



# ICC Journal



**ICC**

the international language association

## ICC JOURNAL Volume 2 Issue 2

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## FROM THE EDITOR

By Barry Tomalin

Editor, ICC Journal

Hi everyone and welcome to the Autumn Issue of our ICC Journal. I hope you are all managing the uncertainties of Covid-19, especially as students go back to school and universities re-open.

We've expanded the content to introduce some new sections in the ICC Journal. As well as three keynote articles we have summaries of the presentations in our new ICC-Languages Webinar programme and Teachers' Tips and Reviews.

So what can you expect? In our keynote presentations Maria Koromila offers a very interesting discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of what she calls cross-cultural training (CCT) in *Cross-cultural Training: Friend or Foe?* and Klarisa Maluku combines business management and education models in *Motivating Multi-national teams*. In a very interesting discussion exploring the links between language, culture and philosophy, an emerging area in linguo-cultural studies, Xiaoman Yang and Jean Langlois explore the analysis by Chinese philosophers of Emmanuel Levinas, a 20<sup>th</sup> century French philosopher whose thinking had close links with the cultural-philosophical principles of Confucius and Chan Buddhism. Their article is entitled *Language, Culture and Philosophy-Comparing France and China*.

In August ICC-Languages inaugurated its monthly webinars with online presentations by me, Barry Tomalin, and Rob Williams interspersed with discussion and Q&A. Rob and I summarise our talks and the discussion in a new feature on ICC-Languages webinars. Our next webinar with Elizabeth Mickiewicz on October 7<sup>th</sup> and others will be summarised in our December issue.

Our new feature, Teaching Tips, has a free materials offer on *Goals*, student goal setting, by Nik Peachey. You can read a review of his work in our companion publication TLC Journal ([www.rudn.tlcjournal.org](http://www.rudn.tlcjournal.org)). Luke Prodromou and Vicki Santaridou in Greece contribute their experiences of engaging with students when their faces are masked and face-to-face contact is restricted *in Back to school in Covid-19, engaging students*.

Finally, in our Reviews section a couple of very unusual books. In *The Encyclopedia Codes* David Crystal entertainingly explains the travails he encountered in producing the best-selling Cambridge Encyclopaedia entries on the Soviet Union and the new Confederation of Independent States in 1991 and how only now has the Official Secrets Act in Great Britain been lifted, allowing him to describe his experience. In *The Good Country Equation*, Simon Anholt, founder of the Good Country Index, describes his life and work in different communities and asks is it possible to change our world for the better in a single generation?

Settle down and enjoy our new format ICC journal. We are keen to hear from you if you have books you'd like to review or articles you'd like to publish on language, linguistics, culture, technology and testing, yes, and philosophy and neuroscience. We are here for our members and friends around the world and in our December issue will be publishing summaries of the presentations at our annual conference to be held on October 17<sup>th</sup> online.

## **ICC-LANGUAGES NEWS**

### **ICC-Languages 2020 Annual 1-Day Online Conference (October 17th)**

#### **Innovation in Language Teaching**

The Online Annual Conference will take place on Saturday, 17<sup>th</sup> October between 10:00 and 17:00 European Time (CET) virtually.

This year the ICC Board is hosting a '1-Day Online Conference' in place of the annual face-to-face conference which aims to stay connected with all the ICC members as well as other professionals and researchers worldwide.

The current uncertainty caused by Covid-19 has not prevented us from learning and interacting. There has been an acceleration to move to the virtual world, therefore, we are all closer than ever! The concept of the 'global village' makes sense within the virtual world more than ever. We used to have a preference when communicating with others, either online or face-to-face, but now we do not have that option so let us talk online!

At the beginning of the lockdown, even though there was some 'online culture shock' for some facilitators and learners, in terms of going virtual, technology has brought the whole formality of classroom settings with teaching and learning, into our home offices or rooms. This has forced us to tailor our training to the current online development system.

With the consideration of effective management of the Covid transition, we, the ICC International Language Association board acted fast to adjust ourselves as an organisation to fill the gap virtually. In the face of this situation, we invite you all to come along and share your expertise with us.

This year, we reduced the number of days and the speakers of the conference considering the concentration span. Please see our speaker list below, and for more information, visit the ICC-languages website: <https://icc-languages.eu/conferences/icc-1day-online-conference-2020/>

#### **The Online Conference Theme**

The theme of the conference will be: "Innovation in Language Teaching – New ways to learn and teach more effectively – new methods, new technologies, new materials, new assessment, and new CPD opportunities". The conference will offer speakers and delegates the unique opportunity to meet educational experts in their specialised fields to exchange ideas with fellow colleagues.

The concept of “*Innovation in language teaching*” has generated much interest in the last two decades as a result of globalisation and technological developments. As a consequence of increased mobility, the challenges for language teachers are becoming more diverse. New challenges often require innovative solutions. What kind of innovative teaching methods, approaches, resources and materials are needed for the contemporary language teaching world? The purpose of the ICC 2020 Conference is to create a platform for teachers and trainers to share good practice and to take away valuable innovative ideas for teaching and learning.

Some fields that the conference will cover are on 17<sup>th</sup> October:

- Digital platforms in teaching and learning
- Innovative Teacher Developmental Programmes
- Innovation in Virtual Learning Environment and Communication Technologies
- Mobile Learning and Learning through Gamification
- Integrating Refugees into Formal Language Teaching Environments
- The importance of intercultural communication in training
- Barriers facing innovation in language teaching
- Assessment methods to test different abilities
- Creative Approaches to help learners learn effectively in the future
- Practical and hands-on ideas for the classroom
- Moving from classroom teaching to online teaching

You are welcome to bring your own topics related to the conference content, so join us as a speaker or as a delegate.

The conference will enable its guests to find out about the best teaching and learning strategies and to help individuals utilise their previous learning experiences to more open up new ways of learning.

## **Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Certificate**

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is extensively recognised to be of great importance in language teaching and this conference offers a certificate for attendees.

## **What will you take away from this conference?**

At the conference, you will have a chance to maintain and broaden your knowledge in addition to gaining the skills needed to use appropriate tools in teaching. It will give you the chance to develop an awareness of current developments in language teaching and cultural learning to create a substantial impact on learning online and face-to-face environments.

## Conference Speakers

**Susanna Slivensky** (ECML), Keynote Speaker, “Developing future plans of the ECML in times of Covid-19”

**Barry Tomalin** “Language and Employability: Gateway to Career Success”

**Elena Yakovleva and Ruben Agadzanyan** “Interactive FL teaching: project activities in context to digital innovations”

**Rob Williams** “Co-created Assessment”

**Emma Abbate** “How to implement a CLIL approach using the EU digital platforms Europeana and Go-Lab”

**Marijana Prodanovic** “Testing the Untestable: Humanistic Approaches to the Modern-Era Language Testing”

## Online Round Panel Discussion-Q&A

Additional open discussion session with Q&A covers online teaching culture shock; online teaching experiences; and how to make teaching more accessible and productive during Covid-19 and beyond.

### Note:

Please feel free to send your questions before the conference to [ozlem.yuges@icc-languages.eu](mailto:ozlem.yuges@icc-languages.eu)

Ozlem Yuges (ICC-Languages Co-ordinator)



## KEYNOTE ARTICLES

### **Cross-cultural Training: Friend or foe?**

**Maria Koromila**

As businesses continue to expand across borders and people continue to move in search of better working or living conditions, there is a rise in culturally diverse environments. Globalisation has created opportunities but also highlighted some challenges, often linked to communication and interaction between different cultures. Cross-cultural training (CCT) is aimed at supporting individuals to work more effectively, in or with different cultures. There is a wide range of CCT offerings but research in this area is often inconclusive. This paper will explore the topic of CCT, focusing on studies from Multinational Corporations (MNCs) and the Healthcare sector. The studies chosen for review, cover both research, which offers support for the effectiveness of CCT, as well as studies that take a more critical view of CCT interventions. In the first part of this paper key terms will be defined and the context will be outlined. Subsequent sections will summarise findings that appear to support the thesis that CCT can be effective, including experiential programmes, such as Ulysses and the CARE Columbus programme, as well as literature which outlines different views and questions the effectiveness of CCT. A brief outline of more recent approaches, such as the use of simulations to encourage the development of cross-cultural awareness and improve cross-cultural interactions will also be examined. Finally, key considerations and factors that can help increase the effectiveness of CCT in the workplace will be outlined. This paper is not intended as a comprehensive review of the full literature on this broad topic, nor it is an attempt to

explore fully the key theoretical frameworks associated with the study of the effectiveness of training interventions generally, or CCT specifically.

Globalisation and technology advances have led to an increase in intercultural interactions, which may not always be easy or successful. For example, it has been shown both in early studies (Tung, 1981) and in more recent industry reports (Personnel Today, 2017) that the rate of failure in overseas assignments can be as high as 40%, with failure to adjust to the host culture cited as a key reason. With the average expatriate assignment costing \$311,000 (£217,000) per year, the cost of failure can quickly add up to millions for businesses operating across different countries. Unsuccessful interactions, resulting from failed expatriate placements, communication misunderstandings, failed negotiations and missed sales opportunities, can significantly harm business and have a negative impact on the individual. Research shows that following an unsuccessful assignment, expatriates often decide to leave their organisation within one year of returning to their home country (Littrell & Salas, 2005). The impact of failed cross-cultural interactions can be equally damaging for service organisations, such as healthcare, as they increasingly need to operate in culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Seen from a different perspective, harnessing cultural differences and successful cross-cultural interactions can help businesses create and sustain competitive advantage and could enable service organisations to better respond to the increasingly diverse communities they serve.

In discussing CCT it is important to clarify the definitions of the key terms used.

Culture is one of the concepts that can be difficult to define as evidenced by

Kluckhohn & Kroeberg's (1952) critical review of definitions, which resulted in a list of 160 definitions of culture. Their definition of culture adopted here, describes culture as patterns of behaviour acquired over time and communicated to new members of a group, acting as a blueprint to guide future actions and acquired through social interaction (Kluckhohn & Kroeberg, 1952). When individuals who come from different cultures interact, they may interpret incorrectly others' behaviours and motives through the lens of their own cultural norms and view of the world. CCT refers to training designed to help employees feel more comfortable working and living in a host country and aims at facilitating cross-cultural adjustment and enhancing the ability to understand and appreciate multiple cultural perspectives (Caligiuri et al., 2005).

There is a wide range of settings in which CCT programmes and services are offered, including international transfers, expatriation and programmes for international business people involved in intercultural business management and negotiation. CCT is also commonly offered to home office personnel in the context of workplace diversity programmes, from research and orientations to hosting international visitors. The approaches used to design and deliver CCT programmes vary from those which focus more on information acquisition and are more didactic in nature to more experiential approaches which focus on learning by doing. The format can also vary widely from workshop style interventions, lasting a few hours to full days or weeks and which could be held face to face, online or in a blended format which combines the two. As will be outlined later in this paper, CCT associated with shorter interventions in the form of workshops, tends to be more instructional in nature and has attracted criticism. Other types of CCT emphasise more experiential

elements and can include immersion programmes or use of simulations; these can often be expensive and difficult to deploy in larger populations.

Although CCT has long been regarded as the main means through which cross-cultural interactions in the workplace can be improved, research in this area is rather limited. One of the studies, that looked into this area, is a meta-analysis of 29 studies by Black & Mendenhall (1990) and they reviewed the link between CCT and effectiveness. In the context of their review the authors defined effectiveness as the ability to help individuals develop skills across three dimensions. These include skills to maintain self and manage their own stress and well-being, skills in fostering relationships with host nationals and cognitive skills, which refer to the individual's ability to correctly perceive the host environment. Their review of the empirical literature concluded that there were positive indications that CCT supports cross-cultural effectiveness, despite the methodological limitations encountered in some studies, such as lack of control groups and lack of a longitudinal design.

A challenge commonly reported with some studies, is that the research devoted to investigating CCT effectiveness has been primarily conducted through the use of qualitative methods and from the perspective of experiences of Western expatriates, who tend to be in more senior positions in organisations. More recent studies attempted to overcome these constraints and explored the experiences of different nationals and at different levels of seniority. In one such study, Ko & Yang (2011) investigated the experience of Taiwanese expatriates in the United States, who had received CCT pre-departure or post-arrival training, using qualitative in-depth interviews. The study confirmed a positive link between CCT and improved cross-

cultural interaction amongst the group of expatriate executives interviewed. The study highlighted that language training and information about local norms and regulations, which in this case was delivered post-arrival, were particularly valuable to participants. The same positive effect of CCT was confirmed in a study by Chen (2015), which examined the relationships between cultural intelligence, cross-cultural adjustment, perceived effectiveness of intercultural training and job involvement. Data was obtained through a questionnaire-based survey of foreign labourers from the Philippine islands working in Taiwan. The researchers found that CCT which was perceived by participants as useful, had a positive impact on better adjustment to a new environment and their work. The labourers had received CCT which included language training and cultural background information about the host country. This was instructional in nature and focused on equipping participants with key information about the host culture.

Language and CCT timing (pre-departure, post-arrival) appear to be interesting variables in the discussion about CCT and it is worth exploring these aspects briefly, before reviewing discussing experiential CCT and simulations. The role of language in developing cross-cultural competency has attracted research interest, particularly in medical settings, where effective communication between health professionals and patients from different cultural backgrounds is key to positive clinical outcomes. Increasingly, those working in these professions may come from another country and are operating in a language other than their own (L2). Research in this area tended to study cross-cultural topics, assuming that the professionals operate in their own language (L1). Gasiorek & Van de Poel (2018) carried out research with nurses in Vienna, Austria, looking into the nurses' perceived cross-cultural preparedness and

how skilled they felt whilst dealing with patients from other cultures in their L1 and L2. Their results showed that nurses felt less confident when operating in L2 and supports the argument that effective CCT should combine awareness and content about cultural issues with language specific communication skills. The researchers argued that in a clinical setting it is often not enough to know what to say, but also how to say it and has to encompass both cognitive and affective aspects of communication throughout the clinical journey, from fact-finding to ensuring a patient understands and will follow the recommended treatment.

Language isn't always part of CCT programmes, particularly in MNCs and for Westerners, given the widespread use of English as *lingua franca*. It is, however, an important consideration because language carries a lot of information about culture. Knowledge of the host country language can facilitate living and working in a different culture and could help minimise misunderstandings arising from limited linguistic proficiency. Lack of proficiency in the host language can potentially create obstacles in the workplace (e.g. obtaining information, decision making) as well as prevent socialisation of expatriate personnel, leading to feelings of isolation and exclusion (Wilczewski et al., 2018).

On the matter of timing, support can be found for both pre-departure and post-arrival training. Waxin & Panaccio (2005) conducted research with French, German, Korean and Scandinavian managers on assignment in India. Their findings indicated that pre-departure CCT facilitated better adjustment for the expatriates and that the positive effect was stronger for managers with limited international experience (less than 2 years). The researchers also reported that the positive effects were more

evident where there was a large distance between home and host culture, using Hofstede's measure of cultural distance and so for example pre-departure CCT had a more positive effect on Korean and German managers. Other researchers (Selmer, 2001) suggested that post-arrival CCT could be more effective, because the motivation to learn is higher post arrival. Selmer's study (2001) of Swedish expatriates in Hong Kong found interest in post-arrival CCT, particularly amongst expatriates who have had longer assignments abroad. Researchers (Waxin & Panaccio, 2005; Selmer, 2001) tend to agree that CCT in its different forms can facilitate cultural adjustment, cushion culture shock and help individuals and their families manage feelings of anxiety. Waxin & Panaccio (2005) point out that there are still MNCs who fail to offer CCT training support and that may be due to the fact that those making the decisions about this may not have international experience themselves.

Examples of CCT which followed a more experiential approach are the CARE (Cultural Awareness and Respect through Education) Columbus, cultural development programme and project Ulysses. CARE Columbus was a programme initiated in Ohio as a response to the growing diversity and negative impacts on the quality of services provided to patients and clients, resulting from cultural and linguistic barriers. A pilot was run between 2006 and 2008 with social work and healthcare participants and offered an interactive programme, which combined a variety of methods such as instructions and literature reviews, as well as exercises and action planning. It aimed at helping participants to consider, accept and recognise cultural differences and equipping them to manage culturally sensitive interactions. Evaluation of the programme via questionnaires, appeared to indicate

that it had been effective in improving attitudes, knowledge and skills and received an overall rating of 4.5 on a 5-point scale (McDougle et al. 2010). This research offers support to the effectiveness of CCT, though further longitudinal research with a larger population would be required to fully assess the programme's efficacy.

Project Ulysses was initiated in 2014 by the professional services firm PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) with the aim of developing responsible global leaders. Participants in the programme worked on assignments in developing countries for periods of up to three months alongside Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and community-based organisations supported by the business. Prior to the start of their assignment, participants received support and CCT through a variety of learning methods such as coaching, project-based learning, reflective exercises and story-telling. The programme was evaluated using post assignment interviews and questionnaires 2 years after the end of the individuals' assignments. Researchers reported positive evidence of learning in areas such as cultural intelligence and global mind-set and identified changes at cognitive, affective and behavioural level (Pless et al. 2011). Their findings suggest that the combination of pre-departure CCT and cultural immersion with opportunities to experience the differences, ambiguity and cultural paradoxes in a developing country, helped participants develop new worldviews and perspectives. Similar to the CARE Columbus programme, Ulysses had also been carried out with a limited sample of employees from the same organisation. Both programmes highlighted the need for further studies which should also assess what elements and combinations of elements of CCT programmes are required in order to recreate the positive outcomes reported previously. It should also be noted the financial investment for



interventions such as Ulysses could be beyond the reach of many businesses, which may opt instead shorter and more cost-effective solutions, such as instruction, workshops or online modular forms of CCT. A similar concern was raised during the evaluation of CARE Columbus, even though the financial investment of \$45 per participant was more modest than the cost of Ulysses.

Though it is difficult to quantify with precision the size of the CCT market, there is little doubt that it is a growing industry with multiple and varied service providers and offerings (Wederspahn, 2000) which has its critics, partly due to limited availability of conclusive evidence to support CCT effectiveness. A study by Puck et al. (2008) looked at pre-departure CCT for non-US expatriate employees in various host countries, through the collection of data from 339 expatriates employed by German MCNs. This was supplemented with findings from 20 semi-structured telephone interviews with randomly selected expatriates. The study, which considered aspects including variation in participation, comprehensiveness and duration of training, found little if any effect of CCT on cross-cultural interactions and general or work adjustment in the host countries. Similar to other studies, it highlighted that language seemed to have a positive impact on adjustment to the new culture.

In a more recent review of CCT and specifically CCT in the form of workshops for medical professionals, Shepherd (2019) criticised these offerings and outlined six main points. Firstly, workshops tend to be superficial by nature because usually they are not long enough to allow participants to absorb information in a meaningful way and follow what the author describes as a "museum approach" (Shepherd, 2019, p.3). Secondly, workshops may present an essentialised view of other cultures and

may not consider sufficiently other contributing factors e.g. age, religion etc. The third issue is that of cultural overshadowing, which refers to the portrayal of events and behaviours as culturally driven, when they are not. The risks of essentialising in intercultural communication and equating culture with national cultures has been discussed extensively by other authors in the field, such as Zhu Hua (1970). In addition, the author suggests that workshops can also be divisive, through an in-group and out-group rhetoric where the in-group "tends to be understood as white, Anglo-saxon male" (Shepherd, 2019, p.4). Linked to the earlier point, the author considers there is a risk of infantilising other cultural groups and assuming they are in-need of constant comfort. The final point of criticism is that workshop interventions are impractical because behaviour will not change following attendance of a single workshop in an institutionalised culture and some concepts are deemed too difficult to operationalise. The author acknowledges that the intent of CCT is to assist medical staff in dealing effectively with members of other cultures, but concludes that the workshop intervention has little, or no value. Furthermore, the author suggests that it could interfere with the clinician's main task and it should ultimately be abandoned.

Simulations have been long used in training and in more recent years in CCT. They include the use of real-life learning scenarios such as role-play, critical incidents and culture capsules, which involve explaining the differences between home and another culture often making use of materials such as photographs and posters (Hurn, 2011). In a recent study (Lau et al., 2016) simulations were used as part of a programme designed to support culturally competent patient care. The Cultural Respect Encompassing Simulation Training (CREST) programme was piloted in

Melbourne and used simulated patients from 18 different ethnic groups to train health professional practitioners and students in rural areas, through the use of live video streaming. Researchers reported positive effects from this intervention, which appeared to contribute to learning and increased cultural competency amongst participants, despite the technical difficulties associated with the technology used. CREST combined the introduction of communication tools over five taught modules prior to participation in immersive simulations. The approach combined simulation with other methods using a structured training approach.

In 2015, Bücken & Korzilius, published the results of a study, looking to assess how effective the use of simulation would be in developing cultural intelligence (CQ- Culture Quotient). CQ was defined the ability to adapt to new cultural contexts (cognitive and behavioural elements). The study involved experimental and control groups of business students, in an international programme and used the Ecotonos cultural simulation. Ecotonos uses cards in role plays where participants are put in situations, which require them to interact with other created cultures, different from their own. The results of the study indicated there was a positive impact on CQ, both cognitive and behavioural, as well as an increased development in confidence in cross-cultural encounters. There was no difference found in the development of communication effectiveness for the groups which participated in the role-play.

The use of simulations in CCT has advantages, including opportunities for experiential learning, a safe environment to practise and test new behaviours as well as a game-like environment which can have a positive impact on participants' motivation (Bücken & Korzilius, 2015). Studies on this type of CCT are still somewhat

limited, or as in the case of the Bücken & Korzilius study, involve limited samples. Other important considerations in developing this type of intervention, is that they can be very time consuming and have to be developed and incorporated in programmes in a way that supports learning, whilst avoiding generalisations and the risk of reinforcing stereotypes (Hurn, 2011).

One of the main difficulties in assessing the effectiveness of CCT is the lack of extensive research in the area and lack of conclusive evidence. Research which reported positive effects typically highlights the limitations, including open questions about the design and cost considerations. It is unclear what is the optimum design of experiential elements required and the cost, both in terms of investment to create and run the programme and the participants' time investment required, can be significant. In addition, self-reported measures such as adjustment can be difficult to assess accurately. Yet to dismiss this type of training might be premature in the light of today's culturally diverse working environments.

Shepherd's (2019) criticism that cultural awareness training is superficial, on the basis that no significant behavioural change can be achieved after a single workshop, is a point that could apply to different kinds of behavioural training in organisations (for example leadership skills or interpersonal skills) and is not perhaps specific to CCT. In occupational psychology it is widely recognised that the workshop, or other single intervention, has to serve as the starting point rather than the single event for change. Training design and evaluation models seek to help formulate and assess interventions that have a lasting impact (Tamkin & Sheppard 2002). In addition, CCT differs from typical training in that it does not aim to simply

impart information, but rather support the change of attitudes. Its main objective is not to train people how to behave, but rather enhance the individual's understanding of similarities and differences with other cultures, facilitate learning and improve cross-cultural interactions (Landis & Bhagat, 1996). Furthermore, Shepherd's (2019) implied definition of the clinician's role primarily in terms of his/her role in treating patients, could be considered somewhat narrow. Clinicians work in the context of an organisation and carry out multiple roles, such as manager or team member and in these roles their interactions are with colleagues, some of whom will be from different cultural backgrounds. According to a House of Commons report (2019) around 13.1% staff in the UK report being of non-British nationality, with the majority reported as other EU nationals and a smaller percentage of Asian nationals. Cultural awareness and effective cross-cultural interactions are important in order to work effectively in what is a multi-cultural environment. The risks of essentialising and cultural overshadowing are well understood and reported in research and are perhaps challenges to be managed, rather than necessarily reasons to dismiss CCT.

The field of CCT is rather heterogeneous and encompasses approaches which vary in their approach, length, content and methods used. These characteristics present some challenges in critically evaluating the topic. Those involved in the delivery of CCT come from different backgrounds and there is not yet an established, regulated or widely recognised pathway for interculturalists (Wederspahn, 2000). Furthermore, research evidence is limited, sample sizes in many studies are small and specifics of what exactly MNCs are doing are not always available in literature. These factors make the task of selecting the right approach challenging, particularly as MNCs and Healthcare providers need to balance efficiency, costs and time, often with little

evidence on the efficacy of the proposed CCT programme. As discussed earlier, more didactic interventions, usually delivered in the form of workshops or online support can be more cost effective, faster to deploy and offer flexibility but may not meet the needs fully and could lead to stereotypes. Experiential learning on the other hand, depending on the elements included, can offer a semi-authentic experience and learning by doing, but it is difficult and potentially expensive to deploy in large organisations. Moreover, further research is needed to determine what elements of experience are necessary to support most effective learning.

Practitioners looking to use CCT are faced with a challenge on how to best support their organisations and what might be the best approach. There is plethora of CCT courses and different types. Gertsen (1990), proposed a typology consisting of four categories shown in figure 1 below:

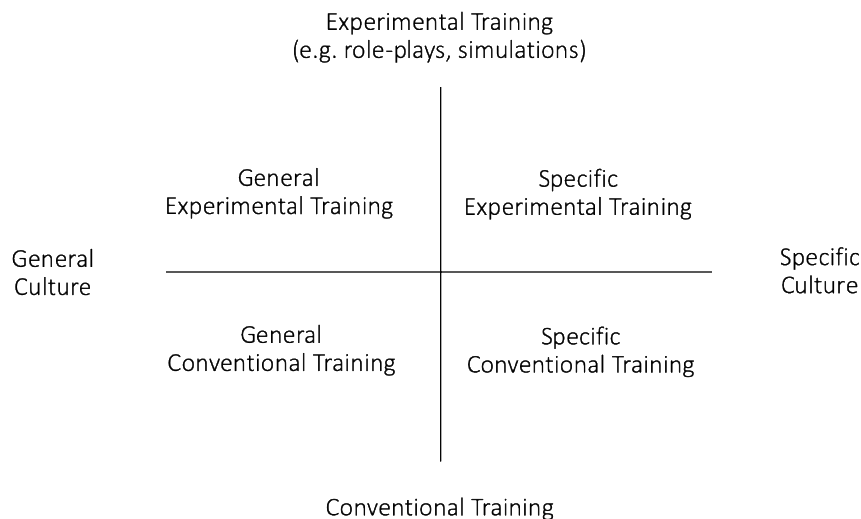


Figure 1: Typology of cross-cultural training methods (Gertsen, 1990)

It is recommended (Gertsen, 1990; Waxin & Panaccio, 2005) that a combination of CCT approaches is optimal, for example culture-generic aimed at allowing participants to understand better their own cultural values approaches as a basis to connect with others are combined with culture specific approaches to provide insights into and understanding of the host culture. Time and budget considerations often place restrictions on how effectively CCT can be deployed, because such combinations require more time and simulations tend to be more expensive (Gertsen, 1990). Considering the design of CCT, Molinsky (2015) proposed that interventions should focus on specific topics and help individuals adapt and adjust their behaviour. He suggests that this approach is more effective but it can also be more challenging, as for most people acting different from their own natural style may be difficult and could feel inauthentic. For example, if the aim is to learn how to present effectively in a different cultural context, one should start with what Molinsky describes as 'learning your lines' - understanding what you need to do to be effective. The next step is rehearsal and adjustments to find what is effective but also comfortable for the individual, followed by practice in an environment which is as realistic as possible but also safe. Knowledge about cultural differences is of value because it can often help alleviate the anxiety someone might experience in the new environment of a host culture, but too much emphasis on differences can lead to othering and counter-productive behaviours.

There is support for approaches combining different types of CCT delivery, both didactic and experiential which are integrated in the organisation's broader learning and development strategy, offer opportunities to practise and can be evaluated in a systematic way (Molinsky, 2015; Littell & Salas, 2005). Molinsky (2005) proposes

that CCT could be viewed almost in the same way as an athlete's approach to a series of drills during their training, something that is being practised over and over again and later incorporated in an overall training routine. Instead of an intervention, or series of interventions, he proposes CCT in the form of 'microprocesses' and a series of smaller adjustments, which can be practised over time and are congruent with an individual's sense of self. Other authors place more emphasis on structure and recommend that CCT would be enhanced if all four key elements: tools, competencies, methods, and instructional strategies underpinning the design are addressed fully (Littell & Salas, 2005).

Practitioners as well as decision makers for the provision of CCT are also advised to consider the specific requirements and needs of their audience. As we saw in the case of language training, as part of developing effective cross-cultural skills (Gasiorek & Van de Poel, 2018) the type and length of prior experience in international placements, the cultural distance with the host culture, as well as the type of role the person is expected to perform - specialist/technical or managerial (Waxin & Panaccio, 2005) must also be considered. Finally, provision of CCT will be more effective in an organisational cultural context that supports diversity and fosters a global mindset. According to Goodman (2012) developing cultural intelligence and a global mindset should be a core course for multi-cultural organisations and also inform processes such as leadership development, knowledge management or how MNCs bring together global teams on projects.

The changing nature of the workplace illustrates the need for additional CCT research. Today's workplaces are more diverse than ever before. Multicultural teams



are common, the economy is internationalised and our world, both at work and in everyday life, is becoming more and more cross-cultural. To better address the challenges that stem from this reality and in order to support practitioners who use or provide CCT services, further research is critical. As outlined earlier, such research ought to involve larger samples, combine qualitative and quantitative methods and more longitudinal studies. In addition, future research should address all aspects of CCT including design, optimum timing and factors impacting delivery and propose ways to assess the efficacy of the interventions used.

It would be difficult to ascertain whether CCT is always effective or not and research examined in this paper has highlighted both positive impacts as well as criticism and concerns. Research and literature reviewed covers different approaches to CCT delivery and in most cases the methodological constraints prevent the researchers from drawing firm conclusions. What is perhaps clearer, is that due to the pressures and challenges of globalisation and increased diversity in workplaces and communities, CCT is still in demand and there is a plethora of providers in an industry which varies and to date is mostly unregulated. As Kealey and Protheroe (1996, p. 162) noted: "[t]he field of cross-cultural research and training is therefore in the uncomfortable position of having a product which is acutely needed but still of unproven efficacy." It is for these reasons that further research is necessary in order to inform future development and approaches in CCT and drive improved effectiveness in the programmes and interventions used.

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## ***Language, Culture and Philosophy – Comparing France and China***

**By Xiaoman Yang and Jean Langlois**

Philosophy is the object of a continual circulation and reception of challenging ideas and concepts from different cultures. A philosophy can never be geographically limited and it "lives" through the critical analyses of philosophers all over the world. A philosophy can sometimes clash with other philosophical traditions but above all philosophical dialogue allows the birth of encounters between reflections which, beyond their differences and their common points, have things to exchange and to learn from each other. In the process very different cultures may share very similar cultural values and attitudes, as this article demonstrates.

Western contemporary philosophy has been regularly enriched by Eastern philosophers. The different cultural representations of the human being and the environment in which it evolves has allowed remarkable synthesis both in the West and the East.

Comparative philosophy is a very challenging subject since it requires taking into account understandings from linguistics, philosophy, anthropology and cognitive science and psychology.

Few western philosophers have succeeded in understand the true meaning of certain philosophical schools in China, in India or Japan. Nietzsche appears as one of the most famous exceptions. Among the few Western philosophers who tried to build bridges between different philosophical traditions even fewer have made the necessary effort of analysing how philosophers from other cultures have received, transformed and sometimes enriched the philosophy of a famous European or American philosopher.

Chinese philosophers have developed a deep interest in French philosophy. From the researchers in major Chinese universities who have decided to investigate the different genres of philosophers, the thought of major French contemporary philosophers like Sartre or Derrida etc. are generally defined by Chinese researchers by their « frenchness ».

However, one contemporary French philosopher, Emanuel Levinas, is different. In this article we will show how Levinas' philosophy was received in China and how this philosophy has been understood there. Even today it still serves as a material for comparisons with great Chinese philosophical traditions such as Chan Buddhism or Confucian philosophy. But who was Emmanuel Levinas?

Born in 1906 in what is now Lithuania and educated in France, Emmanuel Levinas taught at the Sorbonne in Paris and the University of Fribourg in Switzerland. He died in 1995 in Paris, aged 89. Most of his works are in French but his basic philosophy was with ethics and what he described as the Other. He described philosophy itself not as the love of wisdom but the wisdom of love – the love of the Other. Culturally, that might be understood in cultural terms as the celebration of difference and the ability to put yourself in the Other's shoes.

It is this concept that interested Chinese teachers of philosophy as it provided a western approach with similarities to Confucius and Chan Buddhist teaching.

The interest in western philosophy has only developed in China over the last thirty or so years. To understand this late interest it must be remembered that the debates of Chinese intellectuals during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) were, of course, strongly determined by political events. The philosophical references of the time were mostly confined to historical materialism and Hegelian idealism. Post-Hegelian philosophy was generally regarded *a priori* as bourgeois and the works of Western philosophers who lived after Hegel were simply not translated.

It was with the Great Reformation of 1978 - and especially after the 1980s - that post-Hegelian western philosophy became a subject of researching and teaching. The opening to the West and to many of its great contemporary thinkers was hasty and

there was a great deal of work written by non-philosophers published around the time. It is less the analysis of authors that predominates than the possibility of investing them with liberating values. The fashion was for Nietzschean voluntarism, Freudian psychoanalysis and Sartrean existentialism. It is a reversal that was sought, a reversal vis-à-vis Mao's collectivist China- the China of the past. Naturally, the interests of the Chinese were therefore focused on philosophers able to nurture a thirst for freedom and subjectivity: The work of Chinese academics of the time often focuses on the ego and the way it should regain power. They, at this time, had very little consideration for the philosophy of Levinas

After 1989, academics in China began to adopt a very different attitude towards Western philosophy. The Chinese academic world as a whole was beginning to take an interest in the values of post-modernity. At the same time, previously fashionable philosophies were losing their aura. It became the time of an upsurge of work on Heidegger. French authors were generally little studied except when they could be linked to structuralist and de-constructivist reading grids. Phenomenology was of interest to Chinese universities, but it was thought of as a German specialty and Levinas's work was never mentioned.

It is only relatively recent that Levinas's texts have been studied by Chinese scholars even though his work has been known in China for 25 years. It was Yu Zhongxian, a professional translator, who published the first translation of a text by Levinas in 1997, *Shang Di, Si Wang He Shi Jian*, ie. a translation of *God, death and time*. Sun Xiangcheng presented the first research thesis exclusively on the philosophy of Levinas in 1999, at the prestigious Fudan University : *The Other and Otherwise Than Being: A Brief Discussion of Levinas ' philosophical thought*.

In the last 20 years Chinese scholars have recognised Levinas' work as '*seeming to have several correspondences with the Chan Buddhist philosophical tradition*'. This was Ye Xiushan, a researcher at the Social Academy of Social Science in Beijing, who compared Levinas philosophy with the Buddhist tradition of the Tathata (Ye Xiushan, 2002). Ye Xiushan proposed comparing Levinas' phenomenology with the principles highlighted in the ancient Chinese philosophy of Chan Buddhism (generally translated as the "Inner Enlightenment" Buddhism) and particularly the work of Hui Neng (638-

713), the sixth patriarch of the Chan Buddhist tradition. This comparison brings to light, explains Ye Xiushan, similarities which remind us that the clear distinction between "Western philosophy" and "Eastern philosophy" must be put into perspective.

In this case, the comparison is made mainly around three points. First of all, the concept of "instant" in Levinas's philosophy is considered to be very close to the concept of *Dang Xia* in Hui Neng's thought. Levinas proposes not to limit the instant to subjective time and develops the idea of « a temporality of the Other » and of a « heterogeneous instant ». In Hui Neng's philosophy the *Dang Xia* is the moment of sudden enlightenment. It is a short and vivid experience of the eternity of being. Moreover, it is this experience that makes it possible to break the timeline in order to extract oneself from the continuum formed by the past, the present and the future. In the famous *Diamond Sutra* it is said that the possibility of reaching the state of Buddha (that is to say the access to the knowledge of reality in its absolute) passes through the ability to no longer distinguish the past, the present and the future. The individual is conditioned, we are told, by an obsession with his subjectivity, and it is this obsession that leads him to remain stuck in a particular temporality but which is not the only one and which can be exceeded.

There are, explains Ye Xiushan, similarities between the way Levinas views the sensitive subject and the way Chan Buddhism offers an aesthetic attitude to life. Levinas affirms the self-sufficiency of the sensitive subject by virtue of the instant. Before the Chan movement, Buddhism had developed a distinction between intrinsic being (*Tathata*) and the actions and thoughts of everyday life by giving the latter an inferiority to the *Tathata*. Hui Neng developed the thought of *Mahayana* ("Great Vehicle Buddhism") where he explains, "*There is no difference between what can be named and the transcendent. Mortal life and Complete Reality form a whole and cannot be separated*". Hui Neng thus united the Buddhist concept of *klesa* (affliction, pain associated with the world of earthly objects) and the concept of *bodhi* (spiritual awakening). Another great teacher of the chan school, Chan Shi Tian Fa Xun said, "*Carrying water and making fire are attributes of wisdom and its magic.*" Master Zi Bo Zhen Ke explained "*to reach the awakening is also to accept that the awakening is everywhere, in the life of every day whether it is when we dress, when we eat but also when we defecate. It's a lifestyle* "



Finally, it seems that Levinas's thought on the relationship between the sensitive subject and the Other can be compared to Chan Buddhist philosophy when this philosophy describes the relationship between humans and Buddha. Levinas emphasises the extreme importance of the correlation between the subject and otherness and shows that it is only through the other that the subject can truly extend itself. Hui Neng's philosophy analyses the question of human salvation as the process of letting go of the ego, its desires and intentions while emphasising the need to live in acceptance of the other. From the perspective of salvation, Chan Buddhist philosophy does not consider salvation as the salvation of an individual separated from other men but as being able to blend into otherness. As the thinker Chan Sheng An writes: "*Buddha is nothing other than all beings, there is no Buddha without the totality of all beings as there is not this totality of beings without Buddha.*" Subjectivity is considered an error, it is the reverse of a work of self-knowledge, since this work precisely discovers the otherness that resides in each man

Yang Dachun, a Professor of Philosophy at Zhejiang University considers the philosophy of Levinas as an exception in Western philosophy in that "*It surpasses the ontology and epistemology of Western philosophy. It represents a demand for an open-hearted attitude of Western culture toward other cultures and people.*" (Yang Dachun, 2001).

Research should be considered, the author explains, in the sense of a comparative work between the philosophy of Levinas and Confucian philosophy because of the many similarities that appear to exist between the two philosophies. The most obvious similarity is the importance given to the Other. The central concept of 仁 (ren) in Confucian philosophy brings together the idea of man, humanity and openness to the Other at the same time.

Yang Dachun, explains that if in Confucian philosophy and the philosophy of Levinas, the individual is thought of in his relation to the Other in the first it is above all the subject that matters. The relation he maintains with the individual is an act which comes from the subject towards the other and is dictated by his conscience. A man

with a calm conscience and sufficiently trained can be good to others. It is an active gesture and one which starts from the inside and goes out. In Levinas philosophy what calls me to the Other is not the same process, it is the Other who leads me to open up. To the Confucian principle "*I will do something for the Other*", Levinas seems to answer "*I must do something for the Other*".

In Levinas, love for the Other should not depend on blood connections, friendship or even interest in oneself. In Confucian philosophy, on the contrary, the relationship that must be established with the Other can be profoundly different because it must submit to precise social rules: The son owes respect and obedience to the father, the woman owes respect and obedience to the husband, the family must be the first priority, then the friends, the country and then strangers can come. The love one has for a stranger derives from the love one has for the most important people (the family then the country).

Yang Dachun explains that in Levinas the relationship with the Other is thought of not so much as a cognitive activity but as a concrete behaviour and that there is something very close to Confucian empiricism here. However, Levinas does not remain at the level of individual experience, but considers the experience of the relationship to the Other in what it can be in the register of the absolute - whether in access to the infinite or man's relation to God. Yang Dachun recalls that in Confucian philosophy, if the Other is fundamental for the individual, it cannot give rise to the experience of the absolute because if there is indeed a concept foreign to Confucianism, it is that of the 'absolute'. Indeed, nothing is ever absolute, everything is always relative.

Wang Tangjia, Professor of Philosophy at Fudan University, is a specialist in contemporary French and German philosophy. Writing about Heidegger's and Levinas' concept of death he explains that despite certain differences, Levinas' philosophy and Confucian philosophy understand death by following quite similar keys of analysis. Death is thought of in relation to the Other, to time and to responsibility. When Confucius asks "*How can you know death without knowing life?*" Confucius himself stated that the real subject of investigation was life, since death in Confucian philosophy is not thought of as clearly separated from life. It is only a stage of life. As Wang Tangjia reminds us, we all know the Confucian principle

which says that: "*The living must respect the dead as if they were still living*". It is the rite for the dead (*Li*) that allows the living to make the connection (the separation between life and death being only an appearance) with the ancestors who now inhabit a world other than our own. Death is therefore not the end of a being but the moment when he or she leaves our world to join another.

Confucianism sees death as much as an individual's passage to another world, as it is the Other's responsibility to preserve their memory in this world. It is the family's duty to first accompany the body of the deceased to the next world through the funeral rite, but it is also up to them to keep the memory of the ancestor alive, above all to defend his or her honour. Death, in Confucianism, explains Wang Tangjia, "*appears to belong not only to the individual, but also to others, in the first instance to the family. Death implies the end of the connection of the dead with their family in the actual world while re-establishing in the world of imagination a spiritual tie among the dead, ancestors and the living*" (Wang, 2010)

The life of the deceased will be extended in another world but it will also live through the successive generations of the descendants of the deceased in that there would be a continuity of the ancestor in his descendants. The Buddhist philosopher Xunzi (full name Xun Kuang) explained, moreover, that the sacrifice offered to the ancestors is a means of maintaining the continuity of the fundamental bond between the ancestor and his descendants. The very identity of descendants cannot be defined without taking into account their ancestors, in this way defending the honour of their ancestors obviously also means defending their own honour.

To conclude, this study of how Levinas' philosophy is perceived in China acknowledging its links to Confucius and Chan Buddhism allows us to demonstrate, the possibility of understanding a philosophy in an even deeper way by nourishing it with other philosophies or by seeing it through a different cultural lens. A given philosophy can, over time but also across space, be complemented and sometimes achieve greater precision thanks to comparison with other philosophies from around the world. The same probably applies to other disciplines too.

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## **Motivating Multi-national Teams**

**Klarisa Maluku**

### **Introduction**

When we talk about teams in international business, we can refer to two types of team: Multinational teams and Virtual distributed teams (VDTs). In this article we will focus on multinational teams and the various issues that they have to face and how these problems are addressed and resolved within the team. In the second part we will present some of the main factors that will help improve and motivate a team to achieve their primary goals.

### **Definitions**

When we talk about a team, we refer to a group of people with different skills and experiences, that are gathered together to work on a joint project or goal (<http://courses.washington.edu/ie337/team.pdf>).

To build a strong multinational team shared history is essential because, through a shared history, it provides the teams with a shared sense of identity and makes the interaction between team members easier and facilitates their performance. So, in case of the absence of a shared history, it motivates the team to create one, and through establishing the roles and expectations from one another, it creates a sense of unity (MultinationalWorkTeams:ANewPerspective,p.140).

### **Types of teams**

In a globalised economy there are different types of teams. First, teams in an office or business unit comprising members from different cultural backgrounds. Secondly, teams in the same company but working in branch offices. Thirdly, teams formed of companies in joint venture partnerships and mergers and acquisitions and fourth, virtual distributed teams (VDTs), whose communication is almost entirely by email, videoconferencing or social media. (Hurn & Tomalin 2013). As said in the introduction our concern here is with teams working together face to face.

### **Team challenges**

When international teams are formed, one of the first questions is whether these people from different countries and with different cultural backgrounds can cooperate efficiently. Multinational team formation has not always resulted in harmony and cooperation, as there are various difficulties that team members must face and solve in order to achieve a successful functioning team.

(LanguageinInternationalBusiness:,p.85).

### **The language barrier**

One of the main difficulties affecting the functioning of international teams is the language barrier. Even if the team operates in a common language, language diversity affects interpretation of messages and socialisation between the team members. Furthermore, since the teams are composed of native and non-native speakers of the language used in the company, trying to maintain the second language while interacting with other cultural elements has visible feedback on the functioning of the international management team. Besides, a low level of linguistic understanding can harm the group's functioning, slowing down the exchange of information and reducing trust. Even when there is a high level of linguistic understanding, not all team members can confidently express complex ideas in a foreign language like the rest of the team (Hambrick et al,1998,198),

(LanguageinInternationalBusiness:,p.86).

### **Team formation and leadership**

Another critical issue related to multinational teams is how the team is composed. This is essential to successful team performance. In the selection and recruitment process for a multinational team, it is necessary to set up general criteria which should be met in order to become a member of the team

(ManagerialCompetenciesforMultinationalBusinesses,p.113).

A number of key differences characterise multi-national teams.

They are:

- Team selection criteria
- Team leadership criteria
- Team operational procedure



- Team results (Hurn & Tomalin 2013)

All these pose challenges to multinational teams. Let us deal with each one in turn.

In order to form a multinational functional team Meredith Belbin has identified nine indispensable team roles, which are:

- The implementer
- The co-ordinator
- The shaper
- The innovator
- The resource investigator
- The monitor/evaluator
- The team worker
- The completer/finisher
- The specialist (Hurn & Tomalin 2013)

Most team members will have one or more of these skills but it is important to ensure that each one is present.

### **Team leadership**

Teams from different backgrounds may expect leadership from different sources. These might be the most highly qualified or senior executive, the oldest or longest serving executive, the executive with the most technical experience or simply the one with the best reputation as an organiser and team manager. Differences in perception of the team leader's role qualities may lead to lack of cohesion with an impact on results (Tomalin & Nicks 2014).

Another issue is the choice of the right leadership, which is necessary for a successful multinational team. The role of the leader is crucial because he or she is the one that has to guide the team towards meeting organisational goals (Managerial Competencies for Multinational Businesses, p.114).

In the study conducted on 89 multinational teams and 50 multinational team leaders by Joshi and Lazarova (2005), they identified four main competencies:

communication; goal setting and direction; motivating, and inspiring and facilitating teamwork. According to more than 65% of the responses communication and goal setting are essential qualities for a leader to possess. The four above-mentioned skills, were proposed by the study to be the core competencies for successful multinational team leadership. Furthermore, according to this study, these competencies are not only valid for multinational teams but also for successful mono-cultural teams

(<https://bura.brunel.ac.uk/bitstream/2438/8372/2/Fulltext.pdf,pp.4-5>).

### **Team procedures**

Tuckman describes four stages of team development. They are Forming, Storming, Norming and Performing (Tuckman 1965). He describes each stage as follows.

- FORMING – Team selection principles are different
- STORMING – team leadership and organisation of work differs, aims and function of team meetings is different.
- NORMING – group relations and work division and reporting varies
- PERFORMING – When and how do groups complete the task? What constitutes completion?

His contention is that a team that doesn't NORM successfully cannot PERFORM successfully (Tuckman, *ibid*).

A further problem is highlighted by Erin Meyer in *The Culture Map*. As one of her eight scales of successful management she identifies two teamworking approaches of Applications First vs Principles First. Applications First team members tend to focus on finding solutions to the problems and applying them and, if they don't work, trying something else. This approach is common in many US and UK firms. The Principles First approach is the opposite. The problem is examined exhaustively and a strategy agreed and applied in compliance with the principles established. This is a more common approach in many German firms, for example.

When you have both approaches represented in an international team, especially in joint ventures or mergers and acquisition then you risk Storming problems followed by a difficulty in Norming and failure or delays in Performing.

### **Task problems and relationship problems**

The occurrence of conflict is a common thing in teams. These conflicts can be divided into two types: task conflicts such as resource distribution or procedures and relationship conflicts such as values, feelings or preferences. According to some organisational behaviour theory relationship conflicts are rare but possibly have a more negative impact on teams, while task conflicts are more frequent but can be constructive or destructive (De Dreu and Weingart 2003), (EffectiveMulticulturalTeams:Theory and Practice,p.213).

Relationship conflicts are emotionally stressful on people, in contrast to task conflicts which tend to focus on the problem. Usually, conflicts are not personal, and even when they occur, they are not severe enough to ruin the functioning of the team, which can quickly be resolved by remembering the common goal of the team and general agreement (EffectiveMulticulturalTeams:Theory and Practice,p.213).

With task conflicts, there is more risk of creating a destructive conflict, which spreads negative feelings and moves team members away from the common purpose. Besides, this leads to increased frustration, loss of confidence, less initiative in decision-making input and delay in completing commitments. Instead, in order for task conflicts to be constructive, the members of the multinational team should focus on issues, and at the same time respect and try to understand their differences better. The goal of managers is to prevent destructive conflicts and encourage constructive solutions to conflicts and this can be done through group facilitation. For example, interpersonal feedback sessions can help understand what is beneficial for the team and what is harmful to the productivity of the team.

Furthermore, to ensure that task conflicts remain constructive, communication should stay open, all members should be accepted and all their skills and views should be used to make decisions and settle differences of opinion (EffectiveMulticulturalTeams:Theory and Practice,p.213-214).

## Issues facing multi-national teams

Therefore, if a company decides to develop internationally, it has to take the following problems into consideration, while building the team:

- Failed indoctrination and socialisation process: Multinational teams should understand senior management orientation and rules and, if the indoctrination and socialisation processes are achieved, fewer problems will arise from the interaction between members and between members and other sections of the company. So, if the team members do not feel part of the project or the company and do not follow the fundamental values of the company, many problems will arise not only within the team but also between team members with senior management and other organisational elements  
(ManagerialCompetenciesforMultinationalBusinesses,p.114).
- Low individual self-esteem: Working in a team is quite challenging, so a positive attitude, trust and self-confidence will improve the interaction between members. Therefore, this will permit members to deal with issues openly, accept criticism and recognise mistakes.
- Low-quality technical and strategic skills: In the phase of creating a team it is crucial to select individuals with the right set of skills and knowledge and abilities to carry out the various tasks independently and autonomously  
(ManagerialCompetenciesforMultinationalBusinesses.p.114).

## Team results

All the issues discussed in in the previous section can cause delays and failure in performance leading to penalties on late delivery or even cancellation of the agreement, resulting in heavy financial losses, especially in failed international joint ventures and mergers & acquisitions. So how can managers motivate their teams and ensure team success?

## Team motivation

Given the discussion above the following strategies are essential to successful team motivation:

- Prepare the ground carefully. Talk to stakeholders BEFORE the first meeting.
- Have clear objectives that everyone agrees to.

- Make sure you understand everyone's expectations and harmonise them as far as you can.
- Check seniority and organisation of team meetings – agree team and meeting leader.
- Be careful to meet needs of TASK oriented members and RELATION oriented members (socialising).
- Clarify procedures and protocol with each representative.
- Adapt to the participation style of each member.
- Follow-up: - provide translations if necessary, circulate minutes quickly and agree dates for next steps.
- Timing: - control time and progress chase as necessary.

## **Conclusion**

In this article I have tried to establish the key problems facing multi-national teams working face-to-face particularly in international projects and identified the key differences that need to be addressed and how to approach them. In doing so, where appropriate I have introduced general team management models (Belbin and Tuckman) to re-inforce my arguments. Finally, I have suggested key areas to consider in motivating successful teams. Teambuilding is one of the key issues in cultural and language training and is important that business language teachers and intercultural cultural trainers in the corporate sector understand and teach the language, values and behaviour patterns of multinational teams.

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## ICC- LANGUAGES WEBINARS

In August 2020 ICC-Languages launched its series of monthly ICC-Languages webinars. The first two were by me, Barry Tomalin, on *The Business of Culture* and Rob Williams on *Teaching discourse management in the language classroom – artificial models vs real language?*

### The Business of Culture

By Barry Tomalin (August 27<sup>th</sup> 2020)

As we all know the demand for intercultural knowledge as part of training in language training in for international business has grown exponentially in the last few years. The question for language teachers is what additional skills do they need to make a success of intercultural business training. I've been doing this for years with international businesses around the world and have worked in over sixty countries worldwide and taught in the corporate sector in the UK. I also run teacher training courses for teachers looking to expand their careers into the business training sector. So here are seven things I have learned and teach my students.

#### 1. Think business

Most people in business aren't interested in culture as such, although some are. They ARE interested in meeting deadlines, providing quality products and services and keeping to budget. Multi-national teams on site, virtual distributed teams, overseas branches, international supply chain management joint-ventures and mergers and acquisitions all pose challenges to efficient operations management and managers are increasingly aware that they need to understand the expectations of their partners, clients and suppliers and how they do things differently. Once they know, they can implement change and adapt. Note the word 'implement'. It is not enough to understand. Your students need to learn how to implement changes. As one management trainer I know says, *'There is no training without implementation.'*

#### 2. Think management training

This has two aspects: learn something about business models as well as language and cultural models and frameworks. It's good to see language scholars doing this as does Klarisa Maluku in her keynote article on P 38 and Chia Suan Chong in her *Successful International Communication* published by Pavilion Books (reviewed in ICC Journal Vo. 2 Issue 1). Understanding how to fit together intercultural knowledge and business concepts adds credibility and helps show how intercultural awareness can avoid problems and lead to success in international business.

The second aspect is closer to home. I encourage intercultural trainers to see themselves not as language teachers but as management trainers. Management trainers charge by the day not by the student hour and their prices are usually much higher than a language trainer's. However, there can be a drawback. As language teachers we are the experts and we appraise student progress. However, in

management training the 'students' mark us! How much did our intercultural training help them do business more effectively?

### **3. Avoid essentialism**

Bob Dignen of York Associates once said, '*You do business with people not countries*' and he was right. You have to be careful not to assume that everyone who comes from a country conforms to that country's general values and attitudes and behaviour. People are influenced by several things, their national background but also their regional background and their professional, social and, above all, personal experience. National culture is a useful shorthand but never make the mistake of applying it rigidly to all who have a particular nationality. To do so is to commit the crime of 'essentialism' and the punishment is to be accused of 'stereotyping.'

### **4. Think cultural relativity**

At the same time it's also important to recognise that people from different parts of the world may see us very differently. In her book, *The Culture Map*, Erin Meyer of INSEAD in Paris introduces the concept of cultural relativity. For example, I might consider the way I give feedback polite and straightforward but be perceived as Indecisive and weak by some more direct groups but blunt and rude by others who are more indirect.

### **5. Think concepts not models**

This is probably the most controversial of my seven tips. Many intercultural trainers I know teach the cultural models of Hofstede, Trompenaars or Lewis and apply them to the markets they are dealing with. The concepts they have researched and produced are really valuable but I prefer to take individual paradigms as appropriate to the market I am dealing with rather than conform to a whole model, which although it may make my life easier might be less relevant to the market I am dealing with.

### **6. Make your critical incidents relevant**

Critical incidents are very short case studies illustrating a particular communication or organisational breakdown. They are very useful as a way of illustrating issues that arise and are a very good stimulus to discussion. However, because they are good stories I have made the mistake of using critical incidents that are not relevant to the industry or market I am dealing with. Don't lose your participants. Keep it relevant!

### **7. Use the MBI process**

I have to thank a former student and successful trainer, Joanna Smit, for this tool developed by Maznevski and Di Stefano (2000) for showing how to deal with intercultural problems that occur in business. MBI stands for Map, Bridge and Integrate. You MAP an incident by observing what has happened and comparing it with your own practice. You BRIDGE it by exploring why the difference exists and how you may be perceived. Finally, you INTEGRATE by adapting and reflecting on what you will say, do and THINK differently should similar misunderstandings occur in the future.

And those are my seven tips. There are of course lots more that you can learn on our Certificate in Diversity Management and Culture Training and Lifelong Learning courses offered by ICC-Languages. If you would like to access the presentation slides write to me, [barrytomalin@aol.com](mailto:barrytomalin@aol.com) and a recording of the conference is available on <https://icc-languages.eu/webinars/>.

*Barry lectures at Glasgow Caledonian University London and Birkbeck College, University of London. He specialises in language and culture and international communication and is the author of several country monographs and books on methodology and intercultural training. He is a board member of ICC-Languages, Joint Managing Editor of TLC journal and Editor of the ICC Journal.*

### **Teaching discourse management in the language classroom – artificial models vs real language?**

Rob Williams (September 17<sup>th</sup> 2020)

All too often as second language users we find ourselves left out of conversations not because we have nothing to say, but because we are a split second behind the general flow of the discussion. Sometimes we don't have the confidence to interject. Other times we feel we might have missed something important and don't want to hold up proceedings. This can be both in social and professional contexts. And it can become a question of power, where the native speaker holds sway by virtue of being the native speaker. Teaching materials often offer lists of expressions for interruption, asking for clarification, etc. But are these really the tools people use to manage a conversation? And what role does understanding different cultural discourse patterns play? This webinar examines discrepancies between what is often presented in teaching materials and what second language users really need to do. It looks at a number of classroom activities that can hopefully give learners tools to interact with greater confidence.

*Rob Williams is a Principal Lecturer at the University of Westminster, where he is course leader of an MA in International Liaison and Communication as well as teaching intercultural communication and current developments in methodology on the MA TESOL.*

(You can access Rob's webinar and the discussion by visiting our website <https://icc-languages.eu/webinars/>)



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**Back to school in COVID-19  
An English teacher's journal**

**Luke Prodromou and Vicki Sarantidou**

A Greek teacher of English writes, 'First lesson of the year with the first year of senior high school. We begin by talking about the government restrictions on entertainment. There will 'virtually' be no cinema, concerts or theatre. What is permitted will be 'virtual' on the screen. Disappointed faces behind the masks.

Then one of the boys – Roland – put his hand up: he had just taken off his mask and accidentally dropped it on the floor. 'Can I go to the toilet to wash my hands and change my mask?' he asked.

I was a bit suspicious because they had just come in from the break and I thought he might be looking for an excuse to waste time. I offered him antiseptic gel but he said the gel was sticky. I offered him a new mask (still in its wrapping) which I had spare, but he insisted he needed to wash his hands, so I gave him permission to leave the room.

While he was out of the room, I asked the class if they could lend me a pencil as I had forgotten mine. One of the girls offered me a pencil after cleaning it thoroughly with antiseptic. I apologised for asking and explained that I couldn't accept the pencil as it was forbidden. 'Keep it Miss; I don't want it back', said the pupil. According to the new rules, students are not supposed to swap pencils, erasers, sharpeners etc so I – gratefully – but a bit guiltily – kept the disinfected pencil.

Suddenly, there was a noise at the door and I and the whole class turned to see the source of the commotion. We saw someone coming into the classroom on his hands with his legs stretched up above him like an acrobat. The strange figure, who was wearing a mask, paused to show off his skill in doing a perfect handstand, body totally erect and upside down...there was a murmur of 'wows!' around the room, as the stranger made his way – still upside down – to the back of the room where Roland had been sitting before he left to wash his hands.

When I realised the athlete–performer was, in fact, my new student. Roland, I spontaneously burst into applause and the class also began to clap approval of their fellow student. When he was sitting upright again wearing his fresh new mask and rubbing his dirty hands with antiseptic, I congratulated him on his remarkable display of agility. I was genuinely curious and asked him about his favourite sport. He explained that he was learning martial arts. I said ‘how interesting!’ and suggested we might talk about his hobby in a future class – in English, of course, and he seemed pleased with the idea.

I then asked the whole class to take a piece of paper and write their names and three or four sentences about their favourite activities (sports, hobbies...). They could use English, Greek or both. I collected the completed sheets of paper and kept them for future reference. As in previous years, I would try and base the English lessons on topics that were mentioned by my new students. Or at least I would draw on their interests when explaining vocabulary or use their favourite topics when giving examples of grammar. I had taken the first step towards building rapport with my students and beginning to restore the self–esteem which had been partially concealed behind their Covid–19 masks.

The handstand incident initiated by cheeky Roland had also given me the opportunity to praise a potentially disruptive student, to boost his self–esteem and establish rapport with him. I had also raised his expectations that his hobby – martial arts – would form part of our classroom world.’

Small steps towards fighting some of the negative consequences of teaching in the confined and cramped conditions created by the pandemic:

Using praise

Building rapport

Building self–esteem

Using learner input.

Luke Prodromou writes:

My new Facebook profile picture got me thinking about the implications of what's happening to our children (and their teachers) as the new school year gets underway in quite unprecedented circumstances.

The photo captured a moment, a few years back, when I was teaching a large class of children, boys and girls, following a theatrical performance. I chose the picture because it shows me, the teacher, interacting with a bunch of kids whose reactions I can see – especially as I get closer ...reaching out to them physically but also emotionally and psychologically. They're sitting close together, touching elbows, perhaps pinching each other, messing around, being cheeky or naughty...just like kids. Being children... And how wonderful that now seems. Now the masks are on – for better or worse. But what is being masked exactly?

Sadly, it's not only the face that's been muzzled: it's potentially the children's feeling of youthful freedom and fun as the magical adventure of school begins once again. And what happens to their self-esteem, that engine of learning, behind the mask? How will teachers continue to provide this quintessential oxygen of learning when the face is hidden behind fear of infecting and being infected? The challenge is gargantuan.

The responsibility of teachers, parents and governments to maintain and sustain the child's love of school is clearly enormous. Teachers need all the solidarity and support they can get....no educator has ever been trained to deal with the demands that are inherent in the abnormal circumstances of a pandemic, where normal social behaviour is suspended or circumscribed.

'On the first day of school, there was a sadness in the air, a strange muted atmosphere in the classroom. Even the normally naughty kids were quiet: their naturally boisterous nature suppressed...their eyes sad and afraid behind the mostly black masks...' (Greek Secondary School Teacher, September 15, 2020)

In the photo below, the pupil, Billy, is literally jumping with joy. This is a vision of learning which we must hang on to at all costs.



## REVIEWS

### **The Encyclopedia Codes**

By David Crystal

Published by David Crystal Publications 2020

Reviewed by Barry Tomalin

Have you got a copy of The Cambridge Encyclopedia edited by David Crystal on your bookshelf? Even if you haven't, Crystal's latest book is unputdownable. As well as being a leading world academic, lecturer, public speaker, writer and broadcaster, Crystal now reveals himself as a brilliant spy story writer – except that this spy story is solidly based on real events. Without giving away any spoilers, the story revolves around the final edit of his Cambridge Encyclopedia 2<sup>nd</sup> edition and in particular the entries regarding the status of the former states of the USSR following its collapse in 1991. The problem is that although the USSR was replaced by the Commonwealth of Independent States it wasn't certain whether the confederation would survive or be changed or whether all the states formerly under Soviet domination would want to join. In the event there are nine member states, one associate state (Turkmenistan) and two observer states (Afghanistan and Mongolia). The Baltic states of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia chose to assert their newfound independence and subsequently joined the European Union.

So at the beginning of 1992, working away at the final edits, Crystal apparently received a phone call from one Gideon Awthrop, claiming to be from his publisher Cambridge University Press (CUP) and wanting to see him. When Awthrop (probably not his real name) arrived he revealed himself not as an employee of CUP but of the British government's secret service and got Crystal to sign the Official Secrets Act, an embargo on publishing the story only finally lifted in 2017. What was up? Well, in 1991 a Soviet opposition tried to kidnap and oust the President and General Secretary of the USSR, Mikhail Gorbachev. The coup failed but British intelligence was concerned that further unrest was planned and was being partly managed by a 'mole' in Cambridge. If it sounds like Le Carre's novel, 'Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy',

David Crystal would agree with you, casting himself as an unwilling George Smiley, the hero of Le Carre's novel.

It appears that the 'mole' was sending coded messages to conspirators in the CIS and the source of the code was – wait for it– Crystal's Cambridge Encyclopedia. Could David Crystal analyse the messages and break the code?

The answer is yes, he could and he did. The book explains the twists and turns of finding the code, relating it to entries in The Cambridge Encyclopedia and discovering a numerical solution which, when decoded, was used to convey messages between Cambridge and the potential conspirators.

Crystal explains the process in fascinating detail and includes at the end a list of words from the Encyclopedia and their numerical equivalent for those wishing to try creating a code on their own.

Gideon and some secret service colleagues based themselves in the area while this is going on and were able to support Crystal in fending off a potentially dangerous confrontation. *The Encyclopedia Codes* is a really entertaining and informative read, set around the beautiful mountain of Holyhead in Anglesey in Wales, with wonderful evocations of the countryside and of the process of editing and research and of codebreaking. It is a boon to editors, compilers of reference works, statisticians, codemakers and codebreakers alike. But be a touch cautious. As David Crystal describes it, the book is a '*pseudo-autobiographical novella*' and warns us, '*Some of the events are true.*'

## The Good Country Equation

By Simon Anholt

Published by Berrett-Koehler, 2020

Reviewed by Barry Tomalin

This is a rich and important book written in Simon Anholt's immensely readable style. Its subtitle is '*How we can change the world in a generation*' and its theme is the importance of internationalism and how nations and governments can and should work more closely to achieve international co-operation to fight hunger and poverty, climate change and war to ensure the survival of the human race in an age of planetary danger. On the way, Anholt reviews his principles, as explained in previous books such as *Competitive Identity*, and explains how much of what he said about brand promotion for nation states has been misinterpreted and misunderstood, explains the principles and methods by which he has advised nation states governments for over twenty years, talks about his own background and experience, not least his fear of flying, and discusses characteristics of key countries, big and small, where he has worked and advised governments on how to improve their countries' international reputations. Based on and adding to the key principles he has established and written about in his career he adds new thoughts and ideas on how to achieve real international cooperation between states to improve life for all on our planet.

In the last twenty years or so Anholt has worked with leaders and governments of more than fifty nations to help them improve their economic, political and cultural engagement with the international community. In doing so in 1998 he devised the concept of nation brand, now used to describe the use of brand management strategy to raise national profile, a usage he feels has been greatly misunderstood. Partly to correct the impression that raising a country's profile was simply dependent on communications, in 2007 he published *Competitive Identity*, which unfortunately was misunderstood to stress competition not cooperation. In order to stress the importance of an international outlook in 2014 he inaugurated the *Good Country Index*, the first survey to study how countries



contribute to humanity and the planet and in 2016 he launched *The Global Vote*, inviting anyone in the world to vote on the result of national elections. In the 2016 US election over 100,000 people from 130 countries voted.

Anholt's concern in *The Good Country Equation* is to stress how nations can raise profile by how much good they can do in the world we live in. He shows how globalisation has united the world in trade, communication and travel but also led to huge pollution, political unrest, the spread of infection causing international pandemics and the ultimate danger of climate change. Therefore, national governments need to think internationally and cooperatively to defeat planetary wide threats and their success in doing so will improve their reputation. As he puts it, we have been much more successful at globalising our problems than globalising our solutions. However, analysing the results from another of his surveys, the *Nation Brand Index* it is clear that corporate social responsibility is a key factor in achieving international public approval. People, he says, admire good countries and *The Good Country Index*, developed with the support of Dr Robert Govers and launched in 2014, analyses 163 countries by their contribution to the world and to humanity.

Interestingly, one lecturer in Bangla Desh used the *Global Vote* as a classroom activity. She chose a country the students didn't really know much about, explained its history, geography and politics and got them to follow the Global Vote to choose and campaign for their favourite candidates. Then they would follow the actual election to see who won the vote.

The point is that young people in schools and universities need teaching about the importance of internationalism and international cooperation and thinking beyond one's own borders. Efficient re-organisation of syllabi, teaching materials and classroom activities could help change the world in a generation and language teaching and intercultural training are a key part of that process. As Anholt says, it's not about leaving a better world for our children but leaving our children in a better state to fix the world. *The Good Country Equation* shows what needs to be done, what the obstacles are and suggests how to overcome them.



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