

# Observation, Interpretation and Difference

Hofstede on Culture Shock

# Observing Difference

Primary importance of  
separating  
observation and  
interpretation—why?



# Five barriers to communication

- Language difference. Language is also culture, knowing what to say and when and how...
- What is a “fluent fool”?
- How does this first barrier manifest itself at Bucknell?

# Five Barriers to Communication

- Non-verbal communication—gestures, postures, clothing, posture, physical expression, haptics, eye contact, can all be so unconscious that we don't know that they signify
- Some examples?
- How can you be aware of this barrier? How is this visible at Bucknell?

# Five Barriers to Communication

- The creation of stereotypes
  - we fit people to notions that we already possess about their culture—
  - have you encountered stereotypes at Bucknell? Greek system? Res Colleges?
  - How can you overcome this?
  - Can you interpret the other's culture from their perspective?
  - Can you interpret your culture from their perspective?

# Five Barriers to Communication

- Tendency to judge another culture based on the standards of one's own
- Judgements about food and drink, for example
- How do you prevent this?
  - Maintain a distance, you cannot change a culture overnight, and get to know the people involved

## Five Barriers to Communication

- Stress accompanies intercultural interactions
- ambiguity and uncertainty lead to stressful situations
- Stress accompanies intercultural interactions
- ambiguity and uncertainty lead to stressful situations



# Culture Shock

- What is Culture Shock?
  - Prolonged period in a foreign culture
- 
- How do you know you are suffering from culture shock?
  - Familiar cues are missing or have a different meaning.. e.g. in America people ask how are you but don't expect an detailed answer
  - Values that are good, desirable or beautiful are not considered so by the new host culture—e.g. fasting for Ramadan is considered abnormal in this country or wearing a hijab
- You feel disoriented and anxious—depressed or hostile—very tired by the end of the day..



## Culture Shock

You don't like the new ways things are done

Your social skills are not working—when do you say hello, shake hands, hug?

You feel like you will never fit in...

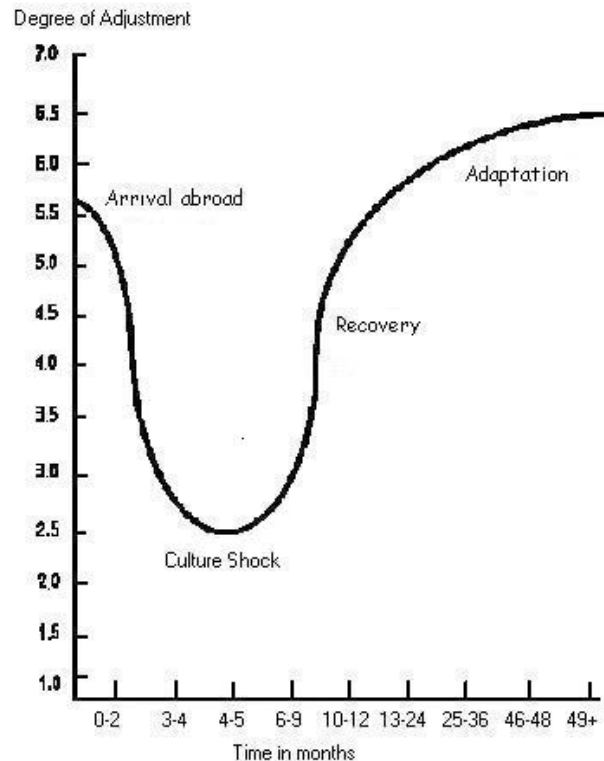
Explain the kissing problem....what is the solution to this?



# Stages in Culture Shock

1. Honeymoon—everything is exotic—you feel like a tourist—the difference is welcomed
2. Disorientation—everything that you know is taken apart—you feel overwhelmed by the requirements of the new culture—disorientation and self-blame
3. Irritability and hostility—feelings of anger and resentment towards the new culture for making you feel this way....
4. Adjustment and integration—you are beginning to learn the new cues and can function in the new environment -- you begin to see the good and bad in both cultures
5. Biculturality—you are comfortable in both the old and new culture

## Understanding Culture Shock



- How might these stages be of use to training new employees overseas? Health care professionals? Students going abroad? New troops?
- What is the major difference between Northern European and Southern European cultures according to the story on p. 24?
- What are the stages of culture shock that Rui went through?
- Work in small groups in reading and then answering the questions on p. 26

# This weekend...

- **Assignment Two**
- *Write a 500 words on your first two weeks at Bucknell in terms of intercultural communication and culture shock.*
- *Which barriers did you meet?*
- *Which stage of culture shock are you at?*
- *Have you experienced this kind of culture shock before?*
- *If so, how does this one compare?*
- *How might this culture shock be mitigated by both you and your new neighbors having learned some of Hofstede's cultural dimensions?*
- Post this under category "Assignment Two"