Cultural Diversity

Chapter 2: Cultural Diversity

Chapter 2.1: The Meaning of Culture

Chapter 2.2: Cultural Variation

Chapter 2.1: The Meaning of Culture

Essential Questions:

1. What is the meaning of the term "culture"?

2. What are the basic components of culture?

Culture is all the shared products of human groups. They include physical objects and the beliefs, values and behaviors of the group.

- There are two types of culture: material and non-material
- **Material Culture**: Anything we can touch (tangible). This may include cars, books, buildings, clothing, computers, and cooking utensils.
- **Non-material Culture**: These are non-tangible things and include beliefs, family patterns, ideas, language, political and economic systems, rules, skills and work practices.

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What are the components of culture?

- **Values**: Shared beliefs about what is good or bad, right or wrong, desirable or undesirable.
- **Language**: The organization of written or spoken symbols into a standardized system.
- **Technology**: A society's culture consists of not only physical objects but also the rules for using those objects.
- **Symbols**: It is through symbols that we create our culture and communicate it to group members and future generations. A symbol must have shared meaning attached to it. It may be a word, gesture, image, sound, physical object event or element of life... as long as it has meaning that is recognized by the group.
- **Norms**: Shared rules of conduct that people use to show how to act in specific situations

Norms:There are several different forms of norms:

- **Folkways**: Norms that describe socially acceptable behavior but that does not have great moral significance attached to them. Ex: everyday customs; manners
- **Mores** (morays): Norms that describe behaviors that have great moral significance attached to them. Ex: dishonesty, fraud, murder
- **Laws**: Written rules of conduct enacted and enforced by the government

Question to discuss: What would our society be like if we did not have one or more of these norms? How would the removal of one of these norms change our society?

- **Cultural trait**: An individual tool, act, or belief that is related to a particular situation or need. Ex: eating utensils, greetings, choice of language
- **Cultural complexes**: clusters of interrelated traits. These include games, social interaction, rules, etc.
- Example of cultural complex: football - material traits include the ball, measuring chains, equipment and benches. The moves/plays, the rules, penalties, financing, advertising and marketing of the games also form the complex.
- **Culture pattern**: The combination of a number of cultural complexes into an interrelated whole. Ex: basketball, baseball, football, tennis et al. all combine to form the American athletic pattern.