The Importance of University Leadership in an Age of Identity Conflicts: Metacognitive Approaches
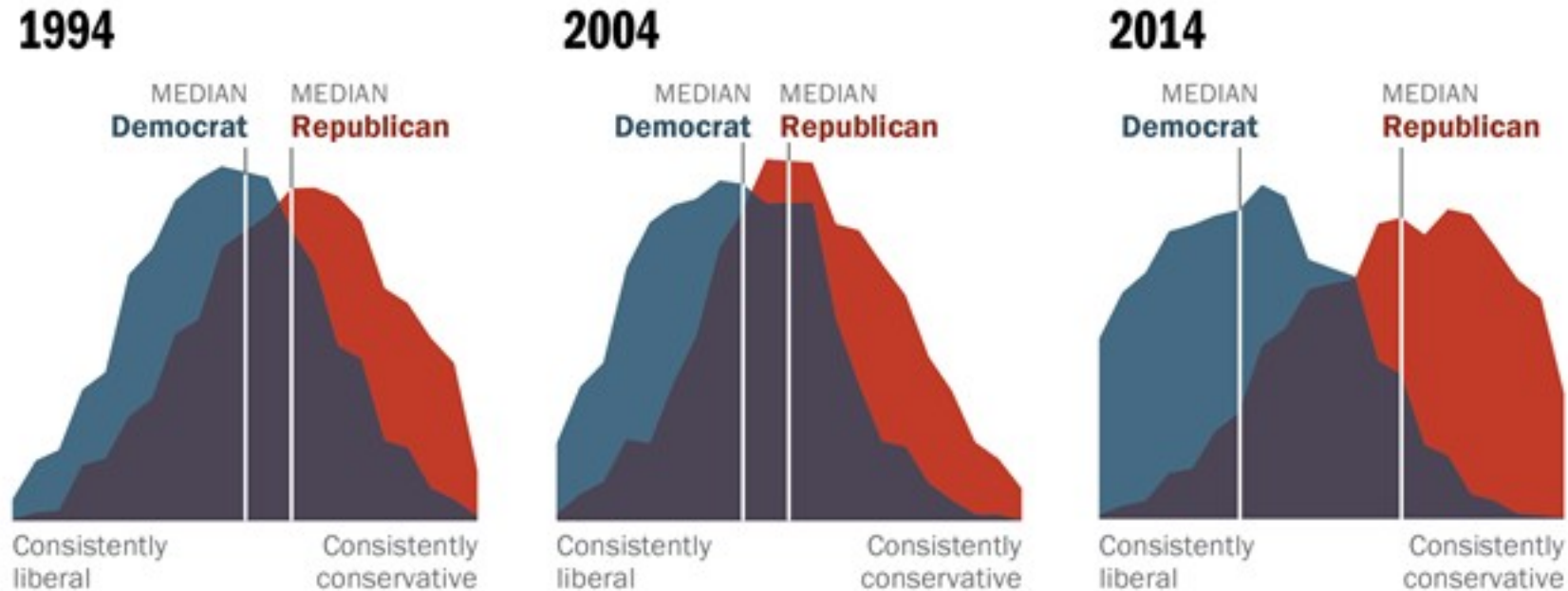
Thursday Sept 12 2pm, LEAP Workshop

by Melinda McClimans, MA, PhD

Overview

- My background
  - experiences living and working in other countries
  - working for the Middle East Studies Center here at OSU
  - my Masters and PhD from Ohio State
- A key role for academia and leaders at universities relates to the discussion of highly politicized issues. People need a place where they can learn about these issues from an academic standpoint. I draw from my experience as an educator teaching about the Middle East.
- Focus on the U.S. context. Key concepts are universal but many will inevitably show contrasts between the particularities of India and the U.S. I hope we have time to discuss these.
- Self reflection. In order to learn across cultural divides, one must reflect on one's self before judging "the other."
- How "decode the disciplines" to:
  - reach students from diverse background
  - facilitate conversation and interaction with other fields
  - Translate knowledge for the general public.

Democrats and Republicans More Ideologically Divided than in the Past

Distribution of Democrats and Republicans on a 10-item scale of political values

Source: 2014 Political Polarization in the American Public
Notes: Ideological consistency based on a scale of 10 political values questions (see Appendix A). The blue area in this chart represents the ideological distribution of Democrats; the red area of Republicans. The overlap of these two distributions is shaded purple. Republicans include Republican-leaning independents; Democrats include Democratic-leaning independents (see Appendix B).
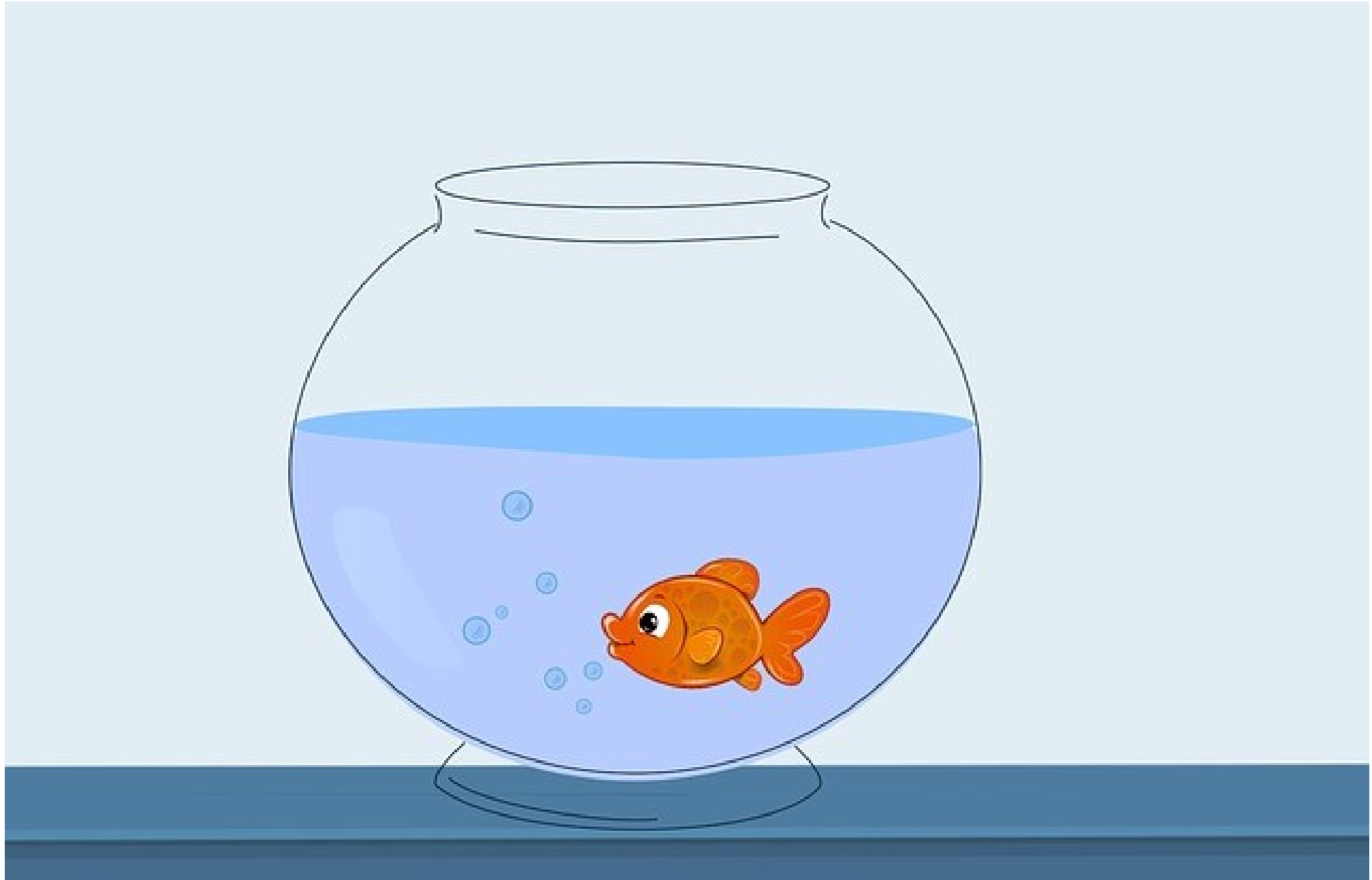
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Sources:

Bail, C. A., Argyle, L. P., Brown, T. W., Bumpus, J. P., Chen, H., Hunzaker, M. B. F., ... Volfovsky, A. (2018). Exposure to opposing views on social media can increase political polarization. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, *115*(37), 9216–9221. https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1804840115

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What is culture and why do we need to think about it.

"It has long been recognized that culture is very hard for humans to think about culture. Like fish in water, we fail to "see" culture because it is the medium within which we exist." (Cole, 1996, p. 8)
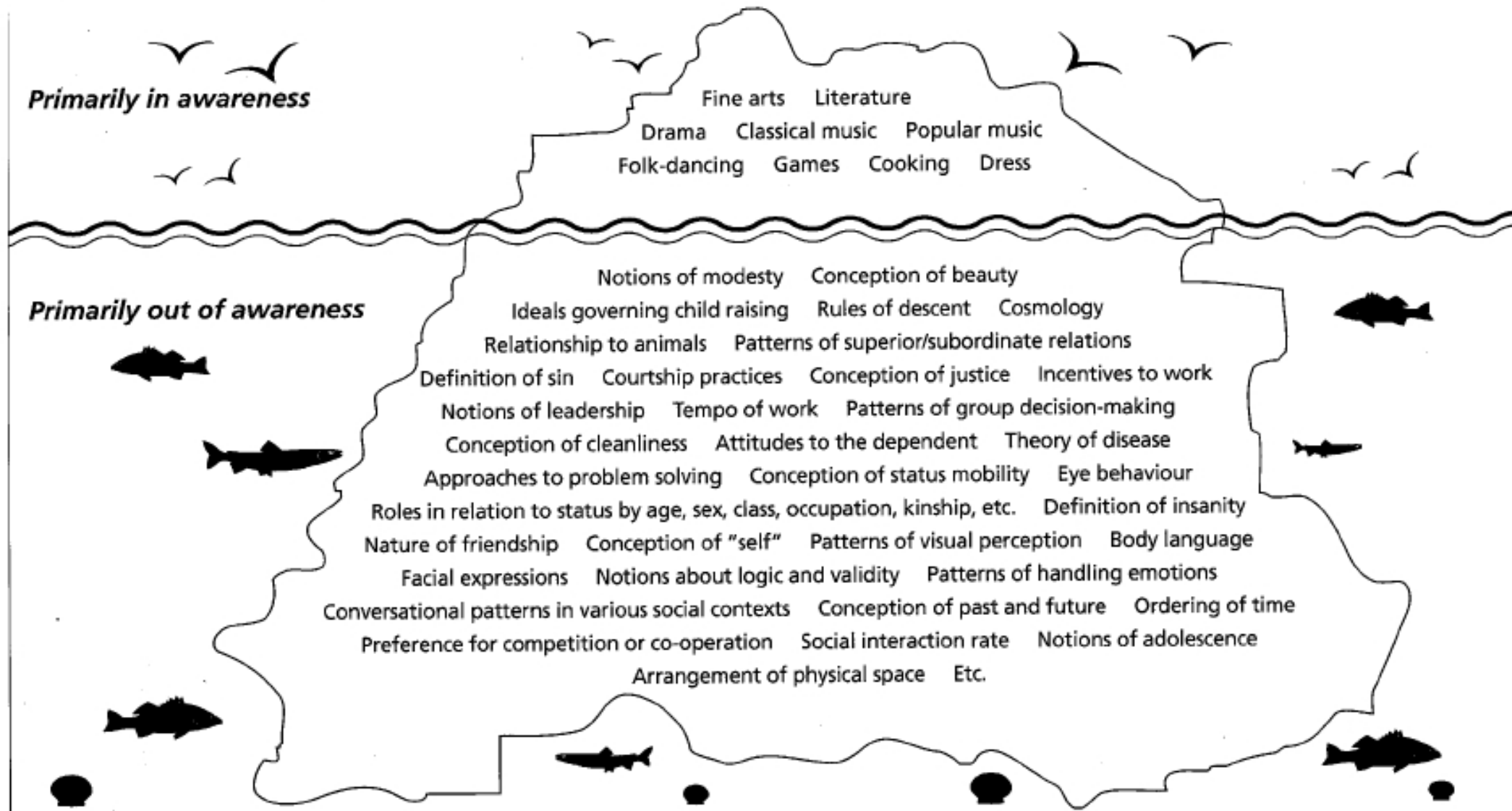
"Encounters with other cultures make it easier to grasp our own as an object of thought." (Cole, 1996, p. 8)

What would you tell someone from another country about culture in your home town?

Thinking about culture

- What are the aspects of culture we see?

- What are the aspects we don't see?

Fig. 1: The iceberg concept of culture

Primarily in awareness

Fine arts   Literature
Drama   Classical music   Popular music
Folk-dancing   Games   Cooking   Dress

Primarily out of awareness

Notions of modesty   Conception of beauty
Ideals governing child raising   Rules of descent   Cosmology
Relationship to animals   Patterns of superior/subordinate relations
Definition of sin   Courtship practices   Conception of justice   Incentives to work
Notions of leadership   Tempo of work   Patterns of group decision-making
Conception of cleanliness   Attitudes to the dependent   Theory of disease
Approaches to problem solving   Conception of status mobility   Eye behaviour
Roles in relation to status by age, sex, class, occupation, kinship, etc.   Definition of insanity
Nature of friendship   Conception of "self"   Patterns of visual perception   Body language
Facial expressions   Notions about logic and validity   Patterns of handling emotions
Conversational patterns in various social contexts   Conception of past and future   Ordering of time
Preference for competition or co-operation   Social interaction rate   Notions of adolescence
Arrangement of physical space   Etc.

"Knowing one self as a cultural being" : A Threshold Concept

A critical first step toward understanding the nature of cultural diversity is "knowing one self as a cultural being"

Gay (2010) emphasizes the process of knowing one's self as a cultural being as a requirement for teaching for equity:

> "Culturally responsive caring is launched through teachers acquiring more knowledge about ethnic and cultural diversity, becoming more conscious of themselves as cultural beings and cultural actors in the process of teaching, and engaging in courageous conversations about issues fundamental to social justice in society and educational equity for ethnically diverse students." (p.69)

We are constantly in a process of learning to be cultural learners. This process starts with knowing one's self in that way and gaining the ability on one's own cultural orientation wile learning about other cultural orientation. This is what the American Library Association regards as a "Threshold concept" and is a critical part of information literacy

Sources:
Decoding Threshold Concepts – Decoding the Disciplines. (n.d.). Retrieved September 12, 2019, from
http://decodingthedisciplines.org/decoding-threshold-concepts/

Gay, G. (2010). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice*. New York: Teachers College.

Decoding the disciplines

Decoding the Disciplines Wheel

1. Define a bottleneck
2. Uncover the mental task
3. Model tasks
4. Give practice and feedback
5. Motivate and lessen resistance
6. Assess student mastery
7. Share

Bibliography

Bail, C. A., Argyle, L. P., Brown, T. W., Bumpus, J. P., Chen, H., Hunzaker, M. B. F., ... Volfovsky, A. (2018). Exposure to opposing views on social media can increase political polarization. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 115(37), 9216–9221. https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1804840115

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Cole, M. (1996). *Cultural psychology: A once and future discipline*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. /z-wcorg/.

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Links to the Middle East Studies Center and my work

https://mesc.osu.edu/

http://u.osu.edu/globaleportfolio/

https://drmcclimans.postach.io/