Advancing URI on the Intercultural Development Continuum

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Why is it so hard to make progress?

Turnover ~4,000 students and others from extremely segregated communities

Two orientations predominate
1. Polarization
2. Minimization
Goals

1. Reflect on the meaning of culture, cultural difference, and intercultural competence
2. Re-examine obstacles to inclusion and equity in terms navigating cultural difference
3. Generate ideas about how we can grow organizationally beyond orientations to cultural difference that limit us
Definitions of Culture

From Textbooks

• Culture is a way of life
• Culture entails all the human-created strategies for responding to the environment
• Culture refers to the shared beliefs and practices of a group of people
Organizational Culture

A shared system of artifacts, values, and assumptions that influence the patterns of daily life learned consciously and unconsciously by community members

- The CED Strategic Plan
#5: Two Ways of Thinking about Culture: Objective vs. Subjective Culture

- Objective
  - Customs
  - Food
  - Dance
  - Art & Music
  - Games & Sport

- Subjective
  - Language
  - Roles
  - Myths
  - Beliefs
  - Social Expectations
  - Values

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Definition of culture I use...

Culture is a web of meaning

• The system of meaning is constituted through social interactions that construct relationships between symbols, beliefs, and practices.
  Ex. Marriage

• People use culture to make sense of the world and determine their behavior. Learned through socialization.
How can we identify cultural differences?

Social boundaries create separate spaces of social life
- International boundaries are most visible
- Residential segregation by class, race, ethnicity, religion
- Marginalization that creates subcultures, particularly around struggles over meanings tied to respect
What is intercultural competence?

A combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that enable someone to:

- communicate across cultural differences
- join in activities or everyday life with a different group or culture
- search out sources for differences in perspectives between groups or cultures
Bennett’s Intercultural Development Continuum

• Describes a developmental process that occurs over long periods through repeated experiences with cultural differences

• The mindsets identified are not static and instead are shaped by context and person’s state of mind

• Best thought of as predominant orientations not stages of development

• Not normative, personal goals determine value
Intercultural Development Continuum

- Denial
- Misses Difference
  - Monocultural Mindset
- De-emphasizes Difference
- Deeply Comprehends Difference
- Minimization
- Polarization
- Acceptance
- Adaptation
- Bridges across Difference
- Intercultural Mindset

Sense of disconnection from a primary cultural community

Modified from the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity, M. Bennett, 1986

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# Towards an Intercultural Mindset

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predominant Experience</th>
<th>Obstacles to Development</th>
<th>Facilitate Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Denial</td>
<td>Unable to perceive differences</td>
<td>Help to see other cultures both globally and domestically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polarization</td>
<td>Cannot imagine an equally “human” experience for the other</td>
<td>Establish commonality, not more sophisticated understanding of difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimization</td>
<td>Cannot see own culture clearly</td>
<td>Focus on cultural self-awareness before detail on other cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>How to maintain ethical commitments in face of cultural relativism</td>
<td>Provide a schemata for experiencing a different cultural context</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Polarization

Examples

Responses
Minimization

Examples

Responses
Questions?