Social justice, diversity, and intercultural–global citizenship education in the global context

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Introduction

In the past 30 years, revolutionary changes in communication and transportation technologies have coalesced with neo-liberal economic and political policies to dramatically accelerate intercultural interaction around the world. The forces of globalisation have catapulted people, practices, and beliefs from different cultures into shared and contested physical and virtual spaces in workplaces, communities, and schools in unprecedented ways. Our world, in the first decades of the new millennium, is a world in motion. More people are on the move today crossing cultural boundaries and national borders than ever before in the history of humankind. The International Organization for Migration reports in 2015 that 244 million people live outside their country of origin (International Organization for Migration 2018). Approximately 1,362 million people crossed international borders for business and leisure in 2017 marking the highest growth in international tourism since 2010 (World Tourism Organization 2018). Yet, our lives, livelihoods, and lifestyles are also increasingly polarised, fragmented, and vulnerable. Greater proximity, magnified economic inequity and insecurity, and real and perceived ethnic and racial tension has led to a backlash against globalisation. Anti-immigrant, protectionist, and populist rhetoric and policies, fuelled by xenophobia and racism, have given rise to new forms of ethnic nationalism, isolationism, and violence around the world.

Driven by the global economy, collaboration in multicultural teams at home and abroad is increasingly the norm rather than the exception. Multinational managers are required to move more rapidly and frequently across multiple and varied cultural contexts than in the past. The growing diversity of student populations in educational institutions at all levels presents immense intercultural opportunities and challenges. Sojourns of international students are more multidirectional today as the value of ‘international experience’ gains currency globally and universities around the world compete for students in the educational marketplace. Additionally, the rapid de-territorialisation and re-territorialisation of migrants and refugees creates contested and hybrid cultural spaces as longstanding norms in countries of origin and destination are disrupted. With increased contact across cultural boundaries, greater complexity in cultural constellations, and exacerbated potential for misunderstanding and conflict, the need for intercultural training and global citizenship education grounded in social justice is more critical than ever before.
This chapter begins with an historical overview of intercultural training. I then turn to the contemporary context of globalisation to describe the complex, contradictory, and inequitable conditions in which intercultural communication occurs today. Explicating the implications of the global context for intercultural training and global citizenship education, I explore four critical trends and address the ways theoretical shifts manifest in terms of practice. The chapter concludes with a discussion of future directions for intercultural training and global citizenship education in the global context.

**Historical perspectives**

The following overview highlights the roots and critical developments of intercultural training over the last 70 years. The foundations of intercultural training can be traced back to the growth in international student exchange programmes and U.S. government-sponsored international development programmes in the post-World-War-II period. Edward T. Hall, often referred to as the originator of the field of intercultural communication, was hired by the U.S. Foreign Service Institute in 1955 (Leeds-Hurwitz 1990). Recognising that training focused primarily on verbal language and country-specific information was not sufficient preparation for work abroad, Edward T. Hall, along with others at the Foreign Service Institute, developed training programmes that were practical, and situation based, with an emphasis on implicit culture. Hall’s concentration on the tacit dimensions of culture such as the use of time, space, and context, later popularised in his work, the *Silent Language* (1959) and the *Hidden Dimension* (1966), continue as key concepts in intercultural communication training today. In addition, Hall’s emphasis on applied and situational learning, his use of experiential teaching methods, the value he placed on the Self as an instrument and focus of analysis, as well as the important shift from studying cultures in isolation to studying communication interactions among cultures, all established the groundwork for intercultural training (Pusch 2004; Sorrells 1998).

The Peace Corps initiated by President John F. Kennedy in the early 1960s enabled thousands of volunteers from the USA to serve in countries around the world. While Peace Corps training originally focused on country-specific information and was conducted on university campuses, training eventually moved to centres in host countries. Training techniques were developed and codified by Albert Wight and Mary Anne Hammons (1970) in the first intercultural training manual, *Guidelines for Peace Corps Cross-Cultural Training: Philosophy and Methodology*. As Pusch (2004) notes, the emphasis on ‘learning how to learn’ that proved possible in host country training for the Peace Corps continues today in intercultural training. Several sources, *Culture Matters: The Peace Corps Cross-Cultural Workbook* (Storti and Bennhold-Samaan 1998) and *Culture Matters: Trainer’s Guide* (Storti and Bennhold-Samaan 1999), outline the strategies and technologies used by the Peace Corps to train volunteers about culture, and to value differences across cultures and cultural self-awareness. The Experiment for International Living, now called World Learning, began administering study abroad programmes starting in the 1930s and founded the School for International Training Graduate Institute in Brattleboro, Vermont in the 1960s as a training centre for Peace Corps volunteers (now called SIT Graduate Institute). Their experiential-based graduate and continuing education programmes focus on building skills in language, intercultural communication, and global citizenship. *Beyond Experience* edited by Donald Batchelder and Elizabeth Warner (1977) and a second edition edited by Ted Gochenour (1995) consolidate concepts, methods, experiential learning activities, and assessment tools for intercultural training that have been developed over the years.

Another critical site for experimentation and development of intercultural training occurred at the University of Pittsburgh starting in the mid-1960s and extending for about 10 years. David
Hoopes and Stephen Rhinesmith, in conjunction with the Regional Council for International Education, developed what came to be known as Intercultural Communication Workshops (ICW), which brought international and American students together to learn from each other and to explore intercultural interactions. ICW, aimed at assisting participants in understanding culture and challenging communication barriers, were typically several days long and drew on a variety of training methods such as lectures, exercises, group experiences, discussions, and film. David Hoopes (1970; 1972; 1973) edited Readings in Intercultural Communication; volumes that compile chapters on research, theory, and training.

ICW at the University of Pittsburgh and a similar model developed at Cornell University by Clifford Clark enabled the development of an expanding network of trained intercultural facilitators. At Portland State University, Le Ray Barna developed an innovative academic model of ICW bringing international students in English as a Second Language courses together with students in communication classes to assist with language learning and to understand what helped and hindered intercultural communication. Barna’s (1972) article ‘Stumbling blocks in intercultural communication,’ based on her work with the ICW model, was first published in Readings in Intercultural Communication and continues as a standard today. In the late 1970s, Milton Bennett established a version of the ICW at Portland State University and along with Janet Bennett developed a systematic train-the-trainer programme for graduate students. Intercultural Communication Workshops across the USA were pivotal in developing and testing a wide range of approaches and strategies for intercultural training, which were shared and refined through growing groups of trained facilitators such as the Intercultural Network and the Society for Intercultural Education, Training and Research (SIETAR). SIETAR, established in 1974 later becoming SIETAR International, has held annual conferences in different location for several decades and has played a central role in facilitating collaboration among intercultural practitioners and researchers around the world. SIETAR Japan was organised in 1985 and SIETAR Europa founded in 1991. In 1998, the first SIETAR Global Network international conference was held in Japan.

While the field of intercultural communication emerged with a central focus on international contexts, it is important to note that developments in ethnic studies, multicultural education, and inter-racial/inter-ethnic relations in the USA paralleled and influenced intercultural communication training. Out of the Civil Rights Movement, departments of ethnic studies emerged in American universities to challenge Eurocentric curricula, to construct knowledge from the position of silenced and disadvantaged groups, and to empower non-dominant groups. Drawing on interdisciplinary fields of study such as ethnic and women’s studies, and multicultural education, an educational reform movement led by James Banks (1988; Banks and Banks 2003), aims to create equal educational opportunities for students from diverse racial, ethnic, class, and cultural groups. Although a broad range of principles are essential to multicultural education, the emphasis on developing an awareness of stereotypes and biases, gaining skills to reduce prejudice, and creating environments that foster interethnic and inter-racial relations increasingly intersect with goals of intercultural training particularly in educational contexts. The emergence of critical theoretical approaches in intercultural communication in the last decade (Nakayama and Halualani 2010) highlights the increasing importance of understanding cultural differences and intercultural communication within the context of inequitable relations of power and privilege.

With a few exceptions, intercultural training in multinational corporate contexts began to gain footing and momentum in the 1980s in Europe, USA, and Japan. In 1980, Geert Hofstede created the Institute for Research on Intercultural Cooperation in the Netherlands. Based on his pioneering research at IBM, Hofstede’s (1980; 1991) dimensions of culture – power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism–collectivism, masculinity–femininity, and Confucian
dynamism – and diagnostic tools have found broad appeal in multinational corporate settings around the world to identify cultural differences and develop intercultural communication skills. In the late 1980s, Fons Trompenaars, founder of the Centre for Intercultural Business Studies also in the Netherlands, developed an approach to intercultural training and consulting based on seven dimensions of culture, which address the way people relate to each other, solve problems, and view time (Trompenaars 1993; Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner 1997). While open to a range of critiques discussed later in the chapter, the work of these researchers and practitioners has had a tremendous impact on intercultural training in multinational business contexts.

Managing ‘diversity’ in the workplace, ubiquitous today in multicultural organisations and corporate boardrooms, was a new idea in the early 1990s. With roots in the Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity Employment policies of the 1970s in the USA, the notion of managing diversity attempted to move beyond numbers and quotas for the inclusion of non-dominant groups towards recognising diversity as a resource (Thomas 1990). Trends in diversity training in the mid-1990s in the USA (Abramms et al. 1996 as cited in Lee Gardenswartz and Anita Rowe 1998) indicate that definitions of diversity were becoming more inclusive; ‘victims vs. oppressors’ and affirmative action paradigms were used less frequently and there was a shift towards concepts and language that focused on ethnic and organisational culture. By the end of the 1990s, globalisation, evidenced by radical demographic shifts in the workforce, required corporate diversity consultants and trainer/practitioners to adopt increasingly more fluid and flexible approaches, pay closer attention to differences in ethics across cultures, and alter training methods, content and format to address changing demands (Gardenswartz and Rowe 1998).

Notable global trends at the end of the millennium, which continue today, include an increase in the number of women, immigrants, and minorities in the workplace as well as an aging workforce. Worldwide, the global economy and population projections also point to an increasingly heterogeneous workforce. Heterogeneity in the workforce, while often targeted, is not, itself, the problem; rather the issue is a lack of knowledge and skills to manage diversity effectively and creatively to leverage strategic advantage (Gardenswartz and Rowe 1998).

Critical issues and topics: The global context

The phrase ‘global context’ is used here to refer to the conditions of globalisation that shape intercultural communication today. While the term ‘globalisation’ came into common usage in the 1990s to describe our rapidly changing world, the various factors and forces that constitute and shape globalisation have been in play for a much longer time (Nederveen Pieterse 2009). Globalisation is a complicated and contested concept with multiple and layered meanings, which is understood and experienced in a broad array of ways by individuals and groups with different interests, positionalities, and points of view. I define globalisation as the complex web of economic, political, and technological forces that have brought people, cultures, and markets, as well as beliefs, practices, and ideologies into increasingly greater proximity to and con/disjunction with one another within inequitable relations of power (Sorrells 2010; 2016). The word is used here to address the contested processes that contribute to the vastly inequitable conditions of living in our contemporary world.

The frequent and multidirectional movement of capital, commodities, services, information, labour, and ideologies in the global context is driven by shifts in international economic policies and global political governance that have taken place since World War II, and which have accelerated dramatically since the 1980s (Stiglitz 2002). Economic liberalisation, also known as ‘free’ trade, is the cornerstone of neo-liberal globalisation. Neo-liberalism is based on government deregulation, a shift of responsibility from the public sector to individuals and the
privatisation of public space, issues, industries, and resources (Harvey 2005). Characterised by a growth in multinational corporate power, an intensification of international trade and international webs of production, distribution and consumption, and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people from their homes, jobs and countries, neo-liberal globalisation has exponentially increased and dramatically impacted intercultural interactions worldwide.

In the context of neo-liberal globalisation, wealth concentration has intensified and economic inequity exacerbated both within and across nations, resulting in vastly disparate access to resources and deepening racial inequities (Oxfam 2017). While just over 50% of the world’s people wake up each morning assured of instant communication with others around the globe (ITU World Telecommunication 2018), according to the most recent estimates, in 2013 one in ten people in developing regions still live below the internationally defined poverty line, starting their day without the basic necessities of food, clean water, and shelter (United Nations n.d). In an era of instant messages and global communication, one out of seven adults in the world do not have the skills to read and write (UNESCO 2017). Today, the median wealth of a white family in the USA exceeds $100,000 while the median wealth of a black family is $10,000, a racial wealth gap accrued from centuries of discriminatory and exclusionary laws and practices and magnified by racial income disparity (Darity et al. 2018). In the global context, friends, migrants, tourists, business people, and students from diverse cultures come into contact more rapidly than ever before in the history of human interaction; yet, some have the privilege of experiencing intercultural interactions in corporate boardrooms, in universities, and through tourism, while other people, displaced from their home, are forced to eke out their basic survival as refugees of the global economy.

Clearly, the global context has dramatically altered the conditions that enable, shape, and constrain intercultural communication. First, intercultural interactions and exchange have increased exponentially as a result of advanced communication, information, and transportation technologies. Second, global intercultural interdependence has escalated as changes in economic and political policies, governance, and institutions usher in an era of shared interests, needs, and resources. Third, as intercultural and transnational interdependence increases, intercultural, misunderstanding, polarisation, tension, and conflict have also intensified. Fourth, economic disparity has magnified within and across nation states based on flows of capital, labour, and access to education and technology exacerbating existing inequalities. Finally, asymmetrical geopolitical and economic relationships of power forged through colonisation, Western domination, and American hegemony, while reconfigured today, continue to define and shape intercultural relations.

In the global context, the ‘West’ and the USA are not by any means the only centres of economic, political, and cultural production and power (Ong 1999; Shome and Hedge 2002); yet, the field of intercultural communication which provides the theoretical knowledge, conceptual framework, and practical strategies for intercultural training is rooted in Western, White perspectives, colonial modes of thinking, and imperial knowledge production (Asante 1987; Miike 2003; Mendoza 2005). The implications for intercultural training of the complex, contradictory, and increasingly inequity global context are explicated through a discussion of four critical trends.

**Current contributions and research**

First, I explore how the central concept of ‘culture’ as theorised in intercultural communication and operationalised in intercultural training is undergoing a process of redefinition to more adequately address the complexities of culture in the global context. Second, I discuss
the emerging emphasis in the intercultural communication field on broader historical contexts and geopolitical relationships of power, resulting in more systemic approaches to training in intercultural communication. Third, the increasing importance of technology and the focus on various forms of ‘intelligences’ in intercultural training today are addressed. Finally, I consider the turn towards social justice and global engagement in intercultural training.

Redefining culture

Historically, anthropological perspectives, defining culture as shared values, norms, behaviours, and ways of thinking, have provided the foundation for the field of intercultural communication and intercultural training. Much of intercultural training is based on concepts, models, and dimensions of culture developed by anthropologists and cross-cultural psychologists (Bhawuk and Brislin 1992; Hofstede 1991; Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner 1997; Triandis 1995), which are typically operationalised in terms of national culture. Recently, the strong reliance on such models for intercultural training in the global context has been questioned for a number of reasons. Values orientations models based on dichotomous dimensions (e.g., high/low context, individualistic/collectivistic, high/low power distance) are criticised as oversimplified, limiting, and potentially counterproductive for addressing the complex dimensionality and multifaceted identities that characterise intercultural interactions in the global context.

Consider the following training situations:

• US-American students from various ethnic, racial, and class backgrounds participate in a pre-departure orientation training preparing them for their sojourns in Europe and Latin America.
• A culturally diverse group of managers from a multinational corporation who move frequently and for short periods of time in and out of various multicultural team contexts in Europe and Asia gather in Amsterdam for intercultural leadership training.
• International business management students from various countries in Asia attend an intercultural communication training course in New Zealand.

In each case, useful generalisations may undoubtedly be made based on national culture of origin, location, or destination; yet, the subcultural ethnic, racial, religious, class, and/or organisational influences shaping the participants and the environments they will enter in the global context are likely as salient as national cultural characteristics. US-American students studying abroad today represent the multicultural diversity of the country. The environments where students are placed – in the scenario above, in families, communities, and universities in Europe and Latin America – are characterised by increasing hybridity and diversity as well. Given the complexities of intercultural interactions in the twenty-first century, the diversity of cultural tendencies within nations, and the dramatic geopolitical shifts that have occurred in the last 30 years, frameworks of cultural variation based on national culture often lead to overgeneralisations and stereotypes that are counterproductive in intercultural training and global citizenship education.

Historically, intercultural training has prepared managers to work in one new culture, often focusing on culture-specific knowledge. Yet, researchers and practitioners Earley and Peterson (2004) argue that knowledge of culture-specific values does not translate into effective interpersonal interactions when managers in the global workforce move rapidly across various and diverse multicultural contexts, as for the participants in the intercultural leadership training described above. Too easily, sophisticated stereotypes of national cultures are substituted for
multidimensional cultural realities with the result of limiting rather than explaining the effects of culture on human interaction (Thomas 2008).

Asian students studying international management in New Zealand, as described above, may argue that the values orientation frameworks are not only inaccurate based on their knowledge of their own cultures but also that the frameworks can perpetuate neo-colonial perspectives that normalise global economic asymmetry and injustice, promote ethnocentrism and Western hegemony, and devalue the humanity of countries that are less firmly articulated in global capitalism. Like European colonial cartographers who positioned the West as the geopolitical centre of the world and misrepresented the sizes and shapes of continents, the uncritical use in intercultural training of theories and models that de-historicise and de-politicise intercultural communication produces systematic distortions of the world (Munchi and McKie 2001).

Thus, a redefinition of our concept of culture in the global context is required. Culture necessarily implies shared meaning; yet, attention only to shared meaning privileges dominant readings or majority group experiences and obscures the dynamic, multifaceted, and negotiated aspects of culture (Appadurai 1996). Critical/cultural studies perspectives define culture as a site of struggle where meanings are continually negotiated and contested within inequitable relations of power (Grossberg et al. 1992). This definition reveals how culture can function as a form of hegemony, or domination through consent, as articulated by Italian Marxist theorist Antonio Gramsci (1973). Hegemony operates when the goals, ideas, and interests of the ruling group or class are so thoroughly normalised, institutionalised, and accepted that people consent to their own domination, subordination, and exploitation.

Cultural studies theorists argue that individuals and groups have the potential to challenge, resist, and transform meanings in their subjective, everyday lives. Fiske (1992: 157) states: ‘The social order constrains and oppresses people, but at the same time offers them resources to fight against those constraints’ noting that individuals and groups are consumers and producers of cultural meanings and can act in counter-hegemonic ways. Culture, then, is the ‘actual, grounded terrain’ of everyday practices, representations, discourses, and institutions where meanings are produced, consumed, negotiated, and contested (Hall 1997).

Emerging approaches in intercultural training define culture as both ‘shared meaning’ and as ‘contested meaning,’ which challenges static and dichotomous notions of culture, disrupts essentialised concepts of cultural identities, and addresses the complexities of culture in the global context (Sorrells and Nakagawa 2008; Sorrells 2010; 2016). Specifically, dichotomous cultural variation frameworks traditionally used in training are now more frequently accompanied by clear and directed discussions regarding the limitations and potential pitfalls of these models. Countering firm correlations between nationality and cultural orientation and acknowledging the de-territorialised and re-territorialised nature of culture in the global context (Appadurai 1996; Inda and Rosaldo 2002), intercultural trainers are moving towards approaches that highlight the complex, multidimensional, and dynamic nature of culture and intercultural interactions in the global context (Earley and Peterson 2004; Englebert 2004). While typologies of cultural variation can provide a first yet limited step towards understanding of difference in intercultural business and other environments, attention to situational contexts and cultural histories is increasingly emphasised (Osland and Bird 2000).

**Taking contextual and systemic approaches**

Following approaches in the field of intercultural communication, intercultural training has traditionally de-emphasised or ignored the roles history and power play in intercultural interactions. Intercultural training, with its roots in the USA, has generally stressed pragmatic approaches
that facilitate effective interpersonal communication without much attention to how interpersonal communication is shaped and impacted by intergroup or international interactions — either historical or current. While attention to face-to-face interpersonal interaction in the present moment is important, this orientation often neglects and obscures critical historical dynamics as well as present-day events that have a tremendous influence on communication in business, relational, intergroup, and international contexts. Extracting intercultural communication from historical, political, and economic contexts also masks inequitable relations of power between individuals, groups, organisations, and countries that often play a major role in contouring intercultural relations. The introduction of the textbook, *Intercultural Communication in Contexts*, in the late 1990s by Judith Martin and Thomas Nakayama (1997) and attention to critical perspectives on intercultural communication (Nakayama and Halualani 2010) provide the theoretical and conceptual foundations for teaching and training about intercultural communication within broader historical, economic, and political contexts.

Returning to the brief scenarios introduced above illustrates the significance of broader contexts for intercultural communication training. Leaders in global corporations must be aware of the impact of situational contexts, historical alliances and enmities, as well as existing configurations of geopolitical power, in order to manage a diverse multinational workforce. Additionally, it is important to ask who has access to intercultural trainings. Is the knowledge and information imparted about effective intercultural communication the privilege of global elites? Szkudlarek (2009: 981) notes that the disproportionate access to intercultural training in the West compared to training available in Asia, Africa, and South America can, itself, serve as a ‘manipulative tool, a new instrument for maintaining inequalities.’

Similarly, students studying abroad, like all sojourners whether students, business people or refugees, are subject to attitudes and treatment based on assumptions and perceptions held by members of host or receiving countries. Historical and current intergroup relations and geopolitical configurations can and do impact everyday intercultural interactions. This seems obvious; yet, while some emphasis has been placed on host culture environmental influences on sojourner or migrant adaptation (Kim 2001), intercultural training has often neglected to address the ways intercultural communication is inextricably interwoven and articulated in historical and current intergroup relations as well as macro-level geopolitical contexts.

It is also important to note the attitudes of host country members towards a particular national group: ‘Americans’, for example, are not homogenous; nor are the identities of the students travelling with American passports. The experiences of White American, Black American, Latino/a, Arab American, and Asian American students studying abroad in Europe or Latin America will vary notably, based on how each is perceived racially, how constructs of ‘race’ are understood locally as well as on intersecting gender, class, religious, and sexual orientation identities. The experiences of students of diverse ethnic, racial, and religious backgrounds who participate in a study abroad programme are also inevitably linked to historical and current events. Situating intercultural communication within historical, political, and economic contexts highlights the links between historical and contemporary conditions and acknowledges the role power, privilege, and positionality play in intercultural communication. Increasingly, intercultural training, curricula for study abroad programmes and global citizenship focus at least some attention on broader macro-level geopolitical, economic, and historical contexts.

Taking an even broader view, the historical context of the past 500 years of colonisation, which includes the anticolonial and independence struggles, civil rights and alter-globalisation movements, is also critical for understanding intercultural communication, training, and global education programmes today. How can we address issues that arise in intercultural training and global citizenship education, for example, regarding south to north migration patterns.
today – from former colonies to centres of imperial power – without situating globalisation within the broader context of colonisation? How can we address the growing tensions, polarisation, and volatility as the number of displaced people – refugees of wars, violence, and the global economy – grows and as ethnic nationalism and religious sectarianism gain rhetorical and political traction? What are the implications of training global managers in intercultural relations in the global context where ‘free’ trade policies enable the outsourcing of jobs by wealthier more powerful nations to poorer less powerful nations without acknowledging how these policies and practices recreate conditions for the exploitation of labour, the consolidation of economic wealth, and political power parallel to the colonial period? How can we train for effective intercultural communication and global citizenship when grappling with the intercultural challenges facing our world today – racial, ethnic and religious discrimination, intensified economic inequity, and disputes over immigrant rights and immigration policies – without recognising how these struggles are embedded in and structured by ideologies about race, class, religion, and nation forged and institutionalised through the last 500 years of colonisation and Western hegemony?

As noted by Judith Martin and Teresa Harrell (2004), the emergence of critical approaches to intercultural communication and the dramatic impact of globalisation on intercultural communication are influencing research on cultural adaptation and re-entry scholarship. Intercultural training for study abroad programmes, in pre-departure orientations and re-entry training, is gradually incorporating a degree of focus on broader macro-level historical, social, and political contexts as pertinent to students’ international experience. Depending upon the type of study abroad programme and the sponsoring university or organisation, intercultural training designs are addressing relationships of geopolitical and economic power between sending and host countries. To varying degrees, study abroad programmes engage participants in discussions about the roles privilege based on nationality, class, race, ethnicity, religion, gender, and sexual orientation may have on their study abroad experience.

Increasingly, attention to the micro-interpersonal level of interactions is coupled with broader views that take macro-level historical relationships as well as present-day events into account. An emerging approach for intercultural communication trainers in multinational corporate settings employs a systems approach to facilitate the analysis of issues and development of effective plans of action. Loosely based on general systems theory (Bertalanffy 1968) and systems thinking (Senge 1990), multinational and multicultural organisations are viewed as systems that are situated within larger economic, political, and cultural systems. Introducing a systems approach or systems thinking in intercultural training highlights the complexity of the whole while viewing the inter-relationship between and influence among increasingly larger systems from the organisational culture to the broader global business culture.

**Integrating teams, technologies, and intelligences**

Advances in communication, information, and transportation technologies are defining characteristics of the global context that significantly alter the conditions of intercultural communication. The compression of space and time that accompany advanced technologies translates into workplaces and work teams that are not only increasingly culturally diverse but also geographically dispersed, which has resulted in the emergence of virtual global teams. As working effectively in multicultural and multinational teams gains priority in organisations, research and training directed towards intercultural teams has increased (Adler 2008; Guilherme et al. 2010).

Thomas (2008) notes that the cultural composition of work groups impacts group effectiveness in three inter-related ways: (1) cultural norms about how work groups function and
how they are structured; (2) cultural diversity or the number of different cultures in the group; and (3) relative cultural distance or the degree to which members of the group are culturally different from one another. Cultural diversity tends to increase the time required for multicultural groups to complete tasks and initially lowers performance rates as compared to homogeneous groups; yet, over time, greater cultural diversity can also increase creativity, and broaden a group’s perspectives and resources resulting in higher quality decision making (Adler 2008; Earley and Mosakowski 2000). In brainstorming, culturally diverse groups generate more creative, high quality ideas and are more effective than homogeneous teams in identifying problems and producing solutions.

Virtual teams who must communicate across time zones, national borders, and cultural frames use a wide variety of technologies to bridge potentially vast differences and discontinuities. According to the Virtual Team Survey Report 2010 (Solomon 2010), 80% of corporate managers work in virtual teams part of the time and over 60% consider themselves part of virtual teams. Yet, only 60% of the respondents indicated that virtual teams were successful, citing time zones, language, communication styles, and cultural differences as the biggest challenges (ibid.). Survey respondents called for more face-to-face communication interaction and the use of collaborative technologies such as video-conferencing to bridge the challenges of cultural differences and distance in the global workplace.

Based on in-depth qualitative and quantitative research on virtual teams across national and organisational cultures, Gibson and Manuel (2003) emphasise trust as critical in virtual teams. Many factors that contribute to building and repairing trust such as proximity, similarities in background and experience as well as interpersonal affective cues are lacking in virtual interactions. While cultural differences are identified as a significant impediment to building trust in virtual multicultural teams, intercultural training that provides knowledge and skills about communication style differences and focuses on creating supportive communicative climates, developing active listening skills, fostering empathy, and giving constructive feedback can improve the effectiveness of virtual teams. A survey conducted in 2018 of 1620 executives from major organisations in 90 countries around the world indicates the prevalence and significance of global virtual teams today; yet, the survey reveals that only 22% receive intercultural training for virtual teamwork. Thus, key challenges – establishing relationships among team members, concerns about understanding levels of context surrounding messages, and a shared understanding regarding the pace and process of decision making – continue (RW3 CultureWizard 2018).

In the global context where managers, workplace teams, educators, and leaders interact with multiple and varied cultural groups, a trend towards developing and enhancing intelligences for managing individual, team, and organisational diversity is evident. Specifically, research and training on emotional intelligence and diversity (EID) (Gardenswartz et al. 2008) and cultural intelligence (CQ) (Earley and Ang 2003) are summarised here.

Extending the notion of emotional intelligence (Goleman 1995) to address today’s diverse world, ‘EID encompasses the ability to feel, understand, articulate, manage and apply the power of emotions to interactions across lines of cultural difference’ (Gardenswartz et al. 2010: 76). Differences can and often do trigger powerful emotional reactions and behaviours in the highly diverse contexts in which individuals and groups engage and work today, requiring emotional intelligence. The EID model is comprised of four interdependent dynamics: (1) **affirmative introspection** is an ongoing process combining self-awareness and insight with self-reflection on one’s own values, preferences, biases, and worldviews; (2) **self-governance** is the act of managing one’s reactions to difference in such a way that enables behavioural choices and responses that are constructive rather than destructive; (3) **intercultural literacy** focuses on investigating and understanding
the norms, beliefs, behaviours, and values of others; and (4) social architecting involves consciously structuring our interactions and environments as intercultural communicators and interpreters to create mutually beneficial and productive relationships (ibid.).

EID is useful to develop effectiveness and leverage creativity for diverse teams who may experience differences as impediments or barriers:

EID provides an approach to creating and reinforcing healthy norms, which empowers teams to perform closer to their potential. Applying EID at the team level requires developing skills, competencies, and norms for creating teams that embrace differences in style, priorities, viewpoints, motivations, and talent.

At the organisational level, balancing shared organisational values with respect for individual uniqueness is at the centre of an emotionally intelligent workplace.

Earley and Ang (2003) first described cultural intelligence (CQ) in their book *Cultural Intelligence: An Analysis of Individual Interactions across Cultures* as the capacities of a person to adapt to new cultural settings through cognitive, motivational, and physical means. CQ can be developed to improve cultural perceptions, gain knowledge and appreciation of differences, and guide culturally appropriate behaviour, which increases success in business practices in the global context (Earley and Mosakowski 2000). The Cultural Intelligence Scale is used to measure an individual’s cultural quotient or cultural intelligence, with a higher score indicating greater capacities for intercultural competence. The three fundamental elements of CQ are: metacognition and cognition (thinking, learning, strategising); motivation (efficacy, confidence, value congruence and affect for the other culture); and behaviour (social mimicry, behavioural repertoire) (Earley and Peterson 2004: 105).

Proponents of CQ argue that it is a particularly useful tool for assessing and training global managers who frequently and rapidly move through diverse cultural contexts. Intercultural training designed with attention to particular managers’ unique strengths and weaknesses increases the effectiveness of training interventions. In addition to developing global managers, CQ competencies are presented as critical for diverse work teams:

Culturally diverse groups have the potential for both higher achievement and greater failure than single-culture groups. The trick they must perform is to maximize the positive effects of cultural diversity while minimizing its negative effects. This goal is achievable by high-CQ leaders who also use group-process knowledge, practice mindfulness in group interactions, adapt behaviour to accommodate the unique circumstances of the group, and encourage and train members to become culturally intelligent.

*Thomas and Inkson 2017: 135*

**Engaging global citizenship and social justice**

As economic and political landscapes are restructured through globalisation and anti-globalisation trends, educational institutions around the world are increasingly focusing on and allocating resources for global education and internationalisation as well as the development of multicultural, global, and cosmopolitan citizenship. To address the complex and shifting dynamics of inclusion and exclusion in global, national, and local communities, these programmes, to varying degrees, are grounded in civic engagement, democratic participation, equality, and social justice. Regional, national, and institutional educational policies and curricula as well as teacher training,
foreign language, and study abroad programmes have been impacted (Banks 2004; Guilherme 2002; Mitchell and Soria 2018).

While discussion and critique of these broad educational initiatives is beyond the scope of this chapter, it is important to note the emergence, in the context of globalisation, of an ‘activist turn’ in the field of intercultural communication that links scholarly efforts with ‘action that attempts to make a positive difference in situations where people’s lives are affected by oppression, domination, discrimination, racism, conflict, and other forms of cultural struggle due to differences in race, ethnicity, class, religion, sexual orientation, and other identity markers’ (Broome et al. 2005: 146). Drawing on existing research and practices, the field of intercultural communication is particularly well positioned to contribute to knowledge, attitudes, practices, and strategies to engage multiple and diverse voices, build alliances and solidarity across various and shifting positionalities, and contribute to a world where equity and justice are the norm not the exception (Allen et al. 2002; Broome et al. 2005; Collier et al. 2001).

In the global context, as intercultural scholars, teachers, trainers, and practitioners draw more frequently on critical theoretical and pedagogical approaches, teaching and training goals are augmented to include informed action for social change. A central goal in critical approaches to intercultural communication includes challenging systems of domination, critiquing hierarchies of power, and confronting discrimination to create a more equitable world (Nakayama and Halualani 2010). According to Giroux (2004: 63–64):

As a critical practice, pedagogy’s role lies not only in changing how people think about themselves and their relationship to others and the world, but in energizing students and others to engage in those struggles that further possibilities for living in a more just society.

Study abroad and re-entry training programmes illustrate the increasing importance of civic engagement and social change in intercultural training. Levin (2009: 9) argues that while the USA lags behind European and Asian study abroad programmes in leveraging international education for workforce preparedness and economic competitiveness, ‘it stands in front in using the study abroad experience to instil in students a sense of civic responsibility and action.’ More frequently today, study abroad programmes require students to work in community service organisations and research projects addressing critical social and environmental issues. Gradually, more and more students returning to the USA from study abroad programmes are encouraged to engage their heightened social consciousness by networking with organisations and activists, educating people in their local communities about their experiences, and linking their experiences in host countries with social and political issues at home.

Noting that study abroad programmes cultivating civic engagement and social justice are still the minority, Levin (2009: 9–11) offers several recommendations for higher education administrators and study abroad practitioners, which include: promoting study abroad as a means to prepare students to meet the challenges of globalisation; integrating global–citizenship oriented study abroad programmes into the university curriculum such that students gain an understanding of global systems and knowledge of the culture, history, geography, and politics of host countries; structuring study abroad programmes to achieve global learning goals and encourage international teamwork and promote civil participation; and broadening the inclusiveness so that study abroad programmes are available to all students, not only those who are more economically advantaged.

Following earlier landmark research projects on cross-cultural effectiveness (Kealey 1989) and intercultural competence (Fantini 2006), Beyond Immediate Impact: Study Abroad for Global Engagement (SAGE), examines the ways in which intercultural experiences, in the form of study
abroad during college years, influence participants’ long-term globally oriented behaviours, referred to as global engagement in the study:

Global engagement, as conceptualized by the SAGE project, is expressed by civic commitments in domestic and international arenas; knowledge production of print, artistic, online, and digital media; philanthropy in terms of volunteer time and monetary donations; social entrepreneurship, meaning involvement in organizations whose purpose and/or profits are to benefit the community, and the practice of voluntary simplicity in one’s lifestyle.

Paige et al. 2009: 29

The study, surveying 6,000 study abroad participants, found that study abroad programmes are one of the most important and impactful experiences undergraduate students can have. SAGE clearly documents the multiple ways returnees are engaged globally and provides empirical evidence for the positive impact of study abroad on global engagement (Paige et al. 2009). A University of Wisconsin study supports SAGE claims stating ‘study abroad at the undergraduate level has a salutary and long-term social impact, by demonstrating that alumni who studies abroad had higher levels of some types of global engagement than alumni who did not study abroad as undergraduates’ (Murphy et al. 2014: 14).

Recommendations for practice

In the previous section, I explicated four trends in intercultural communication and training in the global context including redefining the notion of ‘culture’, emphasising broader historical and geopolitical contexts, focusing on teams, technology and ‘intelligences’, and turning towards social justice and global engagement in intercultural training today. Some of the ways in which these trends are translated into practice and manifest in intercultural training design were already mentioned. Yet, several broad recommendations are useful in developing effective intercultural training in the global context.

First, the methods used to address cognitive, behavioural, and affective aspects of intercultural learning such as critical incidents, case studies, role play, and simulations – to name a few of the most common – need to be adapted and modified to address the complex, contradictory, and often contested nature of intercultural communication today. For example, methods for intercultural training commonly used to engage cognitive learning – critical incidents and case studies – need to reflect the complicated and multifaceted nature of cultural identities and intercultural interactions today; otherwise, intercultural trainers risk reinforcing stereotypes, creating hierarchies of difference, and participating in the construction of the ‘Other.’

Additionally, facilitation of intercultural training in the global context requires sufficient knowledge and skills to unpack multifaceted, layered, and potentially contentious issues that emerge when questions of power and privilege, as well as broader historical and current economic and geopolitical concerns, are addressed. In other words, intercultural trainers need training and practice to learn how to effectively facilitate difficult dialogues, to address contrasting standpoints and positionalities, and to foster participants’ interest and commitment to social justice and global engagement. Re-affirming a foundational premise of the field, intercultural trainers must embrace and foster a ‘learning how to learn’ approach to adequately address the rapidly changing conditions, tremendous challenges, and creative potential of intercultural communication in the global context.
Finally, to translate theory into practice, I recommend engaging in and training for intercultural praxis, a process of critical, reflective inquiry and engaged analysis that leads to informed action for social justice (Sorrells and Nakagawa 2008; Sorrells 2010; 2016). Intercultural praxis operates as engaged communicative action informed by an understanding of the positionalities and standpoint of the communicators and is exercised within and is responsive to particular, concrete temporal and spatial contexts that produce historical and sociopolitical, as well as local and global conditions.

Through six inter-related points of entry – inquiry, framing, positioning, dialogue, reflection, and action – intercultural praxis utilises our multifaceted identity positions and shifting access to privilege and power to develop allies, build solidarity, imagine alternatives, and intervene in struggles for global engagement, social responsibility, and justice. From these points of entry, intercultural praxis may manifest in a range of forms such as simple or complex intercultural communication competencies, oppositional tactics, and creative, improvisational, and transformational interventions. All moments in our day – when we make choices about what we consume, when we are confronted with sexist, racist, homophobic, classist, and other discriminatory language, structures and inequitable conditions, and when we develop relationships and build alliances with friends, co-workers, bosses, and strangers – provide opportunities to engage in intercultural praxis.

The intercultural praxis model (Sorrells 2016) offers trainers, educators, and learners a conceptual framework along with skills and strategies to address the complexities of intercultural communication in the global context (see Figure 23.1). Intercultural praxis focuses attention on issues of power, privilege, and positionality and utilises a systemic approach that requires practitioners to think, reflect, and act critically and multidimensionally. Engaging in intercultural praxis calls for multifocal vision that emphasises the links between the local and global as well the connections between historical and contemporary conditions. Lastly, intercultural praxis offers a blueprint for envisioning intercultural training as a site for global engagement and social justice.

Future directions

The trends outlined in the earlier section indicate some future directions for intercultural training as practitioners – trainers and educators – grapple with the challenges and opportunities of the global context. Clearly, the multiple uses and perhaps, misuses of technologies in our late-capitalist global world will continue to amaze, confound, and demand innovation from intercultural trainers and practitioners. Addressing the challenges of virtual communication and virtual team building and management, as well as ways to maximise the potential for training opportunities through technology, will, based on current trajectories, increasingly require attention. Additionally, as organisations in business, education, non-profit, and governmental contexts recognise the importance of intercultural communication in the global context and wrestle with challenging budget constraints, intercultural training will likely find itself more integrated into other types of training such as resource management, public and community relations, leadership, and organisational development. While this trend towards ‘mainstreaming’ intercultural training indicates an acknowledgement and acceptance of intercultural issues as central in a variety of arenas, it could also result in diluted and canned versions of intercultural training as well as facilitators whose main knowledge area is not intercultural communication.

Additionally, the use of various instruments to quantify intercultural competence and intelligence will likely continue and gain even greater importance in the future. This future direction can contribute in significant ways to our understanding of intercultural effectiveness and in turn, inform intercultural training programmes. One danger that can be foreseen is that
Figure 23.1  The intercultural praxis model  
instruments that claim to measure innate tendencies for intercultural competence will be used in predictive and restrictive ways rather than as means to point to areas that need development. Specifically, tools that claim to offer employers the ability to predict employees’ innate capacities to function effectively in intercultural settings can easily be used to exclude employees from international assignments rather than as tools to identify areas for enhancement and training. In contexts where economic interests are the main criteria for decision making, assessment tools will likely serve as exclusionary gate-keeping mechanisms rather than as a means to identify areas for growth.

Propelled by powerful forces into a fast-paced, technologically driven and yet devastatingly inequitable twenty-first century, the future direction of intercultural training exemplifies to a large extent the competing interests that frame our global context. The goals, role, and direction of intercultural training and global citizenship education occupy a precarious space between serving the interests of bottom-line marketability in business and education and serving the interests of social and economic justice. While the challenges we face are never clearly delineated or dichotomous, an important question for the future remains: Who benefits from the work of scholars and practitioners of intercultural training?

**Related topics**

Citizenship; cultural history; culture; education abroad; essentialism; experiential learning; identity; intercultural praxis; power; race; stereotyping.

**Further reading**


**References**


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