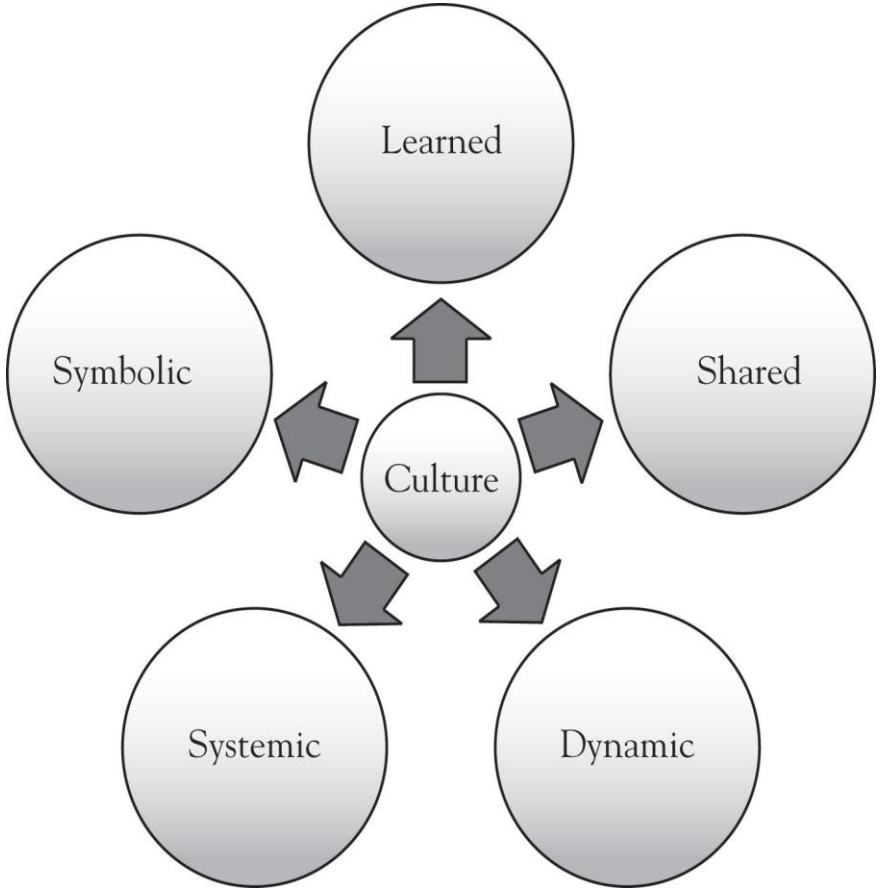
Cross Culture Communication Theories

ITT4302

Pannalin Suchookorn

Culture



What Is Culture? by L. Underwood
Adapted from Understanding Culture; in Cultural Intelligence for Leaders (n.d.)

Cross Cultural Communication

Culture consists of

- the shared beliefs
- values and
- assumptions

of a group of people who learn from one another and teach to others that their

- behaviours
- attitudes and
- perspectives are the correct ways to
- think
- act and
- feel

Cross Cultural Communication

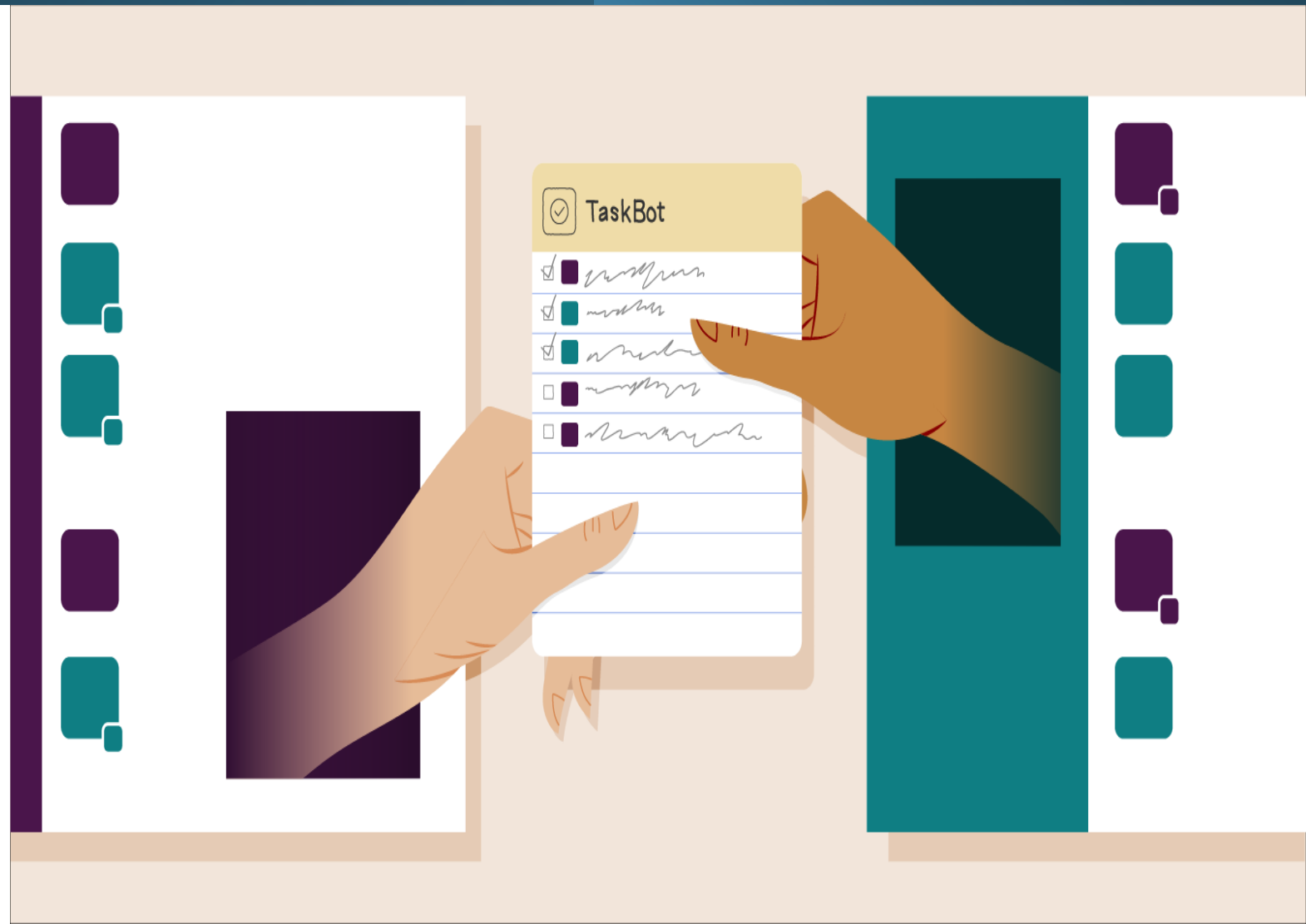
It is helpful to think about culture in the following five ways:

Cross Cultural Communication

Culture is learned.

Cross Cultural Communication

Culture is shared.



Cross Cultural Communication

Culture is dynamic.

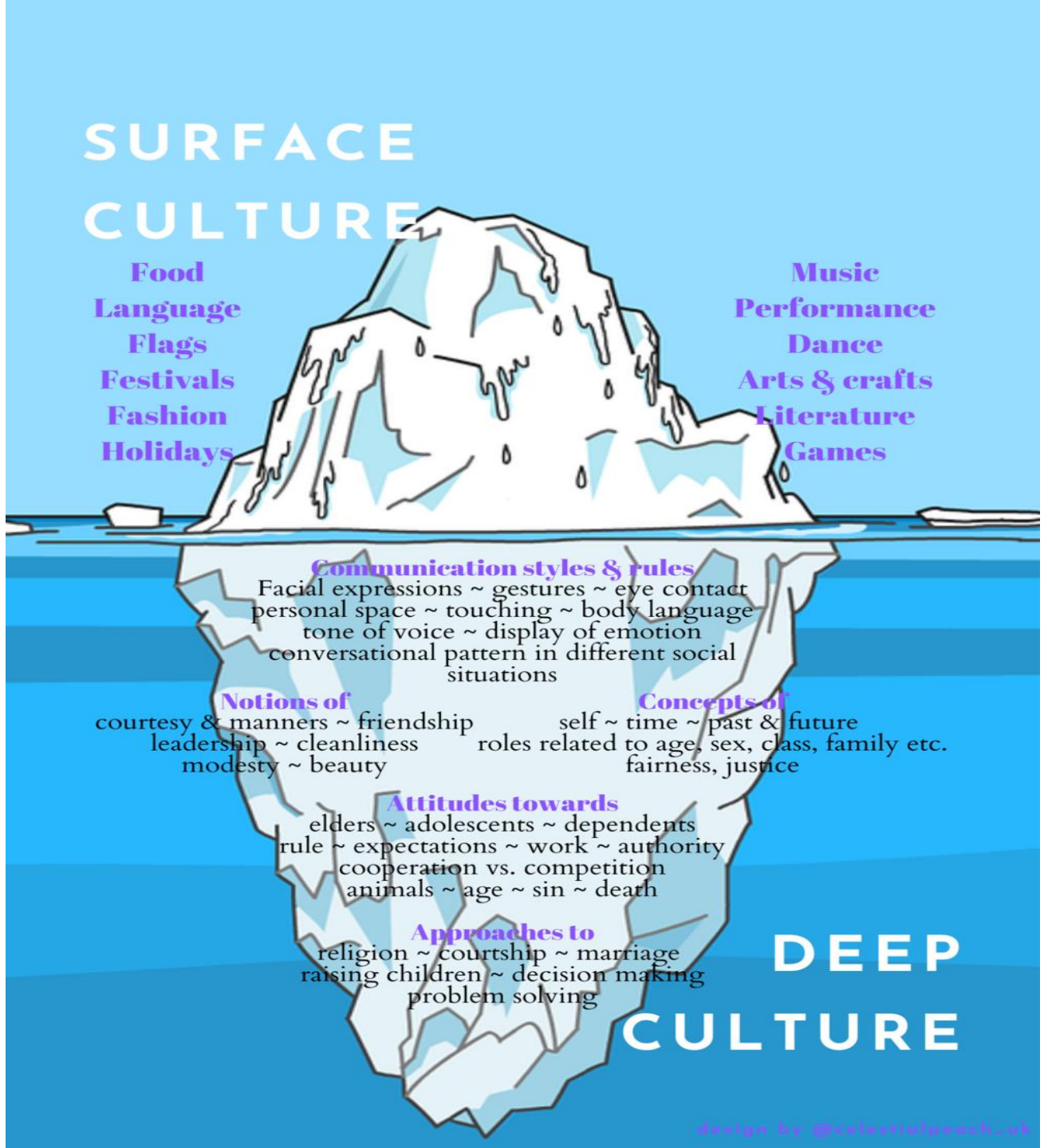
Cross Cultural Communication

Culture is systemic.

Cross Cultural Communication

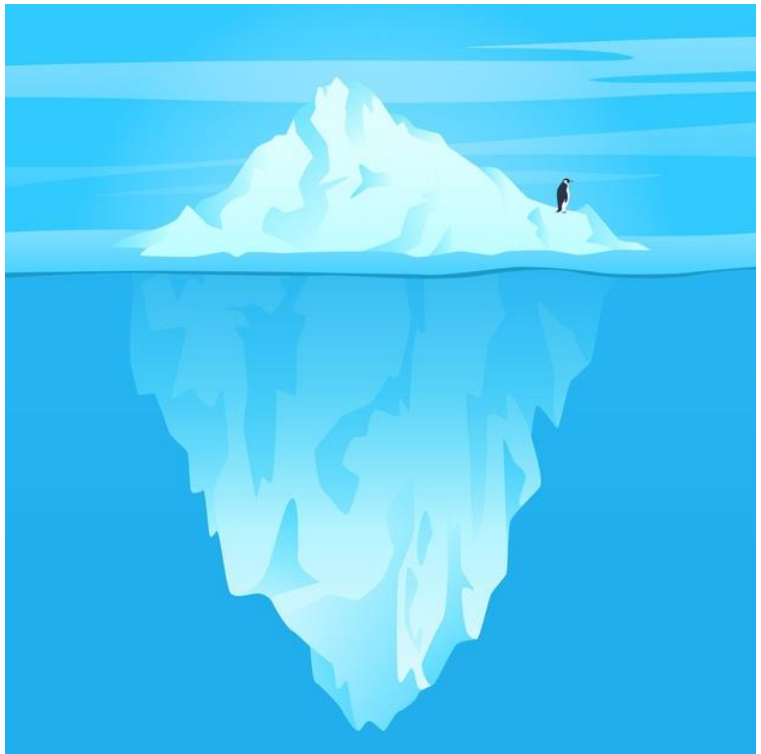
Culture is symbolic.

The Cultural Iceberg
SURFACE CULTURE
Food
Flags
Fashion
Games
Dances
Performances
Music
Language
Festivals
Holidays
Arts & Crafts
Literature
DEEP CULTURE
COMMUNICATION STYLE
Facial Expressions Gestures Touching
Eye Contact Space Tone Body Language
Conversational Patterns Emotion
NOTIONS of:
Courtesy Manners
Friendship Leadership
Cleanliness Modesty
Beauty
CONCEPTS of:
Self Time Past & Future
Fairness Justice Roles
ATTITUDES towards:
Elders Adolescents Dependents
Rule Expectations Work Authority
Cooperation Competition Animals
Age Sin Death
APPROACHES to:
Religion Courtship
Raising Children Marriage
Decision-Making
Problem-Solving


SURFACE CULTURE
Food
Language
Flags
Festivals
Fashion
Holidays
Music
Performance
Dance
Arts & crafts
Literature
Games
Communication styles & rules
Facial expressions ~ gestures ~ eye contact
personal space ~ touching ~ body language
tone of voice ~ display of emotion
conversational pattern in different social situations
Notions of
courtesy & manners ~ friendship
leadership ~ cleanliness
modesty ~ beauty
Concepts of
self ~ time ~ past & future
roles related to age, sex, class, family etc.
fairness, justice
Attitudes towards
elders ~ adolescents ~ dependents
rule ~ expectations ~ work ~ authority
cooperation vs. competition
animals ~ age ~ sin ~ death
Approaches to
religion ~ courtship ~ marriage
raising children ~ decision making
problem solving
DEEP CULTURE
design by @celestialpeach_uk

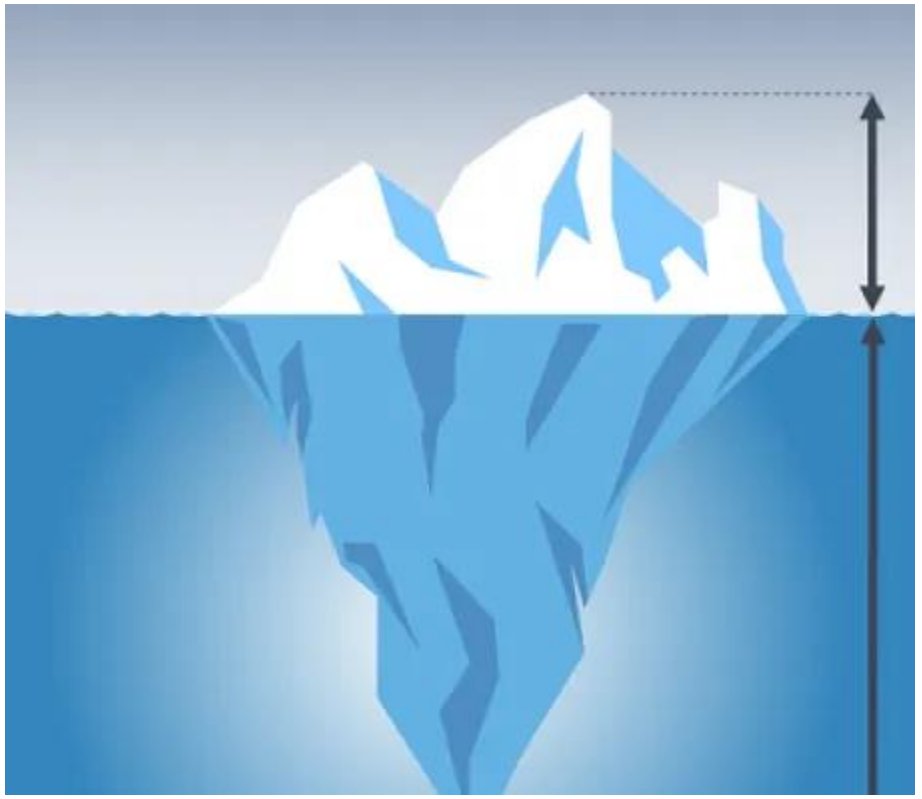
Iceberg Model

- The iceberg, a commonly used metaphor to describe culture.
- It is great for illustrating the tangible and the intangible.



When talking about culture, most people focus on the “tip of the iceberg,” which is visible but makes up just 10 percent of the object.

- The rest of the iceberg, 90 percent of it, is below the waterline.



Many business leaders, when addressing intercultural situations, pick up on the things they can see—things on the “tip of the iceberg.”

Things like

- food
- clothing
- language difference

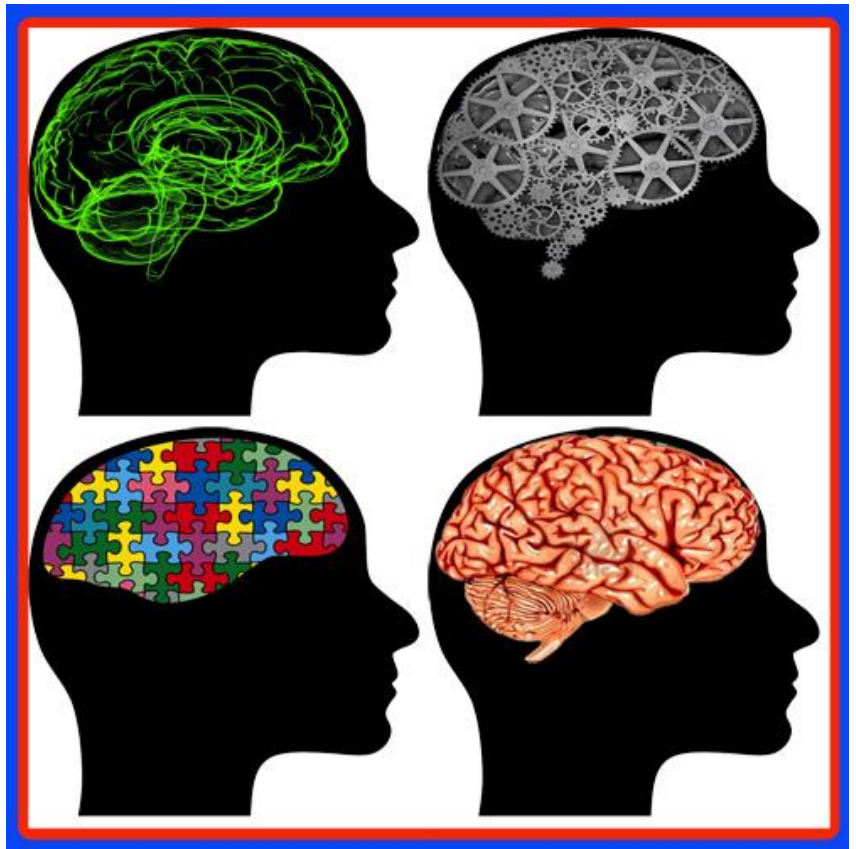
are easily and immediately obvious

but focusing only on these can mean missing or overlooking deeper cultural aspects such as thought patterns

- Values

and

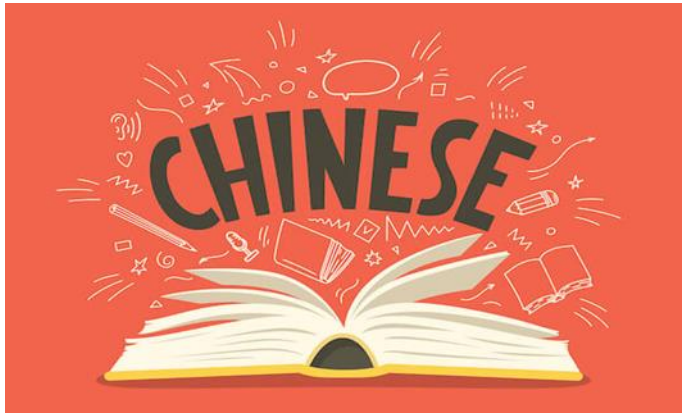
- beliefs
- that are under the surface.



- Solutions to any interpersonal miscommunication that results become temporary bandages covering deeply rooted conflicts.

The cultural Iceberg

- The Cultural Iceberg
- https://youtu.be/a9Z83I_g4Hw



Cultural Membership

- How do you become a member of a culture?

Cultural Membership

- How do you know when you are full member?

Cultural Membership

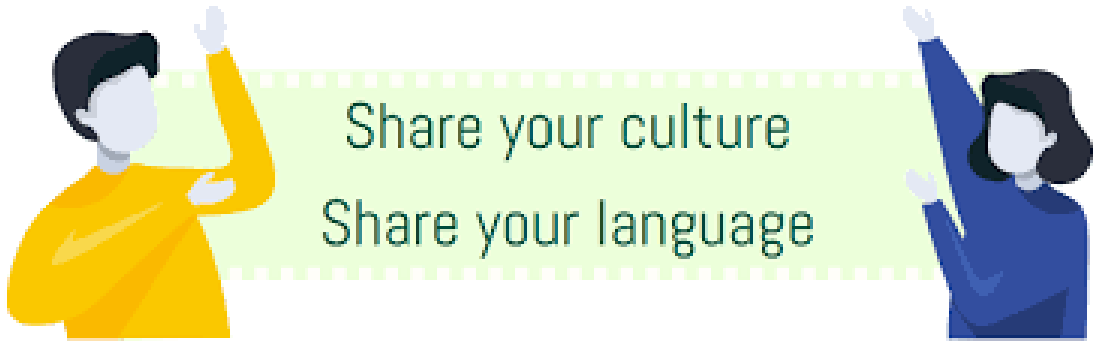
So much of communication relies on shared understanding, that is,

- shared meanings of words
- symbols
- Gestures

and

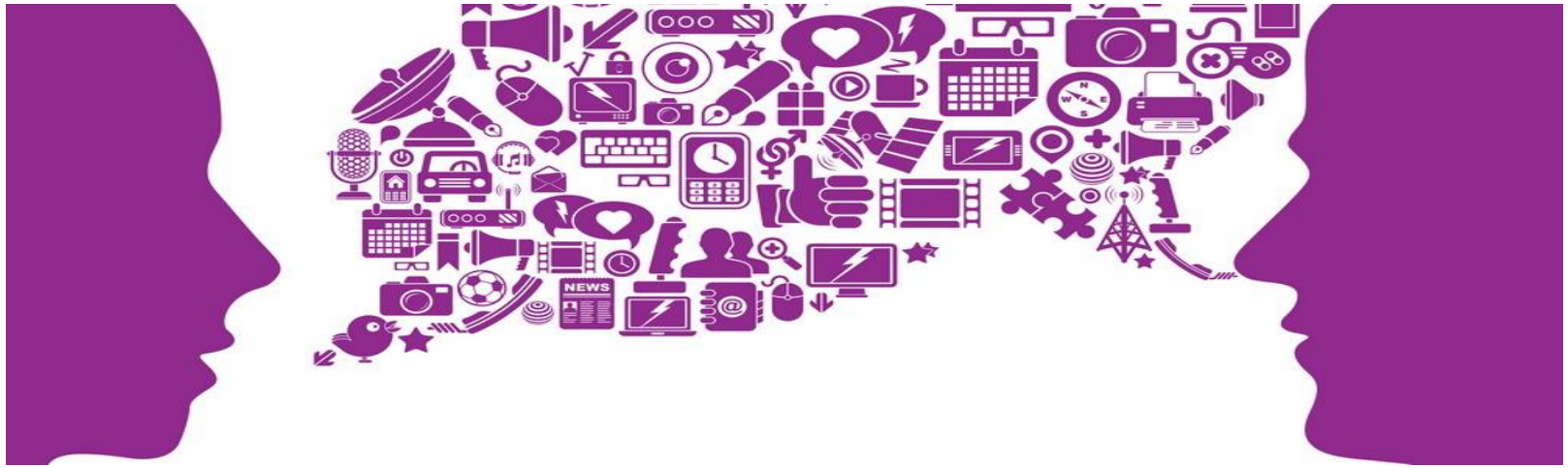
- other communication elements.

- What shared understandings do people from the same culture have?



- Researchers who study cultures around the world have identified certain characteristics that define a culture.
- These characteristics are expressed in different ways, but they tend to be present in nearly all cultures:

- rites of initiation
- common history and traditions
- values and principles



- purpose and mission
- symbols, boundaries, and status indicators
- rituals
- language

Multicultural, Cross-cultural, and Intercultural communication

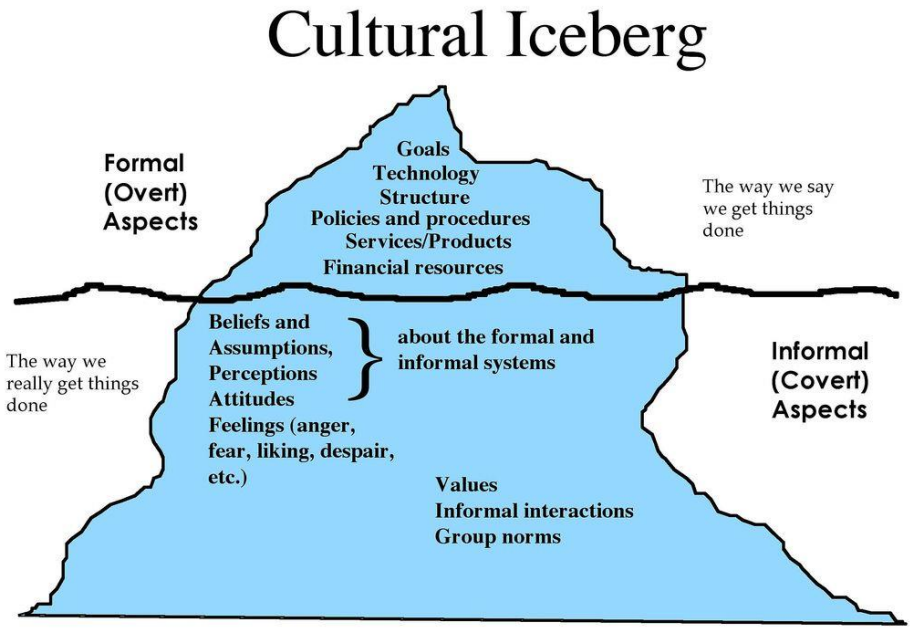
- Although they are often used interchangeably, it is important to note the distinctions among them.

- Multiculturalism is a rather surface approach to the coexistence and tolerance of different cultures.
- It takes the perspective of “us and the others” and typically focuses on those tip-of-the-iceberg features of culture,
- thus highlighting and accepting some differences but maintaining a “safe” distance.

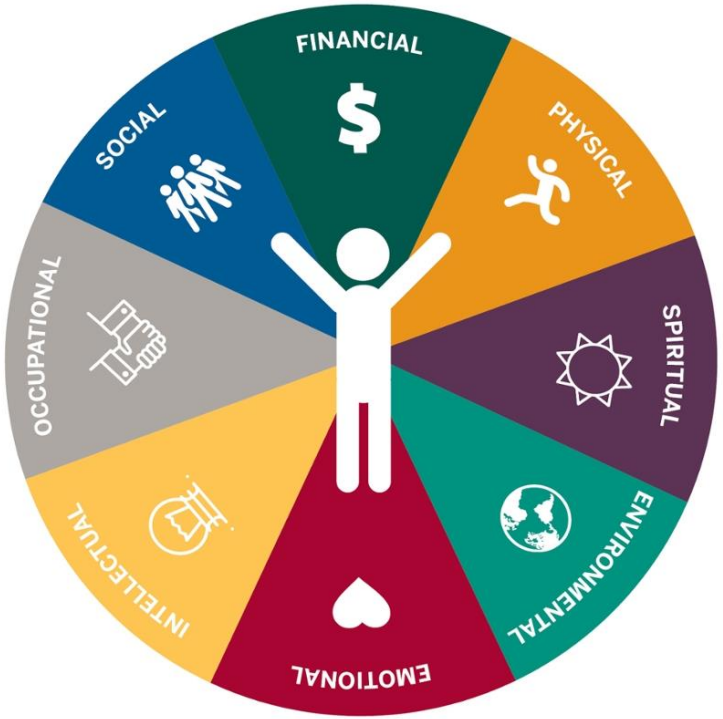
- If you have a multicultural day at work,
- for example, it usually will feature some food, dance, dress, or maybe learning about how to say a few words or greetings in a sampling of cultures.

- Cross-cultural approaches typically go a bit deeper, the goal being to be more diplomatic or sensitive.
- They account for some interaction and recognition of difference through trade and cooperation, which builds some limited understanding—
- such as, for instance, bowing instead of shaking hands, or giving small but meaningful gifts.

- Lastly, when we look at intercultural approaches, we are well beneath the surface of the iceberg, intentionally making efforts to better understand other cultures as well as ourselves.



- An intercultural approach is not easy, often messy, but when you get it right, it is usually far more rewarding than the other two approaches.



The intercultural approach is difficult and effective for the same reasons;

it acknowledges complexity and aims to work through it to a positive, inclusive, and equitable outcome.

- Whenever we encounter someone, we notice similarities and differences.
- While both are important, it is often the differences that contribute to communication troubles.
- We don’t see similarities and differences only on an individual level.
- In fact, we also place people into in-groups and out-groups based on the similarities and differences we perceive.

- The division of people into in-groups and out-groups is where your social identity can result in prejudice or discrimination if you are not cautious about how you frame this.

- We tend to react to someone we perceive as a member of an out-group based on the characteristics we attach to the group rather than the individual (Allen, 2010).

- In these situations, it is more likely that stereotypes and prejudice will influence our communication.

- This division of people into opposing groups has been the source of great conflict around the world, as with,
- for example, the division between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland;
- between Croats, Serbs, and Bosnian Muslims in the former Yugoslavia;
- and between males and females during women's suffrage.

- Divisions like these can still cause conflict on an individual level.

- Learning about difference and why it matters will help us be more competent communicators and help to prevent conflict.