1. What does it mean to say that education is an “embodiment of a culture’s way of life” (Bruner p. 13)? Provide some examples of ways in which Canadian education embodies Canadian culture, or ways in which Chinese education embodies Chinese culture, or education in any other culture with which you are familiar.

2. Bruner speaks of education providing a toolkit or set of cultural tools. What are these tools that he is referring to? Are these the same tools that Rogoff is talking about in her article when she refers to cultural tools? Provide some examples to show the similarity or the difference.

3. What does Bruner mean by a “mutual” “community of learners” (pages 21 and 38)? Does he see such communities as a standard feature of Western culture that arise naturally in schools, or are they something contrary to Western culture which he thinks should be brought into schools? Why are such communities desirable?

4. Provide an example of a situation in which you believe you were working in a mutual learning community. What were the challenges of this situation? What were the benefits?

5. Bruner sees schooling as a means of introducing young people into their culture.

a. What experiences have you had in school where teachers explicitly identified their goal as being to introduce you to the culture? To what extent were these successful?

b. In what ways does school invisibly introduce students to their culture; that is, what aspects of school bring students into the shared meanings and practices of the culture without any explicit attempt on the part of teachers to adopt that goal?

6. What does it mean to say that Western pedagogy deemphasizes “intersubjectivity” by “transmitting” culture to young people? Why does Bruner consider this a problem? What examples can you give of school practices that deemphasize intersubjectivity?

7. Summarize what Ladsen-Billings sees as the primary characteristics of “culturally-relevant” teaching. What does culture refer to in this phrase? Why call this form of teaching “culturally relevant”? She contrasts it with assimilationist teaching. What do you think is her reason for using the term “assimilationist” for this approach?

8. What claims does Ladsen-Billings make about conceptions of self in African-American culture? If her view is correct, what issues does this raise for how American schooling is organized?

9. Discuss with your group what the authors we have read this term would regard as the key components of a definition of culture. Try to pinpoint which articles offer definitions and whether there are any differences from author to author.