

Transcultural Themes

Steven R. Van Hook, PhD

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University of Amsterdam VSPA Inclusivity Committee

Bridging Cultures For
Helpers, Healers, and Teachers

Abstract & Bio

■ **Abstract:** Effective transcultural tactics can enhance multicultural communications in essential fields such as nursing, psychotherapy, business, international affairs, journalism, and education. This presentation covers themes and images that may resonate across culturally diverse audiences to help further develop rapport and trust. Video clips illustrate the themes at work.

■ **Presenter:** Dr. Steven R. Van Hook has a PhD specializing in transcultural distance learning; Master's work in counseling psychology and business communications; and a BA in broadcast journalism. He has been a TV bureau chief in Russia; a director of nationwide print and broadcast public education media in Ukraine for USAID; a counselor and facilitator for community mental health programs. He is a designer and educator for communication courses at UCLA, UCSB, National University, and elsewhere. His research in transcultural learning has been published by SAGE and UNESCO journals. Research website: <http://wwmr.us>



Steven R. Van Hook

Who Should Care?

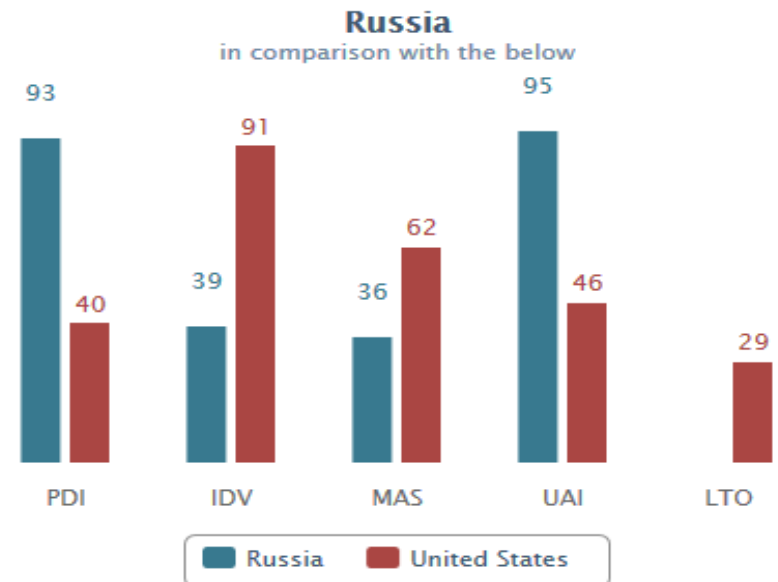
- Nurses
- Psychotherapists
- International educators and students
- Global business managers
- Mass media
- Residents of culturally diverse nations, states, cities



Background in Eastern Europe



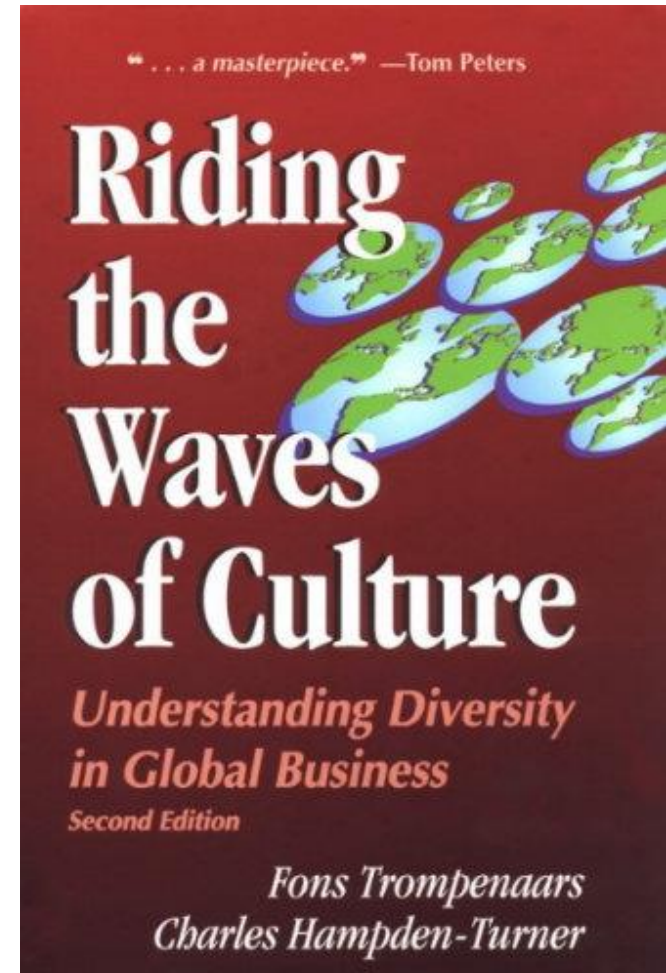
Moscow TV Bureau Chief



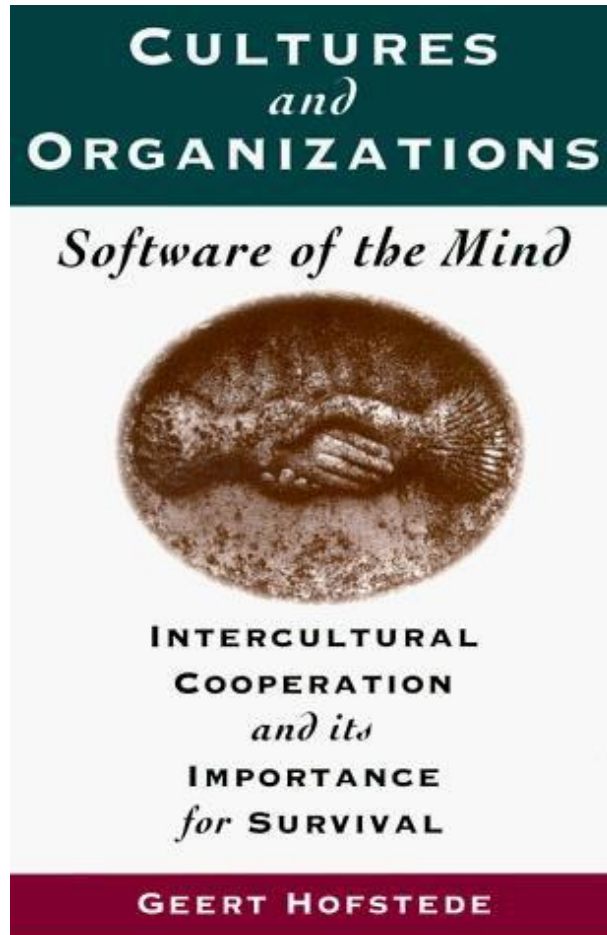
- Russians and Americans are cultural polar opposites

Cultural Theorists

- Geert Hofstede
- Marieke De Mooij
- Fons Trompenaars
- Edward T. Hall
- Barbara Mueller
- Simon Anholt
- Samuel P. Huntington
- Lawrence E. Harrison
- Erin Meyer



Hofstede on Culture



Geert Hofstede
Professor Emeritus, Maastricht
University, Netherlands
1928 - 2020

- Power Distance (PD)
- Individualism (IDV)
- Masculinity (MAS)
- Uncertainty Avoidance (UA)
- Long-Term Orientation (LTO)

Educator



- **Steven R. Van Hook, PhD**
- Global business/MBA/communication courses for UCLA, UC Santa Barbara, California Lutheran University, National University, Antioch University ...

- <http://wwmr.us>
- <http://course.wwmr.us>
- steven@wwmr.us

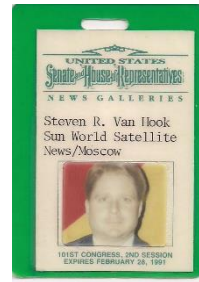


Steven Van Hook

:: Media Samples ::



TV Anchor
Circa 1987



Russia TV Bureau Chief
Circa 1990



Newspaper Writer
1980s –



Radio Reporter
Circa 1985



Nonprofit / Social Work

- VISTA
- USAID
- UNESCO
- Head Start
- IREX
- Educare Research
- Crisis Counselor
- Saylor Foundation
- Corrections Intake
- Domestic Violence Group



Transcultural Nursing



Transcultural Nursing Society

MANY CULTURES ONE WORLD



- Transcultural Nursing (TCN) is a theory based humanistic discipline, designed to serve individuals, organizations, communities, and societies. Human care/caring is defined within the context of culture. Culturally competent care can only occur when culture care values are known and serve as the foundation for meaningful care.

<https://tcns.org/>

Transcultural Psychotherapy



Any form of psychodynamic psychotherapy that emphasizes cultural sensitivity and awareness, including culturally defined concepts of emotion, drives, and behavior. In the psychiatric community, the term is used somewhat more often in a sense similar to multicultural therapy in clinical psychology.



Transcultural Education



- University of California courses in global communications
- 200+ Students
- 24+ Countries
- 20,000+ cultural message impressions in class

The Research Question

- *What sorts of themes and images might create a positive transcultural resonance among groups of diverse nationalities and cultural backgrounds?*
- *How might any resonate themes and images be applied in multicultural settings?*



The Scream
Edvard Munch
1893, Norway

The Challenge

- To examine resonant themes and images for enhanced teaching across multiple nationalities:
- Diverse groups of international participants gathered over an extended periods of time and comfortable enough in a cross-cultural setting to express viewpoints perhaps opposed to others in class;
- Consistent and replicable exposure to numerous images and themes;
- Attentive researcher/observer who might make some theoretical assumptions and measures.



Study Sample



- 40+ Countries
- 900+ Students
- Typically higher-income families

Why Commercials?

- Could use art, literature, history, music – any media and subject that rely on diverse themes and images.
- Commercials are universal recognized quantum packets of information; demographically resonant and necessarily concise.



Coming to Terms

- **Cross-Cultural:** A connection between cultures.
- **Transcultural:** A connection above and beyond cultural differences.
- **Resonance:** *Acoustics.*
Intensification and prolongation of sound, especially of a musical tone, produced by sympathetic vibration.
- **Dissonance:** A harsh, disagreeable combination of sounds; discord.



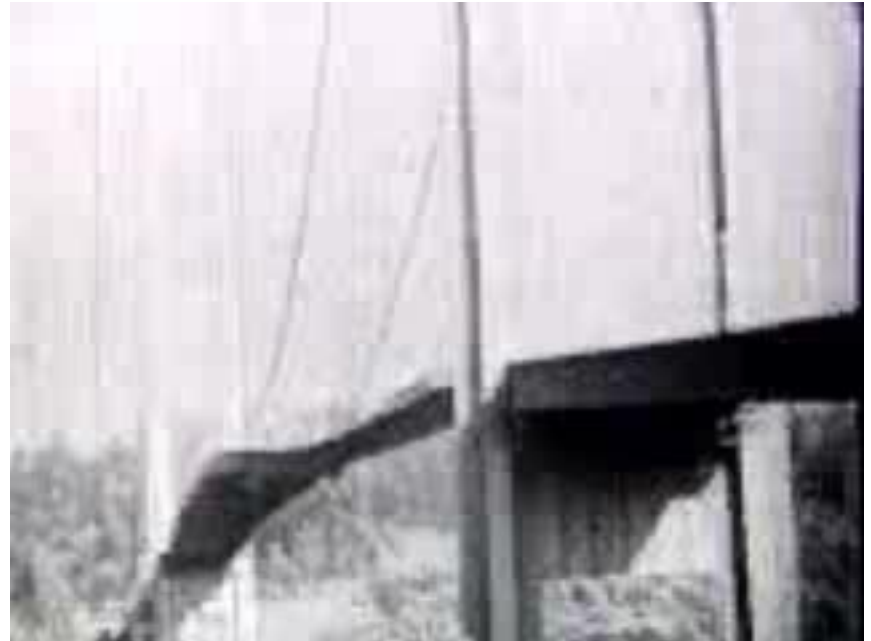
Resonance is:

- *Acoustics.* Intensification and prolongation of sound, especially of a musical tone, produced by sympathetic vibration.
- Richness or significance, especially in evoking an association or strong emotion.
- *Physics.* The increase in amplitude of oscillation of an electric or mechanical system exposed to a periodic force whose frequency is equal or very close to the natural undamped frequency of the system.
- ***Dissonance:*** A harsh, disagreeable combination of sounds; discord.



Resonance & Bridges

- The most famous example of resonance was the Tacoma Narrows Bridge in Washington State (also called Galloping Gertie).
- In 1940, just months after its completion, winds in the Tacoma Narrows matched the bridge's resonant frequency and caused the suspension bridge to sway uncontrollably. Within hours, the bridge collapsed.



<http://science.howstuffworks.com/question603.htm>

Study Sample



- 40+ Countries
- 900+ Students
- Typically higher-income families

International Student Count

- Countries: 40+
- Total Students: 950
- Female: 494 (51%)
- Male: 467 (49%)
- Age range: Mostly early-20s through mid-30s
- Education: Current college students in home countries, college graduates, professionals
- Income: Typically upper income bracket families in home countries

Top Countries (91% of students)

- South Korea: 223 (24%)
- Germany: 185 (19%)
- Japan: 127 (14%)
- Brazil: 68 (7%)
- Norway: 62 (6%)
- Italy: 51 (5%)
- Vietnam: 49 (5%)
- China: 43 (4%)
- Turkey: 34 (3%)
- Sweden: 32 (3%)

Country Origin of Researcher's International Students

UCSB / UCLA / CLU International Programs / 2001 - 2017

<u>Austria</u> Female: 3 Male: 0 Total: 3	<u>Bulgaria</u> Male: 0 Female: 2 Total: 2	<u>Denmark</u> Female: 2 Male: 0 Total: 2	<u>Hungary</u> Female: 1 Male: 0 Total: 1	<u>Italy</u> Male: 27 Female: 24 Total: 51
<u>Benin</u> Female: 1 Male: 0 Total: 1	<u>Canada</u> Male: 0 Female: 1 Total: 1	<u>Ecuador</u> Male: 1 Female: 0 Total: 1	<u>India</u> Female: 2 Male: 0 Total: 2	<u>Japan</u> Female: 81 Male: 46 Total: 127
<u>Bolivia</u> Female: 1 Male: 0 Total: 1	<u>Chile</u> Male: 5 Female: 1 Total: 6	<u>France</u> Female: 1 Male: 0 Total: 4	<u>Indonesia</u> Male: 1 Female: 0 Total: 1	<u>Kuwait</u> Female: 2 Male: 0 Total: 2
<u>Brazil</u> Male: 42 Female: 27 Total: 69	<u>China</u> Female: 27 Male: 16 Total: 43	<u>Germany</u> Male: 118 Female: 67 Total: 184	<u>Iran</u> Male: 1 Female: 0 Total: 1	<u>Lebanon</u> Male: 1 Female: 0 Total: 1

Country Origin of Researcher's International Students
UCSB / UCLA / CLU International Programs / 2001 - 2017

Mexico

Male: 3

Female: 0

Total: 3

Nigeria

Male: 1

Female: 0

Total: 1

Saudi Arabia

Male: 5

Female: 0

Total: 5

Mongolia

Male: 1

Female: 0

Total: 1

Philippines

Female: 1

Male: 0

Total: 1

Slovak Rep.

Female: 1

Male: 0

Total: 1

Netherlands

Male: 2

Female: 1

Total: 3

Poland

Female: 1

Male: 0

Total: 1

South Korea

Female: 164

Male: 59

Total: 223

Norway

Male: 45

Female: 17

Total: 62

Russia

Female: 4

Male: 2

Total: 6

Spain

Male: 3

Female: 2

Total: 5

Country Origin of Researcher's International Students

UCSB / UCLA / CLU International Programs / 2001 - 2017

Sweden

Female: 18

Male: 14

Total: 32

Turkey

Male: 18

Female: 17

Total: 35

Uzbekistan

Female: 1

Male: 0

Total: 1

Switzerland

Female: 9

Male: 9

Total: 18

Ukraine

Male: 2

Female: 1

Total: 3

Taiwan

Female: 10

Male: 4

Total: 14

Venezuela

Male: 1

Female: 0

Total: 1

Thailand

Female: 4

Male: 0

Total: 4

Vietnam

Male: 37

Female: 12

Total: 49

Analysis Algorithm

Survey Instrument with 7-point Lickert-type Scale

- $\bar{x} \geq 5$ with $\text{VAR} < 3$ indicated a Positive Resonance
- $\bar{x} \geq 5$ with $\text{VAR} \geq 3$ indicated a Positive Dissonance
- $\bar{x} > 3$ but < 5 with $\text{VAR} < 3$ indicated a Neutral Resonance
- $\bar{x} > 3$ but < 5 with $\text{VAR} \geq 3$ indicated a Neutral Dissonance
- $\bar{x} \leq 3$ with $\text{VAR} < 3$ indicated a Negative Resonance
- $\bar{x} \leq 3$ with $\text{VAR} \geq 3$ indicated a Negative Dissonance

Survey Instrument

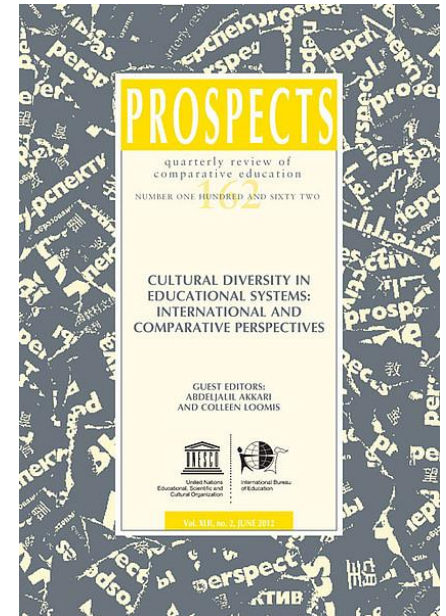
Articles on Transcultural Learning

UNESCO Journal “Prospects”

Van Hook, S.R. (2012, June).

Hopes and hazards of transculturalism.

Article available at <http://wwmr.us>



Journal of Research in International Education

Van Hook, S.R. (2011, April).

Modes and models for transcending cultural differences in international classrooms.

Article available at <http://wwmr.us>



Transcultural Messages:

What Doesn't Work Well

- Humor
- Sex
- Religion
- Politics



Humor Group

Group Classification: Neutral Dissonance

$n = 235$

$\bar{x} = 4.5$

Median = 5.0

VAR = 3.3

$\sum x = 1060$

$p < .001$



Refresh – “Fish Love” – Singapore

Group Classification: Neutral Dissonance

$n = 235$

$\bar{x} = 4.5$

Median = 5.0

VAR = 3.3

$\sum x = 1060$

$p < .001$



Sex Group

Group Classification: Neutral Resonance

$$n = 141$$

$$\bar{x} = 4.5$$

$$\text{Median} = 5.0$$

$$\text{VAR} = 2.3$$

$$\sum x = 632$$

$$p < .001$$



Natan Jewelry – “Headache” – Brazil

Group Classification: Neutral Resonance

$$n = 141$$

$$\bar{x} = 4.5$$

$$\text{Median} = 5.0$$

$$\text{VAR} = 2.3$$

$$\sum x = 632$$

$$p < .001$$

“Headache”

$$n = 47$$

$$\bar{x} = 4.3$$

$$\text{VAR} = 1.9$$

Religions Group

Group Classification: Neutral Resonance

$$n = 141$$

$$\bar{x} = 4.1$$

$$\text{Median} = 4.0$$

$$\text{VAR} = 2.3$$

$$\sum x = 580$$

$$p < .001$$



Politics / Nationalism Group

Group Classification: Neutral Dissonance

$n = 141$

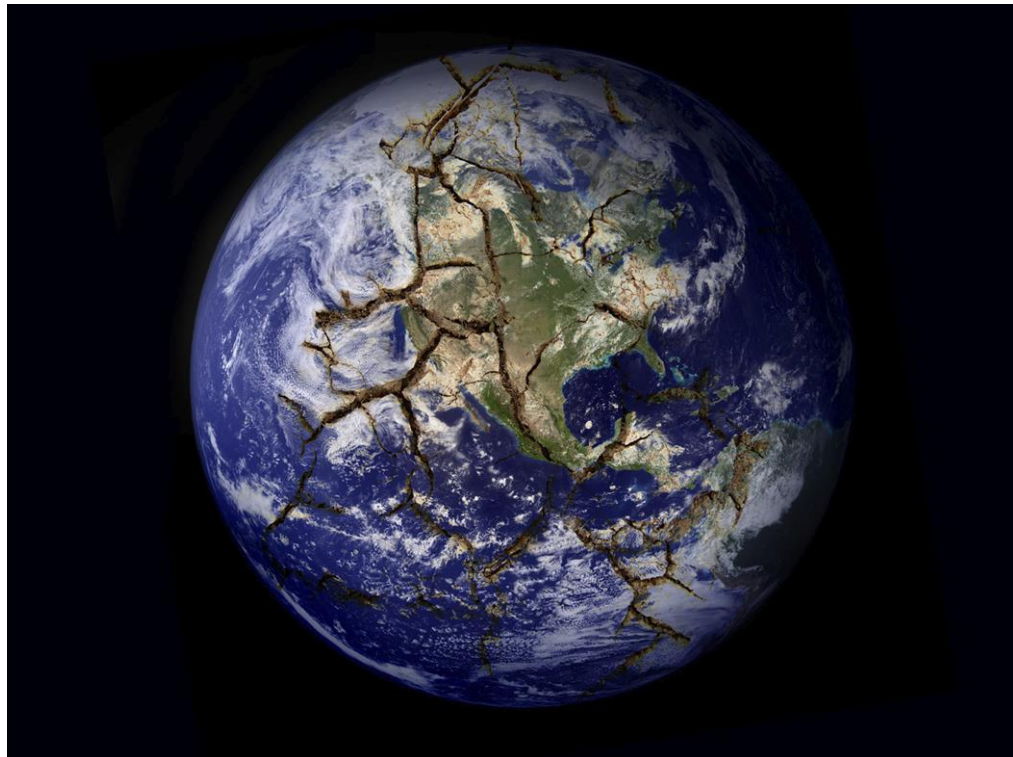
$\bar{x} = 4.7$

Median = 5.0

VAR = 3.4

$\sum x = 667$

$p < .001$



PSA – “I Am American” – USA

Group Classification: Neutral Dissonance

$$n = 141$$

$$\bar{x} = 4.7$$

$$\text{Median} = 5.0$$

$$\text{VAR} = 3.4$$

$$\sum x = 667$$

$$p < .001$$

“American”

$$n = 47$$

$$\bar{x} = 4.8$$

$$\text{VAR} = 3.9$$



Transcultural Themes & Images

- Babies & Children
- Pets & Animals
- Sports
- Love, Marriage,
Relationship Conflicts
- Self-image
- The Birth-Life-Death
Cycle
- Water



Babies Group

Group Classification: Positive Resonance

$n = 141$

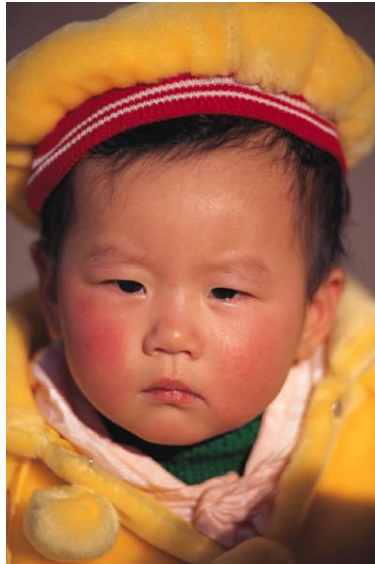
$\bar{x} = 5.7$

Median = 6.0

VAR = 1.7

$\sum x = 808$

$p < .001$



Libero Diapers – “Up & Go” Sweden



EURO EFFIE Gold Award 2000

McDonald's – USA – “Sign Baby”



The Chicago Show (Gold, Best of Show) 1997

Advertising Age Award (Top Winner) 1997

International Andy Awards (Distinctive Merit Certificate) 1997

CLIO Awards (Gold) 1996

Cannes Lions (Gold Lion, Grand Prix) 1996

Creativity (Gold Medal) 1996

International Andy Awards (Excellent Award) 1997

Babies/Children: Socioeconomic costs of war



Boy wounded from missile fire.

“They have to be carefully taught” 📢



Girl wounded and
parents killed in air attack.

Babies/Children and Psychotherapy

- Child development theories demonstrating the importance of nurturing and care in the early years.



Jean Piaget
Lev Vygotsky
Erik Erickson

Animals Group

Group Classification: Positive Resonance

$n = 141$

$\bar{x} = 5.7$

Median = 6.0

VAR = 2.0

$\Sigma x = 798$

$p < .001$



Ikea – “Confused Dog” – Sweden

Group Classification: Positive Resonance

$$n = 141$$

$$\bar{x} = 5.7$$

$$\text{Median} = 6.0$$

$$\text{VAR} = 2.0$$

$$\sum x = 798$$

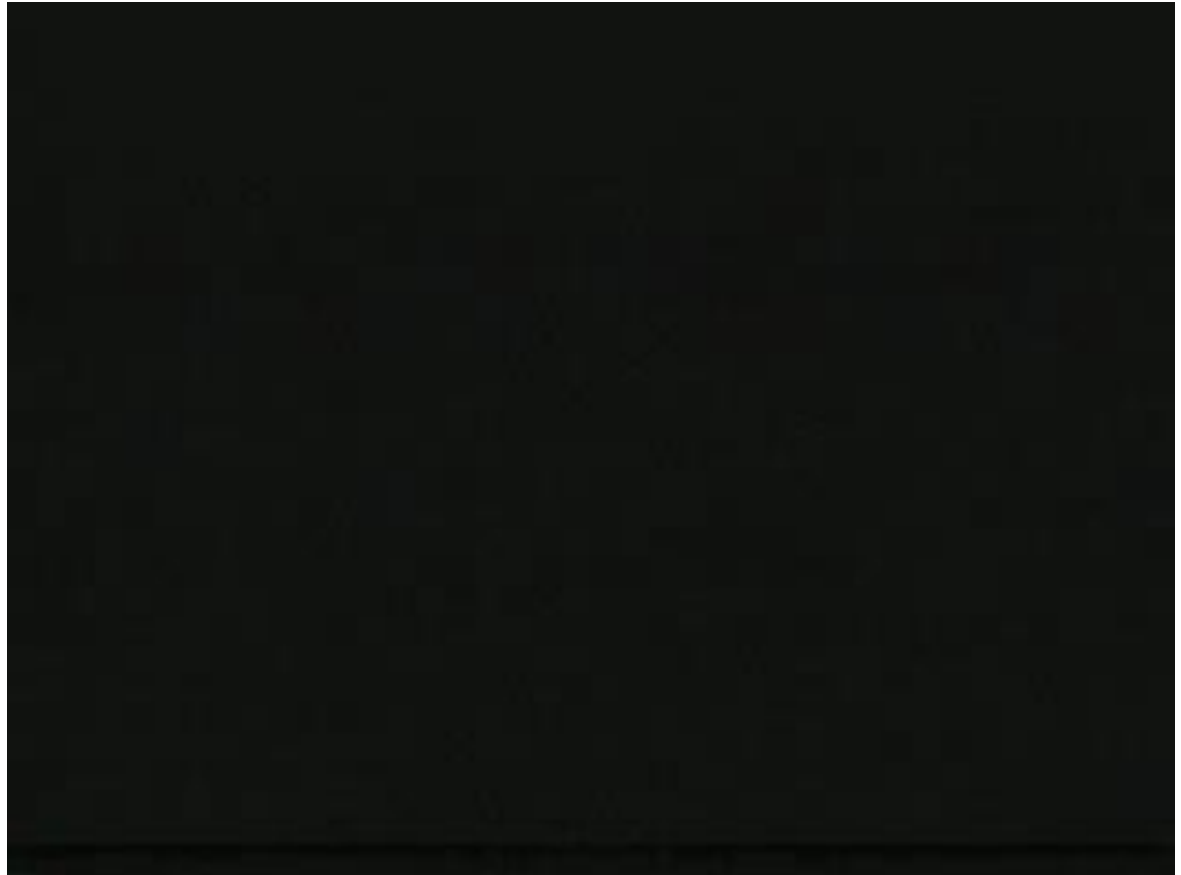
$$p < .001$$

“Confused Dog”

$$n = 47$$

$$\bar{x} = 6.3$$

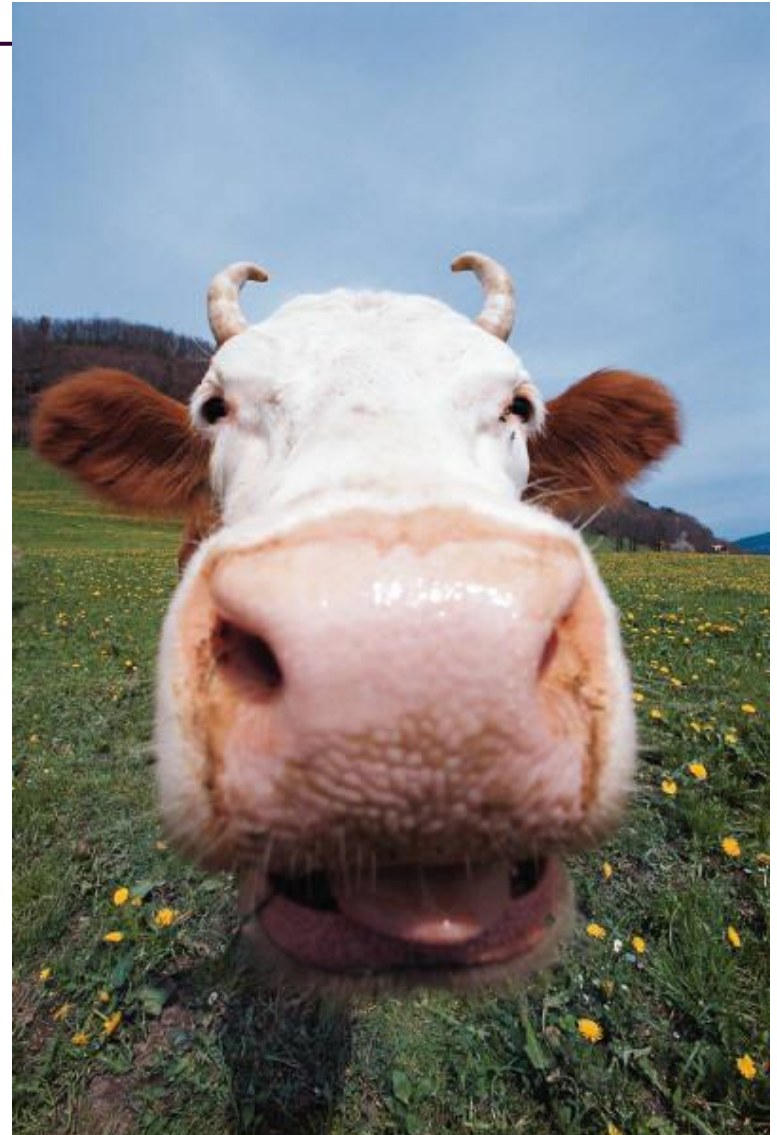
$$\text{VAR} = 1.1$$



Animals: The Globalization of the Family Cow

- The need for the family cow squeezed by refrigeration.
- Holsteins – the “SUV” of dairy milkers – are now the globalized cow breed.

[Article](#)



Relationships Group

Group Classification: Positive Resonance

$n = 141$

$\bar{x} = 5.3$

Median = 6.0

VAR = 2.1

$\sum x = 754$

$p < .001$



Aspirina – “Snoring” – Mexico

Group Classification: Positive Resonance

$$n = 141$$

$$\bar{x} = 5.3$$

$$\text{Median} = 6.0$$

$$\text{VAR} = 2.1$$

$$\sum x = 754$$

$$p < .001$$

“Snoring”

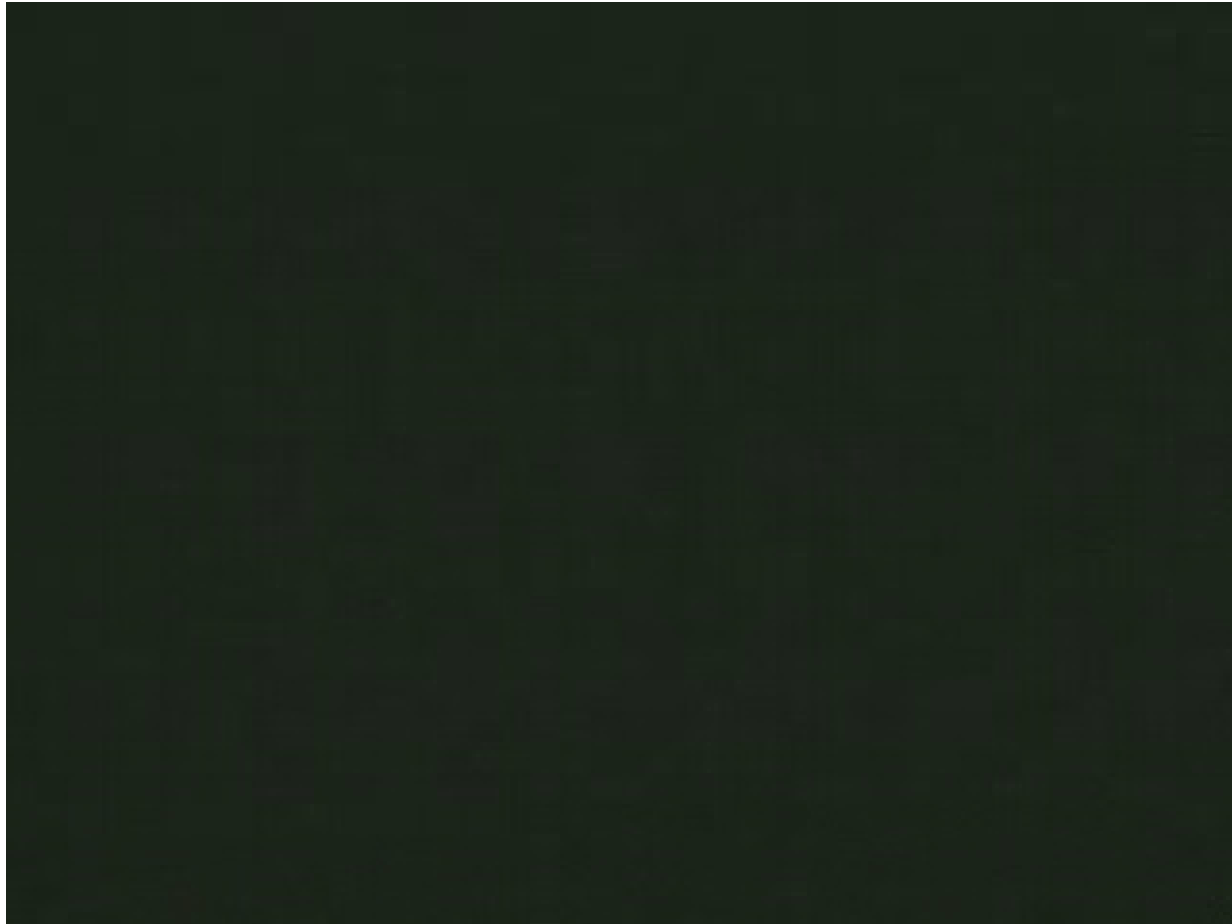
$$n = 37$$

$$\bar{x} = 6.1$$

$$\text{VAR} = 1.1$$



McDonald's – “Marry Me?” – China



Nordstrom – “Moving Van” – USA



The Good, the Bad & the Ugly Awards (Winner - Good TV) 2000

Relationships:

“Nash’s Equilibrium” (27-page dissertation)



**John Nash (1928-)
Nobel Prize in
Economics, 1994**

A Beautiful Mind
By Sylvia Nasar
Universal Pictures 2001



“Adam Smith Needs Revision”

:45

Sports Group

Group Classification: Positive Resonance

$n = 141$

$\bar{x} = 5.5$

Median = 6.0

VAR = 1.8

$\Sigma x = 776$

$p < .001$



IDEA – “Anthem” – Poland



Sports:

Daytona 500 demonstrates complexity theory and social networking

In aerodynamically intense stock-car races like the Daytona 500, the drivers form into multi-car draft lines to gain extra speed. A driver who does not enter a draft line (slipstream) will lose. Once in a line, a driver must attract a drafting partner in order to break out and try to get further ahead. Thus the effort to win leads to ever-shifting patterns of cooperation and competition among rivals. This provides a curious laboratory for several social science theories.



Self Image Group

Group Classification: Positive Resonance

$n = 188$

$\bar{x} = 5.0$

Median = 5.0

VAR = 2.4

$\sum x = 945$

$p < .001$



“Istanbul” – Turkey



National Anthems & Flags



Self-Image: The Masai Aesthetic

Clamor – July/August 2002



“In the Masai language, the word for physical appearance (which roughly translates as a person's "goodness") can also be used to describe their morality.”



“The Masai typically think about attractiveness in terms of both physical attributes and character traits alike.”

Robert Biswis-Diener



“When I asked the Masai about what constitutes a perfectly good-looking person, their answers frequently included friendly, well respected, disciplined, and brave. “

Life Cycle Group

Group Classification: Positive Resonance

$n = 141$

$\bar{x} = 5.1$

Median = 5.0

VAR = 2.3

$\Sigma x = 723$

$p < .001$



Sylvania – “Old Man” – Thailand

Group Classification: Positive Resonance

$$n = 141$$

$$\bar{x} = 5.1$$

$$\text{Median} = 5.0$$

$$\text{VAR} = 2.3$$

$$\sum x = 723$$

$$p < .001$$

“Old Man”

$$n = 47$$

$$\bar{x} = 5.0$$

$$\text{VAR} = 1.4$$



MS Xbox – “Champagne” – UK

Banned by the BBC after 136 complaints



Cannes Lions - International Advertising Festival, 2002 (Gold Lion)

Life-Cycles: Discussion Topics

- **Unemployment rate:** Is it high or low in your country? Does the government provide unemployment insurance? What does someone in your country do when they lose a job?
- **Military:** Is service mandatory in your country? Do they offer benefits and incentives for service? Is military spending a big part of your economy?
- **Education:** Who pays the largest part for education in your country, private or public funds? Who should pay? Is there financial aid? How important is education to economic development?
- **Health care:** How much does a visit to the doctor cost? A stay in the hospital? Who pays: private or government funds? Who should pay? Do you have private insurance companies? Is health care regulated? Should it be?
- **Family planning:** What is happening with the birth rate in your country? Are people getting married later? Do you think the current state of the economy in your country is helping or hurting families? How? Has this impacted your own plans for marriage and a family?

Water Group

Group Classification: Neutral Resonance

$$n = 165$$

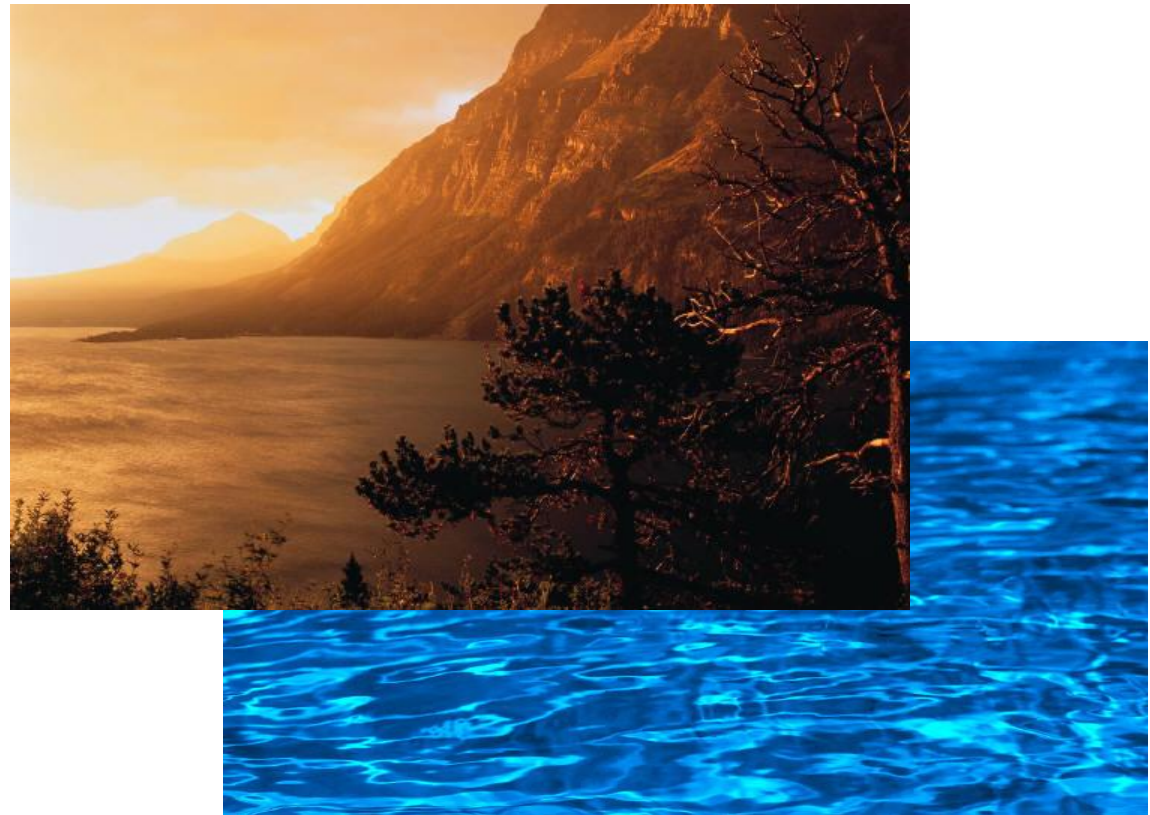
$$\bar{x} = 4.4$$

$$\text{Median} = 5.0$$

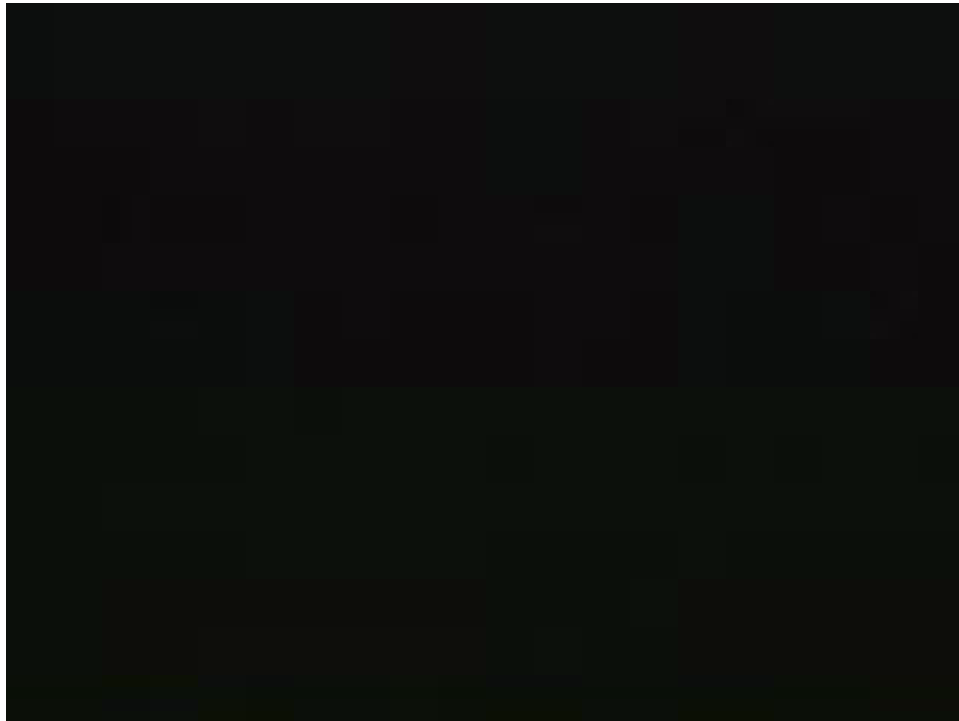
$$\text{VAR} = 1.8$$

$$\sum x = 734$$

$$p < .001$$



McDonald's – Thailand – “Swimming”



Cannes Lions Bronze Award 2000
CLIO Bronze Award 2000

Evian – “Water Ballet” – France



Cannes Lions, 1999 (Bronze Lion)
Epica, 1999 (Winner)

Evian – “Seniors” – France



Food



Presentation

Cross-Cultural Beats



Presentation

‘Pan-Cultural’ Facial Expressions



■ Joy, Anger, Disgust,
Sadness, Fear, Surprise

Ekman et al. (1969)

Watson (2004)

The 'Not' Face



Researchers have identified a single, universal facial expression that is interpreted across many cultures as the embodiment of negative emotion. The look proved identical for native speakers of English, Spanish, Mandarin Chinese and American Sign Language. It consists of a furrowed brow, pressed lips and raised chin, and because we make it when we convey negative sentiments, such as 'I do not agree,' researchers are calling it the 'not face.'

How does it work?

Application & benefits of transcultural images and themes for multicultural groups could include:

- **Comfort** - give group something familiar in an alien setting.
- **Bonding** – group members relate better to each other through common ground.
- **Integration** - groups interact better through common ground.
- **Content relevancy** - e.g., present concepts illustrated with family metaphors and similes.
- **Attraction** - tools to attract attention front and center.



Dissertation

- Van Hook, S.R. (2005). Themes and images that transcend cultural differences in international classrooms. *U.S. Education Resources Information Center*.
(ERIC Document No. ED490740).
(Proquest Publication Number 3200710).
- Also available online at <http://wwmr.us/>

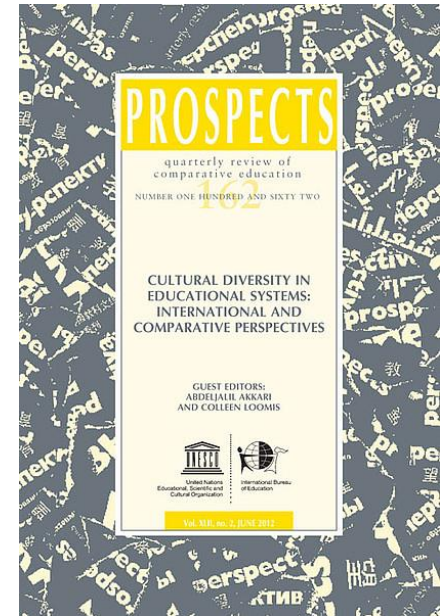
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Questions? Comments?

Steven R. Van Hook, PhD

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Educational Resources*
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- <http://wwmr.us>
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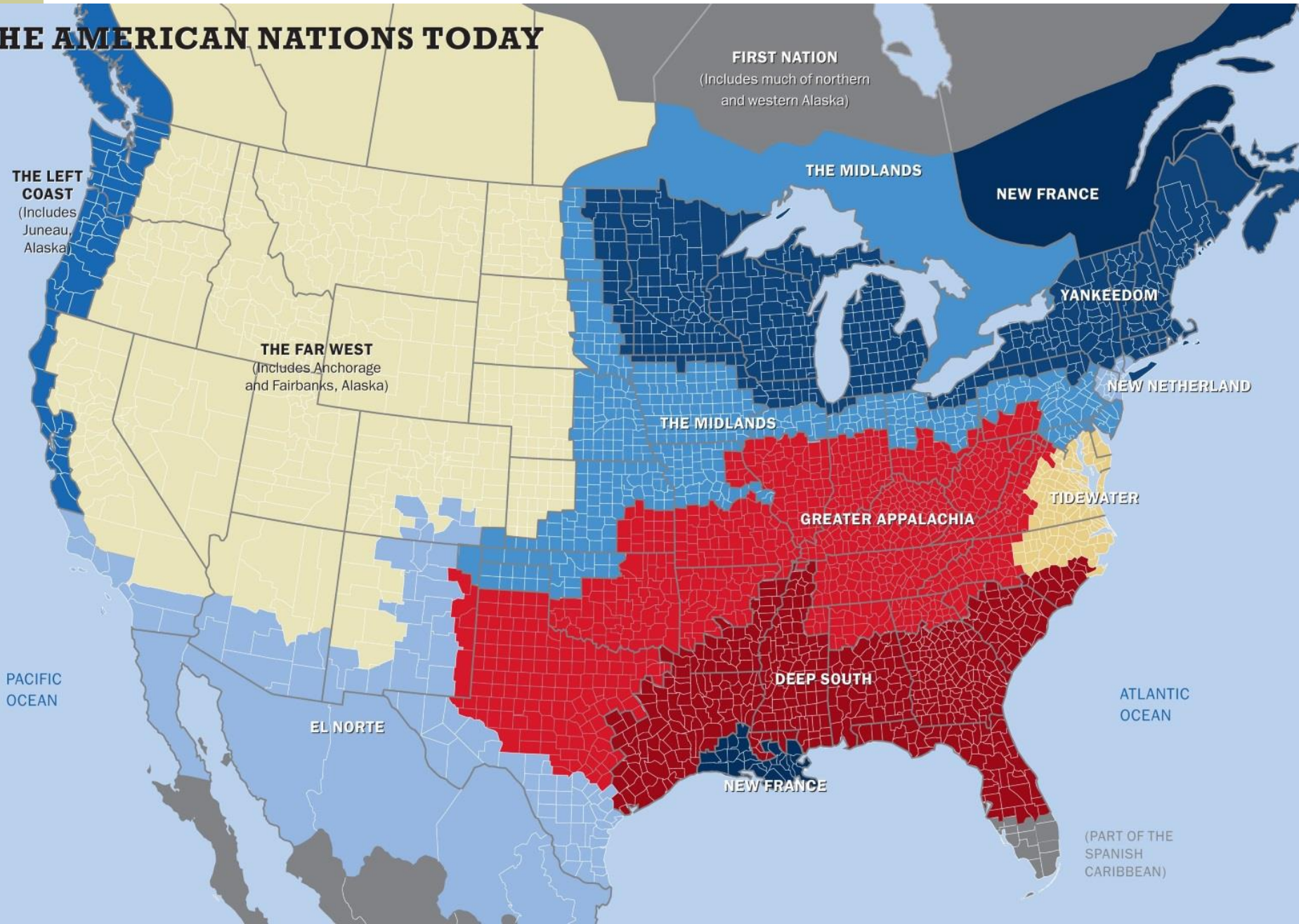




Eleven Regional Cultures in USA

Article

THE AMERICAN NATIONS TODAY



Instructor



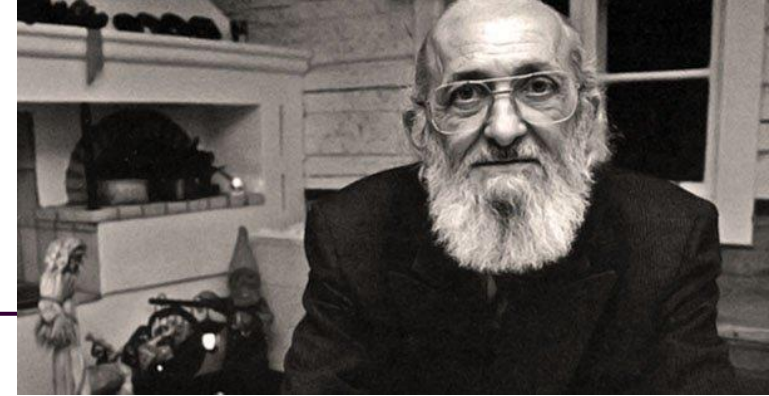
- **Steven R. Van Hook, PhD**
- Global business/MBA/communication courses for UCLA, UC Santa Barbara, California Lutheran University, National University, Antioch University ...

- <http://wwmr.us>
- <http://course.wwmr.us>
- steven@wwmr.us



Paulo Freire

(Brazil: 9/19/21-5/2/97)

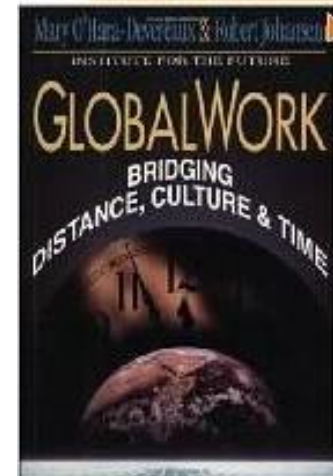


- Among the more interesting and applicable works on culture – especially relating to issues in international education – are the writings of Paulo Freire. Freire’s applied theory was actually quite simple: speak to the students using themes, images, symbols, and words that resonate with them.
- Freire proposed developing an educational curriculum that includes a group of themes that unites the educator and the educatee in a knowing process. The educator, through structured research, would need to learn the “peasants’ manner of seeing the world,” seeking out the themes and problems so ingrained in the peasants’ way of living. Freire attempted to identify the resonant themes by a qualitative process of examining the students’ lives, first considering some of the universal themes of life, then finding locally resonant themes through interview and observation. He found that for there to be a successful transference of meaning or learning, there should be a common frame of reference meaningful to both and all communicators.
- So successful were Freire’s techniques, that within just 45 days, 300 workers in the city of Angicos had learned to read and write. Freire was accused of using his method to spread subversive and revolutionary ideas, ultimately landing Freire in jail.

21st Century Skills

Global Work: Bridging Distance, Culture & Time

- Understand and communicate across multiple cultures
- Communication technologies and how they apply to teamwork in cross-cultural, decentralized settings
- Unique leadership skills in managing business teams in a global setting



O'Hara-Deveraux & Johansen

