Chapter VIII
CBM Elements II

This chapter continues with CBM Elements and the design factors related to the anthropology of culture. Cultural communications is covered in its entirety.

CULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS

> **E5. Cultural communications - The exchange or transmission of information.**

Cultural communications is the exchange or transmission of information. This exchange can be between human beings, other species or entities. Cultural communications serves a purpose; these purposes maybe to report, inform, persuade, warn, direct, or induce a response. However the ultimate goal is to convey meaning from the information source to destination or sender to receiver (Meadow, 2002). Cultural communications can be applied to cultures, target audiences, and other species. In terms of societies and cultures, cultural communications looks at the forms of communications or communication systems that exist. Cultural communications in relation to a target audience looks at language (nonverbal, verbal); writing; spatial, temporal, and visual cues; and semiotics (signs & symbols).

Communications for Cultures

The medium of communications across cultures is very much dependent on the culture. Whether the culture is agrarian or a metropolis dictates its use, means, and access to communication technologies. The most rudimentary form of sound transmission from distance to distance is the human voice (Meadow, 2002, p. 33). The human voice is amplified and modified through artifacts such as horns. Besides variations of horns, other instruments have also assisted in sound transmission such as drums, bugles, and bagpipes. Communicating across longer distances has been aided through signaling with the use of fire and smoke. Flags have been useful in identifying locations, tribes, the military, schools, countries, corporations, and esteemed individuals (Meadow, 2002).

Many cultures use various symbolic forms of written communication. These written systems are often characterized by symbols, pictographs, drawings, carvings, paintings, letters, numbers, punctuation, graphics, musical notes,[1] and characters. Pictorial writing usually represents an idea or object, and alphabetic writing usually represents a sound. Distinctive of all these characteristics is that written systems translate into meaning, preserve thoughts and ideas, require someone who has knowledge of the system to translate, and communicates messages over time (Meadow, 2002).

It can be argued that mathematics, music, physics, chemistry and computing are also forms of written communication. Mathematics is characterized by symbols, alphabetic writing, and numbers that form a notation system.[2] Mathematical concepts can be expressed in written form and, in some cases, graphical forms; the written communication system of mathematics is understood by those who understand its notation system. Figure 8.1 represents the mathematical symbols of the normal frequency distribution, and the graphic representation is the bell curve (Meadow, 2002).

Figure 8.1. Frequency Distribution[3]
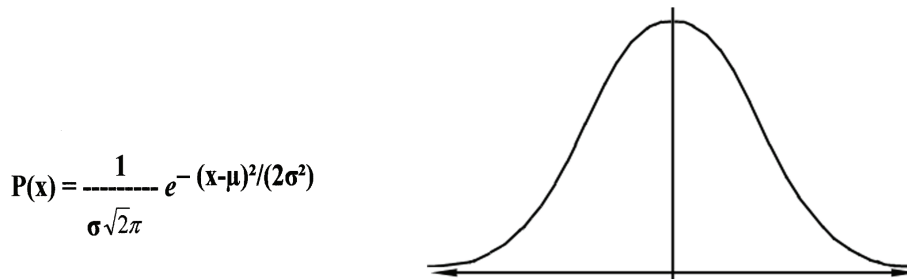
$$P(x) = \frac{1}{\sigma\sqrt{2\pi}}\, e^{-\,(x-\mu)^2/(2\sigma^2)}$$

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