Cross-Cultural Competency

Personal Awareness - Stages of Transition

1. Everything is new, interesting, and exciting.
2. Differences become apparent and irritating. Problems occur and frustration sets in.
3. You may feel homesick, depressed and helpless.
4. You develop strategies to cope with difficulties and feelings, make new friends, and learn to adapt to the host culture.
5. You accept and embrace cultural differences. You see the host as your new home and don't wish to depart or leave new friends.
6. You are excited about returning home.
7. You may feel frustrated, angry, or lonely because friends and family don't understand what you experienced and how you changed. You miss the host culture and friends, and may look for ways to return.
8. You gradually adjust to life at home. Things start to seem more normal and routine again, although not exactly the same.
9. You incorporate what you learned and experienced abroad into your new life and career.
Cultural Awareness

The Iceberg Concept of Culture

Like an iceberg, nine-tenths of culture is below the surface.

Surface Culture
Most easily seen
Emotional level - low

Shallow Culture
Unspoken Rules
Emotional level - high

Deep Culture
Unconscious Rules
Emotional level - intense

courtesy, contextual conversational patterns, concept of time, personal space, rules of conduct, facial expressions, nonverbal communication, body language, touching, eye contact, patterns of handling emotions, notions of modesty, concept of beauty, courtship practices, relationships to animals, notions of leadership, tempo of work, concepts of food, ideals of child rearing, theory of disease, social interaction rate, nature of friendships, tone of voice, attitudes toward elders, concept of cleanliness, notions of adolescence, patterns of group decision-making, definition of insanity, preferences for competition or cooperation, tolerance of physical pain, concept of "self", concept of past and future, definition of obscenity, attitudes toward dependents, problem solving roles in relation to age, sex, class, occupation, kinship, and ...