

Compiled Discussion Boards

1) Compiled Messages

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
Tuesday, September 14, 2010

Date:

Subject: Creating Coherence

Author: Tyler Walworth

1. There are so many different viewpoints out there! I still have to remind myself of the miracle that God has given us called communication. Even though these responses are so varied and so rich in diversity themselves, the string of unity that ties them all together is that they are all striving toward a singular goal of coherence. "I don't have a problem talking or interacting with people of other races, it's the religion aspect that makes me uneasy. I don't think unless I had to for this class I would ever step foot near a synagogue, mosque, or anything non-Christian. In this class I look forward to trying to be as open minded as possible and experience new things." (Seth) This really helps to remind me that we are all searching for others and almost seem to seamlessly interact with them as long as we do not purposefully push them away. This idea of a need for coherence really brings culture into a more specific reference point of creating a view through which we can see the world and make sense of it all.

(Zacharias)
2. The video was extremely interesting and to me, before now, would have seemed completely ridiculous! But I guess that is what this class is all about. I just could imagine walking into a house where it was not ok to have your shoes on. It was also not ok to look people in the eye. Therefore when I found out that people were avoiding me because of my shoes I would try to communicate with them even more only to find that they were basically running away from me and not even willing to look me in the eye! I know I would be angry and frustrated until someone finally told me of the communication massacre that I had just committed. The Roykan also pointed this out very clearly and I think I would have found myself becoming a monster as well in this situation.
3. An example of a high context culture would be some of the families in my church. They operate mainly on inside jokes and the inability to open up to outsiders without their acceptance of these inside jokes. Unfortunately, it creates a hopeless situation for the outsider until someone finally enlightens them to what these jokes mean. One of the lower context cultures I have been a part of and think is a good example is the gas station that I worked for. There was no such thing as context in this situation, but instead everyone used open and clear low context discussion and even opened up to me about their lives.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
Tuesday, September 14, 2010

Date:

Subject: Re:Creating Coherence

Author: Janelle Gertsch

With regard to your comment about not being okay to look people in the eye...it drives me CRAZY when my kids do that! But it had been ingrained into their systems from the time they were infants that they are not to make eye contact, especially with their elders. Imagine my frustration here (in the German Lutheran culture) trying to get them convinced that NOT looking someone in the eye when they are speaking is DISrespectful and can cause others to think they are not trustworthy!

Here's another one - between Middle Eastern countries: My oldest daughter (from the little info we were provided) may possibly have some Pakistani in her heritage - which may explain another reason she was relinquished to the orphanage. She has thick, strong, black hair. She wears it long, down to the middle of her back. But it has some "fuzziness" to it, similar to what some of us may experience on a humid day, curling up around her face. My youngest daughter has thick, strong, black hair. She wears it long, down to her rear end. However, hers is very shiny and smooth, with no frizz, wave or curl. The oldest daughter believes that people like her sister better because she has better hair. And believe me, this goes way beyond sisters' rivalry. The oldest girl sees herself as "not as good" because of the possible mixture of her ethnicity. This is high context - something I never would have imagined existing.

And thirdly - 3 children from high-context India. Me, having been raised in low-context America by extended family with a German (low-context) heritage & upbringing. Talk about a daily battle. Communication is often a struggle - I want to throw issues out on the table and discuss them. The kids don't really want to talk about any of it. Parents vs. children, or high-context vs. low-context#63;

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
Tuesday, September 14, 2010

Date:

Subject: Re:Creating Coherence

Author: Heidi Kohn

Tyler, I found your examples of high and low context cultures interesting. I too talked of inside jokes in my references to high context culture. It is sad that some of our high context situations in the U.S. make people feel like outsiders or excluded – especially in a church setting.

I bet that your time at the gas station was very interesting. A gas station is a place where you find people from all different backgrounds as almost everyone drives a car. Did you have any particularly eye-opening intercultural experiences while working there#63;

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
Wednesday, September 15, 2010

Date:

Subject: Re:Creating Coherence

Author: Donna McCray

When I think about your example of families in church being high context it makes me laugh a little. Not that all churches are like this but a lot of them that I have been to are like this. Especially small churches tend to be very high context. Everyone knows everyone and they know all the inside jokes and situations. It can be very difficult for an outsider to feel welcome in these situations.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
Thursday, September 16, 2010

Date:

Subject: Re:Creating Coherence

Author: Renea Gernant

I think it probably happens in all church organizations. We really do normalize expectations...from where various families will sit...to who is going to coffee...to what some of the unwritten rules of interaction are. Add to that the unsaid assumptions about what it means to be a "good Catholic" or a "good Lutheran," et al.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
September 13, 2010

Date: Monday,

Subject: Morgan- Week 3 :)

Author: Morgan Hohbein

1) When you get down to it, the debate over how to define culture in action is more than likely going to be an ongoing argument. Everyone has their own opinion. Jandt talks about our experience and knowledge of other cultures being limited because we are so biased towards ours. (Jandt, 7) This is a very valid point. People will complain, complain, complain all they want about our country, the way it's run, and such, but when it comes to somebody putting down your culture and the way you were raised, you will more than likely defend it til the end. Also, culture is something of pride. That's a huge characteristic of belonging to a culture. It's actually one of the coolest things about being a part of one. Even within the United States, there are different cultures. "Subcultures exist within dominant cultures and are often based on economic or social class, ethnicity, race or geographical region." (Jandt, 16) This quote does a great job of describing how there are smaller cultures within the larger, more well-known ones.

We can find many examples of culture and pride all in this one country. I like the line in the book (and actually highlighted it when I first came upon it) when Jandt makes the point that "in order to learn, we must learn through interaction with that culture (Jandt, 8). That is why we're doing all these cultural

projects and attending festivals and such. To be exposed to another culture is the best way to learn about it. Textbooks can only get you so far.

2) The business card video was extremely interesting to me and touched on some interesting points. It talked about how the card represents ourselves and other people individually. I learned something new when they talked about the grabbing of the card in the Muslim culture and how grabbing it the wrong way is often a sign of disrespect and is frowned upon. This is something that we as Americans just laugh at and think is so silly. But to them, it's something completely serious and important. Also, it talked about how in many cultures, such as the Chinese culture, disrespecting someone's business card would be the same as disrespecting them. This brings us to the next point which Jandt begins to talk about on page 65, high and low context communities.

3) In high-context cultures, they tend to value interpersonal relationships and put a high emphasis on them. Developing trust is very important as they prefer group work over individual work. Low-context cultures are more logical, factual, and direct. Communicators are more straightforward and concise. These characteristics are usually used to describe the language in a culture, whether it's more or less direct. I feel like American is more of a high-context culture as Americans tend to be more laid back in the way we do things. A lot of foreign cultures do a lot of rituals in order to celebrate or practice their culture. You don't see as much of that in America when it comes to straight culture, not religion. Americans seem to have this code where you can use a lot of jokes and "slang" and others will just know what you're talking about whereas those from other cultures wouldn't have a clue. We're also not as strict of a culture as the others. The place where I see this displayed the most is in Middle Eastern countries. Women would never dare talk the way we do to others. Women rarely even get spoken to in that culture as it is. And it is a cultural norm for them.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
Tuesday, September 14, 2010

Date:

Subject: Re:Morgan- Week 3 :)

Author: Heidi Kohn

Morgan, I agree with your comment about America having a much more lax standing when it comes to communication and traditions. I struggle to think of many places where formalities are still in place in daily life. One example of our extremely lax society is the way that many Americans think it is acceptable to talk on their cell phones while they are at a grocery store check out. I mean, I personally think that is rude, and so do most grocery store clerks, but it is somewhat culturally acceptable. In a high context culture however, behavior like this would be extremely offensive, and the grocery store clerk may even refuse you service.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
Thursday, September 16, 2010

Date:

Subject: Re:Morgan- Week 3 :)

Author: Renea Gernant

I do think that rude cell phone behavior is becoming less tolerated overall, though, and I think we are starting to internalize some cultural rules and when and where one uses the phone. For example, people will tell you to shut it off if it rings in a restaurant...

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
Saturday, October 23, 2010

Date:

Subject: Re:Morgan- Week 3 :)

Author: Tyler Walworth

1) Yes! I agree that people just need to get out there and do it! Jandt is pretty adamant throughout the book that actual contact with other cultures is the most important part. How is a person going to step outside of their own bias if they don't know or have never been challenged by any thing other than their own bubble? This is not to say that those who have not experienced other cultures cannot make a proper value judgement, but I would say that learning by experience is one of the most vital points. Ministering Cross Culturally draws on the idea of real time with people that is spent delving in to who they are. As a Christian it is my responsibility to love my neighbor as myself and in the cross cultural world this means loving their culture that comes with them as well.

2. I thought the business card idea was a little crazy. I now my naivete when it comes to the professional world and the culture of saving face is really fascinating to me because of my out there nature. But this just reinforces what Jandt talks about in our bias toward our own culture. But I still don't like professionalism!

3. It is very interesting that you listed the U.S. to be high context. I have usually considered the U.S. to be low context because of the individualistic nature of the society. Sometimes the only thing you really can talk about to another person is the whether or the frustrating greeting of "How are you?"; But I really do see your point that there are so many phrases in the U.S. now that need context in order to understand a single thing that is said. I think the fact that the sitcom and youtube generation is using quotations now more than ever has brought the U.S. into a hybrid of high context and low context. High in the sense that other cultures might not be able to understand the youtube mindset, but low in the sense that everyone has a connection to everyone else now through shows and youtube.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
September 13, 2010

Date: Monday,

Subject: Week 3- Donna McCray

Author: Donna McCray

1) The first thing that I noticed was that everyone has a different way of defining culture. We all have different experiences and come from different backgrounds and so when we are evaluating what culture is, we all have different opinions to put into it. According to Jandt, there are many different facets of defining culture. "The word culture describes everything that makes a large group of people unique" (Jandt, pg 25). As is made clear by our postings last week, we all come from different backgrounds and therefore view our own and other cultures in a slightly different light than the next person. I think however that we can all pretty much agree on what "American Culture" as a whole is stereotyped as. Things such as materialistic, individualism, and time oriented showed up in multiple posts.

2) I think that it is very interesting that there are such strict guidelines for handing out business cards. When you think about all of the little things in cultures that are considered right and wrong it is a little overwhelming. Am I ever going to learn all of these rules? I really don't think that it is possible. When thinking about my future career, I think there are quite a few instances when a difference in perception could lead to miscommunication. For example, if you have a student who is from a culture that eats dogs (an example from Jandt pg.59), and you talk about pets in class, that child might be confused as to why you are keeping food as a pet.

3) In the book it states "On meeting a stranger, your verbal communication with that person is very explicit—or low context—simply because you have no shared experiences. You can't assume anything." (Jaunt, pg. 63). An example of low context vs. high context would be me and my fiancé. When we first started talking to each other and into the beginning of our dating relationship, we had more of a low context relationship because we were still getting to know things about each other and how we each operated on a separate basis. Now we have a very high context relationship. Whether it is a look or a word, we can guess or know what the other person is thinking about or trying to get at. For example, he is very sarcastic but I did not know that at first. If he had not been very explicit in saying that he was being sarcastic about something than I could have taken it in a very bad way or a way that he was not trying to say at all. If you are in a very high context culture but are from a low context culture it could be very difficult for you to understand how things operate on a day to day basis. Say you start a job in another country and they are high context. You are use to being told just what you need to do so it is going to be hard for you to adjust to that type of culture.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
Tuesday, September 14, 2010

Date:

Subject: Re:Week 3- Donna McCray

Author: Doris Galarza

Donna ,
 I liked the example from Jandt that you gave. I haven't thought of that before. It's interesting because I'm such a picky eater and you know

judgemental i am about my food.. I think that we do need to take inter consideration what the different cultures do have so we know not to offend anyone.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
Thursday, September 16, 2010

Date:

Subject: Re:Week 3- Donna McCray

Author: Renea Gernant

And also as you note, Donna, we won't be able to learn them all. BUT if we are sensitive and concerned...we can avoid overt mistakes and learn to anticipate humble correction in some cases. People in all cultures respect effort...even if we are imperfect in the end.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
September 13, 2010

Date: Monday,

Subject: Kim Week 3

Author: Kimberly McCord Fisher

1) Since a majority of this class appears to have German/Lutheran background, I was at first disappointed to read so many people interested in attending Oktoberfest. It just seems too close to the majority of backgrounds, however, after reading Jandt (pg 52) discussing different people's reaction to different senses, it seems that it could be interesting to have multiple people attend the same function and get their individual reactions.

I cannot post this week without mentioning something I heard a comedian talk about on a morning radio show. This particular comedian is from Australia and was commenting on what he felt was a peculiar phenomenon of Americans. The sports guy on the radio said he is Irish, so the comedian asked him where in Ireland he comes from and what generation of his family is from Ireland.

The sports guy doesn't know.

The comedian then begins his tirade of American's who announce "I'm Irish", "I'm German", "I'm Italian", etc. His response was "NO...you're American." He went on to tell the story that his grandfather was from Ireland, however, his parents, as well as himself, were born in Australia. Thus, they're Australian. He said in his world travels, in no other country do people count their ancestry in place of their citizenship. It made sense. I wish you all could have heard his rant, because I have to say, he was right on the money.

I'd also like you all to know, this old lady cannot remember or perhaps keep straight what she had read in the past few weeks. I'd to know, am I the only one who has a cheat sheet on where everyone is from, their ancestry, history etc?

2) At first, I didn't know whether the business card video was serious or not. I wondered how I've been in the business world for twenty-five years without hearing these rules before! I have to wonder how many people I have

offended by handing my business card off with my left hand, since I'm LEFT HANDED!!! It's as natural to me as breathing. I've also found myself avoiding reading the card as soon as it's handed to me because it felt rude to take my attention away from the person to peruse their card.

3) I wonder if the following is an example of high-context vs low-context: I must comment on my reading of Jandt (pg 59) "Dogs as pets or as food." My husband works for INS with a large percentage of Vietnamese. We have two dogs, Suzie and Kayleigh, who are basically like our children (they even dress up for holidays)! When Kayleigh was a puppy she was quite a handful, and we occasionally thought we had made a mistake by adding a young puppy to our established home of my husband, myself and Suzie (our eight-year-old Cairn terrier). On one occasion, Kevin was at work mumbling about something naughty Kayleigh had done, when a guy walking by said he would take our dog if we wanted to get rid of her. Kevin laughed and said we could never get rid of her, but she just annoyed us sometimes. The gentleman walked off and said if we changed our mind to let him know because dog is delicious! Can you imagine the horror 1) that Kevin felt hearing that and 2) MY horror as the story was told to me! To see the picture in Jandt (pg 60) caused me a flashback of that horrible day as well as a need to give extra attention and affection to Suzie and Kayleigh!

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
September 13, 2010

Date: Monday,

Subject: Re:Kim Week 3

Author: Sara Holle

You are definitely correct in my mind about your first point. I've caught myself doing that as well (in fact, I probably did it in my first post...)--I call myself German, when in fact, I am only from German heritage, like you stated. I do know that the Holles came from the "deep marshlands," if that counts for anything... :) This sort of thing makes Americans look like posers. It reminds me of the individuals who only display their Irish heritage on St. Patrick's Day (and then feel obligated to show it in the amount of alcohol they consume, as well), but not to offend any folks of Irish heritage, it was just an example (perhaps it is on my mind because I went to an Irish Festival yesterday). I consciously decided to not go to a German Fest/Fall Festival/Harvest Festival because I live it every day and have for the past 21 years. I have become proficient in it. Time to experience something different.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
Wednesday, September 15, 2010

Date:

Subject: Re:Kim Week 3

Author: Donna McCray

In regards to question #2, I think you make a good point by saying you didn't know if it was a joke or not. These rules seem pretty silly to someone who is not use to them or involved in using them. But when you get out into the 'real world' you are going to be expected to know all of these little rules that seem silly and trivial now. It is scary to think about how many 'rules' there are to follow in the global business world.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
Thursday, September 16, 2010

Date:

Subject: Re:Kim Week 3

Author: Renea Gernant

Of course, Kimberly, you have been out there and survived...
I did appreciate your point about left-handedness. I don't know the answer but I wonder how they handle left-handedness in cultures in which it is considered 'dirty' to use the left-hand. I know that my mom was a leftie that was forced to use her right hand as a kid. I suppose they may do that in some countries...but it seems like it would be hard.
The dog thing is really tough on people like me who are dog lovers...and yet...I try to remember that there are also folks in the world who would get physically ill if they learned that they had eaten beef which is sacred to them.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
September 13, 2010

Date: Monday,

Subject: Seth Morris- Week Three

Author: Seth Morris

1). According to Jandt on page 427, Culture is defined as 'Sum total ways of living, including behavioral norms, linguistic expression, styles of communication, patterns of thinking, and beliefs and values of a large enough to be self sustaining transmitted over the course of generations'. This definition leaves a lot to be interpreted, because who defines 'norms' for an entire nation, especially one as large as the USA? What is the normal word to describe a fizzy, flavored carbonated beverage? Pop, Soda, Coke? That's where subcultures start, which on page 435 is described as 'Group within a larger society that shares distinctive cultural characteristics to distinguish it from others'. Thinking about this, we constantly find ways to divide ourselves into more and more specific subcultures, but claim each other on larger levels to unite against some other group...for instance, at Concordia we divide ourselves by what sport we play or what's our major to decide where we sit in Janzow, but at a volleyball game we are all together cause we all are

Concordia students, that sort of thing.

How we define culture is going to be a never ending debate, especially because it's dependant on the person's experiences and their perception. For instance, Morgan Hohbein grew up in a very structured environment without experiencing much change throughout her life, because she's always gone to a Lutheran school & lived in the same house all her life (Paragraph 1, Week 1 response). She grew up with Midwestern Values (paragraph 2), and like me realizes that we need to become more cultured, because we haven't been exposed to much being located in the midwest.

A complete 180 of this would be Doris Galarza (in her week 2 response) when she talked about growing up in the Big Apple, learning to be dependent on nobody but herself from an early age.

2) I couldn't agree more with the video from about :27 on when she says "Whether you are traveling around the world or conducting business in your own hometown, this ritual of Asian style business card exchanges is now considered an International business protocol". When I went on my business trip for my internship with Sandhills Publishing to the World's Largest Fly-In airshow in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, I was constantly handing out and receiving business cards. I'm almost certain that I always received the card with my left hand so that my right hand was open to shake theirs. Thankfully, although I spoke with many Asians, I never exchanged cards, because I would have lost some business because of my lack of knowledge about such a seemingly small, easily overlooked thing.

I never heard about the importance of which hand to hand the card in, and how to receive a card. To me it seems like it would be awkward to receive or give a card with both hands, and I feel like I would look ridiculous.

It's interesting how they view this business card as an extension of their face. "drawing on a card is like drawing on their face" "sitting on a card is like sitting on a face". Immediately after talking with somebody I almost wrote something down on the card, either a remind to myself of something to do or a something important to remember the person. Needless to say, I drew on many faces that week!

From what I experienced firsthand, people from the USA, Australia, New Zealand, and South American countries treat business cards very casually, the exchange was never this formal, I saw cards go into back pockets (ouch my face :(), and the whole process was very relaxed. Also, people would write reminders to themselves on my card as well.

3) In the video at 1:10 it explains that "High Context message is where most of the information is internalized in the person or physical context, very little in verbal message". Most of these contain minimal context with pre programmed information in sender and receiver. Greetings are high context communication. Behavioral patterns and meanings are established. Korea, Japan and China are high context cultures.

Low Context-Direct Statements that use westernized logic are low context. Interactions and conversations are measured on the quantity of high and low context statements. The USA is low context, preference for explicit, direct messages.

In high context cultures the relationship determines the communication. People are treated according to social position.

A high context situation (although not a very nice situation) is when you are driving and somebody disagrees with your lane change and gives you the middle finger. We don't need any more information, the finger lets us know what they mean.

A low context situation is talking to a stranger at a social event,

where most of what we take away from the conversation is from the verbal exchange that occurs.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
Tuesday, September 14, 2010

Date:

Subject: Re:Seth Morris- Week Three

Author: Heidi Kohn

Seth, thank you for sharing your observations about how people from USA, Australia, New Zealand, and South America treat the business cards that they receive. I was wondering if the Japanese view of them was prominent in global business. Do you think that Asian cultures tend to have a deeper respect for other's property or business cards because they are more frequently a high context culture?
I also agree with your view that defining culture in action is an on-going debate. It is difficult to define cultural norms, especially in the USA, for example we can look at your discussion of what to call a carbonated beverage. However, I think that part of our lax or acceptance of many things in the USA is a cultural norm for us as well. We all have our preference for how to refer to carbonated beverages, but we recognize that they have a few different names.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
Thursday, September 16, 2010

Date:

Subject: Re:Seth Morris- Week Three

Author: Renea Gernant

I am not sure that I quite agree with "the finger" from a driver being high context. In my mind, that seems extremely direct, rude and decidedly easy to know, understand and interpret.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
Saturday, October 23, 2010

Date:

Subject: Re:Seth Morris- Week Three

Author: Tyler Walworth

1) I think you are very correct in the difficulties of establishing a way to define culture. Jandt on page 147 does give a brief description of the meta-meaning of culture. The problem comes when culture splits and divides as you said into subcultures. But I think

the meta-meaning still remains intact even while the subcultures continue to multiply. The main reason is that there are still principles on which each of those groups are acting within the context of a certain society. While it is true that they have their own culture, this culture is being effected by the meta-culture that they are a part of. For instance, if I were to bring up my western mindset of logic and tried to use that in China, I would be met with major difficulties because of their principles of narrative and the value of story telling. Thus the subcultures actually display the individual circumstances of the larger culture played out for all to see.

2. The one issue I have with the video and Jandt puts a check on this too, is the limits of stereotyping. While it may be true that Chinese business relations are very focused on this issue of business cards, this might not carry over into Taiwan. Thus even though a person is of Asian descent, they may not be from the specific Chinese region. But I still think it is very valuable to practice this standard any way, because those that don't know won't care and those that do will not be turned away.

3. I think you are correct in the idea of America being low context. But I do think that America is very influenced by things like viral videos and the specific media that we watch here. Because so much of our communication is based off of a general knowledge of these media it might seem high context to someone that is new to our culture.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
September 13, 2010

Date: Monday,

Subject: Doris WEEK 3!!

Author: Doris Galarza

1. Looking at the week one and two posts, in my opinion, the debate over how to define culture in action, there are many ways to describe culture in action. The thing is this debate on it will never end. The reason being is that we all have different opinions and just like the Jandt text says, "Our experience with and knowledge of other cultures is limited by the perceptual bias of our own culture." (Jandt, pg7) Many of us at Concordia and even in this class all have different cultures. I really like this: "many classrooms can be models of the United Nations" (Jandt, 13). We all come from different places where we value different things. Yea we are Americans and we all have that as our main culture but people within the U.S. value different things over others, depending upon where you like and how you were brought up. The Jandt text says that in order to learn, we must learn through interaction with that culture (pg.8).
2. After watching the video on Business cards, I was really surprised when it was talking about how a business card is like someone's face and how you should handle the card. I never thought about this before. It was interesting to me that the video talked about not putting the card away in your wallet and then sitting out it because then it was like sitting on the persons face. It's a sign of respect to the person who just gave you a card. After thinking about it, this makes a lot of sense. If I gave someone a business card I wouldn't want them to just treat it like some piece of paper and shove it in their pocket. Now I know what to do when I receive a business card from anyone.
3. After watching the video on high and low

context cultures, I understand that high context cultures have more of a college undergrad feel to it with the long term relationships and having strong boundaries. High context cultures also have accepting to belonging and who is an outsider. We have more ties and interactions with people. Low context cultures are like Janzow. It is rule oriented and task oriented with the separation of time, activities and relationships.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
Thursday, September 16, 2010

Date:

Subject: Re:Doris WEEK 3!!

Author: Renea Gernant

It really does make a lot of sense. I think of it a bit as I do about when you give someone a gift. If that person were to toss it in the trash while you were standing there, you would be horrified, and hurt. Conceptually, they are giving you a gift, a connection and a name. It's personal and important.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
September 13, 2010

Date: Monday,

Subject: Alright week 3!

Author: Hannah Koops

1) Jandt defines culture as, "A community or population sufficiently large enough to be self-sustaining, that is, large enough to produce new generations of members without relying on outside people." (pg 7) For our class, we've shown that we each have a different culture. But we still all live in America... curious, no? So shouldn't we all have the same culture? And when outsiders look into America, don't they classify all Americans as being the same or very similar culture? Don't we do that to other countries/cultures? Jandt offers an answer to this in the discussion of subcultures. These subcultures "exist within dominant cultures and are often based on economic or social class, ethnicity, race or geographical region." (pg 16) Many of us are from the Midwest, but still have very different backgrounds. I think this means we can learn a lot from each other and that it is important to recognize that by understanding more about the people around us, the larger our own boundaries can grow. It is good to be in this class with such diversity; even if it doesn't appear as diversity on the surface.

2) Ok first of all, this business card video made me laugh. If you didn't watch it, you should... for sheer entertainment value if nothing else. :) I was watching Pan's Labyrinth (for this class actually) and in one of the opening scenes the little girl, Ophelia, was meeting the Captain, her new father. She was clutching books in her right hand and offered him her left hand to shake. She grabbed her hand and basically said, "You never offer your left hand you disrespectful child." (Only not in that nice of words) Watching

the business card video reminded me of that scene. Ophelia got started off on the wrong foot with him, just because of a non verbal miscommunication. This example is not out of the ordinary. By not understanding other cultures, we could easily offend others by our lack of competency. Another thing I've been thinking about lately is how much the US really is driven by tasks. On my hall, I worry that I am not spending enough time with my residents. This is because I have been more task oriented than person oriented lately. I think a concept that goes hand in hand with being task driven is the idea of being time driven. I have to get these tasks done by 'X' time, therefore the task comes before the relationship. Table 1 from page 39 of Ministering Cross-Culturally keeps popping up in my mind when I begin to think about my daily schedule. I'm no longer sure if what I'm talking about really answers the question, but it makes a connection in my mind, so I thought I would share it.

3) In high context cultures, as the video mentioned, most of the information is internalized. Very little of the actual message is found in the verbal part of communication. How messages are transmitted and received hinges on the communicators past experience and relationship with one another. Some examples of high context cultures are Japan, India and other Asian cultures. A high context message can be found in rituals or greetings among other things. Low context cultures rely much heavier on the words used. Or, as the video mentions, direct statements. The video also mentioned that low context cultures pull information from westernized logic. For the most part, no culture of communication is completely low context or completely high context, but falls somewhere in the middle of the culture. The US and Australia are some examples of low context cultures.

An example of our low context culture can be seen in advertisements in this country. Advertisements are often over packed with words or dialect in America because words give more tangible ideas than images.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
Wednesday, September 15, 2010

Date:

Subject: Re:Alright week 3!

Author: Donna McCray

It is so true that our class has "such diversity; even if it doesn't appear as diversity on the surface". Even within a culture (America), we all have different separate cultures and we can use that to teach each other and open our own minds to different ideas and beliefs.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
Thursday, September 16, 2010

Date:

Subject: Re:Alright week 3!

Author: Renea Gernant

I get the connection to the floor issue...I think. At very least as I was reading it, it didn't seem like a non sequitor.

I was just noting on Doris's post that the best analogy about the business card thing for me is the idea of gift giving for most of us. If someone gives us a gift, we accept it, thank them and treat it with respect...at least as long as they are in the room. The card is, functionally, a gift and a networking connection...so they honor it... It's different but it is oddly logical too...kind of like your floor to video connection.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
September 13, 2010

Date: Monday,

Subject: Amanda: Unit 2, Week 3

Author: Amanda Kisker

1. I see the debate as never ending. Differences in opinions will always keep the debate going. As I sit here typing away I look over to my book and notice the page it happened to be opened too. Jandt (2007) describes culture on pages six and seven in two different definitions. The first definition originates in the 19th century where culture was used as a synonym for Western Civilization. "The idea was that all societies pass through developmental stages, beginning with savagery, progressing to barbarism, and culminating in Western civilization" (Jandt, 2007, p. 6). In the next section, culture is defined in modern terms. "As a community or population sufficiently large enough to be self-sustaining" (Jandt, 2007, p.7). Specific elements include symbols, rituals, values, and heroes (Jandt, 2007, p.7).

Looking through posts from weeks one and two I noticed the definition of culture varies not only from nation to nation, but region to region and state to state or even city to city. I think what's neat about this class is the fact that we don't meet in a classroom and get to see what everyone looks like. You base your opinion of others solely by what you read on Blackboard. I love how a class, even one without an actual room, can bring together such different people. I noticed from our first and second posts that my fellow classmates come from all over the U.S. In a way, I envy that. I've lived in Nebraska my entire life and although I love it; it's almost as if people who moved around and have lived in different regions will be able to give a variety of definitions of culture. For example, Erika. She's lived in Colorado and plans to teach in inner-city Denver. That's awesome! I don't know her whole past and what drives her to reach out and work with that group of people one day but her cultural experiences will certainly expand over the next 10 years. Heidi in the week two posts discussed living in both Idaho and Michigan. She talked about the culture being so focused on individualism and "hectic." I feel like I can relate to that.

It seems the majority of us in our posts discussed how we agree with Jandt and Lingenfelter & Mayers. Their definitions of American culture fit us to the pin. A lot of us said we related to feeling very time oriented and task oriented. Another common idea brought up was how materialistic Americans can be. Nobody really seemed to argue that thought and I know I myself will admit to fitting right into the definition. We all agree Americans are individualistic, materialistic and very time-oriented, but are they such a bad thing? Sometimes

while reading Lingenfelter and Mayer's book I felt guilty for being the way I am. Surely, I could easily function without some of the items I own or without my entire week planned out. But man oh man would it be rough. This is my culture. I was raised this way and would find it very hard to change. I'm curious how hard it is for immigrants. I wonder what it was like to immigrate to a new country, how difficult that would've been. I also wonder if it's even harder now as our culture grows to become even more low-context, individualistic, materialistic, and time-oriented. (2). I never realized exchanging business cards was a situation that involved so many do's and don'ts. While watching the video I kept thinking, wow never would have thought of that. The card should be clean and in mint condition. The video talked about the card serving as a representation of you. In order to give and receive a card, it should be done with the right or both hands, as it is an insult to use the left hand in Muslim countries. What I found most interesting was the part in the video where they stressed placing the business card in a separate case. The video emphasized not putting the card in a wallet because most men carry their wallet in their back pocket. To sit on their wallet would be like sitting on the face of the person whose card you just accepted and would be extremely offensive. Jandt (2007) describes face maintenance as crucial in high-context cultures. While I may not be handing out business cards any day soon, I very much liked what this video had to say. It was particularly helpful, especially for those considering one day working in a business environment. I think the information presented could help one avoid cultural misunderstandings in the future. After all, one of the goals of this class is become more culturally aware. (3). The difference between high-context and low-context cultures lies in how direct their language is. Low-context cultures for instance expect communication to be direct. There is also a value in expressing yourself, sharing opinions, and trying to persuade others to see things your way. High-context cultures, on the other hand, include communication that is spoken in a much less direct way. Oftentimes in these societies maintaining harmony and avoiding offending people are more important than expressing your true feelings. In high-context cultures very little is in the verbal part of the message. An example of a situation in which variances in high-context and low-context cultures cause problems could occur in the workplace. In a low-context culture a boss may openly call out a careless employee in order to make an example. They would be relatively direct and blunt about what exactly the employee did wrong as well as what should be improved. In a high-context culture, however, criticism takes place privately. This is because public embarrassment causes shame and for one to "lose face." The boss in the low-context culture would probably use language that indirectly conveys to the employee what he/she is doing wrong. If the exact issue was the tardiness of an employee the boss may point out how being on time ensures everything can begin on time and increases productivity. The boss may also say something like arriving late let's down the rest of the team. Overall, the boss will never come out and say to the employee that he/she needs to change his alarm clock to arrive 15 minutes earlier. Instead, the employee is able to pick up on the message through the boss' use of nonverbal cues.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
September 13, 2010

Date: Monday,

Subject: Re:Amanda: Unit 2, Week 3

Author: Hannah Koops

In your third answer, you talk about saving face and a boss calling out an employee for tardiness. I will have to research this because the question that came into my mind when reading this was, is there a relationship between low context cultures and time/task orientation? And is there a connection between high context cultures and event/personal orientation? Are people who live in high context cultures more motivated by personal relationships and saving face and such because actions hold so much more meaning than words? And are people in low context cultures so driven by tasks and time because the meaning of messages are found in words? Ya know? Maybe. Maybe the text book touches on this. I'll check it out.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
Thursday, September 16, 2010

Date:

Subject: Re:Amanda: Unit 2, Week 3

Author: Renea Gernant

WOW, these are great questions ladies...they would make for impressive senior or masters' theses!

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
September 13, 2010

Date: Monday,

Subject: Re:Amanda: Unit 2, Week 3

Author: Seth Morris

I completely agree with your statement "Surely, I could easily function without some of the items I own or without my entire week planned out. But man oh man would it be rough. This is my culture. I was raised this way and would find it very hard to change."
Even Americans that grow up "poor" according to our standards are rich according to others. Their families have cars, roofs over their heads, TV's, food on the table, and other basic things we deem "necessities". Of course this depends on the level of poverty, because even in America we have some people that live without the necessities to live.
I also agree with you on the business card situation. Even on my business trip with an experienced coworker, none of these unwritten rules seemed to be applied or followed about the exchange of business cards, even with people from Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and many countries in South America.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
September 13, 2010

Date: Monday,

Subject: Re:Amanda: Unit 2, Week 3

Author: Sara Holle

Thank you for bringing up the subject of "good vs. bad" with American culture. I got that vibe in Lingenfelter & Mayers as well: they sort of made me feel like, well, pardon the language, poop for being how I am and growing up with my culture. I have gotten this feeling from a number of texts I have to read for classes this semester. Sometimes I think that this situation is what is a drawback to the Christian culture. Christianity proclaims love, compassion, and the narrow path as displayed by Jesus. But when this culture says I need to act in a certain way in order to be an effective witness for Christ, (i.e. attach language as in a title or position) then I tend to shy away from it. I get this feeling from Lingenfelter & Mayers, like I said. They give the appropriate "disclaimers" and say that everyone can work in God's kingdom in a beneficial way by being themselves (insert Luther's theory on "vocation"), but they also seemed to say, (or maybe this is just the way I read the text) that in order to be proficient and Godly witnesses, one has to have certain characteristics, as in be people oriented, event-oriented, etc. Perhaps the example that Lingenfelter and Mayers is giving us is an extreme example, but it seems to rub me the wrong way. Of course, this post may be my defiance and stubborn independence talking right now, as well, but it makes me feel like I can't be a witness to people if the text says I have to act a certain way and in reality, I am the complete opposite of this "certain way."

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
Thursday, September 16, 2010

Date:

Subject: Re:Amanda: Unit 2, Week 3

Author: Renea Gernant

You are all hitting on an important point and it's one that comes up in almost all diversity studies...and it's both a fair point and one that really illustrates well that what the authors are discussing aren't small points. Lingenfelter and Mayers, for example, really try to note that these are differences and different isn't bad. BUT we, as humans, understand much of the world in black and white...not on a scale of difference. We feel that if A is good then B must be bad. What if they were both okay? What if sinner/saint could co-exist in the same person?
It's really easy to be defensive when we read this material no matter which side of the fence is ours. I am a non-crisis oriented person who lives in a

crisis-oriented dominant culture. I feel bad about that sometimes.

I guess that I am affirming that I TOO feel what you are feeling but I also realize that I am feeling that, in part, because I am reading judgement into something that is meant to be descriptive. It's what we do in our culture...and then that merely shows how hard it is to escape our cultural thinking...

Does that make ANY sense?;

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
September 12, 2010

Date: Sunday,

Subject: Unit 2, Week 3: Debate Culture Definition

Author: Janelle Gertsch

1) The running debate of "defining culture" appears, in my opinion, to be a discussion similar to "which came first, the chicken or the egg". Culture has been presented as ethnicity, social class, geographical location and gender.

Within our own class discussions, we've introduced ourselves as students, teachers, wives, mothers, sons, children, grandchildren. Several of us (Sara & Amanda) claim German heritage, I proclaim myself as Polish, Doris states she is Latina and Kim notes her Irish/British background. East Coast, West Coast, Midwest - all cultures - and all part of the American culture. Then I consider the elders in my extended family and think, "Whew - they're a culture of their own!" What I formerly described as narrow-minded and stubborn, I now know to be Conservative and Uncertainty Avoiding. I can hear their voices echo as I type... "Never mind all that college humbug. In our day, we called it minding our own business and keeping to our own kind."

In Chapter 1 (p. 7), Jandt defines culture as "A community or population sufficiently large enough to be self-sustaining, that is, large enough to produce new generations of members without relying on outside people." That being stated, take a moment to consider the early communities in our nation. On the East Coast (having entered through Ellis Island), the neighborhoods or communities of people that were all German, all Irish, all Czech, all Italian. Chinatown. Moving West, the Amish settlements. Wagon trains that grouped together to form small towns on the new frontier known as the West. The small German farming communities that sprang up all along the railroad here in the Midwest. These things were just as Jandt described - large enough to be self-sustaining with regard to producing new generations. So much so that - while making the guest list for our wedding some 20+ years ago, the mother of the bride & the mother of the groom compared lists - and were able to remove the names of OVER A DOZEN families that were DUPLICATED on the lists! (Such is life in a small Midwestern farming community.) As I look back even further, I recall being taught in grade school that "culture" was defined as Asian, Italian, German, African, etc. Which brings me to the conclusion that the definition of culture is ever-evolving. And how could it not be? When I was in high school, the "prestigious, leading-edge" companies boasted themselves as global competitors. Now, if a company isn't global, it practically goes without saying that

they've already knocked themselves out of competition.

2) During my 16-year interim in the office at a local manufacturing facility, I had the privilege of becoming "globalized" - and the majority of my lessons came without leaving the office. We had a sales rep from South America who spent several months in our office, learning about our product so he could open a new market in his homeland. It was from him that I first learned about Business Card Etiquette (in the late 1980's). As this week's video stated, Americans do tend to throw business cards around "like playing cards". Other countries really do take this as a great insult. And the left-hand exchange taboo was also explained - it has something to do with personal hygiene and which hand is used for the task (let your imaginations take it from there, but its sort of like sneezing in your hand and then shaking someone's hand).

I shared in an earlier post a story about how I was kissed on both cheeks by the wife of one of our Mexico sales reps. With regard to differences in perception causing embarrassing situations - I held my stance and acted "cool". Doing otherwise would surely have offended her husband and embarrassed his wife in front of some pretty important people. However, I can't claim to have done so because I was so culturally aware. I was surprised, and unsure how to respond - so luckily, my lack of reaction (in this instance) saved me.

Another real-life example came from the manufacturing floor, and was a serious misunderstanding between male and female co-workers. They were both stationed in a department where the managers had ongoing personnel issues with the workers. The company had replaced managers, moved workers to different machines - nothing seemed to help. Our Midwestern management style (low-context, lots of verbiage - just tell us what's the problem) was getting us nowhere. The work style of the people in that area (high-context, unspoken knowledge, don't speak out of turn and shame anyone) - well, we didn't know any of that at the time. I even heard some people say, "Ya, THEY all hang together when they're in trouble". This went on for several months until the day of a huge blow-up. A group of Latinas entered the Personnel office and requested to "speak to someone", and it was evident that several of them had been in tears. Then came charges of sexual harassment. Followed by an intense investigation. Turns out that a male co-worker had - in his primary language - told the female co-worker to "get the pieces up on the table so they could get to work". We later learned about "machismo" - although he was trying to get the job done, his background and upbringing put him in the position where he needed to appear (and feel) superior to the female in the work area. He did admit that his demand could have been more polite. Then the question came as to why the female co-worker was filing sexual harassment charges. Apparently, the differences in their spoken languages and cultures (the dept. was a mixture of Mexican, Chilean, Peruvian, Guatemalan, etc.) had caused a serious misunderstanding. She interpreted his statement as something like, "Get your ^& up on that table and let's #^%\$!!!". That's where the tears came from. Without intending to do so, he had insulted her virtue in front of her co-workers. Part of our assumption was that her humiliation came from the high-context of the conversation as noted by Jandt (p. 62) "more of the meaning...is already shared by people". This was NOT the case - it was the interpretation of the words that caused the problem. EVERYONE got educated in a short time. Workers were moved around. No jobs were lost over the ordeal. Although it was still a tough spot, problems in the area

decreased over time. This is a prime example of the detriments of not understanding other cultures.

3) High-context (Jandt, p. 62) seems, from what I've observed recently, to be prominent in small communities. Low-context (Jandt, p. 62) appears to be more prevalent in the business world. Within our American culture (and because I was just there), Sunday church services come to mind. And not even the understanding of the religious message, but the "how to conduct oneself". Things like how to dress, who sits by whom, how to handle a fussy infant, the process of proceeding through Holy Communion and returning to your pew vs. walking around to get in from the other side - these are all high-context situations. And I consider my children and the conversations we have: "Don't look back, turn around and face forward". Why's it's interesting back there! "Sit like a lady in your dress." Why's it's itchy! (All low-context interactions.) Imagine someone coming into our congregation on Sunday morning who had never been in a church in the U.S. Would they feel out-of-place? Not know what to do? Where to sit? WHEN to sit? Interesting that CHURCH can be considered a high-context activity which can cause exclusions, but that we ponder why we can't get more new-comers to attend church.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
September 12, 2010

Date: Sunday,

Subject: Re:Unit 2, Week 3: Debate Culture Definition
Gernant

Author: Renea

I could go on and on about your last paragraph but it's late so I will refrain for the moment...
They do the kissing thing in much of Europe as well. And men rather regularly kiss female friends on the mouth. It takes one by surprise at first, but it time, it seems rather normal. In Eastern Europe, same sex friends also hold hands and as Americans we tend to think that odd.
I remember when the A Capella choir came to visit in Slovakia and one of the students commented on how weird it was that there were so many gay people out on the streets. I was kind of shocked--at that time homosexuality was not really openly discussed in Slovakia--and then I realized that he thought that all the people who were holding hands or walking arm in arm were "couples."

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
September 13, 2010

Date: Monday,

Subject: Re:Unit 2, Week 3: Debate Culture Definition
Kisker

Author: Amanda

I love your example in the third question. I never would have thought of church as an example of a high-context culture but you're completely right. The little things that are habit to us like how to dress, when to stand, the process of proceeding through the Holy Communion line, and communication we have with those around us during the service. All of these things would be foreign to someone of a different culture. The more I think about it the more I realize how our high-context culture is evident everywhere. The majority of situations discussed in this class are in a business type atmosphere. Your example was great because it was so creative but also very true!

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
September 13, 2010

Date: Monday,

Subject: Re:Unit 2, Week 3: Debate Culture Definition
McCord Fisher

Author: Kimberly

I also enjoyed your comments about church. I grew up attending Catholic church with my father, so I'm familiar with it, however, when my husband attended his first Catholic Mass (at a funeral), he was like a fish out of water. It was hard to explain (in hushed whispers) to stand, sit, kneel, NOT follow the people up for communion. Just imagine not having someone to explain.

Now I'm even more nervous to attend a religious service outside Christianity!

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
Thursday, September 16, 2010

Date:

Subject: Re:Unit 2, Week 3: Debate Culture Definition
Gernant

Author: Renea

It's a great example...although I would encourage you all not to worry too much about the feeling out of place in other denominations or with other religious groups. As society becomes more and more secular and fewer and fewer people attend religious services, it's becoming increasingly common for groups to do their best to make obvious outsiders feel more welcome...even if it doesn't happen until after services.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
September 12, 2010

Date: Sunday,

1) Culture in action does not only come from customs from “old world” ways of living, but it comes from everyday life. Culture can be what we eat, the way that families interact, and our general tendencies in verbal communication with one another. According to the Jandt text, culture includes our attitudes, values, and behaviors. These can all be influenced by family life, ethnicity, and geography (7). However, they are also greatly influenced based upon the sub-groups that we are in (Jandt 22). For example, a sub-group that many of us in this class have listed is ELL concentration in the Education field. Our ELL group has a certain set of attitudes and values in life, specifically in working with people who are new to the English language.
Another factor that will influence our process of defining culture in action is our geographical background. Some of us have grown up in small towns, some in big cities, and others of us somewhere in between. This mixture is great because it may help us to recognize different cultural aspects of each other’s lives that we simply consider normal or may not realize are unique to our personal cultures. Also knowing that we all come from different places will help us to remember to keep our minds open and ready to learn. No one person can know everything about everywhere and everyone. I believe that we all recognize this and in our endeavor to define culture in action our openness and willingness to learn will promote great discussions and help us to arrive at enlightening conclusions.
2) During my summer job I experienced some differing values being quite damaging and leading to miscommunication. In Mexican culture beauty and especially beautiful bodies are something that are praised and flaunted and not considered inappropriate. Often times a sports-news station would be on TV and women wearing high-cut shorts, high-heels, and midriff bearing tops or even bikinis would stand next to the announcer. Many of my co-workers would talk to one another about how beautiful these women were. One day one of the men asked me if I thought they were beautiful. I personally felt quite insulted that they watched TV like this in front of me (I already felt uncomfortable being the only female waitress). Not thinking too much about it, I shared with him how I felt insulted and how I think that women are more than beautiful bodies. He was very offended that I saw this as inappropriate. He told me that if that’s how I believed that, that was fine, but just because he saw it differently did not mean that it was wrong for him. This man had been in the states for several years and I believe was very in tune to some large cultural differences.
Just as how the “Kwintessential – Business Cards” video mentioned that Japanese feel that sitting on a business card is like sitting on one’s face, I felt that talking about other women’s bodies, meant that my co-workers saw me just as a body. This was not true, as I came to be friends with many of them, but that is how this situation in particular made me feel. The Lingenfelter and Mayers text says that to ministry cross culturally we need to, “learn to think in accordance with the mind-set and culture of those with whom they work” (59). This does not mean that I needed to join in on their TV watching and act like, one of the guys, but it does mean that I need to realize that different cultures value different things or see different things as appropriate and inappropriate. I should not be so quick to be offended or take everything personally.
3) According to a Jandt a high context culture is one where meaning is embedded in the conversation and communication interactions(62).

Not much explanation is needed and interactions often follow a certain protocol with different behaviors meaning different things. As the "Business Cards," video mentioned, when you exchange business cards in Japan, it is understood that the business card is synonymous with the person's face and should be treated with respect.

A low context culture is one like the United States where meaning has to be explained and context for people, places, and ideas do not always "pre-exists," but instead must be explicitly stated. This example may help to clarify the differences. A high context sub culture that exists within America is that of CUNE. If you have been a student at CUNE for a few years you are familiar with many of the professors, their subject areas, homework assigning habits, and personalities. If a fellow classmate mentions that they have a class with ____ (insert a professor's name here) ____, they do not have to tell you what subject area it is or the amount of homework that they typically receive. However, if you are speaking to a fellow college student who attends a different school, you must explain the type of class it is, how many credit hours, the personality of the professor, and finally the name, which would hardly mean anything at all because they may never meet your professor. A high context culture needs fewer explanations or has more "inside jokes," if you will, than a low context culture.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
September 12, 2010

Date: Sunday,

Subject: Re:Heidi's Week 3 Responses

Author: Janelle Gertsch

Heidi ~
I, too, experienced the Latino appreciation for the female figure when we went to Mexico in 1999. Upon our arrival, I was shocked at how tight, short and low-cut the young women wore their clothing. By the time we left Mexico, I found it to be pretty neat that - no matter how they were shaped - those women were CONFIDENT with their bodies and didn't try so hard to hide under giant clothing.

I worked with a young Latina for several years, and she never ceased to amaze - and inspire - me. By the age of 30, she had 6 children, and the youngest was only a year old. And she took such good care of herself that, if one didn't know any better, you would assume she was only 21. She didn't "flaunt" herself in a promiscuous way. She just wore fitted clothing that complimented her great figure. She always look neat as a pin, well put together and professional.

Interesting that these young women are able to see the beauty of their figures, and more often than not, American women are quick to pick out the flaws in our figures and try to hide them. High-context - amongst the Latinas - just "knows" that they, and their men, appreciate their figures. In our often low-context world, I would foresee us explaining to one another, "Well, I had to wear these tight pants, they were the only thing I had clean."

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
September 12, 2010

Date: Sunday,

Subject: Re:Heidi's Week 3 Responses

Author: Renea Gernant

I am interested in Machismo and how we as American women tend to react to that element of Latino culture. I wonder if Latina women have come to adjust their non-verbal communication because of that element of culture...

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
September 13, 2010

Date: Monday,

Subject: Re:Heidi's Week 3 Responses

Author: Janelle Gertsch

I'm not sure if its part of machismo, but I've found myself envious of the local Latinas. Drive through the big park on Sunday after church, and its FULL of the local Mexican families. HUGE family picnics. All the little girls wearing their best Sunday dresses. Most of the grandmothers wearing flower corsages. Watch them in the stores, and the men are always opening doors for their women, carrying packages, pushing the shopping cart, etc. I see the guys I worked with at the discount stores on payday, picking up flowers and often some kind of new blouse or jeans for their ladies. Where did our guys go? To the golf course or the local sports bar. Of course, I realize things may be different inside the privacy of their homes. But what I see on the outside looks pretty neat! Anyone know any more on this topic?

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
Tuesday, September 14, 2010

Date:

Subject: Re:Heidi's Week 3 Responses

Author: Heidi Kohn

I would have to agree with you Janelle. I am envious of the confidence that Latina women have when it comes to their looks. I also have to agree that their men are pretty chivalrous. They defend their women and are quick to let them know that they care. One of my co-workers often told me of all the nice things he did for his wife. My boss even made sure that he and his family got to take a good vacation together. His two little daughters were always dressed up (often matching) by their mom. They had coordinating outfits, their hair was done, and they were very loved and well taken care of. Although men and machismo lead the Latino society I mostly saw that role in the work setting.

The boss was in charge and you did what he said, but outside of that most of the men were softies, especially for their girls or their daughters.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
September 12, 2010

Date: Sunday,

Subject: Re:Heidi's Week 3 Responses

Author: Anna Kreis

Heidi,

The connection you made between the "Kwintessential - Business Cards" video and your experience over the summer was very good! It helped me add more meaning to the video and to help understand its principles in relation to another situation. While reading your response I wasn't expecting them to be offended that you were offended. It was interesting to hear their response and how they in turn responded to a different cultural viewpoint. Thanks for sharing!

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
September 12, 2010

Date: Sunday,

Subject: Re:Heidi's Week 3 Responses

Author: Renea Gernant

I appreciate your connection to Concordia culture and instructors. I have never thought of that before, but students do know a lot about a class just by the department and the instructor...and no one has to say a thing!

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
September 13, 2010

Date: Monday,

Subject: Re:Heidi's Week 3 Responses

Author: Amanda Kisker

Heidi,
I've never been to Mexico and did not realize there was such a praise for good-looking bodies. Your situation seems like a stressful one as well as an uncomfortable one. When you talked about the conversation you had with a co-worker in regards to how it made you feel insulted I think the true colors come out. The variances in our culture were evident by what he said to you. When you expressed that you felt there was more to a woman than a beautiful body he replied that although he respected what you had to say he felt his opinion was right as well. I applaud you for controlling your emotions and having a mature argument about it where you respected what each

other had to say. If I were in that situation I'm not sure I would've been able to do the same. Ultimately I feel this was a very good example of cultural differences and the value of things in different cultures.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
Tuesday, September 14, 2010

Date:

Subject: Re:Heidi's Week 3 Responses

Author: Heidi Kohn

Thank you Amanda. It was very frustrating at times, like the one I described here, but also just being the only female around. I really did feel like I was working in another country most of the summer. It was a good job, but a hard one, and sometimes extended interaction with another culture (no matter how much you care about the people) can be quite exhausting emotionally because it is so different from your own culture.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
September 13, 2010

Date: Monday,

Subject: Re:Heidi's Week 3 Responses

Author: Hannah Koops

In response to your answer to the second question: I found it so interesting! I always assumed that beautiful women were plastered over Mexican advertisements and such for the same reason they are all over American advertisements. I was taught that this was a ploy to gain attention from men, which clearly it is and it is working. Yet, it sounds as if Mexican men and American men see beauty differently. (and I am not speaking in absolutes here, so excuse the generalities) I think it is interesting that you both ended up offending each other (even if the offenses were minor on both ends). This appreciation for perceived beauty still can't stop me from wondering if this appreciation is a cover for lust. Are these men really all that different from the American men I know and hear about that find immodest women to be stumbling blocks at times? Does that make sense? I didn't articulate what I was thinking very well. I guess in short, we all still serve one God who is told to live holy lives and not put ourselves in the midst of temptations.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
September 13, 2010

Date: Monday,

Subject: Re:Heidi's Week 3 Responses

Author: Sara Holle

Your second point reminds me of my own cultural experience: Li'an, my old roommate from China, to be blunt, always wanted to see me naked because she loved to look at naked women. She wasn't a lesbian and didn't get sexually aroused by seeing a naked woman, but she simply enjoyed the beauty of women, no matter what size, shape, or color. From that experience, I have grown to see women as just that: women; women who are beautiful children of God, who deserve to be loved and cherished, and have values upon values and talents upon talents to give the world. My inner feminist was a bit reared when I initially read of your experience, (asking why these women would dress this way to encourage the objectification of women) but there is beauty in these women, and the culture states that it's not objective (unless it is...I can't speak for the culture, I suppose, but I'm only assuming), it's celebratory.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
Tuesday, September 14, 2010

Date:

Subject: Re:Heidi's Week 3 Responses

Author: Heidi Kohn

Amanda and Sara,

Amanda I too wondered if it is just a cover-up for lust, and it could be, but I think it is more what Sara mentioned about a celebration of the human body. As Janelle also mentioned in response to my original post all the Latina women regardless of shape or size flatter their bodies with tight fitting clothing that show them off. It could be a little bit of both lust and appreciation for beauty, but I do not know their hearts so I did not feel qualified to confront them about this. Also I'm not sure that all the people I worked with were Christian, so me telling them that they are sinning wouldn't mean anything to them. I do appreciate your comments Amanda and I think that they raise a good point - even if another culture views something as acceptable that we know is personally a stumbling block to us - does not mean that we need to view it as acceptable. I think that this knowledge is an important part of safeguarding our hearts as we participate in inter-cultural ministry.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
Thursday, September 16, 2010

Date:

Subject: Re:Heidi's Week 3 Responses

Author: Renea Gernant

This is/was an exceptionally interesting and insightful thread. To put in one point of import...maybe an inner feminist one...I am reasonably sure that rates of abuse against

women are pretty high in some parts of Hispanic culture, so while I do think that there is merit to appreciating beauty, there is more than likely just a little bit of the "lust" and "objectification" thing at work in a machismo culture.

That aside, I do think it is interesting to realize that not every culture is burdened with the rather Puritan concept that Americans are that suggests that the body is the root of evil. Women and men were created in the garden perfect...and they weren't wearing anything. The body is an amazing thing and it is beautiful AND we all should do our best to set aside stereotypes of culture and media to celebrate the temple God gave us.

On a personal note, I just love dark skin and hair...no matter the ethnicity. Maybe it's because it's not what I am...but I find dark skin more attractive than my pasty whiteness...I just do. And in Hispanic and African cultures, I LOVE all the color and patterning. I couldn't pull much of it off...partly because I am a pasty white girl...but I LOVE color:).

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
Saturday, September 18, 2010

Date:

Subject: Re:Heidi's Week 3 Responses

Author: Janelle Gertsch

This latest post brought a smile to my face, as the latter part seems to describe the fashion issues in our household. I have so much fun shopping for clothing with my girls. With their dark complexion and black hair, they look absolutely stunning in BRIGHT colors - hot pink, electric blue, neon green, lemon yellow, tangerine orange. I love those colors, but when I put them on, I look as though I've been embalmed! My fair complexion works much better with earth-tones, but they just don't seem nearly as "fun" as the bright colors.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
Saturday, September 11, 2010

Date:

Subject: Erika (Week 3)

Author: Erika Mock

1) The week one and two discussion posts and chapter one in Jandt clearly illustrate the debate over how to define culture in action. On page 6 and 7 of the text Jandt gives a long list of ways we might define and understand culture. The first definition Jandt gives is, "A community or population sufficiently large enough to be self-sustaining" (2007). However, conflict over this reference to culture is presented later in the chapter when the definition of sub-culture is presented. From my perspective, Jandt's definition of culture and sub-culture were very similar. Defining and differentiating between the terms "culture," "subculture," and "co-culture" is difficult. Defining culture is also so complex

because there does not seem to be one definition that pleases absolutely everyone. Someone seems to take offense at every definition and therefore we will likely always have many ways to define and discuss culture.

In examining the discussion posts from the previous weeks it is easy to see that each individual has a unique way of describing and conceptualizing culture. Even though every person in this class is an American and shares (to some degree at least) in the American culture, each person's experiences cause them to view the dominant cultural values differently. From the first two weeks we also see that the concept of "culture within culture" (Jandt, 2007) at work. There are several people in our class that live in or around the city such as Doris, Donna, Kimberly, and myself. We all seem to have different views of American culture than Abbie, Seth, Morgan, and several others who live in Nebraska or more rural areas. In sharing our background and a little of our personal narratives we are able to see how much life events shape our values (i.e. Seth's limited interaction with other cultures, Sara's loss of her brother, my interaction with people with mental illnesses, etc.) and how geographic regions impact our view of culture and cultural norms.

2) Right now I am personally experiencing the repercussions of differences in perception and cultural miscommunication and misunderstanding. I am sure that you are all familiar with the controversy initiated by the Floridian pastor Terry Jones' desire to burn the Koran. Right now my fiancé is currently serving in Afghanistan with the Marines and, as a result of all this talk over burning the Koran, violence has intensified in Afghanistan. Jeff called early this morning to tell me to pray about this whole situation. Right now there are chaotic riots going on in the villages and there have been several incidences of severe violence against the Marines. Jeff does personal security detailing and takes all of the officers to important meetings with Afghani leaders. Our military leaders are doing all they can to explain and publicize that the Marines (and most Americans) do not support the burning of the Koran.

However, because of differing cultural behaviors and values, the Afghani people cannot understand American freedom of religion or freedom of speech. Jandt mentions that, "One of the many elements of a culture is its system of laws...which reflect the values of that culture" (2007). American and Afghani cultures are different and this is reflected in the laws of both cultures.

3) As a result of all of this (see my response to question two), the Afghani people associate the threat to burn their holy book with all Americans. This is a wonderful example of the difference between high and low context cultures. The video from Kwentessential, "Low and High-Context Cultures," detailed Edward T Hall's theory about high and low-context cultures. Hall believed that low-context cultures were those with predominantly explicit, direct messages, while messages in high-context cultures were internalized in the person and context. Because the Afghani culture is a high-context culture the Afghani people see the burning of the Koran as the most unholy act one can commit as they view the Koran itself as holy. In America, a low-context culture, a book is a book. A book has no inherent meaning and therefore the act of burning the Koran would signify to Americans, nothing more than a strong dislike and disagreement with the book. This situation is a great example of the discord sometimes present between high and low-context cultures. The Afghani culture clashes so dramatically with the American culture that good intercultural communication and understanding seems impossible at the moment.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
Saturday, September 11, 2010

Date:

Subject: Re:Erika (Week 3)

Author: Anna Kreis

Erika,

I agree that your example of high and low context societies is not only relevant to what is going on today, but it also shows the effects that cultural miscommunications can have on people who weren't even involved with the initial conflict. It reminds us that most misunderstandings are small or something that causes the group of people experiencing the misunderstanding to laugh, but there is also the other extreme where one misunderstanding can cause more misunderstandings.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
Saturday, September 11, 2010

Date:

Subject: Re:Erika (Week 3)

Author: Renea Gernant

Thanks for that real world example of the issues surrounding the burning of the Koran. In our culture, that would be "free speech" and although perhaps insulting...just as burning the Bible...it's not nearly the cultural affront that it is there.

This example also shows one of the dangers when people act in a very ethnocentric manner toward others. I suspect that the same folks who would advocate the Koran burning would call for violence if a cleric at a Mosque in the U.S. were to host a Bible burning...

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
September 12, 2010

Date: Sunday,

Subject: Re:Erika (Week 3)

Author: Abigail Kuehn

Erika,
Thank you for sharing all you did within these posts. In response to your mentioning of the Afgani peoples' general assumption and view towards Americans as "Koran Burners", I am hit by the assumption that I've perceived where many US citizens view all Islamic people as terrorists or all Hispanic immigrants as illegal aliens. What does this say about our culture? Are we one to continually formulate facts from mere assumptions? Or is that a "human" thing-such as the case with the Afgani view towards Americans as "Koran

Burners"? Is such a high context sentiment formulated from fear and past experience?

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
September 13, 2010

Date: Monday,

Subject: Re:Erika (Week 3)

Author: Amanda Kisker

Erika,
I very much appreciate and feel like your real-world example of misunderstanding between cultures is an excellent one. Miscommunication is hard, especially between cultures. I'm sure it's even harder when it could potentially lead to great violence. I'm one of those people who loves to read the paper in the morning and stay in touch with up-to-date news. I haven't had that opportunity though lately and didn't realize anything about this issue. I'm sure for your fiance as well as the entire Marine Corps it's a stressful situation. I hope their efforts to inform the Afghani people that not all Americans support this Flordian pastor's desire to burn the Koran is successful. I'll continue to keep the millitary in my prayers, especially in this tense time.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
September 13, 2010

Date: Monday,

Subject: Re:Erika (Week 3)

Author: Doris Galarza

Erika,
 I really like what you said when you mentioned that all of us in the class are American and that we share this American culture to a certain degree. I think it's so interesting that even us being from a city, can have so many differences and similarities within the culture of a city life. I didn't know what was all going on with the burying of the Koran. I think that it's important that we pray for our troops because we don't know what's going on over there. Like you said, we live in a completely different culture than the people in Afghanistan. They dont understand how we can have freedom. Thanks for sharing whats going on.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
September 13, 2010

Date: Monday,

Subject: Re:Erika (Week 3)

Author: Seth Morris

I think it was an amazing use of the text when you said "the Afghani people cannot understand American freedom of religion or freedom of speech. Jandt mentions that, "One of the many elements of a culture is its system of laws...which reflect the values of that culture" (2007). American and Afghani cultures are different and this is reflected in the laws of both cultures".

That piece of the text is one of the many reasons that we at odds with these people right now. We represent a Christian nation, with very different value sets.

This made me think "Why should we spend all this time trying to learn about them and understand them, when obviously they aren't trying to learn about us".

But, that is what we have to do. Eventually, they will learn about us and hopefully be accepting of us. This made me think of the song "They will Know we are Christians by our love".
THat's really all we can do right now, is love and pray.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
Wednesday, September 15, 2010

Date:

Subject: Re:Erika (Week 3)

Author: Erika Mock

Thanks for the support and prayers everyone! I really appreciate it. I am glad that the example I gave was a helpful one!

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
September 10, 2010

Date: Friday,

Subject: week3parami

Author: Abigail Kuehn

Attachments:
week3.doc

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
Saturday, September 11, 2010

Date:

Subject: Re:week3parami

Author: Erika Mock

Abbie, thanks for sharing your story about your meal with the Barbar family. We often forget how much food is an element of culture. The United States, probably more so than every other culture, seems to view food as a mere means of nutrition. We rush into our kitchens, whip up whatever is closest on hand, shovel the food into our mouths, and race off to our next “extremely important” appointment. It is unfortunate that we have lost this cultural element. I am so pleased that you were able to have such a great experience, learning about all the different foods and their representations. Would you agree that countries in which food has specific cultural significance are likely high context cultures? I believe this is a reasonable assumption to make as the food would be representing something (i.e. have embedded context) and, unlike the American culture, would not be mere food.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
Saturday, September 11, 2010

Date:

Subject: Re:week3parami

Author: Renea Gernant

We decidedly don't have the ritualized food experiences that many cultures share...

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
September 12, 2010

Date: Sunday,

Subject: Re:week3parami

Author: Janelle Gertsch

I, too, appreciate the story of your Serbian meal experience! The closest I can relate to that is within our own family and “The Cookbook”.
My grandfather had 9 children in his family, and their descendents meet for a reunion every 5 years. Several years ago, some of my mom's cousins had the idea to gather all the old family recipes and have them made into a cookbook. There are 9 divider tabs in the cookbook, each bearing the picture of a sibling. Although the recipes don't have footnotes about WHY they are significant in the German culture, they do have other notes. The person who submitted the recipe was asked to include any handwritten notes about memories linked to the recipe, from whom they'd acquired the recipe, etc. The cookbook was published as a hard-cover, 3-ring bound copy, and all the notes are included. Like “I baked this cake many times when I lived at home on the farm. When my mother would ask me to bake a cake, I knew we were expecting company. It could be that the boys from the neighboring farm down the road were coming over for haircuts. My dad cut their boys' hair for many years, and us girls always had a cake waiting in the kitchen for dessert.”
In our family it is also customary to place a small basket on the table with the Guest Book at bridal showers. Guests bring

half-a-dozen recipes and place them in the basket for the new bride. This is our way of passing on the family recipes and traditions that follow them.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
September 13, 2010

Date: Monday,

Subject: Re:week3parami

Author: Kimberly McCord Fisher

I'm also reminded of food rituals and expectations of other cultures. I just recently watched a television show that discussed a middle eastern culture and how hosting a dinner is a high honor and serving many courses is a sign of prosperity and how insulted they can be if you pass on a course. They see it as a reflection that their food is not good enough for guests and take offense. I really wish I had paid closer attention to that show.
On a related note, we watch a lot of International House Hunters on HGTV, and since taking this class, I notice the minute details of how other countries treat home ownership.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
September 13, 2010

Date: Monday,

Subject: Re:week3parami

Author: Morgan Hohbein

This may have no educational significance, but Bana Barbar happens to be my best friend from high school, so along with Abbie we've had many instances to witness their own cultural differences from food to careers to even Chaza's wedding. It has definitely taught me a lot. One of the coolest things to see is Bana actually conforming to American culture in some ways. But in many other ways, she will always be from Syria and many of her customs will remain Syrian. I'm really glad you got to share that meal with them, they are an amazing family and a great example of non-American cultures that we are used to.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
Thursday, September 16, 2010

Date:

Subject: Re:week3parami

Author: Renea Gernant

That's really a cool connection!

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
September 10, 2010

Date: Friday,

Subject: Anna: week 3

Author: Anna Kreis

1) Overall I think our posts over the last two weeks have shown that we are now considering culture in a broader sense of background and traveling experiences. We recognize that each person does have a culture and that while we may not have experienced a mass amounts of different cultures, each person still has their own culture. One specific conversation that I found intriguing is one that Doris brought up in her second week posting. She had mentioned the term “melting pot” and I had brought up the term “tossed salad” to describe how different cultures are expected to interact in the U.S. It was interesting to see how both of these terms would be acceptable in the U.S. and both are expected in different parts of our country. It was also interesting to determine if a “tossed salad” could still contain each piece of the salad intact as it was before it entered the bowl, or if by introducing it to the other pieces it “melted” a little by exposure to a different way of life and by reexamining its way of life. 2) The idea of a business card being the same as someone’s actual face is a very interesting approach. It really makes you think about how we commonly treat business cards and the lack of face-saving it shows when we put them in our pockets or wallets. Jandt notes that China has two different ways of identify the term “face”. “Lian (face) and main/main zi (image)... Lian represents the confidence of society in the integrity of ego’s moral character, the loss of which makes it impossible to function properly with the community.... Mian stands for the kind of prestige that is emphasized in the U.S., a prepetition achieved through life.” (Jandt p.65). When we disrespect a person’s business card it is the same as disrespecting them. Also the different forms of presenting your card as well as receiving the card are nonverbal indicators of respect. It reminded me of the difference between high and low context communities. (Jandt p.62-63). 3) High context cultures are ones that are usually a lot of fun to be in and horrible not to be included in. In middle school and even high school there are often friendship cliques and whether they realize it or not they usually are operating in a high context situation. There is usually at least one other kid that dreams of being involved in their clique, but because of the high context conversation it is hard for them to actually get in. The clique, like our country, may or may not realize that they are excluding their friend when participating in high context conversations.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
Saturday, September 11, 2010

Date:

Subject: Re:Anna: week 3

Author: Renea Gernant

Can you say a little more about why they are fun? What makes it that way? I mean, I can see situations in which NOT knowing the context could make it just heck...

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
Saturday, September 11, 2010

Date:

Subject: Re:Anna: week 3

Author: Anna Kreis

Being in a high context culture would be fun in that you fully understand all of the unmentioned stories. When I was writing my response I was thinking from the perspective of someone who was in a high context cultured clique of friends. It only names one person's name and you understand exactly what the person talking was getting at.
Also in my small town since most people knew each other and had interactions with each other it became a high context society. There were the underlying understandings of what someone meant when they mentioned the Can Lady also known as Roller Blade Lady and even Cat Lady. If you were from Marengo you knew who she was and you were familiar with her antics. There was also Speedo Man. In these areas a high context society would be fun if you were already in it.

In the ways that it would not be fun is if you had missed the day where Speedo Man was first discovered and you did not understand what people were talking about! In these times high context would not be fun.

Also another way that high context society would not be fun is if you were someone that was not from Marengo reading this post. You wouldn't have a clue who Cat Woman or Speedo Man were. You could probably create some meaning, but it would not be close to what the actual meaning or mental picture that is associated with them. Even my having the high context example translated for you (as I am planning to do) it wouldn't have the same effect as actually meeting these individuals.

Hopefully this elaborated on why it would be "fun" and also why even the same examples would not be fun.

Cat Lady or Can Lady is an older woman (60's... I think) who roller blades around town picking up cans and trash. Sounds innocent enough... well... she also wears clothes from the 70's maybe 80's with really thick belts around her middle. She is actually very thin and fit, but obviously she catches your eye. If this wasn't small town humor enough she also wears a walkman with big ear phones while she roller blades down the street in front of cars. She even does this when she walks too. And to make it better she usually dances or does tricks on her roller blades if she realizes that other people are watching her sing and dance to her music.

Speedo Man is a man from a neighboring town who would ride along the county roads wearing only a flesh colored speedo. Obviously this caused a lot of people to look on in horror and never be completely sure if he was nude or not since most people going past him were in vehicles.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
Saturday, September 11, 2010

Date:

Subject: Re:Anna: week 3

Author: Erika Mock

Anna, thanks for all of your great discussion on high and low-context cultures. It is interesting that Jandt asserts the U.S. to be a low-context culture. After reading his argument, I can see why he labels our nation so although I'm not sure I'm in complete agreement with his findings. Upon my initial read about high and low-context cultures I believed the U.S. would be placed under the list of high-context cultures. Our nation is very exclusive and I believe there are many situations "outsiders" find themselves lost in. The politics of things we consider "everyday" probably leave them baffled (such as interviewing, enrolling in school, going to the doctor, etc.). Jandt quotes E. T. Hall as saying, "High-context cultures make greater distinction between the insiders and the outsiders than low-context cultures do" (2007). Can you think of a culture that makes a bigger distinction of "them" versus "us" than the United States?

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
Saturday, September 11, 2010

Date:

Subject: Re:Anna: week 3

Author: Renea Gernant

You make a good point about the them and us perspective. I think that the difference is that even in our exclusivity the "rules" are out there. Mom tells you not to slurp your soup in public. When someone is a jerk, Americans make it clear that they are ticked. In other countries, the rules are more assumed into the culture and they are harder to figure out. And in other countries, we don't always know that we have given offense because no one is likely to point out the violation.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
September 12, 2010

Date: Sunday,

Subject: Re:Anna: week 3

Author: Janelle Gertsch

Anna, I can total relate to your description of the small-town, High Context culture. I lived in the same town all the years that I was growing up, attended the same parochial school K-8, and the same high school through graduation. When I say Captain & Tenille (wow, I don't even know how to spell that), most readers envision the

singing duo from the 1970's. In our town, Captain & Tenille were a couple who walked around with a Radio Flyer wagon & picked up cans.

After I married, I moved to a small town population 300. I had acquaintances there, as I had attended school with several friends from that town - so I was already "in" with their lingo. Like "Old Alwena" - the elderly lady who walked up to the post office (rain, snow, sleet, sheets of ice) in her house dress and black "old-man" golashes, carrying an old sack in which she would tote home her mail. Everyone knew she was so tight that she squeaked. Not many people know that she has money in about a dozen different banks!

Our next move was to my husband's home town, population 309. Of course everyone knew everything (and I do mean everything) about everybody there - and you are correct. It was fun to be included in the High Context culture as described in the video, a lot (if not most) of the communication was in the form of knowing glances, smiles, etc.

Which brings me to our next move, to another small town population 215. Everyone knows everyone else. Don't talk about anyone, because you may be speaking to one of their relatives. Neighbors are friendly enough, but I feel like a 5th wheel when the inside jokes and remarks cause rolling eyes, snickers and refrains of, "Ya, I know...remember when...". They have no idea how difficult it is to fit into such a tightly-knit community. I'm silently screaming for some Low Context interaction so I can figure out what's going on around here! We have a neighbor who has a sign over his parking area that reads, "A&\$(^&@" garage. For lack of a better term, let's just say he can be very direct. And may I also say - appreciated. Sometimes its so helpful when someone will just blurt something out instead of sugar-coating the message.

Which makes it clear that I'm born & raised in the U.S.A. by a German family - I yearn for direct statements with a mass of the info in the message. Gotta love our heritage!

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
Saturday, September 11, 2010

Date:

Subject: Re:Anna: week 3

Author: Abigail Kuehn

Anna,

In response to your third comment, I completely understand your point of view and the dismal feeling one can receive when seeing others in their high context element while he/she is stuck in the low context state. For that one kid who does dream of communicating in the high context situation, I wonder why we view high context superior to low context? They have their unique differences and yes, high context does seem to be more intimate, but let's not forget that low context does have purpose as well. I'm also intrigued by your comment relating the US as a high context culture. Since we are apart of it, a high context label seems inevitable. However, through the lens of another country, are we high context or low context? And what influences that opinion?

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
Saturday, September 11, 2010

Date:

Subject: Re:Anna: week 3

Author: Anna Kreis

The reason that a high context group is seen as superior to those who are not in it is because of the appearance of greater knowledge and proved inclusion in a group. It is obvious if you are in or out on whether you can follow the conversation. In middle school the desire to be included and apart of an intimate group of friends is of high priority and that may be why we may grow up viewing it as superior.

Your second question about if the U.S. is perceived as a high context society through another countries lense is intriguing. I would like to argue that any other country besides our own would appear as high context to us. Since we are not totally familiar with word choice, habits, news, and popular opinions it would be hard for us to totally fit in with out having each element explained to us. Granted each culture looking into our culture would have a different level of perceiving us as high context depending on how similar our cultures are.

These are great questions and I hope I answered them for you!

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
September 13, 2010

Date: Monday,

Subject: Re:Anna: week 3

Author: Hannah Koops

I was raised to know America as the Great Melting Pot thanks to that little song in School House Rock. (that's what it's called right? Ya know what i'm talking about here?) Anyway, it is so interesting to know that America was formed by so many different cultures coming together. And for a long time, people tried to keep it very segregated into those original cultures. There were Jewish communities who didn't really associate with Irish communities who didn't really associate with Italian communities who didn't really associate with Russian communities... and you get the point. Over time, barriers were broken down and cultures were combined and formed. Can America really be expected to have a culture at all knowing that culture is such a relative term?

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
September 13, 2010

Date: Monday,

Subject: Re:Anna: week 3

Author: Seth Morris

I agree with you that it is more fun to be involved in a high context situation when you are included and it definitely sucks to be left out, wondering what's going on and just wanting to fit in.

Going back to the term of "melting pot" vs. "tossed salad" as a term to describe how cultures interact in the US, I always think "melting pot" because historically that is the term that has been used to describe America as a whole.

I think that in the short run, the US is more of a tossed salad, because unlike things are forced into close proximities, and in the long run, whether we like it or not, we are turned into the melting pot because other people change us and how we look at things, maybe even adding new customs and traditions of their own to our celebrated events.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
September 13, 2010

Date: Monday,

Subject: Re:Anna: week 3

Author: Kimberly McCord Fisher

I didn't think to compare high-context vs low-context in relation to high school, but thinking about it, you're right on. In the 80s (in my small town), "Valley talk" among teenage girls was a language as foreign to most parents as Greek. Thanks for the memories!

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
Thursday, September 16, 2010

Date:

Subject: Re:Anna: week 3

Author: Renea Gernant

Oh, you just brought back memories for ME. I used to have the Valley Girl Handbook...and we tried to be preppy...and had big hair...and got silly about that dialect.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
Tuesday, September 7, 2010

Date:

Subject: Sara: Week Three

Author: Sara Holle

1) Looking at the discussions from the last two weeks, it is clear to me that even though there are multiple similarities in characteristics in American culture, there is a culture within a culture in each state, in each geographical region, and even in each family, as Jandt (2007, 16) stated when he discussed subcultures. In our discussions, we each hit upon synonymous attributes of American life, but also had our own spin on things, our own views on the world, and our “exceptional” cases within the culture. This shows that even though we’re part of a large dominating culture that impacts our lives in every way, we also have our own smaller cultures that are different than the dominating culture. I believe this occurs by the difference in personality, experiences, and beliefs. Concordia is going to be different than public universities in the way it is facilitated, in its students, in its mission statement, and in its programs, but Concordia and a public university are in the same dominating culture. A small farming community is going to spend money differently than those abiding in a penthouse in downtown New York City, yet both these people live in the dominating culture of the United States.

2) I’m not sure if this answers the question specifically, but it’s a cultural difference that I find interesting. I had a roommate from Beijing last year when I went to school in Kansas. She casually mentioned that if she got pregnant, she would simply have an abortion because she never wants kids. She mentioned how women have abortions all the time in China. When she went to school in Beijing, she knew all kinds of young women who had abortions their first year of college. She said her roommate that year had even had an abortion. I was horrified because of my culture: not only because I think it’s bad because of my Christian beliefs, but abortion is a moral issue in the U.S. Abortion is as simple in China as getting a tetanus shot is in the United States. It’s something that periodically needs to be done to prevent bad things from happening in the future. Li’an, my roommate, didn’t say that in so many words, but the way she mentioned the popularity of abortion in an informal and laid-back way brought me to this conclusion. As a woman who opposes abortion, it would be unwise for me to run through the streets of Beijing crudely exclaiming that the majority of women are killing their unborn babies. These women wouldn’t understand what the big deal is in my mind. I don’t know where I’m going with this...

3) I think we’ve all experienced high culture when it comes to best friends and their inside jokes. I’ve experienced high culture within my own family. It always seemed to happen with specific members of my extended family: Lauren and Dani were first cousins, one year apart. I was their second cousin, the same age as Dani. Obviously, Dani and Lauren spent more time together at family gatherings with the same people at Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving, birthdays, etc. Whenever the occasional family reunion would happen, I would gravitate toward those young ladies and they would only speak of happenings within their own family. The phrase “remember when” and “remember that time” were prevalent. I felt left out and smiled only to keep from crying (I was an emotional child). It’s tough, going into a high-context culture society blind. There’s a lot of stuff you miss out on. Jandt (2007) says on page 63, “In low-context cultures, verbal messages are elaborate and highly specific and tend to also be highly detailed and redundant. Verbal abilities are highly valued.” I find this characteristic true in myself when I look at my relationships. I carry my heart on my sleeve and will redundantly tell someone everything about my day, the ups and downs, if they ask. It is also true in regards to my communication with my boyfriend. He will sometimes try to move me physically when he wants me to follow him or if he wants to shift positions, instead of simply saying what

is on his agenda. I will have no idea where he wants me to move, and I do not enjoy being pushed or pulled around physically (not abusively, mind you!!!). I often times say to him, "Use your words!!!" It allows me to know exactly what he's thinking so both of us can live in peace.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
September 10, 2010

Date: Friday,

Subject: Re:Sara: Week Three

Author: Anna Kreis

Sara,

I really like your summary of our postings in the past week and how you applied it to the text from Jandt. When I was reading the section about subcultures I hadn't really applied it to our posting discussions, but it definately sums everything up. Our postings are a demonstration of subculture and it shows just where some of the subcultures we discussed had similarities and differences among each other. It was also neat to see how some of the traits of our dominating U.S. culture were represented in each subculture.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
Saturday, September 11, 2010

Date:

Subject: Re:Sara: Week Three

Author: Renea Gernant

You really do make excellent connections here.

I think that the discussion of your roommate is interesting because you really illustrate well how deeply entrenched our assumptions of right and wrong are. They are second nature and they just are. When faced with a view that is SO different, we are at a loss. It's a little different, but I have a group of friends who just assume that any two adults who date will have sex. They discuss everything about a couple in terms of that reality. They think nothing of asking their kids when they come home if they scored. This just blows my mind whenever it happens. BUT it's their culture reality and I am sure that they think I am a freak of nature.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
Saturday, September 11, 2010

Date:

Subject: Re:Sara: Week Three

Author: Abigail Kuehn

Sara---

You make me laugh!!!

As I read your second post, I just smiled broadly as a picture of your face popped into my head. What a gal you are my dear!

Thank you for sharing that story and what a shock it was for me to read! I feel that we look at each culture and find it easier to recognize the social, political, geographical, and physical differences; but when we brush against moral issues, emotions run wild and we get all stirred up inside. How do we approach such a subject? Should we even attempt such a feat? I think we both know that running down Beijing yelling crazy things that oppose their culture would not be productive, but as Christians, what are we to do with this information? To me, I would say that one needs to form a relationship and then take small steps that may breach that type of conversation, but how often do I actually take these steps?

Maybe this is just turning into a rant with myself, but I feel that it would be extremely difficult to live harmoniously with life/death issues that differ. I respect you and your thoughts. This is such a difference in cultural mindset (including religion) and gives me a lot to think about.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
Saturday, September 11, 2010

Date:

Subject: Re:Sara: Week Three

Author: Erika Mock

Sara, in reference to your second response, thanks for your honesty and willingness to share about your experiences. The real-life example you provided did a great job of illustrating how differences in perception (as a result of cultural differences) could potentially lead to miscommunication and misunderstanding. As your roommate shared her views on abortion with you you acted wisely in realizing that an explosive reaction was probably not the best way to handle the situation. Had you responded with an angry attack about how wrong abortion is (which I believe it IS wrong) the relationship you shared with your roommate might have ended and you would have lost the opportunity to share Christ with her. These situations are so extremely difficult. As Christians we want to help show people that some practices (even if they are the culturally accepted norm) are wrong. However, often our differing cultures act as a barrier. We have to find the balance between accepting culturally accepted practices that are against our beliefs and alienating people because of our overt rejection of their practices. I hope that made some sense...

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
Saturday, September 11, 2010

Date:

Subject: Re:Sara: Week Three

Author: Renea Gernant

Eriks, that makes total sense. It's always important to realize that we can't talk honestly with people if they don't have a relationship with us...a strong reaction that is not based in mutual respect can only cause harm...

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
September 12, 2010

Date: Sunday,

Subject: Re:Sara: Week Three

Author: Janelle Gertsch

You are already very aware of cultural differences, and the unfavorable impact an outburst may have had when your roommate shared her story. Thank you for sharing, as your post opened my eyes to something with which I am surrounded every day - people here in the Midwest who are also in a culture of their own...the non-believers. They can be such great people - volunteering, sharing, great neighbors, friends that are a fun time at a social gathering. Not at all wearing the devil horns and tail! However, much in the same way it was a delicate subject with your roommate, these folks also pose a challenge for us and ways in which to witness our faith. I pictured myself jumping up on the patio table and pulling a "Jimmy Swaggert" when the party starts to get loud and crude, and I know that would surely get me doused in their beverage of choice. Who really wants to be labeled as Sally Sunday School? Those who don't know Jesus as their Lord & Savior are definitely a separate culture that also requires intercultural awareness, empathy & delicate communication. In the High vs. Low Context Cultures video, they state that the High Cultures have much unspoken communication. Does that make Christianity a High Context culture? If so, our challenge becomes the breaking down of those cultural barriers so we can share our faith.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
September 12, 2010

Date: Sunday,

Subject: Re:Sara: Week Three

Author: Renea Gernant

I definitely think that Christian groups/people have their own "dialect" and communication that isn't the same for those outside the faith. I work a lot with Red Cross and other disaster services. MOST people who do disaster work are Christian or otherwise religious. It's almost impossible to face some elements of loss without faith. BUT there are others who aren't. It always throws me when I say something that is completely normal and appropriate with my siblings in faith and, seriously, those

who are outside of it have NO idea what it means or take it in a way completely different than it was intended.

Topic: Unit Two: Week Three (Due Fourth Monday of Term)
September 13, 2010

Date: Monday,

Subject: Re:Sara: Week Three

Author: Doris Galarza

Sara,
you made some really good point when talking about the different culture around the United States but us all being from the dominant culture in the US. I was really shocked about the whole abortion thing with your roommate. I didn't even know that about China. It made me think about how different our culture is from many different countries. i really happy that you shared that because i dont know if i would have known that also, i dont know how i would have handled that situation.

I feel that there is and will always be a constant debate between how to correctly define culture and how to do so in a respectful manner that pleases everyone. Face it world; it's not going to happen. While looking at the variety of posts amongst peers, I've noticed that we've written about our thoughts and opinions that depict our culture of the United States, but seem to all be on the same page about this subject and mindset. It seems to me that we are all living in a common culture right now and are sharing that common cultural mindset towards our country via what the text has told us and what we have been able to conclude on our own.

Taking a closer look at the individual posts, there are differences in what make us who we are. To compare, I found Sara Holle's writings for week one were very insightful and honest. Her culture and preference for interaction revolves around "one-on-one conversations and interaction rather than group or crowd interaction" (Holle, par. 2-I am Sara). As a smaller number of people brings more intimate discussion and depth to such interaction, I see that her view of culture (including that in which she grew up) differs from another colleague, Doris Galzara. As a native from New York City-a place where cramped and compact bodies is a commonality, her childhood culture is the opposing of Sara's environment. Doris shared that "my parents always taught me to be independent" (Galzara, par. 2-Week 2 response) and continued to comment on how her change in environment forced her to depend upon others. She is a prime example of how a change in culture requires one to alter his/her native preference of living and mindset.

As a class, our viewpoints on culture are very broad. We speak of family heritage, socio-economic background, geographical origin, and personality profiles when delving into our personal cultures. In the text, Jandt defines culture as "a community or population sufficiently large enough to be self-sustaining" (p. 7). In opposition to this, we have been

seeing culture in a more immediate and intimate sense by defining our familial heritage that, most likely, cannot be self-sufficient for a large amount of time. In continual accordance with the text, a subculture is that of a common group of people within the setting of a larger or more dominant culture. (Jandt, p. 16) As we have shared who we are and how we have seen our past and present lives define our cultural outlook, we should be mindful of the distinguishing characteristics between culture and subculture. I feel that it can just be down right tricky to define culture. Whoever is defining the word has his/her own personal experiences and cultures that influence such a description that we are all supposed to just follow and categorize our lives into. A culture, no matter what avenue or lens one views it with, will continue to differ and flux as time goes by.

2) Food is a necessary part and aspect of all cultures. I feel safe in saying that every culture consists of human beings and all human beings need (or love/indulge in) food. According to Jandt, “cultures use food to reinforce and express identities” (p. 65). A plate of food may only look like a good meal to an individual from one culture, but if the origin of the dish was presented or received by one from the native culture, a plate of native food has more meaning and reflection upon the native culture’s lifestyle. This past Easter was a great experience for my family and me. We were invited to share a traditional Serbian meal with some friends from our church. We met the Barbar family about 10 years ago when they immigrated to the United States to escape religious persecution.

As the presentation of the meal began, I realized that one of the Barbar family members (who has married a man from the United States) was not accompanied by her husband. This was a surprise to me, but by listening and waiting to see if there was an explanation, she shared that in their culture, it is vital for the woman to spend each holiday and celebration with her family-even if her husband cannot accompany her. Though I first thought this was rather strange, I noted that their upbringing and culture is very different from mine. There could have been some negative vibes or feelings if I had approached the subject and asked why her husband wasn’t there and that this ritual was very strange. Resulting in miscommunication and hurt feelings.

As the meal began, Selma, the mother of the Barbar family, introduced each course to us and described how it reflected the country and people of Serbia. It was wonderful! What just looked like good food to me was a direct part of who our host family was and is to this day! I was more than thrilled to share a part of their culture and felt very honored by their extreme hospitality and openness. Upon reflection of the text, I see how “all elements of culture interrelate” (Jandt, p. 66) and how a bold and negative response or comment could severely damage the communication and relationship between people of differing cultures.

3) The discussion and description of both high and low cultures really translated well with me. A low-context culture communicates in a way where the words/signals used convey the message and meaning and the setting does not significantly determine much. From the video, “Low and High Context Cultures”, low-context communication was described with direct statements and logic. This form of context communication usually

resonates with countries similar to that of the United States. In opposition to this, a high-context communicant would see the meaning of a message more avidly influenced by the physical environment or previous knowledge amongst the people communicating. (Jandt, p. 62) Some common characteristics of high-context communication relate to internalized information, more meaning found in nonverbal messages influence of the setting, and preprogrammed information. (Video: "Low and High Context Cultures")

To compare these two types of communication, I've decided to take the approach through a family dinner. Say that you are coming home for Thanksgiving dinner and are bringing your significant other with you. It is his/her first experience with family. As you approach the door and knock, your mother opens the door and you embrace one another as she starts singing a song that relates to your childhood nickname and the two of you burst into laughter. Your brother then comes to greet you and the two of you share a secret sibling handshake. As you turn around to introduce your significant other, your mother formally introduces herself and shakes his/her hand and your brother does the same. While at the dinner table, direct "interview-esque" questions are directed towards your partner so that they can get to know him/her better. However, your sister and you start giggling at the table as she repeats a childhood name that your neighbor boy used to call you all the time. As you are experiencing a high-context form of communication, your significant other is experiencing a low-context form of communication; even though the settings are the same.