



Intercultural Communications

International Days 2010

What is Culture?

“Culture hides much more than it reveals, and strangely enough what it hides, it hides most effectively from its own participants. Years of study have convinced me that the real job is not to understand foreign cultures but to understand our own.”

E.T. Hall (1959)



Culture Influences:



▶ Adapted from DuPraw and Axner, *Toward a More Perfect Union in an Age of Diversity*

The Sea of Culture

Surface culture

**Art * Music * Food
Dress * Dance
Literature
Language**

In awareness

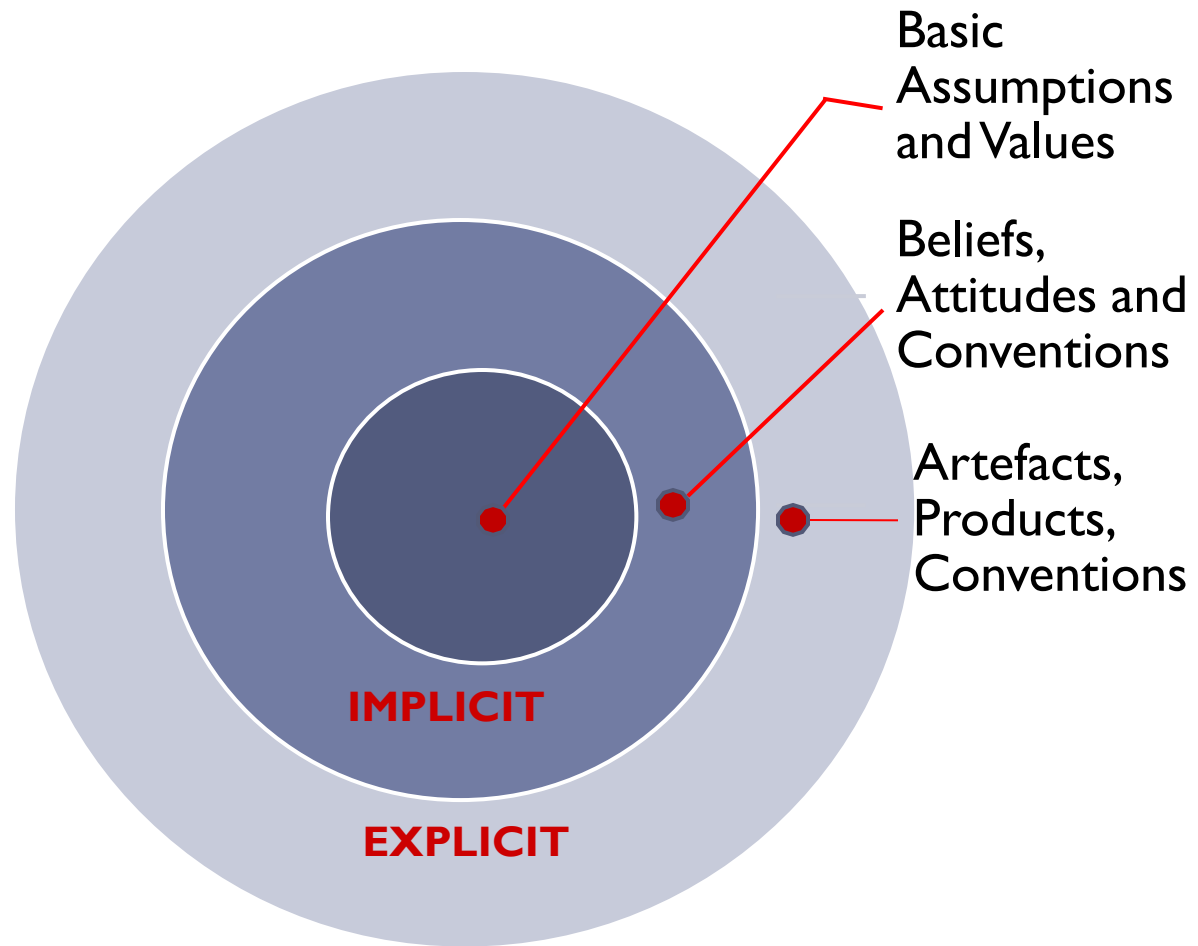
Deep culture

*** Justice * Leadership * Cleanliness
Social Interaction * Communication
Time * Relationship to Nature
Decision making * Problem Solving
Language * Emotion * Friendship
Family systems * Values * Beliefs
Gender Roles * Status * Authority *
Identity**

Not in awareness



Cultural Onion



Dr. Spestos

MS. SMITH: Do you know Dr. Spestos?

MRS. KALAS: Yes, we know him very well.

MS. SMITH: I've heard he's an excellent surgeon.

MRS. KALAS: He's a very kind man.



Power Distance Index

Low Power Distance

- Equality
- Superiors and subordinates are independent
- Achieved status
- Decentralized
- Elderly not highly respected
- Obedience not highly valued

High Power Distance

- Inequality / Hierarchy
- Subordinates dependent on superiors
- Ascribed status
- Centralized
- Elderly respected
- Obedience valued



Individualism / Collectivism

- ▶ Identity as individual - “I”
- ▶ Value independence
- ▶ Individual goals
- ▶ Freedom
- ▶ Individual initiatives
- ▶ Heroes or champions
- ▶ Identity in membership – “We”
- ▶ Value interdependence
- ▶ Group goals
- ▶ Stability
- ▶ Consultation and Consensus
- ▶ Whole is credited; favouritism avoided



Universalism / Particularism

- Focus on rules
 - Consistency of rules
 - 1 truth or reality
 - Universal application of rules
 - “Get down to business”
- Focus on relationships
 - Flexibility of rules
 - Multiple perspectives of reality
 - Particular / situational rules
 - “Get to know you”



Neutral / Affective

- Cool, self-possessed conduct signals respect
- Don't reveal thoughts or feelings
- Physical expressions are often taboo
- Humour relates to understatement
- Animated, heated, emotional conduct signals interest
- Emotions flow easily without inhibition
- Physical expressions are common
- Humour relates to overstatement



Monochronic / Polychronic

- ▶ Sequential
- ▶ Time is measurable
- ▶ Seen as a series of past events
- ▶ Schedules are sacred
- ▶ Appointments are strict
- ▶ Preference for making and following plans
- ▶ Synchronic
- ▶ Time is ambiguous / cyclical
- ▶ Past, present, future interrelated
- ▶ Schedules are subordinate to relationships
- ▶ Appointments are approximate
- ▶ Preference for following where relationships lead



High / Low Context

High Context

- ▶ Collective
- ▶ Slow Relationships
- ▶ Hierarchy
- ▶ Formality
- ▶ Indirect Communication
- ▶ Focus on Process
- ▶ Non-verbal communication is important
- ▶ Responsibility with the receiver of the message
- ▶ Tight social structure and conformity to role expectations

Low Context

- ▶ Individual
- ▶ Quick Relationships
- ▶ Equality
- ▶ Informality
- ▶ Direct Communication
- ▶ Focus on Results
- ▶ Less aware of non-verbal cues
- ▶ Responsibility with
- ▶ Loose social structure and behavior expectation is less clear



Rewrite

SUSAN: So, what did you think of my rewrite?

YANG: Ah yes, the rewrite. Generally tighter than the first draft, don't you think?

SUSAN: I do. Shall I send it down for printing, then?

YANG: It's up to you really.

Indirect / Direct

- ▶ Infer/ Imply
- ▶ Suggest
- ▶ Relational / Intuitive
- ▶ Non-verbal
- ▶ Tendency to avoid confrontation
- ▶ Goal is preserving and strengthening relationship
- ▶ Saving face
- ▶ Be polite
- ▶ Explicit
- ▶ Say what is meant
- ▶ Linear / Logical
- ▶ Spoken word carries most of the meaning
- ▶ Tell it like it is
- ▶ Goal is getting or giving information
- ▶ Honesty is the best policy
- ▶ Be direct



A Pat on the Back

- ▶ MR. KANEDA: Are you satisfied then, Ms. Walden, with the work of the accounting division?
- ▶ MS. WALDEN: Very much. Their output has improved tremendously.
- ▶ MR. KANEDA: They're very proud of their work.
- ▶ MS. WALDEN: As soon as you put Mr. Yamamoto in charge, things began to turn around.
- ▶ MR. KANEDA: Yes, the whole team is working very smoothly now.
- ▶ MS. WALDEN: Will you be giving Mr. Yamamoto some kind of recognition then?
- ▶ MR. KANEDA: Excuse me?
- ▶ MS. WALDEN: You know. An award or something?
- ▶ MR. KANEDA: I hardly think so. We wouldn't want to embarrass him after all he has done.

The Importance of “Face”

Individualist cultures emphasize self-face (self-enhancement)

Collectivist cultures emphasize other-face (self-effacement)

In collectivist cultures loss of face can result in loss of face for the ingroup



Pauses

Silent Communication

- ▶ Can make direct / low context communicators nervous or uneasy
- ▶ May be misunderstood as inability to communicate
- ▶ In reality can be a sign of respect or interest

*May also be negation or disagreement



Non-Verbal Communication Quiz

- ✓ _____ % of communication is non-verbal?
- ✓ True or False: A smile is one of the few expressions that has the same meaning in every culture.
- ✓ Guess what percentage of time two negotiators from the following countries maintain eye contact
 - Two Japanese _____
 - Two Americans _____
 - Two Brazilians _____
- ✓ In the following cities, guess how many times in 1 hour a typical couple in a café touches each other:
 - San Juan _____
 - Paris _____
 - London _____

