What is culture?

- “social behavior and norms found in human society”
- “characteristics and knowledge of a group of people”
- “learned and shared sets of assumptions, attitudes, values, and beliefs”
- “manifestations of human intellect and achievement within a societal unit”
What is culture?

- our accepted and familiar way of life
- how we do stuff around here
- what we do, think, and feel

Our effectiveness in teaching students is directly related to our ability to recognize and move within cultural frameworks -- to be “culturally responsive.”

CULTURAL ICEBERG

- EASY TO SEE (Do/Behavioral)
  Tangible identifiers, customs/practices, etc.

- CHALLENGING TO SEE (Think/Cognitive)
  Personal interpretation of core values in daily life

- DIFFICULT TO SEE (Feel/Affective)
  Core values: learned ideas of good or bad, acceptable or unacceptable
Culture Informs Values

- What to do, think, feel (behavioral, cognitive, affective)
- Role in life
- Expectations of self and others
  - public or general notions
  - personal interactions
- Decision-making
  - pay attention to this? OR ignore it?
  - what is right? OR what is wrong?
  - is it good/beautiful/acceptable? OR is it bad/ugly/offensive?

Culture Informs Emotional Response

- **LOW**
  - Obvious rules
- **HIGH**
  - Unspoken rules
- **INTENSE**
  - Unconscious rules
Culturally responsive teaching

Being capable of genuinely recognizing, embracing, working with, and continually learning about cultural differences...and then utilizing them for better learning outcomes

- Awareness, knowledge, skills, attitude
- “Half the curriculum walks in the door when the students do.”
- Neuroscience of learning and culture
  - Cortisol + Oxytocin
  - Neurological pathways: blocked or maximized by your teaching practice?

Culturally responsive teaching

- Factors of relational trust
  - Time spent together
  - Similar values/outlook
  - Shared interests
- Whole-student development/growth = Better learning outcomes
  - Positive identity development
  - Identification of and response to systems of oppression/discrimination
  - Social-emotional learning (SEL): Relational development; emotional intelligence
Six Fundamental Patterns of Cultural Difference

Communication styles
- Language usage
- Non-verbal communication
- Interpretation of assertiveness

Decision-making styles
- Individual vs. consensus
- Delegation of responsibility

Attitudes towards conflict
- Positive or negative
- Direct (open) or indirect (private)

Attitudes about disclosure
- Emotional frankness and open demonstration
- Personal matters (esp. conflict)

Approaches to completing tasks
- Reasons involved: resources, rewards, time
- Task vs. relationship

Approaches to knowing
- Validity of epistemologies
- Data vs. experience
- Individual or group

Culturally Responsive Classroom Communication: Intercultural Competence Skills

- Curiosity / Inquisitiveness
  - Sense of wonder
  - Lack of arrogance and judgment
  - Back away or go forward?

- Empathy
  - Perspective-taking
  - Understand another frame of reference without judgement

- Cognitive Complexity
  - Consider a variety of frameworks, explanations, scenarios
  - Jumping to conclusions
Culturally Responsive Classroom Communication: 
Active Listening

- Understanding content AND relational dimensions of message
- Verbal AND non-verbal (and cultural appropriateness)

**DO:**
- Use eye contact, open and relaxed body language, neutral verbal cues
- Focus on and respect the speaker regardless of content dimension (be aware of your own non-verbals)
- Communicate your desire to understand

**DO NOT:**
- Use closed body language (slouching, pointing, leaning away)
- Speak too fast (or too slow)
- Plan your response

Culturally Responsive Classroom Communication: 
Paraphrasing

- Especially helpful for instructor/student relationships
  - Age, language, power differential
  - Sends implicit message that you hear, understand, care about thoughts and feelings

**DO:**
- Make sure you hear content AND relational dimensions: facts AND feelings
- Pay attention to non-verbal to gauge your accuracy
- Ask for clarification if necessary

**DO NOT:**
- Evaluate, analyze or add meaning
- Give advice or sympathy
- Question the student unnecessarily
- Interrupt
Culturally Responsive Classroom Communication: Paraphrasing

- Phrases for perceiving FACTS: (+ “Tell me more”)
  - “You’re saying the problem is...”
  - “I hear you saying that...”
  - “So it’s your view that...”
- Phrases for perceiving FEELINGS: mix and match as a question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phrase + Intensity + Feeling</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Your reaction is... a little embarrassed?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“You’re feeling that you’re... quite happy/excited?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“So that makes you feel...” very stressed?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“You feel... extremely sad/angry?”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Culturally Responsive Classroom Communication: Open-Ended Questions

Collect information by exploring thought processes, feelings, attitudes, and views.

- Avoid any question that can be answered “yes,” “no,” or with a short bit of information.
- Avoid using “WHY...?”

EXAMPLES:
- How did you decide that?
- What are your reasons for...?
- What are your ideas for how to address/deal with...?
- What story are you telling with...?
- How is this work organized?
- How are the elements and principles of design/color/etc. working here?
- Tell me about the connection between .... and .......
- What are your thoughts about your next steps/direction/iteration?
Culturally Responsive Classroom Communication: “I” Statements

- Expresses needs and ideas keeping the focus on you and your feelings

“I feel ______ when________ (because____). I need________.”

(feeling, what’s happening, reason, what should happen instead)

- “I” messages DO:
  - Avoid any judgments
  - Keeps communication open
  - Communicates information while respecting both people’s positions

- “I” messages DO NOT:
  - Accuse/point fingers/find fault
  - Place blame or guilt
  - Demand a response

Culturally Responsive Classroom Communication

ACTIVE LISTENING
PARAPHRASING
OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS
“I” MESSAGES

Are you fixing a “problem”…or are you facilitating growth and learning?