

Creating Cultural Synergies

Creating Cultural Synergies:
Multidisciplinary Perspectives
on Interculturality and Interreligiosity

Edited by

Birgit Breninger and Thomas Kaltenbacher

**CAMBRIDGE
SCHOLARS**

P U B L I S H I N G

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Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Interculturality and Interreligiosity,
Edited by Birgit Breninger and Thomas Kaltenbacher

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To all of us who are passionate about what we do

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PART I:

**SKETCHING THE FIELD
OF INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE**

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

BIRGIT BRENINGER AND CHIBUEZE C. UDEANI

The past several decades have seen the re-invigoration of the concept of “intercultural competence” as one of the fundamental and most promising approaches towards studying culture in a respectfully complex way. The introduction of this concept, which has been defined and adapted in different ways in the various disciplines but has generally been conceptualised to incorporate a certain mindset, skillset and heartset (Bennett 2009, 97), has initiated new ways of exploring the inherent multiplicity and versatility of cultural encounters. This inherent multiplicity necessitates not only novel perspectives in academia but also pioneering researchers, willing to truly commit to constructive interdisciplinarity. Such researchers need to be prepared to leave their “narrow professional specialisations” and also venture out to embrace what Edward Said calls the idea of the “critic as amateur” (1983). In order to produce culturally and socially relevant and applicable strategies to be disseminated in and for societies, it is of utmost importance not to generate works in arcane vocabulary which speak only to other specialists. An advocacy of this amateurism in intellectual life and the passionate view of the need for intellectual work to recover its connections with the cultural and social realities in which it occurs, also very much lie at the heart of the idea of setting intercultural competence to work.

Multiculturalism has always characterised the various human societies. Interestingly it has always been principally perceived and treated from the point of view of clash of cultures portraying antagonisms between cultures as if it were the only form of dealing with the phenomenon and challenges of multiculturalism. There is no doubt that multiculturalism brings along with it challenges and questions which must have to be adequately addressed. But even at that, multiculturalism is not bereft of positive aspects for the respective societies where it abounds as a form of cultural encounter.

The very form of multiculturalism which is part of our 21st century portrays peculiar traits. The issue here may not only be so much that of specifying these unique traits. Another decisive point is how could multiculturalism today be addressed so as to, if for no other reason build on its afore-mentioned positive aspects, enable the global community today to face the posed challenges and questions constructively. In this regard intercultural competence is gaining more and widespread attention and acceptance as one of such valid key tools through which this needed constructive approach would be fruitful.

The issue of interculturality in all its dimensions is so much central today that no one who is really aware of the challenges posed by the phenomenon of “failed multiculturalisms” can claim to be oblivious of this situation. Hence this collection of articles understands itself as one of such constructive approaches. The theme—*Creating Cultural Synergies—Setting Intercultural Competence to Work*—already, by addressing the case of developing synergies of cultural nature, pinpoints a possible positive approach as to how multiculturalism today could be constructively dealt with. Furthermore it is the view of the editors that creating cultural synergies can be realised if intercultural competence—a salient tool in this venture—is set to work. The different experts who contributed to this volume dedicated themselves, their time and energy, individually and collectively to explore ways as to how intercultural competence could be set to work so as to create cultural synergies for and in our 21st century.

This book offers various perspectives on social and cultural challenges in the 21st century as well as on creative ideas and strategies casting new lights on “old” problems with the help of intercultural competence. Darla Deardorff in her opening chapter *Intercultural Competence in the 21st Century: Perspectives, Issues, Application*, introduces the manifold definitions and theoretical outlines surrounding the term intercultural competence in the various disciplines. Deardorff emphasises the relevance of the context when selecting the appropriate tool or method to further intercultural understandings. In the second part focussing on *Intercultural Competence: Research and Education*, Birgit Breninger and Thomas Kaltenbacher introduce eyetracking as a valid method to be used in tandem with other methods and theoretical approaches in intercultural trainings. By visualising what they refer to as the “cultural gaze”, they try to document attention strategies influential to information processing. Breninger and Kaltenbacher introduce this important technology to the field of intercultural studies for the first time. In the second contribution to this broad topic, Azzoug Omar talks about discourse theories and cross-cultural pragmatics as well as awareness raising with the help of

“authentic” materials. From his linguistic perspective, he introduces the readers to a study which compares Algerian textbooks to other EFL textbooks concluding that language teachers and ELT textbooks offer a powerful framework for developing sensitivity to cultural differences. In the following chapter Gerhard Schrangl and Jörg Zumbach investigate the impact of intercultural multimedia training on implicit and explicit attitudes towards culturally distant stimuli. In their contribution *The influence of intercultural training programs on implicit and explicit levels of attitudes towards foreigners* the basic idea is that a dialectical cross-linking of self-reflection and the incorporation of new insights with the help of an educational software, especially developed by the authors for this very purpose, contributes to overcome misconceptions towards what was originally assumed to be culturally distant and “strange”. The third part on *Intercultural Competence in Understanding Religion* opens with the chapter on *Interculturality and Interreligiosity: A Conceptual Clarification with Special Reference to Intercultural Competence* by Ram Adhar Mall, in which he argues the point that whoever believes in the presence of “overlaps” between cultures recognising fundamental similarities and illuminating differences among them is destined to develop intercultural competence. Mall emphasises the unprecedented “intercultural turn” of post-colonial encounters and concludes that intercultural competence consists in the development and cultivation of the culture of interculturality. The focus of the subsequent contribution by Giuseppe Milan and Marialuisa Damini *Building Intercultural Competence in Understanding Religion through Cooperative Learning*, is on how to successfully tackle the challenge of promoting intercultural and interreligious education for educators. The authors argue that the challenge for educators is to build pathways that promote an intercultural education which is attentive and open to the plurality of ideas, traditions and experiences. Their chapter focuses on the use of cooperative learning methods in the classroom to promote intercultural competence in understanding religion whereby the teacher creates the conditions for the pupils to experience directly positive interdependence and promotional interaction. The last article in this section, chapter eight, *European Voluntary Service and Intercultural Competence in Understanding Islamic Culture*, by Fahri Caki, concerns itself with the question of how international mobility programs as an instrument of intercultural competence can additionally be an effective means to reduce Islamophobia. The question of effectiveness is raised: do European youth’s perceptions of religious life in Turkish society change significantly after spending a year in Turkey?

The following fourth part on *Language, Politics and Intercultural Communication* subsumes a number of contributions from various disciplines. In *The Construction of the "Third Country Other" in EU Integration Discourse*, Bernhard Perchinig discerns between two very different integration regimes, which refer to two distinct notions of "culture" in the EU policies on migration. He shows, how the EU discourse on integration constructs "third country nationals" as the "uncivilised other" in a post-colonial narrative of "nature" versus "culture", which conflicts fundamentally with the praise of cultural diversity in the depiction of Europe as "unity in diversity". Thomas Herdin in *Intercultural Encounters: Changing Values in a Changing World* continues pointing to the inadequate approach of replacing "interculturality" with "transculturality". Furthermore Herdin introduces the results from the 2008/09 study on value changes in China which focuses on business people from Beijing and Shanghai. In chapter eleven, Adrian Tien casts a closer look on Chinese-speaking communities and cultural "key words", which he claims to play an important role for intercultural competence. In his article *Chinese intercultural communication in the global setting, as reflected through contemporary key words in the Chinese multimedia* he claims that Chinese cultural key words allow one to gain various cultural glimpses on different aspects of modern Chinese culture and society. The fifth and final part is dedicated to the special topic of interest: *Interculturality and Leadership in Business* and opens with Alois Moosmüller's contribution *Coping with Intercultural Challenges in Global Business: an Ethnographic View*. Moosmüller argues that in order to survive in the global market, multinational companies have to become "globally integrated enterprises" which can only be accomplished if companies utilize the implicit intercultural knowledge of their employees with international experience. In the subsequent chapter *An Etic View of Crossvergence: Cases from Trans-National and Intra-National Contexts*, Nina Jacob shows that a flexible organisational structure facilitates effective cross-cultural management, fosters the emergence of crossvergence and gives rise to a greater knowledge of and respect for other cultures. Jitka Odehnalova dedicates the next chapter to the important topic of intercultural competence in business negotiation which focuses on fundamental cultural determinants that influence business behaviour, and thus on cultural differences which might cause misunderstandings in business communication and negotiation. Her research involves qualitative data gained via semi-structured interviews with Czech businessmen focussing on Czech-Chinese business negotiations and analyzed with the help of grounded theory. The final contribution by Sumedha Desai

Software of the Mind at Play in the Software Industry briefly outlines the software industry in India in terms of its orientation, organization structure and leadership. Various leadership theories and leadership styles and their cultural perspective are discussed by means of exemplary cases from the software industry. Thereafter the cultural orientation of leadership in the Indian software industry is investigated using examples of the leaders of organizations from this sector of industry. Desai shows how cultural differences persist alongside cultural synthesis reflecting the interculturality in leadership of software companies in India.

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CHAPTER TWO

INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE IN THE 21ST CENTURY: PERSPECTIVES, ISSUES, APPLICATION¹

DARLA K. DEARDORFF

Before examining synergies around intercultural competence and the ways in which we can put intercultural competence to work in our rapidly changing world, it is important to understand more fully exactly what is meant by intercultural competence and in which contexts. What are some various cultural perspectives on this complex concept? And how is it manifested in different fields such as in education, health care or even in engineering? This paper highlights some different emerging cultural themes around intercultural competence, briefly discusses what this looks like in different fields and raises some questions and issues to explore further in putting intercultural competence to work in the 21st century.

To begin, consider these words from one who could be considered interculturally competent:

I grew up in three cultures: I was born in Paris, my parents were from China and I was brought up mostly in America. When I was young, this was very confusing: everyone said that their culture was best, but I knew they couldn't all be right. I felt that there was an expectation that I would choose to be Chinese or French or American [...] the process of trying on each culture taught me something. As I struggled to belong, I came to understand what made each one unique. At that point, I realized that I didn't need to choose one culture to the exclusion of another, but instead I could choose from all three.

The values I selected would become part of who I was, but no one culture needed to win. I could honor the cultural depth and longevity of my Chinese heritage, while feeling just as passionate about the deep artistic traditions of the French and the American commitment to opportunity and the future.

So, rather than settling on any one of the cultures in which I grew up, I now choose to explore many more cultures and find elements to love in each. Every day I make an effort to go toward what I don't understand. This wandering leads to the accidental learning that continually shapes my life [...]. As we struggle to find our individual voices, I believe we must look beyond the voice we've been assigned, and find our place among the tones and timbre of human expression. (Ma, 2008)

These are the words of world-famous musician Yo-Yo Ma. From his own words, we can draw the following conclusions related to intercultural competence: Intercultural competence is a *process* of trying on other cultures, with our values being shaped by multiple cultures. Intercultural competence is a *choice* that is made to intentionally explore the unknown and it is a process of continual learning, of being curious about the unknown. Finally, the acquisition of intercultural competence involves going beyond our own voice and situating our identity within a broader context.

What are the theoretical definitions of intercultural competence? First, it is important to acknowledge that there is not currently consensus on terminology used to describe this concept, with different disciplines using their own terminology. For example, business may use cultural intelligence and intercultural effectiveness. Engineering uses global competence. In health care and social work, we find references to cultural competence. Education uses a wider variety of terms including global learning and global citizenship. (See Deardorff, 2009 for further details.) Despite these different terms in use, the term intercultural competence will be used for purposes of this paper, given that this term refers to interactions occurring between individuals from different backgrounds, regardless of location. Thus, intercultural competence refers to both domestic encounters as well as those occurring internationally.

Much scholarly effort has been invested, particularly among western cultures, in defining intercultural competence over the past several decades. (For a more comprehensive discussion, see Deardorff, 2009, Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009 and Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009). In fact, the concept of "intercultural" was discussed by Comenius in the 1600s when he suggested "pedagogical universalism," or a multiplicity of perspectives, as a foundation upon which to build an education as well as to encourage mutual understanding (Piaget, 1957, Sadler 1969). More recently, various anthropological frameworks such as Hall's three dimensions of cultural difference (1977) have sought to explain some of the difficulties involved in cross-cultural interaction.

Competence itself is often defined as knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Specifically regarding intercultural competence, scholars prioritize various components as being central to intercultural competence, such as adaptability (Kim 2002, Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984). Hofstede (1997) focuses on the need to understand cultural difference through underlying cultural values while Bennett (1993) presents an intercultural sensitivity model in which one's response to cultural difference, which is developmental in nature, underscores one's degree of intercultural competence. Magala (2005), on the other hand, stresses identity as central to intercultural competence. Meanwhile, Byram (1997), viewing attitudes as fundamental to intercultural competence, posits five "saviors" for intercultural communicative competence and explored intercultural competence from a variety of perspectives including Hymes (1972), van Ek (1986), Ruben (1989), and Gudykunst (1994), concluding that there are a number of issues that need to be taken into account when defining intercultural competence and ultimately, when attempting to assess intercultural competence. Those issues include: emphasis on knowledge of cultures and cultural practices versus the skills of "conscious analysis" of intercultural interaction, the role of non-verbal communication in intercultural competence, the breadth in which the concept of intercultural competence should be defined, the degree of focus on psychological traits versus "capacity to act," and the influence of social and political factors on defining and assessing intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 1997, p. 30). Imahori and Lanigan (1989) developed a model of intercultural communication competence where the focus is on both persons in the intercultural action, not just the individual, which is unique to many other definitions and models. The outcome thus becomes a relational outcome between the two participants in the intercultural interaction.

Different fields and professions also use a variety of terminology and definitions when exploring this concept. For example, the engineering field in the United States uses the term "global competence" (Grandin & Hedderich, 2009) while the field of social work often uses "cultural competence" (Fong, 2009). The health care field, where this can become a life or death matter, uses both "interculturally competent care" in addition to "cultural humility" (Anand & Lahiri, 2009, Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998). Spitzberg and Changnon (2009) cite a wide breadth of work on intercultural competence in different fields in listing some of the work on intercultural competence designed for specific contexts including educational: Anderson *et al.*, 2006, Milhouse, 1996; sales or service: Chairsakeo & Speece, 2004, Hopkins, *et al.*, 2005; conflict: Euwema & Emmerik, 2007, Hammer, 2005, Ting-Toomey, 1988, 2007, 2009; health

care: Gibson & Zhong, 2005; counseling: Li, Kim & O'Brien, 2007; organizations/management: Fisher & Härtel, 2003, Torbiörn, 1985. And there are certainly many other fields that have addressed the concept of intercultural competence including linguistics and foreign languages, cultural anthropology, psychology, sociology, business, tourism and hospitality, military, international development, public administration, police/security, and even in religious organizations (Yancey, 2009). As Moosmueller and Schoenhueth (2009) note, "the discourse on intercultural competence is multifaceted and often considered confusing" (p. 209). And as Spitzberg and Changnon (2009) point out, that while there is obviously no shortage of feasible approaches or models guiding conceptualizations of intercultural competence, there are some common categories within these conceptualizations including motivation, knowledge, higher order skills, macro-level skills, interpersonal skills (categorized under sub-categories of attentiveness, composure, coordination, expressiveness), contextual competencies (including identity), and outcomes.

Research-based Model of Intercultural Competence

The first research study to document consensus among leading intercultural scholars from a variety of disciplines and primarily based in the United States was conducted by Deardorff (2006, 2009). From this national study conducted in the United States, the consensus definition agreed upon by these leading intercultural scholars (including M. Byram, H. Triandis, J. Bennett, M. Hammer—for a complete listing see Deardorff, 2006, p. 246) was broadly defined as "effective and appropriate behavior and communication in intercultural situations." The researcher categorized these specific agreed-upon elements into attitudes, knowledge, skills and internal/ external outcomes and placed these in a visual framework. This study serves as one way to view a more foundational framework on intercultural competence, one that is based on a grounded-research approach. As such, the specific elements of the framework will be briefly discussed here, as one example of a grounded research-based definition and framework of intercultural competence. This framework, which has found resonance in different cultural contexts, is meant to serve as a basis of further discussion for purposes of this paper.

Attitudes: Based on the Deardorff study, key attitudes emerged, those of respect, openness, curiosity and discovery. Openness and curiosity imply a willingness to risk and to move beyond one's comfort zone. Further, curiosity sets a foundation for more creative ways to turn differences into opportunities while openness allows the possibility of

seeing from more than one perspective, which is invaluable when negotiating and mediating cultural difference (LeBaron & Pillay, 2006). In communicating respect to others, it is important to demonstrate that others are valued. This begins through showing interest in others and in simply listening attentively, while realizing that respect itself manifests differently in various cultural contexts. These attitudes are foundational to the further development of knowledge and skills needed for intercultural competence development, with one way to move individuals toward these requisite attitudes being to challenge assumptions. As LeBaron and Pillay (2006) note, “dialogue with genuine curiosity is a precondition for [...] addressing cultural conflicts” (p. 94).

Knowledge: In the United States, there is some debate as to what “global knowledge” is needed for intercultural competence. In regard to knowledge necessary for intercultural competence, intercultural scholars concurred on the following: cultural self-awareness (meaning the ways in which one’s culture has influenced one’s identity and worldview), culture-specific knowledge,² deep cultural knowledge including understanding other world views, and sociolinguistic awareness. The one element agreed upon by all the intercultural scholars in the study was the importance of understanding the world from others’ perspectives.

Skills: The skills that emerged from this study were ones that addressed the acquisition and processing of knowledge: observation, listening, evaluating, analysing, interpreting, and relating. This concurs with an observation by the former president of Harvard University of the importance of “thinking interculturally” (Bok, 2006). Knowledge is not static and given the exponential change occurring in the 21st century, it becomes critical that individuals develop the skills necessary to not only acquire knowledge but more importantly, how to make meaning of the knowledge and then apply that knowledge in concrete ways.

Internal Outcomes: The attitudes, knowledge, and skills outlined in this framework ideally lead to an internal outcome that consists of flexibility,³ adaptability, an ethnorelative perspective and empathy. These are aspects that occur *within* the individual as a result of the acquired attitudes, knowledge and skills necessary for intercultural competence. At this point, individuals are ideally able to see from others’ perspectives and to respond to others according to the way in which the other person desires to be treated, thus demonstrating empathy (Calloway-Thomas, 2010). Individuals may reach these internal outcomes in varying degrees of success, depending on the attitudes, skills and knowledge acquired within this framework.

External Outcomes: The summation of the attitudes, knowledge and skills, as well as the internal outcomes, are demonstrated through the behavior and communication of the individual. How effective and appropriate is this person in intercultural interactions? This behavior and communication become the visible external outcomes of intercultural competence. This then becomes the agreed upon definition of the intercultural scholars in this study, that intercultural competence is the effective and appropriate behavior and communication in intercultural situations. However, it is important to understand that this definition is predicated on particular requisite elements of intercultural competence. It is also important to understand the implications of “effective” and “appropriate” behavior and communication. *Effectiveness* can be determined by the interlocutor but the *appropriateness* can only be determined by the other person—with appropriateness being directly related to cultural sensitivity and the adherence to cultural norms of that person.

These five overall elements of attitudes, knowledge, skills, internal and external outcomes can be visualized through the following model of intercultural competence (see figure 2-1), thereby providing a framework to further guide efforts in developing—and assessing—individuals’ intercultural competence. These elements are placed within the context of intercultural interactions, with an emphasis on the process involved in the development of one’s intercultural competence. It is important to note that the development of intercultural competence is a lifelong process and that there is no point at which one becomes fully interculturally competent. Further, the *process* of development becomes crucial through self-reflection and mindfulness. Knowledge alone, such as language, is not sufficient for intercultural competence and in the end, the requisite attitudes of openness, curiosity and respect remain foundational to all else. In the ever-evolving literature on intercultural competence, the term cultural humility is entering the discussion, which focuses more on attitudes combined with cultural self-awareness. Less emphasis is placed on knowledge (and in fact could even be considered presumptuous that one can develop competence based solely on cultural knowledge) and rather focuses on fostering cultural self-awareness, interpersonal sensitivity and an attitude of openness and learning (Tervalon, & Murray-Garcia, 1998, Juarez *et al.*, 2006). This particular model lends itself well to the focus on cultural humility when interacting with others.

This model highlights essential aspects of intercultural competence; it is important that these are the only aspects—that there may be additional intercultural aspects, especially depending on the context. However, the ones outlined here are deemed essential to the acquisition of intercultural

competence. Further, it is important that model stresses that while the initial focus is on the individual and the knowledge, skills and attitudes of that individual, that the attention then turns to the interaction itself and those involved in the interaction. Further, this model, while culture-general in nature, can be tailored to specific contextual situations, whether domestic or cross-border in nature. One final note on using this model is that it is not meant to be used solely alone but in juxtaposition with other frames, including ones that address more specifically the developmental, psychological, ethical, interpersonal and engagement dimensions of human interactions.

Yet, there are obvious limitations inherent in any model so it becomes important to look at common themes emerging from other cultural perspectives on intercultural competence. Upon closer examination of those different cultural perspectives, several themes emerge including the following: The first theme is the importance of understanding these historical, political and social contexts, particular regarding the role and impact of colonialization on intercultural contact within societies, especially those in African, Asian, and Latin American contexts. In fact, numerous scholars emphasize the importance of context in intercultural competence, and while western definitions and models of this concept tend to view this construct in a vacuum devoid of context, work from Latin American, Arab, and Asian perspectives of intercultural competence note to some degree how crucial it is to consider these contexts. This focus on context points to the importance of awareness in intercultural competence, another theme that emerges from these different perspectives. Another key theme that emerges from different perspectives is that of the importance of relationship within intercultural dialogue and competence. Such a priority on relationship building has significant implications for trust-building and interpersonal communication skills as well as for conflict resolution. The discussions on relationship also lead to the focus on interconnectedness, which in turn underscores another theme running through the different cultural perspectives, that of identity, in which, for example, the African concept of *ubuntu* epitomizes both relationship and identity. In this age of globalization that often leads to politicized cultural identities, the transcendence of one's identity seeks to defy simplistic categorizations of cultural groups and strives to instead understand the fullness of who one is, moving beyond the traditional dichotomous in/out group mentality to one that embraces and respects others' differences and in so doing, keeps the focus on the relational goals of engagement. Based on the discussion and analysis of the current literature on intercultural competence from various perspectives (see Deardorff, 2009), the following are identified as

skills and competences with broader applicability: Respect, self-awareness/identity, seeing from other perspectives/world views, listening, adaptation, relationship building, and cultural humility.

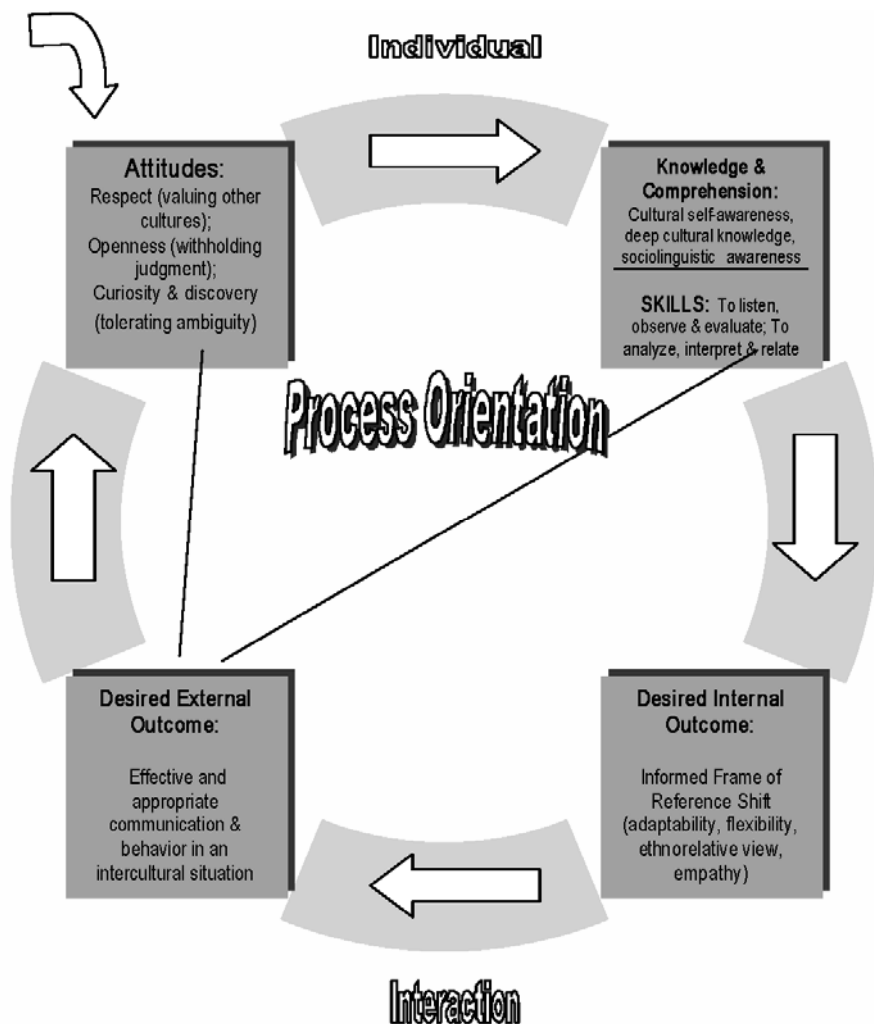


Fig. 2-1 Process Model of Intercultural Competence (Deardorff, 2006, 2009), Copyright 2006 by D. K. Deardorff⁴

So, what does all of this mean for putting intercultural competence to work in the world? First, it is important to remember that intercultural competence is an ongoing, life-long process unique to individuals' contexts and experiences, which means there is no "one-size fits all" approach to developing or assessing intercultural competence. Further, intercultural competence doesn't just happen but must be intentionally addressed in educational institutions and in communities. There are numerous tools and methods related to intercultural competence that have been developed and successfully applied in mediating cultural difference, in combating prejudices and in strengthening social cohesion. Two specific societal tools are the education systems and the legal systems as means of strengthening social cohesion. Other tools and methods related to furthering intercultural development include the following: Informal and formal structures in society, especially through educational institutions (and teacher training in particular), intercultural dialogue, intercultural mediation, project cooperation, community dialogues, fine arts-theatre, art, music, literature, mass media, and government policies. Possible methods upon which to focus particular attention at the individual level in furthering intercultural development include the following: cross-cultural coaching, experiential learning, personal leadership, intentional global (or multicultural) teams, technology, and storytelling, which is a powerful medium in many cultures. The key to using any tool or method to further intercultural understanding is that it remains relevant and appropriate to the context in which it is used. Thus, what works in one cultural context may not be effective or appropriate in another cultural context. Therefore, best practices in developing intercultural competence can only be construed to a limited degree in other contexts and discussions on such methods and tools remain marginally useful.

Questions for further reflection and exploration in putting intercultural competence to work include the following:

- 1) Who needs intercultural skills/competence within communities? Who are the stakeholders and why is this important to them?
- 2) What are the specific needs of those involved?
- 3) What are we missing by focusing exclusively on skills? What else should be addressed within intercultural understanding?
- 4) Which methods are most appropriate for those involved in further intercultural understanding and development?
- 5) What resources are available for utilizing the selected methods?
- 6) What do we anticipate as the challenges in conveying intercultural skills/learning in this context and how can those challenges be addressed?

- 7)What attributes, based on the cultural-context, are needed in those who facilitate the acquisition of these intercultural skills?
- 8)What are the specific goals and intended outcomes of conveying intercultural competence? In other words, what should participants be able to know or do that they were not able to do before? What are the priorities upon which to focus?
- 9)What needs to be put in place for facilitating the development of intercultural competence? Specifically, what content supports the stated goals and outcomes?
- 10)Which processes are best to use to convey the content within this context?
- 11)What are the underlying assumptions about the participants? Content? Processes? How can different perspectives be incorporated into the methods used?
- 12)What will be the evidence that these skills have been successfully addressed? In other words, how will these intercultural skills be assessed?

Criteria that can be taken into consideration when exploring methods for conveying intercultural skills and developing intercultural competence within communities include the following:

- 1)Methods need to be appropriate within the cultural-context of the community. This means that implications of such underlying cultural values like power distance must be explored.
- 2)Methods utilize the available technologies within a community. In some communities, online resources may be an excellent way in which to convey intercultural competence skills while in other communities, online resources would simply not be an option.
- 3)Methods reach all stakeholders regardless of age, socio-economic level, gender, and so on. This may mean varying the methods depending on the specific backgrounds of participants.
- 4)When culturally appropriate, methods need to involve not only knowledge-transmission but also allow for a means for participants to experience application and practice of knowledge and skills.
- 5)When appropriate, methods should include feedback mechanisms so that participants can continue to learn from their experiences.

Further research is needed to determine which methods are most appropriate within specific contexts for conveying intercultural skills.

Conclusion

The only thing in common is our difference and once we understand that—we discover our oneness. This statement concurs with the 2001 UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity which emphasizes the common heritage of humankind within the world's diversity. As we continually search for ways to get along together as human beings sharing this one planet, the need to transcend boundaries, to bridge and transform our differences, to be in relationship with one another, to join in the oneness of our humanity while accepting our differences—these needs will continue to drive us as we seek to overcome differences that may divide us, differences that lead to misunderstandings and conflicts, and even in some cases, to the point of war. This search for intercultural competence underscores the need for genuine respect and humility as we relate to one another, meaning that we arrive at the point of truly valuing each other and in so doing, bridge those differences through relationship-building. Indeed, *cultural humility* may contain the way forward as we strive to understand each other better. In the end, intercultural competence is about our relationships with each other and ultimately, our very survival as the human race, as we work together to address the global challenges that confront us in this century.

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Notes

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