



# Intercultural Communication

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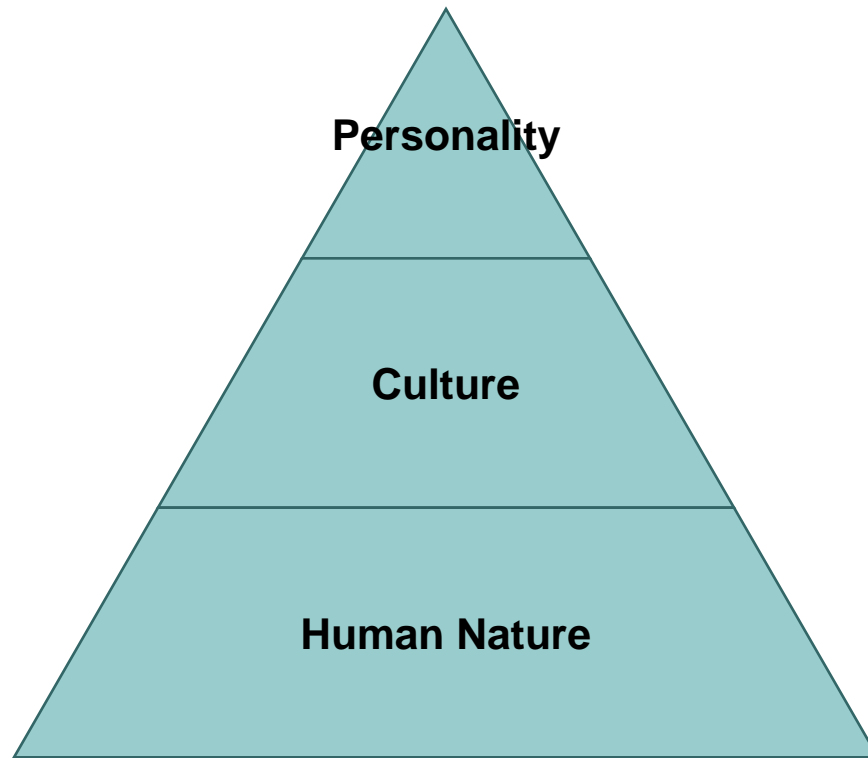


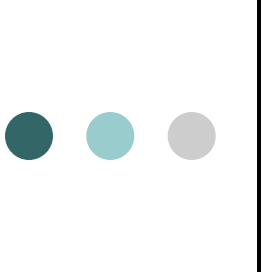
# Layers of Culture

- National
- Regional
- Gender
- Generational
- Social Class



# Levels of Programming





# Stereotyping vs. Cultural Tendencies

- We do not use cultural dimensions to describe or predict an individual's behavior but to understand the dominant values of the social systems in which they were raised.



# Collectivist/Individualistic

- Collectivist – People are integrated into strong groups that protect their members in exchange for loyalty. Interests of the group prevail over interests of the individual.
- Individualist – Emphasis is on the interests of the individual over the group. A person is not supposed to be dependent on the group.



# Collectivist

- Emphasis is on group membership.
- Strong sense of in-group and out-group values.
- Strive for harmony within the in-group.
- Usual prefer avoidance as conflict management style.



# Individualistic

- Emphasis is on individual achievement.
- Each person is independent and responsible for their own actions.
- Stress individual decision-making.



# High/Low Power Distance

- Power distance addresses the way cultures handle the fact that people are unequal.



# High Power Distance

- Rigid class or caste structure.
- Considerable dependence of subordinates on bosses.
- Children are taught to be obedient to parents and older siblings.
- Parental authority lasts throughout the child's adulthood.
- Small children are taken care of.

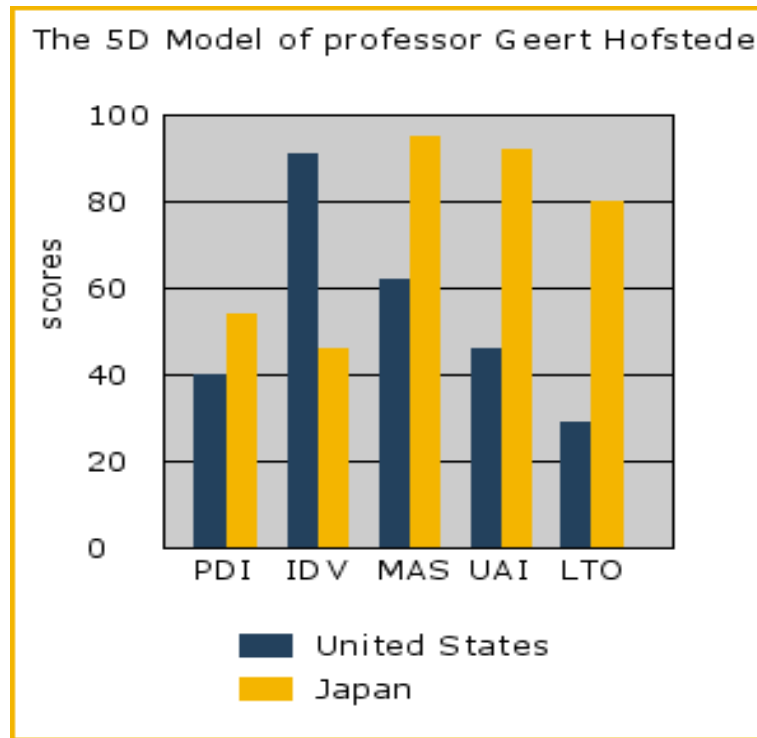


# Low Power Distance

- Status is achieved.
- Everyone is essentially considered equal with the same rights and opportunities.
- Children are treated roughly as equals.
- Parents want children to take control of their own affairs as soon as possible.
- Active experimentation is encouraged.

# Geert Hofstede

## Japan and United States





## Why is this relevant?

- Difference in values and motivators.
- Difference in communication and conflict management styles.



# High/Low Context

- Low context
  - Very direct in our communication
  - Use persuasion so others see our view
  - Unaware of non verbal expressions
  - Example: U.S./Germany/Scandinavian countries
- High context
  - Work hard developing permanent relationships
  - Include many details in the conversation
  - Good at reading nonverbal communication
  - Example: Asia/Middle East South America



# Linear/Circular

- Linear – communication is conducted in a straight line moving in a linear way to the main point. The point is expressed explicitly.
  - Example: Germany/United States
- Circular – the speaker gets to the main point in a round about way. Often the point is left unstated requiring the listener to rely on verbal and nonverbal cues for understanding.
  - Example: Japan



# Direct/Indirect

- Direct - one states what one means in a very straightforward way. Directness is equated with honesty and respect.
  - Example: Israel/Germany/United States
- Indirect - the meaning is conveyed in subtle ways such as nonverbal behaviors. Indirectness is equated with politeness and respect.
  - Example: Asia/Middle East/South America



# What are some of the issues?

- Students arriving late to class.
- Students skipping classes/exams to honor other commitments.
- Lack of in-class participation.
- Students who seem to understand the material in class but then do poorly on exams.
- Plagiarism



# Suggestions and Reminders

- Avoid slang and speak slowly while facing the students, not the blackboard.
- Explain expectations clearly in the beginning of the course.
  - Attendance policies
  - Define what you consider to be acceptable class participation.
  - Explain intentional and unintentional plagiarism.
- Have students share their backgrounds and the classroom culture to which they are most accustomed.
- Use various media to impart information.
- Have students come up with ground rules for participation.
  - Create a safe space for all students to be able to speak.
- Remember to avoid stereotyping based on appearance or name. Don't make assumptions! Let the students share their backgrounds and experiences and validate them.



# Resources

- Other TAs
- “Cultural Translators”
- Office of Intercultural Affairs
  - Amy Daly Gardner
    - Dana Commons, First Floor
    - [adaly@clarku.edu](mailto:adaly@clarku.edu)
    - 508-793-7362
    - [www.clarku.edu/offices/oia](http://www.clarku.edu/offices/oia)