Public Diplomacy and Intercultural Competence

FULBRIGHT ORIENTATION
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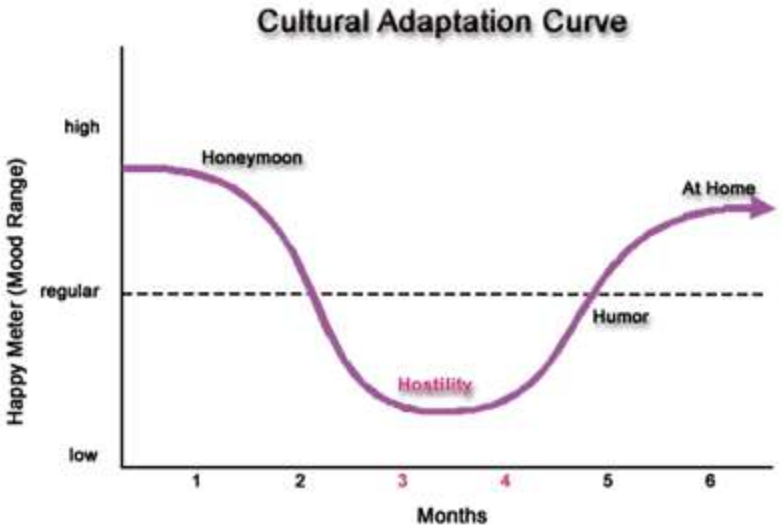
CULTURE SHOCK:
THE U CURVE (LYSGAARD: 1955)



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"CULTURE SHOCK" (OBERG 1960): IDENTITY DISORIENTATION*

- Identity loss & deprivation: values, status, profession, friends, possessions
- Identity strain: efforts to adapt psychologically
- Identity rejection by members of new culture
- Identity confusion: role ambiguity, unpredictability
- Identity powerlessness: inability to cope with new environment

*Thanks to Stella Ting-Toomey and Leeva Chung, *Understanding Intercultural Communication* (2005) for this overview

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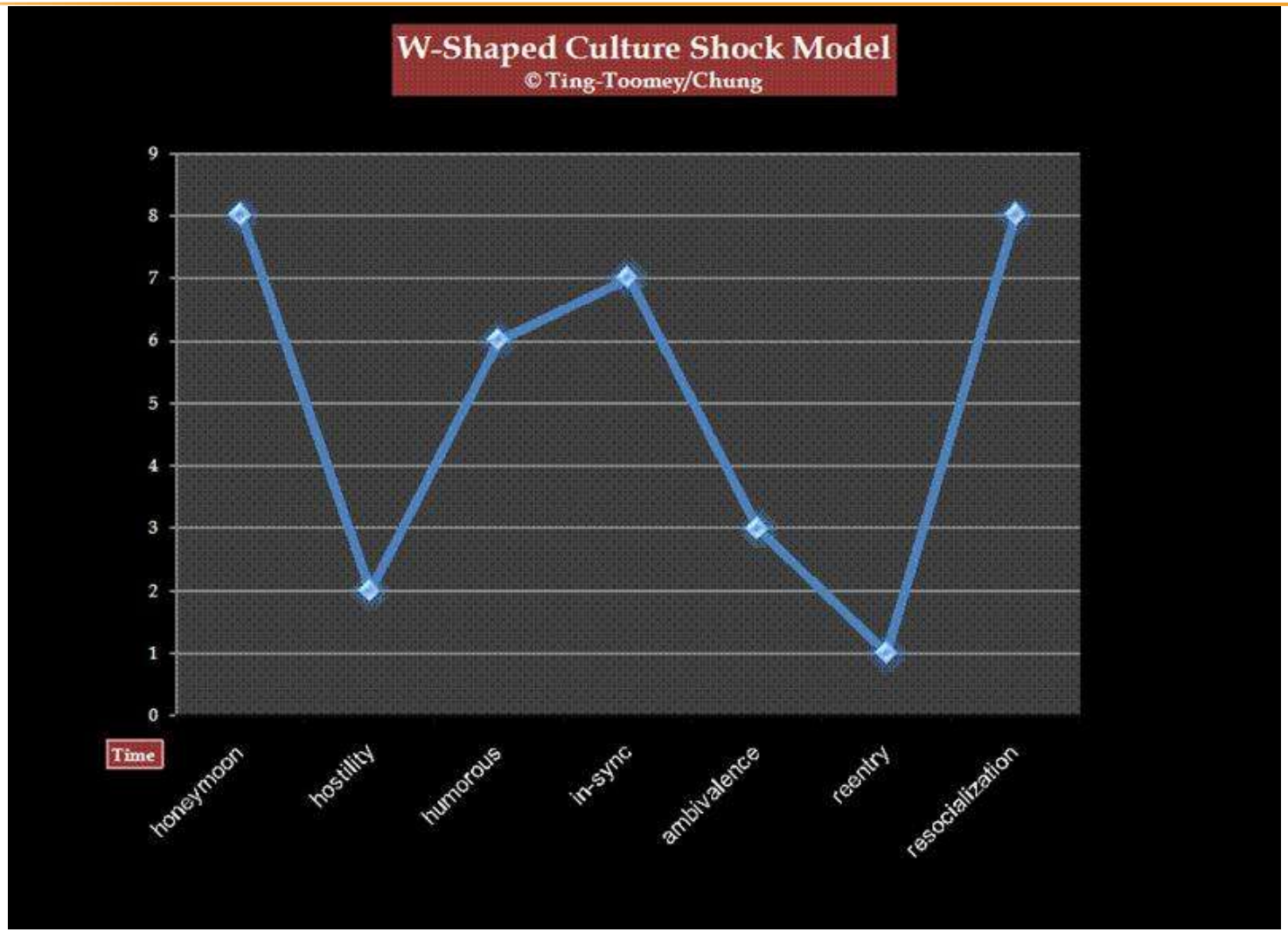
CULTURE SHOCK: THE W CURVE (GULLAHORN & GULLAHORN 1963; TING-TOOMEY & CHUNG 2005)



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THE W CURVE: PLUSES

This model has a more complex account of culture shock. . .

CELEBRATE RECOVERY

It charts recovery during the time abroad. . .

And includes re-entry shock

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W CURVE: THE INITIAL CULTURE SHOCK STAGE:

Affective: anxious, bewildered, disoriented, perplexed; want to be elsewhere!

Behavioral: confused about what's appropriate & effective in communication

Cognitive: lack cultural competence to explain "bizarre" behavior in unfamiliar settings

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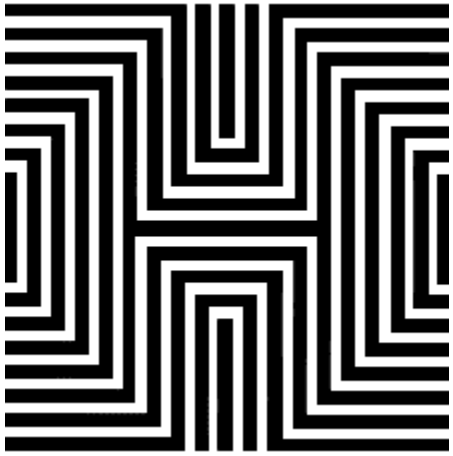
THE W CURVE: SHORTCOMINGS

It doesn't account for individual differences. . .

Subjective experience. . .

Or developmental learning



EXPERIENTIAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL LEARNING

John Dewey (*Experience and Education*, 1938):

- "That all genuine education comes about through experience does not mean that all experiences are genuinely or equally educative. Experience and education cannot be directly equated to each other."

- "Education is the continuous restructuring of experience."

- **Reframing is the key to intercultural learning and development.**

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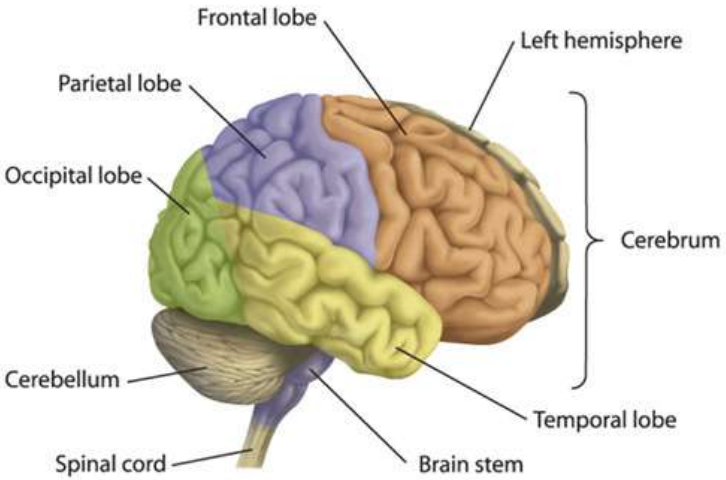
DISCIPLINARY FINDINGS HAVE LED US TO NEW UNDERSTANDINGS ABOUT HOW HUMANS LEARN

- Anthropology
- Communications
- Psychology
- Training
- Neuroscience
- Critical Theory
- Organizational Behavior
- Developmental & Experiential Theory
- Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)



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INTERCULTURAL LEARNING AND COMPETENCE: BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

- Intercultural learning takes **a constructivist view**.

- Intercultural competence
  - means being **effective and appropriate** in culturally different settings
  - develops as we experience ourselves & others in more complex ways
  - is **a continuous, lifelong process** of development.

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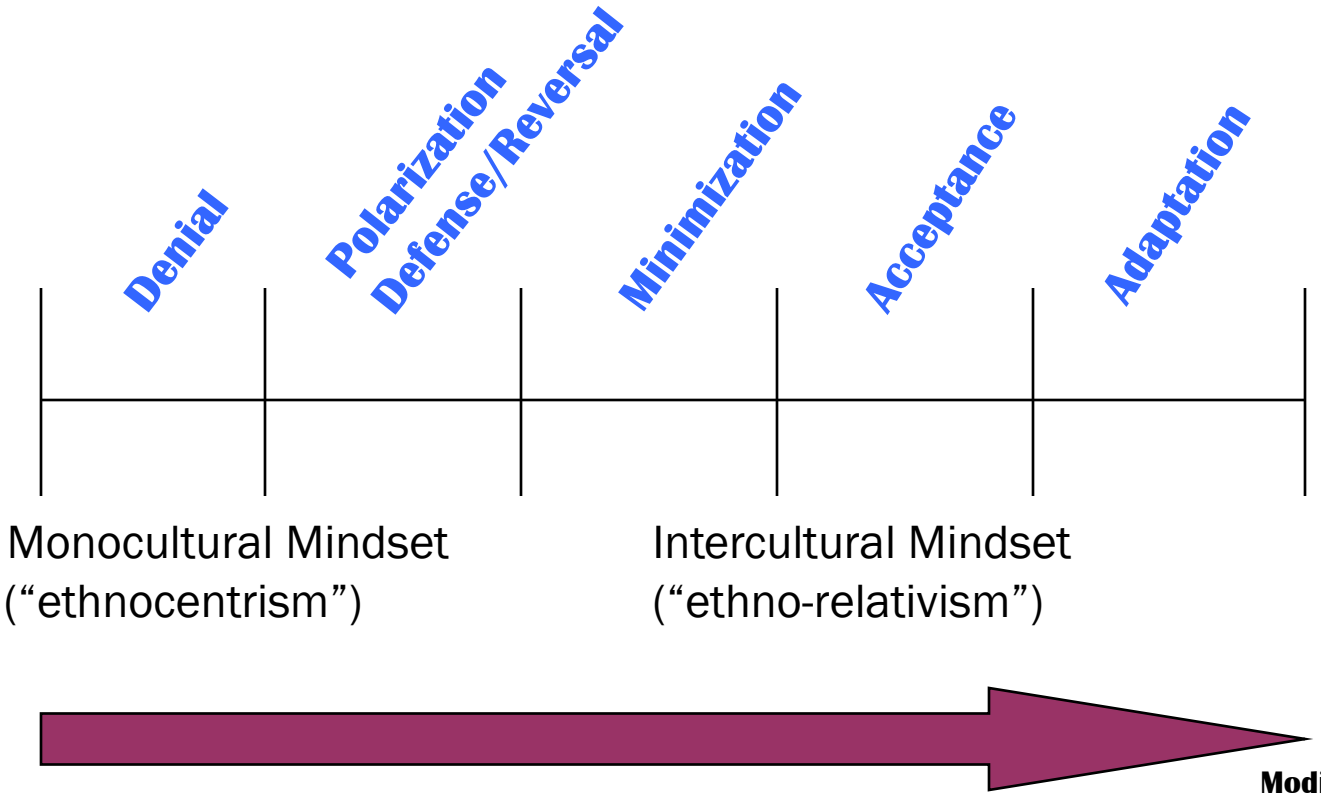
INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT CONTINUUM



Modified from the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS), M. Bennett, 1986

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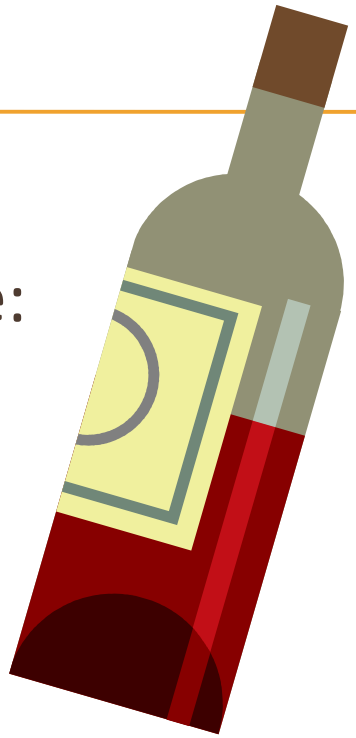
ON "INCREASING COMPLEXITY"



When you drank your first glass of wine:

what did you know about wine?

What do you know now?

And if you wanted to become more knowledgeable about wine, what else might you decide to learn?

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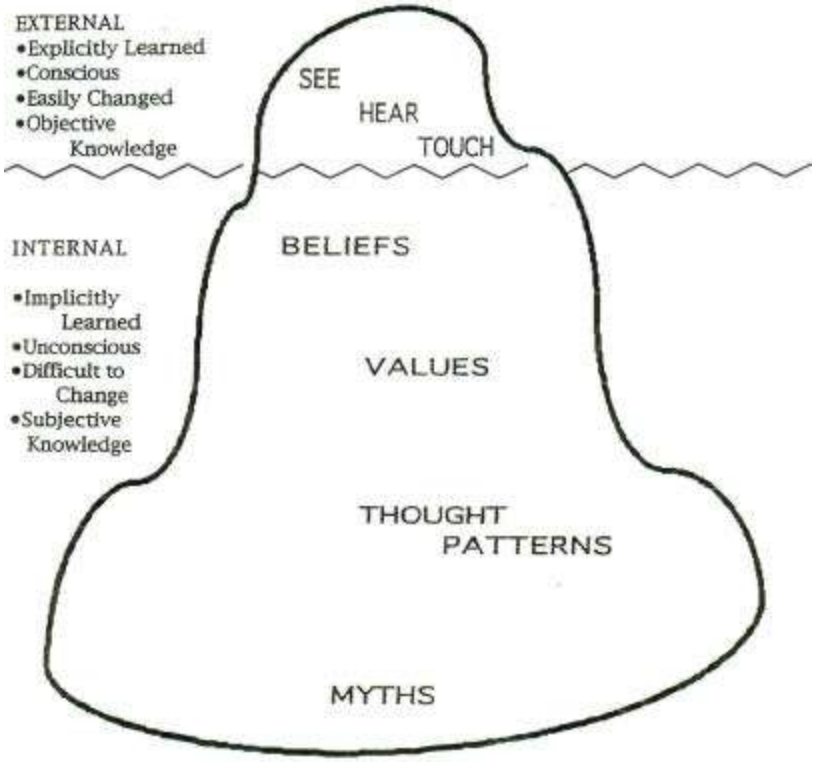
THE KEY INTERCULTURAL QUESTION FOR ANY SOJOURNER: WHY DO THEY THINK, BELIEVE AND BEHAVE LIKE THEY DO?



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VALUE DIMENSIONS:
SHARED IDEAS ABOUT WHAT IS…

Right or wrong

Fair or unfair

Important or unimportant

Good or bad

Normal or abnormal

Values tend to elicit strong, unconscious emotions.

"What is normal is a matter of values."

-Geert Hofstede

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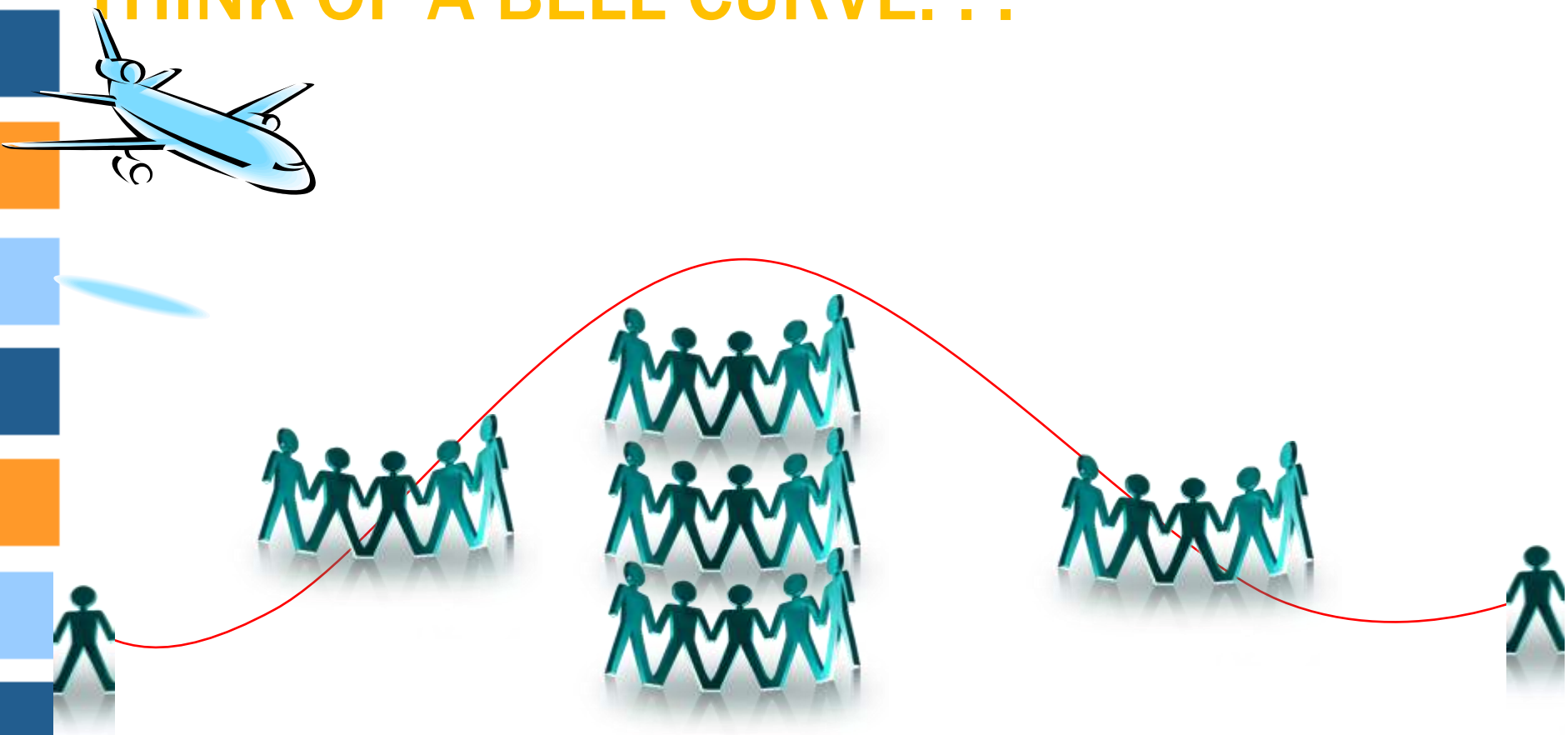
CULTURAL VALUES ARE PATTERNS: THINK OF A BELL CURVE. . .



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HOW DO WE INCREASE OUR EXPERIENCE OF COMPLEXITY? LEARN NEW CATEGORIES OF CULTURAL DIFFERENCE

Some conventional Cultural Difference categories:

- Nation, region
- Ethnic group(s)
- Gender
- Age
- Class
- Profession
- Sexual orientation

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EXPANDING OUR CULTURAL CATEGORIES: CULTURE-SPECIFIC VALUES*

Core Values: USA

- Time: Time is a valuable commodity—don't waste it!
- Control: Take Charge!
- Law and order: Play by the rules!
- Self-Reliance
- Equality
- Capitalism: Realizing the American Dream
- Competition

Hofner Saphiere, Dianne. *Cultural Detective: USA.*

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EXPANDING OUR CULTURAL CATEGORIES: CHINESE CULTURAL VALUES*

- Face: keeping high status in the eyes of others, and giving face to others
- Family: loyalty to and sacrifice for one's family
- Relationships: obligations and commitments connecting people to one another
- Harmony: preference for predictable, orderly relationships
- Prosperity: the goal of all who are willing to work hard and take chances
- Hierarchy: people or things are arranged according to importance

Hofner Saphiere, Dianne. *Cultural Detective: China.*

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BACK TO DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES: DEFENSE AND STEREOTYPING*

US American core values, stereotyped:

- Competition: stereotype:"Americans have phony smiles, they brag a lot, and they're loud."
- Time: stereotype: "Americans are always in a hurry—they don't have time for other people."

Chinese core values, stereotyped:

- Face: stereotype:"The Chinese are inscrutable—they hide what they really think."
- Relationships: stereotype: "You can't do business with Chinese: they're always doing favors for their friends."
- Dianne Hofner Saphiere

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DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES AND VALUES: MINIMIZATION

Darwin: “the young and the old of widely different races. . . express the same state of mind by the same movements”

SMILING FROM A U.S. (MINIMIZATION) PERSPECTIVE*

U.S. student abroad:

"In general it seems to me that foreign people are not necessarily snobs but are very unfriendly. Some class members have told me that you shouldn't smile at others while passing them by on the street in their country. To me I can't stop smiling. It's just natural to be smiling and friendly. I can see now why so many foreign people stick together. They are impossible to get to know. It's like the Americans are big bad wolves. How do Americans break this barrier?"

*Thanks to Laray Barna, Stumbling blocks in intercultural communication, for these student quotes

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THE U.S. SMILE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF A JAPANESE STUDENT IN THE U.S.

"On my way to and from school I have received a smile by non-acquaintance girls several times. I have finally learned they have no interest for me; it means only a kind of greeting to a foreigner. If someone smiles at a stranger in Japan, especially a girl, she can assume he is either a sexual maniac or an impolite person."

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THE U.S. SMILE FROM THE PERSPCTIVE OF A KOREAN STUDENT IN KOREA

"An American visited me in my country for one week. His inference was that people in Korea are not very friendly because they didn't smile or want to talk with foreign people. Most Korean people take time to get to be friendly with people. We never talk or smile at strangers."

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THE U.S. SMILE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF AN ARABIC STUDENT IN THE U.S.

"When I walked around the campus on my first day people smiled at me. I was very embarrassed and rushed to the men's room to see if I had made a mistake with my clothes. But I could find nothing for them to smile at."

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MINIMIZATION: “THE WORLD IS BECOMING THE SAME”

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INCREASING OUR EXPERIENCE OF CULTURAL COMPLEXITY: INDIVIDUALISM VS. COLLECTIVISM*

Individualist: the smallest unit of survival is the self; personal fulfillment is the greatest good; independence and self-reliance are highly valued.

Collectivist: the primary group, usually the smallest unit of survival, is the family; looking out for others protects the self; group harmony is the greatest good

Concept of Self

US UK, F, G I, R, S J ME, A SEA, C

Individualist Collectivist

*Thanks to Craig Storti, *Figuring Foreigners Out* (1999), for these and the following cultural contrasts

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INCREASING OUR EXPERIENCE OF CULTURAL COMPLEXITY: MONOCHRONIC/POLYCHRONIC TIME

Monochronic concept of time: Time is a commodity; it is quantifiable and there's a limited amount of it. Necessary to use time wisely and not waste it—emphasis on efficiency and sense of urgency.

Polychronic concept of time: Time is limitless and not quantifiable. There is always more time, and people are never too busy. Schedules and deadlines often get changed. People may do several things simultaneously.

Concept of Time

US UK G J, R C SEA I, A, ME

Monochronic Polychronic

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INCREASING OUR EXPERIENCE OF CULTURAL COMPLEXITY: ROLE OF CONTEXT

Low Context: people are individualistic; in-groups are not as well developed as they are in high-context cultures and people spend less time in them, hence fewer shared experiences and understanding; one has to spell things out and be explicit.

High Context: people tend to be collectivistic; in-groups are strong, so more shared experiences and understanding; less need to spell things out; more is implicit; what is not said may be more important than what is said.

Role of Context

US G R, F ME A, C, SEA J

Low Context High context

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INCREASING OUR EXPERIENCE OF CULTURAL COMPLEXITY: DIRECT/INDIRECT COMMUNICATION

Direct: people say what they mean and mean what they say; there is no need to read between the lines; it's best to tell it like it is; yes means yes.

Indirect: people don't always say what they mean or mean exactly what they say; you have to read between the lines; people are more likely to suggest or imply than come out and say what they think; yes may mean maybe or even no.

Degree of Directness

G US R, F UK I ME A, C, SEA J

Direct Indirect

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NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION: SIGNIFICANT DIMENSIONS ACROSS CULTURES

- Personal space
- Touching
- Eye contact
- Holding hands in public
- Public displays of affection
- Use of the left hand
- Loudness of spoken voices
- Shaking hands
- Pointing soles of the feet at others
- The “yes” gesture with the head

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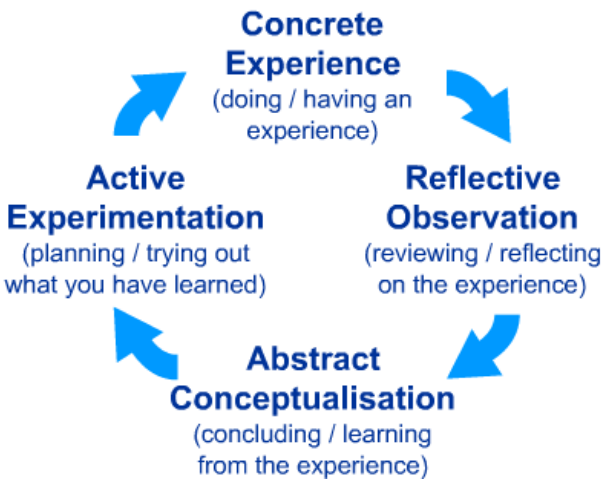
INCREASING OUR EXPERIENCE OF CULTURAL COMPLEXITY: LEARNING STYLE DIFFERENCES



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INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT = PERCEIVING MORE TREES IN THE FOREST

By learning to apply these culture-specific and culture-general dimensions, we increase our **perceptual complexity and intercultural competence**

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CULTURE SHOCK: NEGATIVE IMPLICATIONS

- Headaches, stomachaches
- Feelings of loneliness, isolation, depression,drastic mood swings
- Awkwardness interacting
- Mental exhaustion

CULTURE SHOCK: POSITIVE IMPLICATIONS

IF MANAGED EFFECTIVELY:

- Sense of well-being and heightened self-esteem
- Emotional richness and greater tolerance for ambiguity
- Behavioral competence for social interaction
- Cognitive openness and flexibility
- Enhanced optimism about self, others, and everyday surroundings

PUBLIC DIPLOMACY AND INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

- Charles Frankel (1965): "Tensions exist within nations and between nations that never would have existed were these nations not in such intensive cultural communication with each other."

- Milton Bennett (1993): "Intercultural sensitivity is not natural. It is not part of our primate past, not has it characterized most of human history. Cross-cultural contact has been accompanied by bloodshed, oppression or genocide."

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USEFUL SOURCE MATERIALS:

- **Geert Hofstede's official website:** http//stuwww.uvt.nl/~csmeets/
- ***Culture's Consequences*** by Geert Hofstede (2001)
- ***Experiential Learning*** by David Kolb (1984)
- ***Kolb Learning Style Inventory***: on-line test available (for $25) at www.haygroup.com
- ***Understanding Intercultural Communication*** by StellaTing-Toomey and Leeva Chung (2005)
- ***Cultural Detective*** by Dianne H. Saphiere: www.culturaldetective.com
- ***Figuring Foreigners Out: A Practical Guide*** by Craig Storti (1999)
- ***The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think Differently—and Why*** by Richard Nisbett (2003)
- ***American Cultural Patterns: A Cross-Cultural Perspective*** by Edward Stewart & Milton Bennett (1991)

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Thank You!

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