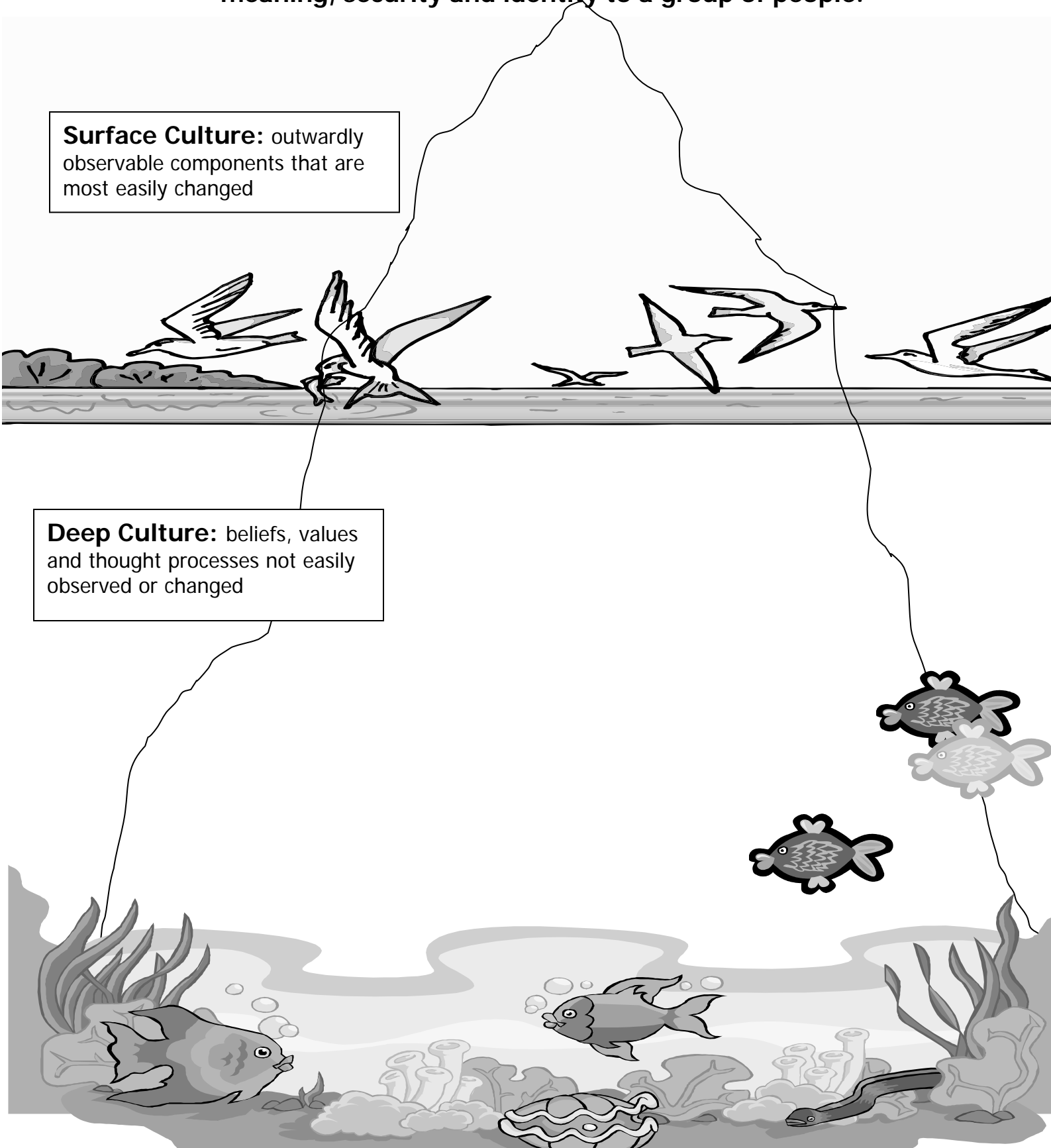


Ice Berg Graphic Organizer

Culture is the values, ideas, attitudes, behaviors, and relationships that give meaning, security and identity to a group of people.

Surface Culture: outwardly observable components that are most easily changed

Deep Culture: beliefs, values and thought processes not easily observed or changed



Surface Culture vs. Deep Culture

Many people are aware of surface differences between culture -differences in food, clothing, and celebrations. These are the aspects of culture that teachers and students often enjoy exploring in the classroom. However, it is the hidden elements of culture- 'Deep Culture'- that cause the most serious problems. It's important to be aware of those hidden values, beliefs, and attitudes that can interfere with a student's ability to function in the classroom and the teacher's ability to reach the student.

Elements of surface culture

- Food - food and culinary contributions
- Holidays - patriotic holidays, religious observances, and personal rites and celebrations
- Arts - traditional and contemporary music, visual and performing arts, and drama
- Folklore - folk tales, legends, and oral history
- History - historical and humanitarian contributions, and social and political movements
- Personalities - historical, contemporary, and local figures

Elements of deep-culture

- Ceremony: - what a person is to say and do on particular occasions. In some cultures, people commonly greet each other with kisses. American forms may seem cold and uncaring. On the other hand, in other cultures people almost never touch each other and may find even pats of approval unusual and upsetting.
- Courtship & marriage: -attitudes toward dating, marriage, and raising a family.
- Esthetics: - the beautiful things of culture: literature, music, dance, art, architecture, and how they are enjoyed. Members of many other cultures may be more receptive to appreciation of art, dance, and music than are American students.
- Ethics: - how a person learns and practices honesty, fair play, principles, moral thought, etc. Plagiarism, one of the most serious offenses in the American academic system, may be an unknown concept to students from other cultures. In some, copying the works of experts is considered an appropriate way to learn the forms of writing. Also, concepts of individual ownership, even of ideas and words, may be foreign to some students. Learning the expectations of a new system may take considerable explicit instruction and explanation.
- Family ties: - how a person feels toward his or her family, friends, classmates, roommates, and others. Loyalty to family, community, friends and a group may be more important to members of some cultures than Americans expect, forcing students to choose between the school and their community on some occasions. The formation of youth gangs has, in some cases, been attributed to the loss of identification with the native culture and community on the one hand, and the lack of acceptance by mainstream society on the other.

- Health & medicine: - how a person reacts to sickness, death, soundness of mind and body, medicine, etc. In many cultures, it is very important for family members to be with a sick person. Students may be torn between the expectations of the school about attendance and the expectations of their families and communities when someone is sick.
- Folk myths: - attitudes toward heroes, traditional stories, legendary characters, superstitions, etc.
- Gesture & kinesics: - forms of nonverbal communication or reinforced speech, such as the use of the eyes, the hands, and the body in some cultures, it is taboo to touch another person on the head, as teachers here often do with younger students. Insulting hand gestures also differ from culture to culture. The "OK" sign in America, with thumb and forefinger forming a circle, is a very bad gesture in some Middle Eastern cultures. Pointing at people is taboo in many cultures.
- Grooming & presence: -Cultural differences in personal behavior and appearance, such as laughter, smile, voice quality, gait, poise, hair style, cosmetics, dress, etc. may seem superficial, but they are the most immediately noticeable features when members of cultures meet. Members of some cultures seem loud and boisterous to members of quieter, more sedate cultures. These differences can lead to alienation between the cultures. This also explains some differences in amount and kind of class participation. In most Asian cultures, for example, people wait for a pause in a conversation before entering it. Many Americans, however, "overlap" -- that is, one starts speaking as the other finishes. In group work, then, Asian students may never see an opportunity to enter the discussion.
- Ownership: - attitudes toward ownership of property, individual rights, loyalties, beliefs, etc.
- Precedence: - what are accepted manners toward older persons, peers, and younger persons. Many other cultures show great respect to teachers, but that respect may be reflected in different ways. For example, in many cultures, students look down when addressed by a teacher or other authority figure as a sign of respect. Most Americans expect young people to look directly at them and may see the downward look as disrespectful and become irritated.
- Rewards & privileges: -attitudes toward motivation, merit, achievement, service, social position, etc. In many cultures, there is less emphasis on individual achievement and success with more importance given to the good of the group. Members of these cultures may respond poorly to the kinds of incentives often offered in this society, but may be motivated by group work and group goals.
- Rights & duties: - attitudes toward personal obligations, voting, taxes, military service, legal rights, personal demands, etc.
- Religion: - attitudes toward the divine and the supernatural and how they affect a person's thoughts and actions.

- Sex roles: - how a person views, understands, and relates to members of the opposite sex and what deviations are allowed and expected. Working in groups or pairs with members of the opposite sex may be very difficult for members of some cultures. Conflict may arise if a student is unwilling to accept direction from someone who has been put in charge of a group or asked to peer review an assignment. While the students may need to acculturate to some extent to survive in this culture, it may take some time for that to happen.
- Space & proxemics: - attitudes toward self and land; the accepted distances between individuals within a culture. Americans generally require more personal space than members of other cultures and become uncomfortable when someone moves into that space. Backing away from them signals rejection and sets off a chain of cultural misunderstandings.
- Subsistence: - attitudes about providing for oneself, the young, and the old, and who protects whom.
- Taboos: - attitudes and beliefs about doing things against culturally accepted patterns. The consequences of violating these patterns can be dramatic. For example, one unfortunate incident occurred when a school bus driver instructed a Muslim girl student to sit in the only available seat, which was next to a male student. The girl, unwilling to violate the beliefs of her religion, refused. The bus driver threatened her, but she refused again. The bus driver became angry and threw the girl off the bus. She was not allowed to ride the bus for two weeks because of disobedience. This whole incident could have been avoided had the bus driver been aware of the girl's cultural taboos and simply rearranged a few students so she could sit next to another girl.
- Concepts of time: - attitudes toward being early, on time, or late. The rules for time in any culture are complex and hard to determine. For example, while North Americans think of themselves as always being "on time," in fact we have different rules that apply to various events such as dinner parties, cocktail parties, meetings, and other events.
- Values: - attitudes toward freedom, education, cleanliness, cruelty, crime, etc.

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