



Language is not enough.

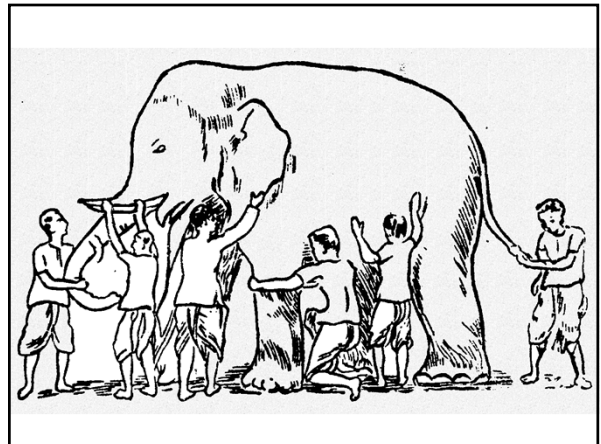
Why language is not enough

- Would you like something to drink?

Have you ever had an experience of cross-cultural miscommunication?

What was it?

- What is the goal of our teaching? More than just words.
- Connection between language, culture, ethnic/racial difference.
- Education is not neutral. (Nieto 2002) Questions about equity and social justice are at the core of education
- Need to go above and beyond basics of language and culture to develop respect and empathy





The Blind Men and the Elephant

A Hindoo Fable

by John Godfrey
Saxe
(1816-1887)



The Blind Men and the Elephant

It was six men of Indostan
To learning much inclined,
Who went to see the Elephant
(Though all of them were blind),
That each by observation
Might satisfy his _____.



The Blind Men and the Elephant

The **first** approached the Elephant,
And happening to fall
Against his broad and sturdy side,
At once began to bawl:
"God bless me! But the Elephant
Is very like a _____!"



The Blind Men and the Elephant

The **second** feeling of the tusk,
Cried, "Ho! What have we here
So very round and smooth and sharp?
To me 'tis mighty clear
The wonder of an Elephant
Is very like a _____!"



The Blind Men and the Elephant

The **third** approached the animal,
And happening to take
The squirming trunk within his hands,
Thus boldly up and spake:
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant
Is very like a _____"



The Blind Men and the Elephant

The **fourth** reached out an eager hand,
And felt about the knee,
"What most this wondrous beast is like
Is mighty plain," quoth he;
" 'Tis clear enough the Elephant
Is very like a _____"

The Blind Men and the Elephant

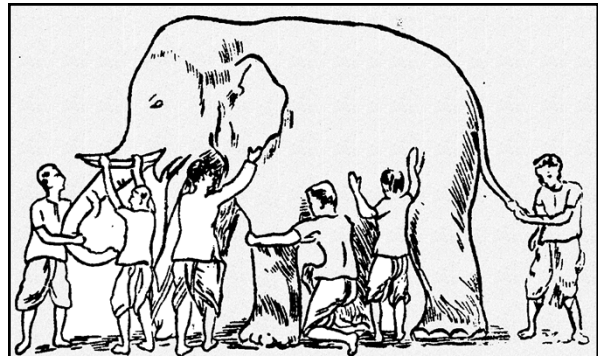
The **fifth** who chanced to touch the ear,
Said: "E'en the blindest man
Can tell what this resembles most;
Deny the fact who can,
This marvel of an Elephant
Is very like a _____"

The Blind Men and the Elephant

The **sixth** no sooner had begun
About the beast to grope,
Than, seizing on the swinging tail
That fell within his scope,
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant
Is very like a _____"

The Blind Men and the Elephant

And so these men of Indostan
Disputed loud and long,
Each in his own opinion
Exceeding stiff and strong,
Though each was partly in the right,
And all were in the _____ !



How is intercultural communication like the story of the blind men and the elephant?



What do you think about when you think about teaching culture?

What is culture?

Is culture a question of "content" such as holidays, films, literature, and food?

Or is culture a set of values, attitudes, and behaviors?



Culture is . . .

Take a minute to write down your own definition of culture. Complete this sentence:

Culture is _____.

Culture is . . .

Take two minutes to discuss your responses with the person next to you.



A Definition of Culture (Kohls 1996)

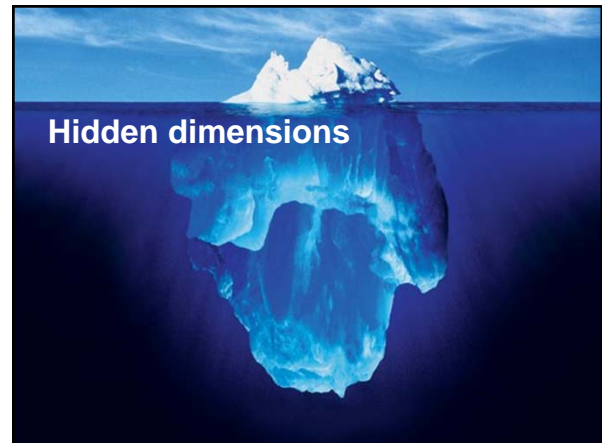
- **Culture** is an *integrated system of learned behavior patterns* that are characteristic of the *total way of life* of a given society.
- It includes everything that a group of people *thinks, says, does, and makes* — its *customs, language, material artifacts* and *shared systems of attitudes and feelings*.
- Culture is *learned and transmitted*.

So, then, what does culture consist of?

What might be some elements of a particular culture?

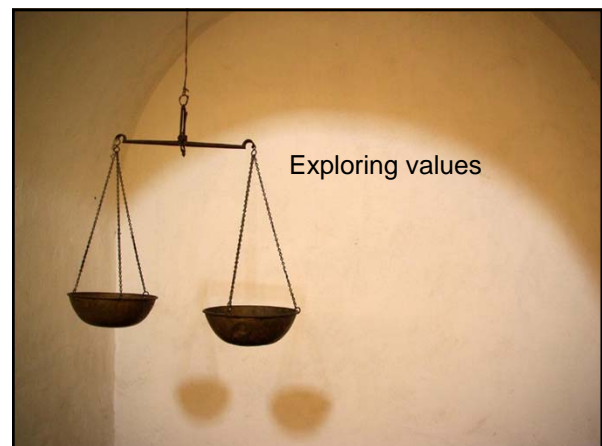
Elements of a particular culture

Manners	Language	Behavior
Customs	Arts	Morals
Beliefs	Religion	Humor
Ceremonies	Values	Rituals
Laws	Knowledge	Idea of self
Thought patterns	Social institutions	Myths and legends



Elements of a particular culture

Manners	Language	Behavior
Customs	Arts	Morals
Beliefs	Religion	Humor
Ceremonies	Values	Rituals
Laws	Knowledge	Idea of self
Thought patterns	Social institutions	Myths and legends



Exploring values

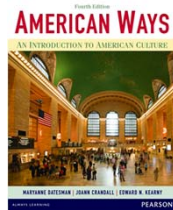
Traditional American values and beliefs

Equality of opportunity and competition

Material wealth and hard work

Individual freedom and self-reliance

(*The American Ways* (4th ed.) Datesman, Crandall, & Kearny, 2014)



Datesman, Crandall &
Kearny: *American Ways*
(Pearson)

Kohls *Survival Kit for
Overseas Living*

(Intercultural Press / Nicholas
Brealey)



Exploring values: Cleanliness

- Bathing: do you use the same water?
- Eating: silverware vs. hands
- Blowing your nose: take it with you?
- Where do you keep your toilet?

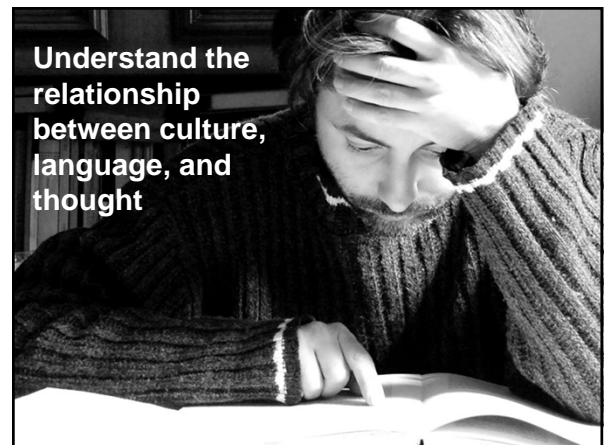


Developing a culture of reading





- Is our view of the world dependent on what language we speak? Or is language dependent upon culture?
- How closely are language and culture related?
- Is it possible for us to understand a language fully without knowing the culture?



Language expresses cultural reality

Language embodies cultural reality

Language symbolizes cultural reality

(Kramsch 1998)

Language is a product of culture

Language is a window to the culture

(Moran 2001)

Principle of linguistic relativity

(Herder, von Humbolt, Boaz)

Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis

“Language is not simply a means of reporting experience but, more important, it is a way of defining experience.”

(Samovar & Porter, 2004)

Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis

Strong: language *determines* thought

Weak: language *influences* but does not *determine* thought.



The “doodles” article

Rhetorical patterns in writing across cultures



(Kaplan, 1966)

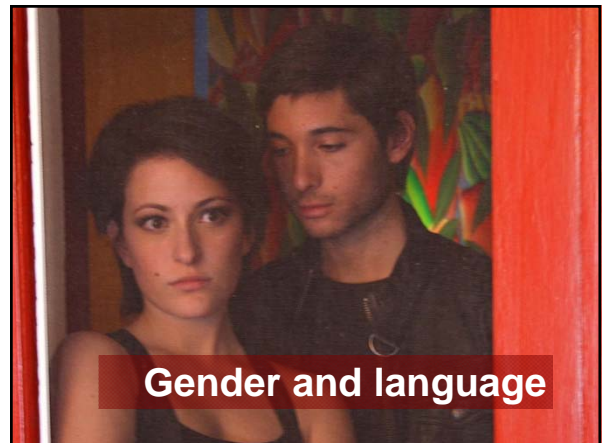
Contrastive rhetoric
(Kaplan, Leki)

Intercultural rhetoric
(Connor, Atkinson)

What is the role of the teacher?



- We need to emphasize the relationship between culture and language in our teacher-training programs.
- We need to be sure to incorporate the relationship between culture and language in our teaching materials and in our classrooms.



Gender and language

- How men and women view interaction
- For women, "Communication is primarily a way to establish and maintain relationships with others." (Tannen 1990)
- "The primary purpose of communication for men is to exert control, preserve independence, and enhance status." (Tannen 1990)



Women's talk

- Equal turns
- Support & sympathy
- Questions
- Keep conversation going
- Responsive to comments
- Concrete & personal
- Tentative, apologetic

(Wood 1994)



Men's talk

- Do not acknowledge feelings
- Focus on gathering data; solving problems
- Express superiority, maintain control
- Not responsive
- Speak in the abstract

(Wood 1994)

Agreement / Completion

Ask students to what extent they agree with the four statements below:

Women talk more than men.

Women talk more for the purpose of maintaining relationships.

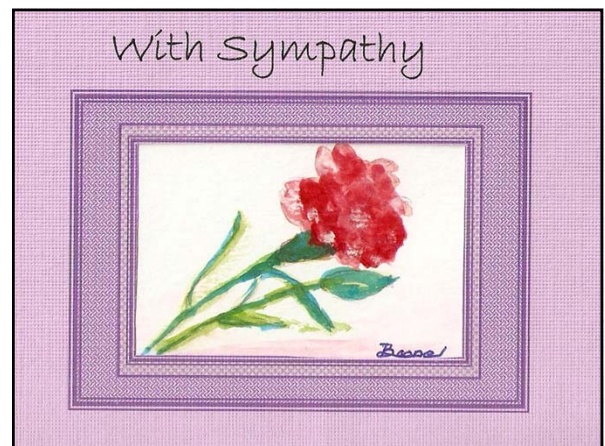
Men talk more to get things done.

I feel comfortable talking to members of the opposite sex.

Then ask them to complete the following sentences:

I think that in communication, women are too . . .

I think that in communication, men are too . . .



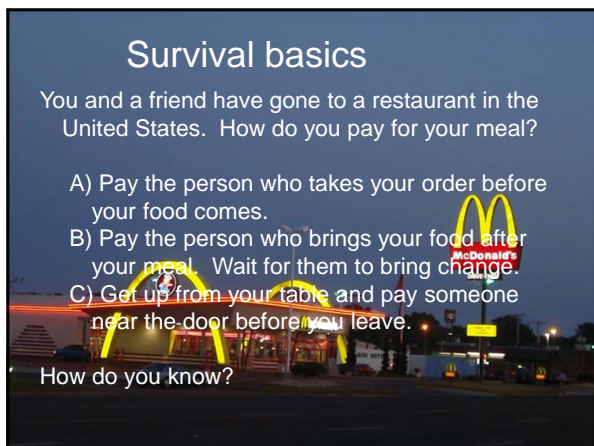
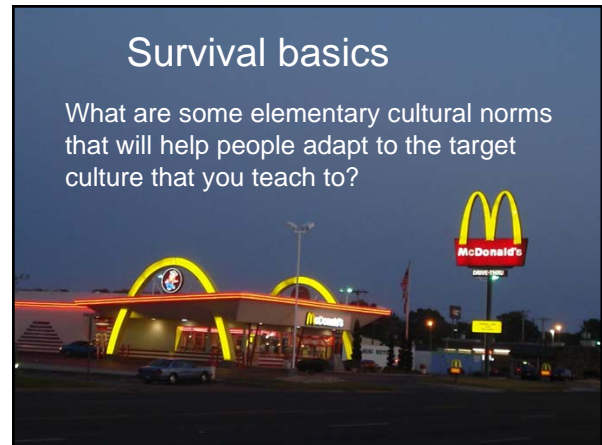
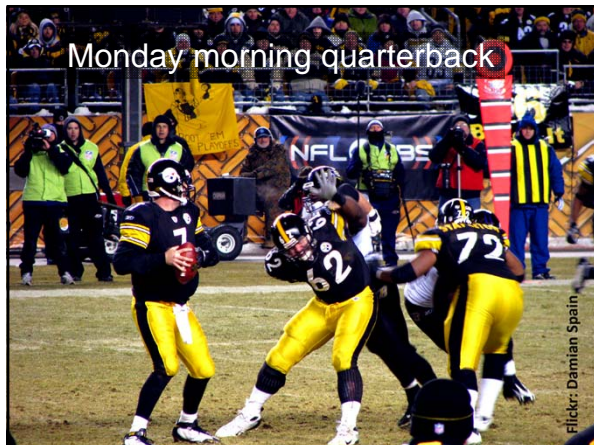
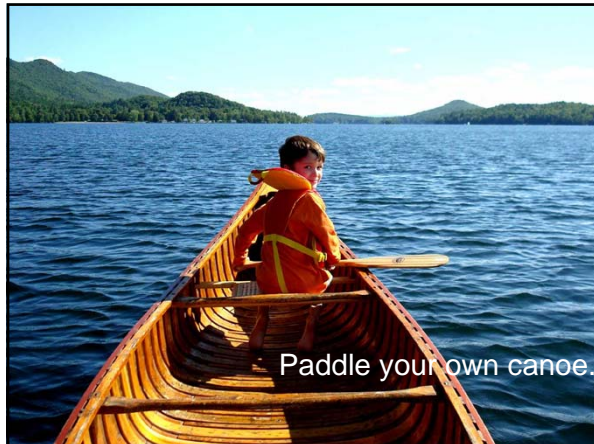


Exploring proverbs

- The squeaky wheel gets the grease.
- You've made your bed now lie in it.

Exploring proverbs

- There's more than one way to skin a cat.
- God helps those who help themselves
- A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush
- Cleanliness is next to Godliness



What does red mean?

- She turned red.
- He felt blue.
- He seems a bit green

**Non-verbal
communication**



Some aspects of non-verbal communication

Gestures and movement - kinesics
Gaze and eye contact – oculesics
Use of space and touch–
proxemics
Use of time – chronometrics ?



?

Culture
a question of perspective





Culture assimilators

- Describe an incident in which an international visitor is faced with a dilemma, problem, or situation that has a cultural basis.
- Suggest four multiple choice explanations for why things happened the way they did.
- Prepare answers to explain.

Culture assimilator

A student from the Middle East is attending a university in the mid-western part of the United States. He has many friends that he hopes to have admitted to the university, so he often visits the offices of different departments to talk to the secretaries, talking about his friends and what good students they would be.

He makes many visits, and each time he is received with smiles and polite listening. However, no action is ever taken to admit his friends.

Later he discovers that his actions were perceived as annoying by the secretaries. What went wrong?

Culture assimilator

- A. The student was perceived as being over aggressive. People were just being polite by listening to him.
- B. The student went to the wrong offices.
- C. It was not appropriate for the student to talk for his friends. They should have spoken for themselves.
- D. People smiled politely because they liked the student and thought he was interesting, but they couldn't do anything to help.

Culture assimilator

- A. The student was perceived as being over aggressive. People were just being polite by listening to him.

There is also some truth in C, because of the US value that people should be independent and act for themselves.

Classroom culture

What types of cultural norms do ESL students need to learn in order to thrive in the academic world?

Classroom culture

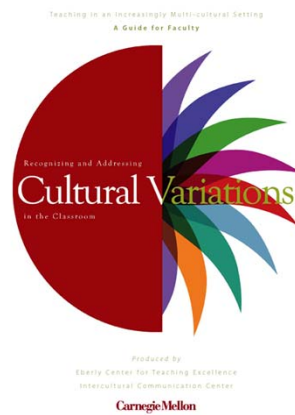
- Plagiarism – proper source citation
- Participation – grades for “class participation” not too much or too little
- Moving beyond repetition to critical thinking

**True/false activities:
Testing across cultures**

Testing across cultures

- Ideas about grading vary from culture to culture (H.D. Brown 2004)
- Emphasis on interdependence leading to *helping* not *competing*
- Some cheating on exams expected and viewed as *common sense*
- Unaware of the sanctions for cheating and plagiarism

(Carnegie Mellon University 2006)



Technique 8: True/false activities: Views of testing across cultures

Directions: Answer the questions below. Answer for your current class and institution.

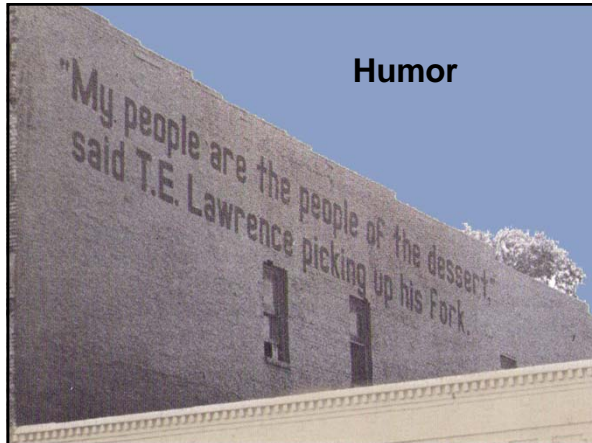
True False It depends

1. *Cheating* means to have an unfair advantage.
2. It is cheating to get help from your friend (unless your teacher says it is OK.)
3. It is cheating to write down the answers ahead of time.
4. It is cheating to look in your book (unless your teacher says it is OK.)
5. It is cheating to learn about the questions ahead of time.
6. It is OK to use your book during an open-book test.
7. It is OK to work with a friend on a test if a teacher says you can "collaborate."
8. At this school, if you are caught cheating, you might fail this class.
9. At this school if you are caught cheating, you might be expelled.
10. Cheating is not considered acceptable in this academic culture.

True / false activities

Students need to commit to an answer before it gets discussed.

Humor



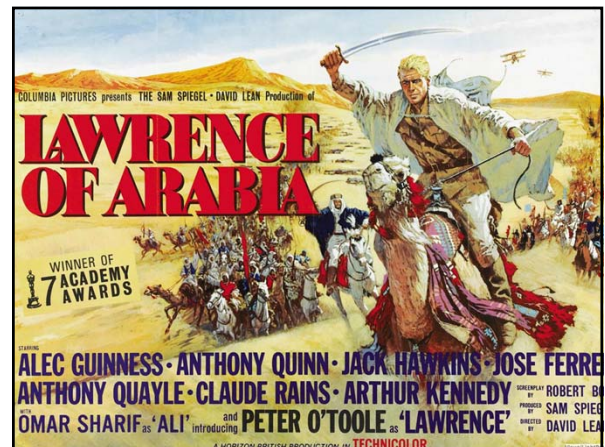
"My people are the people of the dessert,"
said T.E. Lawrence
picking up his fork.

T. E. Lawrence
1888-1935

British army officer

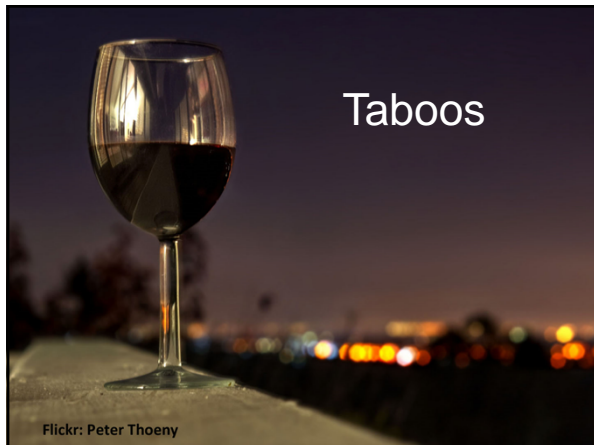
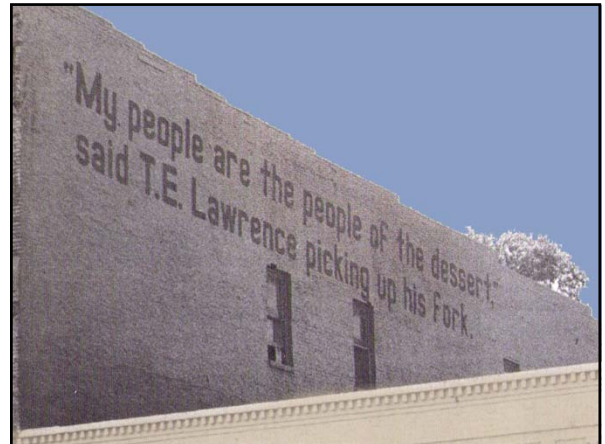
"Lawrence of Arabia"

Arab revolt against
Ottoman Turks 1916-
1918



"My people are the people of the desert."

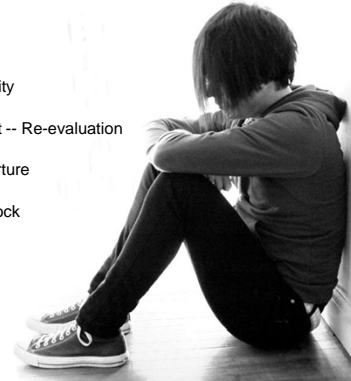
"My people are the people of the dessert,"
said T.E. Lawrence,
picking up his fork.



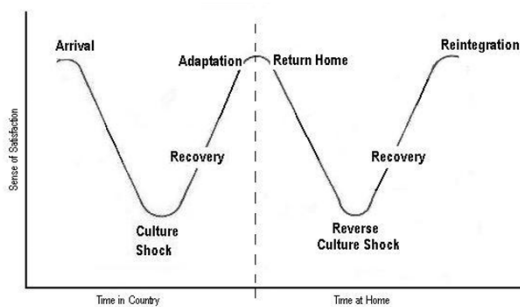


Explain the cycle of adapting to culture shock

- Initial Euphoria
- Irritability and hostility
- Gradual Adjustment -- Re-evaluation
- Adaptation or departure
- Reverse culture shock



Explaining the cycle of culture shock



Symptoms of culture shock

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Homesickness | Marital/family stress |
| Boredom | Stereotyping |
| Withdrawal | Hostility |
| Irritability | Excessive cleanliness |
| Compulsive drinking or eating | Inability to work effectively |

Causes of culture shock

- being cut off from the cultural cues and known patterns which are familiar to you -- especially subtleties
- having your own values called into question
- living for an extended time in a situation that is ambiguous
- living in a situation where you are expected to function normally but where the rules have not been explained

Actions to take against culture shock

- Learn about the host country and actively pursue more information about it
- Look for logical reasons for everything (even if things don't make sense to you at the time)
- Don't succumb to the temptation to disparage the host culture.
- Identify a sympathetic host national and talk with them
- Have faith in yourself and know that the situation will improve with time

