Intercultural training

Lecture4.1

The cross-cultural interactions in working places are not always successful.

For example, studies have found that between 16 and 40 percent of all expatriate managers who are given foreign assignments end these assignments earlier than expected because of their poor performance or their inability to adjust to the foreign environment (Baker & Ivancevich, 1971; Black, 1988; Dunbar & Ehrlich, 1986; Tung, 1981),

and

as high as 50 percent of those who do not return early function at a low level of effectiveness (Copeland & Griggs, 1985).

- Unsuccessful cross-cultural interactions become even more important when the costs of failure are high, and they often are.

- For example, studies have estimated that the cost of a failed expatriate assignment is an amount from $50,000 to $150,000 (Copeland & Griggs, 1985).

- For a firm that has hundreds of expatriate employees worldwide, such costs can easily reach into the tens of millions of dollars.

- In fact, Copeland and Griggs (1985) have estimated that the direct costs to U.S. firms of failed expatriate assignments is over $2 billion a year, and this does not include unmeasured losses such as damaged corporate reputations or lost business opportunities.

How can we improve intercultural skills? Gudykunst (1998)

- **Minimize _anxiety._ Knowledge reduces uncertainty**

- **Watch different perspectives: _perception_ explains behaviour**

- **Their _interests_: watch for differences: seek similarities: interpret what are their interests**

- **_Categories_: we need finer distinctions: over-simplification is root of false stereotyping**

- **+intercultural competence**

- Cross-cultural training

- **Brislin and Yoshida (1993) define cross-cultural training as formal efforts to prepare people for more effective interpersonal relations and for job success when they interact extensively with individuals from cultures other than their own (Brislin & Yoshida, 1993).**

  - **cross-cultural training facilitates more effective cross-cultural interactions.**

Cross-Cultural Training

- **Cultural training programs should include:**
  - **culture-specific information**
  - **general cultural information on values, practices, and assumptions**
  - **self-specific information that identifies one's own cultural paradigm**

Cross-Cultural Training

- **Additional forms of training include:**
  - **mentoring**
  - **interactions, games**
  - **cultural assimilator programs, in which trainees must respond to scenarios of specific situations in a particular country.**

Dynamics of adjustment

(1) *Ethnocentric phase*
(2) *Culture-shocked phase*
(3) *Conformist phase*
(4) *Adjusted phase*

Selmer, J., Torbiorn, I., & de Leon, C. T. (1998). Sequential cross-cultural training for expatriate business managers: predeparture and post-arrival. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 9(5), 831-840

- **Ethnocentric phase:** *pre-departure training and post-arrival training.*

Pre-departure training

- During the **ethnocentric phase**, the psychological predisposition of individuals restricts the in-depth understanding of a particular culture not yet experienced, simply because the cross-cultural context is not a priori of great salience.

Pre-departure training

- Trainees are rarely able to grasp in abstraction and recall later in practice the new social skills.

- Pre-departure programmes could focus instead on essential information on local conditions.

- Training material should include didactic exposure to the cross-cultural adjustment process, underlining the normal and constructive phases that emerge after the initial strains of culture shock.

Training in the ethnocentric phase - post-arrival training

- Upon arrival in the host country, expatriates are caught up in hectic familiarization and difficult socialization (Selmer, 1995b).

- If encouraged to take time off to participate in **post-arrival training**, the trainees themselves would suggest many of the concerns to be discussed.

Training in the ethnocentric phase - post-arrival training

- Training immediately after arrival should enhance cultural awareness and lower ethnocentrism.

- Culture-contrast methods would be the most appropriate to highlight similarities and differences in the fundamental values and characteristics of home and host cultures (cf. Stewart and Bennett, 1991; Althen, 1988).

Training in the ethnocentric phase - post-arrival training

- **Learning is likely to be most effective when the expatriate's reliance upon home-culture views has weakened and openness to the new culture has heightened.**

Training in the culture-shocked phase

- During the culture-shocked phase, cross-cultural training would be most effective.

- The training during this period should facilitate cognitive restructuring by providing explanations of actual cross-cultural experiences.

- Exercises should elicit experimentation with new behaviours which could develop into interpersonally effective performance on the job.

Training in the conformist phase

- The conformist phase is another suitable period for cross-cultural training, but with a different focus. The training at this phase should focus on 'learning by doing as the host-culture members do'.

- Culturally sensitive skills would be efficiently learnt by actual practice on the job, which in turn would provide trainees with objective reactions from significant others.

Training in the conformist phase

- The interactional mode of learning occurs through structured or unstructured situations for interaction between trainees and host nationals and/or experienced expatriates.

- *Long-term effects of training at the conformist phase* are probable, due to the immediacy of application. The immediate transfer of learning to practice reinforces the behavioural skills, such that cross-cultural competencies are quickly incorporated in the personal repertoire of conduct (Sorcher and Spence's, 1982).

The effectiveness of multicultural training in general is proven. A good overview of studies and some aspects of the effectiveness of this training can be found in the below presented paper:

J. Stewart Black and Mark Mendenhall. «Cross-Cultural Training Effectiveness: A Review and a Theoretical Framework for Future Research» / The Academy of Management Review, Vol. 15, No. 1 (Jan., 1990), pp. 113-136.

Training of Intercultural Competence (TIC)

- According to Stephan and Stephan (2001), **the psychological processes which lead to increasing intercultural (cross-cultural) competence** include two corresponding dimensions:

(i) active versus passive processes and
(ii) affective versus cognitive processes

These two dimensions were adapted in the TIC in order to classify the psychological processes addressed by the training (see Table).

Table: Psychological processes addressed in the TIC

	Cognitive	Affective
Active	1. modelling positive intergroup behavior; 2. altering incorrect attributions; 3.emphasizing multiple identities	1. enhancing positive intergroup behavior; 2. detecting mismatch between values and behavior
Passive	1. forming cognitive empathy; 2. strengthening perceptions of similarities	1. reducing threat; 2. forming emotional empathy

Stages in designing evidence-based training programs

Stage I: Select the cultures or subgroups involved in the program.

Stage II: Establish the goals of the program.

Stage III: Choose relevant theories of culture, culture change, and adaptation.

Stage IV: Select specific psychological and communication

processes based on the goals and theory.

Stage V: Select techniques and exercises that will activate these processes.

Stage VI: Evaluate the effectiveness of the program and the processes by which these outcomes occurred.

Stage I: Select the cultures or subgroups involved in the program

- Select the cultures or subgroups involved in the program. To design effective programs, the program designers must be knowledgeable about the cultures and groups involved, the elements of these cultures, their histories, and the history of relationships between these cultures.

Stage II: Establish the goals of the program

- Establish the goals of the program involved. In the past, the goals of intercultural education and training programs were sometimes stated vaguely, the idea being to improve intercultural relations or increase some combination of knowledge, understanding, and skills. These are fine ideas, but they are too broad to be workable goals.

- As a field, we are now in a better position to be specific about our goals. This point is exemplified by the types of programs that are currently being developed.

Stage II: Establish the goals of the program

- As a field, we are now in a better position to be specific about our goals. This point is exemplified by the types of programs that are currently being developed.

- For example, programs are now designed to promote co-existence, immigrant /resident relations, conflict resolution, reconciliation, social justice, and intergroup peace. Intercultural education and training programs also have been developed that have even more narrowly defined goals such as increasing empathy, reducing intergroup anxiety, reducing stereotypes and prejudice, and improving non-verbal communication skills.

Stage III: Choose relevant theories of culture, culture change, and adaptation

- Choose theories of culture and cultural change that are relevant to achieving these goals. Culture is simply too complex to understand without the organizing principles provided by theory. At the broadest level, such theories take a comprehensive view of culture. These theories include the cultural dimensions (Hofstede, 2001; Triandis, 1995), values (Schwartz, 2006), and trait approaches (Church, 2009), as well as activity theory (Cheung, van de Vijver, & Leong, 2011; Ratner, 2008), evolutionary theory (Buss, 2001; Mesoudi, 2009), social representation theories (Moscovici, 1984; Wagner et al., 1999), and the indigenous culture approach (Kim, 2000), among others.

Stage III: Choose relevant theories of culture, culture change, and adaptation

- Likewise, there are many theories of intergroup relations that are relevant to intercultural education and training programs.
- They include social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978),
- realistic group conflict theory (Jackson, 1993; LeVine & Campbell, 1972),
- contact theory (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006),
- intergroup threat theory (Stephan, Ybarra, & Rios Morrison, 2009).

Stage IV: Select specific psychological and communication processes based on the goals and theory

- Based on the goals selected and the relevant theories and empirical research, the next step is to decide how to achieve these goals.

- In the past, this step would have consisted of the selection of techniques, exercises, simulations, written materials, etc. that were expected to achieve these goals. Now, however, we can add a crucial step. We can use research to specify the psychological and communication processes that will lead to the outcomes we desire from our intercultural education and training programs.

Stage IV: Select specific psychological and communication processes based on the goals and theory

- **For example, we can activate cognitive processes such as analytical thinking, perspective taking, cognitive dissonance, self-regulation, recategorization of group boundaries, or processes to counteract attribution biases. Similarly, affective processes such as emotional empathy, positive intercultural emotions, and reducing intergroup anxiety can be created.**

- With respect to communication, processes such as effective listening skills, openness to others' views, displaying culturally appropriate non-verbal behaviors, communicating understanding, or responding effectively to intercultural misunderstandings could be set in motion.

Stage V: Select techniques and exercises that will activate these processes

- With the chosen psychological and communication processes in mind, select the techniques, exercises, and materials that will activate these processes.

Stage V: Select techniques and exercises that will activate these processes

- If reducing intergroup anxiety is the process, we know that <u>intergroup contact</u>, particularly under the conditions specified by Allport (1954), reduces intergroup anxiety, which then leads to more positive attitudes toward the other group (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008; Turner, Hewstone, Voci, & Vonofakou, 2008).

Expectations

Ask participants in pairs to interview one another by asking each other 'What do you want to get out of the workshop?' to check whether the workshop marketing has given correct or misleading information regarding the scope of the workshop.

Expectations

However, there are often some suggestions that are either too big or too esoteric to be covered in the workshop. It is best if the facilitator does not immediately tell a person in front of the group 'We cannot cover this', but waits until all items have been listed.

- Then, it is helpful to clarify if some 'expectations' are beyond the scope of the workshop and available time. In this way the person who requested an item that is not to be covered does not 'lose face', as the items listed have been depersonalized.

Stage VI: Evaluate the effectiveness of the program and the processes by which these outcomes occurred.

- Evaluate the effectiveness of the program, assessing not only outcomes but also the processes by which these outcomes were achieved.

- This is an absolutely necessary step, without which knowledge cannot be accumulated and forward progress will not be made.

Evaluation of the intercultural training effectiveness

● **Intercultural Sensitivity Inventory (ICSI)**

Bhawuk and Brislin (1992) developed a scale to measure intercultural sensitivity by examining

(a) **people's understanding of the different ways they can behave**, depending upon whether they are interacting in an individualistic or a collectivist culture,

(b) **their open-mindedness concerning** the differences they encounter in other cultures, and

(c) **their flexibility concerning behaving in unfamiliar** ways that are called upon by the norms of other cultures. The Intercultural Sensitivity Inventory is a 46-item scale that was developed and tested among participants at the East-West Center in Hawaii and among graduate students in an MBA program who were contemplating careers in international business.

The instrument was found to have adequate reliability and validity.

Reaction Measures

Bhawuk used six items, adapted from Harrison (1992), to measure generic reaction to tap participants' opinions about the training.

These included:

"I knew everything that was a part of the training,"

 "The training was a waste of time,"

"I think the program was much too short,"

"I enjoyed the training program very much"

 "I would tell my friends to avoid such a training program,"

 "I enjoyed learning at my own pace."

These items measure the opinion of the participants about training program.

Behavioral Measures

Harrison (1992) developed a cross-cultural interaction task as a measure of behavioral change.

In this task, participants are required to interact in the capacity of a manager with a Japanese worker, who was a confederate. The interaction is analyzed by using the five-item criteria recommended by Harrison (1992). **These items measure the extent to which a participant would show personal concern, reduce conflict, maintain harmony, emphasize group consensus, and solicit employee input**.

Behavioral Measures

Harrison (1992) developed a cross-cultural interaction task as a measure of behavioral change.

By examining the audio or video taped interactions, two or more judges can rate each of the participants' conversation with the confederate on a five-point Likert scale for each of the five criteria of personal concern, reducing conflict, and so forth. It is recommended that the judges discussed their ratings, and to achieve a consensus rating for each of the interactions. This procedure of obtaining a consensual rating for an interaction task has been recommended by Latham and Saari (1979) since it avoids the mechanical calculation of the average of the independent ratings.

Objective questions

- What do you remember from yesterday: key scenes, events, conversations?

- What did the group achieve?

- Which parts were unclear?

Reflective (feeling) questions

- What did you **enjoy** yesterday?
- What was the high point/the low point?
- Where did you struggle most?
- What image/s might capture the emotional tone/s of the day?

Decision questions

-What did you learn?
- What were your key insights?

Decision questions

- What will you apply in your work, home or community life?
- What would you need to adapt to your culture?
- Is there any unfinished business that needs to be addressed today?
- What changes do you suggest for today/the rest of the course?

Thank you!

INTERCULTURAL TRAINING