Class Activities

# Chapter 15: Cognition in Cross-Cultural Perspective

## 1. Examining Cultural Norms

According to Dr. Marcelle DuPraw and Marya Axner (<http://www.pbs.org/ampu/crosscult.html>), cultures differ in several fundamental ways. The table below identifies some of the ways DuPraw and Axner believe cultures differ, as well as how they differ. To help students understand and appreciate these differences, divide them into small groups and distribute handout 15-1.

Have each group think about how each culture listed would respond to the style described in the “style” column. For example, how might White Americans perceive increased in speech volume compared to Black Americans and Jewish and Italian Cultures? After the groups complete this activity, discuss their responses.

Key

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| Style | Culture I | Culture II |
| Communication:  *How is increasing volume in speech perceived?* | White Americans—Increasing volume in speech indicates an argument has begun | Black, Jewish and Italian—Increasing volume in speech is indicative of an exciting conversation among friends |
| Conflict:  *How is conflict resolved?* | United States—face-to-face meetings are encouraged to work out issue | Eastern countries—issues are to be worked out privately |
| Completing Tasks:  *How do people approach collaborations? What is the primary goal?* | Asian and Hispanic cultures—when collaborating, emphasis is put on developing relationship first | United States—when collaborating, emphasis is put on the task at hand; relationship comes along as the project progresses |
| Decision Making Style:  *Who makes decisions and performs the work?* | United States—a superior delegates tasks to subordinates | Southern European and Latin American countries—superior makes decisions themself |
| Approaches Toward Knowing:  *How is information obtained?* | European cultures acquire information quantitatively | Some African cultures acquire knowledge through imagery and rhythm |

Handout 15-1

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| Style | Culture I | Culture II |
| Communication:  *How is increasing volume in speech perceived?* | White Americans: | Black, Jewish and Italian: |
| Conflict:  *How is conflict resolved?* | United States: | Eastern countries: |
| Completing Tasks:  *How do people approach collaborations? What is the primary goal?* | Asian & Hispanic cultures: | United States: |
| Decision Making Style:  *Who makes decisions and performs the work?* | United States: | Southern European and Latin American countries: |
| Approaches Toward Knowing:  *How is information obtained?* | European cultures: | African cultures: |