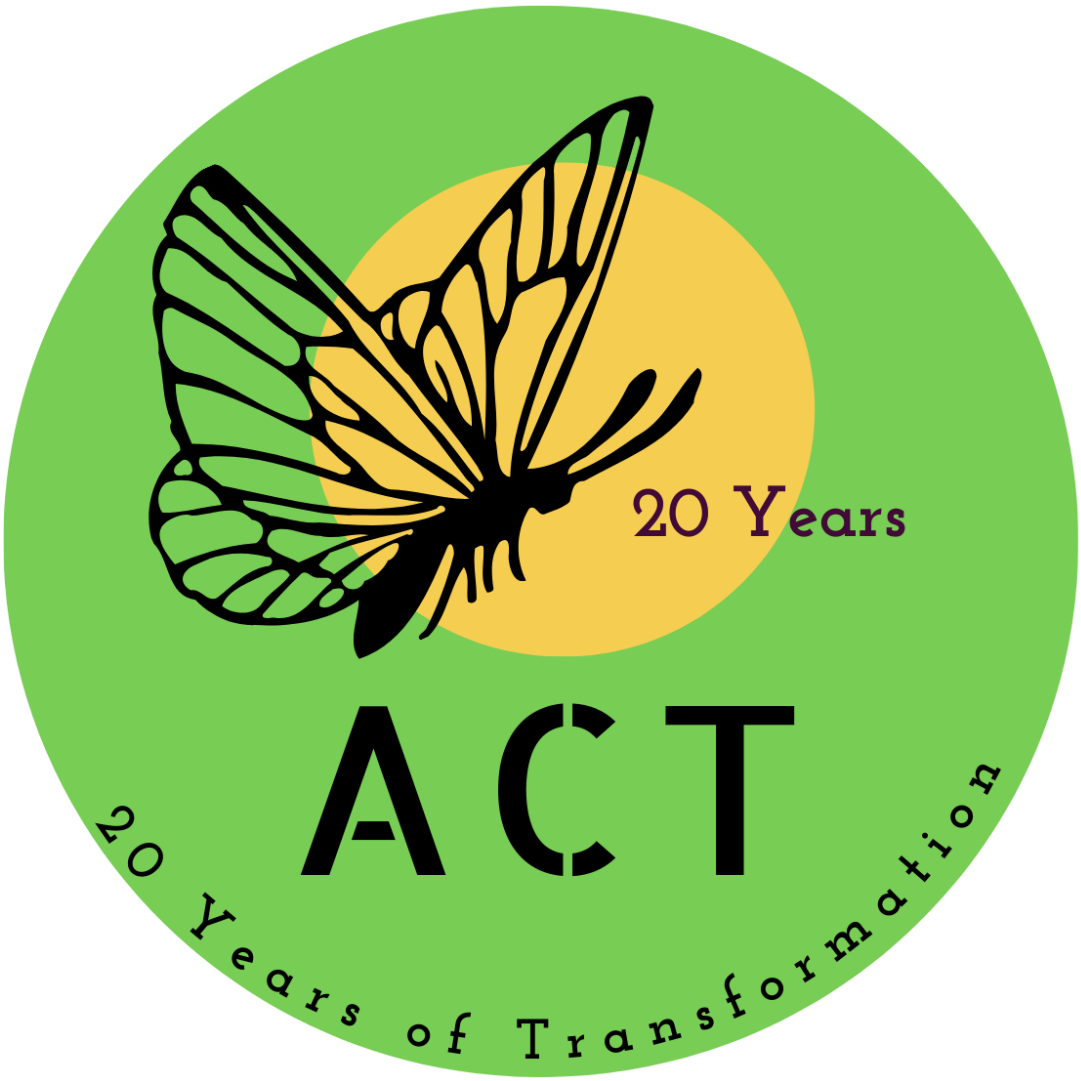

MEA Conference Resource Packet

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How to Manage Cross-Cultural Conflict

Linda Wagener, Senior Consulting Psychologist at the Headington Institute

We're going to talk about conflict management in cross-cultural interpersonal situations. This is a very difficult interpersonal competency to master, and because of that, people tend to avoid conflict—which is the worst thing you can do. Here are a couple of key strategies to help you improve your conflict management skills.

There are two key things to keep in mind. First, know yourself and your conflict style. Second, know the other.

- In knowing yourself, there are a couple of additional questions you can ask. First of all, how committed are you to the task or the agenda, and second, how committed are you to the relationship? Good conflict management involves paying attention to both of these dimensions and balancing them. Both the task and the relationship are important.
- The second dimension then is to know the other. This becomes complicated in a culture with which you're not familiar. I think of culture as an onion where you peel back the various layers, and conflict management tends to be deep in that onion—so it's not until you've been immersed in a culture for a long time that you begin to feel comfortable with your understanding of how they manage conflict and disagreements.

Here are four ways you can improve your conflict management skills:

- **The first is to observe.** When you enter a culture, pay particular attention to how they handle disagreements. What are the verbal and nonverbal ways they manage to pay attention to the task and pay attention to the relationship.
- **The second is to ask key informants**, people who are cultural experts, how people in the culture handle disagreements. How would they recommend you approach someone with whom you have a disagreement?
- **The third is to consult cultural sources.** Read the literature, the stories, the mythology, listen to the music and the poetry, see what's available on the internet, and look for any research done in the culture on conflict management.
- **The fourth is the most important: to observe other people's reactions to you.** This brings together the two dimensions previously mentioned: knowing yourself and knowing the other. In particular, when someone disagrees with you, how do they respond to you? How do they react to your interpersonal style?

If you do these things, you'll get better at managing conflict—even in the difficult moments where there are cross-cultural interpersonal differences. It's important to practice conflict managment for two reasons: one, it will help you get your job done, and second, it will help to bridge often unintentional cultural

misunderstandings. I encourage you to really practice—like any other behavioral thing, the more you practice the more comfortable you'll become.

Cultural Patterns and Communication Patterns, Styles, and Values

http://www.awesomelibrary.org/multiculturaltoolkit-use.html

Candia Elliott, Diversity Training Associates
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September 1, 2010

It is not the degree of difference between groups that causes harm. Rather, it is the lack of skill in identifying breaches of trust based on ethnic differences and the lack of skill in restoring trust once it is broken.

How to Use Comparisons of Cultural Patterns

It is beyond the scope of this project to explain how trust can be restored across ethnic groups, but creating guidelines and training in this area would be a logical next step in the development of cross-cultural collaboration research.

Adaptation and Individual Difference: Within each of the federally defined "ethnic" groups in the U.S., there are critical communication-related areas that can serve as major sources of misunderstanding and misattribution of intent. Following is a short outline of some of the common areas of cross-cultural communication differences between major ethnic groups in the U.S.: African Americans, Asian Americans, Anglo or European Americans, Hispanic Americans/Latinos, and Native Americans.

All members of non-majority culture groups can be conceptualized as living on a continuum of adaptation to or assimilation into the dominant culture. The continuum can be graphed like this:

à ---------- ß
No Cultural Adaptation Total assimilation

1. Persons living in total assimilation have adapted to the thinking patterns, values, family structures, hierarchies of perception, communication patterns, and forms of recreation of the dominant culture. They manifest communication behaviors that do not match the usual pattern for members of their cultural group.
2. Persons with little cultural adaptation maintain the traditional patterns of their culture of origin; their behavior and assumptions will more closely match the behaviors specified below for their cultural group.
3. Most members of a culture will fall somewhere in the middle of the continuum. Often their behaviors at work and in public settings will reflect the dominant-culture pattern. This does not mean, however, that their assumptions and internal reactions to communicative behavior that violates their group's norms will have changed. A member of a non-dominant culture may have a continual source of extra workplace stress due to constant violations of their expectations and norms for interaction, and the ongoing need to consciously adapt and "fit" their behavior to an alien pattern.
4. Depending on a culture's pattern of communication, individuals may not let you know when their expectations or norms have been violated or when they are offended, or at least they may not let you know in a way easy for you to perceive or understand, given the norms of your culture.
5. Becoming more aware of the norms for interaction in one's own culture is a most difficult task, because such norms are internalized very early and become an unconscious component of our expectations of and behavior with others. It is a very crucial task, because only through making these norms conscious can we begin to adapt our behavior to the expectations of the groups or co-workers we are attempting to collaborate with, or at least lessen our tendency to misattribute meanings and motivations to others based on our own cultural norms.

6. Comparisons of cultural value systems are not meant to **stereotype** individuals; rather, they are meant to provide **generalizations,** valid observations about a **group** of people, from which we can discuss cultural difference and likely areas of miscommunication.

Communication Patterns and Assumptions Of Differing Cultural Groups in the United States

(Adapted from Elliott, C. E. (2010). Cross-Cultural Communication Styles, pre-publication Masters thesis)

African American Communication Patterns

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (1999), African Americans comprise 14.2 percent of the U.S. population as of 2020.

Animation/emotion: Communication seen as authentic is generally passionate and animated. Communication that is presented in a neutral or objective way is seen as less credible, and the motives of the speaker may be questioned. The assumption is that if you believe something, you will advocate for it. Truth is established through argument and debate. "Conversational style is provocative and challenging, and the intensity is focused on the validity of the ideas being discussed" (Kochman 1981 pp. 30-31). Effective teachers of African American students are often found "….displaying emotion to garner student respect" (Delpit, 1995, p. 142). African Americans tend to perceive greater emotional intensity when rating the expressions of others (Matsumoto, 1993).

Directness/indirectness: Generally directly facing and talking with the person with whom you have an issue or problem is preferred. Someone who won't face you directly shows his or her claim or problem to be invalid; the assumption is that anyone with a legitimate problem would come to the other person directly. A lack of response to a general accusation or allegation by someone is viewed as an indication of innocence. The internal attitude of an innocent person is "I know they aren't talking about me, so I don't have to respond."(Kochman 1981 p.90). Responding to a general accusation shows that the "mark hit home." A direct accusation will usually bring a direct denial and a request to confront the person making the allegation.

In terms of romance, men and often women will usually state directly whether they are interested in a potential relationship. Ignoring or acting subtly disinterested is not interpreted as a sign of disinterest from a woman; it may be seen as a rude or arrogant response (Kochman 1981).

Teachers are often expected to show they care by "…controlling the class; exhibiting personal power; establishing meaningful personal relationships;…. pushing students to achieve the (class) standard; and holding the attention of the students by incorporating African-American interactional styles in their teaching" (Delpit, 1995, p. 142).

Eye contact: Tends to be quite direct and prolonged when speaking, less so when listening. This is the opposite of the dominant-culture pattern in which the speaker tends to look away from the listener and the listener looks directly at the speaker. The overall amount of eye contact is not different from dominant-culture patterns; it is when the eye contact occurs that differs (Johnson, 1971, p. 17).

Gestures: Frequent and sometimes large gestures are normative. The expressiveness of the communication is what is valued, and if the gestures increase expressiveness they are seen as enhancing communication. (V. Valdez, September 1998, personal communication).

Identity orientation: Traditionally, African Americans have a more collateral orientation than European Americans (Nichols 1986, management training session). Self is viewed and decisions are made within the context of the group and by assessing how the action will affect others in the collateral identity group.

Turn taking and pause time: Turns are taken when the speaker is moved to speak; urgency, status, and the ability to command attention from others determines speaking order. The right to continue speaking is granted by others depending on how well the speaker's idea is being accepted (Kochman 1981 pp. 34). Responses from others are usually made at the end of each of the speaker's points, and this is not felt to be an interruption of the speaker (Kochman 1981 pp.26-27). Turn taking in dyads is also regulated by non-verbal cues that differ markedly from those of the dominant culture. These include: hand gestures, postural shifts which mirror the conversational partner, intonation drop, tempo slowing, and lessening of intensity. The change in gaze direction employed in the dominant culture is often not used (LaFrance & Mayo, 1975, pp. 7-8).

Pause time is often brief; people in groups may interrupt or speak on the ends of other's sentences.

Space: Research on use of space among African Americans is mixed. Some studies indicate that, in race-matched pairs, black children will stand closer to each other during conversation than white children do. Other research has shown that African American adults employ a greater public distance from each other (LaFrance & Mayo, 1978, pp. 79-80).

Time: Linear time is not internalized to the extent it is in the dominant society. Being a more relationship-oriented culture, African Americans tend to be more relaxed in this regard--"The right time is when we get there." Anger from others at being late is often met with puzzlement—"I'm here now, let's get started" is a common response to this kind of situation (Nichols 1986).

Touch: Among friends, African Americans employ more physical touch than European Americans do (LaFrance & Mayo, 1978, pp. 80-81) and less than that usually seen among people of Latin or Arab cultures. African Americans tend to touch children more often and for greater lengths of time than do European-Americans (Coles, 1971).

Vocal patterns: Black English contains a wide range of both volume and pitch within its acceptable pattern. The voice can range from a very quiet, deep sound to very loud and high-pitched, and all may be considered appropriate. Expressiveness and compatibility with the speaking situation is what determines whether the pitch and tone are "correct" (Olquin, 1995). There is not a fixed, relatively narrow range, as is the case in some other cultures.

Native American Communication Patterns

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (1999), 2.2 million persons were classified as American Indians or Alaska Natives in 1994. (Approximately 1.5% of the U.S. population). There are 574 federally recognized tribes living within the US, about half of which are associated with Indian reservations. "Native Americans" (as defined by the United States Census) are Indigenous tribes that are originally from the contiguous United States, along with Alaska Natives. Native American comprise 1.6% of the U.S. population

Animation/emotion: The preferred communication style is restrained, "…in order to not impose one's energy or emotion on others" (Elliott, 1992). Often Indians will speak dispassionately about something very meaningful and important to them.

Directness/indirectness: Indirectness is usually preferable (Locust, 1988). This gives others the chance to refuse a request without directly saying no, or to evade a question that is felt to be too personal or simply

a subject the listener does not want to discuss (Darnell, 1988, p. 5). Elders with high status may sometimes be very direct with those younger than themselves. An untrue allegation or accusation will often simply result in no response from an Indian person; to reply is seen as lowering oneself to the level of ignorance or over-emotionality of the other person. It also involves entering the negative energy space of the accuser (Locust, 1988, p. 122) and may be interpreted by other Indians as a sign of guilt, an indicator that the accusation is true. Silence on the part of Indian people is often interpreted by Anglos as indirectness, although the actual meaning may be quite different (Basso, 1970, p. 218).

Eye contact: Direct prolonged eye contact is seen as invasive. Its avoidance is practiced to "protect the personal autonomy of the interactors" (Darnell, 1988, p. 6). Eye contact is usually fleeting, and the gaze of the listener and speaker will often remain around the forehead, mouth, ear or throat area. Direct gaze to an elder or very respected person is seen as especially rude, unless one is in a formal listening/storytelling situation, in which case "…listeners may look at (the speaker) more directly … without violating his or her personal space by eye contact" (Darnell, 1988, p. 15).

Gestures: A relatively restrained use of gestures in normal conversation is typical. Storytellers or elders may often use gestures, which are larger and more frequent than those found in usual conversations.

Identity orientation: Traditional American Indians have a lineal orientation—their identity is spread vertically over time. Ancestors, the present collateral group or tribe, and the potential people who are not yet born are all part of a person's felt identity and will be considered when making important decisions (Samovar, Porter, and Jain, 1981).

Turn taking and pause time: In formal group speaking situations, turns are usually taken by everyone present, and no one else speaks until the previous speaker is completely through and a few moments of silence have ensued (Darnell, 1988, p. 5). Speaking too quickly after the previous speaker may be seen to indicate that the next speaker, talking so quickly after the first, is a rash person who does not think things through before he or she speaks, or is showing disrespect for the importance of the other person or of what they had to say. Interrupting another speaker is unbearable rudeness, and may lead to severe social consequences if the person interrupted is an elder. When interacting with members of other cultures in which appropriate pause times are shorter, Indians may have to be rude (by their own standards) in order to participate in the conversation at all (Basso, 1988, p. 12). This is a stressful experience for the person, who feels forced to violate their own standards and self-concept in order to be heard.

Space: Often a side-by-side arrangement is more comfortable than a face-to-face orientation, especially in two-person conversations. If interacting with non-Indians or people whom they do not know well, Native Americans often prefer a slightly larger interaction distance--more than arm's length--for conversation.

Psychological space can be maintained by silence. This may be employed if the listener is asked a question he or she feels is invasive or regarded as something that should not be addressed with the other person, because the other does not have the standing of an intimate friend or relative. Sometimes the subject is simply seen as inappropriate.

Time: For Native people raised in a traditional environment, "clock" time is not internalized to the same degree as it is in the dominant culture. The "right time" for something is when everything and everyone comes together; then the appropriate activity will ensue. Time is felt to be more a matter of season, general time of day, or when the person is internally ready for a particular activity. "Every living thing has its own inherent (time) system and you must deal with each plant or animal in terms of its own time" (Hall, 1976, p. 71). The imposition of "clock time" by members of other cultures may be interpreted as arrogant, uncaring, or oppressive behavior. Related to this is the tendency of Indian parents not to worry if their child is "not developing on time" according to others' cultural or psychological standards.

Touch: Touch is usually reserved for friends or intimates; however, many Indians have adopted the European American custom of handshaking, at least outside of traditional settings. The Indian handshake is very light and fleeting, to avoid imposing energy on the other person or receiving energy one does not want.

Vocal patterns: A relatively narrow, quiet range of pitch, tone, and volume is viewed as the proper adult communication pattern, especially when non-Indians or elders are present. Talking quickly, loudly, and very animatedly may be viewed with some disapproval.

Anglo or European American Communication Patterns

European Americans (non-Latino white) comprise around 57.8% of the U.S. population as of 2019.

Animation/Emotion: Emotionally expressive communication is not a preferred mode in public communication situations. In fact, European Americans worry that intensely emotional interactions may lead to a loss of self-control, and therefore should be avoided. (Kochman, 1981). What people know is not necessarily expressed in behavior. There is a strong preference to preserve the appearance of cordiality and friendliness, even when strong differences of opinion are present. European Americans prefer to speak about beliefs, opinions, intentions and commitments. The prescribed value of "equality" in U.S. culture commonly leads to a presumption of sameness: people assume that if they feel or think a certain way about a situation, others would feel or think much as they do, if placed in the same or a similar situation (Samovar, Porter, & Jain, 1981).

Directness/indirectness: European Americans tend to speak very directly about certain things. Their general form of communication tends to rely heavily on logic and technical information rather than allusion, metaphor, or other more creative or emotional styles of persuasion. "Good" communication is believed to be linear: the speaker should move through their "points" in a straight, logical line, with an explicitly stated conclusion (Kaplan, 1967; Stewart & Bennett, 1991, p.156).

Eye Contact: The European American convention for eye contact is for the speaker to make intermittent brief contact with the listener, and for the listener to gaze fairly steadily at the speaker. Children are specifically taught to look at the speaker (Kochman, 1981), and will be reprimanded if they do not. Direct eye contact is believed to be a sign of honesty and sincerity (Stewart & Bennett, 1991, p. 99; Johnson, 1971, p. 17; Althen, 1988, pp.143-144).

Gestures: European Americans tend to use a "medium" range of gestures in usual conversation—not so large or frequent as Arabs or Southern Italians but not as restrained as the English or Japanese (Althen, 1988, pp.141- 142).

Identity orientation: European Americans have an individualism orientation. They view the "self" as located within the individual person, who is seen as having a separate but equal place among other individuals. Self is viewed, and mature identity is believed to be formed, primarily as an autonomous individual. Children are raised to become self-sufficient; ideally, neither they nor their parents expect them to live with older generations of the family after about the age of twenty. A young person who lives with parents after this age may be regarded questionably by themselves and others (Condon, 19; Althen, 1988, p. 5).

Turn taking and pause time: Ideally, turn taking is signaled by the speaker looking directly at the listener and ceasing to speak. Pause time is very brief; often people speak on the end of the first speaker's last sentence (Kochman, 1981).

Space: The usual distance for social conversation is 2-3 feet--about arm's length. Standing closer than this will usually be perceived as intimacy or invasiveness, depending on the relationship of those involved.

Time: In European American culture, time is thought of as linear and monochronic — that is, one thing or one person at a time should be given full attention. Time is conceptualized as having a past, present, and future, and is often thought of as a real object "which should be saved and not wasted" (Samovar, Porter, & Jain, 1981, pp. 113-114). It is not seen as a human-made abstraction. People often speak of losing, wasting, or finding time. Many European Americans feel pressured by the passage of time, and consequently tend to behave in an "efficient" and task-oriented way. If a person has an appointment with you at 3:00, most European Americans would begin to be affronted if the person is not there by a few minutes after 3:00, and would want an explanation of why they are not. This behavior can be interpreted by members of other cultures as coldness—U.S. Americans may be seen as having little interest in personal relationships and trust building, valuing only efficiency (Condon, 1997).

Touch: Most European Americans tend to "employ very little touching in public" (Samovar, Porter, & Jain, p. 175) that is, beyond the expected greeting ritual of the handshake. Lack of touching may be related to cultural values of objectivity, efficiency, and autonomy. European Americans have been described by members of other cultures as touch-avoidant. Compared to the amount of touch that occurs in Latin American, Southern European and Arab cultures, this is certainly true.

Vocal patterns: Tend to be in a mid-range of pitch and on the low end of vocal variation. "Adult," mature communication in public is believed to be objective, rational, and relatively non-emotional. Someone who is expressing himself or herself in a very passionate way may be suspected of irrationality (Kochman, 1981).

Thought patterns and Rhetorical style: Directness in stating the point, purpose, or conclusion of a communication is the preferred style (Kaplan, 1967). Kaplan describes the English language style graphically as an arrow:

This style of communication may be viewed by other cultural groups, with quite different styles, as abrupt or inappropriate. It is in strong contrast to the Asian style, portrayed by Kaplan as a spiral. It is also quite different from the Romance style (including Hispanic), which is portrayed as an arrow with sharp turns in the shaft.

Asian American Communication Patterns

"Asian" is a very broad term, encompassing people from southern India to Indonesia to northern Mongolia. The statements below apply most clearly to people from northern Asian countries such as Japan or China, although they may apply in varying degrees to Asian people (or their descendants) from other nations. "Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are persons of Asian or Pacific Islander ancestry" and represent "more than 50 ethnic groups and speak more than 800 languages or dialects. Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are the fastest-growing segment of the U.S. population, nearly tripling in size from 3.5 million in 1980 to almost 9.6 million in 1998." (CDC, 1999). People designated as "Asian" comprise approximately 6.5%% of the U.S. population in 2019.

Animation/emotion: The control of emotional display is highly valued. An overt display of strong emotion could result in a loss of face for both the speaker and the listener.

Eye contact: Japan and China are overtly hierarchical societies in which it is always important to know one's status relative to the person one is speaking with, so the proper forms of language and nonverbal

communication can be used. Direct eye contact lasting longer than a second or two is avoided, especially with those superior to oneself in the hierarchy or with elders. To behave otherwise would be disrespectful.

Gestures: Gestures are usually kept close to the body and are quite restrained. They are used less frequently than is normal among English or Spanish speakers.

Identity orientation: Japan is usually characterized as a group-oriented collateral society, similar to Latin American or Arab cultures. This means a person's identity and status are intimately tied to the identity and status of their family, and this persists throughout the individual's life span. Decisions are often made in relation to obligations to family, and secondarily to one's own desires. In Japan this sense of "family obligation" and a tie to the sense of personal identity may be extended to the company one works for. China is seen as a lineal culture, also group oriented, but with a greater sense of personal identity being tied to ancestors and to forthcoming generations than is experienced by most modern Japanese-Americans.

Pacing and pause time: Normally the pause employed is somewhat longer than that of European Americans, and a little shorter than the pause typical of Native Americans.

Time: Traditionally, time is seen as cyclical and ever-returning. Asian cultures are masters of waiting till "the time is right." They excel in long-term planning and the initiation and maintenance of long-term relationships.

Touch: In public settings, touch is often so rare as to be virtually non-existent. In one study which measured from, to whom, and where on the body touch was allowed, "Japanese college students received less touch from mothers and other family members than U.S. Americans received from casual acquaintances" (Barnlund 1975 p. 154).

Vocal patterns: A relatively quiet and low-key vocal pattern is the ideal. The overt expression of emotion is considered unseemly and childish (Tada 1975). Northern Asians, especially Japanese, tend to express emotion by "intuitive, nonverbal communication of the sort that develops among family members living under one roof" (Kunihiro 1976, p. 53). Indirect allusion and metaphor are often used to express deep emotion. "The value of suppression and restraint has deep historical roots for the Japanese." (Ramsey 1985, p. 310).

Thought patterns and Rhetorical style: Directness in stating the point, purpose, or conclusion of a communication is not considered appropriate (Kaplan, R. 1967). Kaplan describes the Asian style graphically as a spiral:

This style of communication may be viewed by other cultural groups as evasive or obscure. It is in strong contrast to the European American style, portrayed by Kaplan as a straight arrow.

Hispanic American Communication Patterns

"There are approximately 30 million Americans living in the United States who are of Latin American or other Spanish descent, comprising 11.1% of the total population." (CDC, 1999). As of 1994, "64 percent were Mexican Americans, 11 percent were Puerto Ricans, 13 percent were from Central and South America or the Caribbean, 5 percent were Cuban Americans, and 7 percent were classified as 'Other'

Hispanics." (Department of Health and Human Services/Public Health Service, 1997). Hispanic and Latino Americans comprise approximately 18.7% of the U.S. population as of 2020.

Terms used to refer to this group of people can be controversial (Andrews, 1999). Some use the expression "Spanish people" to denote all people who speak Spanish, but the expression should not apply to anyone other than individuals who are natives of Spain. Many use the term "Hispanics," to denote all who speak Spanish, but, again, this term does not literally apply to any people who do not claim a lineage or cultural heritage related to Spain.

"Latino" is used to refer to people with a lineage or cultural heritage related to Latin America, but should not be used to refer to the millions of Native Americans in the region. Many use the term "Mexican" to refer to persons with a lineage or cultural heritage related to Mexico, but it should only be used to refer to the nationality of inhabitants of Mexico. U.S. citizens from Mexico often object to being referred to as "Mexicans", as do members of indigenous groups in Mexico.

"Mexican-American" is another term sometimes used to refer to U.S. citizens with a lineage or cultural heritage related to Mexico, but, again, many object to this use. The argument against "Mexican-American" is that other nationalities, such as Germans, are not referred to as "German-Americans."

The term "Chicano" has been used recently as a distinct way to refer to U.S. citizens of Mexican heritage, but it was originally used as a derogatory term and is sometimes considered unsavory among more "assimilated" Mexican-Americans. It often has a connotation of political awareness and activism.

Another group of persons from Mexico do not refer to themselves as "Americans" at all. They consider themselves to be in an occupied country because only 150 years ago large numbers of Mexicans became "American" citizens overnight, when the United States won 50 percent of what was Mexico as the spoils of war in the treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo. In fact, the treaty specifically recognized the rights of such people to retain the property deeded to them by Mexican or Spanish colonial authorities and to receive education in Spanish. (The treaty has obviously not been honored.)

A group that also does not refer to themselves as "Mexican-Americans" are those who are in the United States because of economic conditions and plan to return permanently to Mexico as soon as it is economically feasible. Although they may have U.S. citizenship, their ties are primarily with family and friends in Mexico.

In short, if persons have cultural roots in Mexico, more should be learned before referring to them with any single term. If persons have a cultural heritage from Latin America, "Latino" is an appropriate term. Otherwise, "Hispanic" is the most widely used nomenclature at this time.

Animation/Emotion: In public ethnically mixed settings or with unfamiliar persons, Latinos or Hispanics tend to be somewhat low-key. They may often state their points quite directly, but in a relatively quiet and respectful manner. In settings with only Hispanics present, a high level of emotional expression is acceptable. (Olquin, 1995).

Eye Contact: Direct eye contact is often viewed as disrespectful. When a person from a Latin culture is being spoken to, they may look away or down as a sign of respect to the person speaking, especially if that person is significantly older than the listener or is in a position of authority over them (LaFrance & Mayo, 1976).

Gestures: People from Latin cultures tend to use a medium to high level of gestures. This is consonant with a cultural pattern that considers a higher level of emotionality in expression to be the norm (Kaplan, 1967; Albert & Nelson, 1993).

Identity orientation: Latino cultures in general have a collateral orientation. This means the person's identity is intimately tied to the identity and status of their family throughout the individual's life span. Decisions are often made in relation to obligations to family, and secondarily to one's own desires (Condon & Yousef, 1975).

Pacing & pause time: If the person's first language is Spanish, pause time tends to be relatively short. Among indigenous groups, the pause time will be considerably longer, perhaps approaching that of Native people from what is now the continental United States (Bennett, 1996).

Space: Latino's interpersonal distance tends to be somewhat less than that of European Americans (ER's). The typical 2-3 foot "arm's length" spacing preferred by European Americans is experienced by many Hispanics as cold, unfriendly, or a way for the ER to show superiority. Since both people's expectations for "normal" social distances are often unconscious, one can witness the phenomena of the ER being backed across the room by a Hispanic person, as each tries to conduct the conversation in a way that feels right for them. This may be amusing to witness but is very uncomfortable for both participants (Bennett, 1996).

Time: Latinos tend to operate in a polychronic fashion—that is, many activities may be going on at once, and priority is given to the immediate needs of people, especially those involved in one's collateral network. Time is a fluid and malleable concept (Condon, 1997).

Touch: Latin cultures tend to use touch more than cultures originating in Northern Europe, the U.S., or Canada. Levels of touch between members of the same sex occur far more often in public settings in predominately Hispanic cultures than they do in European American culture, and do not carry the sexual connotation such behavior often has in the U.S (Condon, 1997).

Vocal patterns: The normal range of voice pitch for Spanish speakers is narrower than it is for native English speakers; often pitch and volume that are part of "normal" conversation in English are only present in Spanish in the "angry" range of conversation. Consequently the Spanish speaker may experience the European American as arrogant or intimidating. The English speaker may experience the Hispanic as shy, lacking self-confidence, or think the Spanish-speaker is mumbling when they are only speaking in the range that is "normal" for them (Olquin, 1995).

Volume: In business conversation, a quiet and somewhat formal way of speaking is appropriate for the Spanish speaker. The Hispanic can experience the European American as "yelling at me" or showing irritation when the English speaker operates at their normal volume (Olquin, 1995).

Thought patterns and Rhetorical style: Directness in stating the point, purpose, or conclusion of a communication is not the preferred style (Kaplan, 1967). Kaplan describes the pattern of a Romance language as an arrow that makes sharp turns before getting to its destination. The journey is part of the valued experience:

This style of communication may be viewed by European Americans as disorganized or intellectually weak, since it violates the direct linear cause-and-effect norms of English speakers.

Summary of Normative Communication Styles and Values

The purpose of the Summary of Normative Communication Styles and Values chart is to identify arenas of difference between ethnic groups that can destroy trust and respect when the differences are unknown to one or both parties in a communication. These unknown or invisible differences in communication style and values also create difficulties because they may be presumed to be individual personality or ethical issues. .

To use an example from another field, persons with disabilities often find that they are left out of conversations, not given eye contact, and subtly avoided or excluded in other ways at a personal level. This avoidance may be invisible to all but the persons with disabilities. Children are taught, at an early age, not to stare at people who are different. They are taught not to ask persons with disabilities "embarrassing" questions. In short, children are taught that it is not socially safe to interact with persons with disabilities--or anyone who is very different from them. One result of such training may be for adults to unintentionally avoid persons with disabilities, as well as persons who are different from them in other ways. As children we were not sure why we were discouraged from interacting; as adults we are often not even aware how and when we avoid interaction with others.

The chart may therefore be used in a training or self-assessment activity, as well as for information to improve communication. (See the Assessment Tools section of this guide.) As a self-assessment or training tool, the chart may help in the following ways:

- Provide participants with a sense of excitement and interest regarding the exploration of less-obvious ethnic differences
- Help participants feel more comfortable talking about issues related to ethnic and cultural differences
- Increase the awareness of participants regarding their own ethnicity, as well as the ethnicity of others; this awareness is a foundation for improving cultural competence.
- Provide an assessment tool for clarifying ethnic patterns

How are individual differences taken into account in a summary of ethnic patterns? How about the problem of stereotyping people?

One cannot know an individual's communication style or values based on group affiliation.

Individuals may vary from group norms because of bicultural skills, adaptation to the mainstream culture, assimilation, variations in heritage, amount of exposure to cultural norms, living abroad, or other reasons. Persons may not have the heritage and/or cultural affiliation they "appear" to have. Even if they do, they may vary from the group norms on some values or communication behaviors.

If individuals can vary so much from how they "appear," how can one use a summary of patterns? What is a "correct" use of the comparison of group patterns?

Even though individuals vary from group norms, research has shown that normative patterns do exist for each ethnic group.

One purpose of the summary of patterns is to help those who are ethnically "European or Anglo American" to understand that they do, in fact, have an ethnic pattern that is normally invisible to them. European Americans are not just "Heinz 57" or just "Americans," although these are common responses when European Americans are asked to state their cultural affiliation; when applied to them, they often find culture to be a fuzzy concept. European Americans focus more on the present and the future, rather than trying to understand how their views – handed on from others – fit within the world community. This too is an ethnic or cultural value.

How can we adapt effectively if we cannot see how our views fit within the larger world community?

European Americans do have a specific ethnic experience, a point of view, and a set of biases about what "normal" should be. That view about normalcy affects how they treat others in powerful – and invisible – ways. The unconscious assumption is the norm or the normal is how they and people like them (Euro-Americans) act, think, feel, and view the world.

Invisible biases need to become visible, and be seen in relationship to other communication styles and values. Research on intercultural communication suggests that this is a vital early step in handling discrimination and is certainly necessary in order for mainstream agency administrators to improve their cultural competence. Each of us has biases; we gain our biases naturally as we are socialized within any culture or ethnic group.

Having biases is not what causes most of the harm.

People are hurt when we fail to "see" our biases, understand them, and then use our improved self-understanding to become more effective in adapting our views and behaviors to the needs of others.

What is your communication style? Go to **My Communication Style** and check the boxes to summarize your own communication style when working with someone in a work setting. Then compare your communication style with the normative communication style of someone with a different ethnic background. Go to **Normative Communication Styles** to see different patterns from your own. Where are the biggest differences? Do you have a strategy to bridge those differences?

My Normative Communication Styles and Values

The purpose of My Normative Communication Styles and Values chart is to identify arenas of difference between ethnic groups that can destroy trust and respect when the differences are unknown to one or both parties in a communication. These unknown or invisible differences in communication style and values also create difficulties because they may be presumed to be individual personality or ethical issues. By identifying your own style, you can then "see" differences that may have been hidden between yourself and someone with another ethnic background.

What is your communication style? Check the boxes to summarize your own communication style when working with someone in a work setting. Then compare your communication style with the normative communication style of someone with a different ethnic background. Go to **Normative Communication Styles** to see different patterns from your own. Where are the biggest differences? Do you have a strategy to bridge those differences?

Normative Communication Styles and Values

The purpose of the Normative Communication Styles and Values chart is to identify arenas of difference between ethnic groups that can destroy trust and respect when the differences are unknown to one or both parties in a communication. These 34 unknown or invisible differences in communication style and values also create difficulties because they may be presumed to be individual personality or ethical issues.

Summary Normative Communication Styles & Values for Cross-Cultural Collaboration

Communication Style	Very little	Little	Medium	Much	Very Much
Animation/Emotional Expression	**Asian,* Native***	**Hispanic***	**Anglo***		**African***

Gestures	**Asian, Native**		**Anglo**	**Hispanic**	**African**
Range of Pitch between words	**Hispanic, Native**	**Asian**	**Anglo**		**African**
Volume of speech	**Asian**	**Hispanic**	**Native**	**Anglo**	**African**
Directness of questions	**Native, Asian**	**Hispanic**			**African, Anglo**
Directness of answers	**Native, Asian**	**Hispanic**			**African, Anglo**
Directness of rhetorical style, "getting to the point"	**Asian**	**Hispanic, Native**			**African, Anglo**
Accusations require a direct response	**Native, African, Asian**	**Anglo**		**Hispanic**	
Directness of eye contact	**Native, Asian**	**Hispanic**			**Anglo, African,**
Firm, long handshaking	**Native, Asian**		**Hispanic**	**African**	**Anglo**
Touching	**Native, Asian**		**Anglo**		**African, Hispanic**
Concern with of clock time	**Native, Hispanic**	**African**		**Asian**	**Anglo**
Hierarchical membership in group	**Native, African**	**Anglo**			**Asian, Hispanic**
Individualism more than lineal identity	**Native**	**Hispanic, Asian, African**			
Individualism more than collateral group identity	**Asian**	**Hispanic, African**	**Native**		**Anglo**
Awareness of unearned "white" privilege	**Anglo**				**Native, African, Asian, Hispanic**
Closeness when standing	**Native, Asian**	**Anglo**	**African**		**Hispanic**

*Asian American, African American, Anglo or European American, Native American, Hispanic American or Latino

Communication Style (Focus Groups)	**Very little -Low-**	**Little**	**Medium**	**Much**	**Very Much -High-**
Task-Based Purpose vs. Relationship	**Native, Hispanic, Asian**	**African**			**Anglo**
Written vs. verbal	**Native, Hispanic, African**			**Asian**	**Anglo**
Long term history between groups is important	**Anglo**				**Native, Hispanic, Asian, African**
Perceived right to set rules and agenda for meeting	**Native, Hispanic, Asian**	**African**			**Anglo**
Perceived right to speak freely at meeting	**Native, Hispanic, Asian**	**African**			**Anglo**
Authority of the person more important than the logic	**Native, African**		**Hispanic, Anglo**		**Asian**
Formal dress		**Hispanic, Native, African**			**Anglo, Asian**
Perceived right to speak for the group	**Native Asian**	**African, Hispanic**			**Anglo**
Collaboration based on authority	**Native African**				**Anglo, Asian, Hispanic**
Self-Identity, how one describes oneself, related to skin color or ethnicity	**Anglo**			**Asian**	**Native, African, Hispanic**
Ignoring "turns"	**Native, Asian**	**Hispanic**		**Anglo**	**African**
Self-promotion	**Native, Asian**	**Hispanic**		**Anglo**	**African**
Use first names vs. titles (Mr., Ms., Reverend)	**African, Asian**			**Hispanic**	**Anglo, Native**

Spiritual elements included in meetings	**Anglo**	**Asian, Hispanic**			**Native, African**
Defer to older persons in group	**Anglo**		**African, Hispanic**	**Native**	**Asian**
Speed of Response	**Native**		**Hispanic, Asian**		**African, Anglo**
Collaborators must have community respect and support	**Anglo**				**Native, Hispanic, Asian, African**

*Asian American, African American, Anglo or European American, Native American, Hispanic American or Latino

EXERCISE # 1:
From a Monocultural to a Multicultural Perspective

Okogyeamon PhD, Mdiv: 2004/2014/2016 Version

Mariam's Plight with Analytical Concepts:

THE PARABLE: This parable is told to each OLOCHI girl nine months and nine nights before her marriage. It is required that it be told on a night of the full moon, at the moment of sundown, in full sight of the evening sky, covered with nothing more than a yellow night shirt and a vermilion shawl. This pattern may never be broken.

WANA (referred to as MARIAM only by her parents), a first born, is an OLOCHI girl of about 21 years of age from the village of ANAGOMO. For nine months she has been formally engaged to a young man, ITU of the LANOLA people. Through this formal engagement, mutual

familial obligations were incurred. The problem that WANA faces is that between her and her betrothed there lays a river. No ordinary river, mind you, but a deep, wide river infested with nine hungry crocodiles.

WANA ponders how she can cross the river. She thinks of a man that she knows, an ARING-GA, of the NANAKAI people who has a dugout. We'll call him SANEI. So, putting on a heavy white veil for the purpose, she goes to the outskirts of the village to the NANAKAI district. Mariam approaches SANEI's compound and, calling out to him in nasalized tones, asks him to take her across the LANOLA-OLOCHI River. Averting his eyes and with a sing-song voice, he replies, "Yes, SHREE OLOCHI-WANA, I have just become of age and have recently been anointed. I'll take you across if you'll pass the night with me under the banyan tree at the edge of the river. However, before I can allow you to do this, you must agree to stew and to drink YELLOW-AND-THE-BLACK! This you must consume at your first sighting of the Evening Star, Shore-Ga." Shaken by his response, she turns to another NANAKAI, a certain KALO. From a stone's throw, she tells him her story. KALO, bowing profoundly, in sing-song voice responds saying, "Yes, SHREE OLOCHI-WANA, I understand your predicament but. . . it is your problem. Only he who has this ritual responsibility should exercise it. You may not make it mine, SHREE OLOCHI-WANA."

WANA decides to return to SANEI's compound and tell him that she has agreed to his conditions and gives him a newly, intricately woven, full body, vermilion shawl. Before passing the night with him, WANA lights a candle and consumes the stew from seeds and bark. In turn, SANEI dons his vermilion shawl, sits in the center of the hut, picks up a small bowl, spits nine time into it and drops a pinch of nine powders. After mixing the powders with his fingers, he dips his three inner fingers into the paste; fingers spread apart, he touches his upper forehead and then slides them down to the base of his nose between his eyebrows. The three lines meet at "THE WHEEL OF WISDOM." There he sits. In the morning, on the eighth day of the ninth moon—the waxing gibbous moon of LANOLA-BOK, relieved to get an early start, in solemn demeanor SANEI prays over the river; then after throwing banyan leaves into its serpentine currents and following their direction, he assists WANA into his dugout and proceeds across the swirling waters.

Arriving in LANOLA-MAAD before the day of the full moon—several hours before midday, veiled in a black lace shawl, WANA, weak from fasting and sleepless vigil, presents herself to the parents of her betrothed. As prescribed, catching and grasping the shawl tassels, hanging from the shoulders of her mother-in-law-to-be, she stands silent before them. The mother-in-law-to-be asks if WANA will consent to be their daughter. WANA nods consent. There upon, the mother dresses WANA in a yellow robe, over which she adjusts the shawl to cover head and shoulders. This done, both parents touch her forehead and lead her to ITU. The parents then join her hand to that of ITU. No words are spoken. Behind her veil WANA'S eyes streak from emotion.

Later that evening—the evening of the day before they are to be married, WANA feels compelled to step into the moonlight and to break her silence. As the shawl drops to her shoulders, he calls ITU into the garden, looks upon his face and proceeds to describe the circumstances of her crossing the LANOLA-OLOCHI, revealing the mystery of the nine hungry crocodiles. She informs him that she has drunk stew of the YELLOW-AND-THE-BLACK!

Disoriented by what he sees and hears and recognizing the sacredness of all that WANA has revealed, eyes blazing, ITU slaps his ears, averts his eyes. Frozen in place, stone silent, casting his eyes upon the full moon, he remains in the garden until daybreak. At cock-crow, ITU takes a vase of water and washes his hands, face and feet. Teary eyed, in near inaudible, breathy and anguished tones, he says, "WANA-NEE! Do you not know our customs? Have you no wisdom or understanding of role, place, and decorum or no reverence or fear of the sacred! Or have you simply chosen to flaunt or subvert tradition? I stand in awe of, and tremble at, your audacity. Have you no fear of LANOLA-BOK? Leave me! LANOLA-LANOLA! For me, let you name remain MARIAM."

Dismayed and irritated by ITU's response, WANA returns to ITU's parents and asks for her mother-in-law to be. Her mother-in-law says, "Daughter, think upon our ways and what these ways require of you; then speak to our son CIHOTU." Shrouded in a white shawl, WANA turns to our last character, CIHOTU, the youngest brother of ITU. CIHOTU listens to her story and observes her decorum, after which he stutters, "WANA-NEE, your ways are unknown to me. I do know of your fearless valor, tenacity, and will power. You challenge much of what our people believe in. You walk on a path unfamiliar to us. Should I despise you, fear you, or admire you? Will I ever come to truly know you? By our traditions, you are family. Shall you be sister or wife or renegade? What in the name of justice do we owe to you? I know only that I may claim you as wife, if you will have me. What shall it be?" **…** And that's all we know of the story.

Response:
What is happening here in this scenario? What is going on?
Offer "insider" and "outsider" perspectives.
Distinguish between the perspectives.

DISCUSSION:
1. Overall, briefly identify what you understand to be "universal" to the human experience; within that what are "particular" expressions of the human experience – contextual, circumstantial, historically given, and culturally embedded. What meaning or significance do you make of that understanding?

2. Identify ambiguous references pertaining to situational factors, to behaviors or statements of the characters in the parable that may be interpreted differently relative to cultural context. Suggest as many alternative meanings as you can for each reference. Try to challenge all taken-for-granted assumptions.
3. Explain that sense of family the OLOCHI and the LANOLA people hold. Describe the social roles of the various individuals mentioned in the parable. Explain how considerations of class, caste, and status may enter into the inter-group relations of the peoples described in the parable. Tell how this is portrayed.
4. From the standpoint of an outsider to the culture (an *etic* viewpoint), identify assumptions (meanings) one might hold or explanations that one might give regarding (a) WANA's motivations for behaving as she did—appropriately or inappropriately, (b) the social context that made her behavior rational and/or irrational, compelled, frivolous, or audacious and (c)

identify appropriate labels to describe her character or behavior. Consider the problems of making cross-cultural moral judgment.

5. Explain what makes a cross-cultural episode such as "Mariam's Plight" difficult to interpret and so easy to distort. Identify and explain the contractual and ethical issues that complicate the behaviors of the actors.
6. Identify some cultural factors (e.g., modes of interactions, power relationships, customs, sacred symbols, terms of address, appropriate attire, gender relationships, norm expectations) that you would take into consideration in assessing the ethical demands presented in the scenario?

EXPLANATION: From an outsider (etic) perspective, the OLOCHI seem to have the following as objectives for their parable: Perhaps, the OLOCHI wish to communicate the dilemma of decision making, or the social and personal consequences of decision making, or the priority of the community over the individual, or the need to adhere to traditional codes of behavior, or the dilemma of cultural innovation, or particular requirements regarding sacred knowledge, or the need to balance integrity and wisdom with expediency and cunning, or and the realization that even wise, ethical decision making does not always result in a satisfying outcome for the individual. Perhaps one or more or all are the lessons to be learned by the OLOCHI. What might you imagine the insider perspective (etic) to me what happened, why it happened, and what meaning is to be given to behaviors and statements given by the characters in the story?

CONCEPTS: Review the following concepts and how the concepts casts light on the story and vice-versa. The social construction of reality, culture, society, socialization, ethnocentrism, perceptual distortion, projected cognitive similarity, cultural and ethical relativism, limits of relativism.

Analytical Conceptual Tools: Culture, Perception, and Society

Society. People in sustained relationships create the structures and institutions of society. Societies are characterized by geographical proximity/social interaction, shared communication, common language, culture, history, biologically self-sustaining reproduction of membership, and self-sufficiency in institutional structures to meet all the society's needs.

Socialization is a process of learning through members of society acquire the beliefs, behaviors, and dispositions that are appropriate to their assigned positions in society. It is the learning of

place, role, ways to relate to other (rules for behaviors), and what to expect of particular others and what others may expect of ones self.

***Social constructionist view of society*:** Refers to a system of interaction based on individuals interacting with one another in mind over time. These individuals adjust their acts to one another as they go along from situation to situation while symbolically communicating and interpreting each other's acts. The notion "society" refers to patterns that we infer from the interaction process. These patterns are constantly being changed and reaffirmed while new patterns emerge. A society is individuals in interaction, communicating, developing a common, shared perspective. The individual is not thought to be a product of society so much as an actively involved actor in its development.

***Social construction of reality*:** The social world is mediated through language. The social world exists because of the ideas that people embrace and act upon. It is made up of patterns of activity that are based upon human ideas. The ideas that people invent about themselves and their relationships are what hold the social world together. This way of thinking rejects the assumptions that the nature of the world can be revealed by observation, and that what exists is what we *perceive* to exist. Thus, it is anti-essentialist (essentialism refers to a belief that things have a the real, true essence and have invariable and fixed properties that define their 'what-ness' – what they are in and of themselves).

Culture is the acquired knowledge and shared perspective that people use to interpret experience and to generate social behavior (Spradley). Moreover, culture may be defined as the standard that people use for meaning/interpretation, reality, possibility, feeling, activity, and decision making which is shared and perpetuated by a collection of people (Goodenough)—standards for what is, what can be, how to feel about it, what is to be done and how to go about doing it. Culture is the reservoir and medium for shared understanding.

Culture is the collective programming of the human mind that distinguishes the members of one human group from those of another. Culture in this sense is a system of collectively held values. (*Geert Hofstede)*

Culture is the deeper level of basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of an organization, that operate unconsciously and define in a basic 'taken for granted' fashion an organization's view of itself and its environment. (*Edgar Schein)*

Perspective refers to an ordered view of one's world— what is taken for granted about the attributes of various objects, events, and human nature. It is an order of things remembered and expected as well as things actually perceived, an organized conception of what is plausible and what is possible; it constitutes the matrix through which one perceives his [or her] environment.

Perceptual distortion: One's perception can be distorted where there is no clear counterpart in the observer's culture, no functional complex (cultural framework) within which to place the data of observation. It can also be distorted where there is stereotyped experience or stereotyped meaning associated with the object of observation, ambiguity in space and time relationships and in time sequences, and where there is projection.

***Projected cognitive similarity*:** The assumption that the other person's cognition (ways of thinking – ideas, logic, judgments) are similar to what our own would be if we were in the other's place. Assumes universality in ways of thinking.

Frame assumption: The assumption that someone who shares a core identity with you (race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation – and other) is likely to have similar life experiences, share worldview perspectives about social issues, hold similar social expectations, and respond to the world about you in similar ways. These frame assumptions incline you to trust and be open to relationship with that person.

Enculturation refers to a process which conditions or programs the nervous system and thereby influences personality development and social behavior; a process through which symbols, rules, valuations for meaning attribution and interpretation, and patterned cultural behaviors are learned for social interaction within one's primary culture.

Ethnocentrism is a belief that holds one's own cultural standards as innately superior (more valid, adequate, or moral) than those used by the people of another society. This belief finds one's own cultural standards adequate and sufficient as a reference for judging the values, beliefs, feeling responses, and behavior of other people irrespective to their cultural standards and traditions.

Cultural relativism is the assertion that there is a wide diversity of customs, of moral beliefs and practices and that a judgment on the value or validity of any custom, belief or practice is dependent upon the socio-cultural context involved.

Ethical relativism holds that there are no valid moral principles that apply universally in assessing others and that the validity of moral judgments and the moral value of actions are dependent upon the value system of the society. But for the sake of the general well being, people/society may develop and require members of the society to live by ethical principles that contribute to social well being—justice, equity, fairness and opportunity

Historical relativism holds that our understanding of human behavior and of social affairs generally is relative to our cultural perspective as mediated by our spatial-temporal location. Even our interpretation of ourselves is relative to our spatial-temporal location. In the area of human affairs, no objective, detached observation is possible because no human can stand outside of a spatial-temporal location to view any situation.

Limits of relativism: Amoral relativism contributes to a kind of indifference to the wellbeing of others. It contributes to the perpetuation of material deprivation and suffering of oppressed peoples. Ethical humanism requires a commitment to human welfare, whereas disinterest and non-action in the face of human suffering and want is immoral. The wellbeing of people ought to be respected. It is immoral to be indifferent toward the suffering of others; it is wrong to coerce people—to deliberately and forcefully interfere in the affairs of other people. People ought to enjoy a reasonable level of material existence.

Multicultural/Intercultural person: Refers to one who is characterized as situational in relationships with others and to cultural contexts. The person maintains indefinite boundaries of self while respecting the coherence, integrity, inherent validity, and logic of other cultural systems, recognizes the subjective constraints on identity, behavior, morality, personal place that are imposed by cultural systems and particular enculturation, and is ever in the process of reformulating or reevaluating cultural conceptions in the face of diverse contexts and situations.

Favorable conditions for intercultural contacts: Equal status, supportive social climate, intimate rather than superficial contact, contact sustained across time (consider frequency and duration) and across contexts, a pleasant or rewarding outcome, shared participation in functionally important activities or development of some common goals, and interaction within diverse contexts.

***Suggestions for learning another culture*:** Study of interrelationships between language, culture; study of non-Western cultures to appreciate the richness of human thought and life; develop empathy and active concern for other people by expanding interpersonal, cultural contacts, and by furthering intercultural education; recognize a different scale of values in non-Western cultures; seek the common humanity of people and avoid emphasis on cultural extremes; avoid relying on stereotypes as the basis for knowledge, and avoid applying ethnocentric norms in evaluations and interpretations.

***Interrogating representations*:** Social constructionists suggest that it is necessary to critique/analyze all images/ portrayals. This would include asking, who created this image/portrayal? How was it created? For whom was it created? Why was it created? What else is there to know about the object being represented that is not being presented in this particular portrayal? How is the portrayal being shaped by the values and interests of its source/creator? Is the portrayal shaped by careful investigation or by hearsay? And, who might represent the object differently? How could the object, indeed, be portrayed differently by others with different needs, or intentions, or goals?

Power refers to the ability of getting what one wants even in the face of opposition. Power is not evenly distributed across classes or groups and is evident in the following signs: who has the availability or the means to use and wield what kinds of signs; who learns how to use the "signs" properly; who gets a chance to use the signs with certain audiences; and who gets to say what will be taken as important.

EXERCISE 2:
Perspectives – Four Reference Points

A Parable and Exercise on Perspective:

A Parable from 1900 Century Russia –

SCENE ONE:

Woman	*Smiling, dreamily:* "Men are comic—strange and funny."
Narrator	*Not knowing whether this indicated praise or blame, I answered with neither agreement nor disagreement, saying:* "Could be!"
Woman	"Really, my husband's a jealous lover. Sometimes I'm sorry I married him."
Narrator	*I looked helplessly at her.* "Until you explain…," *I began.*

Woman	"Oh, I forgot that you haven't heard. About three weeks ago, I was walking home with my husband through the square. I had a large black hat on, which suits me awfully well, and my cheeks were quite pink from walking. As we passed under a street light, a pale, dark-haired fellow standing nearby glanced at me and suddenly took my husband by his sleeve."
QUESTION	What do we know so far? What is your cultural reading of this?
	[Note that the black hat communicates high class standing of someone with expensive, stylish clothes. Pink cheeks suggest youthfulness. Her mentioning this suggests something of self-perception or how she wishes to be considered. Color of hair is associated with physical features of Russians who are associated either with European parentage—light color—or to Turkish parentage—dark color.]
Woman	The dark-haired fellow said to my husband, "Would you oblige me with a light?" Alexander pulled his arm away, stooped down, and quicker than lightning, banged him on the head with a brick. He fell like a log. Awful!"'
Narrator	"Why, what on earth made your husband get jealous all of a sudden?"
Woman	*Shrugging her shoulders:* "I told you men are very comic."
SCENE TWO	
Narrator	*Bidding her farewell, I went out, and at the corner came across her husband.*
Husband	*Bursting out laughing:* "So, you've been talking to my wife. It was jolly lucky that brick came so pat into my hand. Otherwise, just think: I had about $500 dollars in my pocket, and my wife was wearing her diamond earrings."
QUESTION	What do we know now? On what cultural or personal factors may the husband's interpretation of the situation rest?
Narrator	"Do you think he wanted to rob you?"
Husband	"A man gets into your face in a deserted spot, asks for a light and gets hold of your arm. What more proof do you want?"
Narrator	*Perplexed, I left him and walked on.*
QUESTION	What do we know now? On what cultural or personal factors may the husband's truth and certainty rest?

SCENE	
THREE	
Friend	*Coming from behind:* "There's no catching you today. Hold up. I want to talk to you!"
Narrator	*I looked around and saw a friend I hadn't set eyes upon for three weeks.* "Lord!" *I exclaimed.* "What on earth has happened to you?!"
Friend	*Smiling faintly:* "Do you know whether any lunatics have been at large lately? I was attacked by one three weeks ago. I left the hospital only today."
Narrator	*With sudden interest:* "Three weeks ago? Were you sitting in the square?"
Friend	"Yes, I was. The most absurd thing happened. I was sitting in the square, dying for a smoke. No matches! After ten minutes or so, a gentleman passes with some old hag. He was smoking. I go up to him, touch him on the sleeve and ask in my most polite manner, 'Can you oblige me with a light?' And what do you think? The madman stoops down, picks up something, and the next moment I am lying on the ground with a broken head, unconscious. You probably read about it in the newspapers."
Narrator	*Looking at him earnestly*: "Do you really believe you met up with a lunatic?"
Friend	"I am sure of it!"
SCENE	
FOUR	
Narrator	Anyhow, afterwards I was eagerly digging in old back numbers of the local paper. At last I found what I was looking for: A short note in the accident column:
Newspaper	<u>Under the Influence of Drink</u> "Yesterday morning, the police patrolling the square found on a bench a young man whose papers show him to be of good family. He had evidently fallen to the ground while in a state of extreme intoxication, and had broken his head on a nearby brick. The distress of the wayward youth's parents must be indescribable.
QUESTION	What do we know now? On what socio-cultural factors guide the news writer in creating the story of the event. What "truth" stands behind the story? What is the basis of his "truth"?
	The End

Cultural Digest

One definition of culture is this: “Culture is the received standard for interpreting experience, for generating appropriate behavior, and for how to feel about the experience”.

Distinct individuals and distinct groups having specific identities and roles within the society we receive “scripts” in their observation and imitation of others (enculturation—learning what meaning to give to what is happening, what the appropriate decision(s) is that needs to be made in varying situations, what action(s) need to be taken in the situation given who they are in their social identity (gender, age, class, ethnic) and the roles allowed that identity. That includes expectations of “performance” – prescribed ways of acting (behaviors for differing social settings, actions, stances, intonation, gestures (nonverbals) that are considered appropriate or inappropriate. The expectations in the form of “norms” and “values” are internalized – known implicitly and shown explicitly in the ways they act.
Discussion:

Woman:

- What appears to be the self-understanding of the “Woman” as to what her role is? How does she show this in the ways she presents herself before others? What is your textual support for this –direct ways or inferred?
- What does her personal and culturally informed experience tell her about her Husband / Alexander? What does it tell her about the Dark-Haired Fellow / Young Man?
- In these two cases, what apparently are the culturally informed perceptions and cultural stereotypes at play – the kinds of behavior/emotions can be expected of people (men or women) of a certain type (bodily form, ancestry, ethnicity)?

Husband:

- What appears to be the self-understanding of the “Husband” as to what his role is? How does he show this in the ways he presents himself before others? What is your textual support for this –direct ways or inferred?
- What does his personal and culturally informed experience tell him about his wife (the Woman)?
- What does it tell her about the Dark-Haired Fellow / Young Man? In these two cases, what apparently are the culturally informed perceptions and cultural stereotypes at play – the kinds of behavior/emotions can be expected of people (men or women) of a certain type (bodily form, ancestry, ethnicity)?

Friend:

- What appears to be the self-understanding of the “Friend” as to what his role is? How does he show this in the ways he presents himself before others? What is your textual support for this –direct ways or inferred?
- Based on his perception of her “looks”, what does his personal and culturally informed experience tell him about his wife (the Woman)? What words does he use to describe her?

- How do those words differ from those used to describe the Husband? What kind of cultural bias may he be displaying?
- The Friend is drawing from cultural informed and personal experience to make sense of his experience. What is the sense that he makes of it (interprets the experience)? Identify the textual support for that – direct or inferred.

Newspaper (Editor or Journalist):

- The newspaper editor or journalist, also, is trying to make sense interpret the experience) of what he/she saw. How do you explain the drastic difference in this perspective from the three others?
- How is the editor's/journalist's role (public interpreter of public events) influenced by his/her apparent class, gender, and age culturally informed expectations. Why might those expectations be understood as arising out of stereotypes?

Feelings:

- If as it does, culture involves feelings, what are the range of feelings expressed for the same incident –feeling relative to the perspective of each person and the interpretation of each for the incident.

    - Those of the Woman/Wife
    - Those of the Husband/Lunatic
    - Those of the Dark-Haired Man/Young Man?
    - Those of the Friend?
    - Those of the Newspaper Editor/Journalist?
    - Those of the Narrator?

Takeaways:

- What do you feel from having read and considered the exercise?
- How has the exercise illuminated the definition of culture?
- What key words, ideas, or concepts might you wish to remember and apply in situations that you encounter?
- What questions does the exercise raise for you?

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