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U.S. AIR FORCE

Warrant Officer Senior Staff Course



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Cross Cultural Negotiations

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CCN Outline

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- Understanding Culture
- Negotiations & Communication
- Nonverbal Communication
- Barriers to Effective Negotiations
- Situation Judgment & Exercise





Culture?

- “Historically shared system and beliefs through which we make our world meaningful”

B. J. Hall





The Sinking Boat

- Which manifestations of culture are communicated in this story?
 - Respect for elders vs. youth
 - Individual choice vs. family obligation
 - Concept of “wife” vs. “mother”*





Understanding Culture

- **Worldview** - how we understand what matters and is important to us
 - The **lens** you apply to make sense of things
 - Gives meaning and helps explain our behaviors
 - Helps us account for our own and others' actions
- Worldviews are abstract notions about the way the world is and often operate at the subconscious level
- Worldviews can be discussed in a variety of **sub categories** that include **high and low context cultures***



High & Low Context Cultures

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When discussing cross-cultural interaction experts claim that a lack of **High Context & Low Context** awareness can explain most cross-cultural misunderstanding





Low-Context Cultures

- Have an “I” orientation
- Value: “truth” over harmony & face
 - Task over relationships
 - Self expression
 - Individual achievement
 - Mobility/Initiative



American Proverbs:

- “Good fences make good neighbors”
- “Easy come, easy go”



High-Context Cultures



- Have a “We” orientation
- Value harmony & saving face over “truth”
- Value relationships over task
- Value commitment to family

• African Proverb:
“The first day you meet, you are friends. The next day you meet, you are brothers.”





Negotiations & Communication

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“Negotiation can be considered a special case of communication. Hence, obstacles to communication in general may constitute hindrances to negotiation in particular.”

Raymond Cohen





Communication

- Communication?
 - A process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behavior
- What is “Effective” Communication?*





Communication

- Does successful transmission and reception mean successful communication?

“The idea itself does not really travel, only the code; the words, the pattern of sound, meaning that a person attaches based on his/her frame of reference.”

*Lorand Szalay , Author,
“Intercultural Communication”*





Communication

- Decoding:
 - Peeling away the outer husk of a message to reveal its inner meaning.
- What was the original intention?
 - Matching Semantics*





Low-Context Communication

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- LCC:
 - **Speaker** is responsible for clearly communicating the message
 - Communication is clear, concise, and informative (i.e. *No means No!*)
 - Tend to use direct and explicit verbal expressions, use facts and background information
 - Value:
 - “Getting to the point!”
 - “Not beating around the bush!”*





High-Context Communication

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- HCC:
 - Communication functions as social lubricant
 - **Listener** is responsible for appropriate interpretation
 - **Relationships** are more important than the verbal message (Yes might not really mean yes!)
 - Focus on status and context (social roles or positions)
 - Pay attention to how something is said more than what is said*





Understanding Nonverbal Communication

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Just because you are not talking doesn't mean
you aren't communicating!



Nonverbal Communication

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- All nonverbal behavior communicates something!
- Varies across cultures:
 - *Haptics*
 - *Proxemics*
 - *Chronemics*
 - *Kinesics*
 - *Paralanguage**





Nonverbal Communication Haptics (Touch)

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- Involves the functions, perceptions, and meanings of touch
 - Who touches whom
 - Influenced by our cultural upbringing
 - In many cultures, **touch** communicates **CONNECTION***





Nonverbal Communication

Proxemics (Space)

- Cultural expectations of space?
 - The “personal space” that makes you comfortable could be misinterpreted & perceived as insulting
- *Greetings* can display a culture’s orientation towards personal space
 - U.S. handshake (keep others at arm’s length)
 - Africa, Latin America (kiss)
 - Japanese bow*





Nonverbal Communication Chronemics (Time)

- How people perceive and structure their use of time
- Language reflects our preoccupation with time:
 - “wasting time,” “out of time,” “time is money”
- Time:
 - Is it about who I’m with or who I’m about to meet?
 - Past or future focus?
 - Agendas or flexibility?
 - Punctuality?
 - Address the issue & move on!*





Nonverbal Communication

Kinesics

- A technical term for the study of movement and gesture
 - Derived from the Greek word “motion”
- It includes:
 - Body Movements
 - Facial Expressions
 - Eye Behavior
 - Gestures
- Secretary of State Negotiation*





Gesture Recognition

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What does this gesture mean?



Gesture Recognition

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What does this gesture mean?



Paralanguage

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- Linguistic vs. communication competence?





Paralanguage

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- How we say what we say:
 - Volume
 - Word emphasis
 - Rate of speech
 - Use of silence/pauses
 - Intonation





Paralanguage Arabic example...

- When Arabic speakers ask information-seeking questions in English, their intonation is often perceived as ACCUSING
- Higher pitch range can be perceived as aggressive or possibly threatening
- LOUD VOLUME and PASSIONATE TONE communicates sincerity*



Word Emphasis

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- “I didn’t say his dog would bite”





Word Emphasis

The same word may have very different meanings depending on context and tone.

In the Thai language:

- With proper tones mai mai mai mai mai translates to “New wood won’t burn, will it?”
- Yaa (low tone) means “don’t”, yaa (middle tone) means “medicine”, and yaa (falling tone) means “grass”





Cultural Effects On Negotiation

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Cultural Effects On Negotiation

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Cultural Differences

“Southern Golf”



Cultural Effects On Negotiation

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Cultural Effects On Negotiation

- Worldview?
- Low-Context (Individualistic) negotiating with High-Context (Collectivistic)?
- Haptics (Touch)?
- Proxemics (Space)?
- Chronemics (Time)?
- Kinesics (Body Movement)?
- Paralanguage (How you say what you say)



Cultural Effects On Negotiation

Understanding we (Americans) tend to be:

- Doers and achievers
- Competitive and independent
- Informal with lots of social and identity mobility
- Always looking forward – shaping the future / destiny
- Problem solvers – like to get it over with!

How can awareness help?



Overcoming Barriers

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- Active listening
- Active Asking
- Active Learning!





Overcoming Barriers

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- Leads to perception checking & recognizing possible misinterpretations
- Helps you empathize
 - Validating the speakers experience/feelings





Culture Generalizations

Cultures Are **NOT**
Either/Or

All cultures are a mix
of contradictory
values, beliefs, and
practices





Situational Judgment

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- You are part of a team in Kenya. You have been asked to negotiate with a local counterpart to coordinate the delivery of books and supplies to a local school.





Situational Judgment

- The Kenyan is a respected local national named Abasi and is ready to help plan the delivery. A number of meetings are needed to coordinate the delivery and lately Abasi has been arriving late. Since equipment cannot be delivered without his coordination, this has produced some frustrating delays.



Decision Time

- You have to decide what to do about the issue. Your leadership is breathing down your neck to complete the delivery and clear the supplies out of storage. After carefully thinking about your options, you decide there are a few possible strategies to handle the problem:



Options

- 1. Go privately to Abasi, ask him why he has been arriving late.
- 2. Ignore the problem verbally, but next time Abasi arrives late, use every nonverbal cue you can think of.
- 3. The next time he is late, calmly but sternly voice your displeasure about his lateness so others will know about the problem.



An Option 4??

- Is there another option other than the three listed?



The Best Choice “A New Option”

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- **Example:** In a private discussion suggest Abasi’s assistance in dealing with others who regularly arrive late for meetings and solicit his suggestions about what should be done.
- Help him understanding that leadership is holding you accountable and the impact this has on you.



The Best Choice “A New Option”

- Abasi would receive the “punctuality” message indirectly without losing face.
- No specific person has been targeted... this should help him recognize that tardiness is a problem without publicly humiliating him.
- He is allowed to “solve” the problem by changing his own behavior in order to assist you.