

AFS Learning Objectives

In May 2010 the Support Advisory Group approved a new version of the AFS Learning Objectives for hosted participants. The participant version incorporates the concepts of the Partner Country approved Learning Objectives based on the *Workshop on Intercultural Learning Content and [Quality Standards](#)*, 1984, but is worded for non-native English speakers. Each objective is described very briefly followed by a sentence or two giving an example of achievement or further clarification. The objectives are grouped into Personal Development, Interpersonal Relationship, Intercultural Knowledge and Global Awareness.

The Learning Objectives are very specific in describing what the participants learn from the AFS experience. They follow from the general AFS Mission Statement which says “AFS-USA works toward a more just and peaceful world by providing international and intercultural learning experiences...”

The intent is to use the Learning Objectives in Support. The participant version has been incorporated into the Liaison training module. Orientation materials will be changed in future versions to introduce the Learning Objectives to the students. Liaisons, Support Coordinators and others working with hosted participants now have the tools to focus on the benefits of the program and where behavior changes are necessary help the participant resolve issues from a positive learning perspective.

The Learning Objectives are provided herein and are also available on the AFS WIKI site in the Support section under “See Also” then “Learning Objectives”.

AFS LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Personal Development

- **To think creatively.** Placed in a family and culture with different values and traditions the participant needs to constantly analyze the situation and respond appropriately, recognizing that there are many ways to view a situation, different concerns, and often more than one solution to a problem. A positive result requires thoughtful, creative thinking.
- **To resolve conflicts.** Commit to resolving problems from a win-win perspective, realizing that maintaining good relationships is the goal.
- **To accept responsibility for oneself,** demonstrated by increasing maturity, self-control and accountability.
- **To be more aware of oneself,** demonstrated by increased willingness and ability to view one's strengths and weaknesses objectively and to see oneself as deeply influenced by one's native culture.
- **To feel confidence in one's self worth and abilities,** demonstrated by the willingness to participate joyfully and wholeheartedly in many varieties of social gatherings including presentations in front of a group.

- **To define self in terms of ideals and values rather than economic status**, developing personal goals considering relationships, knowledge, skills and character as more important than possessions.
- **To succeed in different academic settings**, demonstrated by achieving good grades in a different school system with different teaching methods.

Interpersonal Relationships

- **To adapt to new environments**, showing the ability to successfully adapt to a different family and culture, adjusting to new social situations and people.
- **To communicate in a different language**, demonstrated by the ability to carry on extended conversations with hosts in their native language, and by the ability to use and react to non-verbal signals common in the host culture.
- **To build intercultural friendships**, learning how to make friends in unfamiliar environments by actively seeking new relationships through shared experiences with people of different backgrounds and cultures.
- **To deepen concern for and sensitivity to others**, shown by increased ability and willingness to “put oneself in the other person’s place”, that is, to empathize.
- **To value human diversity**, seeing differences as a source of strength, rather than a threat, demonstrated by an eagerness for communications and friendships with others from different ethnic, racial, religious and generational communities.
- **To show appreciation**, demonstrated by recognizing the support, interaction and interest of others in ways appropriate to the situation and culture.

Intercultural Knowledge

- **To increase knowledge of the host country and culture**, demonstrated by an interest in, and understanding of, the key attributes and hidden dimensions of that culture.
- **To increase understanding of one’s own culture**, demonstrated by ability to see aspects of one’s own culture not previously recognized, and to evaluate the culture’s strengths and weaknesses from the perspective of an outsider.
- **To understand the nature of cultural differences**, demonstrated by an understanding of some of the fundamental concerns that must be addressed by all human beings, and by a readiness to accept that a wide variety of solutions are possible.

Global Awareness

- **To deepen interest in world affairs**, demonstrated by an increased curiosity and concern about world issues, obtaining information from many sources and being aware of other cultural perspectives.
- **To better understand the causes of world conflict**, by recognizing cultural differences that affect people and divide us in areas such as environmental concerns, poverty and systems of government.

- **To search for solutions to worldwide problems**, by the giving of one's personal resources (time, energy, money) to support culturally sensitive and technologically feasible solutions.
- **To further world peace**, with the multi culture perspective provided through the AFS experience, work toward a more tolerant, just and peaceful world recognizing the worth and dignity of all people.