

Intercultural Communication Today

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Abstract

The world is a confusing place until we can make some sense of it, so the basic function of culture is to explain the world to each new member of the culture. By telling us what to expect, culture reduces confusion and helps us predict the future. The study of human communication is complex and multidimensional. When the element of culture is added, the complexities of any systematic study of the two are compounded greatly. The study of culture is as elusive as the study of human communication. Although there are as many problems as there are people, we would nevertheless suggest that most of the obstacles fall into the following categories: because culture lacks a distinct crystalline structure, it is often riddled with contradictions and paradoxes; culture cannot be manipulated or held in check: we study other cultures from the perspective of our own culture, so our observations and conclusions are tainted by our orientation.