

Global Teacher Seminar Lesson Plan

Title: Comparing Dimensions of Culture

Theme/Topic: Cultural Understanding

Introduction (2-3 sentence summary of lesson): Students will use the County Comparison website to explore similarities and differences when it comes to the 6 dimensions of culture. Students will share their observations, ask questions, and draw conclusions.

Subject(s)/Grade level(s): Sociology/10-12

Suggested Duration of Lesson: 1 Day

Connection to Standards/Common Core (1-2 standards): CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.3

Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

Essential Questions (1-2 questions): How are cultures similar and different? How might cultural values shape our understanding of ourselves, others, and the world?

Learning Objectives (2-3 objectives): I can describe the different dimensions of culture. I can compare and contrast dimensions between different cultures. I can create arguments about the effects of cultural dimensions on individuals and societies.

Materials Needed: Devices with internet access (<https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/>)

Pre-Assessment of Prior Knowledge: *How will students show what they already know about the topic?*

Start with a student led discussion about culture - ask students to brainstorm on their own and with their neighbors about their understanding of culture.

Teacher-Student Interaction (5-7 steps):

1. Start with an informal discussion with the following prompt(s)
 - a. *What is culture?*
 - b. *How are cultures similar and different?*
 - c. *How does our culture shape our actions and outlooks?*
 - d. *How do we “measure” culture?*
2. Ask students to brainstorm their answers to one or all of the above questions, have students share with a partner/small group, and share with the class. Emphasize that cultures are complex and can affect our attitudes and behaviors without us even realizing it.
3. Pass out the handout with the “6 Dimensions of National Culture” (see attached). Guide students through the 6 Dimensions and allow the students to use the handout to reference the dimensions while they explore the data.
4. Have students access the Country Comparison on a device (<https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/>). Students will spend about 15 minutes choosing countries to measure and compare. As students click through the country comparisons, have them write down their observations and answers to these questions:

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- a. How do you notice the dimensions of culture from where you grew up in your own life or observations of current events? (*For example, if you were born in America, which parts of the American cultural dimensions have you seen in action?*)
 - b. What similarities did you notice? What might these countries have in common? (*History, political structure, economic system, religions/belief systems, etc.*)
 - c. What differences did you notice? What might be different about these countries? (*History, political structure, economic system, religions/belief systems, etc.*)
 - d. How might understanding these dimensions of culture affect our relationships with people from other cultures and/or problem solving in our own country or with others?
5. Have students share their observations and answers with a partner or small group.
 6. Ask students to share their observations/answers with the class. If possible, display the website on a projector for the class in order to show students their classmates' observations.

Closing Activity: *What will the teacher do/say after the lesson? I.e. go over homework, etc.*

Exit Slip - Have students write down one observation we didn't have time to discuss in class and/or a reaction to something a classmate shared. Collect student answers on their way out the door and start class tomorrow with any interesting or unique responses.

Post-Assessment: *How will students demonstrate what they have learned about the topic from this unit?*

For the overall culture unit in Sociology, incorporate the 6 Dimensions of Culture in an overall discussion about culture. (I usually show the documentary *God Grew Tired of Us*-which shows the similarities and differences between US and Dinka Sudanese cultures—during this unit and have a formal class discussion for the summative grade.)

Reflection: *How are students engaging with ideas from another culture? What does it mean for them?*
Students will reflect on some of the cultural attitudes they take for granted to understand their own culture and how it is similar to and different from other cultures around the globe.

Resources: <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/>

Extension Activities/Extending the Lesson/Cross-Curricular Connections (2-3 ideas):

Possibilities for future lessons or how to use this for gifted/etc.

Connections for an ELA or Music Classroom – Have students connect cultural dimensions to themes in literature or music or even examples for specific passages/lyrics

Connections for an Environmental Science Class – How might the cultural dimensions impact a country's approach to dealing with environmental issues? Do the cultural dimensions help or hinder actions to address things like climate change?

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The 6 Dimensions of National Culture

From <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/models/national-culture/>

DIMENSIONS OF NATIONAL CULTURE:

The Hofstede model of national culture consists of six dimensions. The cultural dimensions represent independent preferences for one state of affairs over another that distinguish countries (rather than individuals) from each other.

The country scores on the dimensions are relative, in that we are all human and simultaneously we are all unique. In other words, culture can only be used meaningfully by comparison. The model consists of the following dimensions:

POWER DISTANCE INDEX (PDI)

This dimension expresses the degree to which the less powerful members of a society accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. The fundamental issue here is how a society handles inequalities among people.

People in societies exhibiting a large degree of Power Distance accept a hierarchical order in which everybody has a place and which needs no further justification. In societies with low Power Distance, people strive to equalise the distribution of power and demand justification for inequalities of power.

INDIVIDUALISM VERSUS COLLECTIVISM (IDV)

The high side of this dimension, called Individualism, can be defined as a preference for a loosely-knit social framework in which individuals are expected to take care of only themselves and their immediate families.

Its opposite, Collectivism, represents a preference for a tightly-knit framework in society in which individuals can expect their relatives or members of a particular ingroup to look after them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty. A society's position on this dimension is reflected in whether people's self-image is defined in terms of "I" or "we."

MASCULINITY VERSUS FEMININITY (MAS)

The Masculinity side of this dimension represents a preference in society for achievement, heroism, assertiveness, and material rewards for success. Society at large is more competitive. Its opposite,

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Femininity, stands for a preference for cooperation, modesty, caring for the weak and quality of life. Society at large is more consensus-oriented.

In the business context Masculinity versus Femininity is sometimes also related to as “tough versus tender” cultures.

UNCERTAINTY AVOIDANCE INDEX (UAI)

The Uncertainty Avoidance dimension expresses the degree to which the members of a society feel uncomfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity. The fundamental issue here is how a society deals with the fact that the future can never be known: should we try to control the future or just let it happen?

Countries exhibiting strong UAI maintain rigid codes of belief and behaviour, and are intolerant of unorthodox behaviour and ideas. Weak UAI societies maintain a more relaxed attitude in which practice counts more than principles.

LONG TERM ORIENTATION VERSUS SHORT TERM NORMATIVE ORIENTATION (LTO)

Every society has to maintain some links with its own past while dealing with the challenges of the present and the future. Societies prioritize these two existential goals differently.

Societies who score low on this dimension, for example, prefer to maintain time-honoured traditions and norms while viewing societal change with suspicion.

Those with a culture which scores high, on the other hand, take a more pragmatic approach: they encourage thrift and efforts in modern education as a way to prepare for the future.

In the business context, this dimension is referred to as “(short-term) normative versus (long-term) pragmatic” (PRA). In the academic environment, the terminology Monumentalism versus Flexhumility is sometimes also used.

INDULGENCE VERSUS RESTRAINT (IVR)

Indulgence stands for a society that allows relatively free gratification of basic and natural human drives related to enjoying life and having fun. Restraint stands for a society that suppresses gratification of needs and regulates it by means of strict social norms.