

# ***Developing Intercultural Communication Responsiveness / Competence in College & Business settings***

**Rob Vitello, Wayne K. Johnson**

***“Knowing is not enough; we must apply.  
Willing is not enough; we must do.”***

**Goethe**



# Agenda—Intercultural Communication

- Bristol Community College—Cultural Awareness
- Confucius
- Why should you care about Intercultural Communication?
- Cultural Awareness / Responsiveness / Competency Cycle
- Demographics / Business
- Erin Meyer's—Dimensions of Intercultural Communication
- Communicating—Low-context / High-context
- Intercultural Situational Leadership
- Korean Case Study
- Questions



# Cultural / Intercultural Competencies

- **Bristol Community College**
- **Collaborating with Colleagues**



# Intercultural Responsiveness / Competence in Action

- **Rich South Coast Cultures**
- **Healthcare Professionals**
- **Interactive Learning**



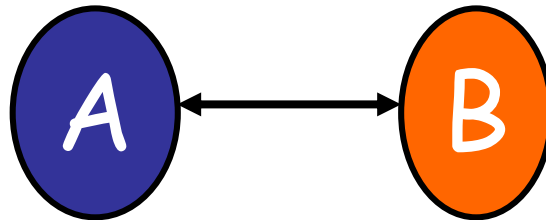
**“All people are  
the same...it’s  
only their habits  
[behaviors] that  
are different.”**

***Confucius***

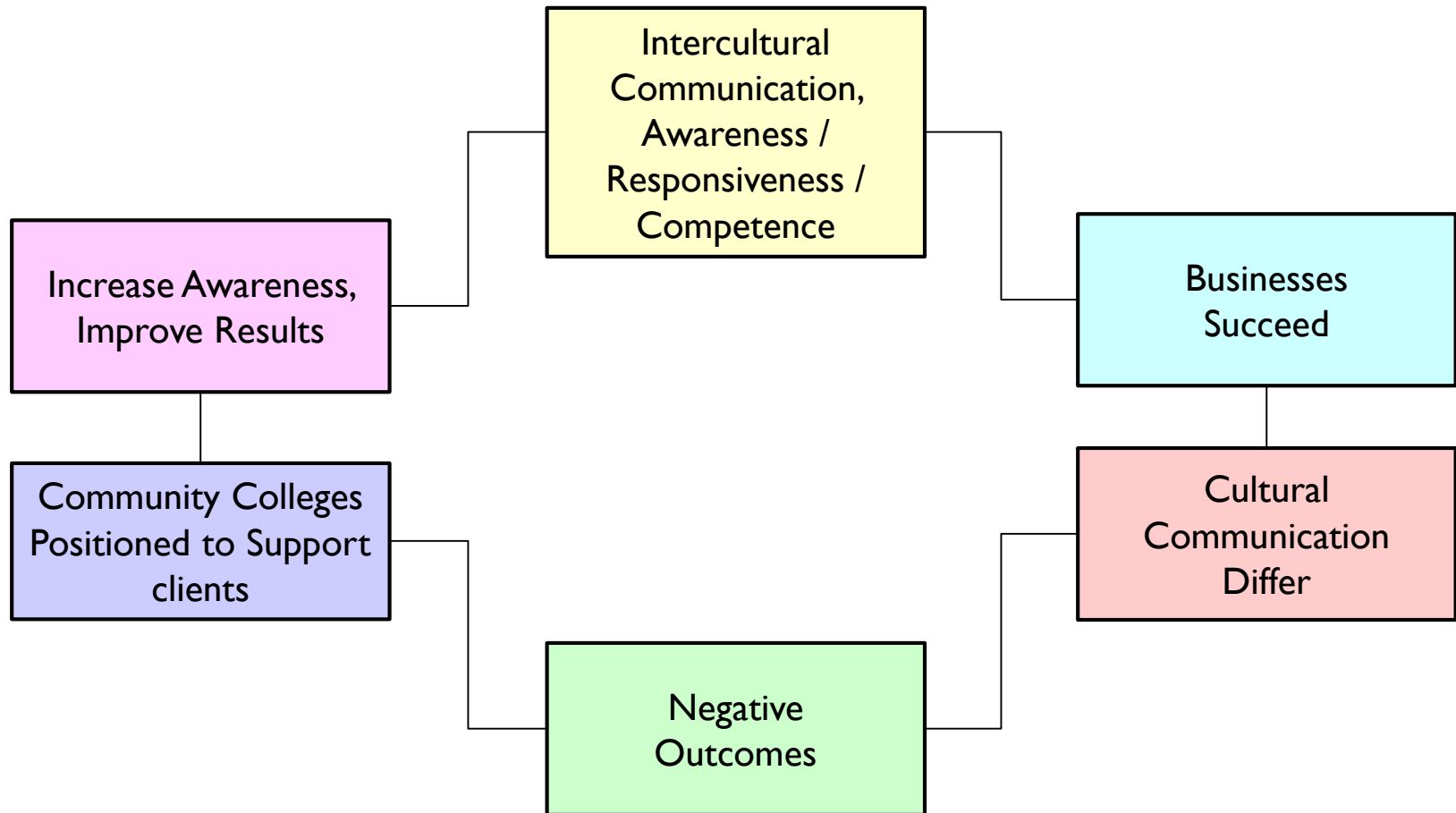


## With your partner, discuss:

- What has been a challenging or interesting cultural / intercultural experience you have had in the past?
- 2 Minutes



# Why should Workforce Development professionals care about Intercultural Communication?





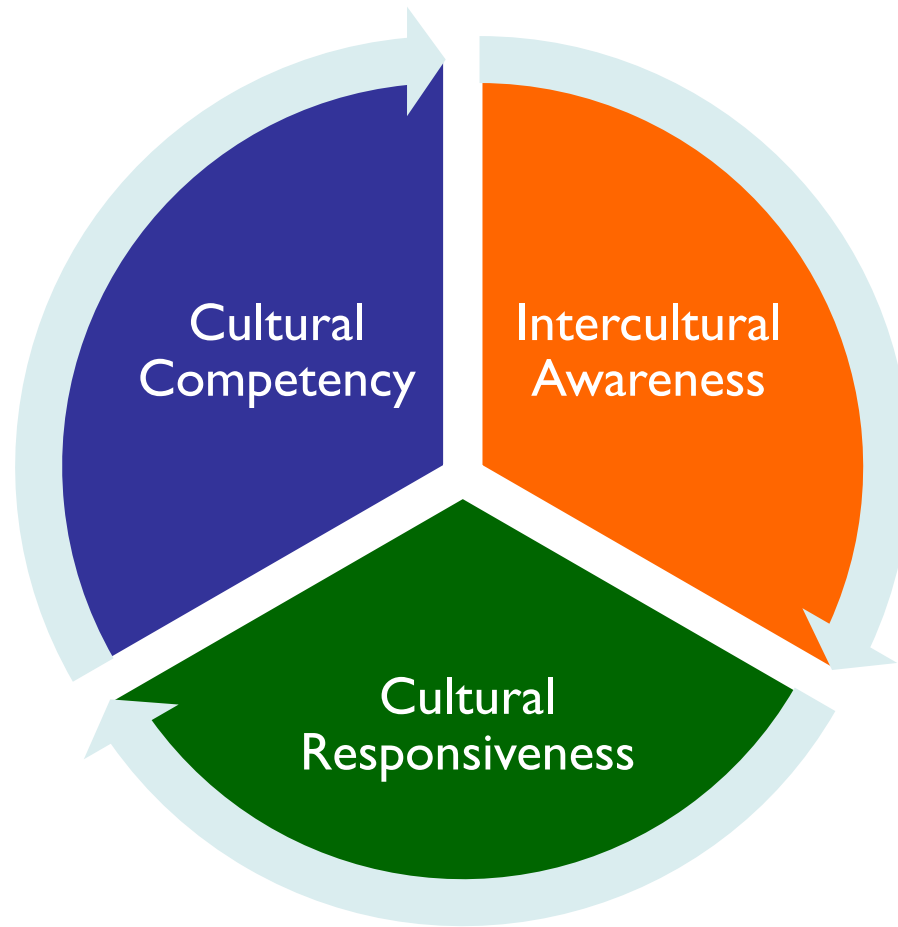


# Cultural Responsiveness:

- Approach those from different cultures with curiosity and openness and to transform that curiosity into an effective action.



# The Cultural Awareness / Responsiveness / Competency Cycle



# Why Intercultural Communication Training?

Healthcare CLASP  
Standards

Finance Industry -  
Customer Service

Manufacturing - New  
Business Markets



# Rationale for Intercultural Responsiveness / Competence Training

- Responding to demographic changes
- Improving the quality of services & outcomes
- Gaining a competitive edge in the marketplace

Cohen E, Goode T. Policy Brief 1: Rationale for cultural competence in primary health care. Georgetown University Child Development Center, The National Center for Cultural Competence. Washington, D.C., 1999.



# Changing U.S. Demographics—Effects Workforce



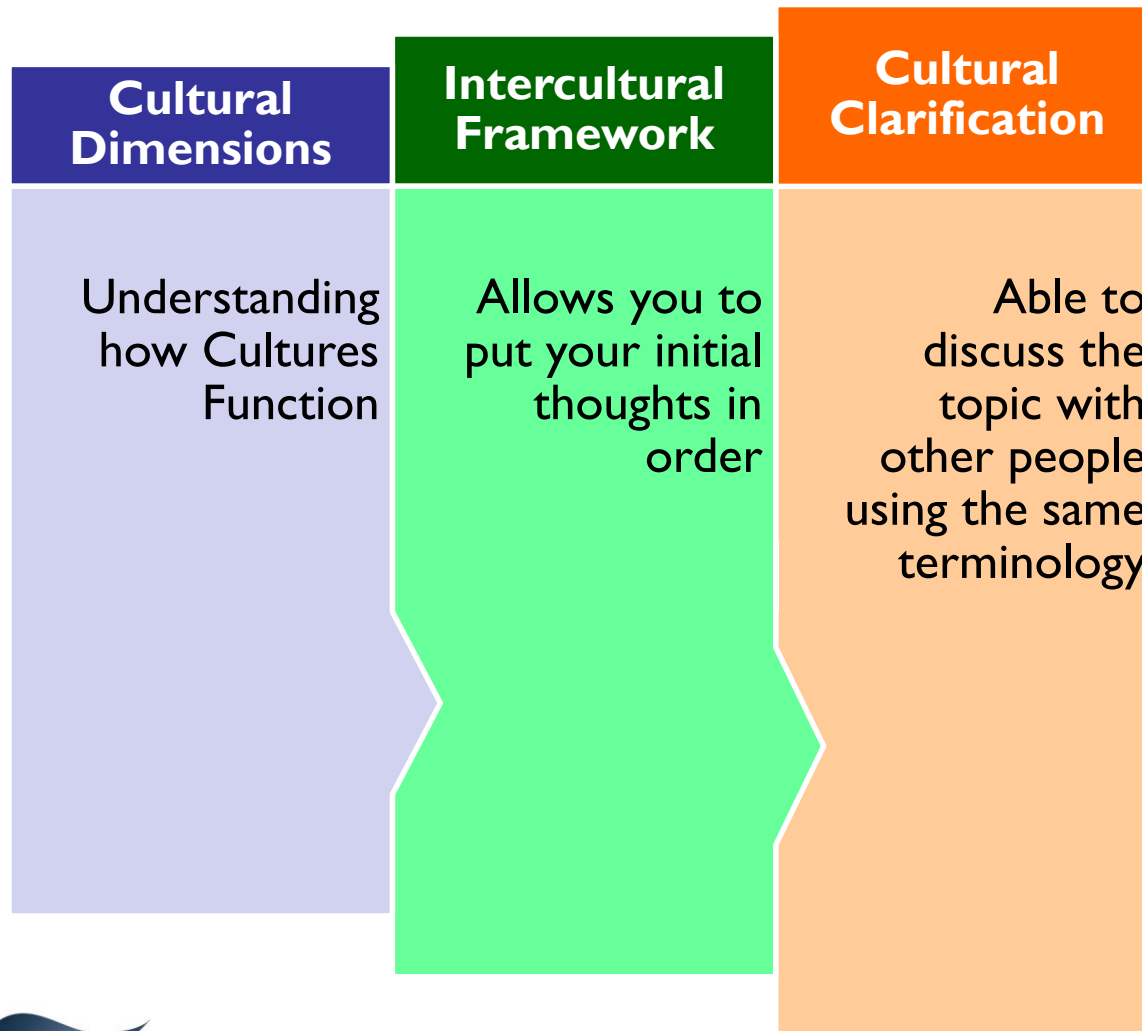
U.S. Population will  
change dramatically by  
2050

Hispanic and Asian  
populations triple over  
the next 40 years.

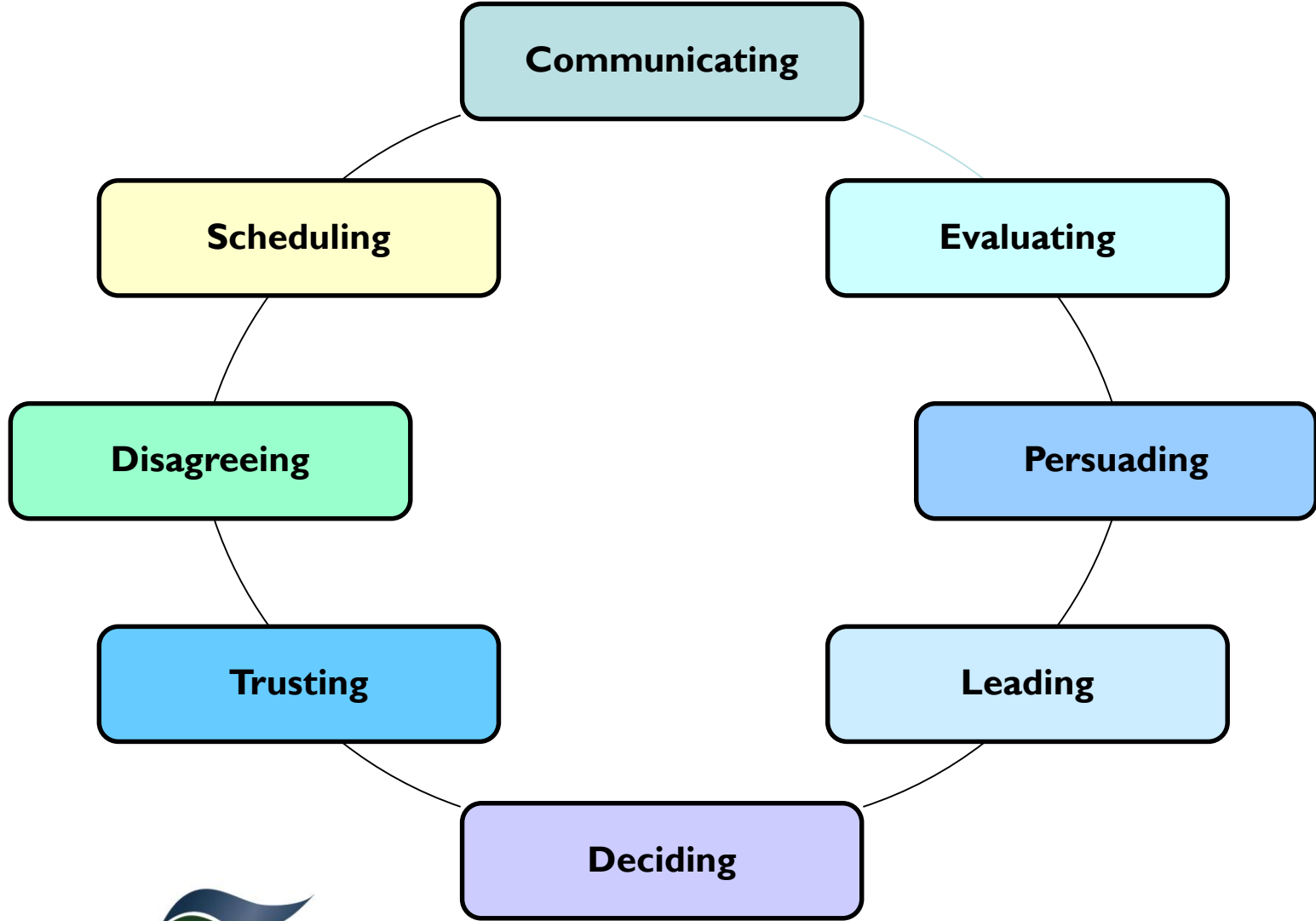
## Community Colleges=Effective Intercultural Training



# Why should we care about Cultural Dimensions theories?



# Dimensions of Intercultural Communication



# What are Cultural Dimensions?

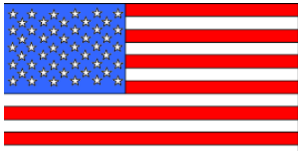
Erin Meyer identified scales and dimensions which create a comprehensive view of what to expect when interacting with people from a given culture.

FIGURE 1.1. COMMUNICATING





# Communicating—Explicit vs. Implicit (Low-context / High-context)



## Low-context communicators (Explicit / direct communication style)

- Use lots of words to communicate
- Present messages that are clear, concise
- Rely on words to retrieve or deliver the message



## High-context communicators (Implicit / indirect communication style)

- Use non-verbal cues
- Draw messages from the environment
- Messages might be vague or ambiguous
- Use stories to get to the point



# Communicating—Low-context / High-context

- In the United States, silence is sometimes viewed negatively, as something that is embarrassing isolating, or representative of a lack of knowledge.
- Many cultural groups (Japanese and East Asian cultures) place emphasis on silence and harmony and a secondary emphasis on speech.



# Communicating—Low-context / High-context

- New Famous Slang—“Read the Air” to get to the bottom of the message.
- KY 空気読めない SKY - スーパー空気読めない
- <https://aso.gov.au/titles/features/japanese-story/clip1/>



# Communicating—Low-context / High-context

In Workforce settings → Useful to consider when making assumptions on the basis of what other people say, understanding that sometimes you need to “read the air” to get to the bottom of the message.

FIGURE 1.1. COMMUNICATING



**Low Context** Good communication is precise, simple, and clear. Messages are expressed and understood at face value. Repetition is appreciated if it helps clarify the communication.

**High Context** Good communication is sophisticated, nuanced, and layered. Messages are both spoken and read between the lines. Messages are often implied but not plainly expressed.

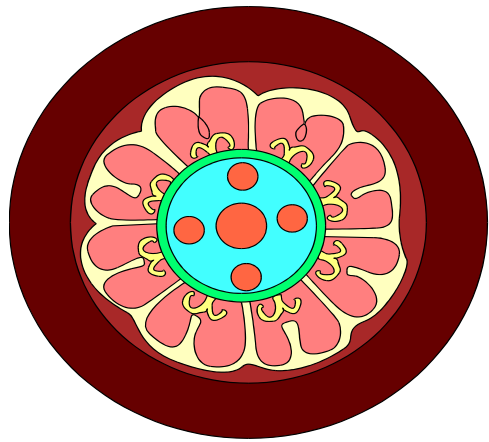
# Intercultural Situational Leadership

When you are working with multiple nationalities you need to be aware of the differences, and set up a framework of what I call:

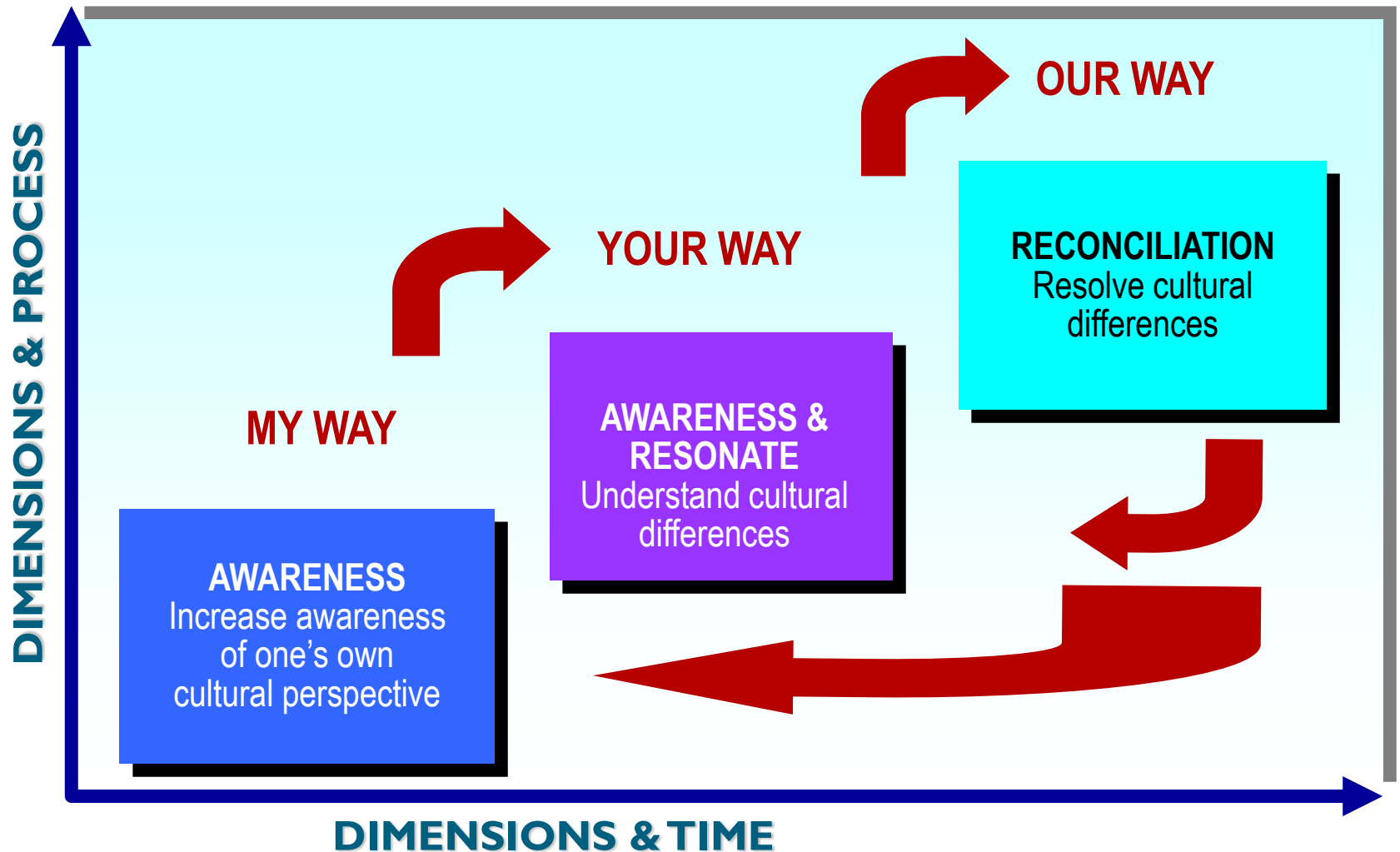
- **“Intercultural Situational Leadership”**
- Community Colleges are able to create programs for effective intercultural communication. [Cross-cultural Communication]
- Increase Cultural and Intercultural Awareness, Responsiveness, and Competency to be effective
- To be very LOW context and direct about this concept→
  - No person can be 100% culturally competent. Period!!!



# International Business Case study in Korea



# Towards Intercultural Competence



# The Cultural Awareness / Responsiveness / Competency Cycle







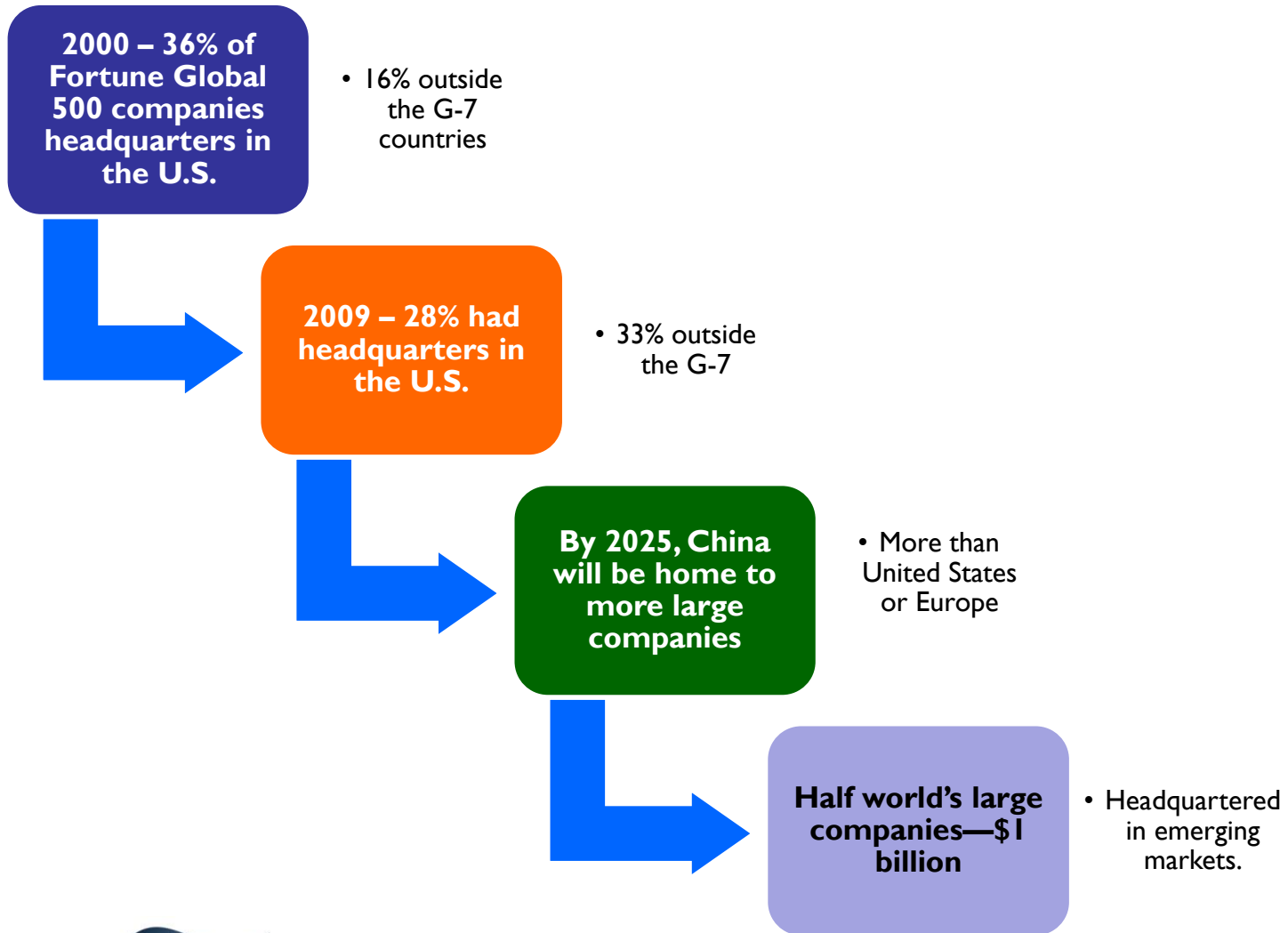
# ***Review Key Concepts***



# Questions?



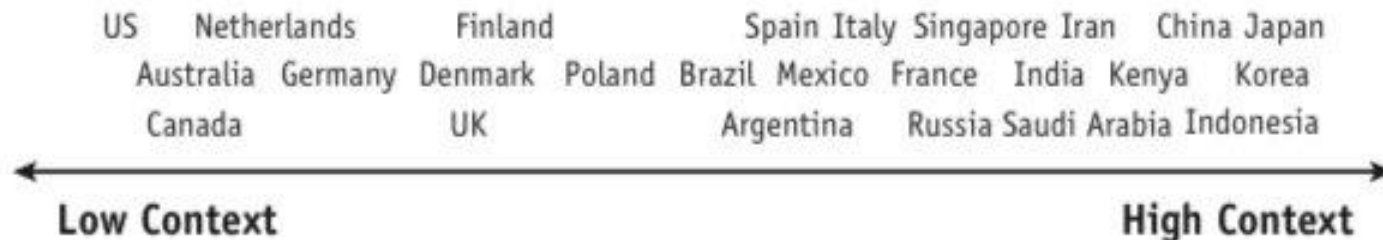
# Business—Intercultural Communication Competence



# Cultural Dimensions

- The fact that one country is in a certain place on the scale does not mean anything until it is compared with another culture. It is all relative.
- The position of one culture on any of the scales should always be treated in relation to the culture you compare it with.
- The most important concept in Intercultural Communication is:  
→ To increase your awareness.

**FIGURE 1.1. COMMUNICATING**



# Communicating—Low-context / High-context Culture

Americans are the most explicit or low-context culture there is (low-context meaning their conversation assumes relatively little intuitive understanding).

- U.S. is a young country of immigrants that prides itself on “straight-talking”.
- Japan and other East Asian countries represent the other extreme.
- Americans in Japan should pay attention to what is not being said.
- Japanese in America should brace themselves for direct language

**FIGURE 1.1. COMMUNICATING**



# **An Example: “Part-time job”**

- Just prior to a Christmas holiday there was a English conversation class with some higher-level Japanese students.
- There were seven pupils in the class.
- Sitting in a circle, they were slowly beginning to talk to each other when one student asked another sitting across from him:

***“What are you going to do during the vacation period?”***

***Answer: “Part-time job.”***

***(Silent period, then the response): “I see.”***

**THE DISCUSSION ENDED**

Was this a good answer or conversation?

# Evaluating

- Americans may be very explicit communicators, but they are in the middle of the spectrum when it comes to giving negative feedback.
- Israelis, Russians, and Dutch are among the most direct when it comes to negative feedback.
- Japanese are among the most indirect.

**FIGURE 2.2. EVALUATING**



# Persuading

- Some cultures, notably the French and Italians, tend toward deductive arguments, focusing on theories and complex concepts before presenting a fact, statement, or opinion.
- Others, notably Anglo-Saxon cultures, tend toward inductive arguments, starting with focusing first on practical application before moving to theory.
- This trait shows up in everything from how people give presentations or lead meetings to how they write emails.

FIGURE 3.1. PERSUADING



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## Concept-first

Individuals have been trained to first develop the theory or complex concept before presenting a fact, statement, or opinion. The preference is to begin a message or report by building up a theoretical argument before moving on to a conclusion. The conceptual principles underlying each situation are valued.

## Application-first

Individuals are trained to begin with a fact, statement, or opinion and later add concepts to back up or explain the conclusion as necessary. The preference is to begin a message or report with an executive summary or bullet points. Discussions are approached in a practical, concrete manner. Theoretical or philosophical discussions are avoided in a business environment.



# Leading

- “In Denmark, it is understood that the managing director is one of the guys, just two small steps up from the janitor,” a Danish executive told Meyer. This represents one extreme in attitudes toward leadership.
- On the other side of the spectrum in countries like Japan and Korea, however, the ideal boss should stand far above the workers at the top of a hierarchy.
- America's outlook on leadership falls somewhere in the middle.

FIGURE 4.1. LEADING



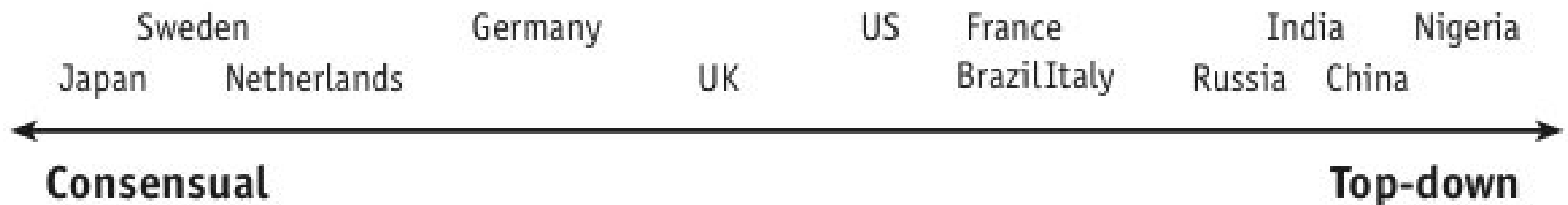
**Egalitarian** The ideal distance between a boss and a subordinate is low. The best boss is a facilitator among equals. Organizational structures are flat. Communication often skips hierarchical lines.

**Hierarchical** The ideal distance between a boss and a subordinate is high. The best boss is a strong director who leads from the front. Status is important. Organizational structures are multi-layered and fixed. Communication follows set hierarchical lines.

# Deciding

- How organizations make decisions relates closely to how they view leadership, but with some important differences.
- Notably, while Japan has a very hierarchical leadership system, it has a very consensual decision-making system.
- This is the famous *RINGI* system, which involves building consensus at a lower level before bringing a proposal to a higher level, thus enabling broad corporate consensus.

FIGURE 5.3. DECIDING



# Trusting

- In some cultures, notably the U.S, people do not worry so much about trusting each other because they trust their legal system to enforce contracts, and so business negotiations focus on what's practical.
- In others, including many emerging market economies but also to a lesser extent Western Europe, personal relationships are much more important, in part because people don't trust their legal system to enforce contracts.

FIGURE 6.1. TRUSTING



## Task-based

Trust is built through business-related activities. Work relationships are built and dropped easily, based on the practicality of the situation. You do good work consistently, you are reliable, I enjoy working with you, I trust you.

## Relationship-based

Trust is built through sharing meals, evening drinks, and visits at coffee machine. Work relationships build up slowly over the long term. I've seen who you are at a deep level, I've shared personal time with you, I know others well who trust you, I trust you.

# Disagreeing

- Some cultures embrace confrontation while others avoid it.
- This scale looks a lot like the scale showing the directness of negative feedback, though with some differences, such as Sweden being further to the left (direct) on negative feedback and further to the right (avoiding confrontation) on disagreeing.

**FIGURE 7.1. DISAGREEING**



## **Confrontational**

Disagreement and debate is positive for the team or organization. Open confrontation is appropriate and will not negatively impact the relationship.

## **Avoids confrontation**

Disagreement and debate is negative for the team or organization. Open confrontation is inappropriate and will break group harmony or negatively impact the relationship.

# Scheduling

- That different cultures treat time differently is one of the most common observations for anyone working or even traveling abroad.
- On one extreme you have got the exceedingly precise Germans and Swiss; Americans fall relatively close to this end of the spectrum; Western Europeans and Latin Americans tend to be more flexible; Africa, the Middle East, and India are extremely flexible.

FIGURE 8.1. SCHEDULING



**Linear time** Project steps are approached in a sequential fashion, completing one task before beginning the next. One thing at a time. No interruptions. The focus is on the deadline and sticking to the schedule. Emphasis is on promptness and good organization over flexibility.

**Flexible time** Project steps are approached in a fluid manner, changing tasks as opportunities arise. Many things are dealt with at once and interruptions accepted. The focus is on adaptability and flexibility is valued over organization.

## Books and Articles

Erin Meyer—The Culture Map <http://erinmeyer.com/>

100+ Management Models: How to Understand and Apply the World's Most Powerful Business Tools by Fons Trompenaars, Piet Hein Coebergh: published 2014

Cross-cultural management textbook: Lessons from the world leading experts in cross-cultural management by Fons Trompenaars, Jerome Dumetz, Olga Saginova, Stephen R. Covey

Cross-Cultural Management Textbook: Lessons from the World Leading Experts in Cross-Cultural Management by Jerome Dumetz, Olga Saginova, Peter Woolliams, Fons Trompenaars: published 2012

Cross-cultural management textbook: Lessons from the world leading experts in cross-cultural management by Jerome Dumetz, Fons Trompenaars, Meredith Belbin, Stephen M.R. Covey: published 2012

Building Cultural Competence: Innovative Activities and Models by Darla K. Deardorff (Editor), Kate Berardo (Editor), Fons Trompenaars (Foreword): published 2012 — 4 editions

Global M&A Tango Global M&A Tango by Fons Trompenaars, Maarten Nijhoff Asser, Trompenaars Fons: published 2010 — 8 editions

Riding the Waves of Innovation: Harness the Power of Global Culture to Drive Creativity and Growth by Fons Trompenaars, Charles Hampden-Turner: published 2010 — 2 editions

Accelerating out of the Great Recession : How to Win in a Slow-Growth Economy by Fons Trompenaars: published 2010

Living Without Oil: The New Energy Economy Revealed by Adjiedj Bakas, Fons Trompenaars, Rob Creemers: published 2009

Innovating in a Global Crisis: Riding the Whirlwind of Recession by Fons Trompenaars, Charles Hampden-Turner: published 2009 — 6 editions

Mastering the Infinite Game: How East Asian Values Are Transforming Business Practices by Charles Hampden-Turner, Fons Trompenaars: published 2009

The Enlightened Leader: An Introduction to the Chakras of Leadership by Peter ten Hoopen, Fons Trompenaars: published 2009 — 6 editions

Riding the Whirlwind: Connecting People and Organisations in a Culture of Innovation by Fons Trompenaars: published 2007 — 3 editions

Managing Change Across Corporate Cultures by Fons Trompenaars, Peter Prud'homme: published 2005

Cohen E, Goode T. Policy Brief 1: Rationale for cultural competence in primary health care. Georgetown University, Child Development Center, The National Center for Cultural Competence. Washington, D.C., 1999.

## Books and Articles

Marketing Across Cultures by Fons Trompenaars, Peter Woolliams: published 2004

Managing People Across Cultures by Fons Trompenaars, Charles Hampden-Turner: published 2004

Business Across Cultures by Fons Trompenaars, Peter Woolliams: published 2003 — 6 editions

Did the Pedestrian Die: Insights from the World's Greatest Culture Guru by Fons Trompenaars: published 2003

21 Leaders for the 21st Century by Fons Trompenaars, Charles Hampden-Turner: published 2001 — 7 editions

Mastering the Infinite Game: How East Asian Values are Transforming Business Practices: How Asian Values Are Transforming Business Practices by Charles Hampden-Turner, Fons Trompenaars: published 2001

Building Cross Culture Competence by Charles Hampden-Turner, Fons Trompenaars, Hampden-Turner: published 2001

Mastering the Infinite Game: How East Asian Values Are Transforming Business Practices by Fons Trompenaars: published 2001

Building Cross-Cultural Competence: How to Create Wealth from Conflicting Values by Charles Hampden-Turner, Fons Trompenaars: published 2000

Building Cross-Cultural Competence: How to Create Wealth from Conflicting Values by Charles M Hampden-Turner, Fons Trompenaars: published 2000

Over de grenzen van cultuur & management by Fons Trompenaars, Charles Hampden-Turner, Paul DuChateau (Translator): published 1993

Riding the Waves of Culture: Understanding Diversity in Global Business by Fons Trompenaars, Charles Hampden-Turner: published 1989 — 9 editions

Business Weltweit: Der Weg Zum Interkulturellen Management by Fons Trompenaars, Peter Woolliams

# **Did the Pedestrian Die: Insights from the World's Greatest Culture Guru Paperback – March 4, 2003**

**by Fons Trompenaars**

## **The Dilemma**

You are a passenger in a car driven by a close friend. He hits a pedestrian. You know he was going at least 35 miles per hour in an area of the city where the maximum speed allowed is 20 miles per hour. There are no witnesses. His lawyer says that if you are prepared to testify under oath that he was only driving at 20 miles per hour it may save him from serious consequences.

### **What right has your friend to expect you to protect him?**

a: My friend has a DEFINITE right to expect me to testify to the lower figure.

b: He has SOME right to expect me to testify to the lower figure.

c: He has NO right to expect me to testify to the lower figure.

Fons Trompenaars has put this dilemma to some 70,000 managers in over 65 countries. The responses vary tremendously and will often change when Fons then reveals a further important factor - that the pedestrian is indeed very? dead! But there is one thread that remains common no matter where and to whom Fons is posing this dilemma: regardless of their culture, people would like to help their friends as well as respect the truth and support laws that protect pedestrians. Culture is the way one solves dilemmas. That is, the way one resolves dilemmas is culturally determined.

Did the Pedestrian Die? is an accumulation of a decade of research into cultural diversity across the globe with a wide range of client organizations. Trompenaars and his research team have identified the issues that really make a difference at the level of the individual and the organization as whole. In addition to his well-established cross-cultural database of 70,000 managers from across the world, more recently Trompenaars has interviewed thousands of business leaders and managers to understand the challenges and concerns they face, the tensions between competing priorities, demands and values.



# With your partner, discuss:

- What has been a challenging or interesting cultural / intercultural experience you have had in the past?
- 2 Minutes

