

## Seminar Facilitation Guide

### Introduction

The seminar opens with a sequence of videos clips from well-known films that show people speaking about or representing unique ways of thinking, interacting, and viewing the world. Some of these are funny showing surprising examples of subtle cultural differences that create awkward situations or of people who came together finding a single commonality. These clips are interspersed with other well-known movie scenes in which differences and similarities are highlighted, ignored, leveraged, or overcome. The final set of clips show people who changed as a result of the multicultural experience. One or two will be for worse, but the last ones shown will be for better to provide inspiration and hope to the attendees that the process they are about to begin can be amazing.

When the video has finished, music will continue to play while individuals are encouraged to reflect for a few minutes on which one of these examples best represents themselves and who they would like to be. (This music should play softly throughout the entire event.) Then the learning activities begin.

### Activity Guide

#### Step 1 – Outline Your Culture, Then Meet Someone Different

- Activity A: Write down your answers to Kluckhorn's (2011) cultural circles: gender, sex, age, exceptionality, urban suburban, geographical region, socio-economic level, ethnic or national origin, religion, and political affiliation.
- Activity B: Find the person in this room who is most different than you without using any of Kluckhorn's categories
  - This is a timed event of 5-10 minutes that gets people familiar with seeking out differences.
  - Rationale: The use of nontraditional categories is recommended by deMello-e-Souza Wildermuth & Wildermuth (2011) as a means of forcing individuals to break beyond their usual categories to include differences like shirt color, hairstyle, etc. which are not usually recognized as problematic.
  - Rationale: This is the beginning of the process by which individuals will come to recognize differences as a non-threatening commonality shared by all.
- Group Reflection: What categories did you use to determine your differences?
  - As a team, record these to be used for the third step in which each individual tries to complete a project that will appeal to the other group member's differences.
  - Use digital submissions to collect these responses and facilitate Activity C

- Activity C: Each team submits one difference between its members. If no one else shares this difference, the team keeps it. Otherwise, everyone who used that category crosses it off. Those tables with the greatest number or most unique categories remaining are recognized for their success.
  - Rationale: This positions the differences as something to be desired and also shows the diversity of categories available for measuring these. The public recognition of diversity creates a supra-commonality that includes everyone in the room (deMello-e-Souza Wildermuth & Wildermuth, 2011). People are all a uniquely different hybridity of different identities.
- Personal Reflection: How did you feel about finding someone different than you? What challenges did you have to overcome? What questions did you ask to find them? What might this person know about that you don't? What will you disagree on?
  - Rationale: This is part of the process of raising awareness of the differences without judging them good or bad. Spradley (1997) identifies this as the fourth stage of transition from ethnocentrism to multiculturalism. Ideally, this training session moves individuals from an ethnocentric background to becoming stage 4 ethno-relativists who perceive the differences, but do not necessarily consider these traits better or worse than any others.

### **Step 2 – Explore Your Differences and Commonalities**

- Activity A: Now share your answers to Kluckhorn's model with your partner to find your commonalities
  - Rationale: this produces a commonality of trust and relationship through which the differences will be transcended in a later step. It also builds on step one as the differences here are usually harder to accept.
- Activity B: Here is another supra-commonality for you all. Each team is going to work on a single project. This project should reflect something that is related to both of your work environments.
  - The two team members create two versions of the same project. Each of them must try to design it in a way that will appeal to the other person.
  - Cunningham (2012) recommends making this a project or case study that everyone can relate to from their various environments and roles. The project may be defined by the facilitator or chosen by the groups, but it should not be too large to complete within 15 minutes.
  - Rationale: the purpose behind the use of a project is to give individuals experience with the way that differences effect the individual's experience of life. No matter how hard they try to make the project in a way that meets the other person's differences, they will come short in some way. This provides a concrete opportunity to prepare and test methods of collaboration to engage and incorporate the strengths and weaknesses of each team member.

### **Step 3 – Find Someone the Same as You**

- Activity A: Within 5-10 minutes find the person in the room who is most like you.

- Rationale: this provides a contrast in which the idea of differences becomes more clearly defined. Individuals must reverse their use of categories and will find that even the similar people are also very different. This is part of the process of “alternative categorization” defined by deMello-e-Souza Wildermuth & Wildermuth (2011) that “may cause the blurring of traditional group lines.” The goal here is to manipulate the person’s perceptions of sameness and difference in order to understand that there is nothing to be afraid of.
- Reflect: What was different about this than the first activity? Which one did you feel you accomplished more successfully? Do you expect to be able to relate to this person better or worse than the first? Why?

#### **Step 4 – Create a Plan for Engaging with Diversity**

- Activity A: Using this “similar” person as a sounding board and discussion partner, design your project with the other person in mind.
  - Rationale: This should take about 15 minutes and clearly reveal the challenges of crossing cultural boundaries as well as the benefits of having a diverse team. The more alike these two discussion partners are, the more difficulty they will have designing a project that will appeal to their project partners who are different.
- Reflect: What are the difficulties in creating a plan that the other person will appreciate? Do you feel like this plan reflects your own interests more than theirs? Will it work? How will you feel if you have guessed wrong about how to meet your partners needs?
  - Rationale: there are two sides to the plan for engagement. The project provides the starting point for a conversation about how well the person can consider the needs of someone else or see the world like them. What are the challenges to crossing the cultural boundaries?
- Reflect: When your partner presents their plan, how can you respond in a way that makes them feel valued and helps them understand where they succeeded or failed?
  - Rationale: this set of reflections helps the individual develop a plan to making it easier for other individuals to make an attempt at multicultural thinking. The entire project is an opportunity to engage with the challenges of diversity in a concrete and relational setting. Having this tool and experience is the first step to diversity self-efficacy.

#### **Step 5 – Practice your Plan with the First Person**

- Activity A: Take your project back to your initial partner. Present it to them and see what their reaction is. Then they will do the same for you.
  - Rationale: This gives participants the chance to see how they feel when others respond to their level of cultural insights into the differences. Each person has the chance to experience being part of the minority culture and the dominant culture through this exercise.

- Reflection: What did your partner do to respond that made your opinions feel valued even when you got things wrong?
  - Rationale: even if the other person's response was negative or uncomfortable, this reflection will help the individual understand how to do things differently themselves.
- Activity B: Collaborate to make changes to your initial idea so that it incorporates the other person's ideas and feedback.
  - Rationale: This exercise helps individuals to move beyond the concept of valuing diversity to developing methods of inclusion that incorporate and collaborate with diverse ideas. In this case it could mean letting go of one's own ideas to include the ideas of the other person.
- Reflection: What was it like to collaborate with this person on the project? How was it the same or different than working with your similar partner? How do you feel about the potential impact of your plan? Would you need to change it again to believe it is good?
  - Rationale: There is an intentional search for connections and empathy throughout the process similar to the design by deMello-de-Souza and Wildermuth (2011). The objective is honestly analyzing the situation.

#### **Step 6 – Reflect on the Experience and Revise your Plan**

- Activity: Find your discussion partner (the person who is similar to you). Discuss your answers to these questions: What did you learn from the people who were different? What was difficult about the process of collaboration? What changed about your project? Do you like the changes? What surprised you? What would you do differently next time?
  - Rationale: this clearly highlights the challenges and opportunities, successes and failures of the plan individuals had created and tested in the previous step. The reflection finalizes Nieto and Bode's process of recognizing the difference, recognize the way these differences effect experiences, and then accept the differences by making provision for them (2008).
  - Rationale: the reflective process allows individuals to explore their thought patterns and values, which influence their beliefs and behavior. By exploring the possibility of changes to the action plan, individuals recognize that multiculturalism is an iterative process, not a single event. If one method doesn't work, try another one.

#### **Step 7 – Create a Plan for the Future**

- Activity A: Pretend you will be working with your first partner again. Write a letter to them expressing your appreciation for their help with your project. Tell them what you enjoyed about working together and anything that surprised you. Comment on the quality of what you produced and how it changed because of your collaboration. Secondly, talk about what you appreciated about their efforts to connect with you through their project. Tell them what they did that made you feel like you could speak up. Suggest one or two things they could improve on for next time and

mention why you look forward to working together in the future. Do not put any names on these letters.

- Rationale: deMello-e-Souza Wildermuth & Wildermuth, (2011) said, "Fortunately, positive perceptions can take place very quickly (Gazzaniga, 2008)." The outcome of this seminar depends on this being the case.
  - Rationale: This letter helps the individuals conceptualize their experience, think about it, and communicate it in writing. It becomes abstracted enough for them to transfer to another setting.
- Activity B: Explain the rationale behind the letters to the group – it abstracts the ideas and helps you understand what is going on in the minds of everyone who learned to appreciate and collaborate across the differences. It also includes suggestions on how to do it better. Then ask for people to submit these letters for collection to be shared with the rest of the group anonymously after the session.
  - Rationale: each individual who participated in the seminar has a different perspective on the value and challenges that the diversity of their team brought to the project. These letters make the idea clearly visible and sharing them provides an important diversity of perspectives.

#### **Step 8 – Share what You've Learned**

- Activity: Open the floor for questions and comments by individuals
  - Rationale: this will help to provide some sense of closure for individuals who had difficulty and also give individuals the chance to publicly reflect or encourage each other. It is the chance to share success stories and struggles.

#### **Step 9 – Learn About Additional Steps and Resources**

- Outline the steps for going forward. This may be incorporated into the sharing activity of step 8, but several important details will be added here about the support provided to individuals in applying the ideas they learned through the seminar.
  - Rationale: Culture is process, not a product (Nieto & Bode, 2008), so transformation will never occur immediately. The purpose of the seminar was to walk people through a mindset shift and give them the tools to participate in an ongoing development of a multicultural mindset and work environment. By giving them specific action steps, they are encouraged to continue the process.

#### **Step 10 – Provide Feedback Through a Survey**

- Ask the participants to complete anonymous surveys about their experience in the seminar and recommendations for the future. If they do not complete these during the seminar, they will be sent follow-up emails requesting feedback.