



# Multicultural Miscommunication

Oregon Family and Community Educators (FCE)  
Member Handout

## Lesson Objectives:

- Gain understanding of what “culture” is.
- Develop an awareness that differences exist between cultures.
- Recognize the increased likelihood of encountering a variety of cultures in our own communities.
- Learn how easily multicultural miscommunication can happen.

## U.S. Census Report 2000

- More than 1 of every 10 residents of the US was born outside the USA.
- Immigration brings more than 1 million new residents to our shores annually.
- People of Hispanic origin make up 12.6% of the US population overall. They are now the nation’s largest minority.
- Immigrants tend to be young, with high fertility rates, at least for the first generation.
- Fertility rates for native born Americans have declined. Baby boomers born between 1946 and 1953 did not reproduce their own numbers in population.

## Definitions of “Culture”

Culture: The learned and shared values, beliefs, behaviors of a group of interacting people. (J & M Bennett, Intercultural Communication Institute, 2002)

Culture: Shared, learned behavior which is transmitted from one generation to another for purposes of promoting individual and social survival, adaptation, and growth and development. (A.J. Marsella, Work and Stress, 8, 1994)

Culture: A way of life of a group of people. Culture is learned, not innate. Culture includes a group's shared values, beliefs, behaviors, preferences, verbal and nonverbal communication styles, relationship patterns. (Chen, Chan, Brekken, Lynch, Valverde. 1998)

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## Some suggestions for further reading

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Prepared by Jeanne Brandt Oregon State University, Extension Family and Community Development, Washington County.

Reviewed by Carolyn Raab, Oregon State University, Extension Family and Community Development, State Office.