HELPING STUDENTS IDENTIFY AND CHANGE JUDGMENTAL THINKING

Being judgmental can be defined as assigning value, good or bad, to a person, object, or situation. Although in some situations it is necessary to judge, when students become judgmental of their host country, they often miss out on opportunities for greater adjustment and growth.

- Instead of making a judgmental statement, it is more helpful to state the facts:
  
  **Judgment:** “This meat is bad.”  
  **Statement of Fact:** “This meat is rotten.” OR “This meat is over-cooked.”

  **Judgment:** “The French are rude.”  
  **Statement of Fact:** “Many French people don’t return my smile on the street and this is unsettling to me.”

  Often our judgments are unconscious and express preferences or compare to a standard.

- In the example below, a student is likely uncomfortable about factors in their new environment feeling “different” from what they are used to.

  **Judgment:** I haven’t seen a normal car since I’ve been here.”  
  **Statement of Fact:** “I haven’t seen a typical American-sized car.”

  Becoming mindful of their thoughts and feelings can help students move through the stages of cultural adjustment.

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Exercise:

- What are judgments have your students had about their host country?

- Can you transform these judgments into empathic statements of fact?