The Intercultural Dimension of Teaching and Learning

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Connected Learning

- This year's conference theme is connected learning.

- The goal of this address is to consider alternative ways to integrate an intercultural dimension into teaching and learning across the disciplines.

- This will involve discussing intercultural terminology.

- I will argue that all of our teaching and learning settings, within specific disciplines or in interdisciplinary programs, at home or abroad, inside or outside of the classroom, can serve as potential environments for intercultural learning and development.

Disconnections

- **Compartmentalization of knowledge into disciplines**

- **Fragmentation of internationalization efforts – colleges, departments, professionalized "service" units (international students and scholars, study abroad)**

- **Fragmentation of "intercultural work" – e.g., the separation of multicultural and international offices**

- **Lack of integration of study abroad into the curriculum**

- **Lack of integration of international students and scholars into the learning experiences of host country students**

Making Connections

Bringing the intercultural dimension into teaching and learning means making many connections:

- Connecting international and domestic students as resources so that they can learn from and with each other.

- Connecting students at home with students abroad.

- Connecting our multicultural and global/international offices so that their programs reach out their respective constituencies.

- Connecting our study abroad program with our academic programs, i.e., curriculum integration.

- Connecting our various global and international efforts.

- Connecting curricular and co-curricular learning opportunities.

Making the Intercultural Case

Time and space have shrunk; we are no longer insulated from cultural differences as we have been in the past. Today, we encounter people of different culture in every realm of our lives. When we meet each other, we discover differences in perspectives, behaviours, and communication styles. As we interact, we are engaged in an intercultural communication. Yet, intercultural sensitivity does not come naturally; unfortunately, we are more likely to ignore, copy, or destroy the difference.

Olson & Kroeger, 2001:116

Making the Intercultural Case

In any society which expects its education system to prepare people for living in an internationalised culture and globalised economy, and also for the interaction between people of different cultures within and across national boundaries, the process of tertiary socialisation and the acquisition of intercultural competence are clearly desirable.
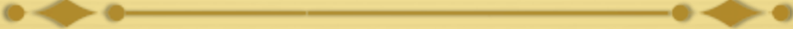
Alfred & Byram, 2002: 351

Making the Intercultural Case

The mission of the General Studies Program is to help students cultivate the intellectual curiosity, abilities, and knowledge required for lifelong learning as global citizens…[through] inquiry, knowledge, and communication.

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Key Concepts for Intercultural Teaching and Learning

- Intercultural development

- Intercultural competence

- Intercultural experiences and intensity

- Culture learning

- Cultural Mentoring

Intercultural Development

- The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (M. J. Bennett, 1993)

- The Intercultural Development Continuum (M. R. Hammer, 2009, 2012)

Preface:What does "intercultural" mean?

✦ **I use the term *intercultural* to refer to communication and interactions between persons and groups from different cultural communities. These interactions revolve around both the domestic (multicultural) and global (international) forms of diversity.**

✦ **The intercultural perspective incorporates *culture* into our analyses of how people interact, communicate, make meaning, and exercise power with other persons and groups.**

Becoming Intercultural

Intercultural sensitivity is not natural. It is not part of our primate past nor has it characterized most of human history. Cross-cultural contact usually has been accompanied by bloodshed, oppression, or genocide. The continuation of this pattern in today's world of unimagined interdependence in not just immoral or unprofitable – it is self-destructive. Yet in seeking a different way, we inherit no model from history to guide us.

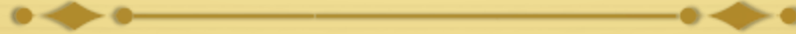M. J. Bennett, 1993: 21

Becoming Intercultural

Education and training in intercultural communication is an approach to changing our "natural behavior." With the concepts and skills developed in the field, we ask learners to transcend traditional ethnocentrism and to explore new relationships across cultural boundaries.

[To do this] we should be operating with a clear model of how intercultural sensitivity is developed.
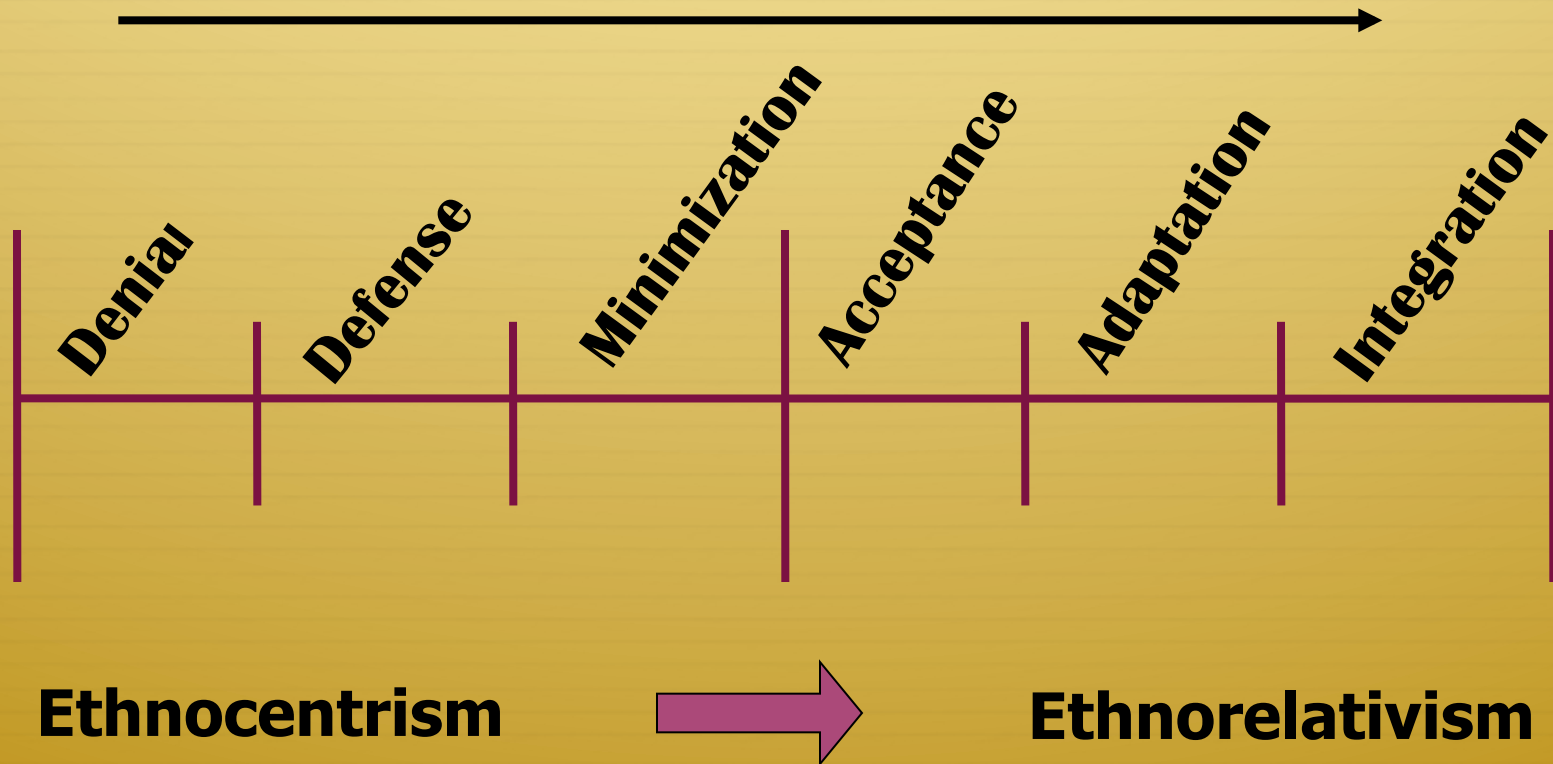
M. J. Bennett, 1993: 21

The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity

- …it [intercultural sensitivity] is the "construction of reality as being increasingly capable of accommodating cultural difference that constitutes development (Bennett, 1993: 24)

- Intercultural sensitivity is developmental.

- Intercultural sensitivity is based on subjective constructions of reality where persons make meaning of experience rather than experience gives meaning to the person.

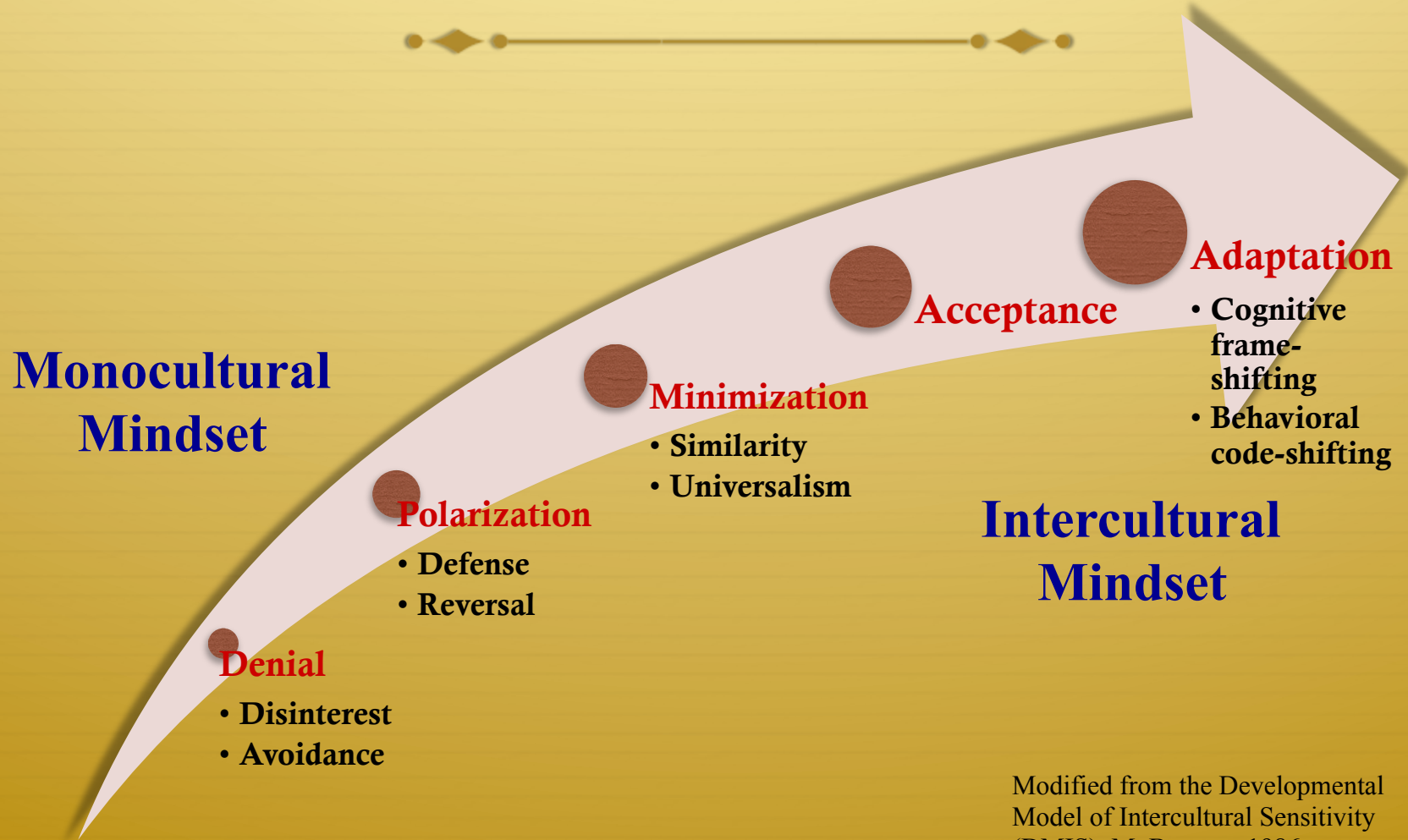- Intercultural sensitivity can be learned and enhanced through experience and guided reflection.

Development of Intercultural Sensitivity

The Experience of Difference

Denial — Defense — Minimization — Acceptance — Adaptation — Integration

Ethnocentrism → **Ethnorelativism**

M. J. Bennett (1993)

Intercultural Development Continuum

Monocultural Mindset

Intercultural Mindset

Adaptation
- **Cognitive frame-shifting**
- **Behavioral code-shifting**

Acceptance

Minimization
- **Similarity**
- **Universalism**

Polarization
- **Defense**
- **Reversal**

Denial
- **Disinterest**
- **Avoidance**

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

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INTERCULTURAL
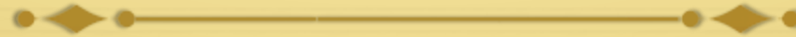DEVELOPMENT
INVENTORY

Denial

The *Denial* intercultural orientation is characterized by a limited capability to understand and appropriately respond to cultural differences.

The Denial orientation consists of *disinterest* and *avoidance* of other cultures.

The Experience of Denial

Cognition:

- ✦ **Having few culture concepts.**
- ✦ **Using only broad categories for difference**

Affect:

- ✦ **Little concern with persons from other cultures.**
- ✦ **Indifference toward culture.**
- ✦ **Feeling that culture is not very important.**

Behavior:

- ✦ **Avoiding difference.**
- ✦ **Seeking out what is familiar (e.g. places, persons).**

Defense

The *Defense* intercultural orientation is characterized by a "we" – "they" evaluative mindset. One's own culture is seen as superior and other cultures are viewed as inferior. It is a polarizing and judgmental world view regarding cultural difference.

The Experience of Defense
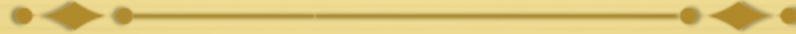
Cognition:

- Limited understanding of cultural differences.

Affect:

- Experiencing fear and anxiety around difference.
- Feeling threatened by cultural differences.

Behavior:

- Viewing own culture as the best.
- Expecting others to assimilate to own culture.
- Evaluating perceived differences negatively.
- Holding negative stereotypes about other cultures.
- Making negative statements about different cultures.

Defense-Reversal

Defense-Reversal is Defense with a twist. It is characterized by uncritical acceptance of a new culture combined with an overly critical evaluation of one's own culture. It is still a polarized worldview with limited categories for understanding difference.

The Experience of Defense-Reversal
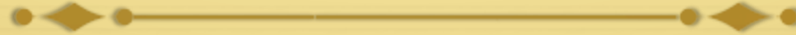
Cognition:

– Still limited understanding of cultural differences.
– Still positively and negatively evaluating cultural differences.

Affect:

– Idealization and positive regard of the new culture.
– A more critical posture regarding their own culture.

Behavior:

– Imitating culture behaviors without actually understanding them.
– Tendency to avoid persons from their own culture.
– "Going native"

Minimization

Minimization is characterized by the discovery of commonality, the importance of similarities among human beings, the essential humanity of all persons.

The Experience of Minimization

Cognition:

- Greater recognition of different culture groups.
- Growing understanding of one's own culture and cultural differences.

Affect:

- Feeling comfortable with persons from other cultures.
- Having a positive outlook about cultural diversity.

Behavior:

- Showing tolerance and respect for different cultures.
- Actively seeking to discover similarities across cultures.
- Strongly supporting universal religious, moral, or political principles.

Acceptance

Persons with an Acceptance orientation recognize cultural differences between their own and other groups, realize that "culture matters", and have greater knowledge of culture than persons in the ethnocentric stages.

The Experience of Acceptance

Cognition:

- Culturally self-awareness (have knowledge of their own culture's values and behaviors)
- Growing knowledge of culture and cultura differences.

Affect:

- Strong desire to experience another (often quite different) culture, learn a another language in addition to those they already know, and develop intercultural skills.
- A positive attitude toward cultural diversity.

Behavior:

- Seeking out persons from other cultures.
- Studying and working abroad and in culturally diverse settings at home
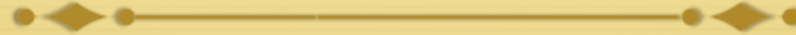- Pursuing international majors and careers.

Adaptation

Persons with an Adaptation orientation have the capacity to shift from one cultural frame of reference to another, cognitively and behaviorally . They generally have a deep understanding of at least one other culture.

The Experience of Adaptation

Cognition:

- Deep understanding of another culture.
- Possession of two or more cultural frames of reference.

Affect:

- Strong desire to be successful and effective in the host culture or culturally diverse organization.
- High value on intercultural competence.
- Strong sense of commitment to the host culture.
- Positive feelings about intercultural experiences.
- Sense of pride regarding their intercultural skills.

Behavior:

- Can shift their cognitive frame of reference to host culture patterns.
- Can shift their behavior to host culture patterns.

Integration

Persons in Integration live in more than one cultural world and view themselves as bicultural or multicultural persons.

The Experience of Integration

Cognition:

- Understanding of multiculturalism.
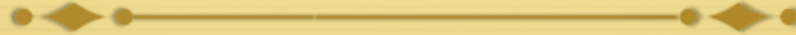- Bicultural or multicultural identity.

Affect:

- Can experience identity confusion, uncertainty about who they are, and lack of cultural authenticity.
- Often experience joy at being able to live and work in multiple cultures.
- Generally have high sense of self esteem and self worth as a multicultural person.
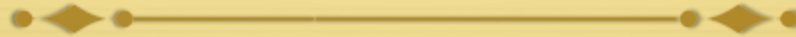- Strong desire to help others make cross-cultural transitions.

Behavior:

- Form and maintain relationships with other multiculturals
- Serve as cultural mediators and negotiators.
- Work in very challenging culturally diverse settings.

Intercultural Competence

Intercultural Competence

- Intercultural competence is defined as one's ability to interact and communicate effectively with persons from other cultures in culturally diverse settings, at home and abroad.

- Intercultural competence is the capacity to <u>shift one's frame of reference</u> to that of a culturally different person or group, i.e., the ability to imagine the perspective of the other.

- Intercultural competence is the capacity to <u>adapt one's behavior</u> to cultural context.

Intercultural Competence

 ✦ **Understand the meaning and importance of culture in people's lives**

 ✦ **Know what is "cultural" and what is not.**

 ✦ **Learn that culture is characterized by patterns not absolutes.**

 ✦ **Practice communicating and relating effectively with people from other cultures.**

 ✦ **Becoming an effective culture learner.**

 ✦ **Serving as a cultural bridge and helping others make cultural transitions.**

 ✦ **Understanding the relationship between culture, privilege, and power.**

Intercultural Experiences and Intensity

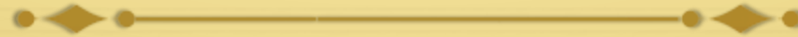# *Intercultural Experiences and Intensity*
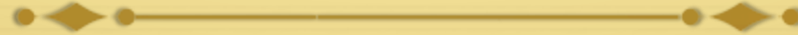
1. **Cultural differences**

2. **Ethnocentrism**

3. **Language issues**

4. **Cultural immersion**

5. **Cultural isolation**

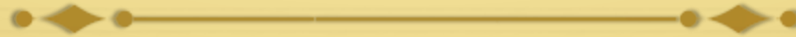# *Intercultural Experiences and Intensity*

6. **Prior intercultural experience**

7. **Expectations**

8. **Visibility/invisibility**

9. **Status**

10. **Power and control**

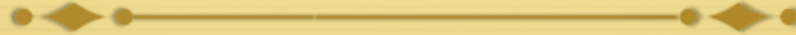Paige, R. M. (1993).

Culture Learning

Culture Learning

1. **Understanding culture**
2. **Understanding one's own culture**
3. **Understanding another culture**
4. **Understanding intercultural experiences**
5. **Learning how to learn**

Paige et al (2006).

Cultural Mentoring

Cultural Mentoring

Cultural mentoring means providing:

(1) Ongoing support for learning.

(2) Concepts and ideas to anchor learning.

(3) Strategies for learning.

(4) Opportunitites to put learning into practice.

(5) Opportunities to reflect on experience.

(6) Opportunities to connect what was learned to the future (employment, education, life).

(Paige & Goode, 2009)

Intercultural Competence in our Academic Disciplines

Within an academic discipline, intercultural competence means:

✦ Applying knowledge from the discipline to the cultural context.

✦ Making ethical choices that recognize the complexities of culture.

✦ Working effectively in multicultural/culturally diverse teams.

Intercultural Competence in our Academic Disciplines

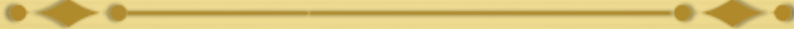Within an academic discipline, intercultural competence is means:

✦ Incorporating alternative and interdisciplinary frames of reference into knowledge construction.

✦ Utilizing alternative methodologies in conducting research.

✦ Learning from and with persons from other cultures.

✦ Recognizing the cultural origins of knowledge.

✦ Understanding one's discipline in its cultural context.

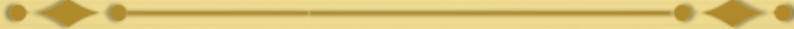# *Bringing the Intercultural Dimension into our Teaching and Learning*

- Use a diversity of texts and authors representing different countries and cultures.

- Use examples from different countries and cultures.

- Make every discussion a cultural discussion, e.g., have students discuss particular topics in small groups in terms of how those issues would be treated in their countries our cultures.

- Draw upon research from different countries and cultures, thus portraying knowledge as global.

- Discuss the intercultural dynamics of the discipline, i.e., in management, the GLOBE study.

Bringing the Intercultural Dimension into our Teaching and Learning

- ✦ **Explore alternative and sometimes contradictory theories.**

- ✦ **Examine the cultural origins and assumptions of knowledge (concepts, propositions/hypotheses, theories).**

- ✦ **Introduce alternative and interdisciplinary frames of reference into knowledge construction.**

- ✦ **Familiarize students with alternative research methodologies.**

- ✦ **Learn from and with persons from other cultures.**

Bringing the Intercultural Dimension into our Teaching and Learning

✦ **Provide students with opportunities to apply their disciplinary knowledge in ways that take culture into consideration, in different cultural contexts.**

✦ **Provide students with opportunities to work on culturally diverse teams.**

✦ **Provide students with opportunities to experience diverse cultures, at home and abroad.**

✦ **Provide students with culture content as frames of reference for experiencing and making sense of difference.**

Supporting Intercultural Competence in our Teaching and Learning

Within an academic discipline, intercultural competence can be supported by:

✦ Sequencing learning to take into account the developmental readiness of the learners to tackle more complex and challenging topics such as race and ethnic relations, power and oppression in societies, etc.

✦ Posing a default question -- *Is this cultural or not?* – to make sense of human communication and interaction.

✦ Providing students with cultural mentoring, i.e., guidance in interpreting culture and intercultural experiences.

✦ Incorporating ongoing reflection on the cultural dynamics related to their everyday experiences.

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