

International Immersion In The Classroom: A New Paradigm

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ABSTRACT

Business, language and cultural eccentricities are the cornerstones of nation-state sovereignty. Cultural diversity presents a myriad of challenges for academia and business. Cross-cultural frameworks serve to transcend barriers and promote classroom learning to an immersion category. In this paper, notable cross-cultural frameworks are explored, including the Kluckhohn-Strodtbeck, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, Hofstede and Lewis. The first three of these theoretical models will be familiar to most. The Lewis model transcends the first three, and is fully explained in Lewis' newest book, "The Cultural Imperative". Grounded in this theory, Richard Lewis developed a cultural assessment exercise, Cultureactive, which identifies individual cultural profiles. Richard Lewis' Cultureactive may be linked to an enriched experience for students of International Business, or any class that has an international component. The transition from Cultureactive to InterCultural Edge [ICE] has been a remarkable journey. ICE is a collaborative initiative between the Fuqua School of Business, Duke CIBER, Richard Lewis Communications, and Cultureactive.com. ICE is web-based product that teaches cross-cultural awareness in business settings by focusing on individual assessments. This allows the executive/student to compare personal results with team results and national cultural profiles. Both research and teaching consortia have been assembled to establish the research validation for ICE as well as develop a certified teaching network. The potential of the Richard Lewis model may be realized by fostering the development of promising cross-cultural research and enabling students to experience Cultureactive today and ICE tomorrow.

INTRODUCTION

The competitive landscape is increasingly driven by globalization and enabled by language and culture. Consistent with the International College Teaching Methods and Styles Conference theme, this paper builds on internationalizing the classroom by capitalizing on cross-cultural resources. Teaching international in the classroom permeates all disciplines. Central to this paper is one of the more recent cross-cultural frameworks, i.e. Lewis' model which can be used to stretch the international mindset of students. Thus, capitalizing upon the experientially-based Cultureactive and integrating this with the theoretically-based InterCultural Edge [ICE] enriches the learning outcomes for academicians and business professionals alike.

Several theoretical models for studying cultural differences are explored, including the Kluckhohn-Strodtbeck, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, Hofstede and Lewis. The first three of these theoretical frameworks will be familiar to most. The Lewis model transcends the previous three, and is fully explained in Lewis' more recent book, *The Cultural Imperative*. Grounded in experience, interviews and observations, Richard Lewis developed a cultural assessment exercise, Cultureactive, which identifies individual cultural profiles. It is this model which facilitates international immersion in the classroom.

INTERNATIONAL IS IMPORTANT

From a business perspective, understanding international business in terms of country/culture/language differences is an important consideration when competing in another culture or with competitors from another country. Countries and cultures vary because of differences in social structure, religion, language, education, economic and

political philosophies. The evaluation of firm performance reflects country-specific financial measures. The knowledge of cross-cultural differences is the cornerstone for success in each of the following areas:

- M&A, JVs, Alliances
- Partnerships between academia and the professional community
- Market research
- Human resource management
- Managerial practices
- Local customs
- Supply chains
- Impact of Internet
- Leadership in times of increasing globalization
- International Immersion In The Classroom

IMPLICATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS

Hill [2003] notes three dimensions when considering the implications for international business:

Importance Of Cross-Cultural Literacy

Recognition of cultural norms and value systems embraces all aspects of an international firm's operations: How deals are negotiated; appropriate incentive pay; structure of the organization; name of the product; promotional strategies; relationship between management and labor; etc.

Linkage Between Culture And Ethics In Decision Making

Some ethical principles are culturally bounded. The *When in Rome* approach to business ethics may be dangerous. What is common in one country might not be ethical in another.

Relationship Between Culture And National Competitive Advantage

For example, does the culture foster innovative, cost-efficient competitors? Does the culture support a developed educational system, individualism versus collectivism, social stratification, values that stress the virtue of hard work, one major linguistic group, social harmony, and a market-driven production system?

The study of each one of these dimensions and their interrelationships is central to cultivating a global mindset. However, it is Hill's first dimension, the importance of cross-cultural literacy, which underscores the emergence of various cross-cultural frameworks for studying cultural differences. Through these frameworks, we build understanding and capabilities that lead to core competencies and ultimately competitive advantage on a global/local scale.

HISTORY

The culmination of six years of intense development is the current transition from Cultureactive to ICE. In 1999, I led a Study Abroad to Great Britain, where I discovered and purchased *Gulliver* [2000] for \$400, a precursor to Cultureactive and a fundamental cross-cultural learning tool. When I shared my find with Duke, Jeff Russell collaborated with Richard Lewis Communications to facilitate the innovation of Cultureactive, the next generation. From a reliability/validity perspective, ICE is the final frontier for academicians and practitioners. Currently, research is being conducted at Fuqua, Georgia State, and across the nation in an effort to provide the validation for ICE that is necessary for rigorous academic purposes.

OVERVIEW

A myriad of supporters are facilitating the evolution to ICE. In addition to the initiative assumed by Duke, there are 13 CIBERS participating in this process. This global project includes Project Academic Advisors, Teaching Consortium Advisors, such as me, a Core Research Team, and a Cross-National Research Team. The Research and Teaching Consortia are enabled by the core groups of specialists. My role as a Teaching Consortium Advisor is to provide feedback to those interested in using this cross-cultural assessment tool as a cornerstone in their courses/consulting work. I share my experiences as well as provide any comments/suggestions. I have used the Cultureactive assessment tool in my International Business and Study Abroad classes with positive feedback from participants. The remainder of this paper draws attention to the evolution of cross-cultural frameworks, culminating with the conversion from Cultureactive to ICE, the international immersion tool.

FRAMEWORKS FOR STUDYING CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

The following models are explored:

- Kluckhohn-Strodtbeck Framework - Examined cultural differences along six dimensions.
- Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner - Identified seven fundamental dimensions of culture.
- Hofstede - Developed a framework for studying cultural differences along four dimensions. Later, he added a fifth dimension.
- Lewis - Classified the world's cultures according to three categories.

Kluckhohn-Strodtbeck Framework

- Control - Environmental determinism vs. individual control?
- Focus - Past, present, future implications?
- Trust - Individuals controllable and not trustworthy vs. responsible and trustworthy?
- Quantity vs. Quality - Accomplishments and carefree living vs. spiritual and contemplative?
- Responsibility - Individual vs. group responsibility for personal well-being?
- Private vs. Public - Activities conducted largely in private or in public?

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner Framework

Universalism (rules) vs. Particularism (relationships)

- Universalism - Universality of what is right and good.
 - Greater attention to abstract societal codes
 - Rules apply to all
 - One right way
 - Trust those who stick to the contract
- Particularism - Particularist cultures emphasize unique circumstances, specific obligations, with less attention to abstract societal codes.
 - Rules apply unequally- it depends on friendships, people, and circumstances.
 - Trust those who respect different situations.

Individualism vs. Communitarianism

- More important to focus on individuals so that they can contribute to the community, vs. focusing on the community since it is shared by many individuals.

Neutral vs. Emotional

- Neutral
 - Objective, detached and efficient
 - Feelings are controlled and may only be expressed according to group norms.
 - Emotions not expressed
 - Trust- Don't trust passionate people.
- Emotional
 - Affective, human and forthcoming
 - Feelings are freely expressed. This is encouraged by group norms.
 - Emotions expressed
 - Trust- Don't trust detached people

Specific vs. Diffuse

- Specific
 - Contract-oriented, focused on the deal
 - Direct- meetings and feedback
 - Involved with others in specific contexts
 - Distinct professional/personal roles
- Diffuse
 - Relationship-oriented focused on personal contact
 - Indirect- meetings (take time) and feedback
 - Involved with others in many areas
 - Blended professional/personal roles

Achievement vs. Ascription

- Achievement
 - Recognition and status is based on personal accomplishments and past record.
 - Achievements, competence, skills and knowledge
 - Titles used when relevant
 - Challenge decisions on substance
- Ascription
 - Status based on personal attributes -birth, kinship, connections, gender, or age.
 - Who you are- social ranking, education, seniority.
 - Titles used extensively
 - Challenge decisions by seniors
 - Attitudes about Time
 - Timing of achievements
 - Present performance and future plans vs. past accomplishments.

- Motion of Time - Monochronic meaning time is a sequence of disparate events, passing in a straight line.
 - Schedules before relationships. Polychronic meaning that time moves in a circle, so that the past, present and future are considered simultaneously.
 - Relationships before schedules. Significant implications for strategy, investment, and HR.
- Attitudes Regarding the Environment. Motivation and Values. Internally vs. Externally derived. More Powerful - Individual vs. the World
 - Internal Control
 - Nature and environment should be controlled
 - Win/Lose
 - Focus on self
 - External Control
 - Harmony with environment and nature
 - Win/Win
 - Focus on others

Hofstede Framework

Power Distance Index Degree of inequality between people, i.e., physical and intellectual capabilities.

- High Power Distance cultures exist in countries that allow inequalities to develop into inequalities of power and wealth.
- Low Power Distance cultures exist in societies that minimize such inequalities.

Uncertainty Avoidance Index and Comfort with Risk Extent to which cultures socialize their members into accepting ambiguity and uncertainty.

- High Uncertainty Avoidance cultures place a premium on job security, career positioning, retirement benefits, etc.
- Low Uncertainty Avoidance cultures are more likely to take risks and are less resistant to change.

Individualism/Collectivism Index Identifies whether a culture holds individuals or the group responsible for the welfare of each member.

- Individualistic Cultures place responsibility for decisions on the individual
- Individual freedoms and achievement are valued
- Decisions-quick and individual
- Nurture close family
- Higher status-business alone
- Collectivist Cultures share responsibility for decisions among the group.
- Extended families and group priorities are valued.
- Decisions-slow, consensual and consultative
- Group nurtures individual
- Higher status-business collectively

- Masculinity Index/Task Orientation/Quantity vs. Quality of Life. Examined the relationship between gender and work roles.
- Masculine Cultures (Quantity of Life)- emphasized traditional masculine values, i.e. achievement, power, wealth, and status.
- Feminine Cultures (Quality of Life)- emphasized cultivation of relationships, relaxed lifestyles, concern with the general welfare.
- Long-term/Short-term Orientation. This dimension was added later.

Significant in their contributions to better understanding cross-cultural differences in terms of business, language and culture, these notable frameworks have their limitations. For example, Hofstede's is the most widely cited work, yet his results must be interpreted with caution. While his research is based on 115,000 questionnaires in over 50 countries, his assumption is a one-to-one relationship between culture and the nation-state. This is not necessarily true. In addition, survey respondents were from a single industry (computer) and a single company (IBM). Thus generalizations may be more limited.

Lewis Framework And Cultureactive

The Lewis model transcends these earlier works because the unit of analysis becomes the individual rather than a culture or nation. Perhaps Richard Lewis' most famous work is his book, *When Cultures Collide: Managing Successfully Across Cultures*. His more recent work, *The Cultural Imperative: Global Trends in the 21st Century*, incorporates his model of analyzing cultures in terms of:

- Linear-actives - Cultures which plan, schedule, organize, pursue one thing at a time (e.g. Germans, Swiss).
- Multi-actives - Cultures which are lively, loquacious, multitask, prioritize according to the importance or thrill of the event (e.g. Italians, Latin Americans, and Arabs).
- Reactives - Cultures that prioritize courtesy and respect, listen quietly, and react carefully to proposals (e.g. Chinese, Japanese and Finns).

Grounded in this trilogy, Lewis developed Cultureactive, a cross-cultural assessment tool that identifies personal cultural profiles. In addition to facilitating communication between individuals of different cultural profiles, the cultural capital of a group or organization may be assessed such that the commonalities between cultural horizons, i.e. mindsets, may be exploited. The implications for cross-cultural negotiations, cognitive processes, leadership approach, listening habits, communication patterns, and managerial styles are boundless.

Richard Lewis' contributions have been made through the lens of practitioner and teacher of effective cross-cultural communication. An experiential model, the Lewis framework is based on forty-plus years of international consulting and some 32,000 interviews. Lewis spent much of his life learning languages and observing communication styles. Intuitively, his model has a sort of practical validity to it. However, the ICE research project led by Duke, invokes a more rigorous methodology and applies strong psychometric properties to the Lewis framework, resulting in a more powerful tool for practitioners and academicians.

InterCultural Edge [ICE]

The transition from Cultureactive to InterCultural Edge [ICE] has been a remarkable journey. ICE is a collaborative initiative between the Fuqua School of Business, Duke CIBER, Richard Lewis Communications, and Cultureactive.com. ICE is web-based product that teaches cross-cultural awareness in business settings by focusing on individual assessments. This allows the executive/student to compare personal results with team results and national cultural profiles. Both research and teaching consortia have been assembled to establish the research validation for ICE as well as develop a certified teaching network.

The research validation process is being implemented according to a Three-Prong attack:

- Conceptual Reconfiguration
- Rescaling
- Contextual Considerations

CONCEPTUAL RECONFIGURATION

The Conceptual Reconfiguration has been spearheaded by the ABC InterCultural Edge research team: Wendi Adair (Cornell University), Nancy Buchan (University of Wisconsin) and Xiao-Ping Chen (University of Washington). They identified five core constructs from Cultureactive as the theoretical grounding for the Lewis model. These five core Lewis constructs were linked to established theories such as Hall's [1973] high-low context of communication, monochronic vs. polychronic and Trompenaar's [1998] universalism-particularism, specific-diffuse involvement, sequential vs. synchronous, neutral vs. affective.

Items were modified and/or added as required, in the translation to ICE for improved validity and reliability testing. New items are based in the works of Bearden, Money and Nevins [2003], Holtgraves [1997], Thomas and Kilmann [1974], Tinsley [1998], Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner [1998], Yamagishi and Yamagishi [1994]. Importantly, the ABC researchers are not comparing Cultureactive or ICE to Hofstede or to his individualism/collectivism dimension.

In reclassifying the terminology, the ICE assessment tool can pose questions such as:

- What constitutes a Linear-Active culture, Multi-Active culture, and Reactive culture?
- Compare each country's profile against the typical profile for a linear-active, multi-active, or reactive culture and locate its position in the Triangle.
- Compare each individual's profile against the typical profile for a linear-active, multi-active, or reactive culture and locate his/her position in the Triangle.

The transition to ICE is well underway with the conceptual reconfiguration almost completed and development of a revised instrument, now grounded in theory.

RESCALING

Cultureactive used a nominal scale, which cannot distinguish statistical significance. ICE developed a linear additive scale, which adds values for multiple items. The use of continuous measures is inclusive rather than exclusive, so that items are included, not excluded.

CONTEXTUAL CONSIDERATIONS

The following are some contextual considerations:

- Businesses are more similar than different.
- Business is a more important determinant than previously considered.
- Business-persons deal with issues/problems more like a Linear-Active regardless of their culture.
- English is the language of business.
- Thus, English may be understood by a disproportionate number of business-persons.
- If one takes the questionnaire in a different language/culture- is there a difference?
- Does language matter?
- Is Linear-Active an arbitrary classification?
- If ICE is translated into Korean, does it make a difference?
- Self-selection considerations

- Business-persons
- MBA students

CONCLUSION

Business, language, and cultural eccentricities are the cornerstones of nation-state sovereignty. Diversity such as this presents a myriad of challenges for academia and business. Cross-cultural frameworks serve to transcend these barriers and promote classroom learning to an immersion category.

This paper reviewed several of the more notable cross-cultural frameworks, and then focused on the newest model developed by Richard Lewis, called Cultureactive, and linked it to an enriched experience for students of International Business, or any class that has an international component. CIBER at Duke University was inspired by the potential of this experiential model, and transformed it into the theoretically-grounded InterCultural Edge (ICE). Duke University has commissioned a CIBER Research and Teaching Consortia to conduct the research validation for ICE and establish a certified teaching network.

The conceptual reconfiguration of Cultureactive to ICE is more than the categorization of countries and individuals into Lewis' three categories. The Lewis instrument mirrors advances in cross-cultural research which had demonstrated cultural orientation as a moderating influence on work habits, negotiating styles, cognitive processes, etc. What is revealed are linkages between the characteristics of people and their work behavior and the extent to which these constructs (linear-active, multi-active, reactive) can help us predict people's behavior and facilitate communication, understanding and learning in classroom situations. ICE is the result of the monumental effort to formalize the theoretical foundation of the Lewis model.

RESEARCH AND TEACHING CONSORTIA

It is hoped that the ICE project will be used as a model of research and teaching collaboration that may be implemented by business schools, corporations, and government-sponsored groups such as the CIBERs. Capitalizing upon an established network of global partners, such as Professor Arie Lewin's Japanese, Chinese, Korean, and French colleagues is paramount to the success of such an undertaking. The potential of the Richard Lewis model will also be realized by fostering the development of promising cross-cultural research and enabling students to experience Cultureactive today and ICE tomorrow.

This transition from Cultureactive to InterCultural Edge [ICE] has been enormously facilitated by support from 14 CIBER Institutions, colleagues in academia- business and other disciplines, and global business partners. The following table lists many of these sponsors.

SPONSORING CIBER's:

- Duke University
- University of Memphis
- Georgia Tech
- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- Michigan State
- University of South Carolina
- Purdue University
- University of Florida
- UCLA
- University of Pennsylvania
- University of Colorado at Denver
- University of Washington
- University of Kansas

- University of Wisconsin

Project Academic Advisors

- Professor Kwok Leung, City University of Hong Kong
- Professor Daphna Oyserman, University of Michigan
- Professor Neal Ashkanasy, University of Queensland

Teaching Consortium Advisors

- Professor Mark Brown, Fuqua School of Business, Duke University
- Professor Rick Larrick, Fuqua School of Business, Duke University
- Professor Cade Massey, Fuqua School of Business, Duke University
- Professor Marta Szabo White, J. Mack Robinson College of Business, Georgia State University
- Mr. Michael Gates, Richard Lewis Communications

Core Research Team

- Professor Wendi Adair, Johnson School, Cornell University
- Professor Nancy Buchan, University of Wisconsin School of Business
- Professor Xiao-Ping Chen, University of Washington Business School
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Cross-National Research Team

- **Korea** - Professor Won-woo Park, Seoul National University
- **France** - Professor David Courpasson, EM Lyon Graduate School of Management and Professor Françoise Dany
- **China** - Professor Kwok Leung, City University of Hong Kong
- **Japan** - Professor Tomoaki Sakano, Graduate School of Commerce, Waseda University

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NOTES