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Digital Humanities in Business English Pedagogy

Interactive Cultural Mapping and Multimodal Resources for Intercultural Competence

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From Language to Intercultural Communication

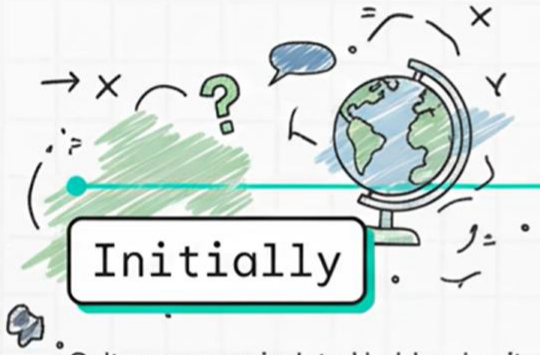
- Linguistic proficiency ≠ intercultural competence

- Business English → cultural diversity and adaptability

The Setting

- Business English course - Marketing Degree (ISCA-University of Aveiro)
- Multicultural classroom: Portuguese + Erasmus students

Course Evolution



Initially

Culture was an isolated 'add-on' unit at the end of the semester.

Realization

Students engaged more when cultural reflection was integrated throughout.

Redesign

Intercultural awareness became the central principle for all tasks.

Why Digital Humanities?

- Use digital tools to analyze and visualize culture
- Blend quantitative mapping and qualitative interpretation
- Collaborative, multimodal learning environments
- Make cultural theory visible and discussable

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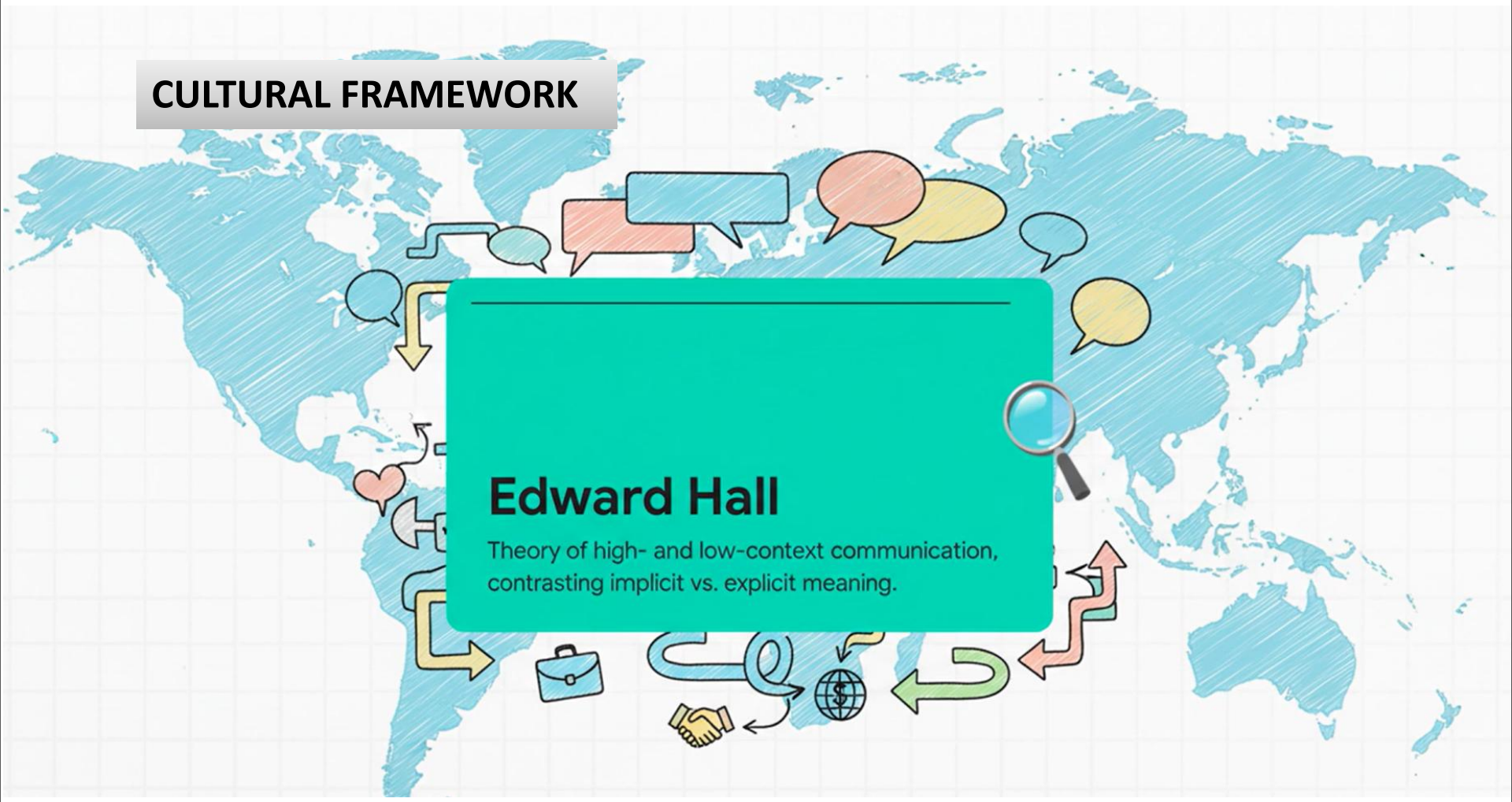
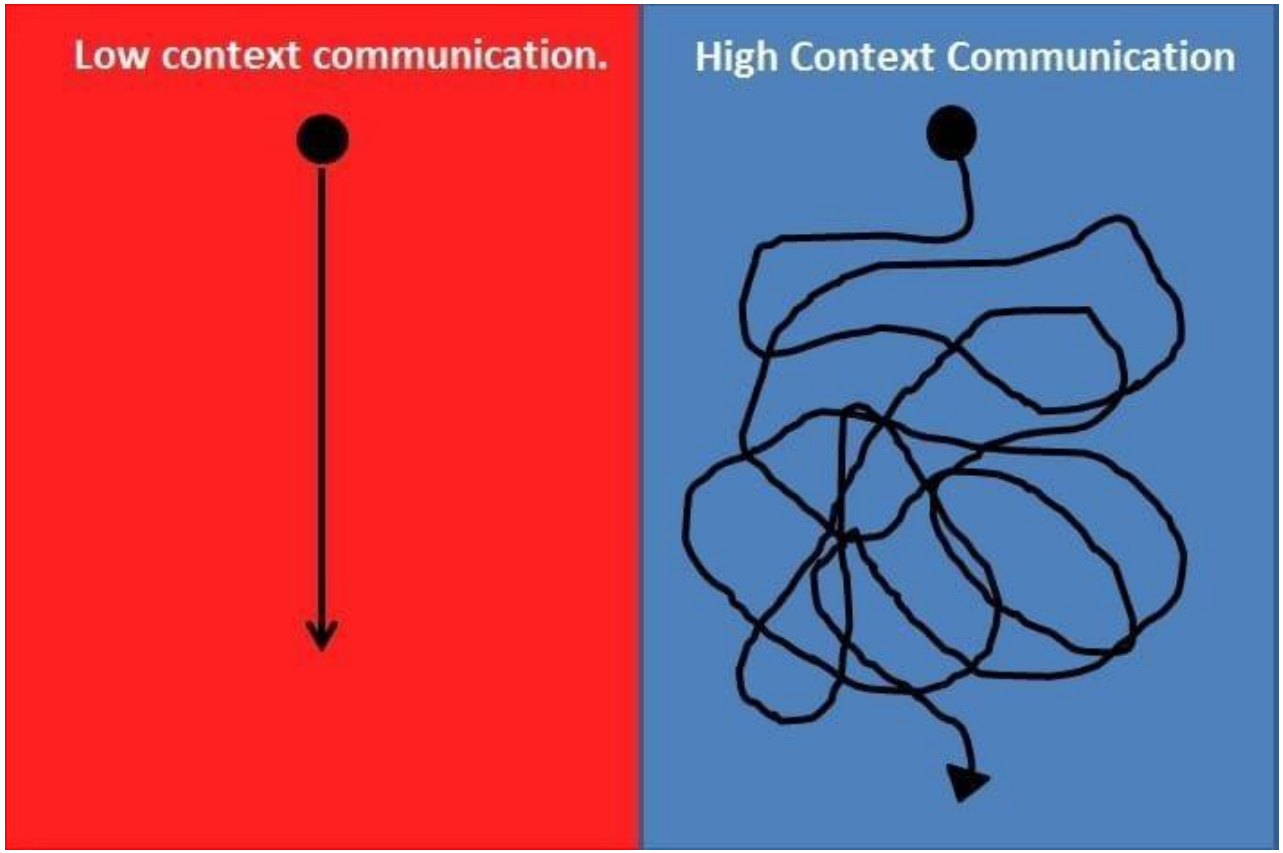
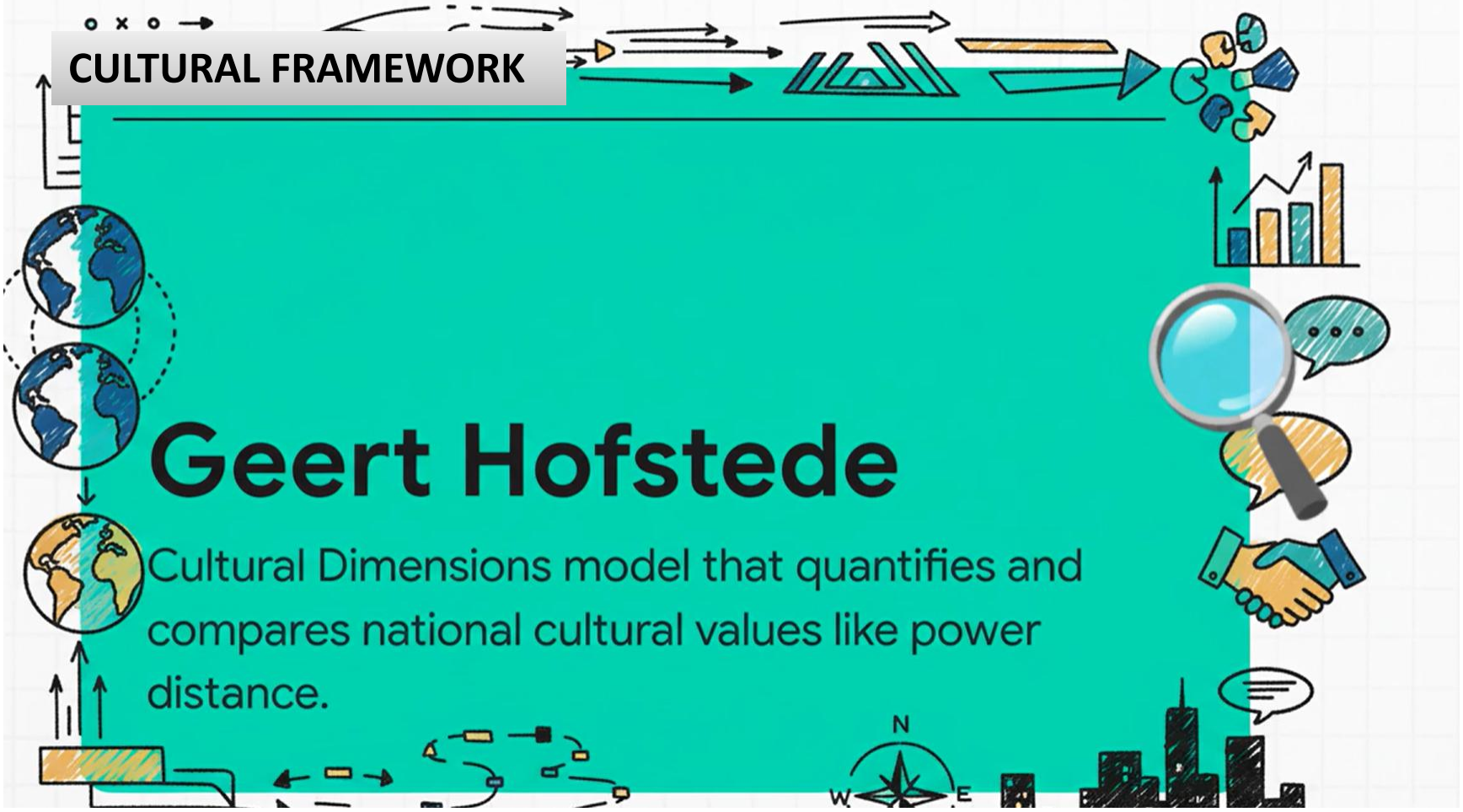
CULTURAL FRAMEWORK



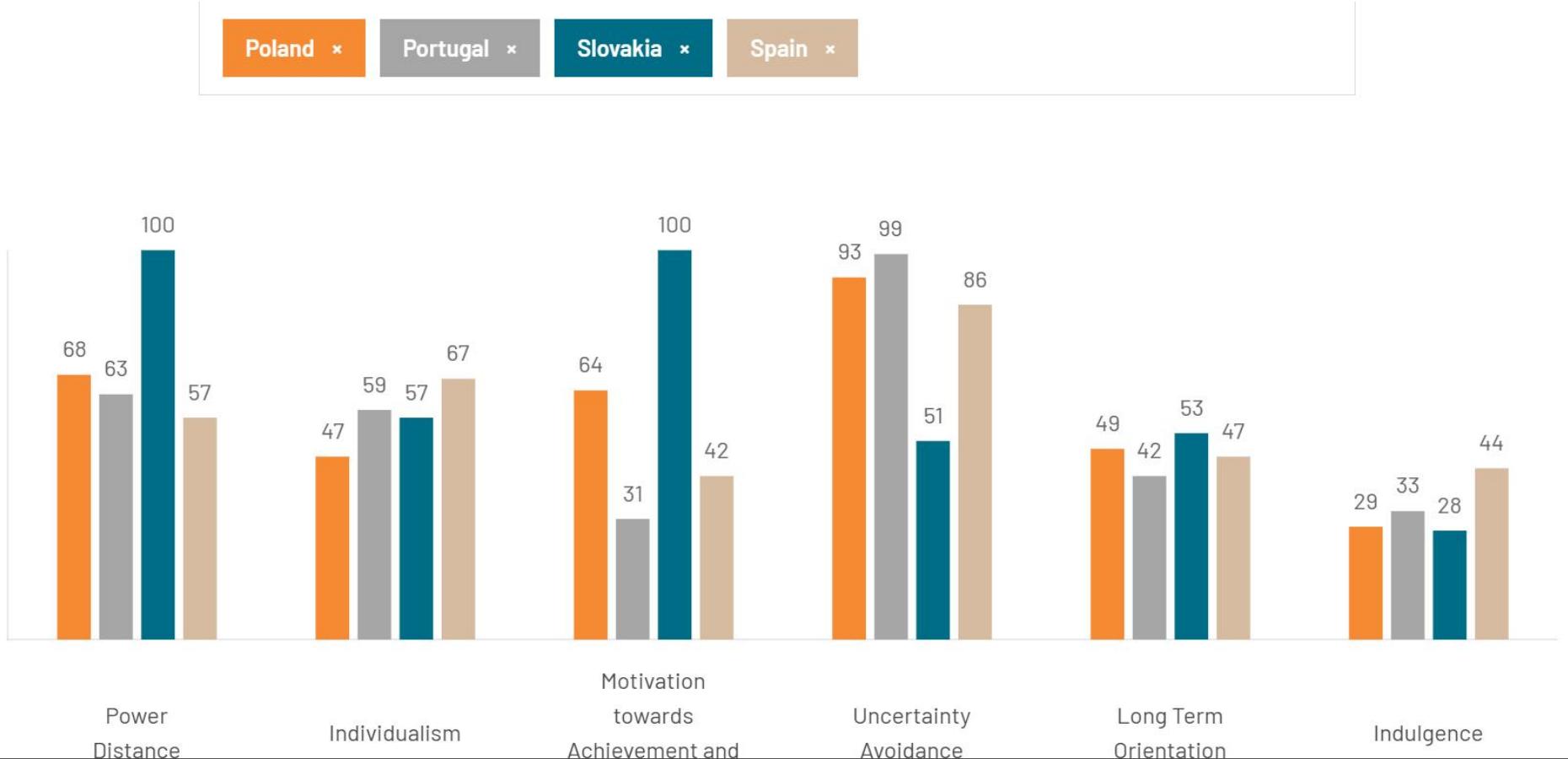
Edward Hall – High/Low Context Communication



CULTURAL FRAMEWORK



Geert Hofstede - six key dimensions for comparing national cultures



CULTURAL FRAMEWORK

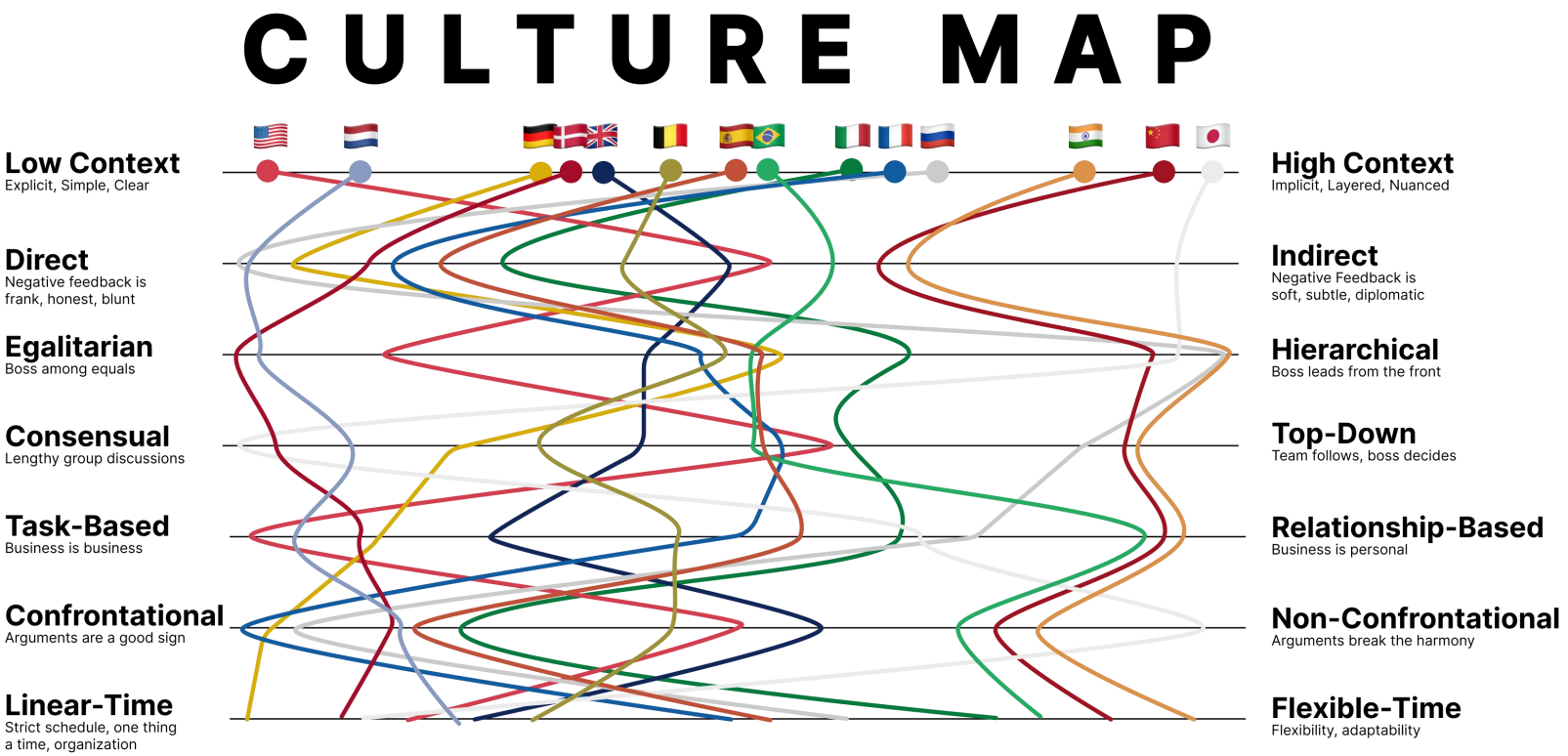
Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner seven dimensions of culture

CULTURAL FRAMEWORK

Erin Meyer's Culture Map

An integrated model with 8 practical scales for global business, adapting earlier frameworks.

Erin Meyer's 8 scales → Business-focused, comparative, digital-friendly model



Meyer's The Culture Map in a Digital Context

- Read HBR article/questionnaire introducing *The Culture Map*
- *Vevox* polls and surveys and oral presentations (in-class sharing)
- Map students' own profiles online + compare with country's norm
- Think–Pair–Share reflections
- Discussion guided by ODIS model (Observe–Describe–Interpret–Suspend judgment)

Indicate your level of agreement with the statements below.

1. I strive to communicate simply, clearly, and explicitly. I avoid reading (and speaking) between the lines.

- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neutral
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

Source: "What's You Cultural Profile" (Erin Meyer, HBR)

Communicating. This scale measures the degree to which a culture prefers **low- or high-context** communication, a metric developed by anthropologist Edward Hall. In low-context cultures (such as the U.S., Germany, and the Netherlands), good communication is precise, simple, and explicit. Messages are expressed and understood at face value. Repetition and written confirmation are appreciated, for clarity's sake. In high-context cultures (such as China, India, and France), communication is sophisticated, nuanced, and layered. Reading between the lines is expected. Less is put in writing, and more is left to interpretation.

Source: "What's You Cultural Profile" (Erin Meyer, HBR)

5. I prefer to give negative feedback immediately and all at once rather than little by little, building up the picture over time.

- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neutral
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

Source: "What's You Cultural Profile" (Erin Meyer, HBR)

Evaluating. Often confused with the Communicating scale, Evaluating measures something distinct: the relative preference for **direct versus indirect** criticism. The French, for example, are high-context communicators relative to Americans yet are much more direct with negative feedback. Spaniards and Mexicans are equally high-context communicators, but the Spanish are much more direct than Mexicans when it comes to giving negative feedback.

Source: "What's You Cultural Profile" (Erin Meyer, HBR)

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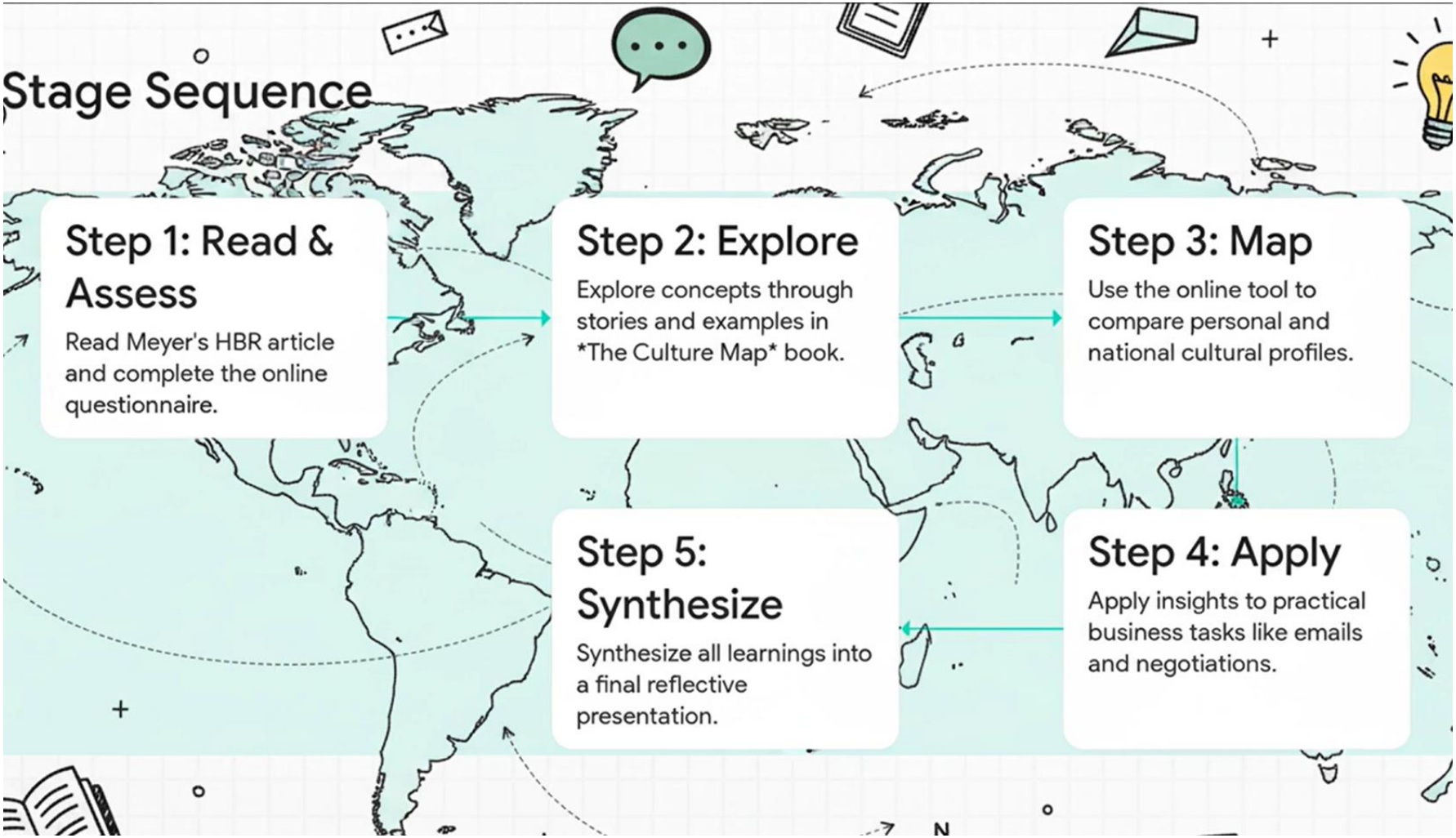

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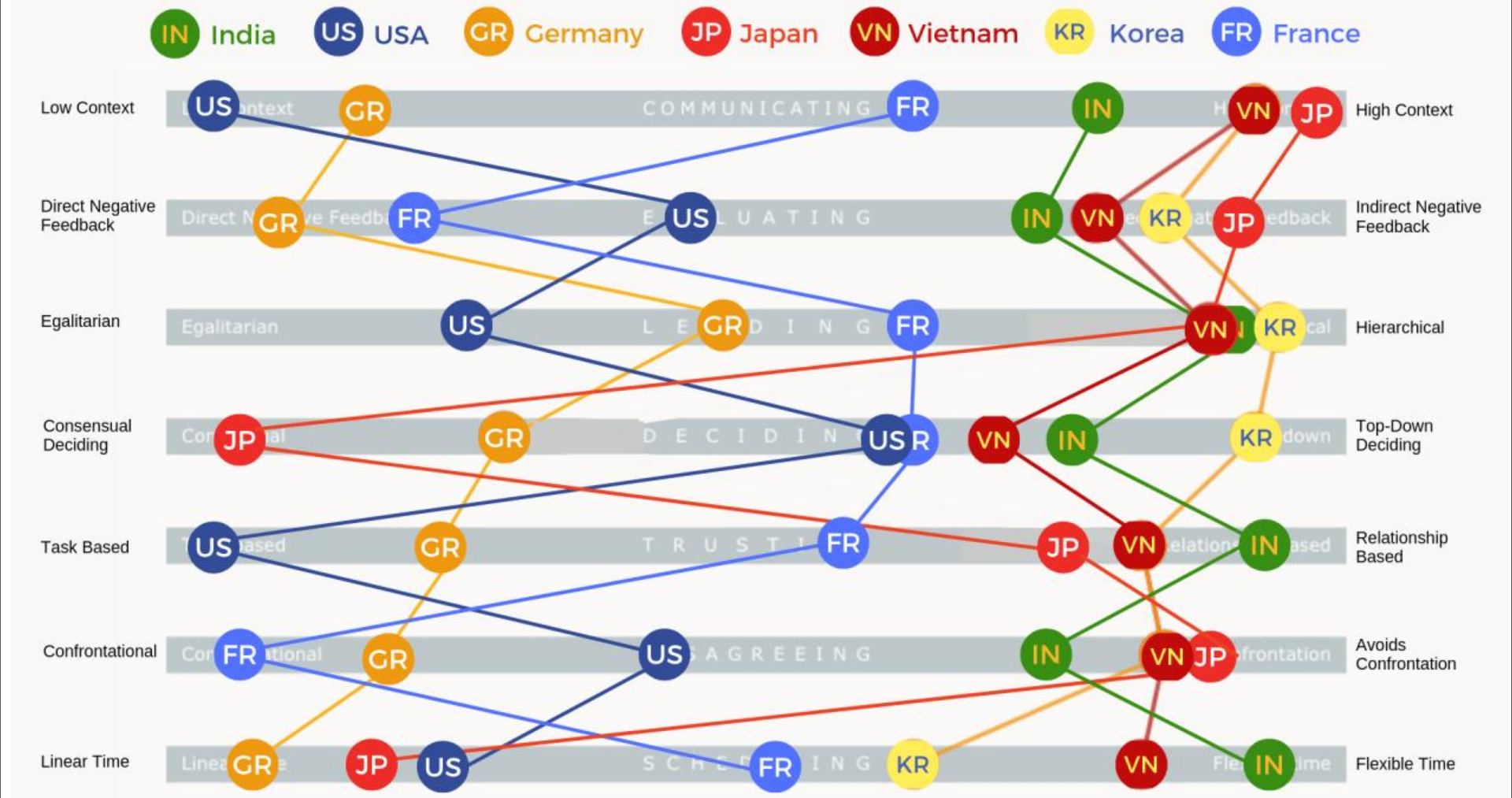
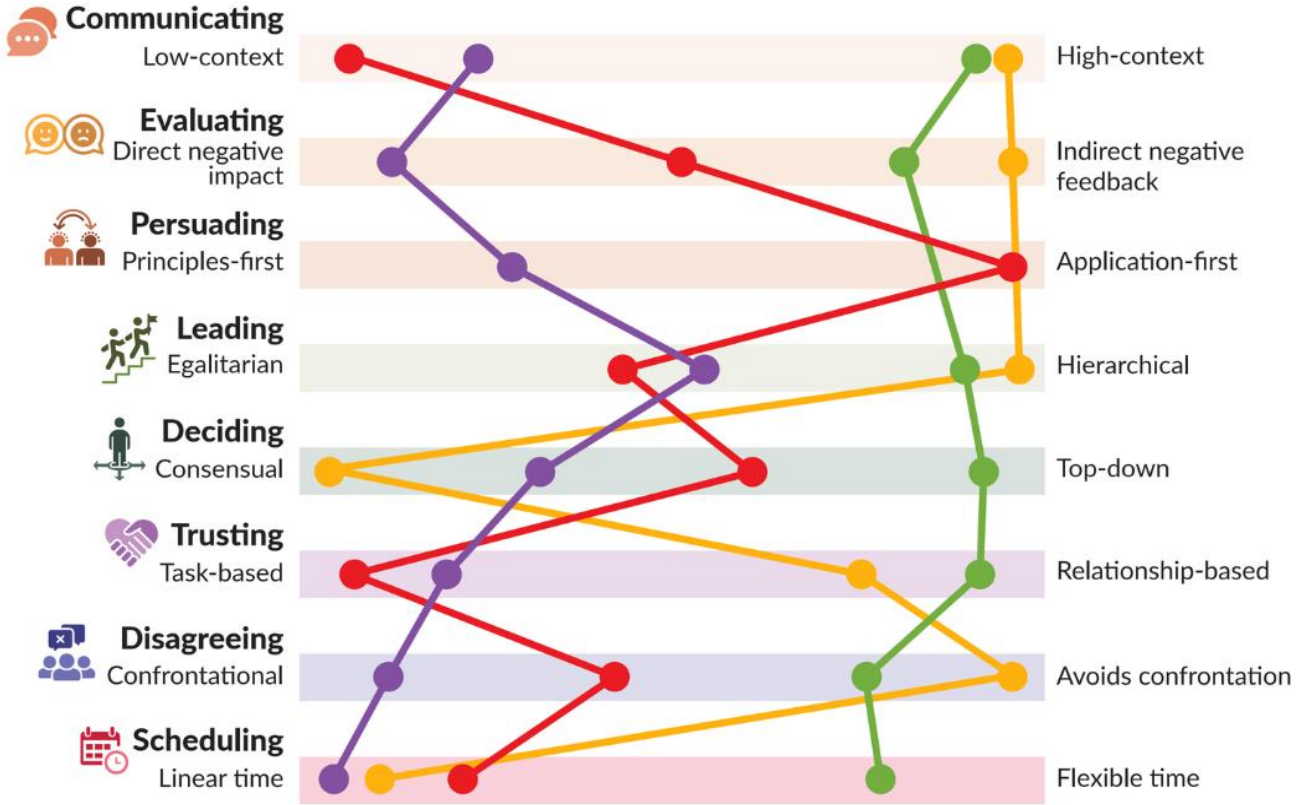
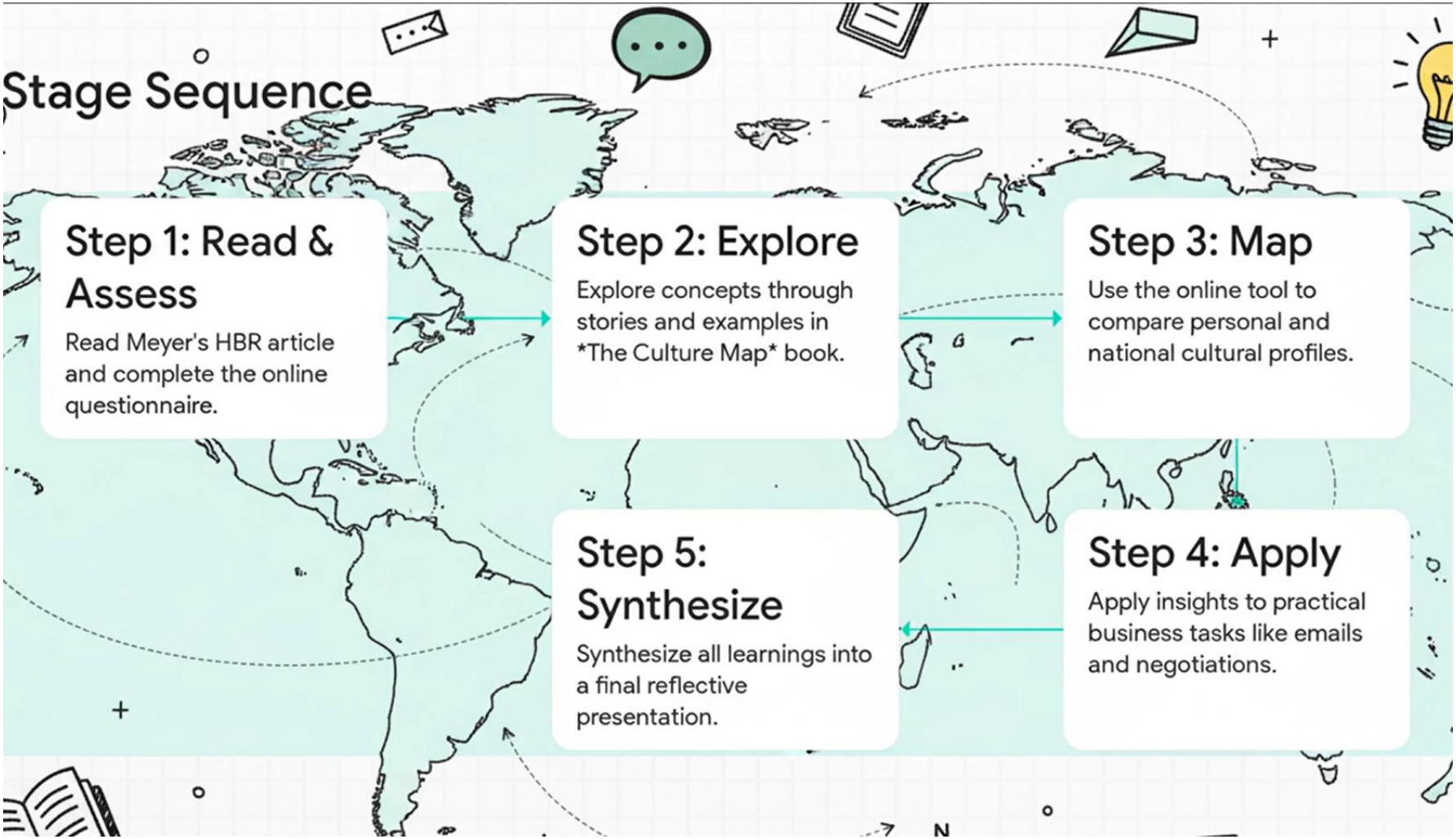


Cultural Relativity:
Understanding how one culture sees another



READINGGRAPHICS
Ideas Come Alive


Stage Sequence
Step 1: Read & Assess
Read Meyer's HBR article and complete the online questionnaire.
Step 2: Explore
Explore concepts through stories and examples in *The Culture Map* book.
Step 3: Map
Use the online tool to compare personal and national cultural profiles.
Step 4: Apply
Apply insights to practical business tasks like emails and negotiations.
Step 5: Synthesize
Synthesize all learnings into a final reflective presentation.

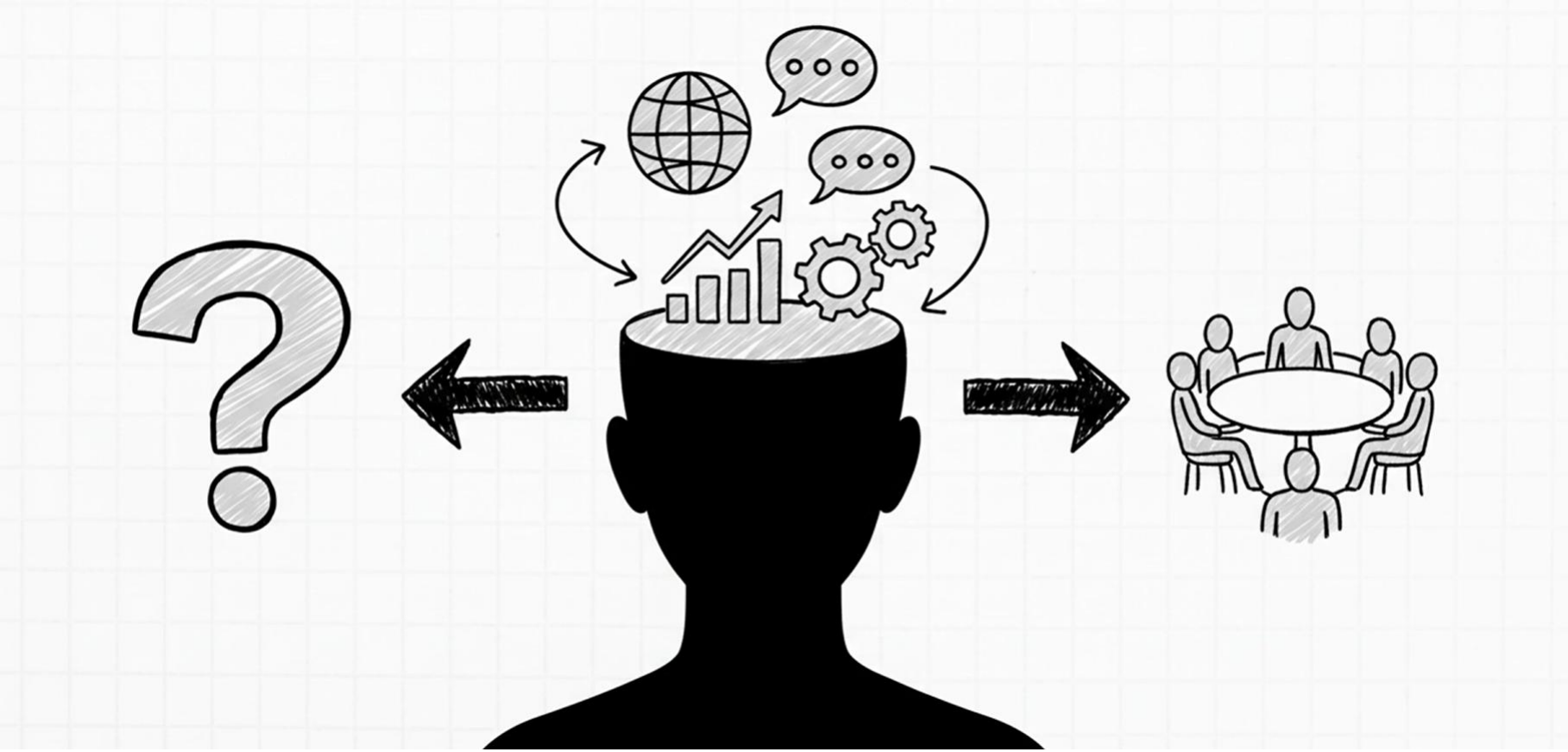
Multimodal Resources

- TEDTalks, YouTube interviews, and case studies
- Interactive Moodle activities (grammar, vocabulary, collocations)
- Online discussion boards, mapping exercises and AI tools (creative / synthetic pedagogy)
- Combining linguistic accuracy with cultural awareness

Voices from the Classroom

- "I learned that cultural models explain tendencies, not rules."
- "Seeing my position on the map helped me understand my communication style."
- It’s easier to talk about cultural differences when you can actually see them on the screen.”

Digital Humanities in Action



How can Digital Humanities reshape the way we teach intercultural competence in Business English - not as a fixed skill, but as an evolving dialogue between language, culture, and technology?