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The value of cross- cultural communication practice

Effective communication is challenging. Especially, cross-cultural communication with people of different mentality. It is known that mentality is psychological pattern of a human being which is the result of culture influence. Culture provides people with ways of thinking and seeing, hearing and interpreting the world. In this way the same things, actions and words can be interpreted variously by people from different cultures, even when they speak the "same" language. When the languages are different and translation and contextual guesses have to be used to communicate, the chance for misunderstandings increases.

There are lots of opportunities of improving skills of foreign language and eliminating ways in which people can't understand each other. One of them is international practice. This method is practiced in almost all countries and cities of the world because international practice does not only reveal the nuances of communication, but helps to find solutions of their overcoming. By the help of this kind of practice people study the world, they study the role of the culture in our lives.

International practice is spread in Russia certainly. Each day it gains popularity. There are also some programs in my town of Murom. As the major of my group is English, we are greatly interested in such programs.

One day our group was lucky to find ourselves in such a program. Two American girls came to Murom and it was a great chance to test our English language skills, even though they only stayed a week. Their names were Shannon and Meddisen. When I saw them for the first time, I, of course, asked them to tell me something about routine life in the USA. To tell the truth, I spent more time with Shannon than with Meddisen, so I learned more about Shannon's lifestyle. I was surprised at how peculiar her lifestyle was. Shannon is a hard-working person, who always wakes up early in the morning and goes to the library immediately. The rest of the day she is busy with her classes and in the evenings she plays water-polo. She told me that the trip to Murom was a present for her good marks. In Murom, Shannon was living with one of my groupmates Nadya. So, we tried to spend every free evening together and also tried to make those evenings interesting, memorable and entertaining. We went to the house of Russian folk-art, to a concert of a local group which is called «Muroma» and to the skating-rink. Sometimes we just hung out and talked. Of course, there were some misunderstandings between us because of the language barrier. Several times the American girls were asked about American radio and their daily habits but they gave us absolutely unexpected answers about Literature and their academic progress. But all in all, we managed to understand each other.

By the way, the week with American girls began with an excursion around the town. My groupmates and I took part in that excursion, so all of us had an opportunity not only to represent our town but to speak with the girls and to improve our language skills. I really hope that we left a good impression with the girls because we tried so hard to be hosts.

In my opinion, those girls were very brave for deciding to go to a foreign country. As for me, I'd like to be a part of a similar program in another country. Alternative Spring Break is an excellent program with its advantages, but only one disadvantage: this program is too short.

Секция 22. Современные проблемы межкультурной коммуникации

Summing up, by virtue of the fact that the specialty of our group is English, we knew the basic aspects and problems of the communication with foreign people. But if people are not aware of potential for cross-culture problems, they are more likely to fall a victim to them, although it takes more sacrifices than awareness to overcome these problems and communicate effectively with people of different cultures and countries.