

6 barriers to intercultural communication



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There are six particular barriers to communication between people. These are anxiety, assuming similarities instead of difference, ethnocentrism, language problems, prejudice and stereotyping, and misinterpretation of nonverbals. According to LaRay M.

Barna (1997), the developer of the list of six barriers, actual difficulties are mostly related to people with different cultures. The first barrier going to be discussed is high anxiety. The meaning of it is when a person feels inconvenient when he or she does not know how to behave in some situations. The result is that the communication transaction fails. Along with my personal experience troubles occurred when I came to the Swiss Hotel Management School for the first time.

Everything was new and very unusual for me. For the first week I could never understand what people expected from me. The style of living was absolutely dissimilar, that is why sometimes I did not know how to behave. The next barrier to intercultural communication is assuming similarity instead of dissimilarity. When people are acting in a home manner in the different culture it might cause a lot of problems.

In order to prepare yourself for various circumstances it is very important to assume laws, habits, and attitudes of another society. For example, in Russia there is no such a thing as a ground floor. It starts directly from the first one. Some time ago in the age of seven I went to England, not having enough information about its customs and traditions at all. Thus I was totally lost in that system.

Ethnocentrism is a third issue on the barrier list. It is based on the idea that your own race, nation, or group is better than any other. Usually ethnocentrism is common for people who come across the "culture shock". During the period of time when an individual is learning the new culture he might find this novel worst than his home culture.

Taking as an example the Swiss Hotel Management School students. Some of...