

Orientation	Pre-Departure
Session Overview	<p>The purpose of this session is to help students to learn by observation, to infer correct behavior from non-verbal or indirect clues, and to teach self-awareness. Students learn self-awareness when they are given the chance to assess their own reactions to, and feelings about, the rituals that the Albatrossian couple perform.</p> <p>First presented by Donald Batchelder and Elisabeth Warner (Beyond Experience: the experimental approach to cross-cultural education, Experiment Press, 1979).</p> <p><b>There are two parts to this session:</b></p> <p>The <b>exercise</b> of performing a ceremonial greeting between members of an imaginary culture (the Albatrossians/facilitators) and foreigners (the students). There should be no on-lookers.</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p>Group discussion of what students saw and experienced.</p>
Participants	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Students <input type="checkbox"/> Host Parents <input type="checkbox"/> Natural Parents <input type="checkbox"/> Host Siblings
Format	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Highly Active / Interactive <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion <input type="checkbox"/> Some Activity / Interactivity <input type="checkbox"/> Independent
Duration	90 minutes
Group Size	12-15 students (preferably with an equal representation of males and females)
Minimum Staffing	2 facilitators
Materials Needed	<p>A dish or a bowl for hand washing; a cup with liquid for drinking</p> <p>Food to eat (preferably food that is easy to grab and feed to others)</p> <p>Sheets for the "Albatrossian" people to wear</p> <p>Enough chairs for half of the students</p>
Preparation	<p>Read through all of the material and make sure you are comfortable discussing it; make notecards or highlight suggested questions to ask students in group discussions.</p> <p>This session requires two facilitators to act out the part of the Albatrossian couple. You will need a male facilitator and a female facilitator. If this is not possible, they will need to be differentiated from</p>

	<p>each other in some other way.</p> <p>The facilitators should read through the exercise and be very comfortable with the cultural rituals and cultural communication that they will be acting out.</p> <p>Have the room prepared with enough chairs in a circle for half of the students to sit in; with one chair placed in the middle of the circle for the Albatrossian male.</p> <p>Fill the bowl with water; set aside.</p> <p>Fill the cup with a liquid to drink; set aside.</p>
<p>LOOP standards achieved</p>	<p>Culture:</p> <p>Students will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understand the concept of culture in terms of objects, behaviors &amp; values</li> <li>2. Be aware of the influence of culture on people</li> <li>3. Understand in which aspects cultures may differ (communication patterns, personal distance, individualism vs. collectivism, etc.)</li> <li>4. Be aware that understanding cultural characteristics requires knowledge of the cultural context (e.g. History, values, safety issues, religion etc.)</li> </ol> <p>My Culture:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be aware of their own cultural background (values, behaviors, objects that are part of it).</li> <li>2. Be aware that they have expectations and those are culturally influenced.</li> <li>3. Understand their motivation(s) for going on exchange.</li> </ol> <p><i>To consider:</i></p> <p>Be aware of one's Cultural Identity</p> <p>The Other Culture:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understand their own stereotypes of the culture they are going to.</li> <li>2. Be aware that they will have to take on challenges (be comfortable about the exchange experience not always being comfortable).</li> <li>3. Understand how to explore differences between cultures.</li> </ol> <p>Adaptation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understand that differences cannot be judged in terms of right or wrong. It's just different.</li> <li>2. Understand the challenges of intercultural communication in terms of: different communication styles.</li> </ol>

## SET UP INSTRUCTIONS FOR FACILITATORS

Allow 15 minutes to set up room before session starts.

Close all doors/windows so participants can't view preparations. Put a large circle of chairs with only enough chairs for the males of the group plus the male

Albatrossian. Male Albatrossian should be wearing robes/toga and shoes. Female Albatrossian only robes/toga. She should be barefoot. Prepare a tray of Dixie cups with an interesting tasting beverage. Have a bowl of interesting tasting snacks. Ideally have some foreign/strange flute music quietly playing in the background. Small LED votive candles create a nice ambience also. Once the student group enters the room, all communication from the Albatrossians is in their language or gestures.

### Info for Facilitator

- Bullets represent talking points or instructions.
- ✓ Checkmarks represent key points or take aways.

## ACTIVITY: Albatross

### Part 1: Seating of the Albatross Couples and Guests

- Albatrossian couple enters the room, the Albatrossian sits on the male chair, the Albatross woman kneels on the floor to his right. They "speak" to each other in their language, which consists of hisses, indicating disapproval; hums, indicating approval, and clicking sounds for transmission of other messages.
- Class enters room. "Participant-observers" are selected, males sit on remaining chairs, females [only] are asked to remove their shoes and are seated on the floor by each male. Faculty person or coordinator helps seat participants.

### Info for Facilitator

Do not allow observers, non-participants. If orientation staff/volunteers want to view, they should participate.

### Part 2: Greeting Ritual

After each part, the Albatross woman returns to her seat by the male, they "speak" briefly. After a short pause, the Albatross male carefully and gently tilts her head towards the earth in a kind of "bow".

- **Gender-specific greetings.** First, the Albatross male gets up and greets each male in turn. In the generic greeting the Albatross male holds each guest by the shoulder or waist and rubs his right leg against the leg of the guest, sometimes turning in a circle. Then the guest reseats himself in his chair. After all males are greeted, the Albatross

woman greets each female guest individually. She asks the guest to stand, she then kneels, runs both hands down the lower legs and feet gently, ceremoniously. The participant then returns to a seated position on the floor. Actors interpret and elaborate these generic greetings, often in very creative ways.

- **Washing the Hands.** The Albatross woman circulates a bowl of water to males, beginning with the Albatross male. Each male dips his right hand into the bowl and then shakes off the water. Only males participate. Then the Albatross woman returns to kneel by the Albatross male.
- **Serving the Food.** On a clicking cue from the Albatross male, the female rises, obtains the food, and offers it to each male, beginning with the Albatross male. Then, each female guest is given food. She does not eat herself.
- **Serving the Drinks.** Once again, the Albatross female gets the drinks, and serves them first to the males, beginning with the Albatross male, and then to the females. She does not drink herself.
- **Selection of Ms. Big Feet.** The Albatross couple examines the feet of each female and, unknown to guests, selects the female with the biggest feet. She is led to the male Albatross chair and is told to kneel at his side, like the Albatross woman. He “bows” her head and then that of the female “guest”.
- **Gender-specific greetings.** The same initial greeting is repeated, first for males, then for females.

### Part 3: Albatross Couple Leaves with Ms. Big Feet.

The Albatross couple instruct the selected female guest to leave the room with them.

## ACTIVITY 2: Discussion (20 minutes)

After the greeting has been performed, “guests” – i.e. class members – are asked to describe what they have just seen, to identify recurring themes and the portions of the ritual which illustrate these themes. Predictably, students are convinced they are observing a male dominated society and provide descriptions replete with inferences and culturally-specific interpretations of behaviors which support these presumed cultural themes.

Now the activity is over and the leaders ask the participants to resume their seats (now back in the language we are used to) and evaluate the game by asking questions like

- What did you observe?
- Did you notice anything in particular?
- What happened?

- How did the men feel?
- How did the women experience their roles?

### Now the meanings of the actions are explained:

- In the Albatross culture the ground is considered holy.
- In the social hierarchy the women rank above men, therefore only women are allowed to touch the holy ground barefoot.
- The women are considered holy, too.
- The men must not touch what comes from the ground, therefore the women feed the men, whereas the women may touch the food and the water.
- The woman was chosen by the size of her foot, and the honor to kneel beside the leader was given to her as the woman with the largest feet because she has the biggest area of contact with the holy ground.
- The bending of the heads was a sign of gratitude - in this way the men can come closer to the holy ground (by touching the women!).
- Why did most of you immediately assume that the women were being discriminated against? (this is often the case – women feel obliged to work in the course of the game)
- Pointing out hierarchies: - in Europe up = good; in Albatross down = good
- Do you believe that in a foreign country/culture you would feel like you felt in this game?
- How can we try to find out what the underlying reasons for behavior are if we are not sure of interpreting the behavior correctly?

### How did it make you feel? What was your reaction?

- Help participants see that their own reaction is very relative: that next to them is sitting someone with quite a contrary reaction.
- Let any and all reactions be express, yet develop the awareness in each participants that s/he is essentially responsible for what “happened.”
- Inevitably the comments arise that “If the experience were done differently” ...The facilitator must make it clear that the Albatross exercises was artificial insofar as it was

#### Info for Facilitator

Aim toward creating the awareness that the “Why’s” of human behavior do not usually lend themselves to simple, neat (sociological/anthropological) concepts and answers.

a simulation. It was not “artificial” in the aspect which matters most: that during a given period of time, a group of people did such and such in that room and that each participants had a real reaction.

- Have students first describe the ritual, allowing them to give their interpretations of what they observed—both general cultural themes and specific parts of the ritual. You may prefer students to write, either as an exercise or to help them organize their ideas. You may ask them to share their impressions with their “neighbor”. Or, you can immediately elicit descriptions from the class as a whole.

## WRAP UP: Discussion (20 minutes)

Major Points which come out of the discussion: How our observations are colored by our own cultural assumptions; how well we observe even to begin with (do we really notice details, or pay close attention?); that we can, in fact, infer a lot of useful information and learn what is expected of us without being told in so many words; that things doesn’t always mean what they seem.

- ✓ Many, if not most, of the observations offered by participants will be highly value-laden. Often one student eventually points out this critical point, but it is important that the facilitator insures that the whole class hears the idea and digests it.
- ✓ Conclusion: (brief recap of information) –you don’t need a lot of detail here. You can simply say how you’re going to recap (ex: discussion, quiz, pop questions, etc.)