



Introduction to the Gap:

In their case study, Crabtree and Sapp (2004) shed light on a very important concept that often plays out in cross-cultural communication settings, namely the gap between cognitive and affective/behavioral tendencies. While we can gain knowledge in a classroom setting, this does not necessarily predict our ability to respond effectively and responsively in a cross-cultural setting when our expectations and emotions are put to the test. Oftentimes, head knowledge neither impacts nor aligns with our physiological and emotional responses, which are typically informed by our own deeply engrained cultural tendencies.

Discussion Questions:

- To what other contexts might the gap apply?
- Why does the gap exist?
- What examples from your own life illustrate the gap? What head knowledge did you have and what was your affective/psychological response when put to the test? Were you surprised by your response?
- How will knowing about the gap help you for upcoming cultural transitions or unfamiliar contexts/relationships you might enter? Does knowing about the gap change the way you prepare or conceptualize preparation for these contexts? Does knowing about the gap change the way you approach personal reflection after being immersed in a new experience?

Introduction to Building “Third Culture” Spaces

Fred Casmir (1993) developed a paradigm called “Third-Culture building” which may provide a lens through which to view the Crabtree and Sapp (2004) case study. Casmir proposes that when two cultures come together, power dynamics may lead to one culture dominating and the other adapting. Another possibility he suggests, however, is a dynamic in which power is shared more equally and a third culture forms that doesn’t favor one culture over the other, rather, an in-between third culture is co-created.

Discussion Questions:

- In what ways did Crabtree and her students build a “third culture”?
- What examples from your life does the concept of third-culture building bring to mind?
- In what other contexts might third-culture building be particularly fruitful?
- What are some advantages of third-culture building? What are some challenges of third-culture building?