

Objective: To hear the multitude of voices in one's self-talk to demonstrate how cultural roles influence one's thinking.

TIME REQUIRED 30 minutes or less

RISK LEVEL High

PARTICIPANTS NEEDED Any number of participants, plus one facilitator

PROCEDURE Please take the following steps:

1. Select a cross-cultural subject that produces ambivalent or controversial thoughts and feelings within the students.
2. Ask the students to tune in to their ambivalent thoughts and listen to the several sides of their internal dialogue, according to their different cultural roles.
3. Instruct students to write down, as a script of a play or transcript of a conversation, the dialogue between their several internal voices.
4. Have students identify the evidence of cultural bias and self-reference in their scripts or transcripts.

DEBRIEFING Internal dialogue is more chaotic and inconsistent than verbal dialogue, so it will be difficult to focus on an imaginary conversation between two contrasting identities or "selves" in one's own mind. We don't think in complete sentences and often ramble in discontinuous ways, interrupted by other competing thoughts that may be entirely irrelevant to the topic under discussion. The student needs to take control of the dialogue and impose some rules just as might be needed when moderating a group of

Note. From *A Manual of Structured Experiences for Cross-Cultural Learning* (p. 77), by W. H. Weeks, P. B. Pedersen, and R. W. Brislin, 1977, Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press. Copyright 1977 by Intercultural Press. Adapted with permission.

people discussing a controversial issue. It will help if the student can assign a name to each participant in the imaginary discussion, guided by their contrasting agenda and needs. Some questions for discussion might include:

1. How did you decide which “imaginary voices” to allow into the dialogue?
2. Were you surprised by any of the things one or the other person mentioned during this imaginary dialogue?
3. What examples of cultural bias were demonstrated during the dialogue?
4. What strategies did the positive or negative voice use in this imaginary dialogue?
5. How did this experience help you better understand the thinking process?

INSIGHT

Our internal dialogue is a discussion between the positive and negative voices of our culturally defined roles.

EXERCISE 8.3: MONITORING INTERNAL DIALOGUE

The aim of this training model is to help counselors monitor both the negative and positive messages in one's internal dialogue. In order to focus directly on reflection of meaning skills it will be useful for you to monitor your own internal dialogue as well as the probable—your best guess—internal dialogue of your culturally different client. Write in your own and your client's internal dialogue for the following four synthetic cultures.

The #A

"I am very fortunate to be so well cared for by my family and by persons such as yourself. I try to be conscientious in obeying the rules and respecting my betters, but my family must not be pleased with what I am doing since they sent me to you. I hope you will help me so that I can make a better contribution in the future. I promise to be a good and worthy client, following any advice you give me."

#A internal dialogue:

Your internal dialogue:

.....

The #B

"Life certainly is full of surprises and most of them are not good. Here I sit wasting my time doing God only knows what, while I could be somewhere else. If I only knew what my family wanted, I could do it, but they don't know themselves what they want. I wonder if you have any idea yourself. I know this much: Things can't keep going on as they have been."

#B internal dialogue:

Your internal dialogue:

.....

The #G

"Well, I came here, so what do you have in mind for me? I don't enjoy playing games, so just tell me what you want and let's get on with it. You should be able to teach me some new strategies so I can get along better with my family, if you're any good. We don't have to like one another to work together, you know."

#G internal dialogue:

Your internal dialogue:

.....

The #D

"Isn't that a crock? Me coming here to see you? I'm the one who has been successful in our family, and now they send me to see a shrink like I'm some kind of wimp. You sit there looking at me with that looney-goosey look in your eye. What the hell do you know about anything? I'll tell you this: if you don't prove yourself this session, there's no way in hell I'm coming back!"

#D internal dialogue:

Your internal dialogue: