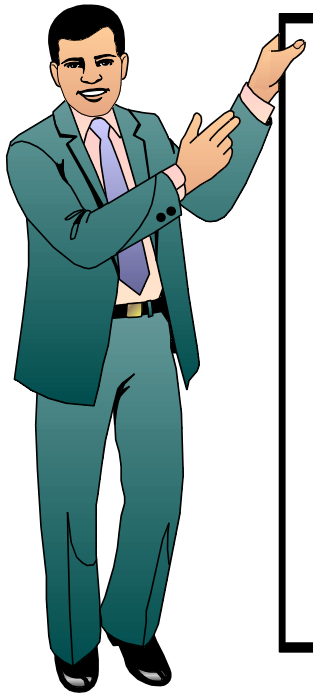
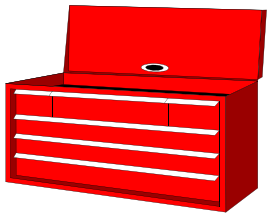
Dr. Grove's Toolkit

for Effective Presentations to Nationally Diverse Audiences



INSTRUCTOR'S MANUAL

Instructional Workshop & Application Practicum

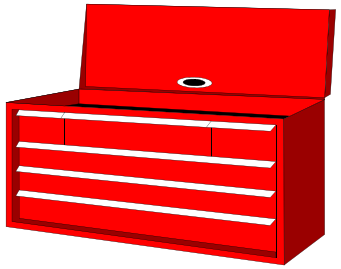


Developed by Cornelius N. Grove, Ed.D.

INSTRUCTOR'S MANUAL

Dr. Grove's Toolkit

for Effective Presentations to Nationally Diverse Audiences



Cornelius Grove, a former high school teacher, served as research director of AFS, the student exchange organization, after earning his Ed.D. at Columbia. He taught courses on classroom cultures at Columbia and The New School. After teaching at a university in Beijing, he co-authored *Encountering the Chinese*. Later, for two new encyclopedias, he wrote entries on pedagogy across cultures. He has authored four books: *The Aptitude Myth: How an Ancient Belief Came to Undermine Children's Learning Today* (2013); *The Drive to Learn: What the East Asian Experience Tells Us about Raising Students Who Excel* (2017); *A Mirror for Americans: What the East Asian Experience Tells Us about Teaching Students Who Excel* (2020); and *How Other Children Learn: What Five Traditional Societies Tell Us about Parenting and Children's Learning* (2023). He and his wife live in Brooklyn, NY.

This manual and the Participants' Manual are made freely available through ResearchGate. Suggested citation:

Cornelius N. Grove (2003, 2022), *Dr. Grove's Framework for Effective Presentations to Nationally Diverse Audiences*. Instructor's Manual and Participants' Manual. ResearchGate.

Pages and content **in blue type** in this manual do not appear in the Participant's Manual. Both manuals are deliberately unpaginated.

OVERVIEW: Preparing to Instruct Units 1 and 2 of This Workshop

Course participants are assumed to be teachers, trainers, and other presenters. The goal of this workshop is to increase participants' *readiness to notice*, and *ability to respond effectively to*, a barrier that undermines effective knowledge transfer to groups of nationally mixed learners: the difference between **KNOWLEDGE-FOCUSED** and **LEARNER-FOCUSED** mindsets and approaches regarding classroom knowledge transfer.

Please devote a few hours of your preparation time to deepening your own understanding of this basic difference. Consult the following:

- "How People From Different Cultures Expect to Learn," a 3-page introduction found among the readings at the back of this manual.
- "Transmitting Knowledge in Classrooms: Two Basic Approaches Worldwide," a 6-page introduction available on ResearchGate.
- "Understanding the Two Instructional Style Prototypes," a 22-page discussion of instructional approaches available on ResearchGate.

Opening Demonstration (see also the page following this one)
Think of yourself as an actor and throw yourself into the two sharply contrasting roles. Do *not* begin by announcing that "I'm now going to demonstrate..." *Simply begin* the workshop in a Knowledge-Focused style, then switch to beginning again in a Learner-Focused style. Only then say that this has been a demonstration, refer them to their manuals' page for note-making, then open a discussion of the differences.

Unit 1: Course Overview
The three pages of Unit 1 should support your overview of the course for the participants. Demo *and* overview: about one hour total.

Unit 2: The Framework
This unit gives participants a working understanding of the two knowledge-transfer cultures. The first page emphasizes that (a) concern with the WHAT of learning generates a Knowledge-Focused culture; (b) concern with the HOW of learning generates a Learner-Focused culture; and (c) the two cultures *as dealt with here* are at opposite ends of a continuum; *many cultures are somewhere in-between*.

The next four pages link a society's expectations about knowledge transfer with the Basic Questions its people ask about (1) patterns of thought, (2) ways to learn, (3) motivations to learn, and (4) instructor-learner relationships. Each set answers has implications for (a) group instruction and (b) learning evaluation. In guiding participants through these, combine telling with drawing out participants' contributions.

The final two pages ("broad generalizations") are offered to better enable participants to consolidate their understanding of the framework.

Unit 3: Application Practicum is overviewed in this Instructor's Manual just before that unit begins.

ABOUT: Dramatic Demonstration of Teaching/Training Style Differences

Objective: During the first 10-12 minutes of this training event, participants become immersed in two sharply contrasting styles of teaching/training/presenting. *The two-part demonstration — by you, the Instructor — is not announced*. It simply occurs.

Description of your short KNOWLEDGE-FOCUSED demonstration:

- Dress relatively formally (men: jacket & tie) but in such a way that you can quickly transform to casual for the second demo.
- Display your full formal name (mine would be "Dr. Cornelius Grove") and verbally introduce yourself using that name.
- Launch instantly into an overview of this course. *DO NOT ask for, nor respond to, input of any kind from the participants*.
- Maintain an authoritarian (but not hostile) delivery style throughout this demo. Remain focused on overviewing course content.
- Continue for no more than five minutes in this manner. Suddenly stop, stay silent for a few moments, then loudly say...

"And now for something completely different"

and begin the class a second time as though nothing had happened.

Description of your short LEARNER-FOCUSED demonstration:

- Quickly adjust your attire to present an informal, casual appearance (men: remove your jacket & tie).
- Remove your full formal name from display; introduce yourself again, suggesting that participants may use your given name.
- Do *not* overview the course. Instead, immediately focus on the participants, seeking course-related input* from them.
- Maintain a warm, friendly style throughout this second demo. Remain focused on drawing ideas from the participants.
- Continue for no more than five minutes in this manner. *Then reveal that you've been demonstrating two delivery styles*.
- Draw participants' attention to the following page in their manuals. Ask them to describe the two styles demonstrated.

* Don't ask for self-introductions because these take too long. Suggestion: Ask participants to stand up (pushing desks back if necessary) and circulate freely, sharing with each other personal experiences of being in a situation where their values/expectations were contradicted [cocktail party exercise].

Dramatic Demonstration of Teaching/Training/Presentation Style Differences

You have just participated in the role of a "learner" in two dramatically different teaching/training/presentation styles.

Describe and discuss the **first** presentation style.	
Teacher/Trainer/Presenter	Students/Trainees/Learners

"And now for something completely different."

Describe and discuss the **second** presentation style.	
Teacher/Trainer/Presenter	Students/Trainees/Learners

UNIT 1: COURSE OVERVIEW

Dr. Grove's Toolkit
for Effective Presentations to Nationally Diverse Audiences

Purpose of the Workshop: This workshop will better enable teachers, trainers, and presenters who are transferring skills or information to others from different nations to take into account the effects of the *cultural backgrounds* of their trainees or audience members.

Content of the Workshop: Differences between two styles of classroom knowledge transfer by teachers, trainers, and other presenters:

- **KNOWLEDGE-FOCUSED:** Presenter's and learners' focus is on the knowledge to be learned. Learners' state of mind is of little concern.
- **LEARNER-FOCUSED:** Presenter's concern is largely on learners' state of mind (engagement, motivation). Secondary focus on knowledge.
- Barriers to learning occur when a presenter using one style faces learners used to the other style. *How can those barriers be overcome?*

Learning Modalities of the Workshop: This workshop uses three vital learning modalities:

- Attendees **learn about** a multifaceted *conceptual framework* for presenting to a group of nationally diverse learners.
- Attendees **experience** some presentation/training styles deliberately being employed by the trainer/presenter.
- Attendees **begin applying** their new awareness and skills by re-thinking any presentation they soon might deliver.

Objectives of the Workshop: The workshop's objectives are that *each participant will*. . .

- gain a useable framework for thinking about knowledge-transfer approaches worldwide;
- become better able to anticipate possible learning expectations of learners from other nations;
- categorize typical teaching/training/presentation methods across a continuum of learning preferences;
- recognize options for adapting their teaching/training/presentation styles to suit others' learning preferences;
- begin planning to apply what was learned here to any knowledge-transfer activity for which they are responsible.

Design of the Workshop: Dr. Grove's workshop and practicum includes three basic units of work:

1. **Overview:** Dramatic illustration of training style differences; overview of the purpose and structure of the workshop.
2. **Instruction:** Explanation of the framework behind "Dr. Grove's Toolkit for Effective Presentations to Nationally Diverse Audiences."
3. **Application Practicum:** Guided distribution of common teaching & training methods into the categories of the framework, and an opportunity for participants to begin applying what was learned today in any course for which they might is responsible.

1. Overview	2. Instruction	3. Application Practicum
early morning	remainder of morning	throughout the afternoon
Content: Dramatic demonstration of training style differences. Then, overview.	**Content:** Explanation of "Dr. G's Toolkit for Effective Presentations to Nationally Diverse Audiences."	**Content:** Categorizing of common teaching & training methods into the framework categories; opportunity to consider how this way of thinking can be applied to any course that you teach or train.
Method: Content and process. Whole-group delivery.	**Method:** Address the *content* of Dr. G's framework. Whole-group delivery.	**Method:** Address the *process* of Dr. Grove's framework. Small-group and individual involvement.
Responsibility: Trainer/presenter, who *demonstrates*.	**Responsibility:** Trainer/presenter, who *instructs*.	**Responsibility:** Trainees in groups or as individuals. Trainer/presenter *facilitates and mentors*.

Dr. Grove's Perspectives on Cross-Cultural Knowledge Transfer

- School-based teaching, business-based training, and other formal presentations to audiences are all related, regardless of where in the world they are designed and delivered. All are variations on a single theme: **knowledge transfer**.

- Audience members (students, trainees, learners) bring with them to this course, and to *any* course, expectations about effective classroom knowledge transfer formed during their early-life experiences as pupils and students in their home nations.

- American knowledge-transfer methods have become influential in many other parts of the world. But the fact that an audience member was born and raised in the U.S., or has had long association with the U.S., *does not guarantee* that he or she will be comfortably adapted to the LEARNER-FOCUSED knowledge-transfer style that tends to be popular in the U.S.

- Instructing, training, or presenting to people *from two or more national backgrounds in the same room* is challenging. But because knowledge-transfer styles are understood and can be anticipated, the challenge can be surmounted through the instructor's deliberate adaptation of his or her presentation style. **Learning this skill is the objective of this course**.

Dr. Grove's Explanation of the "CULTURE OF CLASSROOM LEARNING" Concept

"Culture of classroom learning" refers to the fact that, within any modern society, there are taken-for-granted ways of classroom knowledge transfer that most people in that society tacitly agree on and automatically apply. A culture of classroom learning isn't only about how educators think and act as they prepare students for adult life. *It's also about how the students learn how to learn, and about what they come to expect of themselves and others — especially teachers — while they are learning*. These expectations regarding effective knowledge transfer accompany students into their adulthoods.

UNIT 2: THE FRAMEWORK

Framework for thinking about effective presentations to nationally diverse audiences

Understanding the mindset that generates the characteristic "Culture of Classroom Learning" of the people in any modern nation.

To the extent that these questions ➙➙ are asked by the people of any nation...	**WHAT Questions** ▸ **What** is worth knowing? ▸ **What** amount is worth knowing? ▸ **What** does "knowing" require?	**HOW Questions** ▸ **How** do learners acquire knowledge? ▸ **How** can learners retain knowledge? ▸ **How** can learners apply knowledge?
. . .then their tendency will be to ensure that their nation's culture of classroom learning will become relatively...	**Knowledge-Focused** also known as "Content-Focused"	**Learner-Focused** also known as "Process-Focused"

Cultures of learning are arrayed on a continuum (i.e., they are *not* bi-polar)

Knowledge-Focused . . . . . **Learner-Focused**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

← ← ← ← ← "continuum" → → → → →

1st Set of Assumptions about the Nature of a Culture of Learning

What people assume in response to four Basic Questions about knowing and learning generates their nation's learning culture. Basic Question 1:

Basic Question 1 **What do we in this nation assume to be the most effective, or the most ethical, PATTERNS OF THOUGHT?**	**Knowledge-Focused Culture** Characteristic response **Conceptual (knowing facts); contexted, relational, holistic.**	**Learner-Focused Culture** Characteristic response **Pragmatic (using facts); analytical, cause-and-effect.**
Implications for Group Instruction	Knowledge for its own sake is respected and desired. Breaking things/concepts into parts occurs only infrequently.	Knowledge that can be leveraged for practical benefits is desired. Breaking things/concepts into parts is a common occurrence.
Implication for Learning Evaluation	Acquisition of knowledge is tested via recall (rarely recognition). Rote memorization is common.	If acquisition of knowledge is tested, it's often via recognition. Ability to apply knowledge is tested.

2nd Set of Assumptions about the Nature of a Culture of Learning

What people assume in response to four Basic Questions about knowing and learning generates their nation's learning culture. Basic Question 2:

Basic Question 2 **What do we in this nation assume to be the most effective, or the most ethical, WAYS TO LEARN?**	**Knowledge-Focused Culture** Characteristic response **Mastery via attentive observation of an expert; persevering study.**	**Learner-Focused Culture** Characteristic response **Independent exploration, trial-and-error, problem-solving, etc.**
Implications for Group Instruction	Almost all activity is by instructor; learners watch, listen, take notes. Classroom learners *appear* passive.	Instructor's activity largely intended to compel learners' "engagement." Classroom learners *appear* active.
Implication for Learning Evaluation	Following mastery in private via study, each learner's recall is tested. Risk of public failure is minimized.	Mastery is rarely the goal. Tests based on recognition, application. Learner may be compelled to perform before time for study, risking frequent public failure.

3rd Set of Assumptions about the Nature of a Culture of Learning

What people assume in response to four Basic Questions about knowing and learning generates their nation's learning culture. Basic Question 3:

Basic Question 3	**Knowledge-Focused Culture**	**Learner-Focused Culture**
What do we in this nation assume to be the source of each classroom learner's MOTIVATION TO LEARN?	Characteristic response **Learners are self-motivated. They either want to learn or understand why their learning is important.** **Common in *communitarian* cultures.**	Characteristic response **Learners *not* likely to be self-motivated, so instructors must try to motivate them to learn.** **Common in *individualistic* cultures.**
Implications for Group Instruction	Instructor prioritizes the delivery of authoritative content to the learners. Dissatisfied learners say course is "not serious."	Instructor prioritizes the learners' engagement, activity, "fun." Dissatisfied learners say course is "boring."
Implication for Learning Evaluation	Instructor evaluates each learner. (Did each learner master the content?)	Instructor might evaluate learners. Learners may evaluate Instructor. (Did instructor motivate me to learn?)

4th Set of Assumptions about the Nature of a Culture of Learning

What people assume in response to four Basic Questions about knowing and learning generates their nation's learning culture. Basic Question 4:

Basic Question 4	**Knowledge-Focused Culture**	**Learner-Focused Culture**
What do we in this nation assume to be the most effective or ethical type of RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INSTRUCTORS AND LEARNERS?	Characteristic response **Formal; instructor shown respect. Instructor is a content *authority*.**	Characteristic response **Informal, relaxed, semi-egalitarian. Instructor is friendly content *guide*.**
Implications for Group Instruction	Instructors tell learners what to learn and how to go about learning it; they often are supportive, too. Instructor assumed to know everything.	Instructors avoid authoritative stance, encourage some degree of self-reliance on part of learners. Learners may disagree with instructor.
Implication for Learning Evaluation	Instructors test, grade, and rank learners; their decisions are rarely questioned. Ranks often publicized. Learners *never* evaluate instructors.	Instructors test, grade, and rank learners; their decisions may be questioned. Ranks rarely publicized. Learners often evaluate instructors.

`Broad Generalizations about the Distribution of Learning Cultures

In general, the distribution...	Knowledge-Focused Culture	Learner-Focused Culture
...across Learning Durations: How much time is needed to learn?	Often weeks, months, even years.	Often weeks, days, even hours.
...across Learning Sponsors: Who pays for the learning?	Religious & sectarian, some gov't.	Business, non-sectarian, some gov't.
...across Learning Objectives: What basic outcome is desired?	To *master* the knowledge or skill; to believe the dogma.	To know how to apply or perform the skill; to know about these matters.
...across Learning Topics: What, actually, is being learned?	Topics in which precision is key, including "received" religions.	Topics emphasizing practical application or "understanding."
...across Learning Levels: At what grade/stage are learners?	Older adolescents and adults, especially in a university setting.	Children & adolescents; adults in a business or technical setting.
...across Historical Eras: When did this learning type prevail?	Premodern through the present. In the USA, through WWII.	Increasingly in modern societies. In the USA,increasingly after WWII.
...across World Cultures: What values supports this type?	Communitarian, heirarchical.	Individualistic, egalitarian.
...across World Geography: Where does this type prevail now?	Mainly non-Western, Latin America.	Mainly USA; increasingly Europe.

Broad Generalizations about the Characteristics of Learners

Learners in **KNOWLEDGE-FOCUSED** Cultures	Learners in **LEARNER-FOCUSED** Cultures
Physically inactive ("passive") virtually all of class time	Physically active ("engaged") during much of class time
Mentally attentive via own interest or will-power	Mentally attentive if and when motivated by instructor
Positive about authoritatively knowledgeable instructors	Positive about motivating and entertaining instructors
Typical complaint re instructor is that they're "not serious."	Typical complaint re instructor is that they're "boring"
Relationship with instructor reflects large status gap	Relationship with instructor bridges small status gap
View instructor as all-knowing; never contradict him/her	View instructor as friendly guide; may contradict him/her
Question-asking (rare) usually occurs outside of class time	Question-asking (common) occurs while class is in session
Expect to be told what to learn and how to learn it	Encouraged to be, or to become, self-reliant learners
Patiently accept slow pace due to thorough topic coverage	Pleased by rapid, varied pace and dynamic presentation
Expect big homework assignments, overnight and holidays	Resist big homework assignments, and never on holidays
Memorize as a common part of gaining topic understanding	Resist memorization; believe it inhibits topic understanding
Expect exams to be few (one?), huge, mostly recall-based	Expect exams to be many, recognition- & application-based
Believe academic success is due mainly to determined effort	Believe academic success is due mainly to innate intelligence

OVERVIEW: Preparing to Instruct Unit 3, the Application Practicum

The goal of Units 1 and 2 of this workshop was to build participants' *capacity and readiness to notice* a barrier that undermines effective knowledge transfer to groups of nationally diverse learners: the difference between **KNOWLEDGE-FOCUSED** and **LEARNER-FOCUSED** mindsets and approaches regarding classroom knowledge transfer.

The goal of Unit 3 is to give participants a variety of opportunities to *take into account and apply* their heightened awareness of the two presentation mindsets – in other words, to try to ensure that the concepts learning in Units 1 and 2 actually become useful for their teaching, training, or presenting. To this end, five exercises are provided.

Learning to view various presentation methods as being relatively Knowledge-Focused or Learner-Focused

This is the principal exercise of this Application Practicum. It's objective is to encourage participants to recognize that a wide variety of presentation methods are – in addition to whatever else they might be – relatively Knowledge- or Learner-Focused, or nearly balanced. Begin by reviewing the instructions, which appear on the immediately following page. After that page there are five pages listing 48 knowledge-transfer methods, categorized into three major groups and 21 subgroups. This following exercise uses the 21 subgroups.

Next you'll find a page for easy categorization of the 21 subgroups and, immediately following, a page that's intended to be cut up into 21 small cards, useful for easily sorting into the five categories. *You might wish to substitute your own, larger, sorting page and cards*.

Feel encouraged to allow participants to undertake this exercise individually and/or in small self-formed groups (which are likely to include national groups). Allow a minimum of one full hour for this exercise to be introduced, completed, and discussed.

More ideas for communicating effectively with nationally diverse audiences

This exercise is set up for you to facilitate. The page in this Instructor's Manual includes many of the good ideas that have emerged about how presenters can smooth their communication with participants. The corresponding page in the Participants' Manual is open for notes.

Thought experiments for surmounting Knowledge–Learner style challenges

This exercise is intended for participants to tackle individually and/or in groups, depending on your preference.

Thinking about a real-life Knowledge–Learner style challenge

See the short instructions that are provided for participants with real challenges in their futures, and for those without a current challenge.

Start – Stop – Continue: Take-aways for your professional toolkit

If I were the instructor, this would be my wrap-up exercise, with some sharing at the end.

The Instructor's and Participants' Manuals conclude with 25 pages of readings that I've been gathering.

UNIT 3: APPLICATION PRACTICUM

Learning to view various presentation methods as being relatively Knowledge-Focused or Learner-Focused

Every presentation method can be typed as strongly or moderately Knowledge-Focused, or strongly or moderately Learner-Focused, or nearly balanced between the two poles of the continuum. But most instructors are not used to thinking about methods in this manner.

For teachers, trainers, and presenters who will be facing nationally diverse audiences, however, learning to type various methods in this way is useful. It better enables them to use methods that participants will find congenial instead of perplexing or even distressing. Should we do this to just preserve those participants' feelings? No. We should do this *to remove a barrier to the effective transfer of knowledge*.

The following exercise enables you to practice thinking about presentation methods in terms of the Knowledge-Learner continuum.

Directions: The next five pages list 50 knowledge-transfer (presentation) methods categorized into three main groups and 21 subgroups. As directed by your instructor, proceed as small groups or individuals through the following steps:

1. Familiarize yourself with the main groups, subgroups, and individual methods. Subsequently you'll be dealing with the 21 *subgroups*.
2. Notice the 6th page, which provides five columns for separating the 21 subgroups according to their Knowledge or Learner focus.
3. Notice the 7th page, which can be cut into 21 strips for easy assignment to the columns (your instructor might have another plan).
4. After thought and discussion among yourselves, use the five columns to categorize the 21 subgroups. Expect disagreements!

Examples: A strongly Knowledge-Focused method is subgroup 1a, Instructor's Verbal Presentation. A strongly Learner-Focused method is subgroup 3i, Learners' Group Effort to Verbally Explore an Issue or Problem. Can you categorize the remaining 19 subgroups?

Note: Remote teaching (e.g., Zoom) is not listed as a method. Some of the 50 listed methods can be effective remotely, some cannot.

Master List of 48 Knowledge-Transfer (Presentation) Methods

The following items describe 48 knowledge-transfer (i.e., knowledge transmission) methods organized by locus of activity:

- Group 1: Knowledge-transfer **activity by teacher, trainer, or presenter** for benefit of observing learners; 3 subgroups.
- Group 2: Learning **activity by learners working individually**; teacher or trainer may be a guide or coach; 9 subgroups.
- Group 3: Learning **activity by learners working in a group** with or without teacher or trainer oversight; 9 subgroups.

Group 1:
Knowledge-transfer activity by teacher, trainer, or presenter for benefit of observing learners

1a. Instructor's Verbal Presentation

1. Lecture, traditional [verbal presentation, impromptu or read from document, with or without notes on board or flipchart]

2. Lecture, illustrated [verbal presentation with prepared charts, graphs, PowerPoint slides, illustrations, etc. (or handouts)]

3. Panel or symposium [several experts present in turn, perhaps publicly discuss topic among themselves]

1b. Instructor's Enacted Presentation

4. Demonstration and modeling [expert shows how a behavioral skill appears or a manual skill is performed]

5. Role play by presenters/trainers [expert & assistant(s) adopt roles of others and, spontaneously or using script, publicly perform]

1c. Instructor's Questioning of Learners to Gauge Their Knowledge

6. Socratic method [leader publicly questions learners with intent to stimulate learning or find out what they know]

7. Recitation, public [at teacher's request, individual learners in turn re-state material learned, often for assessment purposes]

END OF GROUP 1

Group 2:

Learning activity by learners working INDIVIDUALLY; teacher or trainer may be a guide or coach

2a. Learner's Private Effort to Learn from Authoritative Human Sources

8. Question & answer, written [learner submits written questions, signed or anonymously, to teacher or expert]

9. Interview research [information collecting by oneself from human "primary sources" or "informants"]

2b. Learner's Private Effort to Learn by Observing Performance of Others

10. Private observation of expert [passive observation of skill being performed by anyone considered an expert]

11. Field trip or site visit, alone [after site visit, implications for learning formulated by oneself or with teacher/trainer guidance]

2c. Learner's Private Effort to Learn by Behaviorally Practicing

12. Private application practice [following observation or instruction, person attempts to apply concepts or skills in some way]

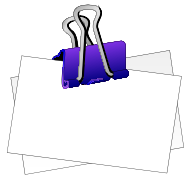
13. Skill simulation, private [individual imitation-of-reality skill-practice activity, usually intended to master behavioral sequences]

2d. Learner's Private Effort to Learn from Authoritative Printed Sources

14. Reading and studying [gaining information by oneself from texts, handouts, other specified documents]

15. Library research [information collecting by oneself from written "secondary" sources]

16. Memorization of information [committing concepts or passages to memory; "rote" memorization]



2e. Learner's Private Effort to Learn by Sorting Prepared Materials

17. Sorting, e.g. of index-cards, by self [any manual categorization exercise with prepared materials, completed by oneself]

Group 2 continues on next page

2f. Learner's Private Effort to Learn by Observing Performance of Self

18. Videotape of own performance, self-critiqued [own videotaped performance viewed and reacted to by oneself]

2g. Learner's Private Effort to Learn by Submitting Self for Assessment

19. Self-assessment completion [learner responds privately to self-evaluation questions, decides on action alone or with teacher]

20. Recitation, private [at teacher's request, learner re-states material learned orally or in writing]

21. Test, exam, demonstration [individual evaluation procedure, scored by teacher/trainer and results returned only to learner]

2h. Learner's Private Effort to Learn by Responding to Written Guidance

22. Worksheet completion, multiple-choice [learner answers questions on basis of correct-answer *recognition*]

23. Worksheet completion, open-ended [learner answers questions on basis of correct-answer *recall*, and/or of own opinion]

24. Programmed-text completion [completion of programmed-text material by oneself]

25. Computer-assisted instruction [any instructional method involving responses to computer-generated guidance]

2i. Learner's Private Effort to Learn by Maintaining Written Records

26. Journal- or diary-keeping [private record of own thoughts related to topic, completed over time then shown to teacher/trainer]

27. Learning log-keeping [private record of data, activities, and outcomes, completed over time then shown to teacher/trainer]

END OF GROUP 2

Group 3.

Learning activity by learners working IN A GROUP with or without teacher or trainer oversight

3a. Learners' Group Effort to Learn from Authoritative Human Sources

28. Question & answer session [learners verbally and publicly question leader or authority with intent to gain information]

3b. Learners' Group Effort to Learn by Observing Performance of Others

29. Field trip or site visit, group [travel with group and teacher/trainer; implications for learning formulated by teacher/trainer]

30. Internship or apprenticeship [long-term association with skilled/knowledgeable others, who are observed and imitated]

3c. Learners' Group Effort to Learn by Behaviorally Practicing

31. Group application practice [following observation or instruction, group attempts to apply concepts or skills in some way]

32. Skill simulation, public [group imitation-of-reality skill-practice activity, usually intended to master behavioral sequences]

33. Game or competition [any skill-related group activity involving rules of play and with individual or group winning as objective]

3d. Learner's Group Effort to Learn from Authoritative Printed Sources

34. Reading, chanting, or singing aloud in unison [group-unison effort to become familiar with, or learn by rote, printed materials]

3e. Learners' Group Effort to Learn by Sorting Prepared Materials

35. Sorting, e.g. of index-cards, group [any manual categorization exercise with prepared materials, completed by group members]

3f. Learners' Group Effort to Learn by Observing Performance of Self/Selves

36. Videotape of own performance, publicly critiqued [own videotaped performance viewed and reacted to with others]

Group 3 continues on next page

3g. Learners' Group Activity to Gain Knowledge from One Another

37. Brainstorming session [learners cooperatively seek solution or idea through rapid verbal generation of possibilities]

38. Peer or relay teaching [following his or her own learning, a learner instructs or trains one or more fellow learners]

39. Oral reports [learners publicly deliver previously prepared information gathered, often privately, via research or other method]

40. Group information search [groups of learners research topic using leader-provided written sources, then report to whole group]

41. Group study [learners gather away from classroom, often voluntarily, to cooperatively assist each other in gaining knowledge]

42. Cocktail party-type discussion [learners, standing, circulate among each other with specified learning or discovery objective]

3h. Learners' Group Activity to Verbally Explore an Issue or Problem

43. Small-group discussion [group of learners explores issue with or without instructional materials, then reports to whole group]

44. Case study discussion [groups of learner critiques prepared "case," then reports suggestions for resolution to whole group]

3i. Learners' Group Activity to Increase Awareness of an Issue or Problem

45. Role playing [learners adopt roles of others, spontaneously or using a script, then publicly perform in a contrived "situation"]

46. Awareness simulation [extensive spontaneous imitation-of-reality activity, usually without rules or objective of winning]

47. Mental imagery [leader guides learners to imagine objects, persons, places, activities, or senses, followed by discussion]

48. Sensitivity and non-verbal group exercises [catch-all category including a wide range of "human relations" group activities]

END OF GROUP 3

Distribution of teaching/training/presentation methods across styles

Sort and distribute the selected presentation/training methods (on cards) across the following five classroom-culture categories.

STRONG Knowledge-Focus	MODERATE Knowledge-Focus	NEARLY BALANCED between Knowledge & Learner	MODERATE Learner-Focus	STRONG Learner-Focus

1a. **Instructor's Verbal Presentation**	**1b.** **Instructor's Enacted Presentation**	**1c.** **Instructor's Questioning of Learners to Gauge Their Knowledge**
2a. **Learner's Private Effort to Learn from Authoritative Human Sources**	**2b.** **Learner's Private Effort to Learn by Observing Performance of Others**	**2c.** **Learner's Private Effort to Learn by Behaviorally Practicing**
2d. **Learner's Private Effort to Learn from Authoritative Printed Sources**	**2e.** **Learner's Private Effort to Learn by Sorting Prepared Materials**	**2f.** **Learner's Private Effort to Learn by Observing Performance of Self**
2g. **Learner's Private Effort to Learn by Submitting Self for Assessment**	**2h.** **Learner's Private Effort to Learn by Responding to Written Guidance**	**2i.** **Learner's Private Effort to Learn by Maintaining Written Records**
3a. **Learners' Group Effort to Learn from Authoritative Human Sources**	**3b.** **Learners' Group Effort to Learn by Observing Performance of Others**	**3c.** **Learners' Group Effort to Learn by Behaviorally Practicing**
3d. **Learners' Group Effort to Learn from Authoritative Printed Sources**	**3e.** **Learners' Group Effort to Learn by Sorting Prepared Materials**	**3f.** **Learners' Group Effort to Learn by Observing Performance of Self/Selves**
3g. **Learners' Group Activity to Gain Knowledge from One Another**	**3h.** **Learners' Group Activity to Verbally Explore an Issue or Problem**	**3i.** **Learners' Group Activity to Increase Awareness of an Issue or Problem**

More ideas for communicating effectively with nationally diverse audiences

Steps you could take *before* the day the participants (or you) arrive at on-site

- Review your course plan for sheer volume of information. Seek to reduce volume, prioritize essentials, and/or lengthen the course.
- Review each of your PowerPoint slides for sheer volume of information. Look for ways to divide wordy slides into two or more slides.
- Review your manuals and handouts. Try to increase the extent to which essential content will be *written* in addition to being spoken.
- Establish direct contact by e-mail with each of your participants before they travel. *Provide them with...*
  - An introduction to yourself as a professional. Refer to yourself using the term you expect them to use in addressing you.
  - A description of your typical presentation methods and expectations for learners' in-class participation, e.g., question-asking.
  - More details about the course, its logistics, homework expectations, etc. Include a list of terms and acronyms you'll often use.

Steps you could take *during* the day of the presentation (or the previous evening)

- Precede the event's beginning with social contact, e.g., a cocktail party, breakfast, etc. Personally greet other-nationality participants.
- Lower your speed of speaking; maintain a 10% or 15% slower rate. (Practice beforehand; for most folks, this is immensely difficult!)
- Do your best to avoid local slang, jargon, sports analogies, in-jokes, etc. When you use acronyms, state (better: write) their meaning.
- Make essential points verbally *and in writing*. If an essential point is not clearly stated in a manual or handout, write it on the board.
- When writing on the board or other device, **PRINT** instead of using script. Handwriting differs remarkably across national societies.
- After your delivery of each unit of work, provide 3 to 5 minutes for participants to freely confer with any fellow participants they wish.
- Clearly state options for question-asking. *Consider offering the following options for question-asking during class:*
  - Ask questions during class by anonymously writing questions on cards and passing them to you. Provide 4x6 cards for this purpose.
  - Ask questions during breaks and/or after the morning and afternoon sessions. Emphasize your openness to these question times.
  - After your delivery of each unit of work, allow same-nation "caucuses" to collaborate on and write their questions for you on cards.

Thought experiments for surmounting Knowledge–Learner style challenges

Thought Experiment #1:

You are a teacher or trainer in a society where the culture of classroom learning is strongly **Learner-Focused**. Your personal classroom style portrays you as an approachable guide for your learners, an advanced fellow learner instead of an expert. In planning your classes, you include ways to actively involve learners such as small-group discussions, simulation exercises, competitions, etc. You encourage learners' questions even though you might not know the answer, in which case you say so. You look for ways for your learners to have input, including in choosing paper topics. Your classes are noisily animated; your learners say they're "fun." Your supervisor compliments your "engagement."

The subjects you instruct are in the social sciences. Such subjects comprise matters that are controversial; in a Learner-Focused culture, learners are accustomed to publicly disagreeing during class time, including disagreeing with you — which you expect and take in stride.

Your supervisor just told you that you're being offered the opportunity to instruct a social science subject for a semester at an institute abroad, in a nation where the culture of learning is strongly **Knowledge-Focused**. How might you approach this assignment?

Thought Experiment #2:

You are a teacher or trainer in a society where the culture of classroom learning is strongly **Knowledge-Focused**. Your personal classroom style portrays you as a respected, knowledgeable professional. In planning your classes, you anticipate the difficulties learners have in understanding your material, then plan to explain those matters thoroughly. What you do *not* anticipate is that any learner will interrupt your presentation to ask a question or offer an opinion. But outside of class - e.g., after class and during your office hours - you are a helpful mentor for your learners. Your classes are quietly attentive. You learners think they're lucky to be learning from you. Your supervisors are pleased.

The subjects you instruct are in the technological realm. Such subjects comprise matters for which details such as measurements and procedures such as repairs are well established. Experienced practitioners don't disagree about such things. Newcomers must watch and learn.

Your supervisor just told you that you're being offered the opportunity to instruct a technological subject for a semester for a visiting delegation of Americans, where the culture of learning is strongly **Learner-Focused**. How might you approach this assignment?

Thinking about a real-life Knowledge–Learner style challenge

For those facing an actual style challenge:

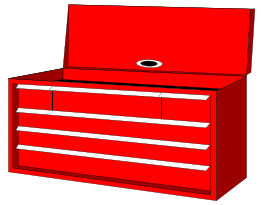
Did you take this course because you're dealing with learners from different nations in *your* classroom, or soon will be? Here's an opportunity to begin thinking about how to apply what you've learned to the actual challenge you are facing. Depending on your instructor's plans, you could do the following alone or discuss your situation with another course participant who isn't facing a real-life challenge. Five steps:

1. First, use the Knowledge–Learner continuum to characterize your own overall personal style of teaching, training, or presenting.
2. Then use the Knowledge–Learner continuum to try to characterize the learning expectations of a few of your challenging learners.
3. Consider the knowledge you're trying to transmit. Explore one or two alternative ways it could be effectively conveyed it to learners.
4. To jump-start your creative thinking about possible alternative content delivery methods, revisit the 50 knowledge transfer methods.
5. Also consider how you might present a different professional "face" to your learners, to better match their ingrained expectations.

For those *not* currently facing an actual style challenge:

If you're taking this course even though you currently have no opportunity to deal with learners from different nations, and depending on your instructor's plans, consider the following ways in which you could beneficially spend this portion of class time. Three possibilities:

1. As suggested above, make yourself available for discussion with another participant who is facing an actual style challenge.
2. Think about a classroom situation that you're familiar with (even though it's not yours) and be guided by the five steps above.
3. Read and think about some of the many quotes – 12 are quite short, 12 are longer – at the back of this manual.



Start — Stop — Continue: Take-aways for your professional toolkit

START:

Describe methods you have not been using *but will now consider using* to improve your presentations to nationally diverse audiences.

STOP:

Describe methods you have been using *but will now consider <u>not</u> using* to improve your presentations to nationally diverse audiences.

CONTINUE:

Describe methods you have been using *and probably will continue using* during your presentations to nationally diverse audiences.

Twelve short excerpts about the two styles collected from around the world

1. Chinese students in New Zealand's universities

Excerpt: Roger Barnard, "Student Challenge for New Zealand," *The Guardian Weekly*, Learning English section, February 2002, p. 1.

Context: Entire article discusses challenges for New Zealand universities that accept TOEFL students from China.

But a more profound challenge for institutions is adapting to the culture of learning of Chinese students who are used to authoritarian teaching and memorisation rather than interpretation and challenging of texts. Such students do not immediately take to the expectation in Western universities for independent, critical thinking and the vocal expression of opinion or dissent. Moreover there is a different attitude towards assessment and examinations.

2. Reaction of American students to university learning in Ghana

Excerpt: Florence Abena Dolphyne, "African Perspectives on Programs for North American Students in Africa," *African Issues*, Vol. XXVIII (2000), No. 1&2 [Study Abroad in Africa], 32.

Context: Entire volume/number of this journal includes articles examining various aspects of university-level study abroad programs in Africa.

Visiting foreign students in Ghana have often complained about the mode of delivery of lectures by some of the academic staff. In our system, professors lecture and students take notes. A few of them literally dictate their lectures, their reason being that in the absence of textbooks that is the only way to ensure that students get the relevant information. North American students dislike this mode of delivery, and not surprisingly, those students tend to drop such courses.

3. Rejected by U.S. students: Learning for the sake of learning

Excerpt: "Drinking at the River of Knowledge," in Andrew Garrod & Jay Davis, *Crossing Customs: International Students Write on U.S. College Life and Culture*, 1999, 47-48.

Context: "James," a student from Nigeria at Dartmouth College, discusses his first impressions of his fellow students from the United States.

I found that few American students at Dartmouth had passions for anything other than fame, wealth, security, or political renown of some sort. The average student I encountered lacked any desire or willingness to explore new avenues of thought just for curiosity's sake, without regard for immediate applications. The general attitude seemed to be, "If it won't help my GPA or career goals, I don't want to learn about it." For me, in contrast, there is no greater pleasure than learning new things and seeing unimagined vistas open up, the anti-intellectual attitude I found among my peers came as a rude shock. I frequently tried to involve others in conversation about the things I was interested in (e.g., the influence of the Bauhaus movement on modern architecture), but with little success.

4. A bicultural sixth grader contrasts learning in U.S. and Japanese schools

Excerpt: Amy Damrow, "Navigating the structures of elementary school in the United States and Japan," *Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 45* (1), 2014, p. 100.

Context: Anthropologist Damrow questions Seiji, a sixth grader who had been attending school at both "Kaichi," a school in Japan, and "Lakeview," a school in Michigan.

Just before Seiji was to finish sixth grade at Kaichi, in Japan, he contrasted his learning experiences there with those at Lakeview, in Michigan, for Amy Darrow, an anthropologist who had been observing him in both schools:

Seiji: Yeah, but Lakeview, it was better than here at Kaichi. You were more free, kind of. At Lakeview, you didn't really have to really, really do it.

Damrow: What do you mean? Give me an example.

Seiji: At Lakeview, if you, maybe, not really do a good job you will be fine. But at Kaichi in Japan, you have to do really well even if you didn't like or you weren't good at that subject.

5. British Educational Advisors in Chinese Schools

Excerpt: Alan Pulverness, "Ready for a Great Leap Forward," *The Guardian Weekly*, Learning English section, February 2002, p. 3.

Context: Entire article discusses the efforts of British educational advisors from Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) to improve the teaching of English at the primary level in China.

In Gansu Province, northwest China, we observed primary school classes ranging from 50 to 70 pupils. They were all teacher-led, adhering closely to the textbook, with the whole class responding in chorus to the teacher's questions or individuals called upon to stand up and give answers, which were then confirmed or rejected by the class. The Basic Education Project is promoting a participatory approach, based on the principles that learning is a joint enterprise shared by teacher and learners, and that appropriate teaching should be needs-driven. The emphasis is on the development of educational capability, rather than the memorisation of static information.

6. Students from the United States in African universities

Excerpt: John Metzler, "Strengthening Reciprocity in Study-Abroad Programs," *African Issues*, Vol. XXVIII (2000), No. 1&2 [Study Abroad in Africa], p. 14.

Context: Entire volume/number of this journal includes articles examining various aspects of university-level study abroad programs in Africa.

Most of the universities that have past (or current) experience hosting U.S. students reported that a small minority of the U.S. students in almost all programs are not adequately prepared for the "practice" and "culture" of learning at African universities. Two particular areas of concern were reported by a number of officials. The first was the lack of experience in taking essay examinations. Second, many American students were frustrated by the "culture of silence," i.e., student nonparticipation, in the African university classroom.

7. A former Western trainer in Zambia recalls her experiences

Excerpt: Julie Tate, "A Personal Experience of Training in Africa," online post dated July 2000, found in March 2002 on www.global-excellence.com/articles/03africa.html.

Context: The author, probably British, begins her 7-paragraph piece by saying that she taught English to trainee nurses 25 years ago in the mining areas of Zambia.

I soon realised that politeness was valued as a sign of respect, even to the extent of participants' feigning agreement with you as trainer out of respect for your position whilst privately knowing you are wrong. I observed that people would see any kind of family commitment as so obviously more important than any personal commitment to training that it was quite acceptable for them to 'disappear' without giving any explanation or advance notice. A typical example might be that they had to go away for a week to meet a third cousin's grandniece and escort her across town.

8. Background to the Use of Rote Memorization in China

Excerpts: Norman A. Chance, "Chinese Education in a Village Setting," in George & Louise Spindler, eds., *Interpretive Ethnography of Education: At Home and Abroad*, 1987, p. 229.

Context: During the 1970s, anthropologist Chance carried out extensive fieldwork in Chinese schools in the countryside near Beijing.

In a second grade classroom, a great deal of effort is spent learning to read Chinese. American children have only 26 letters to memorize and a system of phonetics to assist in recognizing new words. Chinese students have no comparable system to assist them in learning an immensely larger set of characters that are needed to transcribe the Chinese language. Memorization, and its application through intensive reading, is the only way to master the many hundreds of ideographs that children must know to read and write effectively.

9. An immigrant Chinese teacher encounters American high schoolers

Excerpt: Jin Li, *Cultural Foundations of Learning: East and West*, 2012, p. 6.

Context: Raised in China during the Cultural Revolution, Jin Li became a teacher of German there; she later immigrated to Vermont with her new American husband.

I registered, with my husband's help, as a substitute teacher of German in Burlington. The reason was simple: That was the only thing I could do., short of being a Chinese restaurant kitchen aid. I soon got assigned.

I was told to follow the lesson plan made by the sick teacher and "to keep the kids out of trouble." "What trouble?" I said to myself, gazing around. I had never seen, not even in my dreams, such a school, with all the brightly lit classrooms and all the books in the library. The students were well nourished and well clothed, projecting more confidence and happiness than I had ever known in China. This was a learners' paradise.

To my shock, those students did not seem to care about maintaining a good learning environment: They chatted freely and giggled and threw things at each other as if I, the teacher, did not exist. The students were not the least bit interested in learning the content of the minimal lesson.

Later I also became familiar with schools in Pennsylvania and Massachusetts. Students there were the same, even in the supposedly better towns away from the troubled inner cities. My perplexity deepened; the idea of the richest nation on earth inhabited by so many students not wanting to learn really threw me for a loop.

10. Teacher–student closeness within a hierarchical relationship

Excerpt: Maria Popova, "Chasing the Dog's Tail," in Andrew Garrod & Jay Davis, *Crossing Customs: International Students Write on U.S. College Life and Culture*, 1999, pp. 79-80.

Context: A student from Bulgaria, Maria Popova, recalls her years as student in an elementary school for the gifted near Sofia.

The National School for Gifted Children in Bulgaria was situated in the foothills. Besides the beautiful relationship with my classmates, I felt close to my teachers. It is not that we behaved as if they were peers — I would find that disrespectful. We called them by their last names, and addressed them with the polite verb form. But we could also share all our problems with our teachers, ask them for advice without having to make an appointment, or just stop by their office to chat about the future (or maybe the past) over a cup of coffee.

11. Foreign students in American boarding schools

Excerpt: Yilu Zhao, "Lemon-Grass Tastes Meet Peanut Butter at Choate," *The New York Times*, Education Section, 27 February 2002, p. B10.

Context: Entire article discusses differences between foreign and American students at elite U.S. boarding schools.

Foreign students at Choate in Connecticut, especially those from Asia, say that they are bewildered by the lax discipline in American classrooms. They are astonished to find that students are allowed to eat there, talk among themselves occasionally, sit in comfortable postures and, above all, talk back to the teachers. All of these occurrences are perceived as rude in Asian schools.

12. A student in China encounters the American approach to learning

Excerpt: Yu Chen, "I Sing the Unsung Songs," in Andrew Garrod & Jay Davis, *Crossing Customs: International Students Write on U.S. College Life and Culture*, 1999, p. 157.

Context: Yu Chen, a student from China, recalls her first encounter in China with a teacher from the United States.

I became friends with a U.S. Fulbright scholar during my sophomore year at Beijing University, after taking one of her classes, Law and Women — the only seminar and the only feminist class I ever had in China. In contrast to my other classes, where I had to listen and take notes, Lisa's class gave me a chance to think, question, and speak up. Instead of always giving a definitive answer to a question, she would open it up and let students discuss it from different angles. For example, to illustrate unequal relationships, she would ask us to talk about relationships in our families and communities, instead of telling us stories from texts. She asked us who made decisions and who did chores in our families. She would also meet students at a café or hold free discussions over lunch at ther home. Her fun-filled educational style amazed me.

Twelve articles and excerpts reflecting the Knowledge–Learner styles

1. How People from Different Cultures *Expect* to Learn

Source: Cornelius N. Grove. Published by GROVEWELL LLC in 2003. Available on ResearchGate.

Learners in a classroom hear their instructor say that she hopes each of them will decide on his or her own topic for the required paper. She adds that although she will be available for consultation, she wants each one to work as independently as possible with topic selection, research, and writing. Some learners are delighted. Others are silently dismayed. Why?

In virtually every nation, a major component of the socialization of youth is formal education. For some individuals, learning continues beyond schooling and into university; for some, it involves training offered by businesses, governments, and organizations as well as formal presentations during meetings in those settings. *To all of these knowledge-transfer situations, each learner or listener brings a set of expectations.* These were implicitly acquired during his or her earliest years of life at the knees of parents, clergy, and other mentors, and in nursery schools, kindergartens, and the early elementary grades.

Since 1975, I have tried to understand the expectations that learners and listeners the world over bring into knowledge-transfer settings. Each year, millions of people from certain national and cultural backgrounds sit in classrooms and meeting rooms where the instructor or presenter is from a different national or cultural background. *The outcome is a mismatch in expectations about how one best learns or listen in a formal knowledge-transfer situation*, which in turn translates into deep frustration, lowered motivation to learn, and poor learning outcomes.

Consider the vignette in the first paragraph. If someone told me this story, my first question would be, "What is the background of the instructor, and of the dismayed learners?" There's a strong possibility that the instructor is either an American or influenced by American values, and that the dismayed learners had their early learning experiences in a national and cultural setting where American ways had not penetrated. The instructor was being guided by the American (and more broadly Western) values of individualism and self-reliance. The learners' dismay arose from expectations grounded in a contrasting value system, one in which individualism is suspect, dependence is desired, and instructors are expected not only to dispense wisdom but also to provide strong and reliable guidance to those who know less.

"Dismay" is a strong word. Did I use it too lightly? Well, imagine that your early experiences were that mentors and teachers commanded deep respect from all those around them, and authoritatively dispensed knowledge and skills that, for the most part, have served you well. You thus gained an expectation that you can confidently rely on teachers, trainers, professors, and instructors to tell you *what to learn* and *how to learn it*. Now imagine that you're an adult and, as part of your professional development, your employer has sent you abroad for a course. The vignette above occurs. Are you merely disappointed? I think not. You view the instructor as abrogating her responsibilities. You feel alone, rudderless, and yes, dismayed. For hers is not merely an educational failure, but a moral one.

Continued

The majority of *knowledge-transfer cultures* – in secondary and university classrooms, in training rooms of all kinds, and in business meeting rooms as well – can be placed somewhere on the continuum above. The terms ***Knowledge-Focused*** and ***Learner-Focused*** designate sets of intertwined values and expectations shared by instructors and presenters, by learners and listeners, and indeed by most citizens of the society wherein the teaching, training, or presentation is occurring. The room's knowledge-transfer culture may lie anywhere across this continuum, from extremely Knowledge-Focused (1) to extremely Learner-Focused (9).

The following chart lists five of the many complex distinctions I've been able to draw between extremely Knowledge-Focused and extremely Learner-Focused classrooms and meeting rooms:

Strongly Knowledge-Focused	**Strongly Learner-Focused**
Instructor delivers solid content to learners	Instructor facilitates learners' involvement and activity
All knowledge believed inherently worthwhile	Knowledge of a practical nature is believed worthwhile
Instructor tells learners *what* and *how* to learn	Learners encouraged to be very largely self-reliant
Atmosphere is formal and "face"-conscious	Atmosphere is informal and friendly
Intense study is viewed as the path to mastery	Problem-solving is viewed as the path to mastery

In Knowledge-Focused settings, enduring emphasis is placed on the transfer of copious quantities of information and skill to the learners. But that's merely the tip of the proverbial iceberg. As the left side of this chart only begins to demonstrate, the centrality of knowledge is supported by many other interwoven values and assumptions. The same degree of richness and complexity is true of strongly Learner-Focused settings. It is these complexly inter-woven values and assumptions that my work has revealed.

Let's return to the vignette. You might think that those who were dismayed were from a Learner-Focused culture, and that they wanted more focus on themselves by the instructor. But the opposite is true. For this vignette is a classic case of what happens when people from Knowledge-Focused cultures enter a Learner-Focused classroom in the U.S. Accustomed to instructors' telling them *what* to learn and *how* to learn it, they await strong guidance from an authoritative source, which they perceive as supportive, even indispensable, for learning. What they want is *more focus on the knowledge* – delivered via overt instructor directiveness.

What else might we observe in this classroom in which the instructor and some of the learners are American or American-influenced, while the rest

are from different backgrounds? Most likely, friction will occur between contrasting ideas about the proper process of learning. As hinted in the chart, the Learner-Focused Americans – instructor *and* learners – will unite in expecting: (1) That the practical features of the topic will receive much airtime, with scant attention being paid to historical antecedents and theoretical underpinnings. (2) That the learners will contribute proactively to classroom activities (by, for example, freely stating their own views), thus casting the instructor more as a fellow learner than as a respected authority. (3) That the instructor will soon provide problems for solution by the learners, requiring the latter to use a trial-and-error approach and inevitably leading some of them to publicly fail.

These typical features of daily work in U.S. classrooms are unexpected and upsetting to learners from Knowledge-Focused cultures. These three, among others, erect *barriers* to their learning. These features lead them to question the value of what is being taught as well as the seriousness of purpose of the instructor and their fellow learners. For the sake of politeness and a desire to be seen as cooperative – enduring values in most cultures – few will exit or openly criticize the proceedings. But many newcomers would learn more and retain more if only their American instructors or business presenters had known about, and had respected in daily practice, at least some of their expectations about how best to learn.

U.S. businesses and organizations of many types, not to mention U.S. educational institutions, provide instruction attended ever more frequently by learners recently arrived from abroad. Such instruction is expensive; those who pay for it want it to be effective. The knowledge and skills being transmitted are sound, but some of the methods used to transmit it create hurdles for learners from different backgrounds. The same may be said for formal business presentations. In this case as well, when the listeners are nationally mixed, the soundness of the ideas and plans can unwittingly be obscured by the methods used to present them. Objectives are not attained; time and money are wasted. These challenges *can* be overcome.

2. Chinese University Students Complaints about Their Western Teachers

Excerpts: Huhua Ouyang, "Resistance to the Communicative Method of Language Instruction within a Progressive Chinese University. *Local Meanings, Global Schooling: Anthropology and World Culture Theory*, Kathryn Anderson-Levitt, editor, 2003, pp. 121–139.

Background: These events occurred when Western teachers came to Guangwai University in Guangzhou expecting to help the students learn to speak English via the method called Communicative Language Teaching or CLT. The idea behind CLT is that learners will acquire English *by using it* beginning on Day One: Jump in; talk out loud; errors don't matter. Many (not all) students complained about this method – and about much besides:

"Just Improvising"

Complaints about the Teaching Method

The most frequent complaint, agreed upon by over 70 percent of the students, teachers, and leaders, was the lack of systematic organization and linearity of the foreign teachers' classes, which resulted in a lack of a sense of achievement for the students.

In other courses using traditional methods, teaching was very often equated with accurate delivery or transmission of prescriptive knowledge from the teacher as an expert to the student as an apprentice. Students in these courses learn by taking notes and reviewing the lecture after class.

> **Student:** We are not used to their style of teaching. Most of them only speak, speak and speak, instead of writing something on the blackboard. Incapable of taking notes, we students put down nothing when a marvelous speech is over. Their presentation is not as orderly or systematic as their Chinese counterparts'.

"Kindergarten Teaching"

Complaints about the Activity Type

The "fun" style of teaching, which is typical of foreign teachers, is to encourage students to move around in the classroom physically through various game-like activities. The teachers would use personal anecdotes or jokes to make the teaching lively, and invite free and active participation. However, these teaching methods were not well received by the Chinese students, who often thought the teachers did not teach "seriously."

> **Student:** The foreign teachers usually treat us like kindergarten kids, making us sing, dance, and interact like children in oral classes while we are wondering what on earth is happening.

"They Don't Correct Our Mistakes"

Complaints about Error Correction Methods

When it comes to writing in English, almost without exception the students insist that correction of their mistakes in English is an indispensable means for them to improve. The amount of time that the teacher spends on correction is seen as a clear indication of the teachers' quality.

> **Student:** I know I have made some grammar and lexical errors, and how disappointing to see that they are not corrected with the right answers. How can I learn anything from this teacher if she does not do her job?
>
> The foreign teachers like to give us praises as remarks to our written work, like "excellent," "very interesting," and "fascinating"; it seems to us that all they look for is enjoyment for themselves as readers. We don't need that. What we need is the correction that all Chinese teachers painstakingly do .

"Self-Made Unsuitable Materials"

Complaints about the Syllabus

In China, teaching has almost always been centered on or prescribed by one single standard textbook. To some extent, this is comparable to the role of the Bible for Christians or manuals for novice car drivers. A unified textbook

has social implications. Teaching has to be conducted as a collective rather than an individual action. Western teachers, coming from an individualist and liberal system, all display a radically different opinion about the use and role of textbooks in learning and teaching.

> **Student:** Our foreign teachers like to use materials from only they know where, in bits and pieces, and we get worried about what can be learned from such materials since most of them don't seem to have a coherent or consistent theme or subject. In fact, very often they are just what the teachers are interested in themselves. Some use their family anecdotes, personal experiences, and anything that happens to be their interest.

"Biased"

Complaints about the Grading Criteria

Complaints about the criteria for evaluating students' performance, though expressed by fewer students, was one of the most strongly expressed by my informants. This is understandable, since students have low tolerance for bad grades, especially when they believe the criteria were unfair.

> **Student:** In writing courses, some foreign teachers regarded highly those works they think of as "creative," "with individual opinions," or "interesting," according to their own views. Students who usually achieve high marks because of their good language and structure in Chinese teachers' classes were labeled as "lack of opinions" or "not critical enough."

"Not Caring"

Complaints about Interactions with Students

It surprised most foreign teachers to learn that they were being judged not only by their classroom teaching performance, but also by their way of interacting with students outside of class. That is, not only as professionals but also as citizens in terms of their virtue as a moral exemplar or role model. At Guangwai, Chinese teachers usually are authoritarian figures in class when lecturing, showing a serious face and focusing only on academic matters. But they balance this with a much more humanistic mothering attitude after class when interacting with students in private.

In China, it is the good teacher's responsibility to approach students to find out what help they need in private visits and contacts, for instance in students' dormitories. Teachers should establish close and personal relationships and knowledge about students, and offer help accordingly. Students expressed their displeasure at not seeing this in-class and out-of-class balanced teacher-student interaction pattern in their foreign teachers.

> **Student:** It is shocking for some of us to find out that our foreign teachers don't like us to ask them questions during the class break time or after class. They indicate that we take advantage of their private time – "exploiting them," as one of them said. This is especially disappointing if you contrast it with the kind of warm and encouraging faces they show us during their teaching time.

When I interviewed them, most of the foreign teachers ridiculed the notion that they were also judged on the basis of how they comported themselves outside of class, in their private time. Their habit of going to bars to make casual friends, dating local girls, wearing casual clothes, sitting on desks in class, and so forth, conveyed a negative impression to students, who hold strict standards for their teachers' proper behavior as citizens.

The best teachers of Guangwai University, including both progressive Chinese teachers and the few foreign teachers who had "gone native," have married the best features of the Western liberal and humanistic approach with Chinese traditional practices with its emphasis on moral shaping. These teachers can satisfy students' "greedy" demand for a teacher: one who not only allows and encourages them to be free and self-assertive, but who also sets up a strict moral role model and paternalistic leadership for them while offering authoritative instruction during class time.

3. The Case of Mr. A, a Japanese trainee with an American trainer

Excerpts: Cornelius Grove, Willa Hallowell, & Reiko Makiuchi, "Asian Assignees with American Coworkers: Predictable Problems, Potential Solutions," *International HR Journal*, Fall 1998, pp. 26-28 (excerpts).

Mr. A was the first individual from his Japanese division sent to the U.S. The company designated his assignment as "developmental," and he viewed himself as a trainee. Soon after arriving at his new office, Mr. A was assigned to an internal trainer, an American who was responsible for Mr. A's learning according to a set of objectives jointly developed by the Japanese sending division and the American receiving division.

Little time passed before Mr. A complained of adjustment difficulties and stress, and reported confusion and dissatisfaction over the content and purpose of his developmental program. It became apparent that, even though there had been direct communication between the sending and receiving divisions regarding this program, there had been almost no mutual understanding. The Japanese sending division had put forward broad objectives such as upgrading Mr. A's ability to communicate in English and enabling him to improve his abilities as a global manager. These objectives were easy for the American receiving division to accept. But the American side interpreted the objectives quite differently from what the Japanese side had in mind.

A closely related problem was that Mr. A's expectations regarding acceptable training methods were sharply at variance with the expectations of his American trainer. These differing expectations touched on several levels of the learning process.

How do individuals best learn?

From Mr. A's Japanese perspective, learning is best accomplished through watching, listening, talking with people, and similar experiences. He expected to absorb useful knowledge by immersing himself in a wide variety of culturally and functionally different situations during his sojourn in the U.S.

From the American trainer's point of view, learning is best accomplished through active, hands-on completion of carefully chosen tasks and assignments that have specific, measurable learning outcomes. He viewed immersion/absorption as passive and thus a waste of time.

How do trainees best interact with trainers?

As a Japanese, Mr. A was accustomed to a supportive senior-junior relationship between trainer and trainee. Although he hoped primarily to absorb information, he also was accustomed to receiving assignments; in this case, he expected specific instructions from the trainer on the nature of the task and the process of completing it. He assumed that he, the trainee, would do precisely as instructed, and that the trainer, a knowledgeable and involved guide, would be responsible for insuring successful learning outcomes.

The American trainer expected people in his role to set learning tasks for trainees, then to provide comparatively little instruction. He assumed that trainees learn best when using a do-it-yourself, trial-and-error approach. The American viewed trainers and trainees as near-equals; he viewed trainees as self-reliant individuals who accept responsibility for insuring a successful outcome of their own learning. He also subscribed to the American expectation that trainees may negotiate with trainers about the nature and extent of their assignments.

Continued

What are appropriate learning objectives?

We return here to the lack of effective communication between the sending and receiving divisions. To interculturalists, Japan is recognized as a "high context" culture. A high context culture is one in which people constantly communicate with colleagues and friends about a very wide range of topics, and thereby come to have a comprehensive knowledge and nuanced understanding of people, events, things, procedures, social and political realities — in short, the entire context of their daily lives. When people who already are "high contexted" work together, their communication about any specific matter, even a relatively new one, tends to be brief but loaded with shared understanding because they already are well aware of all the factors directly and indirectly impinging upon it. Of course, the process of becoming highly contexted requires much time and effort.

Interculturalists type the U.S. as a "low context" culture in which people tend to communicate with others not only less thoroughly but also about a less comprehensive range of topics. Thus, low context people are less well informed about the overall context of their daily lives. When low context people work together, their communication about any specific matter of importance (e.g., an assignment) requires careful, focused attention in order to "get everyone on the same page," identify and analyze relevant factors, and develop shared meanings.

One can now appreciate, perhaps, that the single set of learning objectives so readily agreed upon by the two divisions was subject to two interpretations. For the Japanese, those objectives meant that Mr. A was to become highly contexted in the ways of American business and social life, best realized by his broadly immersing himself in U.S. daily life for an extended period of time. But to the Americans, those objectives meant that Mr. A was to complete a series of assignments, such as mastering computer software programs, that would introduce him to discrete features of how things get done in the U.S.A. This discrepancy is not just theoretical. It wasn't merely stressful for Mr. A. It actually caused a serious setback in Mr. A's developmental program, wasting his highly paid time as well as that of his American trainer.

4. Germans as Content-of-Learning; Americans as Process of Learning

Excerpts: Patrick L. Schmidt, *Understanding American and German Business Cultures: A Manager's Guide*, Rev. 2nd Ed., 2001, pp. 38-39.

German concept of "solide Ausbildung" versus American "learn by doing"

Back in 1992, the editors of *Newsweek* magazine, in a reaction to the relatively poor educational standards in the United States, undertook a study on which countries did the best job in educating their young. The editors concluded that the best overall school system was the German one.

Why? Traditionally, German society has always cherished education. The importance of a *solide Ausbildung* (respectable education and training) is undisputed and Germans invest an enormous amount of energy in teaching its young people. In the term *solide Ausbildung*, the word "*solide*" has a deeper meaning than in American English. It implies reliability and character. Education that is thorough and dependable is "*solide*."

The high status of education is evidenced in the salaries and respect teachers command. Even students who go on to learn a trade at vocational schools have much higher academic skills and vocational skills than their counterparts in the U.S. The world famous *Dualsystem* is the result of this mentality. The apprentices become excellent and thoroughly-trained workers, the backbone of Germany's economic success, often overlooked by American business people and economists.

The strong commitment to education and training can be seen from the following example. To ensure top quality, Mercedes-Benz AG put over 6000 workers and managers through a one-year retraining program before they even began to manufacture their new S-class model.

Americans, on the other hand, have always been pragmatic people. To become "cultivated" has never been an important value because it was considered elitist. The Declaration of Independence in 1776 states unequivocally that "all men are created equal," excluding any form of elitism. Americans are fond of saying, "If you're so smart, why aren't you rich?"

The U.S. education system has operated on the theories of the educationalist John Dewey (1859-1952), who stressed that the school's job was to emphasize the natural development of the child rather than force memorization of facts. The child becomes the active agent in his own education (rather than the passive receiver of information).

As a result, American schools firmly believe in teaching "life skills" — logical thinking, analysis, creative problem-solving. The contents of a given subject are secondary to the actual process. This is the basis of the concept "learn by doing." Learning facts by heart is considered a block to creativity and individuality.

As everything is geared to the short and practical, training is done quickly in the U.S., the "learn by doing" approach. "Jack-of-all-trades" is a popular term, reflecting the strong belief that a person can do anything and everything.

One area where American education excels is at the university and graduate school level. Here, intelligent inquiry and a tradition of "non-conventional" thinking pays off in producing highly original ideas and innovative products.

The insight above regarding American universities is discussed further in Reading 10.

5. Learning How to Learn the Chinese Way

Excerpts: Peter Hessler, *River Town: Two Years on the Yangtze*, 2001, pp. 68-70.

Chinese teaching styles are significantly different from western methods, which made my Chinese language tutorials even more frustrating. In China, a teacher is absolutely respected without question, and the teacher-student relationship tends to be formal. The teacher teaches and is right, and the student studies and is wrong. But this isn't our tradition in America, as my own Chinese students noticed at the local college where I was teaching. I encouraged informality in our classes, and if a student was wrong I pointed out what she had done right and praised her for making a good effort. To them, this praise was meaningless. What was the point of that? If a student was wrong, she needed to be corrected without my quibbling — that was the Chinese way.

I couldn't teach like that. It was even harder for me to play the role of a student learning Chinese. Actually, this became worse after my tutorials started to feel productive. One day after more than a month of classes, I read aloud a paragraph from my book, recognizing all of the characters smoothly except for one. I sat back and started to register the achievement: I was actually reading Chinese! The language was starting to make sense. But before this sense of satisfaction was half formed, Teacher Liao said, "*Budui!*" [pronounced "boo dwae"]

It meant, literally, "Not correct." Flatly and clearly incorrect. A voice in my head whined: All of the rest of them were right; isn't that worth something? But for Teacher Liao it didn't work like that. If one character was wrong it was all simply *budui*.

I breathed deeply and read the section again, and this time I did it perfectly. That was a victory — I turned to Teacher Liao and my eyes said (or at least I imagined them saying): How do you like me now? But Teacher Liao's eyes were glazed with boredom and she said, "Read the next one." They were, after all, simple paragraphs. Any schoolchild could handle them.

It was the Chinese way. Success was expected and failure criticized and promptly corrected. You were right or you were *budui*. There was no middle ground. As I became bolder with the language I started experimenting with new words and new structures, and this was good but it was also a risk. I would finish a series of sentences using vocabulary that I know Teacher Liao didn't expect me to know, and I would swear that I could see her flinch with unwilling admiration. And yet she would say, "*Budui!*" and correct that part that had been wrong.

I grew to hate *budui*. It wasn't the American way; I was accustomed to having my ego soothed. [It reminded me of what I'd been told by] some of my Chinese-American friends, who as children went to school and became accustomed to the American system of gentle correction, only to return home and hear their Chinese-minded parents say, simply, *budui*. That single B on the report card matters much more than the string of A's that surrounds it. Keep working; you haven't achieved anything yet.

6. Comparison of Secondary School Classroom Cultures in Portugal and the U.S.

Excerpts: Cornelius Grove, "The Culture of the Classroom in Portugal and the United States," *The Bridge*, Summer 1978, pp. 14–15.

In comparing the cultures of schools in Portugal and the United States, two features are strikingly different. These concern the social freedom and the pedagogical freedom allowed the students. In Portugal, students have almost unrestricted social freedom but extremely limited pedagogical freedom. In the United States, conversely, students have very little social freedom while enjoying a vast amount of pedagogical freedom. In spite of individual differences among teachers in both countries, this generalization may be taken as the basic working principle in the understanding of the cross-cultural problems of immigrant Portuguese students in American schools.

What are the behavioral parameters of this cross-cultural difference? First, the student attends school in her or his native land, Portugal. Outside the classroom door, he is assumed to be quite capable of looking after himself. While he is in *escola primária* (primary school), it is quite unusual for him to be overtly monitored or regimented by his teachers; if and when he goes to the *liceu* (secondary school), it is unheard of. Not only is the Portuguese student allowed to move about at will throughout most areas of the school and campus, but he is free even to leave the school grounds if he wishes. His movements are of no concern to the school authorities because a feature of the culture of the school in Portugal is that school personnel do not feel responsible on a moment-by-moment basis for the welfare and safety of the students. Responsibility for the students' welfare and safety belongs to the students themselves, and there are numerous indications that they discharge this responsibility admirably well.

But when the student crosses the threshold of the Portuguese classroom, his freedom ends. Pedagogically speaking, the student is treated by his teacher as though he were ignorant, not in terms of native intelligence but in terms of acquired knowledge. As unknowledgeable, the student cannot possibly have anything of value to contribute to the lesson. He is expected to sit silently, to listen respectfully, to take copious notes, and thus to learn under the wise and informed academic guidance of the professor.

Now this same student immigrates to the United States and begins attending school. Here he finds that he is assumed to be so irresponsible and prone to mischief that he requires almost constant adult supervision in order to insure the safety of himself, his peers, and school property. Like all other students in American schools, he is regimented and regulated in numerous ways, and his movements are a subject of continuous concern to school authorities. The notion that he might be free to leave the campus is entertained in very few American schools. He is constantly monitored in the cafeteria, in the halls, and on the playground. In short, the Portuguese student finds that he has unwittingly transferred into a custodial institution. He finds his treatment here humiliating.

But the immigrant students finds another marked change not so difficult to accept: His individual contributions to the lesson are valued and may be solicited. It is considered seemly for him to ask questions, express opinions, offer information, and discuss issues, and within certain limits he may even display emotion and openly disagree with the teacher. Such ways of doing things are exceedingly rare in Portugal, but most Portuguese students in America find little difficulty in adjusting to this new state of affairs. The pedagogical freedom of the American classroom is highly preferred to the Portuguese way, which more than one immigrant student has described in terms of *rei e escravos* (king and slaves).

Let us return now to my point that students in Portugal are considered unknowledgeable by their teachers. I said – and now I want to argue more positively – that in spite of being considered unknowledgeable, the Portuguese student in Portugal is not assumed to be unintelligent. Pursuing this thought further may also shed some light on American culture and educational practice. Consider the following:

• Portuguese schools move at a distinctly rapid pace in introducing new topics (for example, multiplication and division are taught in first grade).

• Exams in Portugal are based almost exclusively on the ability to recall, not the ability to merely recognize.

• Exams in Portugal may cover as many as three years of study in as many as fourteen different subjects.

• There is very little solicitous intervention of Portuguese teachers in assisting students to learn.

• Portuguese students are expected to make a great deal of headway in their lessons through individual study of textbooks at home.

• Corporal punishment is administered not for disciplinary infractions, but for unwillingness or inability to keep up with the expected pace of learning.

In Portugal, the object seems to be to move ahead academically as rapidly as possible, and to expedite matters by keeping virtually all non-academic pursuits out of the school altogether. Consequently, school in Portugal is experienced by the students as an unrelenting grind. Those who gain cross-cultural perspective by attending school in America look back with a sense of awe at how hard the academic work was in the *escola primária*, and especially in the *liceu*. Conversely, academic work in American schools is perceived as distinctly undemanding. Immigrant Portuguese students can be heard to say that secondary school learning in the U.S. is "not serious."

7. Comparison of the Culture of Teaching in Finland and the U.S.

Excerpts: Amanda Ripley, *The Smartest Kids in the World, and How They Got that Way*. 2013, pp. 83–93.

During her three months in Finland, exchange student Kim had collected a small catalogue of differences between schools in Oklahoma and Pietasaari. The most obvious were things that were missing. There were no high tech, interactive white boards in her classroom. There was no police officer in the hallway. Over time, though, she had begun to notice more important distinctions – the kind that a briefly visiting adult would not see.

Take the stoner kid. Somehow, she hadn't expected to see stoner kids in Finland. There was only one major difference, as far as she could tell: The Finnish stoner kid was a model student. He showed up to class, and he was attentive. He took notes. When Tiina Stara, the teacher, assigned essays, which was often, he wrote them just like everybody else. Sometimes Kim found herself staring at this kid and his friends. They didn't fit into any of the boxes she had used to organize the world. It was hard to explain, but there just seemed to be something in the air here. Whatever it was, it made everyone more serious about learning, even the kids who had not bought into other adult dictates.

Kim noticed that some of the Finnish teachers seemed more bought-in to school than their counterparts in Oklahoma. For example, Tiina Stara.

Like Kim's math teacher back in Oklahoma, Tiina Stara was a veteran teacher, approaching two decades in the profession. Both teachers had jobs that were protected by powerful unions; neither could be easily dismissed.

The similarities ended there. From the moment she had decided to study education in college, Stara had entered a profession completely different from that of Kim's Oklahoma teacher. To become a teacher in Finland, Stara had had to first get accepted into one of only eight prestigious teacher-training universities. Each was about as selective as Georgetown or the University of California in the U.S. Today, Finland's education programs are even more selective, on the order of MIT. It was hard to overstate the implications that cascaded from this one fact. The rigor started at the beginning of a teacher's career, where it belonged, not years into a teacher's career with complex evaluation schemes to weed out the worst performers and demoralize everyone else.

Stara's education program at the University of Jyväskylä was six years in duration, leading to a masters degree, which meant something very different than it did in the United States. For one full year of her master's program, Stara got to train in one of the best public schools in the country. She had three teacher mentors. When she taught her own classes, her mentors and fellow students observed and took notes. Afterward, she got feedback, some of it harsh, in much the way that medical residents are critiqued in teaching hospitals. And like all Finnish teachers, Stara also had to do original research to get her degree.

Now consider Kim's math teacher back home, Scott Bethel. He decided to become a teacher mostly so that he could become a football coach. Although Bethel hadn't taken calculus in high school, he'd been pretty good at math, so he decided to become a math teacher. In Oklahoma alone, Bethel could choose from nearly two dozen teacher-training programs – almost three times as many as in all of Finland. At most U.S. colleges, education was known as one of the easiest majors. The university where he studied has a 75 percent acceptance rate. The university's typical ACT score is lower than the national average. To teach in Oklahoma, Bethel did not need a master's degree. In many states, teachers weren't even required to get degrees in their subject area. In fact, less than half of U.S. high school math teachers majored in math. Almost a third didn't even minor in math.

8. Should Children Learn from Each Other in the Classroom?

Excerpts: Ashley E. Maynard & Katrin E. Tovote, "Learning from Other Children. *The Anthropology of Learning in Childhood*, David Lancy, John Bock, & Suzanne Gaskins, editors, 2010, pp. 196–198.

Anthropologists have documented the conflicts that can arise between school-based and indigenous modes of interaction and learning. For example, different expectations about the value of peer interaction during lessons can lead to conflicts. This is the case in ethnically diverse classroom settings in individualistic cultures such as in the United States. One anthropologist conducted ethnographic fieldwork in two classrooms of Latino immigrant children in Los Angeles. In one classroom, the teacher had gone through a training program called "Bridging Cultures" where she learned about the cultural values of the Latino students, which emphasize collectivistic practices such as collaboration and sharing. This teacher made adjustments in her classroom and lesson plans to allow the children to work together and to create projects in pairs or groups. In the other classroom, the teacher emphasized individualistic values and stressed individual work, as illustrated by the following vignette:

> The Latino children are whispering answers among themselves after one student is called on to respond to the teacher. The teacher then announces to the classroom, "I have heard people whispering and I really don't like it because why? They need to learn by themselves and you really aren't helping them learn.
>
> Later, Brent (a student) ask Adrienne (the researcher) for help with his journal writing. David, who was sitting across from Brent at their desk group, tells Adrienne that "nobody is supposed to help him." Brent becomes upset and makes a disappointed expression. David tells Adrienne while Brent listens, "he has to do it by himself." Brent still needs help, however, and asks what the last word on his paper spells. David replies very softly, "glad," as Brent shows him the paper. But after David looks at Brent's paper more carefully, he very cautiously says "bad, b-a-d," in a quiet and nervous voice.*

In this non-Bridging Cultures class, the children were very conscious of the teacher's do-it-yourself values when she was around; they showed signed of internal conflict. However, they helped each other freely when she was not around.

While typical U.S. classroom environments emphasize individual achievement, autonomous choice, and individual work, many minority and immigrant students come from homes that favor interpersonal relationships over individual performance. Peer-supported learning and collaborative group activities that reward the group as a whole instead of individuals are effective teaching strategies with students who share a collectivistic background. In Japan, children are expected to rely on their peers to correct them, not the teacher:

> One of the most startling sights for me the first time I saw it was what happens when a Japanese student gives an incorrect answer. Other students immediately raise their hands, calling out loudly, "*Chigaimasu!*" "That's wrong!" One of those who called out would then be chosen to give another answer... Teachers routinely and emphatically refrain from giving either

> positive or negative evaluations to students' answers to questions or other responses to academic material. Those responses are evaluated, but only by other students.**

According to that researcher, "Teachers are not available arbiters of correctness, because they decline to act as judges," and "one's peers are reliable guides to academic correctness." Japanese children are placed in groups, or *han*, of about eight children. They learn to rely on each other for social and academic guidance. The fact that *hans* allow the children to successfully teach each other social as well as academic skills at the same time points to the inaccuracy of the widespread Western assumption that formal education and peer assistance or learning are mutually exclusive.

* Elise Trumbull, Carrie Rothstein-Fisch, Patricia Greenfield, & Blanca Quiroz, *Bridging Cultures between Home and School: A Guide for Teachers*, 2001, 34–35.

** Gail R. Benjamin, *Japanese Lessons*, 1997, 45. See also Cornelius Grove, *A Mirror For Americans: What the East Asian Experience Tells Us about Teaching Students Who Excel*, 2020.

9. Trainees' Perspective on Training: Germans *versus* British

Excerpt: Astrid Kainzbauer, "Management Training Across Cultures: The German versus the British Perspective." Research paper (interviews and observations) prepared at the Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration, Center for International Studies. No date; probably 2001. Typed, 19 pages. This excerpt: pp. 4-6. Dr. Kainsbauer's research findings were published in book form as *Kultur im Interkulturellen Training* by the European publisher IKO Verlag in 2002.

Content and Techniques: Participants' Expectations

German training participants seem to be much more interested in the theoretical aspects of the training. They attach importance to theories and theoretical concepts, logical explanations, and definitions. The cognitive acquisition of knowledge is always the most important aspect. Practical examples only serve as an additional explanation.

The British participants, on the other hand, are much more interested in actual results, and quickly get bored with detailed theoretical discussions. They are satisfied with a general concept they can work on, and do not try to "go into depth." People from Great Britain like to experience knowledge and information intuitively.

Germans want to have everything spelled out, need to reflect on and analyze everything. They do not participate in role-plays for the experience only, like the British would, but want to see things fall into place and make sense. They need to fit their training experiences into a theoretical concept. Germans in general have a rather scientific approach to problems. Individual cases and practical examples alone are not a guarantee of success for them. Their approach is: *It works in real life, but does it also work in theory?*

The scientific approach is much less interesting to the British, and in some extreme cases they may even find it deterring. Scientific and academic results do not have the same significance in the English speaking world as in Germany. Thus, in training sessions with British participants, theoretical concepts are only necessarily insofar as they help processing training experiences. Real-life experiences are always the main objective, and are worked on and discussed and may then be fit into a theoretical framework.

Problem-Solving Strategies

When working on a case study, German trainees usually start with preparing a theoretical concept; they approach the problem theoretically. Solutions in writing are often elaborated in great detail, everything they put down in writing is well thought out. British participants generally start with a brainstorming session and collect a number of ideas, and immediately proceed to solving the problem. They may perhaps revise some ideas later that did not work out ("trial and error"). The British approach is much more pragmatic. The most important thing is to find a solution, a way out, some kind of strategy. Their motto generally is: *Better to have a temporary solution than no solution at all.*

Germans always try to get to the root of the problem, try to discover underlying motives and causes and define the problem. They need to finish the preparatory steps before starting to consider all important aspects and to work on various suggested solutions, and eventually they select the one solution that seems to be best. For the British the only thing that counts is finding a solution at all.

10. A Student from India in the U.S. Sees Benefits in *Both* Systems

Excerpt: Anurag Mathur, *The Inscrutable Americans*, Rupa & Co. (Calcutta), 1991, pp. 146-148, 111-112. The author was born in India and educated there and the U.S.

Back at a small college in the U.S., Gopal devoted himself to his work. Though he knew it was an illusion, he thought he sensed his mind flower and expand. The Indian system of education had drilled his mind and beaten it until it was a tight, rigid mass laid upon the fundamentals of science that had been dug deep until they sank into his subconscious. Now from this unshakeable base, he was able to make sorties that his American fellow students couldn't imagine trying, unsure as they were about the basics.

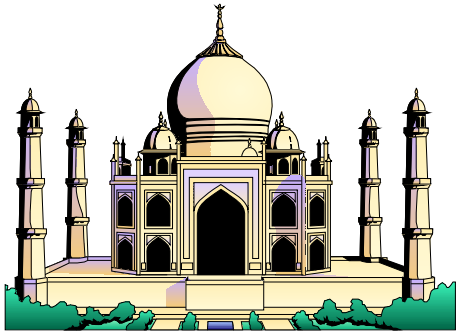
For the first time he began to learn the joy of analysis rather than retention. Based upon the core of fundamentals that had been hammered into him — often quite literally — he experimented with leaps of logic. Often he paused uncertainly, as though in midair, waiting for someone to admonish him and demand that he return to thinking by the book. Instead he found encouragement. His mind soared. He felt himself flying. For the first time in his life he gloried in studying.

I came out of India at the right time, he felt. He had got the best of an educational system where the early years instilled discipline and the basics. In America he found that the American students seemed unable to utilise the truly astonishing opportunities that their educational system offered at the higher levels.

Gopal found himself studying late in the library, staying even later in the lab, not because he wanted higher grades, but because he was enjoying it. He felt that his grasp over his subject had become so thorough that he was able to go back to the fundamentals, to those dragons of his earlier days, and look at them with a new eye. Why were they constructed as they were? What was the intent and what the result? Could they be improved upon? Such questioning would have been heresy to his Indian teachers, a scandal. But they had done their job and Gopal had left them behind. He often considered amusedly with what horror they would react to his questions and the viewpoints he held now. But now he thought of them, the giants of his childhood, as dusty, shrunken old men with barred minds.

Here in the U.S., he exulted, teachers loved questions. They didn't care if they were insane, in fact the crazier the better, so long as they were also intelligent. Even his fellow students, astonishingly, didn't seem to resent his clearly superior abilities.

In India, he sighed with real pain, we could write the definitive book on envy. For centuries outsiders had exploited this fatal flaw, using it to divide and rule. And even today, rumours of a person's success caused demonic leaps of fury in the breasts of nearly everyone who heard about it. The immediate response was to either belittle him or, if possible, to find ways to actively impede him. Using a simple contrast, Gopal suspected he received more compliments in one month in America on his abilities and his work than he had received in all his life in India put together.



Continued

In the following paragraphs, Gopal is at the front of the classroom about to

deliver an oral report:

. . . Gopal was further unnerved by the nearly theatrical languor of the American students. So long as he was among them, it wasn't so apparent, but now that he stood behind the podium and saw this class together, he was nearly struck dumb. One had his thick boots on the table. Another was peering into an empty Twinkie's wrapping as though it was Alladin's Cave that might yet yield treasures. Several were sipping coffee from paper cups. A latecomer arrived and began to disrobe. Two people were diligently helping each other light what Gopal sincerely hoped were cigarettes. A poetic soul was gazing dreamily out of the window as though Camelot had suddenly swum into view. In the face of this pure, unaffected, masterful disinterest, Gopal felt the few facts he had hastily crammed fall into a black pit of panic that suddenly opened

He contrasted this with India where the students projected a nearly unseemly reverence for their teacher and an apparently hypnotised interest in his pearls of wisdom. In reality they were probably even more bored than the Americans so candidly demonstrated, but at least, Gopal thought indignantly, Indian students had the decency to hide it.

11. Western Training Styles and Asian Mindsets: Mixing Oil and Water

Excerpt: Reginald Smart, "Using a Western Learning model in Asia: A Case Study," *Occasional Papers in Intercultural Learning*, No. 4, AFS, June 1983, pp. 9-13.

Analyzed by Smart in this excerpt is a four-day training program in Singapore for 22 managers, including 13 ethnic Chinese, from major multinational corporations.

Five Erroneous Assumptions Underlying the Western Model of Management Training When It's Used in Asia

Role-playing is a universally useful learning method.

So widespread has the role-playing technique become that Westerners simply don't consider the numerous assumptions on which it is based. So when experientially oriented trainers use it as a learning procedure, we expect a certain minimal degree of identification with the role. But what was happening as Asian after Asian "hammed it up" to the great appreciation of our group? Clearly they weren't practising a new behaviour in such a way as to begin its establishment as a habit. Clearly they were not experiencing feelings not customary, but now sensed almost as their own. Clearly they were not putting their own emotional strength into ideas and phrases that were new to them. And clearly they were not attaching new phrases to old feelings that previously had found only unproductive expression. We assume all these things *will* happen in a role-play. But they occurred with only a small minority of these Asians.

Participants can identify and role-play varied responses to their own real-life situations.

Why did so many Asians trainees refuse to deal with a real situation, even through the stages of guided analysis? Were they unwilling to acknowledge any difficulties? Fearful that the person to be influenced would hear of the strategy discussions? While such factors almost certainly were at work, I suspect that more important was a combination of several deeper factors alluded to above — skepticism about the notion of personal change, lack of commitment to change oneself, no real sharing of the Western concept of the individual, and the potential loss of respect among fellow trainees upon disclosure of "real-life" shortcomings.

Learning is an individual matter; it is optimised when tailored to the individual and springs from his or her felt needs.

The self-directed learning mode, based on self-assessment and an individual learning plan, is an example of this assumption put into practice. But Asians seem not to share this assumption. For in spite of very high levels of academic achievement and vocational success, our Asian trainees showed less ability to learn autonomously than do their Western counterparts who complete this course. Given the importance of group acceptance, it isn't really surprising that they decided to work with their friends and thereby lost the opportunity to attempt our personalised challenges. Why? Because while we assume that learning comes chiefly from personal experience, they believe that it is derived chiefly from the wisdom and knowledge of others. Hence one evaluation comment: "I expected to get more than I did from one of the trainers who had such high credentials."

Individual responses to the trainer and the training design provide on-site motivation for the trainees to perform well.

We rarely consider how much we rely on inner forces in individual trainees to help create a good learning climate in which "the process" can take off. In trying to establish an internal system of social control, my fellow trainer

and I completely ignored their custom of conforming to the external pressures of the group's standards. We focused on individual assessments, individual needs, and individual barriers to learning. Asians are more likely to respond to peer pressure and to unseen but dominant reference groups, whose opinions count for them at least as much as a self-assessment does for us.

It is both desirable and possible to change "me."

Especially in the U.S., a cult of change has developed — for its own sake as well as for pragmatic reasons. The value of change permeates learning models of every conceivable variety, and is so basic to marketing all educational opportunities (from personal growth groups to Ph.D. degrees) that it is hardly ever thought about. Yet the idea of changing "me" rests on not one but two major assumptions: (1) that there is an individualistic self, and (2) that it is possible to know the dynamics within that self, and therefore how to modify those dynamics.

For most non-Westerners, however, it is very difficult to conceive of any personal reality apart from those persons who are close and important. One's existence starts with the group, and without that group the "I" has no existence. Furthermore, Asians cannot conceive of the self as an abstract reality that can be separated from specific roles in concrete situations.

The theory of the self as we use it seems to stem from Plato's notion that ideas are what is real, rather than their manifestations. And while many of us might reject Platonism, we nevertheless act as though our theories and concepts are the most important and real things in the world. It is even stranger to many Asians that we claim to know about the abstract self and even claim to have developed extensive knowledge about it, which we call "psychology." While living in the United States, I noticed that it was unexceptional for an eight-year-old to "explain" behavior. ("Oh, that's just her inferiority complex.") By contrast, the average Australian adult rarely explains behaviour; he just reacts to it. Even Australian pedagogues give more weight to philosophical, theoretical, and pragmatic elements of learning design than to psychological ones. Thinking back to my four days in Singapore, I doubt whether our "psychological facts" (in the form of both assumptions and analyses) had enough reality for most of our Asian trainees to be taken seriously by them.

12. Meaning, Learning, and Action in Japanese and American Cultures

Excerpts: Interview with Dr. John Gillespie, a Japan expert and corporate consultant; he was born in Japan and speaks Japanese with native fluency. Recorded during 2002.

This edited transcript is extracted from the middle of the interview.

John Gillespie: The only time studen ts talk to the teacher or professor in Japan is when they're little kids, kindergarten maybe first grade. And then in graduate seminars when they're in their late 20s or even in their 30s. In between, the teacher teaches, the students listen, and there is no dialogue. This doesn't mean that you can't ask your teacher a question. You can, but it has to be after class. Here is why. The main reason is, the implication of asking a question during class is differently understood in the two cultures. In America we ask a question because we just want to know. It's just an informational thing or something that will satisfy my curiosity. In Japan, the implication of asking a question is that the teacher hasn't been clear. So nobody asks the questions.

Cornelius Grove: It's loss of face.

Gillespie: It's loss of face. I've heard Japanese express this out loud. There have been books in which a Japanese is talking about his experiences here in the U.S. and they say they could not believe when a teacher here was asked a question at a university and said, "Oh, I'm not quite sure of the answer to that"; or, "I'll get back to you about that." NEVER in Japan, NEVER did a Japanese professor say, "I don't know the answer to the question."

Grove: This fact figures very largely in my framework.

Gillespie: We say regarding communication that it's a two-way street, that the two parties involved are equally responsible for the success or failure of it. That's true for us. In Japan, they acknowledge that both parties are involved in it. But the communicator is the one that's more responsible for getting the message across.

Grove: Right.

Gillespie: Whereas in our culture it's probably the communicatee, the listener. And if we don't ask questions, the communicator thinks we understand.

Grove: Or in our culture, the communicator begins to worry because nobody's talking to him and asking a question or challenging him or anything.

Gillespie: That's exactly right. That's exactly right. So, in Japan, that's the kind of tradition you grow up in. You're enculturated to that. I have found in my training of Japanese businesspeople that at the beginning, I do not get much interaction. But as I continue with them, they learn to trust me. And I find I can get it more quickly now because I'm older than my trainees, so I do get a dialogue.

Grove: My hypothesis about that would be that, in *your* case, they easily sense that your basic cultural orientation is American, but with a heavy dose of Japanese.

Gillespie: I wouldn't say that this particular thing is unique to Japan. I know once I went to Ireland and I was up in the northwest corner of Ireland and for the first time in my life, outside of Japan, I had a group of trainees who were all from the same culture. All Irish. Not only that, but they were all from northwestern Ireland. And, for the first two-thirds or three-quarters of the first day, not a one of them said a word to us. They were trying to size us up. I was there with a Japanese woman who was my co-trainer, and they had to figure out who we were, whether they could understand what we were saying, and could trust us. Once that happened, we had a nice dialogue. But they were just as slow to get involved as the Japanese are. And it partly is their cultural upbringing, I think. They've grown up in a culture where only people like them live. In America... America accepts more immigrants from other cultures than all of the other industrial advanced nations combined. So you it's hard to find an American, even in Topeka, who doesn't know a foreigner.

Grove: John, just before we turned on the tape, you made some reference to Japanese who come to this country, or find themselves in a Western classroom or training room, and you alluded to their reaction to this.

Gillespie: Yeah, yeah. I have a couple of stories.

Grove: Stories would be great!

Gillespie: Um, let me give you a simple one to start. I 've heard this from dozens of Japanese. They come over here and they go to college and they're shocked, when they walk into the classroom and the professor sits on the desk.

Grove: Yup.

Gillespie: You don't sit on desks in Japan. The desk is a desk. You sit behind the desk, not on the desk. But that's not all. That's a small thing.

Grove: Right.

Gillespie: What about when a student comes into the classroom chewing gum? Or what about when they come in with a hamburger and a coke? You don't do that! (Chuckles.) You don't even do that on the Japanese subway, for God's sake.

Grove: Why don't you do it in the Japanese culture.

Gillespie: It's disrespectful. Disrespect, polite, these are abstract words, so you have to carry them out with behaviors and for the Japanese that's disrespectful behavior to do that. And then they also, to stay with behavior for a second, they also can't believe that Americans will sit with their feet on the desk in front of them.

Grove: I can't believe it either.

Gillespie: Yeah, right. (Chuckles.) And then finally is the thing I just mentioned, is the asking questions to the professor.

Grove: That, I'm really interested in. If there's any way you could spin that out a little bit more: what they think about this, how they react to this.

Gillespie: Well, it's back to... We used the words disrespect or polite. It's not polite to ask the professor a question because there's a presumption with the question that the professor hasn't been clear. So that's an implied criticism of the professor. Right? But Americans simply want to know more. Or maybe they want to clarify.

Grove: Or maybe to disagree.

Gillespie: Or even to disagree.

Grove: Which would...

Gillespie: And *that* is where the Japanese have real problems, because a Japanese student... I've had Japanese students in my class. I've had Chinese students in my class. NEVER once did one of those students, whether undergraduates or graduates, ever disagree with me in class or ask a question. Or say, "Professor Gillespie, wouldn't it be possible to do this?" NEVER once did an Asian student question me. Because that would be questioning my authority.

Grove: In class, *publicly!* Is there any forum, any way, any location in which they can question you and did in fact question you?

Gillespie: Yes. During my office hours.

Grove: OK.

Gillespie: They were free to come to you during office hours...

Grove: Did they?

Gillespie: They did. Not all of them, but I, when I had graduate students, I required that they come to see me once or twice a semester just to have a chat. But, I wasn't twisting anybody's arm. It was never forced. It never seemed, from my perspective, that they didn't want to be there. Maybe the first time they come in they were a little nervous, but that would dissipate very, very quickly.

Grove: Well, you could talk with them in Japanese, for one thing.

Gillespie: Well, that's true. And that always helped. But, one of the...to give you a little background and plumb a little deeper into your question. A lot of it has to do with the collectivism of the Japanese educational system as opposed to the individualism that's inculcated in the U.S. The Japanese tend to like to learn as a group. And they do that all the way through school. They have these little teams and their classrooms are broken up into teams and they do this in laboratory work, and so on. In fact, in chem lab you probably would work in a group of two or a team or something.

Grove: Well, I know something about China. My observation of China is that they will do this spontaneously. It's not that the teacher or professor sets up teams.

Gillespie: It just happens because it's inculcated in how they do things. They learn it in their kindergarten and it's reinforced at home to do this. And so they learn in teams. So, personal experience, you assign... you give an assignment for a paper and, afterwards, the Chinese and Japanese students come to you and want to know which topic they should be working on. In other words, they want *me* to give them the topic. The Americans want to go chose their own topics.

Grove: Yeah.

Gillespie: That's one thing. The second thing is when you have a final exam, the Japanese students all study together and the Chinese students all study together. I would give them open-book exams, but I finally decided that I had to change that. Here's why. I would say, "OK, here's 12 questions," which I'd give them a week ahead of time. I'd say, you know, three of these will be on the exam. The Chinese would get together and say, "OK, you do this one. You do that one. You do the next one." So one person in the group would do one or two of the 12 questions, then they'd all have the same answer to question 1 or question 2.

Grove: Yeah.

Gillespie: So for the exam, when I asked them to turn in their responses to questions 3, 8, 12, they would all turn in the same identical essay!

Grove: Which they'd pretty much memorized.

Gillespie: Which they'd pretty much memorized. And with the Americans, of course, it would be all over the map. But that's an example of the collective approach to things. It's a little different!

Now the other story that I wanted to give you was... I've heard this from at least a couple dozen people. The most recent was a Japanese woman who was completing her Ph.D. a couple of years ago in Education. I met her because she was living with a friend of mine. I had known her before that, so I said, "How's it going?" And she said, "Its OK, but it's harder than I thought it would be." I said, "Why? Is it because of Harvard...supposedly the top university in our country?" She said, "Well, actually, the work is OK. I'm doing the work. I'm doing the readings. It takes me a long time, but I'm doing the readings. I'm getting the papers done. I have a friend who helps me edit, so the English is right." I said, "So, what's... Why do you say it's so different?" She said, "It's the fact that in these seminars I have to get up and make a presentation in front of the class. Never in Japan," she said, "do I have to that." I said, "What's so hard? You know more about the subject than anybody. Why is that so difficult?" She says, "It's difficult for two reasons. One, I have to take my point of view and defend it."

Grove: She never had to do that in Japan.

Gillespie: Never had to do that in Japan. And the second thing was, she said, her classmates would attack her. I said, "Attack you?!" "Yeah," she said, "they would ask me questions about it." Well, of course, that's a part of our process. The professor's looking for dialogue. Most American professors evaluate their students, in large measure, on their participation in class, what you say in class, what you present in class and how you defend it. She said, "Those two things, saying what my opinion was and then defending it when students ask questions...." I tried to convince her, by the way, that they weren't attacking her, they were just being good students.

Grove: Good students!

Gillespie: (laughs) In their American way of understanding, right?

Grove: Right!

Gillespie: So this translates into the business arena. We can come back to the business arena here for a second. The Americans, universally... Let me preface this by saying I've interviewed over 800 Americans – one-on-one interviews – who have worked in Japanese companies.

Grove: Eight *hundred!?*

Gillespie: Oh yes. Easily, easily. It may be over a thousand. I know it's over 800. And I've interviewed over 500 Japanese who've worked in America for their companies, Japanese companies. So, I have a good foundation for these comments.

One of the major complaints that Americans have about Japanese is that they don't know what they think. When I ask them, "What does that mean? Do you mean they don't have a thought in their head? They aren't qualified?" "Oh, no, no, no, no. This guy's really good at accounting. This guy's really good at his technical drawing and design. This guy's..." I say, "So what do you mean they don't have an opinion?" "Well, they never say what they think." Americans always say, "I think *something*." They are giving their personal opinion. Japanese are not trained to give out their own personal opinions. They all *have* them, but they're not trained to *share* them. So unless you sit down and have a beer with the Japanese guy, outside of work, you're almost never going to get them to say what they personally think. This is why, for Japanese companies, decisions take way longer. Americans ask me, "Why do Japanese take so long to make decisions?" Well, it's because no Japanese salaryman says, "*I think* this or that" about an issue. *They have to do consensus*. They must make sure that everybody in their group has the same opinion. This is just like my graduate students having the same answer to the question. Everybody has to have the same answer before they say it in public. Then it's "the group thinks."

Grove: Yeah.

Gillespie: Of course, there's pro and con to both approaches, right?

Grove: Clearly.

Gillespie: You know, the Americans say, "I want to make my own decision." The Americans can make the wrong decision quickly because all the facts aren't in. The Japanese will generally make the right decision. But in a rapidly changing market it might take them too long so that they lose a widow of opportunity. So, there's pro and con there.

Grove: You're almost saying, word-for-word, things that Hu Wenzhong and I wrote in our book on China, *Encountering the Chinese*.

John, let me redirect you now to discuss a couple of specific things that particularly interest me. I'd like you to talk a little about how the Japanese handle information, or knowledge, and about the tendency of the Japanese to analyze things – or to avoid analysis. Are they analytical thinkers? Do they learn to do this? Do they do it well? I've come to understand that some cultures put a great deal of emphasis on learning to think analytically, which I take to mean taking things, whether they're physical things like this tape recorder, or concepts like knowledge transmission, they take it apart and look at all the parts and they put it back together

gradually and believe they understand it much better. Whereas it's certainly not a holistic way to approach things. So what's you observation about the Japanese?

Gillespie: Very, very good question. The Japanese look at analysis as an intellectual construct, not as something that's ingrained as part of their daily repertoire. What's ingrained in them is *synthesis*...

Grove: OK, what do you mean by synthesis.

Gillespie: The Japanese study Descartes in college. Descartes is a Western guy who said – oversimplifying here a bit – break things down into parts, analyze them, and when you put them back together you'll have a better understanding of the whole.

Grove: Right.

Gillespie: But when the Japanese students study Descartes, it's as an intellectual construct and not as something they should actually *do*. It helps them understand the West, so to speak.

Grove: (Laughs)

Gillespie: But what's ingrained in them is not analysis but synthesis. How is the whole held together? In Japan, you get your identity by your relationship to others in your group. You get your identity mainly by your relationship to the members of your family. It's very Confucian. The East Asian cultures are *relational* cultures. So, what the Japanese do is: They think relationally in human matters and equally relationally in technical matters. For example, take the assembly lines at Honda. I've visited their plants here in the U.S. When there is a problem on the line, they don't do what General Motors does. At General Motors, when there's a glitch, they'll take out the offending part for examination but allow the assembly line to go on. In Japan, they stop the entire assembly line, because they want to solve the problem *in the context of the entire assembly operation*.

Grove: Yup.

Gillespie: They resolve the glitch right there in relation to everything that's involved in their cars' assembly. Once that's resolved, they'll restart the assembly line.

Grove: Seems like a better long-term solution.

Gillespie: Chrysler was the first American car-maker to adopt the Japanese approach. And General Motors has adopted it at least at their Friedmont plant. They do it with Japanese technology. This is what I mean by synthetic thought. And I have another example that might be useful, too. When the Japanese and the Americans have trade talks or talks on fisheries or whaling, there always are similar ways in which they get started on the wrong foot with each other. The Americans always want to start with their differences. The Japanese always want to start with what we have in common. So they never can get started right. They're always at loggerheads because they never have any common ground at the beginning. Getting to the end is really hard because of that. All this is *so* deeply ingrained in their cultures!

But you asked me about the meaning of information. What undergirds information and information exchange? If I ask Americans and Japanese, "What is information?," I get blank stares at first. But then they both mention data, facts, figures, charts...

Grove: Do they agree about the facts, figures, charts, and so forth?

Gillespie: Yes, yes. But the meaning of "information" for us Americans is *only* that.

Grove: Right.

Gillespie: Whereas in Japan, the meaning of information is *more* than that. "Information" is *joho* in Japanese. *Joho*, J O H O, long "O" long "O." And *jo* means feelings or affection.

Grove: Just *jo* – feelings or affection.

Gillespie: And *ho* means reward.

Grove: Fascinating! So for the Japanese, information means "affection reward."

Gillespie: The basis on which you get information in the Japanese mind set – yes it's data and facts and so on, but the reason you get it in the first place is *because it's a kind of reward for the feelings that you have about somebody*. In other words, you get information based on the relationship you have with somebody.

Grove: Wow.

Gillespie: This is why Japanese and Americans working together are often frustrated about the amount and quality of information that they get from the other side. Both sides say, "I don't get enough information from the other side to do my job to 100% effectiveness." But what each side means by "information" actually is different.

END OF INTERVIEW EXCERPTS