

As noted by University of Wisconsin Academic Advisor Cornelius Gilbert in the September 2005 edition of *Academic Advising Today*, "as America's ethnic and racial demographics continue to shift, not only on college campuses but throughout the nation, it is essential that administrators and practitioners prepare to effectively deliver cross-cultural services. Professionals of all ethnic and racial backgrounds need to gain multicultural awareness and multicultural competence." **Foundations of Academic Advising CD 3: *Understanding Cultural Identity and Worldview Development***, along with its accompanying Pocket Guide, have been developed to assist in this process by addressing informational material, conceptual theories, and relational skills that relate to, first, development of intracultural competency, and then, by extension, to intercultural competency.

The following excerpt is taken from the third module of the CD, which focuses on the relational skills aspect of developing cultural competence.

The work of Edward T. Hall (1959/1966), one of the founders of intercultural communication study, who developed a conceptual framework of "space and time" orientation, provides considerable fare for reflective consideration. Hall (1959) proposed that we communicate through a wide range of behaviors that are generally unexamined and taken for granted. People influenced by Western European heritage, in particular, tend to live in a "word world" and to be unconscious of how greatly the "language of behavior" affects communication.

Hall (1959) first proposed the handling of time as one of the key components of culture. He used the terms **Monochronic** and **Polychronic** to describe two basic orientations to time. The Monochronic orientation (or "M-Time") views time as sequential and linear. Time is seen as being a limited resource which is constantly being used up, and thus scheduling tends to be "tighter," more rigid, with great importance placed on promptness. From the Monochronic perspective, late arrival for a meeting is viewed as rudeness, and events and activities are scheduled sequentially, one after another, to avoid overlapping. This perspective is oriented to the future.

The Polychronic orientation (or "P-Time") views time in a more "circular" fashion, as the turning of the seasons, and time is seen as renewing itself each year. Scheduling tends to be "loose" and flexible, with many last-minute changes to even highly significant events and activities. Often many activities are juggled simultaneously, and promptness is not considered important. This perspective is oriented to the past and/or present.

Monochronic people are more likely to be task-oriented than relationship-oriented, and may be viewed by polychronic observers as "valuing things over people." In contrast, polychronic people are more relationship-oriented than task-oriented and thus may be viewed by monochronic observers as not taking their work and goals seriously. Monochronic people are likely to feel insulted when a polychronic acquaintance or colleague is late for a meeting; polychronic people are likely to be offended when a monochronic acquaintance or colleague seems too focused on their work to swap stories about their families or what is going on in the world around them.

Northern European-based US dominant culture is highly monochronic; Americans with a more polychronic orientation, including those influenced by Southern European, African, Arabic, or Latin American heritage, often find themselves in conflict with the dominant orientation. For example, an advisor with a monochronic orientation may become irritated when a polychronic advisee is chronically late for their scheduled meetings; while the polychronic advisee may be confused by the advisor's focus on completing tasks and seeming lack of interest in hearing about her family or boyfriend.