Moving beyond stereotypes

FSTML: The Forum
Howard Culbertson
What do I do with Paul NWolfskill?

• He’s got a big heart . . . .

BUT

• He’s boisterous.
• He’s loud.
• He wants to get things done NOW
• He even steps on the toes of fellow Americans
Culture?

• Paul Wolfskill and many other people think of culture as classical music, art and the use of good grammar and syntax.
“Culture is what makes you a stranger when you are away from home”
Defining culture

1. Philip Bock – What makes you a stranger when you’re away from home
2. Ruth Benedict – learned patterns
3. Charles Kraft – Complex, integrated coping mechanism
4. Bob Sjogren -- What makes us “us” and them “them”
An iceberg as an analogy of culture
From Gary Weaver in *Culture, Communication and Conflict: Readings in Intercultural Relations*
Developing Cultural Intelligence (or CQ = cultural quotient)

• Too much / too little?
• Limited time for cultural orientation
  – Anthropologist George Murdock’s 70 “cultural universals”
age-grading
athletic sports
bodily adornment
calendar
cleanliness training
community
organization
cooking
co-operative labor
cosmology
courtship
dancing
decorative art
divination
dream interpretation
education
eschatology
ethics
ethno-botany
etiquette
faith healing
family
feasting
fire-making
folklore
food taboos
funeral rites
language
law
luck / superstitions
magic
marriage
mealtimes
medicine
obstetrics
penal sanctions
personal names
population policy
postnatal care
pregnancy usages
property rights
propitiation of supernatural beings
puberty customs
religious ritual
residence rules
sexual restrictions
soul concepts
status differentiation
surgery
tool-making
trade
visiting
weather control
weaving
The “why” of Cultural Intelligence

• “Missionaries will learn new things every day including new foods and new customs that they are not used to. When they come back, they will be able to teach others what to do and not to do in that country so they will not upset anyone.” – student in introductory missiology class
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Appropriate input

• Example: Team and Haitian child
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  – Oh, that’s different
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  – Oh, that’s different
  – Toilet paper issues
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I have learned to appreciate the little things... like flushing toilet paper!

Shannon Guillot
• Goal: Embrace (rather than simply staying out of trouble)
  – Focus on attitude more than actions
  – Key words
    • Aware
    • Curious
    • Sensitive