Overview:
This lesson plan will challenge participants to expand their curiosity about unfamiliar cultural experiences. Using a deck of picture cards, they will compare their familiar and unfamiliar experiences with others in the group to gain insights about cultural difference.

Objectives:
As a result of this activity, participants will be able to:
1. Identify familiar and unfamiliar cultural experiences.
2. Exhibit curiosity in unfamiliar cultural practices.
3. Articulate deep cultural knowledge for outsiders.
4. Practice emotional resilience and tolerance of ambiguity.

Time:
20 minutes

Group Size:
Large group

Note: This activity works best in large groups (6-10) and with no more than 30 or so learners total. They will need space to move around and talk to each other.

Materials:
A deck of picture cards. You can choose to purchase one of the following sets of picture cards or make your own:
- Photo Jolts! Card Deck by Thiagi
- ImageSet by VisualsSpeak
- Pick-a-Postcard Kit by Experiential Tools

Note: If making your own, select images of social activities and behaviors from around the world (i.e., make sure that the images speak to a diverse audience). Also, 30 or more cards are needed for each group of 6-10 learners.

Intercultural Development Continuum Stages:
- Denial
- Polarization
- Minimization
- Acceptance

AAC&U Intercultural Knowledge and Competence Goals:
Cultural Self-Awareness:
- To articulate insights into own cultural rules and biases (e.g., seeking complexity; aware of how their experiences have shaped these rules, and how to recognize and respond to cultural biases, resulting in a shift in self-description).
FAMILIAR AND UNFAMILIAR
LESSON PLAN

Openness:

• To initiate and develop interactions with culturally different others.
• To suspend judgment in valuing interactions with culturally different others.

Curiosity:

• To ask complex questions about other cultures.
• To seek out and articulate answers to these questions that reflect multiple cultural perspectives.

Other Skills:

Friendship, Teamwork

Facilitator Activity Instructions:

1. The facilitator should lay out all the cards with the image facing up (multiple sets of cards – one for each group).

2. Explain that each participant should think of themselves as cultural beings. They have cultural differences from one another, as well as unique experiences that are familiar to them but may be unfamiliar to others in the room. Emphasize that these differences are cultural, not just personal.

3. Instruct each participant to pick two cards. One card should resonate with the participant and display a familiar experience. The other card should be the opposite: a strange or unfamiliar experience, something out of the participant's comfort zone.

4. With their two cards, instruct them to walk around the room, holding the familiar card facing the front and the unfamiliar card so that it is facing the back of their heads. Make sure others can see both sides of the card (so hold the card over your head or above your shoulder). The purpose of this portion of the activity is to talk to other people in the room. Participants should look at the cards and engage in question/answer. They should ask questions about another person's “familiar” card and the experiences that go along with it. If they have done the activity on someone else's “unfamiliar” card or have a similar/relevant experience, they can offer their insights.

5. The facilitator should debrief with their own questions or a Thiagi debrief.

Debrief Questions:

1. How did you feel when you saw something you are familiar with as one of the “unfamiliar” cards (or vice versa)?

2. What new cultural knowledge did you learn from the other participants?

3. What insights did you gain from this activity about the concept of cultural difference?
Related Tools:

Similar tools:

- Curiosity and Exploration Inventory (CEI-II)
- Photo Analysis
- Pick-a-Postcard
- Picture Storytelling
- Postcards from Abroad