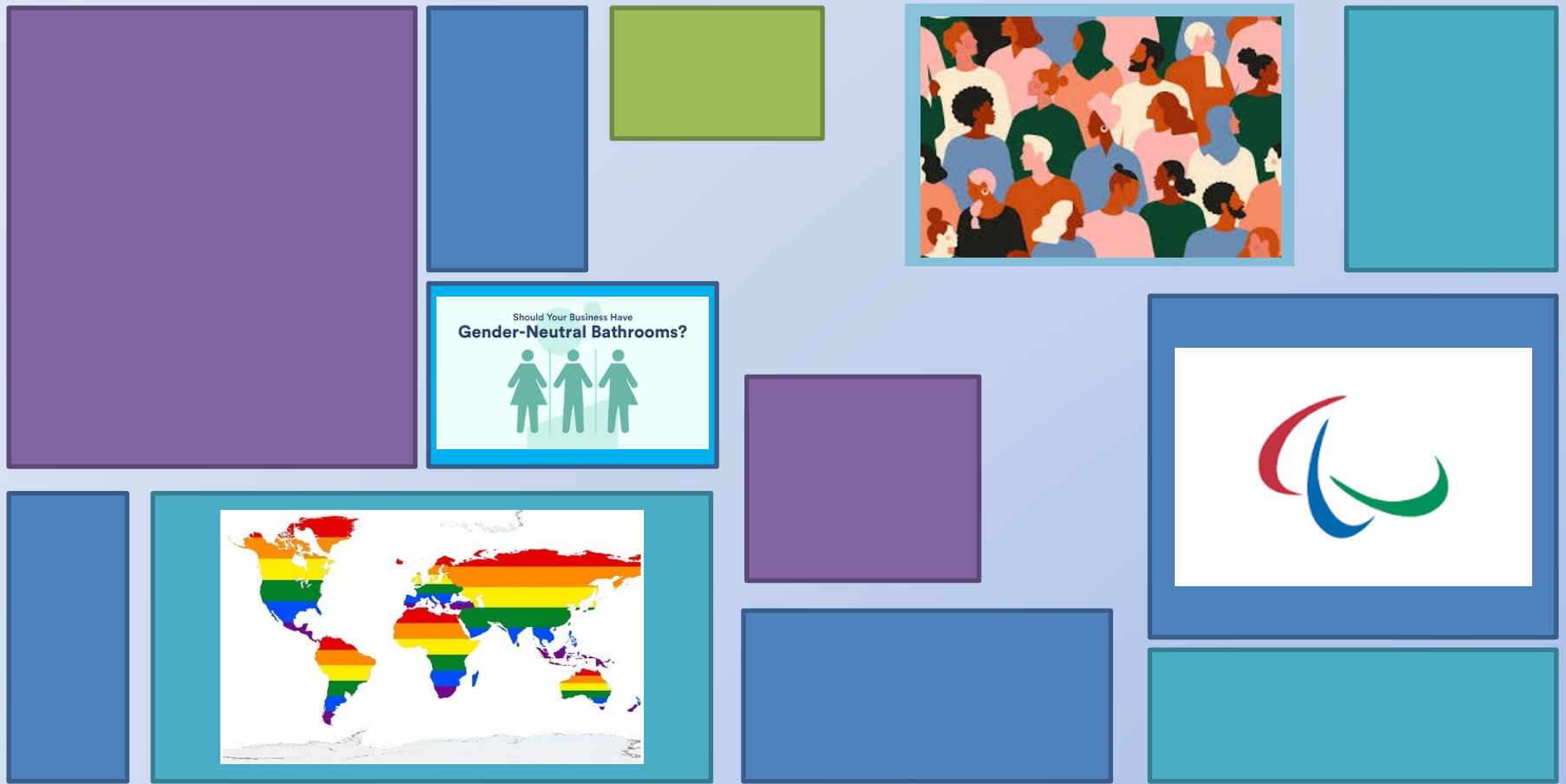




EC5001: Diversity & Difference in a Modern World

Theme 9: Culture & Communication (Part 1)

Acknowledgement

This theme draws heavily on the following text:

Liu, S.; Volcic, Z.; Gallois, C.; (2015). Introducing Intercultural Communication: Global Cultures and Contexts, London: Sage

Communication and Culture

- Before we look at the link between culture and communication we will revisit the concept of culture.
- What do you understand the term to mean?



Communication and Culture

Culture

- When social scientists use the term culture they tend to be talking about a less restrictive concept than that implied in everyday speech.
- In social science, culture is all that in human society which is socially rather than biologically transmitted, whereas the common-sense usage tends to point only to the arts.
- Culture is thus a general term for the symbolic and learned aspects of human society, although some animal behaviourists now assert that certain primates have at least the capacity for culture.

(Scott & Marshall, 2009)

Communication and Culture

- Culture and communication mutually influence one another, producing different behavioural patterns in different contexts.
- Thus different cultures may well produced different modes of communication.
- Difficulties may arise when we try to share meaning with those whose communication behaviours are governed by cultural rules different from our own.

Cultural Rules / Cultural Norms

- Culture teaches us significant rules, rituals and procedures, such as our orientation towards time, tolerance of uncertainty, the way we dress and eat, etc.
- Could you give an example of some cultural rules you were taught as a child? How do they affect your communication behaviour?



Guided Study Activity – Cultural Rules / Cultural Norms

Ethnocentrism and Cultural Relativism

- Read through the following handouts which summarise the concepts of ethnocentrism and cultural relativism



Handout 1 - Ethnocentrism



Handout 2 – Cultural Relativism

- *Take a moment to think about these concepts.*
- *Share your thoughts with the group.*

Cultural Beliefs and Values

- Culture reinforces beliefs and values that are reflected in our communication behaviours. E.g. a 'fair go' is an important value of Australian culture and 'chwarae teg' (fair play) is a value of Welsh culture.
- Could you give an example to illustrate how cultural beliefs and values are reflected in your communication behaviour?



Culture and Communication Behaviours

- Our verbal and nonverbal behaviours reflect our cultural imprints. Features such as loudness, pitch, turn taking and gestures vary considerably across cultures.
- Could you give an example to show how culture governs communication behaviour in your culture?



Cultural Norms for Relationship Development

- Any communication event establishes a certain relationship. Culture teaches us how to develop relationships with others.
- Culture also tells us how our relationship with another should be conducted.
- In some cases this means that a person's culture stops them from communicating effectively with another person, sometimes with very serious results.



Cultural Norms for Relationship Development

- What examples can you think of conflict between cultural norms and resulting miscommunication in the areas of social studies or advocacy?
 - For example, what in our own cultural norms might stop us communicating effectively with another professional?
 - Or, how might cultural norms prevent us from communicating effectively with a service user?



Complete the Guided Study Sheet after this lecture and share your thoughts in the Forum on Moodle.

Hofstede's four cultural dimensions

- The categorisation of cultural dimensions is primarily based on the works of Geert Hofstede.
- Who is Geert Hofstede?
- Individualism–collectivism.
- Masculinity–femininity.
- Uncertainty avoidance.
- Power distance.



Dimensions of culture

- The dimensions of culture are presented along cultural continua, which present the dimensions as continuous and varying in degrees.

Paraphrasing Exercise: What is this statement saying?



Individualism versus collectivism

- In individualistic cultures, emphasis is placed on individuals' goals, abilities and aptitudes over those of the group.
- In contrast, collectivistic cultures emphasize values that serve and preserve the 'ingroup' by subordinating personal goals to this end. Group membership is more important than individuality; responsibility is shared and accountability is collective.

Exercise 1: Case study

- Outside a classroom during a 10-minute break, three Australian students and one Arab student were exchanging ideas about a group project that they were working on. At the beginning of the break, two Australian students first took out cigarettes and lit them. The Arab student watched them; then hesitantly, he took out his own pack of cigarettes and lit one. After the break, they returned to the classroom to work on their project, the Arab student seemed a little upset and did not work well with the rest of the group.
- What was the problem here?
- Could you explain the problem by linking it to Individualism-Collectivism cultural dimension?

Masculinity versus femininity

- This dimension describes how a culture's dominant values are assertive or nurturing.
- In masculine cultures, people strive for maximal distinction between gender behaviours and expectations, and greater value is placed on masculine traits.
- Cultures labelled as feminine are those that permit more overlapping social roles for the sexes and place high value on feminine traits.

Uncertainty avoidance

- This dimension reflects a culture's tolerance of ambiguity and acceptance of risk.
- Some cultures have a high need for information and certainty, and members are actively security seeking. These cultures also tend to be collectivist.
- In low uncertainty avoidance cultures, which are commonly individualist, members are more comfortable dealing with diversity, ambiguity and risk.

Power distance and communication

- Power distance is related to the level of hierarchy in a society, and it affects verbal and nonverbal communication behaviours.
- In literal terms it refers to the distance between an individual and those who are making decisions that affect them as well as their acceptance of this situation
- Therefore a person who is accepting of power distance will be more likely to be compliant and to defer to anyone in authority
- Could you give an example to show in what ways communication can reinforce the power distance between people?

The fifth dimension

Long-term and short-term orientations

- A 5th cultural dimension was developed by Hofstede and Bond, also labelled as Confucian Work Dynamism.
- Long-term orientation encourages thrift, savings, perseverance toward results, and a willingness to subordinate oneself for a purpose.
- Short-term orientation is consistent with spending to keep up with social pressure, less savings, preference for quick results, and a concern with face.

But what do they mean?

What do you think are the characteristics of each dimension?



Using your notes and the Handout from the University of Sandiago discuss each of Hofstede's cultural dimensions and explore the impact they may have on communication.



Handout 3: Hofstede's cultural dimensions

Hofstede Continued

- Hofstede has continued to develop his theories on the dimensions of cultures

The sixth dimension

Indulgence / Restraint orientations

- The 6th of Hofstede's dimensions
- In an indulgent culture it is good to be free.
- Doing what your impulses want you to do, is good.
- Friends are important and life makes sense.
- In a restrained culture, the feeling is that life is hard, and duty, not freedom, is the normal state of being.

The sixth dimension

Indulgence / Restraint orientations

What implications for communication might this dimension have?

What does this mean in practice?

1



Country Cultural Comparison Tool (Hofstede's Insights , No Date)

2



Intercultural Communication: The Hofstede Model (Management Study Guide, 2020)

3



Hofstede's cultural dimensions and differences across cultures (Gill, 2017)

4



Hofstede's cultural dimensions MAPS OF THE WORLD (Hofstede, No Date)

References

- Barger, K. (2018) *ETHNOCENTRISM: What is it? Why are people ethnocentric? What is the problem? What can we do about it?* Indianapolis: Indiana University
- Goldin-Meadow, S (2010) Gesture's role in creating and learning language *Enfance Vol. (3): pp. 239–255*. Available at:
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/236078646_Gesture's_role_in_creating_and_learning_language [Accessed 17/10/2022]
- Hofstede, G. (2001) *Culture's Consequences (2nd Edition)* Sage Publications
- Johnson, H. & Johnson, K (1998) *Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Applied Linguistics* Blackwell Publishers
- Liu, S.; Volcic, Z.; Gallois, C.; (2015). *Introducing Intercultural Communication - Global Cultures and Contexts*, London: Sage
- Mervis, C.B. and Velleman, S.L. (2011) Children with Williams Syndrome: Language, Cognitive, and Behavioral Characteristics and their Implications for Intervention *Perspectives on Language Learning and Education* Vol. 18 Iss. 3 pp. 98–107 Available at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3383614/> [Accessed 17/10/2022]

References

- Saxton, M. (2010). Child Language: Acquisition and development. Thousand Oaks, (CA): SAGE Publications Ltd
- W. Schramm and D. F. Roberts (eds), The Process and Effects of Mass Communication. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press. p. 24.
- Scott, J. & Marshall, G. (2009) *A Dictionary of Sociology (3 rev. ed.)* Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Shannon, Claude and Weaver, Warren (1949) *The Mathematical Theory of Communication*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press. p. 5.
- USNLM (2019) *Williams Syndrome Available at:*
<https://ghr.nlm.nih.gov/condition/williams-syndrome#resources>
[Accessed 17/10/2022]
- Wardhaugh, R., Fuller, J. (2014). An Introduction to Sociolinguistics, Blackwell

Web-links

1. Hofstede's Insights (No Date) *Country Comparison* Available at:
<https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/> [Accessed 11/12/2020]
2. Management Study Guide (2020) *Intercultural communication: The Hofstede Model*
Available at: <https://www.managementstudyguide.com/hofstede-model-intercultural-communication.htm> [Accessed 11/12/2020]
3. Gill, C. (2017) *Hofstede's cultural dimensions and differences across cultures*
Available at: <https://blog.oup.com/2017/03/hofstede-cultural-dimensions/> [Accessed 11/12/2020]
4. Hofstede, G. (No date) *Hofstede's cultural dimensions MAPS OF THE WORLD*
Available at: <https://geerthofstede.com/culture-geert-hofstede-gert-jan-hofstede/6d-model-of-national-culture/> [Accessed 11/12/2020]
5. Casework.eu (No date) *Dimensions of Culture*
Available at: <https://casework.eu/lesson/dimensions-of-culture/> [Accessed 11/12/2020]