



What's in a Word? Culture and Communication

Module: IV
Topic: Acknowledge, Ask, Adapt
Type: Storytelling/Discussion
Group Size: Large Group
Time: 20 minutes

Purpose:

1. To emphasize the importance of culture in communication.
2. To help participants appreciate the fact that words mean different things to different people because of their individual experiences and culture.

What you will need:

Participant Materials	Trainer Materials	Equipment
	:: Children's book <i>Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge</i> by Mem Fox	

Directions:

1. This activity is a good way to wrap up the lesson on the PITC concepts of Acknowledge, Ask, Adapt. Introduce this children's story by asking participants to consider the message(s) as it relates to the lesson just completed. Read the story aloud, ensuring that everyone can see the wonderful illustrations.

Summary: A little boy lives next door to an old folks' home and is friends with all of the older residents. He hears his parents talking about how his favorite resident has lost her memory... he proceeds to ask each of the older residents "what's a memory?" getting a wide range of replies from "something warm", "something that makes you laugh" to "something from long ago". He proceeds to collect items he has access to that he sees as "warm", "from long ago", etc. When he presents them to his special friends, Miss Nancy, they evoke memories from her past and they share delight in the fact that he's helped her "find" her memory.

2. Once the story is finished, ask participants to reflect a few minutes on what they heard that relates to the earlier discussions on communicating about cultural differences.
3. Ask participants to share their thoughts on the story. Possible messages include:
 - a) A single word, such as "memory" can have many different meanings, none of which are right or wrong. These meanings come out of individual people's experiences, culture, or values.
 - b) Everyone has something to offer; something to contribute; something special or unique about him/her.
 - c) When you have a problem, one way to solve it is to ask others what they think; we can learn or gain understanding by listening to others.

PITC ACTIVITIES

Variations:

:: For a large group, the illustrations could be copied onto transparencies and projected onto a large screen using an overhead projector or scan the book and do a power point.

:: Small groups might break out to discuss the story's messages after the reading and return for sharing to the large group after 10 minutes or so.

Links to Head Start Program Performance Standards:

:: 1304.40(a)(1) Family Partnerships

:: 1304.21(a)(3)(i)(E) Education and Early Childhood Development

Activity Developed by:

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Source Material:

Mem Fox. (1985) *Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge*. Brooklyn, New York: Kane/Miller Book Publishers (originally published in Australia).



