Culture

- Values and perspectives shared by people who are "conditioned by similar education and life experience"

- Regional: country, area, community
- Religion: sects, variations, etc...
- Corporate: industry, company, department
- Other groups: schools, clubs, etc...

Values/perceptions that differ within/across cultures

- Individualism and collectivism

- High context and low context

- Perception of space

- Perception of time

- Importance of hierarchies

- Nature of change

- Perception of gender roles

- Criteria/definitions of success

- Nature of authority

- Nature of humor

Communication practices (norms) that differ within/across cultures

- Role of written communication

- Role of meetings

- Patterns of reasoning and argumentation

- Level of formality in inter-personal communications

- Oral presentation style

- Non-verbal communication behaviors

Characteristics of culture

- Culture is not inherent, but learned

- Cultures are rooted in deep seated beliefs

- Culture is the basis for self-identity and community

- Cultures are dynamic

Tips for approaching cross cultural communications

- Avoid ethnocentrism

- Look beyond stereotypes

- Seek common ground

- Observe non-verbal cues

- Study your own and other cultures

Hall: Comparing low to high context cultures

Low Context	High Context
• Tends to prefer direct verbal interaction	• Tends to prefer indirect verbal interaction
• Tends to understand meaning at one level only	• Tends to understand meanings embedded at many socio-cultural levels
• Is generally less proficient in reading non-verbal cues	• Is generally more proficient in reading nonverbal cues
• Values individualism	• Values group membership
• Relies more on logic	• Relies more on context and feeling
• Employs linear logic	• Employs spiral logic
• Says no directly	• Talks around point, avoids saying no
• Communicates in highly structured messages, provides details, stresses literal meanings, gives authority to written information	• Communicates in simple, ambiguous, noncontexted messages; understands visual messages readily

Low Context Culture → *German* *German-Swiss* *North American* *Scandinavian* *French* *English* *Spanish* *Italian* *Greek* *Mexican* *Chinese* *Arab* *Japanese* → *High Context Culture*