

Cultural Competence: Working Definition and Considerations

Prepared by

Robert S. Wright, MSW, RSW

Ex. Dir., Child and Youth Strategy, Dept. Comm. Serv.

&

Social Worker in Private Practice

wrightrs@gov.ns.ca * wrightrs@ns.sympatico.ca

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Cultural Competence: Definition

- Cultural competence refers to an ability to interact effectively with people of different cultures. Cultural competence comprises four components: a) Awareness of one's own cultural world view, b) Attitude towards cultural differences, c) Knowledge of different cultural practices and world views, and d) cross-cultural skills. (From Wikipedia . . .why not?!)

Cultural Competence: Why?

- Within education settings Cultural competence is important for 2 reasons:
 - ▶ **So educators can assist students to become culturally competent**
 - ▶ **So educators can create environments of cultural safety to enable all students to learn effectively**

Principles of Culturally Competent Teaching

- Teaching is easier the more similar educators are to their students (with respect to race/class/ethnicity etc.)
- Teaching is easier the more closely the methods and environment of school match the culture, experience and values of students
- Many implications flow from these propositions

Principles of Working in Diversity

- A) We must understand our cultural differences and similarities
- B) We must understand the social and cultural reality in which we work
- C) We must be able to generate and interpret a wide variety of verbal and non-verbal responses

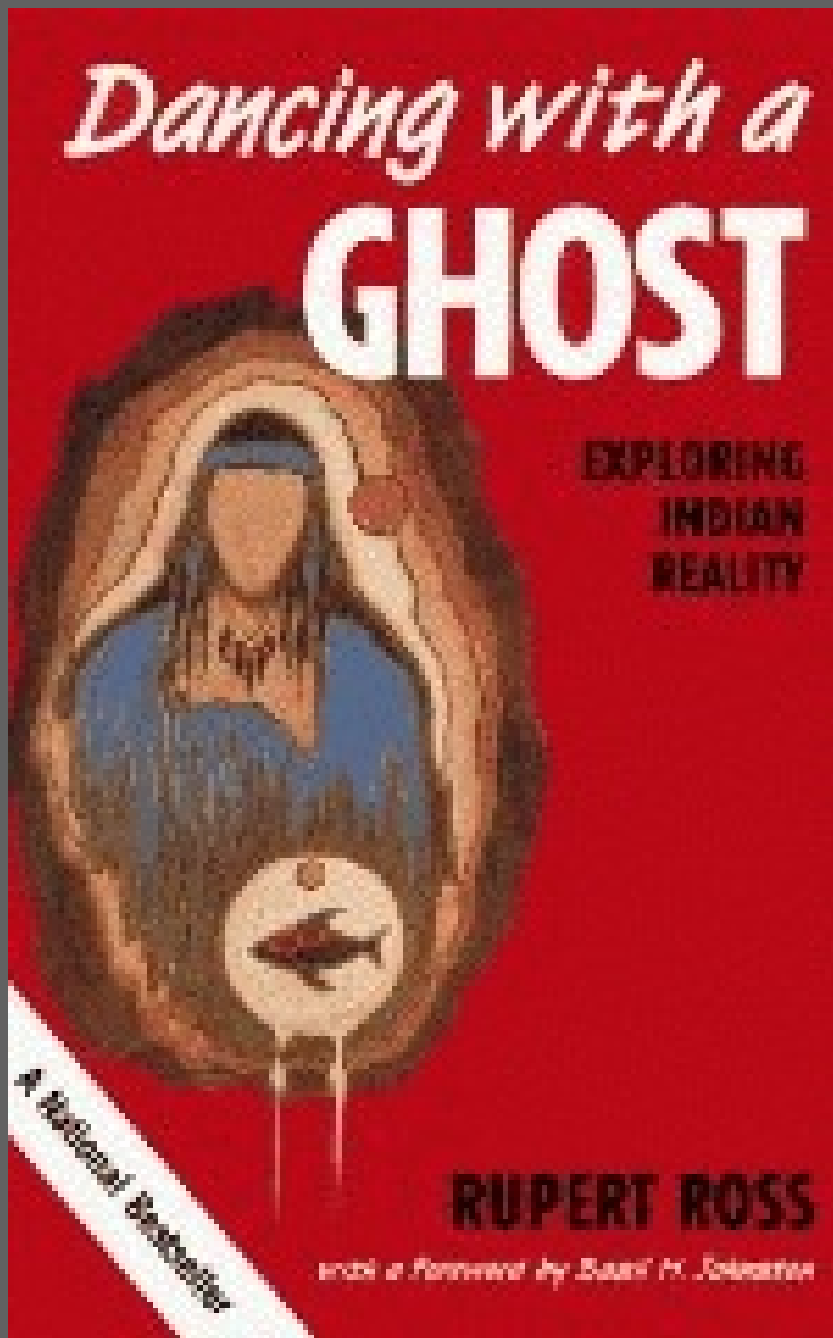
A) Nichols' Model for Understanding Cultural Difference

Philosophical Perspective on Cultural Difference, Edwin Nichols
(cf work of Jung)

- Different world cultures developed out of differing physical environments
- These world views have differing constructs:
 - ▶ *Axiology (values)*
 - ▶ *Epistemology (way of knowing)*
 - ▶ *Logic (principle of reason)*
 - ▶ *Process (practice of reason)*

THE PHILOSOPHICAL ASPECTS OF CULTURAL DIFFERENCE DEVI

ETHNIC GROUPS ETHNIC WORLDVIEW	AXIOLOGY	EPISTEMOLOGY			LOGIC	PROCESS
		APPLIED	PEDAGOGY	METHODOLOGY		
EUROPEAN EURO-AMERICAN	Member-Object The highest value lies in the object or the acquisition of the object	One knows through Counting and Measuring	Parts to Whole	Linear and Sequential <i>-Assembly line-</i>	Dichotomous <i>Either/Or</i> <i>-Newtonian theory-</i>	All sets are repeatable and reproducible <i>-Technology-</i>
AFRICAN AFRICAN AMERICAN LATINO/A ARAB	Member-Member The highest value lies in the relationships between persons	One knows through Symbolic Imagery and Rhythm (function) <i>-Gadwell Bink-</i>	Whole Holistic Thinking <i>-The BIG picture-</i>	Critical Path analysis <i>-Cut to the chase-</i>	Dialectical <i>Union of opposites</i> Difrasismo <i>-Atec thought-</i> The In Between <i>Ibn 'Arabi</i> <i>-Quantum theory-</i>	All sets are interrelated through human and spiritual networks <i>-Black church-</i>
ASIAN ASIAN AMERICAN POLYNESIAN	Member-Group The highest value lies in the cohesiveness of the group	One knows through Transcendental Striving <i>-Tree the forest-</i>	Whole and parts are seen simultaneously <i>-To read a Chinese word-</i>	Cyclical and Repetitive <i>-Stroke order in writing a Chinese word-</i>	Nyaya <i>-The objective world is conceived independent of thought and mind-</i> <i>-Chaos theory-</i>	All sets are independently interrelated in the harmony of the universe <i>-Keiretsu-</i>
NATIVE AMERICAN	Member-Great Spirit The highest value lies in oneness with the Great Spirit	One knows through Reflection and Spiritual Receptivity <i>-Purification rites-</i>	Whole is seen in cyclic movement <i>-Seasons-</i> <i>-Medicine Wheel-</i>	Environmentally experiential reflection <i>-Rites of Passage-</i>	Great Mystery <i>-A set of 4 and a set of 3 form the whole-</i> <i>-Super string theory-</i>	All sets are interrelated through the elements, plant, animal, and spiritual networks <i>-White Buffalo-</i>



In this book, Rupert Ross examines the traditional Cree and Ojibway world view, exploring why aspects of these philosophies often place them in conflict with the Canadian justice system.

B) Social, Cultural and Historical Context

- **North American Diversity is fraught with complicated and tragic history**
 - ▶ **Enslavement of Africans, Genocide of First Nations, Global strife resulting in trans-global immigration, etc.**
- **But only First Nations have a history that started in North America. All people's have an ancient and foundational history and culture.**



What does it mean that in 2008 a woman of European descent and a man of mixed race African/European descent competed for their party's nomination for presidential candidate? Will the fate of poor women and poor people of colour change as a result?

C) Communicating Across Cultures

- Before meaningless, unnatural, non-human or immature behaviour and corresponding values are attributed to people of another culture, it is better to begin by doubting the adequacy of one's own judgement and knowledge
 - ▶ **Elmar Holenstein**

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