Culture & Professional Communication

Week 6
Writing for the Professions
Culture is hard to see and harder to define

- Culture is the sum total of learned values, beliefs, values and customs that serve to direct the behaviour of members of a particular society.

- Culture is a belief system that the members of the culture hold, consciously or unconsciously, as absolute truth. This belief system guides everyday behavior and makes it routine; provides answers to the unanswerable questions of life, sickness, and death; and makes the world make sense.
Beliefs, values and customs

- Beliefs consist of a number of mental or verbal statements that reflect a person’s particular knowledge or assessment of something
  - I believe democracy is important
  - I believe night will follow day
  - I believe John Howard was the greatest Australian Prime Minister ever
Beliefs, values & customs

- **Values** – are basically beliefs except that they are:
  - relatively few in number
  - serve as a guide for culturally appropriate behaviour
  - are enduring or difficult to change
  - are widely accepted by members of society
  - I value honesty, I value freedom, I value friendship

- **Customs** – are modes of behaviour that constitute culturally approved or acceptable ways of behaving in specific situations eg greeting, dress, eating, celebratory, rituals
Culture is learnt and forgotten

- Culture is learnt but the process by which we learn it is mostly forgotten
- We are dealing with something which occurs at an unconscious and often intangible level
- Models for understanding and “seeing” culture include a tree and an iceberg – there is more to it than you can see or are aware of!
The iceberg model of culture

- Manners
- Dress
- Food
- Literature
- Customs
- History
- Folklore
- Language

- Codes of Politeness
- Morals
- Values
- Religion
- Gender Roles
- Family Structures
- Relationships
- Body Language
- Attitudes to Education
- Teaching and Learning styles
- Attitudes to Authority
- Perceptions of Professionalism
- Expectations
- Aspirations
- Communication Styles
- Approaches to Carrying out a Task
- What Motivates People
Cross cultural negotiation

- Cultural assumptions underpin the other person’s perception of reality but are invisible to us.

- These cultural assumptions are also largely invisible to the other person.

- Ethnocentrism refers to the way we tend to evaluate other cultures from the viewpoint of our own culture’s value system.
  - ‘White Australia’ Policy (ALP leader HV Evatt famously said “two Wongs don’t make a white”)
  - Aboriginal racial assimilation policies
Behavioural level of culture

Includes names, social interactions, relationship roles, non verbal communication – examples include:

- Components of names
- Short forms of names
- Origins of names
- Titles
- Kin terms
- Respect for age
- Language and sex
- Invitations
- Who pays the bill
- Giving/receiving gifts
- Showing hospitality
- Giving and receiving complements
- Disagreeing agreeably
Language and culture

- Sapir-Whorf hypothesis – language has evolved to reflect the culture in which it is used and in part determines a culture’s way of thinking eg they observed that Eskimos have 18 words for “snow”

- English places great importance on clarity and directness and conveying of information

- Japanese culture places importance on language conveying subtle aspects of feeling or relationships
Language does not always translate literally

- Kentucky Fried Chicken “finger lickin’ good” translated in Chinese as “eat your fingers off.”

- Pepsi “lift your spirits” translated in Taiwan as “Pepsi will bring your ancestors back from the dead.”

- Coca Cola originally in Chinese translated as “bite the wax tadpole”. Coca Cola revised its slogan so that it translated into something like “happiness in the mouth”

- In Japan, Exxon changed its original name Enco as this translated to “stalled car”
ASSEMBLY INSTRUCTIONS

Mens of Change into Push Car & Passenger Car

There is a hollow of guide before and behind in handle shaft of the main body. Insert the protuberant side of handle shaft into the hollow side.

In Case of Push Car

Insert the protuberant side of handle shaft toward backward and then the handle is made effective as the width of guide hollow is narrow.

In Case of Passenger Car

Insert the protuberant side of handle shaft toward fore direction and then the handle is made effective as the width of guide hollow is wide.

How to Install the Handle

1. Cover the handle width shaft and join bolt holotegether it.
2. Set bolt, washer and nut in order as shown in the drawing and firmly tie them with driver.

How to Install the Knob

Fully insert the handle into the hole of main body backward on an average. On the occasion of using it as passenger, please remove the Knob.

Quality of Materials

Main Body/Handle shaft/Wheel Push Bar: Polyethylene.
Handle/Seat: Polypropylene.

"WARNING"

1. This product is assembly one.
2. When you assemble front wheel and handle, please fix nut and bolt perfectly.
3. If it is loose, it's very dangerous for children.

CORRECT USAGE OF TOY CAR

• REQUIRING OF PARENTS TO CARE •

1. Do not play on the road in where the vehicles incessantly pass.
2. Do not play on a slope, its danger.
3. It is dangerous its use at the places to be in danger of fall such as stair and porch.
4. On the occasion of leaning the weight against the handle, baby may be fallen ahead, therefore the place to be played should be chosen and also parents had better watch the baby until acustoming to play himself (herself) alone.
5. Do not approach it high temperature where existed the fire such as stove and heater.
6. Do not leave the car outdoor so as to not expose to rain.
7. On the occasion of using it as push car, do not push the handoperated line when the baby in the seat.
8. On the occasion of using it as push car for the toddling baby near about 12months since born, the leg comes in contact with the car’s speed and accordingly the baby may be overturned.
9. Toy car and a push car in one is some time overturned backward at the of leaning the push-handle, its dangerous.
10. Please release the Push-handle at the time of riding.
11. Indoor using brings a damage to floor or alcove, so place for playing should be chosen.

Month's Age of Baby & Playing Variety

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Playing Variety</th>
<th>8-12 (month)</th>
<th>12-18 (month)</th>
<th>18-48 (month)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Just riding only</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(except advancing)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing as push - car</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own driving by food-power</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and running ahead</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing with wheeling</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Limited handle operation is possible)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Communicating across cultures – micro concerns

- Try to restrict vocabulary to 3000 words or less
- Only use words in their most common meaning
- Select words with one meaning rather than many meaning eg right = 27/accurate =1
- Be aware of alternate spellings
- Be aware of words created by changing a part of speech from common usage eg ‘doable’
Communicating across cultures – micro concerns

- Use maximum punctuation and get it right – punctuation marks are signposts to a reader
- Avoid complex sentences
- Avoid redundancies – peak capacity, very unique
- Use active rather than passive constructions – ‘we paid the bill’ rather than ‘the bill was paid’
- Try to achieve the right level of formality especially in email – forms of address etc
Communicating across cultures – micro concerns

- Avoid idiomatic expressions and metaphors – ‘a slice of the cake’, ‘chip on his shoulder’ etc. They are not meant to be taken literally.

- Avoid words or expressions borrowed from sports – ‘from left field’, ‘level playing field’, ‘ballpark figure’, ‘sticky wicket’.

- Avoid words and assertions that have associations with Christianity – ‘Holy Land’. Much of our language is based on Judaic-Christian tradition which is not universal.
Culture ... an overview

- Culture is invented
- Culture is learned – it is not innate but is handed down between generations
- Culture is socially shared – it is shaped by humans within group settings
- Culture is gratifying and persistent – because it meets our needs, culture is reinforced
- Culture is adaptive – it can change when necessary
Culture … an overview

- Cultures are similar but different
- Cultures share the following elements
  - sports  – bodily adornments  – dancing
  - a calendar  – cooking  – courtship  – family
  - education  – gestures
- Culture is organised and integrated – it is a consistent pattern that fits together
Culture is not some exotic notion studied by a select group of anthropologists in the South Seas. It is the mould in which we are all cast, and it controls our daily lives in many unsuspected ways.

Edward T. Hall (1959). The Silent Language