

Toward a Theory Based Approach for Intercultural Communication Training

Bernd Kupka

William R. Kennan

Radford University

Radford University

There is little doubt that the intensifying effects of globalization will lead to increases in the number of expatriates sent on international assignments (IAs). All sources agree that the numbers of expatriates sent by multinational corporations is significant. However, there is far less agreement on the exact numbers of expatriates, the costs involved, and the rate of failure. Research highlights the variety of challenges that confront expatriates and their families, some of them serious enough to produce unsuccessful assignment termination, family stress, and voluntary separation from the organization. The extensive literature on expatriation has approached this situation by attempting to describe the factors contributing to expatriate success. Despite these efforts, the literature continues to lament the many difficulties associated with expatriation, which most visibly and immediately manifest themselves as unsuccessful terminations of the assignments and/or loss of gained expatriation knowledge and experiences due to employee turnover. Intercultural communication training (ICT) is a common technique used to improve the potential for success. However, tremendous variation exists in the timing of ICT, delivery methods, and content (Kupka, 2003; Kupka and Kennan, 2002), suggesting a difference of opinion as to what works best. One possible source of these problems resides in the lack of consensus on the theoretic foundations for ICT and the outcomes training efforts should produce.

This paper argues that the expatriation experience can be significantly improved if a theoretical framework for ICT can be established to provide guidance for practitioners in designing training programs that ultimately point to specific and testable ICT outcomes. First, this paper reflects on the foundational assumptions that guide ICT program development and implementation. Second, intercultural communication competence (ICC) is advanced as the most desirable objective of ICT efforts and the connections between ICT and ICC are

delineated. Third, this paper suggests a theoretical approach grounded in cognitive mapping as a guiding theoretical perspective for ICT program design, implementation, and future research.

Intercultural Communication Training – What do we know?

Intercultural communication training (ICT) has long been provided to expatriates. The nature of the training, its duration, format, focus, etc., varies widely (Tung, 1981). Chronologically, ICT typically occurs in three stages: prepatiation, expatriation, and repatriation. Brislin and Yoshida (1994) define ICT as the “formal efforts designed to prepare people for more effective interpersonal relations when they interact with individuals from cultures other than their own” (p. 2).

Efforts to explain the adaptation and learning processes in people who cross cultural borders can be traced back to the late 1960s (Ivancevich, 1969) and early 1970s (Baker and Ivancevich, 1971). Recent literature reviews criticize the absence of a theoretical foundation for ICT (Mendenhall et al., 2002). Most reports about expatriate experiences are based on assumptions, personal descriptions, anecdotal accounts, and lack empirical support. Several authors argue (e.g., Bolten, 1993; Mendenhall et al., 2002) that an interdisciplinary approach that would build a theoretically sound base for the design of ICT programs is essential, yet few attempts have been made.

Mendenhall et al. (2002) review efforts that attempt to contribute to theory development associated with expatriates in intercultural contact situations. Their classification of expatriate adjustment into four categories emphasizes the diverse approaches taken with regard to expatriates. Learning, stress/coping, developmental, and personality-based models dominate attempts to explain adaptation processes expatriates experience during international assignments.

Black and Mendenhall (1990, 1989) offer an approach that employs social learning theory (SLT) (Bandura, 1977) to identify the factors that ought to determine ICT structure. Although others (e.g., Brislin, 1981; Gudykunst, Guzley, and Hammer, 1996) have advanced a variety of frameworks originating in various disciplines intended to provide an agenda for ICT design and implementation, the work of Black and Mendenhall has been highly influential. Its structure and implications will be considered here as an example of the kind of approach taken by many scholars in the past.

Black and Mendenhall’s work draws from Tung’s (1982) work as well as that of Mendenhall and Oddou (1986). Five factors influencing the selection of ICT methodology are identified: (1) degree of training rigor or “cognitive involvement”, (2) cultural novelty (similarity between the individual’s native culture and the new culture, also described in the literature as cultural distance, culture barriers, or cultural toughness), (3) degree of interaction required in the host culture, (4) available training methods, and (5) duration of ICT relative to the degree of interaction and culture novelty. The authors then advance a three-

dimensional model that demonstrates the interdependence of training rigor, modeling processes (symbolic vs. participative), and training methods (area briefings, culture assimilators, simulations, etc.). Black and Mendenhall (1989) claim that a significant and positive relationship exists among these three factors (i.e., the more participative the modeling process, the more complex the training method, and the higher the training rigor). Contextually idiosyncratic IA factors are also considered: 1) contact with host country nationals (HCN) (Black and Mendenhall, 1989, p. 525) and 2) job novelty (Black and Mendenhall, 1990, 1989).

Eventually, Black and Mendenhall establish various claims about influential contingency factors that influence the rigor of ICT. First, the scholars state that “the more novel the host culture is, the more difficult it will be for the individual to attend to and retain the various models of appropriate behavior” (1989, p. 523). Therefore, more culturally novel target cultures require more rigorous ICT. Furthermore, the authors consider the influence of previous experiences with other cultures, particularly with the prospective target culture, as positively connected to the learning experience. In later work (Black, Mendenhall, and Oddou, 1991) this relationship is qualified when these authors acknowledge that the “quantity of previous overseas experience does not seem to necessarily relate to current overseas adjustment” (p. 294). This comment suggests that the quality of overseas experiences could be more important than the amount. These authors also argue that previous overseas experience does not eliminate experiences associated with culture shock, but can only minimize their severity.

The work of Black and Mendenhall represents an important advance in theory development for ICT design and implementation. However, there are five weaknesses in their approach which limits advances in the theory of ICT design and implementation.

First, Black and Mendenhall neglect interdisciplinary connections that would encourage a consideration of the most difficult questions associated with ICT. For example, Black and Mendenhall ignore the subjective and participative role of expatriates in their own learning and adjustment. Trainees are often portrayed as containers designed to receive important insights regarding culture and communication. They are not viewed as actively participating in a socially and culturally constructed reality in which their own experiences actively contribute to the many realities that actually emerge from intercultural communication experiences.

Second, Mendenhall et al.'s (2002) emphasis on the importance of evaluating existing models empirically is ignored. The majority of the literature focuses either on the adaptations of various models in their empirical work or has neglected currently present concepts all together. The lack of longitudinal qualitative and quantitative research places the validation of contemporary theories of expatriate success on shaky ground. Studies that test their model in

various, yet comparable, contexts could provide a valuable substitute for longitudinal research.

Third, Black and Mendenhall's (1990) work fails to place many of their theoretic pronouncements in relation to other established positions. For example, Black and Mendenhall provide little explanation as to the origin of their claims regarding cognitive involvement. Consequently, it is unclear how important work from other disciplinary traditions influences their perspective.

Fourth, key outcome and process variables receive little direct attention. For example, the distinctive features of a successful international assignment are not identified. In the same vein, the premature return of expatriates from IAs is a vague conceptualization of a negative IA outcome. Likewise, important cultural and contextual factors, e. g., political, social, economic, corporate, or other contextual factors remain outside the theoretic frame that guides the construction and implementation of ICT. Therefore, a concrete and contextually sensitive conceptualization of success and failure is required. Another compounding factor is that efforts to define IA success or failure are mostly considered from a home culture organizational perspective while host culture issues and concerns are ignored. Finally, the interactive character of IAs is consistently underplayed.¹

Fifth, Black and Mendenhall's work fails to integrate a clearly articulated ICT outcome. Barna (1983) does address this issue by suggesting that stress management ought to be the objective of ICT. Nicholson, Stepina, and Hochwarter (1990) claim that ICT should lead to the development of a cognitive pattern that improves the understanding of intercultural contact situations. Many scholars, however, depict adjustment as the end of ICT. Unfortunately, few of them provide a definition for what intercultural adjustment actually entails. Black and Gregersen (1991) are two of the few authors who provide an idea of what they mean by adjustment when they define it as "the degree of a person's psychological comfort" (p. 498). This definition is narrow and fails to provide a context to which "psychological comfort" can be related. Therefore, adaptation as a goal of ICT is limited in its scope and effectiveness.

Based on these five observations on Black and Mendenhall's work this paper proposes a particular ICT outcome, intercultural communication competence (ICC). This paper continues by discussing ICC as an important ICT outcome and it considers the important connections between the two.

Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC) – The Goal of ICT

In general, the ICT literature refers to the processes occurring during ICT as either skill development (e.g., Bochner, 1981), knowledge acquisition (e.g., Black and Mendenhall, 1990, 1989; Gudykunst and Kim, 1992), or emotional stabilization (Barna, 1983; Befus, 1988; Stahl, 1998). In contrast, the authors of this article make the claim that intercultural communication competence has to be the ultimate and tested objective of ICT. Bennett (1993, 1986) has long

advocated ICC as a central feature of successful intercultural interaction, however, Bennett does not make the connection between ICC and ICT.

The purpose of ICT should be the development of expatriates who are able to function in a knowledgeable, motivated, skilled, effective, and appropriate manner in cross-cultural encounters. The essence of IA success lies in the ability of expatriates to develop appropriate cognitive maps and employ communication strategies that allow them to adjust to challenging circumstances in ways that benefit their organizations, themselves, their families, and the host culture. ICC acknowledges this reality, focusing on the knowledge, skills, motivations, appropriateness, and effectiveness required to develop and put into practice these fundamental communication strategies. These five ICC dimensions are relevant for all interpersonal interactions and have their theoretical and empirical roots in the literature concerning interpersonal communication competence (Milhouse, 1993). In fact, Cupach and Imahori (1993) state that “intercultural interaction is considered a special case of interpersonal communication” (p. 129).

The majority of ICC models adopt a positivistic, Euro-American, geo-, ethno-, and egocentric perspective (Bruneau, 2002) and are thus limited in their potential for application to multiple cross-cultural encounters. In his discussion of cultural bias in ICC research, Martin (1993) argues that “it is not clear to what degree the models representing Euro-American communicative competence are applicable to other cultures” (p. 19). Generalizations and assumptions derived from models with such narrow perspectives tend to be unfairly normative, ineffective, and inconsiderate. To avoid this, a more comprehensive approach to ICC is needed, especially in the evaluation process. Multiple sources for valid ICC assessment are necessary in addition to self-evaluations: peers (family members, co-workers of the same cultural background as the expatriate, co-workers from the host country workforce), customers, host and home culture international human relations managers, as well as superiors from the home and host culture.

Bolten (2001), Imahori and Lanigan (1989), as well as Spitzberg (1997) provide examples of ICC models that confront these limitations. These perspectives can be combined to more effectively characterize the intercultural contact situation in all its complexity by describing the required skills, dispositions, and the interaction among ICC factors. Following these scholars, ICC can be seen as a *dynamic cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioral guidance scheme for impression management that allows members of different cultural systems to interact continuously effectively and appropriately with each other in diverse contexts with the result of mutually satisfying relationships.*

With this definition in mind, the article authors define a *successful IA as a task-completed international business assignment with benefits for the home company, as well as the host culture and corporation. Additional necessary*

components of a successful IA include the perception of personal growth in the expatriate, accompanying family members, and host country nationals that manifests itself in mutually satisfying relationships among expatriates and host-nationals, and the successful re-integration of the expatriate and the accompanying family.

The Interdependent Nature of ICT and ICC

ICT should be designed to help trainees assign more accurate meanings in the perception and interpretation of observed behaviors in intercultural contact situations; become more competent in their expectations, recognition, as well as assessment of intercultural interactions; and raise their self-efficacy and outcome expectations. Thus, cognitive (knowledge), behavioral (skill), emotional (motivation), and contextual (performance) preparation of the trainee should be the ambition of effective ICT. Since these ICT goals reflect the elements of ICC its development should be the objective of ICT efforts. If improved ICC is to be the purpose of ICT, then this vision should guide ICT design. The need of the expatriate to feel and be perceived as interculturally competent can lead to a positive influence on attention, retention, and reproduction of training contents. If theoretical, educational principles, such as Bandura's (1977) social learning theory, are applied to ICT, the training also should develop cognitive maps that will guide the interactive conduct of the trainee. If changes to these cognitive maps are necessary because of incongruities between reality and the cognitive map, then SLT suggests that expatriates can adapt cognitive maps through observation and interaction in context. Consequently, ICC can be usefully seen as the appropriate foundation for successful intercultural interaction because it provides a theoretical background for ICT design and implementation. Based on the interdependence between ICC and ICT a theoretical framework for ICT design and implementation is developed in the following section.

A Theoretical Approach to ICT

The vast majority of academic articles and publications on ICT lament the lack of a theoretical foundation for ICT, yet attempts to find a unified theoretical basis for ICT are few and far between. This section proceeds by combining communication, educational, sociological, and psychological theories to provide a framework for ICT design and implementation that, in turn, leads to the cultivation of ICC.

To put the challenges of ICC development during ICT into perspective it needs to be underscored that culture is not a harmonious, steady, static construct but rather a complex, dynamic, non-linear and cyclic process that resides in individuals and groups. Definitions of culture are diverse depending on the discipline and perspective of the author (Geertz, 1973; Harris and Moran, 1996; Lustig and Koester, 1998; Matsumoto, 2000). A composite view suggests that culture has to do with the *dynamic process of historically over generations*

communicated, transmitted, perpetuated, learned, acquired, and shared set of explicit and implicit values, beliefs, attitudes, norms, knowledge, customs, mores, and religions in the form of symbol systems, which affect the behaviors and survival of relatively large groups of people. The entrance into a new cultural system presents enormous emotional, behavioral, and mental challenges for those involved due to the frequently occurring “fundamental attribution error” (Littlejohn, 1999, p. 133). Overcoming this phenomenon requires intercultural adjustment from the expatriate for survival grounded in ICC development for success in the IA.

The Basic Modules

Authors who theorize about intercultural learning refer to internal schematic scripts, basic distilled conceptual patterns of schematic frameworks, cognitive structural frameworks (Nicholson, Stepina, and Hochwarter, 1990), cognitive appraisal (Ward, 1996) or other related concepts to describe one of the most fundamental concepts of learning, understanding, problem solving, and decision-making: cognitive maps. This concept goes back to the 1940s when Tolman (1948) made the attempt to explain mental representations of physical environments. Over time the notion developed among psychologists that cognitive maps not only exist for spatial orientation but also for abstract, chronimic, or other concrete internal functions. Kearney and Kaplan (1997) refer to mental, or cognitive, maps as:

models of both physical and conceptual aspects of the world, [which] are necessary to enable people to think about things that are not present in the environment and to access information related to the problem at hand. These models must both represent important objects and concepts and code the relationships (e.g., causal, temporal, spatial) among these objects and concepts (p. 582).

While there is no well developed cognitive map theory available at this point, Kearney and Kaplan argue that cognitive mapping involves “a network of associated internal representations of objects” (p. 582). Cognitive maps, which are said to be developed through learning and the perception of experienced co-occurring factors, have two qualities that are relevant for ICT. Manipulability refers to the susceptibility of the object to modification while experienced concreteness refers to a subjective experience in which the map assumes the characteristics of a concrete object (Kearney and Kaplan, 1997). These qualities are important for ICT because of the necessary ability of trainees to perceive and experience culture bound concepts and objects sensitively, and to subsequently manipulate (interpret, evaluate, associate, and categorize) their cognitive representations accordingly to fit their own background in contrast to the culturally new environment. Kearney and Kaplan (1997) state that, “cognitive

maps are perceptual units, serving as the basis of recognition” (p. 585) that can enable abstract thinking.

The view of cognitive maps developed above emphasizes the importance of experiential education because of the mental ownership of content and experience that emerges among trainees (Earley, 1987). Experienced concreteness, for example, serves to increase the comfort with training content, a more confident use of it, and consequently a more competent application of it along with affective regulation and behavioral skill development. Additional useful experiential qualities of cognitive maps are their sequential coding, hierarchical structure, individuality, and partially hidden nature (sub-consciousness).

Cognitive maps, in summary, can provide the foundation for ICT design and implementation by creating a framework that leads to the emergence of ICC. Cognitive maps are critical because they provide mental templates from which intercultural communication proceeds. This approach focuses not only on the creation of templates for interactive behavior but also on how to successfully navigate intercultural communication in a way that produces desirable outcomes for the organization, individual, host culture, and family members. These maps contain the basis for ICC that ultimately couples with a motivation to succeed that in turn produces a flexible and adaptable expatriate.

As demonstrated above, intercultural contact situations can result in mental, behavioral, and emotional stress. ICT can facilitate the creation of appropriate cognitive maps that minimize the effect of culture shock. A particularly important part of the ICC acquisition, cognitive map building, and contextual adaptability, comes from the literature on cross-cultural adjustment. Oguri and Gudykunst (2002) tested the model of cross-cultural adjustment that Ward and her colleagues created (Searle & Ward, 1990; Ward & Kennedy, 1992, 1993; Ward & Searle, 1991). The Oguri and Gudykunst study on independent vs. interdependent self-construal and the correlation of these concepts with psychological and sociocultural adjustment provides the basis for a number of ICT/ICC-relevant inferences:

1. Their results demonstrate a positive correlation between communication skills (such as direct/indirect communication, communicative dramatism, openness, preciseness, empathy, and using feelings to guide behavior) and independent self-construal². This research concludes that in individualistic cultures independent self-construal predicts sociocultural adjustment, which is defined as the ability to effectively interact with members of the host culture (Ward and Searle, 1991).
2. The communication skills identified by the researchers represent culturally rooted communication styles or social skills. As discussed

above, communication styles and social skills are distinctive features of ICC.

3. Oguri & Gudykunst suggest that the same variables that predict sociocultural adjustment also predict psychological adjustment, which refers to the psychological well-being or satisfaction in a new cultural environment (Ward and Searle, 1991). This finding in combination with the first inference suggests that ICC acquisition during ICT facilitates sociocultural and psychological adjustment through the development of functional cognitive maps.

Eschbach et al. (2001) in their review of the adjustment literature cite claims made by Black (1988), Bochner (1982), and Brislin (1981) about adjustment processes. The authors argue that

individuals make anticipatory adjustments before they actually encounter new situations and that it is important that the expectations are accurate in order to facilitate adjustment. Accuracy of expectations is the key to effective anticipatory adjustment and, thus, to actual adjustment. The fewer surprises, the less culture shock individuals experience, the more that appropriate behaviors will be exhibited, and the smoother and quicker their adjustment will be (p. 272).

Caligiuri et al. (2001) reinforce claims made by Eschbach et al. (2001) and Guzzo et al. (1994) regarding the importance of expectations. Caligiuri et al. claim that increased relevance and context-specificity in pre-departure ICT frequently results in either met or exceeded expatriate expectations. The authors use the theory of met expectations by Porter and Steers (1973) to support their claims. Yet, even as early as the 1960s, Berlew and Hall (1966) focus their research on the socialization of managers and examine the effects of expectations on performance. Role theory, which itself originates in social construction theory and symbolic interaction theory, provides the foundation for their argument. Guzzo et al. (1994) introduce the concept of psychological contracts (Schein, 1980; Rousseau, 1989) among expats and assigning organizations as mental representations of anticipatory cognitive maps that is a factor influencing organizational citizenship of expatriates (LePine et al., 2002; Koys, 2001) and, therefore, potential IA success or failure.

Further illuminating the intercultural adjustment process is the research of Shaffer et al. (1999) that evaluates the model of adjustment advanced by Black et al. (1991). Their work identifies several moderating variables that affect the process of adjustment, such as previous experience, host country language fluency, hierarchical level of the expatriate (junior vs. senior level manager), as well as assignment vector (expatriate, inpatriate, third-country expatriate). In

their work, role theory reappears again when they report that role clarity, role discretion, and role novelty (the creation of realistic expectations) influence the work adjustment of expatriates.

In summary, the detection and evaluation of existing cognitive maps in trainees and the adequate bridging of knowledge gaps through custom designed ICT creates realistic expectations, facilitates skill development, and an increased ability to perceive intercultural contact situations sensitively. The ultimate result of ICT, custom designed and executed from this theoretic perspective, is increased ICC.

The Social Context as a Determinant of ICT Design

This section recognizes the importance of cognitive maps as an outcome of ICT efforts and it also recognizes the adaptation of cognitive maps that must occur in particular contexts, at particular times, and involving particular actors. The following discussion focuses on the adaptation aspect of ICT design.

The application of Bandura's (1977) social learning theory (SLT) to the design of ICT programs was mentioned above. This educational theory represents one overarching framework for the perceptual, conceptual, and structural learning process trainees go through during ICT and can guide the construction of effective, efficient, and meaningful ICT programs. In particular, SLT concepts such as, attention (perception), retention (information storage in cognitive maps), reproduction (conversion of cognitive symbols of environmental stimuli into explicit actions), incentives and motivational processes (psychological, sociocultural adjustment, and IA success through ICC acquisition), plus expectancies of self-efficacy and outcomes (anticipatory cognitive maps) draw attention to the fact that cognitive maps do not and should not remain static and rigid scripts for behavior. Rather, behavior emanates from cognitive maps and then is adapted as human interaction proceeds.

In the same context as social learning theory are the concepts of experiential learning, learning styles, and the debate about andragogy vs. pedagogy in training. Some of the earliest advocates of experiential learning models were John Dewey (1938, 1958), Abraham Maslow (1954), and Carl Rogers (1969). In their footsteps followed David Kolb (1984), today the most accepted protagonist of experiential learning ideas. Their humanistic and social interaction approach to learning reflects the principles of the construction of cognitive maps through expectations, perceptions, interpretations, intra- as well as interpersonal reflections, and interactions to guide future decisions and performances by reenacting observed behaviors that were reinforced as positive and rewarding.

Emphasizing the social context of being and behavior are the theories of social construction of reality by Berger and Luckmann (1966) and social construction of self by Rom Harre' and Paul Secord (1972). Particularly relevant are the ideas that communicative action is voluntary, knowledge is socially

constructed, and knowledge is contextual. These claims reinforce the notion of communicators as choice makers based on experienced, observed, and interpreted contextual interactions. The theory of social construction of self distinguishes between several elements of the self: display (private vs. public exhibition of attributes), individual vs. collective realization (internal cognitive association of concepts vs. collectively ignited grasp of environmental conditions), agency (locus of control and cognitive ownership), self-consciousness (awareness of innately existing cognitive maps), double singularity (differentiation between self and group), and autobiography (historic understanding of self).

The intricate network of social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954), social identity theory (Turner, 1975), and identity disruption theory (Burke, 1991) supports the approach taken by the authors of this article. The ICT relevant elements of these theories are the construction of a new social identity of trainees (innate, interactive, and situational) through comparison with others (trainees, in-patriates, trainers, and members of other cultures during role-plays, simulations, or field trips) because of the identity disrupting forces of anticipated and real intercultural interactions, which represent challenging incongruities between realities in the home culture, existing cognitive maps for successful interaction with members of the home culture, and anticipated and real, potentially conflict-laden, intercultural contact situations that are governed by unknown interaction patterns.

In the same tradition as the previous theories is the origin of symbolic interaction theory, developed by George H. Mead (1934) and John Dewey. It offers an explanation for ICC development, intercultural adjustment, and experiential learning. Expectations of self-efficacy and of others, e. g., self-perceived and assigned roles that are evoked through symbolic exchange; social creation, interpretation, and modification of culturally influenced meanings and self-concepts; plus self-concepts as the motor for behavior and interaction are the principles of symbolic interaction theory and summarize previous theories and concepts comprehensively.

As a group, these theoretical perspectives suggest the following. First, cognitive maps set the stage for the life of the expatriate in what is likely to be a challenging context. Second, cognitive maps established within an ICT framework lead to improved ICC which in turn positions the expatriate as an adaptable, active, inquisitive, and flexible communicator in intercultural situations. Third, the reality of human interaction that creates and sustains social and cultural realities are achieved through the process of intercultural communication that is linked back to cognitive maps which emanate from ICT experiences. Fourth, the structure of ICT should recognize these issues and should include a direct and continuing focus on ICC development.

Conclusions for a Theoretical Foundation of ICT & ICC

The following conclusions derive from the preceding discussion:

- 1) Effective, efficient, and meaningful ICT programs must identify existing cognitive representations of concrete and abstract concepts as well as the knowledge gaps in the trainee in order to customize training. As a part of program development a careful needs assessment is essential. Kearney and Kaplan (1997) provide a measurement framework for this task through the Conceptual Content Cognitive Map (3CM) approach. Similarly, Hammer and Bennett (1998) argue for the use of the rigorously tested Intercultural Development Inventory as a tool for ICC evaluation. Ultimately, the needs assessment establishes a forum for a qualitative and quantitative review and evaluation that can lead to program improvements.
- 2) The development of functional cognitive maps is central to the realization, interpretation, and reaction to intercultural contact situations. Cognitive maps guide attention, retention, expectations, and reenactment of culturally acceptable behaviors and influence affective associations. For ICT to be effective and successful in developing ICC, the training program needs to sensitize the trainee enabling the participant to perceive cross-cultural encounters and interactions appropriately. Gudykunst et al. (1996), following Kohls and Brussow's (1995) basic training principles, suggest a sequence of possible training methods starting with culture general cognitive training followed by culture general participative ICT, culture specific cognitive preparation, and eventually culture specific participative practice. This approach can be used to design and present a sequence that leads from cognitive map development to adaptable and flexible communication behaviors in intercultural contexts.
- 3) Experiential learning is a critical part of the ICT learning process. The sensual and cognitive digestion of real life experiences will complement and enhance the previously developed abstract cognitive maps and give the trainee a stronger sense of confidence. ICT program feedback influences future perceptions and the cognitive, behavioral, and emotional growth of the trainee. Therefore, concrete intercultural experiences connected to the prospective host culture (although not exclusively) during short-term assignments, look-&-see trips, interpersonal interactions with host culture members during role-plays, simulations, or field trips, and with mentors (inpatriates, HCN, current expats/predecessors during home leaves, and repatriates) will facilitate the intercultural learning process. These interactions provide the

opportunity for a multifaceted social feedback loop that can be used to assess intercultural learning and adjustment prior to the departure of the expatriate.

- 4) Educated and tested anticipatory cognitive representations of environmental and behavioral concepts created during ICT facilitate expatriate psychological and sociocultural adjustment. The consistent application of perceptions, expectations, and behaviors that is motivated by the desire to achieve mutually satisfying relationships in intercultural contact situations demonstrates intra- and interpersonally perceived intercultural communication competence. This can be tested with various concluding tests.

An earlier section of this paper makes reference to the cultural bias that often resides in the many efforts to describe appropriate approaches to ICT. The thinking developed here attempts to recognize the cultural nature of all training designs by emphasizing the use of culturally sensitive cognitive maps, intercultural communication competence, and contextual adaptability and flexibility.

The approach advocated in this paper suggests the existence of a useful point of departure from traditional approaches to ICT design and implementation rooted in interdisciplinary based theory, cognitive mapping, and intercultural communication competence that encourages the design of productive, cost-efficient, as well as trainee and task relevant ICT programs that tightly integrate ICT and ICC.

Bern Kupta is a graduate student in Communications at Radford University. William R. Kennan is a Professor of Communications at Radford University.

Notes

1. Dyal and Dyal (1981) offer one of the few perspectives that actively considers the interactive character of IAs.
2. This concept is defined by Markus and Kitayama (1991) as a dominant self-perception as “bounded, unitary, and stable” and “separate from social context” (p. 230).

References

- Baker, J. C. and Ivancevich, J. M.
1971 The assignment of American executives abroad: Systematic, haphazard or chaotic? *California Management Review*, 13, 39-44.
- Bandura, A.
1977 *Social learning theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Barna, L. M.
1983 The stress factor in intercultural relations. In D. Landis and R. W. Brislin (eds.), *Handbook of intercultural training*, Vol 2 (pp. 19-49). New York: Pergamon.
- Bennett, M. J.
1993 Cultural marginality: Identity issues in intercultural training. In R. M. Paige (Ed.). *Education for the intercultural experience* (pp. 109-136). Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.
1986 Towards ethnorelativism: A developmental model of intercultural sensitivity. In R. M. Paige (Ed.). *Cross-cultural orientation: New conceptualizations and applications* (pp. 27-70). New York: University Press of America.
- Black, J. S., & Gregersen, H. B.
1991 Antecedents to cross-cultural adjustment for expatriates in Pacific Rim assignments. *Human Relations*, 44, 497-515.
- Black, J. S., Mendenhall, M.
1990 Cross-cultural training effectiveness: A review and a theoretical framework for future research. *Academy of Management Review*, 15, 1, 113-136.
1989 A practical but theory-based framework for selecting cross-cultural training methods. *Human Resource Management*, 28, 4, 511-540.
- Black, J. S., Mendenhall, M., & Oddou, G.
1991 Toward a comprehensive model of international adjustment: An integration of multiple theoretical perspectives. *Academy of Management Review*, 16, 2, 291-317.
- Bochner, S.
1982 *Cultures in contact: Studies in cross-cultural interaction*. New York, NY: Pergamon Press.
- Bolten, J.
2001 *Interkulturelle Kompetenz*. Erfurt, Thuringen: Landeszentrale fuer politische Bildung Thuringen.
1993 Life-World Games: The theoretical foundation of training courses in intercultural communication. *European Journal of Education*, 28, 3, 339-348.
- Brislin, R. W.
1981 *Cross-cultural encounters*. Elmsford, NY: Pergamon Press.

- Brislin, R. W., & Yoshida, T.
1994b *Intercultural communication training: An introduction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Bruneau, T.
2002, Spring/Summer Intercultural communication competence: A critique. *Human Communication: A Journal of the Pacific and Asian Communication Association*. 5, 1, 1-14.
- Burke, P. J.
1991 Identity processes and social stress. *American Sociological Review*, 56, 836-849.
- Caligiuri, P., Phillips, J., Lazarova, M., Tarique, I., & Burgi, P.
2001 The theory of met expectations applied to expatriate adjustment: The role of cross-cultural training. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 12, 3, 357-372.
- Cupach, W. R., & Imahori, T. T.
1993 Identity Management Theory – Communication competence in intercultural episodes and relationships. In R.L. Wiseman, & J. Koester (Eds.), *Intercultural communication competence* (pp. 112-131). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Dewey, J.
1938 *Experience and education*. New York, NY: Collier Books.
1958 *Experience and nature*. New York, NY: Dover.
- Earley, P. C.
1987 Intercultural training for managers: A comparison of documentary and interpersonal methods. *Academy of Management Journal*, 30, 4, 685-698.
- Eschbach, D. M., Parker, G. E., & Stoeberl, P. A.
2001 American repatriate employees' retrospective assessments of the effects of cross-cultural training on the adaptation to international assignments. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 12, 2, 270-287.
- Festinger, L.
1954 A theory of social comparison processes. *Human Relations*, 7, 117-140.
- Geertz, C.
1973 *The interpretation of cultures*. New York: Basic Books, Inc.
- Grice, G. L., & Skinner, J. F.
2001 *Mastering Public Speaking* (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Gudykunst, W. B., Guzley, R. M., & Hammer, M.
1996 Designing intercultural training. In D. Landis and R. S. Bhagat (Eds.), *Handbook of intercultural training* (2nd ed.)(pp. 61-80). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Guthrie, G. M.
1975 A behavioral analysis of culture learning. In R. W. Brislin, S. Bochner, & W. J. Lonner (Eds.), *Cross-cultural perspectives on learning*. Beverley Hills, CA: Sage.
- Guzzo, R. A., Noonan, K. A., & Elron, E.
1994 Expatriate managers and the psychological contract. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 79, 4, 617-626.
- Hammer, M. & Bennett, M.
1998 *Manual: The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)*. Portland, OR: The Intercultural Communication Institute.
- Imahori, T. T., & Lanigan, M. L.
1989 Relational model of intercultural communication competence. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 13, 269-286.
- Kearney, A. R., & Kaplan, S.
1997 Toward a methodology for the measurement of knowledge structures of ordinary people: The conceptual content cognitive map (3CM). *Environment and Behavior*, 29, 5, 579-618.
- Kolb, D. A.
1984 *Experiential learning – Experience as the source of learning and development*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Koys, D. J.
2001 The effects of employee satisfaction, organizational citizenship behavior, and turnover on organizational effectiveness: A unit-level, longitudinal study. *Personnel Psychology*, 54, 101-114.
- Kupka, B.
2003 Current trends in intercultural communication training for expatriates in German MNCs. Master's Thesis, Radford University, Radford, VA
- Kupka, B., & Kennan, W. R.
2002, November Current trends in intercultural communication training for expatriates in German MNCs. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the National Communication Association, New Orleans, Louisiana
- LePine, J. A., Erez, A., & Johnson, D. E.
2002 The nature and dimensionality of organizational citizenship behavior: A critical review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87, 1, 52-66.
- Littlejohn, S. W.
1999 *Theories of human communication* (6th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Lustig, M. W., & Koester, J.

- 1998 *Intercultural competence – Interpersonal communication across cultures*. (3rd ed.). New York: Longman.
- Markus, H., & Kitayama, S.
1991 Culture and the self: Implications for cognition, emotion, and motivation. *Psychological Review*, 98, 224-253.
- Martin, J. N.
1993 Intercultural communication competence: A review. In R. L. Wiseman, & J. Koester (Eds.), *Intercultural communication competence* (pp. 16-29). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Matsumoto, D.
2000 *Culture and psychology*. (2nd ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth
- Mendenhall, M., Kuehlmann, T., Stahl, G., & Osland, J.
2002 Employee development and expatriate assignments. In: M. J. Gannon & K. L. Newman (Eds.). *The Blackwell Handbook of Cross-Cultural Management* (pp. 155-183). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers
- Mendenhall, M., & Oddou, G.
1986 Acculturation profiles of expatriate managers: Implications for cross-cultural training programs. *Columbia Journal of World Business*, 21, 4, 73-80.
- Milhouse, V. H.
1993 The applicability of interpersonal communication competence to the intercultural communication context. In R.L. Wiseman, & J. Koester (Eds.), *Intercultural communication competence* (pp. 184-203). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Nicholson, J. D., Stepina, L. P., & Hochwarter, W.
1990 Psychological aspects of expatriate effectiveness. In B. B. Shaw, J. E. Beck, G. R. Ferris, & K. M. Rowland (Eds.), *Research in personnel and human resource management* (Vol. 8, Suppl. 2, pp. 127-145). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
- Rousseau, D. M.
1990 New hire perceptions of their own and their employer's obligations: A study of psychological contracts. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 11, 389-400.
- Ruben, B.
1976 Assessing communication competency for intercultural adaptation. *Group & Organization Studies*, 1, 334-354.
- Schein, E. H.
1980 *Organizational Psychology* (3rd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Spitzberg, B. H.

- 1997 A model of intercultural communication competence. In: L. A. Samovar & R. E. Porter (Eds.), *Intercultural communication – A reader* (pp. 379-391). (8th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Tung, R.L.
- 1982 Selection and training procedures of U.S., European, and Japanese Multinationals. *California Management Review*, 25, 1, 57-71.
- 1981 Selection and training of personnel for overseas assignments. *Columbia Journal of World Business*, 16, 1, 68-78.
- Turner, J. C.
- 1975 Social comparison and social identity: Some prospects for intergroup behavior. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 5, 5-34.