Adapting Communication to Cultures and Social Communities

Chapter Eight
Focus Questions

• How do cultures and social communities shape communication?

• How does communication shape cultures and social communities?

• What is ethnocentric bias?

• How do people respond to cultural differences in communication?
Relationships Between Culture & Communication

• Culture
  – a system of ideas, values, beliefs, customs, and language
  – passed from one generation to the next
  – sustains a particular way of life
We Learn Culture in the Process of Communicating

- We learn culture by observing and interacting with others
- We learn culture through exposure to mass communication
- From others, we learn language and what it means
Communication Is a Primary Indicator of Culture

- Individualistic cultures
- Collectivist cultures
- Low-context communication style
- High-context communication style
Multiple Social Communities May Coexist in a Single Culture

- Social communities
  - groups of people who live within a dominant culture who belong to another social group or groups.

- Standpoint theory
Communication Expresses and Sustains Cultures

• Each time we express cultural values, we also perpetuate them

• Communication
  – is a mirror of a culture’s values
  – a primary means of keeping values in everyday life
Communication Is a Source of Cultural Change

- We use communication to resist the mainstream’s efforts to define an identity.

- Communication propels change by naming things in ways that shape how we understand them.
Guidelines for Adapting Communication to Diverse Cultures and Social Communities

- Engage in person-centered communication
- Respect others’ feelings and ideas
- Resist ethnocentric bias
  - Ethnocentrism
  - Cultural relativism
Adapting to Cultural Diversity
Is a Process

- Resistance
- Assimilation
- Tolerance
- Understanding
- Respect
- Participation
Summary

• Relationships between culture & communication

• We learn culture in the process of communicating

• Communication is a primary indicator of culture
Summary

- Multiple social communities may coexist in a single culture
- Communication expresses & sustains cultures
- Communication is a source of cultural change
- Diverse cultures and social communities