

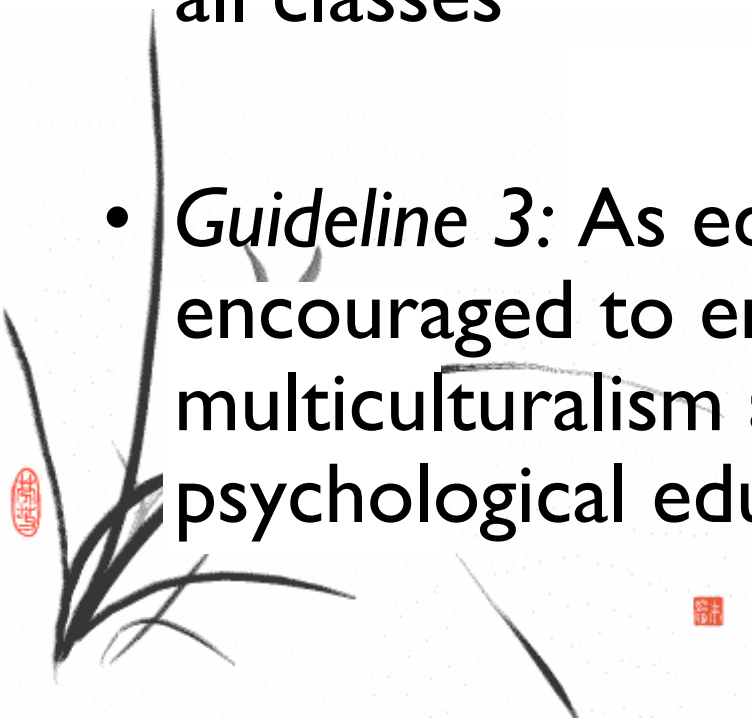
Strategies for Infusing Multiculturalism into a Positive Psychology Course

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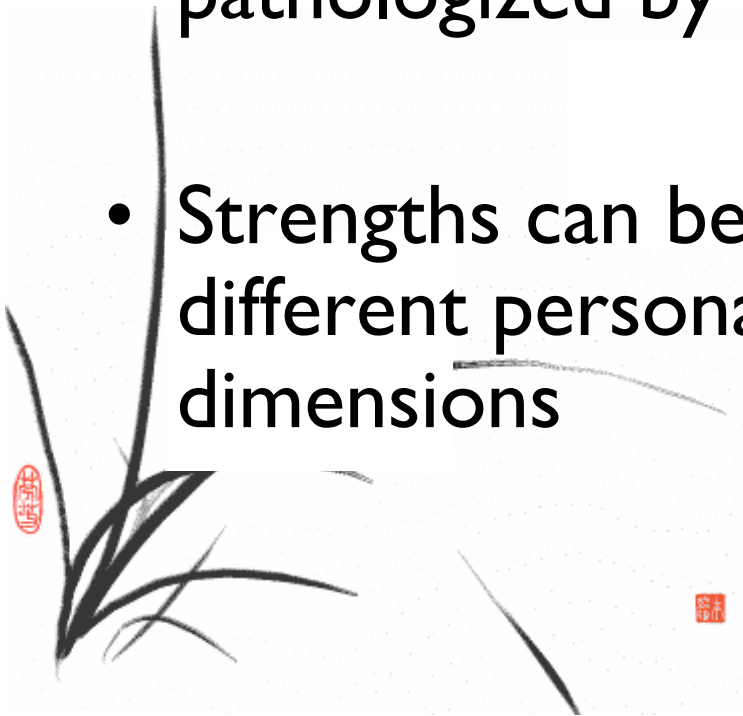
Opening Thoughts

- As multiculturally competent educators we need to infuse multicultural outlooks into all classes
- *Guideline 3: As educators, psychologists are encouraged to employ the constructs of multiculturalism and diversity in psychological education. (APA, 2003)*



Opening Thoughts

- Positive Psychology may be particularly appropriate as people of color have been pathologized by ethnocentric theories
- Strengths can be derived from many different personal affiliations or identity dimensions



Culture Free vs. Culturally Embedded

- Culture-free: universal strengths exist
- Culturally-embedded: all cultures have strengths, but these may be manifested differently in different cultures



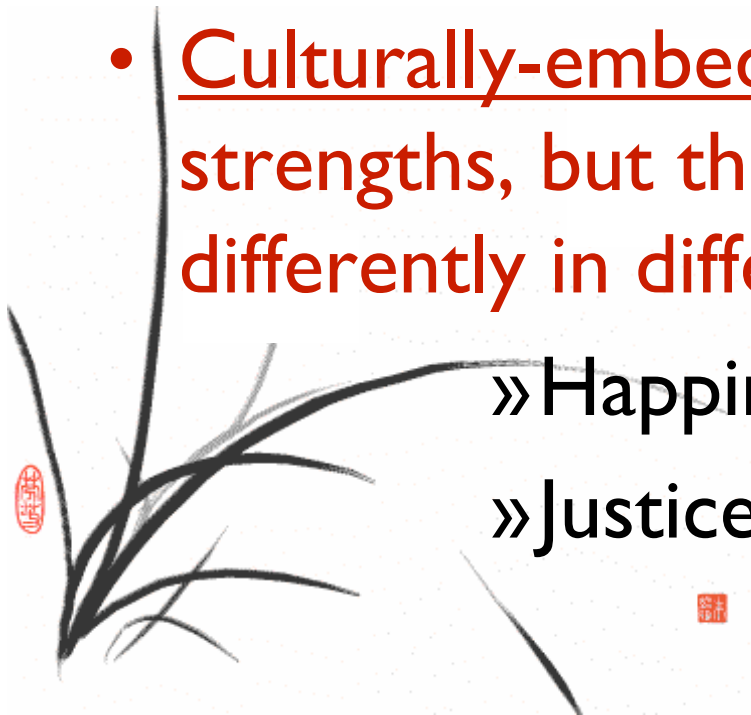
Snyder & Lopez (2006)

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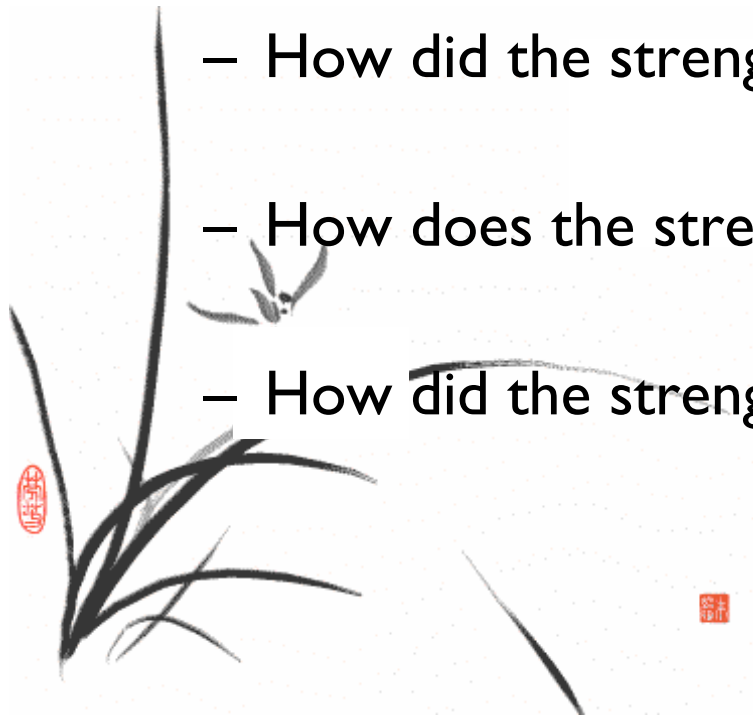
» Happiness

» Justice and Fairness



Positive Psychology & Culture

- To view PP constructs within a cultural context, must examine:
 - How did the strength become valued in the group?
 - How does the strength currently function positively?
 - How did the strength become potent in their life?



Snyder & Lopez (2006)
Christopher (2005)

Strategy 1 & 2

- Emphasize cultural content from the beginning of the course
- Explain culture as a multifaceted concept
 - ADDRESSING format
 - Cultural Strengths Exercise



Cultural Strengths Exercise

Age

Disability (acquired)

Disability (developmental)

Religion

Ethnicity / race

Sexual orientation

Socioeconomic status

Indigenous heritage

Nation of origin

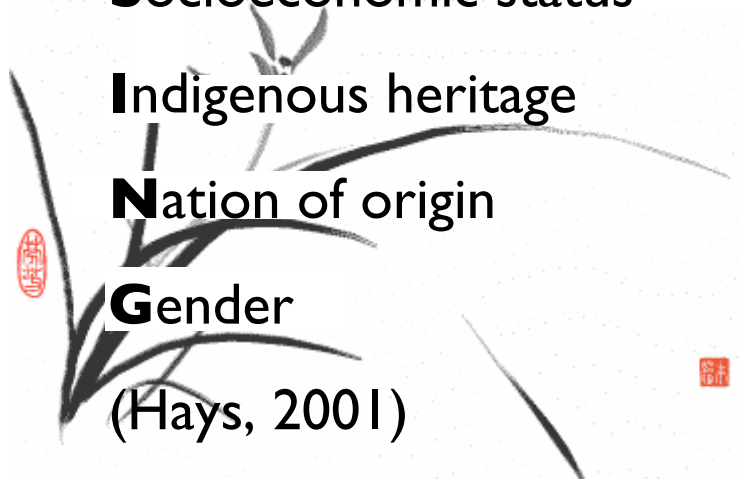
Gender

(Hays, 2001)

- Identify three facets with which you identify strongly

- What strengths do these cultural facets give you

- Pair/Share/Class Discussion



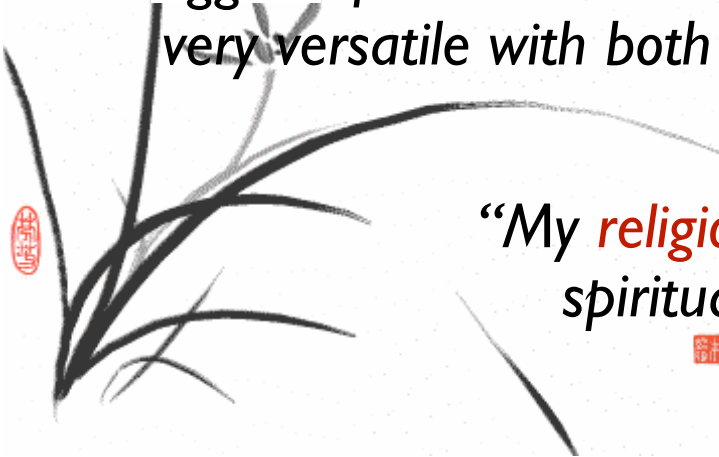
Cultural Strengths Exercise: Examples

"Coming from a **low SES** has given me more desire to reach my educational goals. Because of this I also feel I can more easily relate to others and have a greater understanding of a variety of needs."

"I see my **age** as a group that has had so many resources available to them with technology. We know how to do so many things because of this..."

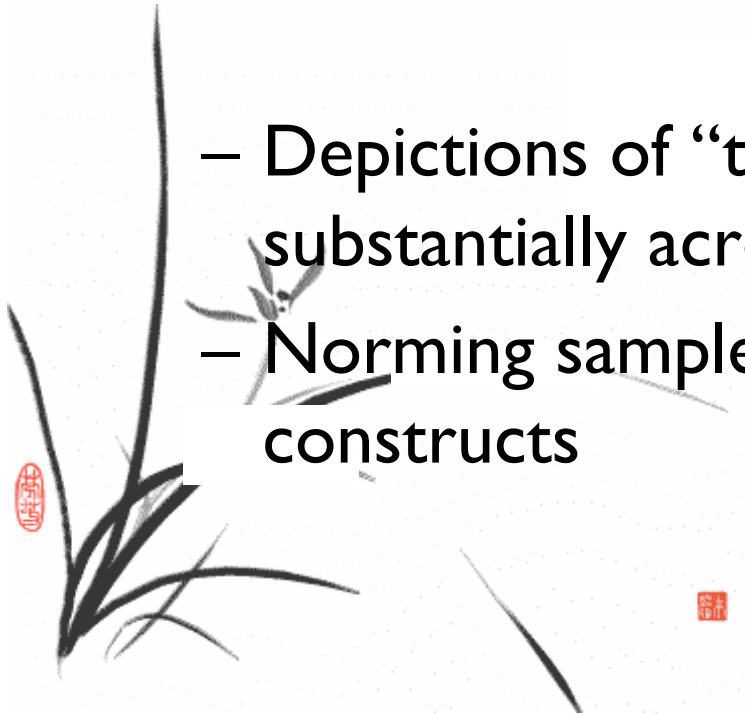
"My **biracial** heritage makes me be able to know the strengths and struggles of both Caucasian and African American people. I am very versatile with both cultures; I fit in with both of them."

"My **religion** is a major cultural strength for me. Being spiritual has made me an optimistic, grateful, and hopeful person."



Strategy 3

- Challenge students to read critically for ethnocentrism
 - Depictions of “the good life” may differ substantially across groups as well as individuals
 - Norming samples or operationalization of constructs



Exercise: Cultural Evaluation

- Example 1:

Max goes weekly to a large building with many others.

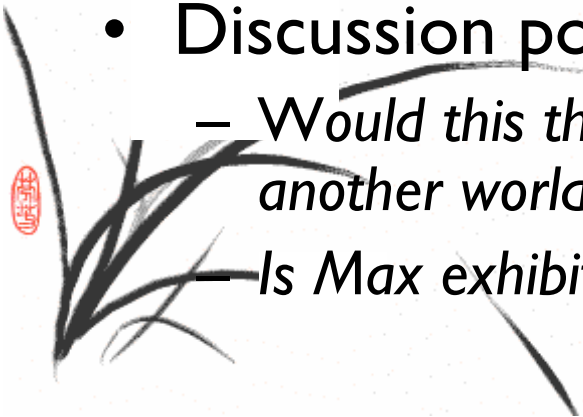
He says the same things every week.

He talks to himself while kneeling and lighting a candle.

- Discussion points:

- *Would this theory/practice be looked at differently from another worldview?*

- *Is Max exhibiting a strength?*



Exercise: Cultural Evaluation

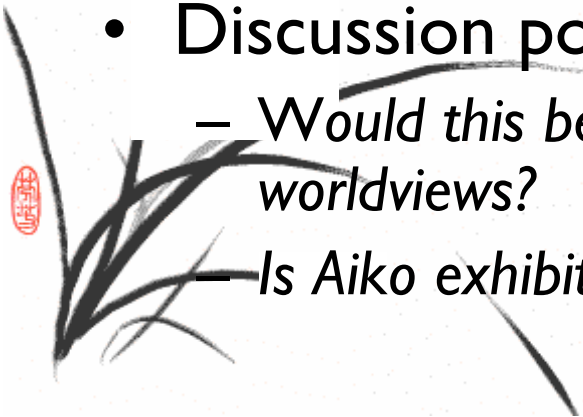
- Example 2:

Aiko disagreed with the instructor but did not say anything about her different beliefs. Instead she tried to work within his framework to assist the other group members in completing the project.

- Discussion points:

- *Would this behavior be looked at differently from different worldviews?*

- *Is Aiko exhibiting a strength?*



Strategy 4

- Present studies and theories from diverse perspectives

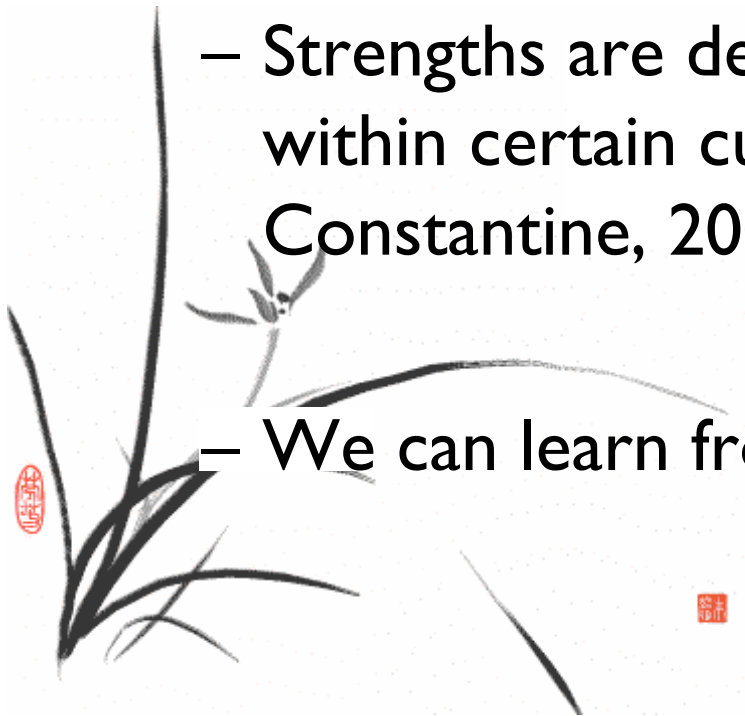
– Chang (2001): Optimism in Chinese American and Caucasian American college students

- Calls for qualitative investigation of research findings to fully understand



Strategy 5

- Discuss culturally-relevant strengths
 - Strengths are defined by culture and may lie within certain cultures inherently (Sue and Constantine, 2003)
 - We can learn from other groups



Final Thoughts

- Multiculturalism allows us to be more inclusive of all students
- Incorporate cultural context into assignments, tests, papers
- Be a role model
- A more balanced viewpoint

