Building Bridges – enhancing your cross-cultural understanding

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When working and relating with people from other cultures we often want a nice neat check list so that we are able to quickly identify their cultural differences and work out how to communicate with them. This workshop will give you some carry away tips, but more importantly it will help you become more aware of your own cultural assumptions and how these compare and contrast with the cultural assumptions of people from cultures different to your own. In particular we will consider cultural values such as Individualism and Collectivism, and Hierarchy and Equality.

We will discuss the kinds of issues that might arise for students from highly collective and hierarchical cultures when they come to study in relatively independent, egalitarian cultures in Australia and New Zealand.

In light of my past experience as an international student and then a teacher in Amman, Jordan, and my current role as an International Advisor for Middle Eastern scholars, special attention will be given to comparisons between New Zealand/Australian and Arab culture and the impact of this on cultural adjustment and transition.

It is my hope that you will go away with greater self- awareness and skills to observe and identify cultural values. As well as cultivate empathy and appreciation for other cultures and strategies to build relational bridges.

The workshop is interactive and will include case studies and group discussion. Come ready to participate!

Timeframe: 90 minutes

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