

INTRODUCTION TO CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION 1

CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION 1

General information:

❖ **Course name:** CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION 1

❖ **Code:** ANH 0962

❖ **Compulsory course**

❖ **Prerequisite:** British culture 1, British culture 2, American culture 1, American culture 2

❖ **Objectives:**

This course introduces students to basic knowledge of intercultural communication theory, helping them to recognize differences in communication among individuals from different cultural backgrounds. It also assists students in enhancing their analytical, comparative, and reflective abilities, thereby fostering appropriate attitudes in communication with people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

OUTCOME STANDARDS

➤ Knowledge:

Students will be able to

- have basic knowledge of concepts in intercultural communication.
- have knowledge of principles in intercultural communication.
- have knowledge of cultural differences in the process of intercultural communication and intercultural conflicts.
- have knowledge of intercultural communication skills, methods to manage intercultural conflicts, and develop intercultural communication abilities.

OUTCOME STANDARDS

Skills:

Students will be able to

- to observe, describe, and explain intercultural communication behaviors based on learned theories
- have skills in analysis, critique, and evaluation in the process of understanding intercultural communication activities.
- have skills to control conflicts arising from cultural differences and resolve intercultural conflicts when they occur.
- have skills to self-study, research to update knowledge in the field of intercultural communication, and apply them appropriately.

OUTCOME STANDARDS

➤ **Autonomy and Responsibility:**

Students will be able to

- have the ability to develop an open-minded attitude, respect the differences of other cultures in intercultural communication.
- have the ability to recognize the cultural values of themselves and their community, adapt appropriately to intercultural communication contexts.
- have the ability to identify and resolve intercultural conflicts.
- have the ability to autonomously develop themselves in terms of knowledge and skills in intercultural communication.

CONTENT SUMMARY

Cross-cultural communication is a field of study investigating how people from differing cultural backgrounds communicate, in similar and different ways among themselves, and how they endeavor to communicate across cultures. Intercultural communication is a related field of study.

Cross-cultural deals with the comparison of different cultures. In cross-cultural communication, differences are understood and acknowledged, and can bring about individual change, but not collective transformations. In cross-cultural societies, one culture is often considered “the norm” and all other cultures are compared or contrasted to the dominant culture.

BRIEF INFO



Educational background:

- **Bachelor of Arts: Hue University**
- **Master of Arts: University of Languages and International Studies, Hanoi National University**
- **Doctor of Philosophy (NZ Aid Scholarship): Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand**

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CHAPTER 1: CROSS CULTURAL TERMS AND PRINCIPLES



CHAPTER 1: CROSS CULTURAL TERMS AND PRINCIPLES

TERMS

1. *Culture*: a shared background (for example, national, ethnic, religious) resulting from a common language and communication style, customs, beliefs, attitudes, and values. "Culture" in this text does not refer to art, music, literature, food, clothing styles, and so on. It refers to the informal and often hidden patterns of human interactions, expressions, and viewpoints that people in one culture share. The hidden nature of culture has been compared to an iceberg, most of which is hidden underwater. Like the iceberg, much of the influence of culture on an individual cannot be seen. The part of culture that is exposed is not always that which creates cross-cultural difficulties; the hidden aspects of culture have significant effects on behavior and on interactions with others.

CHAPTER 1: CROSS CULTURAL TERMS AND PRINCIPLES

2. *Communication*: the process of sharing meaning through verbal and nonverbal behavior.

CHAPTER 1: CROSS CULTURAL TERMS AND PRINCIPLES

3.

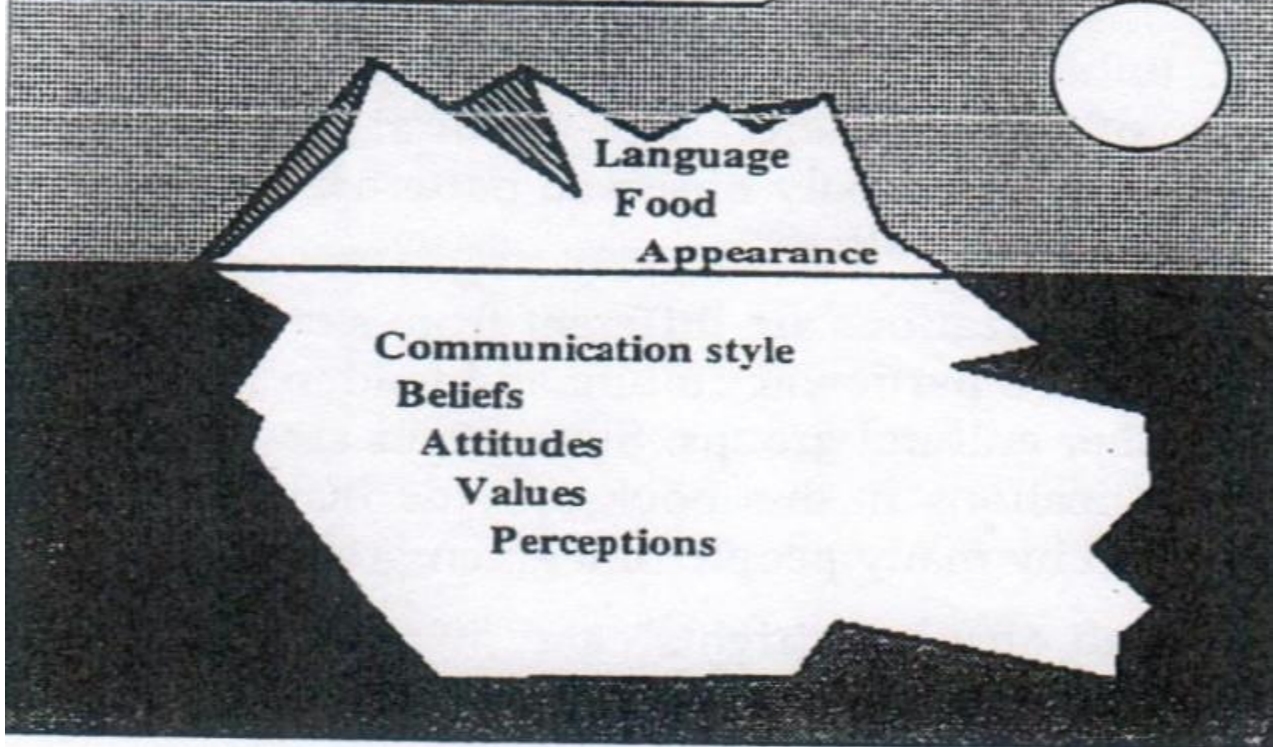
Cross-cultural communication: communication (verbal and nonverbal) between people from different cultures; communication that is influenced by cultural values, attitudes, and behavior; the influence of culture on people's reactions and responses to each other.

CHAPTER 1: CROSS CULTURAL TERMS AND PRINCIPLES

PRINCIPLES

1. Culture, unlike language, is not comprised of fixed rules that apply to all members of one culture. The cultural generalizations in this text are descriptions of commonly observed patterns; they may not hold true for every member of a given culture.
2. Cultural generalizations are different from stereotypes. The latter are applied to all members of a particular culture and tend to limit, rather than broaden, one's views of other cultural groups. Stereotypes are exaggerated images and beliefs. The generalizations in this book provide insight into learned behaviors often demonstrated by many people of a given group.
3. There are no absolute "rights" and "wrongs" implied in this textbook, only cultural differences. What is appropriate in one culture may be inappropriate in another culture.

"Culture is like an iceberg..."



SURFACE CULTURE

Food
Flags
Fashion
Games Dances
Performances Music
Language Festivals
Holidays Arts & Crafts
Literature

DEEP CULTURE

COMMUNICATION STYLE

Facial Expressions Gestures Touching
Eye Contact Space Tone Body Language
Conversational Patterns Emotion

NOTIONS of:

Courtesy Manners
Friendship Leadership
Cleanliness Modesty
Beauty

CONCEPTS of:

Self Time Past & Future
Fairness Justice Roles

ATTITUDES towards:

Elders Adolescents Dependents
Rule Expectations Work Authority
Cooperation Competition Animals
Age Sin Death

APPROACHES to:

Religion Courtship
Raising Children Marriage
Decision-Making
Problem-Solving

- The iceberg model helps to show us that a few easily visible elements of culture are above the surface but that below the surface lie the invisible and numerous elements that make up culture.
- Ethnocentrism is an important word to know; it indicates a mindset that your own culture is superior while others are inferior.
- Whether a culture values individualism or the collective community is a recurring dimension in many cross-cultural communication theories, including those developed by Hofstede, Trompenaars, and Ting-Toomey.
- Language can tell you a great deal about a culture.
- The intercultural development model helps demystify the change from monocultural mindsets to intercultural mindsets.

CHAPTER 2: CULTURAL INFLUENCES ON COMMUNICATION: VALUES



CHAPTER 2: CULTURAL INFLUENCES ON COMMUNICATION: VALUES

Culture can affect how people communicate in different ways. The ways in which we communicate are often influenced by the culture in which we were raised. For example, it may affect communication styles in aspects such as phrases, words, gestures, and languages used. Culture can also affect how people deliver information and their attitudes towards conflict.

Dimensions of culture

Power Distance

The power-distance dimension differentiates cultures by how they distribute power and prestige. In a high-power-distance culture, wealth and status are unequally distributed, and decision making lies in the hands of the elite. In a low-power-distance society, status is less marked, power is distributed more equally, and decision making is participatory. How is this difference likely to affect communication? In high-power-distance countries, the communication of respect and deference will be important, subordinates and superiors will differ in their communication behaviors, and freedom of contact between social classes will be limited. Rules will be set by those in power and accepted by those who are not. In contrast, in low-power-distance countries, communication roles will be less marked; each person will be given an equal voice, and rules will be mutually negotiated. According to G. Hofstede, south Asian countries (like Singapore and the Philippines) and some South American countries (like Brazil, Venezuela, and Colombia) have been classed as higher on the power-distance dimension than European middle-class democracies (like Austria, Denmark, and the Scandinavian countries). The United States is considered to be slightly lower than the median on power distance.

Individualism

Countries also differ in the value they place on individualism/collectivism. Collectivist countries emphasize what Stella Ting-Toomey calls a "we" identity; valuing shared interests, harmony, and collective judgement. Individualist countries, on the other hand, place a premium on an "I" identity, valuing personal identity, competition, and individual decision making. North American and European countries (like the United States, Canada, and Great Britain) are individualist, while many South American and Asian countries (like Venezuela, Peru, Taiwan, and Thailand) stress collectivism. The individualist countries value freedom, creativity, and economic incentive, but at the same time may inadvertently encourage materialism, alienation, and ecological arrogance. As for communication style, collectivist try to avoid conflict and, when this is impossible, use indirect styles of conflict resolution, while individualists are more confrontational and direct.

Collectivists also try to discourage individual accomplishment. In distributing rewards they are more likely to use an equality norm (where each member receives the same reward regardless of input) than an equity norm (where distribution is based on individual merit); in individualist countries the opposite is true. Because harmony is so important, collectivist cultures value obedience, emphasize smooth intergroup relations, and stress politeness. Family and interpersonal obligations are also important. As Ting-Toomey says, "To be attracted to a member of a collectivistic culture means to take on additional responsibilities and obligations toward the member's social networks."

Instrumental/ Expressive Orientation

Hofstede devised a system for classifying countries as either "masculine" or "feminine" in orientation. Because this division is based on the problematic assumption that there are distinctively male and female modes of behavior and social relations, we prefer to label the distinction as instrumental/ expressive orientation. Rather than referring to countries that value strength, aggression, and competition as "masculine", and those that value compassion, nurturance, and emotional expression as "feminine", we'll label the former "instrumental" and the latter "expressive". Hofstede classes Japan, many of the central European countries, and Britain, Ireland, and Australia in the first category, and the Scandinavian countries plus Chile, Portugal, and Thailand in the second. Hecht also notes that in the "instrumental" cultures, there tends to be a sharp division between the sexes in terms of power and expected communication behaviors. As a result, women who express themselves assertively and men who are emotionally expressive may have a difficult time communicating. Members of instrumental cultures may be perceived as uncaring, cold, and aggressive, however, in expressive countries. It isn't difficult to see how these kinds of differences can lead to serious misunderstandings.

Attitudes Toward Uncertainty

Hofstede also believes that countries differ in their attitude toward uncertainty or willingness to take risks. Some countries value risk, change, and freedom of thought, while others value stability, tradition, and authority. Among the countries that value risk and tolerate ambiguity are the United States, Great Britain, Denmark, and Sweden; among the more absolutist countries are Peru, Chile, Argentina, Spain, and Portugal. In the latter countries innovative thinking and risk-taking are likely to be viewed with suspicion. A member of a high-uncertainty culture like the United States may feel a great deal of frustration in trying to introduce new business practices in a low-uncertainty country and may, in turn, be perceived as too impatient, daring, and imprudent.

Reliance on Context

The fifth dimension classifies countries on their degree of context dependency in constructing and interpreting messages. Edward Hall has pointed out that in certain countries the meaning of a message lies as much in where and how it is said as in what it is said. The Chinese language, for example, is highly contextual. Past, present, and future are not usually grammatically marked; when a speaker talks about going somewhere, you have to know from context whether the speaker means that he or she already went, is about to go, or will go tomorrow. Chinese also has many homophones, words with different meanings that sound exactly alike. To understand a message in Chinese, you must be able to "guess" which meaning is intended. While the Oriental countries seem to be highest in context, Greece, Turkey and some of the Arab countries are also high-context. The Swiss, Germans, and North Americans belong to low-context cultures. Low-context cultures value precision, specificity, and clarity; members talk more, find highly verbal people attractive, and are relatively insensitive to nonverbal cues. People in high-context cultures often find low-context speakers loud and insensitive, while people in low-context cultures have trouble understanding why high-context speakers don't say what they mean [...]

Questions for discussion: p5-6

CHAPTER 3:

CULTURAL INFLUENCES ON TEACHING AND LEARNING

Cultural variations in styles of thinking

Culture influences the way we think about ourselves by shaping our social and cognitive development, defining abnormal behaviors, and influencing our worldview. Culture influences the way we think about ourselves through its impact on our values, beliefs, and social norms.

Cultures differ in their norms (what people are supposed to do in certain situations, e.g., greetings or what to eat) and values (what people regard as important, e.g., protecting the honor of the family or who to marry), but people from different cultures also differ in their thinking

Culture plays a significant role in influencing teaching and learning processes. Teachers need to understand how cultural specificity impacts the educational context in order to effectively communicate with students. Learning is a cultural process, shaped by the practices and tools developed within a community. Cultural variations impact language acquisition, including word choice, tone, and nonverbal cues, as well as attitudes towards learning a language. Teaching and learning culture is essential for acquiring knowledge and sociocultural behavior patterns. In the Moroccan context, cultural differences affect teaching practices and student motivation, with traditional teaching methods still being used. Understanding and embracing cultural diversity can lead to better communication, deeper learning, and increased student motivation .

Teachers know that students learn in different ways; the experience in the classroom confirms this every day. In addition, well-accepted theories and extensive research illustrate and document learning differences. Most educators can talk about learning differences, whether by the name of learning styles, cognitive styles, psychological type, or multiple intelligence. Learners bring their own individual approach, talents and interests to the learning situation. An individual learner's culture, family background, and socioeconomic level affect his or her learning. The context in which someone grows and develops has an important impact on learning.

These beliefs, principles and theories have an important impact on the opportunities for success for every student in our schools.

Culture encapsulates various aspects. There are a number of cultural factors, which have direct implications for teaching and learning. Teachers need to be responsive to individual ethnic groups' cultural values, practices, language, learning preferences, involvement and familial patterns.

Cultural gaps can cause teachers to misinterpret students' behavior, which can lead to conflict. These conflicts can have a range of effects: students feeling misunderstood or marginalized, higher rates of discipline referrals, and students leaving school altogether.

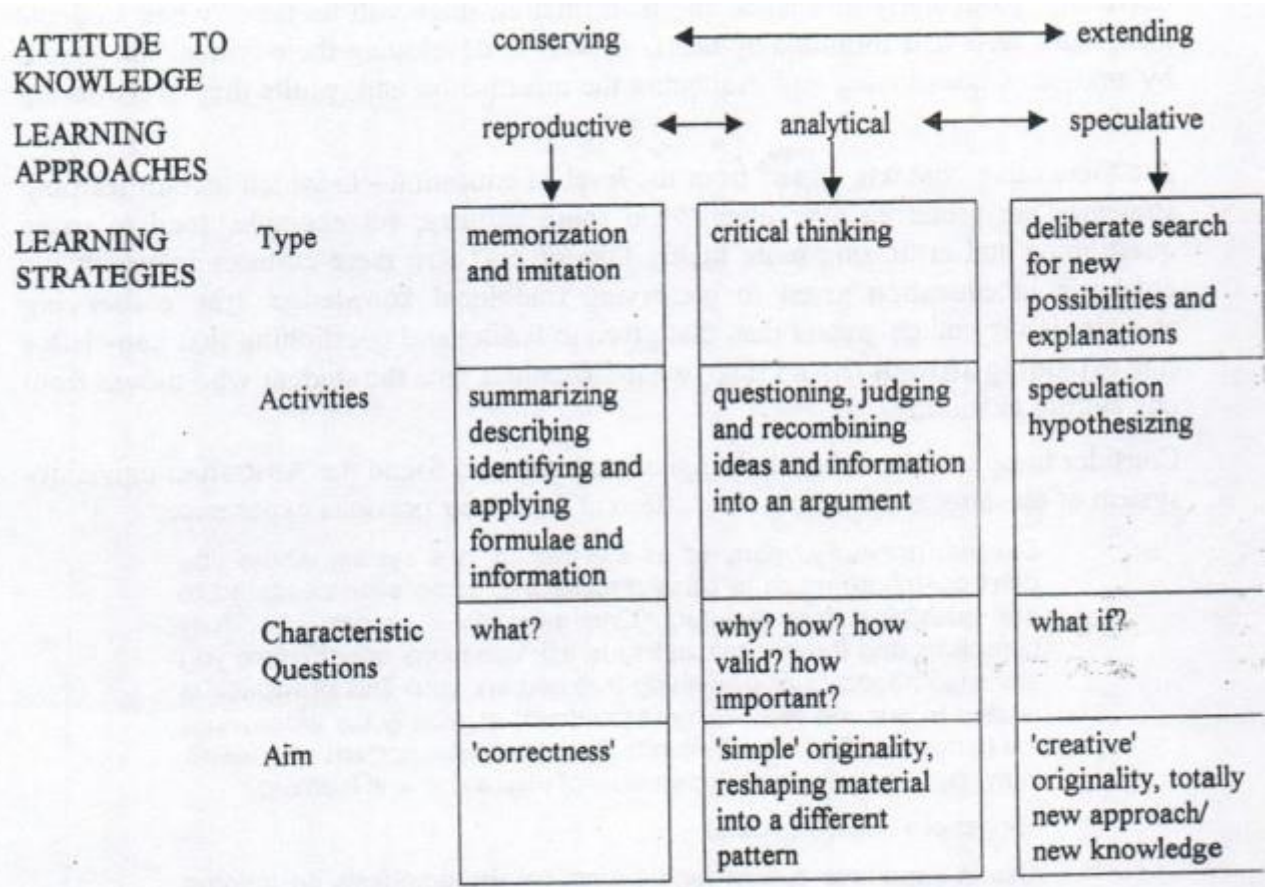


Figure 1 - Learning Styles

OTHER CULTURE	WESTERN CULTURE
Reproductive rote learning is dominant.	Analytical and sometimes speculative learning is expected.
Passive reception of information is expected.	Critical reception of information is expected in reading, writing and verbal interactions.
Memorisation and imitation is expected.	Analytical and critical thinking and sometimes speculating and hypothesizing.
Learning all information given.	Selective learning of key concepts and details.
Activities of summarising, identifying, describing and applying formulas and information.	Activities of questioning, judging, recombining ideas and information into an argument. Sometimes research activities.
Characteristic question is What?	Characteristic questions are Why? How? How valid? How important and sometimes What if?
Aim of learning is "correctness".	Aim is 'simple' originality and reshaping material into a different pattern. Sometimes 'creative' originality.
Reading source usually limited to one text and teacher notes.	Reading is widely expected.
Reading the text at great depth in great detail.	Skim and selective reading of many texts, articles and reports.
There are many limited resources available for student use in some countries e.g. libraries.	Extensive use of library and other resources (eg media, experts, colleagues) is expected.
Circular pattern of thinking and reasoning.	Logical linear patterns of thinking and development of logical arguments and opinions is expected.
The written word is seen as the truth and the goal of learning.	The written word is seen as a tool for learning.
Learning and studying in one's own language	Learning and studying in a second language.

OTHER CULTURE	WESTERN CULTURE
End of year exams.	Continuous assessment throughout the year or semester.
Exams the main or only mode of assessment	Exams only one form of assessment. Others are assignments, field trips, seminar paper presentations, orals, and some self assessment.
Exams are predominantly multiple choice tests, sometimes short answers to questions.	Exams usually involve writing essay type answers or problem solving.
Exams that test memory recall of knowledge and practical demonstration of skills.	Exams and assignments that test application of knowledge, ability to interpret and analyse and solve problems, ability to develop one's own logical arguments and convey own opinions. Sometimes independent research required. (speculative approach).
Information tested comes from lectures and teachers only.	The information tested comes from many sources (teacher, lectures, texts, media, experts, etc.).
Exam technique is not very important.	Exam techniques are essential: organization, understanding the question by identifying key words, presenting relevant information only, in the answer.
Attendance at class, and knowledge of information presented in class usually means success.	Class attendance and facts do not necessarily mean success. Knowledge from other sources and ability to apply knowledge and analyse and evaluate is necessary for success.
Ability to quote excessively or to use others' written work without reference is the essence of scholarship. (Ballad & Clanchy, pp. 24-25)	The total rejection of plagiarism. The need to express concepts in one's own words.

OTHER CULTURE	WESTERN CULTURE
The lecture is the medium of teaching and is well paced, clear stepped in stages.	Class activities, class projects, field trips, interviews, class discussion, small group discussion are additional teaching strategies.
Teacher provides all information required through notes and use of one main text	Teacher expects students to use other sources of information eg libraries, media, experts. The teacher will not provide all information required.
Equipment is scarce and used sparingly.	Equipment is used regularly eg overhead projectors, whiteboards, computers, videos.
Teachers closely supervise student work.	Teachers encourage independent learning and students are expected to take risks and initiatives.
Little opportunity to ask questions in class sessions.	Constant opportunity for questions and expectation that students do ask questions.
The use of one or two texts that are followed closely.	Perhaps no main text, but a teaching list is recommended. If there is a main text, it may not be closely followed.
Aim of teaching is simple transfer of knowledge and skills to students.	Aim is independent and critical styles of thinking, the development and capacity for theorising and abstraction in the student. Sometimes the development of speculative critical intelligence and expansion of knowledge base.
Expectation that students understand examples drawn from own culture.	Expectation that students understand examples from different Western cultures.
The written word is seen as the truth and the goal of learning.	The written word is seen as a tool for learning.
Pedagogy.	Androgogy

OTHER CULTURE	WESTERN CULTURE
Teacher is a respected authority figure whose viewpoint is accepted correct.	Teacher viewpoint is seen as one view-point only. It is expected that students compare a range of conflicting views.
Teacher authority and knowledge is	Teacher viewpoints expected to be

unchallenged and unquestioned.	challenged or questioned.
Teacher is usually expected to have a pastoral care role.	Teacher at tertiary institutions is not usually expected to have a pastoral care role.
Teacher is almost exclusive source of and transmitter of knowledge, guidance and assessment.	Teacher is the student's coordinator of student's learning resources, is a critical guide, a questioner and the principal source of assessment. Sometimes he is a collaborative learner with the student.
Teacher transmits information, demonstrates skills and imparts moral and social training.	Teacher analyses information and ideas within an interpretive framework and models the critical analytical approach required of students.

OTHER CULTURE	WESTERN CULTURE
Passive dependent student role.	Independence active student role. Expected to take responsibility for own learning, to take initiatives and risks.
Student is not expected to challenge or question the teacher.	It is acceptable for students to query and question the teacher.
Students are less inclined to seek assistance and clarification in learning process.	Students are expected to seek assistance as part of learning process. It is their responsibility to ask for assistance and clarification if required.
Role of listener in class and the recipient of written notes.	Role of listener in class but taking own notes simultaneously. Only limited notes, handouts provided.
Expected behavior of international student is to speak quietly and avoid disharmony.	Expected behavior is to speak in a raised voice so all can hear, and to engage in debate and arguments.
In many cultures, eye contact with teacher is disrespectful, especially if there is a gender difference.	Eye contact is expected of student when speaking and listening.

Questions for discussion: p15-16

Further reading p21-22

CHAPTER 4: CULTURE AND VERBAL COMMUNICATION



Intrapersonal Communication



Interpersonal Communication



Small Group Communication



Public Communication



Mass Communication

Verbal communication: In this type of communication, words are employed to transmit ideas or information. This can be done in the form of verbal interactions or through written or text messages such as letters, e-mails, telegrams, SMS and other contemporary modes of transmission.

- Culture in communication can be seen as the invisible glue that binds people together. It influences how we think, feel, and behave, both in our personal lives and in our professional interactions.
- People with different cultures may have different values or beliefs about communication. This can impact how people communicate, both verbally and non-verbally. Additionally, different cultures may have different rituals or traditions around communication that can be difficult to understand or incorporate into business practices. By understanding the effects of culture on communication, businesses can improve their skill sets for working with a multinational company.

➤ Culture in communication can improve one's skill set for working with people from different cultures. For example, when interacting with someone from a different culture, it is essential to be aware of their cultural norms and how they communicate. By understanding the culture, one can better relate to the person and have a more productive conversation. This can also lead to better business outcomes as well as improved relationships between individuals.

Cultural differences that manifest in communication refer to the variations observed between people engaging in a conversation due to differences in their values, beliefs, norms, and behaviors. One can address these differences and communicate effectively by being more culturally sensitive.

Cultural variation refers to the rich diversity in social practices that different cultures exhibit around the world. Cuisine and art all change from one culture to the next, but so do gender roles, economic systems, and social hierarchy among any number of other humanly organised behaviours.

Self-study: Reading text p23-28

Verbal Communication Skills



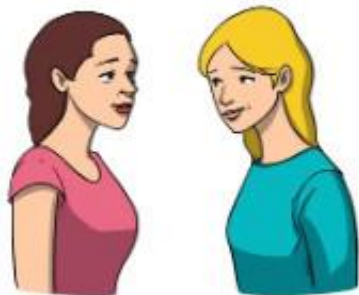
Listen Before Speaking



Read and Write



Talk with an objective



Eye Contact



Confidence



Open-Mindedness

SUMMARY

Advantages:

- It is the most convenient mode of communicating information.
- It helps in conveying messages with clarity and precision.
- It is the most confidential medium of interaction.
- Verbal communication helps in easier comprehension.
- Instant feedback can be received.

SUMMARY

Disadvantages:

- Verbal communication holds no proof of the conversation held unless it is recorded.
- Emotions during the conversation can twist the intended meaning of the message.
- Verbal communication can get lengthy and hence distort the purpose of the conversation.
- The messages sent across can be misinterpreted.
- In verbal communication, there is no going back. Everything is said and done and the person has to live with the consequences of the words spilt.

CHAPER 5: CULTURE AND NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Types of Non-verbal Communication



Facial Expression & Silence



Olfactics (smell)



Chronemics (time)



Vocal Intonations



Body Gestures



Haptics (touch)

Nonverbal communication expresses meaning or feeling without words. Universal emotions, such as happiness, fear, and sadness, are expressed in a similar nonverbal way throughout the world. There are, however, nonverbal differences across cultures that may be a source of confusion for foreigners. Let's look at the way people express sadness. In many cultures, such as the Arab and Iranian cultures, people express grief openly. They 'mourn out loud, while people from other cultures (e.g., China and Japan) are more 'subdued. In Asian cultures, the general belief is that it is unacceptable to show emotion openly (whether sadness, happiness, or pain).

1. Gesture and Body positioning

The way a person holds their body can say a lot about their intentions. The sitting or standing posture, the subtle body movements, the hand positions and leg positions etc. are very defining during a conversation.

For example, when someone has a closed body posture that includes folding their legs or hands in front of their chest or crossing their legs over when sitting on a chair, this can indicate that the person is nervous or experiences social anxiety.

Gestures are specific body movements that carry meaning. Hand motions alone can convey many meanings: "Come here," "Go away," "It's O.K.," and "That's expensive!" are just a few examples. The gestures for these phrases often differ across cultures. For example, beckoning people to come with the palm up is common in the United States. This same gesture in the Philippines, Korea, and parts of Latin America as well as other countries is considered rude. In some countries, only an animal would be beckoned with the palm up.

As children, we imitate and learn to use these nonverbal movements to accompany or replace words. When traveling to another country, foreign visitors soon learn that not all gestures are universal. For example, the "O.K." gesture in the American culture is a symbol for money in Japan. This same gesture is obscene in some Latin American countries. (This is why the editors of a Brazilian newspaper enjoyed publishing a picture of a former American president giving the "O.K." symbol with both hands!)

2. Facial expressiveness

Facial expressiveness carry meaning that is determined by contexts and relationships. For instance, the smile, which is typically an expression of pleasure, has many functions. A woman's smile at a police officer does not carry the same meaning as the smile she gives to a young child. A smile may show affection, convey politeness, or 'disguise true feelings'. It also is a source of confusion across cultures. For example, many people in Russia consider smiling at strangers in public to be unusual and even 'suspicious behavior. Yet many Americans smile freely at strangers in public places (although this is less common in big cities). Some Russians believe that Americans smile in the wrong places; some Americans believe that Russians don't smile enough. In southeast Asian cultures, a smile is frequently used to cover emotional pain or embarrassment. Vietnamese people may tell a sad story but and the story with a smile.

Our faces reveal emotions and attitudes, but we should not attempt to "read" people from another culture as we would "read" someone from our own culture. The degree of facial 'expressiveness one 'exhibits varies among individuals and cultures. The fact that members of one culture do not express their emotions as openly as do members of another does not mean that they do not experience emotions. Rather, there are cultural restraints on the amount of nonverbal expressiveness permitted. For example, in public and in formal situations many Japanese do not show their emotions as freely as Americans do. More privately and with friends, Japanese and Americans seem to show their emotions similarly. Many teachers in the United States have a difficult time knowing whether their Japanese students understand and enjoy their lessons. The American teacher is looking for more facial 'responsiveness than what the Japanese student is comfortable with in the classroom situation.

3. Eye contact

Eye contact is important because 'insufficient or 'excessive eye contact can create communication barriers. In relationships, it serves to show 'intimacy, attention, and influence. As with facial expressions, there are no specific rules governing eye behavior in the United States, except that it is considered rude to stare, especially at strangers. In parts of the United States, however, such as on the West Coast and in the South, it is quite common to 'glance at strangers when passing them. For example, it is usual for two strangers walking toward each other to make eye contact, smile, and perhaps even say, "Hi," before immediately looking away. This type of contact doesn't mean much; it is simply a way of acknowledging another person's 'presence. In general, Americans make less eye contact with strangers in big cities than in small towns. People would be less likely to make eye contact in bus stations, for example, than in more comfortable settings such as a university student center.

Patterns of eye contact are different across cultures. Some Americans feel uncomfortable with the "gaze" that is sometimes associated with Arab or Indian communication patterns. For Americans, this style of eye contact is too intense. Yet too little eye contact may also be viewed negatively, because it may convey a lack of interest, inattention, or even 'mistrust. The relationship between the lack of eye contact and mistrust in the American culture is stated directly in the expression, "Never trust a person who doesn't look you in the eyes." In contrast, in many other parts of the world (especially in Asian countries), a person's lack of eye contact toward an authority figure 'signifies respect and deference.

4. Conversational distance

Unconsciously, we all keep a comfortable distance around us when we interact with other people. This distance has had several names over the years, including "personal space," "interpersonal distance," "comfort zone," and "body bubble." This space between us and another person forms 'invisible walls that define how comfortable we feel at various distances from other people.

The amount of space changes depending on the 'nature of the relationship. For example, we are usually more comfortable standing closer to family members than to strangers. Personality also determines the size of the area with which we are comfortable when talking to people. 'Introverts often prefer to interact with others at a greater distance than do 'extroverts. Cultural styles are important too. A Japanese employer and employee usually stand farther apart while talking than their American 'counterparts. Latin Americans and Arabs tend to stand closer than Americans do when talking.

. For Americans, the usual distance in social conversation ranges from about an arm's length to four feet. Less space in the American culture may be 'associated with either greater intimacy or 'aggressive behavior. The common practice of saying, "Excuse me," for the slightest 'accidental touching of another person reveals how uncomfortable Americans are if people get too close. Thus, a person whose "space" has been 'intruded upon by another may feel 'threatened and react defensively. In cultures where close physical contact is acceptable and even desirable, Americans may be perceived as cold and distant.

Culture does not always determine the message of nonverbal communication. The individual's personality, the context, and the relationship also influence its meaning. However, like verbal language, nonverbal language is 'linked to a person's cultural background. People are generally comfortable with others who have "body language" similar to their own. One research study demonstrated that when British graduate students imitated some Arab patterns of nonverbal behavior (making increased eye contact, smiling, and directly facing their Arab partners), the Arabs felt that these students were more likeable and trustworthy than most of the other British students.

SUMMARY

Using non-verbal gestures can be a great way for various reasons like emphasizing your point, putting across a strong argument, complementing your verbal message, appearing confident and collected and so. But during some instances, this smart hack also has the potential to go wrong. The non-verbal cues we send across might convey the wrong meaning sometimes. Slouchy body posture, fidgeting and overuse of hand gestures might be perceived as rude, distant or offensive due to some of the negative cues we give out.

Non-verbal communication may take place through face-to-face communication. In this case, the space between the communicator and the recipient may also have meaning in terms of communication. For example, the closeness of the communicants may show that the information being shared is either secret or private and confidential and when the communicants are far from each other it may mean there is no privacy of the information being shared; the information may be general. There are other cultural connotations of nonverbal communication. Just to mention a few examples; looking directly into the eyes means some kind of disrespect in some parts of Africa and other nations, while it is a sign of being attentive in America. Other cultures consider the body odor as normal while others dislike it.

CHAPTER 6: INTERPERSONAL AND INTERGROUP COMMUNICATION



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The amount of space changes depending on the 'nature of the relationship. For example, we are usually more comfortable standing closer to family members than to strangers. Personality also determines the size of the area with which we are comfortable when talking to people. 'Introverts often prefer to interact with others at a greater distance than do 'extroverts. Cultural styles are important too. A Japanese employer and employee usually stand farther apart while talking than their American 'counterparts. Latin Americans and Arabs tend to stand closer than Americans do when talking.

. For Americans, the usual distance in social conversation ranges from about an arm's length to four feet. Less space in the American culture may be 'associated with either greater intimacy or 'aggressive behavior. The common practice of saying, "Excuse me," for the slightest 'accidental touching of another person reveals how uncomfortable Americans are if people get too close. Thus, a person whose "space" has been 'intruded upon by another may feel 'threatened and react defensively. In cultures where close physical contact is acceptable and even desirable, Americans may be perceived as cold and distant.

Culture does not always determine the message of nonverbal communication. The individual's personality, the context, and the relationship also influence its meaning. However, like verbal language, nonverbal language is 'linked to a person's cultural background. People are generally comfortable with others who have "body language" similar to their own. One research study demonstrated that when British graduate students imitated some Arab patterns of nonverbal behavior (making increased eye contact, smiling, and directly facing their Arab partners), the Arabs felt that these students were more likeable and trustworthy than most of the other British students.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Individual, personal identity

Describe yourself as an individual. That is, what are your personal characteristics in comparison with other people? Some examples are: happy/ sad; energetic/ lazy; clam/ anxious; noisy/ quiet; timid/ brave; introverted/ extroverted... etc.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of your personal identity?

Does your personal identity influence your communication with people? In what ways?

SELF-STUDY: INRERGROUP COMMUNICATION

READ P46-48

CULTURAL CONFLICT

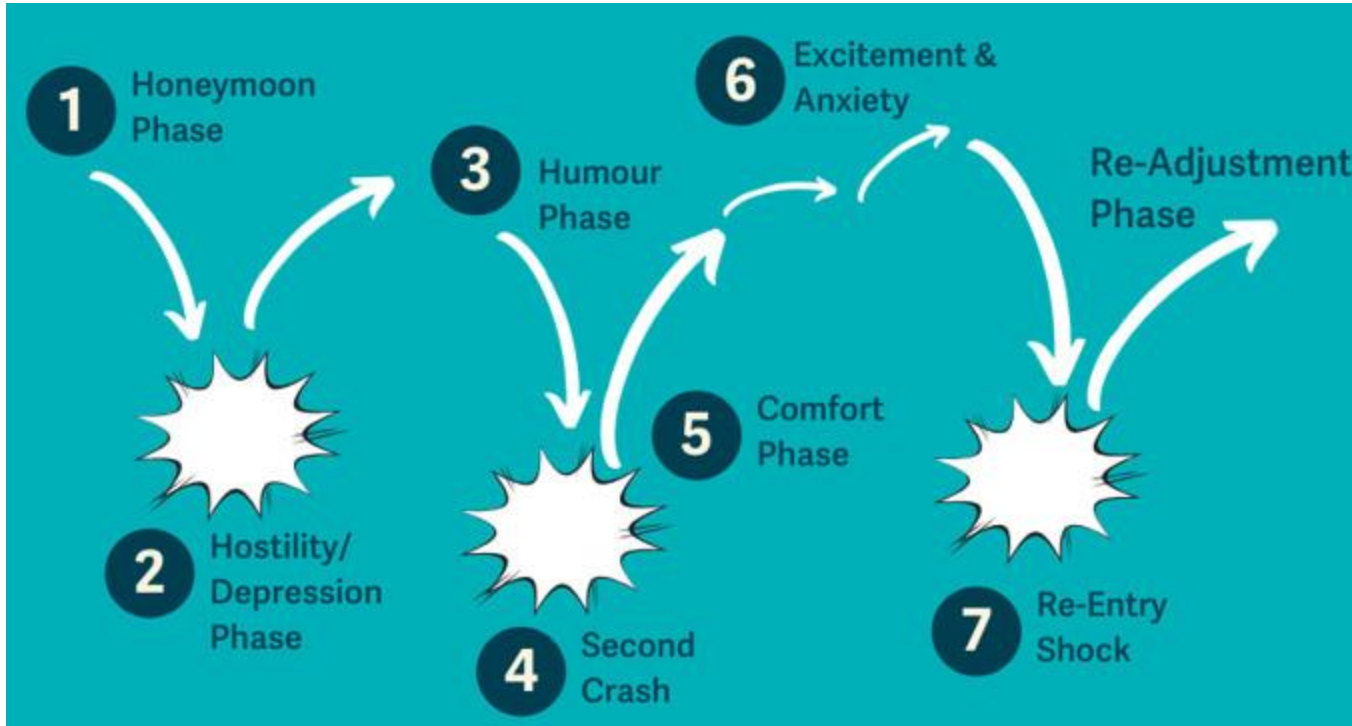
A cultural conflict is a dislike, hostility, or struggle between communities who have different philosophies and ways of living, resulting in contradictory aspirations and behaviors. Cultural conflict is a type of conflict that occurs when different cultural values and beliefs clash. Broad and narrow definitions exist for the concept, both of which have been used to explain violence (including war) and crime, on either a micro or macro scale.

COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE

"Intercultural Communication" is communication between members of different cultures. This definition is simple, but the process is *complex*. Intercultural communication involves differing perceptions, attitudes, and interpretations. We know that even two people from the same culture can have communication problems. People can *unintentionally* hurt each other by something they say or do. Isn't it logical, then, that communication problems can be *compounded* among people who do not have the benefit of shared experiences (i.e., language and culture)?

Cultures do not communicate; individuals do. Everyone has a unique style of communication, but cultures determine a general style for their members. The relationship of the individual to his culture is analogous to an actor and his director. The actor puts his own personality into his acting but is nevertheless influenced by the director. We are not always aware of the *subtle* influences of our culture. Likewise, we may not perceive that others are influenced by their cultures as well.

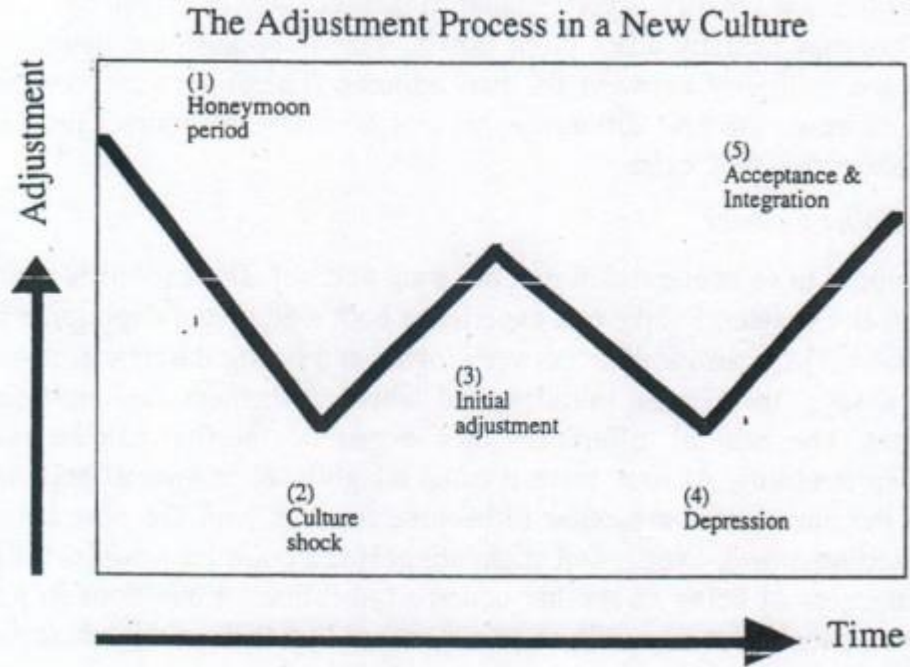
Cultural shock





“A fish out of water” is used to describe someone who is living in a new culture. Such a person will experience a variety of emotional “ups and downs” lasting from weeks to years.

Adjustment process



How do people know that they are having problems adjusting to the new culture?
Typical "symptoms" include the following:

1. Homesickness
2. Inability to work well
3. Too much eating, drinking, or sleeping
4. Anger toward the members of the new culture
5. Glorifying the native culture and emphasizing the negative in the new culture
6. Withdrawal and avoidance of contact with people from the new culture
7. Lack of ability to deal with even small problems.

! One of the most important things a newcomer can do to facilitate adjustment is to try to develop social relationships with people from one's own country, with other newcomers, and with members of the new culture. It is essential to try to develop a group of people with whom one can share new experiences. This is perhaps one of the fastest ways to begin to feel more at ease in another country.

Sometimes newcomers are eager to integrate and choose to give up their own culture. (Some people refer to this as "going native."). Others are fearful of cultural change and cling even more strongly to their own cultural traditions. Both giving up one's own culture and clinging to one's traditions may be extreme behavior. Studies on cross-cultural adjustment suggest that maintaining a balance between two cultural patterns of behavior and beliefs can be helpful in the long term.

If newcomers try to become aware of cultural differences and make some modifications without attempting to change their basic personality, they will probably adjust fairly well to the new society. Especially in the United States, where there is already so much diversity, the newcomer doesn't need to become a "carbon copy" of an American in order to be a part of the society. Newcomers can retain their individuality while becoming aware of differences. And, of course, some changes will have to be made. Feeling like a "fish out of water" shouldn't last forever.

CHAPTER 7: IMPROVING INTERGROUP COMMUNICATION



A group of people's character traits, insights, spirituality, food, art forms, and behavioral patterns are often considered their culture. When such people actively engage with individuals outside their culture efficiently and successfully, it's referred to as **cross-cultural competence.**

Cross-cultural competency is the capacity to comprehend and engage with people from a variety of cultures, not just one. Whether you're at work, in school, traveling, or reaching out in a foreign cultural setting, if you're displaying appropriateness and effectiveness in your conduct, you're cross-culturally competent.

Examples of Cultural Competence

Picking up a few words of the local language while traveling abroad to try and show some respect to the local culture.

Learning about other languages, including their communication styles and styles of expression.

Understanding social norms from different cultures.

Why do we need to develop cultural competence?

Developing cultural competence helps us understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across cultures. It gives us the ability to compare different cultures with our own and better understand the differences. Unconsciously, we bring our own cultural frame of interpretation to any situation. This is not to say that culture alone determines how one interprets a situation. One's own unique history and personality also play an important role (Hofstede, 2002).

Developing cross-cultural attitudes allows one to develop skills for better engaging with people from all kinds of cultures. Cross-cultural skills demonstrated through the ability to communicate with respect; recognize others' values, accept knowledge, skills, and talents; and tolerate, engage, and celebrate the success of others.

Cross-cultural attitude strategies that help develop and enhance one's ability to practice effective communication in intercultural situations:

- **Practice openness** by demonstrating acceptance of difference.
- **Be flexible** by demonstrating acceptance of ambiguity.
- **Demonstrate humility** through suspension of judgment and the ability to learn.
- **Be sensitive to others** by appreciating cultural differences.
- **Show a spirit of adventure** by showing curiosity and seeing opportunities in different situations.
- **Use a sense of humor** through the ability to laugh at ourselves.
- **Practice positive change or action** by demonstrating a successful interaction with the identified culture.

Strategies for the Enhancement of Cross-Cultural Competence

- 1.Attend Diversity-Focused Training or Conferences. ...
- 2.Have an Open Mind. ...
- 3.Be Sensitive to Others. ...
- 4.Show a Spirit of Adventure. ...
- 5.Be Adaptable. ...
- 6.Demonstrate a Sense of Humility. ...
- 7.Practice Positive Change. ...
- 8.Have a Good Sense of Humor.

Tips for Managing Cultural Differences

1. Embrace Effective Communication is the cornerstone of any successful project, especially in international settings.

2. Manage Inter-Cultural Workplace Conflicts

Diverse workplaces frequently encounter conflicts, and the presence of various nationalities can sometimes amplify these tensions. Effectively resolving these issues requires a nuanced approach that takes cultural sensitivities into account. It can be helpful to seek mediation or input from individuals who have a deep understanding of the cultural nuances involved. For instance, disputes may emerge related to intercultural differences in communication styles, hierarchy, or decision-making processes. To ensure that the work continues smoothly, and mutual respect is maintained, it is advisable to establish cross-cultural awareness and sensitivity training programs. These programs can help employees better understand and appreciate the diverse perspectives within the organization, ultimately fostering a more inclusive and harmonious workplace.

Tips for Managing Cultural Differences

3. Prioritize Effective Time Management

Time management can differ significantly across cultures. While some regions may prioritize punctuality, others might have a more relaxed approach to time.

4. Build Relationships and Trust

Relationships and trust are paramount. Establishing strong relationships with your colleagues and partners is not just a formality but a critical component of doing business. Investing time in building trust can pay dividends in the long run, as it fosters collaboration, resolves conflicts more easily, and ensures the success of your international projects.

5. Respect Local Customs

Respect for local customs and traditions is fundamental when working on international projects. In the Middle East, these customs can range from traditional greetings and dress codes to religious observances and business etiquette. It's essential to be aware of these customs and adhere to them to show respect for your colleagues and partners.

SUMMARY

Verbal and nonverbal cultural communications are ways through which information is passed from an individual or group of individuals to others. These communications can take place across cultures. Nonverbal communication includes dancing, clothes amongst others. Nonverbal signs are interpreted differently subject to the cultural background of different societal individuals. Nonverbal communications can be used to support verbal communications to give deeper meanings to information being communicated. Verbal communication in most cases involves the use of sound. It can either take place face-to-face, over the internet, radios, televisions, or phones. Verbal communication comes in different dialects which are usually understood by respective members of a particular culture.

Revision exercises

Read the following passage and mark the letter A, B, C or D on your answer sheet to indicate the correct word or phrase that best fits each of the numbered blanks.

In contrast/ who/ useful / sense/ encouraged/

Culture has a strong influence on non-verbal communication. Even the simple act of looking someone in the eye is not at all that simple. In the USA, Americans are (1) _____ to look directly at people when speaking to them. It shows interest in what they are saying and is thought to carry a (2) _____ of honesty. Meanwhile, in Japan and Korea, people avoid long periods of eye contact. It is considered more polite to look to the side during a conversation. The Lebanese, (3) _____, stand close together and look intensely into each other's eyes. The action shows sincerity and gives people a better sense of what their counterparts want. Given such differences with even the most common expressions, people (4) _____ travel or work abroad have a real need to learn the other culture's body language. People tend to be unaware of the messages they are sending to others. So, it is (5) _____ to consider your own body language before dealing with people from other cultures. Knowing about the body language of friends, clients, and colleagues can be very helpful in improving understanding and avoiding miscommunication.

Read the text and do the following exercise



Are we losing the art of conversation?



We asked four people who watched an online talk on technology and communication by Sherry Turkle for their opinions.

A The talk certainly gave me plenty of food for thought about the way we communicate these days and how technology is changing our behaviour. People are constantly multitasking, whether it be emailing during meetings or texting in the checkout queue. I really believe it's affecting the way we relate to each other and it's not just in the workplace. Kids fade into the background as parents message at the dinner table or post on social networks during the school run. It's as if we can't bear to miss out on what our online buddies are up to, so we juggle the real and online world. My greatest concern is that we don't give our brains a chance to switch off. It's these precious moments when we actually process information that helps us make important decisions.

It was a fascinating talk and the speaker really hit the nail on the head with a couple of things. Take parental influence, for instance. How can we expect teenagers not to text while doing their homework when they witness their parents posting on social media while cooking the evening meal or waiting at a red light? She also made a valid point about people wanting to be in two or several places at once. So they switch back and forth between their real-life and online conversations. I see it all the time with my teenage daughter and her friends. They arrange to meet and then sit together in silence while each one engages in a different conversation online.

B

C So much of what the speaker said rang true. I honestly believe there's a danger that the more connected we are, the more isolated we feel. I don't think this is such an issue for my generation who've lived without technology for so long. We know how to be alone and, more importantly, we know that it's OK to be alone. But the under 20s are another kettle of fish. They're so busy communicating that they never experience the feeling of solitude and run the risk of not learning how to enjoy their own company. In addition, they're learning conversation through messages that can be edited and changed at the expense of learning the art of real conversation in real time with the person in front of you.

I'm not sure to what extent I agree that people are more alone, but the way we communicate has certainly evolved. We send tiny snippets of conversation or emoticons to each other and I wonder how much this actually allows us to really understand one another. This superficial conversation is replacing in-depth face-to-face interaction with its pauses, intonation and sentiment. The speaker makes a good point about how we're getting used to conversing with machines like Siri or robots, which are totally devoid of any experience of human life. But despite such limitations, we seem to be expecting more from technology and less from each other.

D

Circle the correct definition of each word in CAPITALS. Look at the word in context to help you.

1. Parents message at the dinner table or use social media during the SCHOOL RUN.
 - a. driving children to school
 - b. children running in a race at school
 - c. children taking part in a school competition
2. It's as if we can't bear to miss out on what our online BUDDIES are up to ...
 - a. celebrities
 - b. friends
 - c. enemies
3. ... so we JUGGLE the real and online world.
 - a. ignore
 - b. improve
 - c. do several things at once
4. The speaker made a VALID point.
 - a. interesting
 - b. difficult to disagree with
 - c. complicated and contradictory

5. Parents post on social media while cooking dinner or waiting at a RED LIGHT.
 - a. traffic light
 - b. street light
 - c. zebra crossing

6. I don't think addiction to social media is such an ISSUE for my generation.
 - a. connection
 - b. expression
 - c. problem

7. We send tiny SNIPPETS of conversation or emoticons to each other when texting.
 - a. big pieces
 - b. small pieces
 - c. insults, rude words

8. This superficial conversation is replacing IN-DEPTH face-to-face interaction.
 - a. never-ending
 - b. superficial
 - c. deep and detailed

Cross-Cultural Communications



Thank You for your attention !
