

Dustten and Sendtut

Intercultural Simulation

Description

Explain to the students that they are now going to carry out an activity in which they will practise cultural behaviour and norms of different cultures: the Dustten and Sendtut cultures.

Divide the participants into two groups. Each group should have as many people as possible, as well as roughly equal numbers of men and women.

Place the two groups on opposite sides of the room. Once separated, distribute the sheets with the cultural norms of the Dustten culture to the first group and the sheets with the cultural norms of the Sendtut culture to the second group. One volunteer from each group should read the instructions aloud to the group and discuss them with each other.

Inform them that compliance with the rules of each culture will give or subtract points during the activity.

As the groups meet, you should visit both the Dustten and Sendtut groups to emphasise various aspects of cultural norms:

- Visit the Dustten group first, emphasising that men should be accompanied by women. If a participant asks about punctuation, point it out, as you will be in charge of that task.
- With the Sendtut, emphasise the importance of making several short contacts rather than a few longer ones. A valid contact would be any contact that involves a verbal or non-verbal response from a member of the other culture.
- Return to the Dustten group to inform them that they have been invited to a school party in the Sendtut group. Remind them of the rule of no contact with people from other cultures.
- Go back to Sendtut to tell them that they have been invited to visit the Dustten. Remind them of the cultural norm of being friendly, outgoing, party-loving and their eagerness to meet people from other cultures.

Now we start the game!

Announce the party from the centre of the classroom with the following opening:

On behalf of the school, we invite you to our annual party. The hosts would like to emphasise the importance of these social gatherings as opportunities to exchange cultural values and learn from other people and groups. We hope you have a great time.

LET THE PARTY BEGIN!

Stand to one side of the classroom, allowing the cultures to interact, while walking around, observing behaviours that can be described and discussed during the closing session of the activity. You can take notes and also act as if you are scoring points for each group. After about five minutes have passed, get the groups' attention and inform them that the party is over and ask them to return to their seats, without yet revealing their norms to the other group.

Analyse the activity with the following questions. The sequence is very important:

- How do you feel about the cultural norms of your group?
- How do you feel about the behaviour of the members of the other group?
- What words would you use to describe the behaviour of the other group?
- What interesting things happened during the party?
- What were your expectations at the beginning of the party?
- People assume cultural norms very quickly - do you agree or disagree with this statement?
- People rarely question the cultural norms they receive. Do you agree or disagree with this statement?
- The same behaviour can be perceived differently depending on the norms of your group. For example, the same behaviour seems friendly with Sendtut and aggressive with Dustten. Do you agree or disagree with this statement?
- Does this activity reflect things that happen in the real world?
- What real-world process does this activity reflect?
- The Dustten women had to speak for the men in their culture. In what real-world situations does one group speak for another?
- If we repeated this activity, would you share yourself differently, knowing what you know now?

Close this activity by referring to the iceberg model and showing which aspects were artefacts and which were values.

Debriefing

It summarises all the highlights generated by the group and facilitates a discussion on how this activity allows us to practice cultural interactions, as well as to reflect on how we assume values and norms of behaviour, often without being aware that we assume them.

Students should be curious to know about the exchange student whose hosts they are, as well as value the cultural diversity they have in their classrooms and encouraging spaces for interaction between people with different cultural backgrounds, thus enabling the group to learn from their peers and also to understand the value of having diverse people in their classrooms.

Materials

Dustten and Sendtut Cultural Norms Sheet (adapted from Thiagarajan, S. (2004) Simulation Games By Thiagi. Bloomington: Workshops By Thiagi, Inc.):

DUSTTEN CULTURE - Norms and behaviours:

- They are autonomous. They prefer to interact with members of their own culture.
- They do not initiate conversation. They speak only when spoken to.
- They are formal. They say sir and madam.
- Among themselves, men are always accompanied by women.
- Dustten men avoid eye contact with women from other cultures. They respond through their female companions.
- Dustten men can talk to men from other cultures. They can maintain eye contact with men from other cultures.

Rating:

- Dustten lose 1 point for initiating conversations with any member of another family.
- Dustten men lose 2 points for speaking directly to women of other cultures.
- Dustten women gain 1 point each time they respond to a woman from another culture as an intermediary for one of their men.

SENDTUT CULTURE - Norms and behaviours:

- They are informal and friendly.
- Among them, there are no gender differences. Men and women behave in the same way.
- They are extroverted. They love to make contacts outside their culture.
- Sendtut contacts are short and friendly.
- Sendtut are democratic and call everyone by their first name.
- Sendtut value cross-gender contacts more than same-sex contacts.

Rating:

- Sendtut earn 1 point for making same-sex contact.
- Sendtut earns 1 point for making a contact with the opposite gender.
- Sendtut loses 5 points if they fail to make contact with the opposite gender within 1 minute.