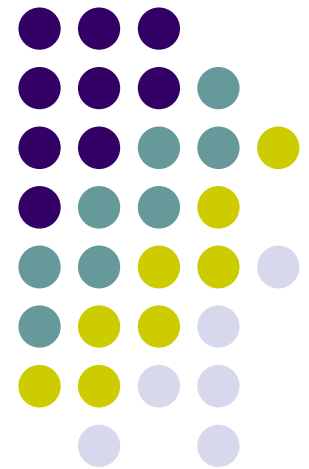
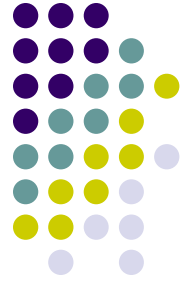


Culture and the Geography of Thought

**Society of PM Professionals of Greater
Vancouver Professional Development Day
April 21, 2010**

Presented by:
Andrew Coates, PMP
Judith Law, MA





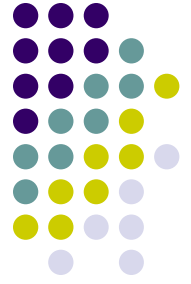
Outline

- Introduction
- The impact of culture
- Research Findings: East Asians / Westerners
 - Cognitive Differences
 - Attention and Perception Differences
- Observing these patterns
 - Dora vs Kai-lan
 - Big to Small
- Discussion Scenarios
- Wrap-up



Introduction

- Andrew Coates
 - PMP 2004
 - Manager, Business Systems, HSBC
 - Software Engineering teams in Canada, Pune and Hyderabad
 - Undergraduate degree in Computer Science from the University of Alabama
 - Certificate for Internet Marketing from UBC
 - Java Programming Certificate from BCIT
 - Mandarin Certificate from Langara College in Vancouver



Introduction (Cont'ed)

- Richard E. Nisbett, Ph.D.
 - Distinguished Professor of Psychology at the University of Michigan
 - The Geography of Thought (Simon and Schuster, 2003) is a study of the differences between Eastern and Western thought patterns based on research
 - Findings from this research can benefit the Project Manager directing multicultural teams

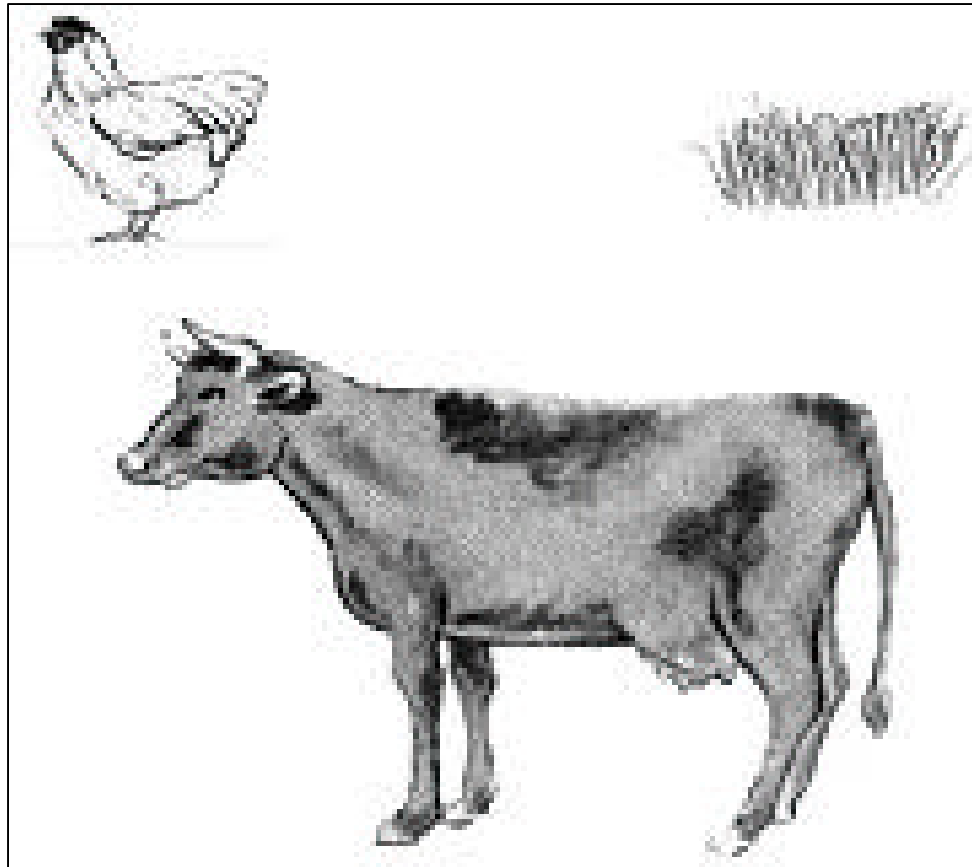
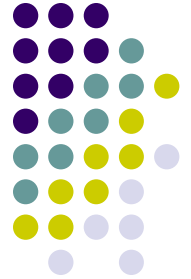
The impact of culture



“Our own culture is like water to a fish. It sustains us. We live and breath thought it”

- Trompenaars, F. and Hampden-Turner, C. (2005) *Riding the waves of Culture: Understanding Cultural Diversity in Business* (Nicholas Brealey, UK)

Categorization

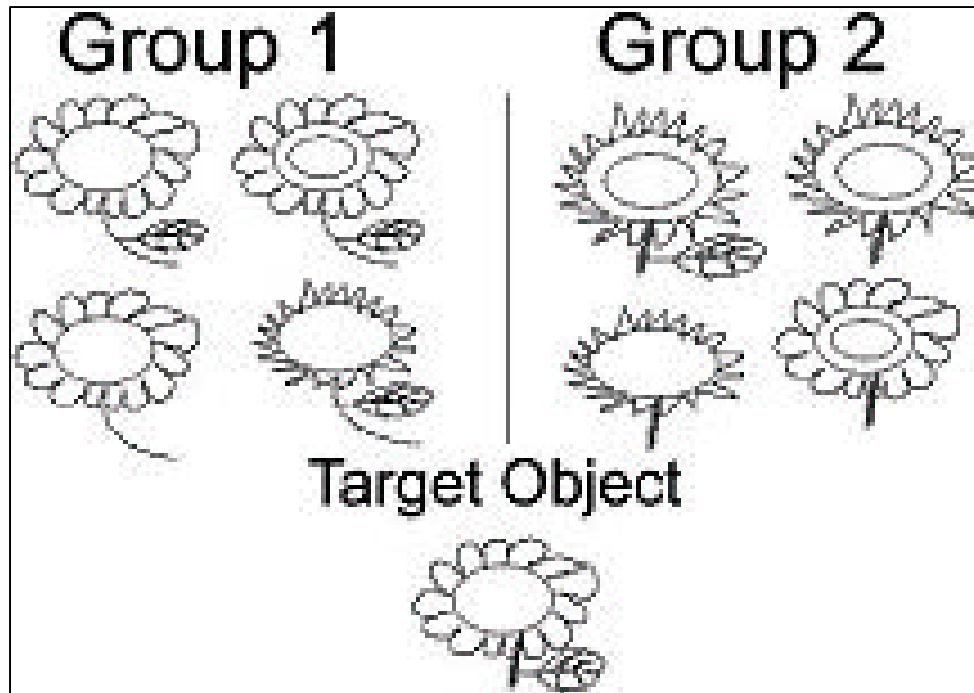


“Which two go together?”

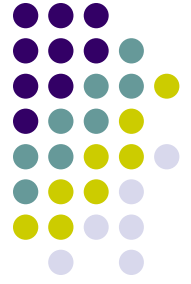
Chiu, L.-H. (1972) *Int. J. Psychol.* 7, 235–242.



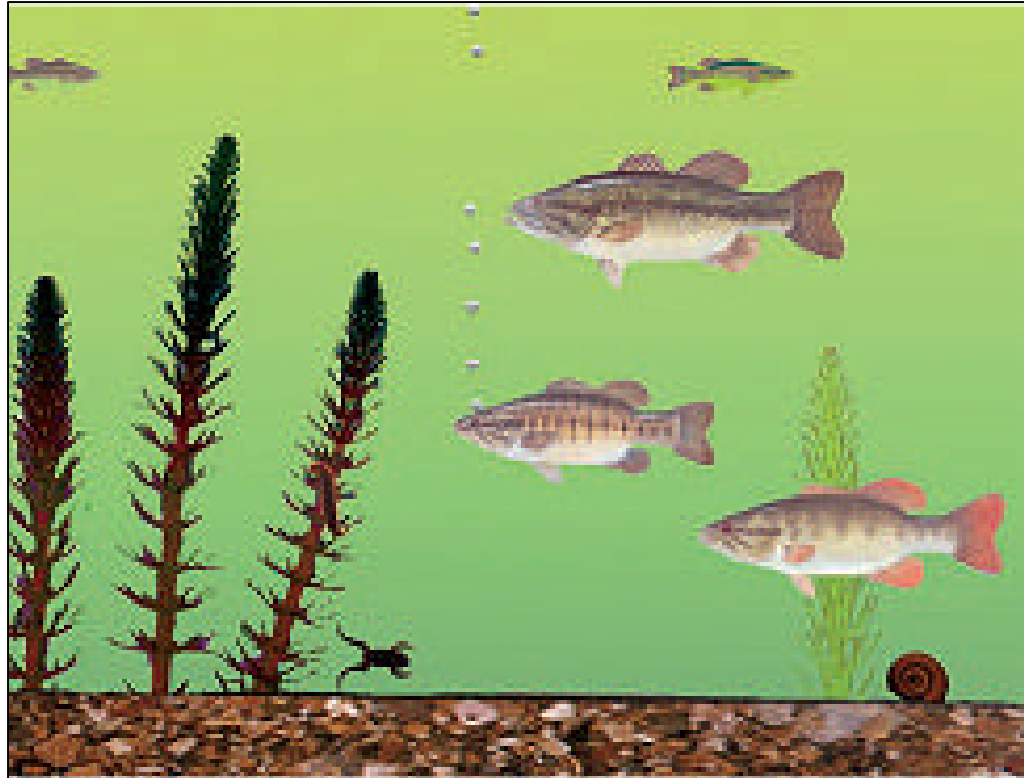
Categorization (Cont'ed)



Which group does the target object belong to?

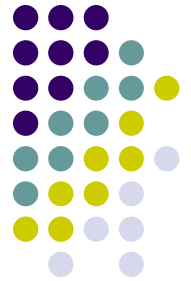


Attention to Field

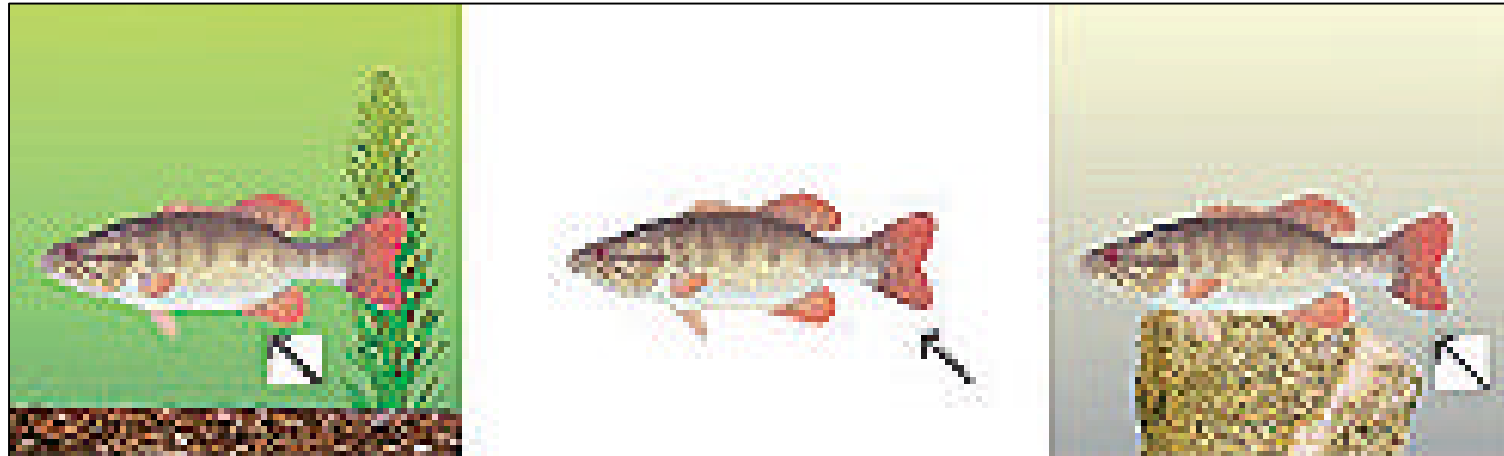


**Still photo from animated
underwater vignette**

Nisbett, Richard E., and Masuda, Takahiko, Culture and Point of View, PNAS, September 16, 2003.



Attention to Field (Cont'ed)



**Fish with
Original
Background**

**Fish with No
Background**

**Fish with Novel
Background**

Research Findings: East Asians / Westerners



- East Asians and Westerners perceive the world and think about it in very different ways.
- Westerners are inclined to attend to some focal objects, analyzing its attributes and categorizing it in an effort to find out what rules govern its behaviour
- East Asians are more likely to attend to a broad and conceptual field, noticing relationships and changes and grouping objects based on family resemblance rather than category membership

Observing these patterns



- Early childhood: Ni hao Kai-lan vs. Dora the Explorer

Dora the Explorer



Dora the Explorer



- Show 101: "The Big Red Chicken" Dora and Boots read about a large chicken and set off to meet him. They cross a broken bridge, open a locked gate, and reach the big red hill.
- Part of what makes "Dora the Explorer" so successful is the show's repetition. Dora will repeat the different goals and objectives of an adventure multiple times. Preschoolers thrive on that repetition, and learn from it.

Ni hao Kai-lan

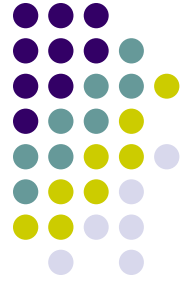




Ni hao Kai-lan

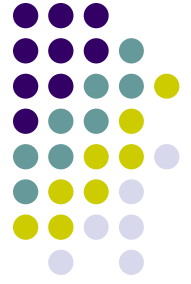
- Preschoolers will be drawn to this well-rounded cartoon that exposes kids to the basics of the Mandarin language and Chinese culture.
- Kids will easily relate to the stories of 5-year-old Kai-lan and her friends, and they'll learn constructive ways of handling social-emotional issues like fear, sharing, and jealousy.

Observing these patterns



- Everyday life: Big to Small

Personal names in Chinese

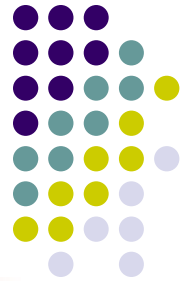


- A Chinese name is written with the family name (surname or last name) first and the given name next, therefore "John Smith" as a Chinese name would be "Smith John".
- For instance, the basketball player who is commonly called Yao Ming would be addressed as "Mr. Yao", not "Mr. Ming".

Address formats



<p>B THOMPSON 35 BRACO ST OTTAWA ON K2L 1B6 CANADA</p>	<p>STAMP</p>
<p>MS JANE JONES RODODENDRONPLEIN 7B 3053 ES ROTTERDAM NETHERLANDS</p>	<p>中华人民共和国 Republic of China 云南省 Yunnan Province 昆明市 650031 Kunming City + Postal code 人民东路 10 号 Renmin Dong Street 10 Mr. J. Doe Name of recipient</p>

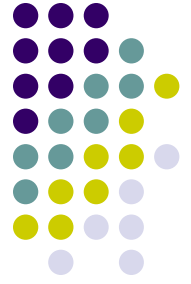


Date formats



Mr. Chang Dechuan (second from right) and Mr. Fu Yuning (center) at the contract signing site.

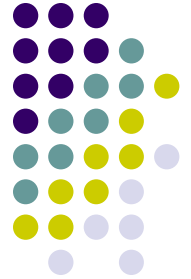
An Ocean of Hope



Details first

- “You may find the tradition of presentation in India frustrating. The Indians are educated to give the reasons for a decision before making the point itself.”
- “You may hear yourself listening to a long preamble and wondering if there is any point to it at all.”

Discussion Scenarios



- Order of Things



Order of things

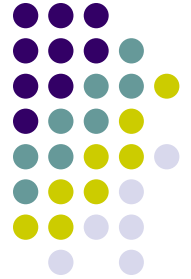
- John, Head of the Canadian Consulate in Vietnam decides to visit a Canadian sponsored clinic on Phu Quoc Island over the weekend. John is accompanied by the Canadian PM, Tim.
- Tung, the Field PM receives angry phone calls from the Health Dept on Monday morning and the officials demand an explanation.



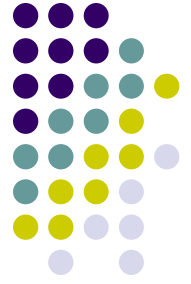
What happened?

- Why are the Health Dept Officials upset?
- What can be done to mend fences?
- What should Tung tell the officials?

Discussion Scenarios

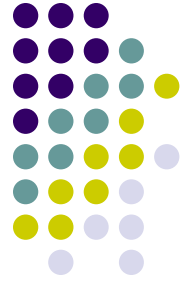


- Measurements



Measurements

- Tim, the Canadian PM suggest that the project put in place a performance bonus scheme for the 4 staff in the office, including Tung. Tung says he is ok with this and asks Tim to provide a draft.
- After reviewing the draft, Tung tells Tim that a performance scheme is unacceptable.



What happened?

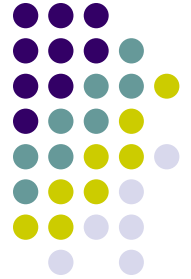
- Why does Tung agree to a draft?
- What might be concerning Tung?
- How might they move forward (or not?)

Wrap up: Generalization vs. Stereotype



- Cultural generalizations
 - Never applies to everyone in a situation
 - Only a “first guess”
 - Discarded when no longer necessary or accurate
- Cultural stereotypes
 - Applies to everyone in every situation
 - Retained even when no longer accurate

Source: HSBC Group Systems



Thank You!
&
Questions?