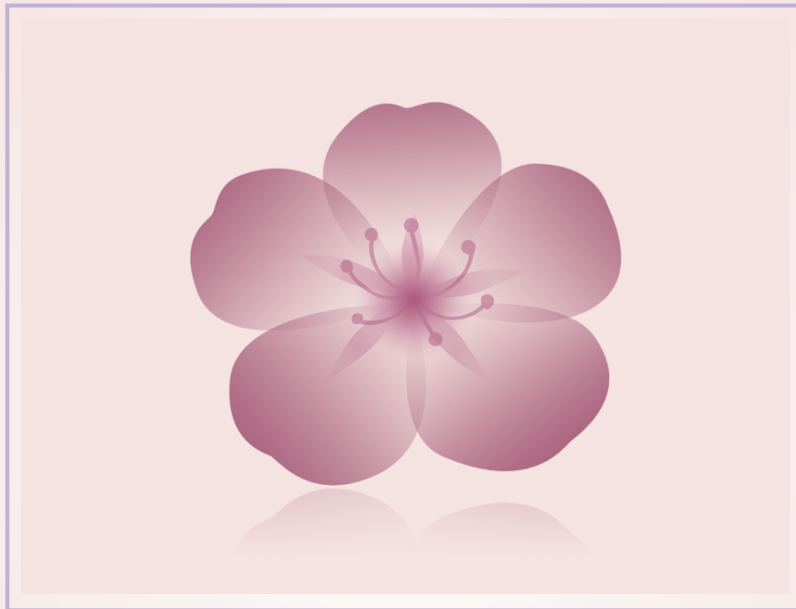


SELF-REFLECTION PAPER



DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL TRAINING IN ORGANIZATIONS



ANGÉLIQUE STEVENS

Motivations

Why did I take this workshop? Because I love Intercultural Competence. Or as we dearly call it at MIIS, ICC. I am in an intercultural marriage, and I have diverse origins (French, Basque, Italian and Spanish). I did not know what to call Intercultural Competence before Graduate School, but I loved being around people who could see the bigger picture, and be part of the world in general.

This fondness of ICC and the practicality of this workshop were the main reasons I decided to spend two weekends away from my house. It was a pretty big time commitment (especially over Halloween weekend). However, I do think that it was worth it. The process I went through during this workshop is something that I will carry with me through the rest of my time in Graduate School, but also in my professional and personal lives.

An "ah-ah moment"

What I learnt in Intercultural Competence will not only help me work better with people who might come from different background than mine (which happens to be peculiar). It will also help me in my personal life, as I will understand that I am very thankful that two sessions of this workshop were organized so that I may glean some revelations.

Most of the "ah-ah moments" that I went through during this workshop occurred during the first weekend. The activities, but also the bonding we did on Saturday were life changing. I had never gotten that fond about people that quickly. It has been nice to see people outside of the workshop and to know that we had a special connection.

Key takeaways

I do consider that individuality comes first before the nations that people may belong to. However, one of the epiphanies that I had during this workshop is that individuals are deeply influenced by the culture they grew up in. This is a point that Peter made very clear: all humans being are wired the same (or "have the same software" as he put it). He also told us that culture taught those people the acceptable means to be loved and accepted, which is what everyone craves, deep inside.

I like this approach of giving the benefit of the doubt to people, and to guess that they usually have the best intentions. I feel like taking this out into the world will help make it a better place, one interaction at a time. I am very thankful for this realization and for what it will bring to my future life.

My own conclusions

I also got to draw my own conclusions, about myself. As a fan of psychology, I always praised myself as a self-aware person, recognizing patterns that I was undergoing and links between current and past events. However, another realization of mine during this workshop was that I had only touched the surface- the more you know, the more you realize you know nothing.

I tried to make sense of this epiphany by ranging my level of awareness into three categories: self-awareness, aware of others and awareness of impression upon others. As I have just mentioned, I reached the first level of awareness a little while back, thanks to the study of psychology and also undergoing some therapy.

My point of mentioning this theory of mine is that I feel like I have reached a second level of awareness thanks to this workshop- awareness of others. I did already know that others were different from me, but I feel like I can see their motives from a clearer point now- from a human perspective. This is my biggest "ah-ah" moment and reflects the process I have undergone in this workshop- I was able to turn the focus of my reflection from myself onto people I interact with.

Moving forward

As I look to the future, I decide that I will strive to reach the third level of awareness I mentioned- the awareness of the impression (or even influence) upon others. I do hope that working on how I act as part of a group will help me move this way.

I am also extremely curious about the phases that I must have gone through to get attached to the people in our group, and I look forward to maybe finding about it in January (if I can secure a spot in the workshop). On top of being left with questions about group dynamics after the workshop, I was also able to get answer to some of my behavioral questions. This journey of Intercultural Competence seems to be a never-ending one, but I look forward to making new discoveries.