Crossing Cultures in the Classroom

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Inadvertently, Roy dooms the entire earth to destruction when, in an attempt to be friendly, he seizes their leader by the head and shakes vigorously.
Importance of Cultural Awareness

- The Health Care Professional. Medical Care, Vol. 41, No. 7 (Jul., 2003), pp. 859-870
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Andrews and Cultural Diversity

- 3366 students, 885 are international from 92 countries.
- Tied for second in the nation for campus ethnic diversity and tied for seventh in highest percentage of international students (compared to other national universities, according to U.S. News & World Report 2016).
- NSSE data suggest AU students are more likely to have friends and interact with people from different cultural backgrounds than the other schools surveyed.
- Yet less likely to include diverse perspectives in course discussions, to have examined the strengths or weaknesses of their own view of an issue, or tried to imagine how an issue looks from someone else’s perspective.
What cultural differences have you experienced in the classroom or in personal interactions with students or faculty?
Culture—what is it?

A more or less integrated system of learned behaviors, values, feelings and ideas shared by a group.

Culture—what is it?
Culture—what is it?

“Operating System” of life
“Layers” of Culture
“Layers” of Culture
“Layers” of Culture

- Behavior
- Values
- Beliefs
- Customs
“Layers” of Culture

“Worldview”
(underlying assumptions)
Barriers to Cultural Awareness

Culture is largely unconsciously absorbed rather than explicitly explained.
Culture is reinforced by the group.
Culture provides shortcuts:
- Stereotyping
- Negative Attribution
Culture is deeper than just behaviors.
No culture is superior to any other culture. No culture is inferior to any other culture. All cultures are corrected by the Gospel.
Ms. Anderson: Hassan was looking at your paper.
Abdullah: He was?
Ms. Anderson: Yes. He copied some of your answers.
Abdullah: Perhaps he didn’t know the answers.
Ms. Anderson: I’m sure he didn’t.
Abdullah: Then it’s lucky he was sitting next to me.
How would you handle this scenario in your classroom? What stereotypes or negative attribution would naturally come to mind from your cultural background? What alternative explanations could be given for Abdullah’s response?
Cultural Values

Time Orientation......................Event Orientation
Task Orientation......................Relationship Orientation
Individualistic Orientation........Group Orientation
Equality Orientation.................Hierarchy Orientation
Achieved Status........................Ascribed Status
Competitive Orientation......Cooperative Orientation
Change Orientation.............Traditional Orientation
Direct Orientation..................Indirect Orientation
Open Orientation....................Closed Orientation
Cultural Values

Time Orientation

Event Orientation
Cultural Values

Relationship Orientation

Task Orientation
Cultural Values

Individualistic Orientation

Group Orientation
Cultural Values

Hierarchy Orientation

Equality Orientation
Cultural Values

Achieved Status

Ascribed Status
Cultural Values

Competitive Orientation

Cooperative Orientation
Cultural Values

Change Orientation

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Cultural Values

Direct Orientation

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Cultural Values

Open Orientation

Closed Orientation
Cultural Values

Time Orientation .................. Event Orientation
Task Orientation ................ Relationship Orientation
Individualistic Orientation ........ Group Orientation
Equality Orientation ............ Hierarchy Orientation
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Competitive Orientation ...... Cooperative Orientation
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Open Orientation ............... Closed Orientation

How might these differences in cultural values cause problems in the classroom? How might they enhance learning?
Importance of Cultural Awareness
ABCs of Cultural Awareness

- Ask Questions
- Be Observant
- Carefully Listen
Every culture values logical thinking and speech.
People everywhere can think in many ways.
A certain logic system is taught by different cultures.
Logic is encoded in language.
Looking for the underlying logic system in a language can help us understand why people write, speak, and think in different ways.
German Dialectic Logic

Thesis  Synthesis  Antithesis
French Digressionary Logic
Individualist cultures

- Binary logic
- Low context
- Direct
Japanese Circular Logic
Bantu Illustrative Logic
Mediterranean Pictorial Logic
Collectivist cultures

- Multi-valued logic
- High context
- Indirect
Crossing Cultures in the Classroom

How can talking about cultural differences answer some of the challenges students have with writing, testing, and classroom discussion?

How might you improve cultural awareness in your classes? Through your assignments?

List two questions, arising from the subject matter you teach, that would help your students explore diverse cultural perspectives.
Biblical Mandate

Love the Lord your God with all your heart...and your neighbor as yourself.

Matthew 22:37-39

I try to fit into the social and cultural patterns of people as much as I can in order to win them to Christ. I do this for the sake of the gospel so everyone can see the blessing it is to those who accept it.

1 Corinthians 9:22, 23 (The Clear Word)
“The people of every country have their own peculiar, distinctive characteristics, and it is necessary that men [and women teachers] should be wise in order that they may know how to adapt themselves to the peculiar ideas of the people, and so introduce the truth that they may do them good.”

Testimonies to Ministers p. 213
Importance of Cultural Awareness
The End