



Volunteer Information Sheets

Outcome Area: Participants will be able to distinguish between the visible and invisible aspects of culture. Participants will be able to explain how the invisible aspects of culture influence the visible ones.

Curriculum Area: Valuing and respecting cultural differences

Age Level: 6th grade - adult

Time Involved: 1 hour

Supplies: Outline drawing of an iceberg for each student
Worksheet #1: Features of Culture (enclosed)

Instructions and Discussion Questions:

1. Before lesson, remind participants that:
 - Culture is a complex concept.
 - Everyone has a culture.
 - Culture shapes how we see the world, ourselves and others.
2. Explain that metaphors often help us understand big ideas by relating something we don't know to something we do know. A useful metaphor for culture is an iceberg. Ask participants what they know about the size and shape of ice bergs. How much of an iceberg is above the water? How much is underwater?
3. Make the point that only about one-eighth of an iceberg is visible above the water. The rest is below. Culture is very similar to an icebergs. It has some aspects that are visible and many others that can only be suspected guessed or learned as understanding of the culture grows. Like an iceberg, the visible part of culture is only a small part of a much larger whole.
4. Ask participants to complete Worksheet #1, Features of Culture. Review with participants that the numbered items on the list are all features of culture. Make sure that they understand all the features on the list. Ask them for examples, or provide examples if needed.
5. Provided participants with a copy of an outline drawing of an iceberg with a clear line delineating the part of the iceberg that is above the water's surface and the larger part that is below the surface.
6. Divide participants into groups of four. Ask them to bring the Features of Culture Worksheet with them. Have them discuss in their groups which features of culture they think are visible and which are invisible.

7. Ask participants to look at both their outline drawing of the iceberg and their Features of Culture Worksheet. Have them review the features one by one and decide as a group if a particular feature belongs above the line (i.e., is visible”) or below the line (i.e., is “invisible”). Have participants write above the water line the numbers of those features of culture that they, as a group, consider to be observable features. They should write the numbers of the “invisible” features below the water line. Do the first few features with them. Provide examples, e.g., values cannot be directly observed; holiday customs are visible.
8. After participants have had time to work in groups on the remaining features, have each group pair with another group and compare their placement of features. Participants must be prepared to say why they placed a particular feature where they did. (Note: In the list of features, the numbers that should appear below the water line are #3, #4, #6, #8, #9, #10, #16-18, #22-24, #26-30.)
9. Ask participants whether they see any item below the water line that might influence or determine any item above (e.g., ideas about modesty might affect styles of dress; religious beliefs might influence holiday celebrations, painting and music).

Source: Diverse Issues M- September 2003 adapted from Building Bridges, a Pece Corps curriculum of the Paul D. Coverdell World Wise Schools.

Prepared by: Jackie Cervantes-Guzman

Worksheet #1: Features of Culture

1. Styles of dress
2. Way of greeting people
3. Beliefs about hospitality
4. Importance of time
5. Paintings
6. Values
7. Literature
8. Beliefs about child raising (children and teens)
9. Attitudes about personal space/privacy
10. Beliefs about the responsibilities of children
11. Gestures to show you understand what has been told to you
12. Holiday customs
13. Music
14. Dancing
15. Celebrations
16. Concept of fairness
17. Nature of friendship
18. Ideas about clothing
19. Foods
20. Greetings
21. Facial expressions and hand gestures
22. Concept of self
23. Work ethic
24. Religious beliefs
25. Religious rituals
26. Concept of beauty
27. Rules of polite behavior
28. Attitude toward age
29. The role of family
30. General worldview