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The world is flat: an intercultural experiential exercise in business communication.

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The World is Flat: An Intercultural Experiential Exercise in Business Communication

Susan Luck, Pfeiffer University, with Belem Barbosa, University of Aveiro ; Isabella Crawford, Robert Gordon University, and Stephanie Swartz, University of Mainz Applied Sciences

In 2016, the Fortune 500 earned two-thirds of the US GDP and 37% of the global GDP, with 28 trillion in revenue and 1.5 billion in profits.

These companies employ 67 million people in 34 countries.

The number of US workers employed by foreign-owned companies rising 22% over an eight-year period; compared to the average of a 3.6% percent increase in employment in U.S.-owned firms (Pew Research Trust 2017).

According to the Society of Human Resources Management,

- a global mindset is crucial, no matter where an employee is located. In the past, an organization's leaders, managers and employees needed to understand a culture only if they were going to another country to live. Now, employees work virtually across borders via technology, they work with a variety of ethnicities at home, and they interact with a globally dispersed customer base. So a global mindset and skills are necessary for all employees (para 2.)

And to compete and be successful in these world businesses, no matter at what level of employment, employees need intercultural communication competency skills.

However...

- the 2018 Jobs Outlook Survey issued by the U.S. National Association of Colleges and Employers found, among other results, that the percentage of graduating seniors and young employees believed that they were proficient in global/intercultural fluency was much higher than the percentage view of employers (Bauer-Wolff 2018)
- In other words, teaching theory doesn't translate into competency.

What we did

- Who we are
- https://drive.google.com/file/d/121_XStuQpzL3OHw36XuFA_VPD5u5MDYn/view?usp=sharing
- [IMG_3739.MOV](#)
- Who are students are:
- In the US: working adult MBA students
- In Germany, working adult business UG students
- In Scotland, working adult marketing students
- In Portugal, working adult marketing students

Students were to do the following:

- As a group, choose a company. Then analyze its online presence; what message does it send? What tools are they using? How effective are these tools?
- Then they were to meet at least three times to plan and prepare a group-written document and presentation. Included in the presentation were international communication challenges

The real learning outcome, however, was

To learn how to communicate with people from another culture.

What we did:

- Three phases: initial team building, research and sharing, combination project presentation
- Student work focused on potential difficulties that companies experienced on the foreign market. These difficulties could encompass brand recognition, human resource policies or competitors
- Presentation included communication analysis, marketing suggestions, and advice for HR

Before the exercise, we measured..

- Used Chin and Starosa's Intercultural sensitivity scale as pre-exercise survey
- Measured five factors: Interaction Engagement, Respect of Cultural Differences, Interaction Confidence, Interaction Enjoyment and Interaction Attentiveness

After the exercise, we measured again.

- Increased sensitivity to subtle clues in cultural communication
- Slight increase in recognizing that students needed to watch behavior to interpret words
- Negative effect on willingness to interact with those from another culture
- Negative effect on willingness to interact with those from their same culture

Yet we also found

- Strong increase in enjoyment in interacting with people from another culture
- Strong decrease in fear around interacting with people from another culture
- Strong decrease in fear of one's ability to communicate with people from another culture
- Strong increase in willingness to try to convey meaning in a manner outside of one's own comfort zone.

Successful?

- Yes, but needs further study.
- much was just timing or composition of teams?
- Were the presentations that were live and transatlantic seen as more beneficial and real in comparison to the online ones?