

GETTING CULTURE

Incorporating Diversity Across
the Curriculum

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TEACHING ABOUT CULTURE

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The importance of culture is one of the most fascinating topics to emerge in recent years in psychology and one of the biggest challenges teachers and researchers face. The field has made amazing strides in improving our understanding of culture and its influence on human behavior in the past two decades. In this chapter, I discuss three primary topics relevant to teaching about culture: a definition of culture, the complexity of understanding individual behavior, and teaching goals. I hope to stimulate thinking about culture and its relationship to mental processes and behaviors to help improve teaching efforts in psychology concerning culture.

What Is Culture?

One of the major conceptual issues facing a researcher or teacher dealing with culture is a definition of culture. Scholars in the social sciences have proffered different definitions of culture over the past 150 years, and there will probably never be "the" definition with which all scholars agree. Nevertheless, I do believe that it is important to have a working definition, and to make that explicit in my work. I encourage all teachers of culture to do so as well.

Over the years, *culture* has been defined as all capabilities and habits learned as members of a society (Tylor, 1865); as social heredity (Linton, 1936); as patterns of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinct achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952/1963); and as the totality of equivalent and complementary learned meanings maintained by a

human population, or by identifiable segments of a population, and transmitted from one generation to the next (Rohner, 1984). Some have defined culture as shared symbol systems transcending individuals (Geertz, 1975), whereas others define culture simply as the shared way of life of a group of people (Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen, 1992).

A limitation of many of these definitions, however, is that they may be applicable to many social animals. After all, fish swim in schools, wolves hunt in packs, lions roam in prides, bees communicate sources of food to each other, and even birds build nests and have nest eggs! Many social animals build relationships between themselves and the community; differentiate between ingroups and outgroups; negotiate issues concerning status, power, dominance, and hierarchy within groups; and distribute tasks.

Thus, culture as typically defined is not a uniquely human product. But certainly there are some things unique about human culture, and these are rooted in the fact that human social life is much more complex than that of nonhuman animals. Humans are members of multiple groups, each having its own purpose, hierarchy, and networking system, and humans move in and out of these multiple social groups and ecologies constantly. Human social life is also complex because of the incredible diversity in thoughts, feelings, and actions that humans are capable of having or engaging in. Conflicts can arise easily because of this diversity, and group survival is not possible without social coordination to reduce diversity in behavior in any situational context.

The considerable degree of social complexity in human social life brings with it enormous potential for social chaos, which can easily ensue if individuals are not coordinated well and relationships not organized systematically. Social chaos would set in if the behaviors of society's members were not regulated to a large degree. For example, driving without laws dictating which side of the road to drive on, how to make turns, and who has the right of way would lead to chaos on the roads.

One of the most important functions of human culture is to provide this necessary coordination and organization to prevent social chaos and to maintain social order. This aids individuals and groups in negotiating the social complexity of human social life, allowing humans to move seamlessly in and out of multiple social groups, adapting and adjusting behavior to these groups. Culture is what provides a system of rules for driving, preventing chaos on the roads.

Culture does this by providing a meaning and information system to its members. Thus, I define human culture as "a unique meaning and information system, shared by a group and transmitted across generations, that allows the group to meet basic needs of survival, by coordinating social behavior to achieve a viable existence, to transmit successful social behaviors, to pursue happiness and well-being, and to derive meaning from life" (Matsumoto, 2007; Matsumoto & Juang, 2007). Culture as a meaning system helps human groups deal with enormous social complexity by allowing for greater differentiations among social groups, by institutionalizing cultural practices and customs, and by prescribing social norms and expectations. Culture provides rules for all important aspects of human social life, such as mating, aggression, and cooperation. Moreover, cultures are constantly changing their rules, adapting them to local, ecological, environmental, and intellectual conditions. Culture as a meaning system is rooted in uniquely human cognitive behaviors, including language (Premack, 2004), belief that other people are intentional agents, self-other knowledge (Goffman, 1959; Tomasello, 1999), and continual building upon improvements and discoveries (ratcheting) (Tomasello, Kruger, & Ratner, 1993). And because groups communicate their solutions across generations, each generation need not create entirely new solutions, ensuring efficiency for survival.

Human cultures enable groups to meet basic needs of survival, such as meeting others to procreate and produce offspring, putting food on the table, providing shelter from the elements, and caring for daily biological essentials. Human culture also allows for complex social networks and relationships, the enhancement of the meaning of normal, daily activities, and the pursuit of happiness. It allows us to be creative in music, art, drama, and work. It allows us to seek recreation, to engage in sports, and to organize competitions, whether in the local community, a little league, or the Olympic Games. It allows us to search the sea and space, to develop an education system, and to create mathematics, an achievement no other species can claim. It allows us to go to the moon, to create a research laboratory on Antarctica, and to send probes to Mars and Jupiter. Unfortunately, it also allows us to have wars, create and improve on weapons of mass destruction, and recruit and train terrorists. Human culture does all this by creating and maintaining complex social systems, institutionalizing and improving cultural practices, creating beliefs about the world, and communicating this belief system or meaning

system to other humans and subsequent generations, all in order to prevent social chaos and maintain social order.

Given this definition, culture is not race, ethnicity, or nationality. But culture gives these social constructs and other social constructs (e.g., sexual orientation, disabilities) meaning. Moreover, cultures around the world can be very similar in some respects and very different in others. Thus, when talking about culture, it's a good idea to think about the meaning systems involved, where they come from, and what similarities and differences they exhibit when compared with other cultures around the world.

The Complexity of Explaining Behavior of Individuals from Different Cultures

One of the problems teachers must face concerns how students deal with issues of diversity. Too often, presentations about culture emphasize differences more than similarities. Indeed, in psychology, "culture" is almost synonymous with "differences," and that definition keeps us from searching for common ground. Keep in mind that cultures as meaning and information systems help to produce both similarities and differences.

Typical work on culture also seems to imply, often not overtly, that Eurocentric or American perspectives are the norm and that other cultural perspectives are "unusual" or "outliers." Thus, it's a challenge to get students (and sometimes researchers!) to realize that they have unconscious cultural blinders that may lead them to make value judgments that are inappropriate. Here's what usually happens. *We observe* differences in what we would normally expect in people who *appear physically different* than ourselves. Then we interpret these differences as *cultural* differences.

Our interpretations *may* be correct; in fact, those differences may indeed be culture. But, our interpretations may be wrong. Incorrect interpretations occur because of biases we have when interpreting the behavior of others. For one, psychologists have a love of differences. In research, there is a bias in the political nature of publishing similarities versus differences in psychological research; it's easier to publish differences. When researchers attribute observed differences between people of different races, nationalities, ethnic groups, or any such participant variable to culture without empirical justification, I have called this attributional bias the *cultural attribution fallacy* (Matsumoto and Yoo, 2006).

Individuals, too, have such a bias when making such interpretations. When we are too quick to make inferences about cultural differences from the behavior of people who just happen to look different from ourselves, these biases actually help to reinforce our own sense of self-worth, oftentimes while denying such self-worth to others.

In reality, the sources of motivation for human behavior are complex. In a recent paper, I outlined three sources of such motivation: basic human nature, which includes dispositions, cognitive abilities, and universal psychological processes we are born with; culture, including unique situational meanings, social roles, and norms; and personality and individual differences, including role identities, narratives, values, and aggregate role experiences (Matsumoto, 2007). Undoubtedly there are other sources of behavior as well, and all of these contribute to producing the kinds of differences in individual and group behavior that we observe in our everyday lives and research.

We understand this level of complexity when explaining *our own* or *our group's* behaviors. But when we try to interpret the behavior of people with whom we are less familiar, our awareness of such complexity seems to go out the door. For instance, people of different cultures spontaneously categorize emotions into two groups (Demoulin et al., 2004; Rodriguez Torres et al., 2005). One involves those thought to be uniquely human emotions, such as contentment, delight, melancholia, or resignation; the other involves emotions thought to be shared by humans and animals (basic emotions). And, people of different cultures tend to attribute uniquely human emotions more to ingroups, and basic emotions more to outgroups, in an inhumanization process (Cortes, Demoulin, Rodriguez, Rodrigues, & Leyens, 2005). That is, we don't consider people of other groups and cultures as human as we consider ourselves. Maybe this is because we have more intimate knowledge of the importance of all of these processes compared to people or groups we don't know. Or perhaps we have a bias in the way we want to interpret our own behaviors compared to those of others. Whatever the reason, we often forget this complexity when we interpret the behaviors of others and are often too quick in interpreting differences as culturally rooted.

One of the goals of understanding the relationship between culture and psychology is to understand the complexity of the sources of human motivation, and to learn how to apply that complexity when interpreting the behavior of others as well as ourselves. If students (and researchers) continue to

simply interpret all group differences as cultural, that may serve only to promulgate stereotypes about people—which is ironic, because one of the goals of cultural psychology is to break down the power of stereotypes in describing people rigidly.

What Are We Teaching?

It's not easy to get students to delve into this complexity. The traditional approach in academia is to teach them about culture. When we do this, we should teach not solely cultural differences, but cultural similarities as well. If we understand culture from an environmental and adaptational framework, then it is easy to see how there can be both cultural similarities and differences. And I believe that understanding the basis of similarities among people and groups, along with differences, provides all of us with a common basis from which to understand each other.

That kind of traditional academic teaching involves knowledge-based outcomes, which are definitely important. But helping students gain skills that can aid them in navigating the difficulties of intercultural interactions or a multicultural life is also a valuable and worthy goal.

Research my colleagues and I have done over the years suggests that one very important outcome to consider for teachers interested in skill acquisition and development is emotion regulation (Matsumoto, Yoo, & LeRoux, in press). Emotion regulation is *the ability to manage and modify one's emotional reactions in order to achieve constructive, desirable outcomes*. It's clear from the research that, if individuals are to adapt and adjust well in dynamic, multicultural environments, they need a psychological engine that enables them to deal with the inevitable stresses that occur in that environment. Emotion regulation is a major part of that engine.

Traditional didactic courses that impart knowledge may not necessarily affect students' emotion regulation skills. Instead, emotion regulation and other psychological skills are probably best taught in experiential-based learning. This means that teachers who are interested in these kinds of student outcomes may need to create opportunities for students to have real-life intercultural experiences that produce real-life emotions. This could be achieved by incorporating role plays, simulations, and in- and out-of-class activities that expose students to differences that provoke emotional reactions. Informed and prepared faculty would then need to guide students in

constructing and reconstructing their emotional experiences in order to get a better handle on them, which should then open the door to a greater range of cognitive knowledge stores. At the same time, those knowledge stores need to be introduced and incorporated so that student emotions become associated with a larger range of cognitive and behavioral repertoire than before the event. This means, of course, that faculty need to be comfortable in doing so, which may require the same kind of development on the part of the faculty.

In any case, I believe we need to give strong consideration to bolstering our typical knowledge-based approaches to teaching culture by (a) teaching similarities as well as differences, and (b) incorporating experiential-based learning that will have an effect on emotion regulation. The question, of course, is, what do we want our students to learn, and how can we deliver that knowledge? The answer may not lie in content, but in a hypothesis-testing type of critical thinking process that helps students engage with cultural differences. We can help students acquire this type of critical thinking if we model it ourselves in and out of our classrooms.

Conclusion

We have only scratched the surface in terms of understanding culture and its relationship to mental processes and behavior. In light of our world's increasingly pluralistic and multicultural tendencies, it's important for teachers to continue to be on the cutting edge of knowledge and teaching in this area so that students can emerge as more informed voyagers of the world who have some practical skills in engaging with the complexity of a diverse life. Our ability to understand, appreciate, respect, and interact with people of diverse cultures, lifestyles, and belief systems has implications not only for how we deal with friends, neighbors, colleagues, and strangers, but also for how we deal with other countries and cultures. Dealing with culture is a major challenge not only on a local scale, but also on a global scale, and it can mean the difference between war and peace. Hopefully, all of us, in our own ways, can help to make the world a better place through our teachings about culture and in our daily lives.

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GOT CULTURE?

Incorporating Culture into the Curriculum

Regan A. R. Guring

To say that the world is getting increasingly diverse is to make a gross understatement and is now also trite and hackneyed. Whether from being “flattened” by technology or from increased rates of immigration and migration, the world is more diverse than it has ever been in the history of humankind. This is particularly the case in North America. Even the first U.S. Census in 1790 showed that the United States was a very diverse country (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1976). Today, more than ever before, students in the United States and around the world must be well aware of cultural diversity and its consequences regardless of their own cultural backgrounds. Culture is part of the “web of significance” in which we live enmeshed (Geertz, 1973).

Learning about diversity and culture is a critical learning outcome for all students, not just those in the cultural majority. Universities around North America have instituted initiatives to diversify the curriculum by changing general education requirements, revising majors, creating new courses on culture, hiring more faculty of color, and trying to diversify the student body (Branche, Mullennix, & Cohn, 2007). Diversity, meaning all the ways in which people are different (Bucher, 2004; see also Matsumoto, this volume), has been defined in various ways, sometimes exclusively in relation to ethnicity and race, and sometimes also incorporating other differences such as disability and sexual orientation. Similarly, culture has been defined in many different ways (Guring, 2010), and both terms can be used somewhat interchangeably. This

chapter provides a broad overview of the major considerations needed to best incorporate culture into the curriculum. In many ways I set the stage for the chapters that follow in this book. I first provide a brief definition of culture, highlighting some of the major issues inherent in trying to define culture. I then discuss the different ways that faculty can bring more diversity to their classes.

Culture Defined

At first defining culture does not seem too difficult, but both trained academics and laypeople often mean different things when they discuss culture. (Matsumoto, in this volume, provides a more expansive discussion of this issue.) Many students use the words *culture*, *ethnicity*, and *race* as if they mean the same thing. People also think that culture represents a set of ideals, beliefs, or behaviors. Culture has many dimensions. If you ask someone what she thinks the dominant culture around her is, in most cases she will identify an ethnic category. Someone in Miami may respond with “Cuban.” Someone in Minnesota may respond with “Scandinavian.” When I ask that question in Green Bay, Wisconsin, people often respond with “Hispanic” or “Hmong” (people from Laos, near Vietnam). They sometimes say, “American Indian” because they think that I am asking for which ethnic group is most visible in town. In reality, culture can be a variety of things. The dominant culture in Green Bay is Catholic, but people rarely realize that religion also constitutes a form of culture.

Culture must be discussed and defined before one can determine how to incorporate it into the curriculum. There are many definitions of culture (Soudijn, Hurschmaekers, & Van de Vijver, 1990, analyzed 128 definitions). Culture can be broadly defined as a dynamic yet stable set of goals, beliefs, and attitudes shared by a group of people (Gurung, 2010). Culture can also include similar physical characteristics (e.g., skin color), similar psychological characteristics (e.g., levels of hostility), and common superficial features (e.g., hairstyle and clothing). Culture is dynamic because some of the beliefs held by members in a culture can change with time. However, a culture generally remains stable because its members change together. Their beliefs and attitudes can be implicit, learned by observation and passed on by word of mouth, or they can be explicit, written down as laws or rules for the group to follow. The most commonly described cultural groups are those defined by ethnicity, race, sex, and age.

Two of the most important aspects that define cultural groups are *socioeconomic status (SES)* and *sex*. Although sex (including gender) has been in the curriculum for some time (e.g., gender studies, human sexuality classes, women’s studies), socioeconomic status has only recently been incorporated into the curriculum. The poor make up a large percentage of Americans without health insurance. SES is related to a higher occurrence of most chronic and infectious disorders and to higher rates of nearly all major causes of mortality and morbidity (Gurung, 2010). SES is a critical aspect of culture because research shows it to be associated with a wide array of health, cognitive, and socioemotional outcomes, with effects beginning before birth and continuing into adulthood (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002).

Definitional Issues

Any discussion of culture has to be cognizant of a major trend in the literature. Whenever we talk about culture, we often tend to emphasize cultural differences. To some extent, this is a natural human tendency. Even if people who are relatively identical in age, ethnicity, and intelligence are randomly separated into two groups and forced to compete with each other, members of each group will tend to believe they are better than those of the other group. Even when not competing for resources, we still like to emphasize how we are different from other people. This behavior creates three major problems. First, this emphasis on differences often leads us to treat some groups better than others, favoring them for a range of activities and services. Second, by focusing on major group differences, we often forget that differences exist within a group as often as between groups. Some African Americans have the same values, attitudes, and beliefs as some Asian Americans, and the superficial ethnic difference should not be taken to automatically suggest that the two individuals are vastly different. Finally, and perhaps most importantly in the context of education, whenever we deal with an individual from an unfamiliar culture, we often use the key ways that he or she is different to define his or her entire culture. When students learn about how a culture is different, they automatically assume that every member of that culture is different.

When we consider incorporating culture and diversity into the curriculum, we have to consider the implications of how we define culture. My definition of culture is general and inclusive. It can be argued that by

making such a broad definition I am downplaying the hardships faced by groups that have been historically discriminated against. Having ethnic and sex differences as major (or sole) parts of the university or department definition of culture may better facilitate the creation and requirements of courses on ethnicity and sex/gender. But having broader definitions may also make it easier for some instructors to avoid the more incendiary topics in diversity (e.g., racism and sexism) to focus on other forms of diversity that are somewhat less divisive (e.g., disability).

We should remember that cultural components interact. An individual has an ethnicity, a nationality, a sex, and many other components of culture. When we focus on only one of these (e.g., ethnicity) without noting how the one element interacts with others, we are missing out on the big picture. Human identity is complex, and focusing on only one element ignores that complexity. Sex and ethnicity provide a good example. As Lotte (1984) states, "By and large within the women's movement today, white women focus upon their oppression as women and ignore differences of race, sexual preference, class and age. There is a pretense to homogeneity of experience covered by the word *sisterhood* that does not exist" (p. 164). Figure 2.1 provides a useful graphic illustration of the importance of recognizing connectedness.

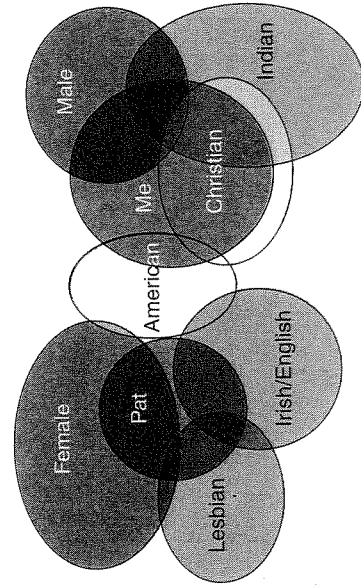


FIGURE 2.1

Cultural Components Interact

One final point in the context of definitions: There is a significant difference between teaching *about* diversity and teaching *to* a diverse student body; they require different skills and techniques. The chapters in this book primarily discuss the first type (teaching about diversity), although some also touch on the second (e.g., Hailstorks, this volume and the final section of this book).

Why Culture?

Some may wonder what the fuss is all about. Why should everyone incorporate culture into the curriculum? There are many different answers to this question, and perhaps one of them will suit you better than others. For many of us, there is no choice. Incorporating diversity is often a mandate handed down by our professional organizations, our university system or campus, or our department (Johns & Kelley Sipp, 2004). The American Psychological Association (APA), for example, urges that faculty "employ the constructs of multiculturalism and diversity in psychological education" (APA, 2003). In the field of psychology, one of the major competencies deemed critical by the Task Force on Undergraduate Psychology Major Competencies (Halonen et al., 2002) was that "students will recognize, understand and respect the complexity of sociocultural and international diversity."

Mandates aside, a sizable body of research suggests that being aware of cultural diversity can play a significant role in affect, behavior, and cognition (Gurin, 1999; Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995). Gurin (1999) points out that students who had experienced the most diversity in classroom settings and in informal interactions with their classmates showed the greatest engagement in active thinking processes and the greatest growth in intellectual and academic skills. Experience with diversity is especially effective in moderating stereotyping and prejudice.

Although research helps to counteract skepticism, the importance of culture is relatively clear if we take a look at life and experience. Culture is part of who we are; our identity is based on interrelated cultural aspects—our ethnicity, our nationality, and our religious outlooks. This is particularly important for students and faculty of European ancestry, for whom being "White" is often associated with not having as much culture as others. As Prieto and

Robinson (both this volume) point out, even those of European descent have cultural richness and a cultural identity. Furthermore, because we live in a diverse world, it seems fitting that we have culturally diverse curricula. Such curricula will help ensure the full and equal participation of all groups in society, a goal of the social justice approach (see Goldstein, this volume). Finally, a diverse curriculum that supports diverse student bodies improves recruitment and retention, two of the critical variables in college (Wang & Folger, 2004).

When asked why they do not cover cultural issues in their classes, our colleagues in the field have many different reactions and reasons, some of them valid. More often than not, however, they are more valid to the believer than in reality. These reasons vary, and you may have heard many of them yourself.

A common perception is that cultural diversity is tangential or irrelevant to the course. "It does not fit my course" is the oft-repeated refrain. Although this may be true in some areas, if one believes that cultural diversity is important, one needs to make the effort to make culture relevant. Instructors of physics or chemistry, for example, may be able to focus on equations and reactions that are constant across cultures. Although an introduction to physics or chemistry course may seem an odd place for cultural diversity, there is a large ethnic variance among the foremost proponents of physics and chemistry; the fields are not pure White (though they may appear and mostly are predominantly male). An easy way to incorporate diversity in these classes is to highlight contributions made to the discipline by diverse investigators (see Daniels, 2007, for biochemistry; Gunasekera and Friedrich this volume, for the Science Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) areas; and Guthrie, 2004, for psychology). Finding the time to discuss the varying ethnicities of investigators creates another issue and leads to another common excuse: "There's no time to cover diversity." We make time for what we think is important.

Sometimes it is easier to shift the responsibility to other sources. Some faculty members, especially those who do not believe they are competent to talk about diversity (another common excuse for not doing it), may also believe that students should get their diversity information from specific courses instead of from each instructor. One model of incorporating culture is having special courses on diversity, such as Race and Ethnicity or Introduction to Women Studies. A majority of colleges, 68%, require that students take one or more

diversity courses (Humphreys, 2000). Although this approach exposes students to diversity issues, it may marginalize culture. Students "have" to take the course and "get it taken care of" or "out of the way." They may therefore become dissatisfied with the course and may even resent the instructor (see Haynes, this volume).

One of the most inaccurate assumptions is that "basic theories apply to all cultures" and that therefore one does not need to spend time and energy discussing cultural variation. Although this sentiment may have reflected the state of the research perhaps 100 years ago, it is clearly not the case today (Matsumoto, 2007). There are many ways that cultures differ, and learning about them is important.

Another Model of Cultural Education

Requiring students to take a specialty course or courses in culture is only one way of incorporating culture into the curriculum. Another way is to infuse culture across the curriculum. This method is commonly used for writing. Many universities choose to have classes in every department pay more attention to writing and not just have it be the responsibility of the English Department (see Sewanee University; Kuh, et al., 2005). This method works well for culture too.

There are different ways of successfully managing infusion. Sometimes culture is introduced as a separate subject within a course in the form of a designated lecture or lectures, a separate chapter, or supplemental readings. Another method is to have culture be the thread throughout the class. Relevant cultural issues are mentioned in each lecture or every week, or a textbook is adopted that has a culture section in every chapter. Both these methods run the risk of making the "other" cultures discussed exotic or unique. The best method is to have culture be the fabric of the course, its main foundation (Banks & Banks, 2004; Kitano, 1997). There are many resources to help with this approach (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 1997; Branche, Mullennix, & Cohn, 2007; Bronstein & Quina, 2003; Buchet, 2004; Fowler, & Mumford, 1999; Johns & Kelley Sipp, 2004; Kowalski, 2000; Simoni, Sexton-Radek, Yescavage, Richard, & Lundquist, 1999; Singelis, 1998; Timpson, Canetto, Borrayo, & Yang, 2003; Trimble, Stevenson, & Worell, 2004; Whittlesey, 2001; Wlodkowski & Ginsburg, 1995).

Key Guidelines for Incorporating Culture into the Curriculum

There are many pragmatic ways to better include culture into the curriculum and many places and opportunities to do so. It does take time and effort, but if you have bought this book and read this far in this chapter, you clearly have an interest in this important task. There are seven key items to keep in mind:

1. *Make it explicit.* If you are serious about educating about cultural diversity, do not steer away from acknowledging it. Clearly list your goal in your syllabus (e.g., “To provide valuable information on cultural differences”). Students should know that learning about cultural diversity is going to be stressed and is not something tangential to the course. You can walk the walk by designing your assignments to make sure students learn about culture, and even by picking a textbook that incorporates culture throughout. For example, the subtitle of the textbook I use to teach health psychology is “A Cultural Approach” (Gurung, 2010). It is clear to students that cultural diversity is going to feature strongly in class.
2. *Make it safe.* It is not always easy to talk about diversity. Many students are uncomfortable. Many faculty members are uncomfortable. It is important to set ground rules for discussion and to provide alternative responses to raising one’s hand for sharing differences (Kees, 2003; Wlodkowski & Ginsburg, 1995). Members of different cultural groups have different comfort levels for class participation, and sometimes it is helpful to explicitly acknowledge these differences. Chapters in this book will greatly expand your awareness of things to watch out for.
3. *Model appropriate behavior.* Students rely heavily on instructors when someone in the class makes a potentially offensive comment. Some examples of such “triggers” (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 1997) are the following: “I feel so sorry for people with disabilities. What a tragedy”; “Men are biologically more adapted to leadership roles”; “Homeless people prefer their life”; “People of color just blow things out of proportion”; “If women wear tight clothes, they are asking for it.” Instructors need to be prepared to respond to such statements, for often not reacting to them could indicate implicit agreement. Such triggers can also be used to generate discussion (if students feel it is safe).
4. *Make it relevant.* Many students have had minimal exposure to individuals who are different. Often they do not even realize that the people they interact with or are exposed to *are* different. Socioeconomic differences are easily invisible in superficial classroom interactions, as are differences such as sexual orientation. One way to make talking about culture relevant is to tie discussion

to current events and to make local connections. If there is an American Indian reservation nearby or a national rally for gay rights or a controversy related to a minority group, the instructor can use the opportunity to educate the class about the group in question.

5. *Make it credible.* It is difficult to talk about the experiences of a group based on only your reading or secondhand experiences. For example, European American instructors are often hesitant to discuss the experiences of African Americans because they feel, sometimes correctly, that students will not consider them credible. The best thing to do is to use experts, primary sources, and the vast array of movies (*Crash*, *A Class Divided*, *What’s Cooking, Mi Familia*), television shows, and musical productions. With the advent of YouTube, various short clips are easily accessible for use in class.
6. *Make it active and experiential.* Getting students involved in their learning and making class presentation more “active” have been shown to be better for student learning in a variety of situations (Bean, 1996; Warren, 2006). Providing students with ways to engage with diversity information directly is useful. Most of this book discusses such methods, including the “Who am I?” task (students illustrate their own cultural diversity by listing the ways they describe themselves), perspective-taking exercises (Watkins-Goffman, 2001), grocery shopping (in a culturally different grocery store, such as a European American student going to a Mexican American grocery store), visiting a different religion’s place of worship, reflection papers for movies, book clubs on diversity (e.g., *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?*, Tatum, 2003; *Sexing the Body*, Fausto Sterling, 2004), and interviews (see Pedersen, 2004).
7. *Make it count.* If you are implementing new strategies to incorporate culture into the classroom, it is critical to assess your level of success. Measure student satisfaction with the class, and monitor if it changes from before you introduced diversity to after. Perhaps directly measure student prejudices during the course of the class (Case, 2007). Perform content analyses of student papers or choose from the many methods suggested by guides to conducting research on teaching and learning (see Gurung & Schwartz, 2009, for a review and complete guide).

Conclusions

Culture is multifaceted, influencing every aspect of life. Healthy curricula need both specialty courses and the infusion of culture into standard courses. Cultural diversity is a fact of life not yet adequately represented in academic

curricula. This book provides a comprehensive review of resources and methods to optimize the integration of culture into the curriculum. Specific models of integration and best practices will provide you with the tools and material to try out new techniques immediately.

In closing, let me ask the question suggested by the title of this chapter: Have you "Got Culture"? It is important to do the following as you answer this question for yourself. Examine yourself and be cognizant of how you vary from others (e.g., sex, age, religion, family values). Examine your courses (syllabus, textbooks, lectures, activities). Examine your department mission and learning outcomes, procedures and criteria for program review, merit, tenure and promotion, and the requirements for the major and minor. Examine your university mission statement, the hiring language, and the general education requirements. If you are committed to incorporating culture into the curriculum, leave none of these stones unturned.

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