

BASIC CONCEPTS OF CULTURE

Date: 07/02

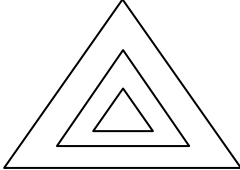
(1 HOUR)

- OBJECTIVES:**
1. Participants understand the basic concepts of culture.
 2. Participants are able to distinguish the various dimensions of culture.
 3. Participants understand the need for sensitivity to differences between cultures.

OVERVIEW FOR TRAINERS:

METHOD	TIME	KNOWLEDGE
<p>Role Play: Two people enter the transit area of an airport, one at a time.</p> <p>1st I'm tired. I left Japan about 16 hours ago. This will be a long layover. I guess I'll just lie down here and go to sleep. (Lies down on the floor, shuts his eyes, and sleeps comfortably.)</p> <p>2nd I'm tired. I left Los Angeles almost 16 hours ago. This will be a long layover. I wish I had somewhere to lie down. Oh well, I guess I'll sit here in this chair and try to get some sleep. (Struggles to sleep sitting up in the chair.)</p>	5"	<p>Two people from different cultures presented with the same set of circumstances view the situation and respond to it in two completely different ways. The person from Los Angeles sees the floor as dirty, and does not consider sleeping on the floor as an option. He feels embarrassment and disgust about sleeping on the floor and chooses instead to try to sleep sitting in a chair. The person from Japan sees the floor as clean, does not feel any embarrassment or disgust, and lies down on the floor to sleep.</p>
<p>----SHOW questions----</p> <p>S = What do you See? H = What is Happening? O = Does this happen in Our place? W = Why won't the person from Los Angeles sleep on the floor? How does he feel about sleeping on the floor? Why does he feel that way? Why doesn't the person from Japan have the same feelings? How might the person from Japan judge the actions of the person from Los Angeles? How might the person from Los Angeles judge the person from Japan?</p> <p>I. Three Dimensions of Culture A. Break into small groups and make a list of <i>attitudes, practices, and products</i> you might find in a culture that assumes that floors are dirty. Make a second list of <i>attitudes, practices, and products</i> that you might find in a culture that assumes that floors are clean. List findings on newsprint.</p>	20"	<p>I. Three Dimensions of Culture A. <i>In cultures where 'floors are dirty':</i> <u>Attitudes:</u> - Eating or sleeping on the floor is unsanitary. - Sleeping or eating on the floor is uncivilized. <u>Practices:</u> - Shoes are worn inside the house. - People sit on chairs. - People sleep on beds. - People eat at tables.</p>

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<p>B. Discuss the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What problems might these two men encounter in trying to relate to each other? 2. What kind of things might they argue about? 	10"	<p><u>Products:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shoes designed to be worn all day. - Chairs for every room: sofas, dining chairs, lawn chairs, etc. - Beds for people to sleep on: waterbeds, mattresses, air mattresses, hide-a-beds, etc. <p><i>In cultures where 'floors are clean':</i></p> <p><u>Attitudes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is unsanitary to make the floor dirty by wearing shoes indoors. - Those who wear shoes indoors are uncivilized. <p><u>Practices:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Take off shoes before going indoors. - Children play on the floor. - People sit and sleep on mats and cushions. <p><u>Products:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shoes that slip on and off easily. - Cushions and mats for sitting and sleeping. <p>B. Discussion</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Problems: Misunderstanding Negative judgments Emotional tension Arguments Alienation 2. Arguments: Why don't you take off your shoes before entering my house? Why don't you provide chairs so people can be comfortable?
<p>C. Show the <i>Three Dimensions of Culture</i> diagram describing the three dimensions of culture. Discuss the following questions: (questions based from Paul Hiebert)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The first dimension of culture is knowledge. How did the culture of these two people affect the way they perceived the objects in the room? 2. The second dimension of culture is feelings. What feelings did these two men have 	25"	<p>C.</p>  <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Knowledge: one saw the floor as a resource, the other did not. One valued the chair, the other saw no need for it. 2. Feelings: one felt uncomfortable because there was no place to lie down, and felt disgust for the person

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<p>about the circumstances in which they found themselves? How were their feelings different?</p> <p>3. The third dimension is values. How might these two men have judged each other? What values did they have in common? What values were different?</p>		<p>sleeping on the floor. The other person felt tired, but uninhibited about sleeping on the floor.</p> <p>3. The person from Los Angeles may have judged the person from Japan as uncivilized, and the person from Japan judged the person from Los Angeles as impractical.</p>
<p>II. Applying the Three Dimensions of Culture to Cross-Cultural Relationships</p> <p>A. Break into small groups and make a list of adaptations a person from a culture that views the floor as dirty might have to make in order to minister effectively among people who view the floor as clean (or vice versa). Include adaptations in all three categories of Hiebert's diagram. Report findings.</p>	10"	<p>II. <u>Applying the Three Dimensions of Culture to Cross-Cultural Relationships</u></p> <p>A. Adaptations from dirty to clean:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Find the validity in their way of thinking. 2. Resist judging them by my cultural standards. 3. Take off shoes before entering their home. 4. Buy shoes that can be slipped on and off easily. 5. Sit with them on the floor when visiting their homes. 6. Provide a place for people to leave their shoes outside my home. 7. Get rid of the chairs in my living room.

Reference: Materials from this lesson were adapted from: Paul Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1985.

ATTITUDE: Facilitators are sensitive to the thoughts, feelings, and values of participants from different cultural backgrounds.

SKILL: Participants are able to identify differences between cultures.

EVALUATION: Facilitators will know that participants have learned the content of this lesson when they show sensitivity to the thoughts, feelings, and values of people from different cultural backgrounds.

MATERIALS:

- Newsprint
- Marking pens
- Masking tape
- The Three Dimensions of Culture* diagram

The Three Dimensions of Culture

