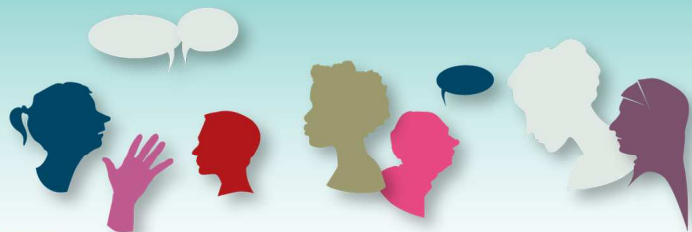


Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters



Module 6

Activity 2: Examples of reflection, change and action

a) **Socialising with fellow students from different countries on a work and travel visit to the USA**

I liked the experience because it prepared me for future communication with people from similar cultures. It demonstrated to me that I need to be careful when I communicate with people from different nationalities and religions because I do not know what their reaction might be in a specific situation. I realized that, despite being a challenge, communication with people from different parts of the world, different nationalities and religions, is very interesting and very pleasant. It can be even more pleasant and complete if we have some preliminary information about the people we are going to communicate with.

b) **A German teacher gets to know a group of Indian teachers on a teacher exchange programme**

I think it increased my tolerance and acceptance among Indians and other cultures in general. I told my students about it. And I tell them every day that you should never have prejudices because you have to get to know people before having an opinion about them. Generalizations are stupid.

c) **Everybody is talking but no one is speaking: an encounter with a group of deaf people using sign language**

[The experience] made me realise that there is no place for annoyance, aggravated gestures and dismissing of others because you cannot communicate with them. I have also to come to terms with the fact that I will never be able to communicate with the deaf as well as I would like to; it has freed me. [As a result of the experience] I took an additional class – deaf culture and communication. I will attend classes to help me develop my communication skills for the deaf community.

d) **An encounter with Bulgarian migrants in Greece**

Did it change me? I thought that at home even the walls help. I felt really grateful I had a country and a home I could return to. I want to go round the world, but also to have a home to return to.

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e) Communicating with a girl from another religion

I learned so much about the relationship between people because relationships are more important than nationalities or religion. I was changed in my way of thinking. It's not important what you are and where you come from. It's important what you have inside, deep down.

f) Different levels of formality at a dinner party held by international students to thank their professor

For myself, I am happy to be reflecting on the incident. It thus gets the attention it deserves. I have also developed an interest in finding out more how people express gratitude. I am still waiting for a good chance to talk with the professor and his wife about this. I want to find out from them how much they remember of that dinner party, what they make of it and whether they had noticed any lack of appropriateness on my part.

g) When help becomes an invasion of their freedom: accompanying people with physical disability on a museum visit.

The experience helped me a lot in changing my views, thoughts and judgements concerning people who face disability, for they are human beings just like me, who can manage on their own and perform activities as well as I can and even better, and are only in need of help when they ask for it. Sadly, as much as I would have loved to do something such as volunteering in an NGO that worked with and for the disabled, I haven't had the time or resources to do so. But sincerely hope to do so later in my life.