

SEE WHAT I MEAN
Differences between Deaf and Hearing Cultures
SECOND EDITION – ONLINE VERSION

Teachers' Guide

By Thomas K. Holcomb and Anna Mindess

Copyright 2009 Eye2Eye Productions

Distributed by Treehouse Video LLC

www.treehousevideo.com

Note to teachers:

Thank you for purchasing this program. We hope you and your students will find its visual depictions of cultural differences between Deaf and hearing people to be helpful in your discussions. This guide is designed to provide you with some ideas on how to use the program with your class. The program covers several topics. First, general characteristics of cultures are discussed, including differences between collectivist and individualist cultures, variations in time orientations, and politeness norms. Then specific vignettes depicting examples of common misunderstandings between Deaf and hearing people are shown, followed by explanations from each culture's point of view.

This second edition gives special focus to new technological innovations that have affected both Deaf and hearing people's lives and have also resulted in the adoption of new rules of behavior in both cultures that are sometimes at odds. We have included brand new scenarios depicting the use of pagers/cell phones, Video Relay Service (VRS) and email.

It is important for students to understand that we are generalizing in this program and have picked extreme examples of the two contrasting cultures to make our points.

See What I Mean: Differences between Deaf and Hearing Cultures – 2nd Edition Teachers' Guide
Copyright 2009 Thomas K. Holcomb and Anna Mindess

Please remind your students that diversity and individual differences exist within each group so there is a range of behaviors that would all be considered part of "Deaf culture" and "hearing culture". We acknowledge that not every Deaf person subscribes to Deaf culture precisely as it is presented in the program. Likewise, not every hearing person would behave exactly as the hearing people in the program.

There are several ways you could use the program to supplement your Deaf culture or ASL class. We hope you view this guide is a flexible tool that can supply you with ideas on leading discussions on the topics in the program. Some options for its use are:

1. Have the students watch the program together in class and discuss it afterwards. Assign the students to watch the program again in the laboratory to answer the questions in the worksheet.
2. Have the students watch the program and answer the questions in the worksheet together in class.
3. Have the students complete the numbered "program questions" in the worksheet while viewing the program in class and complete the lettered "your view" questions as homework.
4. Since the program is 90 minutes long, it may not be possible to show the program in its entirety during one class period. You may want to have students watch the program in sections, with time reserved for in-depth discussions after each section. For example, the program viewing can be spread over three class periods, starting with the first part where culture is discussed in general terms. Then show the second part of the program on a different day to focus specifically on the cultural differences between Deaf and hearing cultures. For the third class, you can show the section on

Technology and have a good discussion on how technology has impacted people's lives, both Deaf and hearing.

5. Or come up with your own approach.

Three worksheets are included for your convenience. They could be used for in-class work, homework assignments, laboratory activities and/or a discussion guide. Worksheet #1 is designed for students to complete PRIOR to viewing the program. Worksheet #2 requires students to concentrate on the information that is presented throughout the program. Worksheet #3 provided students with an opportunity to reflect further AFTER viewing the program.

SEE WHAT I MEAN, 2nd edition
SUGGESTED PREVIEWING ACTIVITIES

Note to teachers:

We recognize that the program will be shown to students with a wide range of previous experience with Deaf people. For this reason, it might be helpful to have a discussion prior to viewing the program to prepare and sensitize your students to the issues related to culture. You can choose the discussion items below to use in class, depending on the level of your students.

1. Have students observe hearing people and make a list that they notice about how they interact with one another. Do the same with Deaf people. This could be done as a homework assignment.
 - a. How far/close do they stand apart while talking?
 - b. Is there eye gaze continuous or broken up?
 - c. How much physical contact is there?
 - d. When do people hug?
 - e. How do people get the attention of others?
 - f. How much gestures and facial expressions do people incorporate in their conversations?

2. Have the students do the following in class.
 - a. Make a list of behaviors that would be considered "hearing culture" that would apply to most hearing people in the world. For example, things that people do because they are hearing include: talking on the phone, yelling to get attention, and listening to music.

 - b. Make a list of behaviors that would be considered "American hearing culture" that would apply to hearing people in the United States, but not necessarily in other parts of the world. For example, things that

many hearing people do in the US include: making their own decisions without necessarily consulting with peers, not maintaining full eye contact while talking, and adding polite phrases to soften criticism.

- c. Make a list of cultural behaviors that might be unique to Deaf people. For example, things that people do because they are Deaf include: using sign language, installing visual signaling devices, and seeking other Deaf people for companionship.
 - d. Make a list of behaviors that would be considered “general American culture” shared by Deaf and hearing people alike. Things that people do because they live in the United States include: celebrating national holidays such as the July 4th celebration, eating hamburgers, and wearing T-shirts.
3. Ask students to imagine how their lives would be different if they had a different hearing status (for example, Deaf becoming hearing or hearing becoming Deaf)
 4. Given that the subtitle of the program is Differences between Deaf and Hearing Cultures, have students guess what distinctions might be included in the program.
 5. Have students complete Worksheet #1.

Name: _____

SEE WHAT I MEAN- 2nd edition

WORKSHEET #1

PREVIEW ACTIVITIES

1. Suppose you went to another country, what elements of culture would you observe first? What would be the most obvious differences for you?
2. If a foreigner asked you to describe American culture, how would you answer? Would it be easy for you to explain? Why or why not?
3. Do you believe there is a Deaf culture? A hearing culture? Why or why not?
4. From your own personal experiences, have you noticed any differences in how Deaf people approach things? (For Deaf students, have you noticed any differences in how hearing people approach things?)
5. Have you encountered any conflicts or misunderstandings in your personal dealings with Deaf/? (for Deaf students, what conflicts or misunderstandings have you encountered with hearing people?)

Name: _____

SEE WHAT I MEAN – 2nd edition

WORKSHEET #2

(to be completed while viewing the program or immediately after)

While the answers to program questions can be found in the program, “Your VIEW” questions provide you with an opportunity to share your thoughts, feelings, and experiences related to situations and issues that are presented in the program.

FRIENDS ON THE PHONE

QUESTION #1: Why does each woman judge the other to be “rude”? What expectation or rule of politeness is broken in each scene?

a. Late Twentieth Century -

b. Early Twenty-first Century -

JAPANESE RESTAURANT SCENE

QUESTION #2: What are 3 aspects of culture mentioned by the narrator?

a.

b.

c.

YOUR VIEW A: Can you think of others?

QUESTION #3: How are cultural values learned?

QUESTION #4: How is culture like a set of tools?

YOUR VIEW B: Examples of cultural tools are igloos for the Eskimos and siestas for people who live in hot climates. Can you give examples of cultural tools that have allowed you to survive in/adapt to your environment?

CHINATOWN SCENE

QUESTION #5: What are two characteristics of collectivist cultures?

a.

b.

Question #6: What are two characteristics of individualist cultures?

a.

b.

YOUR VIEW C: Can you name some cultures that could be classified as collectivist?

YOUR VIEW D: Can you name some cultures that could be classified as individualist?

YOUR VIEW E: Can you give reasons why American culture is considered an individualist culture?

YOUR VIEW F: Can you give reasons why Deaf culture is considered a collectivist culture?

MURAL SCENE

QUESTION #7: How is attitude towards time different in Switzerland than Latin America?

QUESTION #8: How would you describe the attitude to time here in the US? Is it more similar to Switzerland or Latin America?

YOUR VIEW G: Common phrases in American English related to time include “Time is money”, “Time waits for no man”, and “Time is of the essence”. What do these phrases show about Americans’ attitude toward time? Do you think there is uniformity among Americans across ethnic and regional boundaries with respect to time?

YOUR VIEW H: How would you describe your family’s attitude toward time?

CLASSROOM SCENE

QUESTION #9: What are four features of the Deaf classroom?

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.

QUESTION #10: What are four features of the hearing classroom?

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.

YOUR VIEW I: How does the information sharing behavior in the Deaf classroom fit with the expectations of a collectivist culture?

LEAVE TAKING SCENE

QUESTION #11: How would you characterize classic “Deaf goodbyes”?

QUESTION #12: How many times did the Deaf friends hug before they actually left the scene (restaurant)? In contrast, how many times did the hearing friends hug?

QUESTION #13: What are three reasons for the lengthy leave taking ritual among Deaf people?

a.

b.

c.

NEW CAR SCENE – “The Neighbors”

QUESTION #14: How is the concept of privacy different between Deaf and American hearing cultures?

QUESTION #15: What are two reasons why Deaf people value information sharing, especially when it comes to financial matters?

a.

b.

YOUR VIEW J: From your personal experience, is this custom unique to Deaf people only?

YOUR VIEW K: Do you personally feel comfortable about discussing money with your friends? with your family? with neighbors?

MEETING SCENE – “After the Presentation”

QUESTION #16: What is the sandwich approach to giving constructive feedback?

QUESTION #17: Why is this important in American hearing culture? How can it be confusing to some people?

QUESTION #18: What are the benefits of using direct approach according to Deaf culture?

YOUR VIEW L: Which approach do you prefer when receiving feedback? Which approach do you usually use when providing feedback? Why?

TEACHER/STUDENT SCENE – “Are You Okay?”

QUESTION #19: Why was the student offended by the instructor’s comments?

QUESTION #20: Why was the teacher confused by the student’s reaction to her concern?

QUESTION #21: Why is the Deaf community considered a close knit and intimate community?

YOUR VIEW M: What is your gut reaction to these two phrases, “If you can’t say anything nice, don’t say anything at all” and “if you can see it, you can comment on it”?

YOUR VIEW N: How would you feel if someone made a comment about your personal appearance?

TEXT PAGER SCENE – “ What’s Cookin’?”

QUESTION #23: What core value of Deaf culture is illustrated by the Deaf man’s frequent messages?

QUESTION #24: How did the hearing woman view her boyfriend’s messages?

YOUR VIEW P: Which of these two people’s texting pattern do you tend to use more often? Does it depend on the situation or person involved? Explain.

3. Have you traveled to other countries? What cultural differences did you notice? What frustrations did you experience?

4. Looking back on interactions you've had with Deaf/hearing people, do you see things differently now?

SEE WHAT I MEAN
Differences between Deaf and Hearing Cultures
SECOND EDITION

SUGGESTED ANSWERS

Please note: Below are suggested answers to many of the questions included in the Teacher’s Guide. One of our goals in creating this film and teacher’s guide was to encourage students to think about their own personal experiences and opinions. Thus, no answers are supplied for these introspective questions. If you have any feedback or alternative answers we would love to hear from you.

You may contact us at: swim@treehousevideo.com.

Thomas K. Holcomb

Anna Mindess

Handout #2

QUESTION #1: Why do both women judge the other to be “rude”? What expectation or rule of politeness was broken in each scene?

- a. Late Twentieth Century - In Deaf culture face-to-face conversations take priority. The hearing woman broke off eye contact without an explanation and suddenly turned all of her attention to her cell phone, leaving her Deaf friend completely in the dark.

- b. Early Twenty-first Century – Similarly, the hearing woman was just about to tell her friend a funny story and the Deaf woman, suddenly broke off listening and gave all of her attention to her text pager without asking if it was okay or explaining why she needed to answer the call..

QUESTION #2: What are 3 aspects of culture mentioned by the narrator?

- a. Food.
- b. Styles of clothing.
- c. Language.
- d. Art.
- e. Cleanliness.
- f. Child rearing.
- g. Roles of men and women.
- h. Rules of politeness.
- i. Values, customs, beliefs behaviors.

QUESTION #3: How are cultural values learned?

- a. From parents and relatives.
- b. In school.
- c. From peers.

QUESTION #4: How is culture like a set of tools?

We employ cultural conventions to help us make our interactions with one another smoother.

QUESTION #5: What are two characteristics of collectivist cultures?

- a. Group members feel responsible to help each other survive.
- b. Group members support each other in the common pursuit of the group's success.

QUESTION #6: What are two characteristics of individualist cultures?

- a. The rights of the individual are of primary importance.
- b. Independence and self-reliance are valued.

YOUR VIEW C: Can you name some cultures that could be classified as collectivist?

- a. Chinese.
- b. Japanese.
- c. Deaf.
- d. American Indian.

YOUR VIEW D: Can you name some cultures that could be classified as individualist?

- a. U.S. American.
- b. Australian.
- c. Most Northern European countries.

YOUR VIEW E: Can you give reasons why American culture is considered an individualist culture?

- a. Self-reliance and independence are encouraged.
- b. People are supposed to make decisions independently.

YOUR VIEW F: Can you give reasons why Deaf culture is considered a collectivist culture?

- a. Reciprocity (the system of pooling resources).
- b. Information sharing.
- c. Strong feelings of loyalty.

QUESTION #7: How is attitude towards time different in Switzerland than Latin America?

Precision and punctuality are more important in Switzerland. While in Latin America, the attitude towards time is more relaxed.

QUESTION #8: How would you describe the attitude to time here in the US? Is it more similar to Switzerland or Latin America?

Probably somewhere between the two, depending on what part of the country you live in.

QUESTION #9: What are four features of the Deaf classroom?

- a. Semi-circular seating .
- b. Eye-contact with the teacher is maintained.
- c. ASL is the language of instruction.
- d. Interactive discourse style.
- e. Students who arrive late are expected to explain the reason for their tardiness.

QUESTION #10: What are four features of the hearing classroom?

- a. Seats are arranged in rows.
- b. There is less eye contact with the teacher, as the students are focused on taking notes.
- c. The teacher does the lecturing; the students listen.
- d. Spoken English is used.
- e. Students who arrive late are expected to sit down without attracting too much attention.

YOUR VIEW I: How does the information sharing behavior in the Deaf classroom fit with the expectations of a collectivist culture?

It is important to share information that might benefit the group (e.g. regarding a traffic jam, car accident, or road construction).

QUESTION #11: How would you characterize classic “Deaf goodbyes”?

- a. Lengthy.
- b. Repeated hugging.
- c. Plans are made for the next meeting.

QUESTION #12: How many times did the Deaf friends hug before they actually left the scene (restaurant)? In contrast, how many times did the hearing friends hug?

- a. Deaf – 3
- b. Hearing – 1

QUESTION #13: What are three reasons for the lengthy leave taking ritual among Deaf people?

- a. The need to take advantage of face-to-face interaction.
- b. The opportunity to share every last scrap of information while they have the chance.
- c. Good opportunity to make specific plans about their next meeting.
- d. It is a tradition.

QUESTION #14: How is the concept of privacy different between American Deaf and hearing cultures?

- a. Hearing Americans consider certain topics to be “private” (e.g., money, details of illness, and bodily functions).
- b. Deaf people are more likely to openly discuss many of the personal issues mentioned in answer “a”. The Deaf community is small and close-knit, similar to a small town atmosphere. It is assumed that the news will get out sooner or later. If there’s a reason to keep the news a secret, you must be explicit.

QUESTION #15: What are two reasons why Deaf people value information sharing, especially when it comes to financial matters?

- a. It helps others who might not have as much information due to language difficulties, communication obstacles, and access to information.
- b. Sharing experiences, especially bad ones, helps protect others from suffering financial hardship.

QUESTION #16: What is the sandwich approach in giving constructive feedback?

Positive comment, feedback or criticism, positive comment.

QUESTION #17: Why is this important in American hearing culture? How can that be confusing to some people?

- a. It reduces the likelihood of hurting people's feelings.
- b. The point might be buried under a lot of words and thus not be as clear as it would be if stated directly.

QUESTION #18: What are the benefits of using the direct approach, according to Deaf culture?

- a. Ambiguity is not appreciated as it can lead to miscommunication.
- b. It is important to express one's thoughts/opinions clearly.
- c. Giving people direct feedback shows you care about them.

QUESTION #19: Why was the student offended by the teacher's comments?

The teacher made a negative personal comment about her appearance.

QUESTION #20: Why was the teacher confused by the student's reaction to her concern?

She felt concern for her student, yet she received a "brush-off" for her caring comment.

QUESTION #21: Why is the Deaf community considered a close knit and intimate community?

- a. It is small and intimate.
- b. Educational settings are limited.
- c. There is a "small world" feeling as one repeatedly runs into the same people over and over.
- d. Community members tend to share intimate details of their lives with each other.

VRS SCENE – “Not the Best Connection”

QUESTION #22: What do Deaf people appreciate about:

- a. videophones?

They allow faster, easier, more direct communication in ASL and allow Deaf people to converse easily with their families and friends anywhere in the world in the most comfortable way possible, by signing.

- b. The video relay service?

The video relay service allows real-time conversations which are much faster and smoother than the old text-relay calls, The improvement in speed and comfort creates an experience that feels close to having direct communication between Deaf and hearing callers.

TEXT PAGER SCENE – “What’s Cookin’?”

QUESTION #23: What core value of Deaf culture is illustrated by the Deaf man’s frequent messages?

The importance of sharing information.

QUESTION #24: How did the hearing woman view her boyfriend’s messages?

More like email messages.

EMAIL SCENE – “Thanks for the favor”

Misunderstandings between people are often caused by several factors on each side. In this scene identify:

- a. What was the “rule” that the deaf woman Angie broke in the email to her supervisor?

Signing off her email to her supervisor at work with a phrase that in American culture is usually reserved for an intimate relationship.

- b. What erroneous conclusion did the supervisor Jim jump to?

He thought she was sending a flirtatious message or “coming on to him.”