1.4: Broadening Horizons (Summary)

From theory to practice...

- **Strive to encounter others in an attitude of openness and a spirit of curiosity.** Seek to understand rather than to predict. To the extent possible, suspend judgment for as long as you can, forming an image of the other person gradually through conversing. **Active listening** helps, i.e., focusing intently on the words and body language of the other person.

- **Don't apply culturally differentiating labels to individuals.** Generalizations about norms of behavior are misplaced when we are dealing one-on-one with an individual. Because they are widespread, it's good to know about the categories (i.e. "individualism" vs. "collectivism") used to differentiate national cultures, but it's important to keep in mind that they represent broadstroke generalizations, which can in no way be applicable to every individual from that culture.

- **Beware of unexamined assumptions.** You are likely to have gleaned information about different cultures from local new sources or from friends or family or from what you may have learned in school. You should be cautious with such "received wisdom", which may rely on stereotypes and outdated information. It's important to learn what sources to trust – both in person and online. Equally important is a willingness to be open to different points of view.

- **Be alert to your personal filter bubble.** You should not assume that you are receiving neutral results from search requests or getting balanced views from online news providers. They may be feeding you what they assume you want, namely more of the same. Try using a different web browser or logging out of your Google or other accounts, to see if suggested links change.
Key Concepts

- **Active listening**: A communication technique that requires that the listener fully concentrate, understand, respond and then remember what is being said.

- **Algorithm**: A process or set of rules to be followed in calculations or other problem-solving operations, especially by a computer.

- **Citizen journalism**: Ordinary citizens reporting through the Internet on events or issues of local importance, often using social media.

- **Collectivism**: Cultural orientation where the group is the primary unit of culture; group goals take precedence over individual goals.

- **Communication apprehension**: The fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or group of persons.

- **Complexity theory**: Also known as complex dynamic systems; a framework for understanding phenomena that are composed of many variables and subsystems.

- **Cosmopolitanism**: Moral view of the individual as having an allegiances and personal responsibility to the world.

- **Critical intercultural communication**: Approach to the field that focuses on issues of power, context, socio-economic relations and historical/structural forces as they play out in culture and intercultural communication encounters, relationships, and contexts.

- **Culture**: An accumulated pattern of values, beliefs, and behaviors shared by an identifiable group of people with a common history and verbal and nonverbal symbol system (from Jim Neuliep).

- **Culture-of-use**: A set of historically developed, socially accepted norms and behavior for participation in speech communities such as online discussion forums (from Steve Thorne).

- **Decentered**: Shifting from an established center or focus; especially to disconnect from practical or theoretical assumptions of origin, priority, or essence.

- **Digital divide**: Inequalities related to the access and use of information and communication technologies.

- **Digital infinity**: The idea that all human languages follow a simple logical principle, according to which a limited set of elements are combined to produce an infinite range of potentially meaningful expressions.

- **Diaspora**: A scattered population whose origin lies in a smaller geographic area.

- **Echo chamber**: In media, an echo chamber is a situation in which information, ideas, or beliefs are amplified or reinforced by transmission and repetition inside an 'enclosed' system, where different or competing views are censored, disallowed or otherwise underrepresented.

- **Emic/Etic**: In anthropology and other social sciences, emic refers to characteristics derived from inside a social group (from the perspective of the subject) and etic from outside (from the perspective of the observer).

- **Empathy**: The imaginary participation in another person’s experience, including emotional and intellectual dimensions, by imagining his or her perspective (James Bennett).

- **Essentialism**: A belief that things have a set of characteristics that make them what they are; in intercultural communication, characterizing cultures by a set of contrasting features, such as individualism versus collectivism.

- **Filter bubble**: Describes a personalized search in which a website algorithm selectively guesses what information a user would like to see based on information about the user.

- **Global citizenship**: The idea that all people have rights and civic responsibilities that come with being a member of the world.

- **Globalization**: A process of interaction and integration among the people, companies, and governments of different
nations, a process driven by international trade and investment and aided by information technology

- **Groupthink**: When group members try to minimize conflict and reach a consensus decision without critical evaluation of alternative viewpoints by actively suppressing dissenting viewpoints, and by isolating themselves from outside influences

- **Homophily**: i.e., "love of the same", is the tendency of individuals to associate and bond with similar others

- **Individualism**: Cultural orientation where the individual is unique and individual goals are emphasized over group goals

- **Intercultural communication**: Two persons from different cultures or co-cultures exchanging verbal and nonverbal messages

- **Netiquette**: A set of social conventions that facilitate interaction over networks

- **Other**: Identifying and excluding a person from a social group, placing him or her at the margins of society, where social norms do not apply

- **Othering**: Describes the reductive action of labeling a person as someone who belongs to a subordinate social category

- **Power distance**: The extent to which members of a culture expect and accept that power is unequally distributed

- **Reductionism**: The practice of analyzing and describing a complex phenomenon in terms of phenomena that are held to represent a simpler or more fundamental level; in intercultural communication, refers to reducing individual identities to perceived national characteristics

- **Search engine optimization**: The process of maximizing the number of visitors to a particular website by ensuring that the site appears high on the list of results returned by a search engine

- **Semantic**: Pertaining to meaning

- **Small cultures**: Small social groupings or activities wherever there are cohesive behavior patterns and practice (from Adrian Holliday)

- **Social justice**: The equitable distribution of wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society

- **Solutions journalism**: An approach to news reporting that focuses on the responses to social issues as well as the problems themselves

- **Symbol**: An arbitrarily selected and learned stimulus representing something else

- **Taxonomy**: The practice and science of classification of things or concepts

- **Uncertainty avoidance**: The degree to which members of a particular culture feel threatened by unpredictable, uncertain, or unknown situations

- **Worldview**: The cognitive and affective lens through which people construe their experiences and make sense of the world around them (AACU)

- **Xenophobia**: Intense or irrational dislike or fear of people from other countries

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**Recommended Resources**

**Books**

- Edward T. Hall, *The Silent Language* (1959), a classic, which many seen as the beginning of the field of intercultural communication

- Geert Hofstede, *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind* (1991), standard in the field by one of the major scholars
• Adrian Holliday, *Intercultural communication & ideology* (2011), looks at intercultural communication against the backdrop of an unequal global politics in which ideology plays a major role


**ONLINE RESOURCES**

**Globalization**

• *Why the World Is Flat*
  Article from *Wired* about Thomas Friedman's well-known book on globalization

• *Pankaj Ghemawat: Actually, the world isn't flat*
  Ghemawat offers counter-arguments to the conventional wisdom about globalization, the concept that, as Tom Friedman put it, the "world is flat". In particular he has interesting comments about Facebook.
  TED description: "It may seem that we’re living in a borderless world where ideas, goods and people flow freely from nation to nation. We’re not even close, says Pankaj Ghemawat. With great data (and an eye-opening survey), he argues that there’s a delta between perception and reality in a world that's maybe not so hyperconnected after all."

• *Global Policy Forum: Globalization*
  From Global Policy Forum, with extensive links

**Statistics on world demographics**

• *World Demographics Profile*
  From Index Mundi, includes demographic information on all countries

• *Hari Kondabolu - 2042 & the White Minority*
  Humorous take on the demographic changes coming to the USA

**Cultural dimensions and history of intercultural communication**

• *Edward T. Hall and The History of Intercultural Communication: The United States and Japan*
  Article tracing the role of anthropologist Edward T. Hall in founding the field of intercultural communication

• *Geert Hofstede cultural dimensions*
  From Clearly Cultural

**On broadening horizons and media**

• *Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: The danger of a single story*
  Nigerian novelist speaking about her experiences growing up in Nigeria and studying in the USA
  TED description: "Our lives, our cultures, are composed of many overlapping stories. Novelist Chimamanda Adichie tells the story of how she found her authentic cultural voice — and warns that if we hear only a single story about another person or country, we risk a critical misunderstanding."
· **Leslie Dodson: Don't misrepresent Africa**

TED description: "Real narratives are complicated: Africa isn't a country, and it's not a disaster zone, says reporter and researcher Leslie Dodson. In her talk, she calls for journalists, researchers and NGOs to stop representing entire continents as one big tragedy."

· **Alisa Miller: How the news distorts our worldview**

World map dramatically illustrates the US media's reporting on world events (very limited)
TED description: "Alisa Miller, head of Public Radio International, talks about why — though we want to know more about the world than ever — the media is actually showing us less. Eye-opening stats and graphs."

**Technology and the filter bubble**

· **Technology is creating a world without strangers**

On the sharing economy

· **How to Burst the "Filter Bubble" that Protects Us from Opposing Views**

From the MIT Technology Review

· **Eli Pariser: Beware online "filter bubbles"**

Pariser's classic TED talk explains the concepts of echo chamber and filter bubble.
TED description: "As web companies strive to tailor their services (including news and search results) to our personal tastes, there's a dangerous unintended consequence: We get trapped in a 'filter bubble' and don't get exposed to information that could challenge or broaden our worldview. Eli Pariser argues powerfully that this will ultimately prove to be bad for us and bad for democracy."

· **Ethan Zuckerman: Listening to global voices**

Interesting comments on how to be more aware of what's happening in the rest of the world, such as "engineer serendipity" and "cultivate xenophiles". Discussion of Twitter from an international perspective.
TED description: "Sure, the web connects the globe, but most of us end up hearing mainly from people just like ourselves. Blogger and technologist Ethan Zuckerman wants to help share the stories of the whole wide world. He talks about clever strategies to open up your Twitter world and read the news in languages you don't even know."

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**References**


perspective. Waveland Press.


Credits

Photos: Unless otherwise noted, the images used are from open sources

Horizon: Pixabay; https://pixabay.com/p-768759

Chimamanda Adichie: Slowking, GFDL 1.; https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=28638718


Girls’ Generation: Korea KPOP World Festival: https://www.flickr.com/photos/42438955@N05/11039813825/


Ryan Boyette: Enough Project; https://www.flickr.com/photos/enoughproject/6939045049

Yi ethic group: Bernd Gross; https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/F...i-Minority.JPG

Small discussion group: Culture Republic; https://www.flickr.com/photos/getambition/4700594335

Oakland Occupy: Brian Sims; https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/F...cent_signs.jpg