

*‘Intercultural Communication: Bridging
Cultures through Teaching and Learning’*

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What is Culture?

- Culture is a set of common beliefs and values that is shared by a group of people that binds them together into a society. All people are members of at least one culture. The norms of a culture define roles and provide a framework that makes people's behavior predictable and understandable to one another.

John Bodley (1994): Diverse Definitions

Topical:	Culture consists of everything on a list of topics, or categories, such as social organization, religion, or economy
Historical:	Culture is social heritage, or tradition, that is passed on to future generations
Behavioral:	Culture is shared, learned human behavior, a way of life
Normative:	Culture is ideals, values, or rules for living
Functional:	Culture is the way humans solve problems of adapting to the environment or living together
Mental:	Culture is a complex of ideas, or learned habits, that inhibit impulses and distinguish people from animals
Structural:	Culture consists of patterned and interrelated ideas, symbols, or behaviors
Symbolic:	Culture is based on arbitrarily assigned meanings that are shared by a society

Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis

- Sapir (1921): “Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression in that society.”

- As a result of differences in language, people in different cultures will think about, perceive, and behave toward the world differently.
- Reality itself is already embedded in language and therefore comes preformed.
- Language determines, enabling and constraining, what is perceived and attended to in a culture, as well as the upper limits of knowledge.

Culture Shapes...

- The way we think
- The way we interact
- The way we communicate
- The way we transmit knowledge to the next generation

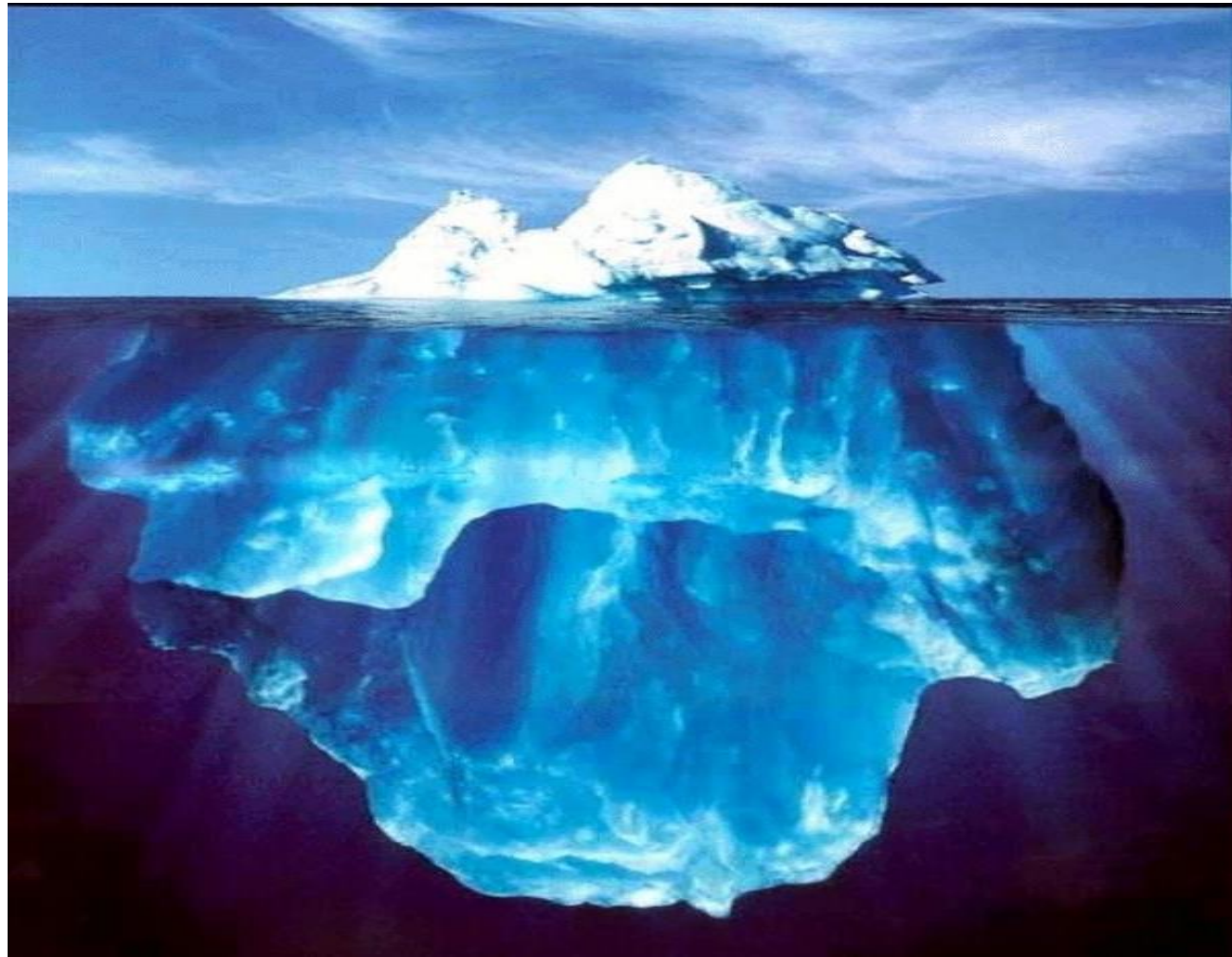
Culture Affects...

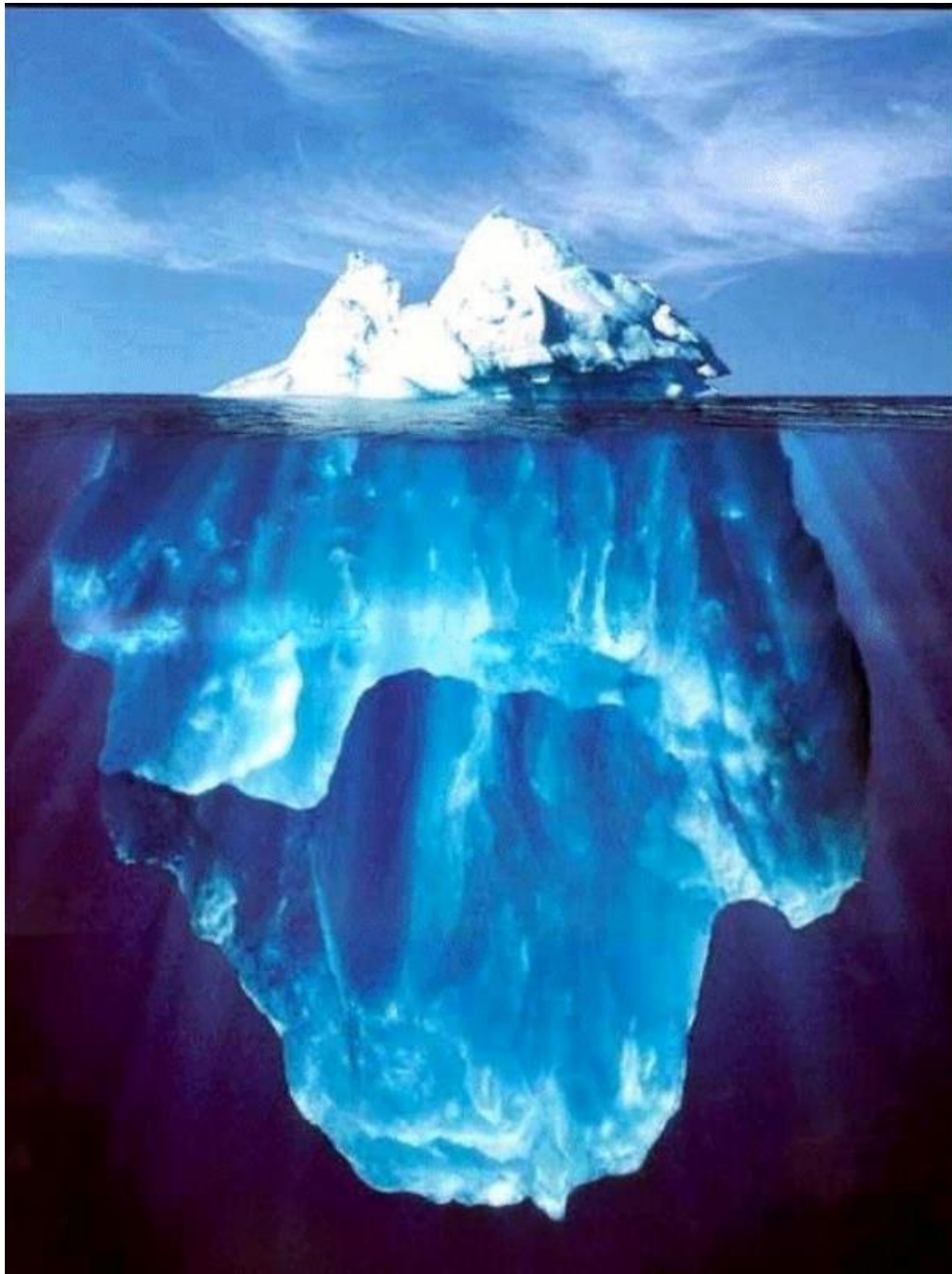
- The organization of learning
- Pedagogical practices
- Evaluation procedures
- Rules of schools
- Instructional activities and curriculum

First Step in Cultural Awareness

- Understanding the values and rules for behavior of our own culture that are so ingrained that we feel they are “normal” or the “right” way of doing things.

The Iceberg Model of Culture





Surface Culture

Above the Surface

Deep Culture

Unspoken Rules

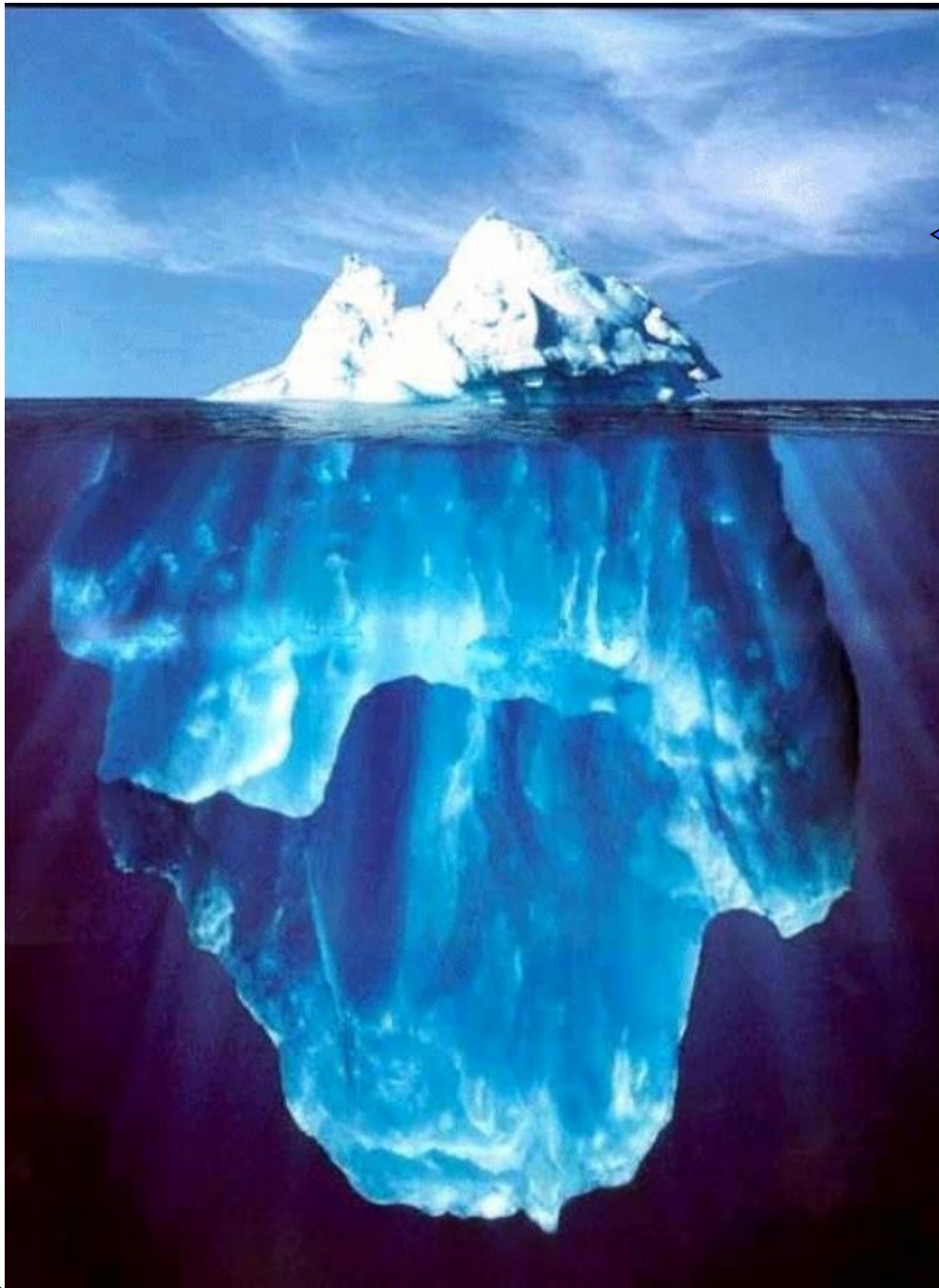
Just Below the Surface

Behavior-Based

Unconscious Rules

Far Below Surface

Value-Based



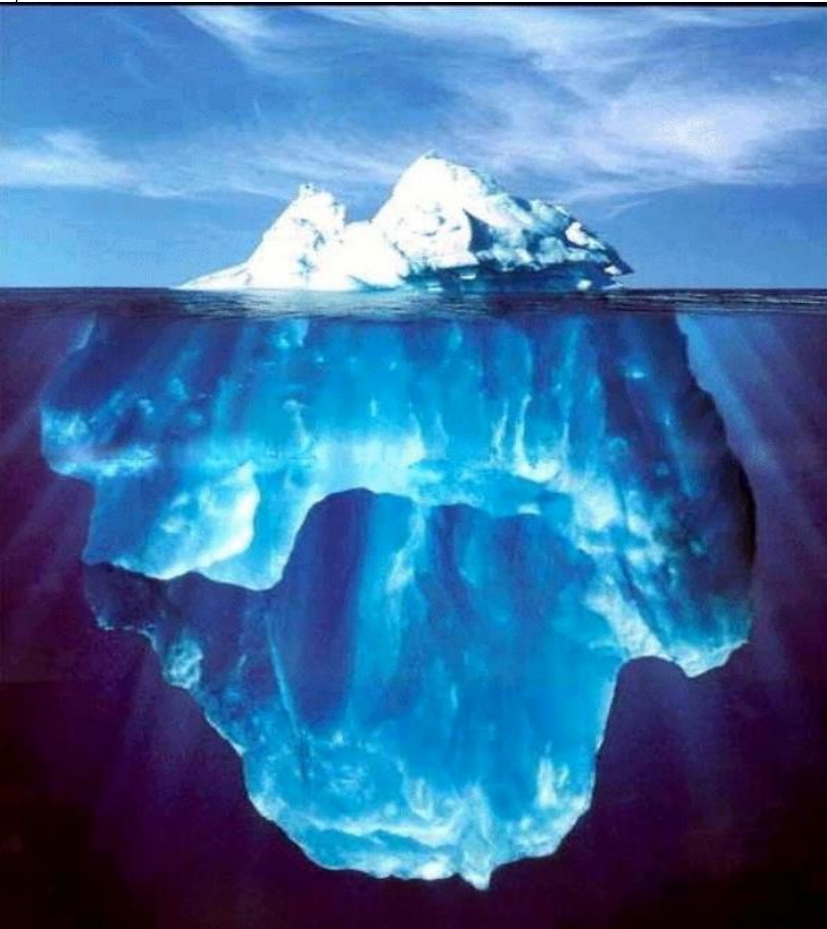
Surface Culture

Above the Surface

Emotional Load: Relatively Low

Food * Dress * Music * Visual
Arts * Drama * Crafts *
Dance * Literature *
Language * Celebrations *
Games

The kind of VISUAL elements of culture that are easily identifiable, easily shared, and easily accessed.



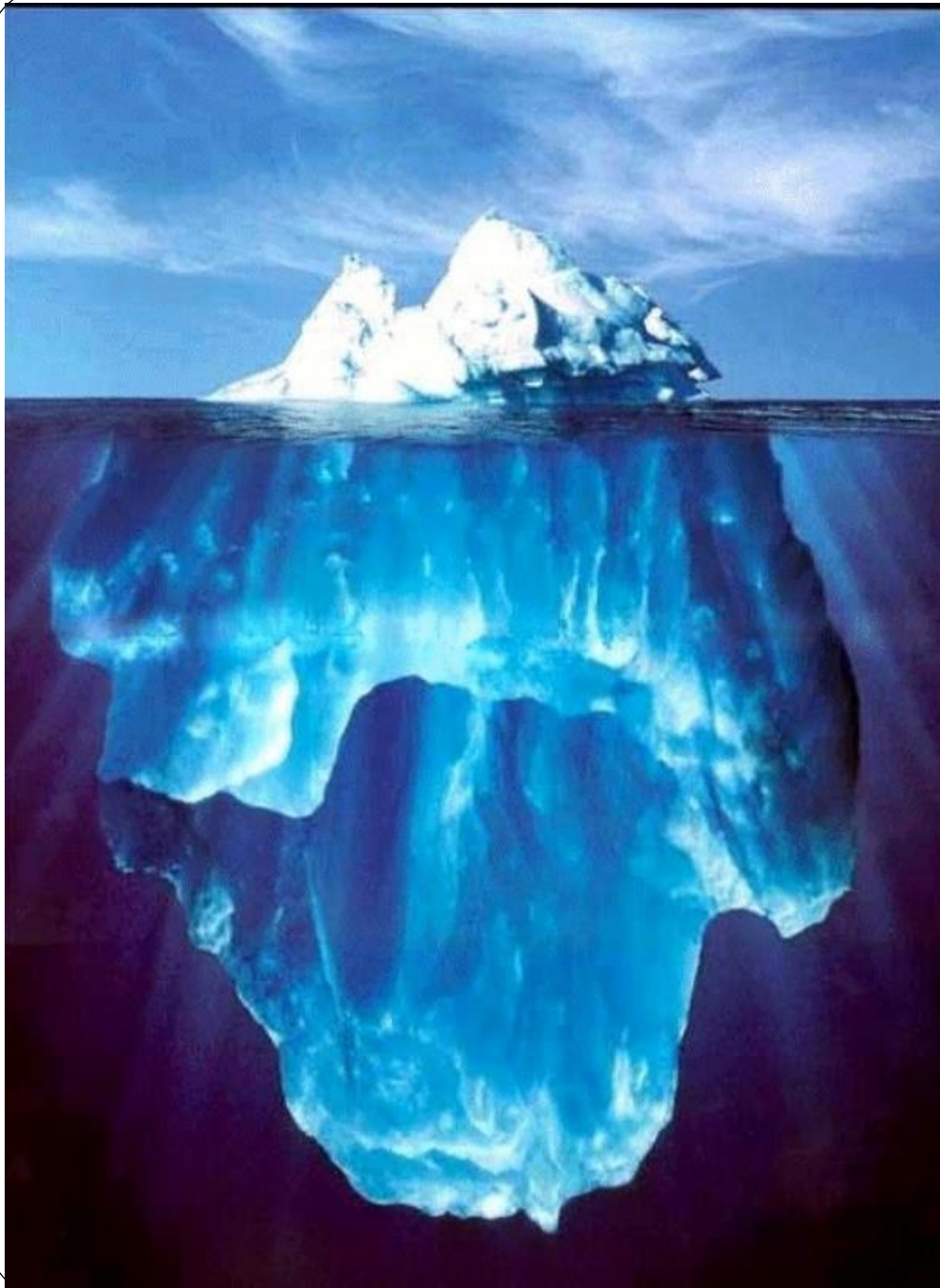
Surface-Culture Rules Example

It is the third
Thursday in
November.

*What are you going to
eat?*

In the United States,
that date is
Thanksgiving.
Depending on your
family, you may be
eating Turkey, Ham,
or nothing special at
all. Even if you
don't celebrate, you
may wish somebody
“Happy
Thanksgiving”.

“Everybody does it differently”



Courtesy * Contextual
Conversational Patterns * Concept
of Time * Personal Space * Rules of
Conduct * Facial Expressions *
Non-Verbal Communication * Body
Language * Touching * Eye-Contact
* Patterns of Handling Emotions

Deep Culture

← Unspoken Rules

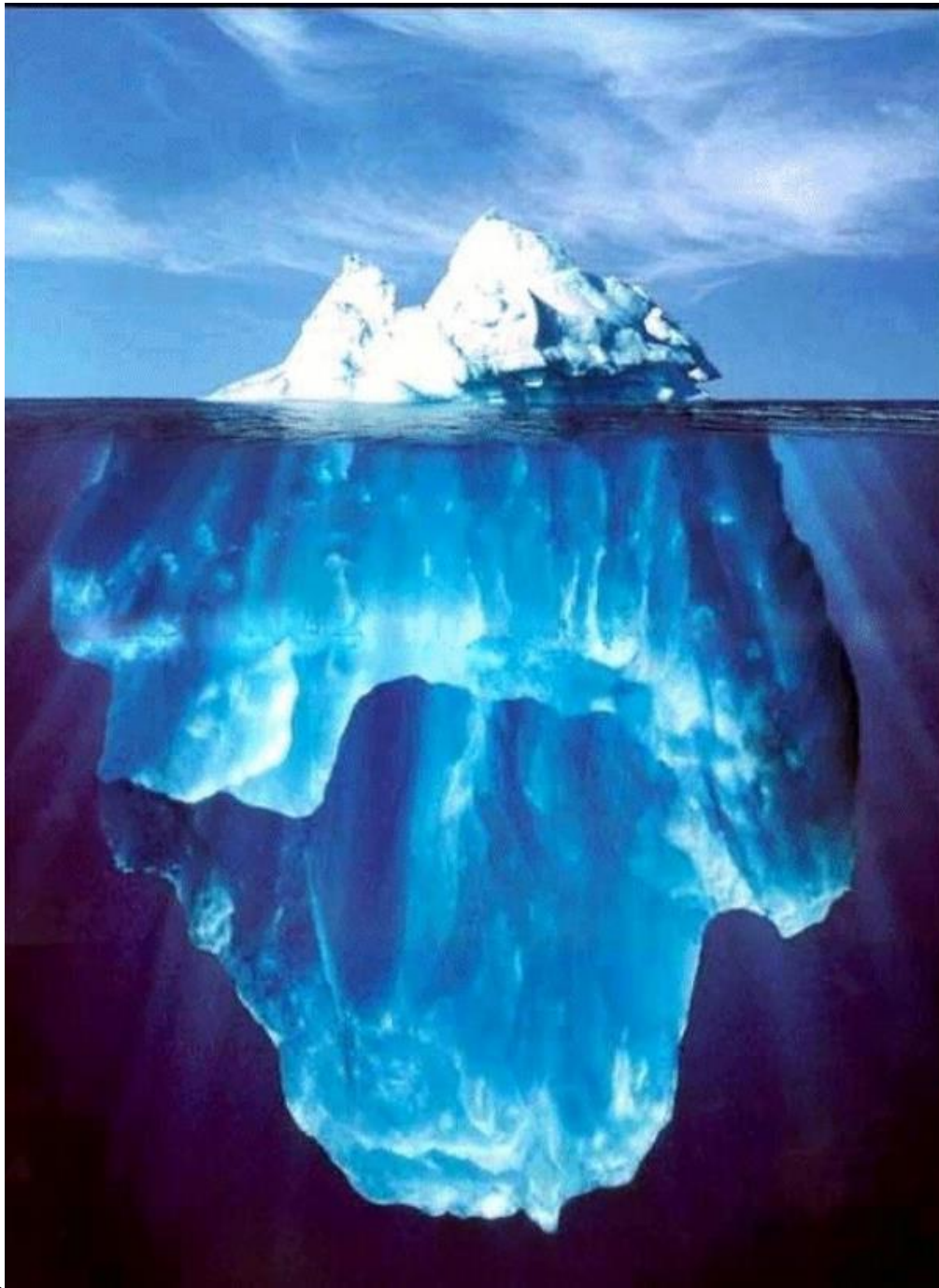
Just Below the Surface

Emotional Load: High

Elements of culture that are perhaps not as
easily pointed out, more ingrained into
society.

Behavior-based.

“What are you DOING?”



Deep Culture

Unspoken Rules Example

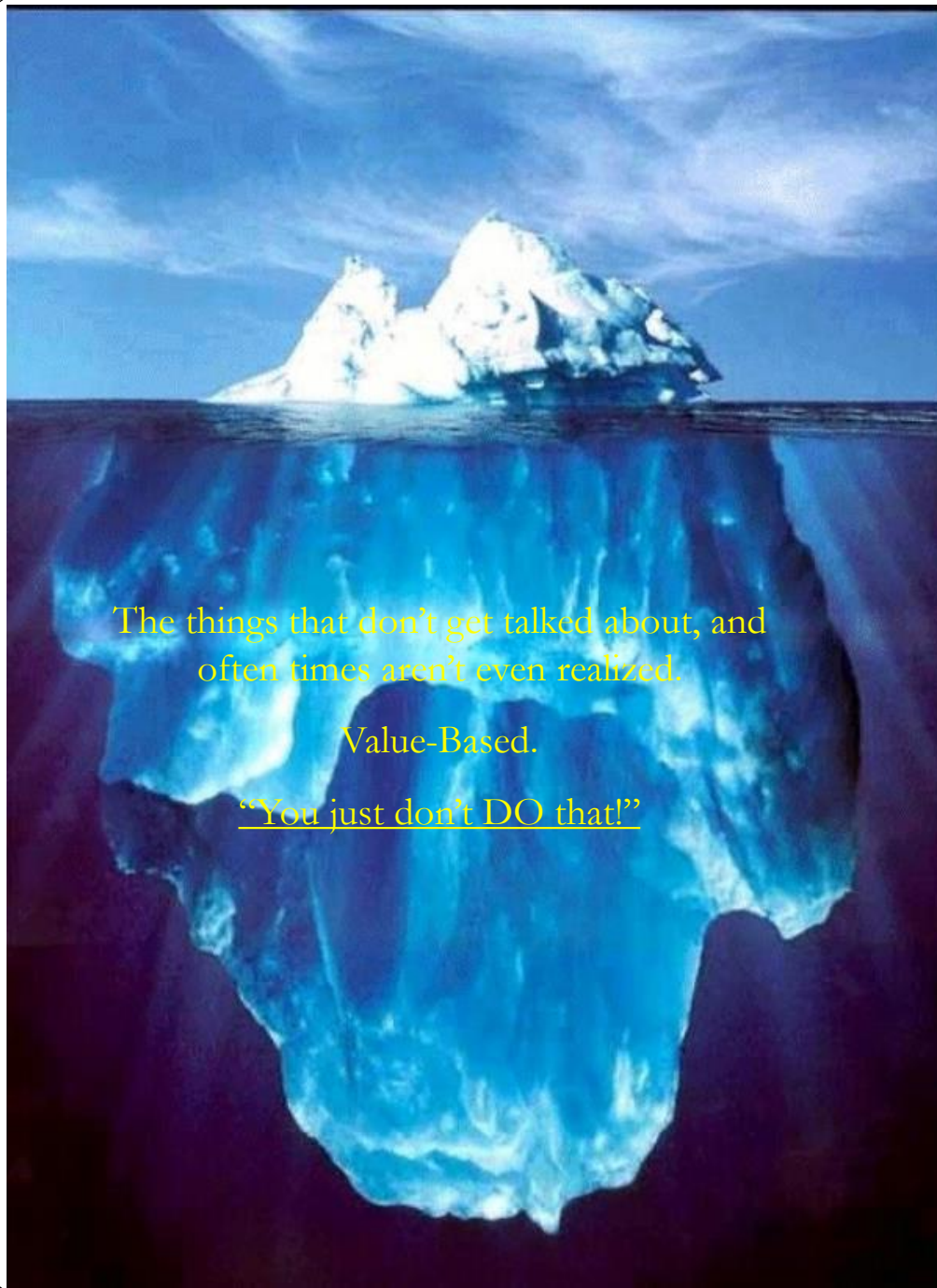
You are in a major chain grocery store (Target, Kmart, etc), standing in line at the checkout.

How do you know what to pay for your items?

In that culture - we don't haggle over low-cost, pre-priced items. You just pay as is marked.

BEHAVIOR-BASED

“What are you DOING?”



The things that don't get talked about, and often times aren't even realized.

Value-Based.

"You just don't DO that!"

Notions of Modesty * Concept of Beauty *
Courtship Practices * Relationships to
Animals * Notions of Leadership * Tempo
of Work * Concepts of Food * Ideals of
Childrearing * Theory of Disease * Social
Interaction Rate * Nature of Friendships *
Tone of Voice * Attitudes Towards Elders *
Concept of Cleanliness * Notions of
Adolescence * Patterns of Group Decision-
Making * Definition of Insanity * Preference
for Competition or Cooperation * Tolerance
of Physical Pain * Concept of "self" *
Concept of Past and Future * Definition of
Obscenity * Attitudes toward Dependents *
Problem-Solving Roles in Relation to Age,
Sex, Class, Occupation, Kinship, and so
forth

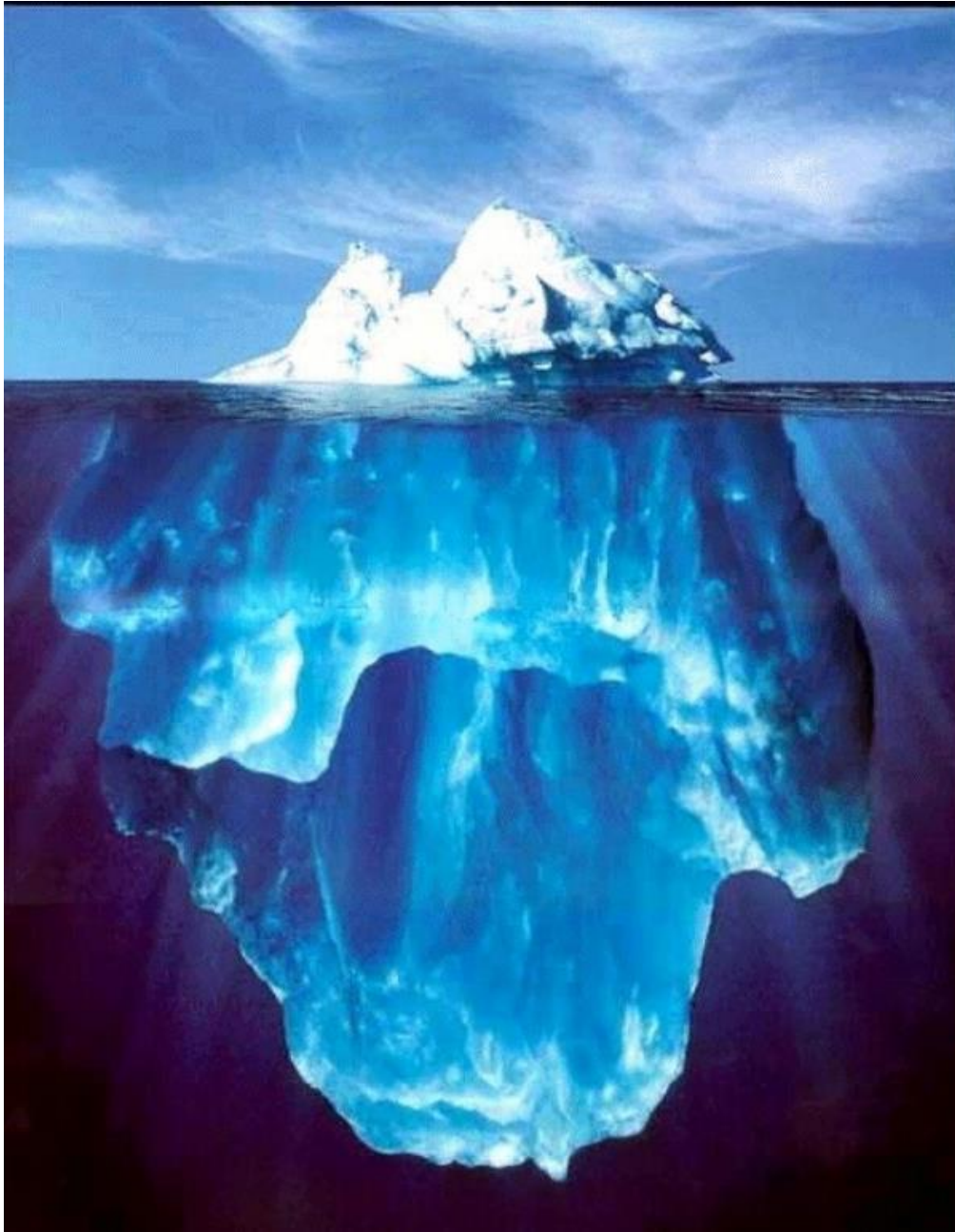
Deep Culture



Unconscious Rules

Far Below Surface

Emotional Load: INTENSE



Deep Culture

Unconscious Rules Example

It is summer and your air conditioning has broken. Your family is lounging around the house and your children are playing in the family room. It is getting quite hot.

How do you cool off?

In the United States, you don't take your clothing off around your children. It would be considered highly offensive for a father to walk around home completely naked, no matter how hot.

VALUE-BASED

“You just don't DO that!”

Questions to Consider...

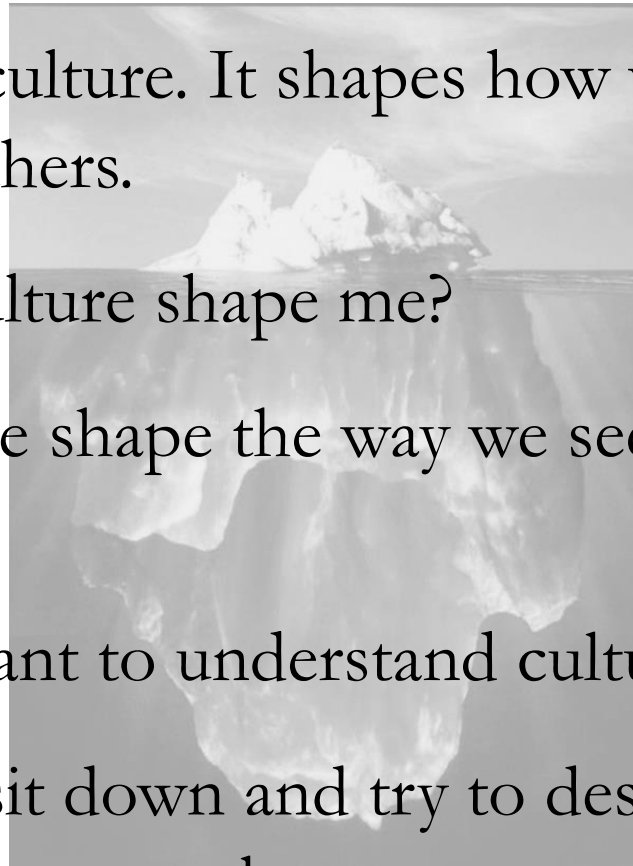
Everyone has a culture. It shapes how we see the world, ourselves, and others.

How does my culture shape me?

How does culture shape the way we see ourselves, others, and the world?

Why is it important to understand culture?

As an activity – sit down and try to describe as many of the elements of your own culture as you can – including all three levels.



How does Culture Influence Peoples' Lives?

Do now: Identify one thing that represents your culture.

Example: American culture - baseball



HW – Pick five artifacts in your home, describe the item, and describe why it is important to your culture?

Acculturation

- Acculturation is the process of adapting to a new culture. All people experience the acculturation process when they move from one culture to another.

In the Acculturation Process, we
must adapt to:

- New Languages
- Different Cultures
- Values and Beliefs
- Communication Systems
- Non-verbal/body language
- Conversational styles

Stages of Acculturation

Stage One	Euphoria	Excitement over the newness of being in a new country.
Stage Two	Culture Shock	Engenders feelings of anger, hostility, and frustration
Stage Three	Recovery	Individual starts to feel comfortable in new culture
Stage Four	Acceptance	Acceptance of new culture

Cross-Cultural Values

Americans

- Freedom
- Independence
- Self-reliance
- Equality
- Individualism
- Competition
- Efficiency
- Time
- Directness
- Openness

Japanese

- Belonging
- Group harmony
- Collectiveness
- Age/seniority
- Group consciousness
- Cooperation
- Quality
- Patience
- Indirectness
- Go-between

Elashmawi &
Harris 1993

Edward T. Hall's Model

High-context cultures

- Long-lasting relationships
- Exploiting context
- Spoken agreements
- Insiders and outsiders clearly distinguished
- Cultural patterns ingrained, slow change

Low-context cultures

- Shorter relationships
- Less dependent on context
- Written agreements
- Insiders and outsiders less clearly distinguished
- Cultural patterns change faster

Cultural Classification--Hall

- Low-Context Cultures - What is Said is more Important than How or Where it is Said
 - U.S.
 - Germany
- High-Context cultures - What is Said and How or Where it is Said are Significant
 - Asia
 - Latin America
 - Middle East

High and Low Context Cultural Values

Factors/Dimensions	High Context	Low Context
Lawyers	Less important	Very important
A person's word	Is his or her bond	Get it in writing
Responsibility for organizational error	Taken by the top level	Pushed to the lowest level
Negotiations	Lengthy	Proceed quickly
Examples:	Japan, Middle East	U.S.A. Northern Europe

Classroom

- Provide a wide array of cultural information in different formats, including DVD's, music, online programs, guest speakers, literature and newspapers.
- Ask your students to point out the things they notice about cultural information they learn in class. Have them mention the differences they observe.
- Assign students a new culture and have them teach it to the class.
- Add fun activities to your culture curriculum such as games, short plays, debates, songs, holiday celebrations from other cultures, etc.
- Encourage students to find penpals or keypals from different cultures.
- Incorporate activities that help students reflect on their own cultures and have them think how they would teach their culture to someone from another country.