Yuthókeča:
Rethinking Metaphors for Transformational Instruction

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Our context

- Collaborative diversity initiative
    - Indian University of North America
    - Crazy Horse Memorial Foundation
    - University of South Dakota
- Students from different Indian nations across the United States
- Summer "bridge" program
    - Freshman-level courses (Math, English, Public Speaking)
    - Career exploration

Metaphors in education

- Prevailing metaphors in education
  - Transmission (information passes from teachers to students)
  - Facilitation (coaching, "guide on the side")
  - Catalyst (creation of cognitive dissonance)
  - Military ("tough love," forced assimilation)
  - Agriculture (teachers "nurture," students "grow")
    - (Badley & Hollabaugh, Metaphors for Teaching and Learning, pp. 52-54)
- Bridge metaphor in diversity education
  - Connecting minority cultures with the dominant culture
  - Bringing minorities across to the dominant culture

Bridge metaphors

The bridge idealized…

low-context culture ⟷ high-context culture

The bridge realized…

- built by the dominant culture using its standards and methods
- located in majority spaces
- encourages movement in one direction (away from the minority culture)
- requires learners to meet expectations of dominant-culture educators
- disregards diverse learners' ways of knowing and learning
- serves to establish educators as gatekeepers of knowledge
- maintains dominant-culture power structures and methods

Education and communication

- Every encounter, including instruction, uses communication to accomplish its goals.
- Communication has, minimally, two dimensions:
    - Instrumental
    - Relational
- Instrumental goals for library instruction:
    - ACRL IL Competency Standards for Higher Education
- Relational goals for library instruction:
    - Rapport-building between library instructors and students
    - Long-term relationship building between students and academic libraries

Our problem

We were reaching the students instrumentally…

- We taught using the Freirian (top-down) banking model.
- We were transmitting knowledge to students.
- We reached the students intellectually.
- This served our functional goal (education).

Our problem

…but we sensed we weren't connecting with them.

- We sought to create relationships between the students and academic libraries.

- In a high-context culture, learning is accomplished both instrumentally and through relationships.

- We were not reaching the students relationally.
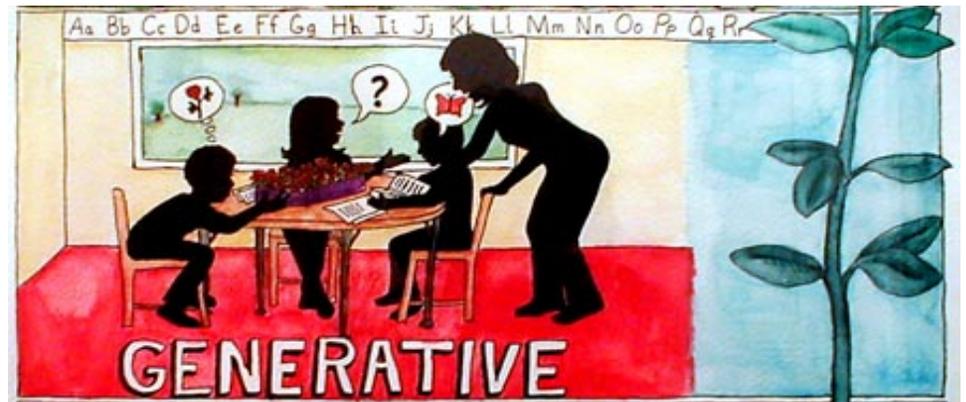
Metaphors and change

"Metaphorical imagination is a crucial skill in creating rapport and in communicating the nature of unshared experience. This skill consists, in large measure, of the ability to bend your world view and adjust the way you categorize your experience."

(Lakoff & Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, p. 231)

- All cultures use metaphors.
- Metaphors influence the ways we think, perceive, and act.
- Metaphors can be used to enhance mutual understanding with other people and cultures.
- It is important to reflect on our use of metaphors.

(Johannsen, *Library User Metaphors and Services*, p. 36)

Hospitality in education

The conventional understanding of the hospitality metaphor in education:

- host = teacher
- guest = student
- hosted space = classroom
- power = teacher

(McAvoy, Hospitality: A Feminist Theology of Education, p. 23)

Discourse of hospitality

- Derrida differentiates between visitors and guests.
    - A visitor is a "stranger," "not…an invited guest."
    - A guest is "welcomed" and "treated as a friend or ally."
- He notes the crucial relationship between guest and host.
    - Both guest and host are in a dependent and necessary relationship.
    - Both are essential for hospitality.
- He defines hospitality as the handing over of power from the more powerful to the less powerful.

    (Derrida, Hostipitality, pp. 3-18)

We came as visitors...

- Visitors come with instrumental goals.
  - Visitors' goals tend to be self-oriented (e.g., entertainment, services, learning).
  - Hosts tend to accommodate visitors in dedicated, impersonal spaces (e.g., museums, visitors centers).
  - There is an instrumental exchange (e.g., payment for services).
  - Relational exchanges are very limited.

We needed to become guests...

Guests come with relational as well as instrumental goals.

- Goals are relationally oriented (e.g., present or future relationship).

- There is a relational exchange (e.g., friendship or other mutual relationship).

- Guests are accommodated in more informal, personal spaces (e.g., kitchens, living spaces, or break areas).

The guest metaphor suggests...

- recognizing the importance of the host context.
- honoring local information and information practices.
- clarifying power relationships within the host context.
- engaging in hospitality by sharing power with our hosts (students).

Guest teaching strategies
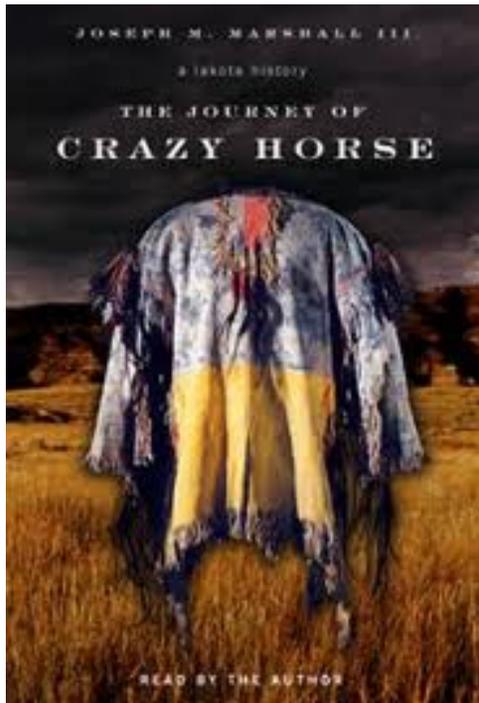
- Try to teach in spaces belonging to the hosts.

- Honor the hosts' space in culturally sensitive and relevant ways.

- Do research before meeting with hosts.
  - Become as culturally knowledgeable as possible.
  - Understand communicative norms and preferences of the host.

Guest strategies for IL instruction
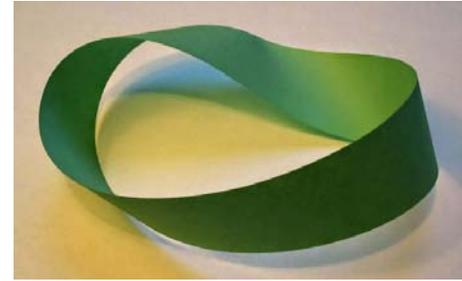
- Be prepared to adjust your behavior to hosts' cultural and communicative norms as you identify them.
- Identify and connect to IL practices within the host culture.
- Include active-learning techniques that encourage self disclosure and sharing of power/responsibility.
- engage all participants in dialogue about authority and information practices.

Be prepared to fail…

Failure events will happen.

- Rejecting hospitality: remaining a visitor
- Misreading group dynamic
- Missing the importance of nonverbal communication
- Role conflict: Guest vs. elder
- Not invoking (Freirian) authority

Be prepared to fail...and learn

Failure is the best teacher.

• Teaching involves testing of intercultural hypotheses.

• Failure and reflection lead to revision and growth.

Failure will not damage your students.

• Minority students are highly motivated.

• They have learned to learn under challenging conditions.

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