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## A DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH TO TRAINING FOR INTERCULTURAL SENSITIVITY

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**ABSTRACT.** *The development of intercultural sensitivity demands attention to the subjective experience of the learner. The key to such sensitivity and related skills in intercultural communication is the way in which learners construe cultural difference. This article suggests a continuum of stages of personal growth that allows trainers to diagnose the level of sensitivity of individuals and groups and to sequence material according to a developmental plan. The developmental continuum moves from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism. Earlier stages of the continuum define the parochial denial of difference, the evaluative defense against difference, and the universalist position of minimization of difference. Later stages define the acceptance of difference, adaptation to difference, and the integration of difference into one's world view. The stages of development are illustrated with typical statements and behaviors of learners that can be used to diagnose levels of sensitivity, and strategies to facilitate movement from each stage to the next are suggested. Special attention is given to questions of ethics and credibility that often arise in intercultural training situations.*

### INTRODUCTION

In their search for effective techniques and measurable outcomes, trainers of intercultural communication sometimes neglect considering the immediate subjective experience of trainees. An emphasis on this aspect of the training process might be called a "phenomenology of training." There are two major reasons why the phenomenology of training is a crucial concern. First, people do not respond directly to events; they respond to the *meaning* they attach to events (Kelly, 1963). Consequently, we need to understand how trainees will construe relevant life events before we can choose and sequence appropriate elements for a program. In addition, different individuals and groups are likely to respond differently to the same training element. We need to understand how groups might differ predictably in their likely interpretations of elements so we can change our approach when necessary. Second, successful intercultural training implies more than acquisition of new skills. Since intercultural sensitivity is not "natural" to any single culture, the development of this ability demands new awareness and attitudes. As trainers, we need to know how the attitude

of intercultural sensitivity develops so we can facilitate precise movement in that direction.

The needs implied by a phenomenological approach to training can be addressed by a developmental model of intercultural sensitivity. By specifying stages of development along a continuum, such a model can be used to diagnose the "level" of individuals and groups, to select appropriate training elements consistent with the likely interpretations made from that level of development, and to sequence material that facilitates movement towards greater sensitivity as defined by the model.

A developmental model need not, by itself, suggest particular teaching methods or learning-area concepts. Effective teaching and training strategies already exist for the presentation of basic intercultural concepts (e.g., J. Bennett, 1984; Paige & Martin, 1983; Pusch, 1981). Experiential techniques for the classroom are reviewed by several authors, including Asuncion-Lande (1976), Kohls (1979), and Hoopes and Ventura (1979), and intercultural group development processes are listed by Gudykunst (1976). The basic learning areas of intercultural communication are also generally agreed-upon, falling within the areas of cultural self-awareness, other-culture awareness, and various approaches to intercultural communication and perception (Gudykunst & Hammer, 1983; Paige & Martin, 1983).

There is an unfortunately common tendency among some trainers and educators to design programs as a potpourri of exercises and ideas. The failure to select and sequence materials rigorously for various groups may render otherwise effective approaches useless or even obstructive. Some attempts at addressing this problem with models of intercultural "development" processes have been attempted. For instance, Brislin, Landis, and Brandt (1983, p. 3) suggested a developmental sequence in response to their question, "What are the antecedents of intercultural behavior?" This model seems well-suited to guide research but, in its present form, it does not offer clear guidance to a classroom or workshop educator. Paige and Martin (1983, p. 55) suggest an actual training model in response to their slightly different question, "How should different types of training activities be sequenced to produce the most effective learning?" They organize typical training elements into a sequence of increasing complexity and difficulty within the dimensions of behavior requirements (active/passive), risk of failure and self-disclosure (low/high), and culture learning domain focus (cognitive/affective). This model represents a considerable refinement of earlier, non-sequenced lists of activities, but it still leaves implicit the basic assumption about where participants are "starting" and where they should "end up," in terms of their subjective experience. Thus it is limited in its ability to diagnose the needs of a particular group or individual. Gudykunst and Hammer (1983) offer a model which suggests the sequencing of three stages: perspective training; interaction training; and context-specific training. These authors have a clear subjective goal in mind

("third-culture perspective"), but their model again refers to types of training activities, not to the nature of a participant's developmental experience.

Hoopes (1981) comes closest to positing a phenomenological model when he states:

The critical element in the expansion of intercultural learning is not the fullness with which one knows each culture, but the degree to which the process of cross-cultural learning, communication and human relations have been mastered (p. 20).

With this focus, Hoopes lists the following categories of a "spectrum" of intercultural learning: ethnocentrism; awareness; understanding; acceptance/respect; appreciation/valuing; selective adoption; assimilation-adaptation-biculturalism-multiculturalism. It is this type of informal model which refers to the subjective states of the learners that can best be refined for the purpose of diagnosing groups or individuals and sequencing material.

A developmental model is ideally based upon the key organizing concept which must be internalized for development to occur. In the case of intercultural sensitivity, this concept is *difference*—that cultures differ fundamentally in the way they create and maintain world views. If a student accepts this principle and interprets events according to it, then intercultural sensitivity and general intercultural communication effectiveness seem to increase. However, the concept of fundamental cultural difference is also the most problematical and threatening idea that many of us ever encounter. Students (and sometimes instructors) employ a wide range of strategies to avoid confronting the implications of fundamental difference. A developmental model, then, should both illustrate "improvement" in the ability to comprehend and experience difference, and it should imply the strategies that will impede such experience. To accomplish these purposes, the model should be phenomenological in the sense that it describes a learner's subjective experience of difference, not just the objective behavior of either learner or trainer.

In Part 1 of this paper, the main stages of a somewhat more elaborate model (Bennett, 1984) are defined. In Part 2, applications of the model to diagnosis and developmental training strategies are suggested.

## **PART 1: THE DEVELOPMENTAL MODEL**

The continuum illustrated in Figure 1 is divided into six "stages of development." Each stage represents a way of experiencing difference, for instance Denial (of difference), Defense (against difference), etc. It is assumed in the model that intercultural sensitivity increases with movement to the right towards more "relative" treatments of difference. The midpoint of the continuum represents a division between "ethnocentrism" as that

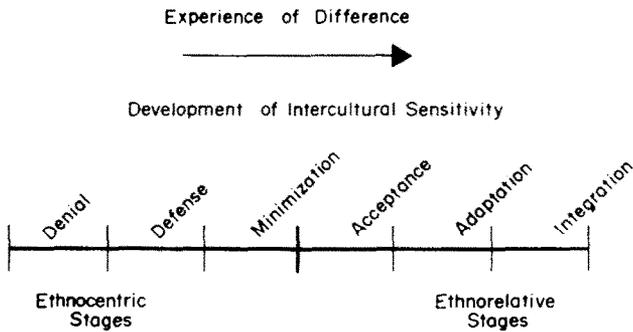


FIGURE 1.

term is generally understood (e.g., Porter & Samovar, 1983) and “ethnorelativism,” a term coined here as an appropriate antonym of ethnocentrism. The later stages of ethnorelativism include concepts such as Adler’s (1977) “multicultural man,” Bochner’s (1979) “mediating person,” Heath’s (1977) “maturity,” and “intercultural competence” as discussed by a number of authors (e.g., Dinges, 1983; Brislin, et al., 1983).

The choice and sequencing of stages in this model are based on the theoretical considerations discussed above and on fifteen years of teaching and training experience in intercultural communication with a wide range of students. Varieties of this model have been presented to many groups of intercultural educators and discussed in advanced intercultural communication seminars over a period of three years. In addition, the model has been used successfully to design curricula for various courses and workshops in intercultural communication. As much as possible, it represents the real-life observations of educators in this field and the actual reported experiences of students.

I. *DENIAL*. A denial of difference may occur when physical or social isolation precludes any contact at all with significant cultural differences. Since difference has not been encountered, meaning (categories) has not been created for such phenomena. As such, this position represents the ultimate ethnocentrism, where one’s own world view is unchallenged as central to all reality.

A more common form of Denial is parochialism. This is a relative condition, representing a lower degree of contact with cultural difference than might be possible. For instance, people living in small towns with homogeneous populations are generally deemed more parochial than people living in larger, cosmopolitan cities. Parochialism can be associated with extremely “broad” categories for difference. Broad categories allow for difference to be perceived at a minimal level without much discrimination. An example of such a broad category would be the recognition that Asians

are different from Westerners, without recognition that Asian cultures were different in any way from one another.

In extreme cases of Denial, cultural difference may be attributed to sub-human status. Such was apparently the case in early white settlers' attitudes toward American Indians, and parallels to that situation can be seen in Nazi attempts to eliminate "undesirables," or in the apparent genocide of some Central American Indian groups. The common feature of these incidents is not their political or military similarity, but the denial "with extreme prejudice" of cultural difference.

II. *DEFENSE*. The defense against difference involves attempts to counter perceived threat to the centrality of one's world view. Because difference must be recognized (and thus given meaning) before it is seen as threatening, this stage represents a development in intercultural sensitivity beyond denial.

The most common Defense strategy is denigration of difference. This is generally called "negative stereotyping," wherein undesirable characteristics are attributed to every member of a culturally distinct group. The denigration may be attached to race, religion, age, gender, or any other assumed indicator of difference. This kind of denigration is here considered as a stage of development, not as an isolated act. Supportive of this view is the observation that people who denigrate one group are likely to denigrate some other groups as well. Although misinformation may accompany the denigration, the central factor in defensive denigration is not ignorance, but ethnocentrism.

Another Defense strategy is the assumption of cultural superiority. Rather than denigrating other cultures, one simply assumes that one's own culture is the acme of some evolutionary scheme. Such a maneuver automatically assigns a lower status to cultural difference while allowing the defender to be "tolerant" of those cultures' attempts to develop. The superiority strategy allows more experience of difference than does denigration, but ethnocentrism is still supported by the belief that most cultural difference must be overcome for genuine development to occur.

The most beguiling defense against difference is a position that can be termed "reversal." Common to Peace Corps Volunteers, other long-term sojourners, and expatriates, reversal involves assuming superiority of the host culture while denigrating one's own culture. Although such a position is indistinguishable in terms of ethnocentrism from the previous strategies, it nevertheless may seem like a more "enlightened" state. Certainly those who use this strategy present themselves as more culturally sensitive than their unreversed counterparts.

III. *MINIMIZATION*. The last-ditch attempt to preserve the centrality of one's own world view involves an attempt to "bury" difference under the weight of cultural similarities. The state of minimization represents a development beyond denial and defense because, at this stage, cultural difference is overtly acknowledged and is not negatively evaluated, either

explicitly as in denigration or implicitly as in superiority. Rather, cultural difference is trivialized. While differences are seen to exist, they are experienced as relatively unimportant compared to the far more powerful dictates of cultural similarity.

The minimization of difference generally takes either (or both) of two forms. One is that of "physical universalism," exemplified by the work of Lorentz (1977) and other ethologists. In this view, human behavior is best understood as mainly innate, with cultural difference representing rather straightforward permutations of certain underlying rules. People holding this view generally approach intercultural situations with the assurance that awareness of basic human patterns of behavior is sufficient to ensure successful communication. Such a view is ethnocentric insofar as the basic categories of behavior are held to be absolute and similar to one's own.

The second, and perhaps more common form of Minimization is that of "transcendent universalism." In a kind of abstract parallel to the concrete behavioral assumptions of physical universalism, transcendent universalism suggests that all human beings, whether they know it or not, are products of some single transcendent principle, law, or imperative. The obvious example of this view is any religion which holds that all people are creations of a particular supernatural entity or force. The statement, "We are all God's children," when the "children" include people who don't subscribe to the same god, is indicative of this religious form of universalism. Other forms of transcendent universalism include the Marxist notion of historical imperative, wherein all people are subject to the same historical "forces"; economic and political "laws" that are thought to affect all people in the same way, such as the capitalist concept of "individual achievement"; and psychological principles such as "archetypes" or "needs" that are assumed to be invariably valid cross-culturally.

In both forms of Minimization, cultural difference is recognized and tolerated to some degree. However, such difference is seen as either superficial or even obstructive to the pursuit of communication. This is because communication is assumed to rest necessarily on the common ground of universal rules or principles. While this stage is the most interculturally sensitive of the ethnocentric positions, it cannot fulfill the potential for intercultural understanding often claimed for it by its adherents.

**IV. ACCEPTANCE.** The acceptance of cultural difference represents a move from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism. At this stage, cultural difference is both acknowledged and respected. Difference is perceived as fundamental, necessary, and preferable in human affairs. Particular cultural differences are not evaluated at this stage—they simply exist.

Within this stage are two major levels of acceptance that seem to occur in sequence. First is the acceptance of behavioral difference, including language, communication style, and nonverbal patterns. Second is acceptance of the underlying cultural value differences which may represent pro-

foundly different organizations of reality (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961; Stewart, 1972).

While the acceptance of these cultural differences is generally acknowledged as central to intercultural communication (e.g., Barnlund, 1982), the developmental process that allows such acceptance has received less attention. In this model, the assumption is made that a major shift from an ethnocentric to an ethnorelative approach to difference is necessary for the acceptance to occur. Characteristic of this shift is the subjective reconstrual of difference as a “thing” to difference as a “process.” From the ethnorelative perspective, people do not “have” behavior patterns—they *behave*. More profoundly, people do not “have” values—they *value*. With this reconstrual, the extension transference (Hall, 1976) and reification (Berger & Luckman, 1967) that may lead to objectification of culture is avoided and people are seen as dynamic co-creators of their realities. The concomitant construal of cultural reality as consensual and mutable is essential to ethnorelativism and necessary for further development of intercultural sensitivity.

*V. ADAPTATION.* The acceptance of cultural difference as discussed above allows the adaptation of behavior and thinking to that difference. It is this temporary alteration of process that forms the heart of intercultural communication. The ability to change processing of reality constitutes an increase in intercultural sensitivity when it occurs in a cross-cultural context.

The most common form of Adaptation is empathy. Empathy as it is defined here (Bennett, 1979) involves a temporary shift in frame of reference such that one construes events “as if” one were the other person. When the other person is using a significantly different world view to process reality, the empathy approximates a shift in cultural world view. Generally, empathy is “partial,” extending only into those areas relevant to the communication event. The behavioral manifestation of empathy is action that is more appropriate to the “target” culture than to the native culture. This action may be simply mental, such as the ability to formulate appropriate questions, or it may include the ability to generate coordinated verbal and nonverbal behavior that is perceived as appropriate by a target culture member.

Another form of Adaptation is cultural pluralism, which is here taken to mean the ability to shift into two or more rather complete cultural world views. The terms “biculturality” and “multiculturality” are often used to refer to this phenomenon (with the exception of Adler (1977), who uses the term “multicultural” in a broader sense). Cultural pluralism can be interpreted as the habitualization of a particular empathic shift. For instance, an American who has lived for an extended time in Japan may develop an ability to easily shift into a fairly complete Japanese world view, such that he/she might be termed “bicultural.”

As implied by the above example, cultural pluralism probably necessitates "significant overseas (or other-culture) living experience" (SOLE). Yet SOLE alone is apparently insufficient for general intercultural sensitivity to develop. Nondevelopmental pluralism may occur when one is simply acculturated into two or more cultures, such as children of expatriates or missionaries sometimes are. In these cases where no intentional empathy has preceded the pluralism, intercultural sensitivity as it is treated in this model cannot be assumed automatically.

In summary, adaptation to difference as a stage of development of intercultural sensitivity is the ability to act ethnorelatively. This ability to act outside one's native cultural world view is based on the acceptance of difference as a relative process, and it is the crux of intercultural communication. Other forms of "adaptive" behavior, such as assimilation or nondevelopmental pluralism may mimic some aspects of intercultural sensitivity, but in themselves they lack the developmental base necessary for ethnorelativism.

VI. *INTEGRATION*. The integration of difference is the application of ethnorelativism to one's own identity. This is taken as the process underlying Adler's (1977) description of the multicultural person as "not simply the person who is sensitive to many different cultures. Rather, he is a person who is always in the process of becoming *a part of* and *apart from* a given cultural context" (p. 26). In this way, Adler extends the definition of "multicultural" beyond pluralism. In the language of this model, a person who has integrated difference is one who can construe differences as processes, who can adapt to those differences, and who can additionally construe him or herself in various cultural ways.

One of the skills of intercultural sensitivity that occurs at this stage of development is the ability to evaluate phenomena relative to cultural context. This ability, termed "contextual evaluation," is similar to the ethical stage of development termed "contextual relativism" by Perry (1970). It allows one to reinstitute the judgments that were suspended at the stage of Acceptance. However, the judgments of goodness or badness of action are no longer ethnocentric. Rather, they are simply statements of appropriateness to one or another cultural frame of reference. Thus, one could evaluate the same potential action as good (Culture A) or bad (Culture B). In terms of individual ethics, actions are evaluated relative to the created culture context one has developed for one's self.

At the stage of Integration, the lack of any absolute cultural identification can be used for constructive purposes. This position can be called "constructive marginality," where the normally alienated state of marginality becomes a valuable tool in cultural mediation (Bochner, 1981). As the culmination of intercultural sensitivity, the stage of Integration suggests a person who experiences difference as an essential and joyful aspect of all life.

## PART 2: TRAINING APPLICATIONS OF THE MODEL

Based on the definitions of developmental stages summarized in Part 1 of this paper, this section will suggest how the model can be used to diagnose the "level of sensitivity" of individuals and groups and how, given that level, developmental training activities might be selected and sequenced.

### *I. Denial*

*Diagnosis.* Individuals operating at a Denial level of sensitivity are likely either not to perceive difference at all, or to employ wide categories in perceiving difference. An example of the former is the statement sometimes heard that Tokyo (or some other foreign location) is not at all different from, say, New York. If asked upon what this conclusion is based, the person may say, "They both have lots of cars and buildings." This answer betrays a selective perception which disallows recognition of phenomena that fall outside familiar categories. Another form of restricted categories is exhibited by students (and others) who ask the classic "dumb questions" that so annoy international students and visitors. These questions are usually of the form, "Do you have (ice cream, refrigerators, houses) in your country?" or "Do you ride (camels, lions, sampans) to school?"

The use of wide categories for perceiving difference is illustrated by the common confusion of Koreans, Chinese, and Japanese or by assuming similarity between Gulf State Arabs and Iranians. Aside from the irritation this causes to visitors from those areas, the confusion indicates that categories for these (and probably other) cultural differences are not well discriminated. The extreme form of wide category is a simple American/Foreigner dichotomy.

The behavioral response when confronted with difference can also be an indicator of this stage of sensitivity. Children or young adults may giggle or otherwise show embarrassment. High-school age students may additionally make comments such as "That's weird." Adults may exhibit studious politeness, as if cultural difference were a handicap that should be ignored in public. In all these cases, the behavior noted is more likely to be an indication of Denial than of the more overtly negative evaluation associated with Defense.

*Developmental Strategies.* At this stage of sensitivity (and only at this stage), the best technique for development seems to be "cultural awareness" activities. These generally take the form of "Mexico Night" or similar functions, where music, dance, food, and costumes are exhibited. In terms of this model, the purpose served by these activities is to create more differentiation of general categories for cultural difference. It should be noted that not much more than this can be expected from such functions,

even though they are sometimes touted as great contributions to intercultural sensitivity.

For more sophisticated (but not more sensitive) audiences, travelogues, history lectures, or other area studies type material may serve the same purpose as the cultural awareness activity. Again, the purpose served by such content at this point is not so much improvement of communication as it is facilitation of simple recognition of difference.

Overall, the strategy of development here is to avoid premature discussion of really significant cultural differences. Such discussion will either be ignored or, more detrimentally, be used as a rationale for maintaining the comfort of Denial. At the same time, cultural awareness should be facilitated in such a way that depth is slowly and inexorably developed. This movement can be best assured by providing accomplished intercultural facilitators to monitor and "push" discussion a little in these situations. Unfacilitated intercultural contact tends to be more entertaining than developmental.

## *II. Defense*

*Diagnosis.* Individuals and occasionally entire groups are easy to diagnose in the denigration phase of this stage. Overt statements of hostility toward any one culture should be taken as indicative of a Defense level of sensitivity. As predicted by the model, Defense should be expected in people who have just come out of Denial. In a typical intercultural workshop or classroom setting, statements of hostility may be masked by requests for confirmation that one particular group is "really" troublesome. It is not uncommon to find a mix of Denial and denigrative Defense, where one culture is targeted as "bad" and other cultures are simply ignored. Group pressure may exacerbate the denigration and discourage more sensitive individuals from participating in the discussion.

The possible relationship between denigration and an organized institution should be considered in diagnosing this stage. Some organizations teach that certain cultures or philosophies are "evil." Notable in this regard are some fundamentalist religious sects and conservative political groups. When this institutional affiliation is known, Defense level should be assumed until discussion indicates otherwise.

The superiority phase of Defense is less obvious. It may be indicated by a question such as "So what's wrong with being an American?" In general, strong appeals to pride in one's own culture probably derive from this stage. One form of this pride is seeing one's own culture as a standard or goal for the entire world. While considering Western technology as the standard for all economic development is the most common form of this view, it may also be held by non-Westerners who consider their cultures as the epitome of ethical, religious, or political development.

While reversal is easy to diagnose as the denigration of one's own culture, it may be the most difficult of the Defense positions to dislodge. This is because people exhibiting reversal are likely to be very credible in a training situation. They have usually traveled widely or lived abroad, and they may be influential in perpetuating this form of Defense in the group.

*Developmental Strategies.* Movement beyond the denigration phase of Defense is impeded by a tendency to "retreat" to Denial. If the trainer has been successful in overcoming Denial, the next expected behavior is some form of Defense. Overt hostility may, however, seem less "sensitive" than the previous behavior of simply ignoring difference. Thus, the trainer and perhaps the individual him/herself may be tempted to return to superficialities—endless "Mexico nights."

Resisting the temptation of retreat involves encouraging movement toward more superiority. An increase in cultural self-esteem can replace denigration as a Defense behavior. Trying to explain to someone in denigrative Defense that his or her negative stereotypes are inaccurate does not work, and may simply provide the trainee with more denigrative fodder. Techniques to increase cultural self-esteem could include discussions of what is "good" about one's own culture, accompanied by discussion of "good" things about other cultures. It is premature at this point to emphasize that cultures are simply different, not "good" or "bad," since that idea necessitates more ethno relativism than available at this stage.

Because of the perceived credibility of the source, strong "reversed" statements of denigration are difficult to combat. For instance, once a well-traveled American group member has begun denigrating the behavior of "typical" American tourists, a shift to emphasizing the superiority of these tourists is ill-advised. One technique which has worked in this circumstance is to "spread around" the denigration by noting that tourists from other cultures also exhibit insensitivity, and then shift emphasis to some generally positive aspects of tourists in general (e.g., curiosity, benefits of simple cross-cultural contact, etc.). The best treatment of reversal, however, is the *inoculation*. This technique involves noting the possible existence of reversal attitudes before any statement of them comes from the group. People are less likely to make certain kinds of remarks if that type of comment has been predicted and countered beforehand.

Overall, developmental movement out of Defense is facilitated by emphasizing the commonality of cultures, particularly in terms of what is generally "good" in all cultures. While this seems antithetical to the cultural relativity necessary for successful intercultural communication, it is a necessary stage of development that must precede a subsequent emphasis on difference. A failure to allow Minimization to follow Defense by "skipping ahead" to Acceptance or Adaptation may eventuate in a strengthening of the Defense stage and rejection of further development.

### III. *Minimization*

*Diagnosis.* The minimization of difference is most obviously indicated by statements such as, "In other cultures you just have to be yourself," or, "You'll get along all right with good common sense." The former statement betrays a belief that cultural difference is mainly superficial and that one's "basic humanity" will shine through if one is simply sincere. The latter statement implies that all cultures value similar logical processes. In addition to these indicators of physical universalism, trainers may encounter statements of transcendent universalism such as, "There are some things that are true everywhere." Physical universalism is most likely to be exhibited by empiricists, meaning most Americans and particularly more technically-oriented people. The Western valuing of individuality and direct openness exacerbates this tendency, since such values imply that people should be accepted for "who they are" if they are honest about it. Transcendent universalism is more likely to be exhibited by people with a strong philosophical position to uphold, such as religious, political, or economic missionaries.

Minimization may sometimes have the same kind of credibility as that accompanying the reversal phase of Defense. It tends to be a position which may be held by more sophisticated students, people with overseas experience (particularly businesspersons), and "internationalists." In terms of the model, Minimization may serve the function of preserving for these people a kind of "enlightened ethnocentrism" that sounds interculturally sensitive while allowing them to avoid the sense of incompetence which might arise from confronting cultural unknowns.

*Developmental Strategies.* Between this stage and the next is a "paradigmatic barrier." Movement to the next stage represents a major conceptual shift from reliance on absolute principles of some sort to an acknowledgment of nonabsolute relativity. For Westerners, this shift seems best approached inductively. Simulations, reports of personal experience, and other illustrations of substantial cultural differences in the interpretation of behavior are effective at this point. Awareness of these differences must be shown to have definite practical significance for intercultural communication to overcome the stasis of minimization. Even if this is done effectively, students are still likely to experience a degree of disorientation and confusion as they struggle with the implications of relativity. Care should be taken that this confusion is simply acknowledged and not prematurely eased by retreating to earlier ethnocentric states.

It is particularly effective at this stage to use "representatives" of other cultures as resource persons. These people work best in a small facilitated discussion group (as opposed to the overused and largely useless panel). Resource persons *must* be selected, since being from another culture does

not preclude ethnocentrism, and having a resource person in Minimization is worse than none at all. If resource persons are selected carefully and placed in facilitated situations, they can provide the credibility for expression of cultural difference that may forever elude the trainer. Participants are unlikely to face someone from another culture and deny cultural differences claimed by that person.

#### *IV. Acceptance*

*Diagnosis.* People at this stage of intercultural sensitivity can be recognized by the enjoyment they bring to the recognition and exploration of difference. They are usually fairly tolerant of ambiguity, manifested by a willingness to hear generalizations and probabilistic statements about cultural difference without demanding absolute answers. Questions about difference may be naive and sometimes inappropriate, but the questions seem geared to learning rather than to confirming stereotypes.

*Developmental Strategies.* Development into ethnorelativism is first established by stressing recognition and nonevaluative respect for variation in verbal behavior and communication style (such as greeting rituals, forms of argument, etc.). Such behavior is most generally recognized as appropriately different. Using verbal language as a parallel, "body language" and other categories of nonverbal behavior differences can be acknowledged and accorded the same respect.

Failure to move fairly quickly beyond this stage of development opens the possibility that verbal and nonverbal difference will be incorporated into the previous stage of transcendent universalism. As noted earlier, transcendent universalism usually includes substantial recognition of behavioral difference. Unless respect for value differences associated with behavior is established, efforts at this stage may serve simply to elaborate details within an ethnocentric frame. On the other hand, moving prematurely to an ethnorelative discussion of values without sufficient establishment of behavioral relativity may create a threat that encourages retreat to a defensive state.

The main impediment to development from this stage is the possibility that value difference is not understood in a processual context. Eventually, a cultural assumption or value will be personally offensive. A likely candidate is some form of the valuing of women versus men, although the culprit may also be alternative forms of sexuality. If this difference in valuing is perceived as "characterizing" members of that culture, those who find it offensive may retreat to superiority, denigration, or possibly minimization ("They don't *really* feel that way"). To preserve the sensitivity of this stage, difference that might be personally disvalued (such as "sexism") must be seen as part of a culture's overall organization of the world. As

such, the offending difference becomes "a way to cope with reality," rather than a distasteful trait. It should be stressed that this view of cultural difference does not disallow one from having a personal opinion about the difference—it simply precludes that opinion from becoming an ethnocentric evaluation.

Movement into the next stage of intercultural sensitivity, Adaptation, is encouraged by emphasizing the practical application of ethnorelative acceptance to intercultural communication. In actual education or training contexts, this move must be made fairly quickly to add personal relevance and usefulness to the necessarily anecdotal treatment of behavioral difference and the theoretical treatment of values. In some cases, communication applications can be combined effectively with discussion of values to facilitate the development, such as including a discussion of homestay communication with relevant value differences.

### *V. Adaptation*

*Diagnosis.* Adaptation is indicated by the ability to intentionally shift frame of reference; that is, to empathize. Manifestations of this ability generally include the generation of appropriate questions about cultural difference. For example, when analyzing a communication problem between a Japanese person and an American, an empathic question from an American might seek information about the status difference between the two people. (Note that this question is not a "natural" one for Americans.) People in Adaptation are also able to perform well on cultural assimilator (Fiedler, et al., 1971) type tests which demand cognitive operation in a different cultural frame.

Many people who are pluralistic (bicultural or multicultural) are able to exercise intentional empathy either among their internalized frames of reference or even to other cultural frames. However, as noted earlier, the mere fact of pluralism does not automatically place a person at Adaptation. Pluralists who are not ethnorelative offer the same credibility problem to trainers as do reversed Defense or Minimization participants—it is difficult to contradict an ethnocentric statement made by a bicultural person. Even more problematically, these people may be resistant to any attempt to construe their hard-earned abilities as part of a trainable developmental sequence.

Another "false indication" of Adaptation is a claim of empathy that is actually based on Minimization. Statements betraying this situation may be of the form, "I can get along with everyone in the world," or "All you have to do is just *listen* to what they're saying." Upon questioning, this kind of "empathy" usually can be traced to an underlying assumption of universalism.

*Development Strategies.* Participants moving out of Acceptance are eager to apply their knowledge of cultural difference to actual face-to-face communication. Thus, now is the time to provide opportunities for interaction. These activities might include dyads with other-culture partners, facilitated multicultural group discussion, or outside assignments involving interviewing of people from other cultures. Training in the practice of empathy is also appropriate. As much as possible, activities should be related to real-life communication situations. For instance, in the case of Americans anticipating study abroad, communication practice could refer to homestays or developing friendships in the other culture. In the case of international students and visitors, practice could include communicating with faculty and other everyday situations.

These same real-life situations seem to be effective for pluralists who are less ethnorelative. However, the reason for their success may be different. In these cases, it may be that the limitations of culture-specific adaptation become evident and create a motivation for the pluralists to generalize their abilities through more use of ethnorelative principles.

## *VI. Integration*

*Diagnosis.* The integration of difference is most obviously indicated by a lack of strong cultural identification combined with well-developed levels of Acceptance and Adaptation. These criteria exclude people who claim they have no culture when the claim is based more on lack of cultural self-awareness than on marginality. People at this stage may vary in their ability to maintain "healthy" self-concepts. At one extreme are those who are profoundly disturbed by their lack of cultural identification and who may experience an ongoing sense of alienation and anomie. At the other extreme are those who appear perfectly content with a self-created identity and who adjust well to a wide range of situations. In either case (and those in between), the common factor is a sense of self as a dynamic process involving choice at every level of identity. The difference between extremes seems to be whether the choice is seen as a blessing or a curse.

*Developmental Strategies.* The major developmental work at this last stage of intercultural sensitivity is in the area of ethics. People who have integrated difference may experience difficulty constructing an ethical system that will guide their choices and actions. Since no one cultural system of ethics can be accepted wholesale, these people face a constant plethora of possibilities. Training in Perry's (1970) "ethical scheme" or some other meta-ethical model is helpful in developing tools to construct a personal ethic.

Another useful area of development at this stage is in the skills of cultural

mediation (Bochner, 1981). When the integration of difference has led to constructive marginality, it constitutes a valuable and perhaps crucial resource for creating a world that is hospitable to the great diversity of humanity.

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## ABSTRACT TRANSLATIONS

Le développement de la sensibilité interculturelle exige qu'on examine l'expérience subjective de l'apprenant. La clé de cette sensibilité et des connaissances pratiques qui sont liées à la communication interculturelle est la manière dont les apprenants conceptualisent les différences culturelles. Cet article suggère une suite d'étapes de croissance personnelle qui permet aux enseignants de diagnostiquer le niveau de sensibilité d'un individu ou d'un groupe et de placer les matières dans une séquence en accord avec un plan de développement.

Le développement procède de l'ethnocentrisme à l'ethnorelativisme. Les premières étapes du développement définissent tout d'abord un déni de la différence, une défense contre la différence, qui en contient cependant une évaluation, et enfin la position universaliste de minimisation de la différence. Les étapes ultérieures définissent l'acceptation de la différence, l'adaptation à la différence, et finalement son intégration dans la vision du monde.

Les étapes du développement sont illustrées de déclarations et de comportements typiques des apprenants qui peuvent être utilisés pour diagnostiquer le niveau de sensibilité et des stratégies pour faciliter le passage d'une étape à la suivante sont suggérées. Une attention particulière est accordée aux questions d'éthique et de crédibilité qui sont souvent soulevées dans les situations d'apprentissage interculturel. (author-supplied abstract)

El desarrollo de sensibilidad intercultural requiere que se preste atención a la experiencia subjetiva del aprendiz. La clave de tal sensibilidad y de habilidades relacionadas con esta en la comunicación intercultural es la manera en que los aprendices perciben diferencias culturales. En este artículo se sugiere un continuo de etapas de crecimiento personal que permite que los entrenadores diagnostiquen el nivel de sensibilidad de individuos y grupos, y, según un plan de desarrollo, que pongan en secuencia sus materiales.

El continuo de desarrollo va desde el etnocentrismo hasta el etnorelativismo. Las primeras etapas del continuo definen la negación de diferencias (posición limitada), la defensa contra las diferencias (etapa de evaluación), y la minimización de las diferencias (posición universalista). Las etapas más avanzadas definen la aceptación de las diferencias, la adaptación a las diferencias, y la integración de las diferencias en la visión que uno tiene del mundo.

Las etapas de desarrollo son ilustradas con declaraciones y comportamientos típicos de los aprendices, que pueden servir para diagnosticar el nivel de sensibilidad; y se sugieren estrategias para facilitar el movimiento de una etapa a la siguiente. Se presta atención especial a las cuestiones de ética y credibilidad que surgen con frecuencia en situaciones de entrenamiento intercultural. (author-supplied abstract)