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American Cultural Values : A Look at One's Own Cultural Identity

Judith Day
School for International Training

Jane Farrell
School for International Training

AMERICAN CULTURAL VALUES: A LOOK AT ONE'S OWN CULTURAL IDENTITY

by Judith Day
Jane Farrell

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Principal Advisor Jan Gaston (m.j.)

Project Advisor Reader:

Michael Jerald

Abstract

For "American Cultural Values--A Look at One's Own Cultural Identity" by Judith Day and Jane Farrell

This paper is presented in two sections. Part A sets out a 16-lesson course for American ESL teachers in which people will look at personal and cultural values, with the goal of achieving an objective insight into the values of their own culture and developing ways of incorporating this awareness in the ESL classroom. Should this course be used by non-American teachers there is another course outline (see Alternative Course Outline for Non-native Speakers of English) that has been developed. Part B is an articulation of some major values pertinent to American society. Areas covered are success, time, work, individualism, equality, world view and moral orientation.

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Introduction

This paper is presented in two sections. Part A sets out a 16-lesson course for ESL teachers in which people will look at personal and cultural values, with the goal of achieving an objective insight into the values of their own culture and developing ways of incorporating this awareness in the ESL classroom.

Part B explores some major values pertinent to American society. We have dealt with those of middle-class America and looked as Success, Time, Work, Individualism, Equality, World view, and Moral Orientation. These are of major significance in American society and part of the consciousness that is "American." A person interested in facilitating the course may find the description of the values given here useful in guiding discussions or in setting goals for particular lessons. Should the course be used with a group of non-Americans or, more particularly, non-native speakers of English (see Alternative Course Outline for Non-native Speakers of English), the articulation of values offered here may be invaluable in discussions. It is also hoped that ESL teachers doing this course would find this section useful when working with cultural awareness with their own students, or that the values explored in Part B may provide a stimulus or a model for anyone wanting to examine other American values.

This course has been designed for American ESL teachers who are working either in the United States or abroad. The number of students taking the course could be between 12 and 30. More than 30 would make the class unwieldly, and it would be difficult for the facilitator to

deal adequately with the students as individuals and with the number of small groups there would be. Each lesson is planned for 100 minutes and we see the 16 lessons as running over 8 weeks, with two lessons a week. An alternative course outline for a group of ESL teachers who are non-native English speakers can be found in the Alternative Course Outline for Non-native Speakers of English.

The course has been designed to provide maximum involvement of the students taking it. We do not see it as a chance for lectures, note-taking and readings. We see it rather as an opportunity for the participants to examine the cultural assumptions they make, their individual backgrounds and personal values, and that elusive thing so difficult to capture in generalizations called "American values." To this end, the person or people leading the lessons are seen not as teachers (those with the answers, those who make a judgement as to right or wrong) but as facilitators, setting up a framework in which a particular activity can take place. (See Explanation of Terms.)

Through the teaching experience we have had and in the light of the more student-orientated approaches to language teaching, we believe there is a need for ESL teachers to be more aware of themselves as cultural beings, of their language as an integral part of their culture, and of the impact these can have on their students.

There are many different forces at work in the ESL classroom--personalities, culture, family background, aspirations, incentive all come into play. On the surface we see English as the

common element but it does not, cannot, occur in a vacuum, outside the cultural background and experience of the students and the teacher. What is happening behind that facade of language and beyond the interplay of personalities is a cultural experience. This encounter between teacher and students is loaded with cultural implications. Is this understood, experienced as a threat, dealt with in terms of contrast, ignored as a result of the teacher's unawareness of his or her culture? Do teachers really understand the extent to which they are bound up in their own culture? How conscious are they of the cultural implications of their work, the extent to which they might be interfering in the students' culture? It is for teachers to consider such questions that we thought it necessary to design this course.

Language teaching, then, is a meeting of cultures and a heightened awareness of this can only lead to a more understanding encounter between student and teacher. This course is intended to be a beginning or a springboard--the process of self-awareness is personal and difficult and a constantly developing movement over years, over a life-time. It is beyond anything we imagine could be accomplished in 26 class hours. However, we <u>can</u> work on opening or re-opening awareness; we <u>can</u> pose questions; we <u>can</u> provide a framework within which the purpose is to look at those questions. This is what we have attempted to do.

Assumptions and Goals

The following is a list of the assumptions that we, the authors, have established in writing the course, and, the goals of what we would like covered by the end of the course.

Assumptions:

- The ESL teacher is, of necessity, involved in a cross-cultural situation.
- The realization of oneself as a cultural being, followed by an attempt to articulate one's cultural values, helps one come to a better understanding of one's own culture.
- The attempt to articulate personal values may lead to an increasing awareness of the difference between personal and cultural values and the tension inherent between them.
- In the move towards the articulation of personal and cultural values, their relationship and an awareness of the tension between them, one will be developing at the same time a certain objectivity towards culture. However this is both a difficult and ongoing process.
- Through the awareness gained by exploring one's cultural identity and personal and cultural values, it is possible to gain a clearer insight into a culture other than one's own, the individual within that society, the interplay between individual and cultural values, and the ESL teacher's role in relating cultural values in the classroom.

Goals:

- To work on moving the students into a process of awareness in which they are considering the web of cultural values that binds them and their roles as individuals within their own culture.
- To move from an attempt at clarifying values in general to clarifying personal values in the context of cultural values and then to clarify "American" values specifically.
- To look at ESL teaching from the view of cultural values and differences and to develop some techniques and activities for presenting this in the classroom.

General Format of the Lesson Plans

Generally the presentation of the lessons follows this pattern:

1. Length and description of the activities for the day
2. Assignments and due dates
3. Suggested materials
4. Feedback* (when applicable)
5. Movement of the discussion--a discussion guide for the facilitator*
6. Point of the discussion--a rationale for the discussion

When a lesson does not incorporate a large discussion, notes may follow the lesson plan either briefly describing the facilitator's role or giving a short outline of the movie that is to be shown.

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*For explanation of terms see Explanation of Terms--pages 60-64.

PART A - Lesson Plans

I. Structure and Symbol

15-20 mins.	Movie of an American Indian dance. Students are to consider what is going on and to be aware of the questions and images that pass through their minds as they try to make sense of what they are seeing.
60 mins.	Discussion based on the students' observations, moving towards the differentiation between structure (what is going on) and symbol (what it all means) and a clarification of the process they went through in making these observations.
Materials	Within the U.S., short movies on a variety of topics are available from Media Centers of Educational Resource Centers. For this lesson, a film on anything that is ritualistic and rather foreign to the students would be suitable.

(I. Structure and Symbol)

Movement of the discussion:

- General impressions of the movie.
- What do the students know for sure about what they saw? (facts without interpretation, descriptive information)
- How did they interpret what they saw? (interpretation)
- How did they come to that interpretation? (process involving previous experience, expectation, cultural judgement, guessing)
- In watching the movie, what kinds of expectations did the students have about what was happening in it and why?
- Within their own culture, what social expectations do the students have, e.g., regarding school, marriage, career, status symbols and so on, and what effect do socio-economic factors (either the students own socio-economic backgrounds or knowing/guessing about someone else's) have on these expectations?

Point of the discussion:

- That in interpreting the unknown, people refer to the known, the experiences they have already had and the expectations their own culture has bred in them.

II. Basics and Diversity

30 mins. In groups of 5 or 6, students are to consider human needs--what are they?--and make a list of them on the paper provided. They are then asked to look at the ways in which these needs can be expressed and/or satisfied, drawing on their experience both in various parts of the U.S. (place A) and abroad (place B). They should note the ways beside the need in contrasting columns:

Need	Place A	Place B

40 Mins. A large group discussion on what the lists show in terms of similarity and difference. This is a chance for people to talk about cultural difference and the diversity of ways in which human needs are expressed and fulfilled.

20 mins. Individually or in pairs, students are to come up with a definition of culture, to be shared.

15-20 mins. Feedback--see Explanation of Terms

Materials Large sheets of paper and markers.

(II. Basics and Diversity)

Movement of the discussion:

- Why are things done in one way here and another way there?
- Can the students get to the "why" of cultural behavior? (American society and the whys behind it)
- Does finding explanations for behavior help in understanding cultural differences?
- Why does it/ does it not help? How does it help?
- How do people find these explanations for behavior?
- How are the students affected by the cultural differences they encounter?

Point of the discussion:

- To have the students both expressing things they have been through and looking behind these experiences for more meaning, while being aware of the process of exploration.
- To have students express themselves in general terms about societies and cultures they have experienced, including their own.
- To be seeing behavior in terms of universals (the needs that underly that behavior) and specifics (the different ways in which societies allow those needs to be expressed).

III. Stereotype Exercise

Have paper prepared and hanging around the room with unfinished sentences on it such as: Californians are...; New Yorkers are...; etc. There should be about seven or eight of these, covering the U.S. or regions of the U.S. that most of the students in the class are from.

10-15 mins. Students in groups of 4 or 5 discuss ways of completing the statements. They do not need to deal with everyone. This is not a time for the students to be attacking or defending each other, but a time for really looking carefully at the stereotypes they have of others.

10 mins. Students write up their statements on the paper and consider what others have written.

20 mins. Students are put in state or regional groups corresponding to those on paper. They are to discuss the stereotypes written up about them. Do the students relate their own behavior to these stereotypes? Why have these stereotypes arisen? Where have these stereotypes come from?

(III. Stereotype Exercise)

45 mins. In the large group, each small group comments on the stereotypes about themselves. This is followed by a discussion of stereotypes generally.

Assignment: Make legible notes or write a short essay about your childhood, centered around as many of the following points as you find relevant and bringing in any others you want: family relationships, rituals in family life, grandparents and other relatives, environment, neighbors and neighborhood, friends, people who had a strong influence on you, your family's mobility, education.

Materials Paper (prepared with the half-finished sentences before the class) and markers.

(III. Stereotypes Exercise)

Movement of the discussion:

- General reaction to the exercise, particularly to being stereotyped. Has it ever happened personally before? Reaction?
- What other stereotypes do students have projected on them? What other stereotypes do students have of themselves?
- What are the connotations of stereotypes generally? Why?
- How do stereotypes arise?
- Why do people stereotype?
- Are the students ever conscious that they are stereotyping and, if so, what is their reaction?
- How are the students' stereotypes expressed in words or actions? How do students' stereotypes affect their perception of the group that is being stereotyped?
- Are stereotypes the same as generalizations? How? Do they have the same function?

Point of discussion:

- To re-experience personal reactions to being stereotyped.
- For students to acknowledge that they do stereotype and examine the reasons and effects of them further.
- For students to look at the definition and use of stereotyping in others as well as in themselves.

(III. Stereotype Exercise)

- To be building up a consciousness in the students of the cultural blinkers they look through.

IV. Childhood and Family Values

30 mins. Discussion in groups of three of the papers the students wrote. One person talks for 10 minutes while the other two try and extract the values shown and write them down. The two who are listening can ask questions about anything that is not clear. Each person in the group has the chance to talk for 10 minutes.

30 mins Sharing of the perceptions of values in the same group of three.

30 mins. In groups of six, each person is to choose one value from his or her background, say why it is or was important and how he or she was affected by it as a child and the importance that particular value has for him or her.

Assignments to be collected

Materials The students should have prepared notes or a short essay for this class to be collected by the facilitator.

(IV. Childhood and Family Values)

Role of the facilitator in the discussions:

- To be moving from group to group, listening and perhaps commenting or suggesting new angles of approaching the topics. In the groups of three, the students should be looking back at values held or inculcated in them when they were children. In the groups of six, individually the students should be looking at whether the value has changed or remained the same since childhood.

Point of the discussion:

- To come to an understanding of the deep-rooted hold of the cultural and family values inculcated in the students during their childhood.
- For students to be aware of their values, how they relate to them now and how they may have moved away from or consciously retained values from their childhood.

V. Values

5-10 mins. Individually, students are to look at what they have in their billfolds or purses and consider what the values are of the items they find.

20 mins. Students then select three of the items that say something about three things they value. In the large group, students choose someone they are interested in on the basis of the items that person has selected. The person chosen should then choose someone else on the same basis, so that everyone is in groups of three. Students then tell each other what it was about the items chosen that made them interested in the person they chose. It is important here to be talking about the person rather than the objects. Each person in the small group then goes on to comment on why they chose their items, this time speaking in terms of the values they relate to.

60 mins. A large group discussion of what values are and how they affect people's lives. What influences do the students think have shaped their values as they are?

(V. Values)

Movement of the discussion:

- What do the students mean when they talk about values?
- What influence do values have in terms of decisions students might have to make?
- What is the difference between values and needs, values and morals, values and priorities, and values and desires?
- What are the most important values for the students at the moment? How are they influencing the students' lives?

Point of the discussion:

- To come up with a working definition of values by looking at what values are.
- For students to look at the way their personal values influence them.

VI. What You Are Is Where You Were When--Dr. Morris Massey

100 mins. The showing of this film will take the whole class time. Students are asked to note down things that strike them or that they have a strong positive or negative reaction to, while they watch the movie.

The movie This is a lecture presented by Dr. Massey--however, it is extremely entertaining as he takes the role of a salesman with a product he is determined to sell. The product is his theory on the formation of values in each generation. He looks at events within the world that have helped shape the values of the children growing up during that decade and the subsequent misunderstandings that can occur between generations with different values. Is he a successful salesman? Reactions to this movie, its presentation, the ideas in it and to Morris Massey himself are usually strong.

Materials: This movie is available from: Vistor E. Errikson, Reston Publishing Co., Inc. 11480 Sunset Hills Rd., Reston, Virginia 22090. Toll-free call: (800) 335-0338.

(VI. What You Are Is Where You Were When--Dr. Morris Massey)

Point of showing the movie:

- To be moving from exploring personal values to cultural values.
- To see how historical factors can influence cultural values.

VII. The Average American and You

30 mins. Discussion of Dr. Massey's movie, encouraging students to explore in depth the reasons for the particular reactions they had.

15 mins. Values ranking exercise. Each student is given a copy of the lists on page 18 and should rank both the personal and national values for themselves and for the "average" American. The rankings are from 1 to 10, with 1 being the highest.

20 mins. In groups of three or four, students are to discuss the differences and similarities in their values and priorities, as well as in the rankings they gave the "average" American. Students may, at this point, alter their rankings if they want to. The members of each group should attempt to come to an agreement on their rankings.

25 mins. A large group discussion for sharing each group's rankings, the process involved in reaching them, the reasons behind the way each group ranked them, and how groups arrived at the rankings for the "average" American. The aim is for the groups to be discussing the difficulty or ease with which

they reached (or did not reach) agreement on the rankings and why this was so.

Assignment

Read Part III, pp. 33-79, "American Assumptions and Values" from American Cultural Patterns: A Cross-Cultural Perspective, Edward C. Stewart. This is for next week.

Materials

Copies of the values ranking exercise as given on page 18 are needed. It has been adapted from a presentation given at TESOL '80 called "Consider the Whole: Organic Learning Experiences" by L. Van Horn, B. Thomas, R. Ritkowski, S. Linning, J. Bennett, K. Hamilton, B. Carvutto, I. Green, and J. Farrell.

American Cultural Patterns: A Cross-Cultural Perspective, Edward C. Stewart, Society for Intercultural Education, Training and Research, Georgetown University, Washington D.C. 20057. Publisher: Intercultural Network Inc, 906 N. Spring Avenue, LaGrange Park, Illinois 60525.

(VII. The Average American and You)

Movement of the 30 minute discussion:

- General reactions to the movie.
- Opinions about what Dr. Massey had to say. Why? What was he saying?
- Did his manner help or hinder the students' appreciation of his ideas? Why? Why was he like that? Was he successful?
- What was the movie trying to do? Was it successful?
- What did the students get out of seeing the movie?

Point of the 30 minute discussion:

- To see the close connection between emotions and values.
- Through discussion to have the students reveal their feelings and reactions and try to get behind them to why they reacted in that way and the values exposed there.
- To recognize that everything is perceived through our value system.
- For students to be fitting themselves into a general pattern of American values.

(VII. The Average American and You)

Movement of the 25 minute discussion:

- What is the general ordering of values? Where do the major similarities and differences occur? Why?
- How were the rankings reached? What criteria were used to reach the "average" American rankings?
- Do these rankings reflect anything the students think is particularly American? Do they think these rankings would be the same in another country? How would they differ? Why?
- What perceptions do the students have about the way non-Americans view Americans in terms of values?

Point of the 25 minute discussion:

- To explore values in more concrete terms than before.
- To explore them on both personal and national levels and in specific as well as general terms.
- To be making generalizations about Americans and the "American" way of thinking.
- To be thinking about the meaning of the term "American."

Values Ranking Exercise

Rank the following personal and national values from 1 to 10, with 1 being the highest. Rank them both for yourself and for the 'average' American.

PERSONAL VALUES

___ ___ a satisfying job

___ ___ good health

___ ___ a lot of money

___ ___ a good relationship with family

___ ___ as much education as wanted or needed

___ ___ a position of power in the community

___ ___ many material possessions, including a home

___ ___ a lot of leisure time

___ ___ conservation of the environment

___ ___ a successful marriage with happy children

NATIONAL VALUES

___ ___ a strong military defense system

___ ___ conservation of the environment

___ ___ educated citizens

___ ___ inexpensive medical care for all

___ ___ improved public transportation systems

___ ___ a substantial reduction in crime

___ ___ elimination of poverty

___ ___ space exploration programs (oceans, too)

___ ___ protection of small businesses and farmers

___ ___ better racial and cultural understanding and relations

VIII. American Assumptions and Values

45 mins. Students get into four groups, one for each section of the chapter they read as an assignment and they discuss the topic in terms of personal experience and America at large (movies, advertising, education, business...). They should list examples of institutions, attitudes, behaviors, etc., that are pertinent to their section and suggest reasons for the particular aspect of American behavior they are discussing. Each group will be required to make a 5-10 minute report.

45 mins. In a large group, one person from each group talks about the examples chosen and suggests briefly why Americans act this way.

Assignments A. Choose one of the other sections in the reading and do with it what you did in class today, i.e., see how it relates to American life. Three pages, typed, due in a week.

B. In pairs, pick an aspect of American life or an American cultural value and suggest three ways in which you would present it or in other ways deal with it in an ESL class. Due, on a ditto, by Lesson XIV.

(VIII. American Assumptions and Values)

Role of the facilitator:

- To be moving from group to group directing the movement from explanation of experience to clarification of what value lies behind that behavior.
- The exercise can also be approached with a cross-cultural contrast, i.e., how do South Americans deal with time as opposed to Americans or by looking at a personification of values through American folk heroes, literary figures or contemporary TV characters (e.g., Archie Bunker).

Point of discussion:

- To be relating values to everyday life in a move from the abstract to the specific.
- To step back and be able to analyze behavior as related to values.
- To bring out the pervasiveness of cultural values.
- To have students come to an awareness of how their personal experience or vision of America relates to these basic values.
- To begin a process of definition of "American" through values.

IX. America--an historical perspective

90 mins. with questions

In comparison with other countries of the world that are rich with a history of traditions and values, America, with her two hundred years of existence, has often been labelled a country without a past.

This lesson has been left open for a guest speaker, preferably a U.S. historian, who can historically relate the growth of America as a country to the set of values that labels Americans as American.

Materials

A speaker is required.

(IX. America--an historical perspective)

Point of the lecture and discussion:

- To get a sense of the development of American values in an historical perspective.

X. What is it that makes you American?

10 mins.	Students are asked to think of an item that they regard as typifying the U.S. in some way.
10 mins.	In groups of 3 or 4, they share their ideas, explaining why they chose that particular object.
15 mins.	Each group should briefly present one of its ideas (the one everyone in the group thought was best) to the other groups.
40 mins.	In groups of 5 or 6, students discuss the question, "What is it that makes you American?"
15 mins.	Students, in their groups, are to write their ideas on paper and put them up for others to see.
Assignment	Assignment A from Lesson VIII is to be collected and examples and explanations students have given should be drawn from them, copies made and given out to students at the next class.

(X. What is it that makes you American?)

Role of the facilitator:

- To listen in on groups and see they are on the right track.
- To perhaps throw in questions to bring the students back to the point--when have they felt particularly American or been made to feel American? What were the elements in the situation that brought this about?
- This is a difficult exercise, but one that should prove interesting if people are really working on experiences they have had both abroad and in various parts of the U.S.

Point of the discussion:

- To recognize those marks of appearance, behavior and attitude that distinguish Americans from others.
- To generate a feeling of identity as American and to have the students share this with the feeling of "me as unique."

XI. But What if the Dream Comes True?

10 mins. Hand out typed excerpts from the papers the students wrote for Assignment A., Lesson VIII. These are to be read outside class for the students' interest and may give them some ideas when working on the assignment given below.

90 mins. The showing of the CBS documentary will take the rest of the class time. Students are asked to note what the movie assumes about the American Dream and its realization.

Assignment In pairs, select a distinctive group or "tribe" of America, research it and explore its relationship to the American Dream or the American success story. This report is to be typed onto a ditto and handed in a day before Leson XIII so that copies can be made for others. Class time will be given in the next lesson for these assignments. Suggested groups are Cuban refugees; Jews on the Lower East Side; Marin County; coalminers in West Virginia; Southern Baptists; truckdrivers; etc. Suggested readings: Tribes of America, Paul Cowan; Serial, Cyra McFadden; On Becoming American, Ted Morgan; Beyond Culture, Edward Hall.

(XI. But What if the Dream Comes True?)

Materials — Excerpts from Assignment A. given in Lesson VII should be copied and given to all students.

The documentary — This CBS documentary looks at a family for whom, to all intents and purposes, the American Dream has come true. It brings out a tinge of disenchantment, a barely acknowledged sense of hollowness and futility at the core of lives that are lived in great material comfort.

This documentary is available from CBS, 51 W. 52nd St., New York, New York 10019. CBS Educational and Professional Publication Division. Telephone: (212) 975-4321.

XII. The American Dream

45 mins. A large group discussion of the documentary, the American Dream itself, the values inherent in it, the reality of the American Dream today.

45 mins. This time is given for people to work on the assignment from Lesson XI.

(XII. The American Dream)

Movement of the discussion:

- General impression of the documentary.
- What is the American Dream? What does it promise?
- What values are prominent in it?
- How do people recognize when someone has realized the American Dream?
- How real is the American Dream today? How do students relate to it? Who is it meaningful for? Why?
- Are the American Dream and the American success story synonymous? What is the American Success story?

Point of the discussion:

- To examine more closely the promise the American Dream has for people who hold it (including those who want to emigrate) and the reality of realizing the Dream.
- To clarify the American Dream and its meaning in American life, the effect it still has or can have on Americans.

XIII. Reports on the Tribes of America

90 mins.

The assignment from Lesson XI should have been handed in a day before this class. Copies will be given to every student. In groups of 6 (i.e., 3 pairs, the pairs being those who worked together on the assignment), the reports will be shared and discussed. Each pair is given 15 minutes to report on their tribe, after which 15 minutes has been allotted for questions, comments, suggestions from the rest of the group. Comments at this time should be kept to the report that has just been given, rather than bringing in the reports of others.

Materials

Copies of the assignment from Lesson XI should be made before this lesson.

(XIII. Reports on the Tribes of America)

Role of the facilitator:

- To move from group to group, listening, perhaps asking questions that help bring the students back on the track--what the values of the tribe are, how they are expressed, what the attitude is of the people of that tribe towards the middle class, how their lives compare to those of the "average" Americans, what their hopes are, what the general pattern of their lives is, what the relevance of the American Dream is to them....

The point of the reports:

- To move from the generalizations the students have been using to the diversity in American life.
- To look at basics (i.e., ideas held in common, the threads that bind Americans) and diversity (i.e., the completely different working out of or relationship to those ideas possible) in American life.

XIV. American Culture and the ESL Classroom

45 mins.	"Schools are places in which students are socialized." In groups of 5 or 6, students are to consider the implications of this statement for ESL teachers both in the U.S. and abroad.
15 mins.	Individually students note down questions and concerns they have about teaching U.S. culture in the ESL classroom.
30 mins.	Students share their concerns in the large group.
Assignment	Assignment B from Lesson VIII should be collected.

(XIV. American Culture and the ESL Classroom)

- Students may be asked to consider some or all of the following in discussing the given statement:
  - the relationship between language and culture
  - teachers as transmitters of culture
  - the influence cultures have on each other
  - the effect of the socializing that goes on in the classroom and its relevance to the students' lives
  - the aims of the teachers teaching in the U.S. and abroad
  - how the ESL teacher's aims may affect what goes on in the classroom
  - the socialization of the teacher
  - the relationship between ideas behavior and society
  - cross-cultural understanding
  - the teacher as representative of cultural norms

The facilitator's role in the 30 minute discussion:

- To encourage the sharing of concerns without judgement or comment.

(XIV. American Culture and the ESL Classroom)

Point of the 30 minute discussion:

- To look at the interaction of the culture and teaching/learning.
- To consider the implications of being an American and teaching English as a second or foreign language.
- For students to realize that they are not alone in the worries they have that may have arisen as a result of working on the assignment given in Lesson VIII or in the teaching experience they have already had.

XV. Classroom Suggestions

60 mins. Copies of the ideas collected in the previous lesson (Assignment B, from Lesson VIII) are handed out. In groups of 3 pairs, each pair takes 20 minutes to go over their suggestions, allowing some time for the others to offer constructive criticism.

30 mins. A large group discussion of how and why people chose the areas they dealt with in their classroom suggestions.

Materials Copies of Assignment B given in Lesson VIII should be available for every student.

(XV. Classroom Suggestions)

Movement of the discussion:

- What aspects of American life or cultural values did the students consider in their assignments and why?
- What influenced that choice? (teaching in the U.S. or abroad, teaching children or adults...)
- What thoughts have the students got about history, culture, values, language and their interaction?
- How much importance do the students place on historical events, personalities and social customs in considering their approach to the cultural side of teaching ESL?

Point of the discussion:

- For students to clarify their approach to teaching culture.
- For students to be consolidating their experiences throughout the course with a view to their own teaching.

XVI. More Classroom Suggestions and Evaluation

45 mins. The facilitator will present further ideas for presenting culture in the classroom. The following are activities that the authors have come across. Stereotyping and Values Ranking could be presented first, as they are variations on what the students themselves did in the course. They will serve also as examples of the adaptability of many of these exercises. The Customs Bank could be tried out briefly by the class. The Pyramid and Utopia can be discussed for their possibilities. (See pages 96-108 for copies of these exercises).

10 mins. Students are given a copy of the course outline and asked to think about the course as a whole.

35 mins. A large group discussion of the course. Students give their evaluations. This is not a time for them to challenge the facilitator but a time for them to look critically at themselves in regard to the experiences they had in the course and to look at which parts they found particularly helpful. The facilitator should encourage students to fully explore their comments and to pinpoint the reasons

(XVI. More Classroom Suggestions and Evaluation)

for their reactions.

Written Evaluation — This should be given out at the end of the course and the students are asked to hand it in as soon as possible.

Materials — Copies of the teaching suggestions made by the facilitator, course outline, and written evaluation sheet should be made available to the students. A suggested format for the written evaluation sheet is listed on page 39. Note that question 7 can only be used if feedback was indeed part of the course, as suggested in Explanation of Terms.

The exercises in Appendix I (pp. 96-108) are taken from the TESOL '80 presentation of "Consider the Whole: Organic Learning Experiences" by L. Van Horn, B. Thomas, R. Ritkowski, S. Lining, J. Bennett, K. Hamilton, B. Carvutto, I. Green, and J. Farrell. Copies of the entire presentation can be obtained by writing Margretta Winters, Director ISE-West, Dominican College, San Rafael, California 94901.

(XVI. More Classroom Suggestions and Evaluation)

Point of the discussion:

- For the facilitator to understand where the students are in relation to what has gone on in the course and what they have got out of it.
- Through understanding the students' comments, to see where changes could be made in a future course.
- For the students to get a sense of the course as a whole and how it has affected them.
- For the students to look carefully at why certain activities worked for them whereas others did not.

The written evaluation:

- This is seen as somewhat more future-oriented than the verbal evaluation, thus placing an emphasis on what the students can take with them from the course and having them think about possible changes or ideas they can use in their own teaching.

WRITTEN EVALUATION

Please answer the following questions as fully as you can.

1. Of what use has the course been to you?

2. What areas do you think the course was strong in?

3. What areas do you think the course could have emphasized more or what other areas do you think could have been included?

4. What did you think of using the three movies--the Indian dance, Dr. Massey's movie and the CBS documentary--compared to the readings you were required to do?

5. In what ways did you find the written exercises and presentations useful or otherwise?

6. How do you see the role of facilitator after your experience in this course?

7. What are your feelings about feedback?

8. Did you think there was a good balance between individual, small group and large group work?

9. What is the major idea about culture in the ESL classroom that you will take away with you?

10. What direction do you see yourself developing in now in terms of cultural presentation in the ESL classroom?

11. What major changes would you make to the course?

RATIONALE BEHIND THE COURSE DESIGN AND THE LESSON PLANS

Rationale behind the Course Design and the Leson Plans

This course has been designed with one basic thought in mind--that we, the authors, are dealing with process: the continuing growth of the students and the facilitator, the development of one section of the course to the next, one lesson to the next and within each lesson. We do not envisage the course as something finished, complete in itself. It is hoped that the participants will, through it, touch on ideas, concerns and awarenesses that they have had before coming to the course, that the course will enable them to develop to clarify some of those and will give them a way in which to continue this growth afterwards. The course is seen as a time for the students to be looking at themselves as cultural beings, as members of a particular family background, as individuals who have emerged from and yet are intrinsically bound up in that particular cultural and social background. They will also be looking at the U.S. and its development out of Europe, its growth and the ideas that have shaped that growth to give the American culture the distinctive form it has. The question of how to approach these areas in the ESL classroom will also be posed and the students, given a chance to consider this, will thus bridge the gap between this course and the ESL classes they themselves are teaching.

The 16 lessons in the course, then, fall into four groups: Lessons I-III, IV-VIII, IX-XIII and XIV-XVI, dealing with culture, values, the U.S. and the ESL classroom, respectively.

As this course is a course in cultural awareness, Lessons I-III deal with culture, the students' culture, other cultures, cultural

differences contrasted with human similarities and ways in which people cope with these. The tone is here being set for what follows. The students will be dealing with culture on three levels: the personal, the general and the abstract. This is a pattern that will occur again later. The consideration of culture starts from a very broad base and the movement in later lessons will be one of gradually narrowing the focus of concern.

Lesson I is concerned with the way we try to make sense of cultural activities that are foreign to us. This is something anyone who has lived abroad has gone through and that which people experience even in moving around the U.S. The aim here is for the students to get at the basis they use for a reference when they interpret what they see. It is hoped the lesson will touch an awareness in the students of the cultural veil through which they look. The lesson also looks at two aspects of human activity: what people <u>do</u> and what they <u>mean</u> by what they do, i.e., structure and symbol. This, of course, operates at many different degrees of subtlety all through society, and it is possible the lesson will reach these aspects.

Having established the difference between structure and symbol and considered the cultural eyes with which they see, the students move on in Lesson II to how the social structures in different parts of a country or in different cultures express or provide for the expression or satisfaction of similar needs. The students are, in effect, still dealing with structure and symbol, but approaching them from the angle of the human similarities lying beneath the cultural differences.

It is basic to the course that the students be using the

experiences they had, and we have found that often there are a lot of stories students want to tell, anecdotes they want to share. Lesson II provides a chance for them to do this for a purpose. It is hoped that having done it, the students will be freer to turn their focus in on themselves and that the sharing of the stories will add to the closeness of the group as well as spark off a lot of interest.

Lesson III, the final in this section, moves on to a consideration of cultural differences and one way people have of addressing them--stereotyping. The students will be asked to look at stereotyping from more than one angle; how they stereotype others and how the react to the stereotypes others put on them. Through the exercises and the discussions the students will be asked what the function of stereotyping is. They will be moving back and forth from being aware that they all stereotype to asking why and then, when they are aware of their stereotyping, how it affects their perception of the group stereotyped. This is the process of narrowing the focus, of working from the general to the specific, from the outside to the inside, that is part of the shape of the course.

Culture is a broad base to work from, but in the first three lessons we hope that the students have had to look at how they cope with cultures other than their own, something a lot of them will no doubt have done when traveling or living abroad. There are two ways of dealing with the foreign: one is to try to interpret it (an active, involving process), the other is to fall back into stereotypes (a passive, detaching process). Everyone does both and that is not the point--it is the awareness of doing it and how that awareness affects

the individual that matters. This is what the first section is trying to get at.

The second group of lessons, IV-VIII, mainly addresses values. The link between Lessons III and IV occurs in the writing of the essay on childhood that the students are given as an assignment. In discussing their family life, they are asked to write about rituals and relationships, the structures of their childhood. These descriptions will be used as a basis for looking at family values, i.e., the values the students grew up with, many of which they undoubtedly still hold, but some of which will have changed. So we are approaching the discussion of values through something familiar, and the students will have a chance to talk about their background and their feelings about it and how they feel they have changed. This sharing is an important part of the group dynamics.

Lesson V moves on to a discussion of values, specifically. Through using concrete personal items that express or relate to values, the students will be working towards a definition of the abstract--values. At the same time, they will be thinking about the influence their values have on their lives. So the movement in this lesson is from the level of the personal to the abstract, completing the cycle from the lesson before, which was looking at values from a much wider angle.

In the course of Lessons IV and V, the students will have been forming, confirming or expanding on their own ideas about the formation of values in the individual. They have looked at their family values and how they relate to them now, as well as trying to clarify the

meaning of values. Lesson VI presents someone else's theory on the formation of values. Dr. Morris Massey adds further dimensions to the topic by bringing in, first, the influence of external, world events on values formation and, then, the different values between generations. A lot of the impact of the movie derives from his including both his and the viewers' generations in the patterns he sees. Lesson VII then begins with a discussion of people's reactions to the movie and, in a way reminiscent of Lesson I, has them look at why their reactions were what they were, that is, what the cultural influences affecting them were, how they reacted to or made use of stereotyping and generalizations while they were watching the movie. By discussing Dr. Massey's theory about values formation, the students' own ideas about it may become more explicit.

An element of Dr. Massey's presentation that carries into Lesson VII is the making of generalizations. This comes into play in the values ranking exercise. People not only make generalizations when they first attempt to explain unusual or foreign behavior, they also use them when talking about groups as a whole, and here Americans are being asked to make generalizations about Americans. This is part of an important aspect of this course which is for students to be developing in themselves the ability to step back from situations they are involved in and perceive the elements common to them, building up a (cultural) framework of generalizations in or from which to work. It is always hard to do this with the things closest to one's self such as one's own culture. It is, however, an important skill to develop in regard to one's own culture because it is an aid to insight into

oneself and other Americans as cultural beings. One can also use this skill to consciously set up a particular cultural framework (one's own) against which to contrast others, in order for one to better understand other cultures.

The students are working towards an awareness of the self as a cultural creation and an objectification of that, will, in cultural encounters, aid in the perception of both the cultural differences being experiences and how others perceive them. It is to be understood, however, that all of this is constantly moving, changing, expanding, contracting--it is a living process, and we believe that to be conscious of this process can only be of great benefit to what goes on in the students' lives as well as in the ESL classroom.

So, Lesson VII, with its values ranking on a personal and general basis will serve to continue the two trends of the students' clarifying their perception of themselves as well as their perception of their own culture. In developing the second, the word "American" is soon used as a standard against which to judge other things. Comments about the meaning of this work might occur towards the end of Lesson VII in the discussion of the values ranking exercise. What does "American" mean in reference to values?

Someone who has dared to attempt an answer to this is Edward C. Stewart in his book American Cultural Patterns: A Cross-Cultural Perspective. Stewart wrote the book specifically for American technicians, advisors, academics, Peace Corps volunteers, etc., in order to give them a perspective on cross-cultural problems that they might encounter in their work abroad. A large part of the book is

devoted to a definition and description of American culture. He divides his conceptualization of American culture into four major components: form of activity, form of relation to others, perception of the world and perception of self. Using these divisions as a framework in which to approach America, we are moving in Lesson VIII towards, first, a general articulation of American values and, then, a description of behavior that those values imply. It is important here that the students bring in their personal experience of being American (behavior description) and see how that relates or in many cases does not relate to the dominant middle class values described by Stewart.

So, in Lesson VIII, the students are coming to the end of looking at values, as such, and are moving to explanations for behavior. They will be talking in generalizations about the way Americans behave. In Lesson VII, the discussion could even get into generalizations about American values or value systems in other cultures. But here basically the students are moving in the slightly different direction of considering American behavior (in part, the outward expression of values) and reasons for its being that way, the American way.

And it is in searching for an explanation that we move on to a new lesson and a new section of the course. The third section deals with America--the students will move from the general (culture) to the specific (values) and so to the personal (American). There is a parallel movement here between considering the emergence of a particular culture from its social and historical background and the consideration in the previous section of the emergence of the individual from a particular family and cultural background. The focus

has moved from the individual in society to that society within world cultures, those attitudes, values, experiences or expectations that distinguish this American culture from others. The focus here is narrow in that it is on the U.S. alone.

Lesson IX looks at the U.S. from an historical perspective and those aspects of its beginnings as The New World that influenced thought both now and then. In Lesson X the students look at the U.S. in terms of the word "American" and its connotations and the uniqueness of the U.S. In Lesson X they make use of both the tangible and the intangible in trying to define that quality of being "American." This lesson should bring out a host of similarities in experience, upbringings and expectation that the students share by virtue of being American, even though they may come from all over the country. There is something elusive about this word "American" that makes it difficult to define and, although the experiences the students share in this lesson in an attempt to come to a clearer understanding of it may seem somehow trivial, they are extremely important because they reveal the common, shared pool of American experience. The difference between being familiar with the Bobbsey Twins and the Secret Seven is partially cultural. It is the constant building-up of experiences such as the students might share in this lesson that has helped form them as cultural beings distinct from others. It is this psychological backdrop that aids them in understanding the subtleties of "Manhattan" but not "Monty Python." It is this common background that is lacking when teachers encounter other cultures in their ESL students.

Lesson XI moves onto something quite specifically American that

arose historically outside the U.S. but that is, nevertheless, unique to the U.S. and common to all Americans--the American Dream. Lesson XI looks at the fulfillment of the Dream and the implications of that. Lesson XII looks more closely at the Dream itself, what it meant, what it means today, who it is meaningful for. The students will be asked to look at it in terms of what has gone before in the course--society, values and the individual. Lesson XIII looks in greater depth at the question of the reality of the American Dream today. And in exploring this question, the students will move away from the unity of common cultural experiences to the diversity of ways in which people can relate to an idea held in common. This is the thread from Lesson X--in all walks of life there are certain experiences held in common that form a "psychology of the people," if you like. It is these experiences that create a common psyche, in this case, the American psyche, the American being, the American in relation to the physical, the mental, the spiritual, the tangible and the intangible. These are the feathers that make birds stick together. And these experiences happen in spite of social or economic background. In fact, these experiences can become part of our cultural psyche even though not actually experienced but by being passed on as part of the experiences of the group as a whole, e.g., a particular film star's mannerisms that everyone may know even though few have actually seen the movies. So Lesson XIII, at the end of the third section, returns to the diversity of life in the U.S., having pulled out some of the threads that bind people together.

Throughout this third section, then, the students have been

working on abstracting and defining that which is "American." They have taken up that multi-faceted stone of American society and tried to look into its center to find those things common to all sides. They have been doing this in various ways--by looking at historical factors, at themselves as Americans, at an idea that seems to be unique to America and understood by all Americans, and finally they have pulled back from the center and begun turning that gleaming stone in their hands as they consider, again, the many different sides to American society in light of those things held in common as American.

The focus in the first three sections has been gradually narrowing and it is at this point that some depth of perception will, hopefully, be achieved and that a movement towards the objectification of the students' culture and their part in it will have begun.

The final section includes Lesson XIV-XVI. Up to this point the emphasis has been on culture, values and Americans and not at all directly with the reason the students have taken the course. They are ESL teachers. This course has been designed to help them in that capacity and unless what happens in the course is carried through to their classrooms, it will have had little point.

The ESL classroom provides a meeting-place for cultures, and it is from this point of view that we have thought the course to be needed and useful. The last section, then, brings the participants in the course back to the reality of their being ESL teachers and has them considering the classroom as a socializing influence and ways of enhancing cultural awareness on all sides.

Lesson XIV deals with the role of the school as a socializing

force. What the students are being asked to think about here is the ESL teacher as a potential source of social change for the ESL students--whether the language students are living in the U.S. or abroad, what happens to them in the ESL classroom will have an effect on them. Are ESL teachers sufficiently aware of that, how do they feel about it, what is their basic approach to dealing with this cross-cultural situation in the classroom? Lesson XIV allows for the airing of views, concerns and questions on these points.

Lesson XV moves closer to the practical as the students share ways in which they would handle specific cultural items in class and Lesson XVI continues this, wrapping up the course with a verbal evaluation, followed by a written one.

All in all, we hope through the course to have made as much use as the students will allow of their lives, their experiences, their thoughts, directing them towards a process of objectification in viewing their culture as a dynamic force in the ESL classroom. We believe this process to be the continuing responsibility of the individual, but hope that through this course beginnings may have been made or impulses reawakened.

EXPLANATION OF TERMS

Explanation of Terms

Facilitator or Teacher?

A facilitator is one who is enabling a process to take place in others and who is concerned with the drawing out of awarenesses in the student rather than the passing on of knowledge. The latter activity is that of the teacher. It may be that in many ways the activities of the facilitator and the teacher are similar, but we feel the vital difference lies in the ultimate reason that person is leading the group. If the extent of the role is to create a situation in which students can look in at themselves and be aware of the processes that go on within themselves, we would say the "leader" is a facilitator. If it is to set up a situation in which students are being prepared to learn something they do not have (e.g., English), no matter whether this involves having the students look at their own learning process at the same time or look at their own language, etc., then the role of the "leader" is that of teacher. The teacher is the one with the knowledge that students don't have. There are many ways for the teacher to deal with that knowledge and the gap it creates between teacher and student, but it is the having of that knowledge and the desire of the students to have it that distinquishes teacher from facilitator. The nature of the material in this course is such that students will be making constant use of their own experience and perceptions. This kind of introspection cannot be "taught," although the facilitator can guide a process in the students with the goal of having them look at certain

points in depth. Neither role is superior. They are simply different and each has its place in education.

The Facilitator's Role

We have, in the lesson plans, suggested the movement or shape the discussions might have. It is not our intention that the facilitator follow these suggestions step by step. It is part of the job of the facilitator to sense the direction a particular group may want to go in and to follow that. The point of the discussion, also included in the lesson plans, is a guide to the facilitator of the objectives of a particular lesson. These are the underlying motives of the lessons. Through participating in discussion, the students should arrive at a place in their own awareness consistent with what we have termed the point of the discussion. The facilitator provides the opportunity for the students to look at themselves and can shape this introspection to an extent by careful manipulation of discussion. The students are accountable, ultimately, only to themselves for their own involvement in this process and the learning that will come out of it. The involvement necessarily encompasses attendance in class and participation, including the generation and sharing of ideas. Beyond this accountability to self, the students are more directly responsible to the facilitator for the completion of homework reading and assignments. During the course of discussion, however, it is the

facilitator who, with the point of the discussion in mind, can be keeping the dialogue on tracks that are meaningful and relevant. To this end, we have included the shape or movement of the discussion suggestions. Often it is only by maintaining a certain objectivity that the facilitator is able to make a decision as to what is or is not relevant, promoting the growth of the discussion perhaps by narrowing its focus but increasing its depth.

The facilitator's role, then, is a difficult one--to be a firm guide, but not obtrusive; to sense a direction and not force it; to restrict the field of discussion to what is relevant and yet not cut people off or have them feel snubbed. In respect to these, feedback is invaluable to the facilitator.

Feedback

This is a process which allows students to voice their reactions or feelings about an activity and to try and understand why they felt that way. It is something that helps the facilitator to see what the students did or did not get out of a particular activity or the course as a whole. Because we see it as a time for the facilitator to listen to the students and the students to reflect on themselves, we do not regard feedback as a time for dialogue between the facilitator and students. The facilitator's task at this point is to understand what the students are saying and why, and so the facilitator may ask

questions or reflect statements in order for that to happen. The questions that a student asks may be taken by the facilitator as showing something about that student's wants or concerns, but not as deserving answers at this particular time.

In courses we have participated in, it has been an oft-quoted saying of the facilitators that "Feedback is a time for me—it is my time." It took us a while to understand what this meant and we feel that it would be helpful for the students if the role of feedback was explained to them at the beginning of the course, perhaps following the time when students voice their expectations, as described below.

Because we believe that it is important in terms of security that the facilitator and the students know what is going on, we feel that time should be given at the very beginning of the course for people to express their expectations and for the facilitator to perhaps bring these expectations closer to what the course actually offers. We also feel that the constant turning of the facilitator to the reactions and feelings of the students through feedback can only serve to assist in a realigning of needs with what is being offered. This part of the process is the most difficult, we feel, and the facilitator's sensitivity at this point is, indeed, the crux of the relationship between facilitator and students and the area which the facilitator will constantly need to look at and be developing personally.

We have not included feedback in the lesson plans, feeling that this should be done at the discretion of the facilitator involved. We

would, however, recommend a 10-15 minute period for this at least once a week (or once every two lessons). We see it as a way for the facilitator to keep in touch with the feelings, reactions and thoughts of the students about the work they are doing in the course.

The revealing of expectations at the beginning and the evaluation of the course at the end should also help the facilitator to gain insight into the students themselves and the path they have trod through the course.

Discussion

Discussion serves a different function: it is a time for students to give opinions and work on thoughts or attitudes towards specific matters. Discussion is the instrument of growth. An understanding of that growth or of impediments to it may come through the reflective period of feedback.

Evaluation

Both a verbal and a written evaluation are requested at the end of the course. They give the students time to look back at the course as a whole, perhaps seeing the development that has gone on and to critically appraise the parts of the course—what they felt was successful and why, what the course lacked and so on. This can serve

as a guide to the facilitator in the planning of future courses.

ALTERNATIVE COURSE OUTLINE FOR NON-NATIVE SPEAKERS OF ENGLISH

Alternative Course Outline for Non-native Speakers of English

The following are suggestions for adapting this course for a group of ESL teachers who are non-native speakers of English.

The aim in this case would be slightly different from that of Lesson Plans--Part A in that the participants would be working towards a clarification of themselves as members and individuals in their own culture and then moving to a contrasting of this with American values. We will be suggesting general rather than specific adaptations, believing that the specifics depend on the particular group taking the course. The facilitator may find that the discussions need to be more structured and that feedback would be particularly helpful when doing the Alternative Course Outline for Non-native Speakers of English, but that is something the facilitator has to decide. We have kept the same titles for the lessons in this section as for the lessons in Lesson Plans--Part A, but they should be changed appropriately when adapting the course.

I. Structure and Symbol: A short display of anything that is ritualistic but foreign to the students will do here. If it is not possible to get hold of a movie, perhaps a dance or drama group or even a group of students could be asked to present something to the class. The presentation should not exceed 20 minutes because it is not the presentation itself that is important so much as how the students try to make sense of it.

II. Basics and Diversity: This exercise can remain as it is

although a comparative element may be introduced by asking the students to use their experiences in various parts of their country or with different racial groups and then how they think these needs are expressed or satisfied in the U.S. The students will already be making use of stereotypes at this point and these can be picked up again in the following lesson.

III. Stereotype Exercise: Here, it is the unfinished sentences that need thought. The facilitator could use stereotypes of other groups or races within the country the students come from or refer to stereotypes on a world scale, e.g., Americans are...; Germans are...; Spaniards are..., etc. The way this first part of the lesson is done will affect the last 60 minutes of the class, though. The facilitator should not lose sight of one of the aims of the exercise which is to look at the validity of stereotypes and where they arise from. It is important that the students do this themselves.

Below are reactions from a mixed group of students when they did a similar exercise in formulating stereotypes of Americans. We have included this exercise to give the reader an idea of what kinds of stereotypes were generated from a classroom situation.

Stereotypes of Americans

Rich, powerful
Materialistic (most of them)
Want a house, two cars and two children
Have two cars
Have big cars
Have guns
Drive dirty cars carelessly

Eat hamburgers, drink coke, chew gum
Eat bad food
Eat a lot and jog for a diet (Good for health)
Organic lifestyle
Drugs
Wear jeans

Easy going
Careless
They look like they don't worry about the world
Individualistic
Unfriendly
Gentle
Impersonal
Quiet
Peaceful--nonviolent
Helpful
Selfish

Live in skyscrapers
Watch a lot of TV (a lot of stations)
Travel with cameras
Love movies
Get married between 25 and 27
Like sports
Like things in big quantities
They are big children

Punctual
Always in a hurry--Time is money
Demand a tip for doing something
Use checks and cards more than cash
Fond of innovations
Work really hard
Energy savers
There are no trains

Communicate with everyone by saying hello or hi
It's easy for foreigners to say hello to Americans but difficult to be their friends
Familiar. They use first names even in business

Study specific areas if they go to the university
When they do something they do it very well. Maybe they do just one thing but they do it very well.

Low moral values
Patriots, but when at the university they don't help each other
Don't care if I understand English or not.

The religion is always different.

Don't like to touch each other
Enjoy life
Enjoy themselves with all the same things.
Live their own life and don't care about what other people do.

IV. Childhood and Family Values: It is basic to this lesson that the meaning of "values" be clear. This should be done at the beginning of the class.

V. Values: Again, understanding of the word "values" is imperative for the success of this lesson.

VI. What you are is Where you Were When...: Although entertaining, Dr. Massey's presentation is such that at times even native speakers have trouble catching what he says. We do not think this movie should be used as a chance for the students to hear real American English spoken. That is not the point of this course and should be done somewhere else. In any case, this particular movie would not be a good one for listening comprehension for the reason given above.

What the movie does, though, is look at external events, e.g., a war or the depression, and see how they affected the values of those who were children at that time. Dr. Massey feels that all our values are set in us by the age of 10 and will remain the same until we are in our 20's when a "significant emotional event" may change some of them. He feels that the difference in values that each generation has as a result of the external events in its childhood is what lies behind the generation gap. And this is where an adaptation to this lesson could

start: the students could look at their grandparents' lives (what happened historically during their childhood, what values they had, what their lives were like, how their lives reflected the values they had), their parents lives and their own, always looking for reasons behind the differing values. The students, working in groups of 5 or 6, could set up a time line that showed external events and important moments in the lives of their grandparents, parents and themselves. This would be similar to the time line in Dr. Massey's movie.

VII. The Average American and You: The students can be asked to do the values ranking for themselves and the "average" person in their country or, and this may be more in keeping with the aim of working towards cultural comparison, they could do the ranking for themselves and an American. It would be interesting to work on the reasons for their American rankings. The assignment given in this lesson is over 40 pages of heavy reading for the next class. The facilitator may want to lessen the load by giving excerpts to read from each of the four sections in Part III of American Cultural Patterns: A Cross-Cultural Perspective by Edward C. Stewart or provide a list of statements to be thought about in terms of the values they reveal. Examples of such statements, from the film Bronco Billy, a Clint Eastwood movie released in summer 1980, are

> You're gonna get what you wanted. I promised that.
> Sir, you have a good day. Ma'am could I be of service to you?
> Quit chewing the fat and earn an honest day's pay.
> Nobody says that about a cowboy.
> Prayer: Lord, we ask you to forgive our sins and we thank you for this here chow, ah, food. And we ask you to look after these little cowgirls and cowboys so they don't get tangled up with hard liquor and cigarettes. Amen.

He talked dirty about my mother.
Never kill a man unless it's necessary.
In the last ten years, nobody's changed the script and that's the way I wanna keep it.
Spit it out. That's what I'm here for, is to help.
I'm just making a living like everyone else.
The sun always shines over the next valley. That's where we'll find our pot of gold, I reckon.
We'll put up our boots and get through this together.
She's coming round to my way of thinking.
Deep down in my heart I always wanted to be a cowboy. You only live once and you have to give it your best shot.
The living must go on living. What has happened has happened.
I can arrange anything--you know that.
We fight together, we stick together.
You can do anything you want. You just have to go out and become it.
You have to know what you want to be or you'll never go far.
Don't tell me what to do.
You're nothing more than an illiterate cowboy.
No problem. Simple.
I'm trying to make time pass more quickly. Why? I find life boring.
One rotten apple spoils the barrel.
You have the worst ailment known to man--no money.
Lady Luck didn't shine on you.

VIII. American Assumptions and Values: Here, again, we feel this can be exploited in at least two ways. The students can be asked to look at the American values and compare them with their own or take a more in-depth look at American values only, finding examples for them, working from either the reading or a list of statements such as were given above. This may be difficult for the students though depending on their exposure to American life. Keeping in mind the goals of the course, however, the comparative approach may get the students further.

IX. America--an historical perspective: The facilitator could choose a reading that gives an historical perspective to the values or

society of the students' country or may want to approach it comparatively, using a passage from a book by an American historian and having the students pick out the major forces at work, then compare them with the historical develoment of their own country.

X. What is it that makes you American?: This can be changed quite nicely to "What is it that makes you different from an American?" or "What is it that makes an American different from you?" (although this may move the focus of the discussion off the students themselves, which might not be wanted), or, again, the topic might be "What is it that makes you different from people who live in Z?" (Z being a country of the students' choice).

XI. "But What if the Dream Comes True?": Either this documentary can be shown and a comparison made between "success" and "happiness" in American and local terms, or the students can be asked to describe the success story that has a hold on the imagination of their people through a short play or story. They may want to deal with the way the idea of success has changed in the last 50 years or so. The plays and stories should be presented within this class time. The students should be looking at all aspects of success--material, emotional, social, spiritual....

The assignment given in this lesson should be restricted to groups within the students' country or to countries nearby that they might be familiar with or be able to get information on. Having the students go out to interview people about their ideas of success might

be interesting at this point.

XII. The American Dream: If the documentary was shown in the last class, then a discussion of the values shown in it and a comparison between the American success story and that of the students' country would be appropriate here. If, however, the plays or short stories were done, then a discussion of those, the success story they portrayed, the meaning of words like "success" and "happiness" in their culture and how they may have changed in the last 50 years or so would be a suitable follow-up.

The second half of this class is free for students to work on the assignment given in Lesson XI.

XIII. Reports of the Tribes of America: The facilitator may prefer to do the class in a large group, not in the smaller groups of 6.

XIV. American Culture and the ESL Classroom: or Culture and the ESL Classroom. This is the point at which the whole question of cultural differences should be dealt with in terms of how those differences affect the teachers and the students. When the participants in the course are a group of ESL teachers who are not native speakers of English, this lesson may provide a good opportunity for them to voice their feelings about their position. Their feelings about the English language, American or English culture and its impact on the local culture, the system they teach in, and the different ways

of thinking inherent in different languages could be brought out here.

The focus should be narrowed in the last 30 minutes of the class to the teaching of American culture, however.

XV. Classroom Suggestions: Again, a large group might be better than small groups.

XVI. More Classroom Suggestions and Evaluation: A discussion of what the course has given the students and how they might transfer this into the classes they are teaching might be helpful here.

It is important the students understand the reason for the evaluations.

PART B--American Cultural Values

"Your Grandmother and Father left you a great heritage, Billy. They and others like them handed down to you the right to worship as you choose, and the right to work and profit from your enterprise. They've given you a land where there is freedom, true equality of opportunity, a nation that is governed by the people, by laws that are best for the greatest number. Your duty, Billy, is to preserve that heritage and strengthen it. That is the heritage and duty of every American."

The Lone Ranger

In this section we explore a few major values pertinent to the American cultural value system. We have looked at basic attitudes towards success, time, work, the individual, equality, moral orientation and world view. We must point out from the beginning that any description of a value system is, by definition, not a true description of behavior but instead a median which can be utilized in judging behavior. The word "value" in the sense we are using it here is more in line with the Radcliffe-Browian description of value: any normative idea or sentiment that serves as an organizer of culturally standardized behavior.[1] Clearly we can not hope to give a complete description of the values that are shared by a majority of Americans (the scope of this project is hardly wide enough for such an undertaking). but by narrowing the focus of the value system, by looking at it as a dominant theme set against a background of variation, contradiction and diversity, we hope to give the reader a framework with which to approach the question of "What does it mean to be American?"

The American Middle Class

This context of variation, contradiction, and diverstiy especially holds true when discussing America at large for there exists an immense diversity in American geography, ethnic backgrounds, religion, politics, etc. To conceptualize the diverse range of life styles experienced in Hawaiian tropical island communities, Wyoming open range

megalopolis is often staggering. In the face of diversity, then, an explanation of a general American value system must be directed at the majority, that is, at middle class America. Because of the standardization of mass education and mass communication, there exists a conformity among middle class Americans in habits of dress, hygiene, diet, recreation, and in language and basic educational skills. The typical American family is today an urban one living in a city or a large town (suburbs included). The wage earners within the family are most likely employed by a large firm, necessities are purchased from the vast array of manufactured goods available, the standard of living is extremely high in comparison with the rest of the world (hot water, electricity, transportation, central heating, and often air-conditioning are thought necessities not luxuries), and life in general through social, political, economic and ecological realms is greatly influenced by an elaborate technology. The focus, then, for the rest of this section will be on the middle class.

As earlier expressed in other sections of this project, the following description of some of the basic cultural values in American life is not hoped to be read and understood as an end in itself, but we hope that it can facilitate an entrance into the exploration of values that have historically shaped and molded the lives of Americans.

Success

One of the most important concepts that has shaped the face of America and Americans is the belief in the success story. Historically the American success story has revolved around the self-made man, who with an affinity towards hard work, an air of thriftiness, an eagerness for knowledge, and a great deal of ambition climbed the ladder of success. It is because of the relatively open class system (one not fixed by heritage, privilege, or authority) that the American success story has centered itself on the common man. In America common men can put themselves at the center of the universe. Anyone is allowed a crack at success. This is especially apparent in the life of Abraham Lincoln or Jimmy Carter where a dirt poor, down home farm boy achieved the highest elected governmental office in America. Literary examples also include the poor little protagonists in the Horatio Alger stories (Ragged Dick, Mark the Match Boy) who through Algerian values (thus reflecting American ones) of luck, pluck, and virtue rise beyond their humble beginnings. Upward mobility without restraint lies at the heart of the American success story.

Success in America also meant and means material prosperity. The American success story of rags to riches is open to anyone and the greater the rise from poverty to wealth the greater the success story. As Mr. Whitney tells Ragged Dick in Ragged Dick, "I hope, my lad, you will prosper and rise in the world. You know in this free country poverty is no bar to a man's advancement."[2]

But it must be remembered that the accumulation of wealth isn't

considered a proper end in itself. Sobriety, frugality and industry can very well serve in large acquisitions of material goods but it serves no purpose if the self-made man acquires his fortune as a self-seeking, dishonest and uncharitable person. The self-made man must be deserving of a good fortune and have providence on his side. Benjamin Franklin in The Way to Wealth tells us,

> This doctrine, my friends, is reason and wisdom, but after all, do not depend too much on your own industry, and frugality and prudence, though excellent things; for they all may be blasted without the Blessing of Heaven; and therefore, ask that blessing humbly, and be not charitable to those that at present seem to want it, but comfort and help them.[3]

In Horatio Alger stories we also find the villains as rich, vile old men who perpetuate their fortunes by exploiting poor widowed families. The villain is economically successful but does not have a sense of moral righteousness. We can see from these examples a blending of the Protestant ethic* and the success story. Along with the hard work and frugality there is a moral strain that weaves itself into the success story. A respect for God is required. Success therefore, in the true American success story implies a sense of moral correctness.**

American "success" has also implied an economic success irrefutably dominated by the value of money. In American culture there has always been a great emphasis on personal achievement especially

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*In the Protestant ethic, salvation was acquired not only by industry and frugality, but also by integrity, charity, and the acquisition of a moral sense of good.

**This can be applied to Watergate and the moral outrage of the American people when Nixon was finally seen as a self-seeking, dishonest politician.

occupational achievement. However, that achievement has been ranked not so much by the kind of job one has, but rather by the money (salary) one earns, this aspect overriding any ranking of prestige or social position by occupation. Though Americans tend to identify each other by what they do, it often loses its primacy when compared with salaries. For example, the prestige of the university professor is overshadowed by "successful" entrepreneurs or film stars who command a higher salary. Worth, value, or success is determined on a monetary scale. In America money is what counts.

Wealth tends to define social position because there are no fixed traditional social hierarchies or established symbols of heredity. In America one's position in society has turned towards an outward materialistic display of prestige items, that is, fancy cars, swimming pools, expensive homes, good clothes, electronic sound systems, power appliances, exotic vacations, etc. Remember to "keep up with the Jones."

This materialistic nature of America is one where people are impressed by bigness, speed, wealth and power. The acquisition of money, success and power is a crescendoing value that leads to the 'bigger is better' concept. Better is implied by bigger not so much because big things are good, but because what one has acquired is usually thought good and more of that is thought better. Hence we find with this attitude a society that has expanded searching for "more" and "better." This expansion subtley underlies the success motive. In America one can become successful but even with that achievement there is a push towards a higher or more successful level. Usually one is

never completely satisfied with what one has. Satisfaction is tinged with thoughts of how one can better the situation--as aptly put by an old American adage putting forth this idea: there is always room for improvement.

Time*

Just as money as a measure of success has an irrefutable value in American culture, so does time. Like money, time is precious and worth saving. The value of time in American culture embodies an orientation that is a product of an urban, industrialized life style where the segmentation of the day is mandated by the mechanized clock. Work hours, recreation hours, eating and sleeping hours are all divided within a 24-hour period. This contrasts greatly with an agrarian orientation to time where time is divided into seasonal, cyclical dimensions. There is a great obsession with punctuality (hence the popularity of exact digital watches), scheduling events, and a general ordering of the day in terms of distinct time blocks. Americans are attached to the clock. Such an orientation can be seen in light of money and success. Since salaries are computed in increments of time worked, the value of time has taken on a high dimension of worth and value. An employer literally buys the time and skill of the worker he employs and by budgeting correctly the man hour costs against the cost of the product, the employer can assure a profit. Hence it is this equation of work-equals-time therefore time-equals-money that has contributed to the high value of time in American culture.

Besides being valuable, time in the American sense is also oriented towards the future. Time is not something that is seen as

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*Other values covered in this section are effort, optimism, efficiency, and attitude towards progress.

standing still, but rather it is viewed as that which slowly flows out of the past and rushes forward into the future. Time flies. Time moves fast. It is a linear progression that is always moving forward and that forward movement involves progress and change.

The importance of change in the American value system can not be overstated for America has done much to institutionalize this concept. Americans are pressed to keep up with the times (the changing times): the new advancements in science and technology, the newest household product, the newest best seller that will change their lives. Their lives are seen in a spiral of changing events projecting themselves into the future and, most importantly, the change from old to new is seen as improvement. Progress for Americans is an improvement in the present. Looking at such regularly used adjectives as "backwards," "outmoded," "out-of-it," "old-fashioned," shows the value orientation of dissatisfaction with the old and the positive focus towards the new and progressive.

Americans' attitudes towards change and progress are also wrapped up in the bubble of optimism. They believe in the hopefulness of the future, the better life ahead.* Shirley Temple, in the midst of the Depression, was singing, "Be optimistic and smile, smile, smile..." and as displayed in General Electric's carousel of progress exhibition at Disneyland, "There's a great big beautiful tomorrow shining at the end of every day." This positive thinking is also seen in the children's story of the Little Red Caboose where with optimistic thoughts the

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*President Reagan used this value in his presidential campaign.

little train puffed up the big hill that the big train couldn't climb singing, "I think I can, I think I can."

At the root of the Little Red Caboose's success was individual effort. It is thought if one does something, i.e., starts a chain of events that is seen as progressively moving forward, then the goal of the effort will be achieved. Obstacles and bad conditions need only be recognized and removed to ensure success. A successful person is one who is moving in time with effort, one who gets ahead, gets results, tackles a problem and does something about it. In contrast, a failure is one who gets nowhere, the one who didn't make a go of it, didn't try hard enough or exert enough effort. It is a severe code, one that doesn't acknowledge defeat easily, and in the case of Vietnam a value that made Americans (or the military) believe that with increased spending and more effort, a small Asian country could be bombed into submission.

The American emphasis on effort and optimism leads us to the value against which action is performed: efficiency. "Efficiency" is a word in American culture that has long been a word of praise, accentuating the importance of technological innovation, modernity and progress. It is a standard which insists on one's doing a good job in the fastest, most practical, rational, and economical manner possible. The efficient person gets things done.

In sum, effort, optimism, progress and efficiency all give the American a very rational and pragmatic orientation. It is an orientation that is fixed on the immediate future. It stresses immediate adaptability to interests and satisfactions in the here and

now and gives Americans a future oriented outlook rather than one that lingers in the past.

Work

The great attention and value given to work is a key in defining and understanding American culture. Americans are stereotyped as an active people, living in a country that is bustling with activity and agitation. Americans are doers. The productive person is the busy person. Americans envy those who can do twenty things at the same time. Work, whether it is done in a paid capacity such as a salaried position, or in an unpaid domestic arrangement such as a housewife, or in a volunteer situation, is an action shared by almost all Americans. Even those who need not work for financial reasons do so. "Work" in the American sense of the word is a necessity of life for it is felt that one has to "do" something. One has to be productive to have any value. Status and worth are often judged by occupation, but more importantly by how productive one is at that chosen occupation. Rarely do Americans question productive activity. The question might be asked about the validity of a certain task or job but usually in the context of substituting something else that might be more efficient or worthwhile. The necessity to work, to participate in a directed productive activity, is ingrained and embedded in the American mind.

Why do Americans have this great attachment to work? Historically it can be seen as having risen from a heritage where survival depended on work, and where religion also (through the Protestant "work" ethic) put a moral orientation on the attitude towards work. Pilgrims, pioneers, settlers all endured a hard life style that demanded a steady participation in fulfilling the needs for survival. One worked to eat

and if one didn't work no one ate. We have the remnants of this value today in the children's story of the Little Red Hen. The hen goes through the process of planting and threshing the wheat and then baking the flour for her bread, soliciting help along the way from her friends. They don't help her and when the bread is baked she refuses to share it with them, and justifiably so according to the work ethic because they hadn't helped her. They hadn't worked. The Protestant ethic also contributed to the importance of the value of work by giving work a religious quality. Productive activity was seen as a sign of grace giving the average worker an incentive to work. Metaphysical rewards were intertwined with directed productive activity. One worked ones way to heaven. Though today the religious incentive has succumbed to the cult of material success, the moral value of work as a necessity still remains. Work is a directed, regular, productive activity that is done, and whether it is liked or not, it is the main focus in the lives of a majority of Americans.

Individualism

"Individualistic" is probably the one word that comes to mind when describing Americans as a group. It is a concept of uniquenes that is fostered from childhood. The child is taught to make up his own mind, to make his own decisions, to solve his own problems, to have his own personal things, to set his own goals, to confront the world, face-to-face, man-to-man, on an individual basis. The American is the center of his world and cherishes the right to be an "individual."

The concept of self-reliance is also intertwined with individualism and though such a value is no longer truly viable in the urbanized society (they depend on each other for food, clothing, housing, etc.), Americans nonetheless value their capacity to do things themselves, and to not be dependent on something or someone. Take for example the American and his car. The idea of car pools and public transportation is not one that has readily caught on in America. The American preserves his freedom and mobility, his individual choice of action by having a private car. (No matter what the price of gas, Americans will always pay for their independence of mobility). The idea of being dependent on someone else or public transportation has been hard to adopt. On the other hand those who are in situations where other means of transportation are not available (Los Angeles, for example) hate the idea of being tied to their cars. There is a great dislike of ultimate dependence on anything.

While individualism has emphasized the individual it has also accepted affiliations within the group. It wasn't the individual, the

rugged frontiersman, the loner moving across the Great Plains that settled America as we are often led to believe, but rather America was founded and built by groups of people working together. From the first pilgrims to the modern corporate structures of today, accomplishment has depended on the group. As in the case of western settlers it was the casual informal groups (wagon trains, house building parties, quilting bees) that were easily formed and quickly dissolved that brought about group consciousness. Americans are taught to work together from childhood. From joining the Girl Scouts to Little League to making the high school drill team or football team group participation is stressed. However, the formation of the group maintains the separateness or individuality of each member. Each member usually has a special function or contribution that is necessary for the end result of the team effort. The group allows each member to express his own opinion and to have an equal part in the final decision or action. The individual then is allowed to pursue his own goals while cooperating with others, though there are limitations to this. There is a code that demands a certain loyalty over individual goals. Too much individual initiative in a group situation can be dangerous leading to alienation and ostracism as seen by the example of Alexander Haig who through his brash individualism and non-team playing effort had often threatened his position as Secretary of State. Group or team decision making then, is seen as a series of concessions rather than in Japan, for example, where decision making requires the concensus of the entire group. In America, it is this give-and-take attitude, this loose affiliation toward group, this dynamic of compromise to the group

and retention of individual goals that has led to the success of team work in the U.S.

Equality

Americans through their legal system and in social interactions relate to each other more or less on an egalitarian basis. Americans have always prided themselves on the fact of living in the land of opportunity--equal opportunity. This has, however, been more of a moral imperative than an actual fact in American life. Throughout American history there has always been a group of people who have been discriminated against and to whom such a value of equal opportunity has not been applied. Differences in wealth, influence, education and privilege do and have existed in the U.S. In reality this negates a truly egalitarian society, but the important fact is that the concept of one is implanted in the American consciousness. Historically barriers of social class were broken with the immigration and frontier expansion periods. Immigrants came to America because it offered the opportunity of growth (economic, religious, education) to anyone. The government also assured the individual his freedom and rights by individual representation, granted him security and protection, and respected the individual's autonomy by not interfering in his life. Everyone was and is equal under the law and exercises the same rights.

A consequence of American egalitarianism is also found in interpersonal relations. Americans are known for their informal, simple and direct manner. The immediate use of first name, humor, kidding, etc., are all products of an egalitarian frame of mind. Even in positions of authority (an interview, for example) the preferred mode is the informal one which puts the interviewer and the interviewee

on more of an equal basis. Games of one-upmanship or rank pulling are not appreciated in daily interactions and such displays of inequality or upstaging in the American value system have a very negative connotation.

World View--Moral Orientation

In line with the rationalistic pragmatic approach to life that pervades the American life style is the orderly world view. Americans tend to put actions and thoughts into categories, dividing them, making them concrete and tangible, and evaluating them separately. This is shown in the English language where, for example, the action of water hitting the beach is categorized into a noun form (wave). The language thus divides this continuous action into parts to understand it. But is there really a dividing line between where one wave stops and another wave begins? The universe, then, according to the world view is mechanistic and by analyzing the parts separately one comes to an understanding of it. Problem solving is also conducted this way in that thinking is organized into distinct groups (paragraphs, topic sentences, outlining) and then the spaces are filled in. Likewise people are often separated into distinct parts (good side, bad side), and there doesn't have to be an acceptance of a person in his totality to be able to be friends with or work with that person.

Moral orientation is also connected with this western tendency to separate experience into distinct categories. Generally, Americans separate experience into dualities and then make judgements based on those separations. For example, in a given situation an action or material object is categorized into either a high level (positive, justification for effort) or low level (negative, rejection, failure.) This dual judgemental system is seen throughout American life; moral-immoral, right-wrong, legal-illegal, success-failure,

practical-impractical, work-play, sin-virtue, clean-dirty, introvert-extrovert, secular-religious, civilized-primitive. This kind of thinking tends to put the world values into absolutes, and though other cultures also have dual systems of thinking (Chinese: Yin-Yang; Hindu: destruction and regeneration), they do not usually rank one superior to another and use such a division as a guide to proper behavior as Americans do.

Besides conceptualizing the universe mechanistically, there is an attitude that man is master of his environment per se. Man is seen as separate from his environment, opposed to being one with it. Man exploits the environment to conquer it, to control it. There are no limitiations to this conquest because Americans now have the final frontier--space. The new ecological approach is an indication that Americans are becoming aware of their limitations and capacities, but whether this will change the basic value system remains to be seen. Up until now the American has attempted to conquer nature by overcoming, improving, tearing down, and rebuilding it in a better way. He has tried to break down the soil, to harness the natural resources, and govern the natural environment. It must be admitted that enormous agricultural productivity is due to this dominating nature, but America (as the Western World) has paid highly for these successes with the squandering and spoiling of natural resources, forests, water, air, etc.

And thirdly, the American (and Western man) credits himself with a special consciousness, a soul, which other creatures are not believed to possess. Man is thought to be qualitatively different from other

forms of life. In contrast most of the non-western cultures merely consider man as another form of life different only in degree from other lifeforms. Through reincarnation man might be recycled as an insect or fish, or, as in the case of animistic religions all living things are believed to have a soul. Western biologists also share this view of man as part of a larger scheme. And it was precisely because of this conflict of values that traditional Western culture came into conflict with biological views in the 19th and 20th centuries. But apart from science, the overriding value still exists that dictates man's qualitative difference from other forms of life.

In sum, the American world view and moral orientation can be said to contain a certain objectivity to the world that separates man from nature, allows him to understand and judge the world by categorizing and fragmenting phenomenon and that ultimately places him in the position to control and dominate the environment.

Summary: Orientations of American Culture

- American culture is organized around an attempt at an active mastery of experience rather than a passive acceptance. Into this dimension falls a low tolerance of failure and an emphasis on success: money, materialism and power.

- Within this active mastery is a dimension of orderliness, one that divides and orders experience into smaller sections.

- American culture tends to be interested in the external world of events rather than the inner world of meaning. Americans are doers and tend to be manipulative instead of contemplative.

- The world view is pointed towards an open vista, emphasizing change and thus movement.

- The primary faith of the culture is immersed in rationalism which de-emphasizes the past and orients towards the future.

- Optimism, individual effort and efficiency are results of a rationalistic orientation.

- Moral orientation is in terms of twofold judgement.

- Work is the main focus of many Americans.

- The central personality type is outgoing, accessible, adaptive and informal.

- Emphasis is on the individual and his uniqueness to the world.

- Individual personality is stressed rather than a total submission to group identity.

- In interpersonal relationships the weight of the value system favors horizontal rather than vertical interchanges. Peer relationships are preferred over subordinate ones, equality over hierarchy.

Appendix I.

STEREOTYPING

Levels: Low intermediate to advanced

Size of group: 10 to 12

Materials: One page of paper or card to represent each nationality in the class, including the teacher's.

Purposes:

Affective: To recognize the existence of cultural stereotypes.

To study the validity and invalidity of cultural stereotypes.

To defend one's culture against invalid stereotyping.

To gain awareness of the pros and cons of stereotyping inside and outside the international classroom.

Linguistic: To practice explaining aspects of one's culture.

To ask and answer questions related to one's people.

To use vocabulary relevant to one's culture and the culture of others.

To correct grammatical errors if a transcript is used for this purpose.

Procedure:

NOTE: The success of this activity depends very much on how it is introduced and on the sensitive, diplomatic approach of the teacher as facilitator. It is not an exercise to insult people, but rather, carried out carefully, it can lead to prevention and resolution of conflicts and more thoughtful understanding of people from other cultures.

Students understand the meaning of "stereotype." One or more

examples of stereotypes may be provided by the teacher and/or students. (For example, "All Americans are overweight because they love junk food.") A short discussion about whether this is valid may begin the exercise. Students may also be asked if they can think of any dangerous stereotypes.

The teacher prepares papers or cards, each beginning with a sentence about each nationality in the class, including the teacher's. (For example, "Japanese people are...") These are passed out to each class member, including the teacher, to write a stereotypical completion. Although discussion tends to begin immediately, the teacher does not encourage it at this time. At the end of this part of the activity, a stereotype from each person about each culture, including his/her own, will appear on each page or card.

Since thinking and writing the stereotypes can take 30-40 minutes, and because handwriting is sometimes illegible, the teacher may collect the papers or cards and transcribe them for a later time. The teacher may correct or include grammatical mistakes on the transcript, depending on the linguistic purposes envisioned. The teacher may ask the students to spend some time thinking about what they wrote as homework and have them read during this part of the exercise.

These pages, cards, or transcripts are used as the basis for the exploration of cultural stereotypes. Each national representative has the opportunity to comment on the ones related to his/her culture--validating, invalidating, or questioning each one. The teacher may participate first. Free and lively questions and discussion occur. This may be followed by discussion of the causes and

effects of cultural and general stereotyping, the potential dangers and mistakes, and how to avoid making stereotypes which may be dangerous for inter-cultural understanding.

Comments on our experience:

By using this activity (bravely) early in the program, the recognition and avoidance of potential problems related to stereotyping has been quite beneficial to understanding. This recognition has brought prevention and resolution of conflicts both inside and outside the classroom.

VALUES RANKING

Is status more important than a successful marriage? Is a clean environment more important than economic security for all? Can world hunger be eliminated before the risk of war arises?

Level: High intermediate, advanced

Size of group: 10 - 12 or large group divided into smaller ones

Materials: Three lists (similar or identical to those which follow)

Purposes:

Affective: To explore one's values on three levels: personal, national, and international.

To gain awareness and appreciation of others' values.

To share understanding of the difficulties of recognizing and deciding priorities.

Linguistic: To practice vocabulary of one's personal, national and international values and opinions.

To practice basic social, economic, and political vocabulary.

To develop oral skills in disagreement.

To practice expressing and supporting one's opinions.

Procedure:

This exercise may be done in one, two, or three parts or altogether as one lesson.

The teacher gives each student the same list of personal, national, and international value components, with spaces to rank them

from one to ten. Including the teacher, all rank them without consulting others. In dyads, triads, or as a whole group, discussion of differences and similarities in values and priorities takes place. Values are expressed, questioned, sometimes reinforced, and often changed. One student, in fact, insisted upon compiling the class opinions on each level.

Values Ranking Sample Lists (can be separated)

PERSONAL VALUES

__ a satisfying job

__ good health

__ a lot of money

__ a good relationship with family

__ as much education as wanted or needed

__ a position of high status in the community

__ many material possessions, including a home

__ much leisure time

__ a clean envirnoment

__ a successful marriage with happy children

NATIONAL

__ a strong military defense system

__ a clean environment

__ educated citizens

__ inexpensive medical care for all

__ improved public transportation systems

__ reduction/elimination of crime

__ elimination of poverty

__ space exploration programs (ocean, also)

__ secure income for everyone

__ elimination of racism and discrimination

INTERNATIONAL

__ slowing or stabilizing world population growth

__ reducing the risk of war between nations

__ maintaining clean air and water around the world

__ reducing hunger and famine in developing countries

__ raising general world living standards

__ making secondary school education available to all

__ reducing nuclear weapons testing and production

__ cooperating on global problems, such as drug traffic and hijacking

__ developing and utilizing the world's natural resources, including the ocean, on a more equitable basis

__ agreeing on the priorities of world problems

Credit: Experiment Orientation Materials

THE CUSTOMS BANK

Discovery and Sharing of Cultural Uniqueness

Levels: Low intermediate and above

Size of group: Can be done with a large group, divided into two's or three's

Materials: None

Purposes:

Affective: To recognize, express, and share cultural uniqueness.
To gain appreciation of cultural and personal differences.
To stimulate interest in discovering more about your own and other cultures.

Linguistic: To use culture-related vocabulary.
To give a clear explanation of something.
To ask and answer questions.
To practice listening and "understanding."

Procedure:

The teacher gives an example of a unique American custom (for example, "Turkey is eaten at Thanksgiving in the States because...") and explains its background. The students ask questions and "understand" the custom.

Then, after reflecting on the customs unique to their countries, students do the same thing with one or two partners. When they are finished, the class comes back together and each student presents the custom of (one of) her or his partner(s). After all the customs have been shared (explained, "understood," and questions answered), a

summary may be done by the whole group. And in this way the class begins a "bank of customs."

Comments on our experience:

Students have remarked that this was their most interesting activity, and that they would like to repeat it. Teachers have found it extremely interesting. It is important that the teacher give the students a model of "understanding." It is also worthwhile to make a tape and transcription.

Credit: Original Activity developed by S. Linnig, ISE-West, Dominican College, San Rafael, California.

THE PYRAMID

Levels: Intermediate and advanced

Size of group: Groups of four; maximum three groups

Materials: Large (2 1/2' x 4') sheets of inexpensive paper, colored magic markers, masking tape

Purposes:

Affective: To become aware of your own and other people's values and ideals.

To recognize problems of deciding priorities.

To increase awareness of the importance of cooperation.

Linguistic: To learn and practice social, political, and economic vocabulary.

To practice listening and understanding.

To practice questions and answers.

To practice constructing and supporting arguments.

Procedure:

NOTE: This activity can take from one to three hours.

In each group of four, students propose, discuss and draw in pyramid form the basic priorities of a society. Top priorities are put on the apex of the pyramid and less important priorities are placed further down. Students are free to choose whether these will be material or non-material elements in order to allow for meaningful varieties of perception and greater creativity. Each group is told it will be responsible for helping the other groups to understand the diagram.

The teacher can begin by showing an example of a completed pyramid (for example, militaristic society, so that students will use the example for form rather than content). In small groups, students "brainstorm" ideas that are not accepted by everyone. Students then rank their priorities and draw the pyramid in whatever way the group decides is best.

After each group has completed its pyramid, the drawings are taped to a wall, side by side, for all to see. Orally, the class makes open observations, comparisons, and contrasts of the diagrams. This exercise may be followed by a discussion of group dynamics.

Comments on our experience:

This exercise has been highly effective, enlightening, motivating, and fun. It has promoted much understanding of individual, cultural, and community value systems, and has given students an open opportunity to use their creative imaginations through cooperation. It has also helped all of us become more aware of our most important values and ideals.

Credit: This activity was adapted by Susan Linnig, ISE-West, Dominican College, San Rafael, from an activity used in a Swiss school system.

Note: This exercise can be followed by "Utopia."

UTOPIA

Levels: Intermediate to advanced

Size of group: Class divided into small groups of three or four

Materials: Large (2 1/2' x 4') sheets of inexpensive paper, colored magic markers, masking tape

Purposes:

Affective: To become aware of your own and other people's values and ideals.

To increase awareness of the importance of cooperation.

Linguistic: To learn and practice social, political, economic, and philosophical vocabulary.

To practice listening and understanding.

To practice questions and answers.

To practice constructing and supporting arguments.

Procedure:

NOTE: This activity takes from one to three hours.

The teacher explains that each group will have the opportunity to exercise fantasies and dreams. They are going to plan the ideal (or fantasy) country together, discussing and deciding what this country could be like--any way they would love to see a country. After that, they will draw a visual diagram of their work and present it to the other groups.

The groups should work in separated areas if possible and be given a time limit. Again, no instruction is given as to what kind of plan it may be. (Some may draw a topographical picture, others a political

or economic chart, some, a colorful painting. These differences in perception greatly enliven the following discussions and are very interesting for all.)

When the plans are finished, they may be dealt with one at a time or taped side by side for open discussion.

Comments on our experience:

One interesting experience was when one artistic and highly individualistic student, after refusing to cooperate, offered a plan of individual islands near the country, so that each "citizen" could have his or her fantasy islands. Where complete cooperation had previously seemed impossible, all worked very proudly together and were very excited about presenting their group plan to the others.

Credit: Exercise developed by Susan Linnig, ISE-West, Dominican College, San Rafael, California.

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Endnotes

[1]Radcliffe-Brown, A.R., Method in Social Anthropology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), p. 76.

[2]Alger, Horatio, Ragged Dick and Mark the Match Boy (New York: Macmillian, 1962), p. 157.

[3]Warfels, Harry P. (ed.), Rhapsodist and Other Uncollected Writings of Benjamin Franklin, (New York: American Book Co., 1947), p. 23.