

Communication can be very different in different cultures.

- A. Culture can be defined as that set of values and beliefs, norms and customs, and rules and codes that socially define groups of people.
- B. Cultures differ in some fundamental ways.
 - A. Basic philosophical differences about religion and the nature of the universe contribute to a culture's overall worldview.
 - B. Cultures also differ in terms of locus of control.
 - a. Control cultures believe in an internal locus of control; they feel that people control their own destinies; "Don't let anything stand in your way" might be a motto.
 - b. Constraint cultures believe in an external locus of control; they feel that people are governed by factors, like fate, that are outside their control; "One does not make the wind, but is blown by it" might be a motto.
 - C. Cultures differ in terms of their action orientation.
 - a. Doing cultures believe that self-worth is related to the ability to accomplish tasks; "Just do it" would be a motto.
 - b. Being cultures believe that self-worth is related to the ability to create rewarding relationships; "People are more important than things" would be a motto.
 - D. Cultures differ in terms of their attitudes toward time.
 - a. In M-time cultures, schedules, sequences, and clock time are valued; "Time is money" might be a motto.
 - b. In P-time cultures, time is experienced quite loosely and being on time is not considered important; "Haste makes waste" might be a motto.
 - E. Cultures differ in terms of the values they place on their connections to others.
 - a. In individualist cultures, the basic unit is the individual who is expected to make his or her own decisions and act in his or her own best interests.
 - b. Individualist culture can be horizontal (when members are equal) or vertical (where there are status differences between members)
 - c. In collectivist cultures, the basic unit is the group and members act in order to maintain harmony in the group.
 - d. Collectivist cultures can also be horizontal or vertical.
 - F. Cultures differ in terms of the communication styles they value.
 - a. In low-context cultures, context is relatively unimportant and meaning is explicitly coded in words.
 - b. In high-context cultures, context is important and communication relies on shared understandings, so less information needs to be coded into words.
- C. American culture has its own unique patterns.
 - A. Americans have a control orientation and believe in effort optimism.
 - B. Americans value doing over being and M-time over P-time.

- C. America is an individualist country.
- D. America is a direct, low-context culture.
- D. Within any given culture there are ethnic, regional and class differences.
 - A. We all belong, not just to one culture, but to a number of hierarchically embedded cultures.
 - B. Linguists have identified differences between European Americans, who often speak AE, and African Americans, who often use AAVE or Ebonics.
 - a. Both have well-developed grammars.
 - b. AAVE favors mimicry, use of proverbs and aphoristic phrasing, punning, spontaneity, improvisation, and the like.
 - c. AAVE favors call and response patterns.
 - d. These differences are group-based and do not apply to every European- or Africa-American.
 - C. Social class and regional differences also exist.
- E. Cross-cultural communication occurs when we interact with others who have different understandings about the world. There are several barriers to this kind of communication.
 - A. Prejudice impedes intercultural understanding.
 - a. Prejudices are negative attitudes based on group rather than individual opinions.
 - b. Prejudices are based on biased cognitive models like negative interpretation, discounting, use of the fundamental attribution error, exaggeration, and polarization.
 - c. Prejudices are used to support discrimination.
 - d. Prejudices are communicated when the mass media sensationalize racial incidents or fail to give out-group members a voice, and when individuals tell offensive stories and jokes or make insensitive language choices.
 - B. Ethnocentrism is a barrier to effective intercultural communication
 - C. Assumed similarity is a final problem in intercultural communication.

II. Over time communication takes on different meanings.

- A. During the Colonial period (1600 to 1780) communication emphasized social agreement, inequality, and patriarchal control.
 - A. The basic interpersonal unit was the household not the nuclear family.
 - a. The home was a site of production.
 - b. Personal space and privacy were limited.
 - B. Codes of conduct were relatively crude and earthy.
 - C. Under patriarchy older males ruled all aspects of life.
 - D. Women were considered as less civilized and moral than men.

B. During the Early Industrial period (1830 to 1880) communication changed in response to rapid urbanization and industrialization.

A. Anxiety about political instability, economic change, and new social freedoms were reflected in communication practices.

B. Work and home became separated.

a. Men dominated in the world of work and women in the private sphere of the home.

b. The job of the Republican Mother was to raise good citizens.

c. More privacy was available.

C. New codes of conduct emerged.

a. In public self-effacement and rigid politeness abounded.

b. In private, people were expected to exemplify character through thrift, hard work, duty, integrity, sentimentality, gentility, kind-heartedness and the like.

D. Women became romanticized.

C. During the Modern Period (1900 to 1960) communication again changed.

A. During this period America became a consumer society and advertising came into its own.

B. Attitudes toward the home life change.

a. The home became a site of conspicuous display.

b. It provides fewer social functions.

c. Mothers are blamed for the failures of their children.

C. Character was replaced by personality as an idea. People are expected to be forceful, outgoing, and charming.

D. Sexuality changed.

a. Sex became freer and more open.

b. Personal fulfillment became the goal of relationships.

III. There are a number of things we can do to increase our ability to communicate across cultures.

A. In order to develop a "third culture" perspective, communicators who are considering communicating across international borders should follow a number of rules.

A. Before departure, it is important to learn about the culture.

B. Differences in material culture should be expected.

C. Dealing effectively with stress is important.

D. Adaptation is increased through friendships with host nationals.

E. Mistakes are unavoidable and should not cause undue concern.

F. It is important to develop an attitude of nonjudgmental curiosity.

B. Co-cultural understanding can also be increased.

- A. Opening oneself up to new contacts is essential.
- B. Knowing about the history and experiences of members of different subcultures leads to understanding.
- C. Stereotypes should be tested.
- D. Empathy should be developed.
- E. The more self-confident a person is, the more able he or she is to understand people who are different.