


What is culture?

Do you think of culture as more . . .

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

a set of values, attitudes, and behaviors?

both ?




Culture is . . .

What would you include in your own definition of culture?


Culture is _____.

Write your answers in the question box.



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*.






QUESTION FOR YOU: What are the elements that make up a particular culture?

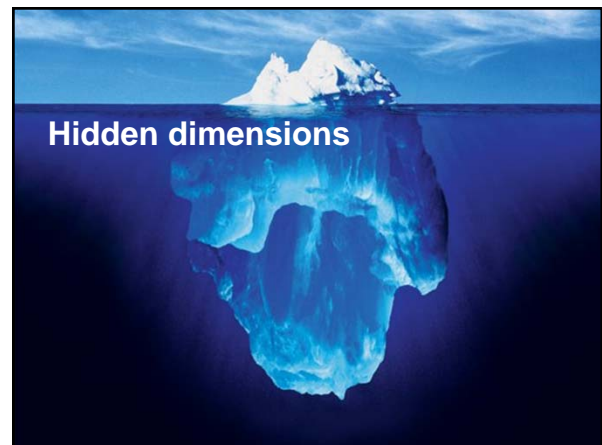
Write your answers in the questions box.



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





Goals for our webinar

Define what we mean when we say "culture"

Look at some key concepts of culture and intercultural communication

CONCEPT:
Explore underlying values

The image shows a pair of metal scales of justice hanging from a chain against a plain, light-colored wall. The scales are balanced, with both pans hanging at the same level.

Explore underlying values

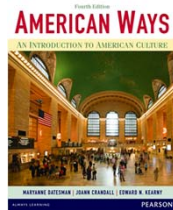
Traditional American values and beliefs

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)



ACTIVITY: Using Literature *The Road Not Taken*

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that, the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that, the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

Robert Frost

From *The Poetry of Robert Frost*, New York: Holt. 1969.



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Though as for that, the passing there
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And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

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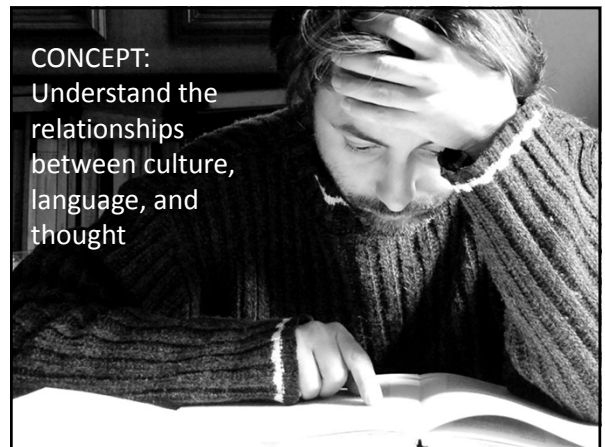
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- Is our view of the world dependent on what language we speak? Or is language dependent upon culture?
- How closely are language and culture related?
- Is it possible for us to understand a language fully without knowing the culture?



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)

Strong: language *determines* thought

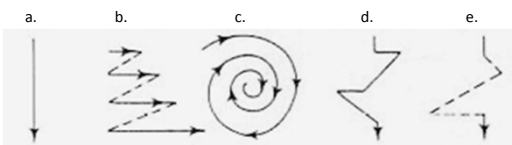
Weak: language *influences* but does not *determine* thought.



Rhetorical patterns in writing across cultures

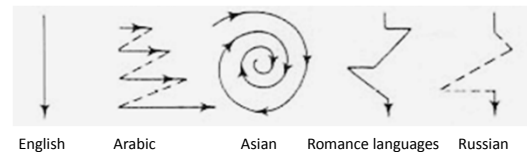
(Robert B. Kaplan, 1966)

1. Asian 2. Russian 3. Arabic 4. Romance languages 5. English



Rhetorical patterns in writing across cultures

(Robert B. Kaplan, 1966)



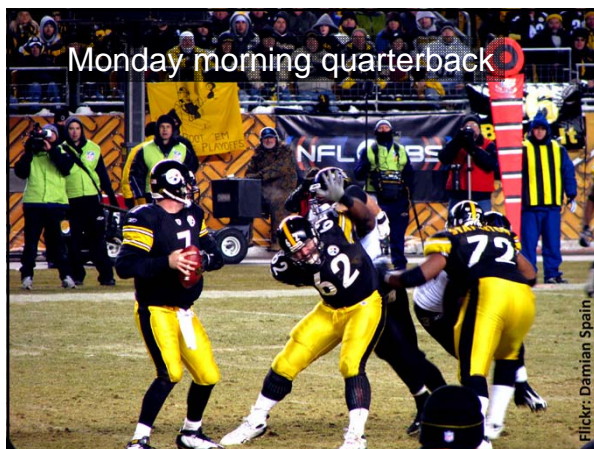
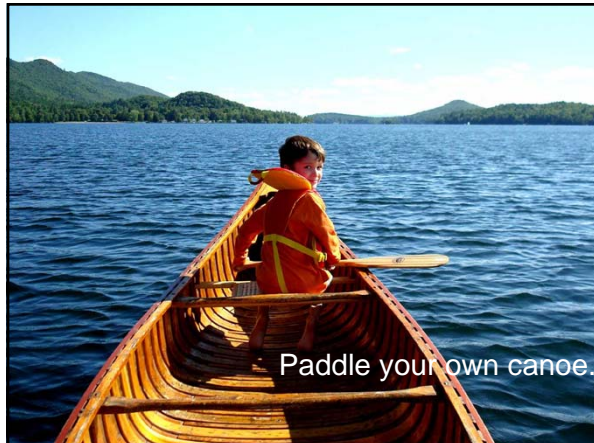
ACTIVITY: Exploring proverbs

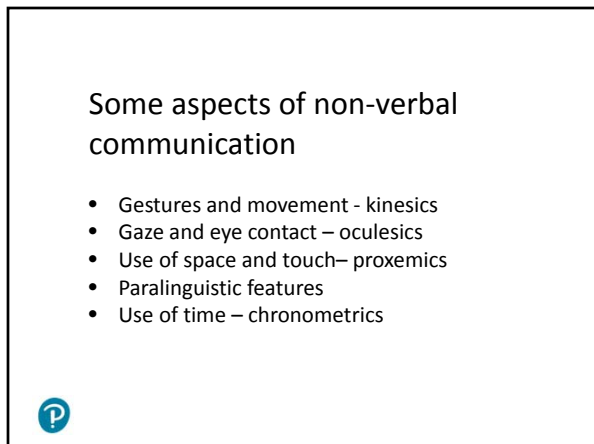
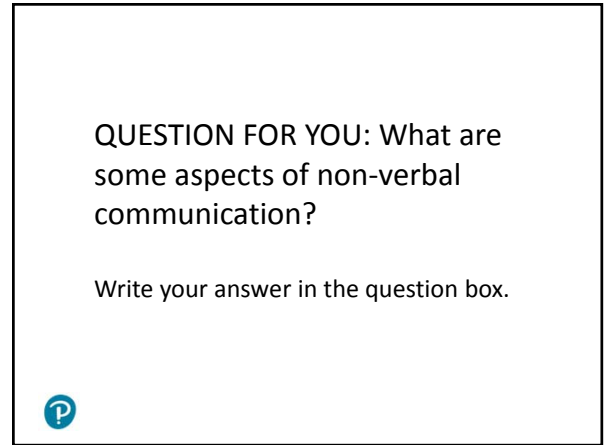
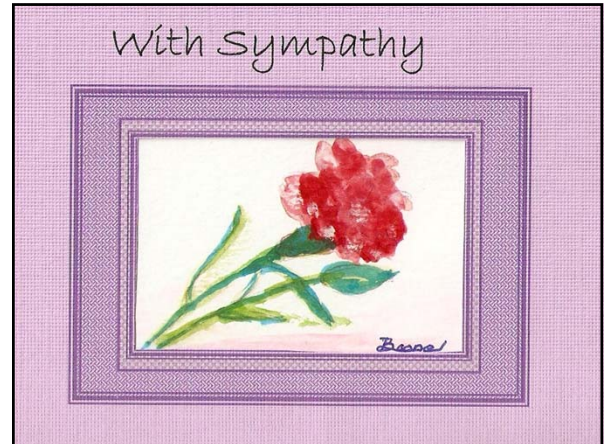
- The squeaky wheel gets the grease.
- You've made your bed now lie in it.

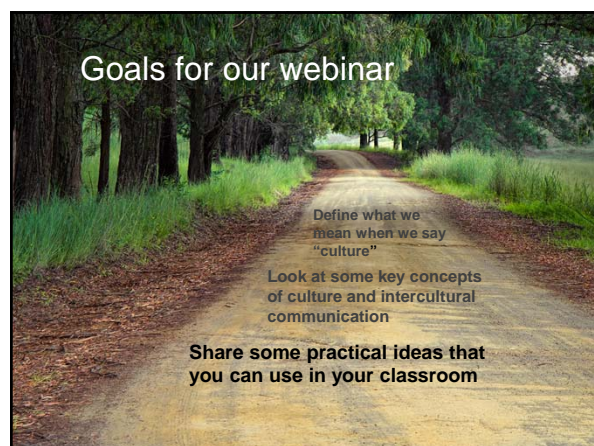


ACTIVITY: Exploring proverbs

- 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







ACTIVITY: Culture assimilators

- Describe an incident in which an international visitor is faced with a problem or situation that has a cultural basis.
- Suggest four explanations for why things happened the way they did.
- Prepare an explanation for the correct answer .



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?



QUESTION FOR YOU: What went wrong?

- The student was perceived as being over aggressive. People were just being polite by listening to him.
- The student went to the wrong offices.
- It was not appropriate for the student to talk for his friends. They should have spoken for themselves.
- 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.



ACTIVITY: Culture assimilators

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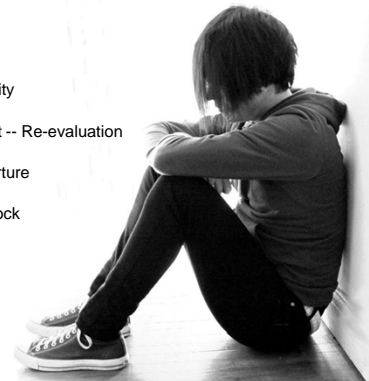


CONCEPT: Classroom culture

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

ACTIVITY: Explain the cycle of adapting to culture shock

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



Explain 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



ACTIVITY: Students as experts

Students research a particular area of the target culture, then present their findings in written, oral, or poster form. Possible topics: food, work, holidays, attitudes towards money, family structure and life, education.



CONCEPT:
Introduce concepts of social responsibility, ethics, and human rights

Introduce concepts of social responsibility, ethics, and human rights

- What is the goal of our teaching? More than just words. (Brown, 2007)
- 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



Introduce concepts of social responsibility, ethics, and human rights

- Raise student awareness of issues.
- Gently lead into discussions or exercises to help them explore their own ideas and opinions.





ACTIVITY: Thinking peace, doing peace

Thinking peace/Doing peace

(adapted from Ochoa-Becker, 2003)

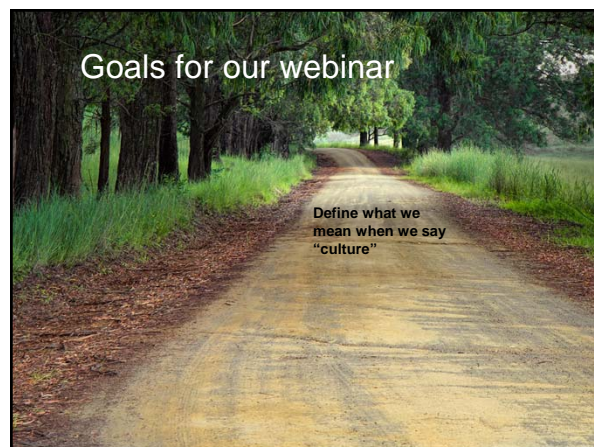
- Select 4 or 5 photographs that depict war and violence from magazines, newspapers, or online sources. Allow students time to examine them carefully and then discuss the following questions:
 - Why do you think this violence is taking place?
 - Could these problems have been settled in other ways? How?
 - What are the ways we can help prevent war?
- With the students, brainstorm the ideas that come to mind when hearing the word “peace.”



Thinking peace/Doing peace

(adapted from Ochoa-Becker, 2003)

- Place students in small groups and have them discuss the following questions:
 - How would you define “peace.”
 - Think about a time you experienced peace. What was the situation? Why did you find it peaceful? Explain why you found it peaceful. Give an authentic example of your own to begin the sharing.
 - Can you think of a place where you feel more peaceful than in other places?
 - What can you do to contribute to peace at a local level among your friends, in the classroom, and in your family?



Goals for our webinar

Define what we mean when we say “culture”

A Definition of Culture (Kohls 1996)

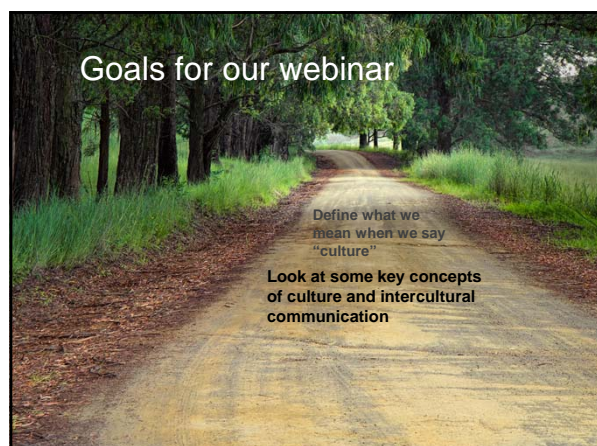
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- Culture is *learned and transmitted*.



Elements of a particular culture


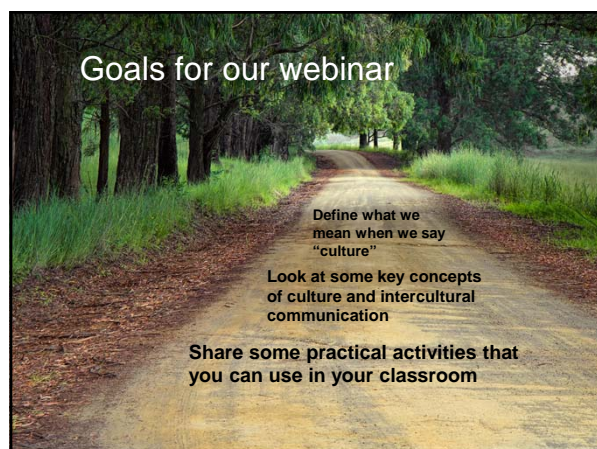

Manners	Language	Behavior
Customs	Arts	Morals
Beliefs	Religion	Humor
Ceremonies	Values	Rituals
Laws	Knowledge	Idea of self
Thought patterns	Social institutions	Myths and legends





Look at some key concepts of culture and intercultural communication

- Explore underlying values
- Understand the relationships between culture, language, and thought
 - Rhetorical patterns in writing across cultures
- Register and politeness
- Non-verbal communication
- Norms of classroom culture
- Introduce concepts of social responsibility, ethics, and human rights

GOAL: Share some practical activities that you can use in your classroom

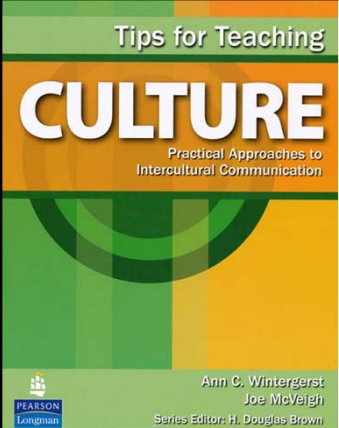
Literature

Proverbs

Culture assimilators

Students as experts

Thinking peace / doing peace



Wintergerst & McVeigh

Tips for Teaching Culture

Pearson

Read chapter one online:
<http://bit.ly.10VAdZ2>



Joe McVeigh www.joemcveigh.org

Home Blog Training Consulting **Books** Resources About Contact

Books

I work with ESL/EFL publishers to produce quality instructional materials.

I'm the co-author with Ann Wintergerst of *Tips for Teaching Culture: Practical Approaches to Intercultural Communication* published by Pearson Longman. Learn more about this book at www.joemcveigh.org or [Amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com). Outside the U.S. try this Pearson site. You can also preview [sample chapters](#) and the [first chapter of the book](#) here. [Sample chapters](#) are in the People's Republic of China, a Chinese translation is available from Tsinghua University Press.

I am also a co-author with Jennifer Bixby of two books in the Oxford University Press series *Skills for Success*. We wrote Book 2 in the Reading/Writing strand and also the introductory level reading/writing book. You can learn more about the entire series and view [various sample chapters](#) from OUP. You can also preview the [online components](#) of the books in the series.



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Question mark & pen
 Balanced scale
 Statue of Liberty
 Woman gesturing
 Question mark
 Clock
 Taj Mahal
 Thank you flower

Ethan Lofton
 Procsimas Moscas
 Ludovic Bertron
 David Goehring
 Ethan Lofton
 David Goehring
 Beto en la playa
 Joanne Q. Escobar

