

# Communication Essentials For Professionals



Life Skills Unit



# Cross-cultural Communication

1. Communication and Culture
2. High and Low – Context Culture
3. Hofstede's Dimensions of National Culture
4. Cultures and Body Language
5. Intercultural Considerations

# Communication and Culture?

- Cultures provide people with ways of thinking, seeing, hearing and interpreting the world.



- It draws on speech patterns, language, and nonverbal messages.



# Communication and Culture?

Cont'd

- Cultural differences can cause behavior and personality differences; like communication, manners, norms, socializing and meetings etc. which leads to miscommunication.
- Differences appear in words that have different meanings.
- Also, major differences in greetings, handshaking, body language, sitting positions, personal space, gifts, dining and punctuality.

# What is Culture?

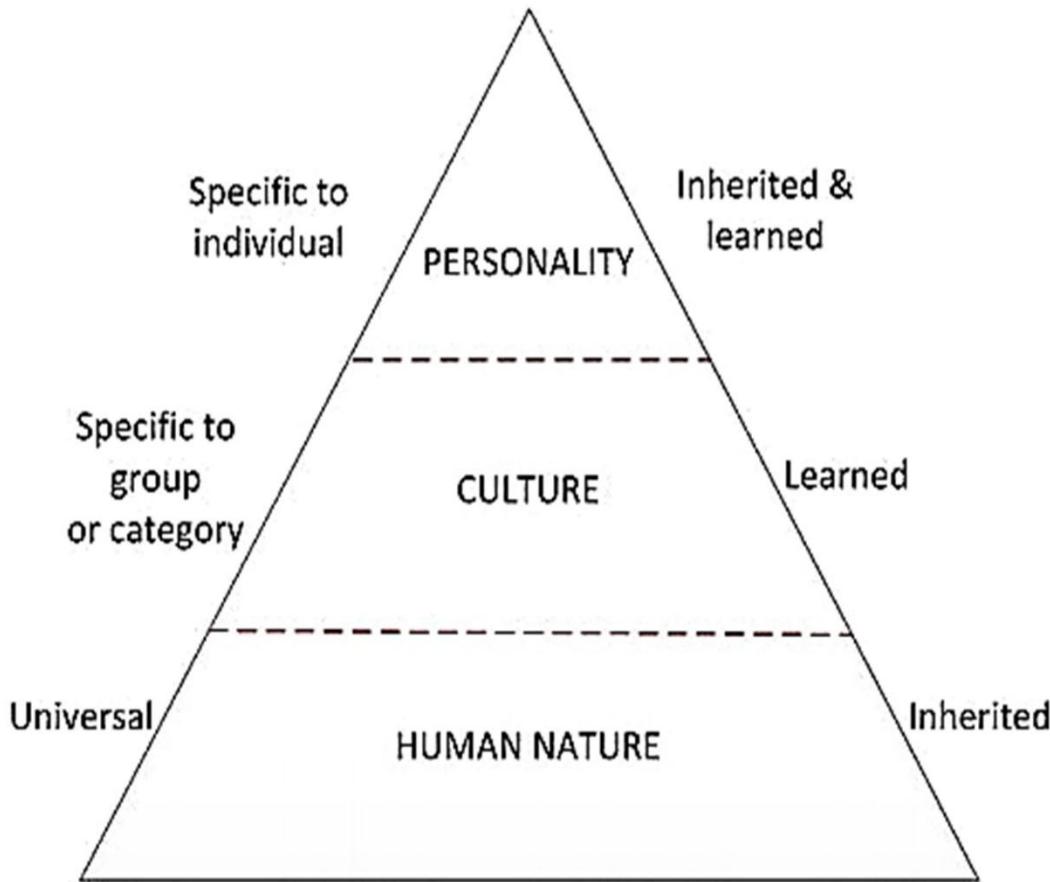
Culture is the collective rules and traditions that the society members abide by, and that distinguish one group of people from the other.



Culture is like programming of the mind, an individual observes the rules that the society demonstrates and adopts them starting from early childhood.

# What is Culture?

Cont'd



Three levels of uniqueness in human mental programming (Hofstede 1994: 6)

# What is Culture?

Cont'd

## The Iceberg of Culture:

### Above water line:

- Food & Dressing
- Monuments
- Accent

### At the water line:

Recognizing implicit understandings.

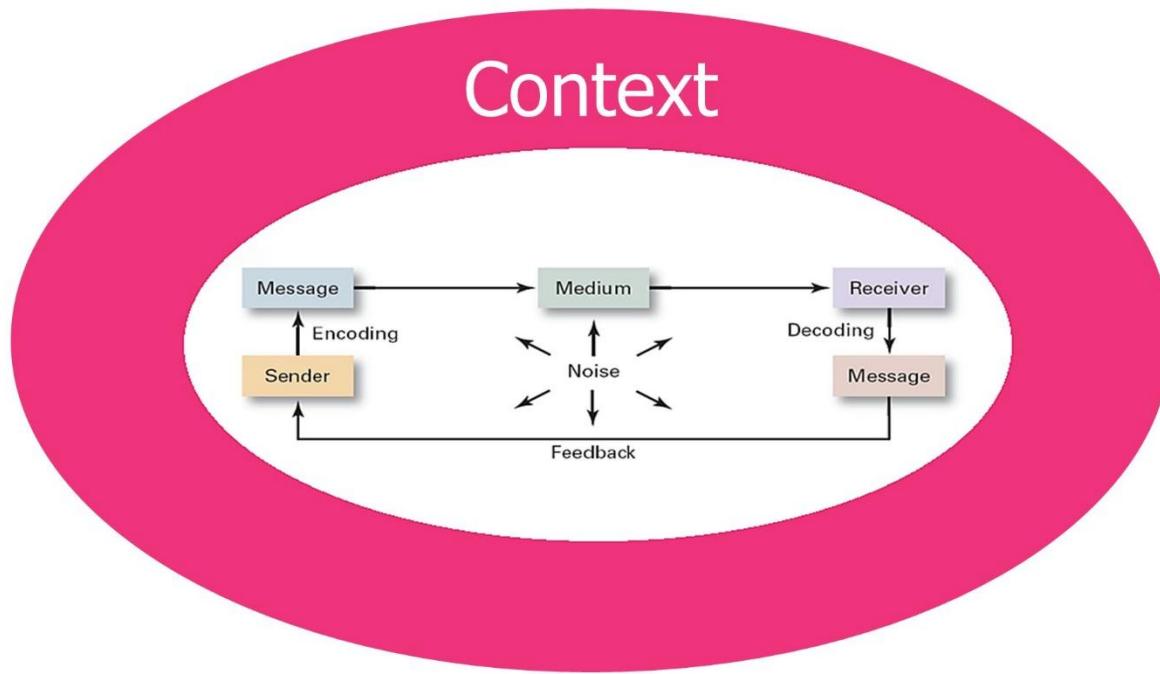
### Below the water line:

- Habits
- Understandings & Assumptions
- Values
- Judgments



# High and Low – Context Culture

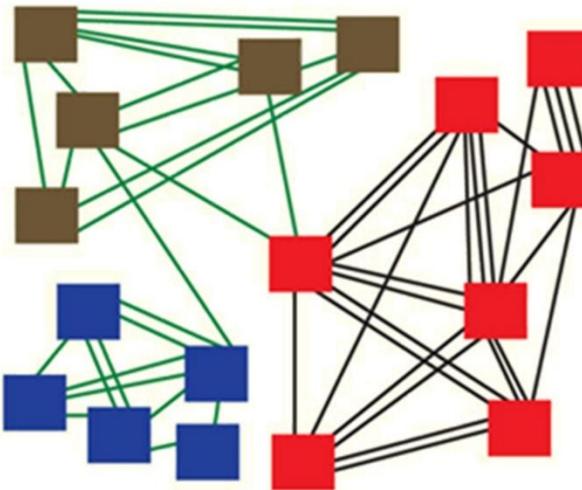
The concepts of high context and low context refer to how people communicate in different cultures. Differences can be derived from the extent to which meaning is transmitted through actual words used or implied by the context.



# High and Low – Context Culture

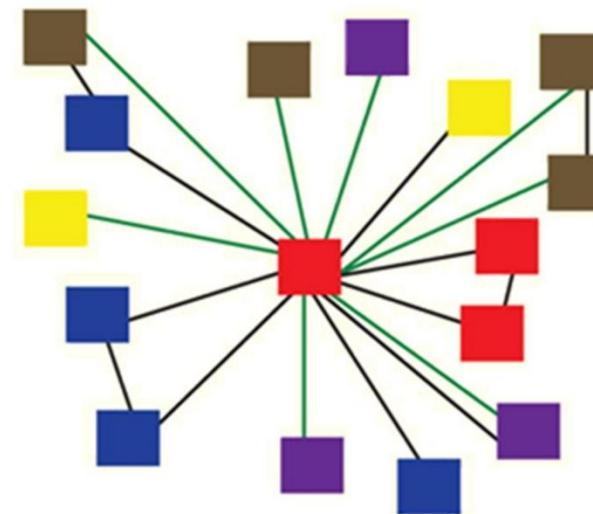
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Context versus Information



**Context**

High-Context Culture

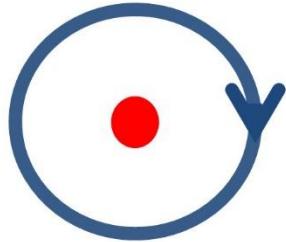


**Information**

Low-Context Culture

# High and Low – Context Culture

Cont'd



## High-Context Culture

- Less explicit communication.
- Non-verbal communication over verbal.
- Multiple intersections with others.

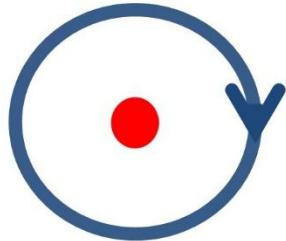


## Low-Context Culture

- Straightforward communication, rule oriented.
- Verbal communication over non-verbal.
- Separation of time, of space, of activities, of relationships.

# High and Low – Context Culture

Cont'd



## High-Context Culture

- Long term relationships.
- Knowledge is situational.
- Decisions and activities focus around personal relationships, often around a central person who has authority.

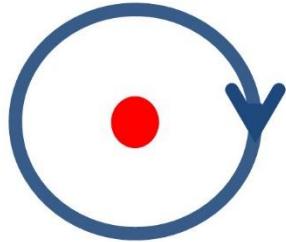


## Low-Context Culture

- More formal and looser connections of shorter duration.
- Knowledge is more often transferable.
- Task-centered. Decisions and activities focus around what needs to be done, division of responsibilities.

# High and Low – Context Culture

Cont'd



## High-Context Culture

- Decision process is intuitive and relational.
- Planning is oral and informal.
- Work-style is team-oriented.
- Deep respect for the past.  
[Tradition over change]



## Low-Context Culture

- Decision process is logical and linear.
- Planning is written and formal.
- Work-style is individualistic.
- Present and future-oriented.  
[Change over tradition]

# High and Low – Context Culture

Cont'd

Countries that are high-context and that are low-context cultures.



# Hofstede's Dimensions of National Culture



# Hofstede's Dimensions of National Culture

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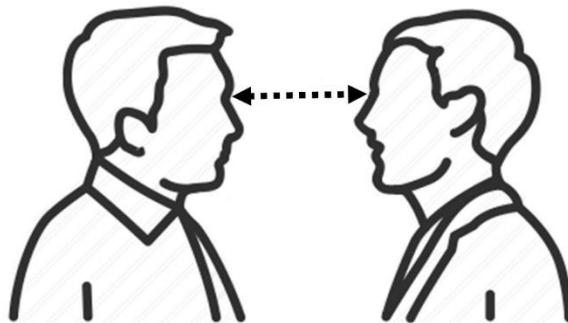
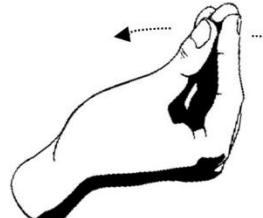
Let's try it... showcase of Egypt's grades...

*<https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/>*



# Cultures and Body Language

Different meanings of hand gestures and body language across cultures.





# Intercultural Considerations

- Handling culture shocks.
- Stereotyping and global cultures.
- Avoid violation of cultural values.
- Using slang.
- Using humor.
- Gender egalitarianism
- Variation in Etiquette between global cultures.
- Different time-zones.

Thank You