

Task description

This assessment requires you to make connections between the theoretical concepts learned in the course and application of these concepts in your analyses of one case study in which intercultural communication problems occurred. To accomplish this assessment, you are required to:

- Identify the causes of intercultural problems in the case and provide your solutions, by drawing on concepts and theories of intercultural communication learned in the course and other relevant literature you have searched.
- Reflect on your learning through analysing the intercultural communication case.

Case study: Andy's business adventure in Malaysia

When Andy's trading company in Berlin offered to send him to Kuala Lumpur to manage an off-shore project, he was very excited. His younger sister, Kylie, had visited Malaysia for two weeks when she was on an exchange program in high school. She had loved the food in the vibrant markets and had made a number of friends there. "This will be great; I so look forward to this experience," Andy said.

But six months into the project, Andy was not having such a great time. In addition to the hot, humid weather, which he was not used to, he missed German bread and sausages. More importantly, he found it challenging to work with the Malaysian team. They seemed to agree with him on everything. At team meetings, the Malay colleagues seldom said "No" to anything. They never criticised his ideas, and they never complained at all! However, several of his ideas failed miserably when they had been implemented. One of Andy's friends told him that his Malay colleagues would have known that his ideas would not have worked in the Malaysian cultural context. Andy felt frustrated. "Why didn't they tell me openly?" he wondered. Even worse, disagreements began to occur between Andy and the Malay team leader, Vivian. When they met with clients to discuss business deals, Vivian often started the conversation by asking about the clients' family, children, after work activities – things that were not related to business. Andy told Vivian several times that he felt such an approach to doing business was "unprofessional", but Vivian seemed to have ignored his advice. The working relationship between Andy and Vivian fell further and further apart, as time went by. After 18 months, Andy decided to return to Berlin. Despite his success in project management in Germany, Andy felt like a failure.