CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

&

MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCIES

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Today’s Agenda

• Purpose of the Presentation
• Cross-cultural Communication
• Intercultural Communication
• History and Theories
• Culture and Related Terms
  • Culture
  • Cultural Identity
  • Cultural Awareness
  • Cultural Sensitivity
  • Cultural Relativism
  • Cultural Adaptation
  • Cultural Invasion
TODAY’S AGENDA CONTINUED

- Multicultural Competencies or Multicultural Competency Skills
- Verbal and Non-verbal Cross-cultural and Intercultural Communication
- Barriers to Effective to Effective Cross-cultural and Intercultural Communication
- Summary
- Activity
  - Cross-cultural and Intercultural Communication in Libraries
- Questions & Answers
- References
PURPOSE OF THE PRESENTATION
Purpose of the Presentation

- Studies indicate significant positive effects of cross-cultural and intercultural communication in interpersonal relationships and work environments

- Globalization has made the world a “global village” in which everyone needs to practice cross-cultural and intercultural communication

- Globalization has afforded us opportunities to interact with diverse peoples where multicultural competencies are in demand
Cross-cultural Communication
and
Intercultural Communication

1. Cultural Awareness
2. Cultural Sensitivity
3. Cultural Relativism
Cross-cultural and Intercultural Communication

Interdisciplinary area based on anthropology, cultural anthropology, cultural studies, psychology, sociology, linguistics, communication, and history
Cross-cultural Communication

- How people from different cultures communicate among themselves
- How diverse peoples endeavor to communicate across cultures.
- How communication differs among cultures
- How communication is similar among cultures
Intercultural Communication

1. Studies communication across different cultures, groups, and sub-groups
2. Explores how culture affects communication such as in co-cultures
3. Refers to wide range of communication processes among different cultures, groups, and subgroups
4. Investigates problems that naturally appear within an organization or social context made up of individuals from different religious, social, ethnic, and educational backgrounds.

- Verbal Communication
- Nonverbal Communication
- Space Relationships
Cross-cultural Communication and Intercultural Communication

• Terms are sometimes used synonymously
• Both communication modes complement each other
• Both provide knowledge that help us to
  • monitor, learn, and adapt
    • our own multicultural competencies or multicultural competency skills
### Cross-cultural Communication vs. Intercultural Communication

#### Cross-Cultural Business Communication
- builds cultural intelligence through coaching and training in cross-cultural communication competencies
- cross-cultural negotiation
- multicultural conflict resolution
- multicultural customer service,
- business and organizational communication

#### Intercultural Business Communication
- how messages are encoded (e.g., coding and decoding)
- what medium they choose for transmitting them
- how messages are interpreted
- Concentrates on verbal, non-verbal, and spatial communication modes
HISTORY
Cross-cultural Communication and Intercultural Communication

- **Georg Simmel (1858-1918), German sociologist**
  - Developed concepts of “the stranger” and “social distance”

- **Charles Berger and Richard Calabrese (1975), Communication Theorists/Professors**
  - Explored Simmel’s concepts and developed the “Uncertainty Reduction Theory” or “Initial Interaction Theory”
  - Identified cognitive uncertainty and behavioral uncertainty

- **William B. Gudykunst et al. (1983-1985), Mass Communication Researcher/Professor**
  - Applied Berger’s and Calabrese’s theory to interpersonal communication and intercultural communication
  - Further investigated “the stranger” and “social distance” concepts of Simmel
  - Introduced the concepts of “high anxiety” and “low anxiety”
William B. Gudykunst’s Theories

- **Strangers** are individuals who belong to a particular group that follows different cultural behaviors and traditions than the dominant or majority group.
- **We become anxious** when encountering strangers and do not know how to react.
- **Uncertainty arises** because we do not know how strangers will behave or react.
- **Uncertainty occurs** because we are unable to explain strangers’ behavior or reactions.
- **Uncertainty leads to apprehension and anxiety** during initial interactions with strangers.
- **High anxiety will influence us to avoid interactions or to be indifferent** to these interactions.
Culture and Related Terms
Culture

- Sum total of the ways of living such as
  - Behavioral norms
  - Linguistic expression
  - Styles of communication
  - Thinking patterns
  - Group’s beliefs and values that are self-sustaining and transmitted over generations
Cultural Identity

- Identification with a particular culture, co-culture, group, subgroup, etc.
- Acceptance to a particular culture, co-culture, group, subgroup, etc.
Cultural Awareness

- **Foundation of communication including cross-cultural and intercultural communication**
  - Ability of looking at ourselves objectively
  - Ability of becoming aware of our own *cultural* values, beliefs and perceptions.
  - Ability of being cognizant, observant, and conscious of similarities and differences among cultural groups and subgroups
Cultural Sensitivity

- **Making no value judgments** based on one’s own cultural values, practices, traditions, etc.

- **Not rendering judgments** on cultural artifacts for better or worse and right or wrong

- **Remaining neutral and being empathetic** toward different cultures
Cultural Relativism

• Theory in anthropology
  • Explains how differences among peoples result from historical, social, and geographical/environmental conditions
  • Presents all civilizations and its peoples as complete and equal cultures
Cultural Adaptation

- Newcomers’ acquisition of the host culture’s norms and values
  - Cognitive, psychological and behavior flexibility
  - Learn the host’s language and customs
Cultural Invasion

• One group imposes its cultural values and practices on other groups with different cultural backgrounds

• One group’s purpose is to impose its values and practices throughout the world such as in ethnocentrism and eurocentrism
Types of Cultures

1. High Context Cultures
2. Low Context Cultures
## Intercultural Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Context Culture</th>
<th>Low Context Culture</th>
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</table>
| • Dimension of culture that conveys meanings in messages based on the environment or context  
  • Eastern Culture such as a Japanese Tea Ceremony | • Dimension of culture that does not convey messages’ meanings based on the environment or context  
  • Dimension of culture focusing on the use of words or verbal symbols  
  • Western Culture |
# High Context and Low Context Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Context Culture</th>
<th>Low Context Culture</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Collectivist or Group Identity</td>
<td>• Relies on a communication style heavily based on explicit and direct language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Value interpersonal relationships</td>
<td>• De-emphasizes collectivism or group identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Have members that form stable, close relationships</td>
<td>• Emphasizes individual identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Eastern Culture</td>
<td>• Western Culture</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- Eastern Culture
- Western Culture
MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCIES
OR
MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCY SKILLS

1. What these skills are?
2. Why they are important in today’s global environment?
Multicultural Competencies or Multicultural Competency Skills

- Understanding, appreciating, and responding to diverse political, cultural, and economic issues across and within nations
- Cultural knowledge and understanding of events in at least a few other cultures
- Cultural openness and sensitivity to others’ situations – how they think, feel, and behave
- Respectful of social etiquette variations
- Acceptance of different linguistic expressions and language varieties
Why are these skills important in the 21st century?

• Competencies in managing situations in domestic situations as well as those abroad
• Effective interpersonal communications with individuals of diverse cultures
• Improved relationships across cultures based on increased global knowledge
  • Personal literacy: understanding and valuing oneself
  • Social literacy: engaging and challenging other people
  • Business (leadership) literacy: focusing and mobilizing one’s organization
  • Cultural literacy: valuing and leveraging cultural differences
How do we develop and expand these skills?

• Multicultural competencies skills progress over time as one’s awareness, knowledge, appreciation, and responses expand and improve
  • Attitudes
  • Skills
  • Knowledge
# Self-Assessment of Multicultural Competencies

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Attitudes</th>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Be open-minded</td>
<td>Ask questions about cultural differences</td>
<td>Become familiar with diverse greetings, verbal and nonverbal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ask for clarifications</td>
<td>Get feedback</td>
<td>Understand the impact of cultural on behavior and actions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Remain positive</td>
<td>Assess strengths</td>
<td>Engage in reflective journaling practices to monitor your progress</td>
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<tr>
<td>Be curious about learning about others’ cultures</td>
<td>Acknowledge cultural awareness</td>
<td>Use knowledge to respond effectively to cultural and ethnic differences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use prior knowledge to build new knowledge about cultural diversity</td>
<td>Acknowledge cultural identities as uniqueness</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Use previous experience as a guide in new interactions</td>
<td>Address inappropriate behavior without judging cultural values or behaviors</td>
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Nonverbal Cross-cultural and Intercultural Communication
Effective Nonverbal Cross-cultural and Intercultural Communication

• Use physical gestures and movements to demonstrate meanings
• Facial expressions or eye contact can demonstrate approval or convey welcoming messages
• Shaking hands, patting on the shoulders, hugging, pushing, or other kinds of touch
• Body nuances such as gait or posture, attire or fashion, choice and treatment of object or cultural artifacts
• Tones, pitch, and sounds
• Spatial proximity
Barriers to Effective Cross-cultural Communication

1. Anxiety
2. Assuming Similarity Instead of Difference
3. Ethnocentrism and Eurocentrism
4. Stereotypes and Prejudice
5. Non-verbal misinterpretations
6. Language
Anxiety: High and Low Levels

• We become anxious when we anticipate the unknown
• We focus on our anxiety, not giving the appropriate attention to the immediate interaction.
• We will not communicate effectively in high states of anxiety.
Assuming Similarity instead of Difference

• We do not want to assume similarity among cultures.
• We want to remain open-minded about learning other people’s cultural practices and traditions.
• We want to maintain the belief that each culture is unique and equal to all other cultures.
• We want to assume nothing and remain curious. We want to learn about other cultures without making any kind of judgments.
Ethnocentrism and its Subcategory, Eurocentrism

- **Ethnocentrism**
  - Negatively judging diverse cultures by comparing them to your own culture
  - Believe one’s own culture is superior to other cultures
  - Extreme ethnocentrism is called “cultural nearsightedness” or “cultural myopia”

- **Eurocentric ethnocentrism** focuses on Western cultures such as Western holidays in the academic year or curriculum based on Western history, music, and art, etc.
### Stereotypes and Prejudice

**Judgments about Individuals on Group Membership**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stereotypes</th>
<th>Prejudice</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Broader term</td>
<td>• Refers to an irrational suspicion or hatred of a particular group, race,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Refers to negative or positive judgments about individuals based on an</td>
<td>ethnicity, religion, or sexual orientation, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>observable or believed group membership</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Based on myths or legends, not realities</td>
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Non-verbal Misinterpretations

1. Relying exclusively on physical movements and gestures
2. Different gestures or movements have different meanings in diverse cultures
3. Verify individuals understand what has been communicated verbally or nonverbally
Language

• Learn greetings in other languages to welcome individuals of linguistic diversity

• Be empathetic to those who are learning English
  • Translanguaging
  • Code-switching
  • Language Brokering
Summary
Cross-cultural and Intercultural Communication
Multicultural Competencies or Multicultural Competency Skills

- Important in today’s global environment to improve communication across cultures anywhere in the world
- Progressive process of learning, observing, monitoring, and responding
- Reflective journaling practices facilitate monitoring and responding
- Facilitates communicating with diverse peoples, improving interpersonal relationships in personal and professional lives
Activity

1. How can developing skills in cross-cultural and intercultural communication benefit libraries?

2. How can libraries train staff in developing multicultural competencies in order to best serve diverse peoples?

3. How can libraries collaborate with other community organizations to provide resources to those who belong to linguistically and culturally diverse populations?
How can developing skills in cross-cultural and intercultural communication benefit libraries?
How can libraries train staff in developing multicultural competencies in order to best serve diverse peoples?
References


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Enjoy your time at NYLA in Saratoga Springs!