

FOSTERING SKILLS OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION AS A PREREQUISITE OF CAREER SUCCESS

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A specialist can't evaluate the problems and peculiarities of his or her work without having been exposed to a different culture and draw the distinction between the alien and home-grown professional spheres. Therefore collaborative intelligence coupled with cultural awareness appears to be instrumental for gaining professional expertise. The article pinpoints some ways to teach students how to attain the synergy of organization and assimilate principles of intercultural communication.

Success of any business venture is to a great extent dependent on the synergy of the company, which means a whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Therefore a psychological factor which underpins organization development is that of intelligence, to be more specific collaborative intelligence of its members.

One of the most complicated issues to be tackled in collaborative processes is bridging the gap between different viewpoints, approaches, cultural assumptions, etc. The problem in question is accentuated for international companies that are bound to deal with cross-cultural differences of their partners.

To make a proficient cross-cultural communicator it is imperative not only to tailor your style to the needs of an interlocutor but to synthesise multiple insights from anthropology, psychology, linguistics, pedagogy and organized behavior alike.

There are various ways to introduce students to principles of intercultural communication and familiarizing them with methods and concepts of the target culture with regard to their profession:

- Case studies which exemplify manifestations of cultural behavioral patterns
- Overview of the major areas where cultures most often clash
- Reading articles which can be summarized in the notion 'As others see us'
- Group discussions of various stereotypes and their origin
- Watching documentary films with a view to assess similarities and differences in cultures and develop strategies for dealing with cross-cultural issues
- Self-assessment tests which make students aware of their own cultural moorings.

The integral part of cross-cultural training is investigation of pitfalls cross-cultural differences may present and examining the ways to bridge the gap between them. The chief cultural dimensions which can be effectively employed in analysis are as follows:

- Emphasis on individualism or collectivism
- Cultural assumptions about gender roles
- Concept and management of time
- Hot or cool expression of emotions
- Deal-focused vs relationship focused interaction
- Internal or external locus of control
- Attitude towards authority (high-power or low-power distance)

Understanding cross-cultural differences of this kind isn't just a matter of idle curiosity. It

can be applied to real situations of cross-cultural communication when it is necessary to adjust your interactive style to that of a stranger. Furthermore, cross-cultural analysis on the part of a student contributes to his or her values clarification as they unconsciously make a choice in favour of one or another cultural pattern delineated in the comparison.