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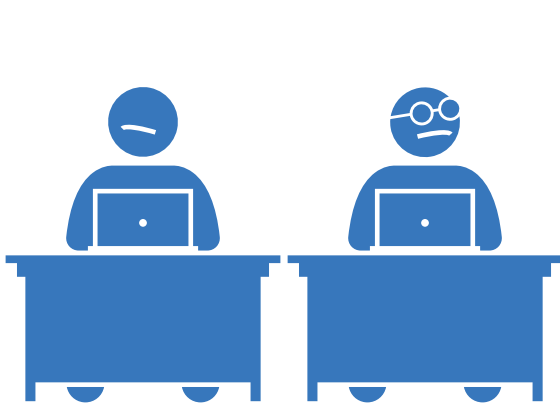
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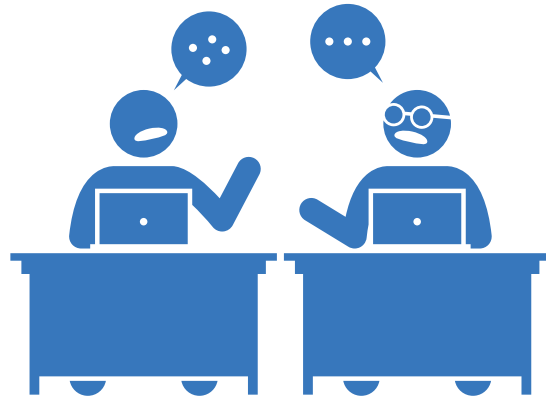
UNIT

1

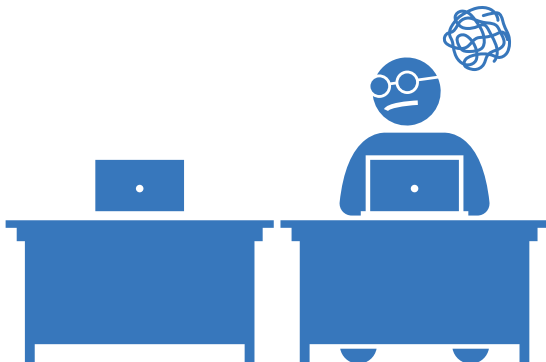
Cross-Cultural Communication



Dislike Each Other



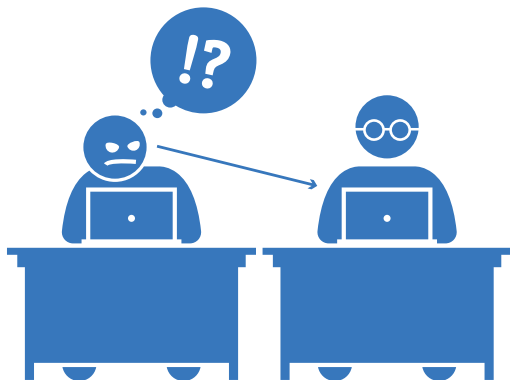
Disagreement



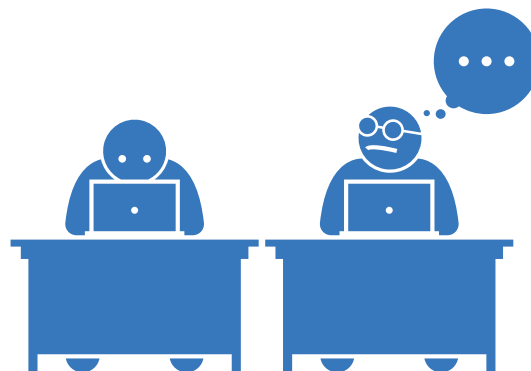
Missing Teammate



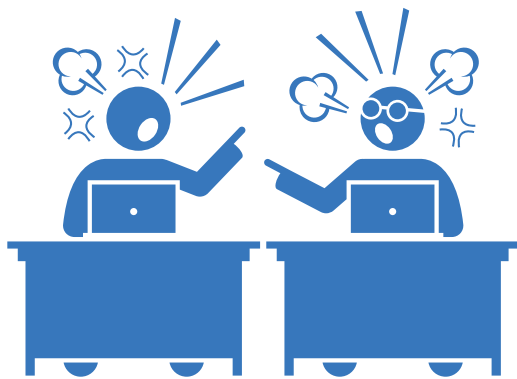
Unhelpful



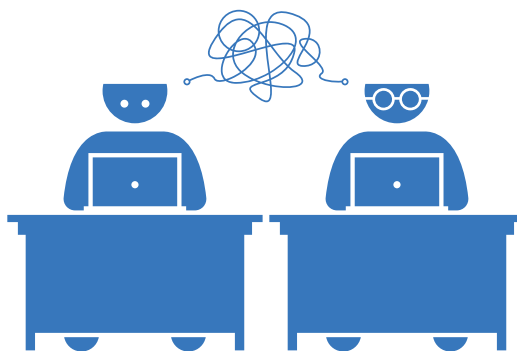
Lack of Trust



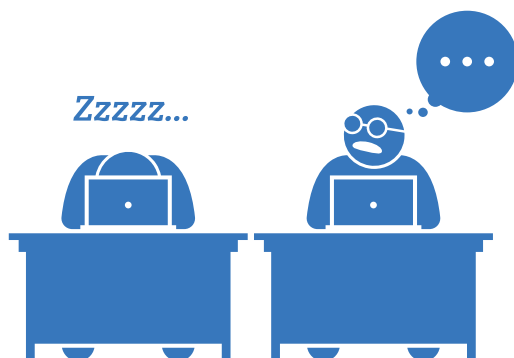
Lack of Confidence



Quarrel



Poor Communication



Sleeping Partner

Think & Discuss

- 1** Look at the pictures.
What could be a barrier to communication?
What about in a cross-cultural setting?
- 2** How do cultural differences influence communication styles?

BRAINSTORMING

- 1 How does culture influence communication?
- 2 What are some effective ways to overcome communication barriers?
- 3 Have you noticed more and more “foreign foods” on the supermarket shelves?
- 4 Are you familiar with the word “diversity”? What does it mean?
- 5 Have you ever tried to communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds? What was the experience like? Did you feel it was successful?
- 6 Do you speak any languages other than Chinese? If so, which?

▼ communication barriers



GUIDED READING



With advancements in modern technology and international networking, communicating with people of different cultural backgrounds has become a necessary skill for the new generation. Miscommunication can result from a lack of cultural awareness and lead to problems in business and politics. Seamless communication is already hard to achieve between two people who speak the same language, let alone between those who speak different languages.



▲ failure in communication

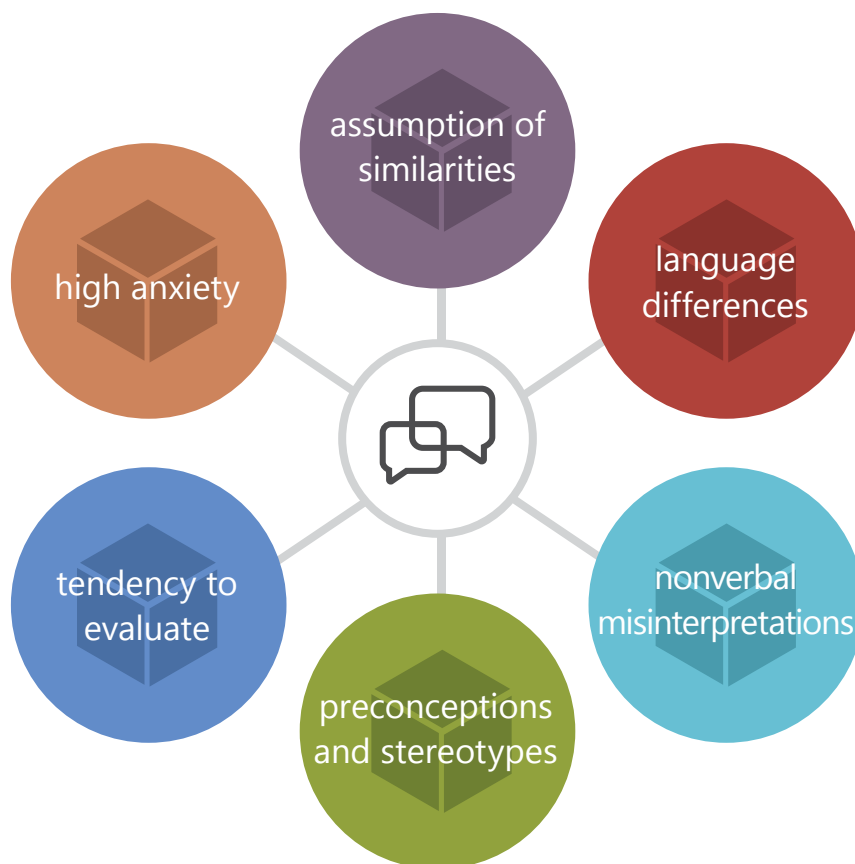
What is cross-cultural communication? It's a field of study that examines how we communicate with those from different cultures. The goal of cross-cultural communication is to increase awareness of differences among cultures so as to reduce uncertainty. However, this can be challenging.

Anthropologist Edward T. Hall first discussed high-context and low-context cultures in his book *Beyond Culture* in 1976. According to Hall, high context cultures focus on underlying contexts, while low context cultures expect communication to be more explicitly stated. Strictly speaking, not all cultures are either high context or low context though. Some might be high context and become low context with the influence of other cultures.

Even with all the right intentions, we are still likely to encounter difficulties when we try to communicate with people from other cultures. According to LaRay M. Barna's "**Stumbling Blocks in Intercultural Communication**," there are six stumbling blocks in cross-cultural communication. These are assumption of similarities, language differences, nonverbal misinterpretations, preconceptions and stereotypes, tendency to evaluate, and high anxiety.

Knowing these stumbling blocks and developing listening skills with an open-minded attitude can help us increase our competency in cross-cultural awareness. This "cross-cultural competency" is among the ten most important skills of the future, according to Tim Rettig, the author of *Struggling Forward*.

Six Stumbling Blocks in Intercultural Communication



READING COMPREHENSION

True or False. Please circle the correct answers.

- (T) (F) 1 Communication with people of different cultures has become a requirement due to advancements in technology and international networking.
- (T) (F) 2 Misunderstandings can arise from a lack of awareness.
- (T) (F) 3 Misunderstandings almost never happen between people who speak the same language.
- (T) (F) 4 Increasing cultural awareness is easy.
- (T) (F) 5 Reducing uncertainty among people of different cultures is challenging.
- (T) (F) 6 The idea of high context and low context cultures was first established in 1986.
- (T) (F) 7 A high context culture will always remain so without any changes.
- (T) (F) 8 According to LaRay M. Barna's theory, there are seven stumbling blocks to cross-cultural communication.
- (T) (F) 9 According to Tim Rettig, "cross-cultural competency" is among the ten most important skills of the future.
- (T) (F) 10 The stumbling blocks do not include "language differences."





▲ Tran Quoc pagoda, the oldest Buddhist temple in Hanoi, Vietnam

DIALOGUE



- Peter** *(Peter answers the telephone.)* Hello, Peter speaking. *(A moment later.)*
Good morning, Carol. How are you?
- Carol** Hi, Peter. I'm fine. Listen, I wanted to get your advice. It's about an advancement offer from my company. But I have some concerns. Can we talk?
- Peter** Congratulations! What great news. What concerns? I hope I can help.
- Carol** Well, my company wants to send me to Vietnam as part of my promotion. Specifically, I'd have to manage a new branch office in Hanoi. However, I've never been there before.
- Peter** I see. So, you're worried about communicating with the people there?
- Carol** Right. Since I'm completely unfamiliar with Vietnamese culture and don't know a word of Vietnamese, I'm afraid I'll be unable to get my ideas across or to understand the local business context. I don't want my lack of communication skills to be the reason the whole project fails.
- Peter** I know it's never easy to blend into a new culture. Are you going to learn Vietnamese before you go?
- Carol** That goes without saying. My company will arrange lessons.

- Peter** I think if you can learn to do one thing, you'll be fine.
- Carol** What is that?
- Peter** Keep an open mind. From my experience, when you first live in a new country, you will surely experience things that you think are "strange." But remember to never judge people there by the standards of your own culture, because the other way around, your culture could also seem "strange" to the local people. You have to be open to differences.
- Carol** I think your advice is quite useful. Thank you.
- Peter** You are welcome. So, have you decided whether you want to accept your company's offer?
- Carol** I think I will. After talking to you, I think although living in a new culture is hard, I will learn a lot from that.

▼ a street in Hoi An, Vietnam



DIALOGUE DISCUSSION

- 1 Where is Carol going? What is she worried about?
- 2 What's Peter's advice to Carol?
- 3 Will Carol take her company's offer? What's her reason?
- 4 Make a list of countries you wouldn't mind going to and a list you definitely would not want to go to. Explain the reasoning behind your choices.
- 5 What other things should be taken into consideration when going abroad? Please make a list.



MAKING CONNECTIONS

Cross-cultural communication is often confused with intracultural communication, which is the study of communication between people of the same cultural environment but with varying backgrounds.

For more information about the differences between intracultural communication and cross-cultural communication, refer to the book *Cross-Cultural and Intercultural Communication* at:



https://books.google.com.tw/books?hl=zh-TW&lr=&id=-5sjpr1ypmcC&oi=fnd&pg=PR7&dq=cross+cultural+communication&ots=GFen92NBW&sig=UMprfEJEGdd8XKB7Ud7IXJJ78xc&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=cross%20cultural%20communication&f=false

Below are more subjects about cross-cultural communication.

- ✦ cross-cultural communication barriers
- ✦ cross-cultural communication politeness
- ✦ cross-cultural communication problems and challenges

