

Intercultural continuing professional education – lessons from abroad Joy Wee, 9 June 2011

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Summary points

Difficulties:

- ☒ LANGUAGE, accents
- ☒ teaching at wrong level (too basic)
- ☒ teamwork new to some
- ☒ irrelevant case examples, stories that are not culturally understood; supplies discussed unavailable; information not locally relevant
- ☒ lack of teaching materials, no notes left
- ☒ assumptions that learners know nothing, too basic
- ☒ 'pyrotechniques,' gimmicks
- ☒ wasted time (large group discussions)
- ☒ difficult to ask questions

Benefits:

- ☒ direct, to the point
- ☒ gentle, patient, respectful, friendly
- ☒ visuals, hands-on, enhance skills
- ☒ new techniques, ideas, different approaches, alternate viewpoints
- ☒ equal treatment of patients
- ☒ speak from experience
- ☒ more discussion
- ☒ bridging the gap, no fear of 'breaking' relationship
- ☒ access to literature
- ☒ organized, comprehensive
- ☒ learners permitted to form own conclusions

Advice:

- assess learner level of knowledge, educational background beforehand
- pre-circulate materials, leave handouts behind for each learner
- teach at appropriate level
- socialize/intermingle before session
- introduce self
- set expectations, teach at appropriate level
- speak clearly, slowly, loudly; use interpreters if necessary (buy a dictionary); may get help from English-speaking learners
- allow breaks (40 min) and enough time
- be a content expert
- realize computers/power may not work
- use appropriate examples
- be practical, let everyone practise
- provide individual work
- test understanding
- leave contact information

Teaching Methods:

- use ice-breakers
- clinical scenarios (local)
- be interactive
- use visual aids (not too complex), demonstrations
- simplify concepts
- adapt teaching to the moment
- avoid statistics
- efficiency appreciated in some cultures

Cultural aspects:

- ❑ dress/behave modestly, appropriately
- ❑ get to know learners outside of class
- ❑ be available, approachable
- ❑ understand daily challenges of local life
- ❑ be aware of local situation (how things are done, what is available)
- ❑ learn about the country, culture, faith
- ❑ improvising is necessary
- ❑ do not override values/customs, ways of discussing prognosis
- ❑ avoid being offended, coming to quick conclusions
- ❑ learn about system before trying to change it

Other:

- ❑ learners will take what they wish from each session/approach
- ❑ some learners may not be able to see well (vision not tested)
- ❑ in some settings, apparent age of teacher matters