

Chapter 1 exam (intercultural communication)



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INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION Introduction: The first chapter briefly discusses the eight dimensions of communication, the knowledge of which is necessary for bridging the gaps in intercultural communication. The writer has emphasized the benefits of intercultural communication and points out that it takes place in different contexts and is associated with uncertainty, anxiety and communication apprehension. (CA). 1st Generalization: Mixing and merging of peoples of different cultures is a pre-condition to smooth communication. Brian Spitzberg states that most models of communicative competence include a cognitive, affective and behavioral component. He further explains that the cognitive component refers to how much one knows about communication. The affective component refers to one's motivation to approach or avoid communication, and the behavioral component refers to the skills required for communication. All these three components point towards an important factor related to communication. There is a vast difference in the verbal and non-verbal communication patterns across cultures and micro-cultures which are so numerous. How can anyone belonging to one culture know anything about these patterns in another culture without being acquainted with it? (cognitive) Skills are acquired through observation and imitation. How can communication skills of a different culture be adopted without getting a chance to observe them? (Behavior) And until one ever has sufficient acquaintance with people of a new and different culture, how can one be motivated to approach them? (Affective) In the beginning of the chapter, there is a prediction that Marshall MacLuhan's vision of global village is soon likely to become a virtual certainty. The reason is of course the tremendous development in technology. Telecommunication systems and supersonic jets have made it

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possible for people across the globe to come closer to each other. But the question is, have people come together in the true sense? Communication systems are only means to communication. It cannot be said that people have come together, not in the true sense until they change their mindset, cross the cultural boundaries and communicate heart to heart. Acquaintance or exposure is essential. This is analogical to the acquisition of mother tongue. A child acquires his mother tongue, the necessary skills and knowledge for using it, only when he is sufficiently exposed to it. Gradually, he begins to take pride in it. (Affective component). Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. has rightly said, “ ----- the history of our planet has been in great part the history of the mixing of peoples.” So we can conclude that exposure to different cultures and micro-cultures are first necessary to get rid of the anxiety and communication apprehension associated with intercultural communication. Of course, the mass media and technology can help us to experience different cultures virtually through films and movies, thus quickening and aiding the process of communication. But the whole issue seems to be a vicious circle. People avoid intercultural communication because they lack the knowledge and skills required for it. But knowledge and skills cannot be acquired until the two cultures come in contact. This is the immediate problem that faces the world today, the major hurdle in the plan of the global village, in spite of leaping strides in technological development. 2nd Generalization: A Global village can survive only if there is smooth intercultural communication. There are several benefits of intercultural communication. When there are different groups with diverse interests, conflicts are inevitable. But a better understanding between them will reveal that basic human life is the same everywhere, human wants and

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desires are the same. The differences are only subtle and on the surface. This understanding will help to develop a tolerance for difference and pave the way for global unity. Noted historian and Pulitzer Prize winner Arthur Schlesinger has warned us about the dangers that prevail when people of diverse cultural, ethnic and linguistic groups converge in one place. There is more killing and violence in the name of religion. Hostility between groups is amongst the most instinctive drives, not only in humans, but in animals as well. Hostility is due to fear, which in turn is the result of ignorance which leads to a sense of insecurity. Communication will eradicate fear and create a secure atmosphere. Ethnic, religious or linguistic differences are not deep and real. These boundaries can be erased only when intercultural communication takes place. Intercultural communication will bind people together and they will all be driven by a common goal. Intercultural communication can thus fulfill the dream of a global village. References Both references are from the support material which you sent and I do not have details of the book.