Intercultural Competence: From Theory to Practice

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Presentation Objectives

By the end of this presentation, participants will be able to:

- Increase self-awareness of one’s own cultural agility and Intercultural competence.
- Identify barriers to cultural competence such as implicit bias and microaggressions.
- Reflect on Possible Effects from Microaggressions in University settings.
- Reflect on ways to foster their own cultural agility and intercultural competence.
Components of Intercultural Competence

- Attitude
- Awareness
- Skills
- Values
- Beliefs
- Knowledge
What is...?

Cultural Agility

“…the mega-competency which enables professionals to perform successfully in cross-cultural situations. Culturally agile professionals succeed in contexts where the successful outcome of their jobs, roles, positions, or tasks depends on dealing with an unfamiliar set of cultural norms – or multiple sets of them.”
### Awareness: Assessing Cross-Cultural Competence: A Review of Ten Tests

- David Matsumoto and Hyisung C. Hwang (2013)
- Evaluation of the content, construct, and ecological validity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI)</th>
<th>Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cross-Cultural Sensitivity Scale (CCSS)</td>
<td>Intercultural Sensitivity Inventory (ICSI)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural Intelligence (CQ)</td>
<td>Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)</td>
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<td>IBA and BASIC</td>
<td>Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS)</td>
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<td>Intercultural Adjustment Potential Scale (ICAPS)</td>
<td>Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ)</td>
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### Assessing Cross-Cultural Competence: A Review of Ten Tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Used valid and reliable criterion variables</th>
<th>Positive effects from pre-post sojourn or training</th>
<th>Extreme group comparison</th>
<th>Concurrent ecological validity</th>
<th>Predictive ecological validity</th>
<th>Incremental Validity Over Demographics</th>
<th>Incremental validity over personality</th>
<th>Incremental validity over at least one other 3C test</th>
<th>Cross-cultural samples (beyond international sojourners in the U.S.)</th>
<th>Mixed methodologies</th>
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<td>CCAI</td>
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Note. 3C = cross-cultural competence; CCAI = Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory; CCSS = Cross-Cultural Sensitivity Scale; CQ = Cultural Intelligence Scale; IBA = Intercultural Behavioral Assessment; BASIC = Behavioral Assessment Scale for Intercultural Communication Effectiveness; ICAPS = Intercultural Adjustment Potential Scale; ICC = Intercultural Communication Competence; ICSI = Intercultural Sensitivity Inventory; IDI = Intercultural Development Inventory; ISS = Intercultural Sensitivity Scale; MPQ = Multicultural Personality Inventory.
Knowledge: Culture Iceberg

Surface
• Food
• Festivals
• Fashion
• Arts & Crafts

Below Surface
• Communication Norms
• Notions and Concepts of…
• Attitudes toward…
• Approaches to…
Influence of National and Civilization Culture

(Civilizations)

Toynbee (1946):
  • Civilizations as highest-order source of human identity.

Huntington (1993):
  • Civilizational boundaries as the major *locus* of conflict in the post-Cold War era.

Voss & Murphy (2012):
  • Civilizational membership as major driver of national culture.
Influence of National and Civilization Culture

(Cultural Dimensions)

Power Distance, Individualism vs. Collectivism, Masculinity v. Femininity, Uncertainty Avoidance, Long Term vs. Short Term Orientation, Indulgence vs. Restraint

Hofstede (1980) with later amendments:
  • National culture as higher-order social driver of differences in normative values and practices.

House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, and Gupta (2004):
  • New project to develop cultural dimensions (nine values and nine analogous practices)—the GLOBE project.

Minkov (2011):
  • Analysis of World Value Survey data.
Influence of National and Civilization Culture

(Culture as Composites of Personal Values)

Rokeach (1968):
• Universal human values as drivers of human behavior.

Schwartz and Bilsky (1987):
• Clustering of universal human values across cultures.

Schwartz (1999):
• Model reduction to represent differences in national culture.
Microaggressions

“Brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial, gender, sexual-orientation, and religious slights and insults to the target person or group” (Sue, 2010, p. 5)
Microaggressions

Characteristics:

• Constantly and continuously experienced
• Often committed unknowingly by well-intentioned people
  • Dismissed as innocent or innocuous
Examples of Microaggressions

• Multiple male PhD faculty are introduced by the title “Dr.,” while a female PhD is introduced by first name or Ms.
• Asking a multiracial person “What are you?”
• Asking an international student from an eastern country, "How does it feel to be in a free country?"
What Are Possible Harms from Microaggressions?

• Microaggressions harm the dignity of an individual or group of individuals
• It can become very difficult to perform at your fullest capacity when you feel targeted
• Increased suspicion, lack of trust, doubt in ability to assess environment
• Negative impact on an individual’s psychological health
  • Fear of retaliation (e.g. removal of Assistantship, no promotion, poor evaluations, denial of tenure, no research/publication support, etc.)
Intercultural Competence: From Theory...

Benefits of building intercultural competence within an academic department:

1. Should increase respect and mutual understanding between faculty, staff, and colleagues.
2. Should increase creativity in problem-solving through new perspectives, ideas, and strategies.
3. Should decrease unwanted surprises that might slow progress.
4. Should increase trust and cooperation.
5. Should promote inclusion and equity.
Intercultural Competence: ...to Practice

Case Study: The Scene and Context

- Teaching college course on Organizational Behavior and Ethics in the Arabian Gulf
- All students are citizens and nationals of the country
- Course taught in different classes by several teachers of different nationalities
- Using textbooks from the United Kingdom
- Cultural mismatch of ethical decision making and choices
- Threat of excessive student failure of major exams
- Required intercultural competent intervention and problem solving
Skills of Intercultural Competence: From Theory to Practice

Case Study:

1. Increases respect and mutual understanding ...(e.g. did not suggest their way of thinking was incorrect; acknowledged cultural differences without attributing hierarchy).

2. Increases creativity in problem-solving through new perspectives, ideas, ...(e.g. re-writing the exam to properly convey the ethical takeaway and other intentional subject matter; restructuring the grading system; revising instructional methods; a collaborative effort from an international/multicultural team).
Skills of Cultural Competence: From Theory to Practice

Case Study:

3. Decreases unwanted surprises that might slow progress (e.g. massive failing of two exams; not learning the subject matter due to cultural gaps between students and learning materials).

4. Increases trust and cooperation.

5. Promotes inclusion and equity (e.g. collaborative effort; equally respected contributions from involved parties).
Let’s Practice

**PRACTICE makes PROGRESS, NOT PERFECT.**

![Image](image_url)

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### The Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column A</th>
<th>Column B</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instead of This</strong></td>
<td><strong>Try This</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| [To a woman with a religious (or cultural) headscarf]  
“What’s so special about your hair?” | |
| You’re different than other _____ people I know. | |
| [Professor to Asian student during class]  
“What do Asians think about this situation?” | |
Components of Intercultural Competence

- Awareness
- Knowledge
- Skill

Attitude
Attitude: Unconscious Bias (also known as Implicit Bias)

Attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner

Characteristics:
• Favorable and unfavorable assessments
• Activated involuntarily / No awareness or intentional control
• Resides deep in the subconscious
  • “Blind spots”
Implications of Bias

• Bias does not automatically equate to being anti [ ].
• It is possible to hold bias against a group with which you identify
  • It is possible for men and women to hold implicit gender bias; or POC to have preferences for those outside of their own race, ethnicity, etc.
• Bias can be bidirectional  

Attitude: What to Do With It

• Acknowledge your values, beliefs, and biases.
• Unconscious biases require personal motivation to dedicated effort to unlearn.
• Paying attention to the possibility for unconscious bias allows us to, first retroactively and then eventually proactively, consider how we engage or disengage with others.
“We Are Penn State!” or “Are We Penn State?”
Questions?

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