**An argument for culture analysis in the second language classroom**

George H. Hughes

**The focus of culture study**

1. Individual (psychological) questions X institutional questions
2. Individual – needs, motives, desires, purposes, etc;

* Questions can aid us in sensitizing our students to cultural differences.
* Should be carefully guided to help sts to relate to the target value system and research personal decisions about their own values.

1. Institutional – ideas, beliefs, customs, forms of organization, etc.

Is widely applicable to the culture as the whole, but it is factual knowledge that students can usually look up on their own.

**Models for the analysis of culture**

1. **Books’ Key Questions**

Nelson Brooks

The practical use of distinguishing between individual and institutional, systematic observation.

Sample of questions:

Getting the sts to ask themselves such questions concerning their own society is a good start in cultural study.

Be aware of cultural differences

Time consuming

Questions sts would discover outside the class

1. **Murdock’s Seven facets**

George Murdock

1. A patterned activity (norm – verbal/implicity behavior)
2. The appropriateness of such an activity under certain circumstances (time/place)
3. The particular subject of the behavior
4. The object toward which the bhv is directed
5. Some means external to both the subject and the object of the behavior
6. The purpose of certain activity
7. The result of the activity

888 categories

1. **Hall’s Ten Primary Message Systems**

Edward T. Hall

100 categories from 10 primary message systems

The criteria to form these 10 m.s:

1. Rooted in a biological activity widely shared with other advanced living forms.
2. Capable of analysis in its own terms without references to the other systems and so organized that it contains isolated components that can be built up into more complex units.
3. So constituted that it reflects all the rest of culture and is reflected in the rest of culture.

The Primary Message System are:

1. Interaction – characteristic of all life;
2. Association – joint of two cells (basis for structuring society);
3. Subsistence – nutritional requirements and the way in which these are met in a particular society;
4. Bisexuality – the answer to the need of a mixed genetic background;
5. Territoriality – space;
6. Temporality – time; (help to define oneself)
7. Learning – adaptive mechanism;
8. Play – humor;
9. Defense – religion, war, law enforcement, and medicine;
10. Exploitation – the extension man makes of his body to utilize the environment.

Map of culture (the evolution of culture) – comprehensive and comparative view of their native and target culture (most contrastive areas)

1. **Taylor and Sorenson’s Model**

Darrel Taylor and John Sorenson

Culture capsules

Analyzing one element at a time the st derives unified picture.

Categories:

1. Technology
2. Economy
3. Social organization
4. Political organization
5. World view (religion and philosophy)
6. Esthetics
7. Education

The order is important – starts with concrete and proceeds to more abstract considerations.

Subcultural categories:

1. Biological elements
2. Geographical elements
3. Historical elements

\* Based on Mexican culture

\* The categories are subdivided into precise topics (easier of gathering)

Example

1. **Nostrand’s Emergent Model**

Howard Lee (Nostrand’s Emergent Model)

\* Feelings, beliefs, and thoughts process

\* Certain ingredients are characteristics of a culture member’s behavior

\* Procedure – combine: experience of people way of life X descriptive knowledge about the people = the resuming study is an examined experience of the target culture.

4 levels of societal organization:

1. The human organism (personality)
2. Social realtions
3. Culture patterns
4. Ecology

\* Emphasized 3 cultural elements: values, traits and world view as concrete manifestations;

Every culture has 12 themes (no more than that)

Example

**Conclusion**

Models offer an opportunity for culture study (systematic, comparative, comprehensive manner). They show the integrative aspect of culture. They cut across cultural boundaries (they can be applied to any culture). They cut across time barriers. new changing data. Empity taxonomy (need to be filled for each culture) (?)

**Technique for cultural awareness**

1. **Comparison method –** target culture X sts culture (problems)
2. **Culture assimilators –** crosscultural interaction misunderstood (incident) – 4 explanations (select 1) if it’s wrong they will seek for further information until to get the correct conclusion.
3. **Culture capsule –** Brief presentation showing a difference (+ visual) – questions for discussion.
4. **Drama –** crosscultural misunderstandings – members act out short scenes (misinterpretation of the target culture) – final scene to clarify the misunderstanding.
5. **Audiomotor unit or Total Physical Response –** list of oral commands which sts respond. (causes a cultural experience)
6. **Newspaper –** compare an item in the foreign newspaper with is equivalent in their newspapers. Examples.
7. **Projected media –** Films, film strips and slides – variety of activities – films easily available and slides of travels teacher made.
8. **The culture island –** the ambiance is a culture island (posters, pictures, bulletin board) – attracts attention, elicits questions and comments.

**Foreign language teachers or superscholars?**

Train sts to interpret and understand culture. Ethnographic study.

**Questions for consideration**