

# Communication Between Cultures

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# Chapter 9 Overview

## Cultural influences on context: the educational setting

- **Education's influence on culture**
- **Functions of education**
- **Achieving competent multicultural communicative abilities**

**Changing dynamics of the educational system**

**Multicultural education**

**Influence of language**

**Developing multicultural teacher competence**

# Education's influence on culture:

Education perceived differently by cultures

*E.g. Latinos believe education has moral evaluative connotation*

Learning and knowledge differ from culture to culture

*Goals of schools bound to intellectual, social functions of dominant society*

*Most explicit function of schools directed to inculcation of knowledge and skills deemed necessary for individual participation in larger society*

Informal knowledge transmitted

*Children internalize basic values and beliefs learned in schools: correct conduct, gender role expectations, etc.*

Education as a profession

*Awareness of cultural diversity inherent in multicultural classrooms*

# Functions of education

- **To help fashion the individual**

*The ways in which children learn and what they learn influence their thinking and behavior*

- **To provide a way to certainty, to form character**

*Education provides children with a set of guidelines and values for living a proper life*

# Achieving competent multicultural communicative abilities: Changing educational dynamics/culturally diverse education systems

## Significant differences in what and how cultures teach

*History and language pass along culture and reinforce a society's beliefs and values  
... as well as prejudices*

*Every culture tends to glorify its historical, scientific, economic, and artistic  
accomplishments while minimizing others: ethnocentrism*

## Formal education process tied to values, characteristics of culture

*Method of curricular delivery: vocal participation? individual texts?*

*Authority vested in teachers*

- *In some cultures, teachers traditionally hold position of moral authority*
- *Nonverbal aspects - space, distance, time, dress codes - communicate power, influence*

# Contrasts in educational systems

- **China**

- *Inherently competitive*
- *Testing has power to determine one's entire professional trajectory*

- **Japan**

- *Guided by ministry of education, enforcing standardized school curriculum*
- *“Lessons” include character formation, moral education, proper social behavior*
- *Less attention paid to oral communication*
- *Memorization, not analysis, stressed*

- **Korea**

- *Teachers responsible for discipline; notified by parents of misbehavior at home*
- *Teachers rotate among classes; having students take all classes together and wear uniforms leads to group solidarity and conformity, valued in Korean culture*
- *Hair length (boys) and make-up ban (girls) strictly enforced*

- **Russia**

- *No student choice in subjects of study, excepting foreign language*
- *New post-Soviet Union Russia schools more competitive*
- *Universities now define students in economic terms*

# Contrasts in educational systems, continued

- **Africa**

- *Memorization of proverbs and application of meanings*

- *Goals of education two-fold:*

- 1) *Social*

- a. *develop child's character, sense of belonging*

- b. *inculcate respect for elders/authority*

- c. *encourage participation in family and community*

- d. *appreciate and promote cultural heritage of community at large*

- 2) *Practical*

- a. *develop intellectual skills, physical skills*

- b. *develop specific vocational training, healthy attitude toward honest labor*

- **Spain**

- *Students instructed in:*

- Formative skills - religious education*

- National spirit - pride in culture*

- Complementary skills*

- *Non-competitive (ideas, information shared)*

- *Extracurricular not stressed; students spend twice the time in academic study*

- *Classrooms very structured; disagreement with teachers deemed disloyalty*

- *Grades received on final exam; emphasize improvement rather than achievement*

# Contrasts in educational systems, continued

- **Mexico**

- *Economy limits access to texts, completion of mandated 12th grade*
- *Cooperation emphasized over competition*
- *Group interaction primary learning mode; teachers interact through proximity*
- *Focus on present; concern for doing job well, regardless of time required*

- **American Indian (Navajo used for example)**

- *Concerned with fundamental aspects of culture's worldview and beliefs*
- *Cultural values major facet of education:*
  - 1) *life a continuous quest for harmony*
  - 2) *universe orderly but full of dangers*
  - 3) *evil and good complementary and inherent in all things*  
*(therefore, human nature inherently neither good nor evil)*
  - 4) *everything composed of both male and female which complete the other*
  - 5) *future uncertain*

- **Muslim schools**

- *Arabic and religious classes added to standard academic curriculum*
- *Classroom seating separated by sex*
- *Traditional dress (hijab for girls, uniforms for all); traditional social behaviors*
- *Prone to questioning teachers, examining/analyzing*



# Achieving competent multicultural communicative abilities: Multicultural education

## Challenges of multicultural education

*Due to underlying difference in styles of language use and interaction patterns, potential for teachers to misread aptitudes, intent, abilities*

*Important aim: to teach about cultural practices of others without stereotyping or misinterpreting and to teach about one's own practices without casting others negatively*

## Culture and learning

*Personal cognitive abilities determined by demands of our environment*

*Cultural ways of knowing: methods people employ to think. Examples:*

- Hawaiians believe thinking comes from the gut, linking heart and mind*
- Indigenous cultures depend on knowledge gained through direct experience*
- Holistic: knowledge through sensory -- eyes, mind, spirit, future, through medium*

# Achieving competent multicultural communicative abilities: Multicultural education, continued

## Cultural learning approaches

*Influenced by learners' preferred modalities (auditory, visual, kinesthetic), perceptions*

*Approach #1: Four bi-polar scales = continuums of learning preferences*

- Field Independence vs. Field Sensitivity: whole concept versus parts*
- Cooperation vs. Competition: collective versus individualistic cultures*
- Trial and Error vs. Watch, then Do*
- Tolerance vs. Intolerance for Ambiguity: low or high uncertainty cultures*

*Approach #2: Perception and judgment*

- Mastery (Sensing-Thinking) Learners: realistic, results-oriented, active engagement)*
- Understanding (Intuitive-Thinking) Learners: theoretical, knowledge-oriented*
- Self-expression (Intuitive-Feeling) Learners: curious, insightful, imaginative*
- Interpersonal (Sensing-Feeling) Learners: interpersonally-directed*

# Achieving competent multicultural communicative abilities: Multicultural education, continued

## Relational styles for learning

*The manner in which people relate to one another carry over into the classroom*

*Dependency/Independence: student reliance on support, help, opinions of teachers*

*Participation/Passivity: engaging in versus observing the learning process*

*Impulsivity/Reflectivity: rapid versus slow arrival at answers; risk to saving face*

## Cultural motivation style

*Four styles that impact multicultural classroom:*

*Intrinsic: internal drive to succeed, excellence reward in and of itself*

*Extrinsic: stimulated by external rewards*

*Learning on demand: set, scheduled curriculum; student interest not a factor*

*Learning when interested: study of what's interesting, relevant to the learner*

# Achieving competent multicultural communicative abilities: Language diversity in multicultural education

## Schools challenged to meet needs of English Language Learners

*Lack of common language in American classrooms problematic*

*Discrimination against students using non-standard English common in various policies and practices*

## Language and identity

*Language helps individuals construct and maintain their ethnic identity*

*Assimilation into English-speaking culture can become wedge between identity and social system*

*Four sources of difficulty for ELLs:*

- *dual concern with cognitive (content) and linguistic (new language expression)*
- *academic insufficiency*
- *higher grade level entries create heavier cognitive and linguistic loads*
- *deductive instructional approach in U.S. in conflict with inductive-approach cultures*

# Achieving competent multicultural communicative abilities: Teacher multicultural competence

## **Becoming multiculturally competent**

*Develop competencies in multiple ways of perceiving, evaluating, believing, and doing*

*Engage in practices that provide equitable outcomes for all learners*

- **Understanding self**

*Teachers must examine biases, resist ethnocentric influence*

- **Understanding diversity**

*Teachers challenged to become students of their students, their communities*

- **Classrooms for multicultural education**

*Classroom as community, fostering feelings of membership and inclusion*

*Differentiated classroom: students compete with themselves, not other students*

- **Multicultural competence and communication strategies**

- *Establish immediacy - comfortable classroom atmosphere, global/cultural topics*

- *Communicate empathy - supportive climate, attuned to nonverbal, genuine*

Next ...

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## **Chapter 10**

# **Cultural influences on context: the healthcare setting**

