Overview:
This lesson presents the concepts of etic (outsider/objective) and emic (insider/subjective) understandings of culture. The slides explain the differences in these two perspectives, offer motivation for developing emic perspectives by discussing the value of this viewpoint, list some strategies for learning to see a culture from the insider viewpoint, and use concrete (published) case study examples as fodder for practice and discussion.

Objectives:
As a result of this reflection, participants will be able to:
1. Characterize the differences between the emic and etic perspectives on culture.
2. Identify strategies for developing an emic perspective on another culture.

Time:
45 minutes

Group Size:
Entire group

Materials:
Emic Perspective slides (in Downloads)

Intercultural Development Continuum Stages:
- Minimization
- Acceptance

AAC&U Intercultural Knowledge and Competence Goals:

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.

Knowledge of cultural worldview frameworks:
- To demonstrate sophisticated understanding of the complexity of elements important to members of another culture in relation to its history, values, politics, communication styles, economy, or beliefs & practices.
EMIC PERSPECTIVE
LESSON PLAN

Participant Activity Instructions:

1. Use the slide deck to facilitate discussion with participants.
2. Debrief with the following prompts or use a framework such as the Thiagi debriefing questions:
   - What are your take-aways from this activity? What will you remember next week? A year from now?
   - What are some contexts in which you would personally find it very useful to have an emic perspective? Are they any contexts in which you plan to apply what you have learned today?
   - What are your personal challenges to emic approaches? What makes perspective-taking so difficult?
   - Which is your favorite listed strategy for shifting to an emic point of view? Why? Can you add any to the list?
   - What are the ethical issues involved in emic versus etic approaches?
     - Why would an emic perspective be an ethical imperative (the right thing to do) in some cases?
     - Can you think of any instances where insiders may not want to "let you in"? How do you feel about that?

Related Tools:

- A Flower’s Point of View
- If I Woke Up Tomorrow
- Different Perspectives: Bias and Assumptions During Interviews