Intercultural Learning and Development

Drake University Learning Symposium
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The Cultural Iceberg

**Behaviors & Practices**
Characteristics which are apparent to the casual observer

**Attitudes**
How the core values are reflected in specific situations in daily life such as working or socializing.

**Core Values**
Learned ideas of what is considered good or bad desirable or undesirable acceptable or unacceptable

**Institutions of Influence**
The forces which create, define, and mold a culture’s core values
What is “Intercultural?”

- Intercultural vs. Cultural
  - Cultural: Aspects of identity, including language, socioeconomic status, gender, attitudes, core values, etc.
  - Intercultural: The interface between two or more individuals with differing cultural maps.
Intercultural Development

Must *step outside of our own frame of reference* and interact meaningfully to develop intercultural sensitivity and competence.

Developmental process:
1. Identifying own cultural patterns
2. Acknowledging patterns of others
3. Learning to adapt across cultures

(Bennett, J.)
Intercultural Competence

- The capability to shift cultural perspective and adapt— or bridge -- behavior to cultural commonality & difference
  - Deep cultural self-awareness
  - Deep understanding of the experiences of people from different cultural communities—in perceptions, values, beliefs, behavior and practices
  - Behavioral shifting across these various cultural differences
Why is “intercultural” important?

• Develop a strategy for navigating difference and integrating others’ values, beliefs and behaviors in order to enhance effectiveness of interactions
Intercultural Competence

Diversity: The Who
- Presence of differences

Inclusion: The What
- Leveraging differences to increase contributions & opportunities for all

Intercultural Competence: The How
- “How” to achieve Diversity representation & Inclusion goals

Assessed by representation (e.g., how many . . .)
Assessed by outcomes (e.g., climate, tenure turnover, conflict)
Assessed by the IDI

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DEVELOPMENTAL MODEL for INTERCULTURAL SENSIVITY (DMIS)

• Created as a framework to explain how people experience and engage cultural difference
• Based on observations made in both academic and corporate settings about how people become more competent intercultural communicators
• Organized observations into positions along a continuum
Intercultural Development Continuum: Primary Orientations

- **Monocultural Mindset**
  - Misses Difference
  - Denial

- **Polarization**
  - Judges Difference
  - Minimization

- **Acceptance**
  - Deeply Comprehends Difference
  - Adaptation

- **Intercultural Mindset**
  - Bridges across Difference
  - Inclusion

Modified from the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS), M. Bennett, 1986
Monocultural Mindsets

• **Denial**: Likely recognizes observable cultural differences but may not notice deeper difference. Consists of *disinterest* in other cultures and active *avoidance* of cultural difference.

• **Polarization**: Views cultural differences in terms of “us” and “them.” Can take the form of “Defense” or “Reversal.”
  - Defense: difference as threatening to one’s own way of doing things
  - Reversal: Idealize other cultural practices while denigrating one’s own culture group
Intercultural Mindsets

• **Minimization (transitional)**: Highlights commonalities in human similarity and universal values and principles that may mask deeper recognition/appreciation of differences. (Dominant and non-dominant group members).

• **Acceptance**: Recognizes and appreciates patterns of cultural difference and commonality in one’s own and other cultures. Curious about patterns of behavior.

• **Adaptation**: Capable of shifting cultural perspective (cognitive frame-shifting) and changing behavior (behavioral code-shifting) in culturally appropriate and authentic ways.
The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)

- Difference between “CAB” (cognitive, affective, and behavioral) paradigm and “Developmental” paradigm
- Developmental paradigm is grounded more in the dynamic interaction that arises between individuals rather than more static, personal characteristics (Hammer, 2015)
- “How do individuals experience cultural difference?”
- Theory-based
- Results are actionable
- Complete online in 15-30 minutes
An Education Example

Assume “Ellen’s” Developmental Orientation is at Minimization.

• It is likely that her efforts at building cross-cultural understanding and awareness across diverse administrators, faculty, staff and students are effective. She is able to identify relevant commonalities for bridging across cultural diversity.

• Ellen likely uses teaching strategies that she has found successful across a number of classroom situations to make sure everyone has the opportunity to participate in class discussions and learn.

• Her developmental orientation has a “blind spot” insofar as she may not be attending to how cultural differences need to be recognized and adapted to in her classroom in order to help her students learn more effectively.

• Ellen may experience a sense of frustration that a number of her culturally diverse students do not participate in class discussions as often as she would like.

• She may not be fully aware is that many of the specific strategies she is using to help students participate may not be as effective with students whose learning approach is culturally different. Ellen may not attend to cultural differences as deeply she might in order to facilitate learning in her classroom.
Intercultural Development Continuum: Primary Orientations

1. Denial
   - Misses Difference
   - Monocultural Mindset

2. Polarization
   - Judges Difference
   - Deeply Comprehends Difference

3. Minimization
   - De-emphasizes Difference
   - Acceptance

4. Acceptance
   - Bridges across Difference
   - Adaptation

5. Intercultural Mindset
   - Deeply Comprehends Difference

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Polarization

• I was very surprised to realize that I had much more culture influencing me than I ever believed to be true.

• I had another goal of making a personal connection with someone from a different culture. This was by far the most challenging thing for me. I am an outgoing person, but I was terrified that I would do or say something wrong or be unable to connect and make things worse than before.

• At the EMBARC refugee simulation, I had to force myself to take a deep breath and go start a conversation. I almost chickened out, just as I have done many times in the past, but I knew that I had set this goal and I wanted to follow through with it. I was so pleasantly surprised with the interaction. I think the setting, being geared toward culturally educating students, was perfect for this interaction.
  • Talking to someone who had actually experienced these things and getting their perspective on the world and their culture taught me more than any book could have.
Minimization

• I have never had my eyes opened that much by something that is at a Science Center.

• Throughout this semester, I have learned a lot more than I ever believed I would have learned from a class. Not only have I learned about facts, but I have learned more about myself and how I feel about certain topics. I would have never thought that I had room to grow and develop in my cross-culture navigation. My IDI developmental and leading orientation taught me a lot about myself that no one would have ever been able to teach me.
Minimization

• Each one of these experiences was an emotional rollercoaster of fear, shame, sadness, intrigue, pride, and joy.
• Overall, my experiences followed the 3D model very closely. Before a lot of these experiences, I didn’t necessarily deny that race results in unearned privilege, but I definitely denied the extent to which it does. Then, as I learned more about my privilege, I became more ashamed of my white identity, and tried to distance myself from it. Now, especially after taking the IDI, my previous understanding and experience is being challenged, and I’m realizing that distance (or reversal, as the IDI would describe it) is not going to help the problem, and that I need to move on to the dismantling stage. This means I need to not only accept and appreciate others’ cultural diversity, but my own as well, and this is what I hope to work on in the future.
Acceptance

• Seeing all the interactive parts of the exhibit work toward breaking stereotypes and misconceptions made me genuinely happy.

• I could feel myself reverting back to my trailing orientation of minimization in that I was drawn mostly to the parts of the exhibit that highlighted similarities rather than celebrating the differences between races.
  • I’m glad I’m now able to acknowledge this tendency to revert back to minimization in some situations...
Acceptance

- With all three cultural opportunities I felt a bit outside or apart from what was going on, whether it made me uncomfortable or was just unfamiliar. Examining the reasons these things did not come naturally to me was incredibly useful though. I think understanding my own perspective in cultural terms makes it somewhat easier to shift perspectives and navigate cross-culturally. It’s not effortless, but it’s easier if I know where I’m standing in the first place.
THANK YOU

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