

**How do I approach my role in teaching
students with very different cultural
backgrounds?**

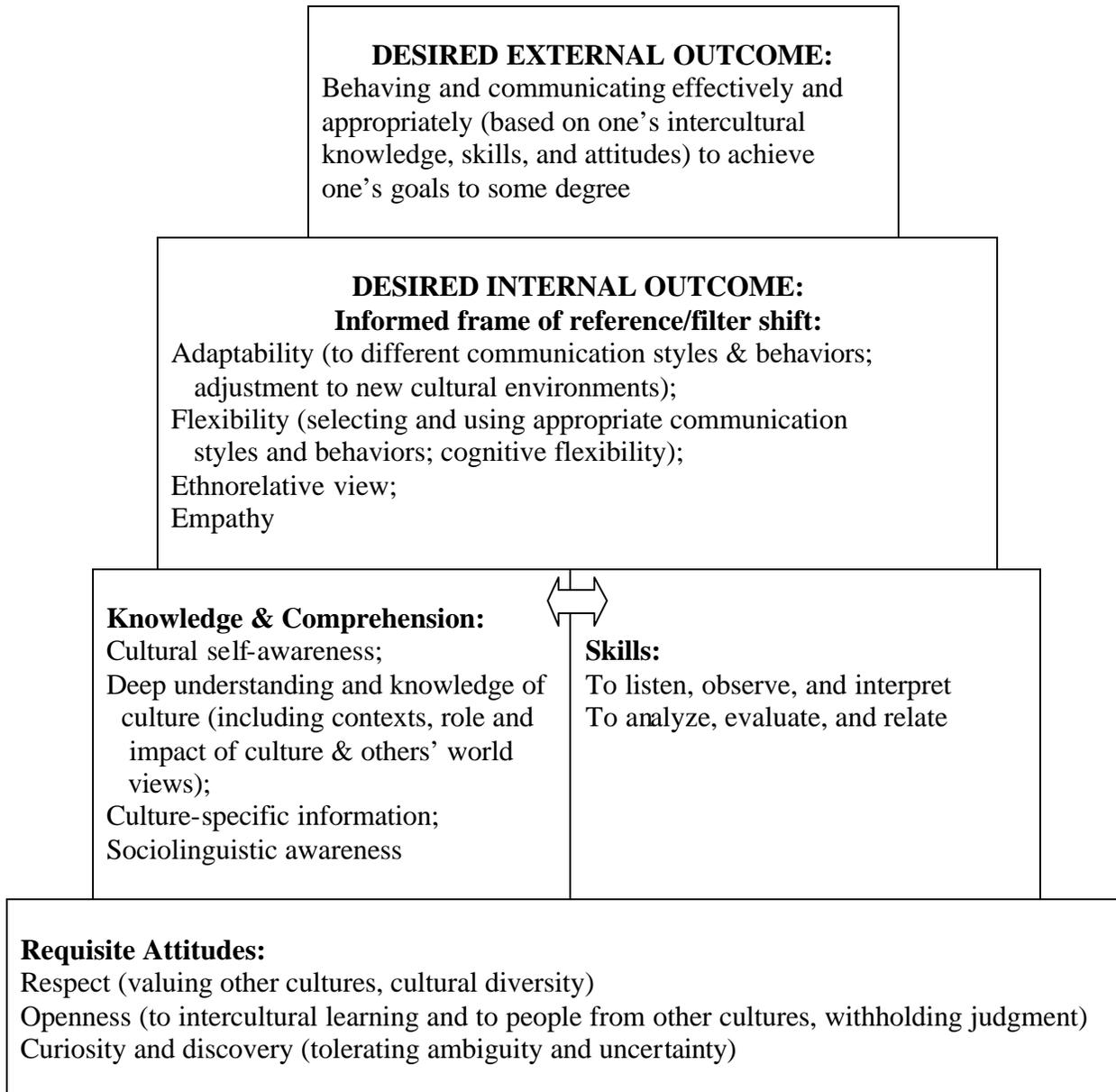
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INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE MODEL

From "The Identification and Assessment of Intercultural Competence as a Student Outcome of Internationalization at Institutions of Higher Education in the United States"

by Dr. Darla K. Deardorff in *Journal of Studies in International Education*, Fall 2006, 10, p. 241-266 and in *The SAGE Handbook of Intercultural Competence*, 2009 (Thousand Oaks: Sage).

Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence (Deardorff, 2006. 2009):



NOTES:

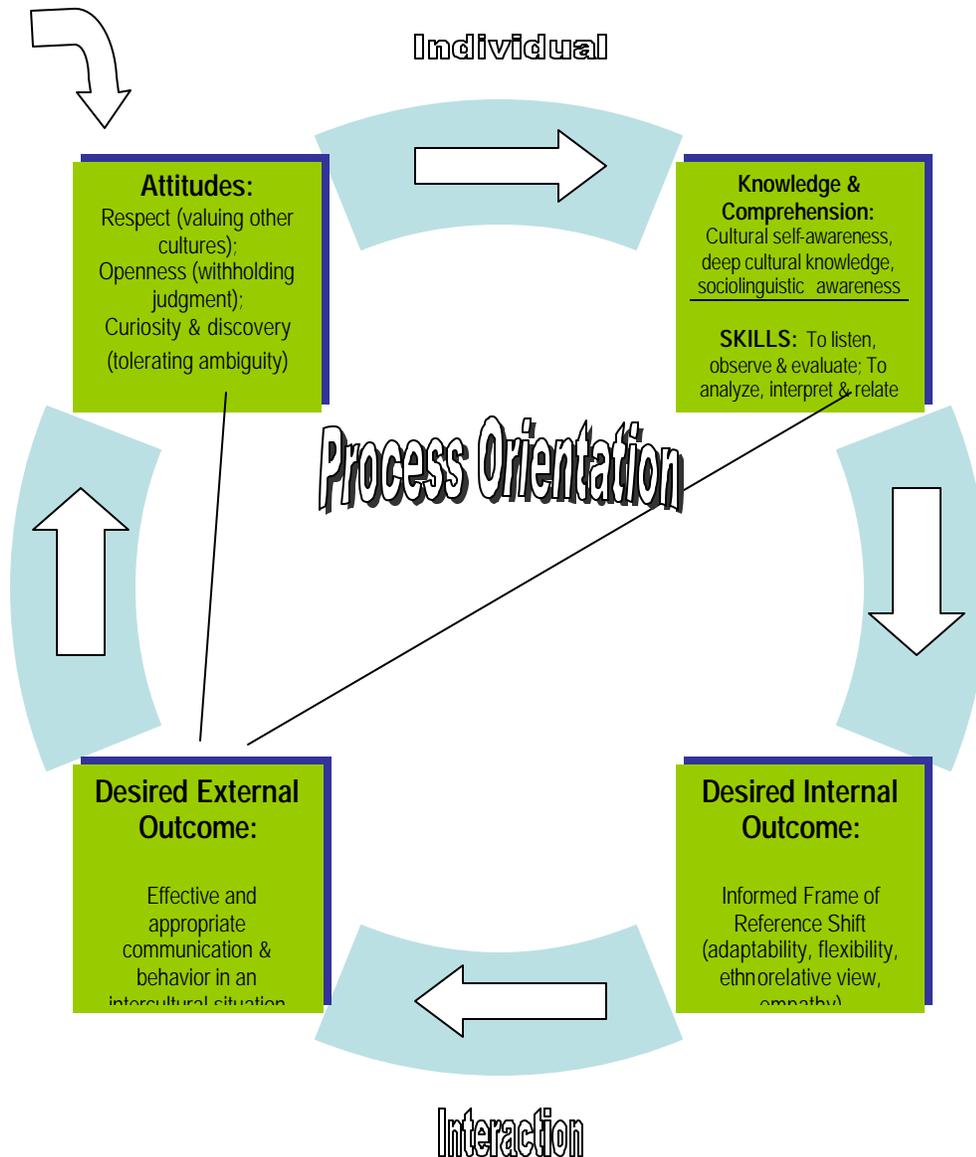
- Move from personal level (attitude) to interpersonal/interactive level (outcomes)
- Degree of intercultural competence depends on acquired degree of underlying elements

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Process Model of Intercultural Competence (Deardorff, 2006, 2009):



Notes:

- Begin with attitudes; Move from individual level (attitudes) to interaction level (outcomes)
- Degree of intercultural competence depends on acquired degree of attitudes, knowledge/comprehension, and skills

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INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE: SELF-EVALUATION

PART ONE. *The items listed below are invaluable in developing intercultural competence and in interacting effectively and appropriately with persons from other cultures. Please rate yourself on the following:*

	5=very high	4=high	3=average	2=below average	1=poor
1. Respect (valuing other cultures)	5	4	3	2	1
2. Openness (to intercultural learning and to people from other cultures)	5	4	3	2	1
3. Tolerance for ambiguity	5	4	3	2	1
4. Flexibility (in using appropriate communication styles and behaviors; in intercultural situations)	5	4	3	2	1
5. Curiosity and discovery	5	4	3	2	1
6. Withholding judgment	5	4	3	2	1
7. Cultural self-awareness/understanding	5	4	3	2	1
8. Understanding others' worldviews	5	4	3	2	1
9. Culture-specific knowledge	5	4	3	2	1
10. Sociolinguistic awareness (awareness of using other languages in social contexts)	5	4	3	2	1
11. Skills to listen, observe and interpret	5	4	3	2	1
12. Skills to analyze, evaluate, and relate	5	4	3	2	1
13. Empathy (do unto others as they would have done unto them)	5	4	3	2	1
14. Adaptability (to different communication styles/behaviors; to new cultural environments)	5	4	3	2	1
15. Communication Skills (appropriate AND effective communication in intercultural settings)	5	4	3	2	1

PART TWO. *Reflect on situations requiring intercultural competence – what helped make you more appropriate and effective in your interactions? Now reflect on how you can continue to develop your intercultural competence, especially areas you rated as lower. (You can write down your reflections on the back of this paper if that is helpful.)*

Based on Intercultural Competence Models developed by Deardorff, 2004. Instrument by Deardorff, 2006.

"Identification and Assessment of Intercultural Competence as a Student Outcome of Internationalization" by DK Deardorff in *Journal of Studies in International Education*, vol 10, issue 3, Fall 2006, pp. 241-266.

MOVING BEYOND ASSUMPTIONS: THE O.S.E.E. TOOL

O - _____ what is happening

S - _____ what is happening objectively

E - *EXPLORE* _____ for
what is happening

E - _____ the explanations

INTERCULTURALLY COMPETENT TEACHING – REFLECTION QUESTIONS

(based on the Deardorff Intercultural Competence models, 2006)

Attitudes

- How truly open am I to those from different cultural, socio-economic, and religious backgrounds?
- Do I make quick assumptions about a student? Do I pre-judge students or situations or do I withhold judgment while I explore the multifacets of the situation?
- Do I measure a student's behavior based on my own culturally-conditioned expectations or do I try to understand a student's behavior based on his or her own culturally-conditioned background?
- Do I value those from different backgrounds? How do I demonstrate that I value others, even when I may disagree with their beliefs and opinions?
- Am I eager to learn about different cultures and specifically, am I eager to learn about my students' backgrounds and experiences? Do I make an effort to learn more?

Knowledge

- Can I describe my own cultural conditioning? For example, what cultural values impact how I behave and communicate with others? What are some of my core beliefs and how have they been culturally influenced?
- How would I describe my worldview?
- How would I describe some of students' worldviews? How might these differ from the ways in which I see the world?
- How much do I know about my students' cultural backgrounds? What information am I missing and how can I get that information?
- How can I incorporate my students' worldviews into my course materials?
- What worldviews are demonstrated through the course materials I currently use? How can I enhance those materials so that other worldviews are represented?

Skills:

- How much do I really listen to my students?
- Do I engage in active observation in my classroom, paying attention to subtle nuances and dynamics among my students? In my interactions with my students?

- Do I engage in active reflection of my teaching practice and of my interactions with those from different cultural backgrounds? Do I not only seek to understand why something occurred but what lessons I learned from the situation?
- Do I know how to evaluate interactions and situations through an intercultural lens, seeking to understand underlying cultural explanations for what occurred?

Internal Outcomes (adaptability, flexibility, etc)

- Do I know how students want to be treated or do I assume they want to be treated by my cultural standards?
- Am I able to adapt my behavior and communication style to accommodate students from different culturally-conditioned communication styles?
- Am I able to be flexible in responding to students' learning needs, seeking to understand those needs from their cultural perspectives?
- Can I easily view knowledge, cultural artifacts, or a situation or issue from multiple perspectives?

External outcomes (communication, behavior)

- How culturally appropriate have I been in my interactions with my students? In my teaching? How would my students answer this question?
- Was I able to meet my goals in an appropriate and effective manner?
- What could I do differently in the future to be more appropriate and effective in my communication and behavior, both in interpersonal interactions and in my teaching?

General Reflection Questions

In reflecting on how teachers can help development students' intercultural competence, the following questions arise:

- How can teachers specifically incorporate students' cultural perspectives into the course?
- How can teachers allow space for students to reflect on their own intercultural competence development?
- What role can teachers play in mentoring students in this development?
- What role can others in the broader community play in developing students' intercultural competence?

- What role can technology play in students' development of knowledge and skills in relating to those from different backgrounds?
- How can teachers help students demonstrate respect (in culturally-appropriate ways) and openness to other ways of viewing the world?
- How can students work together effectively and appropriately in small groups during the course?
- How can teachers move beyond "objective culture" in the classroom to pushing students to learn more about "subjective culture," which impacts the ways in which students actually interact with others?
- How can teachers help students develop an "intercultural lens" through which to view the world? (Or as Derek Bok proposed, how can we teach students to "think interculturally?")

STRATEGIES:

References:

- Bok, D. (2006). *Our underachieving colleges: A candid look at how much students learn and why they should be learning more*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press
- Brown, S. & Kysilka, M. (2002). *Applying multicultural and global concepts in the classroom and beyond*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
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- Heyl, J. & McCarthy, J. (2003). "International Education and Teacher Preparation in the U.S.," paper presented at *Global Challenges and U.S. Higher Education: National Needs and Policy Implications*, Duke University, Durham, N.C., 24 January 2003
- Spitzberg, B.& Changnon, G. (2009). "Conceptualizing intercultural competence." In D.K. Deardorff (ed) *The SAGE handbook of intercultural competence*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Triandis, H. (1994). *Culture and social behavior*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

CROSS-CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING IN THE CLASSROOM

WHAT'S HAPPENING...?

As you read each of these situations, please state the first thing that comes to your mind regarding what's happening.

1. Several students in the class call you "Teacher."
2. Some students in class seem not to understand time limits on test-taking.
3. At about the same time in every class, one of the students asks to be excused. He returns a short time later.
4. Several students rarely ever look at you, especially when you talk directly to them.
5. You really want the students to ask questions in class but several students never seem to want to participate.
6. A few students in the class don't seem to want to have much to do with each other even though they're from the same country.
7. A student talks with you for 20 minutes about his family, your family, and other topics that don't seem very relevant to class.
8. Whenever you ask an Indian student if she understands, she always shakes her head and you simply cannot understand why she can never understand anything!
9. You notice 2 students apparently working together on a test despite your admonitions not to cheat.
10. A student is talking about her mother and refers to her mother both as "he" and "she."
11. When a student doesn't understand what the teacher says, the teacher repeats it again, louder than the first time.
12. A student always agrees with everything you say.

OTHER SITUATIONS:

CROSS-CULTURAL STRATEGIES/INSIGHTS FROM SCHOOL TEACHERS

- Know your students – really make an effort to learn about their cultural and family backgrounds, as well as communication styles and preferred learning styles – and recognize that each student will ultimately be completely different
- Use the OSEE tool in adapting to different communication styles and evaluating situations
- Be careful about your expectations of students and their responses – don't always expect direct answers or even questions
- Be very intentional about providing an environment where students of all cultural backgrounds (and communication styles – especially indirect styles) feel welcome and able to express themselves in ways that are comfortable for them
- Use more visuals!!! And non-verbal cues!
- Learn key words in students' languages (hello, thank you, please, goodbye)
- Have picture flashcards available
- Be willing to adapt your own communication style – to tone down or play up facets of your own style to mesh better with students styles
- Don't assume that students know what you're talking about – even very basic things
- Clearly state what is expected from students – don't assume they know!
- Be willing to laugh at yourself
- Don't force students to communicate in a certain way (ie make eye contact if they don't feel comfortable)
- Be willing to communicate with parents (and students) in different ways
- Keep learning more about yourself – and be willing to push your comfort zone
- Take cues from your students
- Be aware of body language (inc. space) used in class – by you and by the students
- Be careful not to single out students in class
- Incorporate writing activities to allow opportunities for students to communicate through the writing to you
- Be sensitive to the way in which you convey criticism to students (so they don't "lose face")
- Realize that students are not always thinking about/approaching things in the same way
- Remember how it feels to be uncomfortable and how that can impact one's ability to learn...
- Bring different cultures and traditions into the classroom and into the lessons
- When interacting with parents, see if someone is available to interpret/translate if necessary
- Make sure students are respectful of those from different cultures – build a culture of respect
- Don't judge students
- Consider pairing up students of different cultural backgrounds for activities (ie native Spanish speakers could teach some words to non-native Spanish speakers)
- Honor all cultures in the classroom
- Be aware and knowledgeable of the many different culturally-conditioned communication styles of your students!

(D.K. Deardorff, Duke University, 2007)

Seven Lessons Toward Cross-Cultural Understanding

One: Don't assume everyone is the same.

Two: Familiar behaviors may have different meanings.

The same behavior - saying yes, for example, can exist in different cultures and not mean the same thing. Just because you've recognized a given behavior, don't assume you've understood it.

Three: What you think of as normal behavior may only be cultural.

A lot of behavior is universal, but certainly not all. Before you project your norms on the human race consider that you might be wrong.

Four: Don't assume that what you meant is what was understood.

You can be sure of what you meant when you say something, but you can't be sure how this is understood by someone else. Check for signs that the other person did indeed understand you.

Five: Don't assume that what you understood is what was meant.

You are obliged to hear what others say through the medium of your own culture and experience. You know what those words mean to you, but what do they mean to the person speaking them? Always double check!

Six: You don't have to like "different" behavior, but understanding where it comes from may help you respond with more sensitivity.

Seven: Most people do behave rationally; you just have to discover the rationale!

INTERCULTURAL RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS

Compiled by Dr. Darla K. Deardorff

Intercultural Bibliographies:

Intercultural Resources/Bibliographies <http://www.intercultural.org/resources.html>

Intercultural Bibliography <http://www.carla.umn.edu/culture/bibliography/culture.html>

Intercultural Learning Resources:

Culture Matters Interactive Workbook

<http://www.peacecorps.gov/wvs/educators/enrichment/culturematters/index.html>

What's Up with Culture? <http://www.pacific.edu/sis/culture/>

Specific Intercultural Resources for Educators:

Worldview Program at UNC-Chapel Hill <http://www.unc.edu/world/>

North Carolina in the World <http://www.ncintheworld.org/>

LEARN NC online courses in global/intercultural education for teachers

<http://www.learnnc.org/>

UNC's K-12 International Outreach Program

<http://gi.unc.edu/programs/k-12-program/index.html>