

Unit Two

Culture: It's More than Meets the Eye



The Unit at a Glance

In this unit you'll find learning experiences designed to broaden students' perspectives about cultures other than their own using the culture of the Dominican Republic as an example. They will examine their own culture and the culture of the Dominican Republic using primary source documents. The unit is divided into six separate modules. Each module has three or more lessons organized around one or more of the enduring understandings and essential questions listed below. All of the modules revisit, from a different vantage point, the major theme: *Everyone has a culture. It shapes how we see ourselves, others, and the world.*

Together, the six modules help students understand that the ability to understand and respect other cultures is a 21st century "survival skill." The unit is flexible. You can teach the entire unit, select particular modules, or adapt the modules or lessons to meet your students' needs. All of the modules can be used with students in grades 9-12. Modules 1, 2, and 6 can be adapted for use with students in grades 6-8.

This is a standards-based unit designed to meet National Council for the Social Studies standards and Language Arts standards identified by the Mid-Continent Regional Education Laboratory (McREL). We've also organized this unit around six enduring understandings. As noted in the Introduction to the study guide, these are important ideas that have lasting value beyond the classroom. They involve generalizations that will endure over time (Wiggins and McTighe 1998). Because of this, you can adapt the lessons in this unit for use with the study of any country in your curriculum.

Enduring Understandings:

The enduring understandings for this unit are:

- Everyone has a culture. It shapes how we see ourselves, others, and the world.
- Culture is like an iceberg. Some aspects are observable; others are beneath the surface. The invisible aspects influence the visible ones. To understand someone from another culture you need to understand both the visible and invisible aspects of that culture.

- Understanding someone from another culture can sometimes be hard because people see the world, themselves, and others in fundamentally different ways. No matter what their culture, people behave as they do because of the things they believe in and value. Beliefs and values vary from culture to culture.
- It's possible to misinterpret things people do in a cross-cultural setting. To keep from misunderstanding the behavior of others from another culture, you have to try to see the world from their point of view, not yours.
- Crossing cultures isn't easy. It's a complex process where understanding behaviors in light of the cultural context is very important. The ability to cross cultures respectfully can bring greater harmony and understanding into your school, community, and world.
- Despite cultural differences, there are cultural universals (common needs that unify all people) that join people from all cultures in a common bond of humanity.

Essential Questions:

We've developed a set of "essential questions," related directly to the enduring understandings above. These essential questions are meant to guide teaching and provoke student curiosity and interest (see Appendix A, page 171). Because they are designed to stimulate student thinking and discussion, essential questions are open-ended and do not have an obvious "right" answer. Essential questions can also provide you with advance organizers for the unit. Examples of several essential questions used in this unit are:

- How does culture shape the way I see myself, others, and the world?
- Why doesn't everyone see things the way I do?
- How can I learn to see things from another culture's point of view?
- Why is this important?

Topical Questions:

Topical questions flow from essential questions, but are more narrowly focused and content-specific (Wiggins and McTighe 1998). While you can use the essential questions to study many different countries and cultures, the topical questions in this unit are specific to the Dominican Republic. Using our topical questions as an example, you can create your own topical questions for the study of other cultures. Table C on page 65 shows the relationship between enduring understandings, essential questions, and topical questions. The questions in each row of the table are addressed in Modules 1-6, respectively.

We suggest that if you are working with students in grades 6-8, Modules 1, 2, and 6 would be most appropriate. All modules can be used with students in grades 9-12.

Note to Teachers

For many activities in this unit, we are indebted to the Peace Corps publication *Culture Matters: The Peace Corps Cross-Cultural Workbook* by Craig Storti and Laurette Bennhold-Samaan. This primary resource is one of the ways Peace Corps prepares new Volunteers to serve effectively. If you wish to go even further into *Culture Matters*, you'll find the book and its accompanying *Training Manual* at the Coverdell World Wise Schools Web site www.peacecorps.gov/wws/educators. Both publications can be downloaded in their entirety.

Teaching About Culture:

When teaching about culture, keep in mind that culture is just one of numerous influences on behavior. People can differ from each other in many other aspects; e.g., personality, age, gender, level of education, special abilities, and any other personal features that make each individual a unique human being. We need to be careful of over-generalizing or making statements like: “She’s an American, so that explains why....”; or “He’s from New York or Texas, so that explains why....”; or “He’s a Canadian, so that explains why”. Cultural groups do have certain characteristics in common. But within each group, there is always a broad range of individual differences.

Assessing Student Understanding:

In this unit, we use both traditional and alternative forms of assessment: journal entries, graphic organizers, oral presentations, role playing, skit writing, interviews, student self-assessment, performance checklists, and performance tasks. We’ve also developed a culminating performance task (see page 142) that is designed to assess students’ ability to apply what they have learned about culture to their own school setting.



Table C

Enduring Understandings	Essential Questions	Topical Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Everyone has a culture. It shapes the way we see ourselves, others, and the world. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does culture shape the way I see myself, others, and the world? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the culture of the Dominican Republic? How is it similar to and different from US culture?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Culture is like an iceberg. Some aspects are observable; others are beneath the surface. The invisible aspects influence the visible ones. To understand someone from another culture, you need to understand its visible and invisible aspects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do the invisible aspects of culture influence the visible ones? Why is it important to understand the visible and invisible aspects of culture? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the visible features of Dominican culture? What are the invisible ones? In what ways do the invisible features influence the visible ones?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding someone from another culture can sometimes be hard, because people see the world, themselves, and others in fundamentally different ways. No matter what their culture, people behave as they do, in part, because of the things they believe in and value. Beliefs and values vary from culture to culture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why doesn't everyone see things the way I do? How do my beliefs and values influence the way I behave? Is there a set of common American beliefs and values? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are some things Dominicans might not see the same way as I do? What are some things that I might not see the way Dominicans do? How are Dominican beliefs and values similar to and different from mine?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It's possible to misinterpret things people do in a cross-cultural setting. To keep from misunderstanding the behavior of individuals from another culture, you must try to see the world from their point of view, not yours. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why might it be possible for me to misunderstand individuals from another culture? Why might it be possible for people from another culture to misunderstand me? How can I learn to see things from another culture's point of view? Why is this important? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can I keep from misunderstanding people from the Dominican Republic and other cultures?

Table C Continued

Enduring Understanding	Essential Questions	Topical Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crossing cultures isn't easy. It's a complex process where the ability to read the context and respond appropriately is essential. • The ability to cross cultures respectfully can bring greater harmony and understanding into your school, community, and the world. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you learn to read the context of a cross-cultural situation? • If you did develop these skills, how could it lead to better harmony and understanding right here in your own school? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is going to the Dominican Republic an example of crossing cultures? • How can I use contextual clues to understand the cultural norms of the Dominican Republic? • How can this knowledge help me better understand others?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despite cultural differences, there are "cultural universals" (needs common to all people) that unite individuals from every culture in a common bond of humanity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do "cultural universals" (needs common to all people) unite individuals from all cultures in a common bond of humanity? • What are the cultural universals that all people share? • Despite cultural differences, how are we all the same? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In what ways do people in the United States and people in the Dominican Republic share common needs?



Content Standards Addressed in This Unit

National Council for the Social Studies Standards

Culture (NCSS Theme I)

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of culture and cultural diversity so that the learner can:

- Compare similarities and differences in the ways groups, societies, and cultures meet human needs and concerns.
- Explain how information and experiences may be interpreted by people from diverse cultural perspectives and frames of reference.

Individual Development and Identity (NCSS Theme IV)

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of individual development and identity so that the learner can:

- Identify and describe ways in which regional, ethnic, and national cultures influence individuals' daily lives.
- Identify and describe the influence of perception, attitudes, values, and beliefs on personal identity.

Global Connections (NCSS Theme IX)

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of global connections and interdependence so that the learner can:

- Explain how language, art, music, belief systems, and other cultural elements can facilitate global understanding or cause misunderstanding.

Language Arts Standards

Identified by the Mid-Continent Regional Education Laboratory (McREL)

Standard 1: The learner will be able to demonstrate competence in the general skills and strategies of the writing process.

Standard 5: The learner will demonstrate competence in the general strategies of the reading process.

Standard 6: The learner will use reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of informational and literary texts.

Standard 8: The learner will demonstrate competence in speaking and listening as tools for learning.

Understanding Culture

The Module at a Glance

This module contains four lessons which introduce students to the concept of culture. It is designed to help students better understand their own culture and the culture of others. Students identify features of culture and work from their own experience to begin to define the culture of the United States. They use primary source materials from the Dominican Republic to get a first-hand glimpse into the features of a culture different from their own. Their learning is guided by the essential questions: How does culture shape the way I see myself, others, and the world? How does my culture shape me? What is the culture of the Dominican Republic? How is it similar to and different from the culture of the United States? These questions lead to the enduring understanding: Everyone has a culture. It shapes how they see themselves, others, and the world.

I believe that participant observation is more than a research methodology. It is a way of being, especially suited to a world of change.

Mary Catherine Bateson,
Anthropologist

Lesson One: Introducing Culture

Objective:

- Students will be able to describe how the concept of culture relates to their own experience.

Instructions:

1. Ask students to imagine that they are “aliens”— peaceful, intelligent creatures from another planet who have been given the mission of spending a week researching life in your community and school. Their mission is to find answers to the following questions: What explains why humans in your community and in your school think and act the way they do? The aliens are expected to return to their home planet to report their observations and findings.
2. Ask students to work in groups of three or four and together discuss and write down: What observations would an alien make about life in our community?
3. Explain to students that they need to be looking for “big picture” and “small detail” observations. Ask students to divide their paper into two columns, one with the heading: “Big Picture” and one with the heading “Small Details.” Provide several examples of each category, such as:

BIG PICTURE

- “Something seems to shape the way people live, think, and act.”
- “People live in families and belong to different groups.”
- “There seem to be rules of behavior that everyone understands.”
- “Older people teach younger people what is expected.”

SMALL DETAILS

- “Young people in schools dress in different ways.”
- “Older people dress in other ways.”
- “People eat together, usually sitting around a table.”
- “People look at watches and clocks a lot.”
- “There are lots of cars.”

- After students have made their observations, explain to them that an important part of the aliens’ mission is to find out the answers to the following questions:
 - What is important to human beings?
 - Why are some things about human beings the same, and why are some things different?
 - Why don’t all people think and act the same way?
 - What are the rules? How are they learned?
 - What shapes how human beings see the world, themselves, and others?
- Ask students to work in groups to discuss the following questions, as if they were still “aliens.”
 - What observations do the aliens make?
 - What questions do these observations raise in the aliens’ minds?
- Once you have discussed their observations and questions, ask students to step out of their role of “aliens” and now to think about themselves. Ask students to respond to the following questions: What explains:
 - How and why you dress the way you do?
 - How and why you celebrate certain holidays?
 - The foods you eat and the way you’ve been taught to eat them?
 - What you’ve been taught is the polite thing to do?
 - The traditions in your family?
 - What is important to you?
 - What influences and shapes you?
- Explain to students that we call this influence in our lives “culture.” Introduce students to the enduring understanding: *Everyone has a culture. Culture shapes the way we see ourselves, others, and the world.*

Enduring Understanding:

- Everyone has a culture. Culture shapes how we see ourselves, others, and the world.

Essential Questions:

- How does culture shape the way we see ourselves, others, and the world?
- How does my culture shape me?
- Why is it important to understand culture?

Topical Questions:

- What is the culture like in the Dominican Republic?
- How is Dominican culture similar to and different from the culture of the U.S.?
- What are some things Peace Corps Volunteers have noticed about the culture of the Dominican Republic?

Standards:

National Council for the Social Studies

- Culture (Theme I): Social Studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of culture and cultural diversity so that learners can compare similarities and differences in the ways groups, societies and cultures meet human needs and concerns.
- Individual Development and Identity (Theme IV): Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of individual development and identity so that the learner can identify and

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describe ways regional, ethnic, and national cultures influence individuals' daily lives.

Language Arts Standards:

- The learner will demonstrate competence in the general skills and strategies of the writing process.
- The learner will use primary sources to gather information for research topics.

Assessments:

Interpretation of Primary Source Materials; Journal Entries

Materials:

Features of Culture; Quotes about the Culture of the Dominican Republic; Everyone Has a Culture

Time: Four days

8. Explain to students that in this module, they will be exploring answers to the following questions:
 - How does my culture shape the way I see myself, others, and the world?
 - How does my culture shape me?
 - What is the culture like in the Dominican Republic?
 - How is Dominican culture similar to and different from the culture of the United States?
9. Begin the next part of the lesson by providing students with real-world scenarios to help them think about what it would be like to move into a different culture (in this case, the Dominican Republic)
10. To stimulate student interest, ask them to imagine that now they are like the “aliens” –outsiders moving into another culture. Ask them to imagine they are facing one of the following scenarios:
 - Your family is moving to the Dominican Republic. You don't know anything about this country. What you do know is: the customs will be different, the language will be different; and you will be attending school and living in a community with Dominicans. People keep telling you that you need to understand the Dominican “culture.” You are not sure what they mean.
 - You are going to spend the summer living with a family in the Dominican Republic. Different people have told you that you need to understand the “Dominican culture.” You are not sure what they mean.
11. Ask students to imagine what questions they might be asking themselves if they really were in one of the above scenarios. Responses, depending on grade level, might be:
 - What will it be like?
 - Will I fit in?
 - What is culture?
 - What is Dominican culture like?
 - How will I know what is acceptable behavior and what isn't?
 - What are the “rules”?
 - How different are Dominicans from Americans? How are they similar?
 - What shapes Dominicans?

Journal Entry:

Ask students to respond to the following journal prompt:

- If you knew you were going to the Dominican Republic for several months or more, what things might you do to prepare yourself for living in another culture?

Lesson Two: Features of Culture

Objectives:

- Students will be able to explain some of the features of their own culture.
- Students will be able to describe their impressions of how the culture of the United States has shaped them.

Instructions:

1. Write the following statements on the board:
 - No one is exactly like me.
 - I have many things in common with the members of my family and community.
 - Every person in the world needs some of the same things I need.
2. Point out to students that people in various groups often look at people in other groups as “different.” Ask students: How does this occur in our school or community? Why?
3. Ask students to describe some of these differences. Then ask: Why might people in one group behave differently from people in another group?
4. Explain that many differences are related to *culture*—beliefs and ways of living that are handed down from one generation to the next.
5. Working from the statements on the board, explain that all people share basic needs (e.g., food, shelter, love, and respect). In addition, each of us learns a set of behaviors and beliefs from the people we grow up with (e.g., the foods we eat, the way we celebrate holidays, and how we are expected to behave toward neighbors). Finally, each individual has unique talents and preferences (e.g., I’m good at math, I’m good at soccer, and I don’t like chocolate).
6. Explain that when we talk about behaviors and beliefs that a group of people have in common (not individual talents and preferences), we are talking about culture.
7. Explain to students that they will now look at some of the features of culture. Provide each student with a copy of Worksheet #1, *Features of Culture*, on page 72. Make sure students understand each feature by providing or eliciting examples.
8. Take four of the features of culture (celebrations, greeting people, beliefs about hospitality, and attitudes toward the importance of personal space and privacy) and ask students to respond in their journals to the following questions about these features:
 - What kinds of celebrations are important in your family? In the U.S.?
 - How do we generally greet people we don’t know? People we do know?

Adaptation comes out of encounters with novelty that may seem chaotic. In trying to adapt, we may need to deviate from cherished values, behaving in ways we barely glimpsed, seizing on fragmentary clues.

*Mary Catherine Bateson
Anthropologist*

Worksheet #1

Features of Culture

Directions: For each feature of culture, think of one example common to people in the U.S. or in the country where you were born.

1. Styles of dress
2. Ways of greeting people
3. Beliefs about hospitality
4. Importance of time
5. Paintings
6. Values
7. Literature
8. Beliefs about child raising (children & teens)
9. Attitudes about personal space/privacy
10. Beliefs about the responsibilities of children & teens
11. Gestures
12. Holiday customs
13. Music
14. Dancing
15. Celebrations
16. Concept of fairness
17. Nature of friendship
18. Ideas about clothing
19. Foods
20. Eating habits
21. Facial expressions and hand gestures
22. Concept of self
23. Work ethic
24. Religious beliefs
25. Religious rituals
26. Concept of beauty
27. Rules of polite behavior
28. Attitude toward age
29. Beliefs about the importance of family
30. General world view

- How do we show hospitality in our community?
 - How important do you feel it is to have personal space and privacy?
9. Ask students to compare their answers in groups of four. Ask students to add to their lists the responses of their group members that are different from their own.
 10. Conduct a whole-class discussion:
 - What did you learn from this activity?
 - What conclusions can you begin to draw about the culture of the U.S.?
 - What are your beginning impressions about how U.S. culture has shaped you?
 11. Review *Worksheet #2, Everyone Has a Culture—Everyone is Different* on page 74. Make a copy of this worksheet for every student.
 12. For homework, ask students to complete *Worksheet #2*. This will help them identify unique aspects of their own cultures.



Lesson Three: Defining Culture

Objectives:

- Students will be able to further describe how their culture has shaped them.
- Students will be able to define the concept of culture.
- Students will be able to explain some of the attributes of culture.

Instructions:

1. Begin the lesson by asking students to form small groups and compare their homework responses to *Worksheet #2*.
2. After small groups have compared their responses, ask:
 - Were your responses to the questions exactly alike?
 - Why do you think this was so?
 - What differences did you find among responses?
 - How can you explain the differences?

Worksheet #2

Everyone Has a Culture—Everyone Is Different

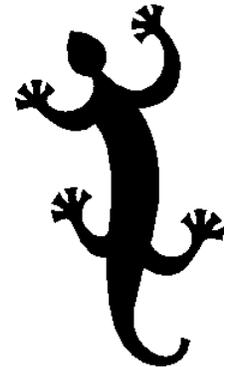
Directions: Please respond to each question.

1. What languages do you speak?
2. What music do you listen to? What dances do you know?
3. What foods do you eat at home?
4. In your family, what is considered polite and what is considered rude? What manners have you been taught?
5. What do you wear on special occasions? How important is your extended family (e.g., grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins)?
6. What holidays and ceremonies are important in your family?
7. What things are most important to you?
8. Based on what you've written, how would you describe the characteristics of the culture you're a part of?

3. Explain to students that their responses to the worksheet questions were partially shaped by the culture in which they were raised. Make the point that if these questions were given to Dominican students or students from another culture, their answers might be different because they have grown up in a different culture.
4. Write the enduring understanding for this module on the board: *Everyone has a culture. It shapes how we see ourselves, the world, and others.* Explain to students that in this part of the lesson they will be exploring answers to these essential questions:
 - What is culture?
 - How does it shape the way we see ourselves, the world, and others?
5. Write the word CULTURE in big, bold letters across the board and ask students to pair up with another student.
6. Ask students to work in pairs to formulate a preliminary definition of culture based on what they have learned in the previous two lessons. Ask each pair to join with another pair to compare their definitions. Provide younger students with the following definitions of culture:
 - *Culture*: The daily living patterns and the most deeply held beliefs that a group of people have in common.
 - *Culture*: A set of behaviors and customs passed from one generation to the next. The rules, language, religion, family structures, recreation, and education that a group of people share provide predictability and safety in their lives. When people are bound together by common beliefs and practices, they understand each other. And the world around them has meaning.
7. Ask students: What words do you see in both definitions? Which words in the second definition do you think are important?
8. Provide older students the above definitions and some others, for example:
 - *Culture* is the shared set of assumptions, values, and beliefs of a group of people by which they organize their common life.
 - *Culture* consists of concepts, values, and assumptions about life that guide behavior and are widely shared by people. These are transmitted from generation to generation, rarely with explicit instructions by parents and other respected elders.
 - *Culture* is an integrated system of learned behavior patterns that are characteristic of the members of any given society. Culture refers to the total way of life for a particular group of people. It includes what a group of people thinks, says, does, and makes—its customs, language, material artifacts, and shared systems of attitudes and feelings.

To have your eyes widened and your organ of belief stretched, whilst remaining discreetly submissive, seems to me a faculty the traveler ought to cultivate. When you have submitted to observing with as little prejudice as possible, then you are in a proper state of mind to walk about and learn from what you see.

Philip Glazebrook, Author



Note to Teachers

Definitions of culture can be found in *Culture Matters: The Peace Corps Cross-Cultural Workbook* by Craig Storti and Laurette Bennhold-Samaan. This primary resource is one of the ways Peace Corps prepares new Volunteers to serve effectively. You'll find the book and its accompanying training manual at the Coverdell World Wise Schools Web site, www.peacecorps.gov/wws/educators

9. Ask students to work in pairs to analyze the various definitions to see if they can come up with common attributes present in all of the definitions (e.g., culture is learned; culture is shared; culture deals with values and beliefs that shape behavior).
10. Summarize for students the following attributes of culture. Older students may be able to identify some of these attributes on their own.
 - Everyone has a culture.
 - Culture is collective, shared by a group.
 - Culture is learned.
 - Culture influences and shapes behavior.
 - Culture has to do with values and beliefs.
 - Culture involves customs and traditions.
 - Culture is transmitted from generation to generation.
 - Culture is often unconscious; people are sometimes not aware of how their behaviors and attitudes have been shaped by their culture.
 - People in all cultures have common needs.
11. Use the following questions to focus discussion on the role culture plays in forming our behaviors and beliefs:
 - How do you think your culture has shaped you? How has it influenced your values, preferences, and beliefs?
 - Despite the differences in culture in our class, what are some things that everyone shares in common?
 - How does culture shape the way we see ourselves, others, and the world?

Journal Entry:

Ask students to respond in their journals to the following prompts:

- What is culture?
- How does culture shape the way I see myself, others, and the world?



Lesson Four: The Dominican Republic: A First Glimpse at Another Culture

Objectives:

- Students will be able to describe some of the features of Dominican culture.
- Students will be able to use primary source documents to analyze cultural features of the Dominican Republic.
- Students will begin to describe the similarities and differences between the culture of the United States and the culture of the Dominican Republic.

Instructions:

1. Students will begin their understanding of Dominican culture by looking at several examples of its cultural features. These examples were provided by Peace Corps Volunteers and a visitor to the Dominican Republic.
2. Distribute Worksheet #3: *Quotes about the Culture of the Dominican Republic* (see page 78). The Peace Corps Volunteers' quotes provide primary source material for your students.
3. Explain to students that these descriptions of the Dominican people and their culture were provided by Peace Corps Volunteers who have served in the Dominican Republic. Each of the quotes illustrates various features of Dominican culture.
4. Ask students to work in pairs using both the Peace Corps Volunteer quotes and the *Features of Culture* Worksheet from the previous lesson. Tell them that their task is to work as "cultural detectives" by reading each quote and matching it up with one or more of the cultural features on Worksheet #1 on page 72.
5. Explain to students that the quotes will provide just an initial look at the Dominican Republic and do not address all of the cultural features of that country. If you have used any part of the Geography Unit, you may also want to ask students to revisit the quotes from Peace Corps Volunteers in that unit to obtain additional clues about Dominican culture.
6. Model the process aloud for the first few quotes until you feel that students can work independently. For younger students, provide fewer quotes and more examples.
7. Debrief the activity with the following question in a whole-class discussion:
 - What clues did you get about Dominican culture as you read the quotes and analyzed the cultural features?



Worksheet #3

Quotes about the Culture of the Dominican Republic

Directions: Read each quote and match it up with one or more of the "Features of Culture."
Write the applicable cultural feature under each quote.

"The people here really pull together to help out one another. The word 'neighbor' seems to mean a great deal more here. People know, care about, and help their neighbors. Sometimes, to an American, it could seem that Dominicans are overly involved in the lives of others, because we are so used to privacy."
(Cheryl Bernstein)

"The best thing about the Dominican Republic is the people. The people literally have open doors. For example, if I am walking down the street and it starts to rain, I feel that practically any Dominican would open their door to me so I wouldn't get wet. The Dominicans are a very loving and generous people."
(Linda Machado)

"The Dominican Republic is a hot country filled with people who are just as warm. They are passionate in their speech and always friendly in their manner. They value one another's company and, at least in the towns and villages, consider unlimited hospitality to be every guest's right." (Siobhan Foley)

"Everyone in the Dominican Republic loves the national music—the *merengue*. You can hear music blaring out of corner shops and individual households. Children learn to dance at a very young age. My favorite music is the 'live' music produced in the church on Sundays with drums, tambourines, *guitras* (a local instrument), singing, and hand-clapping." (Melissa Rochford)

"The Dominican Republic is a country of open doors. The people naturally give of themselves to all others, no matter how little they possess. In doing so, they share with you their unique culture. Culturally, my community is very family-oriented. People never move far from their family, and everyone in my small town and the surrounding towns are in some way related to each other. As a result of this cultural trait, my town is very close as a unit. The people come together in good and bad times to help each other. Everyone is welcome in everyone's house, and therefore a lot of visiting occurs. Visiting is a daily activity, and it is basically a requirement of living in a Dominican community." (Kristen Caputo)

Culture is Like an Iceberg

The Module at a Glance

This module contains four lessons which are designed to deepen students' understanding of culture and cultural differences. Students will grow in cross-cultural understanding as they explore the visible and invisible aspects of culture in two countries—the United States and the Dominican Republic. Through the use of video and primary source material, they will compare the culture of the United States and the culture of the Dominican Republic. They will come to understand the way in which cultural beliefs influence behavior. Through participation in a performance task, they will step into the shoes of a Dominican and clearly describe Dominican culture to an American audience. Through role playing, they will also describe the key features of American culture to their classmates, who will play the role of Dominicans. These activities will lead to the enduring understanding that to understand culture, we must go beneath the surface of visible behaviors for clues to the internal values and beliefs that shape those behaviors.

The first month or two of class I was always saying, "Look at me when I talk to you," and the kids simply wouldn't do it. They would always look at their hands or the blackboard, or anywhere except looking me in the face. And finally one of the other teachers told me it was a cultural thing. They should warn us about things like that.

Tony Hillerman
Skinwalkers

Lesson One: Culture is Like an Iceberg

Objectives:

- Students will be able to distinguish between the visible and invisible aspects of culture.
- Students will be able to explain how the invisible aspects of culture influence the visible ones.



Instructions:

1. Before beginning this activity, remind students of the following:
 - Culture is a complex concept.
 - Everyone has a culture.
 - It shapes how we see the world, ourselves, and others.
2. Then explain to students that metaphors often help us understand big ideas by relating something we don't know to something we do know. A useful metaphor for

Enduring Understandings:

- Everyone has a culture. Culture shapes how we see ourselves, others, and the world.
- Culture is like an iceberg. Some aspects are observable. Others are beneath the surface. The invisible aspects influence the visible ones. To understand culture, you need to “go beneath the surface.”

Essential Questions:

- How do “invisible” aspects of culture influence the “visible” ones?
- Why is it important to understand the relationship between the two?
- Why is an in-depth understanding of culture necessary in today’s world?

Topical Questions:

- What are the visible features of the culture of the Dominican Republic?
- What are the invisible ones?
- How do the invisible features influence the visible features of Dominican culture?

Standards:

National Council for the Social Studies Standards

- Culture (NCSS Theme #1): Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of culture and cultural diversity so that learners can compare similarities and differences in the ways groups, societies, and cultures meet human needs and concerns.
- Individual Identity and Development (NCSS Theme IV): Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of individual development and identity so that the learner can identify and describe ways regional, ethnic, and national cultures influence individuals’ daily lives.

Language Arts Standards:

The learner:

- Demonstrates competence in the general skills and strategies of the writing process.
- Uses primary sources to gather information for research topics.
- Uses graphic organizers to gather and record information for research topics.
- Demonstrates competence in speaking and listening as tools for learning.

Assessments:

Journal Entries; Oral Presentations; Role Playing; and Completion of Graphic Organizers.

Materials:

Features of Culture; Quotes about the Culture of the Dominican Republic, Video Viewing Graphic Organizer.

Time: Three-five days

culture is an iceberg. Ask students what they know about the size and shape of icebergs. Ask: How much of an iceberg is above the water? How much is below the water? Whole class discussion.

3. Make the point that only one-eighth of an iceberg is visible *above* the water. The rest of the iceberg is below. Culture is very similar to an iceberg. Just as an iceberg has a visible section above the waterline, and a larger, invisible section below the waterline, so culture has some aspects that are visible and many others that can only be suspected, guessed, or learned as understanding of the culture grows. Also, like an iceberg, the visible part of culture (what we can see or observe) is only a small part of a much larger whole.
4. Ask students to revisit the *Features of Culture* Worksheet on page 72. Review with students that the numbered items that appear on the list are all features of culture. If you haven't completed Module #1, make sure that students understand all the features on the list. Ask them for examples, or provide examples if needed.
5. Next, provide students with a copy of an outline drawing of an iceberg with a clear line delineating the part of the iceberg that is above the water's surface and the larger part that is below the surface.
6. Divide students into groups of four. Ask students to bring the *Features of Culture* Worksheet with them. Then ask them to discuss in their groups which features of culture they think are visible and which are invisible.
7. Now ask students to look at both their outline drawing of the iceberg and their *Features of Culture* Worksheet. Ask them to review the features one-by-one and decide as a group if a particular feature belongs above the line (i.e., is "visible") or below the line (i.e., is "invisible") Have students write above the water line the numbers of those features of culture that they, as a group, consider to be observable features. They should write the numbers of the "invisible" features below the water line.
8. Do the first few features with them. Provide examples; e.g., Values are invisible (cannot be directly observed); holiday customs are visible (can observe them). Place holiday customs above the water line and values below the water line. Provide several more examples before having students work independently.
9. After students have had time to work in their groups on the remaining features, have each group pair with another group and compare their placement of features. Students must be prepared to say why they placed a particular feature where they did. (Note to teacher: In the list of features, the numbers that should appear *below* the water line are: #3, #4, #6, #8, #9, #10, #16-18, #22-24, #26-30.)
10. Ask students: Do you see any item below the water line that might influence or determine any item above? (e.g., Ideas about modesty might affect styles of dress; religious beliefs might influence holiday celebrations, painting, and music).



Lesson Two: Taking a Deeper Look at the Features of Dominican Culture

Objectives:

- Students will be able to explain key features of the culture of the Dominican Republic.
- Students will analyze the similarities and differences between Dominican culture and the culture of the United States.
- Students will use inductive reasoning to draw conclusions about the culture of both countries.

Instructions:

1. Remind students that “a picture is worth a thousand words.” They will now have the opportunity to revisit the video of the Dominican Republic from the Geography Unit. Explain that they will see the video with new eyes because they have learned more about Dominican life and culture in this unit. In viewing the video a second time, they will notice more than they did the first time.
2. If you have not used the video yet, explain to students that in it they will meet people from three different regions of the Dominican Republic and hear comments from Peace Corps Volunteers, each serving in a different town or village: Hato Mayor, Los Toros, and El Jamo.
3. Explain to students that they will be viewing the video in order to compare life in the Dominican Republic with life in the United States. Make copies of Worksheet #4, *Video Viewing Graphic Organizer*, on page 83 and give one to each student.
4. Before you show the video, ask students to fill in the column titled *In U.S. Culture*. After you show the video, ask students to fill in the column titled *In Dominican Culture*. You may want to stop the video at the halfway point, to enable students to begin to fill in the Dominican Republic column while the details are still fresh in their minds.
5. When the video is finished, give students time to complete the matrix. Ask them to refer back to the Peace Corps Volunteer quotes from the last lesson for further information which will help them complete the matrix. Then debrief the video viewing with the following questions:
 - Was there anything in the video that surprised you?
 - Has your impression of the Dominican Republic changed after seeing the video? If so, in what ways?
6. After students have discussed their impressions of the video, lead them into a comparison activity using the following questions:
 - If you look at each row horizontally, how is Dominican culture similar to and different from U.S. culture?
 - If you look at each column vertically, and cover up the U.S. column with a piece of paper, what conclusions can you draw about life in the Dominican Republic? What evidence from the video supports your conclusions? If you cover up the Dominican Republic column, what conclusions can you draw about life in the U.S.?

Worksheet #4

Video Viewing Graphic Organizer

Directions: Before you watch the video, fill in the U.S. column of the matrix.
As you are viewing the video—and after it is finished—complete the Dominican column of the matrix.

	In U.S. Culture	In Dominican Culture
How do people dress?		
What is school like?		
What is the role of the family?		
Who is more important: each person or the whole group?		
What is the role of religion?		
How important is time and the clock?		
How/when do kids become adults?		
What do people seem to value most?		

Lesson Three: Seeing Through Another Set of Eyes

Objectives:

- Students will analyze primary source materials to gain a deeper understanding of Dominican culture.
- Students will be able to explain the culture of the Dominican Republic to a foreign visitor.

Instructions:

1. Explain to students that they will go even deeper into Dominican culture by reading another set of descriptions on pages 86-87 written by Peace Corps Volunteers and visitors to the Dominican Republic. (Note: You may need to read these quotes to younger students.)
2. Explain to students that, after they have read/heard the quotes, they will join with a partner and develop a “Dominican Republic Culture Matrix.” Ask students to draw a blank matrix similar to the one below. Based on what they learn as they are reading the quotes ask them to jot down what they think may be visible or invisible features of Dominican culture.

Sample Dominican Republic Culture Matrix	
Invisible Features of Dominican Culture	Visible Features of Dominican Culture

3. Provide students copies of the *Primary Source Document: Peace Corps Volunteer Quotes about the Dominican Republic* on pages 86-87. Ask them to use the information in the quotes, together with what they have learned so far about the Dominican Republic, to complete a “Dominican Republic Culture Matrix” as in #2 above. Model the activity by reading the first quote aloud and completing the first row of the matrix, asking for examples from the class.
4. Once students have read the quotes and completed a matrix, ask them to work in small groups to plan a presentation in which they will play the role of a Dominican explaining Dominican culture to American students. Explain to students that they will be “stepping into the shoes” of a Dominican teenager when they give their presentations. Ask them to refer back to the quotes and the video for details.

5. Give small groups 20 minutes to prepare their presentation about Dominican culture. Share with students the presentation guidelines in the sidebar.
6. Ask for a volunteer from each small group to give his/her presentation. As volunteers are doing so, they will be imagining that the rest of the class is American students preparing to go to the Dominican Republic. Remind the students in the “audience” to listen with an open mind—and to remember that not everyone sees the world the way they do.
7. After each presentation, allow time for students to ask questions and provide feedback to the presenter, such as:
 - The good things about your presentation were....
 - The examples that made your presentation clear were....
8. Debrief this activity by asking students the following questions:
 - Now that you have more information, how do you think Dominican culture is similar to and different from culture in the United States? Has your opinion changed? What additional information has made a difference?

Journal Entry:

Ask students to respond to the following prompt:

- If you were going to live for a while in the Dominican Republic, how would you need to adjust your behavior to fit in with and respect their culture?



Insights from the Field

Presentation Guidelines

- ✓ You are to assume the role of a Dominican student who has been invited to explain Dominican culture to interested American students (who will be visiting the Dominican Republic soon).
- ✓ Begin your presentation by stating the beliefs that are important to Dominicans.
- ✓ Give an observable behavior that is an example of each belief you state. Use examples from the two sets of quotes you have read, as well as from the Dominican Republic video.
- ✓ Make sure your explanations are clear and easy to understand.
- ✓ At the end of your presentation, ask the audience if they are clear about everything you have mentioned. If not, clarify and encourage further questions.

Primary Source Document

Peace Corps Volunteer Quotes about the Dominican Republic

“Dominicans are very warm people who enjoy life. Guests are treated with respect and given every comfort. Guests are never asked to leave, no matter how many hours, days, or weeks they might stay! Hospitality is valued here. Dominicans know how to share and they do it instinctively. They value close family relationships and interdependence. Dominicans rely on the family. It is the most stable, trustworthy institution in the country. Personal ‘space’ is practically non-existent here. The buses are crowded. But there is never the feeling of panic that such a situation might cause in the U.S.” (Siobhan Foley)



“*Merengue* represents the fun-loving spirit of Dominicans, with its heavy beat and its catchy lyrics. The people dance smoothly, in perfect rhythm. The *merengue* combines African drum beats with Spanish singing tradition.” (James Weglarz)



“The Dominican culture combines the past and the present. Strong traditions exist alongside modernism. The culture is characterized by respect and appreciation for life. People welcome visitors with open arms. Everyone speaks Spanish and very few speak English. The music, like the people, is energetic. The country is famous for the *merengue*. Dancing is a very important part of the culture. Another important aspect of the culture is religion. Most Dominicans are Catholic. Many traditions are based on religious holidays—for example, the festival of *Patronales*—which is basically a celebration in honor of the patron saint of the town. Patron saints are thought to be the guardians of a town’s well-being. Each town has its own patron saint, and the festival of *Patronales* usually lasts nine days. The festival is held in the middle of the street or the town square and includes music, dancing, games, beauty pageants, contests, guest musical appearances, parades, and lots of food and drinks. The people dance, play carnival games, and generally have a great time.” (Michele Stora)

“You can see cultural differences in the interaction between American teenagers and Dominican teenagers. American teenagers who visit the Dominican Republic tend to cling to one another and not greet strangers. American teenagers are brought up in a culture where, in some ways, strangers are viewed as a threat. They go to schools with large student populations—sometimes 1,000 or more young people. They don’t know them all, and they don’t instinctively greet each other. Dominicans, however, often hug each other as a form of greeting. And when they see American teenagers not responding, not touching, not greeting, they often sense rejection. It’s very important in the Dominican Republic to get over some of the cultural inhibitions that are part of growing up in America. Social interactions in Dominican culture tend to be characterized by ‘rituals’ of hospitality.” (Observation of a visitor to the Dominican Republic)



“Last February I took 10 American Boy Scouts and leaders to the Dominican Republic for 12 days as part of a scouting exchange program. At night we each stayed with different Dominican scouting families. The boys were overwhelmed with Dominican hospitality. And they were surprised about some aspects of Dominican culture. As American teenage boys, they are not “into” hugging people. While I warned them that they would need to be prepared for this form of greeting, they didn’t believe me. It was interesting to watch these kids adjust to a culture where body space is almost non-existent. In the first couple of days, the boys were embarrassed and leaned backwards whenever a Dominican hugged them. But by the third or fourth day, they were not leaning backwards anymore. When hugged by a Dominican, they just smiled. Then, around the fifth day, most of my Scouts were actively hugging people back. We even made a joke of it. Whenever they saw me, they would run over and say, ‘Mr Ross, I haven’t given you a hug in a long time.’ We would vigorously hug each other and laugh. Eventually this sign of affection between Dominicans and Americans became natural and just part of the daily greeting of ‘old’ friends. When I dropped off the kids at the Santo Domingo airport for their flight home, I asked each to hug their parents when they got home. Most admitted that they never hug their folks. But at the next Scout meeting, all but one boy reported that he gave each of his parents his best Dominican hug.” (Neil Ross)



Lesson Four: Describing American Culture to a Dominican

Objective:

- Students will be able to explain American culture to a Dominican guest.

Instructions:

1. Present students with the following hypothetical scenario:
 - Imagine that a group of students from the Dominican Republic will be visiting our school in two weeks. As a member of the 'Welcome Committee', you will be responsible for explaining the culture of the United States to several Dominican students. To prepare for this task, have students work in small groups to complete a graphic organizer similar to the one below. Use Worksheet #1 (*Features of Culture*) on page 72 and the *Video Viewing Graphic Organizer* on page 83 to help you complete each column.

U.S. Culture Matrix	
Invisible Features of U.S. Culture	Visible Features of U.S. Culture

2. After students have had time to work in groups completing the matrix, ask for volunteers from each group to share with the whole class examples of the invisible and visible features of American culture.
3. Now ask students how they would introduce important aspects of American culture to Dominicans. Give small groups 20 minutes to prepare their presentation about American culture. Give students the following guidelines:
 - You are to assume the role of an American student who would like to explain American culture to visiting Dominican students.
 - Imagine that your audience is Dominican students who know very little about American culture.
 - Begin your presentation by stating the beliefs that are important to Americans.
 - Give an observable behavior that is an example of each belief you state.
 - Make sure your explanations are clear and easy to understand.
 - Show respect toward your audience. Remember that Dominicans may have a hard time understanding American beliefs and behaviors.
 - At the end of your presentation, ask your "Dominican" audience if there is something they would like you to explain further—and if they have any other questions about American culture.

4. After 20 minutes, ask for a volunteer from each group to stand and give his/her presentation, imagining the rest of the class to be Dominican students. After each presentation, allow time for students to ask questions and provide feedback to the presenter, such as:
 - The good things about your presentation were....
 - An example that made your presentation very clear was....
5. Debrief the activity by asking students the following questions:
 - If you met someone in our school or community who came from another culture and whose behaviors were puzzling to you, what might you say and do to better understand this person? What would you do if you found that certain behaviors of your own were puzzling to someone of another culture?
 - If you were in another country and you encountered behaviors that were puzzling to you, how might you come to understand the beliefs that influenced those behaviors?
6. Help students understand that, because of their culture, people in the Dominican Republic and in other countries may have different beliefs than Americans do. Dominicans may see us as “different.” We may see Dominicans as “different.” To respect and understand Dominican (or *any*) culture, we need to “go beneath the surface” and try to identify and understand the cultural beliefs and traditions that influence visible behavior in that culture.
7. Remind students of the enduring understandings in this lesson:
 - Everyone has a culture.
 - It shapes how we see ourselves, others, and the world.
 - Culture is like an iceberg. Some aspects are observable, and others are beneath the surface.
 - The invisible aspects influence the visible ones.
 - To really understand another culture, you need to “go beneath the surface.”
 - To understand another culture, you first need to understand your own.
8. Ask students to read the anecdote, *Drip Diplomacy*, (Worksheet #5 on page 90). It tells the story of a Peace Corps Volunteer, Keith Talbot, who has slowly learned the invisible cultural “rules” surrounding the giving and getting of water in the Dominican Republic. Ask students to identify as many features of Dominican culture as they can while reading the anecdote. Debrief the activity by asking: How did the Peace Corps Volunteer skillfully learn to fit into another culture that had rules and customs other than his own?



Worksheet #5

Drip Diplomacy

Strange and subtle are the habits of courtesy. Water is a precious commodity out here in the *campo* (countryside), so there is a whole culture built around its acquisition and usage. If you go to any store or wait for a *guagua* (bus), the custom, usually, is to push or shove your way to the front. When it comes to water, at least in my community, the rules are different. I spent the morning collecting water for myself at the communal tap. The same *Doñas* who elbowed me aside in the *colmado* (corner store) last night made sure I got my water when it was my turn--first come, first served.

Water is one of the first things you offer a visiting Volunteer, water to drink and to wash off the dusty road. A good host is not stingy with his water even if he has to go through great effort to get it. A good guest notices how difficult it is to get the water and limits her usage accordingly. Even better, the guest helps replace the water used.

Volunteers from water-poor communities are often quick to notice the lavish habits of Volunteers from water-rich communities.

"I can't believe she used three full gallons to take a bath. You'd think she were washing an elephant." On the other hand, Volunteers from water-rich communities are struck by the unreasonable stinginess of the water-poor. "He hoarded water like it was gold at Fort Knox, rationing it out drop by drop. I consider myself a decent host in this area. I keep about 15 gallons in my house almost all the time. Since the average Volunteer uses about three to four gallons a day, that's a pretty good quantity.

I never tire of marveling at the combinations of strength and grace displayed by the women and girls who carry five gallons on their heads, with a gallon in each hand. My favorite is when they casually turn to chat with a neighbor, blithely ignoring the burden with which they are laden. I once watched a woman gracefully bend down and pluck a peso without spilling a precious drop!

I carry the water on my shoulder. I've assumed that the wide berth the folks give me is not due to unpleasant body odor, but because of the constant splashes that leap forth from my bucket. But I'm improving. Now, people rarely ask me if I've recently gone swimming after I've actually been carrying water. And the water source is one of the best places to catch the latest gossip. I have concluded that *chesmes* (rumors) are flying due to the occasional, "*No me digas!*" ("Don't tell me!") and "*Adquerosa!*" ("Gross!") that escapes from their mouths while they are huddled over the tap.

I suppose that's what I like best about the water collection process. It's one of the places where I fit into the community best. My Spanish is what it is, and I do remain the gringo. Yet, I understand the rules at the tap and even some of the subtleties. The community sees I am on even ground with them and ask no privileges. It is a calm and orderly place. Maybe I will fondly remember the communal tap when I am reaching for the hot water faucet in the shower. And then again....

Keith Talbot served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in the Dominican Republic from 1993 to 1995. This anecdote comes from Looking at Ourselves and Others, a Peace Corps publication that can be found at the following Web site: www.peacecorps.gov/www/guides/looking/index

Understanding Differences

The Module at a Glance

This module contains two lessons designed to guide students to the understanding that individuals from other cultures may not see the world in the same way that Americans do. What Americans may regard as different or “strange” may be considered perfectly normal in another culture. Students will realize that understanding someone from another culture can sometimes be hard because people see the world, themselves, and others in fundamentally different ways. Through the experience of Peace Corps Volunteers in the Dominican Republic, students will explore answers to the questions: How does it feel when others see you as different or as an “outsider”? How do others feel when you see them as “different”? How do your beliefs, values, and cultural upbringing influence the way you behave? How do others’ beliefs, values, and cultural upbringing influence the way they behave? How do you avoid cultural stereotyping? As they explore these questions, students will achieve a broader perspective on their own culture and an increased sensitivity to the customs, values, and beliefs of cultures other than their own. They will use this new awareness to become more understanding of students in their own school.



Lesson One, Part One: On Being Seen as Different

Objectives:

- Students will be able to explain why understanding someone from another culture can sometimes be hard.
- Students will be able to give examples of how people see the world, themselves, and others in fundamentally different ways.

Instructions:

1. Begin this module by asking students to respond in their journals to the following questions:
 - How does it feel to be seen by others as “different”—as an outsider? Describe such a time.
 - Describe an instance when you considered someone else to be “different”—or an outsider. Explain the reasons that caused you to conclude that this was true.
2. Give students approximately 15 minutes to think about these questions and respond in their journals. If students seem to be engaged by these questions, more time can be given for journal writing.

Enduring Understandings:

- Understanding someone from another culture can sometimes be hard because people see the world, themselves, and others in fundamentally different ways.
- To understand another culture you first have to understand your own.
- No matter what their culture, people behave as they do because of the things they believe in and value.
- Beliefs vary from person to person and culture to culture.

Essential Questions:

- How does it feel when others see you as “different”—or as an “outsider”?
- How do your beliefs, values, and cultural upbringing influence the way you behave?
- How do others’ beliefs, values, and cultural upbringing influence the way they behave?
- How can you avoid cultural stereotyping?

Topical Questions:

- What are some things Dominicans might not see the same way as I do?
- What are some things you might not see the same way as Dominicans do?

Standards:

The National Council for the Social Studies

Culture (NCSS Theme I): Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of culture and cultural diversity so that learners can:

- Compare similarities and differences in the ways groups, societies, and cultures meet human needs and concerns.
- Explain how information and experiences may be interpreted by people from diverse cultural perspectives and frames of reference.

Language Arts Standards

The learner will:

- Demonstrate competence in the general skills and strategies of the writing process.
- Use primary sources to gather information for research topics.
- Demonstrate competence in the general skills of speaking and listening.

Assessments:

Skit Writing; Role Playing; Letter Writing; Journal Entries

Materials:

Interview with a Peace Corps Volunteer, Home Alone in the Dominican Republic; You Americans activity; How Culture Shapes Us as Americans.

Time: Two-three days

3. Ask students to compare their journal responses with those of a partner. Ask them to give special attention to the reasons why their partners concluded that another person was different.
4. Ask for five volunteers to share their reasons with the whole class. Record the reasons on the chalkboard. Remain non-judgmental about the reasons students give. Ask for five more reasons and record these as well.
5. Explain to students that Americans often think someone from another culture is “different” because of differences in language, clothing, customs, behavior, and beliefs. However, someone from another culture may think Americans are “different” for the very same reasons.
6. Make the point that to understand another culture, you first need to understand your own—and see yourself as others might see you. Tell students they will be participating in several activities that will make them aware of how others sometimes see Americans.
7. Read or give students the dialogue on page 94. The dialogue, written by a Peace Corps Volunteer, describes the experience of being viewed as “strange.”

Journal Entry:

Ask each students to respond individually in their journals to the questions:

- What could you do to help someone new to this school, or from another culture, to not feel like an outsider?



Primary Source Document

Interview with a Peace Corps Volunteer: On Being Viewed as Strange

(Adapted from the Peace Corps publication **Culture Matters** (p. 64). You may find the full text of this publication on the Web site: www.peacecorps.gov/www/culturematters/index/html).

Interviewer: When you went to the Dominican Republic, were there any surprises?

Peace Corps Volunteer (PCV): Not really. I mean, you're not prepared for every little thing, for all the particulars. But you know the people are going to be different, so you expect that. You may not know all the ways they're going to surprise you, but you do know you're going to be surprised when you go to a foreign culture.

Interviewer: How did the Dominicans react to you?

PCV: It's funny you should ask that, because that was surprising.

Interviewer: What do you mean?

PCV: Well, we thought we were prepared for going into a culture different from ours, but we weren't. After all, if you go in knowing these people aren't like you, then of course you also know that you aren't like them. But we had trouble believing that they found us strange sometimes. Doesn't make sense, does it?

Interviewer: So it's easy to accept that other people might be strange, but hard to believe that you could be perceived of as strange?

PCV: That's what I experienced, anyway.

Interviewer: I wonder why.

PCV: I think it has to be that while you are actually having the experience of their strangeness, they are the ones having the experience of yours. You never really experience yourself as strange, of course, so it just doesn't seem real. You know it must be real, but you have to take their word for it.

Interviewer: So you think it's hard for Peace Corps Volunteers to believe that the local people don't always understand them?

PCV: Despite all our training, I think we unconsciously tend to believe that we are the "normal" ones and the people in the other country are going to be the "strange" ones. Then, when you get to the other country, you realize that people see the world, themselves, and others in fundamentally different ways. The hard thing is learning to see things from their point of view.

Interviewer: Why is that hard?

PCV: Because before you go to another country, you tend to believe that your point of view is the only point of view—and that it's the right point of view. It's hard to realize that there may be two equally reasonable ways to view a situation, depending on your culture.

Lesson One, Part Two: On Being Seen as Different

1. Read *Home Alone in the Dominican Republic* aloud to your students. Explain that the anecdote was told by a Peace Corps Volunteer. It illustrates how American behavior can be seen as different or strange in another culture.
2. Ask students to imagine that they were a Peace Corps Volunteer in Krystal Williams' situation. How would they handle the cultural differences respectfully? List students' responses on the chalkboard. Elicit a number of different alternatives for handling a delicate situation with respect.
3. Explain to students that you would like them to write and perform a brief skit about some aspect of Krystal's situation. Ask them to form groups of four. Ask a volunteer from each group to play the role of Krystal or someone like her. The other three members of each group will play the role of Dominicans. Have all four members of each group write the skit together. Give them the following guidelines:
 - Your skit should clearly illustrate exactly what the cultural differences are and why.
 - Your skit should contain a respectful resolution of the conflict caused by individuals from each culture seeing the same situation in a different way.
 - Your skit should not oversimplify the problem.
4. Give students 15-20 minutes to prepare their skits. Then ask for volunteers to act it out.
5. Debrief the activity by asking: What have you learned from this activity?

Home Alone in the Dominican Republic

"I was sometimes considered odd or strange in the Dominican Republic in terms of my being used to having private space. For example, there would be times when I would want to sit down by myself in my own room and just read a book. And anytime I was reading a book, my Dominican neighbors always assumed I was studying. It was completely outside of the realm of possibility for them that anyone would choose to sit alone, all by themselves, and read for pleasure. Often they would stop by with some food to 'help me study.' This would inevitably lead to long conversations. From the Dominican point of view, this was a gesture of hospitality. And Dominicans place a great value on hospitality. Another example of my being considered 'odd' was the fact that I lived alone and that, at times, I wanted to be by myself. It was hard for my Dominican neighbors to understand this. Very few, if any people, live by themselves in the Dominican Republic. Everyone has a family or is connected to a family or lives with a family or an extended family. If I wanted to be alone, they would think I was sick and send someone over to stay with me. If I had wanted to be alone much of the time, they would think I was rude or ignoring them, and their feelings would be hurt." (Krystal Williams)

Lesson Two, Part One: You Americans

Objectives:

- Students will be able to explain how people from other cultures may view Americans as a group as different from themselves.
- Students will be able to explain why understanding their own culture can help them better understand another culture.

Khoo Ah Au liked Americans. Above all he found their personal relationships easy to read. His own people were always very careful not to give themselves away, to expose crude feelings about one another. Americans seemed not to care how much was understood by strangers. It was almost as if they enjoyed being transparent.

Eric Ambler
Passage of Arms

Instructions:

1. Ask students: What are some things that you value? How do these values shape your behavior? Then explain to students that people behave as they do because of the things they believe in or value. On the chalkboard, write the following values that some people from other cultures have noticed are common to many Americans:
 - Informality (Being “casual” and “down-to-earth”)
 - Self-Reliance (Not looking to others to solve your problems)
 - Efficiency (Getting things done quickly and effectively)
 - Social Equality (Treating everyone the same)
 - Assertiveness (Saying what’s on your mind)
 - Optimism (Believing that the best will always happen)
2. Explain to students that not everyone in the world shares these values. Ask students: Do you think every person in America shares these values?
3. After some brief discussion, explain to students that they will have an opportunity to read about behaviors that others have noticed about Americans. In some sense, these behaviors are examples of stereotypes others have of Americans. They may also be examples of what makes Americans seem different to others.
4. Provide each student with a copy of Worksheet #6, *You Americans*, on page 98. Explain to students that these seven statements may be true for all Americans, for some Americans, or for no Americans. It is their job to decide whether the statements are accurate, partially accurate, or false.
5. Ask students to work in pairs to complete Part I of Worksheet #6. Ask them to provide, in writing, a good reason for why they think each comment is: true of *all* Americans; true for *some* Americans; or true for *no* Americans.

6. Now ask students to complete Part 2 of Worksheet #6. Then have students share their responses to Part 2 in small groups. Lead a whole-class discussion.
7. Explain to students that they may not like or agree with some of the stereotypes others have of Americans, but they should at least be aware that they exist. For an explanation of each of the seven statements, you may want to provide students with Worksheet #7 on pages 99-100, which presents the reasons that some cultural anthropologists give as to why individuals from other cultures might have these beliefs about Americans.



Note to the Teacher

Worksheet #7 gives reasons why some think that Americans come across the way they do to people from other cultures. After you present each explanation to students, stop and ask them if they agree with it or not. In addition, ask students if they agree with the statement itself. For example, for statement #1, ask students: Is it true that Americans are always in such a hurry to get things done? Listen to students' responses without making a judgment. Instead, ask: Is there someone who may have another viewpoint on this subject?

Bold Talent shook his head. How like children the Americans were, with their pranks and easy warmth. Men who offered their hands for strangers to shake and ladies who sat and chatted at dinner with gentlemen they had never seen before, children who threw snowballs at adults no matter what their station.

Bette Bao Lord
Spring Moon

Worksheet #6

You Americans

(Adapted from the Peace Corps publication **Culture Matters**. You may find the full text of this publication at the Web site: www.peacecorps.gov/www/culturematters/index/html).

Part 1: Working with a partner, read each of the seven comments that a non-American might make of an American. For each of the comments, give a good reason, in writing, for why you think this comment is: true for *all* Americans, true for *some* Americans, or true for *no* Americans.

1. Why are you Americans always in such a hurry to get things done?
2. Why do you Americans insist on treating everyone the same?
3. Why do you Americans always have to say what you're thinking?
4. Why do you Americans always want to change things?
5. Why don't you Americans show more respect for your senior citizens and elders?
6. Why do you Americans always think things are going to get better? Why are you so optimistic?
7. Why are you Americans so impatient?

Part 2: Now looking at one of the comments above, answer the following questions:

How would you feel if this statement were made about you?

What would be a polite response if someone said it to you?

Worksheet #7

Explanatory Notes for 'You Americans'

Below are reasons why some cultural anthropologists think that Americans may come across the way they do to people from other cultures. As you are reading each explanation, think about whether or not you agree with it. Is it true of all Americans, some Americans, or no Americans?

1. *Why are you Americans always in such a hurry to get things done?*

Americans often seem this way because of their tendency to use achievements and accomplishments as a measure of a person's worth. They're in a hurry to get things done because it's only then that they feel they have proven their worth to other people. The more Americans accomplish, the more they feel they are respected. "Getting things done quickly and efficiently" is important to Americans.

2. *Why do you Americans insist on treating everyone the same?*

Americans do this because of our cultural roots as a free nation (e.g., "All men are created equal"). Americans have a deep cultural instinct toward social equality and not having a class system. This is a reaction to the European class system as well as the feudal system that existed in Europe. In cultures where inequality between social classes is more accepted, American insistence on egalitarianism, or social equality, may be annoying.

3. *Why do you Americans always have to say what you're thinking?*

Americans believe that being direct is the most efficient way to communicate. It's important to "tell it like it is" and "speak your mind"—to say what you mean and mean what you say. Being direct is often valued over "beating around the bush." Americans value "assertiveness" and being open and direct about one's thoughts and feelings. Not all cultures have this same value. In some cultures, the "normal" way to disagree or to say no is to say nothing.

4. *Why do you Americans always want to change things?*

Americans think things can always be better, and that progress is inevitable. The United States is just a little more than 200 years old, and American culture tends to be an optimistic one. Older cultures are more skeptical because they have been around longer, have experienced more, and have been in situations in which progress was not always made. In American businesses, being open to change is a strong value, because things really do change quickly, and it is necessary to adapt. Many Americans believe it is "good" to initiate change and "bad" to resist it.

Worksheet #7 continued

5. *Why don't you Americans show more respect for your senior citizens and elders?*

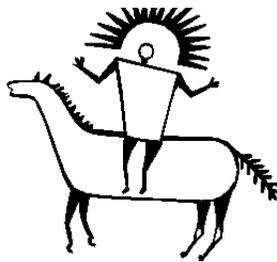
Americans believe people must earn by their actions whatever regard or respect they are given. Merely attaining a certain age or holding a certain position does not in itself signify any achievement.

6. *Why do you Americans always think things are going to get better?*

America, because of its resources and successes, has always had a culture of optimism. Americans believe that they are in control of their own destinies, rather than being victims of fate. Many Americans tend to believe that "the American dream" can be achieved by anyone who is willing to work hard enough. Many Americans believe that the only obstacle to things getting better is "not trying hard enough." Americans also believe that a personal lack of determination or effort can be "fixed." Other cultures may believe more in fate ("what will be will be"). When something bad happens, some members of these cultures believe it was fated to happen, must be accepted, and cannot be changed.

7. *Why are you Americans so impatient?*

Americans believe that if things take a long time to do, they can do fewer of them. Many Americans believe that more and faster are better. They do not like to stand in line and wait, and they originated "fast food." Americans believe that "getting things done" (and doing them quickly) may be more important than other things. On the other hand, a number of other cultures believe that slower is better and that building and maintaining relationships takes priority over "getting things done" at the expense of relationships.



*(Adapted from the Peace Corps publication **Culture Matters** (pp. 134-135). You may find the full text of this publication at the Web site: www.peacecorps.gov/wws/culturematters/index/html).*

Lesson Two, Part Two: You Americans

1. Explain to students that Worksheet #7 provides useful explanations of why others may think in a particular way about Americans. Also explain to students that it would be almost impossible for one of the above statements to be true of all Americans. Within every culture there are wide variations of behavior simply because there are so many factors—in addition to culture—that can cause an individual to behave in a certain way: age, gender, personality, and experience.
2. It's important to remember that no one American is quite like any other American, but a handful of core values and beliefs do underlie and permeate our national culture (just like a handful of core values and beliefs underlie Dominican culture). These values and beliefs don't apply across the board in every situation, and we may, on occasion, even act in ways that directly contradict them. But they are still at the heart of our cultural beliefs.
3. Explain to students that if the statements about 'You Americans' were actually meant to apply to all Americans, this would be an example of cultural stereotyping. Ask students to discuss in pairs: How would you feel if someone from another country had stereotypes about you before the person even knew you? Then conduct a whole-class discussion.



Journal Entry:

1. Ask students to respond to three out of four of these prompts:
 - Explain how you would avoid stereotyping if you were a Peace Corps Volunteer just beginning to serve in another culture.
 - Explain a time when stereotyping others has happened in this country or even in this school.
 - How can stereotyping others, because of their culture, be avoided? Why bother?
 - Explain why avoiding stereotyping would make this community or this school a better place to live.
2. After students have responded in their journals, have them discuss their responses with two other students. Then conduct a whole-class discussion.

It Depends on Your Point of View

*Courage is resistance
to fear; mastery of fear—
not absence of fear*

Mark Twain, Author



The Module at a Glance

This module contains three lessons, designed to develop students' skills at seeing a situation from two points of view. In doing this, students will begin to understand the importance of being able to see things from another culture's point of view. They will learn that understanding another culture involves being able to interpret behaviors, customs, actions, and practices from that culture's perspective, not their own. In the process, they will learn that no two people see the same thing in exactly the same way—even if they live in the same culture. When two different cultures are involved, the situation becomes even more complex. Students will learn that it's easy to misunderstand things people say and do in a multicultural and/or a cross-cultural setting. They will practice viewing a situation from another culture's point of view. They will apply what they learn to identifying and resolving cultural misunderstandings in their own school.

Lesson One: Interpreting Behavior: Expanding Our Point of View

Objectives:

- Students will know that understanding another culture involves being able to interpret behaviors, customs, actions, and practices from more than one point of view.
- Students will know that any behavior has to be interpreted in two ways: the meaning given to it by the person who does the action; and the meaning given to it by the person who observes the action.
- Students will be able to explain how others interpret the same reality in different ways.
- Students will practice the skill of interpreting a situation from two different points of view.

Instructions:

1. Ask students: Have you ever had the experience of going to a movie or watching a video with a friend and, at the end of the movie, each of you thought different things in the movie were important? funny? sad? boring? interesting?

Enduring Understandings:

- It's easy to misunderstand things people say and do in a multicultural and/or a cross-cultural setting.
- To avoid misunderstanding the behavior of individuals from another culture, you have to try to see the world from their point of view, not yours.

Essential Questions:

- How do you learn to see things from another culture's point of view?
- Why is it easy for Americans to misunderstand people from another culture?
- Why does it take patience and skill to see things from another culture's point of view?

Topical Questions:

- Why would it be easy for Dominicans to misunderstand me?
- How can I avoid misunderstanding people from the Dominican Republic?

Standards:

National Council for the Social Studies Standards:

Culture (Theme I): Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of culture and cultural diversity so that the learner can:

- Compare similarities and differences in the ways groups, societies, and cultures meet human needs and concerns.
- Explain how information and experiences may be interpreted by people from diverse cultural perspectives and frames of reference.

Language Arts Standards:

- The learner will demonstrate competence in the general skills and strategies of the writing process.
- The learner will demonstrate competence in the skills of speaking and listening as tools for learning.

Assessments:

Journal Entries; Writing Tasks; Case Studies; Role Reversals.

Materials:

Copies of the *Understanding Cultures Activity*; *Jogging Alone*; *Jogging Alone Graphic Organizer*; *Self-Assessment Checklist*.

Time: Three-four days

2. Ask students: How can that be? You each saw the very same movie. How can two people watch the same movie and see different things?
3. Follow these questions with a whole-class discussion. Lead students to the awareness that no two people see the same thing in exactly the same way. Each person brings to the situation their own values, beliefs, and life experiences.
4. Explain to students that we all believe that we observe reality—things as they are. But what actually happens is that the mind interprets what the eyes see and gives it meaning. It is only at this point, when meaning is assigned, that we can truly say we have *seen* something.
5. In other words, what we see is as much in the mind as it is in reality. If you consider that the mind of a person from one culture is going to be different in many ways from the mind of a person from another culture, then you have the explanation for that most fundamental of all cross-cultural problems: the fact that two people look upon the same reality, the same example of behavior, and see two entirely different things.
6. Make the point that any behavior observed by two people from different cultures has to be interpreted in two ways:
 - the meaning given to it by the person who *does* the action; and
 - the meaning given to it by the person who *observes* the action.
7. Only when these two meanings are the same do we have successful communication-- successful in the sense that the meaning that was intended by the doer is the one that was understood by the observer.
8. Explain to students that they will now participate in an activity that will help to clarify these concepts. Make copies of Worksheet #8, *Understanding Cultural Viewpoints*, on pages 106-107. Distribute to all students.
9. Have students complete Part I of this activity first. In groups of three, ask students to discuss their answers to the six questions. Ask them to note similarities and differences in individuals' responses to each question. After five minutes of small group discussion, ask students: Did all three students in each group share exactly the same response? Were your viewpoints similar, or was there some variation? Explain that it is rare that three people would have exactly the same opinion on a subject. Opinions might be similar, but not identical.
10. Reinforce the idea that if two people from the same culture often view a situation in two different ways, it is even more complicated when two people from different cultures view a situation. Culture exerts a powerful influence on our point of view.
11. Now have students complete Part 2 of this activity. In their same groups of three, ask students to compare their responses to the same questions, but now with the knowledge of the cultural context. Ask: Now that you had information about the cultural context in which the behaviors occurred, how did your responses change?

12. Explain to students that, if they were to go to another culture, they would need to be careful not to make snap judgments about a particular behavior or custom, until they understood the cultural context—and the reasons why that behavior was accepted as “normal.”
13. Remind students of the point made in the last module: We always view something as “normal” when compared to a certain standard. In our case, the standard is American culture. When going into another culture, you have to set aside what the standard for “normal” is in American culture and try to understand the reasons why something is accepted as “normal” in another culture (according to *that* culture’s standards).
14. Conduct a whole-class discussion on the following questions:
 - Does understanding another culture’s point of view necessarily mean you have to agree with it?
 - Can you disagree with a person’s cultural belief and still have a respectful relationship?
15. Keep in mind that students’ responses are a reflection of the developmental level of their thinking. You can raise the level of students’ thinking by conducting open-ended discussion where all responses are respected. Rather than making a judgment on a particular student’s response, it is more useful to ask: “Does anyone have another opinion on the subject?” In this way, all students will feel safe in sharing their opinions. As other opinions are expressed, initial viewpoints may change.

Journal Entry:

Ask students to respond in their journals to the following essential question:

- Why does it take patience and skill to see things from another culture’s point of view?



Worksheet # 8

Understanding Cultural Viewpoints

(Adapted from the Peace Corps publication **Culture Matters**. You may find the full text of this publication on the Web site: www.peacecorps.gov/www/culturematters/index/html).

PART ONE

In the first part of this exercise, read the description of the six instances of behavior given below and write down your immediate response to or interpretation of that behavior in terms of your own cultural values, beliefs, or perceptions. The first one has been done for you.

1. A person comes to a meeting half an hour after the scheduled starting time.
Your Interpretation: This person is late and should at least apologize or give an explanation.
2. Someone kicks a dog.
Your interpretation:
3. A woman carries a heavy jug of water on her head while her husband walks in front of her carrying nothing.
Your interpretation:
4. A male guest helps a hostess carry dirty dishes into the kitchen.
Your interpretation:
5. A young man and young woman are kissing each other in public.
Your interpretation:
6. While taking an exam, a student copies from the paper of another student.
Your interpretation:

PART TWO

In this second part of the activity, you are asked to imagine how these some of the same behaviors would be perceived or interpreted by someone from a culture different than your own. The particular cultural difference is described in each case. Read each behavior and the description of the culture, and then write in the space provided how you think a person from such a culture would interpret that behavior.

1. A person comes to a meeting half an hour after the scheduled starting time. How would this act be interpreted:
 - by someone from a culture where people often arrive half an hour after the scheduled starting time?
Interpretation:

2. Someone kicks a dog. How would this act be interpreted:
 - by someone from a country where dogs tend to carry disease?
Interpretation:

3. A woman carries a heavy jug of water on her head while her husband walks in front of her carrying nothing. How would this be interpreted:
 - by someone from a culture where carrying water is seldom done by men?
Interpretation:

4. A male guest helps a hostess carry dirty dishes into the kitchen. How would this act be interpreted:
 - by someone from a culture where men are not expected to clean up after a meal?
Interpretation:

Lesson Two: Resolving a Cross-Cultural Misunderstanding

Objectives:

- Students will understand that cross-cultural misunderstandings are common occurrences.
- Students will identify a solution to a cross-cultural misunderstanding.

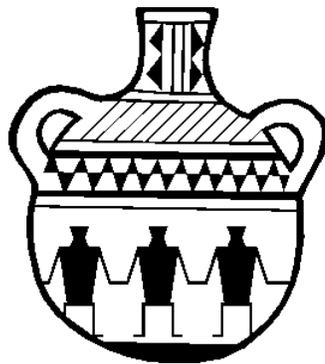
Instructions:

1. Remind students of the essential understanding of this unit: *Culture influences how we view ourselves, others, and the world.*
2. Ask students to participate in a “Say and Switch” activity. In “Say and Switch,” students form pairs and decide who will be Partner A and who will be Partner B. When a question is asked by the teacher, Partner A begins to respond to the question with his/her own ideas, while Partner B carefully listens. “A” stops speaking as soon as time is called (usually 45-60 seconds) and the partners switch roles. “B” now has the opportunity to pick up the discussion where “A” left off and also to state his/her own opinions about the question while “A” carefully listens. After 45-60 seconds, time is called, and the partners switch roles again. The process continues for several more rounds so that each student has the opportunity to speak at least three times.
3. The question for the “Say and Switch” activity in this lesson is: *Why would it be easy for others to misunderstand me?*
4. When you’ve completed the “Say and Switch” activity, explain to students that they will now have the opportunity to read about the way in which Dominicans misunderstood an American Peace Corps Volunteer who was doing something that we, here in the United States, think is perfectly normal.
5. Give students a copy of Worksheet #9, *Jogging Alone*, on page 110. The anecdote describes an incident involving a Peace Corps Volunteer who had one way of looking at a situation, and her neighbors, who interpreted the situation differently.
6. Ask students to read the Peace Corps Volunteer’s account. As they are reading it, ask them to think about how they might solve the dilemma. Then ask students to work in pairs to respond to the questions at the bottom of the worksheet.
7. When students have had sufficient time for discussion, elicit responses to each question. Allow time for differing responses to be considered and respected.
8. Ask each student to pretend that he/she was the Peace Corps Volunteer in the jogging incident. Ask each student (in the role of a Peace Corps Volunteer) to write a letter “home” to his/her “parent” describing the incident and how it was resolved.

9. Provide students with an Assessment Checklist (sample below) before they begin writing their letters. Have students exchange the first draft of their letters with another student for peer review and feedback. (The review and feedback should be based on the criteria in the Assessment Checklist). Then have students revise and polish their letters.
10. Have students share their letters with a new partner. Then ask for volunteers to read their letters to the class.

Sample Assessment Checklist for Letter

- ✓ The jogging incident is described in a factual manner.
- ✓ The needs and feelings of the Peace Corps Volunteer are described.
- ✓ The needs and feelings of the Dominicans are described in a way that is respectful of their culture.
- ✓ The Peace Corps Volunteer explains what he/she did to resolve the problem in a way that was respectful of Dominican culture.
- ✓ The letter is organized into a number of paragraphs that follow each other in a logical order.
- ✓ The mechanics of English (grammar, punctuation, and spelling) are correct.



Worksheet #9

Jogging Alone

“When I first arrived in my village in the Dominican Republic, I began to have a problem with my morning jogging routine. I used to jog every day when I was at home in the U.S., so when I arrived in my village in the Dominican Republic, I set myself a goal to continue jogging two miles every morning. I really liked the peaceful feeling of jogging alone as the sun came up. But this did not last for long. The people in my village simply couldn't understand why someone would want to run alone. Soon people began to appear at their doorways offering me a cup of coffee, or others would invite me to stop in for a visit. Sometimes this would happen four or five times as I tried to continue jogging. They even began sending their children to run behind me so I wouldn't be lonely. They were unable to understand the American custom of exercising alone. I was faced with a dilemma. I really enjoyed my early morning runs. However, I soon realized that it's considered impolite in Dominican villages not to accept a cup of coffee, or stop and chat when you pass people who are sitting on their front steps. I didn't want to give up jogging. But, at the same time, I wanted to show respect for the customs of the Dominican Republic—and not be viewed as odd or strange.”

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What was the American's point of view here?
• What American cultural norm did the American think would be viewed as perfectly normal in the Dominican Republic?
• Describe a way you think that the American could respect the Dominican need to show hospitality to a stranger and, at the same time, not have to give up jogging. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What was the Dominicans' point of view here?
• What was the reason for the Dominicans' point of view? What cultural norm did the Dominicans have that made them view the American's behavior as "strange"?
• How might the Dominicans begin to understand and respect American cultural norms and, at the same time, satisfy their own need to show hospitality to strangers? |
|---|---|

Lesson Three: Seeing Both Sides of an Issue

Objectives:

- Students will practice the skill of seeing an issue from different points of view.
- Students will identify examples of cross-cultural misunderstandings in their own school and ways to resolve them.

Instructions:

1. Explain to students that there are often two or more equally reasonable ways to view a situation, depending on your culture. Explain that being able to see multiple sides of an issue is an important life skill. Ask students why they think this may be so. Explain to students that actively listening to another's viewpoint with an open mind is sometimes the most powerful thing they can do when misunderstandings occur.
2. Remind students that active listening is one of the most underrated communication skills. Review with them the rules of active listening. (Maintain direct eye contact. No interruptions. Keep an encouraging facial expression. Use positive body language. If the person who is speaking gets stuck, ask: Is there more you would like me to know? and then resume listening.) Ask for two student volunteers to model the skill of active listening in a brief conversation about "Something surprising that happened to me this week." One student will be the speaker and one student will be the active listener.
3. Inform students that they will now have the opportunity to practice seeing an issue from different points of view.
4. On each of four pieces of chart paper write one of the following: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree. Tape each piece of chart paper on the wall in a different corner of the room.
5. Explain to students that in a moment, you will state a controversial issue and they will have the opportunity to express their opinion on it by moving to one of the four corners of the room. When they have moved to their desired corner, ask students to discuss the reasons why they have taken this position on the issue.
6. State the following issue: *My way of doing things is the best way of doing things.* Have students move to their desired corner—the one that expresses their opinion on this issue.
7. Ask students to form pairs and explain the reasons behind their opinions to each other (using active listening). After students have had a chance to discuss the reasons for their position, ask a spokesperson from each corner to state the reasons behind their group's position.

In England, if something goes wrong—say, if one finds a skunk in the garden, he writes to the family lawyer who proceeds to take the proper measures; whereas in America you telephone the fire department. Each response satisfies a characteristic need: In the English, love of order and legalistic procedure; and here in America what you like is something vivid and swift.

A. E. Whitehead, Author

8. Next, let students know that they will have an opportunity to see the issue from another point of view. Ask the “Strongly Agree” group to move to the “Disagree” group’s corner and the “Disagree” group to move to the “Strongly Agree” corner. Then ask the “Strongly Disagree” group to move to the “Agree” group’s corner, as the “Agree” group moves to the “Strongly Disagree” group’s corner.
9. When students have moved to their designated corners, ask them to put their first opinion aside for a moment, to keep an open mind, and to try to think of all the reasons why they might take the opposite position on the same statement: *My way of doing things is the best way of doing things.*
10. After students have had a chance to discuss the reasons for their “new” position with a partner (again, using active listening), ask a spokesperson from each corner to state the reasons behind their group’s “new” position.
11. Debrief the activity by asking students how it felt to let go of their original positions and see the issue from another viewpoint.
12. When the discussion has ended, explain to students that the discomfort they might have felt having to take a position opposite to their true feelings, is somewhat like the discomfort they might feel when they are in another culture that sees some things differently than they do.
13. Conclude the lesson by reminding students again of the enduring understanding for this module: *It’s easy to misunderstand things people do in a cross-cultural setting. To keep from misunderstanding the behavior of others from another culture, you have to try to see the world from their point of view, not yours.*
14. Ask students: How would putting this idea into practice make our world a better place? Make our school a better place? Ask them to respond to this question first in a class discussion and then as a journal entry.

Choices and Explorations for Further Study:

Ask students to select one of the following writing activities:

- Imagine you are a Dominican in a community where a Peace Corps Volunteer serves. Write a letter to a fellow Dominican describing two or three things Americans do that seem puzzling, odd, or humorous.
- Describe a situation in which you were misunderstood by others. Write about it from two points of view: your own point of view and the other person’s point of view. Explain how your position could be justified and how the other person’s position could be justified. Provide concrete examples.

Context and Crossing Cultures

The Module at a Glance

This module builds on Module Four and helps students deepen their understanding of the importance of being able to see the world from another culture's point of view. Students will explore why, when crossing cultures, the ability to "read the context" is essential. Crossing cultures is often not easy. However, there are certain "fundamentals" of culture that students will examine in this module to strengthen their ability to read the context of a culture other than their own. Based on this knowledge, students will develop several guidelines for moving into a new culture. In the performance task at the end of the unit, students will interview others who have come to the U.S. from other cultures. They will learn from the experiences of the interviewees what it feels like to cross cultures and read the context of an unfamiliar place. Note: For complete information on the fundamentals of culture see the Peace Corps' cross-cultural workbook, *Culture Matters*. This publication can be found at the Coverdell World Wise Schools' Web site www.peacecorps.gov/wws/culturematters/.



Lesson One, Part One: The Fundamentals of Culture

Objectives:

- Students will be able to explain at least two of the fundamentals of culture.
- Students will improve their ability to see the world from more than one point of view.

Instructions:

1. Revisit with students the essential understandings from Module Four:
 - It's easy to misunderstand things people say and do in a multicultural and/or a cross-cultural setting.
 - To avoid misunderstanding the behavior of individuals from another culture, you have to interpret that behavior from their point of view, not yours.

Enduring Understandings:

- Crossing cultures isn't easy. Crossing cultures is a complex process where the ability to "read the context" and respond appropriately is essential.
- There are certain "fundamentals of culture" that can provide a structure for thinking about and analyzing the ways people think and behave in various cultures.
- The ability to understand and respect cultural differences can bring greater harmony and understanding into your school, community, and the world.

Essential Questions:

- How do you figure out the context of a cross-cultural situation? Why bother?
- How can you use the fundamentals of culture to understand cultural differences?
- If you were to master the skills needed for crossing cultures, what difference could it make in your own life, in your school, and in your community?

Topical Questions:

- What do I need to know and be able to do to cross cultures effectively?
- How can I use contextual clues to understand the cultural norms of the Dominican Republic?
- How can this knowledge make me more skillful in communicating and developing positive relationships with people in other cultures?

Standards:

National Council for the Social Studies Standards:

Culture (Theme I): Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of culture and cultural diversity so that the learner can:

- Compare similarities and differences in the ways groups, societies, and cultures meet human needs and concerns.
- Explain how information and experiences may be interpreted by people from diverse cultural perspectives and frames of reference.

Language Arts Standards

- The learner will demonstrate competence in the general skills and strategies of the reading/writing process.
- The learner will demonstrate competence in the skills of speaking and listening as tools for learning.

Assessments:

Journal Entries; Interviews; Group Projects; Writing Tasks; Performance Tasks.

Materials:

Fundamentals of Culture; Two Views of Time

Estimated Time: Two-three days

2. Have posted or written on the board the essential understandings of this module:
 - Crossing cultures isn't easy. Crossing cultures is a complex process where the ability to read the context and respond appropriately is essential.
 - There are certain fundamentals of culture that can provide a structure for thinking about and analyzing the ways people think and behave in various cultures.
3. Let students know that in this particular lesson, they will be looking at the question: How do you learn to read the *context* of a cross cultural situation?
4. Be sure that students know the meaning of "context" (the circumstances in which a particular event or action occurs). Provide some examples:
 - In a movie theater, people are expected to line up quietly to buy their tickets. It is considered rude to cut into that line.
 - In public transportation, such as buses and subways, people rarely talk to people they don't know. This is considered to be a way of respecting people's right to privacy.
 - Teens behave differently when they are at home with their families, than they do when they are with friends at school.
5. Explain to students that *context* refers to the often unwritten rules or norms that have evolved and become a part of a group's expected behavior in various situations. In the examples above, the context would be:
 - Unwritten rules about behavior in a movie theater.
 - Unwritten rules about behavior in public transportation vehicles.
 - Acceptable behavior at home vs. acceptable behavior with friends.
6. Ask students: What would be some examples of things you would never want your friends to do when they were in the presence of your parents? Ask why a particular behavior would be considered "unacceptable." Ask: Is this rule written in a book anywhere, or do you just know it?
7. Ask students: What would be some examples of things you would never want your parents to do when they were in the presence of your friends? Ask students why a particular behavior by their parents would be considered "unacceptable." Ask again: Is this rule written in a book anywhere, or do you and your friends just know it?
8. Explain that if you "just know" it, it is a cultural norm among your friends. This norm guides behavior and lets everyone know what's right and what's rude when they are in the presence of someone's parents.
9. Explain to students that just as there are cultural norms in this school, or this community, or this country, there are cultural norms in other countries. When you step out of one culture and step into another one, we call it "crossing cultures."
10. Explain to students that crossing cultures is not just limited to going from one country to another. Sometimes we can get the experience of crossing cultures when we move from one neighborhood to another, from one town to another, from one school to another, or even from one group to another. In each new place, what is accepted as normal behavior may be similar to what is acceptable in the old

place or it might be very different. To “read” a new culture accurately takes time, observation, sensitivity, and not jumping to conclusions too quickly.

11. Ask students: Think about a time when you were in a new situation, didn’t read the context, and did or said something inappropriate—a situation after which, you said to yourself: “If only I had known...” “If only someone had told me...” Relate the story of this event to students.
12. Ask students: Was there ever a time when you thought you were doing/saying the right thing, and it turned out to be the opposite because you didn’t understand the unwritten “rules,” the context? Ask: What made it hard to read the context? What helped you understand what went wrong? What helped you understand how to avoid messing up again?
13. Explain to students that they will now be learning about some things that will help them read the context more easily. These are called “fundamentals of culture” (see *Culture Matters*, page 29). Knowledge of these fundamentals is one of the many ways students can increase their ability to read the context of a cross-cultural situation. Explain to students that the “fundamentals of culture” are like building blocks we can use to better understand our own and other cultures. The fundamentals of culture are listed below.

The Fundamentals of Culture

The fundamental ways cultures differ is in the way they view:

- The concept of *time* (e.g., How important is punctuality? Are people’s lives driven by the clock, or do people have a more relaxed view of time?)
- The concept of the *self* (e.g., Is the culture more individualist, or is it more collectivist? Is individual self-reliance and independence more important, or is ensuring the well-being of the group more important?)
- The concept of *locus of control* (e.g., Do people believe they control their own lives and their own destinies, or do people believe things “just happen” to them due to fate—or due to outside forces they cannot control?)
- The concept of *personal vs. societal obligations* (e.g., Do the same rules apply to everyone, regardless of the situation, or are exceptions made for certain individuals depending on the circumstances?)

Not everything people do can be explained through these four concepts, but they are so fundamental that they are often the source of (or reason behind) a wide range of thought and behavior. Often, the most significant ways in which cultures differ are in how they view and react to these four concepts.

These fundamentals give us a structure for thinking about and analyzing culture that can help us explain why people from another culture think and behave the way they do—and also why we think and behave the way we do.

16. Explain to students that one of the easiest “fundamentals” of culture to understand is the differences in the way people from different cultures view time. In some cultures or some groups, for example, it is expected that people may not arrive on time for a meeting or a social event. Being punctual is not an important value in that setting. Peace Corps Volunteers in the Dominican Republic have observed the following:
 - “The culture of the town where I live is based on a slow, easy pace of life. People always seem to have time to stop and talk with you, no matter what they may be doing.”
 - “I went to the meeting late. This was the custom in the Dominican Republic. Meetings rarely started at the appointed time.”
17. On an overhead projector, show students the following two—and somewhat conflicting—viewpoints about time:
 - Our lives should be run by a schedule.
 - Our lives should not be run by a schedule.
18. Ask students who agree with the first statement to please stand up and move to one side of the room.
19. Ask students who agree with the second statement to stand up and move to the opposite side of the room.
20. Have students visualize an imaginary line connecting the two groups on either side of the room. Then ask: Is there anyone who feels undecided or somewhere in the middle of these two positions? Ask those students to move to the middle of the imaginary line.
21. Explain to students that they have just formed a continuum or a range of opinions on a specific topic. Explain that when people are taking an opinion poll, they might say: “On a scale of 1 – 10, where 1 = “Strongly Agree” and 10 = “Strongly Disagree,” provide a number that indicates your opinion on the topic. For example, the number “5” would indicate “not sure” and the number 3 would indicate “agree, but not strongly.”
22. Based on this explanation, give students the opportunity to shift their position on the continuum (e.g., some students may wish to move from the “10” position to the “8” position, indicating that they disagree but not “strongly,” or from the “1” position to the “2” position, and so forth).
23. Ask students to partner with someone next to them and explain why they have selected their particular position on the continuum. Then ask for volunteers to share several reasons with the whole class.
24. After students have taken their seats, explain that cultures differ in how people conceive of and handle time, and how their concept of time affects their interactions with each other. We can say that different cultures view the concept of time on a continuum. It’s also important to remember that views about the importance of time can be influenced by personality or age as well as culture.

Lesson One, Part Two

1. Explain to students that the two ends of the cultural continuum for looking at how time is conceived of are “monochronic” on one end and “polychronic” on the other end. These may sound like complicated words, but they can be taken apart and understood quite easily. The word monochronic can be broken up into two parts: “mono” and “chronic.” “Mono” means one, as in monorail (one rail on which a train of cars travels). “Chronic” means time, as in chronological order. In monochronic cultures, punctuality is valued, because time is viewed in just one way.
2. The word polychronic can also be broken up into two parts: “poly” meaning many and “chronic” meaning “time.” In polychronic cultures, punctuality is simply not that important because time is viewed in many different ways.
3. Ask students: In general, do you think the United States has a monochronic culture or a polychronic culture? How strongly is punctuality valued? Does this value differ among age groups?
4. Read students the descriptions of “monochronic” and “polychronic” cultures below.

Two Views of Time

- *Monochronic:* In monochronic cultures, the belief is that time is fixed and people need to regulate their lives by it. The needs of people are secondary to the demands of time—schedules, deadlines, etc. Schedules are sacred, to be late is rude, interruptions are considered “bad,” and “time is money.” These cultures believe that time is quantifiable, and a limited amount of it is available. People do one thing at a time and finish it before starting something else, regardless of circumstances. In these cultures, the focus is: 1) on the task and getting the job done quickly, and 2) on establishing and maintaining relationships.
- *Polychronic:* In polychronic cultures, the belief is that time is the servant and tool of people. Time is adjusted to suit the needs of people. Plans frequently change, and being made to wait is normal. These cultures believe that more time is always available, and you are never too busy. People often have to do several things simultaneously, as required by circumstances. It’s not necessary to finish one thing before starting another, nor to finish your business with one person before starting in with another. In these cultures, the focus is: 1) on the person and establishing relationships, and 2) on the task and getting the job done quickly.

5. Explain to students that time is often a cultural phenomenon. How time is treated varies from one culture to another. However, views of time may also vary within cultures, based on the personal preferences of individuals. We know that time is cultural, when a particular approach applies to large groups of people, or the majority of people in a particular culture. Tell students that they will soon have an opportunity to see if their own concept of time is more monochronic or polychronic.
6. Explain to students that people in different places have very different concepts of time. Some cultures are more “clock-driven” than others. In some cultures, it is expected that people will arrive late for an appointment, and therefore, this is anticipated in advance. In other cultures, it is expected that people will arrive on time. A Peace Corps Volunteer once noted: *Neither behavior is right nor wrong, better nor worse. It is just different. Accept this in others and enjoy the difference.*
7. Ask students to respond to the statement in italics above. Do they agree with it? Ask students to back up their opinions with reasons.
8. Then lead students into assessing their own feelings about the importance of being on time. Explain that they will have an opportunity to complete a questionnaire that will give them a rough idea of their approach to time (monochronic or polychronic). Ask students if they think they can predict in advance if they are more on the polychronic, or more on the monochronic, end of the continuum. Ask students to write their prediction down on a piece of paper and fold the paper until they have completed taking and scoring the time continuum questionnaire.
9. Provide students with a copy of the inventory in Worksheet #10 on page 120. Explain how it works, and ask them to complete it.

The immature rice stalk stands erect, while the mature stalk, heavy with grain, bends over.

Cambodian proverb



Worksheet #10

SCORE YOURSELF: Monochronic or Polychronic

(Adapted from the Peace Corps publication **Culture Matters**. You may find the full text of this publication at the Web site: www.peacecorps.gov/www/culturematters/index/html).

The exercise below can help you to discover whether your own concept of time is more monochronic or polychronic. After reading the paired statements, circle the one that best describes the action you would take or the way you feel about the particular topic. For example: read statements 1a and 1b, then decide which one is more like you and circle that one.

- 1a. People should always stand in line so they can be waited on one at a time.
- 1b. There's no need to stand in line, as people will be waited on when they are ready for service.

- 2a. Interruptions usually cannot be avoided and are often quite helpful.
- 2b. Interruptions should be avoided whenever possible.

- 3a. It's more efficient if you do one thing at a time.
- 3b. I can get as much done if I work on two or three things at the same time.

- 4a. It's more important to come to agreement, even if it takes more time.
- 4b. It's more important to stick to the schedule.

- 5a. Unexpected things are hard to adjust to and should be avoided where possible.
- 5b. Unexpected things happen all the time. That's life.

- 6a. You shouldn't acknowledge a new visitor when you are still meeting with another person.
- 6b. It would be rude to ignore a visitor who drops by.

- 7a. You shouldn't take a deadline too seriously. Anything can happen. What's a deadline between friends?
- 7b. Deadlines are like a promise. Many other things depend on them, so they should not be treated lightly.

- 8a. It's important in a meeting not to become distracted by something else that comes up. You should stick to the agenda.
- 8b. Distractions are inevitable. An agenda is just a piece of paper.

- 9a. I tend to be people-oriented.
- 9b. I tend to be task-oriented and like to get the job done.

- 10a. Personal talk is part of the job.
- 10b. Personal talk should be saved for after business hours or during lunch.

10. Explain to students that there is nothing scientific about this exercise. Most of the paired statements are taken out of context. So you might select one alternative in one situation and the opposite alternative in another set of circumstances. In this exercise, however, you have been exposed to some alternative behaviors and ways of thinking about time that you may want to consider as you seek to better understand others.
11. Tell students that the following behaviors tend to be more characteristic of people with a monochronic world view: 1a, 2b, 3a, 4b, 5a, 6a, 7b, 8a, 9b, 10b. And the following behaviors tend to be more characteristic of people with a polychronic world view: 1b, 2a, 3b, 4a, 5b, 6b, 7a, 8b, 9a, 10a.
12. Ask students to form a “human continuum” the way they did earlier in the lesson. At the left side of the room, post a piece of chart paper that reads “Polychronic.” At the right side of the room, post a piece of chart paper that reads “Monochronic.” Explain to students that this continuum will be marked by a set of numbers from 1-10. The number “1” will be on the polychronic side of the room and the number “10” will be on the monochronic side of the room.
13. Ask students to line up on this continuum at the point they think indicates their approach to time (monochronic or polychronic). Explain that some students may stand at the number “7” point on the continuum. This would mean that they tend to have a more monochronic approach to time but sometimes behave in a polychronic way. Some students may stand at the number “5” right in the middle. This would mean that their approach to time is polychronic in some situations and monochronic in others. Some students may stand at the number “3.” This would indicate that they tend to have a somewhat polychronic approach to time.
14. Ask students if they remember the Peace Corps Volunteers’ comments about time in the Dominican Republic. Perhaps you will need to refer back to the video or the quotes and the Volunteers’ comments about time (e.g., “The pace of life is slower.” “I learned to slow down.” “Time is not that important.”).
16. Ask students where they predict a significant number of people in the Dominican Republic might be on the continuum. Ask students why they think this is so. Ask students: “If you were to go to the Dominican Republic, how would you adjust your behavior to accommodate the Dominican approach to time?”
17. Discuss with students: If time were less important in the U.S. and the pace of life were slower, what impact might that have on your life?

Journal Entry:

Ask students to be seated and ask them to respond to the journal prompts below. Afterwards, conduct a whole-class discussion on the journal responses. Be sure to explain that this activity was not meant to stereotype people in this class or people in another culture.

- Are there aspects of each approach to time that you like and agree with? What are they and why?
- Are there aspects of each approach to time that you dislike and disagree with? What are they and why?

Lesson One, Part Three

1. Review with students a second “fundamental” of culture: the concept of the “self.” See the definitions below.

The Concept of Self: Individualism and Collectivism

(Adapted from the Peace Corps publication **Culture Matters**. You may find the full text of this publication at the Web site: www.peacecorps.gov/www/culturematters/index/html).

The concept of “self” exists on a continuum from individualism on one side and collectivism on the other. The two concepts are described briefly below. While no culture is exclusively individualist or collectivist, most tend to be more one than the other.

COLLECTIVIST: In collectivist cultures, a person’s identity is a function of his/her connection to and role in a group, e.g., the family or work team. The survival and success of the group ensures the well-being of the individual, so that by considering the needs and feelings of others, one protects oneself. Harmony and the interdependence of group members are stressed and valued. Individuals protect group members from “losing face.” Group members are relatively close psychologically and emotionally, but distant between themselves and nongroup members. There is much emphasis on the family and extended family.

INDIVIDUALIST: In individualistic cultures, a person’s identity does not necessarily stem from his/her connection to or role in a group. Rather, taking care of oneself and being self-sufficient is considered to be the way to contribute to the well-being of the group. There is a strong value placed on being “independent.” A person’s role in his/her extended family is not viewed as being as important as it is in collectivist cultures. “Standing on one’s own two feet” is considered important. Self-reliance and individual responsibility are greatly stressed and valued. The needs of the individual often take precedence over the needs of the group.

2. Explain to students that these concepts will become clearer when they read the following account of behavior in the Dominican Republic (which has a more a more collectivist culture). Explain to students that this account was provided by an American who lived in the Dominican Republic for four years.
3. Give students a copy of Worksheet #11 on page 123 and ask them to discuss it with a partner.
4. Ask students to discuss the following questions with their partners: Have you seen similar examples of this kind of behavior in the United States? Would you say that this kind of behavior is common in the U.S.? For what reasons do you think this is so?

Worksheet #11

Behavior in a Collectivist Culture

“With respect to cultural differences, the whole concept of sharing seems to be different in the Dominican Republic. Sharing —especially in communities of poverty— is very important. Communities of poverty require a culture of sharing. Whereas a community of plenty, such as we have here in the U.S., emphasizes individual self-reliance.

“It’s as simple as this example: If you were to go into a local colmado (small grocery store) in a village or small town and ask the owner this question: ‘What’s the difference between Dominican teenagers and American teenagers?’ He would answer: ‘Well, if five American teenagers were to come into this store they would buy five bottles of Coke. If five Dominican teenagers came in, they would buy one Coke and get five cups. And they would share the five cups until they finished the Coke. And then, they’d buy another Coke and share it among themselves in the same way.’

“I don’t think the culture is much different in Dominican cities from the culture in the countryside or campos (small villages). Here is another example: If you were in an outdoor restaurant in a town in the Dominican Republic, you might see some street children watching to see if you had any leftovers to give them. And if you had, let’s say, a cookie, a leftover cookie, you might offer it to these four little children (who may not have eaten that day). And one of them would come up to you, take the cookie you offered, break it into four pieces, and share it with the three other children who are with him.

“Even though the one child may have been very hungry, the instinctive response is this: You may not have much, but what you do have, you are required by your culture to share—and this is ingrained in children at an early age, so that the behavior becomes almost automatic.

“Where does this cultural norm come from? I think it comes from survival. You couldn’t survive in the Dominican Republic if you were individualistic or competitive. But there is also a tremendous emphasis on hospitality and sharing in that culture. Any stranger will experience this in the villages and towns in the Dominican Republic.” (Visitor to the Dominican Republic)

5. After partners have had a chance to discuss the questions in #4 above, lead a whole class discussion, eliciting responses from volunteers.
6. Now ask students to form a “human continuum” the way they did when they expressed their opinions about time. At the left side of the room, post a sign that reads “Individualist.” At the right side of the room, post a sign that reads “Collectivist.” Explain to students that this continuum will be marked by a set of numbers from 1-10. The number “1” will be on the collectivist side of the room and the number “10” will be on the individualist side of the room.
7. Ask students to line up at the point they think indicates where the majority of people in the United States would fit on the continuum between individualist or collectivist. Ask students to discuss the reason for their position on the continuum with a partner.
8. Then ask the question: Do you think the United States as a whole has a collectivist culture or an individualistic culture? Lead a whole-class discussion, making sure that students support their opinion with an example. In a multicultural classroom, you might have a wide divergence of opinions on this topic.

Journal Entry:

Ask students to respond to the following journal prompts:

- If you were going into another culture that you knew had a polychronic view of time and a collectivist concept of the self, how would you prepare yourself?
- If you didn't know anything about this culture, how would you go about “reading the context?”



Lesson Two: Reading the Context

Objectives:

- Students will reinforce their understanding of cultural context.
- Students will be able to write a list of suggested behaviors when moving into a new culture.

Instructions:

1. Present students with this scenario:
 - Imagine that your father or mother has been offered a new job, and your family has to move to another city. You will be leaving the school that you are now attending (and where your school’s “culture” is familiar to you). You will be going to a new school where the culture will be unfamiliar to you. You do not know what students consider “acceptable behavior” there. What questions will be on your mind the day before you go to the new school? Explain to students that going from one school to another one is very much like going from one culture to a new one.
2. Ask students to respond to this prompt in their journals:
 - What questions might be on your mind as you prepare to go to this new school?
3. Ask students to share their journal entries with a partner. Then ask for volunteers to share their questions with the whole class. Expected responses might be:
 - Will I fit in?
 - What clothes should I wear?
 - How do kids dress in this school?
 - What are the rules like in this school?
 - Are they similar to the rules in my old school?
 - How will I make friends?
4. Explain to students that answers to these questions are not written down anywhere. They are things you will have to discover by learning to “read the context” by observing people’s behavior in this new place.
5. Now ask students to imagine that they were moving to the Dominican Republic. Based on what they have learned about the Dominican Republic so far, ask students to think about how they would go about reading the context—i.e., learning what is considered to be “normal” behavior in that town. Ask them how they would get to know the people, be sensitive to and respectful of their way of doing things, behave appropriately for that culture, and

When I first went to Korea as a Peace Corps Volunteer in 1967, my world was configured by the grammar of English and I believed, without having ever thought about it, that everyone in the world saw ‘things’ just as I did. As I started to learn Korean I began to see that language skewed actual reality around, and as I got better at it, I began to understand that it was possible to see everything differently.

*Richard Wiley, Author
(RPCV Korea)*

begin to “fit in.” Would the way they would go about reading the context in the Dominican Republic be similar or different from the way they’d begin to read the context in a new school?

6. Ask students to work in groups of four to prepare a set of guidelines about reading the context of another culture based on what they have learned so far about the Dominican Republic and about culture in general. In preparation for this, ask students to review Modules One through Four. Let students know you would like each group to come up with at least four ideas or recommendations.

Journal Entry:

Ask students to review their journal entries from this and the previous four modules, and then to write a response to the following prompts:

- What do I need to know and be able to do to read the context of another culture?
- How can my ability to understand and respect cultural differences lead to greater harmony in my school and my community?

Culminating Performance Task:

1. The structure for this performance task is the same one used in the Culminating Performance Task in the Geography Unit. It is based on guidelines from *The Understanding by Design Handbook* (McTighe and Wiggins 1999, page. 140). *The Understanding by Design Handbook* uses an acronym (“GRASPS”) to help teachers design performance task scenarios See page 170 for a description of how to write a performance task.
2. Provide students with a copy of Worksheet #12, *Module Five Performance Task* on pages 127-128. Explain the task to students and provide them with a copy of Worksheet #13, *Interview Basics* on page 129 as a resource to use for their interviews.



Worksheet #12

Module Five Performance Task

GOAL: To give you the opportunity to demonstrate your comprehension of the following enduring understandings:

- Crossing cultures isn't easy. Crossing cultures is a complex process where the ability to "read the context" and respond appropriately is essential.
- There are certain "fundamentals of culture" that can provide a structure for thinking about and analyzing the ways people think and behave in various cultures.
- The ability to understand and respect cultural differences can bring greater harmony and understanding into your school, community, and the world.

ROLE: You are an experienced reporter.

AUDIENCE: Students, teachers, and parents in your school community.

SITUATION: Your class is compiling a book describing what it actually feels like to go into a new culture (e.g., from one country to another, from one city to another, or from one school to another). This book will be distributed throughout the school district to help promote cultural understanding. It will also be sold at the annual PTA/PTO fundraising event.

PRODUCT OR PERFORMANCE: You are a reporter assigned to interview someone from your school—and someone from your family—or community who has come to the United States from another culture. Your interview questions should help the people you interview explain how they felt crossing cultures and how they learned to "read" the context and "figure out the rules." Your interview questions should also encourage the people you interview to identify things about American culture that are similar to and different from their home culture. Interview summaries will be published in a class book.

STANDARDS FOR SUCCESS:

- Your interview questions help the people you interview feel comfortable in explaining what it was like to cross cultures and how they learned to "read" the context and "figure out the rules."
- You practice the skills in the attached handout entitled *Interview Basics*.
- Your interview questions encourage the people you interview to identify things about American culture that are similar to and different from their home culture.

Continued on next page

Worksheet #12 continued

- Your interview summaries contain good examples and are worthy of being published in the class book
- In practice sessions in front of the class, you demonstrate good active listening and interviewing skills.
- In practice sessions in front of the class, you demonstrate good note-taking and summarizing skills.
- Following your interviews, you work actively in a small group, share the results of your interviews, and summarize the main points in writing.
- Individuals in your small groups share your group's findings in clear, understandable presentations to the rest of the class.
- Your small group submits written summaries of the best interviews to be published in a class book.
- Your written summaries demonstrate your mastery of the enduring understandings of Module Five.



Worksheet #13

Interview Basics

- Make a polite request for the interview (in writing or verbally).
- State the purpose of the interview.
- Inform the interviewee how much time the interview will take (15-30 minutes).
- If your interview takes place in the workplace, dress appropriately.
- Arrive on time.
- Arrive with an Interview Guide and a pen or pencil to write down answers (or a tape recorder and tape).
- Introduce yourself and say why you are here. Thank the interviewee for his/her time.
- Ask one question at a time and give the speaker ample time to think before responding.
- Be an excellent listener. (Remember that experienced interviewers do more listening than talking.)
- Use active listening techniques (maintain eye contact with the speaker; do not interrupt; remain silent until the speaker seems to have finished talking; then paraphrase the speaker's response and check for understanding).
- Take careful notes on your Interview Guide (either during or immediately after the interview).
- After each question and response, stop and summarize what you think the speaker has said. Check whether you've understood correctly. After summarizing, ask: "Is this correct?" Ask a question about anything that may seem confusing to you—or if you need an example (e.g., "I'm not sure I understood that.. Would you mind explaining it again?" "Would you say a little more about that? I'm not sure I got it.")
- Ask questions that are not on your list if the interviewee says something that triggers a question.
- At the end of the interview, thank the interviewee for his/her time.

The Cultural Universals that Bind Us

The Module at a Glance

This final module of the Culture Unit focuses on the enduring understanding that, despite cultural differences, there are cultural universals that unite all people in a common bond of humanity. Students identify the common needs that all humans share. They work with primary source documents to analyze the similarities in “a day in the life of a child” in the Dominican Republic and the United States. Through a second primary source document, students address the essential question: In what ways do people in the Dominican Republic and people in the United States share common needs? Finally, through various media, students respond to the question: How can an understanding of cultural universals bring greater harmony and understanding into your school, community, and the world?

*The real voyage of discovery
consists not in seeing new
landscapes, but in having
new eyes.*

Marcel Proust, Author

Lesson One: Sharing a Common Bond of Humanity

Objectives:

- Students will explain the concept of cultural universals.
- Students will describe the common human needs that exist across cultures.

Instructions:

1. Introduce students to the concept of “cultural universals.” Explain to students that the word *universal* means “including or affecting the entire world and all within the world.”
2. Show students pictures of people of all ages in different parts of the world. Ask students to remember the people and the faces in the *Destination: Dominican Republic* video. Ask them to imagine that they have placed themselves in the video. Ask students the following questions:
 - What do you and the people in the video all need to survive?
3. Answers might include: air, food, water, shelter. Lead students to think about the intangibles that all humans need: love, acceptance, respect, and so forth. Ask students: What

Enduring Understandings:

- Despite cultural differences, there are cultural universals that unite all people in a common bond of humanity.
- Knowledge of these cultural universals can bring greater harmony and understanding into schools, communities, and the world.

Essential Questions:

- Despite cultural differences, how are people the same?
- In what ways do people in a diverse world share a common bond of humanity?
- How can our awareness of this common bond of humanity bring greater harmony and understanding into our school, community, and world?

Topical Questions:

- In what ways are people in the United States and people in the Dominican Republic similar, despite the cultural differences in the two countries?
- In what ways do people in the United States and people in the Dominican Republic share common needs?
- How are the people in these two countries united in a common bond of humanity?

Standards:

National Council for the Social Studies Standards

Culture (Theme I): Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of culture and cultural diversity so that the learner can:

- Compare similarities and differences in the ways groups, societies, and cultures meet human needs and concerns.
- how information and experiences may be interpreted by people from diverse cultural perspectives and frames of reference.

Language Arts Standards

- The learner will demonstrate competence in the general skills and strategies of the reading/writing process.
- The learner will demonstrate competence in the skills of speaking and listening as tools for learning.

Assessments:

Journal Entries; Graphic Organizer; Letters Writing; Culminating Performance Task.

Materials:

Pictures or photos of people of all ages in different parts of the world; *Comparing the Lives of Children and Teens*; *Day in the Life of a Dominican Child*; *Not Just Any Other Day*.

Time: Two-three days

The scene is a cafe in Tangiers, Morocco. Tomorrow is Sunday. I've just invited a Moroccan friend to a picnic at the beach. Will he come? "Perhaps," he says in English, translating from the Arabic, N'shallah, which literally means "God willing." And I'm feeling hurt. What does he mean "perhaps"? Either he wants to come or he doesn't. It's up to him. He doesn't understand why I'm so upset. Our two cultures confront each other across the tea cups.

Only several years later do I understand. He would come, he meant, if Allah willed it. His wanting to come and his being able to come were not one and the same. In Morocco, unlike America, where there's a will, there's not necessarily a way. So who was I to demand an answer to my question? And who was he to give one?

*Craig Storti, Author
(RPCV Morocco)*

is the difference between living and surviving? Ask students: Could you survive without air? Could you survive without love? Without respect? Could you live without love? Without respect?

4. As students state their opinions, make sure that they also state the reasons why they think as they do.
5. Have students respond to the following prompt in their journals:
 - Make a list of everything you think each person in the world needs to survive and live a happy life.
6. Have students share their responses with a partner. Have the partners pair with another set of partners to form a group of four. Ask these groups to share their lists with each other and decide which things are most important. Ask the group of four to combine their lists so that there is no duplication—and so there is just one new list of the things that the group thinks are most important for living and surviving.
7. Have each group appoint a spokesperson to read the group's list aloud. Call on groups in turn. As the spokespersons are reading their lists, write what they say on the chalkboard. Do not write the same word or phrase twice. Instead, put a checkmark next to the word or phrase each time it is repeated. At the end of this activity, you should have a list of the things that everyone in the class agrees are most important for life and survival.
8. As students are reading their list of items, interject a question now and then such as: Is this really important? Is it essential? Why do you think this is so? Would this be important to someone living in another country, or is this only important to Americans?
9. Ask students: Based on what you've learned so far, do you think students in the Dominican Republic would come up with the same list?
10. If so, tell students that they have just come up with a preliminary list of "cultural universals"—the things *all* people need regardless of their culture. Explain to students that this is only a preliminary list because the more they learn about other cultures or the Dominican Republic, the more likely their list might change.

Journal Entry:

Ask students to respond in their journals to the following prompt:

- Assuming the universal needs for food, shelter, and air have been met, which of the remaining items on our class list of cultural universals are MOST important to you. Why?

Lesson Two: Identifying Common Bonds of Humanity

Objectives:

- Students will use primary source documents to compare childhood in the United States with childhood in the Dominican Republic.
- Students will describe the cultural universals that both countries share.

Instructions:

1. Remind students of the children and teenagers they met in the Dominican Republic video. Ask them what still stands out in their minds. Explain to students that they will now have the opportunity to learn about a day in the life of a Dominican child/teen through the eyes of Peace Corps Volunteers (see the Primary Source Document on pages 135-137 in which Volunteers were asked to describe the daily life of children and teenagers).
2. Many Volunteers told us that the activities of a child depend upon where that child lives, how many siblings are in the family, the family's level of income, and so forth. What became very clear was that country children and city children live very different lives. Children and teenagers who live in a large city or in the capital, Santo Domingo, may lead lives that are similar to the lives of children in the United States. On the other hand, children and teenagers who live in small towns and villages in rural areas lead very different lives.
3. Provide students with copies of Worksheet #14, *Comparing the Life of Children and Teens in the U.S. and the Dominican Republic*, on page 134, and ask them to complete column one prior to reading the anecdotes in the Primary Source Document. This might be a homework assignment the night before students read the anecdotes.
4. Then give students a copy of the various descriptions of *A Day in the Life of a Dominican Child*. You can read these anecdotes to younger students. Older students can read all of them.
5. Ask students to identify as many cultural universals as they can while they are reading the anecdotes. Have students discuss their impressions in small groups. Have them consider the question: In spite of the cultural differences between the United States and the Dominican Republic, what are the cultural universals that unite the children and teenagers in these two countries in a common bond of humanity?
6. After they have read the anecdotes in the Primary Source Document on pages 135-137, have students complete the Dominican Republic column in the graphic organizer. Finally, have them identify the common bonds that children in both countries share.

Worksheet #14
Comparing the Life of Children and Teens
in the United States and the Dominican Republic

Time of Day	My Activities	A Day in the Life of a Dominican child or teenager
7 AM		
8 AM		
9 AM		
10 AM		
11 AM		
Noon		
1 PM		
2 PM		
3 PM		
4 PM		
5 PM		
6 PM		
7 PM		
8 PM		
9 PM		

What are the common bonds that children in both countries share?

Primary Source Document

A Day in the Life of a Dominican Child: Anecdotes Provided by Peace Corps Volunteers

“A ten-year old girl with two siblings who lives in the country town of El Arrozal is her mother’s right hand. The mother runs a corner grocery store and so during the day the daughter, Rosaria, is in charge of watching her brother and sister. The three children attend school in the morning. School in the country village is a three hour session with a 15 minute break. Rosaria stops off at the store on the way home to receive food items from her mother to cook for lunch. She helps her mother serve lunch and then—while her parents take their *siestas* (30 minute naps)—she and her brother share the clean-up activities and straighten up the house. Then the three children take their siestas. When they wake up, they either play outside with their friends, watch TV (if the electricity is working), do their homework, or go to the corner store to help their mother. The evenings are pretty calm, and the mother cooks dinner while the children take their baths. In the evenings, Rosaria fills the buckets with water for her siblings for their baths and then takes hers when they finish. The mother cooks dinner with food she brings back from the store. The mother checks their homework and then they either watch TV until bedtime or go directly to bed, depending on the hour.”



“Here in the capital city of Santo Domingo, the life of my nephew, who is 17 years old, is very different from the life of my neighbor’s eighteen year old son in El Arrozal, who is married and expecting his first child. My nephew, Davy, spends his mornings at baseball practice when the weather permits, followed by a two hour lunch at home visiting with friends and watching TV. In the afternoons from two until five, he works for his uncle at his accounting firm. His job there is organizing files and reviewing returned checks from clients. He attends school at night during the evening class, from seven to ten. If he has baseball practice the following morning he goes to bed around 11 p.m. Electricity permitting, he watches TV, specifically sports games (baseball, basketball, or volleyball) in the evenings or visits with friends in the neighborhood. On the whole, besides the actual hours, his life in the capital city is not much different than that of a high school student in the U.S.”



“Maria lives in a country village. She is in the 5th grade. Her day starts at 6:30 a.m. when the entire household gets up to get ready for school. She gets dressed in her school uniform of blue blouse and tan skirt, having bathed the night before. Her mom will brush her hair and give her a chocolate oatmeal drink for breakfast and she leaves for school at around 7:30 a.m. or so. Maria has class from 8 a.m. until 12 learning normal subjects like math, science, Spanish, English, religion, and social studies. She has 22 children in her class, and her classroom is outside under an overhanging roof with a blackboard. She does not have books and spends a lot of time copying off the blackboard. After school Maria goes home and waits until lunch is ready. She eats and then has to do the dishes. Her afternoons are spent doing homework, watching television (if there is any electricity), and helping her mom clean the house and do the laundry. She must make at least one trip to the river to look for water and carry it back in one-gallon jugs. She plays with her sister and brother, usually inventing games, and occasionally she visits her grandmother who lives down the street. There are no organized school sports, but she does sing in the church choir. In the late afternoon she bathes (usually before dinner). Dinner is eaten at 7 p.m. or so and she goes to bed around 10 or 11 p.m.”



“I am writing about Anna, the twelve-year old girl I live with. During the week, she wakes up at 7:00 a.m., gets ready for school, eats breakfast, and leaves for school at 7:45. She goes to school at a *colegio* which offers more activities to the students than most schools, including computers and playing equipment. School lasts from 8-11:30, and at 11:30 she comes home to help prepare for lunch at 1:00. After lunch, she helps clean the house and wash the dishes, and then has the afternoon free to do her homework and play with her friends. The family owns a television, and, if there is electricity, she is often found watching T.V. in the evening. Anna also prepares for the next day of school in the evening, and goes to sleep at about 9 or 10.”



“Tony, the sixteen year-old son, is the only son living at home. At 6:30 he wakes up and milks the cow and does a few other chores before preparing to leave for school at 7:30. School lasts four hours although rarely is there a week when school lasts all five days. Tony is in 10th grade, but many students in his class are much older. The students learn math, English, Spanish, natural sciences, P.E., and chemistry. At recess they play volleyball or basketball or sit and talk with friends. When Tony gets time, he cuts/collects firewood for cooking and helps his father with what work needs to be done. After dinner he studies a little or plays dominoes. He goes to bed around 8:30 and listens to baseball games on the radio. Baseball is a national passion.”

“Carmen gets up around 7:00 and gets ready for school, which starts at 8:00 and goes until noon. In school she studies such subjects as mathematics, Spanish, English, science, and history. She participates in sports as well. Kids play sports like volleyball, basketball, and baseball. Carmen is now 14 and in the 7th grade. Her school has pre-school and grades 1 through 8. After eighth grade, students must attend school in our pueblo which is 40 minutes away. Once Carmen is out of school she comes home to eat lunch at noon and do chores. Once her chores are done she’s free to play with friends. Kids are very inventive in the Dominican Republic and play a wide variety of games with odds and ends they find on the ground. Often groups of boys will get together to play baseball or basketball. There are a few different youth groups in my town, such as the Catholic Youth Club that meets weekly at 7 p.m.”



“All children can now attend school in the town of Las Canitas because our high school just opened this year. Previously the cost of transportation to the high school in the next pueblo over was too expensive, and the children often dropped out of school after the eighth grade. Children wake at 6:00 and do errands for their parents or grandparents. Then they go to school (in their school uniforms of blue shirts and khakis), either the morning session (8:00 a.m - 12:00 noon) or the afternoon session (2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.). We now have a school breakfast program and kids eat lunch at home before or after school. In their free time, they play baseball, swim at the beach, fish, or play volleyball. There are organized teams for softball and baseball for young men and women.”



Lesson Three: Crossing Cultures and Finding Common Bonds

Objectives:

- Students will use a primary source document to identify examples of crossing cultures respectfully.
- Students will infer from a primary source document the ways in which all people have common needs that unite them in a common bond of humanity.

Instructions:

1. Explain to students that they will be reading (or you will read to them) a story written by a Peace Corps Volunteer, Dianne, serving in the Dominican Republic. In this story they will find examples of:
 - how Dianne has mastered the skills of reading the context and crossing cultures respectfully.
 - how, despite the differences between the United States and the Dominican Republic, people have common bonds of humanity that unite them.
2. Explain to students that Dianne has been asked to speak to a group of Dominican men and women in honor of “International Women’s Day.” Two of the things Dianne knows about the context of this situation are that many women will not speak to a public audience, and that women are seldom recognized for the things they contribute to the life of the family and the community. Dianne’s challenge is to honor the women while not offending the men.
3. Explain to students that one of the first things Dianne asks the women in the audience to do is to list the essential components of life that we all need as human beings to survive. Remind them of the class list of cultural universals and common needs that they came up with in the first part of this lesson.
4. Ask students to read *Not Just Any Other Day* on pages 140-141 and answer the following questions:
 - In what ways are women in this village in the Dominican Republic and women in the United States similar?
 - What do Dominican women in this village consider to be the “essentials of life”? How are these “essentials” similar to or different from our class list of common needs across cultures?
5. Dianne ends her story by saying that she thinks of this day whenever she needs a reminder of “how human beings everywhere contribute each day to the well-being of our world.” Lead students in a discussion of what “small part” they can play in making that happen.
6. Organize students into groups of four. Ask them to illustrate the following enduring understanding: *There are cultural universals that unite all people in a common bond of humanity.* Give students the choice of doing one of the following:
 - Design a role play
 - Create a picture
 - Make a collage

- Create new words to a familiar song
 - Write a poem
 - Come up with their own alternatives
7. Wrap up this lesson with the following quote from a Peace Corps Volunteer: “*We must all hope for the same kind of world, where people understand each other better—where their first impulse upon meeting a stranger is to be curious rather than afraid. I like to think I have done my small part in making that happen. I sincerely hope you enjoy doing yours.*”

Travel is more than the seeing of sights; it is a change that goes on, deep and permanent, in the ideas of living

Miriam Beard, Author



Not Just Any Other Day

by Dianne Garyantes

I walked into the well-lit, freshly-painted office building—late, as expected. This was the custom in the Dominican Republic; meetings always started late. As I entered, I wiped the mud from my shoes; it had been raining all day in the little village where I worked. A small knot of women in faded dresses and flip-flops was huddled in the center of a large meeting room. Maybe I had pushed the lateness thing too far, I thought, because they were waiting for me.

I had been asked by the local women's club to speak on a panel for International Women's Day 1991. I was asked to speak about life, about women, about who we are and what we could become. During my past year in the village, I had been humbled by the harsh conditions around me and the grace with which people managed to live. Families worked three harvests a year in the nearby rice fields, nurtured supportive relationships with their families and neighbors, and most kept three or four sources of income flowing into the household. Who was I to speak to them about life or who they were? I decided my talk would have to be a discussion in which the women themselves would rely on their own wisdom and worth.

It was a surprise to me that the women's club was acknowledging International Women's Day. The women in the club usually came together to be social, to trade sewing tips, to escape from the everyday events of the household. They were not politically active and did not identify themselves as a subordinate or marginalized group because they were women. My guess was that I had been asked to speak that day because I was a somewhat exotic *Americana*, not because I was a woman.

My first glance into the meeting room told me my instincts were correct. All of the other panelists for the day were men. Although I knew that in the Dominican Republic men were viewed as the ones who spoke with and for authority, it was still a shock. This was International Women's Day! The day was set aside to celebrate women and our accomplishments. I was filled with a new sense of purpose as I walked to the front of the room.

When it was my turn to speak, I asked the women in the audience to list all the essentials of life, things we all need as human beings to survive. The responses came at a rapid-fire pace: good health, shelter, food, water, children and family, clothing, medicine, education. The list went on until the poster board I was writing on was full.

Next, we circled in red the items on the list for which women in the Dominican Republic were responsible. The answers this time came more slowly. The first person to respond said that women in the Dominican Republic were responsible for caring for children and families. Another hand went up to point out that women collect water every day for drinking, cleaning, bathing, and cooking. We realized that women also are responsible for keeping the family healthy and getting medicine when someone is sick. Women also make sure that homework is done and that children are in school every day. Meals, clothing, and cleaning and maintenance of the home are also under the responsibility of women. We continued to circle items on the list until every single suggestion on the poster board was surrounded by red. The air in the room became thick with stunned silence.

I felt exhilarated and a little dazed by the enormity of our conclusion. All the items on the list were the responsibility of the women sitting in the room. Women were making daily decisions and carrying out responsibilities that were nothing less than essential to life. They were essential to life! Our list, cheerful with bright red circles, affirmed this.

As in societies and cultures everywhere, men and women in the Dominican Republic share in the responsibilities for their families, communities, and country. The difference is that women are seldom acknowledged, celebrated, or rewarded for their contributions. The women in the audience felt this lack of appreciation every day as they ate last, after their husbands and children, and rarely, if ever, shared a meal at the same table as their spouses. Instead, they sat in the kitchen at the back of the house, taking quick mouthfuls of food in between serving and cleaning up after the others. Many of the women in the audience had been put down or ignored all their lives. Who, after all, was the boss? Who, after all, was important?

One of the women in the audience that day was Gloria, who worked two jobs as a nurse, and traveled forty kilometers in the back of a pick-up truck for one of her jobs. She also swept and mopped her house each day, raised a young son, and helped cultivate bananas, plantains, and cocoa for additional income. When the community needed help raising money to build a school, Gloria organized collections in the local church and raised more than \$300 for the project.

Idaylia, who was also there that day, had a disabled left foot, yet still started each day by collecting water for her family. This meant at least three trips to and from the village's water hole, which was a quarter-mile from her house. She carried the water in a five-gallon can on top of her head and, even with her limp, she barely spilled a drop.

The silence in the room was beginning to soften. Someone giggled. Someone else spoke. Soon everyone in the audience was talking excitedly, telling jokes, and laughing, including the men on the panel. It was thrilling to watch the light shine in the women's eyes and to see it reflected and multiplied among them. It was as though they all had been a team running a relay and had just found out they had won first place. We loudly applauded ourselves and sailed out of the meeting room feeling giddy, buoyant, joyous.

The rush of pride and sense of awareness I shared with the women that afternoon comes back to me at different times during my life today. I think of it when I need a reminder of how human beings everywhere contribute each day to the well-being of our world. This happens whether we are recognized for it or not. This lesson is one of the many gifts given to me while I was a Peace Corps Volunteer in the Dominican Republic.

Dianne Garyantes (Dominican Republic 1989-91) lived in El Pozo de Nagua where she worked on community development projects. She has a graduate degree in Public Administration and International Development from Rutgers University, and a B.A. degree in Journalism/Political Science from Pennsylvania State University.

Culminating Performance Task

Note to Students: This culminating performance task is designed to provide an opportunity to apply what you have learned about cultural understanding in this unit in a real-world context. You will work on this task in a team with five other students. Students in each team will divide up the roles described below.

GOAL: To persuade the entire student body that understanding culture can lead to increased respect and harmony in our school. To convince all students to reach out in friendship to students different from themselves.

ROLE: You are an expert in cultural studies working on a team with an artist, a photographer, an author, a cross-cultural counselor, and a hospitality specialist.

AUDIENCE: Every student and teacher in our school.

SITUATION: Our school is becoming increasingly multicultural. Students, teachers, administrators, and parents want to build a school community where everyone feels at home and valued. You are a team of “Cultural Specialists” hired by the principal and PTA/PTO to find ways to increase cultural understanding and respect in our school. You’ve been hired for this assignment because it is widely known that you’ve learned a great deal about culture—and have the skills required both to understand other cultures and to cross cultures knowledgeably and respectfully.

PRODUCT OR PERFORMANCE: A presentation about culture to the student body that stirs their minds and hearts—and inspires them to act in ways that promote building a school community where everyone feels at home and valued.

STANDARDS FOR SUCCESS: See the Rubric on page 143.



Rubric for Assessing the Quality of the Culture Unit Performance Task

Criteria	Exceeds the Standard	Meets the Standard	Does Not Meet the Standard
Engages the Audience	Uses a wide variety of activities and media thoughtfully, creatively, and professionally.	Uses a variety of activities and media creatively and professionally.	Does not use a wide variety of activities and media.
Shows Deep Understanding of Culture	Incorporates all six enduring understandings about culture in a clear manner that is easy to understand.	Incorporates at least four of the enduring understandings about culture in a clear manner that is easy to understand.	Incorporates 2-3 enduring understandings about culture. Some parts are not easy to understand.
Is Well-Organized and Highly Professional	All parts of the presentation flow together logically, clearly, and seamlessly.	All parts of the presentation flow together in a clear and polished manner.	The presentation appears to be disjointed or confusing in parts.
Is Easy to Hear, See, and Understand	Each presenter speaks in a clear, audible, and articulate voice, maintaining eye-contact with the audience. All visual aids can be easily seen from a distance. The material is presented so that all can easily understand it.	Each presenter speaks in a clear, audible voice, maintaining eye contact with the audience. The majority of visual aids can be easily seen from a distance. The material is presented so that all can understand it.	Some of the presenters are difficult to understand. Eye contact with the audience is not constant. Some visual aids can be seen from a distance. Some of the material is not easy to understand.
Touches the Minds and Hearts of the Audience	After the presentation, students and the school community have taken substantial and ongoing action to build a community where everyone feels at home and is valued.	After the presentation, students and the school community have taken positive action to build a community where everyone feels at home and is valued.	After the presentation, students and the school community have taken little or no action to build a community where everyone feels at home and is valued.
Teamwork	Shows evidence of serious work and diligent participation by every member of the team. Team members all carry equal weight for the success of the presentation.	Shows evidence of serious work and participation by every member of the team. Team members all contribute to the success of the presentation.	Does not show evidence of serious work and participation by every member of the team.