

## Preview for Chapter 6

**Part 1 Directions:** Write your answers to these questions. (Notice, these questions pertain to just paragraphs 2-5 of the sample unit.)

1. If you go to a party, but you know very few of the other guests, how do you feel?
  - a) I feel excited because it is a chance for me to meet some new people.
  - b) I feel shy because I don't know what to say to people whom I don't know.

### Part 2: Reading passage

#### Chapter 6

##### 6.1 Forming in-groups: needing or not needing party skills

<sup>2</sup> People in individualist cultures (e.g. Canada, the United States and Western Europe) have many in-groups. Because people tend to be mobile, they often leave an in-group and join a new one (or several new ones). Unlike for collectivists, their in-groups are not necessarily determined by where they were born, the family that they were born into, or the place where they work or go to school. Individualists choose the in-groups that they want to join. For this reason, they don't feel great pressure to conform to any group. If a group wants a member to do something that he or she doesn't want to do, that person can easily quit that group and join another one. In sum, the individualists feel less attachment to any in-group; however, having less attachment to former groups means that individualists need to feel comfortable when meeting outsiders. Developing the social skills that are necessary for forming relationships with new people increases the possibility that they will be able to join new groups. (Triandis et al, 1988). As long as they have the proper social skills and the motivation, they can join a number of different groups.

<sup>3</sup> While collectivists feel happiest when their in-group does well, an individualist feels most pleasure when he himself is successful. An individualist might say, "What is best for me is very important."

<sup>4</sup> A common perception is that Asians are shy and quiet among people that they do not know and that Westerners (e.g. Europeans, Canadians and Americans) are outgoing and even noisy. In fact, researchers have found that both Asians and Westerners share this perception. Researchers conducted a study of this topic at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. They discovered that both the Chinese students and American exchange students who were studying at this university felt that the American students were more

outgoing and sociable, and the Chinese students were more passive, shy and reserved. As a result of these characteristics, the Americans usually initiated conversations, and the Chinese responded (Smith and Bond, 1994).

<sup>5</sup> Why do Westerners appear more active in social situations, compared to Asians,



who seem more passive? Some people mistakenly believe that the Asians are not friendly, do not want to talk to strangers, or just lack the motivation to start a conversation with a stranger. Cross-cultural psychologists reject these beliefs. As we have learned in Chapter 3, an

important in-group for Asians (collectivists) is their family and the friends of their family. Collectivists' in-groups do not change very often; i.e. they are unlikely to quit one in-group in order to join a new one. Also, they do not usually choose their in-groups. For this reason, there is little need for them to develop interpersonal skills for getting in groups. In other words, they don't need to develop skills (like starting a conversation with a stranger) that can be used to socialize with people who are outside of their in-groups. Westerners (individualists), on the other hand, frequently change in-groups. To do this, they need "party skills," which are techniques one might use to initiate and carry on a conversation while socializing with people whom one doesn't know well (Triandis, 1994b). In sum, people from individualist countries may seem more sociable, but it is just because they have to work hard in order to get into new groups. Well-developed social skills also help them maintain good relationships with members of their in-group, so that they can stay in that group as long as they would like to (Triandis et al, 1988). However, despite someone's efforts to stay in a certain group, there is always the risk that shifting loyalties among group members could force that person out of the group entirely. This is because individualist groups could be considered "fluid," so movement into and out of a group is always possible (and is expected, to some extent).

**Part 3: Study Guide** (Notice, these questions pertain to just paragraphs 2-5 of the sample unit.)

## Study Guide for Chapter 6

1. According to ¶ 2, why do people from individualist cultures need proper social skills?
  - a) To help them join new in-groups.
  - b) To help their in-groups maintain harmony.
  - c) To help them conform to their in-group.
  - d) Because they feel pressure from their in-group.
  
2. According to ¶ 3, an individualist might say, “What is best for me is important.” Compare that comment to what a collectivist might say.
  
3. According to ¶ 4, what is the perception among Asians and Westerners?
  - a) Westerners feel that Asians are shy around people that they don’t know, but Asians think that they are not shy.
  - b) Westerners feel that Asians are not shy around people that they don’t know, but Asians think that they are shy.
  - c) Westerners feel that Asians are shy around people that they don’t know, and Asians also think that Asians are shy.
  
4. In ¶ 5, sentence 3, it states, “Cross-cultural psychologists reject these beliefs.” What are the beliefs that they reject?
  
5. In ¶ 5, it mentions “party skills.” Which of these are examples of party skills? (Choose three that are correct.)
  - a) Saying “hello” to someone that you don’t know.
  - b) Listening to a concert with other people.
  - c) Asking a new acquaintance a question about her hometown.
  - d) Giving a compliment to someone.
  - e) Eating pizza with a knife and fork.
  - f) Being a good dancer.

**Part 4: Preparation for discussion** (Notice, these questions pertain to just paragraphs 2-5 of the sample unit.)

### Preparation for discussion of Chapter 6

*Think about your answers to these questions. You do not have to write your answers.*

3. Who are the members of your most important in-group in your country? How did you become a member of this in-group?
4. Do you feel comfortable meeting and talking to people who are not part of your in-group?
5. In ¶ 5, it mentions “party skills”. Do you think that you have good party skills? Explain your answer.