

Culture is a complex concept central to understanding multicultural education (Campbell, p. 71). Cultures are often presented as fixed, static, and homogeneous. As we learned in class, all cultures are dynamic. Culture is a collage of factors that include learned behavior, attitudes, values, and so much more. Teachers need to understand that many factors affect students in different ways, and they must also be aware of these differences in order to ensure a safe, inclusive learning environment.

Directions: For further study of culture, select a classmate, friend, or acquaintance from a major cultural group distinctly different from your own. Be prepared to discuss your results with the class and how this knowledge can assist you in understanding and meeting the needs of your future students.

Influences of Family on Learning & Cultural Patterns	Name of Interviewee:	Name of Interviewer (YOUR NAME):
Family Structure (e.g., 3 children, single parent, grandparents, uncle in home)		
Major family customs		
Languages spoken in home		
Celebrations		
Religious practices		
Cultural offenses		
Important values		
Memories of grandparents		
Other		

Sample Student Work: Cross-cultural Interview

Influences of Family on Learning & Cultural Patterns	Name of Interviewee:	Name of Interviewer (YOUR NAME):
Family Structure (e.g., 3 children, single parent, grandparents, uncle in home)	Thomas Santos- Two parent family with six siblings. At different times growing up many aunts and uncles from both sides of his family lived with them. Today, one of his brothers lives in the house they grew up in. Both of his parents have passed away. The last time all of his siblings were all together was when his Grandmother passed away eight year ago. She outlived her son.	Faye Beck Two parent family with two sisters. My aunt on my Dad's side lived close by, but all of my Mom's brothers and sisters live far away and we do not see them much.
Major family customs	At Christmas time, Thomas's family would have many extended family members at their house, up to 60 family members would stay. They cooked in an outside kitchen and everyone participated in cooking. They celebrate for nine days. They pray to Our Lady of Penafrancia and say the rosary. They also enjoy singing prayers.	At Christmas we would go to my Aunt's house and have my Great Aunt and Uncle there with us. There were probably only a dozen family members at any one celebration. My Mom and aunt made all of the meals and us kids would wash dishes.
Languages spoken in home	Chamorro and English	English
Celebrations	Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving, July 4 th , Liberation Day, All Saints Day- Celebrations always included respecting and serving the elders of the family. At least once a month his family would have everyone over for a BBQ. He says that feeding the neighborhood was a part of the celebration. When someone passed away the family never had to cook anything for at least three days. Celebrating a life was very important to them,	Birthdays, Easter, Christmas, and Thanksgiving. My Dad farms and ranches so celebrations usually include chores and tractor rides.

Religious practices	Thomas is Catholic so attending church and having a big meal every Sunday is very important. His family did not have a lot of money so traveling far for church was not an option.	We go to church, Sunday School, and Confirmation. Growing up I attended Bible Camp and after I was confirmed I taught Sunday School with my Mom.
Cultural offenses	Any disrespect of the elders is wrong. He states that yelling in the jungle is never allowed and no one can take things out of the jungle. It is not polite to disrespect the ancestors.	My mom made us put a quarter in a jar every time we told each other to “shut up”. No raising your voice to anyone older than you was ever allowed. Burping in public was also no allowed. We were taught to use our manners no matter how rushed we were.
Important values	Family, hard work, and taking care of the elders is very important. In Guam, everyone is close, so being welcoming and understanding is very valuable.	We value hard work and family time.
Memories of grandparents	Thomas says the say “amen” to the older family members and kiss their cheeks. Thomas was very close to his grandparents, on both sides. He said that at one time all four of his grandparents lived with them. Thomas talked about kissing his grandparents hands. His Grandma had a big garden that he loved to help with. Both of his Grandma’s were always in the outdoor kitchen, and always took time to play with the grandkids. When we talked, there were times I was not sure if he was talking about many elders, or just his Grandparents, but I did not want to stop him.	We lived on the same farmstead as my Dad’s parents. My Grandma passed away from cancer when I was 14 but my Grandpa lived long enough to see my oldest child be born. My Mom’s parents were divorced and my Grandpa came to live with us when he got sick with cancer. I have only met my Grandma on my Mom’s side twice. My Grandma on my Dad’s side taught me to value of an animal in your life, and to love your family more than anything.
Other	In Guam, the younger generations are always taught to take care of the elders, and the land. The island is small so everyone needs to respect its resources. It is not uncommon to have many generations living together in a tiny house.	I was a twin sister, she got cancer when we were 14. My Dad says that’s why God took my Grandma at that time, she could not have watched her suffer. I gave bone marrow at 15 and we kept her until we were almost 20, then the cancer came back.

Discussion Board Prompt: *What did you learn from your cross-cultural interview? Point out two "a-ha" moments (new things you learned or any new revelations you found surprising/helpful).*

Part 1: What did you learn from your cross-cultural interview? Point out two "a-ha" moments (new things you learned or any new revelations you found surprising/helpful).

I interviewed a friend of mine originally from Guam. He has taught us how to prepare dishes like keliguin, meat cooked in lemon juice rather than with heat, and many others, but I have never gotten to hear many of his family traditions until now. One a-ha from the interview is that his family traditions are centered around religion. At Christmas the family, both immediate and extended including cousins, aunts, and uncles, on both sides, usually 60 people, gather to say the Novena. It is nine days of prayer celebration to Our Lady of Penafracia. Thomas grew up in a family with two parents and six siblings. Often others from the family lived with them at different times. He and his family often hosted family BBQ's at a minimum once a month. The language spoken at home was Chamorro and English. Another a-ha moment for me was when he talked about the Catholic church but in a much different light than I expected. They often say amen to the elders of the church and their family, kiss them on the cheek and kiss their hands or bow to them. Some of the things that are disrespectful or offensive in their culture are disrespecting elders, yelling in the jungle or taking anything from the jungle. Anything that disrespects the ancestors is considered very offensive. When he talked about his family memories, he talked a lot about cooking in an outside kitchen. He said it is not surprising to see many generations of family living together. "The younger generation is raised to respect the elders, the island is small, so we are all family." It was so nice to get to know these little details about him and his family. I wish he could go back and visit more than he gets to.

1. I have been working at a school on the reservation for the past two years and I have learned a lot through my experiences about the lives of my students who live here. This interview helped me understand how there are differences and similarities in our cultures. One difference I noticed was home structure and some religious practices. She has more people living in her home than an average house would. She also participates in powwows and sweats. However, her every day life is pretty similar to mine. Her and her family believe in going to school and getting an education.

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