

## Design and Pedagogy for Transformative Intercultural Learning

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*Significant learning is learning that makes a difference in how people live—and the kind of life they are capable of living. We want that which students learn to become part of how they think, what they can and want to do, what they believe is true about life, and what they value—and we want it to increase their capability for living life fully and meaningfully. —L. DEE FINK*

Intercultural experiences have the potential to not only help participants live and work more effectively and appropriately across cultures, but also produce deep, transformative, and significant learning, such as that described in the quote by L. Dee Fink above. This chapter brings together research and literature in the areas of intercultural training, international educational exchange, intercultural communication, and the scholarship of teaching and learning to address how to design effective intercultural curricula that will do just that. “Intercultural curriculum” is broadly defined here as a structure or framework through which educators intentionally facilitate intercultural learning. Such a curriculum can be as short as a few hours or as long as a semester or more; it can be for credit or not for credit. Participants can include students, faculty, staff, administrators, homestay families, and others involved with intercultural learning experiences. Such curricula can be facilitated before, during, and/or after a study abroad experience (e.g., U.S.-based students participating in an international or domestic intercultural immersion program or international students studying in the United States); integrated into traditional courses to make them more intercultural; or used to form the basis of training programs

to help faculty and staff work more effectively across differences. In other words, this chapter addresses how to design curricula for a wide variety of intercultural learning experiences and audiences in higher education.

Learning how to live and work effectively and appropriately across cultural differences is no longer a “nice to have,” but rather a “need to have” skill set. A growing number of educational institutions are working to actively promote intercultural learning, with many emphasizing its importance in their mission statements or strategic plans. Oftentimes, the assumed best route to achieve this objective is through international educational exchange; however, today’s needs cannot be addressed simply by increasing the number of students who study abroad. From a practical standpoint, it is not feasible for all students to study abroad. Furthermore, research has demonstrated that simply exposing learners to, or immersing them in, another culture does not necessarily lead to significant intercultural development (Paige and Vande Berg 2012). A growing body of research on international education, as well as the scholarship of teaching and learning, strongly suggests that educators must be more intentional about facilitating intercultural learning in all aspects of their work, at home and abroad. This is even more imperative if the goal is for intercultural experiences to lead to the type of deep, transformative learning referred to by Fink at the outset of this chapter.

Educators who are committed to intercultural learning can start by furthering their own intercultural development. Research indicates that many of the faculty and staff working with study abroad participants do not possess optimal levels of intercultural development for facilitating students’ intercultural learning (Goode 2007/2008; Ziegler 2006). It is important to note that facilitating intercultural learning requires skills that differ significantly from typical teaching skills. In order to ethically facilitate intercultural learning that resonates with the learners, educators must have an authentic sense of their own development and skills, coupled with a strong understanding of the theories and factors that drive curriculum design.

This chapter begins with a discussion of several pedagogical “best practices” that educators should take into consideration when designing an intercultural curriculum. The bulk of the chapter then describes the steps involved

in designing an intercultural curriculum using backward design. Backward design (also known as reverse engineering) simply means beginning with the end in mind, and it is fundamental to designing significant, transformative intercultural learning experiences (Fink 2013; Wiggins and McTighe 2005). Throughout the chapter, attention will also be paid to key ethical issues to consider during the design process.

Although this chapter does not address the process of *facilitating* intercultural learning (see chapter 6), it must be emphasized that effective facilitation is just as crucial to the success of a strong curriculum as the design process. A strong curriculum is a necessary but insufficient condition for increasing intercultural development.

## **Pedagogies**

In order to design effective intercultural curricula, educators must first understand several pedagogical best practices. In particular, educators should become familiar with constructivist, experiential, and learner-centered pedagogies. Additionally, such curricula ought to be developmental, holistic, and also balance challenging and supporting the learner. Educators should not only understand the theories behind such pedagogies, but also know how to translate those theories into practice.

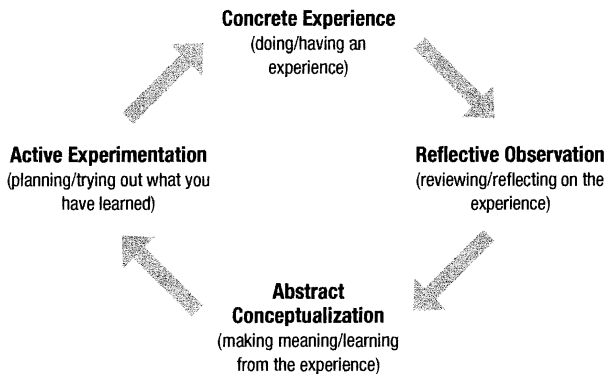
### ***Constructivist Pedagogies***

Constructivism maintains that reality is socially constructed, and how we make meaning of the world is highly culturally influenced (Berger and Luckmann 1966). From spitting in the street to copying answers on an exam, how individuals make meaning of these events will differ depending, at least in part, on the cultural groups that have influenced their lives. Intercultural curricula that are constructivist in nature encourage learners to come into awareness of their own processes of making meaning and help them recognize and appreciate how others may make meaning differently. Educators who aim to facilitate others' intercultural learning need to first practice this themselves and then consider how to help their learners do the same.

### *Experiential Pedagogies*

Intercultural learning should also be experiential. Experiential learning theory—which draws on the work of William James, John Dewey, and Jean Piaget, among others—maintains that experience does not necessarily lead to learning. As Kolb states, “Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (1984, 38). Kolb’s (1984) Experiential Learning Cycle (see figure 1) is now widely recognized as a best pedagogical practice within the intercultural field for transforming experience into learning.

**Figure 1. Kolb’s Experiential Learning Cycle**



*Note:* Reproduced from Kolb (1984).

According to Kolb (1984), in order to learn deeply and most effectively from an experience, learners must have a concrete experience; reflect on that experience; make meaning by connecting that experience with concepts, theories, or other experiences; and then try out or apply what they have learned, thus leading to a new concrete experience. This “learning around the wheel,” as it is sometimes called, can begin at any point in the cycle. In international education, the starting point is often concrete experience because encountering culturally different others offers a constant stream of unfamiliar experiences. An educator may also design a learning activity in which learners enter the cycle by reflecting on something they have observed outside the classroom,

or the educator may introduce new concepts and/or theories and ask participants to connect these ideas with their personal experiences—past, present, or future. The cycle should be viewed as an upward spiral—every time learners go around the cycle they learn something, and thus start the next cycle from a more elevated place (see Passarelli and Kolb 2012; Zull 2012; Gregersen-Hermans and Pusch 2012; Savicki 2008).

### *Learner-Centered Pedagogies*

Facilitating intercultural learning is not only about educators imparting their knowledge onto learners, it must also be learner-centered. While the educator is ideally more knowledgeable and experienced with the topics of intercultural learning—including but not limited to understanding of the host culture(s)—the idea is not for that person to explain or interpret cultural differences for the learners. The goal is for facilitators to appropriately use their knowledge and experience to guide others through a learning process and to help participants learn from their own experiences. Learners must reflect on and draw meaning from their experiences; the educator cannot do that for them. In addition, the facilitator needs to trust the learners in their ability to engage in this reflection (see chapter 6). As Weimer explains, “The goal of learner-centered teaching is the development of students as autonomous, self-directed, and self-regulating learners” (2013, 10). In essence, it is about helping people learn how to learn through their personal experiences.

### *Developmental Curricula*

Designing curricula that are developmental means taking into account learners’ developmental readiness, primarily their intercultural development. The Intercultural Development Continuum (IDC) (Hammer 2009), which is based on Milton J. Bennett’s Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) (1986, 1993), offers a helpful continuum with which to assess learners’ intercultural readiness. The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) (Hammer and Bennett 1998), an instrument grounded in the IDC, assesses the complexity with which an individual experiences cultural difference. Although a full explanation of the IDC or IDI is beyond the scope of this chapter (see

Hammer 2009), they offer useful conceptual frameworks for attending to learners' developmental readiness with regard to intercultural learning. For example, with learners who tend to polarize difference, per the IDC, educators may need to focus on helping them find commonalities with culturally different others; with learners who tend to minimize differences, facilitators need to help them become curious about and move toward cultural differences. (For more information about teaching to the different IDC worldviews, see J. M. Bennett and M. J. Bennett n.d.; J. M. Bennett 2009; Hammer 2009, 2012; M. J. Bennett 2012; Gregersen-Hermans and Pusch 2012.)

Educators often work with diverse groups of learners who may be at very different places developmentally. In such situations, it is important to gather any information available about the participants' developmental readiness, as a group and individually, with regard to intercultural learning and to keep this in mind when designing (and facilitating) curricula.

### *Holistic Curricula*

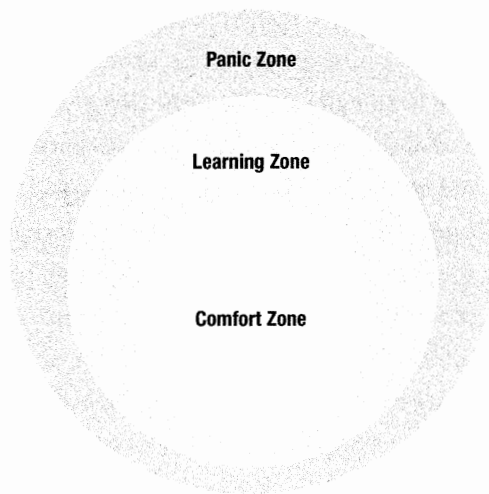
Effective intercultural learning is also holistic in the sense that it involves affective, behavioral, cognitive, and perceptive learning. As Kolb explains, "To learn is not the special province of a single specialized realm of human functioning such as cognition or perception. It involves the integrated functioning of the total organism—thinking, feeling, perceiving, and behaving" (1984, 31). Most traditional college courses rely heavily on cognitive learning; some involve behavioral learning as well, often through "labs" or similar venues. However, very few courses or other learning experiences intentionally involve asking participants to learn from and through their emotions or to observe and reflect on the perspectives they characteristically take in various contexts. (See chapter 7 for strategies to engage learners in reflective practices.)

### *Challenge and Support Curricula*

Another important pedagogical practice—one that is based on Sanford's (1966) challenge/support hypothesis and was first applied to the context of intercultural learning by Janet M. Bennett (1993, 2003)—involves balancing challenge and support (see figure 2). In order to learn most effectively and

fully, learners need to get outside of their “comfort zone” and stretch into what is considered their “learning zone.” However, if people are pushed too far outside their comfort zone or remain outside of their comfort zone for too long, they may enter a space that is sometimes referred to as the “panic zone,” where the challenge becomes too much and is no longer productive. While little learning can take place if participants are not stretching outside of their comfort zone, learning is also unlikely to occur in this panic zone.

**Figure 2. Balancing Challenge and Support to Promote Learning**



*Note:* Adapted from Sanford (1966) and J. M. Bennett (1993, 2003).

Educators can assist in maximizing students’ learning by helping them get outside of their comfort zone and into the learning zone. However, it is also important to recognize that learners cannot remain there forever; staying outside one’s comfort zone is taxing and will eventually push learners into their panic zone. So the goal is for educators to provide the needed challenge and support to help students get into the learning zone as much as possible, while also acknowledging when it is appropriate and necessary to move back into the comfort zone to recharge. (For research examining the application of the challenge/support hypothesis in intercultural learning, see Vande Berg, Connor-Linton, and Paige 2009; Harvey 2013.)

## Backward Design

In order to effect significant and transformative learning across cultures, the entire intercultural experience, including but not limited to the curriculum, must be designed with the end goal(s) in mind. This is what is often referred to as “backward design” (Fink 2013; Wiggins and McTighe 2005). The process of backward design can be summarized as follows:

The designer starts the process by imagining a time when the course is over, say one or two years later, and then asking, “What is it I hope that students will have learned, that will still be there and have value, several years after the course is over?” The answer to this question forms the basis of the learning goals. Then the designer moves backward in time to the end of the course and asks the assessment question, “What would the students have to do to convince me—and themselves—that they had achieved those learning goals?” The process of working out the answer to that question clarifies the real meaning of the learning goals. And then it’s time to move back in time once more, to the time of the course itself, and ask, “What would the students need to do *during* the course to be able to do well on these assessment activities?” (Fink 2013, 71)

While Fink is referring specifically to designing college courses, this process is also applicable when developing other types of learning experiences. Indeed, educators would be well advised to thoughtfully and intentionally apply such design principles to any learning experience, in or outside of the classroom.

There are seven key steps in the process of creating an intercultural curriculum using backward design (adapted from Fink’s [2013] Twelve Steps of Integrated Course Design):

1. Identify important situational factors.
2. Conduct a needs assessment.
3. Identify/define key learning objectives.
4. Decide upon feedback and assessment methods.



5. Choose the most appropriate teaching and learning activities.
6. Integrate activities into a coherent whole.
7. Reflect on the process and identify key learning.

Each of the seven steps will be discussed in greater detail below, with recommendations for the associated facilitation. It is assumed that the person designing the curriculum will also be involved in the facilitation. While there are certainly circumstances in which one might design an intercultural curriculum that is then facilitated by others, as stated earlier, the facilitation is just as important, if not more so, than the curriculum. If the designers are not involved in the facilitation, they should work closely with the intended facilitators to ensure they are comfortable with and capable of facilitating the curriculum being designed.

### *Step 1. Identify Important Situational Factors*

The first step is to identify the audience and consider the other important situational factors involved. Some questions that educators should ask themselves include:

- How many participants will be present?
- When will the curriculum be facilitated?
- Is it taking place before, during, and/or after a significant intercultural experience?
- Is it tied to a specific intercultural experience?
- Where will it take place?
- Will the learning occur in person, online, or in a hybrid format?
- Is it for credit or not for credit?
- How often will the participants meet and for how long?

Try to find out as much as possible about the relevant situational factors.

### *Step 2. Conduct a Needs Assessment*

Next, educators should conduct a needs assessment of the audience as well as any other key stakeholders. Consider the learners, including their needs, interests, strengths, challenges, and motivations for participating. The following includes important information that would be helpful to know about the participants, if possible:

- Demographics;
- Cultural backgrounds (including but not limited to ethnic and national identities);
- Preferred learning styles;
- Preferred communication styles;
- Previous intercultural experience and intercultural training;
- Level of intercultural development; and
- Differing abilities (including but not limited to physical and cognitive impairments).

In some cases, this information can be derived from a formal needs assessment, such as a survey, of the intended audience. In other cases, this may not be feasible or perhaps appropriate; instead, gather information by talking with key stakeholders and/or people who are similar to the audience. For example, if a dean has requested an intercultural training for the department, discuss why the dean feels that such a program is necessary and ask what changes would be desired as a result of the training. In that same vein, when developing a course for incoming international students, educators can talk to current international students about their experiences and what they found to be useful in their first semester on campus. The point is to gather as much information as reasonably possible to better understand the audience.

It may also be beneficial to get a sense of how the work fits into wider organizational needs or goals. Does the institution or department have a mission statement or strategic plan that includes language around internationalization, intercultural learning, diversity and inclusion, or similar concepts? In addition,

it may be advantageous to inquire about the needs of other key stakeholders, even if they will not be participating themselves. For example, when designing a training program to help faculty and staff work more effectively with international students, go straight to the source and survey some of these students to find out what they feel faculty and staff need in this regard.

### *Step 3. Identify/Define Key Learning Objectives*

With a good understanding of the situational factors and the audience in hand, the core of the backward design process begins. Steps 3 through 5—defining the learning objectives, deciding upon feedback and assessment methods, and choosing the most appropriate teaching and learning activities—should be performed sequentially, yet also synergistically. As Fink explains, “One very important feature of this model...is the proposition that the three initial decisions need to be integrated: the learning goals, the feedback and assessment, and the teaching and learning activities must all reflect and support each other” (2013, 71).

Learning objectives are the heart and soul of strong curriculum design. Pusch notes, “Objectives are nothing more or less than our hopes, dreams, and desires, stated succinctly. They provide the justification for every planning decision, the guiding principles by which we operate, and the foundation for any evaluative process we undertake” (1994, 115). How can we design an effective curriculum if we cannot first articulate what we want participants to get out of it?

There are various types of objectives. The first, and most general, has to do with the long-term objectives to be accomplished. Why is this particular curriculum being created? This is something that should have already been identified, most likely during the needs assessment. With the overall goals in mind, the next step is to develop more specific and concrete learning objectives. When doing so, it is important to consider what is known about the context and audience. For example, the learning objectives must be realistic given the length of the program and the participants’ background or previous experience. (See chapter 8 for additional ideas on crafting learning objectives.)

Another factor to take into account when developing learning objectives is the desired blend of culture-general and culture-specific learning for the given context and participants. “Culture-general learning” refers to intercultural concepts, theories, and frameworks that can be used to help one learn in or from any type of intercultural experience. It is critical to include culture-general learning in any type of intercultural curriculum because it helps build transferrable skills and understanding that can be used in a wide variety of intercultural situations. “Culture-specific learning” involves learning related to a given culture. Students who plan to study in Thailand, for example, will obviously want to gain knowledge, understanding, and skills specific to their experience with Thai cultures. The more that participants interact or will interact with specific cultures, the more culture-specific learning should be woven into the culture-general objectives. The following framework can be useful when creating intercultural learning objectives.

#### INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCIES FRAMEWORK

Building on the foundational work of intercultural scholars, and influenced by fields such as mindfulness, emotional intelligence, and neuroscience, Michael Vande Berg (2016) constructed a four-phase framework for intercultural learning. It highlights four competencies—self-awareness, awareness of others, tuning into and attending to emotions, and cultural bridging—as being critical to the development of intercultural competence, and thus, collectively, they provide a helpful framework for designing intercultural learning objectives.

- **Self-awareness.** In order to learn effectively across cultures, learners must come into awareness of their own cultural background and how that impacts their values, beliefs, and assumptions. In addition, self-awareness must extend beyond a biographical understanding of the self to include an awareness of one’s own ways of making meaning and of one’s judgments, emotions, and physical sensations (see Vande Berg 2016; Schaetti, Ramsey, and Watanabe 2008; M. J. Bennett and Castiglioni 2004).

- **Awareness of others.** This competency refers to the importance of understanding and utilizing frameworks that can help make sense of cultural differences and similarities. According to Vande Berg (2016), it also involves coming into awareness of how others may make meaning of the world differently from us.
- **Tuning into and attending to emotions.** Perhaps the most overlooked component of intercultural competence, this competency involves noticing and learning from and through the myriad of emotional responses felt in relation to any experience engaging across difference, whether it be in a foreign country or in a classroom on the home campus. Such experiences are rife with emotions that offer a window into ourselves as learners and human beings (see Vande Berg 2016; Schaetti, Ramsey, and Watanabe 2008; Zull 2012; Savicki 2008).
- **Cultural bridging.** The ultimate intercultural goal is to be able to bridge cultural differences. This involves bringing together competencies in the first three areas to shift perspectives, attune emotions, and, ultimately, act in ways that are both appropriate and effective when living and working with people who are different from us (Vande Berg 2016).

These four competencies offer a framework for developing learning objectives in virtually any type of intercultural learning experience. They build upon one another and are mutually supporting; we must possess the first three competencies, at least to some degree, before we can succeed in achieving the fourth. Without these competencies, it is difficult, if not impossible, to consistently interact in ways that are both appropriate and effective across cultural differences. Taking into account these competencies and their relationship to one another, in conjunction with other factors such as audience needs, length of the training, etc., can help when developing learning objectives. Table 1 offers several examples of program-specific learning objectives related to each of these four competencies.

**Table 1. Examples of Learning Objectives Using the Intercultural Competencies Framework**

Curricular Program	Example of a Program-Specific Learning Objective (and Related Competency)
Study abroad orientation for students going to multiple locations	Participants will identify at least one personally held value or belief that may contrast with values identified by members of the host culture ( <i>self-awareness</i> ).
Summer "Business and Culture" study abroad program in Brazil	Participants will compare and contrast how culture influences attitudes toward, and practices related to, business in the United States and in Brazil, identifying at least two differences and two similarities ( <i>self-awareness / awareness of others</i> ).
Ongoing orientation for new international students on a U.S. campus	Participants will become more comfortable with not knowing and will come up with personal strategies for engaging ambiguity ( <i>tuning into and attending to emotions</i> ).
Intercultural training program for faculty working with a diverse student body	Participants will identify the cultural values, beliefs, and assumptions represented in their course syllabus ( <i>self-awareness</i> ); consider how students from different perspectives may view the course syllabus and their teaching approach ( <i>awareness of others</i> ); and adapt their syllabus to be more inclusive of different cultural perspectives on teaching and learning ( <i>cultural bridging</i> ).

**META-CURRICULUM OF IMMERSION EXPERIENCES**

It is important to recognize that in an international or domestic immersion experience, program logistics also impact learning; these logistics are effectively part of a "meta-curriculum" supplementing the more formal curriculum. If involved with such a program, to the extent possible, the goal should be intentionally designing not just the curriculum, but the entire program, with the learning objectives in mind. John Engle and Lilli Engle (2003) identify seven defining components of cross-border overseas programs and discuss how intentional design in these areas can contribute to student learning. These areas include:

- Length of student sojourn;
- Entry target-language competence;
- Language used in coursework;
- Context of academic work;

- Types of student housing;
- Provisions for guided/structured cultural interaction and experiential learning; and
- Guided reflection on cultural experiences (Engle and Engle 2003, 8).

The Georgetown Consortium Project (Vande Berg, Connor-Linton, and Paige 2009; Paige and Vande Berg 2012) examines how these components impact intercultural learning and suggests that the most effective approach combines immersive program components with intentional intercultural facilitation. Thus, whenever possible, we need to consider how the backward design process might take into account the ways in which all components of a program could be intentionally designed to contribute to the learning objectives.

#### ***Step 4. Decide Upon Feedback and Assessment Methods***

Once learning objectives are established, educators should consider how they will assess whether participants have achieved these objectives. It may seem counterintuitive to discuss assessment before the learning activities, however, if the assessment is directly tied to strong learning objectives, it can clarify and facilitate answers to the question of what the learning activities need to entail (Fink 2013).

Any good intercultural learning experience will include forward-looking feedback and assessment, not just backward-looking measures. Fink explains that in forward-looking assessment, educators look ahead to what they expect or want learners “to be able to do in the future as the result of having learned about x, y, and z” (2013, 95). For example, educators may ask learners to formulate a plan for how they will apply what they have learned in their own lives. (Chapter 8 provides detailed analyses for designing effective assessment.)

#### ***Step 5. Choose the Most Appropriate Teaching and Learning Activities***

The next step is to choose the most appropriate teaching and learning activities for the audience. In this section, a number of different intercultural learning

activities are discussed, with insights on potential ethical issues that may arise during facilitation. As mentioned previously, while this activity selection process is done after educators have developed the learning objectives and have decided upon the assessment procedures, all three components must be integrated.

### **ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

There are important ethical considerations when choosing teaching and learning activities that are appropriate for a particular audience. Educators should choose activities that will resonate with the participants yet also push them outside of their comfort zone, although not excessively so, as discussed earlier in this chapter. Possible ways to do this include implementing a flexible design that allows participants to opt out of activities if they are overwhelmed or uncomfortable, and emphasizing the fact that participants should share only what they are comfortable sharing.

Think, too, about potential group dynamics and the impact on participants' relationships, and vice versa. Are these students who will be going abroad together? Staff who work together? Faculty who are in similar situations but will not likely ever see each other again? It is also important to think about the cultural makeup of the group and how to take this into account during the design process. For example, might the gender and/or cultural background of certain individuals make some interactions more difficult or uncomfortable, or perhaps put someone on the spot? How might an educator take these potential challenges into consideration during the design process?

### **TYPES OF ACTIVITIES**

There are many resources where one can find a plethora of intercultural learning activities (for example, see Berardo and Dearthoff 2012; Stringer and Cassidy 2003, 2009; Thiagarajan 2006; Paige et al. 2006; Fowler and Mumford 1995, 1998). Many of these activities can be tailored to the specifics of a given situation. What is critical to keep in mind is that the objectives should define the activities, not the other way around. Many inexperienced intercultural educators may be tempted to begin by compiling a list of activities they know



about and/or like, rather than proceeding from what they want participants to learn. This approach is unlikely to produce optimal learning.

The following offers brief descriptions of various types of activities that could potentially be included in an intercultural curriculum. This list is far from exhaustive, but focuses on the most commonly used activities and several that the author deems to be most important.

**Reflective activities.** Reflective activities are particularly helpful in getting participants to think about their own values and beliefs and how they have been shaped. Examples include an exercise that asks participants to reflect on the cultural groups they have been a part of and the values they derived from those groups, or an activity in which participants identify proverbs or sayings they grew up hearing and the values taught through them. Such activities can help learners come to greater awareness of how they make meaning of the world, and shift their frame of reference to contemplate how others may make meaning of things differently. (See chapter 7 for strategies for effective reflection.)

**Mindfulness exercises.** Mindfulness exercises introduce learners to practices that can help them cultivate stillness, engage ambiguity, and, ultimately, deepen their self-awareness (Kabat-Zinn 2013; Langer 2014, 2016). Examples include mindfulness meditations, such as breathing exercises or body scans, as well as more active “stillness” practices, such as sensory awareness activities or mindful walking exercises (see Kabat-Zinn 2013; Rechtschaffen 2014). These exercises support the type of holistic learning (and self-reflection) necessary to engender intercultural development (Ting-Toomey 1999).

**Practices and processes.** It is critical to introduce participants to practices and processes that will help them continue to develop their intercultural competence even after the conclusion of the formalized learning experience. Practices can be defined as habits that learners integrate into their lives that help them continue to develop, usually in small yet significant ways, and approach their life experiences in increasingly interculturally competent ways. One example might be taking a deep breath in times of stress or not knowing (a mindfulness practice). Processes are similar, yet typically more complex than practices. Participants should learn processes that they can then apply in their daily lives

(either in the moment or retrospectively to a challenging or confusing experience involving cultural differences), and by doing so, continue to deepen their intercultural competence. An example is the describe-interpret-evaluate methodology (J. M. Bennett, M. J. Bennett, and Stillings 1977), or its various adaptations (such as describe-analyze-evaluate [DAE] and observe, state, explore, evaluate [OSEE], Nam 2012 and Deardorff 2012, respectively), which can be introduced when time is limited. Cultural Detective (Hofner Saphiere 2004) is another such process, one that focuses on interpersonal interactions and cultural bridging and is particularly useful in merging culture-specific and culture-general learning. Personal Leadership (Schaetti, Ramsey, and Watanabe 2008; see also chapter 6 of this volume), a process that incorporates mindfulness, is richly holistic and deeply introspective.

**Structured and semistructured experiences.** A strong intercultural curriculum draws from participants' personal experiences. These can be experiences that take place in or outside the formalized curriculum or anything in between. On the more formalized end, the group might engage in cocurricular-type excursions that help participants better understand ideas or concepts they have learned, such as visiting a local cemetery and discussing the relationship between culture and values surrounding death and dying. In another scenario, learners could be asked to independently participate in activities in which they engage with cultural groups different from their own. For example, on an international exchange program, participants could be required to find a cultural partner or mentor with whom they can engage in dialogue or activities. It is important, however, to consider (and perhaps discuss with learners) the ethics involved in whatever is being asked of them in order to ensure that no one is taking advantage of others merely for their own learning or interfering where they do not belong or are not wanted.

**Case studies and critical incidents.** Case studies and critical incidents offer brief vignettes or scenarios through which learners can examine real-life issues. These activities offer participants an opportunity to try to view a scenario from multiple perspectives and reflect on how the concepts, theories, and processes they have learned in a classroom could play out or be applied in real-life

scenarios. Such activities can lead to lively discussions and engage participants in problem-solving tasks.

**Film/television clips and other audiovisuals.** Audiovisuals can be used to provide information and/or provoke discussion. Clips from film and television, commercials, news reports, political speeches, etc., can offer innovative ways to explore culture-general concepts through culture-specific examples. When learning about nonverbal communication or cultural dimensions such as individualism and collectivism, for example, educators can present culture-specific clips to generate a discussion about how these frameworks can offer insight into a given culture and to explore the significance of context. It is important, however, to use audiovisuals with care and think about how the specific audience and individuals may potentially react to the chosen clips. For example, avoid using clips that may simply reinforce participants' stereotypes or make anyone feel singled out or put on the spot. As with most activities, debriefing is extremely important.

**Simulations.** Simulations can be particularly powerful activities and can produce many of the same reactions and feelings that an intercultural experience might inspire. They can serve as a catalyst for Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle, producing a shared experience among the group—an experience that participants will nonetheless make meaning of in very different ways. Some simulations are long and elaborate, while others are short and relatively simple. Some could potentially involve a high level of risk and push some participants significantly outside of their comfort zone. It is imperative to consider participants' developmental readiness when deciding whether it is appropriate to include such an activity. Through the debriefing process, the group can reflect on, share, and draw learning from their diverse ways of making meaning and their emotional and physical responses to the experience. Effective debriefing is particularly important with simulations and often requires as much time, if not more, than the simulation itself.

**Role-plays.** In a role-play, participants and/or the facilitator(s) act out a scenario, typically some type of "what if" situation. Somewhat similar to simulations, role-plays tend to be less structured and require more involvement

from the participants in the creation of the scenario(s). Role-plays could be viewed as case studies come to life. The facilitator usually provides some background information or instructions, and the actors may be given some time to prepare or they may be asked to be more extemporaneous. Role-play can also include “improv” activities to help participants try out new behaviors, get more comfortable with discomfort and not knowing, learn to take themselves a little less seriously, and think creatively. Role-playing activities may push some participants significantly outside of their comfort zone, although the risk level can be adjusted by having participants perform only in small groups, allowing them time to prepare a script, or by including nonacting roles. The debriefing, which is critical, offers an opportunity to reflect on, analyze, discuss, and even rewrite or repeat the role-play.

**Instruments.** There are many instruments that could potentially be integrated into an intercultural curriculum. These could include instruments that assess one’s intercultural sensitivity, cultural intelligence, cross-cultural adaptability, or similar concepts, such as the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), Global Competencies Inventory (GCI), Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI), or NAFSA’s My Cultural Awareness Profile (myCAP©) Suite of Resources. (For more information about intercultural assessments, see Deardorff 2015; Moodian 2009.) There are also instruments that may appear to be less directly related to intercultural understanding yet facilitate increases in self-awareness in other areas, such as Kolb’s Learning Styles Inventory (LSI) or the Enneagram. Depending upon what is being assessed, these instruments can increase participants’ self-awareness and help them help themselves along the intercultural development continuum.

**Lectures.** Lectures involve the facilitator(s) sharing knowledge with the learners. Since intercultural learning requires much more than basic knowledge transfer, the lecture format should not be relied on too heavily. However, used sparingly and in conjunction with other types of activities, lectures can be a useful way to introduce participants to ideas, concepts, and theories that they can then explore further throughout the learning experience.

**Reading materials.** Books, articles, and other reading materials assigned prior to or during the learning experience can introduce and/or complement ideas

and concepts addressed in other aspects of the curriculum. For example, readings from various cultures could be used to explore how some of the concepts and ideas discussed actually play out in those specific cultures.

### ***Step 6. Integrate Activities into a Coherent Whole***

After choosing the appropriate teaching and learning activities, educators need to integrate them into a coherent whole; systems thinking is critical at this stage. As Renwick explains, “The systems approach to program design means that we try to see all the participants in their respective places (in their homes and organizations), the whole program in its place, and all the participants together in the program there” (2004, 440). There are certain components that any intercultural curriculum should include and also important factors to consider when sequencing the activities. Most, if not all, intercultural curricula should include the following elements, although the extent to which each is covered will obviously depend on many factors, such as the length of the learning experience.

**Opening/Introduction.** As with most learning experiences, there needs to be some type of opening that likely includes an overview or agenda of some type, a conceptual/theoretical framing, and an activity that introduces the facilitator and the participants to one another. How this is done and to what depth obviously depends on the length of the learning experience, the learning objectives, and other situational factors.

**Trust-building.** It is critical in almost any group-based intercultural learning experience that participants trust the facilitator and, ideally, one another. Furthermore, the facilitator must trust the learners. As mentioned previously, a good intercultural curriculum will push participants outside of their comfort zone, so it is crucial to create an atmosphere in which participants learn to become more comfortable with being uncomfortable and know what their options are if pushed too far outside of their comfort zone. A helpful first step in the trust-building process, which must be ongoing, is being transparent from the beginning and inviting participants to collaboratively set the group expectations.

**Body.** The body of the curriculum consists of most of the activities meant to address the learning objectives and assessment methods. These should be intentionally sequenced, a topic that is discussed in the next section of this

chapter. It is also imperative to build some “breathing time” into the design for possible “in-flight” modifications, as well as sufficient time for debriefing after each of the activities (Pusch 1994).

**Debriefing.** The importance of debriefing should not be underestimated and debriefing time must be included in the curriculum design. In fact, facilitating some intercultural activities without sufficient debriefing could result in producing more harm than good and could be considered a breach of ethics. While debriefing is usually an area that cannot be entirely planned out in advance, and will usually be dictated in part by the learners, it is essential that educators deliberate ahead of time on some potential debriefing questions and the main points that participants will ideally take away from each activity. Kolb’s Experiential Learning Cycle is particularly constructive in designing debriefing questions that will maximize learning.

**Application/Closing.** Toward the end of the learning experience, participants should have an opportunity to reflect on what they have learned and ponder one final time—hopefully they have been prompted to think about this throughout—how this learning applies to their lives. What actions will they take immediately, as well as over the coming months or even year(s)? Through this same activity, or another, it is also advisable to wrap up, summarize, or bring some other type of satisfying closure to the learning experience.

**Evaluation/Assessment.** As mentioned previously, choosing the appropriate means for assessing learning should come prior to choosing the teaching and learning activities. In many cases, that assessment is also then included in the design. Whether it be through formal or informal means, there should be some type of activity that assesses the extent to which the learning objectives were achieved. In a for-credit course, this could include assignments, projects, papers, or similar assessments. Such extensive assessment is likely not possible or even desirable in a shorter, not-for-credit intercultural curriculum, yet knowing whether the learning objectives were achieved is just as important. In such cases, assessment can be more informal and likely integrated into the learning activities or the application/closing, for example an activity that asks participants to apply their learning or allows them to share their key takeaways.

## SEQUENCING

The coherent and effective sequencing of activities is critical to learning and is achieved by factoring in the audience, the learning objectives, other situational factors, and the pedagogical practices discussed earlier. Table 2 offers a sequencing chart that includes a few example activities. Completing the information on this grid for the chosen teaching and learning activities can help educators decide how to best arrange them into a coherent whole. Effective sequencing varies the types of activities used, attends to different learning styles, and teaches around Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle. Educators should think about how they can provide variety and balance among individual reflections, partnered and small group discussions, and full group interactions. In addition, it is helpful to consider which of the four intercultural competencies discussed earlier are developed through each activity when deciding the sequencing. While situational factors do play a role, generally, *self-awareness* and *awareness of others* should be touched upon, to at least some extent, before venturing into *tuning into and attending to emotions* and *cultural bridging*.

**Table 2. Sequencing Grid**

Learning Activity	Amount of Time*	Learning Objectives and/or Primary Intercultural Competencies Addressed**	Learning Style Emphasis (CE, RO, AC, AE)***	Learner Risk Level	Activity Level (Passive, Interactive, Active)	Developmental Worldview Emphasis (Denial to Adaptation)
Describe-Interpret-Evaluate Activity	45–60 minutes	<i>self-awareness / awareness of others</i>	RO/AC	Low	Interactive	Polarization/Minimization
Nonverbal Communication Simulation	25–35 minutes	<i>self-awareness / awareness of others / tuning into and attending to emotions</i>	AE	Low to medium	Active	Minimization
Mindfulness Meditation: Body Scan	15–20 minutes	<i>self-awareness / tuning into and attending to emotions</i>	CE/RO	Depends on learners' experiences	Active	All

Notes: The activities listed here are provided as examples only and much of how these activities are classified depends on how they are facilitated. Sequencing grid adapted from course materials from Kappler Mikk and Paige (2007).

\* Time estimates include debriefing.

\*\* Examples refer to the four core intercultural competencies framework (Vande Berg 2016) because program-specific learning objectives are not known.

\*\*\* CE = concrete experience; RO = reflective observation; AC = abstract conceptualization; AE = active experimentation.

It is also important to acknowledge and think through the risks involved in each activity, for the participants as well as the facilitator (see Paige 1993 for a discussion on risk factors). Some activities push participants further outside of their comfort zone and are considered higher risk, although this depends, in part, on the individual learners. It is generally advisable to start with lower-risk activities and progress to higher-risk activities; however, proceeding completely sequentially from lowest to highest risk is not necessary because some back-and-forth between lower- and higher-risk activities can help balance challenge and support and take into account different learning styles.

### ETHICAL EDUCATORS

Another important ethical consideration for intercultural educators is the need to consider their own limitations, which is also related to risk (see Paige 1993). According to The Society for Intercultural Education, Training and Research in the United States of America's (SIETAR USA) *Living Code of Ethical Behavior* (2013), ethical intercultural educators "seek to possess adequate self-knowledge about [their] own values, experiences, culture and social context for how they influence [their] actions, interpretations and choices about intercultural strategies and content." As with the learners, educators must become comfortable with being uncomfortable. They must be self-aware of their own panic zones and not attempt to facilitate activities that are too high risk for their abilities or inappropriate given their relationship to a particular audience.

### *Step 7. Reflect on the Process and Identify Key Learning*

The final step of the design process takes place during and after facilitation of the intercultural curriculum. This is an opportunity for educators to practice experiential learning themselves. By reflecting on the process via their own experiences and the participants' assessments or evaluations, educators can make meaning of their experiences and consider how they can apply what they have learned to improve the design and facilitation process in the future.



## Conclusion

The ability to interact appropriately and effectively across difference is a critical twenty-first century skill, and in order to gain that skill, intercultural learning must be integrated into the core of the educational system and experience. Educators need to understand what intercultural learning entails and how to foster it. This chapter has discussed how to design curricula that can help facilitate intercultural learning in a variety of higher education scenarios. It has brought together scholarship and research on intercultural training, international educational exchange, teaching and learning, and a number of other areas in order to holistically contemplate how educators can effectively design frameworks for facilitating intercultural learning.

It bears repeating that in addition to training educators on how to design and facilitate students' intercultural learning, institutions must invest in the intercultural development of faculty and staff. Investing in our own intercultural learning and development as educators and institutions allows us to bridge the cultural gaps that exist between us and our students, model the kind of intercultural competence we seek to foster in the world, and, ultimately, be better designers and facilitators of intercultural learning.

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