Policy Insights from the
Behavioral and Brain Sciences
2014, Vol. 1(1) 63–71
© The Author(s) 2014
DOI: 10.1177/2372732214550404
bbs.sagepub.com
SAGE

Intercultural Training and Assessment: Implications for Organizational and Public Policies

Michael W. Morris[1], Krishna Savani[2], and Richard D. Roberts[3]

Abstract

With globalization, cross-cultural competence is increasingly important to effective policies in international relations, business, and even in our schools and communities. Can we *assess* the skills and attributes relevant to gaining proficiency in other cultures? What kinds of *training* can help people toward this goal? Evidence on the assessment question comes from surveys of immigrant acculturation and expatriate adjustment, investigating antecedents including personality, general intelligence (*g*), and social-cultural intelligence. Evidence-based research should guide organizational and public policies for selecting people for intercultural positions, assignments, and assistance. Although past assessment tools have often lacked the validity necessary for consequential applications, recent innovations make the implementation of these policies feasible. Evidence on the training question comes from research on multiple learning processes that play different roles in the journey toward proficiency in another culture, such as studying, attributional reasoning, social learning, and conditioning. Training policies should recognize the distinctive demands of each learning process and identify evidence-based training procedures that fit the learning process. Finally, parallels across the two halves of our discussion on assessment and training can help understand both how personality traits and social strengths foster intercultural learning, and why general mental ability is not as important a driver as many assume.

Keywords

acculturation, assessment, conditioning, cultural training, expatriate adjustment, intercultural competence, second-culture learning, social learning

Tweet

Globalization demands acquiring proficiency in other cultures, which depends on measurable dimensions of social intelligence, and can be trained through multiple modes of learning.

Key Points

- Communicating across cultural lines increasingly matters for national security organizations, businesses, and communities.
- Evidence-based training procedures and assessment policies could markedly improve on current practices.
- Personality traits and social strengths matter more than general intelligence in intercultural learning.

Introduction

Dealing with other cultures is a rising challenge in military, business, and civic arenas. The *Iraq Study Group Report* emphasized, "All of our efforts in Iraq, military and civilian, are handicapped by Americans' lack of language and cultural understanding" (Baker & Hamilton, 2006, p. 60). In business, lack of linguistically and culturally capable employees hurts American firms in globally competitive industries, with lost business estimated at billions per year. Likewise, our law enforcement, education, and health care systems struggle with the challenges of cultural diversity in our communities; ethnic minorities constitute half the population in California, Hawaii, New Mexico, and Texas, and will be half the nation's population by 2050. As globalization heightens the need for intercultural competence on many fronts, the U.S. faces a Sputnik moment, searching for better policies and tools for developing its people's cultural and linguistic proficiency.

[1]Columbia University, New York, NY, USA
[2]National University of Singapore, Singapore
[3]Professional Examination Service, New York, NY, USA

Corresponding Author:
Michael W. Morris, Management Division, Columbia University, 3022 Broadway, New York, NY 10027, USA.
Email: ksavani@nus.edu.sg

The United States is not alone in facing globalization-related challenges of dealing with diversity. Across 34 Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) countries that participated in the Program of International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2012, 11% of all students had an immigrant background. Realizing this global trend, PISA chief Andreas Schleicher called for adding assessments of "global competencies" to those for math, science, and reading because students need "to collaborate with people of diverse cultural origins" (Secondary School Admission Test Board, 2014). But can such competencies be assessed or developed?

This article reviews current evidence on *assessment* and *training* of intercultural competence and draws implications for related social and organizational policies. Assessment tools measure the personal attributes that correlate with intercultural learning and proficiency. Next generation tools could be used to identify people well-suited to intercultural challenges or in need of culture-related interventions. Training tools must target the critical learning processes relevant to acquiring foreign cultural proficiency. Some extant training methods are seriously flawed, and some little-used methods could be developed into valuable tools.

Assessment and Selection

Evidence From Immigrants

Immigrants' cultural learning takes one of four paths: assimilation, separation, integration, or marginalization.[1] Integration is more prevalent in settler societies (the United States, Australia) than in former colonial societies (France, the Netherlands) or societies just beginning to receive immigrants (Portugal, Sweden). A meta-analysis of 83 studies (Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2013) associated the integration path with better psychological and social adjustment, especially so in settler society contexts.

Not only does the society matter but also the immediate community. Immigrant youth in ethnic enclaves learn the host culture more slowly than in more mainstream communities (Birman, Trickett, & Buchanan, 2005). The initial community particularly matters for immigrants with personalities high in Need for Cognitive Closure (NFCC), a characteristic that attracts people to cultural conformity (Fu, Chiu, Morris, & Young, 2007). For immigrants who land in an ethnic enclave, higher NFCC predicts slower learning of the host culture, but for those who land in a mainstream community, higher NFCC predicts fast learning (Kosic, Kruglanski, Pierro, & Mannetti, 2004).

Immigrants on the integration path become biculturals, fluent in two cultures. Biculturals switch between cultural modes in response to situational cues (Hong, Morris, Chiu, & Benet-Martinez, 2000). Chinese Americans become more likely to exhibit prototypically Chinese decision biases after exposure to Chinese faces or icons (Ming vases), and prototypically American biases after seeing Caucasian faces or American icons (cowboy hats). This "frame switching" process enables biculturals to operate like cultural chameleons, tailoring their interpretations (Zou et al., 2009, Study 4) and persuasive arguments to different cultural audiences and contexts (Leung, Lee, & Chiu, 2013). Again, personality also matters. Bicultural MBA students with higher NFCC (and high in-group identity) adhered more to Chinese norms when solving a management problem in China and also adhered more to American norms when solving a similar problem in the United States (Chao, Zhang, & Chiu, 2010).

In sum, immigrants can learn the host culture without losing their heritage culture knowledge or identity. Learning is fastest for those who go to settler societies, who avoid living in ethnic enclaves, and who are high in need for closure.

Evidence From Expatriates

Much research on expatriates (expats), sojourners, and exchange students has investigated predictors of adjustment, psychological comfort with practicalities of life (i.e., food, housing, and living conditions), interpersonal interactions with locals, and work/academic tasks (Gregersen & Black, 1990). The predictors fall in two major categories: situational factors (the expatriate's environment) and personal factors (individual differences).

Situational factors. Expats adjust better with social and organizational support. Adjustment increases with cross-cultural training, support from host nationals, and presence of a well-adjusted spouse (Shaffer, Harrison, & Gilley, 1999). Adjustment increases with work decision autonomy (Takeuchi, Shay, & Jiatao, 2008) and support from the home organization and superiors (Kraimer, Wayne, & Jaworski, 2001).

Personal factors. Expats' own attributes also predict how they fare. These individual difference factors can be assessed in advance to select people for expatriate roles or to identify people in need of support or training.

Personality traits. Foreign adjustment and effectiveness are correlated with a profile of personality characteristics (Shaffer, Harrison, Gregersen, Black, & Ferzandi, 2006). *Extraversion* (expressiveness) predicts expat work adjustment and job performance; *openness to experience* (curiosity vs. comfort with routine) predicts foreign work adjustment and job performance; *agreeableness* (social flexibility) predicts better interpersonal interactions with host nationals, better job satisfaction in the new setting, and lower desire to terminate; *conscientiousness* is associated with better general adjustment to the host culture and better job performance, both self-rated and supervisor-rated; and finally, *emotional instability* (reactivity) is negatively associated with adjustment, both personal and professional (Mol, Born, Willemsen, & Van der Molen, 2005). While this survey-based literature

provides valuable hints for selection, it provides little insight about *why* these personality traits matter.

General mental ability. General mental ability ("*g*")—capacity for all-round thinking, especially manipulating abstract symbols—is one of the most important predictors of human outcomes, including academic and career performance, and even mortality (Roberts & Lipnevich, 2011). But surprisingly, tests have found no conclusive evidence that *g* predicts expatriate adjustment (e.g., Ward, Fischer, Lam, & Hall, 2009).

Social strengths. Beyond purely cognitive abilities, dimensions of social ability or intelligence can also be measured. *Emotional intelligence* (EI) is a set of "mental processes involving emotional information," including "a) appraising and expressing emotions in the self and others, b) regulating emotions in the self and others, and c) using emotions in adaptive ways" (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, pp. 190-191). Because interacting with locals is part of learning a new culture, feeling at ease, and getting things done, high EI should predict expatriate adjustment. Among international students in New Zealand (Ward et al., 2009, Study 2), EI predicted sociocultural adaptation and life satisfaction but not academic adaptation. Among Taiwanese managers working in China, EI predicted intercultural adjustment and organizational commitment (Lii & Wong, 2008). But do such associations reflect the general influences of EI—a positive association with life satisfaction—or something specific about EI and intercultural adaptation, such as coping or learning?

Another social strength is *cultural intelligence* (CI; Earley & Ang, 2003). CI has four ability dimensions relevant to intercultural effectiveness: cognition (e.g., "I know the legal and economic systems of other cultures"), metacognition (e.g., "I adjust my understanding of a culture while I interact with people from that culture"), motivation (e.g., "I am confident that I can socialize with locals in a culture that is unfamiliar to me"), and behavior (e.g., "I change my verbal behavior [e.g., accent, tone] when a cross-cultural interaction requires it"). Individuals higher on overall CI make culturally appropriate behavioral inferences, perform better in multi-cultural work settings, show better adjustment in a foreign country, and negotiate better in multi-cultural teams (e.g., Ang et al., 2007). The metacognition dimension predicts intercultural trust development and collaboration (Chua, Morris, & Mor, 2012). A recent review of validity evidence found current CI instruments promising but lacking in several criteria needed for use in high-stakes selection decisions (Gabrenya et al., 2012).

Summary. Research on expatriates identifies environment (cultural distance, family adjustment, organizational support) and person factors (personality traits, social strengths but not general mental ability) that predict adjustment dimensions such as social, work/school, and general satisfaction. While selecting on personality and social strengths would help in identifying personnel for challenging overseas positions, traditional instruments for assessing these attributes have been vulerable to self-report biases and faking. As we shall see, however, new techniques to overcome these limitations are being successfully introduced.

Implications for Selection Policies

Traditional policies of selecting individuals for jobs, foreign assignments, and academic programs largely rely on cognitive assessments, tests of *g*, and domain knowledge. Longstanding evidence shows that noncognitive traits such as *conscientiousness* predict school and work performance as strongly as do the cognitive dimensions. However, these have been traditionally measured through self-report ratings, which are highly fakeable; introducing incentives can shift self-rated social strengths up to a full standard deviation (Lipnevich, MacCann, & Roberts, 2013). Self-ratings are also vulnerable to self-perception and scale usage biases. However, several innovations in assessment methods have substantially ameliorated these limitations. Both the Educational Testing Service and U.S. armed forces have recently adopted noncognitive assessments for selection (e.g., Drasgow et al., 2012; Kyllonen, 2008).

An increasingly used response format is forced choice between alternative statements that have been pretested to be of *equivalent social desirability* (Brown & Maydeu-Olivares, 2011). This eliminates the primary means by which people fake responses. The U.S. Army has used the Tailored Adaptive Personality Assessment System (TAPAS) for hiring and classifying personnel since 2009. TAPAS measures the five personality dimensions by presenting respondents with two personality statements (e.g., "I always get my work done on time" and "I get along well with my co-workers") and asking them to choose the one "More like me." It could be used to select soldiers for challenging intercultural assignments, based on the personality profile that predicts expatriate success. Similar forced-choice measures of EI have been recently developed (Anguiano-Carrasco, MacCann, Geiger, Seybert, & Roberts, in press).

Self-ratings always involve a tacit reference group, which plagues comparisons, particularly across cultures. With the *anchoring vignette* technique, respondents rate short descriptions of unambiguous hypothetical persons on the same scale that they rate themselves. Statistically controlling for respondents' ratings of the hypothetical person reduces differences across cultures due to differing reference groups (Kristensen & Johansson, 2008).

As for question formats, *Situational Judgment Tests* (SJT) present people with specific interpersonal situations and ask them to weigh alternative behavioral responses. The questions may ask about optimal or typical behavior (e.g., "what is the best response" vs. "what would you do") and may ask respondents to select the best response, select the best and

worst responses, rank-order them, distribute points among them, and/or rate them. Meta-analyses of SJTs designed for personnel selection find they correlate with personality and intelligence but also predict job performance incrementally above these antecedents, presumably because they capture domain-specific talents or understandings (Christian, Edwards, & Bradley, 2010). An EI test in this format shows promising validity (MacCann & Roberts, 2008).

Another increasingly used question format focuses on *biographical data*, standardized questions about individuals' past behaviors, activities, or experiences. These can be designed to reduce the possibility of faking (Schmitt, Oswald, Kim, Gillespie, & Ramsay, 2003), such as by asking students to elaborate on their biodata details (e.g., after "Have you seen a foreign movie in the last year?" ask "What was the name of the last foreign movie you saw?"). For some questions, job applicants feel pressure to be honest because employers could easily check their answer against objective records ("Did you vote in the last election?" "How many foreign countries have you visited in the last year?"). Other questions would require honesty because answers could be checked by other tests ("What languages aside from English can you read?"). *Computerized adaptive testing* enables contingent follow-on questions within the same assessment that could test the claimed linguistic ability. Biographical data assessment has survived legal challenges in the selection context. Biographical data assessments of personality traits have been developed and validated (Jackson et al., 2010).

In sum, methodological advancements to response and question formats mitigate problems with using assessments of personality traits and social strengths in selection policies. Assessement tools using these innovations could provide metrics useful in many social and organizational applications, such as selecting employees for assignments, selecting students for foreign study, identifying at-risk immigrants for support services, program evaluation, student aptitude assessments such as PISA, and so forth.

Learning and Training

Learning Processes

The journey of learning another culture extends over years, involving qualitatively different kinds of learning processes that are fostered by different training procedures. Evidence distinguishes at least four important types of learning processes relevant to intercultural learning.

Studying. Learning about another culture often begins with studying—committing facts to declarative memory—in the context of a class, orientation programs, or independent reading. In business and educational settings, training about culture or diversity often centers on classic findings about country differences in values, such as individualism–collectivism (Osland & Bird, 2000). While cultural values differ by country, individuals within countries show little consensus in the values they endorse (Schwartz, 2014), so country averages are not very useful in anticipating any given individual's values. Moreover, people's cultural value endorsements do not correlate substantially with their tendency toward culturally normative judgments or behavior (Kitayama, 2002). In our view, training focused on country differences in values presents homogenizing portraits of societies and suggests misleading models of what drives culturally divergent behavior. Research indicates that such programs can increase stereotyping (Buchtel, 2014) and essentialism (Fischer, 2011; Morris, 2014).

Attributional reasoning. A major means of learning from observations is explaining others' behaviors—tracing actions to causes and motives. Does the behavior reflect something special about the actor's characteristics, about their task, or about their social environment (Eberly, Holley, Johnson, & Mitchell, 2011)? A pervasive bias is attributing too much to the actor's characteristics and overlooking the context (Ross, 1977). Expats seeking to learn what cultural norms are guiding people's behaviors have to overcome this bias. Consensus of behavior in a situation is a strong cue: if the locals all handle a situation in the same way, they are probably following a cultural norm. Another cue is surprise: when a visitor is surprised by a local's behavior but other locals are not, then this divergence likely reflects a difference in cultural norms.

Social learning. Aside from digesting facts and diagnosing others' behavior, learning also happens through less deliberate, more implicit mental processes. One learns the gestures and rhythms of routine interactions in a culture in the course of everyday experience. Social learning theory (e.g., Bandura, 1977) holds that people learn by imitating role models' behaviors, particularly the ones that work well for them. People reflexively mirror the mannerisms of their interaction partners (Chartrand & Bargh, 1999). In an experimental simulation of an expat's exposure to daily situations of the new culture, American students—exposed to dozens of interpersonal episodes sampled from the everyday experiences of Indian college students—began to act more in line with Indian norms. Correspondingly, Indians exposed to episodes from the lives of U.S. students began to act more in line with American norms (Savani, Morris, Naidu, Kumar, & Berlia, 2011).

Social learning seems particularly important for learning "scripts," the sequences of actions in institutionalized events, such as dining at a restaurant or running a meeting (Morris & Murphy, 1990). Freshly arrived expats often bluff their way through events by imitating locals or more seasoned expats—their "procedural" knowledge of how to act precedes "declarative" knowledge of what their gestures fully mean.

Adapting behavior toward the local norms helps expats mesh with locals. Job candidates who adopt some behavioral mannerisms of recruiters from a different culture are more

likely to be offered a job (Sanchez-Burks, Bartel, & Blount, 2009). However, complete accommodation to local norms is not advisable; visitors who imitate local ways too blatantly are distrusted (Thomas & Ravlin, 1995). Effective adaptation comes not so much from extreme behavioral plasticity, as from flexibility combined with good judgment about role models.

Conditioning. Social learning can provide a generic script for how to act in situations, but expats have to find ways of conducting themselves that suit them personally and fit the local context. This shaping of fine-grained behavioral styles can come only through first-hand experiential learning, trying different variations, noticing the outcomes, and then repeating the ones that work best. In every interaction throughout the day, a person receives reinforcement, positively or negatively. One layer of reward/punishment is whether the interaction accomplished the desired end. Another layer of reinforcement comes from social sanctioning: Did the locals smile or frown? Did they withdraw or approach afterward? Conditioning is a subconscious process through which the association between a situation and an action is strengthened by the experience of more positive reinforcement.

Implications for Training Policies

We have distinguished four learning processes that play distinct roles in the journey toward proficiency in another culture. Programs to improve intercultural competence need to consider these distinct learning processes, as they would be targeted by different kinds of training programs. Past training programs have focused almost exclusively on explicit learning processes, such as studying and attributional learning (Brislin & Yoshida, 1994), but recent theorizing in social psychology emphasizes that much of social cognition and behavior runs through implicit processes (e.g., Chartrand & Bargh, 1999).

Studying. In most organizations, as noted, training employees for overseas assignments is limited to rote learning of facts—language, history, legal systems. Teaching languages just-in-time is difficult, so one basic policy recommendation would be emphasizing foreign languages earlier in primary and secondary schools. College programs preparing people for careers in national security, law enforcement, and business should require foreign-language competency.

Committing knowledge to memory through studying can be fostered through "external memory" devices, but should not be replaced by them. The U.S. Army issued soldiers in Iraq a wallet-ready "smart card" summarizing key cultural facts. Given the shortage of translators, a handheld device called the *Phraselator* was issued to soldiers to deliver phrases in Arabic and other languages. The device could emit prerecorded commands at the push of a button, such as "Not a step further," "Put your hands on the wall," and "Everyone stop talking," but unfortunately offered no way to understand responses to these directives (Mackey, 2004). Similarly, research has probed the development of a handheld device to guide soldiers' decisions in intercultural interactions (e.g., Huhns, Vidal, Ruvinksy, Mendoza, & Langevin, 2006). While such tools may help new arrivals bridge cultural barriers, reliance on them can carry a meta-message of disregard. Technological tools should promote cultural learning rather than substitute for it.

More generally, no catalog of facts in memory (or external memory) prepares someone for all the situations that they will encounter in a dynamic foreign environment. Unless one can know everything, training in content knowledge is less important than training in sound learning strategies. Some examples are web-based tutorials on social etiquette and protocol in different cultures (e.g., www.culturena-vigator.com) and tools that teach foreign languages in a visual contextualized way (e.g., www.rosettastone.com).

Attributional learning. Long-standing tools for training culturally appropriate attributions are called *cultural assimilators* (Fiedler, Mitchell, & Triandis, 1971). These were developed by first asking American expats to describe interactions with locals in a country that illustrated a cultural clash. Themes in these "critical incidents" are distilled in prototypical scenarios, along with multiple-choice options of explanations for locals' behaviors, an option that locals endorse and other options based on cultural stereotypes or misplaced American assumptions. Over time, practice shifted from culture-specific to culture-general assimilators, that present critical incidents representative of a misunderstanding that occurs in many settings. Undoubtedly, these training sessions are more engaging than merely studying lists of common misunderstandings. Yet, studies of assimilator training indicate only limitied effectiveness. Expats trained with assimilators showed an advantage relative to a control group on cognitive criteria such as accurate attributions, but not behavioral and emotional aspects of adjustment (Bhawuk, 1998).

Some limitations of attribution assimilators are not hard to understand. They do not emphasize how to learn about norms of another culture but how to *avoid* falsely imputing American motivations to locals. This same critique can be lodged against "self-awareness training" (Brislin & Yoshida, 1994), in which a trainer responds as negatively as possible to the trainee's gestures and comments. These trainings teach *what not to do* rather than how to make useful attributions. Trainees should be taught to look for clues in people's behaviors and have conversations about the intentions behind behaviors. They should be taught to infer cultural norms, the culture's shared understandings, through inferring from cues such as consensus and surprise.

Another concern about attributional assimilators is that they teach each point through one case, a critical incident. Cases or stories have advantages; an identifiable character sticks in people's memories and motivates their actions to a

greater extent than abstractions and statistics (Small, Loewenstein, & Slovic, 2007). However, generalizing lessons from the critical incident requires drawing analogies. Analogical transfer of insight to structurally similar cases is sharply limited, unless the training presents multiple cases for each rule (Loewenstein, Thompson, & Gentner, 2003). While multiple cases for each point may seem redundant to a user-experience designer, they are crucially important for effective training.

Social learning. Although social learning happens largely implicitly, training can help in both of its steps—observation and imitation. In training people to observe the culturally specific gestures and routine interactions that they need to master, a key matter is focusing on the right role models. Expats should attempt to figure out which behaviors are accepted from outsiders and which are not. As appropriate behavior varies according to social roles, it is safest to learn from someone of the same age and gender. An important matter is choosing apt role models, such as a highly experienced expat of one's same age and gender.

The next step of social learning is developing skill in enacting the social behaviors that work for the role model. This clearly requires experiential learning, practice, and feedback. "Behavioral training" (Brislin & Yoshida, 1994) sessions refer to the high-touch training that a diplomat or politician receives before a public event, in which they are coached to perform a scripted performance, with attention to proper proxemics, gesture, phrases, intonation, and cadence, and suppressing any interfering American habits. This training is too time-consuming and resource-intensive for most people and most occasions.

A more realistic way to develop skill in enacting unfamiliar social behaviors may be by acting-class exercises (Tan & Chua, 2003). Well-honed exercises help students become more aware of their posture, gesture, and voice, as well as how to modulate them. If nothing else, such methods may broaden the comfort zone of highly analytic professionals for the "fake it till you make it" approach of learning through imitation. Many corporations (such as McDonalds®) have shifted their expat training budgets from pre-departure classes to post-arrival coaching sessions. What a given person needs to learn is more apparent after arrival to their setting. Once again, training is best spent developing trainee's learning strategies and pointing to learning resources, rather than trying to instill a generic repertoire of social performances for the new culture.

Conditioning. Conditioning may be the most important process in cultural learning but the process least addressed by current training practices. "Experiential training" (Brislin & Yoshida, 1994) refers to simulations, role-plays, and field visits—these have been dismissed as too resource-intensive to be practical. Foreign field visits are obviously time-consuming, but visits to local immigrant neighborhoods may provide some of the value at much less cost. Group simulations of the war-game variety are highly expensive, but simpler computerized simulations of interpersonal interactions in the other culture can train through conditioning processes without much cost (Savani et al, 2011).

In addition to training specific cultural norms, experiential learning may also develop some of the personal strengths that generally foster cultural adjustment. Cultural metacognition levels can be raised through extended exercises that demand intercultural collaboration (Erez et al., 2013). Implicit learning may also require cognitive flexibility that is not habitual for analytic professionals, who may feel uncomfortable muddling through without explicit understanding.

Training through conditioning also occurs upon arrival to a new cultural setting. Psycholinguistic evidence supports the premise of "culturally immersive" foreign-language training, in part because first-language accessibility recedes in the foreign cultural setting (Linck, Kroll, & Sunderman, 2009). Even visual cues to one's heritage culture can interfere with fluency in a second language. Mainland Chinese immigrants in New York speak English less fluently when primed with a Chinese face or images associated with Chinese culture (Zhang, Morris, Cheng, & Yap, 2013).

That said, other evidence suggests caveats to the policy of immersive training. While gaining linguistic fluency benefits from total immersion, attributions and social learning can benefit from mixed cultural environments that afford opportunities for comparison and provide other expats as role models. Suprising evidence suggests that exchange students exposed to reminders of their home culture develop greater adjustment to their host culture, because reminders of home allay alienating insecurities (Fu, Morris, & Hong, in press). In sum, culturally immersive training programs help some learning processes but may hinder other learning processes and dynamics of cultural adjustment.

Summary. Overall, our review of training techniques and policies in relation to the four distinct processes has yielded clear insights about how intercultural training could be improved. The most widely used current method—classroom lessons about country differences in values—can perpetuate stereotypes and convey characterological models of cultural behavior that fail to appreciate the role of social norms. Some methods dismissed as impractical, such as training through simulations, could be designed on the basis of recent research to foster experiential learning through conditioning. Another insight is that training needs to take different forms at different points in the learning journey. Studying facts is a great way to start but needs to be replaced by forms of training that focus on reasoning, social learning, and conditioning. Each is fostered by different learning conditions and different forms of instruction and feedback, so understanding the targeted learning processes needs to guide the design of training policies.

Conclusion

Promoting intercultural competency requires evidence-based assessment and training. This article began by reviewing evidence from survey research about antecedents of immigrant and expatriate acculturation, adjustment, and effectiveness. From this assessment research we drew implications for selection policies. The second half of the article reviewed evidence from laboratory research on intercultural learning processes. These insights about learning processes help to elucidate the findings about predictors of immigrant and expatriate adjustment.

The immigration literature finds that adjustment is better in settler societies with longer histories of immigration. This may reflect the availability of role models for social learning. Yet immigrants acculturate slower in an ethnic enclave community. This may reflect heritage-culture priming or reduced feedback from locals for conditioning.

The expatriate literature finds that different personality traits predict different kinds of adjustment. *Extraversion* may help because sociability enables more interactions and more feedback. *Openness to experience* may help because curiosity begets the observations that attributional reasoning requires. *Agreeableness* may help because interpersonal flexibility helps adapt behavior in social learning. The negative effect of *emotional instability* may reflect vulnerability to the downward spiral of culture shock. These are only hypotheses, but testing them would be useful in learning how to tailor training based on personality.

Another key finding about expatriates was that their adjustment was not driven by general mental ability, *g*. On the traditional view of what it means to learn another culture (language and history classes), this is surprising. However, in the view from CI research and our delineation of learning processes, it becomes understandable. If cultural learning largely comes through implicit processes, then it would not depend on the explicit processes enabled by *g*.

The convergence between findings from survey research on assessment and laboratory research on training strengthens the case for basing policy on research evidence. Assessment of personal dimensions relevant to immigrant and expatriate adaptation has led to findings that challenge conventional wisdom about traits that matter most. Learning research suggests that some of the most prevalent training techniques are quite limited and some little-used techniques have untapped potential. Given the rising importance of intercultural proficiency, countries and organizations would be well served by evidence-informed policies to promote cultural competence. Finally, research should guide not only policy strategy but also policy implementation, such as the instruments used to assess personal attributes and the simulators used in training programs. The more closely that science and practice merge, the more they learn from each other.

Authors' Note

The views, opinions, and findings contained in this article are solely those of the authors and do not purport to represent the views of the U.S. Army Research Institute, Columbia University, National University of Singapore, or Professional Examination Service.

Acknowledgment

We thank Jay Goodwin and Jennifer Klafehn for helpful conversations about these ideas. Also, we thank Cameron McClure for research and writing assistance.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: This research was partially supported by Army Research Institute Grant W911NF-13-1-0113 awarded to Michael W. Morris.

Note

1. *Assimilation* means identification and engagement solely with the host culture; *separation*, solely with the heritage culture; *integration*, with both cultures; and *marginalization*, with neither culture.

References

Ang, S., Van Dyne, L., Koh, C., Ng, K. Y., Templer, K. J., Tay, C., & Chandrasekar, N. A. (2007). Cultural intelligence: Its measurement and effects on cultural judgment and decision making, cultural adaptation and task performance. *Management and Organization Review*, *3*, 335-371.

Anguiano-Carrasco, C., MacCann, C., Geiger, M., Seybert, J. M., & Roberts, R. D. (in press). Development of a forced-choice measure of typical-performance emotional intelligence. *Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment*.

Baker, J. A., & Hamilton, L. H. (2006). *The Iraq study group report: The way forward—A new approach*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.

Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychological Review*, *84*, 191-215.

Bhawuk, D. P. (1998). The role of culture theory in cross-cultural training: A multimethod study of culture-specific, culture-general, and culture theory-based assimilators. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *29*, 630-655.

Birman, D., Trickett, E., & Buchanan, R. M. (2005). A tale of two cities: Replication of a study on the acculturation and adaptation of immigrant adolescents from the former Soviet Union in a different community context. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *35*, 83-101.

Brislin, R. W., & Yoshida, T. (1994). *Intercultural communication training: An introduction* (Vol. 2). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Brown, A., & Maydeu-Olivares, A. (2011). Item response modeling of forced-choice questionnaires. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, *71*, 460-502.

Buchtel, E. E. (2014). Cultural sensitivity or cultural stereotyping? Positive and negative effects of a cultural psychology class. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *39*, 40-52.

Chao, M. M., Zhang, Z. X., & Chiu, C. (2010). Adherence to perceived norms across cultural boundaries: The role of need for cognitive closure and ingroup identification. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, *13*, 69-89.

Chartrand, T. L., & Bargh, J. A. (1999). The chameleon effect: The perception–behavior link and social interaction. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *76*, 893-910.

Christian, M. S., Edwards, B. D., & Bradley, J. C. (2010). Situational judgment tests: Constructs assessed and a meta-analysis of their criterion-related validities. *Personnel Psychology*, *63*, 83-117.

Chua, R. Y., Morris, M. W., & Mor, S. (2012). Collaborating across cultures: Cultural metacognition and affect-based trust in creative collaboration. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *118*, 116-131.

Drasgow, F., Stark, S., Chernyshenko, O. S., Nye, C. D., Hulin, C., & White, L. A. (2012). *Development of the Tailored Adaptive Personality Assessment System (TAPAS) to support army selection and classification decisions*. Fort Belvoir, VA: US Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences.

Earley, P. C., & Ang, S. A. (2003). *Cultural intelligence: Individual interactions across cultures*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Eberly, M. B., Holley, E. C., Johnson, M. D., & Mitchell, T. R. (2011). Beyond internal and external: A dyadic theory of relational attributions. *Academy of Management Review*, *36*, 731-753.

Erez, M., Lisak, A., Harush, R., Glikson, E., Nouri, R., & Shokef, E. (2013). Going global: Developing management students' cultural intelligence and global identity in virtual culturally diverse teams. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, *12*, 330-355.

Fiedler, F. E., Mitchell, T., & Triandis, H. C. (1971). The culture assimilator: An approach to cross-cultural training. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *55*, 95-102.

Fischer, R. (2011). Cross-cultural training effects on cultural essentialism beliefs and cultural intelligence. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *35*, 767-775.

Fu, J. H. Y., Chiu, C. Y., Morris, M. W., & Young, M. J. (2007). Spontaneous inferences from cultural cues: Varying responses of cultural insiders and outsiders. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *38*, 58-75.

Fu, J. H. Y., Morris, M. W., & Hong, Y. Y. (2014). *A transformative taste of home: Home-culture primes foster expatriates' adjustment through bolstering relational security*, Working paper, City University of Hong Kong.

Gabrenya, W. K., Jr., Moukarzel, R. G., Pomerance, M. H., Griffith, R. L., & Deaton, J. (2011). *A validation study of the Defense Language Office Framework for Cultural Competence and an evaluation of available assessment instruments* (Technical Report #13–12). Patrick AFB, FL: Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute Press.

Gregersen, H. B., & Black, J. S. (1990). A multifaceted approach to expatriate retention in international assignments. *Group & Organization Management*, *15*, 461-485.

Hong, Y. Y., Morris, M. W., Chiu, C. Y., & Benet-Martinez, V. (2000). Multicultural minds: A dynamic constructivist approach to culture and cognition. *American Psychologist*, *55*, 709-720.

Huhns, M., Vidal, J., Ruvinksy, A., Mendoza, B., & Langevin, S. (2006, November). *Cultural tactical advisor for warfighters in the urban battlespace*. Proceedings of the 25th Army Science Conference, Orlando, FL.

Jackson, J. J., Wood, D., Bogg, T., Walton, K. E., Harms, P. D., & Roberts, B. W. (2010). What do conscientious people do? Development and validation of the Behavioral Indicators of Conscientiousness (BIC). *Journal of Research in Personality*, *44*, 501-511.

Kitayama, S. (2002). Culture and basic psychological processes—Toward a system view of culture: Comment on Oyserman et al. (2002). *Psychological Bulletin*, *128*, 89-96.

Kosic, A., Kruglanski, A. W., Pierro, A., & Mannetti, L. (2004). The social cognition of immigrants' acculturation: Effects of the need for closure and the reference group at entry. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *86*, 796-813.

Kraimer, M. L., Wayne, S. J., & Jaworski, R. A. A. (2001). Sources of support and expatriate performance: The mediating role of expatriate adjustment. *Personnel Psychology*, *54*, 71-99.

Kristensen, N., & Johansson, E. (2008). New evidence on cross-country differences in job satisfaction using anchoring vignettes. *Labour Economics*, *15*, 96-117.

Leung, A. K. Y., Lee, S., & Chiu, C. (2013). Meta-knowledge of culture promotes cultural competence. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *44*, 992-1006.

Lii, S. Y., & Wong, S. Y. (2008). The antecedents of overseas adjustment and commitment of expatriates. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *19*, 296-313.

Linck, J. A., Kroll, J. F., & Sunderman, G. (2009). Losing access to the native language while immersed in a second language: Evidence for the role of inhibition in second-language learning. *Psychological Science*, *20*, 1507-1515.

Lipnevich, A. A., MacCann, C., & Roberts, R. D. (2013). Assessing noncognitive constructs in education: A review of traditional and innovative approaches. In D. H. Saklofske, C. B. Reynolds, & V. L. Schwean (Eds.), *Oxford handbook of child psychological assessment* (pp. 750-772). Cambridge, MA: Oxford University Press.

Loewenstein, J., Thompson, L., & Gentner, D. (2003). Analogical learning in negotiation teams: Comparing cases promotes learning and transfer. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, *2*, 119-127.

MacCann, C., & Roberts, R. D. (2008). New paradigms for assessing emotional intelligence: Theory and data. *Emotion*, *8*, 540-551.

Mackey, R. (2004, December 12). The Phraselator. *The New York Times*, p. 86.

Mol, S. T., Born, M. P. H., Willemsen, M. E., & Van der Molen, H. T. (2005). Predicting expatriate job performance for selection purposes—A quantitative review. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *36*, 590-620.

Morris, M. W. (2014). Values as the essence of culture: Foundation or fallacy? *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *45*, 14-24.

Morris, M. W., & Murphy, G. L. (1990). Converging operations on a basic level in event taxonomies. *Memory & Cognition*, *18*, 407-418.

Nguyen, A.-M. D., & Benet-Martínez, V. (2013). Biculturalism and adjustment: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *44*, 122-159.

Osland, J. S., & Bird, A. (2000). Beyond sophisticated stereotyping: Cultural sensemaking in context. *The Academy of Management Executive*, *14*(1), 65-77.

Roberts, R. D., & Lipnevich, A. A. (2011). From general intelligence to multiple intelligences: Meanings, models, and measures. In K. R. Harris, S. Graham, & T. Urdan (Eds.), *APA educational psychology handbook* (Vol. 2, pp. 33-57). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Ross, L. (1977). The intuitive psychologist and his shortcomings: Distortions in the attribution process. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, *10*, 173-220.

Salovey, P., & Mayer, J. D. (1990). Emotional intelligence. *Imagination, Cognition and Personality*, *9*, 185-211.

Sanchez-Burks, J., Bartel, C. A., & Blount, S. (2009). Performance in intercultural interactions at work: Cross-cultural differences in response to behavioral mirroring. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *94*, 216-223.

Savani, K., Morris, M. W., Naidu, N. V. R., Kumar, S., & Berlia, N. V. (2011). Cultural conditioning: Understanding interpersonal accommodation in India and the United States in terms of the modal characteristics of interpersonal influence situations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *100*, 84-102.

Schmitt, N., Oswald, F. L., Kim, B. H., Gillespie, M. A., & Ramsay, L. J. (2003). Impact of elaboration on socially desirable responding and the validity of biodata measures. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *88*, 979-988.

Schwartz, S. H. (2014). Rethinking the concept and measurement of societal culture in light of empirical findings. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *45*, 5-13.

Secondary School Admission Test Board. (2014). *Think Tank on the future of assessment*. Princeton, NJ: SSAT.

Shaffer, M. A., Harrison, D. A., & Gilley, K. M. (1999). Dimensions, determinants, and differences in the expatriate adjustment process. *Journal of International Business Studies*, *30*, 557-581.

Shaffer, M. A., Harrison, D. A., Gregersen, H., Black, J. S., & Ferzandi, L. A. (2006). You can take it with you: Individual differences and expatriate effectiveness. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *91*, 109-125.

Small, D. A., Loewenstein, G., & Slovic, P. (2007). Sympathy and callousness: The impact of deliberative thought on donations to identifiable and statistical victims. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *102*, 143-153.

Takeuchi, R., Shay, J. P., & Jiatao, L. (2008). When does decision autonomy increase expatriate managers' adjustment? An empirical test. *Academy of Management Journal*, *51*(1), 45-60.

Tan, J., & Chua, R. (2003). Training and developing cultural intelligence. In P. C. Earley (Ed.), *Cultural intelligence: Individual interactions across cultures* (pp. 258-303). Stanford, CA: Stanford Business Books.

Thomas, D. C., & Ravlin, E. C. (1995). Responses of employees to cultural adaptation by a foreign manager. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *80*, 133-146.

Ward, C., Fischer, R., Lam, F. S. Z., & Hall, L. (2009). The convergent, discriminant, and incremental validity of scores on a self-report measure of cultural intelligence. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, *69*, 85-105.

Zhang, S., Morris, M. W., Cheng, C. Y., & Yap, A. J. (2013). Heritage-culture images disrupt immigrants' second-language processing through triggering first-language interference. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *110*, 11272-11277.

Zou, X., Tam, K. P., Morris, M. W., Lee, S. L., Lau, I. Y. M., & Chiu, C. Y. (2009). Culture as common sense: Perceived consensus versus personal beliefs as mechanisms of cultural influence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *97*, 579-597.