

# Two Frameworks for Teaching Culture and Critical Thinking

## During this event, Andy will:

- explore the rationale for including culture as an area of study in the English language classroom
- demonstrate a lesson which requires students to use listening and intercultural awareness skills
- provide an activity which uses students' ability to form critical questions rather than judgements

# Andy Noonan

Andy Noonan has over 20 years of experience in TESOL methodology, teacher training, and online course facilitation.



As a Trainer of Trainers at World Learning, Andy facilitates training and reflection sessions utilizing a variety of methods, including in-person observation and online engagement, for trainees in U.S. Department of State-funded programs.

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**AMERICAN ENGLISH**

# Two Frameworks for Teaching Culture and Critical Thinking

**World Learning**  
SIT Graduate Institute



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# Today's Webinar

1. An overview of teaching culture in the English language classroom
2. Introduction of Moran's **Cultural Elements Framework** and **Cultural Knowings Framework**
3. Walkthrough of a lesson using these frameworks
4. Reflection questions

# Why teach culture?

- **Andy, were you disappointed when your daughter was born and she had brown eyes and brown hair?**

C or C?

## Little c culture

- Products
  - Shoe style
  - Dog sweaters
- Practices
  - Greetings
  - Negotiating
- People
  - Cashiers

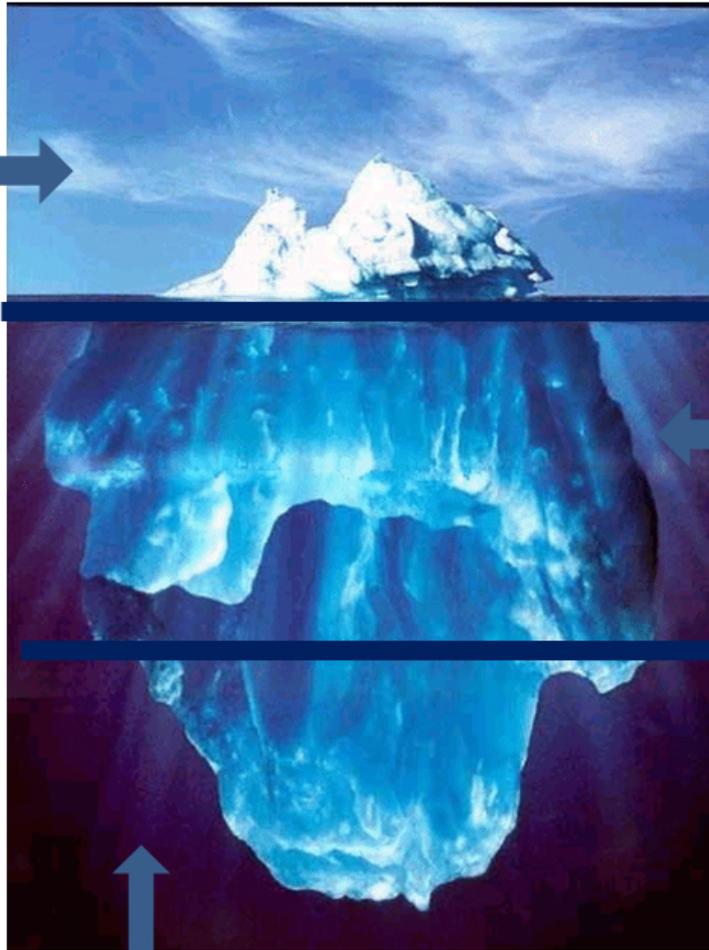
**Little c cultural elements are the everyday things that a learner would encounter.**

## Big C culture

- Art
- Architecture
- Music
- Dance
- Literature
- Film

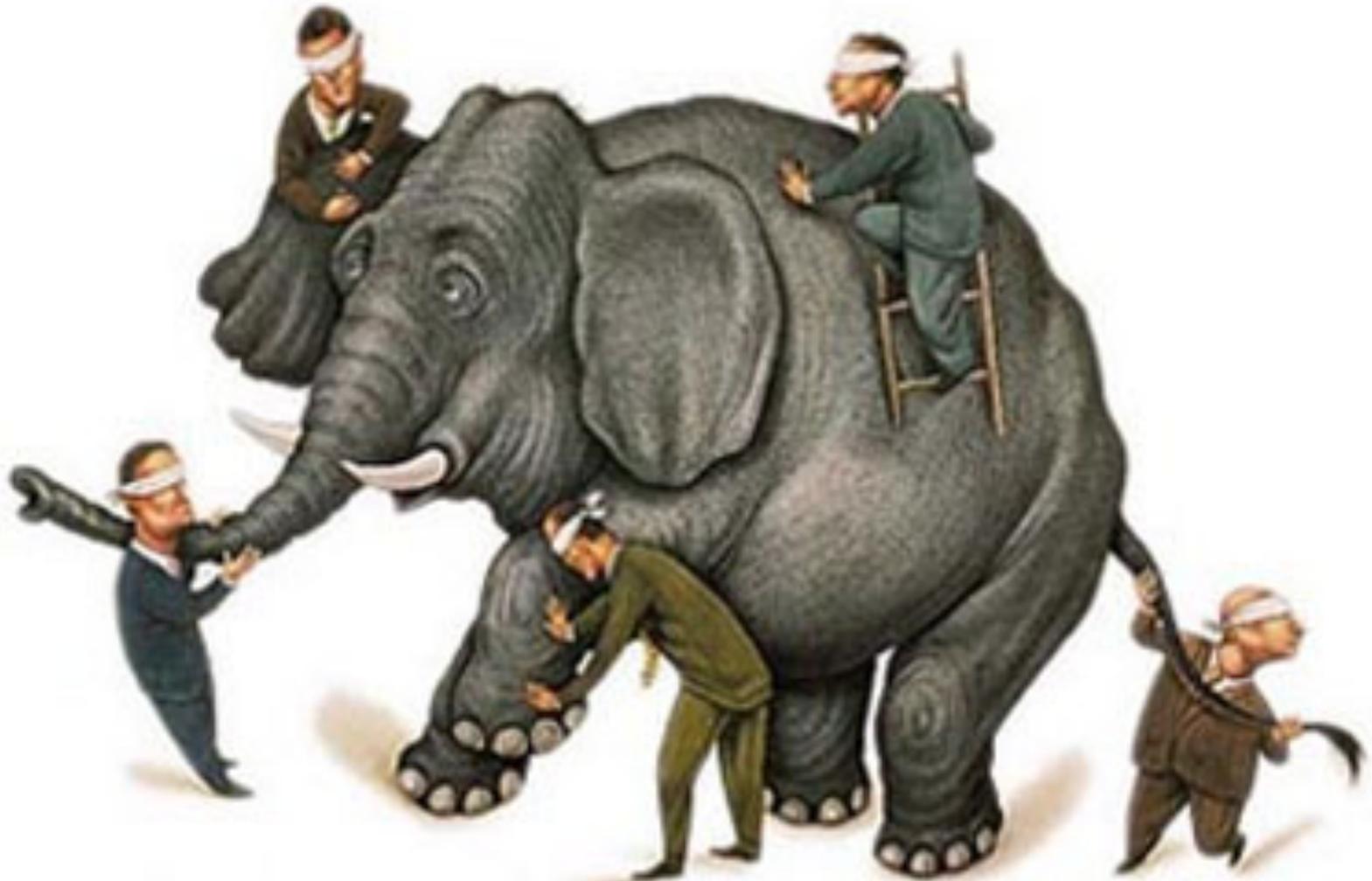
**While important, Big C culture doesn't let us look into the day-to-day lives of the cultures we are trying to enter by learning English.**

**Behaviors & Symbols** (What we see and hear)



**Attitudes** (Positive or negative opinions and feelings)

**Beliefs and Values** (Deep-level assumptions about and orientations to what is “real”)



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C1

The students'  
home culture



C2

Any outside culture

In English textbooks, often  
the U.S., England, Australia,  
Canada, etc.

# Benefits of looking at C1

- Builds the ability for students to talk about their own cultures– usually ignored by textbooks
- Allows students to build pride in aspects of their culture
- Allows students to critically analyze possible negative aspects of their own culture
- Allows students to “see” their culture from an outside perspective
  - This should enable students to critically analyze outside cultures with more sensitivity.

# Benefits of using these Frameworks

1. Relatively easy to use
2. Versatile
3. Allow the teacher to exploit textbooks to a deeper degree
4. Help build the mental processes that enable students to be more culturally aware and better able to function in a 21<sup>st</sup> century, globalized world

# Framework 1: Cultural elements

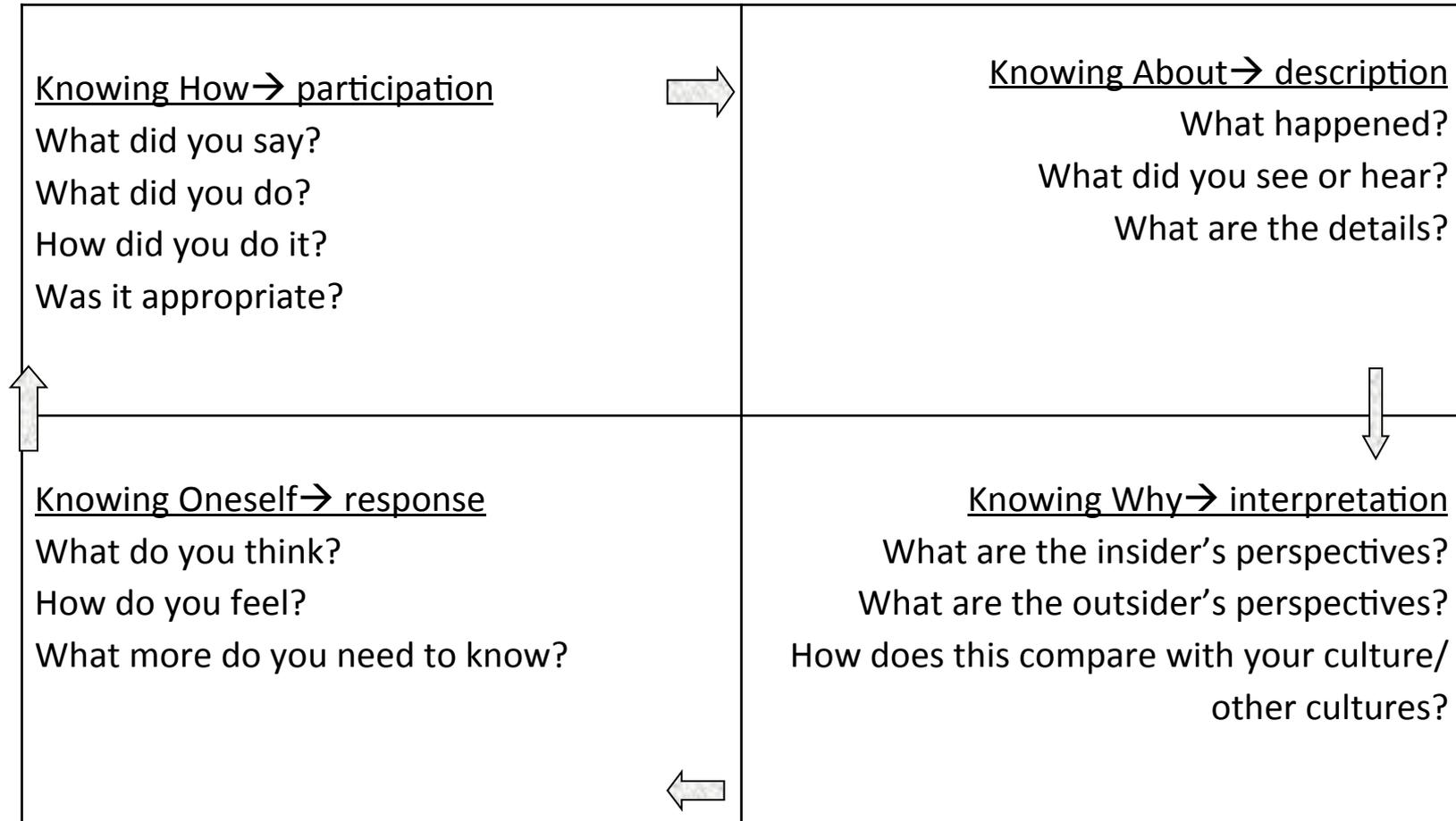
1. <u>Products</u>	2. <u>Practices</u>	3. <u>Persons</u>
4. <u>Communities</u>	5. <u>Perspectives</u>	Adapted from Moran, P. Teaching Culture: Perspectives in Practice. Heinle ELT, 2001

# Cultural Elements Framework

- Allows students to isolate elements of culture for further exploration. By looking at one element in detail, students can build the ability to recognize and start to do the analysis on their own.

- **Products = Things created and used in a culture**  
Examples: chopsticks, convenience stores, para-para dance
- **Practices = behaviors, social interactions**  
Examples: greetings, showing respect, exchanging business cards
- **Persons = People acting within a culture**  
Examples: salary man, taxi driver, grandmother
- **Communities = Groups of people sharing values and behaviors**  
Examples: sports fans, construction workers
- **Perspectives = underlying beliefs of a culture**  
Examples: respect for teachers and elders, wabi sabi

# Framework 2: Cultural Knowings



## Framework 2:

# Cultural Knowings Framework

- Based on Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle, the Cultural Knowings Framework takes the student step by step through a cultural element they have seen or experienced.
  1. Describing the cultural element allows them to see it from multiple angles based on direct evidence.
  2. Analyzing the description allows understanding to develop from multiple views/perspectives.
  3. Responding to this allows the students to explore their own reactions and more importantly, create questions to find out more.

# Using Video

- Modern TV shows, movies, video clips, music
- Voice of America: Off the Highway

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?  
time\\_continue=3&v=F9peVFiIDXo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=3&v=F9peVFiIDXo)

# As a Listening Lesson

- Following a Pre-listening Tasks, During Tasks, Post-listening Tasks Framework (PDP)

## Pre-Listening:

- Step 1: Activate background knowledge, create interest and pre-teach any vocabulary that is essential to complete the tasks

# Hippie Culture



# Living “off the grid”



# Solar Panels



# During Listening Task 1: Gist

- Play a short snippet of the video and ask the students to complete a task that demonstrates they understand the basic theme of video:
  - Choose the best title
  - Choose the most accurate summary
  - Circle the items the woman probably does NOT own

## **During Listening Task 2: Find all the cultural elements**

- Play the video (Tip: keep it short! 1-3 minutes)
- Have students write down all the cultural elements they find. Have them compare with a partner.
- Check the students' answers aloud and give language support, if needed.
- As a class, try to identify the cultural element that is the most interesting, strange, or mysterious.

# During Listening Task 1: Find all the cultural elements

1. <u>Products</u>	2. <u>Practices</u>	3. <u>Persons</u>
4. <u>Communities</u>	5. <u>Perspectives</u>	Adapted from Moran, P. Teaching Culture: Perspectives in Practice. Heinle ELT, 2001



I'm a hippie. ~~Let's just go...~~let's start from that. And that means back to the land, connected with the earth. I live in a small cabin, off the grid on 20 acres. I have solar panels. I have no running water. I have a spring that I get my water from. I have space! And animals and earth and sky and eagles and coyotes and life is good!

# Identify the cultural “mystery”

<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Products</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Small cabin</li><li>• Solar panels</li><li>• Natural spring (for water)</li><li>• House on 20 acres of land</li></ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Practices</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Living “off the grid”</li><li>• Owning an outside dog</li></ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Persons</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hippie</li></ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Communities</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hippies</li><li>• Locals (?)</li></ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Perspectives</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Living off the grid is better than living in organized society</li><li>• Sacrificing modern conveniences for freedom is a good thing</li><li>• Pride in one’s subculture</li><li>• Feeling connected with nature</li></ul>	<p>Adapted from Moran, P. Teaching Culture: Perspectives in Practice. Heinle ELT, 2001</p>

# During Listening Task 3: Knowing About → description

- Consider the most important cultural element:
  - What happened?
  - What did you see or hear?
  - What are the details?
- These questions help develop the students' ability to pick out a greater level of details for a more complete comprehension

I'm a hippie. ~~Let's just go...~~let's start from that. And that means back to the land, connected with the earth. I live in a small cabin, off the grid on 20 acres. I have solar panels. I have no running water. I have a spring that I get my water from. I have space! And animals and earth and sky and eagles and coyotes and life is good!

# Post-Listening Task 1:

## Knowing Why → interpretation

- What does it mean?
- How can you explain it?
- What are the insider's perspectives?
- What are the outsider's perspectives?
- How does this compare with your culture/other cultures?

# Post-Listening Task 2: Knowing Oneself → response

- What do you think?
- How do you feel?
- How does this affect you?
- What more do you need to know?
  - With a partner, create two questions that you could ask the woman from the video to better understand her lifestyle.

# Let's think about that lesson...

- What is the role of the teacher when using these frameworks?
- Could these frameworks be used to teach reading? Writing? Speaking?
- What homework could you give with this?
- How would you adapt this lesson for your students? For younger learners?
- What elements of your culture do you think your students would benefit from thinking more deeply about?

# Reflection time

Based on your experience today, what are your thoughts on teaching/learning culture? Have they changed? Do you want to try anything this this week?

# References

- Moran, P. (2001) *Teaching Culture: Perspectives in Practice*. Boston, USA: Heinle ELT.
- Byram, M. (1997) *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence*. Clevedon, UK: Multicultural Matters.
- Storti, C. (1997) *Culture Matters: The Peace Corps Cross-cultural Workbook*. Peace Corps Information Collection and Exchange.

# Thanks for coming!

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