MODULE 2
CULTURAL DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES
SYNOPSIS

The Cultural Competence Program (CCP) and The Cultural Atlas

The Cultural Competence Program (CCP) is an online training course aimed at building capability around cultural diversity in the workplace. It features engaging multimedia learning modules and a wealth of resources.

The CCP builds capability around cultural diversity. It helps Australian organisations navigate and maximise the benefits of cultural diversity in the workplace. The CCP for individuals is available as an app for tablets and mobile devices. The program builds capability around cultural diversity, and participants will gain practical skills and cultural specific knowledge for use both at work and in everyday life.

Topics covered include:

• Diversity Works – the business case for investing in diversity
• Cultural Differences and Similarities
• Core Inclusion Skills
• Unconscious Bias
• Cross-Cultural Communication (two modules)
• Cultural Adaptation
• Australia by the Numbers

The CCP provides a solid foundation in understanding what culture, diversity, inclusion and cultural competence mean. Whilst it is primarily aimed at building capability around cultural diversity in the workplace, secondary school students will benefit from undertaking the course in terms of increasing their own understanding of cultural diversity in Australia.

The CCP explores topics including cross-cultural communication, addressing stereotypes, unconscious bias, diversity and the benefits of multiculturalism in the workplace. There are over sixty animations and films, including real people telling real stories. Also included are fun, interactive activities, plus options for further reading.

Working alongside the CCP, the Cultural Atlas is a supplementary resource designed to inform and educate in relation to cross-cultural attitudes, practices, norms, behaviours and communications.

The Cultural Atlas is a large-scale online resource providing information about a range of cultures in Australia including:

• Core Concepts – cultural values
• Etiquette, Do’s and Do Not’s
• Greetings and Communication
• Religion
• Demographic Statistics
• Business Culture
LEARNING OUTCOMES AND BENEFITS FOR SCHOOLS

The Cultural Competence Program (CCP) and The Cultural Atlas

There are eight modules (and one summary module) within the CCP. The activities in these guides are tailored to work with each specific module. Teachers may work through the modules in sequential order or choose to work with modules that best suit their curriculum needs.

The Australian National Curriculum has been used as a guide for the basis of these activities. Teachers are advised to select and adapt the activities to suit the student age and stage of their class, and the curriculum foci and outcomes used in specific schools. The activities are also suitable for use in pastoral care and student wellbeing programs.

The CCP and Cultural Atlas can be used in relation to the following subject areas of the Australian National Curriculum:

- Years 7–10 Civics and Citizenship
- Years 7–10 English
- Years 7–10 Health and Physical Education
- Years 7–10 Media Arts

In addition, the CCP and Cultural Atlas relate to the following General Capabilities within the Australian National Curriculum:

- Personality and Social Capability
- Ethical Understanding
- Intercultural Understanding

The seven study guides associated with the CCP and Cultural Atlas are:

- DIVERSITY WORKS
- CULTURAL DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES
- CORE INCLUSION SKILLS
- UNCONSCIOUS BIAS
- CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION
- CULTURAL ADAPTATION
- AUSTRALIA BY THE NUMBERS

ACCOMPANYING VIDEOS

The following videos accompany this study guide, and can be accessed at <https://theeducationshop.com.au/cultural-competence-program/>

- Stories: Famous – Excerpts from interviews, where a variety of people describe what they think their culture is famous for.
- Cultural Themes – An explanation of some of the themes that emerged when people from different cultures were interviewed.
- Stories: Time – Excerpts from interviews, where a variety of people from different cultures discuss time.
- Time – An insight into how the concept of time may be viewed differently by various cultures.
- Stories: Communication – Some interesting anecdotes regarding communication, from a range of interviewees.
- Direct or Indirect? – An explanation of the different ways that cultures may communicate, and the meaning of ‘high context’ and ‘low context’ cultures.
- Stories: Family – Excerpts from interviews, where a variety of people from different cultures discuss ‘family’.
- Find Similarities – Advice on how to engage with people from cultures different to your own.

CONCEPTS COVERED IN THIS STUDY GUIDE

This module of the CCP (and the activities in this study guide) focuses on three broad thematic areas across cultures in relation to:

- Time
- Direct and indirect communication
- Family

Upon completion of the module and related activities, students will:

- Understand that cultures have similarities and differences
- Recognise that culture impacts all aspects of behaviour
- Understand differences in direct and indirect communication across cultures
- Understand differences in the perception of time across cultures
- Understand the importance of family across cultures
- Know practical tips to start a conversation using general cultural similarities (family)
CURRICULUM LINKS RELATED TO ‘CULTURAL DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES’

Civics and Citizenship

YEAR 7
Citizenship, diversity and identity
- How Australia is a secular nation and a multi-faith society with a Christian heritage (ACHCK051 - Scootle)
- How values, including freedom, respect, inclusion, civility, responsibility, compassion, equality and a ‘fair go’, can promote cohesion within Australian society (ACHCK052 - Scootle)
- How groups, such as religious and cultural groups, express their particular identities; and how this influences their perceptions of others and vice versa (ACHCK053 - Scootle)

YEAR 8
Citizenship, diversity and identity
- The values and beliefs of religions practised in contemporary Australia, including Christianity (ACHCK065 - Scootle)
- Different perspectives about Australia’s national identity, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, and what it means to be Australian (ACHCK066 - Scootle)
- How national identity can shape a sense of belonging in Australia’s multicultural society (ACHCK067 - Scootle)

YEAR 9
Citizenship, diversity and identity
- The influence of a range of media, including social media, in shaping identities and attitudes to diversity (ACHCK080 - Scootle)
- How ideas about and experiences of Australian identity are influenced by global connectedness and mobility (ACHCK081 - Scootle)

English

YEAR 7
Language: Language variation and change
- Understand the way language evolves to reflect a changing world, particularly in response to the use of new technology for presenting texts and communicating (ACELA1528 - Scootle)

Language: Language for interaction
- Understand how accents, styles of speech and idioms express and create personal and social identities (ACELA1529 - Scootle)

Literature: Literature and context
- Identify and explore ideas and viewpoints about events, issues and characters represented in texts drawn from different historical, social and cultural contexts (ACELT1619 - Scootle)

Literature: Responding to literature
- Reflect on ideas and opinions about characters, settings and events in literary texts, identifying areas of agreement and difference with others and justifying a point of view (ACELT1620 - Scootle)

YEAR 8
Language: Language for interaction
- Understand how conventions of speech adopted by communities influence the identities of people in those communities (ACELA1541 - Scootle)

Literature: Literature and context
- Explore the ways that ideas and viewpoints in literary texts drawn from different historical, social and cultural contexts may reflect or challenge the values of individuals and groups (ACELT1626 - Scootle)

Literature: Responding to literature
- Understand and explain how combinations of words and images in texts are used to represent particular groups in society, and how texts position readers in relation to those groups (ACELT1628 - Scootle)
- Recognise and explain differing viewpoints about the world, cultures, individual people and concerns represented in texts (ACELT1807 - Scootle)

Literacy: Interacting with others
- Plan, rehearse and deliver presentations, selecting and sequencing appropriate content, including multimodal elements, to reflect a diversity of viewpoints (ACELY1731 - Scootle)

Literacy: Creating texts
- Create imaginative, informative and persuasive texts that raise issues, report events and advance opinions, using deliberate language and textual choices, and including digital elements as appropriate (ACELY1736 - Scootle)

YEAR 9
Language: Language for interaction
- Understand that roles and relationships are developed and challenged through language and interpersonal skills (ACELA1551 - Scootle)

Literature: Literature and context
- Interpret and compare how representations of people and culture in literary texts are drawn from different historical, social and cultural contexts (ACELT1633 - Scootle)
Literacy: Texts in Context
- Analyse how the construction and interpretation of texts, including media texts, can be influenced by cultural perspectives and other texts (ACELY1739 - Scootle)

Literacy: Interpreting, analysing and evaluating
- Interpret, analyse and evaluate how different perspectives of issue, event, situation, individuals or groups are constructed to serve specific purposes in texts (ACELY1742 - Scootle)

Literacy: Creating texts
- Create imaginative, informative and persuasive texts that present a point of view and advance or illustrate arguments, including texts that integrate visual, print and/or audio features (ACELY1746 - Scootle)

YEAR 10
Language: Language for interaction
- Understand how language use can have inclusive and exclusive social effects, and can empower or disempower people (ACELA1564 - Scootle)

Literature: Literature and context
- Compare and evaluate a range of representations of individuals and groups in different historical, social and cultural contexts (ACELT1639 - Scootle)

Literature: Responding to literature
- Reflect on, extend, endorse or refute others’ interpretations of and responses to literature (ACELT1640 - Scootle)
- Evaluate the social, moral and ethical positions represented in texts (ACELT1812 - Scootle)

Literature: Creating literature
- Create literary texts that reflect an emerging sense of personal style and evaluate the effectiveness of these texts (ACELT1814 - Scootle)
- Create imaginative texts that make relevant thematic and intertextual connections with other texts (ACELT1644 - Scootle)

Literacy: Interpreting, analysing and evaluating
- Identify and analyse implicit or explicit values, beliefs and assumptions in texts and how these are influenced by purposes and likely audiences (ACELY1752 - Scootle)
- Use comprehension strategies to compare and contrast information within and between texts, identifying and analysing embedded perspectives, and evaluating supporting evidence (ACELY1754 - Scootle)

Literacy: Creating texts
- Create sustained texts, including texts that combine specific digital or media content, for imaginative, informative, or persuasive purposes that reflect upon challenging and complex issues (ACELY1756 - Scootle)
- Evaluate strategies to manage personal, physical and social changes that occur as they grow older (ACPPS071 - Scootle)
- Investigate and select strategies to promote health, safety and wellbeing (ACPPS073 - Scootle)
- Investigate the benefits of relationships and examine their impact on their own and others’ health and wellbeing (ACPPS074 - Scootle)
- Analyse factors that influence emotions, and develop strategies to demonstrate empathy and sensitivity (ACPPS075 - Scootle)
- Plan and use health practices, behaviours and resources to enhance health, safety and wellbeing of their communities (ACPPS077 - Scootle)
- Investigate the benefits to individuals and communities of valuing diversity and promoting inclusivity (ACPPS079 - Scootle)

YEAR 9 AND 10
Personal, Social and Community Health
- Evaluate factors that shape identities and critically analyse how individuals impact the identities of others (ACPPS089 - Scootle)
- Investigate how empathy and ethical decision making contribute to respectful relationships (ACPPS093 - Scootle)
- Plan, implement and critique strategies to enhance health, safety and wellbeing of their communities (ACPPS096 - Scootle)
- Plan and evaluate new and creative interventions that promote their own and others’ connection to community and natural and built environments (ACPPS097 - Scootle)
- Critique behaviours and contextual factors that influence health and wellbeing of diverse communities (ACPPS098 - Scootle)

Media Arts

YEAR 7 AND 8
- Experiment with the organisation of ideas to structure stories through media conventions and genres to create points of view in images, sounds and text (ACAMAM066 - Scootle)
- Develop media representations to show familiar or shared social and cultural values and beliefs, including those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (ACAMAM067 - Scootle)
- Develop and refine media production skills to shape the technical and symbolic elements of images, sounds and text for a specific purpose and meaning (ACAMAM068 - Scootle)
- Plan, structure and design media artworks that engage audiences (ACAMAM069 - Scootle)
- Present media artworks for different community and institutional contexts with consideration of ethical and regulatory issues (ACAMAM070 - Scootle)

YEAR 9 AND 10
- Produce and distribute media artworks for a range of community and institutional contexts and consider social, ethical and regulatory issues (ACAMAM077 - Scootle)

Health and Physical Education

YEAR 7 AND 8
Personal, Social and Community Health
- Investigate the impact of transition and change on identities (ACPPS070 - Scootle)
With this in mind, it is extremely important to spend time creating a safe and inclusive classroom environment.

Suggested activity to help establish this:

### ACTIVITY

**Establishing Class Ground Rules**

The aim is to establish a classroom environment that encourages openness, positive behaviour and expected standards of interaction with other class members. Teachers are to lead a discussion that invites students to develop a series of Class Ground Rules. Ideas to include:

1. **Respect Others:** You may hear ideas and opinions that may differ from your own. Try and take in new information without judgement and keep an open mind. Be mindful of your words and body language and ensure these reflect a respectful attitude. Learn by listening to others.

2. **Own Your Own Values:** Speak from personal experience (e.g. ‘I feel …’ or ‘In my experience …’). Avoid overtly negative, accusatory or generalised statements when interacting with others in your class. If you disagree with a class member, remember to challenge their opinion not the person.

3. **Be Open and Honest:** All students have the right to ask questions without fear of judgement. It is important that everyone be given the opportunity to learn as much as possible. If you are not confident in asking a question in front of the class, make sure you approach your teacher personally.

4. **Respect and Confidentiality:** Everything said in the classroom stays in the classroom. When sharing personal anecdotes, avoid using real names and carefully consider what personal information you choose to share with the class.

5. **Share ‘Air Time’:** Students are encouraged to express their ideas and opinions. Allow others to share and don’t monopolise discussion. You are not obligated to speak; it is fine to say ‘pass’.

Once the class has established their Ground Rules together, teachers should formalise these and display/make copies available to all students. These can be referred to during your engagement with the CCP and the Cultural Atlas.
FOCUS ON CULTURAL CORNERSTONES

Asking an individual what their culture is famous for is a great way to start a conversation. As a class, view the clip ‘Stories: Famous’. Fill in the following table regarding what the selected cultures are ‘famous’ for.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture</th>
<th>Famous aspects of this culture identified by interviewees</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
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<td>Italian</td>
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<td>Egyptian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Filipino</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

• Working in pairs, visit the Cultural Atlas: <https://culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/intro>. Select a country not from the list above (or your own culture) and conduct research into what its main cultural cornerstones are. Share and discuss your findings as a class, noting any similarities and differences across cultures, and any direct experience students have had with these cultures and their cultural cornerstones.
The Indigenous people of Australia were custodians of the land for an estimated 60,000 years before it was colonised. In the late 18th century, settlers established the country as a penal colony for the convicts of the British Isles. As the land was colonised, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations were dispossessed of their land and their societies were fractured and marginalised. The social makeup of the country was dramatically changed and a European-like cultural mainstream came to be established. The following cultural information depicts this newly dominant culture – a Westernised society whose values have been influenced by continual migration to the Australian continent in the last 250 years. While the information and observations provided in the Cultural Atlas have been summarised from reliable sources, it is important to bear in mind that the information is a general guideline. Cultures are complex, dynamic and constantly changing, and every country has great depth and diversity.

The ‘Cultural Themes’ clip begins with the following quote by the Greek philosopher Aristotle: ‘Knowing yourself is the beginning of all’. As a class, discuss what is meant by this statement. Do you agree? Can you provide examples where you have seen this concept in action?

The clip raises the idea that you need to have an understanding of how your own culture can influence your own thoughts and behaviour (at both a conscious and unconscious level) before you can effectively deal with people from a range of cultures. Some questions have been designed to help you start to think about your own cultural influences. You will undertake these further along in the module. For now, working in small groups, students are to visit the Cultural Atlas and focus in on exploring the range of ‘Core Concept’ cultural themes that are explored for Australia.

Teachers are to allocate one core concept to each student group, and students are to research/summarise their concept and present their findings to the class in the form of a PowerPoint or Google Slide Show. Presentations should include relevant images.

Core concepts to allocate to student groups in relation to Australia:

- MATESHIP
- EGALITARIANISM
- AUTHENTICITY
- OPTIMISM
- HUMILITY
- INFORMALITY
- EASY-GOING
- COMMON SENSE
- HUMOUR

NB: Prior to commencing this task, it is vital that teachers address the important influence of Indigenous culture on Australia. Teachers are strongly advised to read the statement below that appears on the homepage on the ‘Australia’ page in the Cultural Atlas.
FOCUS ON CULTURAL IDEAS AROUND ‘TIME’

This module of the CCP focuses on exploring the different cultural ideas and understandings of the concept of ‘time’. As a class, brainstorm concepts around the term ‘time’.

Following discussion of the brainstormed ideas, view the clip ‘Time’ and answer the following questions:

1. How does the Australian/Western European concept of time as linear influence the way time is perceived and tasks are approached?
2. How does the linear perspective of time influence the way people interact and communicate?
3. How does the Southern European/South America concept of time as flexible influence the way time is perceived and tasks are approached?
4. How does the linear perspective of time influence the way people interact and communicate?
5. How does the African/Asian concept of time as cyclical influence the way time is perceived and tasks are approached?
6. How does the cyclical perspective of time influence the way people interact and communicate?
7. What benefits and what potential disadvantages do you see with each of the differing perceptions of time?
8. Which perception of time (linear, flexible, cyclical) do you most relate to/practice?
9. Do you know people who relate to/practice one of the other perceptions of time? Share and discuss as a class.

As a class, view the clip ‘Stories: Time’ which presents a range of people talking about their cultural attitudes towards time. After viewing this clip, complete the following activities.
Time and Cultures Activity

How do you view time in everyday life?

In this activity, teachers are to ask students 5 questions about time e.g. “Do you think time can be wasted?” Students are to then self-reflect and express their answers on a sliding scale ranging from 0 (“Never”) to 100 (“Always”). The class should compare their results; consider how answers differ, and analyse how these different perceptions of time might impact your everyday life at school.

1. Do you often wish there was more time?

Give your answer as a number from 0 (“Never”) to 100 (“Always”). After students share their answers, teachers are to reveal that the average answer by other respondents is 70.

- Where was your class response on the scale compared to the average answer from other respondents?
- Were you surprised by this response in relation to the average answer?
- As a class, read the song lyrics from Pink Floyd’s song, ‘Time’: ‘And then one day you find ten years have got behind you, no one told you when to run, you missed the starting gun.’ What sentiment are these lyrics expressing? Does every year feel like it’s getting shorter to you?
- Do you find time to do everything you want? What helps you to best manage this sense of trying to fit everything in?
- ‘Running out of time’ is a common expression in a linear time culture such as Australia. How can this concept influence people within that culture in both positive and negative ways?

2. Do you think that time can be wasted?

Give your answer as a number from 0 (“Never”) to 100 (“Always”). After students share their answers, teachers are to reveal that the average answer by other respondents is 60.

- Where was your class response on the scale compared to the average answer from other respondents?
- Were you surprised by this response in relation to the average answer?
- Does your school reflect a linear culture in relation to time? Does this align with your own perception of time?
- Have you been involved in a situation at school where someone values time differently from you? What has been the result of this difference?
3. **Do you strive to schedule your time?**

Give your answer as a number from 0 (“Never”) to 100 (“Always”). After students share their answers, teachers are to reveal that the average answer by other respondents is 66.

- Where was your class response on the scale compared to the average answer from other respondents?
- Were you surprised by this response in relation to the average answer?
- How is scheduling linked to cultures with a linear perspective of time? How do flexible time cultures respond to the concept of scheduling? How can this lead to tension?

4. **Do you think punctuality is important?**

Give your answer as a number from 0 (“Never”) to 100 (“Always”). After students share their answers, teachers are to reveal that the average answer by other respondents is 78.

- Where was your class response on the scale compared to the average answer from other respondents?
- Were you surprised by this response in relation to the average answer?
- As with scheduling, how is punctuality linked to cultures with a linear perspective of time?

5. **Do you prefer to finish one task before going on to another task?**

Give your answer as a number from 0 (“Never”) to 100 (“Always”). After students share their answers, teachers are to reveal that the average answer by other respondents is 58.

- Where was your class response on the scale compared to the average answer from other respondents?
- Were you surprised by this response in relation to the average answer?
- In terms of task management, what is perceived as best practice in linear time cultures? How does this differ in flexible or cyclical time cultures?

Teachers are to allocate one of the following quotes about time to small student groups. Students are to prepare a presentation on their quote that covers the following:

- What is the main message regarding the nature of time in this quote?
- Consider the differing cultural perceptions of time we have looked at (linear, flexible, cyclical). Which perception is most relevant to the ideas expressed around time in this quote?
- Do you agree with the sentiments expressed about time in this quote? Explain.

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4. **Quotes:**

‘*I WISH IT NEED NOT HAVE HAPPENED IN MY TIME*’
- Frodo

‘*SO DO I,’ SAID GANDALF, ‘AND SO DO ALL WHO LIVE TO SEE SUCH TIMES. BUT THAT IS NOT FOR THEM TO DECIDE. ALL WE HAVE TO DECIDE IS WHAT TO DO WITH THE TIME THAT IS GIVEN US.*’
- J.R.R. Tolkien

‘*YESTERDAY IS GONE. TOMORROW HAS NOT YET COME. WE HAVE ONLY TODAY. LET US BEGIN.*’
- Mother Teresa

‘*A MAN WHO DARES TO WASTE ONE HOUR OF TIME HAS NOT DISCOVERED THE VALUE OF LIFE.*’
- Charles Darwin

‘*TIME IS A CREATED THING. TO SAY “I DON’T HAVE TIME,” IS LIKE SAYING, “I DON’T WANT TO.”*’
- Lao Tzu

‘*HERE WE ARE, TRAPPED IN THE AMBER OF THE MOMENT. THERE IS NO WHY.*’
- Kurt Vonnegut

‘*LOST TIME IS NEVER FOUND AGAIN.*’
- Benjamin Franklin

‘*SCARS HAVE THE STRANGE POWER TO REMIND US THAT OUR PAST IS REAL.*’
- Cormac McCarthy

‘*UNFORTUNATELY, THE CLOCK IS TICKING, THE HOURS ARE GOING BY. THE PAST INCREASES, THE FUTURE RECEDES. POSSIBILITIES DECREASING, REGRETS MOUNTING.*’
- Haruki Murakami

‘*TIME IS AN ILLUSION.*’
- Albert Einstein
FOCUS ON CULTURAL IDEAS AROUND ‘COMMUNICATION’

This module of the CCP explores the different cultural ideas and understandings of the concept of ‘communication’. As a class, brainstorm concepts around the term ‘communication’.

Following discussion of the brainstormed ideas, view the clip ‘Stories: Communication’ which presents a range of people talking about their cultural attitudes and experiences regarding direct and indirect communication. After viewing this clip, complete the table above and following activities.

As a class, view the ‘Direct or Indirect’ clip and answer the following questions:

1. Different cultures communicate in differing ways. One key aspect is how direct their communication is. Complete the table below.

2. Edward T. Hall provided an explanation of why some cultures are more direct than others in his seminal work where he defined cultures along the spectrum from ‘High Context’ to ‘Low Context’. What are the features of ‘High Context’ cultures in relation to communication? What are some examples of ‘High Context’ cultures?

3. What are the features of ‘Low Context’ cultures in relation to communication? What are some examples of ‘Low Context’ cultures?

4. Working in pairs, plan and draft a role-play between a person from a ‘High Context’ culture and someone from a ‘Low Context’ culture. Their communication should last for approximately two minutes and may be set in a school, work or social situation. You should ensure that you include clear examples of direct and indirect communication, and upon completion, the class must guess which person was from the ‘High Context’ culture and which was from the ‘Low Context’ culture.
Direct vs Indirect Communication Activity

How do you communicate at school and in your daily life?

In this activity, students are asked a series of questions about their preferred communication style at school, e.g. “Do you prefer to communicate in a frank and direct way at school?” We want you to self-reflect and express your answers on a sliding scale from 0 (“Never”) to 100 (“Always”). Students are encouraged to share their result with other people’s answers; how do they differ and how might the results impact your communication with others in your daily interactions?

1. Do you prefer to communicate in a frank and direct way at school?
   Give your answer as a number from 0 (“Never”) to 100 (“Always”). After students share their answers, teachers are to reveal that the average answer by employees, who answered the same question with respect to communication in their workplace, is 63.
   - ‘Low Context’ cultures, like Australia, usually communicate in a direct and explicit way with little left to interpret. To someone from a ‘High Context’ culture, the direct style can sometimes come across as somewhat rude or even impolite. It is important to understand if a person is used to a ‘High’ or ‘Low Context’ culture.
   - Where was the class response on the scale compared to the average answer from employees in the workplace?
   - Were you surprised by this response in relation to the average answer from employees?
   - Have you experienced cultural communication differences with fellow students, teachers, or other people in your life? Share and discuss as a class.

2. If you say ‘yes’ to take on a task, does it mean you will complete it?
   Give your answer as a number from 0 (“Never”) to 100 (“Always”). After students share their answers, teachers are to reveal that the average answer by employees, who answered the same question with respect to communication in their workplace, is 81.
   - In Australia, ‘yes’ generally means ‘yes’. If you agree to take on a task it usually means you commit to complete a task within a certain timeframe.
   - However, many cultures can find it disrespectful to say ‘no’ and will prefer to say ‘yes’ even though they may mean no. For example, the concept of ‘face’, common in many Asian cultures, requires individuals to avoid contradicting their superiors in front of others. A direct ‘no’ is unlikely to be expressed.
   - Where was the class response on the scale compared to the average answer from employees in the workplace?
   - Were you surprised by this response in relation to the average answer from employees?
   - Have you encountered differing cultural ideas around the concept of ‘face’ in your dealings with different cultures at school or in life? Share and discuss as a class.
3. Do you try to point out mistakes of others to make sure they correct them?

Give your answer as a number from 0 (“Never”) to 100 (“Always”). After students share their answers, teachers are to reveal that the average answer by employees, who answered the same question with respect to communication in their workplace, is 51.

- In an Australian work context, it is commonly considered appropriate to give positive and negative feedback and find areas of improvement in performance. When working in a culture where the concept of ‘face’ dominates business relationships, pointing out the mistakes of others can have negative consequences.
- Where was your class response on the scale compared to the average answer from employees in the workplace?
- Were you surprised by this response in relation to the average answer from employees?
- Have you encountered differing cultural concepts and perceptions around giving feedback at school or in life? Share and discuss as a class.

4. Do you prefer communication that gets straight to the point?

Give your answer as a number from 0 (“Never”) to 100 (“Always”). After students share their answers, teachers are to reveal that the average answer by employees, who answered the same question with respect to communication in their workplace, is 71.

- ‘Straight to the point’ is a communication style referred to as ‘Low Context’. In Australia, this is the common communication practice. It is considered effective and efficient as you are not wasting other people’s time. On the other hand, when communicating with a person from a ‘High Context’ culture, this style can unintentionally come across as rude and insensitive. This is certainly not the intended impact and is a common misunderstanding which can sometimes hurt relationships across cultures.
- Where was your class response on the scale compared to the average answer from employees in the workplace?
- Were you surprised by this response in relation to the average answer from employees?
- Can you think of any communication situations (at school or in your life) where you have needed to adapt your style? Share and discuss as a class.

The way we communicate is definitely influenced by our culture. Understanding different communication styles as well as how others might interpret your own communication style will help you immensely at school, work and in general life.

Working in small groups, allocate one of the following communication scenarios to each group. Students are to plan, draft and perform a role-play that illustrates their allocated communication concepts, and the class must guess what communication style/cultural communication concept they are exploring:

**COMMUNICATION SCENARIOS:**

- A ‘Low Context’ colleague pointing out a mistake in a work task to a ‘High Context’ colleague
- A ‘Low Context’ boss trying to hurry along a meeting with a ‘High Context’ colleague
- A ‘High Context’ employee trying to point out a mistake made by their ‘Low Context’ boss
- A ‘High Context’ colleague explaining why they’ve failed to complete a task on time to their ‘Low Context’ boss

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FOCUS ON CULTURAL IDEAS AROUND ‘FAMILY’

This module of the CCP explores the different cultural ideas and understandings of the concept of ‘family’. As a class, brainstorm concepts around the term ‘family’. Following discussion of the brainstormed ideas, view the clip ‘Stories: Family’ which presents a range of people talking about how family is central to most cultures. After viewing this clip, complete the following activities.

1. The clip begins with a quote from actor Michael J. Fox: ‘Family is not an important thing. It’s everything.’ Do you agree with this sentiment? Can you recall specific times and events where you’ve realised the importance of family?
2. The importance of family is paramount across most cultures. To many of us, this statement may seem obvious, but recognising similarities across cultures (as well as the range of differences) lies at the heart of cultural competence. How can a conversation about family between people of differing cultures help foster understanding and build cultural competence. Share and discuss answers as a class.
3. Complete your own family tree (hard copy on a poster or digitally). Present completed family trees to each other in small groups, sharing information about family members and family anecdotes. Do you note any cultural similarities or differences in family structure and relationships? Share and discuss as a class.

### Attitude towards and experience with family structure/relationships

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<thead>
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<th>Name</th>
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<td>Fabiola</td>
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<td>Adam</td>
<td>Croatian Bosnian Aboriginal Australian</td>
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<td>Albert</td>
<td>Kenya</td>
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<td>Linh</td>
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### Ways this influences their behaviour/interactions with others

Having a conversation about family can help people become more culturally competent. As a class, view the ‘Find Similarities’ clip and answer the following questions:

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**MODULE CONCLUDING DISCUSSION**

- What activities and ideas did you find most interesting in this module? Why?
- Why do you feel that understanding cultural differences and similarities is an important part of building cultural competency?
Research Tasks

Consider the following statement from the CCP module Cultural Differences and Similarities:

**Time is viewed differently across cultures. It impacts how we act and communicate as well as interpret other people’s behaviour. Understanding different views on time and time management will help you better manage cross-cultural relationships.**

With reference to the above and drawing on ideas from the Cultural Differences and Similarities module and your own additional research, write a reflection that explores the different cultural perceptions of time. Explain the linear, flexible and cyclical perception of time with examples, and discuss which cultures tend to hold which perception. Discuss how each perception can influence behaviour, particularly in dealings with others. Conclude with an exploration of why an understanding of these different time perceptions is important for building cultural competence.

The Cultural Differences and Similarities module explores the work by anthropologist Edward T. Hall in relation to ‘High Context’ and ‘Low Context’ cultures. Research and prepare a PowerPoint presentation or Google Slide Show that presents a summary and explanation of Hall’s cultural dimensions. Points to include:

- Definitions of ‘High Context’ and ‘Low Context’ cultures
- Examples of cultures that fall into which category
- A summary table presenting the differences and influences on behaviour for ‘High Context’ and ‘Low Context’ cultures
- Your assessment of why an understanding of this work is vital for building cultural competence

Working in small groups, research and find three song lyrics from popular songs (modern or old school) that talk about the concept of ‘time’. Analyse the lyrics in relation to:

- The message they are making about time
- The perspective they represent on time (linear, flexible, cyclical). Share and discuss as a class.

Contemporary Australian culture tends to hold a linear perspective on time; this is vastly different from the Indigenous Australian perception of time. Working in pairs, research the following:

- What is the Indigenous Australians’ perception of time?
- How does this differ from the contemporary Australians’ cultural perception of time?
- How can we help build cultural competence by increasing awareness and understanding around the differences in time perception within Australian society?

Timeline

Construct a hard copy or digital timeline of your life in the traditional, linear sense. Include at least ten key milestones. When completed, swap with a partner and try and apply a flexible or cyclical structure to your partner’s timeline.

- How would you be able to present their selected milestones in a non-linear way?
- What difficulties does such a reimagination of this task pose? Share and discuss the different ideas and approaches you took as a class.

As we learn from the Cultural Differences and Similarities module of the CCP, most cultures place a great deal of importance on family. Starting a conversation about family is a great way to connect with people from other cultures and help build connections and cultural competence.

- Working in pairs, devise a list of questions and conversation starters around ‘family’ that could be used between two people from different cultures in a workplace/school/social setting. Once completed, allocate these to other student pairs in your class and role-play the questions. What similarities and differences did participants note in relation to the perception and role of family in their lives?
- NB: Ideally this task would work well if students could pair with a student from a culture different from their own.
REFERENCES


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