

**Training Video:** Trainees can make a training video about different policing tasks that require English communication, like traffic stops or talking with victims of stolen property. The video should compare the right and wrong way to communicate with foreigners during these tasks.

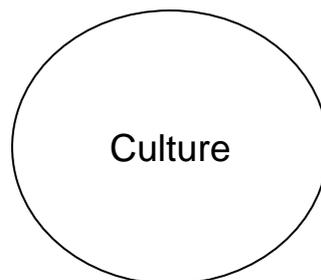
**Survey foreigners:** This project involves direct interaction with foreigners. Trainees can write survey questions related to a policing topic like: How safe tourists feel. The trainees can make a report or presentation about their survey results.

### **Practice:**

Think about *Text 4: Complaint of Loss or Stolen Property*. What type of project could trainees do to show they understand the procedure and language needed to assist a victim of stolen property?

## **Intercultural Communication**

Intercultural communication is a necessary part of effective communication. This is especially true for police officers who are frequently interacting with people from many different cultures. What do you think of when you think of culture?



When we think of the culture of a group of people, we tend to think of what we can see, like their traditional dress, music, and food. But it is the deeper aspects of culture that cause communication problems. Read the example in Scenario 1 and answer the questions.

**Scenario 1:** Ibu Roniya is the former Chief of the Police Language School in Indonesia. One day, she decided to visit the school, so all of the instructors take her out to lunch. There are two English instructors from America teaching at the school. Sarah has been at the school for over a year. She has met Ibu Roniya before and she is somewhat familiar with Indonesian culture. Anna has just come from America.

Sarah: Ibu Roniya! It's so good to see you again!

Ibu Roniya: It's good to see you again, too, Sarah. You look fatter!

Anna: How rude! How can you say that to her?

1. Why is Anna upset? What did she think Ibu Roniya said that was rude?
2. How do you think Ibu Roniya feels now?
3. What do you think caused this misunderstanding between Ibu Roniya and Anna?
4. Who was right? Who was wrong?

This scenario demonstrates how different cultures can cause problems in even the simplest act of greeting one another. In Ibu Roniya's culture, being fat equals being healthy. She was trying to pay Sarah a compliment. In Sarah and Anna's culture, being fat equals being ugly. Anna felt like Ibu Roniya was trying to insult Sarah. We can say these two beliefs come from their cultures' concepts of beauty. In American culture, this includes being skinny and tan. You can see examples of concepts of beauty through the media, like this magazine cover. What is the concept of beauty in your culture?



**Culture** is the shared products, language, knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, and values of a group of people (Duffy and Matikainen, n.d.).

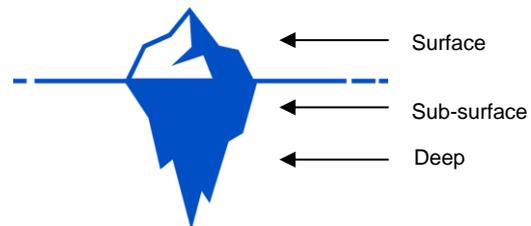
It is our responsibility to help trainees avoid intercultural communication problems. To do this, we must help trainees:

1. Build awareness of their own culture
2. Understand intercultural communication breakdowns
3. Become interculturally competent

It starts with building trainees' awareness of their own culture by looking at the elements of culture.

### Elements of Culture

One good way to understand culture is with Edward T. Hall's 1976 "Cultural Iceberg Model." Hall said that culture is like an iceberg. The parts that we can easily see, like food, dress, and music, is only the tip of the iceberg. The majority of our culture is what is under the water. It is hidden from sight, but it is what drives how we behave, what we say, how we say it, and how we experience the rest of the world. The way a group of people define beauty is an element of culture that is under the surface.



**Surface Culture:** The part of the culture we can see is called "Surface culture." Look at this photo from the Police Language School in Indonesia. The students were asked to depict American culture. What aspects of surface culture can you see? Frank (2013) stated, "Examples of surface culture elements include food (McDonalds and Coca Cola), national costumes (cowboy hats and flannel shirts), traditional music and dance, literature, and specific holidays (Christmas)." What would this photo look like if the trainees were asked to show Sri Lanka culture?



**Sub-surface Culture:** Sub-surface can be thought of as the "unwritten rules" of a culture, and they can generally be learned through observation of interactions. For example, how do people from a certain culture greet one another? Do they shake hands? Kiss on the cheeks? Bow? Hug? In American business culture, a firm handshake with eye contact is expected, but people should bow in Japanese culture. In Indonesia, I had to learn the sub-surface cultural notion of "jam karet" which means "rubber

time.” This meant that Indonesians have a relaxed sense of time, and punctuality is only expected for very important meetings. Frank (2013), lists “notions of courtesy, body language, gestures, touching, eye contact, personal space, facial expressions, conversational patterns, and concepts of time” as elements of sub-surface culture. Let’s look at a few more examples.

- In Japan, it is considered rude to not take one’s shoes off before entering a house.
- In China, conversations often start with “Have you eaten?” In American culture, conversations are often started with “What’s up?”
- In Germany, it is impolite to keep your hands in your lap during meals.
- In Greece, sometimes people say “no” by tilting their head backwards and clicking their tongue.
- In Indonesia, it is rude to point with the pointer finger. Instead, one should point with the thumb or all of the fingers together.
- In America, it is considered rude to ask a woman her age or ask anyone how much money they make in small talk.

What are some sub-surface cultural elements in Sri Lanka?

**Deep Culture:** Deep culture is so hidden, that we don’t often recognize it as a culture unique to only our group of people. It is what we grow up believing is the “right way” that all people should think and behave. In scenario 1, we saw that an example of deep culture is concepts of beauty. Ibu Roniya thought she was right to comment on Sarah’s weight gain. Anna thought she was wrong. Another example is the concept of friendliness. In an American restaurant, it is expected that the servers will be very friendly. They should smile and check on how diners are enjoying their food frequently. In a restaurant in the Czech Republic, it is rare to see smiles or for servers to check on everything. A part of Czech deep culture is that smiles and friendliness is reserved only for close family and friends. They often view the American concept of friendliness as insincere, that they aren’t showing their true feelings when they smile at everyone they see. Frank (2013) states, “Other examples of unconscious values and attitudes relate to the nature of friendships, concepts of food, notions of modesty, concepts of cleanliness, gender roles, preferences for competition and cooperation, and so on. “



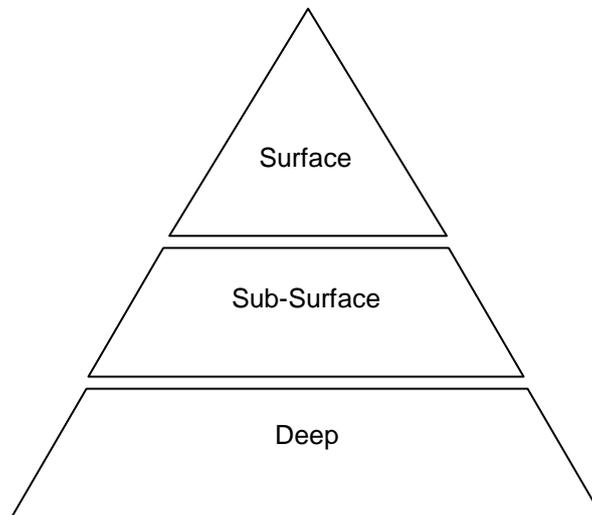
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**Did you know...**

When Russia opened its first McDonald's restaurant in 1990, the employees had to go through "cheerfulness" training to mimic the American value of friendliness that the restaurant prides itself on.

(From "The New Norm" *Invisibilia*)

**Practice:** To help trainees build awareness of their own culture, use the diagram below to organize their thoughts. How would you complete the first two sections of the triangle below?



(From *Raising Cultural Awareness in the English Language Classroom*, 2013)

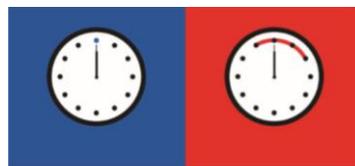
**High Context vs. Low Context Culture**

One way to examine deep culture is by comparing high context and low context cultures. High context cultures are generally found in Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East. Low context cultures are found in most countries where English is the first language. Frank (2013) describes the characteristics of the two types of cultures with the characteristics in the table below:

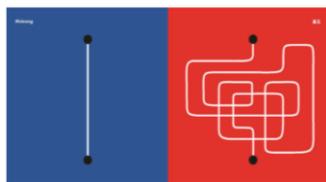
<b>High Context</b>	<b>Low Context</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Collectivist (value group harmony over personal achievement)</li><li>• Interpersonal relationships are very important</li><li>• Value indirect communication because there is a great deal of shared knowledge among people</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Individualistic (value personal achievement over group achievement)</li><li>• Goal-oriented</li><li>• Value direct communication that results in action</li></ul>

Liu Yang is a Chinese graphic designer who moved to Germany when she was 14 years old. Based on her experience in both countries and cultures, she designed many posters to describe how she saw the differences in Chinese (red) and German (blue) cultures. Now these posters are famous and used to describe the deep cultural differences between Western and Eastern cultures. Look at the posters below and try to match the deep cultural concepts to the correct poster.

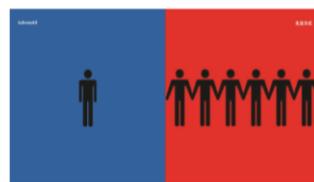
Child Raising	Power distance	Concept of Beauty	Queueing
Concept of Face	Collectivist vs. Individualistic	Communication Style	Care of Elderly



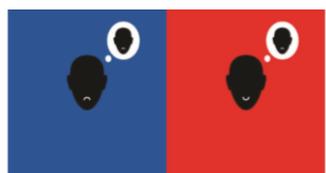
Concepts of Time



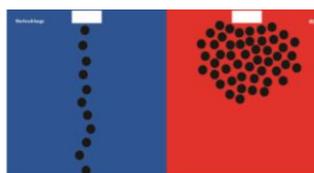
1. \_\_\_\_\_



2. \_\_\_\_\_



3. \_\_\_\_\_



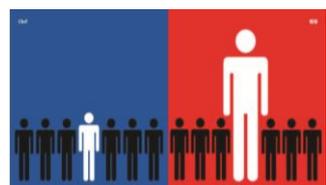
4. \_\_\_\_\_



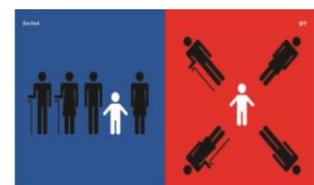
5. \_\_\_\_\_



6. \_\_\_\_\_



7. \_\_\_\_\_



8. \_\_\_\_\_

Deep cultural values like those depicted by Yang can cause serious communication problems. Read an example of this in Scenario 2 and answer the questions.

**Scenario 2:** There was a quiet knock at the door and in came a young Chinese police constable. He was, of course wearing his uniform. He saluted the superintendent and stood smartly at attention in front of the large wooden desk.

"Yes?" inquired the superintendent.

"My mother is not very well, sir," started the constable.

"Yes?" repeated the superintendent, beginning to frown.

"She has to go into hospital, sir," continued the constable.

"So?"

"On Thursday, sir."

The superintendent's frown was replaced by a look of exasperation. "What is it that you want?" he asked sternly.

At this direct question, the constable's face fell and he simply mumbled, "Nothing, sir. It's all right," and turned and left the room.

As soon as the door had closed, the superintendent turned to me and said, "You see. A classic case. They can't get to the point."

"So, what would you want him to say?" I asked.

"Well, instead of beating around the bush, he should come straight to the point. He obviously wants some leave so he can look after his mother. He should ask for leave and not waste my time going on about his poor mother."

"You want him to say something like, 'Can I have some leave please, sir?'"

"Yes, exactly," replied the superintendent.

[\(http://blog.tesol.org/what-is-intercultural-communicative-competence/\)](http://blog.tesol.org/what-is-intercultural-communicative-competence/)

***Did you know...***

"Beating around the bush" is an American English idiom describing a manner of communication that is not direct or straightforward. If someone is beating around the bush, they are avoiding the main point.

1. Which deep cultural values were reflected in the conversation between the constable and the superintendent?
2. Why did the communication break down?
3. Who is right? Who is wrong?

Now that we've explored some examples of deep culture, go back to the triangle diagram and complete the last section about the deep culture of your culture.

### Intercultural Communication Breakdowns

First, trainees must have an awareness of their own culture, and understand that it is unique in the world. Second, they should explore how intercultural communication can break down and cause problems.

**Taboo:** At the very least, not knowing a culture can cause people to do or say something that is taboo. If something is taboo, it means it is not allowed by a culture. For example, when I first moved to Indonesia, I wanted to "fit in" with the culture by eating with my hands. However, I'm left-handed, so I used my left hand to eat. I didn't know that this was taboo in Indonesian culture. I was embarrassed! What might be taboo in your culture? What would you teach visitors so that they aren't embarrassed by doing something taboo?



**Intolerance:** A more serious consequence of intercultural communication problems is intolerance. Tolerance is the ability to accept differences in people, especially different opinions, attitudes, and behaviors. In scenario 2, we can see that the superintendent is intolerant of the constable's communication style. He knows what the constable wants, but he refuses to give him leave because he doesn't accept the indirect communication style that is a product of the constable's high context culture.



**Stereotypes:** A stereotype, according to Google, is "a widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing." They can be based on ethnic groups, genders, religions, professions, and different social classes.

- All Asians are good at math
- All women should be housewives
- All poor people are lazy drunks
- All police are corrupt
- All Blacks are in gangs
- All Muslims are terrorists



Stereotypes are dangerous because they lead us to make assumptions about people and say offensive things. Look at the example in Scenario 3 below and answer the questions.

**Scenario 3:** In Cambodia, there are security officers in charge of protecting Angkor Wat, the world's largest Buddhist temple complex. The officers must enforce a code of conduct which includes a dress code. Visitors to the temple must cover their shoulders and knees while inside the temples. Read the following scenario between an officer and a visitor from America who was wearing shorts and a tank top.

Officer: Excuse me, Ma'am. You can't enter the temple like that.

Woman: What do you mean? Like what?

Officer: Sexy clothes are forbidden.

Woman: How dare you! I'll wear whatever I want! I paid the same entrance fee like everyone else!

(This scenario was adapted from US Department English Language Fellow, Kitty Johnson)

1. Why was the woman so upset?
2. What stereotype may have caused the officer to assume the woman was trying to be sexy?
3. Who was right? Who was wrong?

### **Intercultural Competence**

Finally, after building awareness of one's own culture and exploring how intercultural communication can break down, trainees must develop their own intercultural competence. They must be prepared to understand how a person's culture may affect their behavior or speech, including their own. Yilin Sun (2014) defined intercultural competence this way:

**Intercultural competence:** the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately with people from other language and cultural backgrounds.

Think about the three scenarios. Was communication effective in any of the scenarios? The did the speaker achieve what he or she was trying to communicate? Why or why not? Whose responsibility is it to be interculturally competent? The speaker or the listener or both?

### Teaching Tip: Running Dictation

1. Prepare a number of sentences each on it's own strip of paper.
2. Tape up the sentences in different places around the room.
3. Group the trainees in groups of 2 or 3 and have them choose roles:
  - a. Reader: Runs to a sentence on a wall, memorizes it, and then comes back to report to the writer. The reader can run back if s/he forgets something.
  - b. Writer: Writes down the sentences as dictated by the reader.
  - c. Checker (optional role if there 3 people in a group): Checks what the writer is writing to make sure everything is correct.
4. When a group has written all of the sentences, they should raise their hands. The teacher must check the work. If the group has written all of the sentences correctly, they win. The activity doesn't end until all groups are finished.

(Dunlap, 2015)

In Jerrold Frank's article (2013) on raising cultural awareness, he uses Byram's model (1997) to describe cultural competence as having five features. Complete the running dictation activity in small groups to write the five features in the chart below.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Think about three scenarios we encountered earlier. Let's evaluate the people in the scenarios for intercultural competence using Byram's model.

1. In Scenario 1, how might Anna have reacted differently if she was **curious** about why Ibu Roniya told Sarah she was fatter?
2. Also in Scenario 1, how might Sarah **relate** Ibu Roniya's culture to Anna so that Anna understood what Ibu Roniya meant?

3. In Scenario 2, the superintendent knew the communication style of the constable, but he didn't tolerate it. How could the conversation have ended differently if the superintendent **understood** why the constable communicated indirectly and **critically evaluated** both communication styles?
4. In Scenario 3, what **new knowledge** did the officer need to know about American culture in order to better enforce the code of conduct?

### **Building Intercultural Competence**

It is impossible to know and understand the cultures of every people group. This is especially true because not everyone from a particular group share's their group's culture. Individuals are all different and should be treated as such. What we can do, is give trainees tools to develop their intercultural competence. In this section, we'll look at activities to help trainees.

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*Being aware of the difference that exist between cultures and knowing how to act when we are faced with puzzling cross-cultural situations are important skills for harmonious intercultural relations. (Duffy and Matikainen, n.d.)*

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**Research Project:** There is plenty of information on the internet now about the cultures of people from different countries. If trainees know which people groups they are likely to encounter in their future jobs (ex. The Australian police, Russian tourists, British expats, Sri Lankan Moors, etc.), they can do research on the surface, sub-surface, and deep culture of those people groups. Officers should focus on the aspects of culture that can cause communication breakdowns. Follow the 4E's we explored in the "Beyond" section on project work to guide these types of research projects.

<https://culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/countries>

[http://www.culturocity.com/resource\\_cultures.htm](http://www.culturocity.com/resource_cultures.htm)

**Native Informants:** Trainees could also get their information about a culture directly from the source by interviewing a person from that culture. Inviting people from a different culture to come to the classroom provides a safe opportunity for trainees to be curious and ask questions about a different culture. They can challenge stereotypes about a people group as well. Frank (2013) recommends that trainees develop their questions for the native informants in advance. He provides the following question templates:

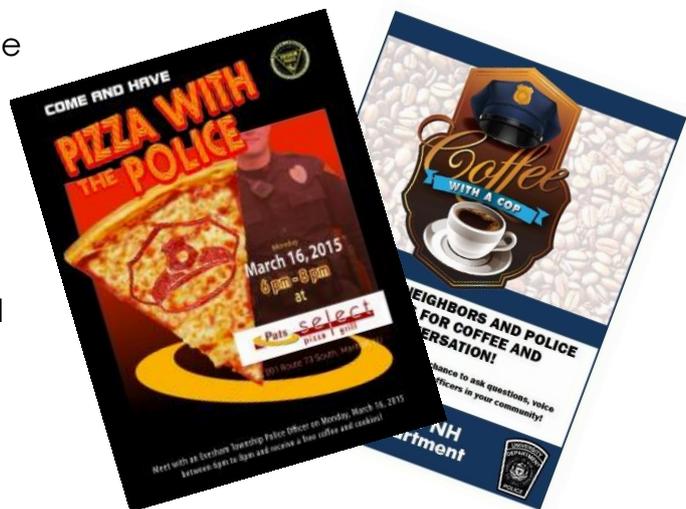
Is it okay in your country to \_\_\_\_\_ ?

Why do people in your country \_\_\_\_\_ ?

Example: In your country/religion, is it okay for women to shake men's hands? Can you tell me more about that?

The trainees could also ask the native informants to talk about their own intercultural communication experiences.

To the right are some examples of ways police in America have invited conversations with people in their communities. Is this something that you could do in your classroom?



**Freeze Roleplay:** We already talked about roleplay as an effective “Through” activity to help trainees understand language. Role plays can also be used for understanding culture, but we’ll change the activity slightly. In a Freeze roleplay, freeze the action or the dialogue at the moment that communication breaks down. Then ask trainees to rewrite the script using what intercultural communication strategies so that the message is effectively communicated.

Practice this freeze roleplay using the one of the three scenarios from above.

**Dear Cultural Advisor:** This activity comes from Duffy and Matikainen (n.d.). They suggest that trainees read letters of people from different cultures asking for advice on how to handle an intercultural situation. Trainees could write their own letters and have other classmates answer them, or the instructor can write or collect the letters from other sources like the internet or native informants. The example letter below came from an American who was teaching English. What advice would you give to her?

Dear Cultural Advisor:

My alarm bells went off when he first touched me—on the shoulder. After he had touched me several times, in the same place, he asked if it was okay in American culture. I said yes, because well, it is. He also hugged me, which I did not find weird, again because, in the States, this is acceptable. I was not familiar enough with Sri Lankan culture at the time to know that touching of any sorts between men and women is completely un-okay. The touches are getting worse, to the point where he touched my hand long enough for us to be holding hands yesterday. He also makes off-handed comments like telling me that I was his "type" and that he would marry a girl like me. Once he said teasingly, "you are pretty - men like you." I'm scared and confused. I wanted to be welcomed into my school, well-liked and well thought of. I'm afraid the next time he says something or touches me, I'm going to erupt!

Sincerely,  
Scared and Confused

### ***Did you know...idioms***

*Alarm bells went off* – to become aware that something is wrong

*Off-handed comments* – comments that don't fit the context of a conversation

*Erupt* – to display anger suddenly with shouting

### **Write Your Response**

Dear Scared and Confused,

Sincerely,  
Cultural Advisor

**Culture Journal:** Finally, trainees should keep a cultural journal to reflect on their own culture, what they learn of other cultures, questions they have about other cultures, and experiences they have with intercultural communication. Frank (2013) states that "Over time the journal becomes a record of students' deepening cultural awareness and the changes in how they view themselves and other cultures." I recommend having students keep a section of their personal terminology book as a cultural journal. This

can be the one place they collect language and cultural reflections for your course.

Yilin Sun (2014) stated that people with intercultural competence demonstrate the following characteristics. Think about how you can use the activities above or other activities to help trainees in your classroom practice these characteristics.

- **empathy:** an understanding of other people's behaviors and ways of thinking
- **respect:** genuine admiration and appreciation of different ways of thinking and communication
- **tolerance:** the ability and willingness to accept and acknowledge different behaviors and ways of thinking, the existence of opinions or behavior that one does not necessarily agree with
- **sensitivity:** the awareness and responsiveness to other people's behaviors and ways of thinking
- **flexibility:** willingness to adapt and open to change and different ways of thinking

### **Design a Plan for Intercultural Communication Training**

1. What course(s) do you teach?
2. What are some topics or areas in your course that involve police interacting with people from different cultures?
3. What are the possible different cultures that the police may be interacting with?
4. How will you prepare your trainees to use intercultural competence while working with these people groups?
5. How will you know when your trainees are ready to interact with cultural competence in the field?