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AN EXAMINATION OF THE CROSS-CULTURAL DIMENSIONS OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

In 2005, at the 5th South East Asian Association for Institutional Research Conference in Bali, Indonesia, I delivered one of the keynote addresses. In that speech, I discussed issues facing cooperative programs between institutions that have two disparate cultural heritages. Of course, even though we will talk about institutions, we are really talking about individuals, since individuals are the backbone of any institutions. Institutions reflect the culture and heritage of not only the higher echelon of the institution, but also everyone associated with the institution irrespective of their role. In many ways, the people performing the day-to-day tasks at any institution have a more profound effect on the culture of the institution than those in managerial positions.

In this paper, the primary focus will be on international higher education. More and more institutions in the West are looking for and actively recruiting students from the East. In the same way universities in the East are seeking partnerships of various kinds with Western universities. For the purpose of this paper the traditional definitions of East and West will be broadened. The East includes all countries in Asia, as well as the Middle East. The West includes the United States of America, Australia, and England, as they appear to be the major purveyors of programs in the East.

Inevitably in the interaction between the East and the West the cultural differences will raise issue that may become problematic. For international programs to be successful, it is important that both sides be prepared to examine the source of the problems. Issues that need to be examined include teaching methods, student-professor interactions, staff interactions as well as pedagogical beliefs. We will try to address these issues using real life experiences.

Our solutions should not be just focused on student behaviors, since professors play a pivotal role in creating effective classroom interaction and set the tone for classroom behavior. We will provide some suggestions for addressing this lack of cultural understanding and the concomitant problems. We do understand that there is no magic answer but we do know that the whole institutions and all its members should be involved in any programs. The solutions that are proposed go beyond institutions of higher education and have relevance for businesses as well.

Two disparate topics, towels and kimchi, may not seem to have relevance to an article on cultural understanding, but they illustrate the theme of this paper cultural understanding. Recently in Japan many traditionalist became quite upset with the importation of tea towels from China. Tea towels play an important role in the traditional tea ceremony. Although the towels from China cost less and may be identical in quality and artistic design, many Japanese feel these foreign towels have a negative impact on the "sanctity' and tradition of the ceremony.

In South Korea, there was a similar scenario involving kimchi - one of their national foods. China is the focal point of this controversy and again the variable is cost. Imported kimchi is cheaper than the home grown variety. Whereas we in the West would consider this beneficial since the quality of the food is the same, the Koreans see this importation as a threat to the traditions and culture of Korea. After all, kimchi is one of their national foods and, like the tea ceremony, is reflective of national pride and identity.

Many of us would look at these two issues and exclaim, "What's the big deal!" In the course of international events, these events may not to be a big deal; no bigger than a tax on tea by the British, which in actuality lowered the price of tea but resulted in the American Revolution. I am not saying that such an event will follow but rather that the two examples above illustrate the point that one needs to be aware of cultural issues when dealing internationally. One must not only be aware but one must also be sensitive to and accepting of behavior that in other circumstances and contexts would be

unacceptable. We cannot and should not express our misgivings or disagreements regarding behavior with which we disagree if we wish to be successful in international environments. For example smoking is still a common behavior in Asia, and we in the West are generally not bashful in expressing our thoughts on the subject. Expressing our displeasure when such behavior occurs in a business meeting may have unintended consequences - your hosts may feel that you are judging them.

This is not to say that we sanction abuse, indignities or other universally repugnant behaviors, but rather we must avoid imposing our practices and belief system on others.

An interesting facet of this interaction is that it is not a one-way street. We must also realize that some of our behaviors are as upsetting as theirs are to us. For example, I was being escorted by a young woman around a Korean university. We came to a door and I hastened to open it. She objected but I insisted. As we walked, I explained why I did what I did and she explained that she was losing face because of my behavior and that her boss would be angry at her. At the next door, I let her open it. No great issue in my mind, but an illustration of where compromise sometimes is better than insistence on transporting one's behavior to another country. In Thailand, I encountered a situation where I was informed that I should not address my staff before they addressed me in the morning, as I was in a higher position. In many Muslim countries, Westerners look at some of the customs of dress and behavior and are judgmental. Interestingly enough when Muslims remark on our customs of dress and behavior, we dismiss their behavior and criticisms as extremism or religious intolerance.

The old adage that all that glitters is not gold is very relevant when working in an international environment, especially in an Asian country. Often Westerners, especially Americans, pride themselves on being upfront and open in negotiations. We conduct our negotiations at the surface level and feel satisfied when we believe we have made progress. Later we find to our dismay that what we thought was clear and evident was really only one part of the story. Our counterparts were considering and operating at

several levels of which we were unaware. As we gain more experience, we begin to realize that almost all negotiations are multi-level, and if we are lucky we may be able to discern some of the hidden levels. We should never be foolish enough to assume that we will ever be able to grasp fully the nuances of the negotiations. Being aware of the existence of hidden levels and interplay at least gives us an opportunity to put negotiations into their proper perspective and not be surprised when outcomes are different from what we thought we had agreed to in the discussions. When we have greater experience in international arenas, we recognize that no matter how hard we try or study, we may never fully grasp the nuances and mores guiding discussions. This understanding comes only with being fully inculcated and more often being born into a particular culture.

Many times agreements may be finalized and we begin to plan for 50 students to transfer to our university in the first year. In actuality we may get 10 and wonder why so few. It is simple - our partners believed that discussing and focusing on 50 potential students made us more willing to agree and also showed the commitment and goodwill of our partners. We are happy and they feel good even though they knew they would not meet the goal. When we address the issue later, our partners are perplexed that we were not aware of the fact that the numbers were merely put forth to help the negotiations and were not really to be thought of as factual.

In an article in *The Economist*, 24 February 2005, the internationalization of higher education as a growing phenomenon across the world was highlighted, and this growth has not slowed in recent years. Of course, this presents many challenges and calls for rethinking about how we teach, how we approach our students, our beliefs in and approaches to pedagogy, as well as our relationships with students. In fact, teaching and working in an international environment presents a great opportunity to broaden one's knowledge and examine one's cultural beliefs. It is the contention of this writer that one will invariably change, if only by osmosis, when working in an international environment with people from different cultural background and beliefs. One cannot

help but reexamine all aspects of one's life when working with people who have different cultural values and beliefs especially during student-teacher interactions.

In a conversation with a student in Hong Kong, the following dialogue took place: "Dr. Lyon. I knew the answer to the question you asked in class last week." "Why didn't you answer?" Her explanation was that she was Chinese and did not want to stand out from the rest of the students in a public setting. This rather innocuous exchange illustrates differences in approaches to classroom behavior. As an American professor, I expect students to answer questions; as a Chinese woman she has been taught to not bring attention to herself. There is an obvious disconnect between what the professor expects of students and the student's cultural heritage. Obviously, I had to make an adjustment to my teaching approach to address and hopefully encourage students to feel comfortable in participating in the class.

A few days after this conversation, a colleague from Australia shared her frustrations that there was a disconnect between her style of teaching and students expectations of their professors. Teaching about pedagogical approaches with which they were not acquainted, assigning readings based on Western philosophy and practices, as well as encouraging classroom debates were not getting the results she expected from her students. She was also upset that she was unaware of these problems and that the students did not tell her and tried to overcome the hurdles on their own with varying degrees of success. Because of these factors, my colleague's initial perception was that her students were not interested or, even worse, not capable of doing the level of work that she expected of tertiary students. Only later did she come to realize that her perceptions were wrong and that she had to make accommodations in her approach to teaching while introducing and helping her students to adjust to her style.

These two examples serve to illustrate the problems of teaching in a cross-cultural setting. It is quite obvious that two different sets of values and beliefs were operating simultaneously without any clearly established mechanism to bridge the gap. This resulted in impressions being formed that were not consonant with reality. The student

knew the answer; the other students were working diligently. The misperceptions, however, could easily serve to reinforce already existing biases and stereotypic beliefs. Of course, one could attribute the differences to cultural heritage and feel as if a profound observation had been made. Is this good enough? Does it even begin to address the fact that bias and insensitivity can easily arise in classrooms when professors and students come from different cultural backgrounds? The answer is no.

Although the focus of this paper is on the problem of Westerners teaching in an Asian country (keeping in mind that Asian countries differ profoundly one from another as do Western countries), parallels can easily be made to any environment in which students and lecturers come from different cultural backgrounds and heritage. These same issues arise outside the sphere of education and operate as well in business settings, although in probably a less formalized and ritualized setting than that which exists in the hierarchical classroom setting. Although one must remember that there is a hierarchical component to business encounters and they are in some ways as ritualized as classroom settings.

In any discussion of cross-cultural teaching and learning, one must always recognize the centrality of the problems inherent in a classroom where the learner is being asked to assimilate a lecture delivered in a foreign language. Both the leaner and lecturer must recognize how many words are culturally loaded. The lecture cannot make any assumptions regarding the ability of the learner to be aware of idiomatic expressions and must use concrete culturally relevant examples. The learner must also resist translating every word literally and learn to ask when unsure regarding a concept. R. A. Gilbert in a study of learning styles in Mandarin/English classrooms indicates that, "the data clearly show that learning styles are often culture and language specific" [7, p. 203]. In discussing language teaching in Hong Kong, P. Glenwright states, "culture, of course, is not the only factor contributing to the difficulties. As indicated, linguistic and pedagogical competencies are not unimportant" [8, p. 11]. D. E. Ellis, in discussing Western style teaching in Vietnam, states that the role expectations of the Western

teacher as "…model of the language, representative and interpreter of this culture, learner facilitator, friend and counselor may not be able to be transferred across cultures" [6, p. 6]. Obviously such role conflicts and the inability of both the learner and lecturer to fulfill personal expectations are troublesome.

L. S. Vygotsky [19] posited that that the individual and the social context are mutually constructive of a single interacting system and cognitive development in a process of acquiring culture. Basically, communication is therefore the process by which a message is conveyed between a sender and receiver in a reciprocal manner that includes a deep cultural meaning. Applying his theory to a cross-cultural teaching setting – such a Vietnam or Hong Kong - raises many questions and also raises the need to get the answer right; thus, meaning is often not fully recognized by a non-native participant in the communication paradigm. The implications of this are evident. The student, as well as the lecturer in the classroom conducted in a foreign language may both be unsuccessful communicators because of their unfamiliarity with the cultural loadings in the communication process.

It may be that the nodding of the heads of students in Asian classrooms may not be an affirmation of understanding or agreement as in Western classrooms, but rather a message indicating confusion or politeness. Does a smile in an American classroom mean the same as in Asian classrooms? It is very difficult to answer the question as it may indicate joy, embarrassment, or simply be face saving. Unless the lecturer is aware of these cultural factors and signs, much misunderstanding can occur and communication can be seriously affected.

It is interesting to note that much of the focus in the literature has been on the student and the problems that the student has in learning in a foreign language. K. Owens [14] points out how little is really focused on teacher problems as opposed to learner or learning problems. It is axiomatic, therefore, that both teaching and learning in a cross-cultural classroom present many problems both of a pedagogical and cultural nature beyond mere understanding of the language of instruction. Unless such problems

are recognized, effective classroom interaction cannot take place. It is highly probable that under such conditions preconceived ideas and beliefs may be confirmed. If these beliefs are erroneous, bias would certainly occur and be reinforced and less than effective teaching and learning would take place.

Similar issues may arise in business negotiations. A. Trope [18] stated that, in cross-cultural negotiations, acknowledgment of cultural differences must be seen as a technique, not a sentiment. Before the negotiation of provisions of an agreement begins, there are unique opportunities to stipulate resolutions of conflicting understandings and discover elements of language that may become especially important as the negotiations proceed.

The problems presented by language differences are exacerbated when perceived learner characteristics, teaching style, and philosophy are considered. There is a great deal of literature that discussed the manner in which Asians learn. Please note that the following will deal with generalizations, and the author knows that such generalization may be misinterpreted. Generalizations usually weaken arguments, but in this particular discussion the usefulness of generalizations outweigh the negative aspects; the reader should bear this caution in mind. The image of Asian students in America and much of the Western world is that of an unimaginative, industrious, compliant rote-learner. How much of this is due to cultural heritage and tradition and how much is due to misconceptions regarding the form and style of learning is an unresolved issue. In fact, much of the characterization of the Asian learner may really be the product of Western belief and bias without full awareness of the cultural factors guiding the Asian approach to and conception of learning and pedagogy.

K. M. Cheng [4] discussed the concept of the culture of East Asia. He described East Asian communities "... as a family with cultural similarities when compared with the rest of the world. The family includes Japan, Hong Kong, South Korea, Taiwan, mainland China, and Singapore as its basic members with the potential of including Vietnam and North Korea. The cultural study of education in this family may be

pertinent to, for example, two other areas of study: education in South east Asian societies where ethnic Chinese have high visibility; or learning characteristics of students of east Asian origin in Western societies." [4, p. 89]. He made several assertions as a result of his research and experience regarding education in these communities:

(a)   Traditional East Asian societies, in one way or another, are viewed by its members as hierarchies in which each individual has a position;

(b)   Such hierarchies are, nevertheless, less dynamic, allowing for social mobility, for which education is the sole legitimate means;

(c)   In such societies, individuals are expected to adapt themselves as much as possible to the system, often by way of participation in competition; and

(d)   Education in these societies has evolved into machinery for training people's adaptability rather for knowledge and practical life-skills.

From these, K. M. Cheng further derives the following:

(a)   In these societies, to be hard-working is not only a result but also the aim of education, which necessarily plays down the role of genetic ability;

(b)   The relevant comfort with an irrelevant and uniform curriculum is a natural (although not necessary) consequence of the educational construct (i.e., for university entrance);

(c)   The "excellence" exhibited by East Asian students in international comparisons is a result of their preparedness to conform to uniform requirements and their belief in effort;

(d)   Compared with the West, the East Asian values of education are more compatible with the mass-production characteristics of contemporary education systems. In other words, if East Asian students "achieve", it is because they are more "friendly" to the examination ideologies [4, p. 94-95].

These assertions provide a rather sweeping overview of the purpose of education in East Asian communities.

D. A. Watkins and J. B. Biggs [21] provide interesting insights into the Chinese learner and raise many questions regarding some of the myths attributed to the manner, scope, and style of their learning. The works of H. W. Stevenson [16], D. A. Watkins [20], K. C. Wong and K. M. Cheng [22] and others clearly show that the picture of the Chinese learner is merely a stereotype based generally on lack of hard data, inappropriate analysis (e.g., using Western philosophy and culture as the base), and in many cases little significant contact or interaction with Asian students. It should be noted that many Westerners bring these stereotypes with them and often have them confirmed, at least in their own minds, when they discover that the Asian student does not readily embrace the material, curriculum, and methods of teaching employed in the classroom. The author must admit that this was his initial experience, and that it took a long time and much effort to counteract this tendency of blaming the learner rather than adjusting to the reality of the environment.

Do Asians approach learning and schooling differently from Westerners? There is little doubt that there are differences, and that the differences are significant and must be understood and addressed, if cross-cultural teaching is to be effective. W. O. Lee [12] presents the Confusion perspective on the perfectibility of humans, their educability, the role of effort and will power in learning while pointing out the social and personal roles of education. The Confucian tradition puts great emphasis on personal initiative, social responsibility, and respect for teachers. There is the underlying belief that everyone is educable, that effort is a much more important factor than natural ability, and that attaining success through education brings honor to the family and prepares one to assume a leadership role in society (e.g., W. O. Lee [12], B. Yang, W. Zheng, and M. Li [23], H. W. Stevenson [16], K. M. Cheng [4], and D. A. Watkins and J. B. Biggs [21]).

Students in Asian classrooms tend to be compliant, respect the teacher, and not question authority. This does not necessarily mean that they are unimaginative, closed-minded, or lacking in initiative. It may well be that the observations made by Western researchers using Western criteria may be inadequate in identifying classroom behaviors

and procedures that involve questioning, foster creativity, and encourage initiative. H.W. Stevenson [16] indicates that the Asian classroom is replete with approaches and techniques that encourage creativity and questioning but not necessarily in a form that would be readily apparent to a Western observer or researcher. S. Lau, A. Hui, and G. Ng [11] edited the book *Creativity: When East Meets West,* which details the misconceptions regarding creativity in Asian classrooms and attributed the same to the narrowness and stereotypical beliefs of Western researchers, particularly the Americans.

Many Westerners bring to the study of Asian classrooms a preconceived notion of what a good learning environment should be. J. B. Biggs [2] refers to an earlier work by J. B. Biggs and P. J. Moore [3] that identifies the characteristics of an environment that fosters good learning. He goes on to say that these factors may not be present in "Confucian-heritage" culture (CHC) classrooms. He posits, however, that the results indicate, "… that highly adaptive modes of learning emerge from CHC classrooms" [2, p. 50]. The basic point that Biggs makes is that deep learning does occur in these classrooms despite Western assertions that the classroom environment as they perceive it is not conducive to this development. It may well be that "…what some Western observers are seeing is not what they think it is" [2, p. 50].

Although the focus of this paper has been on the problem faced by the Asian learner within a Western teacher's classroom, it is interesting to note that in a publication on *The First International Conference on Cross-Cultural Education in the Circumpolar North* (see F. Darnell [5]) that many of the same cross-cultural concerns were echoed. It may be that the problems are generic and not specific to any cultural group. It is evident that there are problems and issues in teaching and learning in any environment where cultural, linguistic, and philosophical differences exist between teachers and learners. This is a logical conclusion that is reinforced by the literature cited above. The issue facing us now is what can be done to minimize the consequences of these difficulties.

We are all products of our cultural heritage and to a great degree cherish and respect that culture. It influences us both consciously and unconsciously in all aspects of our lives and it takes a concerted effort to overcome the effects of our culture. Whether it is even possible to completely overcome cultural influence is a question beyond the scope of this paper. It is quite common for many open-minded to overcome their cultural limitations and accept the behaviors of people from other cultures. Even here, one must be cautious. Sometimes this willingness to understand and accept differences has unforeseen and unintended consequences. It is possible to misjudge why students do fully understand or appreciate our teaching methods or our beliefs regarding teaching and learning. We may assume their poor performance or lack of enthusiasm is the result of cultural factors when in truth some students may not be as able as we assume. We then overlook or excuse their behavior. This is a form of reverse bias and must be avoided.

Another issue that needs to be addressed when looking at cross-cultural settings is interactions between faculty members. There are many occasions when cultural differences can cause division and misunderstanding among faculty. These same issues may arise between participants in business settings. Western faculty, for example, may not understand the reticence of Asian colleagues. They appear to be reluctant to engage in open debate or question authority in meetings. Western faculty members apply their cultural expectations for university lecturers and do not respect their posture and totally disregard the cultural underpinnings of their behavior. On the other hand, our Asian colleagues may view the willingness of their Western counterparts to openly confront authority and to publically disagree with our colleagues as rude, overbearing, undisciplined, and uncultured. They do not recognize the cultural history behind the behavior and judge the actions, as we do their behavior, by the standards that have guided their professional lives. In business situations reticence and verbosity often are common behaviors when Westerners and Easterners negotiate or engage in confronting problematic situations.

When meetings or appointments are set up in the West, they generally begin on time. As a faculty member from the West, I regard my time as important and get upset when a meeting is scheduled for 9:00 a.m., but does not begin until 9:30 a.m. My Asian colleagues appear to accept this as a matter of course. In fact they often do not show up until 9:15. While this may be acceptable when the meetings involve only members of the university, it seems very disrespectful and inconsiderate when there are visitors to the institution - at least from my Western perspective. It also appears that starting classes on time, ending on time, as well as cancelling classes or changing the time and date are not as well controlled as in the West. In fact, the lecturer's convenience seems to be paramount and guide behavior rather than the set schedule. These behaviors appear to be accepted but make me very uncomfortable as they are outside my experience in general. Of course, such behaviors occur in the west, but not to the same degree or frequency. When discussing these issues, the responses by my Asian colleagues range from "we are on Vietnamese-Korean time" to "the students don't mind". These examples and the response illustrate how there can be two different views about the same behavior, and the viewpoint is influenced by your cultural background and expectations.

While cultural heritage is an important factor, both westerners and easterners must guard against using this as a shield. It is necessary for each to learn how to distinguish between culturally acceptable and unacceptable behaviors in the respective cultures. Extreme behaviors are unacceptable no matter what the cultural setting is, whether it be behaviors that might be described as aggressive or withdrawn. How to address this problem of transcending one's cultural heritage to be able to fully understand and fully appreciate another culture is not an easy task. Developing training/orientation programs to do this effectively is a research project waiting to be conducted. Merely working or socializing with people from other cultures is not enough. Living in a foreign country helps, but respect for and understanding the mores of another culture can only be accomplished through education, socialization, intensive interaction, and the willingness

to accept as valuable and legitimate perspectives different from your own. It is a daunting task.

A personal example at this point might help to illustrate how faculty-faculty relationships are tenuous especially when major issues are confronted. The issue involved the existing curriculum/practices that were in place in the special education department. A colleague of mine from Australia and I were openly critical of and questioned the established program. We set out to make changes. We possessed true knowledge and knew what should be the best practices for training special education teachers. In order to make the desired changes, we engaged in many unpleasant, open, and, at times, heated (at least on our part) debates with our Chinese colleagues. We prevailed; there were changes in the curriculum. On reflection, it is difficult for me to determine why we so adamantly engaged in these debates. Was it because we were sure we were right or were we trying to impose our value system on a system that had a different cultural underpinnings of which we were unaware or even worse unable to appreciate. The cost of these changes is unclear. Did we win the battle but lose the war because we bullied our colleagues and beat them into submission? Even though the lecturers came to embrace the changes, I am not sure I did the right thing. Was it right for me and my colleague to impose our cultural values while passing judgment on another culture? I often fear that I may have done a disservice to my colleagues as well as given them a poor example of western behavior.

The above example illustrates how a philosophical and pedagogical belief was transported to Hong Kong with little or no regard or understanding for the existing situation or cultural practices. Interestingly enough, throughout Asia, we see Western practices being championed by those who receive their education in the West or are influenced by Western professors or texts. These lecturers are in a very interesting position (J. E. Katchen [9]). They are engaged in disseminating ideas or using pedagogical approaches that are not rooted in their cultural heritage. At institutions where I have worked or lectured, pedagogical knowledge reflective practice, action

research, and portfolio assessment were examples of concepts that were guiding curricular discussions. Often these were championed by high level administrators as the prevailing view was that Western education may be more advanced that Eastern education, and we should adopt these practices even if they are not in keeping with their cultural heritage. It is ironic that the academic success of East Asian students occurs under systems that do not appear to foster such success (H. W. Stevenson [16], I. Kiderra [10]). Is this also a case of reverse bias that has been fostered by exposure to another cultural perspective, which has changed one thinking and beliefs regarding educational practices so that you devalue the existing system? The same pitfalls will be encountered if one tries to bring the established negotiation practices from the west to the east. It will be interesting to see if parallel issues arise as the number of Western MBAs increase. Will the holders of these degrees be able to deal with the cultural dissonance that they will inevitably encounter when they work in the east?

What approaches might be used to address this problem of the lack of cultural understanding. The following suggestions reflect not only the thoughts of the author, but also discussions with Western and Eastern colleagues. Although our focus will be on the field of education, many of these can be employed in business settings. First, a system might be established where colleagues from different cultures are paired together much like a big sister/brother program. The aim would be to provide a systematic way to establish opportunities to learn from each other and have each serve as a purveyor of their respective cultures. It might even be possible to establish teams which could serve the same purpose. Establishment of a program such as this would require much planning and care. Another possible approach to consider is establishing a series of staff seminars. These would involve a few staff meetings and discussions on topics relevant to each other's culture. A program may include a presentation on a topic such as philosophy, a film, or guided discussions based on selected readings. Sharing of research interests or encouraging cooperative cross-cultural research teams could lead to greater understanding. It may help to set up a system where local could help expatriate staff to

adapt their teaching materials and approaches to the meet the cultural needs of the students, and the expatriate could assist the local faculty in getting material accepted by conferences or journals where English is required. The expatriates could also introduce Western techniques to their Eastern colleagues.

Although the above activities deserve consideration, there is a program that many of my Western colleagues identify as essential. There should and must be an orientation program for new faculty. Many institutions hold this program at the beginning of the year but it would be prudent to have a series of this session throughout the year. Under certain circumstances, it might be advantageous to hold a similar program for local faculty, especially if there is an influx of expatriates. The initial program for new faculty should focus on acquainting faculty with the rules of etiquette in the country, possibly providing staff with some simple phrases that would assist them in every day interactions: shopping, ordering food, transportation, etc. A guidebook or packet of material with such things as maps, shopping information, social activities, etc. can help. Language classes should be established. These not only help faculty in everyday life, but also help in understanding culture, since language is so culturally loaded. Another point that should be emphasized is that even in these situations difficulties and misunderstandings may arise until both groups become acclimated to and accept each other's differences.

It should be obvious that the same cultural differences that exist among faculty also exist between local students and expatriate lecturers. The hierarchical relation in Asian classrooms, as discussed earlier, may be at variance with many of the teaching methods used by Western lecturers. These lecturers, for example, may promote and expect discussion, foster competition, seek to develop deep conceptual learning, encourage student-directed learning activities, as well as other approaches that reflect in many a belief in the democratic approach to learning. Often western lecturers are unaware of how difficult it is for Asian students to adjust to these methods. While the Western lecturer has expectations as to what is the best learning environment, so too do

the students. Unfortunately, it is not easy for these students to express their misgivings and concerns given their cultural background and the role prescribed to them as students.

It is rather quixotic that awareness of these difficulties has often had researchers turn to discovering ways of changing curriculum or sensitizing the lecturer. Little attention has been given to helping student adjust. In fact, the apparent neglect of strategies and programs to help students to adjust to the teaching style of the lecturer may not only inhibit learning, but may also reinforce stereotypes that students have about lecturers and lecturers hold regarding students.

My lecturing style is rather informal. I like to ask question, pursue thoughts and ideas as they arise and may not present material in such a fashion that one could take notes in a systematic manner. This style has been difficult for my Asian students. And all of my assurances that they are being given the necessary information do not alleviate their anxiety. In contrast, most of my Asian colleagues present their material in a lock-step fashion, provide copious handouts, and follow the textbook religiously. One might conclude erroneously that these "imports' do not prepare as well as the locals. In fact, students had remarked at times that they want more specific information and more handouts in line with their experience in the past. I changed my approach a bit, but how far can I and should I go? Is there a middle ground? Is it reasonable to ask the students to different teaching styles? The obvious answer to these questions would be yes, if there is a concerted plan to sensitize and familiarize students with the background of their lecturers.

The fact is that such a program does not exist and the result may be a polarization of the views students bring to class regarding foreign lecturers or intensify their reaction to a different approach to teaching. Ph. E. Lyon [13], in a preliminary study of student-supervisor discourse across cultures, noted the need to assist students to understand the communication style of non-native speaking supervisors. Further, he found that the style of the supervisor interaction often conflicted with students' expectations. Chinese students expected supervisors to be critical and focus on difficulties rather than

providing emotional and psychological support. Western supervisors generally felt that the latter approach was more appropriate. It is obvious that both need to be helped to understand the others' perspectives, if quality supervisory interaction is to occur. This illustrates the need for programs to assist students to adjust to the approaches of Western lecturers. What type of program would be most effective has yet to be determined, but it may be that the suggestions above for faculty programs may be adjusted for use with students.

It has been clearly shown that bias and misunderstanding can and does exist in situations where people from different cultures interact in a fairly intensive situation. Although in a tertiary institution the constituent members have a common purpose and are expected to be more understanding than the general populace, the same stereotypical beliefs, insensitivities, and misconceptions regarding other cultures operate as they do in society at-large. The only way to overcome these very serious issues is through a commitment by the whole institution to make change, as well as the willingness of individual members to be open and willing to make adjustments in their behavior and cultural expectations.

The ideas in this paper are based on my experiences as well as research, but one does not always put into practice that which they preach. Above I presented the case of the Chinese woman (Peggy), who did not want attention drawn to her so did not answer a question in class. I understood and learned from her explanation. A few months later I was explaining to the class that I would be absent as I was presenting a paper at a conference and wanted to inform them that another lecturer would hold the class that day. In response to a question from a student, I explained where I was going as well as the topic of my paper. I then proceeded to thank Peggy as she had brought to my attention a very important aspect of the behavior of Chinese students. She got quite upset. I was perplexed and tried to calm her down in front of the class. This was not working so I suggested she see me at the break. At the break we started to talk and I came to realize that I had violated the exact principle that prevented her from answering

the question as detailed above. I apologized for drawing attention to her. I also explained that this was a perfect example of insensitivity and of a Western lecturer forgetting that he was in a different culture and that in my country it would be appropriate publically never thinking that drawing attention to her was inappropriate. Fortunately she accepted my apology. To combat bias and insensitivity one must be always aware of the other person's cultural background and beliefs, which I am learning everyday through experience and self-reflection.

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Лайєн Ф. І. Міжнародні освітні проекти: міжкультурний вимір

У статті розглядаються численні питання міжкультурної взаємодії, які виникають на стадії розробки або реалізації освітніх проектів між західними та азіатськими навчальними закладами. Ґрунтуючись на власному великому досвіді,

а також публікаціях, доступних в цій галузі, автор робить висновок про те, що сьогодні, коли все більше і більше університетів на Заході та в Азії прагнуть до такої співпраці, простого визнання існування міжкультурних відмінностей вже недостатньо і пропонує ефективні шляхи їх усунення в умовах нової хвилі глобалізації в галузі освіти.

Ключові слова: міжнародна вища освіту, культурні / лінгвістичні труднощі, освітня модель, заснована на конфуціанській культурній традиції, західна освітня модель.

Лайен Ф. И.   Международные   образовательные   проекты: межкультурное измерение

В статье рассматриваются многочисленные вопросы межкультурного взаимодействия, которые возникают на стадии разработки или реализации образовательных проектов между западными и азиатскими учебными заведениями. Основываясь на собственном обширном опыте, а также публикациях, доступных в этой области, автор делает вывод о том, что сегодня, когда все больше и больше университетов на Западе и в Азии стремятся к такому сотрудничеству, простого признания существования межкультурных различий уже недостаточно и предлагает эффективные пути их устранения в условиях новой волны глобализации в области образования.

Ключевые   слова: международное   высшее   образование, культурные/лингвистические трудности, образовательная модель, основанная на Конфуцианской культурной традиции, западная образовательная модель.

Lyon Ph. E. An Examination of the Cross-Cultural Dimensions of International Educational Partnerships

This article addresses multiple cross-cultural issues that emerge and become evident when educational partnerships between Western and Asian educational establishments are contemplated or already in progress. Drawing from his own extensive experience and various publications available in this area today, the author maintains that being

merely aware of these issues is not sufficient (in light of the growing number of universities seeking such partnerships both in the West and in Asia) and offers concrete recommendations to address the inevitable issues that arise in the evolution of these partnerships in a new era of educational globalization.