

CULTURAL ARTIFACT ACTIVITY

Various sources. Adapted by Darla K. Deardorff, 2006.

Purpose:

To raise cultural self-awareness as well as to broaden participants' perspectives on other cultures (if group members are from a variety of cultural backgrounds).

Target Audience:

This activity is for participants at the beginning of a cross-cultural training/course. This quick activity can be done in various size groups, from 2 to 8 or more.

Time:

1-2 minutes to set up and introduce the activity, 10-25 seconds per individual to share and a few minutes for debriefing.

Procedure:

Group persons in pairs to larger groups of up to 7-8 people. Ask them to choose one item/object that they currently have with them (or are wearing) that tells something about their cultural background - this can be an item in a pocket, purse, backpack, etc - whatever they have with them. Example: A person may say "my watch - because my life is governed by schedules."

Debrief:

This activity is aimed at raising cultural self-awareness: Questions to discuss in the debriefing include how participants chose the objects they did, insights they gained into their own culture or others' cultures represented in the group. You can discuss the importance of cultural self-awareness as one interacts interculturally and ask if they can think of other objects/artifacts (not necessarily with them) that would be representative of their cultures. You can then discuss what one can learn about other cultures from objects/artifacts from that culture.