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Developing Intercultural Competence in Higher Educational Contexts

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INTRODUCTION

The role of cultural values in shaping the way we communicate and perceive the world around us is well established in intercultural communication, cross-cultural psychology, and anthropology, to name a few. Drawing on Simmel's (1950) concept of a "stranger" as someone who is geographically near but culturally distant or different, Gudykunst (2005) proposes that high degrees of unfamiliarity characterize persons whom one perceives as strangers. As communities become culturally diverse with people from different ethnic and national backgrounds, the number of "strangers" with whom one interacts also increases, with everyday interactions requiring a level of intercultural expertise that is not as pressing in (culturally) homogenous environments. Doctors may be faced with communicating with patients who never speak up because their cultural values dictate that they should not question or interrupt a person in authority. Teachers may feel disrespected when a student calls them by their first name, not understanding that the student's informality is not indicative of insubordination. Businesspeople may get frustrated when their client insists on several conversations over meals or coffee when no business is discussed whatsoever, despite a pressing deadline. In every facet of a culturally diverse society, a measure of cultural understanding is required for effective communication. Although people often learn life-skills through trial and error out of necessity, educating students in how to communicate across cultural differences is an essential systemic consideration. This fact is increasingly acknowledged in higher education institutions across the world, as evident in initiatives to integrate intercultural training as part of the curriculum in a variety of disciplines (Deardorff & Arasaratnam-Smith, 2017). However, a wholistic approach is

needed in preparing students for living and working in increasingly diverse communities.

This chapter draws on literature in intercultural communication competence (ICC) to identify variables that define ICC and contribute to developing ICC in higher educational contexts. A model for developing global graduates (Arasaratnam-Smith, 2020) is presented and discussed with intent to inform curriculum development in higher education in the future. The main goals of this chapter are to highlight the importance of intentionality in integrating intercultural competence development in higher education and to provide suggestions for achieving this goal for current and future intercultural education.

CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING OF SELF AND OTHERS

Kramsch (1998) describes the co-constructed nature of culture as, "membership in a discourse community that shares a common social space and history, and common imaginings" (p. 10). This characterization of culture highlights the potential communication challenges that could arise when people who do not share common history or imaginings due to having been "formed" in different social spaces interact with one another in everyday life. Culture serves as a point of reference with which we understand the world around us. An earlier example to illustrate this view is that it is culture that distinguishes between a cow as deity or dinner. It is culture that dictates whether a loud burp at the dinner table is uncouth or a compliment to the chef. The role of culture as a frame of reference for understanding social categories is illustrated poignantly in Foucault's (1970) preface to his classic work, *The Order of Things*:

> This passage quotes a 'certain Chinese encyclopedia' in which... 'animals are divided into: (a) belonging to the Emperor, (b) embalmed, (c) tame, ...(m) having just broken the water pitcher, (n) that from a long way off look like flies.' In the wonderment of this taxonomy, ... the thing that...is demonstrated as the exotic charm of another system of thought, is the limitation of our own, the stark impossibility of thinking *that*. (p. xvi)

Categories that make perfect sense within the frame of reference of a cultural context are at best charming, and at worst absurd, in the absence of that contextual understanding. The pervasive nature of culture is such that its influence can be least visible to those who are immersed in it.

The recognition of the need for cultural understanding is not new. Singelis and Brown (1995) observe, "culture shapes attitudes, values, and concepts of self. These individual differences, in turn, unquestionably affect behavior" (p. 356). Disciplinary experts have long-standing traditions of training students to be aware of cultural differences in their contexts of practice. For example, earlier work by Roysircar (2004) identifies the importance for therapists to be culturally self-aware, so they do not carry their own cultural biases into conversations with clients. Haas and van Dellen (2020) observe cultural variations in how changes to self-concept are perceived over the years. In other words, while culture influences understanding of self, it also influences how changes to that understanding are perceived. Culture, like history, is cumulative in nature to the extent that one is part of events, traditions, and memories without necessarily being a participant of all these. As such, the immersive nature of enculturation, the gradual internationalization of norms, behaviors and values of the communities in which one lives, often hinders one from cognizance of oneself as a cultural being. The cultural lenses with which we see the world are often least visible to ourselves because, these lenses or filters with which we are most familiar define the parameters of "normality" for us. Developing ICC therefore not only involves developing knowledge, skills, and attitudes that contribute to effective and appropriate communication between "strangers," but also developing an understanding of oneself as a product and propagator of one's culture.

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE

Intercultural communication competence (ICC) has been a topic of interest to scholars for several decades. For instance, one of the earliest measures of ICC was developed by Ruben and Kealey (1979) in response to the need to effectively assess efficacy of participants in government sponsored overseas programs. Over the years, ICC has been conceptualized in several models (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009) and several attempts have been made to measure ICC and variables that contribute to ICC. Although a number of variations exist in how ICC is defined, researchers generally agree that ICC is effective and appropriate communication across cultural differences, effective in that the goal of the communication is achieved, and appropriate in that the communicator behaved in a manner that is acceptable within the cultural context. As noted by Spitzberg and Chagnon, several studies have identified variables that contribute to such effective and appropriate communication.

One of the widely used conceptualization variables that contribute to ICC is captured in the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ) which identifies cultural empathy, open mindedness, emotional stability, social initiative, and flexibility as variables that encompass a personality that can successfully adapt to other cultural settings (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000). The MPQ is a widely used instrument that has been tested in different cultural and situational contexts (e.g., Hofhuis et al., 2020). Variations of these variables are represented in models of ICC by other scholars. In other words, research on variables that contribute to ICC, by various researchers, identify similar variables to those identified in the MPQ. As such, the MPQ is used as a guiding framework to discuss the variables that contribute to ICC in the following section.

Cultural Empathy

The ability to engage effectively in cognitive and emotional role-taking behavior to understand others better is an ability that has been associated with ICC in a number of studies (e.g., Khukhlaev et al., 2020). Understanding others through empathetic behavior is proven to have several relational benefits (Calloway-Thomas, 2010). Even when a person lacks intercultural experience, the ability to empathize with someone from a different culture still contributes to ICC, as demonstrated in an early work by Arasaratnam (2014) where a direct relationship between empathy and ICC was identified even in the absence of experience. Understanding or empathizing with others is not necessarily agreeing with their point of view but rather recognizing their perspective and adding that knowledge to shaping how one relates to the other person. Understanding of others usually involves communicating with others at interpersonal and intercultural levels (Gudykunst, 2005), depending on the extent to which one shares common cultural ground with the other person. Hence, understanding communication principles in general as well as relational dynamics such as working one's way through differences of opinion constructively (Cai, 2015) and listening actively (Rost & Wilson, 2013) are relevant to developing understanding of others.

Open Mindedness

Open mindedness refers to an unprejudiced attitude toward people from other cultures (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000). Relatedly, the Integrated Model of Intercultural Communication Competence (Arasaratnam, 2006) identifies positive attitude toward people of other cultures as a variable that contributes to ICC. Deardorff's (2006) pyramid model of ICC identifies openness and withholding judgment as a foundation to the outcome of effective and appropriate intercultural communication. Like empathy, open mindedness facilitates understanding of others in that it enables one to withhold judgment based on perceived differences before getting to know someone relationally.

Emotional Stability

One early reference to emotional stability and ICC is by Hammer and colleagues (1978)

who identify the ability to cope with psychological stress as an important ability to what they refer to as "intercultural effectiveness." Gudykunst (2005) makes a similar reference to a process of anxiety/uncertainty management as crucial to coping with the inherent uncertainty involved in engaging with the unknown in intercultural communication. Relatedly, although conceptually different from emotional stability, Gudykunst and others (e.g., Tkachenko & Khukhlaev, 2022) also highlight the importance of mindfulness as a key variable in ICC. Mindfulness refers to a state of awareness and intentionality when communicating, making deliberate choices in response to the communication situation. The importance of mindfulness in ICC has been empirically established (e.g., Nadeem & Koschmann, 2021).

Social Initiative

Social initiative implies an active approach to intercultural engagement. Relatedly, motivation to engage in interaction with other people is identified as a contributor to ICC, in other research (e.g., Ibragimjanovna, 2022). The greater the motivation to seek intercultural contact, the more experience in intercultural communication, and arguably the more opportunity to develop ICC. Arasaratnam and Banerjee (2011) demonstrate the relationship between sensation seeking and ICC. Sensation seeking, a biological imperative to actively seek novel experiences (Duell & Steinberg, 2019), also predicts social initiative in intercultural friendship-seeking behavior (Morgan & Arasaratnam, 2003). Further, Arasaratnam-Smith (2016) demonstrates a direct positive correlation between sensation seeking and ICC. Intercultural friendships or exposure to intercultural interactions increase one's experience in intercultural communication, which in turn has been demonstrated as a contributor to ICC.

Flexibility

Flexibility refers to the ability to change strategy or adapt to situations when the situation is not what one expects, as often is the case in intercultural interactions. For example, someone who is used to teaching in one cultural context might have certain expectations of what is available in a "normal" classroom. Arriving at a classroom in another country, the person might find that a "normal" classroom consists of a few benches and a blackboard. Not only would the person need to adapt quickly to whatever teaching strategies on which they relied using technological tools or availability of other materials, but also change their attitude and expectations of normality in that cultural context. Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven (2000) note that flexibility also encompasses the ability to learn from past experiences. Going back to the example of the teacher, the person's experience of teaching in a classroom that has minimal resources should expand their frame of reference of what a "classroom" is. This includes classrooms that have computers and ergonomic chairs as well as classrooms that have blackboards and benches. Experience is a variable that is identified in a number of models of ICC (see Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). However, flexibility highlights the fact that having experience alone is not sufficient, but the ability to reflect on experiences and learn from experience is what is required for ICC, as is evident in several studies in experiential learning abroad (e.g., Chwialkowska, 2020).

The variables that contribute to ICC cumulatively point to the types of knowledge, attitudes, and skills that are necessary for effective and appropriate communication across cultural differences. Arasaratnam-Smith (2020) conceptualizes these variables in terms of four types of understandings that need to be developed in students in higher education in order to prepare them for living and working in diverse communities. These understandings, namely, understanding of self, understanding of others, understanding of self's responsibility toward others, and understanding of others' contribution to self, are represented in a model for Developing Global Graduates.

In Figure 14.1, understanding of self as a cultural being is an essential vantage point from which to build the rest of the

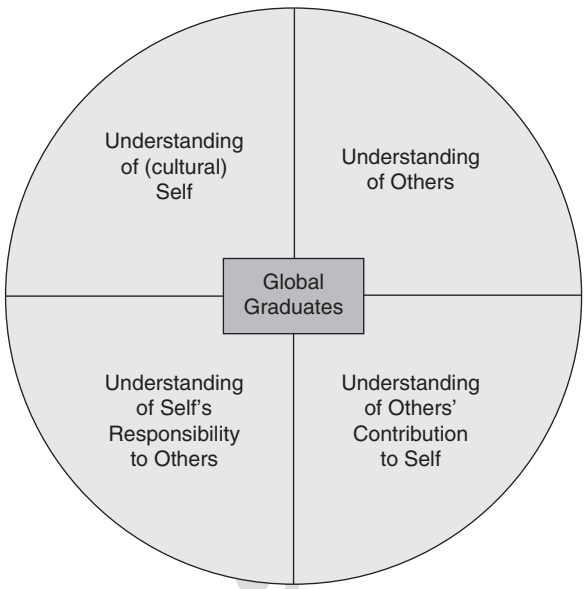

Figure 14.1 "Global Graduates"
Source: Adapted from Arasaratnam-Smith (2020).

understandings identified in the model. One of the ways in which self is understood is understanding of self as reflected in others' behavior toward oneself, or the "looking-glass self" as described by Cooley (1902). The looking-glass self-conceptualizes our understanding of self as our perception of the way others evaluate us and our responses to this perception. We imagine how we appear to others; we imagine how others may evaluate us based on their perception of us; and we respond (emotionally) to that imagined evaluation or judgment. Relatedly, Mead (1934) proposes that, "the individual experiences himself as (an object), not directly, but only indirectly from the particular standpoints of other members of the same social group" (pp. 138–140). Such an understanding of self is demonstrably relevant even in cyber interactions (Robinson, 2007). This understanding of self as dependent on the perception of people from the "same social group" has significant implications for understanding self as a cultural being. This is similar to Goffman's (1959) view of presentation of self as a social performance, in which one is required to understand the social script in order to participate successfully in the performance. As evident in these various framings of self, understanding of self is very much situated in sociocultural context. As such understanding of self involves not only understanding the (cultural) values, traditions, and assumptions that shape our thinking, but also a process of ongoing reflective learning from new experiences. Understanding of self involves critical self-reflection. For example, there is evidence to suggest that successful study abroad or other such experiential learning programs involve integrating self-reflection as part of the learning and assessment processes (Jackson, 2017).

As evident from the aforementioned framings of self, understanding of others is interrelated to understanding of self. For instance, looking-glass self is reliant on one's imagination of how one is perceived by others. In order for a person to imagine how others might perceive the person, this individual must implicitly participate in a role-taking exercise wherein the person sees themselves from the other's point of view.

This exercise may be reasonably reliable when all persons involved share cultural history and values. In an intercultural interaction, however, imaging how one is perceived by others is a more complex exercise. Theoretical frameworks such as Hofstede's (2001) cultural dimensions and Schwartz's (2004) cultural framework provide helpful points of reference with which to understand others' (cultural) behavior. For instance, Hofstede's framing of individualistic and collectivistic cultural dimension highlights how decision-making from an individualistic mindset considers personal agency, personal fulfillment, personal rights, and so forth while a collectivistic cultural orientation considers objectives such as maintaining peace and one's responsibilities toward the collective, when making decisions or choices. Similarly, Schwartz's concept of hierarchy versus egalitarianism provides insight into how culture influences not only behavior, but also how another person might see us based on the social hierarchical position we hold from that person's perspective. Understanding of others through empathetic behavior is an essential part of developing ICC, as previously discussed.

Moving on to the next quadrant of the model in Figure 14.1, understanding of self and understanding of others should engender understanding of self's responsibility toward others. In other words, there is an interconnectedness to human existence in communities. Regardless of individual agency or freedom to make individual choices, those choices inevitably have implications for others whose lives are intertwined with ours. The impetus for self's responsibility to others is not new. For example, in business, there is the concept of mutuality between employer and employee wherein there is overlap of alignment of interests (Boxall, 2013). Interconnectedness or mutuality is demonstrably beneficial in crisis situations (e.g. Kayser & Acquati, 2019). Understanding of self's responsibility to others involves not only recognizing the interconnected nature of our human existence, but also the willingness to consider personal responsibilities that accompany personal rights. Although it must be noted that societal and political inequities result in unequal distribution of rights among people, this particular label of "understanding of self's responsibility to others" refers more to a personal posture than response to social hierarchies. In other words, self's responsibility to others involves both knowledge of personal (and others') rights as well as willingness to yield one's rights in deference to or for the benefit of someone else, based on the recognition that being an interconnected human involves contributing to others' well-being as well as looking after one's own. Concepts such as global citizenship (Cabrera, 2010), mutuality and reciprocity (Alasuutari, 2011), and even altruism (Kerr et al., 2004) are relevant, as are qualities such as self-awareness (in relation to impact of self's actions on others), and motivation to forgo exercising one's personal rights for the sake of another's well-being or comfort.

Relatedly, understanding of others' contribution of self is a recognition of oneself as situated at a point in history where the cumulative work and decisions of others have contributed to the social realities in which one exists. The nature of scholarly work is an excellent illustration of this. Not only are scholars expected to familiarize themselves with previous works in a particular topic before making new contributions, but also, from time to time, scholars do a piece of review work that captures decades of research on a topic in order to facilitate future research (e.g., Shadiev & Sintawati, 2020). Review of literature is an explicit exercise in understanding others' contribution to self's understanding of a topic. Understanding of others' contribution to self arguably fosters humility to the extent that one is aware of one's place and one's contribution in the grand scheme of the vast collection of contributions made by others. Additionally, in order for one to build on an idea or make progress in thinking through a problem or process, it is essential that one understands what others have contributed to that thinking in the past, to avoid "reinventing the wheel," as it were. The study of world and national history is also part of understanding of others' contribution to self. For example, actions, decisions, and even sacrifices made by people who came

before us have contributed to current realities, whether those realities include freedom, oppression, or a combination thereof. Understanding of others' contribution to self facilitates one to respond to one's current reality in an informed manner. In terms of curriculum considerations for higher education, subjects such as anthropology, history, philosophy, and literature facilitate understanding of the vast contributions of others to the human collective. Assessments that not only involve a review of literature but also the explicit directive to identify how others' works have contributed to self's current understanding of a topic or have shaped self's thinking about future directions are helpful in fostering understanding of others' contribution to self. For example, a reflection exercise on identifying the key scholars who have shaped one's thinking on a particular topic and the questions one would ask those scholars if given the opportunity.

Understandings as Learning Outcomes

The model of Global Graduates presented in Figure 14.1, although relatively new at the time of writing of this chapter, has been used to inform several studies (e.g., Beneitone & Yarosh, 2022). While the four understandings identified in the model of Global Graduates may be compelling in principle, the pragmatic reality of most educational programs is such that there is a limit to what could be covered in curricula that are confined by time and resourcing constraints. However, the intent behind the Global Graduates model is not to suggest that all the aforementioned knowledge components should be part of a single curriculum. Instead, the model highlights the types of understandings that educators should strive to develop in students in any higher education curriculum in order to prepare them for the global marketplace. In other words, what is being suggested is not a separate curriculum for learning intercultural competencies such as short course in intercultural competence as a supplement to a degree in economics, but rather an integration of intercultural learning within any disciplinary curriculum. The desired outcome of such an approach being graduating an economist who has integrated her knowledge of economics with her understanding of how to communicate effectively and appropriately across cultural differences.

The four types of understandings identified in Figure 14.1 could be conceived as parameters for learning outcomes in a broad curriculum. A learning outcome states what a student should know and be able to do at the completion of a subject or course. Learning outcomes specify what is important for a student to know, and by omission, what is not (Supena et al., 2021). A statement like "understanding of self," however, is likely to be challenged as too imprecise to be a learning outcome, especially in educational environments where learning outcomes are not only precise, but also prescribed, to the point of requiring certain vocabulary to make them trackable and measurable. Such precision is unhelpful, particularly if learning outcomes are used as tools of performance monitoring rather than objectives to be achieved by a particular curriculum. The four understandings identified in the model of Global Graduates, while not precise, potentially allow for just the brand of flexibility required to prepare students in any discipline to be ready to function in culturally diverse workplaces. Because of their imprecision, they are adaptable to different disciplinary preparations. In other words, the model presents the possibility of developing the four understandings in medical students, business students, engineers, teachers, and lawyers, by structuring their disciplinary learning in a manner that ensures that the students develop the four understandings throughout their course of study.

INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE AND INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

As previously noted, the model of Global Graduates is relatively new at the time of writing of this chapter. As such, its veracity

is yet to be widely tested. However, there are conceptual overlaps between what the model identifies and what is well established in literature in intercultural competence and intercultural education. To not engage with the findings in these bodies of research in the present discussion would be remiss. Understanding the cultural self and others essentially also involves developing intercultural competence, as the development of the four types of understandings identified in the model involve developing knowledge and skills that also contribute to intercultural competence.

Developing ICC is a process rather than a destination, with incremental learning occurring through acquiring new experiences, new knowledge, and ongoing self-reflection of such learning (Tecedor & Vasseur, 2020). As previously noted, there is also some evidence to suggest that high sensation seekers are prone to seek out novel experiences such as interacting with people from other cultures or study abroad, thereby positioning themselves to develop ICC through such activities (Nadeem et al., 2017). Research also notes that certain attitudes hinder ICC. For example, ethnocentrism, which is the view that one's own culture is central to or superior to others' cultures (Neuliep & Speten-Hansen, 2013) is known to hinder ICC, as demonstrated by Arasaratnam and Banerjee (2007). Communication apprehension, or the fear or anxiety associated with real or anticipated communication with another person, is also known to hinder ICC (Neuliep, 2012). To recap briefly, among others, ethnocentrism and communication apprehension hinder ICC, while empathy, experience, motivation, listening, positive attitude toward other cultures, mindfulness, respect, curiosity, openness, and cultural self-awareness facilitates ICC.

The overlap in variables between developing ICC and developing global graduates is evident in these examples. Developing ICC in students goes a long way toward developing global graduates, especially in understanding self, others, and self's responsibility to others. Developing understanding of others' contribution to self requires some additional intentionality (such as knowledge of history) beyond developing ICC. However, skills such as self-reflection and listening also arguably foster understanding of others' contribution to self.

Deardorff and Arasaratnam-Smith (2017) note that instructional strategies for developing ICC should be intentional, contextual, learner-focused, applied, focused on attitude/attribute development, focused on the "why" and the "how" (not just the "what"), incorporate diversity of perspectives, include a variety of assessments, customized for purpose (e.g., Azevedo & Shane, 2019) and include training for educators (Martorana et al., 2021). In other words, instructional strategies for developing ICC should not be generic "one-size-fit-all" plans that can be adapted for multiple purposes in multiple contexts. Customization of strategies for context and purpose would involve equipping educators with the knowledge and skills necessary for such customization, as also noted by Deardorff and Arasaratnam-Smith. To condense the points noted by the authors, instructional strategies should be intentional, bespoke, and should involve training for educators – all of which imply an institutional-level commitment and investment. The challenge with institutional buy-in could lie in the conceptual separation of disciplinary preparation and preparation of students to practice their disciplinary expertise in culturally diverse contexts, or the development of "soft skills," in other words, although there is increased awareness among employers for the need for such skills (Abelha et al., 2020)

As educators will be familiar, curricula in disciplinary preparation center on core knowledge and competencies that are deemed essential for a certain level of disciplinary expertise, and some peripheral or complementary knowledge and skills in the form of electives. As long as preparation for working in global contexts is considered peripheral ("nice to have" instead of "must have"), there is likely to be lack of institutional buy-in for centralizing such preparation. A key question

educators must ask, however, is, what percentage of students in higher education will graduate and work in entirely (culturally) homogenous contexts? Investment in preparing students for culturally diverse contexts should be inversely proportional to the answer to that question. And if indeed educators need to prepare students not only to be disciplinary experts but also conversant in communicating across cultural differences, then part of that preparation involves preparing educators (of all disciplines) to navigate cultural diversity in the classroom.

Based on insights drawn from personal narratives of international students, Arasaratnam-Smith and Deardorff (2023) propose that educators should FOSTER intercultural learning: Facilitate, Observe, Seek, Teach, Empower, and Reflect. "Facilitate" refers to intercultural competence development for students and educators; "Observe" classroom dynamics, being alert to how students are dealing with culturally different others; "Seek" understanding of students' experiences with cultural diversity; "Teach" students intercultural skills; "Empower" students to express themselves in safe learning environments; and "Reflect" on one's own experiences as an educator with the goal of improving upon past practice. If we want educators to FOSTER intercultural learning, then induction/training for new educators should include the knowledge and skills required for not only observing how students are engaging with diversity but also designing activities and assessment that help students to learn from experiences with diversity and self-reflection. Using visual media such as films, for example, is demonstrably effective in stimulating conversation and facilitating intercultural learning (Roell, 2010). There are various resources for educators who wish to engage students in thinking outside their cultural comfort zones (e.g., Bernardo & Deardorff, 2012).

Students, in turn, are encouraged to ENGAGE: Experience, Nurture, Grow, Adapt, Guard, and Empathize. Although Arasaratnam-Smith and Deardorff's acronym is presented to international students, it is relevant to students in general, particularly in the context of preparing students for culturally diverse workplaces. Students are encouraged to "Experience" new cultures (e.g., study abroad, engaging with local international students), "Nurture" intercultural friendships, "Grow" out of one's own comfort zone, "Adapt" to new environments, "Guard" against prejudice, and "Empathize" with other people's experiences and points of view. As previously noted, exposure to cultural diversity does not automatically translate into ICC without abilities such as self-reflection, empathy, and motivation to learn. Developing global graduates involves developing these abilities in higher educational contexts.

CONCLUSION

In an increasingly globalized, culturally diverse world, it is essential that educators in higher education contexts consider the imperative for preparing students for communicating across cultural differences. Preparation in disciplinary expertise alone is no longer sufficient if graduates do not know how to exercise that expertise across cultural differences. A doctor who cannot understand the health beliefs and beliefs of social power distance of a patient may be ineffective in achieving the outcome she wants without the ability to connect with her patient at an interpersonal level (Majda et al., 2021). A businessman may not be able to secure a client unless he understands that connecting relationally with the client and her extended family over a long dinner is even more crucial to sealing the deal than the income projections he has fastidiously prepared ahead of time (Sarala et al., 2019). There is already awareness of this need for educating students to function in a culturally diverse society (Achaeva et al., 2018). Drawing on a model for developing global graduates, this chapter has identified four types of understandings that need to be developed in students in higher education contexts and discussed some ways of developing these understandings

through curriculum and assessment. This chapter has also discussed the relevance of preparing students in ICC as part of their preparation to be ready for culturally diverse communities. Although there seems to be an "in principle" agreement among educational institutions across the world that intercultural competencies or preparation for diverse workplaces is essential for students, initiatives to develop global graduates are inconsistent at best and nonexistent at worst, arguably due to competing demands on limited resources.

Going forward, what is required is a paradigm shift on the part of educational leaders in which there is a realization that medical training, for example, is incomplete if it only consists of medical knowledge and skills (Pop, 2021); teacher training is incomplete without training to teach in culturally diverse classrooms (Sjøen, 2023) or indeed without some overseas teaching experience to expand one's global mindedness (Mahon & Cushner, 2002); and legal training is incomplete without training in intercultural communication to communicate with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds (Ricca, 2023). It is promising to see that many institutions across the world have already arrived at this conclusion and are incorporating ICC training into disciplinary training (e.g., Chernyak, 2017). However, such initiatives are not yet the norm. Systematic and systemic considerations of how today's students in higher educational institutions are prepared for global workplaces are imperative. Given trends toward online modes of learning at the time of writing of this chapter, exposing students to cultural diversity is more accessible and important than ever before (Shiri, 2023). Options such as virtual collaborative learning across cultures (O'Dowd & Dooly, 2020) and virtual intercultural assignments or collaborative projects (Beach et al., 2021) present cost-effective opportunities for institutions to provide students with intercultural exposure. The time is ripe for maximizing the opportunities available for drawing from learning insights across the world.

In a post-pandemic world that has had to adapt quickly to virtual work and study across distances, opportunities abound for further research in developing intercultural (communication) competence in higher education. Firstly, while there are studies on longitudinal benefits or effects of study abroad experiences (e.g., McManus et al., 2021), there is room for longitudinal studies of the effects of intercultural competence education through virtual exposure alone. In other words, the long-term learning effects of study abroad compared to virtual cultural experiences alone merits further investigation because there is a visceral element to being physically immersed in another culture that is absent in engaging in intercultural communication in the safety and familiarity of one's own library or classroom. Longitudinal research comparing the benefits/effects of virtual substitutes for immersive intercultural experiences would provide essential insight into whether we have traded one cost for another in opting for potentially affordable virtual options in lieu of immersive intercultural learning experiences. Secondly, another area for further exploration is the extent to which digital media platforms facilitate or debilitate the development of intercultural competence, because, as much as the availability of technology facilitates access to diverse peoples, the rules of engagement in digital platform are different (Ng, 2020) to face-to-face dynamics on which much of past research is based. For example, can there be genuine intercultural dialogue in the midst of cancel culture or public rejection of someone due to disagreement with their views (Norris, 2023)? Thirdly, while the use of visual media in intercultural education is not new (e.g., Oberhuemer, 1994), and the practice of visual media as intercultural instructional tools has continued (Méndez-García & Cores-Bilbao, 2023), there is room for further research in the extent to which visual media can be used effectively in intercultural education while avoiding cultural misrepresentation (Glotov, 2022). Finally, further research is essential in the fiscal benefits of developing global graduates compared to graduating students

with disciplinary expertise but without intercultural competency. A longitudinal approach is required for this type of research too, as the benefits of internalized deeper learning of intercultural principles may not be evident in initial interviews or initial performance where it is arguably possible to maintain behavior that is approbative for a short while. Findings from such research would be instrumental to institutional buy-in for any discussions on pervasive integration of intercultural competence in curricula.

The cultural composition of communities across the world has shifted dramatically in the past several decades. While core curricula may have kept up with advances in disciplinary knowledge, a proportional shift toward preparing students for diverse workplaces is yet to occur. The proliferation of technological solutions to geographical limitations during the COVID-19 pandemic presents educators with opportunities for integrating intercultural education into diverse disciplines as never before. However, there is a need for intentionality in such integration. This chapter has presented a case for such integration of intercultural education in higher education curricula and a model to frame such education around understanding of self, understanding of others, understanding of self's responsibility toward others, and understanding of others' contribution to self. It is my hope that the reflections in this chapter would stimulate a shift toward developing global graduates who are ready to work in diverse communities, regardless of their chosen discipline, utilizing some of the strategies suggested in this chapter.

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