**Acquiring and Teaching Intercultural Competence in Psychology: A Developmental Journey**

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As part of my presentation for Strategies for Internationalizing Undergraduate Psychology workshop, I have prepared a list of suggestions that emerge from my experiences as a faculty member. These suggestions are based in large part from my efforts (over several decades) to work toward teaching more effectively about intercultural, international, and global themes. I have organized my thoughts and related content around three general areas: (a) suggestions for faculty self-education and development, (b) general priorities for teaching that support the development of intercultural competence, and (c) some specific approaches/strategies for teaching. Following each section, I have included several questions for reflection and conference conversation.

Each of the faculty members at this workshop brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to the task of internationalizing the psychology curriculum. I am hopeful that the ideas I mention below can be filtered through the lenses of participants and enriched through modification and elaboration by co-participants and presenters at this workshop.

Each of us has a “story” about how we became interested in internationalizing the psychology curriculum; I assume that each person at this workshop can point to a personal set of experiences that has been meaningful in planning and implementing effective teaching relevant to intercultural competence. As part of my talk, I will use information from my developmental experience to discuss my learning relevant to internationalizing and globalizing the psychology curriculum. I am looking forward to learning through the sharing of knowledge, expertise, and perspectives of fellow workshop attendees.

Faculty Self-Education and Development

In this first section, I focus on five themes that support self-education and faculty development relevant to internationalizing the curriculum.

1. Take time to become familiar with principles and guidelines about internationalizing and globalizing psychology. Use these principles and learning goals to inform your priorities and your personal approach/philosophy for internationalizing the curriculum.

Three documents have been particularly useful to me as I have contemplated various options for internationalizing/globalizing psychology in my courses and work with students. They include:

The American Psychological Association’s (APA) *Resolution on Culture and Gender Awareness in International Psychology* (which originated from efforts of the International Committee for Women of Division 52 [ICFW] and CIRP [Committee for International Relations in Psychology]. The APA resolution (2004) is available at [www.apa.org/about/governance/council/policy/gender.aspx](http://www.apa.org/about/governance/council/policy/gender.aspx) ). The “executive” summary and paper (Rice & Ballou, 2002), which provided a rationale for APA’s resolution, identified 5 core principles for gender and cultural awareness:

(a) Understanding the experiences of individuals in diverse cultures and contexts.

(b) Respect for pluralism based on differences.

(c) Awareness and analysis of power.

(d) Critical analysis of Western perspectives.

(e) An international and interdisciplinary social-cultural perspective.

APA’s *Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major* (available at [www.apa.org/ed/precollege/about/psymajor-guidelines.pdf](http://www.apa.org/ed/precollege/about/psymajor-guidelines.pdf)). Although all 10 guidelines are relevant to internationalizing the curriculum, 2 of the guidelines seem especially pertinent to internationalizing psychology curricula: Goal 5 (Values in Psychology) and Goal 8 (Sociocultural and International Awareness). As the guidelines elaborate, learning/outcome goals associated with sociocultural and international awareness include:

1. Interact effectively and sensitively with people from diverse backgrounds and cultural perspectives.

(b) Examine sociocultural and international contexts that influence individual differences.

(c) Explain how individual differences influence beliefs, values, and interaction with others.

(d) understand how privilege, power, and oppression may affect prejudice, discrimination, and

inequality.

(e) Recognize prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory behaviors that might exist in themselves

and others.

APA’s *Report and Recommended Learning Outcomes for Internationalizing the Undergraduate Curriculum* ([www.apa.org/ed/precollege/about/international.pdf](http://www.apa.org/ed/precollege/about/international.pdf)). This report is the product of a task force on internationalizing the curriculum. Five learning outcomes are emphasized:

1. Psychological knowledge. Students should recognize, acknowledge, and describe sociocultural differences and commonalities between people as well as the diversity of human behavior.
2. Methodological issues. Students should be aware of research methods/skills for competence in international research.
3. Psychology in international perspective. Students should be aware of how the discipline of psychology is developed, studied, and applied in and across cultures.
4. Interpersonal understanding. Students should be able to use their psychological knowledge and understanding of cultural differences and behavior to demonstrate skills and values that will help them function effectively in a complex multicultural global world.
5. Global issues. Students should be able to recognize, appreciate, and describe the role that psychological knowledge plays in addressing issues related to the human condition from a global perspective.

Across these three documents described above, multiple themes are emphasized repeatedly. I have gleaned the following themes or priorities across these materials. I have also prepared a more elaborated list of “principles of inclusive psychology” that I sometimes share with students (especially toward the end of a class).

1. Provide a critical analysis of Western perspectives, which includes an analysis of how power and privilege structures within psychology are reflected in theory, research, practice, and attitudes toward diverse cultures.
2. Encourage reflexivity and acknowledge “positionality.” As students of culture, we benefit by asking questions that encourage us to explore the following: How am I “positioned” in society and how do my experiences of privilege, disadvantage, and values influence my perspectives and worldview?
3. Promote intercultural skills and understanding through exploring and gaining knowledge of cultural practices, values, and psychologies as they are understood by the individuals who live them. Support the development of “frame-shifting” and “behavioral code shifting” skills, which involve the ability to see issues and practices from multiple perspectives.
4. Frame human behavior within ecological, contextualized, interdisciplinary frameworks. Emphasizing behavior in context decreases the likelihood “context stripping,” or treating human diversity as “nuisance variables.”
5. Promote a holistic, inclusive “culture of evidence.” The methodologies that are likely to provide a holistic understanding are likely to include a combination of traditional psychological methods (e.g., quantitative experimental methodologies) as well as qualitative methods (e.g., case study, ethnography, participatory action frameworks).
6. Promote knowledge of global and social justice issues around the world, and develop appreciation for diverse, culturally-sensitive ways of addressing these concerns.

2. Think creatively about self-education and development as a faculty member and scholar. Take advantage of the unique opportunities available to faculty members at liberal arts colleges.

I believe that steps toward internationalizing the psychology curriculum need to begin with ourselves. Devoting time and energy to scholarship about internationalizing the psychology curriculum can be associated with more uncertainty and fewer traditional rewards (e.g., a clear path toward publication) than the typical scholarship model found in North American psychology. More specifically, taking advantage of opportunities for scholarship that inform teaching about global perspectives may be associated with more risk, and may take time away from more customary forms of scholarship in psychology. Our presence, however, in liberal arts contexts, usually means that unique faculty development pathways are more likely to be valued, and we may have more opportunities to take advantage of interdisciplinary opportunities than is the case in other colleges/universities. Our institutions are also more likely to provide at least partial funding for faculty development opportunities in the liberal arts.

In many ways, my experience offers one example of the serendipitous ways in which moving beyond my usual comfort zones has led to a variety of new possibilities. As someone who lived in another country (Japan) as a child and adolescent, I have been mindful of my international roots throughout my career as a psychologist. However, a 30-year time gap elapsed between the time I lived in Japan as a young person and returned to Japan as a psychologist/educator. The Japan Study Faculty Travel grant (ACM/GLCA program) gave me this opportunity in 1999. This initial foray led to a rich and unexpected set of opportunities that have evolved over the past 12 years. These opportunities have led to and included: (a) numerous acquaintances and collaborations with psychologists, mental health workers, and feminists in Japan; (b) the chance to serve as a “cultural ambassador” and to accompany small groups of students to several Japanese universities; (c) extended time in Japan during two sabbaticals; (d) teaching at Waseda University as an extension of my role as Resident Director of the Japan Study Program; (e) a term of service on the Japan Study Advisory Committee; (f) collaboration with a Colorado College faculty member (Joan Ericson) on an ACM FaCE grant that supported the planning of a course in Japan; and (g) the opportunity to sponsor independent study options for Cornell students at institutions in other countries.

Initial faculty development opportunities in Japan also made me a more viable candidate for other experiences such as: (a) participating in East-West Center programs on Infusing East Asia in the Undergraduate Curriculum, and the China Field Study program; (b) teaching a short-term summer course in South Korea (2010); (c) serving as an external examiner for the Cultural Studies program at the University of Birmingham, UK; and (d) fulfilling a term as a member of the American Psychological Association’s Committee for International Relations in Psychology (CIRP). Each opportunity has contributed to new ways of thinking and teaching about psychology. As has often been the case throughout my career, teaching informs research/scholarship, and scholarship opportunities have informed my teaching.

Although many of the comments above are autobiographical, I believe that some generalizable themes may be relevant to colleagues. Thus, I offer the following suggestions.

1. Contribute to campus-based faculty interest groups that may be region specific (e.g., an Asian interest group or Latin America interest group) or start an interdisciplinary reading group that focuses on global issues or a specific region of the world.
2. Get involved in campus programming for international students. This programming might involve orientation activities, serving as a host family, or becoming involved as an adviser to student groups. Although these roles involve service to students, they also offer enrichment to faculty members.
3. Serve as an advisory board member for a consortium study abroad program or campus-based committees that oversee international study.
4. Take advantage of short-term travel/study opportunities for faculty members (campus-based grants, consortium grants, or other educational groups that feature education about regions that interest you).
5. Participate in your institution’s research and teaching exchange possibilities. Many liberal arts colleges have collaborative/sister relationships with other institutions around the world. These relationships may allow for short exchanges that allow faculty members to visit the sister institution to present their research, teach, or to introduce students to these settings.
6. Apply for internal and external grants designed to support faculty-student research and travel, or group faculty travel. In addition, consider applying for Fulbright sponsored teaching/research opportunities ([www.cies.org](http://www.cies.org)).
7. Develop language skills. Learning a new language or refreshing existing language skills is a complex and time-consuming process, and finding the time to develop high levels of proficiency is most likely unrealistic for the typical busy faculty member. However, developing even limited language skills can facilitate communication substantially, and sends the message to hosts in other countries that one is willing to invest effort in developing cultural competence.

3. Develop collaborative relationships with colleagues from other countries.

One of the most rewarding aspects of a faculty development plan that incorporates study and travel abroad is the opportunity to develop relationships with colleagues from other countries. These relationships often emerge as a result of traveling and working abroad; however, they may also begin to develop prior to travel phases of one’s development plan. These relationships often lead to opportunities to co-present with international scholars at conferences, collaborate on writing projects, and to enrich on-campus and off-campus teaching.

My personal connections with international psychologists began through initiating interactions with international students who were completing their Ph.D. or undergraduate degrees in the US, then developing contacts with international psychologists psychology at conventions in the US, and finally, by developing a network of contacts while traveling and studying in Asia. To facilitate these connections, I joined the Division of International Psychology (Division 52 of APA), and also prioritized attendance at committees and convention sessions that feature international psychologists (especially the International Committee for Women in Psychology, ICFW).

Although my initial acquaintance with international colleagues has often emerged at US conferences, I have been able to build on those contacts through regular follow-up contacts in multiple settings. With these colleagues, I have been able to participate in collaborative projects and presentations at APA conventions, visit these colleagues in their home countries, and maintain periodic contact through e-mail. For each of the past five years, I have had opportunities to co-present with international colleagues, and have completed writing projects with these colleagues (e.g., Enns & Kasai, 2003; Iwakabe & Enns, in press; Mirsu-Paun & Enns, 2008). These collaborations have enriched my scholarship and teaching. I have also been able to “give back” to some of my international colleagues by editing their writing for an English speaking audience, journal, or book project. When forming these relationships, it is important to avoid reinforcing traditional power relationships between the West and other countries. “Co-mentoring” and reciprocity are important (Enns, Kasai, & Machizawa, 2006).

4. Read journals and participate in professional networks that foster international/global perspectives.

In addition to keeping up with our specialties in psychology, it is useful to take time to scan journals that publish international research or that deal with social justice issues in a global context. Within professional organizations, consider joining and participating actively in divisions or interest groups that foster international awareness or international projects. In addition to APA’s International (Div. 52) and Peace (Div. 48) divisions, international interest groups can be found within a variety of other APA divisions (e.g., counseling psychology, psychology of women, teaching of psychology) and within the American Psychological Society (APS).

Several other types of professional organizations merit at least brief mention. The Association for Cross-Cultural Psychology ([www.iaccp.org](http://www.iaccp.org)) not only sponsors a journal and conferences, but also features a variety of teaching tools on its website (*Online Readings in Psychology and Culture*). Psychologists for Social Responsibility ([www.psysr.org](http://www.psysr.org)) is another example of an independent nonprofit group that fosters social justice themes in global context. Region-specific interdisciplinary organizations such as ASIANetwork ([www.asianetwork.org](http://www.asianetwork.org)) can also offer enrichment to psychologists. Personal involvement in any these groups can lead to collaborative scholarly projects, service opportunities, and/or creative teaching ideas.

5. Define psychology broadly and inclusively. Enrich your knowledge of cultural psychology by reading widely in related fields of study.

I have sometimes been held back by fears that my interests in global and international issues are not psychological enough, or that my colleagues might believe that I am moving too far adrift from my psychological roots to define what I am doing as psychology. Despite these concerns, I have sometimes found more helpful information and background relevant to international teaching/scholarship roles within anthropological, sociological, or religious studies texts than in psychological texts or journals. Over time, I have gained more freedom from self-imposed constraints and have learned to believe that these sources informal and enrich cultural psychology rather than supplanting psychology. My thinking has been reinforced by other sources that draw broadly from interdisciplinary scholarship. For example, a recent text titled *Themes in Chinese Psychology* (Sun, 2008) draws substantially from Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, and Chinese fiction to inform her philosophically-oriented approach to Chinese psychology. I was also pleased to note that at least one resource for “taking psychology abroad” features a variety of ideas that incorporate interdisciplinary learning (Smith & Vandermaas-Peeler, 2009, at teachpsych.org/otrp/resources/smith09.pdf).

Part 1 Questions for discussion

1. What types of life experiences, academic experiences, “critical incidents,” and/or serendipitous events have contributed to your interest in internationalizing psychology?
2. What types of support networks within/across institutions and with colleagues have been helpful for moving forward with international/global teaching and research interests?
3. What types of faculty development opportunities have been most useful to you as you have prepared for internationalizing your teaching and/or research?
4. Competing teaching priorities are present in most of the environments in which we teach. What strategies or approaches have you used to convince colleagues in your department (or within the academic affairs division) of the importance of your international/global interests?

Teaching That Supports Intercultural Competence and Internationalizes the Curriculum

It is sometimes difficult to know where to get started in terms of teaching about international aspects of psychology and/or intercultural competence. In this section, I offer some broad suggestions for moving toward teaching more international/global content.

1. Integrate international/global perspectives within existing courses and expand from that point of entry.

Although some courses lend themselves more easily to the teaching of a more inclusive, global psychology (e.g., multicultural psychology), it is now possible to locate research and theoretical perspectives relevant to many topics in psychology and many regions of the world (Arnett, 2008). During the past year, for example, a special issue of *Perspectives on Psychological Science* (July, 2010) included reviews of cross-cultural/cultural research in diverse domains such as cognitive neuroscience (Park & Huang, 2010), personality psychology (Church, 2010; Markus & Kitayama, 2010), developmental psychology and cognition (e.g., Rogoff, Morelli, & Chavajay, 2010; Ross & Wang, 2010), and subjective well-being (Oishi & Schimmack, 2010). Arnett (2008) argues that we have been slow to take full advantage of the “immense amount of psychological research taking place in countries around the world” (p. 609), much of it published in English.

One useful approach to specific content areas is to consider global forces and social issues that can be linked to the content of a specific course. Marsella (1998) identified 25 global changes and forces relevant to psychology (see also Marsella, 2009). One strategy that may facilitate internationalizing course content is to consult Marsella’s list and introduce several of these issues in light of existing course content.

One of the courses I have taught throughout my career is the psychology of women and gender. At the first phase of my development, I integrated specific content/examples relevant to specific topics (e.g., violence against women). This eventually led to a structure that I have adapted to more specialized courses relevant to gender (e.g., Women’s Roles and Women’s Movements in Japan, Psychology of Women and Gender in Cultural Context). Although I have been able to retain a general structure that is relevant to the study of gender in multiple contexts, I have found it essential to re-work reading lists for multiple contexts and to move beyond psychology to find appropriate readings. For example, when teaching Psychology of Women and Gender in South Korea (summer of 2010), I retained some general readings written by North American authors. However, I relied primarily on English language readings written by and about women of South Korea. This strategy allowed me to teach a more inclusive and culturally relevant course, and one that I think was more engaging to students. When teaching about body image issues, for example, I have used at least one general article about body objectification theory (e.g., Fredrickson & Roberts, 1996) along with one or two country-specific articles about body image issues. The pairing of a North American source with one or two country-specific sources related to an issue provides students with tools to consider how an increasingly global issue may or may not be relevant to a specific cultural context, as well as how local cultural values inform the issue.

A recent survey of psychologists (Grenwald & Velayo, 2011) found that the most common method for revising courses was to integrate global content throughout a course (endorsed by 91.7% of respondents who identified themselves as internationalizing their courses). This practice is consistent with the thoughts I have shared in the previous paragraphs. Although this recent survey revealed that the cross-cultural or multicultural psychology course was the most common course in which international content was infused, respondents also indicated that they had revised a wide range of other courses to include global content. These courses included research methods and developmental, abnormal, gender, introductory, social, organizational, educational, cognitive, neuro/physiological, and personality psychology.

2. Consider teaching campus-based “topics” courses that centralize content about another region of the world.

Courses such as multicultural and cultural psychology provide opportunities to introduce broad concepts relevant to culture and psychology. Focusing intensively on a specific region of the world is a useful approach, and may allow us to bring greater depth to our teaching of global issues. A campus-based course may also provide a foundation for teaching a short-term study abroad version of the same course or a related course.

I recently offered a course titled “Asian and Asian American Psychologies” (October, 2010). This course allowed me to integrate indigenous Asian approaches with perspectives on the Asian immigration experience, as well as scholarship about Asian American Psychology. I used readings from a text (*Asian American Psychology,* Tewari & Alvarez, 2009) as well as a variety of sources about Asian philosophical and cultural traditions. Although the course was taught primarily on campus, we also heard from guest speakers, viewed movies, and participated in a two-day field trip to Chicago. While in Chicago, we explored a variety of immigrant communities such as Little India, Korea Town, and China Town, and talked with members of these communities about the roles and evolution of these immigrant communities. Students also completed “mapping” activities or a neighborhood “ethnography,” which required them to apply focused observation skills.

Although this course did not provide the full cultural encounter that comes from teaching a course in another country, students began to “get their feet wet.” In addition, because approximately half of the 22 students in the course identified themselves as Asian American or Asian international students (from China, Vietnam, Burma, Taiwan, Korea, and the Philippines), the membership of the class facilitated productive intercultural encounters. This recent experience was one of the more rewarding teaching experiences of my career, and revealed how centralizing content relevant to diversity may offer a welcoming atmosphere for a diverse group of students.

3. Incorporate a critical analysis of Western psychological perspectives within your teaching.

One of my first efforts to teach about culture involved focusing on the “cultural relativism” of specific psychological constructs (Enns, 1994). Examining assumptions and the strengths and limitations of specific psychological constructs may be especially useful when the cross-cultural literature on a topic is skimpy. (Fortunately, this is less likely to be an issue in 2011 than it was during the early 1990s.) Students can be encouraged to consider what types of constructs are relevant to an inclusive psychology. In general, examining the assumptions underlying Western psychological theories and research can provide a foundation for critical thinking across the psychology curriculum.

Marsella (1998) argued that “Western psychology will need to be repositioned as one of many psychologies worldwide rather than as the only or dominant psychology” (p. 1286). We need to encourage our students to ask how Western psychology is a “cultural construction” and how it can support ethnocentric biases. Recently, Marsella (2010) has proposed that even when sources are written by psychologists from non-Western cultures, we may need to be cautious about accepting some of the interpretations they offer. He argued that because many non-Western psychologists have received their training in US institutions and because of the way in which graduate education can reinforce existing power structures and perspectives, Western-trained international scholars may inadvertently promote a non-critical view of Western concepts. Thus, gaining knowledge of/exposure to indigenous concepts is also likely to be important to our teaching. As emphasis on critical and decolonizing approaches in psychology increases, we are fortunate to have greater access to resources relevant to indigenous psychologies (e.g., Bakker, 2009; Kim, Yang, & Hwang, 2006).

4. Bring an interdisciplinary approach to internationalizing the psychology curriculum.

Encourage students to enroll in courses across the curriculum that emphasize multicultural content. Cultural psychology courses (and related courses) provide excellent contexts for internationalizing the curriculum as well as for studying issues such as immigration, prejudice, power dynamics, privilege, and racism. Within the context of our liberal arts colleges, students also have opportunities to internationalize their knowledge base in multiple disciplines such as in language departments, anthropology, sociology, religion, and philosophy. Bringing multiple disciplinary lenses to the study of human behavior across cultures is likely to help psychology students develop expanded worldviews. As advisers and teachers, providing guidance about the value of enrolling in these options enrichment opportunities is important.

Arnett (2008) proposed that psychology professors’ education tends to be based on relatively narrow approaches to research and training, and thus, they sometimes have difficulty questioning the assumptions that dominate psychology. He argues that anthropologists are more effectively equipped to emphasize approaches that are “faithful to the cultural context of the people they study” (p . 613). Furthermore, Arnett proposes that undergraduate psychology programs should require at least two courses in anthropology or cultural psychology. Although his recommendations may seem overly prescriptive, encouraging students to try out different frameworks for encountering human behavior is likely to enrich their perspectives within psychology.

Other options include developing courses that bring together instructors from multiple disciplines. One example of such a strategy is a course that I co-taught in Japan with a sociologist from my campus (Erin Davis). The title of our course was Culture, Gender, and Public Policy in Japan, and allowed us to work with students in more creative ways that transcended our usual disciplinary boundaries. In addition, we linked our course to Joan Ericson’s Colorado College course, and our courses overlapped for 10 days in Japan. Although our courses had independent components, we shared activities, guest speakers, and occasional readings. Joan’s expertise in the humanities and Japanese women’s literature enriched psychology and sociology students’ understanding of Japanese culture and psychology.

5. Teach about social justice issues in global context. Teach culturally sensitive attitudes toward intervening in social justice issues.

An inclusive psychology (as I define it for myself) is a “psychology of the common good” and of social change. Considering the social change and social policy implications of global issues supports civic engagement. Volunteer activities, service-learning, and internships in both the domestic and international context are effective tools for promoting civic engagement attitudes. Unfortunately, when students do not receive adequate predeparture training or service learning abroad is not framed effectively, students can sometimes return with notions about Western superiority. Preparation for participating effectively in such service-learning activities is crucial to help avoid the possibility that students might develop victim blaming or even neo-colonial attitudes toward persons of diverse cultures.

Tools that help prepare students may include videos/movies that highlight culturally sensitive interventions (such as the 2008 Nova program titled “Walk to Beautiful”). Wessells’s (2009) article on contextually appropriate psychosocial support identifies problems associated with “parachuting” and intervention efforts that are (a) inattentive to power dynamics, (b) are contextually and culturally inappropriate, (c) emphasize deficits over resilience, or (d) fail to incorporate a holistic perspective. Watters’ (2010) book also offers a critique of culturally insensitive interventions. These readings serve as examples of materials that foster productive student discussion and provide students with a broader, more contextualized understanding of ethics in the global context.

Part 2 Questions for discussion

1. What course or courses have you created or revised with the intention of internationalizing/globalizing the content? In which courses has this infusion worked most effectively (and least effectively)? Why? What are some of the challenges of integrating global content in psychology courses?
2. What goals relevant internationalizing the curriculum (as defined by various documents) are easier and harder to implement? What types of internationalizing efforts appear to elicit greater engagement on the part of students?
3. What types of global issue-oriented teaching (see #1) lends itself to a psychological-global perspective? How have you integrated material relevant to global social issues within your courses?
4. What interdisciplinary directions have you pursued (or hope to pursue)? What psychological topics/courses lend themselves to an interdisciplinary approach?
5. What types of readings and assignments foster the goals of internationalizing the curriculum, and foster students’ ongoing interest in psychological perspectives written by non-Western psychologists?
6. The logistics of planning and carrying out off-campus study can be daunting and might be shared by collaborating with a faculty member on another campus. What do you see as the potential gains or disadvantages of cross-institutional collaboration?

The “How” and “Who” of Teaching Intercultural Competence: Some Thoughts about Teaching Approaches

In this final section, I address some themes relevant to teaching strategies. I expect that all participants at this workshop will benefit by sharing and exchanging specific assignments that facilitate various learning goals that we seek to promote as part our efforts to internationalize the psychology curriculum. I am also happy to share more specific information about assignments and strategies relevant to the points I emphasize below.

1. Consider using a developmental model to understand the varying worldviews of students and to guide your short-term and long-term teaching goals.

One of the 5 learning outcomes identified by APA’s sociocultural and international awareness learning goal is to help students “interact effectively and sensitively with people from diverse backgrounds and cultural perspectives.” Scholars who study students involved in intercultural experiences concur that developing intercultural competence, or moving from a monocultural to intercultural mindset, is a developmental process that encompasses two general phases marked by (a) ethnocentrism, at which time one’s own culture is central to understanding others; and (b) ethnorelativism, which involves understanding one’s own culture in the context of multiple cultures (Bennett, 2004; Hammer, 2009; Pederson, 2009; VanHook, no date). The Intercultural Developmental Continuum Model, which has been tested extensively within the international education community, posits six phases (3 phases for each of the 2 general phases of ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism).

Denial, the first substage associated with ethnocentrism, is exemplified by the denial and lack of awareness of difference and the assumption that one’s personal cultural reality is relevant to understanding all cultural contexts. This subphase is often followed by defense, which follows one’s initial recognition of cultural difference. At this point, the person may be particularly vulnerable to negative stereotypes that reinforce the sense of “rightness” of one’s personal value system. An alternative position at this point is referred to as “reversal,” and involves idealizing the new culture one is encountering and viewing one’s home cultural context in negative terms. In reversal, the values of the new culture may be viewed as superior, and one’s own culture may be denigrated. Common to both alternatives (defense or reversal) is the use of one’s home culture as a reference point. A third, transitional phase of ethnocentrism is referred to as minimization. This phase is thought to emerge out of defense or reversal and to involve minimizing difference and cultural values. It may entail the adoption of a “politically correct” approach that involves efforts to avoid stereotyping by emphasizing individual differences.

Movement toward ethnorelativism and cultural competence is posited to follow the 3 sub-phases that focus on unlearning ethnocentrism. The development of ethnorelativism begins with an acceptance of the reality that one’s original cultural values represent one of myriad and equally complex worldviews. This phase is marked by the growing acceptance that the experiences and behaviors of others are rich and varied. The person’s curiosity leads to growing recognition and exploration of differences. Acceptance is followed by adaptation, or a more conscious, active approach to understanding and internalizing other realities. This phase is marked by higher levels of empathy and the exploration of culture through the lenses of persons who live within a specific cultural context. A final phase, referred to as integration, reflects the ability to shift effectively between cultural visions, the ability to move between multiple frames of reference.

Some of the skills associated with intercultural competence can be referred to as cognitive frame-shifting or behavioral code-shifting. According to Paige (2009), cognitive frame shifting involves the capacity to shift mentally into modes of thinking that reflect modalities that are typical within a host culture. It involves the ability to experience how individuals in a host culture think about an issue or experience. Behavioral code-shifting, a complementary skill, involves the ability to adapt one’s actions and behaviors in light of the values and norms of a host culture. Other models of intercultural competence focus on the importance “personal leadership” (Schaetti, Ramsey, & Watanabe, 2008), which elaborates on skills associated with the principles of mindfulness and creativity.

Developmental models also focus on affective skills. Persons who have developed intercultural competence skills can be described as holding an “emotional passport” which involves recognizing the emotional challenges of moving between cultures (e.g., learning to identify signs of discomfort), developing skills for quieting the mind when facing cultural challenges, and using tolerance for ambiguity to help one cope effectively with new demands (Abarbanel, 2009). The “personal leadership” model expands on these themes.

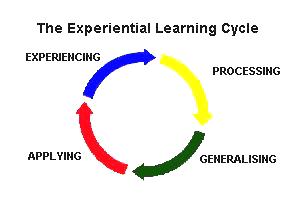
It is likely that a combination of on-campus and study-travel abroad experiences is likely to be most useful for facilitating intercultural competence. Helping students move through and transcend ethnocentrism can be fostered in a variety of on-campus experiences that expose students to global issues, guest speakers, movies about international issues, autobiography, and various experiential learning activities. It seems likely that the development of intercultural competence is most likely facilitated through direct interactions with persons from diverse social locations. Some of these experiences can be fostered through interactions with diverse subcultures within the United States, but are likely to be best facilitated through intercultural experience gained through internships, service-learning, and study abroad programs.

2. Use a variety of experiential and creative teaching methods whenever possible.

Study abroad educators often speak of the importance of using experiential and affective learning tools for developing intercultural competence (e.g., Savicki, 2008). Whether one’s teaching occurs in another country or on campus, incorporating some experiential learning, which is then integrated with conceptual learning, is likely to facilitate self-understanding as well as content goals.

A typical cycle of experiential learning begins with some type of concrete experience (e.g., a movie, simulation, exercise, or personal experience) and is followed by some form of guided reflection (e.g., journaling, small group discussion). Reflection becomes the foundation for new ways of organizing or conceptualizing experiences and reflections in a meaningful way (e.g., through considering the first two steps in light of theory or a new framework developed within the classroom). Students then benefit from being able to test concepts in new situations, which provides the foundation for the next sequence of experiential learning. To illustrate this process more effectively, I have included a figure at the end of this short section.

Some of the teaching tools that lend themselves to active learning include case study methods, critical incidents, small-group discussion, debates, films, and videos that engage students experientially and encourage students to adopt a different frame of reference. Activities that facilitate self-reflection and then to more complete conceptualizations are addressed in the next section.



3. Use guided self-reflection and application assignments to facilitate interactive learning as well as intercultural knowledge and development.

Bennett (2009) observed that “guided reflection is necessary to generate the kind of cultural self-awareness that supports intercultural learning -- that is, reflection at a cultural not just personal level” (p. S9). When encountering new content or a new situation, it is easy to bring a “tourist” or “spectator” approach to learning and to rely on professors’ directions and leadership.

My conversations with many other faculty members suggest that assignments that require self-reflection provide important supports for effective intercultural learning, especially for off-campus courses. More than a personal journal, these assignments might be better construed as directed reflection assignments, field notes, or specific prompts for writing about the events or experiences of a particular day. “Mapping” activities, which require students to explore a specific location or cultural experience in some depth, are also useful for developing observation and “mindfulness” skills. Anxieties associated with encountering new situations can sometimes divide one’s awareness and limit student learning. On other occasions, students’ lack of familiarity with a culture may limit their attentiveness to the range of behaviors that might be relevant to a cultural behavior or value. As a result, directed writing prompts are often useful for helping students bring higher levels of attention and focus to new encounters.

At early phases of intercultural development, students are likely to benefit from autobiographical assignments that ask them to engage in some form of social identity analysis (e.g., about gender, culture, privilege). Culture is often invisible to persons who live in it on a daily basis. One of the benefits of intercultural education is the new lenses that students may bring to understanding their personal cultures of origin. Social identity analysis assignments can help make personal culture more visible.

Assignments that build on personal social identity analysis include those that focus on helping students learn about a person from a cultural/ethnic context other than one’s own. Such assignments require personal interaction and interviews, and are likely to facilitate important insights about human diversity. Involvement in collaborative projects that promote interaction is also useful. For example, my short-term course in Japan included a 2 ½ day interactive learning experience that brought together US college students with Japanese university students. In small groups, they planned a project, then spent a day gathering data (typically about some aspect of popular culture), then reported their findings to the larger group of American and Japanese students. Although limited in scope, this direct interaction helped American students learn how to learn about culture as well as to become “cultural detectives” (Paige, 2009) from cultural insiders.

4. Foster student responsibility for their own learning and encourage small group learning experiences.

In general, small group discussion and projects: (a) help students develop cognitive abilities as they clarify their thoughts, opinions, and understanding with others; and (b) facilitate active, independent learning that allows students to test ideas with others rather than absorbing information from an expert. Group dynamics and member motivational levels can also present challenges to effective group work, and thus, an instructor’s attentiveness to group dynamics is important to ensure that negative group dynamics do not detract from optimal learning.

Small group learning is useful for both on-campus and off-campus courses that emphasize internationalizing the curriculum. In the off-campus setting, I have found that dividing students into small groups is also useful for learning to negotiate a new cultural context and developing more independent “wayfinding” skills. When students are responsible to find their way and carry out learning in small groups, a “tourist” approach and dependence on the leader are likely to be ongoing issues. When teaching in Japan (in 2010), I divided students into small groups or “*han,”* and students were often responsible to “check in” with group members throughout a day’s scheduled activities. Rather than “herding” students from one place to another, I occasionally gave students a detailed agenda for the day (e.g., exploring a neighborhood or some element of “ordinary” culture), which they modified when necessary. Even with minimal or no language skills, students were able to carry out meaningful tasks and develop greater confidence about their skills for “discovery learning” in a new cultural context. Their independence required them to be more attentive to details and more responsible for themselves and each other. The group project discussed under #3 represented another opportunity for students to develop greater responsibility for their own learning (in interaction with college students from Japan).

5. Be attentive to the whole person, and make use of relational aspects of learning. When possible, take advantage of students’ discomfort or personal distress to help them develop effective coping skills. Learn to live with ambiguity and teach students to develop tolerance for ambiguity.

At a recent talk, Buskisk (2011) identified two major domains or “habits” of effective psychology teachers: (a) communication abilities/professional competence, and (b) the ability to establish rapport. Skills relevant to rapport building may be even more central to teaching about intercultural competence than when teaching about “standard” content areas in psychology. Developing intercultural competence also requires students to question their assumptions and live with discomfort. A professor’s abilities to model openness and skill in discussing challenging issues are likely to be important features of teaching excellence related to internationalizing the curriculum.

Themes relevant to rapport building are likely to especially important when leading off-campus study experiences. Whereas the slice of student behavior that we see within our traditional classroom contexts is quite limited, when leading student groups off-campus, we often need to play roles as teachers **and** student affairs professionals. In these expanded roles, we need to be attentive to mental health needs and behavioral issues. As they experience new cultures, students may experience feelings and cognitive disruptions that may be difficult to manage without support. A well-prepared faculty member communicates behavioral expectations and policies clearly, but also uses her or his rapport with students to deal with difficult personal issues.

Like many other faculty members who had led student study-abroad groups, I have found that the unexpected challenges involving group dynamics, mental health issues, personal safety, or student behavioral excesses to often be more unsettling than logistical and course content issues. Although it is beyond the scope of this paper to talk at length about strategies, a teacher-leader’s basic communication and rapport-building skills become crucial tools for negotiating difficult encounters. These skills include: (a) staying calm and expressing confidence in the individual or group’s ability to cope, (b) bringing a flexible but firm approach to dealing with challenges, (c) using unexpected challenges to teach about tolerance for ambiguity, and (d) respecting the privacy of individuals while also providing necessary information to a group in order to defuse anxiety and support the coping of all members.

Faculty members sometimes indicate that their concerns about “the unexpected” limit their willingness to take the modest or calculated risks associated with traveling and working with students abroad in off-campus contexts. However, when faculty members are well-prepared and have taken necessary time to establish rapport with their students, the communication skills associated with teaching excellence are likely to serve them well.

Part 3 Questions for discussion

1. I suggested (see #1, this section) that students at different developmental phases may respond differently to teaching activities that focus on global/international content. What are your perceptions about the types of teaching goals, activities, and roles that seem most useful for teaching students at different developmental phases? What are some tools for working effectively with classes populated by diverse groups of students who may be at substantially different places with regard to “ethnorelativism?”
2. How might a developmental perspective be built into our psychology curricula (e.g. a sequence of activities or courses that nurtures intercultural skills and knowledge)?
3. What types of experiential learning activities have you found to be most useful in teaching about international/global issues? How do you link experiential and reflective experience with conceptual learning?
4. What can we do to minimize the likelihood that ethnocentric attitudes are potentially reinforced as students explore global issues (e.g., adopting “they should be more like us types of attitudes?”). What approaches help students examine their own thinking processes and develop critical lenses for examining their own “taken for granted” cultural practices?
5. What approaches to teaching and learning about global/international issues foster student investment in deeper levels of learning about culture? What types of experiences facilitate “frame shifting” skills and “behavioral shifting skills?

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