



You Said What!?

Communication Skills for Library Staff

Emphasizing the Multicultural Experience

By Dr. Nara Venditti

www.SucceedinAmerica.com



www.SucceedinAmerica.com



Objective

**Increase
your personal effectiveness
when communicating across cultures**





Why communication?

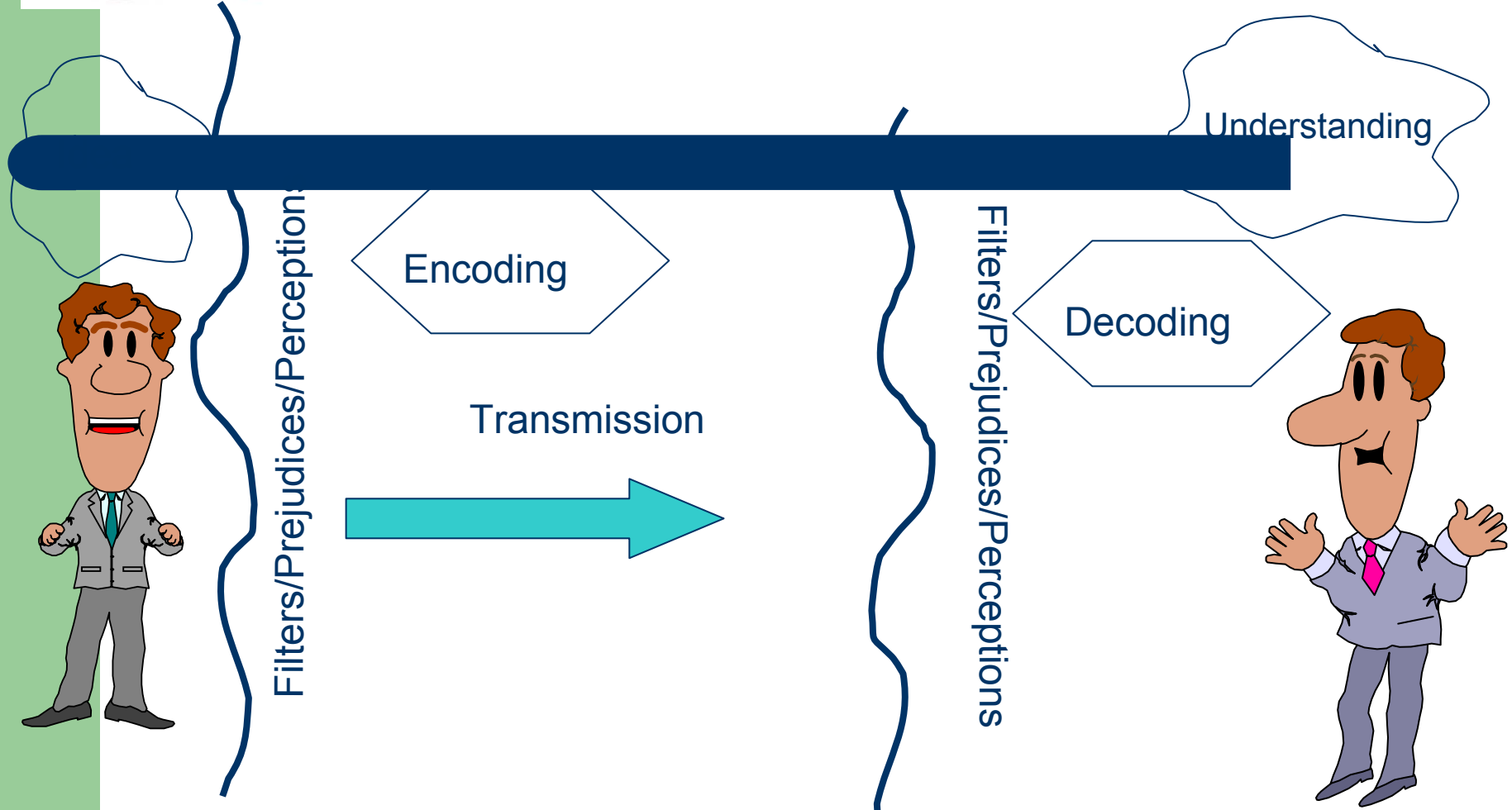
- **Communication with customers is vital to creating a successful relationship**
- **Yet, we are rarely taught how to communicate effectively, especially in multicultural setting**



Demographic Shift is Happening All Across the Land

- **Foreign born constitute 12.4% of US population**
- **One in five speaks language other than English at home**
- **At any given time we have about 0.5 mln of international students in our educational institutions**
- **Minorities are responsible for 70% growth**
- **About one million enters this county annually**

Communication Model



Adapted with permission from Claire Bloom, MSEL, MSST

Feeds Back Understanding

www.SucceedinAmerica.com



Barriers to Communication

- Poor Listening Skills
- Cultural Barriers
- Language Barriers
- Stereotyping
- More Barriers





What Interferes with Listening?

1. **Customer was unclear** (felt rushed, spoke with accent, grammatically incorrect, more...)
2. **You were unclear** (spoke fast, used jargon, terms, idioms, acronyms, more ...)





A Selective Listener

- Often interrupts the speaker
- Plans what to say next
- Does not support the speaker verbally or non-verbally
- Tunes out



What is culture?

- **System of values, beliefs, attitudes, traditions in a given society**
- **“Culture is a medium evolved by humans to survive”
– *Edward Hall***
- **Culture is learned**
- **Foreign culture is like a secret code**



Iceberg Model of Culture



VISIBLE:

Dress, food, music,
dance, what people
say, behavior

INVISIBLE:

norms, values,
assumptions, expectations, habits,
attitudes, tradition, family structure



How cultures differ? By communication styles!

- **Low Context Cultures**
(e.g., the US, Scandinavia, Russia, Germany)
- **High Context Cultures** (e.g., Middle Eastern, Asian, Latin American)



Communication considerations of Cultural Differences

By verbal and non-verbal content

Non-verbal communication

(eye contact, smiling, laughing, touching, space)

Attitude to time

Gift giving

Marriage and courtship

Grieving

Emotional responses

Individual or Group

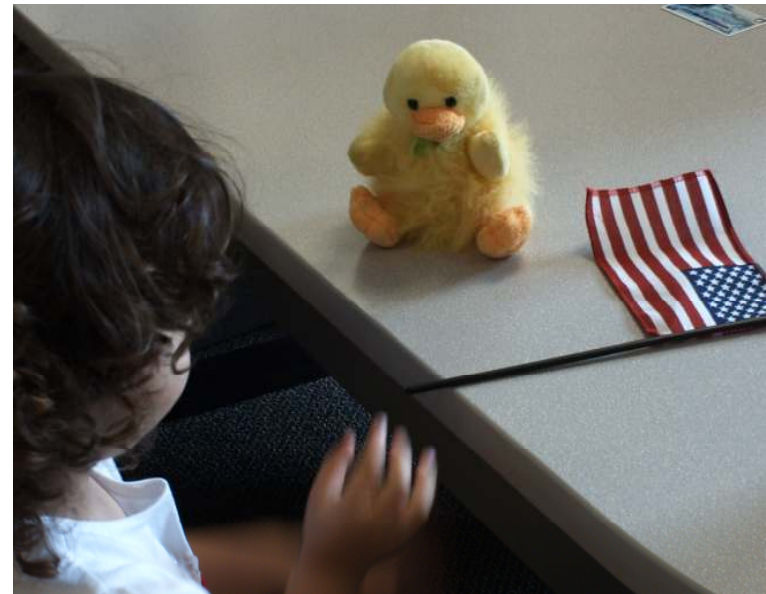
Task or relationship

***** there are other considerations*****



American Culture Major Values

- Freedom
- Equality
- Individualism
- Optimism
- Directness
- Efficiency.
- Respect for the law
- Future orientation
- Self-promotion





Some Hispanic Cultural Values

- Familism
- Simpatia
- Respeto
- Gender issues
- Loyalty
- Power distance
- Time orientation

Amado Padilla



Some Chinese Cultural Values

- Mianzi – face
- Guanxi – relationships, networking
- Keji – politeness
- Inner and outer circles
- Renqing – reciprocity
- High appreciation for education
- Li and surface harmony



Language Barriers

- Cultural References
- Meaning nuances
- Slang
- Idioms
- Acronyms
- Different versions of English
- Accent
- There may be others



Lost in Translation 😊

- Please leave your values at the front desk
- You are invited to take advantage of the chambermaid
- Fly in leather - fly naked
- Nothing sucks like Electrolux
- "Borrow" is not "buy"



Tips for Effective Cross-Cultural Communication





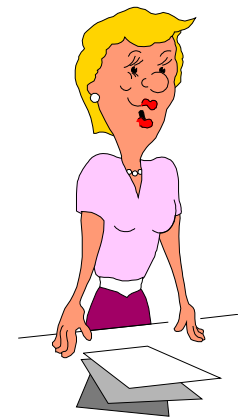
Speaking/Listening Tips

1. **Do not shout**
2. **Enunciate clearly**
3. **Use simple, common English**
4. **Do not speak fast. Slow down.**
5. **Repeat main points**
6. **Do not rephrase, or rephrase only to simplify**



Cont.

7. **Work with written material or use pictograms**
8. **Be patient; use pauses**
9. **Check audience's comprehension**
10. **Verify your comprehension**
11. **Ask to repeat the phrase**
12. **There are more tips**





Some Tips for Active Listening

1. **Nod, smile, maintain a pleasant expression**
2. **Confirm verbally**
3. **Support the speaker verbally and non-verbally**
4. **Use restating and pacing techniques**



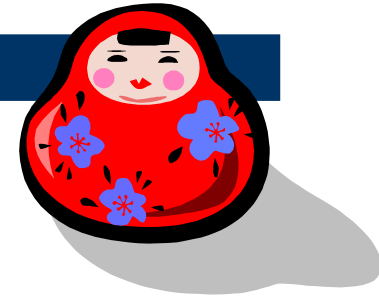


Steps to confirm your understanding (when a person is unclear or speaks with accent)

- 1. Use a confirming statement**
- 2. Summarize key facts**
- 3. Ask if your understanding is correct**
- 4. Clarify misunderstandings (if necessary).**



Selected Cultural Tips



1. **Colors can communicate**
2. **Flowers may mean different things**
3. **Gift giving etiquette varies**
4. **Some cultures use sarcastic humor**
5. **Acceptable personal space varies across cultures**



How they say it with white

- In many European cultures white expresses innocence and purity. Very often it is associated with young love. It is the color worn at weddings.
- In contrast, in many Asian cultures white is color of mourning and death. It is the color worn at funerals.



Some Language Tips

- 1. Reduce potentially confusing phrases (idioms, acronyms, slang)**
- 2. Understand that choosing a wrong word is a common mistake with non-native speakers**
- 3. Realize that same concepts can have different interpretations in different cultures**



Cont.

4. Use LinguoClick\$ to build relationships

(these are words and phrases that connect and build relationships, see “**thank you**” in different languages)

5. Spell key words and proper names

6. Learn the correct pronunciation of the foreign name



The Naming Game

- Naming tradition varies across cultures
- To learn more about addressing etiquette across cultures, click below for my article on the subject

<http://www.succeedinamerica.com/articles/businessinsider2004.pdf>



Translation Tips

- Picking a translator
- Back translation
- www.polytalk.info
- <http://lincolntrail.typepad.com/polytalk/2007/10/language-kit-vi.html>



How do you learn about cultures? Use **NARA**TM formula

- N** ● Never assume
- A** ● Ask your students/customers/clients
- R** ● Relate to them on many levels
- A** ● Ask the expert





You Said What!?

Communication Skills for Library Staff Emphasizing the Multicultural Experience

By Dr. Nara Venditti
www.SucceedinAmerica.com





www.SucceedinAmerica.com

Merci

Gracias

Հարճակալուլթյուն

Спасибо

Danke

ありがとうございます

THANK YOU

