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COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE

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Understanding Cultures and Co-Cultures



What's To Come

- Understanding Cultures and Co-Cultures
- Components of Cultures and Co-Cultures
- How Culture Affects Communication
- Communicating with Cultural Awareness

Understanding Cultures and Co-Cultures

- Culture is the totality of learned, shared symbols, language, values, and norms that distinguish one group of people from another



Understanding Cultures and Co-Cultures

- People distinguish between in-groups and out-groups
 - In-groups are the groups of people with whom we identify
 - Out-groups are groups we see as different from ourselves
 - Being part of the out-group can be exciting, but it can also be stressful

Understanding Cultures and Co-Cultures

- We acquire our culture
 - Culture is different from ethnicity
 - Culture is different from nationality
 - The process of acquiring a culture is called “enculturation”



Understanding Cultures and Co-Cultures

- Co-cultures are groups of people who share values, customs, and norms related to mutual interests or characteristics
 - Co-cultures can reflect shared activities, beliefs, or characteristics
 - Co-cultures sometimes reflect a certain common lifestyle or vocation
 - Many people identify with multiple co-cultures
 - Many co-cultures thrive online

Components of Cultures and Co-Cultures



- Cultures vary in their symbols
 - A symbol is anything that represents an idea
 - Flags and national anthems are both examples of cultural symbols

Components of Cultures and Co-Cultures

- Cultures vary in their languages
 - Approximately 6,800 languages are used in the world today
 - Chinese, English, and Spanish—in that order—are the three most commonly spoken languages

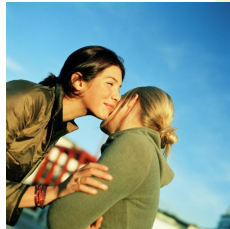
hello
مرحبا
Здравейте
你好
bon jour
γειά σου
halló

Components of Cultures and Co-Cultures

- Cultures vary in their values
 - A culture's values are the standards it uses to judge how good, desirable, or beautiful something is
 - U.S. American culture tends to value equal opportunity, material comfort, practicality and efficiency, achievement, democracy, free enterprise, and individual choice

Components of Cultures and Co-Cultures

- Cultures vary in their norms
 - Norms are rules or expectations that guide people's behavior in a culture
 - Greeting norms and norms for politeness often vary considerably across cultures



Components of Cultures and Co-Cultures

- Cultures vary in their norms

Sarah Attar became the first Saudi woman to compete in the 2012 Olympic track and field, wearing a headscarf, green long-sleeve shirt, and black leggings despite the 66-degree temperature.



She drew a huge roar of approval from the crowd of about 80,000 as she strode down the home stretch.



Components of Cultures and Co-Cultures



How Culture Affects Communication



- Individualistic and collectivistic cultures
 - Individualistic cultures believe their responsibility is to themselves
 - Collectivistic cultures believe their responsibility is to their communities

How Culture Affects Communication



How Culture Affects Communication

- Low-context and high-context cultures
 - People in low-context cultures are taught to communicate directly and to “say what they mean”
 - People in high-context cultures are taught to convey meaning through subtle behaviors and contextual cues rather than through verbal directness

How Culture Affects Communication



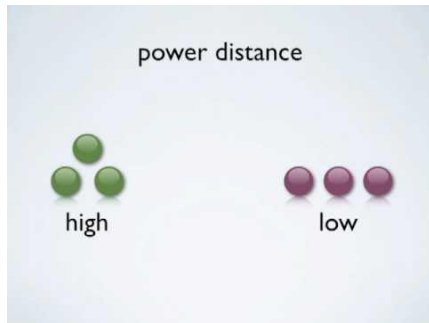
10 Surprising Ways To Offend People In Other Countries



How Culture Affects Communication: Power Distance

- Low-power-distance and high-power-distance cultures
 - People in low-power-distance cultures believe that no one person or group should have excessive power
 - In high-power-distance cultures, certain groups have great power and the average citizen has much less

How Culture Affects Communication: Power Distance



How Culture Affects Communication: Power Distance



Start
4:10

How Culture Affects Communication

- Masculine and feminine cultures
 - People in masculine cultures cherish traditionally masculine values and believe in gender-differentiated roles
 - People in feminine cultures cherish traditionally feminine values and tend not to believe in gender-differentiated roles

How Culture Affects Communication



- Monochronic and polychronic cultures
 - People in monochronic cultures view time as a finite commodity
 - People in polychronic cultures view time as more holistic and fluid and less structured

How Culture Affects Communication



How Culture Affects Communication

- Uncertainty-avoiding and uncertainty-accepting cultures
 - People in uncertainty-avoiding cultures are drawn to the familiar and are relatively unlikely to take risks
 - People in uncertainty-accepting cultures are open to novel situations and are accepting of people and ideas that are different from their own

Communicating with Cultural Awareness

- Be open-minded about cultural differences
 - Be mindful
 - Avoid ethnocentrism



Ethnocentrism: the word “Gentile”



Start
16:40

Ethnocentrism: the word “Gentile”

¹gentile 

noun | gen-tile | \ˈjɛn-tī(-ə)\

Simple Definition of GENTILE

Popularity: Bottom 50% of words

: a person who is not Jewish

Source: Merriam-Webster's Learner's Dictionary

Communicating with Cultural Awareness: Greeting Norms



Communicating with Cultural Awareness: Greeting Norms

- Male Russian leaders kiss.
- It's considered a societal norm.



Communicating with Cultural Awareness: Greeting Norms

- Male Russian leaders kiss.
- Male American leaders don't kiss. (The man hug!)



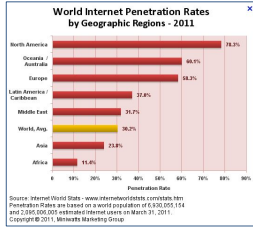
Communicating with Cultural Awareness

- Be knowledgeable about different communication codes
 - Cultures use different gestures
 - Cultures use different jargon
 - AWOL, 10-4, STAT, FAQ
 - Cultures use different idioms
 - See examples on next slide →

Communicating with Cultural Awareness

- *To pay through the nose*
- *Under the weather*
- *To be one card short of a deck*
- *Throw in the towel*
- *Step on it!*
- *Piece of Cake*
- *Spill the beans*

Communicating with Cultural Awareness



- Be flexible and respectful when interacting with others
 - Expect ambiguity
 - Appreciate differences in access to communication technology
 - Adapt to others

For Review

- What is culture?
- How does culture influence communication behavior?
- In what ways can we improve our cultural communication skills?
