

Unwritten rules of the game - What cultures do you carry?





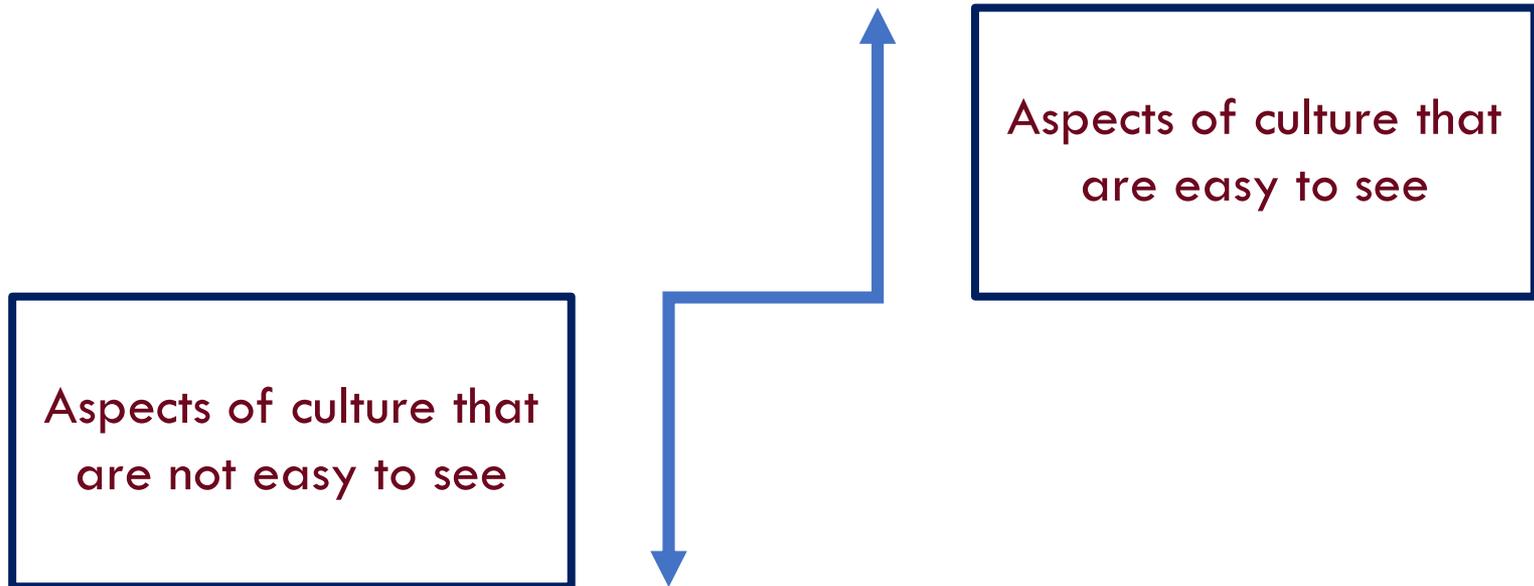
First let's consider a few definitions of culture,

“Culture refers to the way people think, feel and act ... the collective programming of the mind distinguishing the members of one group or category of people from another ... A simpler definition is ‘the unwritten rules of the social game’ - *Geert Hofstede*

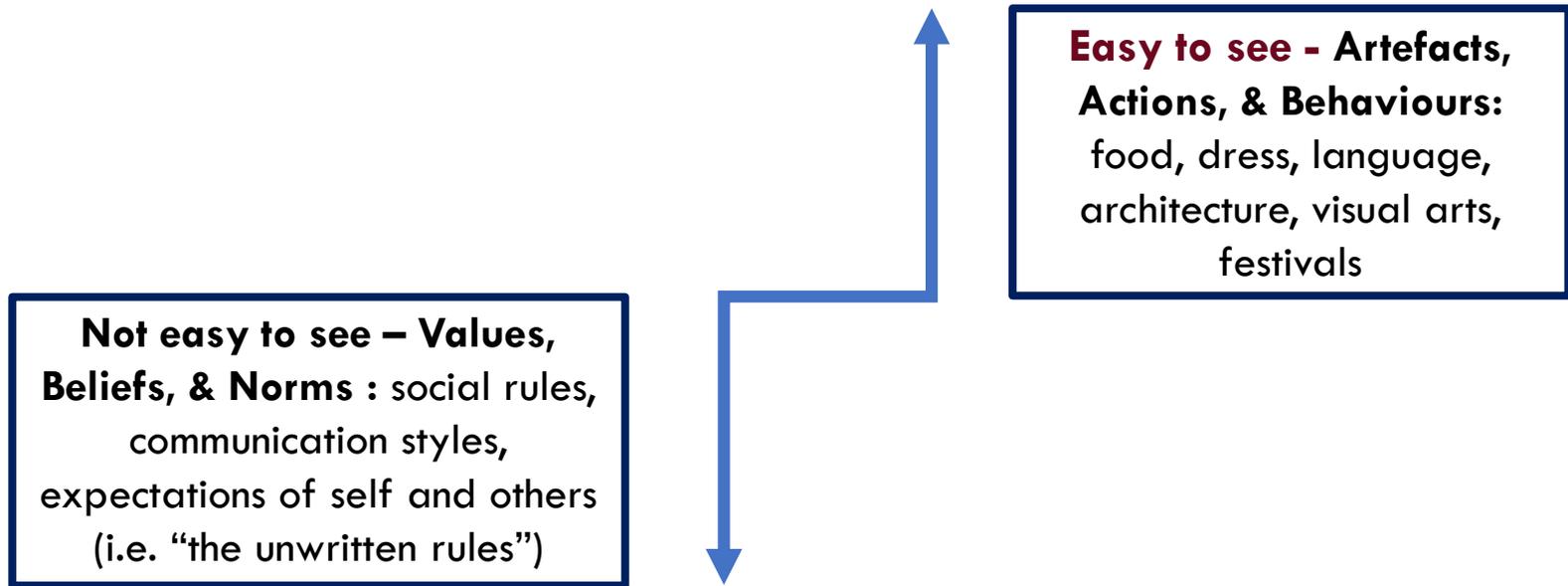
“(culture is) a set of values, beliefs, and expectations that members of a group come to share.” – *Edward Hall*

Image source: <https://hro-partners.com/Blog-info/Why-You-Should-Develop-a-Coaching-Culture-Within-Your-Organization>

Another way to consider culture is by thinking about which parts of culture are visible and invisible. If we have not actively interacted with a particular culture before we may still have some exposure to the visible aspects such as media or cuisine. Often the motivation to interact with a new cultures comes from an affiliation for some part(s) of its' visible culture.



Parts of culture mentioned in the definitions, such as the values and beliefs are part of the invisible aspects of a culture. That is, they are often not discernable to the naked-eye. It is the values, norms, and beliefs of a culture that determine the expectations for oneself and others when interacting. We often become aware of the invisible elements of a culture through direct interaction with a culture. Either through interacting within that culture or with members of the culture.



As we may not be aware of the what the “unwritten rules” of a culture may be in advance of our interaction, we can be become confused or disorientated when we find-out the rules around interaction are different for what we expect or are used to. We may experience unanticipated responses to our attempts to engage and interact with/within a new culture. This can lead to an experience of “Culture-shock”.

Culture tends to be associated with nationality or ethnicity. However it's important to remember that culture can be found in many different places. Including all the different identities that we hold.



Which identities do you hold?



How do you display your culture(s)?

1. So, let's take it for granted that all the identities that you hold have cultures attached to them. This will mean that there are visible and invisible parts too.
2. What are the “unwritten rules” for the identities/cultures that you carry?
 - What are your expectations for yourself and others in interactions? Do they ever change depending on your identity?
 - Does it cause you stress when you have to “switch”?
3. Was there ever a time in your life when you felt that your unwritten rules were violated or counteracted while interacting with another person or organization?
 - If so, what did you do, or how did you react?

Intercultural Training available through Queen's University International Centre and Four Directions Indigenous Student Centre

If you found today's information interesting, then QUIC and the Four Directions Indigenous Student Centre invite you to participate in a five-part series of workshops which will help you to:

- Describe the concept of culture and apply this concept to evaluate your own culture(s);
- Recognize skills that will help you be more effective in intercultural interactions;
- Recognize strengths and challenges that affect interactions with cultural commonality and difference;
- Describe the historical, political and cultural issues that impact the contemporary experience of Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island (North America)



- 8 series to choose from throughout the year
 - 4 in the Fall term
 - 4 in the Winter term

**For more information please visit
<https://quic.queensu.ca/get-involved/intercultural-training/>**