

ECS 116

Culture

- Adapted from *Working with Children from Culturally Diverse Backgrounds* by M. Diane Klein Deborah Chen 2003

Cultural Diversity

- Anthropologists define culture as a way of perceiving, believing, evaluating, and behaving.
- Our cultural identities are influenced by the different subgroups to which we each belong (ethnicity, age gender, religion, language, socioeconomic class, geographic location).

Acculturation / Assimilation

- Acculturation is the first stage in this process in which characteristics of the dominant group are adopted by the new group. (Gollnick & Chinn, 1994)
- Assimilation is a process by which a new group (or individual) becomes part of the dominant culture, either through gradual disappearance of the differences which distinguish the two groups, or the cultural patterns of the new groups becoming part of the dominant culture.

Cultural Pluralism

- Cultural Pluralism is a society in which groups of diverse backgrounds maintain their traditional cultures within the parameters of the common society.

More on Culture.

- Culture is learned. We are born into a certain culture. As young children we learn how to behave, what to value and believe, and about roles and relationships through observation, participation, and interaction with our families and communities.

Culture is shared and Adaptation occurs

- We are part of an identifiable group because of shared values, beliefs, behaviors, preferences, and practices.
- Some cultural practices are adaptations to the requirements of the physical environment. Weather conditions influence buildings, clothing styles, foods, and work schedules.

Values/ Non verbal Communication

- Cultural values are those behaviors and ideas a particular group considers desirable and important.
- Each cultural group has its own means of communicating nonverbally such as with gestures and facial expressions.

Language is a Demonstration of Culture

- Each culture has its own unique words and meanings. Cultures differ in how information is conveyed.

Challenges of a Diverse Society

- The increasing diversity of the U.S. requires a pluralistic view that recognizes the mutual benefits and contributions of the multiple cultures of the country (Hanson, 1998)
- We must try and learn to understand our own culture, that is why we do what we do.

Ethnocentrism

- Ethnocentrism is the inability of an individual to view another ethnic group as equal or valid members of society.

Definitions. /Ethnicity/Race

- Ethnicity describes a common origin, history, heritage, language, religion and other cultural features.
- Race categorizes people according to physical characteristics such as skin color, body size, facial features and hair texture.

More Definitions

- **Gender** identification begins at birth and plays a critical role in shaping behavior
- **Socioeconomic Status** the greater differences in values, lifestyle, or behavior are found across social class.
- **Religion** religious practices influence child rearing practices and other expectations families have for their children

Definitions continued

- **Age-** groups form micro-cultures
- **Language-** children who speak the same language or dialect may tend to interact mainly with each other
- **Geographic region-** There are significant cultural differences from one area of the country to another

Definitions continued

- **Disability-** at least one child in ten has a special need that require special education services.
- **Stereotyping-** Stereotypes are exaggerated generalities that often lead to dangerous oversimplifications

Elements of Culture

- **Mainstream** refers to those individuals or groups who share values of the dominant culture
- **Macro-culture** the dominant or core culture of the U.S.

- **Micro-culture every society has subcultures or sub cultural groups with unique cultural patterns which are not in common with the macro-culture**

Cultural discontinuity

- The term cultural discontinuity is used when discussing school failure of minority students as a result of cultural differences.
- When the culture of the classroom and the home culture are drastically different it may cause.

Collectivistic/Individualistic

- Children who are raised in an **individualistic culture** are raised to primarily value individual
- Children raised in a **collectivistic culture** are raised to primarily value family