

ON STEREOTYPES

*Excerpted from the Study Abroad Toolkit &
based on the intercultural films and videos
by Crossing Borders Education and the
Facilitator Manual by SIT Graduate Institute*

Step 1: Stereotypes and Culture Definitions (25 minutes)

F: Read this clip summary aloud

This clip introduces a group of four US American and four Moroccan students who will be traveling and living together for a period of time.

F: BEFORE viewing the film clip, remind students to keep the following questions in mind because they will be writing in their journals right after viewing

- What are *observations* and *value judgments* about the two cultures, their own and the “other” that are identified?
- What are some of the *demonstrations* of culture that are mentioned by each of the students?
- Note some of the cultural characteristics you are expecting to see while in your host culture.

Show film clip 1.1: *On Pre-Conceptions* (5 minutes)

F: Reflection & sharing (3-5 minutes)

Give time for individual reflection and writing, then sharing with a neighbor before opening for a large group discussion.

F: Large group highlights (5 minutes)

Invite students to share, but remind them not to repeat items already mentioned by others.

Gather a few examples of *value judgments* about the cultures -- what *observations* are the students in the film making as a way to support those judgments?

Make sure students (or you) note:

- All people have observations about their own, as well as the *other* culture.
- Some of the cultural characteristics are accurate, but the value placed on the behavior varies by individual.
- Can students identify where these ideas come from? If so, where?

F: Definitions (10 minutes)

Facilitator generates from the students a list of phrases and/or bullet points to describe each of these points that includes at least the following:

1. Culture is defined as...
 - values and beliefs shared by a group of people,
 - transmitted generation to generation,
 - within and by its members, and
 - sometimes the communication of culture is indirect, inexplicit, and nevertheless real.

2. What are the functions that culture serves? It
 - helps us to categorize things we see,
 - allows us to make meaning of interactions,
 - provides a way to interpret behavior of a group of people, and
 - gives us a way to understand our own behavior.

F: Generate a list of some cultural characteristics /assumptions/ stereotypes participants have about their host culture, and some ways in which they might verify if these are accurate.

Here are a few suggestions to start with:

- Value of time
- Value of work
- Roles of men and women
- Role of religion within society
- Orientation toward the future, the past and the present
- Value of independence or interdependence in the community