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Merilee Karr

University of Richmond

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Cross-Cultural Leadership Training

By

Merilee Karr

Senior Project
Jepson School of Leadership Studies
University of Richmond
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education have also increasingly faced challenges with global operations and interaction yet the majority of the current research has focused on corporations.

A leader is a person with technical ability and interpersonal skills (David Hannaman). Leadership is the process of influencing the activities of an organized group toward goal achievement (Yukl, 3). Understanding the necessity of communication and interaction in leadership clarifies the role of a leader in cross-cultural situations and emphasizes the need for skills and behaviors to be effective in these instances. Failures in global assignments are often direct results of firms' rapid selection of technically qualified candidates who may lack the cross-cultural communication or adjustment skills to perform effectively in a foreign assignment. A global assignment failure (poor performance or premature return) is generally the result of ineffective cross-cultural adjustment rather than the outcome of inadequate technical or professional skills (Global Assignments, 55). Using this premise, one alternative to failure in selection of the candidates based on technical capability would be to provide extensive training to teach interpersonal skills and behaviors that would be effective in another culture. I will argue in this paper that the current research and training is not adequate to meet the growing need for cross-cultural leadership interaction.

General Training Research

Bernard Bass and James Vaughn's book on training in industry was published in 1966, yet is still a viable resource today. Understanding the nature of training, they address the learning resulting from different processes. They define learning as "a relatively permanent change in behavior that occurs as a result of a practice or experience." (Bass & Vaughn, 29) The most fundamental statement which can be
applied to all types of training is the idea that the level of material that is retained is a function of how meaningful it is to the participant. Therefore, if people are able to make connections to their own lives or apply theories to personal experiences, more learning will take place.

The Gert Hofstede studies on cross-cultural dimensions are one of the most respected as a cross-cultural management-training model, yet the focus is on the differences between cultures or cultural spheres. He explores the difference in thinking and social action that exist between members of 40 different modern nations. The book identifies 4 main dimensions along which dominant value systems in the 40 countries can be ordered and which affect human thinking, organizations, and institutions in predictable ways. The data collected comes from a survey of IBM subsidiaries collected in 1968 and again in 1972 producing over 116,000 questionnaires matched by occupation, age and sex. He concluded the four dimensions of culture are Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, Masculinity, and Individualism. He demonstrates how countries, on the basis of the four dimensions, can be divided into culture areas, and in some cases can point to historical reasons that are likely to have led to the cultural differentiation between the areas.

This approach clearly does not affect learning as defined by Bass and Vaughn keeping in mind that for most managers Hofstede's charts do not offer any immediate connections to a person's own life experience. Sylvia Odenwald errs in the same way missing the underlying needs of the participants to make the learning process meaningful and effect lasting changes. The failure of business management studies on cross-cultural
training to incorporate the psychology of learning brings into question the nature of cross-cultural training.

**Psychological Theories on Training**

The psychological field has addressed human reaction to cross-cultural interaction and immersion. Cross-cultural psychology is defined as the scientific study of human behavior and its transmission, taking into account the way in which behaviors are shaped and influenced by social and cultural forces. (Berry, 1) Marshall Segall et al. discuss the tendency to project 'our' values on 'them' defined as egocentrism. Because human nature, according to Segall, is a combination of biology and cultural influences, behavior and values vary widely across locations. It is these differing set of values toward life which, when encountered, require acculturation. Because not all individuals who experience these pressures are equally affected by them, it is important to see the natural inclinations each individual has toward acculturation. Acculturation is the process commonly defined as the acquisition of some, but not all, aspects of the host's cultural elements (Moorthy, 17). This approach to learning is a drastic divergence from Hofstede's generalizations about cultures and their actions. Many organizations also take a systematic approach to training. The Intel Corporation is one example cited in Odenwald's case studies. Each major site worldwide has a training organization with a training manager from the local culture. Once a year a week long international training summit is held to decide on corporate-wide training strategy for the coming year and to promote communications and the building of relationships among the training organizations around the world. In 1983, they launched an intercultural training program
with the development of multicultural integration classes for foreign bon professionals. The main objective is the development of cross-cultural awareness. The goal is to incorporate cross-cultural education into all training. At Intel they believe that they must learn what it means to manage various cultures and develop their ability to know when they need to seek additional cultural specific information or help (Odenwald, 106). Each type of training is clearly defined based on the desired outcomes they have established without taking into consideration the individual person's capacity to learn, or adequately adjust behaviors as a result of the training.

The model presented by Gudykunst and Hammer shows the various approaches to cross-cultural training. The technique that has been used most frequently according to Berry et al. is the cultural assimilator, first developed by Fiedler, Mitchell, and Triandis (1971).

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Experiential

Expository

Culture Specific

Culture General

General

Specific
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Usually critical incidents are described and analyzed based on the cultural assumptions and the trainee is asked to select the correct answer for the specific culture. This method
is biased in the sense that only one answer is considered correct. Also the incident might be interpreted from different perspectives, so clear-cut answers would prove detrimental to the learning process. The model however does provide a basis for understanding the spectrum of training approaches in a visual diagram.

The idea that cultural understanding can even be acquired is an issue that is debatable. This is based on contemporary assumptions about the accumulation of factual knowledge. The idea is then presented for apprenticeship learning based on assumptions that knowing, thinking, and understanding are generated in practice, in situations whose specific characteristics are part of practice as it unfolds (Stigler et al., 310). This theory has roots in psychological learning techniques, but the application to cultural training is clear. If some immersion were to take place prior to the specific context, it would greatly increase the ability of an individual to understand the culture and to interact accordingly. The limits are time constraints and resources for businesses, however businesses might increasingly look for potential candidates that have already been immersed in other cultures to take advantage of the psychological cross-cultural learning that they have experienced. If you could have immersion in cross-cultural experiences such as the Peace Corp or programs such as Youth for Understanding focusing only on the cross-cultural content it will pay off. In the State Department there is no way to have the luxury to do that. We do have some programs for super hard languages such as Arabic or Chinese called field schools in those countries. It is expensive to spend a year or two paying individuals for training when the average assignment is only two years. In some instances there is as much time in training as in the actual assignment. The more experiential the training the more it invokes their attitudes, their values, their personal
approaches- the closer you can get to simulating a learning experience, the more realistic it becomes in terms of involving the whole person. If you can get close to a sweaty-palms situation, the individual will be better prepared when they encounter a similar situation in the field. (Leki)

**Communication Theories on Training**

Communication is a process involving the exchange of messages and the creation of meaning. Our implicit personal theories of communication are our unconscious, taken for granted assumptions about how communication takes place. The problem with assuming that our implicit theories are accurate is that we are assuming that other people are interpreting our messages the same way we intended them. This is not the case. (Gundkunst, 15) When the cultural aspect is added into the mix, it makes effective communication even more difficult. If people go into cross-cultural situations interpreting communication from the traditional frame of reference, miscommunication is almost a certainty. When people are aware of their communication behavior, they become mindful to some extent. Mindfulness involves "(a) creation of new categories; (b) openness to new information; (c) awareness of more than one perspective" (Langer, 62). This argument supports the idea of cross-cultural awareness training to increase the level of mindfulness. The ability to assess situations and then begin to participate after watching how individuals in the culture behave is a good way to prevent offensive actions. A person should not take action in a foreign culture until someone else from the host culture initiates the action. (Hannaman)
Communication theory takes an individual approach to understanding cross-cultural interaction, different from the other disciplines we have explored. However, even in intercultural communication theory the individual level approach has received minimal attention. (Kim, 142) The other issue that needs to be addressed is the notion that culture can be used as a retrospective explanation of observed differences. This approach does little to help explain the causes of the behavior. Given the complexities of the influence of culture on behavior, it is necessary to find relevant intervening variables to understand what it is in culture that accounts for cultural differences. This is where studies in communication theory such as The Communication Accommodation Theory (Gallois, 115) fail to create meaningful applications. Communication Theory does however address the context in such studies as CAT and in the Theory of Conversational Constraints (Kim, 148). The TCC also measures the influence of individual level and cultural level issues. These include such variables as need for approval and dominance and psychological gender.

In developing a training approach that is not culture specific, but teaches awareness of differences in behaviors and situational approaches, the ability to recognize the varied ways in which people relate to things and the relationship between objects or things helps us understand our world. Listening challenges us to receive and relate, to store and retrieve information effectively, essential skills for successful intercultural communication. (Ricard, 81) This approach deals with self-analysis and teaches a framework for all interactions, from individual to group and across contexts. The skills taught in this theory are valuing, observing, listening, thinking, speaking, and gesturing. (Ricard, 11) This approach looks carefully at the individual, works to redefine
the skills base and then creates a framework for future reference. This is effective in the sense that it works to change behaviors through a grounded approach, but the ambiguity in the methods in teaching these skills is not addressed. The idea of placing the needs analysis in the hands of the individual is a progressive approach and accounts for the level of experience of the individual over more standard training methods.

The field of communication theory could prove very useful to practitioners attempting to generate cultural general training approaches. It provides a framework for identifying different communication constraints and understanding the underlying behaviors and assumptions that cause the surface level actions. Through a greater understanding of individual rather than culture specific communication it might be applied to a range of situations and provide a basis for flexibility in communication across contexts.

Current Business Approaches to Cross-Cultural Training

Most business management literature regarding cross-cultural or international management refers to the Hofstede studies of the cultural dimensions. The failure of many of these applications is the focus they place on the charts of the dimensions themselves. R. Hodgetts and F. Luthans textbook on International Management teaches the structure of Hofstede dimensions with practical applications which can be inferred from the studies. What this and other literature fails to explain through their selective inclusion of the studies is the underlying roots that give rise to these generalizations. Hofstede goes so far as to answer the question, what skills need to be enhanced for effective cross-cultural interaction?
He states, the seven main cross-cultural skills are:
1) Capacity to communicate respect
2) Capacity to be non-judgmental
3) Capacity to accept the relativity of one's own knowledge and perceptions
4) Capacity to display empathy
5) Capacity to be flexible
6) Capacity for turn-taking (discussion)
7) Tolerance for ambiguity

Answering the more fundamental question, what skills should be trained to make international cross-cultural leadership interaction most effective, J.S. Black suggests that work adjustment, interaction adjustment, and general adjustment are the three skills areas which need to be honed in order to be most successful. These studies answer the needs of companies searching for training methods. It is ironic that one of the skills listed is the capacity to be non-judgmental; that is the reaction to the generalizations of labeling nationalities on a scale of power distance, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, and individualism.

Another strength in Hofstede's research is his recognition that the convergence theory exists and that increased interaction across cultures will cause management philosophy and practice around the world to become more and more alike. English is known as the "language of business" and through consistent adaptation, a new approach or set of norms will result in global management. This can also be seen politically where the U.S. is often characterized as the 'mediator of world problems'. If this trend continues, the infiltration of "Western" ideas, businesses and interactive behaviors may serve as a general standard for cross-cultural interaction. Other experts believe otherwise.

Having the mentality that there is a global Americanized culture is such an impediment to being effective across cultures. The Japanese for example relish in the ignorant American because they take them to the cleaners. The Japanese
understand a little English. It is stereotype, cliché English but they know a lot
more about our culture than we do about theirs. Where is the negotiating
advantage? You are a fool if you do not attempt to understand and it happens all
the time. The notion that everyone will come to a global culture centered around
Americanisms; it just isn't going to happen that way. As long as you injure
yourself with that kind of thinking, you are going to be at a huge disadvantage. A
language is a tool to understanding a culture so that eventually you can become
effective in dealing with that culture without loosing your own. Keeping that
duality and being effective in both of worlds is the key. That is the thing that will
give you competitive advantage in whatever you are doing. (Leki)

The field of global management has been guided by research in organizational
behavior and human resource development that has come primarily from the Anglo-
Saxon culture cluster. (Wursten) From World War II through the end of the 1970's, US
management was widely considered the world's best. As a result, rather than adapt to the
local customs, US MNC's often exerted a strong influence on business practices in the
countries where they operated. After competitive advantage waned, though, US
companies found it necessary to pay more attention to the local business culture. Despite
significant efforts in this direction, some observers, continue to fault US firms for what
they see as an excessively domestic orientation (Moynihan, 9). Despite the domination
of Anglo-Saxon culture on business practices, 80% of the theories of organizational
behavior come from the same culture and there is really only one picture in the heads of
American's when they talk about organizational culture. (Wursten), the development of a
worldwide business culture does not seem to be evolving. Cultural differences are
accentuated when people work globally, not converged into one global culture. People
will pay lip service to the system, but their motivation is totally different in other cultures
and their perception of leadership styles is totally different (Fidalgo).

While Hofstede's dimensions may be the foremost authority in many cross-
cultural training programs, other approaches are beginning to surface to address the
concerns that current approaches are not meeting the organizational needs. "Finding an integrated programme of study that endeavours to enhance and develop values and behavior that seem 'appropriate' to the practice of international business is, however, unusual" (Richards 1997). Many of the deficiencies begin with the process of selection for overseas assignments.

According to many researchers, American Multinational corporations focus their selection for overseas candidates based on technical competence in the domestic context (Black and Mendenhall, 1990). Hofstede's studies do address the different values cultures' place on behaviors. This can particularly be of use when determining potential candidates for overseas assignments in a specific region or country. In general, American behaviors that lead to success often fail in other contexts. "Those who are most successful in the western world are often wholly inappropriate for cross-cultural postings precisely because of the orientations that ensured their success here" (Ruben, 1989). It is in these instances where training might prove most valuable. Yet as we noted earlier, psychologists believe that there are differing levels of ability to learn behaviors.

**General vs. Specific Training**

Most of the current methodology is based on a "Cultural Generalist" point of view. We have seen that interpersonal communication studies support the methodology of a general approach while many practitioners use this "intuitive" training approach which is difficult to measure results. They don't understand what they are training because their objectives are not clear from needs assessment and the evaluation is level 1 (applause meter) rather than measured by the impact of the organization. Most
training evaluation, there is just no way that that would happen so we have to make compromises. We have sent out surveys learn about programs such as if the English language training program is accomplishing what it is intended to. We will send out surveys but our return rate on those is pretty low. It is hard to keep track of the people: there are over 40,000 people and the matrix of people, a worldwide data-base is not possible; it is a question that cannot be resolved. So the quick answer to evaluation is that when we have a specific need to learn something because we need to redesign some aspect of the training. We always do response level evaluation after the programs, we do learning objectives to the extent we can for example we have a computer training program and the person either answers the questions correctly or they don't get through the program and they go crazy. To measure relevance we can often contact key stakeholders at the embassies and ask them how the behaviors have changed from the training. In this way the relevance of the training can be assessed. The ultimate evaluation of the security training is security. It can't be measured by the number of deaths abroad and then directly attributed to the training program because there are so many other factors. If you could spend a lot a time and money you could measure some variables, but no one will give me the resources to do that, nor would I want them. It is just overkill to measure the amount of car-jackings in Venezuela over a five-year period compared to another population in Venezuela. The process of training evaluation in my world is a dirty one, one full of compromises. We try to make intelligent and informed decisions from the data that we do have and when we recognize that we don't have enough data we will take the time and effort to get more. But is has to stop at a point. It can't be constant, ongoing, that level of exacting presence.
Leadership Approaches

While all of these questions address the management perspective of cross-cultural training, it is clear that leadership training must take a more multidisciplinary approach to be successful especially considering the lack of convergence in all areas of leadership across the world. As far back as The Republic by Plato, the idea of leadership training existed. His process included beginning with good prospects. He believed that genes and childhood environment were key success factors in leadership ability. He also believed in training and work experiences. His candidates would undergo rigorous studies in geometry and arithmetic and athletics, for a good balance. Work experience in public office or the military followed combined with philosophy. Plato believed that only philosophers possessed the clarity of judgement necessary for equitable government of society. He would continually test the candidates during the years to decide which ones were ready to go to the next level. He theorized that at age 50 the candidates would be ready to rule (Conger, 37). It is clear to see from this excerpt that Leadership training is not a new concept, but one where the issues have not changed for centuries. It is interesting to note that Plato saw the importance of a mix of experience and traditional book learning to obtain the best-equipped leaders.

Jay Conger's book Learning to Lead: The Art of Transforming Managers into Leaders addresses this very subject. While he points out the tradition of training, his idea of leadership still sounds like traditional management revisited in many instances. He looked for the "emerging leaders" in some of the programs he attended and actually criticized one man for serving as a "gatekeeper" because his opinion was not known to
the group. He characterizes the essential components to a leadership training to include the following:

1. Develop and refine certain of the teachable skills
2. Improve the conceptual abilities of managers
3. Tap individual's personal needs, interests, and self-esteem
4. Help managers see and move beyond their interpersonal blocks

These four components seem to be so general that the guidelines do not aid anyone in creating training based on this framework. Also, before any of these activities can take place an organization must assess their training needs so that the desired outcomes are met through the training. He also claims there are in existence four basic approaches to training: personal growth, conceptual understanding, skill building, and feedback. These broad categories do little to clarify different approaches because they do not define the importance of the approaches in terms that make them meaningful to practitioners. I would agree however in his conclusion analysis that current training is not sufficient to create leaders. Time is the major critical factor that is lacking in most American programs. In contrast, the Japanese have much more significant resources in time and money allocated to these efforts. Conger also pinpoints the organizations themselves with the blame for the lack of emerging leaders- most companies he asserts, "They prefer managers- and for a simple reason: they are a known and controllable quantity. Leaders are not. They take initiative, they challenge the status quo, they encourage followings. For many companies that is a frightening prospect" (Conger, 42). Further, the ability to measure the results in the bottom line is quite difficult. When the cross-cultural dimension is added to the equation, the story becomes even more complicated.

Nancy Adler looks at the cross cultural dimensions of organizational behavior through a hierarchical management perspective. Even the section entitled 'Leadership'
focuses on the corporate manager’s role in decision making. This is where a definition of leadership would be helpful in understanding how to train leaders in cross-cultural interaction. According to Yukl’s book, "Leadership in Organizations", there are as many definitions of leadership as there are people who have attempted to define the concept. For this paper, we will use the following definition: leadership is interpersonal influence, exercised in a situation, and directed, through the communication process, toward the attainment of a specified goal or goals (Tannenbaum et al. 1961). In that case, leadership can encompass much more than the role of the traditional manager in a business. A concept of leadership must move beyond the reins of business management training to impact the current paradigm of training past the stereotypical ropes courses and adventure methods of teaching leadership behaviors.

The situational theory of leadership addresses at least one of the skills mentioned in Hofstede’s study, the capacity to be flexible. The situational approach to leadership is defined as, "the importance of contextual factors such as the nature of the work performed by the leader’s unit, the nature of the external environment, and characteristics of followers"(Yukl 1994). This definition also encompasses the need to assess the environment and react based on these observations. In this sense, a true leader would be more equipped to interact than would a manager used to the authority of decision making as suggested by Adler. The situational theory addresses many of the behaviors in Hofstede’s theory mentioned above including the ability to be flexible and the capacity to be non-judgmental. The question then becomes, can we train the situational theory into behaviors in the trainees? In cross-cultural settings, the fundamental question must also be answered- whether truly global training is enough in interactive intensive assignments.
A Conversation: David Hannaman, Director: Human Resources Research Organization

The Human Resource Research Organization is a not for profit organization whose mission is to apply science and technology to improve human performance. They partnered with the North Carolina Center for World Languages and Cultures on research to improve the cultural communication and training for the Special Forces of the United States Army. These missions require the troops to teach, negotiate, and operate with people from different cultures. Given this context, the level of cultural interaction is high and the security risk for the U.S. government is high if the proper research and training is not conducted. "Methods to Improve Cultural Communication Skills" developed out of that need. The research is based on cultural, not national behaviors ranked by the level of importance in the culture paired with the behaviors that are most important for the mission. They identified 383 cultures and 10 regional cultures relevant to Special Forces. While 919 notional behaviors were discovered, they were narrowed down through focus groups and clusters analyses as well as literature searches in world languages to over 400 behaviors for each cultural cluster. It provides a basis for training and distinguishes which behaviors are to be trained and which are not. The methods developed in this research compose a systematic procedure for developing training procedures needs assessments prioritized in behavioral terms including both the culture and context (mission). Through this methodological approach much of the bias of the subject matter experts can be avoided and ensures the effective use of limited training time.

The value of this research is that it provides a blueprint for cultural training in behavioral terms and incorporates context as a variable. The target phase of the process
in the research is in needs assessment. The US Special forces realized that their understanding of what they were training and why it was inadequate. They had no formal structure or basis for the material that was taught. Essentially this study provides a resource for practitioners to analyze the framework for developing their training so that the desired outcomes can be met through clear objectives.

There are several factors that must be considered in analysis of the study. Gender issues are not taken into consideration for example, the limits of this context in other applications is important to note, and the lack of diversity based on rural and urban settings creates a limited base. The most important future research would be to apply the Cultural Behaviors template to business or political contexts. This would expand the value of this work to make it applicable to practitioners in these areas. Research needs to be conducted based on gender so that applications such as business would be able to incorporate a clear and relatively unbiased dimension on gender issues in cross-cultural training. Finally, while the prioritized behaviors are useful in creating a training plan, a more specific training approach needs to be developed to ensure end users will accurately turn the research into practical applications based on the objectives they wish to meet through training behaviors. This should also include methods to combine different cultures into one training for people who will be dealing with several cultures.

The questions that need to be answered before an adequate training can be developed are:

Can you identify what skills you are training?
Can you justify why you are training these skills?
Can you identify what skills you are not training?
Can you justify why you are not training these skills?
With the help of the behavioral applications of this research the user will be able to identify and prioritize behaviors and justify the need to train or the low level of importance behaviors will have on the individual and their performance in the specific context.

A Conversation: Huib Wursten, Director: Institute for Training in Intercultural Management

In the history of cross-cultural research, Hofstede is the grandfather of cross-cultural management. His research in developing the five cultural dimensions broke new ground in the field. It was the biggest research ever conducted in this field at the time. The response from people all over the world requesting help led him to found the Institute for Training in Intercultural Management because he is interested primarily in research. The ITIM trains how the values discovered by Hofstede are affecting the organization: leadership styles, motivation, and delegation styles. The first step is to make people aware of these differences and then, because managers are not interested in abstract concepts, how to apply these values.

Wursten has developed, in conjunction with Hofstede, a grid for how combinations of the dimensions (masculinity/femininity, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and individualism) can be applied in practice called "mental images". He took the Hofstede study a step further. In general the way people in different cultures are looking at organizations, the picture that they have in their head about macro-organizations, the political field, public administration and micro-organizations is quite consistent in spite of the differences in organizational culture. Organizational culture is
much more superficial than country culture. An onion clearly explains this concept with the outer layer as the "superficial" culture of the organization with the next layer representing the perception of a "hero", followed by the rituals that are performed including patterns of behavior with the "inner core" signifying the personal values held by the individual. Using this metaphor, it is clear that while surface reaction may be positive, the true feelings or response at the deepest level would be hard to change. The skills he is trying to develop in managers, mostly of the top level, are identifying which "mental images" are at work and then being able to translate their ideas and best practices into the local cultures and the mindsets people have of organizations.

Flexibility is the skill that is most important to work across-cultures. Wursten believes that there is something that is needed to be able to work across-cultures, some personality profiles see one approach that is best for coping with business yet others are able to see the relativity of that. The ability to do that (see the relativity) is a big part which is inherent in someone's personality.

Using the Japanese as an example of a nation with a strong cultural identity, their global success according to Wursten can be attributed to their ability to adapt their methodologies to the local culture. The concept of quality circles or kaisen can be proven ineffective ways to motivate people in other cultures. Korea is a neighboring country where it is not successful to do so. The reason quality circles would fail in the US for example is that it assumes people are motivated by group rewards for improvement. In General Motors in Detroit or Volvo in Sweden people do not want to be rewarded as a group because they want ownership of ideas. Because of this the Japanese better adapt
their approach to the local environment in order to motivate people because motivation is the key factor in management.

The development of mental images is a step toward integrating Hofstede's dimensions into direct practical applications. What is still missing with this new development is a clear methodology for training these perceptions for clear outcome based training. The measurement of success in his programs is if the organization sees the benefits of the training enough to ask him back. Based on the four levels of evaluation, this is level one (applause meter) feedback. The need to develop more sophisticated tools to discern the impact on the organization is essential to offering the most comprehensive program.

A Conversation: Antonio Fidalgo of Human Resources at the International Monetary Fund

Mr. Fidalgo has been with the International Monetary Fund for a year and a half and in responsible for the cross-cultural training programs they offer. They hire out consultants who conduct this type of training and it is offered several times a year to the employees. Unlike many organizations dealing with cross-cultural issues, the IMF's focus in these training workshops is in interaction within the organizational culture rather than reacting to customers or outside environment. With employees from over 140 countries, cross-cultural interaction is an issue that effects the productivity and culture of the organization on a fundamental level.

Mr. Fidalgo believes that there is a current need to move beyond the current approach to understanding other cultures, to creating more effective workers by utilizing
the potential resource presented through the diverse workforce through training. While there is a move on a surface level to a more global business culture, that is the macro perspective. On a micro-scale, cultures will continue to be divergent. As a Portuguese man working in the United States he has had personal experience on this subject when working with a firm in Minnesota. The director of the training did not meet Antonio until just before they were supposed to work together, something that would be unheard of in his own culture. When the program was not going as planned, he put Antonio on the spot by asking him to "jump in" when he was not prepared to do so. This was a source of great embarrassment because of the unfamiliarity with this situation and the reality that in his frame of reference this was inappropriate given the circumstances. This example illustrates his own cultural influences that are difficult to overcome despite working among different assumptions.

There is a need to move away from behaviors to outcomes. It does not matter how a person from another culture takes on a task, but the outcome that is important. The method of delegation or communication must not be judged in a truly global environment. If this approach were to be enacted in the IMF, the traditional Anglo-Saxon structure would have to change to support other methods and tolerance for ambiguity would need to increase. Currently, the organization hires across cultures and expects everyone to fit the Anglo-Saxon organizational model. He understands their need to choose to hire all Anglo-Saxons or to adapt their organization to meet a broader definition of culture.
A Conversation: Ray Leki, Director: Overseas Briefing Center in the U.S. State Department

The National Foreign Affairs Training Center is like the Human Resources wing of the Department of State. We also offer training for the Executive branch of government for people who are going oversees including everyone from NASA to military personnel who will be working at the embassies to FBI to the FDA. Our main clients are however the department of state. It is set up in three large schools: the school of language studies, the school of professional and area studies teaching people to be effective in the context of their assignment, and the school of applied information technologies that is getting larger all the time with the growing need in this area. Area programs are typically two weeks teaching about the government, history, society, and infrastructure not really cross-cultural stuff, but good background information to have.

There are three small centers. The first is the Senior seminar which brings high level performing individuals from all walks of government for a one year program which deals with what American foreign policy looks like from a different perspective, the pig farmer in Indiana or the man sitting on a military base in North Carolina. Usually thirty people a year participate in this program. There is a Career Transition center, an outplacement unit and finally the Overseas Briefing center. Our mission is to provide employees and their family members, really whoever is going oversees with as much expatriation and repatriation as we can to help them better accommodate as humans living in another country. We have an information center that has culture specific information with the eye on what ones life would be like if they were to go to that post.
The rest of what we do is culture generic. It can range from the staying safe overseas program the security oversees program that teaches people how to deal with terrorism overseas, street crime, fire safety. Things that as Americans we take for granted, if you have an accident you call 911 and a cop comes and he doesn't expect a payoff on the spot. There are all these assumptions that people have that they need to check before they go overseas. There is also a special version of the program for kids as young as six years old, a version for teenagers. The program for employees is mandatory, and spouses are strongly encouraged to attend and we try to make it as easy as possible for their family members as well. The threats that are posed overseas are often more prominent risk for teenagers than for the employee. Street traffic, prostitution, drugs all face the 16 year-old that doesn't have the protection of the walled embassy. That is really the person with the greatest danger, which is why we encourage the entire family to participate. The other programs run from communicating across cultures, cross-cultural dynamics 101 essentially to what is American culture because we have a lot of foreign born spouses. We focus on the nuances of day to day life such as how you do income taxes while you are abroad, how do you plan for real estate, how you ship your dog overseas. Then there is series of programs on how to increase the employability of spouses, because the success of the community overseas is an important variable and when spouses have jobs they tend to be happier. Largely, whatever cross-cultural training we do is of the culture generic nature. What happens to people when they cross-cultures, what information do you need to have in order to be effective across cultures. Most of the culture specific training occurs during the language training programs. Over the years it has been established that you can't teach language without
teaching part of the culture. The culture becomes the vehicle for teaching the language
and the language empowers people to learn about the culture. All of the language trainers
are host-country born so they know something about the culture from personal
experience.

Methodology

Our class entitled Communicating Across Cultures talks about the essence of culture,
about some of the fundamental theories. It talks about American values and there is
typically a simulation, where people take on the roles of a person from another country.
In other modules it becomes a more ad-hoc thing depending on the numbers, the audience
or the places they are being sent. Several years ago a guy called from NASA in Texas
with a Southern drawl requesting some quick over the phone training for some astronauts
who were going to Russia the next day. The space station in Russia is a cultural island in
the middle of nowhere, ninety miles from the nearest person who will speak English. All
organizations go through a learning curve. NASA has since planned for training
beforehand. This has been the decade for companies small and large going overseas and
they all think at first that we will send our hot-shots, our type A's and they learn, they all
learn. There is a measurable sort of index of how much attention a company will pay to
its foreign assignments. In the ideal world, I as the trainer would get to say that I need
this much time to train and here are the specific activities I think would be effective. The
reality is that we will get a phone call the day before some counter narcotics guys are
leaving on a plane for Columbia, one of the most dangerous jobs there is and all you get
to train them is an hour. If that is all you get well then…. It is typically a lot more compromise than one would envision. It is situationally dictated.

Evaluation

In training magazine, there was just an article about how evaluation never seems to work effectively. As trainers we all understand the value of training, the value of evaluating training to market it, to tie it to return on investment or organizational objectives. We all know that evaluation can be laborious and that it never happens easily. We have over 240 posts around the world for us to do impact level training evaluation; there is just no way that that would happen so we have to make compromises. We have sent out surveys to learn about programs such as the English language training program and if is accomplishing what is intended. We will send out surveys, but our return rate on those is pretty low. It is hard to keep track of the people: there are over 40,000 people and with the matrix of people, a worldwide data-base is not possible; it is a question that cannot be resolved. So the quick answer to evaluation is that when we have a specific need to learn something because we need to redesign some aspect of the training we get the information we need. We always do response level evaluation after the programs, we do learning objectives to the extent we can for example we have a computer training program and the person either answers the questions correctly or they don't get through the program and they go crazy. To measure relevance we can often contact key stakeholders at the embassies and ask them how the behaviors have changed from the training. In this way the relevance of the training can be assessed. The ultimate evaluation of the security training is security. It can't be measured however, by the
number of deaths abroad and then directly attributed to the training program because there are so many other factors. If you could spend a lot a time and money you could measure some variables, but no one will give me the resources to do that, nor would I want them. It is just overkill to measure the amount of car-jackings in Venezuela over a five-year period compared to another population in Venezuela. The process of training evaluation in my world is a dirty one, one full of compromises. We try to make intelligent and informed decisions from the data that we do have and when we recognize that we don't have enough data we will take the time and effort to get more. But is has to stop at a point. It can’t be constant, ongoing, that level of exacting presence.

**Cross-cultural characteristics or skills**

There might be a casual correlation based on the interests that someone with cross-cultural experience would have, but there is no direct connection between the selection of candidates and their ability to be effective across-cultures. Yes, there are people who have certain characteristics that make them more effective in cross-cultural environments. You can tell almost immediately who is going to be more effective in a larger sense and who might be effective on the job but will never be effective in the larger community. There are some people who could live in a country for two years and never have a discussion with someone from that culture. One thing that people who make it to the top, one of the things they tend to need to have is the ability to go beyond the job and interact with the culture to learn what is going on in this capital for instance. If your job forces you out into the community you are better off. It varies by job and it varies by temperament. People who were Peace-Corp volunteers and were happy on
assignment are more likely to be able to go to a new post and find fun things to do. Anyone that has had a deep prolonged no-escape-from-it cross-cultural experience either learn to deal with it and like it or they hate it.

Oh yes, flexibility is an important characteristic. You can take a person and how they look at themselves in terms of the community and larger humanity and use that to understand some of the dynamics that go on, but it really can't be used in a predictive sense. Someone could be excellent in cross-cultural competence in Jamaica but in Korea not at all. It is good for understanding where people are, what there problems are, but it doesn't say because someone has done well on a test they will be effective in a cross-cultural setting.

**Trainability**

You can train whatever you want. Some people believe that if you are a racist you will never be able to enjoy cross-cultural interaction. In two weeks, it is possible that values, long held, can be changed very rapidly. If the person wants to be trained, if you see within yourself a level of closemindedness it can be addressed. The question is, does the individual want that to happen and if he doesn't want it, can it still happen? The answer is yes, but the training of that becomes much more hit or miss. You can use Hammer's model to understand where that person is coming from and create situations that are challenging but not so threatening that they are turned off forever. The simple question is can you train people to have different attitudes. Yes. You have to (as a trainer) understand where they are and guess right about how to train them. If you start pushing people it just isn't going to happen.
Experiential learning

Yes, if you could have immersion in cross-cultural experiences such as the Peace Corp or programs such as Youth for Understanding focusing only on the cross-cultural content it will pay off. In the State Department there is no way to have the luxury to do that. We do have some programs for super hard languages such as Arabic or Chinese called field schools in those countries. It is expensive to spend a year or two paying individuals for training when the average assignment is only two years. In some instances there is as much time in training as in the actual assignment. The more experiential the training the more it invokes their attitudes, their values, their personal approaches- the closer you can get to simulating a learning experience, the more realistic it becomes in terms of involving the whole person. If you can get close to a sweaty palms situation the better prepared the individual will be when the encounter a similar situation in the field. All of it is situational and all of it requires compromises.

Gender

I think gender roles in the culture are of the core of what one needs to understand. You can teach the content and each person can internalize it in a way it makes sense to you. Certainly gender roles plays a major part in almost every cultural experience. If you don't understand your gender bias in another cultural context, you won't go very far.

Future Changes

The most significant change in the next ten years will be shifting much of what we do into interactive web based training. We have a global work force, it doesn’t make
sense to bring them back to Arlington Virginia to train them, that isn't going to happen in
the future. The challenge for people in nuance training, cross-cultural training, leadership
skills training is to incorporate those nuances into what is basically a dumb disk so that
someone on the other side of the world can get the intended benefit from the disk. That is
an enormous challenge for everyone in this field. We all know it is there. Some of us are
there and some of us are lagging behind. The demand is changing because each new
group of officers who comes through has higher expectations for what we offer in terms
of technology. That is our greatest challenge for the future.

A Workshop: The GLOBE Project

The GLOBE project is the first comprehensive study that looks at leadership
across-cultures. They have selected middle managers to interpret the cross-cultural
perceptions of leadership in order to avoid executives educated in Anglo-Saxon culture.
The measurement tools were developed using back translation and a vocabulary of about
300 leadership words that could be translated from English. The focus is on the food and
banking industries because of the constant nature of these choices across all cultures.

The idea that the world is converging to one business culture for example, or one
leadership style is one premise for the GLOBE study. Dinah Nieberg of the International
Monetary Fund believes that some managers have a style that is either liked by everyone
or is universally adaptable. The people in her experience who she believes to fit this
criteria have been, "in the middle-ground, not too much one thing or the other, calm,
good listeners, not too domineering, and don't make judgements without information."
Wursten says that flexibility is the best skill to work across cultures. Jack Welch said,
"We are developing a new system of heroes and the heroes we are looking for are the people who are flexible in translating the ideas to the different motivators of the culture. We have a survey we have developed to measure that type of flexibility to recruit people with these types of possibilities."

The question must be asked, are the characteristics needed to be successful across cultures inherent or can training teach these behaviors? Wursten believes, "it is a big part inherent. There is something that is needed to be able to do so (work effectively across cultures). There is not one approach best for coping with business and some people are able to see the relativity of that." What the GLOBE study is attempting to do is characterize the similarities of leadership perceptions across cultures to understand which behaviors are universally admired and which characteristics are seen as destructive behaviors.

Professor Carlos Altschul de la Facultad de Ciencias Economicas, Universidad de Buenos Aires presented on the findings in Argentina thus far in the GLOBE study. What they have discovered is that the characteristics which the desired leader should possess are the ability to be: diplomatic, decisive, inspiring, integrity, performance oriented, procedural, and visionary. In contrast the abusive leader is viewed in Argentina as autocratic, face saving, and self-centered. The other important findings are the values in their culture for specific leadership words. Lider is the Anglo-Saxon word leader translated but the connotations in this culture are of a popular politician or a coach. They are people who are endowed with unique gifts, and condemned to ignominious exile. The abilities that make someone a leader are believed to be things an individual is born with. In there culture, charisma has connotations of a rule breaker or the typical
Argentine macho, not the American view of a dynamic personality. 'Un jefe' translated means 'boss', but in the context of their culture means someone who orders people around. These distinctions are important for understanding the fundamental perceptions and stereotypes of leadership in different cultures. The studies also indicate that there is less power centralization in industries than in society, and require greater performance and future orientation in industries and in society. It suggests that attaining a supervisory position is perceived as a privilege and that many people use it in an authoritarian manner and for personal benefit. Non-specific to Argentina, the study reinforces the notion of a cluster of countries with a similar cultural heritage. The GLOBE project will be a breakthrough in cross-cultural studies on the basic level, providing new insights and creating new generalizations about interaction in different contexts.

The implications of this project on the IMF are a better understanding of management aspects such as which characteristics are flexible and which are constant over time such as punctuality, the example Dr. Altschul used that he believes is necessary to be efficient in a globally competitive environment. Dinah Nieberg also believes that it will help to justify the need for training in this area of human resource development.

The limitations of this research must also be considered. Unlike the Hofstede study, the GLOBE project will be looking at different organizational cultures across the specific industries. It will not however, look at anything beyond the business realm such as politics or community organizations. While the banking and food industries cross all cultures, they only represent a small, specialized segment of the population. Consistent with many studies mentioned previously, there is no measurement for the differences in gender or economic situation. Without biographical information on the subjects, there is
less applicability of the study to different, more specific areas of training and education. The use of focus groups as well as surveys increases the willingness of participants to answer accurately in the most comfortable venue. While the general information this study will generate should greatly enhance the body of knowledge in this area, especially pertinent to leadership studies, it will serve as an initiating force in future research that can stem from the findings.

Concluding Remarks

Research is cross-cultural training is a young and growing field. The practitioners included in this research have yet to develop a comprehensive training based on needs or desired outcomes. Therefore the level of understanding for this growing area of human resources and increasingly important issue in global competition has yet to reach a point where managers can confidently justify the expense to the company. That is not to say that some companies do not see the need for this type of training, but without proper proof of the effectiveness of the expense, it is difficult to convince executives of its need. The IMF for example allocates money for consultants to conduct training workshops in the organization, but the employee responsible for the cross-cultural aspects of training can only allocate 20% of his time to this area. This is an organization employing people from over 140 countries. The reality is that the IMF is progressive in this area in terms of resource allocation. Over time and across industries the following facts have been consistent:

1. Only about 35% of U.S firms offer any pre-departure, cross-cultural, or language training for their global managers.
2. In the 35% of firms that do offer cross-cultural training, the training is not very rigorous and might include watching films, reading books, and talking with people who have lived in the country are the most common approaches in use. Few firms offer their global managers in depth, rigorous, skills centered cross-cultural training. Behavior focused training may also be a trap that many organizations fall into, leading to lower potential productivity because it works under the premise that there is one preferred method rather than taking vastly different approaches to get to an outcome. Using a form of outcome based organizational interaction would diversify the process and foster creativity.

Evaluation is an area that could produce a wealth of knowledge that is currently lacking. Through a clear understanding of the programs that exist, the field could grow enormously by having quantitative data to show the value of the training. Without this sort of proof, it will be difficult to convince the other 65% of businesses that this type of training is valuable to them.

While there is a need to document the value of what is already being trained, an even greater need is to develop new methods to meet the market demands. As individuals work increasingly globally, the need for training such as interactive web based becomes essential to adapt to the changing needs of the customer. It will allow for training to become easier to manage in terms of time, but the real challenge is to make the computerized training meaningful.

The field of cross-cultural leadership training is an area where the need has grown exponentially as the world economy continually becomes more interdependent. There is much research that needs to be done in the next few years to better understand what
methodologies are most effective and create new environments for training. While many organizations have not reached the top of the learning curve in terms of this area, competition will force many of those organizations to seek new ways of making their human capital worldwide more effective. The challenge for leadership is to understand the differences across contexts and adjust accordingly. The world may globalize, but understanding differences is paramount regardless of how many people speak English. Communication occurs at a much deeper level than language and the individuals and organizations who understand that will have a clear advantage over those who remain closed minded.

Bibliography


