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Explicit and Implicit Cultural Difference in Cultural Learning Among Long-term Expatriates

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ABSTRACT

FACULTY OF LAW, ARTS & SOCIAL SCIENCES
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EXPLICIT AND IMPLICIT CULTURAL DIFFERENCE IN CULTURAL LEARNING AMONG LONG-TERM EXPATIATES

By Joseph Paul Shaules

Globalization has meant increased contact between cultural communities throughout the world. This contact is at times relatively shallow – involving, for example, tourism or short-term travel – and at others relatively deep, as during study-abroad programs, expatriate job assignments, or immigration. Whether shallow or deep, intercultural experiences create adaptive demands for the sojourner. This 'cultural learning' may involve explicit demands, such as figuring out a subway system, or relatively deeper challenges, such as learning a new language, adapting one's communication style, or understanding a different cultural world view.

This study examines the nature of these shallow and deep intercultural learning experiences. It seeks to answer the questions: 1) How can we describe the depth and intensity of different cultural learning experiences? and 2) How can we use this increased understanding to inform intercultural education? The methodology involves interviewing expatriates, some of whom have relatively isolated and shallow experiences abroad, and others who have involved themselves more deeply in their new environment. Analysis focuses on comparing the level of intercultural sensitivity of sojourners who have had varying depths of intercultural experiences. The depth of sojourners' cultural learning is examined from the point of view of relationships with cultural hosts as well as foreign language ability. The level of intercultural sensitivity is examined using the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (M. J. Bennett, 1993).

Results show that a sojourner's reaction to hidden cultural difference is key to understanding intercultural learning, and that deeper intercultural contact can create greater intercultural empathy, but can also increase resistance to cultural difference. Results also show that while competing models of intercultural learning providing effective conceptual frameworks for understanding different elements of intercultural learning, no existing model incorporates the sojourners' reactions to implicit and explicit cultural difference. A new model of intercultural learning is presented which incorporates these elements, and which is intended for use in designing intercultural education initiatives.

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1.1 - Introduction - Cultural contact and the "global village"

As early as 1964, Marshall McLuhan (1964) argued that the world was turning into a "global village" in which communication technology was: "extend(ing) our central nervous system in a global embrace, abolishing both space and time."(p. 4) 40 years later, with the continued expansion of shared mass media, the advent of the internet, a globalized economy, increased industrialization, tourism and travel, the age of the "global village" seems to have fully arrived. Currently, tourists email vacation photos from once exotic locations, people on different continents know the same athletes, music and movie stars, and interacting with people from other parts of the world has become not only common, but unavoidable.

The nature of the social, political and cultural changes brought about by globalization is not yet clear. McLuhan (1968) felt that people everywhere were increasingly being expected to "adjust to the vast global environment as if it were his little home town."(p. 11) Some argue global interconnectedness heralds the advent of a new "transcultural community" in which a sense of global citizenship will replace local and national cultural identities and values (Agar, 2002). If this is true, perhaps this trend can even smooth some of the edges of the conflict and misunderstanding that has characterized intercultural contact in the past.

Unfortunately, the increased contact of our global village has not brought about an end to prejudice, war, ethnic conflict and cross-cultural misunderstanding. One reason for this may be that the contact in our new global village remains relatively shallow while the roots of intercultural conflict are often deep. Though people around the world share brand names, consumer goods and popular culture, objects and symbols mean different things to different people. A Coca Cola can be a status drink in one place and a sign of economic imperialism in another. Generally, Hollywood films do not accurately portray life in the United States and listening to Bob Marley often teaches little about Jamaica. On the contrary, superficial contact and mass media can create stereotypes and a false sense of cross-cultural understanding. Even foreign travel may not increase understanding as tourists experience only the most superficial elements of the communities they are visiting. A German tourist in Waikiki watching a Hula dance may be experiencing another culture, yet whether that translates into a deeper intercultural understanding is not clear.

In spite of the shallow nature of much intercultural contact, globalization has also meant that millions of people each year are also having deeper and more extensive intercultural experiences as they study and work abroad, immigrate, and form increasingly multicultural communities. Rather than being a mass-market experience, this deeper contact happens one person at a time as sojourners interact in new cultural environments. This can involve big challenges, such as learning a new language and communication style, adapting to new cultural values and adjusting one's world view to a new cultural reality. Other intercultural experiences, however, such as tourism or life as a sheltered expatriate, are more shallow and less demanding.

Trying to understand the difference between the relatively shallow experiences of some sojourners and the deeper challenges of others will be a primary focus of this study. As we shall see, superficial contact and technological convergence across borders can mask the deeper more subtle cultural differences that often create intercultural misunderstanding. An expatriate American working in Japan has to learn that despite western-style suits and skyscrapers in Tokyo, one can't simply do "business as usual" in another country. We will also see that the most successful "interculturalists" – a term used in this study to refer to people with extensive intercultural experience – not only understand the specifics of getting along in a particular cultural community, they also learn broader lessons about the nature of cultural difference, cross-cultural communication, and cultural identity.

Goals of this study

The fundamental questions this study tries to answer are: 1) How can we describe the depth and intensity of different cultural learning experiences? and 2) How can we use this increased understanding to inform intercultural education? These issues are important because in our increasingly globalized world sojourners vary widely in terms of the depth of their involvement with a host cultural environment. One person may travel extensively, but never live abroad. Another may live in several different countries, yet not be deeply integrated into any of those host environments. Another may live only in one new cultural community yet integrate deeply. Finally, a sojourner may be living and working in a multicultural environment. Currently, we have few models to describe the differences between these different learning experiences.

This study seeks to understand *cultural learning* – defined as the process of coming to terms with the demands of a new social or cultural environment, typically in a foreign country and often involving the use of a foreign language. The fundamental premise of this term is that participation in any new social environment involves a set of adaptive demands being placed on the sojourner. One's particular reaction to these demands constitutes the process of cultural learning. The methodology involves interviewing expatriates, some of whom have had relatively isolated and shallow experiences abroad, and others who have involved themselves more deeply in their new environment. Analysis focuses on comparing the level of intercultural sensitivity of sojourners who have had varying depths of intercultural experiences. Do some sojourners, for example, gain great intercultural sensitivity without deep intercultural experiences? Or are deep intercultural experiences necessary for greater intercultural sensitivity? How can the answers to these questions be applied to intercultural education?

The depth of sojourners' cultural learning is examined from the point of view of relationships with cultural hosts, as well as foreign language ability. Their level of intercultural sensitivity is examined using the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (M. J. Bennett, 1993). This model purports to measure the success of intercultural learning, and does not rely on the measurement of the skills or knowledge regarding a particular host cultural community, nor an evaluation of subjective emotional states. Instead, it defines cultural sensitivity as the ability to accept and adapt to alternative constructions of social reality, thus enabling a more empathetic view of a host community. This study seeks to stay grounded in the concrete experiences of sojourners, and views intercultural experiences as developmental. Viewing cultural learning as a developmental process informs intercultural education by providing a model for desirable outcomes and gives clues about how to achieve them.

In this study, the contrast between the varying depths of intercultural experiences will be described in terms of the degree to which the cultural difference confronting a sojourner is explicit or implicit. A tourist generally need only deal with the most concrete products of cultural communities, such as food, architecture and transportation systems – what this study will refer to as "explicit culture". The longer-term resident, on the other hand, often must also grapple with elements of their cultural environment that are not

immediately apparent to the short-term visitor, such as differing values and communication styles – or "implicit culture". The explicit and implicit nature of cultural phenomena will be discussed in more detail in 1.3.

Cultural frameworks influence and shape us in implicit ways – they function out of everyday awareness. As this study will highlight, it is precisely the out-of-awareness nature of cultural difference that makes deeper cultural learning difficult. While this implicit side of cultural difference is widely recognized in the field of intercultural communication, it is rarely focused on in terms of intercultural learning and education. But it must be examined more closely if we are to understand the different demands that the multi-leveled intercultural contact of our "global village" makes of us.

1.2 Understanding culture and intercultural learning

Our understanding of the nature of culture has changed over time, and the precise details of its definition constitute an unresolved debate. The Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology,(Barnard & Spencer, 1996) for example, does not even offer a definition, choosing, rather, to trace the history of competing conceptualizations. Etymologically, *culture* is linked to words such as "cultivate" and "agriculture" and started to be used in the 17th century to refer to the potential for human development, as when referring to someone as being "cultured". Starting in the 19th century, *culture* was used in two different ways: 1) to describe a set of desired qualities – some people are more cultured than others, and 2) to describe, in the anthropological sense, the world being divided into any number of *cultures*, each with intrinsic value (Williams, 1958).

The development of this more relativistic sense was important, because until the early to mid 20th century, a dominant view of human difference was racial determinism – the notion that physiological differences in race were important factors in determining behaviour. Often, genetic superiority was seen as a reason for industrial development and modernism. In the first half of the 20th century however, anthropologists and sociologists such as Boas (1928), Levi-Strauss (1958), Mead (1961), Benedict (1934), Durkheim (1938), and Weber (1968) argued strongly that one's social and cultural environment – not racial difference – was the dominant force in shaping our behaviour and that different "cultures" held self-contained and alternative valid world-views.

These researchers held contrasting views of how precisely to define *culture.* One influential early definition was created by Taylor (1871):

> Culture or civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, moral, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. (p. 1)

Taylor's definition emphasizes the shared knowledge, values and physical products of a group of people. When we visit another place, we see that buildings and food are different, and that the thinking and values that brought about those cultural products contrast with those one is used to. In addition, this definition reminds us that *culture* is not a static object, but something that is modified and re-created in an ongoing process. Throughout the 20th century, social scientists argued extensively about further refinements of the definition of *culture.* The debate often reflected the context and purpose of the definition. Benedict's (1943) definition of culture as "behavior which in man is not given at birth, which is not determined by his germ cells as is the behaviour of wasps or the social ants, but must be learned anew from grown people by each generation" (p. 9-10), for example, was an attack on scientific racism.

For many of these researchers, however, the study of cultural systems was a way to gain insights into the ways that our own socialization limits our self-understanding. As Margaret Mead (1995) put it: "I have spent most of my life studying the lives of other peoples, faraway peoples, so that Americans might better understand themselves." (p. 1) Mead and others analyzed other social systems in order to "illuminate the social practices of our own times, and . . . show us, if we are ready to listen to its teachings, what to do and what to avoid." (Boas, 1928) Accordingly, these researchers became interested not only in social organization and genealogy but in everyday behaviour and communication styles. Benedict (1934) remarks that in the past, "custom did not challenge the attention of social theorists because it was the very stuff of their own thinking: it was the lens without which they could not see at all." (p. 9) These social scientists were joined by linguists such as Sapir (1921) and Whorf (Carrol, 1956) who emphasized that our perception of the world is determined in large part by the language we speak and the socialization of our cultural environment. They remind us that the influence of culture and

socialization is often invisible from the inside – i.e. that culture is to us like water is to a fish, so much a part of our world that it is difficult to separate from our experience and examine objectively.

This greater understanding of cultural relativism in the early 20th century corresponded with the development in the field of psychology of the concept of the unconscious. A fundamental insight of Freud (Brill, 1995) and Jung (Jaffe, 1979) was that experience shapes behaviour in unseen ways. Thus, while psychoanalysts were exploring at the individual level how our experiences shape our personality and behaviour in ways of which we are only vaguely aware, anthropologists were discovering the same thing at the macro levels of cultural communities. Barnlund (Valdes, 1986), describes the ideas of "individual unconscious" first developed by Freud, (Brill, 1995) and "cultural unconscious", (used by Barnlund to refer to the ideas of these early researchers) as "among the greatest insights of this modern age." (Barnland, 1989)

Naturally, the world has changed since anthropologists were studying relatively isolated peoples. One obvious effect of globalization has been increasingly interconnected and diverse cultural communities. It may no longer be possible – if, indeed, it ever was – to accurately speak of "Chinese culture" or "Italian culture". We understand more fully that *culture* is not a singular deterministic entity which controls behavior or which one "belongs" to, but rather it is a network of products, meanings and expectations which communities share. And each individual participates in multiple cultural communities in a variety of roles, and so we can more easily refer to "cultural experience" or "cultural frameworks" than *culture* itself. In addition, one can as easily speak of the *culture* of a football team as that of a nation. The complex and shifting nature of *culture,* however, should not obscure the powerful influence of one's cultural socialization and the potential challenge of adapting to a new cultural environment. Despite globalization and increasingly multicultural communities, it is still a challenge to learn a new language, live and work in another cultural environment. In many ways, the discovery of the power of implicit cultural frameworks by social scientists early in the last century parallels the experiences of today's sojourners as they discover that going abroad implies not only getting used to a new physical environment, but also making sense and adapting to different world views and confronting an array of new cultural communities.

1.2.1 Edward Hall and implicit culture - from culture to intercultural

For the anthropologists mentioned above, the study of culture was primarily a pursuit of specialists who were studying social organization and their underlying value systems. They often viewed culture as a self-contained system, and attempted to describe how that system worked. After World War II, however, there was increased interest in understanding what happens when people from differing cultural frameworks come into contact with each other. Edward Hall was the first person to use the term "intercultural communication", while studying culture as it relates to cross-cultural miscommunication and misunderstanding. First drawing on his experience working with Native Americans, Hall (1959) elaborated a view of culture as an unconscious framework of shared meaning that makes communication possible, but that makes intercultural conflict inevitable. He argued that people were generally unaware of their cultural conditioning, and that hidden difference in how we think and communicate creates barriers to intercultural understanding.

1.2.2 Searching for a universal cultural grammar

Hall focused in particular on finding ways to describe objectively these hidden differences. He attempted to identify concepts that could be used as neutral points of comparison – a kind of universal grammar to describe cultural difference. His work rests explicitly on the premise that intercultural communication is difficult because we are unaware of our own hidden patterns of thinking and communicating. He was particularly interested in differing cultural orientations regarding the use of time and space, and felt that by understanding our own cultural patterns, we would be freed from cultural constraints.

Hall developed concepts such as a distinction between high and low context communication and cultures (Hall, 1959, 1976). High-context communication was described as that in which communicators relied relatively more on the context of a message, and less on the words themselves. Thus, "one word says it all". In low-context communication, meaning relies more on the actual content of the message, and less on when, how, and by whom it is expressed. This type of communication is the "say what you mean" way of expressing meaning. Hall's concept of high and low context

communication was useful because it acted as a criterion by which different countries or cultural groups could be compared. According to this view, for example, Japanese communication was said to tend towards "high context", as typified by the Japanese expression "hear one and understand ten" (*ichi wo kite, juu wo shiru*). Anglo-American communication patterns tend more towards lower context, and therefore value a more direct and explicit communication style (Hall & Hall, 1987). By using this category of cultural comparison, cultural conflict between, say, Japanese and Americans becomes easier to understand. Hall's distinction doesn't mean that every American or Japanese follows fixed communication "rules", but rather it provides a point of overall comparison.

For people who experience cross cultural contact, these concepts are powerful because they articulate differences which function out of awareness, and which for that reason are hard to pin down. Cultural difference at this level of abstraction is felt or intuited affectively, and Hall hoped to make people aware of these differences to help them avoid negative judgment and increased prejudice. Thus, when it is noticed that American business contracts often are more detailed and explicit than Japanese contracts, the reasons for these differences became clearer. Japanese contracts were seen as a contextualized document resting on the trusting relation between partners, while American contracts were given detail in order to send a clear, explicit message intended to minimize the chances of misunderstanding.

The importance of Hall's ideas was important beyond helping us understand particular elements of cross-cultural misunderstanding. His work created the framework for subsequent researchers' attempts to describe cultural difference, one that did not presuppose any "normal" way to communicate or do things. Hall, like the earlier generation of anthropologists, believed that an important goal of studying culture was cultural self-understanding. He saw this as a way to solve intercultural conflict and develop human potential. He states:

> Theoretically, there should be no problem when people of different cultures meet. Things begin, most frequently, not only with friendship and goodwill on both sides, but there is an intellectual understanding that each party has a different set of beliefs, customs, mores, values, or what-have-you. The trouble begins when people have to start working together, even on a superficial basis. Frequently, even after years of close association, neither can make the other's system work!

> The difficulties I and others have observed persist so long and are so resistant to change that they can be explained only in psychological terms: people are in and remain in the grip of the cultural type of identification . . . Man must now embark on the difficult journey beyond culture, because the greatest separation feat of all is when one manages to gradually free oneself from the grip of unconscious culture. (Hall, 1976, pg. 239-240)

For Hall, (1976) bringing the hidden patterns of one's own cultural orientations to light was of primary importance, but also very difficult, because "it is frequently the most obvious and taken for granted and therefore least studied aspects of culture that influence behaviour in the deepest and most subtle ways." (p. 17) Hall's contribution was to point out in concrete ways, as Freud had done half a century before, that much of what humans say and do is regulated at levels of the self of which we are not fully aware.

1.2.3 Describing cultural difference

Many researchers have followed up on Hall's attempts to uncover hidden patterns of cultural difference. They have created a variety of categories to describe salient features of particular cultural groups, and have identified universal categories of cross-cultural comparison (Hall, 1959; Hofstede, 1983, 1997; Kim, Triandis, Kagitcibasi, Choi, & Yoon, 1994; Kluckhohn & Strodbeck, 1961; Ting-Toomey, 1994; Triandis, 1995; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). These have not led to an absolute "cultural grammar" – a single set of categories for cross-cultural comparison which is accepted as all-inclusive, but have produced a series of concepts, such as "individualism/collectivism", "power distance" (the degree to which a cultural community makes status explicit) and "affective/neutral" (the degree to which emotion is expressed openly) which act as a widely accepted set of conceptual tools.

Questions remain about cross-cultural comparison. Researchers do not agree on the categories for cultural comparison. In addition, some researchers use cultural concepts, such as *face* or *facework* (Goffman, 1967; Hu, 1944; Ting-Toomey, 1994), that describe culture without making quantified comparisons. Many studies focusing on individual cultural groups explain salient features from the point of view of the insider. Examples include studies of Latin American cultural patterns using the concept of *dignidad*, (Triandis, Lisansky, Marin, & Betancourt, 1984) and analysis of the Japanese

concept of *amae* (Doi, 1995).

In addition, when making broad generalizations about large cultural groups there is a danger of overlooking the diversity that exists within a country or linguistic group. A second-generation Jamaican living in London may have values and communication patterns vastly different from any abstract norm of "typical" British culture. This is particularly true in highly diverse societies such as India, in which it might be more meaningful to describe cultural frameworks in religious, ethnic and linguistic terms. Furthermore, relying on mainstream norms to describe narrowly defined national culture (much of Hofstede's work, for example, is based on comparing the attitudes of IBM employees throughout the world) risks encouraging stereotypes; e.g. "The British are reserved" or "Italians are emotional". For their part, cross-cultural researchers are generally careful to qualify their results by explaining that the patterns of cultural similarity simply represent a generalized tendency towards particular values, and that they cannot be used to *predict* individual behavior. Rather, categories of cultural comparison give us a framework for *interpreting* behavior. Cross-cultural research does not teach us that everyone in "culture X" is the same, it reminds us that behavior must be interpreted within a cultural context.

Despite the obvious diversity within countries and cultural communities, it should be kept in mind that even when an individual is atypical (thus generating diversity), he or she still generally shares many frameworks of meaning with others from similar communities. An individual Italian may be unconventional when compared with other Italians, but his or her ability to interpret behavior or communicate in Italy is still better than most Ethiopians'. Or, to make a linguistic comparison, just as a shared language does not make people say the same things, a shared cultural framework does not generate identical behavior.

1.3 Implicit culture

While some cultural difference is visible and correspondingly easier to describe – customs about eating, for example – others, such as those focused on by the cross-cultural researchers mentioned above, are not. A Latin American may vaguely feel that US American friendships are "shallow", but not be able to explain the reaction beyond this. An intercultural researcher might describe this reaction by referring to an abstract concept of cultural

comparison, saying that Latin Americans' relationships tend to be more "diffuse" – sharing a larger private space, and Americans' relationships more "specific" – developed in relation to a specific context (Lewin, 1936; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). The difficulty for the sojourner is that while the difference is real and is felt in everyday life, it functions so far out of awareness that it is hard to come to grips with.

To understand the different depths of cultural learning, it is necessary to come to a clearer understanding of how different elements of culture function at different levels of awareness. Perhaps the most articulate description of how culture functions at different levels of awareness comes from Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998). They conceptualized culture as the way in which groups of people solve problems and reconcile dilemmas. They also point out that culture exists not only at the national and regional level, but also on the smaller scale of corporate culture, or among people with particular professional or ethical orientations. The dilemmas they describe are related to relationships between people, how people relate to time, and how people relate to the environment. Dilemmas related to relationships between people include *universalism* vs. *particularism*, *individualism* vs. *collectivism*, *neutral* vs. *emotional*, *specific* vs. *diffuse*, and *achievement* vs. *ascription*.

An example of culture as a way of solving problems and dilemmas deals with individualism and collectivism. The dilemma in question is: in dealing with others, is it better for each person to operate independently in order to contribute to the common good? or is it better for people to work collectively to contribute to the common good? For example, if a group of friends is trying to decide where to eat, the individualist approach to making this decision might involve each person openly giving their opinions, and negotiating or voting on the final outcome. The underlying reasoning is that each person should be given the chance to contribute their ideas and state their opinions as an individual. Each person, then, is responsible for speaking up and giving a clear opinion and this egalitarianism is seen as the basis for constructive relationships.

A more collectivist approach to the same situation, however, would be to assume that it is of primary importance to be sensitive to the desires and needs of other members of the group. Everyone is responsible to be solicitous to others and not insist too strongly on individual desires. This means that even less assertive, or lower status members of the groups get heard and a

consensus can be built around the input of everyone. This willingness to adapt to the needs of those around you then allows for close nurturing relationships in which no one is ignored or left out. This kind of inclusiveness is seen as the basis for constructive relationships.

Japanese and American cultures are sometimes given as examples representing collectivist versus individualistic values. A group of "typical" American friends deciding where to go out to eat is more likely to have a give and take with competing ideas and clearly stated individual opinions. A "typical" group of Japanese friends in the same situation is more likely to be indirect and spend time asking opinions and building consensus. Ideally, both of these ways for deciding which restaurant to eat at creates a positive outcome, and the goal of both the individualists and collectivists is the same – good relationships between people, and an effective way of making decisions. But both the practices – how people do things – and the underlying assumptions about why things should be done in a certain way, are different.

It is important to note that Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner do not describe these orientations as absolute and certainly do not say that all Japanese are more collectivist than all Americans. Even the most individualistic people recognize and take into account the needs of others, and collectivist thinking does not mean that people do not give their own opinions. Both options – focusing on the wants of the individual or focusing on the needs of the group – are used by any group of people at different times. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's point, however, is that certain groups of people, in this case "typical" Japanese and "typical" Americans, have a tendency to approach a similar situation in different ways. This tendency towards different ways of solving problems and relating to others is at the root of intercultural conflict.

According to Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, (1998) our decisions and behaviour in situations like the one above are based in unspoken, out-of-awareness assumptions about how things should be and how people should get along. One unspoken assumption for someone raised in a more typically individualist cultural community might be that people need to develop themselves on their own terms, and that expressing oneself and meeting one's own needs contributes to the common good. If the individual is stifled, frustration and conflict will result. An "individualist" in the above situation might say it is important for everyone to have the chance to speak up (or vote) because anything less would be unfair, and would create resentment.

The unspoken assumption for more collectivist values, on the other hand, might be that humans develop themselves best in relation to others, and that mutual interdependence is necessary and desirable for personal development. Positive relationships are described in terms of nurturing and support, which then allows individual development to take place. Ask the Japanese in the above example why it is important to pay attention to the opinions of others, and you will likely be told that to do any less would be unfair, create tension and eventually conflict. Thus, though the goals of differing cultural orientations are the same, the practice and underlying assumptions are different.

The idea of unspoken assumptions underpinning our behaviour is an important part of Trompenaars' and Hampden-Turner's model of culture. To visualize this, they use the image of an onion (diagram 1), with deeper, more out-of-awareness elements of culture at the center.

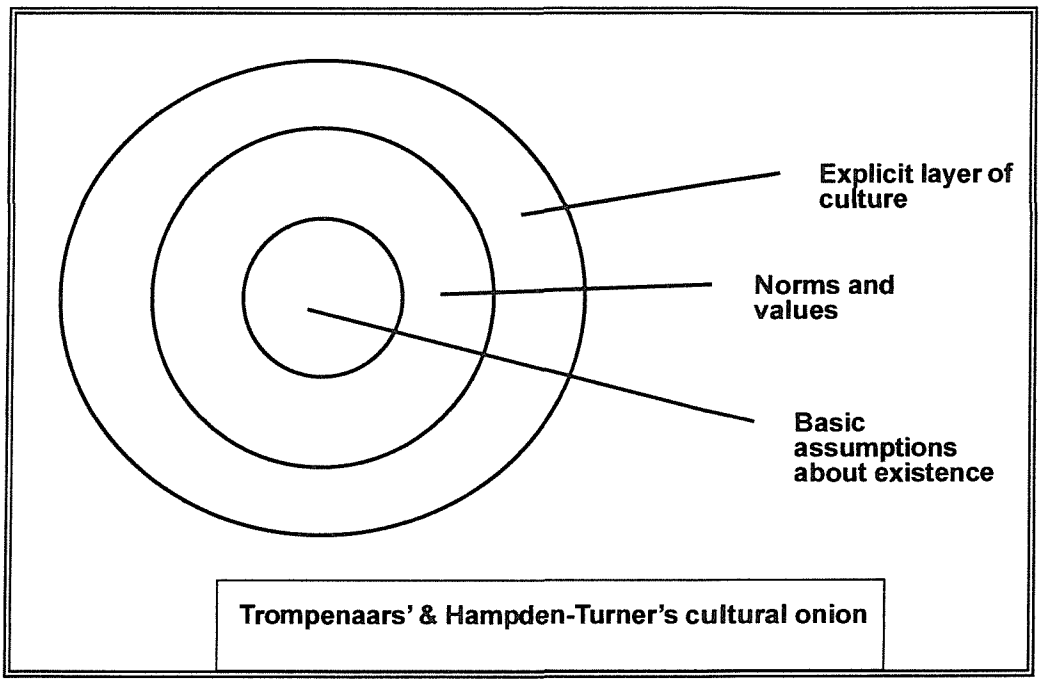

Diagram 1

On the outside of the onion lie explicit products of culture, defined by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner as: "the observable reality of the language, food, buildings, houses, monuments, agriculture, shrines, markets, fashions and art." (p. 21) The visible products of culture are symbols of deeper meaning.

If, in an example used by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, you see a group of Japanese bowing, you witness explicit culture in the act of bending. The symbolic meaning of that behaviour, however, is at a deeper, less explicit layer of cultural interpretation. If you ask Japanese "Why do you bow?" you arrive at the next layer of the cultural onion, **norms** and **values**.

According to Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, **norms** are the "mutual sense a group has of what is 'right' and 'wrong'" (p. 21-22), whether they are formalized, as in laws, or informal as in customs about how to shake hands or eat food. **Values**, on the other hand, reflect a cultural group's definition of good and bad, and serve as criteria to choose between alternatives. Whereas "norms" define how one *should* behave, values define how one *wants to behave*. The difference can be seen in cases where norms and values are in conflict with each other. The value "Working hard at your job is good" may be a shared ideal, even while there may be a behavioural norm adopted by employees of a company which says "Do not work harder than the people around you, because then everyone will be expected to do more." If you ask a Japanese why they bow, they might say that they do so because everyone does it (norm), or because it is important as a show of respect (value).

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner go on to describe the core of their cultural onion. They describe "basic assumptions about existence" as being the unexamined base upon which norms and values are built, and which operate at an even more implicit level. According to Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, the most fundamental problem that cultural organization looks for an answer to is survival. Thus, as African cultures dealt with the problems of droughts, the Dutch to rising waters, and the Inuits to bitter cold, they developed solutions which, once solved, became automatic. These solutions disappear from everyday awareness and become part of a system of absolute assumptions. This is true not only for the technologies and practices of dealing with the physical environment, but also for the types of relationships and forms of communication that a group uses.

It is rare for people to question the underlying assumptions behind their norms and values. If you ask a Japanese why they bow, they might say that they want to show respect – a value – but if you ask why it is important to show respect, you may be given a puzzled look. Asking about basic assumptions raises questions that are never asked, and this can provoke irritation. If you ask an American why he calls his boss by her first name, he

may reply that in his company everyone does so (norm), or because it is good for people to be treated equally (value). If you ask why being treated equally is good, the person may have trouble answering. If you go on to question the legitimacy of equality by arguing that equality is not ever possible, since there must be hierarchy for people to work effectively, your line of reasoning may seem like an attack.

In this way, differences in fundamental cultural assumptions can create intractable conflict. In the previous example, many elements of Japanese language, social structure and communication patterns have a built-in assumption that hierarchy is a natural and normal element of human existence. In language, hierarchical relationships are made explicit. The word for "you" changes depending on the relationship with the speaker. Status can be considered a grammatical feature and even basic words such as "to eat" (*taberu, meshiagaru, kuu*) change depending on the context and relative status of the interlocuters. The norms related to bowing reflect this hidden assumption, yet are so taken for granted that asking about them is difficult. The values and communication patterns typically associated with mainstream American culture, on the other hand, emphasize explicit social equality. Being on a "first-name basis" is considered a mark of a good relationship. In practices that would be inconceivable in many cultural contexts, even teachers or step-parents are sometimes called by their first names and treated as friendly equals, rather than seniors. An American who refuses to call friends by their first name risks seeming bizarre or perhaps causing offense, just as a Japanese would who did not show deference to seniors or spoke too formally to juniors.

One point for caution is that Trompenaars' and Hampden-Turner's diagrams and their focus on national-level culture can create the impression of culture as a fixed quality that can be quantified and predicted. This is misleading because particularly at the deeper levels of values and norms, cultural phenomena as described by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner are a characteristic of how people interact, not a set of rules that people follow – a framework for interaction, not an object. It is difficult, however, to describe cultural difference in a way that recognizes both the diversity and dynamism of particular behaviors, and the deep patterns of similarity that unify people in cultural communities at differing levels of abstraction.

1.4 Deeper cultural learning

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's ideas help us understand why the challenges of adapting to a new cultural environment are so persistent. Learners must deal with ever-deeper levels of cultural difference. An Australian English teacher coming to teach in a Korean high school will probably quickly learn how to use chopsticks, take public transportation and perhaps get used to eating *kimchi (spicy pickled cabbage)*. He will then have adapted to some of the outer layer of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's cultural onion. He may learn explicit norms as well, such as not pouring one's drink for oneself, but allowing someone else to do so. But as he interacts more with Koreans, he will continue to run into more implicit and perhaps troubling cultural difference. He may find learning the Korean system of deferential language arbitrary. Hearing high school students addressing classmates who are "only" a year older using deferential language might even seem "unfair". Rather than identifying this as a cultural convention, however, this teacher may conclude that Koreans themselves are "unfair".

1.4.1 Implicit culture and increased prejudice

Deeper cultural differences create problems when sojourners react negatively to phenomena without recognizing a systematic pattern of cultural difference. In one study, de Nooy and Hanna (2003) showed how cultural differences in information gathering strategies reinforced negative stereotypes among Australian students studying in a French university. The study showed:

> Australian students at odds with a high context cultural environment as they attempt to operate according to the low context communication principles of their home universities. Three interrelated cross-cultural issues [were] in play here: 1) approaches to the circulation of information; 2) relative importance of task versus relationship during interaction; 3) extent to which information and rules vary according to situation. (p. 69)

The Australian students in this study were accustomed to typically low-context assumptions about information circulation, and had the expectation that helpful information should be openly and easily available to all (on a website, for example) in a way that anyone can understand. A higher context approach to information circulation assumes that 'insiders' (in this

case, the students) know where to go and who to ask for the particular information that they need. This difference was also related to the relative importance of personal relationships in gathering information (asking other students, developing relationship with administrative staff), which corresponds with 'particularist' and 'universalist' ways of solving problems:

> The information available in low context communication is likely to be valid for all situations (universalist), whereas information offered in high context communication may well vary according to the particular situation and the relationship (or lack of it) between interlocutors (particularist). (p. 70)

Australian students confronted with these differences made a variety of interpretations as to the reasons for their difficulties gathering information, including lack of ability in French and lack of pre-departure support from their home university. By and large, however, the most common interpretation of their difficulties was 'French failures of efficiency'. Typical comments were that "French administrative employees are 'extremely unhelpful, unfriendly and unknowledgeable", or the advice to "(A)lways remember that [French administration] is arbitrary, illogical and inconsistent." Much more rarely, students understood that there was systematic difference – i.e. that one could "work the system" in a different way in order to get what one wants. As for the number of students who recognized not only that there was systematic difference, but that the root of that difference was cultural, discouragingly:

> there were no students who were, so to speak, completely enlightened. Interviewees who propose astute strategies, along with their justification, are still also likely to tell you – or, more importantly, their successors – that 'the French' are hopelessly disorganised. (p. 76-77)

At issue for cultural learners in a situation like this is not specifically whether French or Australian universities are better at distributing information, but rather the recognition that the strategies that work in one environment don't necessarily work in another. The ability to adapt one's information strategies to the underlying system was the cultural learning task of these students. The Australian students would have certainly felt less frustration if they adopted the strategies for information gathering used typically by French students. Importantly, the students in this study reported great satisfaction with their

experience abroad. Clearly, they learned a lot about France and most of them developed successful strategies for dealing with their new environment. That did not mean, however, that they were able to identify the deeper cultural differences that they were facing, or that they overcame stereotypes and became culturally tolerant.

It is these deeper challenges of cultural learning which many global-village sojourners may be missing. Travel abroad or the protected life of a high-status expatriate, do not confront sojourners with the deep systematic differences encountered by these students. It is increasingly easy to overlook these deeper differences because the technology of daily life continues to converge. Riding an elevator in Zimbabwe is nearly the same as doing so in Algeria, and increasingly similar clothing, forms of transportation, building materials and architecture means that cultural difference is less obvious. But are the deeper layers of culture also converging?

1.4.2 Implicit culture and cultural convergence

Some scholars question the validity of describing cultural difference at the national level and further postulate the development of a "transcultured identity"(Agar, 2002; Allolio-Nacke & Kalscheur, 2002; Parry, 2002). Agar (2002) argues that the whole concept of *culture* is no longer valid:

> The "culture" part of the terms "transcultural" is now a major problem. For most anyone today, the "cultures" that affect him/her at any given moment are multiple, local to global, partial, and variable in their impact. "Culture" used to be a way to describe, generalize and explain what a person was doing. It is not so easy – maybe even impossible – to do that any more. (p. 15)

Agar prefers the concept "community of practice" – a term from the field of business communication referring to the informal networks which develop in collaborative relationships (Sharp, 1997) – and argues that it is a "more powerful tool than the old idea of 'culture'" (p. 15). He calls for us to give up the aspiration to talk about *culture* in the sense of predicting behaviour and making generalizations, and narrow the focus to a particular situation:

> A situation is **dynamic** – in fact it is a nonlinear dynamic system. The situation has people in it. Like any nonlinear dynamic system, the situation is an interaction between an environment and a model of that environment, the two co-evolving over time. Let's call that moving environment the **flow**, and the model will

> be called a **framework**, or **frames** for short. Much of the time the navigation is straightforward. Sometimes the flow moves in unexpected directions and you adjust the frames. Sometimes you get a bright idea and change the frames and the interaction with the flow goes more smoothly. The transcultural moment comes when a disruption occurs, something the frames can't handle. A transcultural self can understand and explain such disruptions and resolve them with positive outcomes. (p. 15)

Agar's point is well taken. A sojourner does not deal with *culture* as such. She confronts a series of "transcultural moments" and in this way comes to a more generalizable understanding of her cultural environment. Agar's view also reminds us to view cultural learning as a process, rather than as the discovery of a fixed set of cultural rules.

As for whether, as Agar argues, the term *culture* is no longer useful, it is certainly true that increasing levels of cross-cultural contact make it ever more difficult to use labels such as "Italian culture". Yet, despite this, Agar's understanding of the process of cross-cultural conflict is not fundamentally different from that of, say, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, who recognize that cultural frameworks exist at many levels at the same time, and develop over time. The difference, perhaps, is simply one of focus. While the cultural labels developed by researchers such as Hofstede may run the risk of overgeneralization, they also provide a way to talk about very real differences that can be as difficult to deal with as they are to describe.

Agar and some others also raise the question of whether we are fast arriving at a "post-cultural" world in which people will have a global, rather than national, regional or ethnic identity. Bennett addresses this issue by describing culture as existing at different levels of abstraction:

> National groups such as Japanese, Mexican, and US American and pan-national ethnic groups such as Arab and Zulu are cultures at a high level of abstraction – the qualities that adhere to most (but not all) members of the culture are very general, and the group includes lots of diversity. At this level of abstraction we can only point to general differences in patterns of thinking and behaving between cultures. For instance, we might observe that US American culture is more characterized by individualism than is Japanese culture, which is more collectivist.
>
> Analysis at a high level of abstraction provides a view of the "unifying force" of culture. The very existence of interaction, even through media, generates a commonality that spans individuals and ethnicities. For instance, despite their significant individual and ethnic differences, Mexicans spend more time interacting with

> other Mexicans than they do with Japanese. They certainly spend more time reading Mexican newspapers and watching Mexican television than they do consuming Japanese media. This fact generates Mexican "national character" – something that distinguishes Mexicans from Japanese (and from other Latin Americans as well.) (M. J. Bennett, 1998, p. 4)

While Agar reminds us not to over-generalize based on broad cultural labels, Bennett reminds us that broad labels are meaningful as long as we remember that they only imply the sharing of particular cultural frameworks. Understanding cultural difference does not mean that one can predict or explain with certainty a particular individual's behaviour. Often that is not possible even in one's own cultural milieu. As Bennett points out, however, different cultural groups share experiences and frameworks which are used in *interpreting* behaviour. Using Bennett's example, we can say that a Mexican sharing a linguistic framework, exposure to similar media, knowledge of similar traditions and familiarity with particular values, is more likely to successfully interpret the intentions of communication of other Mexicans, than would a Guatemalan or Tibetan.

Hofstede (1997) deals directly with these issues when discussing the question of whether world cultures are converging due to globalization:

> Research about the development of cultural values has shown repeatedly that there is very little evidence of international convergency over time, except an increase of individualism for countries that have become richer. Value differences between nations described by authors centuries ago are still present today, in spite of continued close contacts. For the next few hundred years countries will remain culturally very diverse.
>
> Not only will cultural diversity among countries remain with us: it even looks as though differences within countries are increasing. Ethnic groups arrive at a new consciousness of their identity and ask for a political recognition of this fact. Of course these ethnic differences have always been there. What has changed is the intensity of contact between groups, which has confirmed group members in their own identities. (p. 238)

The question of cultural convergence is difficult to answer definitively. It is certainly true that people around the world have more in common than ever. At the same time, as Hofstede points out, information technology and news media also act as a unifying force for national and regional cultures. Over the past several years, for example, the popularity of American television in foreign countries has declined as local networks gain the experience to

produce their own programs. This is because, "Given the choice, foreign viewers often prefer homegrown shows that better reflect local tastes, cultures and historical events " One survey found that "71 percent of the top 10 programs in 60 countries were locally produced in 2001, representing a steady increase over previous years" (Kapner, 2003).

The degree to which shared global culture is changing underlying values and world views is open to question. There is both convergence and deep cultural difference. Are Americans becoming more collectivist due to exposure to Japanese comics and visits to Kyoto? Will Latin American friendships become less diffuse due to watching Hollywood movies and spending vacations in California? Will Finns become more emotive because of increased contact with Italians? These things seem unlikely. Nevertheless, increased cross-cultural contact is certainly having a profound impact on the world community, even if that impact is difficult to judge.

We have examined ways in which culture exists at different levels of awareness, and how the varying levels of cross-cultural difference can make life abroad challenging for sojourners. We now examine our current understanding of cultural learning, and how it can be understood in terms of the "depth" of intercultural experience. It is precisely the deeper processes of cultural learning that this research will focus on.

2 Cultural learning

In the previous chapter, we saw that cultural difference exists on both the superficial or explicit level, and the deeper level of values, norms and underlying beliefs. It was argued that recognition of the varying "depths" of cultural experiences is important in understanding the social changes due to globalization and also in creating better models for intercultural education. This chapter will present an overview of different perspectives on intercultural education and learning, and attempt to connect these ideas with our understanding of cultural "depth". Because this study seeks to measure the level of intercultural sensitivity of sojourners and compare that with the depth of their intercultural experiences, it is important to find a way to measure the success of an intercultural experience and, by extension, the goals of intercultural education. This chapter will end with an explanation of the conceptual models that this study will use to analyze sojourners' experiences, and will therefore serve as a base for the discussion of methodology in chapter 3.

2.1 Defining the goals of cultural learning

Until recently, few sojourners had the benefit of intercultural communication training. Cultural adaptation was largely a question of "sink or swim", with success measured simply in terms of finishing an assignment, completing one's studies, or sending money back to one's family. Fortunately, there is now a growing body of literature on intercultural communication education available to sojourners and educators (Barnland, 1989; Bennett, 1986; Cushner & Brislin, 1996; Gaston, 1984; Hall & Hall, 1987; Hess, 1994; Landis & Bhagat, 1996; M. R. Paige, 1993; Seelye, 1984, 1996; Stoorti, 1994; Tomlinson, 2000; Valdes, 1986, 1994, 1995). Much of this is meant for sojourners – especially in business – but also university education, (M. J. Bennett, 1998; Jandt, 1995; Tomalin & Stempleski, 1993) and language classrooms (Byram, 1997; Byram, Nichols, & Stevens, 2001; Cates, 1999; Damen, 1987; Gaston, 1984).

For the most part, the materials mentioned share the same broadly defined goals: Increase the understanding of 1) the nature of culture, 2) how cultural difference affects communication and human relations, and 3) the influence of culture and cultural difference in specific domains such as

business or language learning. Generally, the field is marked by an emphasis on cultural relativism – understanding the limits of one's cultural perspective and appreciating the cultural perspective of others. The underlying assumption behind this approach is that cultural difference has the potential to create conflict and that intercultural understanding is necessary to mitigate this tendency.

One exception to this is "global issues education" (Cates, 1997; Harrison, 1999; Higgings & Tanaka, 1999). This is an educational approach to internationalism that began after World War II in the United States under different names such as International Understanding (1947), Education in World Citizenship (1952), World Studies (1980's) and Global Education (1980's). It calls for us to go "beyond" culture in intercultural education and focuses on "an education for a world citizenship", which would allow us to "develop an allegiance to humanity as a whole" (Cates, 1999). This approach – generally from the field of education rather than from cultural studies – downplays the importance of cross-cultural difference and emphasizes commonality across culture and an appeal to universal values (Shaules & Inoue, 2000). Unlike the materials above, global issues education is generally meant for students studying in their home culture, and not specifically as a way to prepare sojourners to go abroad.

2.2 "Intercultural communication education" vs. "cultural learning"

In this study, we will distinguish between "cultural learning" (CL) and "intercultural communication education" (ICE). We will use ICE to mean the study of culture and cultural difference – as typified by the materials listed above – while using the term CL to mean the actual process of coming to terms with the demands of new cultural frameworks. ICE materials are created for conscious, formal learning and contain an explicit or implicit "goal" in the content. CL, on the other hand, is an unmediated experience in which a sojourner does his or her best to gain the knowledge, skills and experience to take care of daily needs, communicate and form productive relationships. Living in a foreign country is very different from reading a book about culture or participating in a training course. Though some educational materials emphasize experiential approaches, (Seelye, 1996) studying intercultural communication is primarily an intellectual experience while living in a foreign country is an all-body, all-mind experience. The difference could be compared

with learning the rules of tennis vs. actually getting on the court and playing a game. The "game" of living abroad is, of course, life itself.

2.2.1 The goals of intercultural communication education

The premise behind much ICE is that learners need preparation for future intercultural encounters. For learners with concrete plans for a sojourn in a specific context, some goals are relatively easy to define and quantify. An expatriate manager arriving in Rome for a work assignment will need a map of the city, information on how to find housing, and an understanding of company operations there. The goals that are easiest to define are related to the concrete layers of cultural phenomena – the physical environment and factual information. But information is not enough. ICE also seeks to help learners deal with the human element of intercultural interaction. Learners must be prepared to deal with deeper layers of culture – different values and norms, different ways of communicating and forming relationships. Ideally, sojourners not only learn to function, they should also develop personally.

So, in the same way that culture exists at both explicit and implicit levels, the goals of ICE exist at both concrete and abstract levels. Explicit cultural difference generates concrete learning goals; "To eat in China, one must learn to use chopsticks." "To ask for directions, you must learn these phrases." Explicit norms are sometimes included in this kind of learning – "In Thailand, don't sit with your feet pointed at someone." The danger of concrete goals, however, is that they are inflexible and often do not allow for exceptions. They also do not explain why people do what they do. Negotiating a contract successfully is infinitely more complex than knowing not to put a business card in one's back pocket.

The deeper goals of cultural learning are more abstract. The goals of "communicating well," "adapting to" or "appreciating" culture are highly contextual and hard to pin down. What does one need to learn to "communicate well"? and what does it mean to "adapt well"? And how can we help learners "appreciate" other cultures? One possible way to approach these questions is to examine the qualities of successful interculturalists. Unfortunately, there is no model for a perfect interculturalist. Intercultural educators face a dilemma similar to language educators. The grammar taught in foreign language textbooks is modeled upon that of an idealized native speaker. In fact, the language learners find abroad is often different from the

simplified rules learned in class. In addition, even dedicated language learners rarely reach native speaker proficiency. There is a parallel problem for ICE. There are no perfect interculturalists and it is generally impossible (and perhaps not even desirable) to fully assimilate into a new cultural environment. In the same way that teaching grammar and vocabulary (explicit learning of linguistic "rules") does not insure good communication, learning of cultural "rules" does not insure a successful intercultural experience.

In ICE materials, deeper learning goals are often idealized abstractions. One that is frequently mentioned is "cultural awareness" (Gaston, 1984; Hofstede, 1997; Ingulsrud, Kaib, Kadowakic, Kurobanec, & Shiobarad, 2002; M. R. Paige, 1993; Tomalin & Stempleski, 1993; Tomlinson, 2000; Valdes, 1986). Gaston (1984), for example, defines "cultural awareness" as "the recognition that culture affects perception and that culture influences values, attitudes and behaviour" (p. 2-4). He goes on to describe the process of gaining cultural awareness as having four stages: The first stage is **recognition** – the "growing consciousness of our own cultural group" which involves a recognition that "cultural differences are not only obvious and concrete (food, shelter, clothing), but subtle and abstract (values, attitudes, mores)". The skill required at this stage is non-judgmental observation. Stage two is **acceptance/rejection**, which he defines as a reaction to cultural difference that is either positive or negative. The skill required at this level is the ability to cope with ambiguity. The third stage described by Gaston is: **integration/ethnocentrism**. For Gaston, this involves beginning to think bi-culturally, or becoming rigidly ethnocentric. The key skill at this stage is the ability to empathize. The fourth and final stage of this model is **transcendence**, when we are able to "value and appreciate our own cultural roots" as well as to "value and appreciate all other cultures as well". The skill described for this level of intercultural awareness is the ability to respect. After achieving this final stage, the cultural learner is able to "transcend culture and see ourselves as a product of culture, but no longer a prisoner of culture."

Ultimately, however, goals like this frequently fall back on descriptions of ideal outcomes that are hard to quantify and connect to real life. Gaston defines "awareness" as the "recognition" of cultural influence, a "growing consciousness", "beginning to think biculturally" and

"transcendence" of culture. These component characteristics are as abstract as the initial goal. In this sense, they give little guidance on how to help learners reach these ideal states. His skill goals are more concrete, and "non-judgmental observation" seems easier to translate into educational activities. Empathy is also a clear goal, however "ability to respect" seems extremely difficult to work into a lesson plan. These goals raise as many questions as they answer. Is it really possible to transcend one's own cultural frameworks? How can we measure someone's stage of cultural awareness? Is it possible for someone to successfully adapt to another culture without consciously learning the lessons described by Gaston? Why do some people become *more* prejudiced due to an intercultural experience?

One educator who has created a detailed set of intercultural education goals is Byram (1987; 1997; 2001) . Writing from the perspective of language education, Byram (1997) describes the goals of intercultural education as the "intercultural speaker", one who attains "intercultural communicative competence". He makes a distinction between "intercultural competence" and "intercultural communicative competence", defining the first as the ability to interact in one's own language with people from other cultures, and the latter as the ability to do so in a foreign language. The component elements of these competencies are centered around what Byram calls *savoirs*. These include attitudes (savoir etre), dispositions or orientations to act (savoir s'engager), knowledge (savoirs) and skills of interpreting and relating (savoir comprendre, apprendre, faire). Each of these elements if further defined so as to allow for educational objectives to be formalized. For example, Byram's attitude goal (savoir etre) is defined as "curiousity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own" (p. 50). This is then broken down into sub-competencies including things such as: willingness to engage others in a relationship of equality, interest in discovering other perspectives, willingness to question one's own values.

Byram's contribution is important for several reasons. First, he breaks down intercultural competencies in great detail, making explicit how complex the phenomenon of cultural learning is. Byram also gives a special emphasis to the contextual nature of intercultural interaction, avoiding some of the overbroad idealizations found in much intercultural education. In addition, unlike much cultural learning theory, Byram's intercultural competencies are defined specifically to facilitate the planning of educational

activities suitable to the classroom. Thus, when he describes the competence of "critical cultural awareness", he lists as a sub-competency the ability to "identify and interpret explicit or implicit values in documents and events in one's own and other cultures" (p. 53). This definition lends itself to planning activities, such as analysing cultural artefacts. His knowledge competencies include things such as knowing "the national definitions of geographical space" and "the processes and institutions of socialization" (p. 51). Because Byram focuses systematically on a particular intercultural education context – language education – his learning goals are much more concrete than those of many other educators.

This level of concreteness, however, presents its own difficulties. One is that attempting to catalogue a process as complex as intercultural communicative competence produces an unwieldy set of goals. Byram's five *savoirs* are broken down into nearly 30 sub-competencies. Yet even these smaller categories are immensely broad, and include things such as knowing "the processes of social interaction in one's interlocutor's country" (p. 51). These broad goals are difficult to put into practice because things such as "the processes of social interaction" function nearly exclusively out of everyday awareness. Byram's view of the out-of-awareness nature of intercultural learning is not entirely clear. His definition of "cultural awareness" is the "ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries" (p. 53). Yet it is precisely the lack of explicit criteria for the deeper patterns of intercultural interaction that makes intercultural learning a challenge. The process of raising implicit cultural phenomena to the explicit level is not discussed in detail. Finally, Byram's focus on interaction and context sometimes obscures the deeply personal and potentially transformative nature of the ongoing process of much intercultural learning. While he has given us a much more detailed set of final goals, and has even suggested ways to plan classroom activities, the process that an individual learner goes through to reach deeper levels of intercultural understanding is not entirely clear. In addition, the possible negative outcomes of intercultural contact – increased prejudice, for example - are dealt with very little.

The above is not an attempt to devalue the work of educators such as Gaston or Byram. The point is simply to show that defining the goals of ICE is more difficult than it might appear at first, particularly when they are related

to the deeper elements of cultural difference and cultural learning. This brings us back to the distinction between ICE – the idealized education goals of intercultural communication – and CL, the lived process of adapting to another cultural environment. We will next examine how research in CL can inform the goals of ICE.

2.2.2 The goals of cultural learning

One approach to identifying goals of CL is to study well-adjusted interculturalists in order to identify the salient features of their success – the skills, attitudes and awareness that have helped them adapt. This can also shed light on a central concern of this study – an evaluation of the relative intercultural success of different sojourners.

There has been a great deal of research seeking to understand intercultural adaptation. Unfortunately, there seems to be little consensus about the goals of cultural learning, and, as with ICE, it is difficult to define success clearly. The literature that describes intercultural learning is muddled with the use of terminology that is often interrelated, overlapping, context-specific and vaguely defined. These include: *intercultural competence*, *intercultural adaptation*, *intercultural effectiveness*, *cultural sensitivity*, *cultural awareness*, *intercultural performance* and *cultural adjustment*. While all these terms attempt to describe a positive outcome for an individual faced with intercultural contact, they often describe very broad ranges of skills, knowledge and awareness, and may mean different things in different contexts, or to different researchers (Hannigan, 1990).

Much research into CL seeks to clarify the factors associated with success in a cross-cultural setting (Dinges & Baldwin, 1996). Yet cultural adaptation is hard to define, and research in this area fragments into varying measures of success, such as: self awareness and self-esteem (Kamal & Maruyama, 1990), health (Babiker, Cox, & Miller, 1980) and mood states (Stone & Ward, 1990). Other researchers have focused on successful relationships (Cushner & Brislin, 1996) or the ability to manage stress (Hammer, Gudykunst, & Wiseman, 1978). Matsumoto (2001) focuses on the social psychology of adjustment, and defines personal characteristics desirable for adjustment, such as emotion regulation, critical thinking, and openness/flexibility. At the other extreme, Black and Stephens (1989) define success in more practical terms such as the ability to perform daily activities

or work tasks.

As with ICE, one weakness of CL research like this is that it simply describes an ideal outcome - an ideal set of skills or states of mind - while shedding less light on the general processes involved in reaching those goals. It can be represented as a list of "does and don'ts"(table 1).

The "does" and "don'ts" of cultural learning:	
You should:	You shouldn't be:
1) know culture-specific information	1) overly task-oriented
2) speak the target language	2) authoritarian
3) know about and identify with your own culture	3) perfectionist
3) be flexible	4) rigid
5) be realistic about the target culture	5) ethnocentric
6) have organizational skills	6) narrow-minded
7) manage interactions well	7) self-centered
8) be a good communicator	
9) be able to establish and maintain relationships	

Table 1 – For an overview see Matsumoto (2001) and Hannigan (1990)

Lists like this provide some guidance for intercultural educators, but they also create serious problems. Some of the "does and don'ts" – such as "culturally specific information", or "knowledge of a target language" – are relatively easy to include in a syllabus. But many others are not. How can you teach a sojourner to "have organizational skills" or "be flexible"? Or by the same token, how does one prevent learners from being ethnocentric or authoritarian? With the arguable exceptions of numbers 1 to 3, all of the items shown by research to be identified with successful intercultural adaptation involve deep levels of the personality and identity. Indeed, it would be reasonable to argue, as Matsumoto et al. do, that the primary emphasis in intercultural education should not be to attempt to explain cultural difference, but to focus on the psychology of dealing with the stress of cross-cultural experiences (Matsumoto et al., 2001).

Another weakness of goals produced by much current research is that they do not help us conceptualize cultural learning as a process, or help

us understand what motivates cultural learning. This may be why the process of cultural learning – with the exception, perhaps, of a discussion of "culture shock" – is generally not included in ICE materials. The generalizations and ideal outcomes of many CL goals avoid the reality that learners have positive and negative reactions at the same time, may adapt to one element in their new environment, but not another, or function well, but only within certain contexts. They state the final goals, but do not describe the process of achieving those goals, or the varying degrees of learning reached by different sojourners.

2.3 Cultural learning as a process

The idealized goals for ICE and CL have been created primarily through reverse engineering – an attempt to start with a desired end product and work backwards to determine how to replicate it; thus breaking down intercultural success into cause and effect. But cultural learning, like language learning, is a dynamic process of engaging with others. It can not be easily dissected and made predictable, and is also highly context-specific. This is especially true at the deeper or more abstract levels of culture – precisely the levels that cause the most intractable problems. Yet there is another way to look for ICE and CL goals. Rather than looking at the end product, we can study how people react to intercultural experiences over time. This has traditionally been the approach used in the study of culture shock (J. Bennett, 1993; Ward, 1993; Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001; Ward, Okura, Kennedy, & Kojima, 1998).

2.3.1 Culture shock and cultural learning

Somewhat out of favor now, research on culture shock tries to understand the progression through stages of an intercultural experience. It looks at how people *do* react to intercultural environments, as opposed to how educators might *want* sojourners to react. The concept of culture shock was initially described as an "occupational disease" of those going abroad caused by "the anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse"(Oberg, 1960). Now, it is a widely known term and commonly used to mean any discomfort experienced by people going abroad, and its psychological causes have been described in detail (J. Bennett, 1998; Oberg, 1960; Stone & Ward, 1990; Ward et al., 2001; Ward et al., 1998).

Descriptions of the reasons for culture shock match well with the implicit models of culture described by Hall (1959; 1976), Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) and others. Weaver (1993), in an overview of the literature related to culture shock, describes three causes: (1) the loss of familiar cues, (2) the breakdown of interpersonal communication, and (3) an identity crisis. He points out that these all occur in any new situation, but that in a cross-cultural situation the effects are greatly exaggerated. These three causes can be correlated with the ever-deeper layers of cross-cultural difference. They can also give us a description of how cultural learning takes place at deeper layers of the self, and how deeper learning differs from more superficial adaptation.

2.3.2 The anatomy of deep cultural learning

In the global age, it is easy to forget how traumatic it can be to live in a new cultural environment. In spite of the technological convergence that has taken place over the last century, different cultural environments affect us at deep levels of the self. This is not necessarily a product of bizarre or distressing features in our environment, it is simply a natural product of disrupting the normal flow of environmental cues which reinforce our sense of self. Humans are creatures of perceptual habits, and can be thrown into deep states of disorientation when these habits are interrupted. The following was written as a description of the causes of culture shock, but can also be seen as describing the deeper processes of cultural learning.

Unfamiliar cues

The first cause of culture shock and challenge of intercultural learning is a loss of familiar cues. "Cues" are what is most "tangible and observable" in our environment and correspond well with the Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner description of explicit culture. Weaver (1993) divides these cues into "physical cues" – which include "objects which we have become accustomed to in our home culture which are changed or missing in a new culture" and "behavioural or social cues", which "provide order in our interpersonal relations." (p. 140) As with Trompenaars' and Hampden-Turner's description of explicit and implicit culture, the cues Weaver (1993) describes are the explicit manifestation of symbols that function at deeper layers of meaning.

> Cues are signposts which guide us through our daily activities in an acceptable fashion which is consistent with the total social environment. They may be words, gestures, facial expressions, postures, or customs which help us make sense out of the social world that surrounds us. They tell us when and how to give gifts or tips, when to be serious or to be humorous, how to speak to leaders and subordinates, who has status, what to say when we meet people, when and how to shake hands, how to eat, and so on. They make us feel comfortable because they seem so automatic and natural. (p. 140)

Weaver goes on to tie this directly to the out-of-awareness element of cultural learning:

> When we enter another culture we feel out of sync and, yet, we often do not realize the cause of our awkwardness because we learned our own kinesic, proxemic, and chronemic cues simply by growing up in our own culture. This silent language, or nonverbal communication, is especially important for the communication of feelings (Mehrabian, 1968) and yet is almost totally beyond the conscious awareness of the average person. (p. 141)

According to Weaver, at the most explicit level, "the very act of changing physical environments causes stress"(p. 141). It may be that as some degree of technological convergence takes place globally, the stress caused by changes in our physical environment will be somewhat reduced. Certainly, a German visitor to Shanghai faces a less baffling physical environment than she would have one hundred years ago, if for no other reason than the increased similarity in the technology of everyday life. But at the deeper symbolic levels, the adjustment process is still difficult.

The breakdown of communication

The cues described above are explicit insofar as they correspond to visible physical and behavioural phenomena and how we respond to our environment. The next cause of culture shock described by Weaver is more implicit. It is related to the ways in which our interactions with others are interrupted.

> Identifying a breakdown of communication as a cause of culture shock emphasizes the process of interpersonal interaction and is much less behavioural than the other possible causes. In fact, it approaches humanistic psychology with its emphasis on the psychodynamics of human

> interaction. A basic assumption in this explanation is that a breakdown of communication, on both the conscious and unconscious levels, causes frustration and anxiety and is a source of alienation from others. (p. 142)

The frustration of communication breakdown causes frustration not only because we have difficulty managing everyday tasks, such as buying train tickets, but also because the deeper layers of our identity can not be expressed or reinforced. These deeper layers may well correspond with the deeper cultural layers of norms and values described by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner.

Cultural learning as an Identity Crisis

The final description of the process of culture shock offered by Weaver is as a form of identity crisis. This description corresponds to the deepest, most hidden parts of personality and cultural identity, and with it he also provides a bridge between culture shock and cultural learning. He describes the loss of our normal cues as disorienting, but remarks that this same disorientation can free us from our normal way of doing and perceiving, and make us more conscious of the grip that culture has on our behaviour and personality. He goes on to compare the overseas experience to an encounter, or sensitivity group, in that it "offers a new social milieu in which to examine one's behaviour, perceptions, values, and thought patterns" (p.146).

In Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's cultural onion, implicit assumptions about reality are at the core of culture. It seems reasonable to say that the kind of deep personal changes described by Weaver would correspond to dealing with cultural difference that resides at these deeper layers of unquestioned assumptions. Put more simply, learning to eat with our fingers (explicit culture, physical cues) probably will not cause us to question our identity, but communicating with and developing relationships with people who have fundamentally different world views might. Weaver (1993) emphasizes how difficult this process can be:

> An experience close to psychosis may be required to take one outside the collective pressures and assumptions of our culture. We may discover things about ourselves that allow for great personal growth. Yet it may be an ego-shattering experience. (p. 144)

Weaver's descriptions of culture shock correspond well with the concept of

cultural difference existing at different levels of conscious awareness. It also introduces an element of psychology into the attempt to understand cultural learning. Finally, it helps us look at culture shock / culture learning, as a developmental process which happens over time.

2.3.3 The stages of cultural learning

Unlike the idealized goals of ICE mentioned in the previous section, the concept of culture shock sees cultural adaptation happening over a period of time, and attempts to identify a progression, or stages in which it takes place. Different authors use a variety of phases to describe culture shock (J. Bennett, 1998). These include the "U curve", which describes an initial high, or honeymoon period, followed by a sharp emotional downturn, and then finally an emotional upswing as sojourners get adjusted. Often this adjustment corresponded with making a friend in the foreign culture (Weaver & Uncapher, 1981). A variation of the "U curve" is the "W curve" which includes an element of culture shock and adaptation upon return to the home culture. But not all research finds the same patterns, and some research finds that some people do not experience high levels of stress when adapting to life abroad (Lewthwaite, 1996; Ward et al., 1998).

In terms of the purposes of this study, the curves postulated by research into culture shock are crude markers. They simply represent the fact that one feels stress in new environments, which decreases over time. So while an understanding of culture shock may give us a clearer understanding of the psychological mechanisms involved in cultural learning, it does not give us a clearer goal for intercultural education. It also does not seem to provide predictable stages that learners can use as goals in the adaptation process. There is one researcher, however, who has started with the notion of stages of intercultural learning, and developed a theoretical model that gives a clear goal of intercultural learning, and stages that learners must go through to reach that goal.

2.4 Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity.

Milton Bennett has proposed the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS), a model of intercultural learning and education that provides a clearly defined goal, posits stages of development to reach that goal, and makes explicit how to create educational activities based

on this model. In addition, this model is presented as representing universal stages of intercultural development, and has led to the creation of a multiple choice instrument – the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) - which purports to measure objectively one's stage of intercultural sensitivity. This claim has been backed up by validity studies which seek to test the reliability of the basic premise of the model. If valid, the DMIS has the potential to provide us with a structure for planning intercultural education, and a measure for intercultural awareness. Because of the importance of these claims, and because Bennett's characterization will be an important element of the analysis done in this study, the DMIS will be examined in some detail.

2.4.1 Defining intercultural sensitivity

Bennett (M. J. Bennett, 1993) describes the desired outcome of both CL and ICE as an increase in intercultural sensitivity – defined as "the construction of reality as increasingly capable of accommodating cultural difference" (p.24). Put more simply, Bennett defines success as an increased ability to accept and empathize with other cultural realities. His model is developmental – i.e. it postulates predictable stages that learners go through as they gain cultural sensitivity. According to Bennett, one moves from a natural starting point of ethnocentrism – natural in that it characterizes normal socialization and human evolutionary biology – to "increasing sophistication in dealing with cultural difference" (p. 22). In this study, we have distinguished between the process of intercultural education and cultural learning. For Bennett, the desired outcome of both of these processes is the same – greater ability to construe other cultural realities.

The key organizing concept of Bennett's model is *differentiation*, which is used in two ways:

> first, that people differentiate phenomena in a variety of ways and, second, that cultures differ fundamentally from one another in the way they maintain patterns of differentiation, or worldviews. If a learner accepts this basic premise of ethnorelativism and interprets events according to it, then intercultural sensitivity and general intercultural communication effectiveness seem to increase. (p. 22)

Thus, Bennett's (M. J. Bennett, 1993) model is cognitive and phenomenological. It sees dealing with the existence of cultural difference as a primary challenge of intercultural competence, but does not focus on

behaviour or how people feel about a particular culture. Instead, it looks specifically at the cognitive ability to construe cultural difference. For someone who cannot construe cultural difference, other cultural worldviews are non-existent or denigrated. With an increasing degree of ethno-relativism, learners gain the ability to empathize – look at the world through the cultural lenses of others. In doing so, their construal of the nature of culture and cultural difference becomes more sophisticated.

Bennett's model describes cultural learning as progressing from the most ethnocentric stage – *denial*, through *defense*, then to *minimization*, to the ethnorelative stages of *acceptance*, *adaptation* and *integration*. In practice the stage of a learner's development can be determined by evaluating how an individual describes his or her experience of cultural difference. In other words, someone who says "Well, people in that country are really backward" is manifesting a particular way of construing cultural difference ("backward", i.e. recognizing difference and denigrating it), which can be categorized in discrete ways. The six stages mentioned are his attempt at determining these stages of intercultural sensitivity.

2.4.2 The ethnocentric stages

Denial

The first stage posited by Bennett is *denial*. In the stage of denial, learners simply do not recognize that cultural difference exists. This stage is based on ethnocentrism, defined by Bennett as "assuming that the worldview of one's own culture is central to all reality." Someone in denial lives in physical or psychological isolation, and the reality of other cultural viewpoints does not exist at all. Difference is simply not recognized. Bennett (1986) gives the example of an American in the stage of denial reporting on a trip to Tokyo, saying it was "just like home" because "there are lots of cars, big buildings, and McDonalds" (p.31). This individual only notices the familiar, and betrays a lack of categories for experiencing cultural differences.

According to Bennett, people in *denial* use wide categories for cultural difference. This can lead to the "stupid question" syndrome, such as when someone asks a Japanese visitor about Samurai, or asks an African visitor about wild animals. These questions betray the fact that the person asking the question has extremely simple perceptual categories for the concepts of "Japanese" or "African" – e.g. "there are Samurai in Japan" and "there are lions in Africa". These kinds of benign stereotypes mask a more insidious side to the stage of denial. When a cultural group in denial feels threatened by another group, the response can be to dehumanize them, and in extreme cases commit genocide.

Defense

Bennett describes the stage of *defense* as a "posture intended to counter the impact of specific cultural differences perceived as threatening"(p. 34). Cultural difference poses a threat to one's identity, and by extension to one's cultural reality. In *denial* cultural difference is ignored – its existence is amorphous. In *defense*, the threat is recognized and specific strategies are created to counter that threat. Someone at this stage of development might respond to cultural difference with statements such as "Well, people in that country are lazy" Or "At first people seem polite, but you later realize that they are being phony." In these differences, real cultural differences are perceived, but they are evaluated negatively. The evaluation of observed behaviors as "laziness" or "phoniness" upholds the central position of the cultural values of the speaker.

Three kinds of *defense* are described by Bennett: *denigration*, *superiority* and *reversal*. *Denigration* is one in which negative evaluation is focused on some aspect of cultural difference, such as in the examples above. *Superiority*, on the other hand, is a positive evaluation of one's own culture. An example given by Bennett is the concept of "modernization" which he sees as having a built-in component of superiority. An American who wants to help "modernize" other countries, or help them "develop" is in fact assuming a position of cultural superiority for the "development" already "achieved" in the U.S. Nationalism can be seen as a form of superiority. Finally, Bennett describes the state of *reversal*, which involves someone denigrating one's own cultural background and believing in the superiority of another. Bennett mentions Peace Corp Volunteers who disavow American values and instead try to adopt the values of their host community. A statement that might indicate *reversal* might be, "I did not realize how screwed up my country was until I started to live here (in this foreign country)."

Minimization

The final ethnocentric stage for Bennett is *minimization*, which involves "an effort to bury difference under the weight of cultural similarities." Cultural difference is recognized, but it is seen as less important than certain cultural universals. This kind of thinking can be found in intense competition, when a group of people will cooperate to work against a common enemy. Put more theoretically, "one finds superordinate constructs that place previously polarized elements onto one side of a larger construct" (p. 41). *Minimization* can be seen in the "golden rule" of "Do unto others what you would have them do unto you." This assumes that people share the same fundamental characteristics, and therefore one can use one's own experience as a guide for interacting with others.

Bennett describes two forms of *minimization*: *physical universalism* and *transcendental universalism*. He describes *physical universalism* as corresponding to the assumption that people everywhere share a fundamentally similar physical biology, which reflects a similar set of needs and motivations. Examples of this kind of thinking might be statements such as "Well, humans are just social primates. We all basically behave based on the same instincts." Bennett points out that while assertions like this may be true in a general sense, in terms of intercultural understanding they are

trivial. This is because human behaviour exists within a social context, and needs to be interpreted using that social context. People who look at things from a *physical universalism* perspective will most likely end up using unconscious judgments based on their own culture.

The second form of *minimization* described by Bennett is *transcendental universalism*. This is parallel to *physical universalism*, except that the universal qualities that someone at this stage relies on are related to some transcendent law or principle. Examples of this are religious thinking such as "We are all children of the same god" or assertions of psychological or sociological imperatives, such as "All humans have the same emotional needs" or Marxist theories of class struggle. This stage of development may recognize that cultural difference exists, and even give it great importance. Ultimately, however, this difference is always seen as less important than the overriding principle. An example of this thinking might be a missionary who understands the need to learn the customs and language of a community to be better able to bring them his message of "truth".

2.4.3 The ethnorelative stages

Acceptance

Bennett (M. J. Bennett, 1993) describes *acceptance* as marking a fundamental shift in how cultural difference is dealt with. No longer is cultural difference something that is denied or denigrated. From an ethnorelative standpoint, cultural difference is not seen as good or bad, just different, and particular behaviour is understood to exist within a cultural context. Someone dealing with cultural difference from the *acceptance* stage of development might say something like "Well, everyone has their own way of doing things that works for them." Bennett describes acceptance as "crossing the barrier" from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism, and describes two forms, respect for behavioural difference, and respect for value difference. Respect for behavioural differences refers to the recognition that how people act reflects deep-seated differences in culture. An example given by Bennett is language. Someone operating from the perspective of *acceptance* will recognize that learning a foreign language means more than learning new words to express the same ideas, it reflects an entirely different view of the world which is separate, but as valid as one's customary view.

Bennett sees the acceptance of other values as more difficult than the

acceptance of behaviour. Because sooner or later values will be found which are personally offensive, a learner at this stage must understand that even these must be viewed in a cultural context, and seen as an ongoing process of assigning meaning. The example Bennett uses to illustrate this point is of some form of valuing men over women. If a learner sees this value as a set "rule" followed by a culture, it is difficult to accept, but if it is seen as a larger part of a process of creating meaning, it can be viewed more accurately in the context in which it occurs.

Adaptation

At the stage of *acceptance* the framework of appreciating cultural difference is created, while at the stage of *adaptation* skills for functioning within the cultural viewpoints of others are developed. In particular, Bennett mentions communication skills. These skills are seen as an additive process, in which new ways of communicating and looking at things are added to a learner's personal repertoire. Bennett explicitly excludes the process of assimilating into another culture as being part of the adaptation stage. He sees this as happening because in assimilating into a new culture, we are in effect substituting one world view for another.

In *adaptation* on the other hand, learners develop the ability to shift among multiple perspectives. He describes two kinds of cultural frame shifts for the purpose of communication: empathy, which involves temporary and intentional shifts of a frame of reference, and pluralism, which may be unintentional and tied to more permanent frames of reference. These frame shifts allow for people to develop relationships and share more fully in the world view of someone else. Someone at the adaptation stage might make a statement such as "Let me explain it from the French point of view".

Bennett (M. J. Bennett, 1993) describes pluralism as reflecting a "philosophical commitment to the existence of a 'multitude of irreducible and equivalent ultimate wholes, ideas, values and value scales, as well as experiences in which they are tested.'" By this, he means that cultural differences must be understood "totally within the context of the relevant culture" (p. 55). and that by extension one's understanding of that culture must come from actual experience within that cultural frame of reference. Pluralism is the general category that Bennett puts "biculturalism" and "multiculturalism" in. Someone operating from a pluralistic standpoint

experiences multiple perspectives as a normal part of themselves. They may have an "Italian self" and a "Greek self", which functions within those relative world views.

Integration

Bennett describes the state of *adaptation* to be "good enough" for most intercultural settings, but defines one final stage beyond the ability to shift into different cultural points of view. This is a person whose "essential identity is inclusive of life patterns different from his own and who has psychologically and socially come to grips with a multiplicity of realities" (Adler, 1977, p. 25). The person in *integration* creates a self in the process of shifting between perspectives.

The individual in the state of *integration* lives outside of normal cultural boundaries. Referring to this as "constructive marginality", Bennett (1993) explains:

> . . . marginality describes exactly the subjective experience of people who are struggling with the total integration of ethnorelativism. They are outside all cultural frames of reference by virtue of the ability to consciously raise any assumption to a meta-level (level of self-reference). In other words, there is no natural cultural identity for a marginal person. There are no unquestioned assumptions, no intrinsically absolute right behaviours, nor any necessary reference group. (p. 63)

Bennett insists that this does not mean that the cultural marginal can not make ethical choices, or that "anything is okay". Rather, the multicultural person evaluates choices contextually, with the ability to even look at the same situation from multiple perspectives. Ethical choices are informed by this contextualized understanding.

2.5 Reflections on Bennett's model

2.5.1 Strengths of the DMIS

Conceptually, the DMIS solves a number of problems for intercultural education. The goal is explicitly defined, with differentiated stages of development for learners. It is tied clearly to the experience of people's lived intercultural experience. It avoids the subjectivity of defining success in an intercultural setting using difficult-to-define behavioural measures. It also

avoids the subjectivity of relying on emotional states or reports of well-being. Bennett has also used this model as a basis for sequencing different kinds of training activities – i.e. he has connected the theory to the practice of intercultural education. For example, according to Bennett, learners who are in the developmental state of *defense* are best served by learning activities which focus on cultural similarity, since this can help them overcome resistance to difference. Learners in the state of minimization are better served by activities that focus on cultural difference.

Another strength of the DMIS is that it provides a clear way to evaluate cultural sensitivity. One's stage of development is measured by the way that one perceives, and by extension talks about, cultural difference. This means that statements that sojourners make about their experiences of cultural difference can be compared to Bennett's model. Having this as a kind of base-line measurement allows researchers to investigate the factors that lead to intercultural sensitivity. For example, sojourners with different levels of foreign language ability could be evaluated using the DMIS to see how language learning is related – or is not related – to gaining intercultural sensitivity. For these reasons, Bennett's model has been chosen as a starting point for the analysis of sojourners' experiences in this study. Not everyone, however, accepts Bennett's claims, nor does his model necessarily totally meet the needs of this study. Therefore, we will first examine the question of the validity of Bennett's approach in order to better determine how it can be used in the context of this study.

2.5.2 Validity of the DMIS

Certain theories about learning – such as Piaget's description of the stages of children's learning abstract thought, or the stages describing children's acquisition of their first language – seem to be tied to physiological processes of development and may come close to being scientifically provable. Other theories about mind or learning, however, are more simply descriptions of complex phenomena. Freud's concept of the unconscious, for example, can not easily be demonstrated in a quantifiable way, yet it provides a powerful conceptual framework to interpret experience and behaviour. In this way, a model of intercultural learning need not be "true" in some absolutely verifiable way in order for it to be useful as an educational or conceptual tool. In that sense, if Bennett's model is treated as a set of ideas to help us make sense of a

complicated process, it needn't face some absolute test of scientific validity. It should, however, match reality – that is, it should provide a functional framework to make sense of the phenomena in question.

For his part, Bennett and others have undertaken studies to show the validity of his model (Bennett, 2003; Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003; Paige, 1999). The fundamental premises of Bennett's model are relatively simple:

> 1) "The phenomenology of difference is the key to intercultural sensitivity. Intercultural communication behaviour is treated as a manifestation of this subjective experience." 2) "The construing of difference necessary for intercultural sensitivity is that of ethnorelativism, whereby different cultures are perceived as variable and viable constructions of reality." 3) "Ethical choices can and must be made for intercultural sensitivity to develop. However, these choices cannot be based on either absolute or universal principles. Rather, ethical behaviour must be chosen with awareness that different viable actions are possible." (p. 66)

While the general approach of Bennett's model seems intuitively obvious, the particular stages and sequencing of learning as described by Bennett seem less so. He describes six stages, but why six? Couldn't it be five? Or perhaps it is simply a cumulative process without identifiable stages. And are these stages valid for people of all cultures?

Bennett's approach to measuring intercultural sensitivity is to treat an individual's description of her experience with cultural difference as a manifestation of her ability to conceptualize cultural difference. In other words, how one talks about cultural difference gives evidence for one's degree of ethnocentrism or ethnorelativism. One method for doing this is to have a conversation with someone and ask opinions about cultural difference. Those statements are then analyzed based on the DMIS to determine the level of intercultural sensitivity. In the course of his work as a cross-cultural trainer, however, Bennett has also developed a written multiple-choice instrument – the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) – designed to measure intercultural sensitivity. The IDI consists of a series of statements regarding the respondent's view of cultural difference. Respondents mark their level of agreement with the statements and based on their responses, a profile of their level of intercultural sensitivity is created. Bennett claims that the IDI is a valid and objective measure of intercultural sensitivity. The IDI is proprietary,

and is used in Bennett's intercultural communication consulting and training work. The right to use the IDI is reserved for people who have been trained in its use.

Bennett's work has been subject to different studies to test the ideas behind the DMIS (Hammer et al., 2003; Paige, 1999; Yamamoto, 1998). The largest studies, however, focused not on the DMIS directly, but on the IDI. In order to evaluate these studies, it is important to understand how the IDI was created and look at the relationship between the IDI and DMIS. The items on the IDI were created using the six categories of the DMIS. A series of interviews were done in which 40 people with experience abroad were asked to talk about their ideas regarding cultural difference. A set of open-ended questions, intended to elicit responses associated with the six stages of the DMIS, were asked. The questions were:

(1) Do you think there is much cultural differences around here? (Denial)
(2) What kinds of difficulties or problems associated with having cultural differences around here exist? (Defense)
(3) When it comes down to the bottom-line, is it more important to pay attention to cultural differences or similarities among us? (Minimization)
(4) Do you make any specific efforts to find out more about the cultures around you? (Acceptance)
(5) Do you try to adapt your communication to people from other cultures? Does it mean anything to you to look at the world through the eyes of a person from another culture? Do you feel you have two or more cultures? (Adaptation)
(6) Has your adjustment to other cultures led you to question your identity? Do you feel apart from those cultures that you are involved in? (Integration)

Based on the answers to these questions, Bennett created a list of statements which typified responses from each of these categories, such as: 1) People from our culture are less tolerant compared to people from other cultures (defense), (2) Our common humanity deserves more attention than culture difference (minimization) (3) I have observed many instances of misunderstanding due to cultural differences in gesturing or eye contact (acceptance/adaptation). The items generated from this study were refined and expanded on, and then further refined. The end product was a multiple-choice questionnaire which is based theoretically on the DMIS, and which was subsequently studied.

In two studies intended to examine the empirical structure of the IDI, Hammer et al. ran a variety of statistical tests to see if the distribution of responses on the IDI clustered in the way predicted by the DMIS (Hammer et

al., 2003). A first study done on an initial version of the IDI did factor analysis to test the validity of the categories, and the results suggested that the factors identified were not highly stable. The finding suggested that rather than 6 categories as predicted by the DMIS, answers were more reliably explained when other categories were used. Three of these dimensions were identified: a Denial and Defense category, a Minimization category, and an Acceptance and Adaptation category (Paige, 1999). Based on these results, a further refined version of the IDI was also then subjected to a large scale study to test the validity of the categories (Hammer et al., 2003). Confirmatory factor analyses, reliability analyses, and construct validity tests were run. This study validated five main dimensions of the DMIS, Denial/Defense, Reversal, Minimization, Acceptance/Adaptation, Encapsulated Marginality.

These studies indicate that rather than six categories as predicted by DMIS, subjects' responses grouped into the five categories above. Denial and defense seemed to be essentially a similar experience. Reversal seems to be a different experience than other kinds of defense, minimization seems to be an experience of its own, acceptance and adaptation are similar to each other, and the marginality which typifies the integration portion of the model is seen as a separate category. The DMIS and the results of the study of the IDI can be compared using the following diagram (diagram 2):

Developmental model of Intercultural Sensitivity					
Denial	Defense	Minimization	Acceptance	Adaptation	Integration

Categories validated by Hammer's IDI study				
Denial/ Defense	Reversal	Minimization	Acceptance/ Adaptation	Encapsulated Marginality

Diagram 2

Bennett and the other authors of this study claim that they are not trying to use this study to test the DMIS. Rather, they are testing the IDI – the test instrument created based on DMIS. Somewhat contradictorily, they also say that based on the findings of this study the DMIS model has been largely supported by testing (Hammer et al., 2003). The results of this study, as well as the contradictory claims of validity, raise, at the very least, doubts about the importance of describing intercultural learning in a fixed series of six

distinct stages as predicted by the DMIS.

In addition, there may be questions in terms of construct validity, which focuses on a systematic sampling of the items related to the construct being measured (Emmert, 1989). In the initial study used to create items for the IDI, interviewees were asked questions which may have led their experience artificially into the categories predicted by the theory. In particular, the question "When it comes down to the bottom-line, is it more important to pay attention to cultural differences or similarities among us?" is a binary question which will confirm the category regardless of the answer. Replying that difference is important puts one in the acceptance category and replying that similarity is important puts one in the minimization category.

Validity across cultures

One important issue for Bennett's model is whether it works equally well for people from different cultural milieus. Bennett is from the U.S,, and his educational background and training experience are centered on the United States. It is reasonable to question whether this model works better for Americans than for people of other countries, particularly non-western countries. As for the national origin of the subjects in these studies, the interview-based study which produced the statements used to create the items for the IDI was conducted with 40 subjects, almost 40% of which were American (15/40). Another 25% were from Western and Northern Europe (11/40), and the remainder were: Eastern Europeans (3/40) Central Asians (2/40), South Americans (1/40), Africans (2/40) and East Asians (6/40). Although this group is culturally diverse, it is heavily weighted towards U.S. Americans and Europeans (26/40 = 65%). It should be pointed out that three of the American subjects were from ethnic minorities (Hammer et al., 2003). The largest quantitative study done to test the validity of the IDI was done with a much larger sample (591 respondents). The subjects, however, were weighted even more heavily towards the U.S. (87%, with 13% from 37 different countries)

One study done in Japan raises questions about the category of *minimization* as it applies to Japanese. Yamamoto (1998) did a series of qualitative in-depth interviews of Japanese university students studying in the United States. Data were analyzed according to the categories proposed by Bennett. Then, emergent categories were identified which typified students'

experiences. In the first analysis, Yamamoto found many instances in which students' descriptions did not fit the DMIS, and in particular were not consistent with either the physical universalism or the transcendent universalism predicted for the *minimization* stage by Bennett. Rather, students' descriptions of their experience were "closely related to Japanese cultural values and perception of reality" (p.77). An example was that students simply described difference and indicated a relative level of comfort/discomfort with difference. They did not talk about their experience in terms of "acceptance" or "respect". Regarding the use of Bennett's model in Japan, Yamamoto (1998) concludes that:

> These results suggest that the definitions of each stage may need some modification to understand intercultural sensitivity in the Japanese context. It might be possible to say that what Japanese perceive as differences/similarities or how they deal with differences/similarities are different from or not included in the stages of the model. These aspects need to be considered and added to the model in order to modify it to apply in the Japanese context. (p. 77-78)

One other consideration for this study was that unlike Bennett's initial quantitative study which used questions based on the categories of DMIS theory, Yamamoto's study asked open-ended questions in a qualitative interview model designed to avoid inadvertently leading interviewees to the researcher's conclusions.

Bennett,(2003) has commented on the results of Yamamoto's study and feels that the stage of minimization for cultures like Japan's may refer to cultural absolutes other than physical universalism and transcendent universalism, yet still follow the same developmental stages predicted by the model. This point of view has not been elaborated on in detail by Bennett in his writing and is therefore difficult to interpret. While there are no easy answers to this question, this issue provides an area of exploration for this study.

Critiques of Bennett

While Bennett's model has gained some acceptance and has been used in other studies as a neutral measure of intercultural competence and as a description of the goals of cultural learning (Olson & Kroeger, 2001), the desired outcomes of his model have been the subject of criticism as well.

Sparrow (2000), challenges the ultimate goal of Bennett's model. According to Bennett, the final stage of intercultural sensitivity is that of *integrated marginality*, a state in which one's identity and world view stand outside any single cultural reality. One creates an identity and world view in the act of choosing from multiple perspectives. Sparrow, however, argues against the notion that it is possible to go beyond one's cultural reality in the way that Bennett describes. According to Sparrow, the idea of using a meta-awareness of culture as a goal of intercultural education, articulated first by Adler (1977) and refined by Bennett, represents a "Cartesian concept of a mind, detached from experience, capable of determining an objective reality" (p. 177) which has recently been brought into question. She argues that social identity theories suggest that an ultimate stage of social development is typically a reconnection to real communities, rather than the marginality described by Bennett.

To support her position, Sparrow studied a group of women with high degrees of intercultural experience and integration into host communities. She found that their experiences were characterized by a sense of connectedness to community and investment in relationships, and that their description of their experiences did not match well with Bennett's model. In addition, she disputes Bennett's idea that empathy can be learned as an imaginative, intuitive skill. Rather, Sparrow concludes that true empathy and interpersonal skills rise naturally from relationships with one's own family and communities of origin and from a commitment to interaction with others (Sparrow, 2000). Her point, she says, is not to deny the cultural learning goals by Bennett, but to show that:

> individuals develop in a variety of ways, depending on almost infinite variables, and that their ways of understanding and describing their development can vary significantly. Gender, religion, racial and ethnic backgrounds, socioeconomic status and language competence all interact within specific contextual realities to configure personal and social identities. (p. 96)

Sparrow's points are well taken. There is a danger in defining a particular kind of intercultural competence as "the" intercultural competence, when the lived experience may be much more organic and varied than predictable by a single theory.

2.5.3 DMIS and cultural depth

A central concern of this study is finding a way to describe the depth of intercultural learning. In chapter 1 it was argued that culture (and cultural difference) exists at both the readily-apparent level of explicit culture, and the deeper more challenging levels of values and worldviews. Accordingly, the degree of challenge for a given cultural learner may vary widely. One person may travel extensively, but never live abroad. Another may live in several different countries, yet not be deeply integrated into any of the cultures. Another may live only in one foreign culture, yet learn the language and integrate deeply. How can we compare the cultural learning of these different people?

Bennett's model proposes that intercultural sensitivity is not context specific. Once one has achieved an ethno-relative outlook, one should be able to apply that outlook to any intercultural experience. But what about people who have an ethno-relative understanding of one cultural community, and yet remain ethnocentric towards another? For example, a German who adapts to life working in Paris and learns to shift perceptual references between those of French and German colleagues, might then go to live in China and still make ethnocentric judgments about Chinese colleagues. It might be that deeply held cultural assumptions – the importance of the individualism, for example – which were not challenged during the stay in France could be challenged in China. How would Bennett's model deal with someone in this situation? According to Bennett, (personal correspondence) this person could be said to have "issues" remaining in defense or acceptance. They have not fully achieved an ethnorelative viewpoint. Ethnorelativity is not only a question of being able to function in another culture, it is also recognizing in general the validity and viability of other viewpoints.

If this is true, one wonders how deep one's intercultural experience must be to achieve this advanced state. Part of this question revolves around the nature of empathy. Bennett sees empathy as a conscious shift into other cultural perspectives based on an acceptance of cultural difference. Sparrow sees it as something (according to Sparrow) deeper, which grows organically out of relationships with people in new cultural communities. Sparrow (2000) suggests that Bennett's view of the goals of cultural learning represent an intellectualization of cultural difference that is at odds with the actual lived experience of many of the interculturalists that she studied. Bennett (1993)

feels, however, that empathizing with another culture is not the same as recognizing the validity of other cultural viewpoints in general.

Bennett's and Sparrow's views represent two differing lenses to view the relative depth of cultural learning experiences. Bennett's ideas do not emphasize the relative depth of intercultural experiences. If you've made the fundamental cognitive recognition of cultural relativism, you are equipped for future encounters. He does not state how easy he thinks this to be, but implies that it is possible to be in the stage of *acceptance* without much experience in other countries. He refers to the pluralistic stage of *adaptation* as requiring at least two years abroad (p. 55). Sparrow, on the other hand, talks about the deep connections to community in the group of interculturalists she studied. Their cultural learning was not primarily exemplified by the kind of marginality described by Bennett, and seems to fit better with the understanding of relative depth of intercultural experience that this study is focusing on.

These two views of cultural learning are at the crux of the questions this study seeks to answer. In a world marked by increasing yet often shallow intercultural interaction, what should be the focus of intercultural learning? Is it possible to prepare sojourners with training designed to achieve the kind of cognitive acceptance of difference proposed by Bennett? Will this prepare them adequately for the wide range of intercultural situations they may find themselves in? Or does deeper cultural learning require the kind of intense connections and interactions typical of the subjects in Sparrow's study? The next chapter will discuss how this study will try to find some answers to these questions.

3 Research goals and methods

In the previous two chapters, we have seen how globalization is characterized by both shallow and deep intercultural interaction. We have also seen that this cultural "depth", while part of the tradition of intercultural communication studies, has not been well incorporated into the field of intercultural communication research and education. We have examined the goals of intercultural communication education, and found them often to be simply a list of idealized outcomes. In contrast to this, we have seen that Milton Bennett has proposed the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS), which purports to measure the degree to which one is capable of conceptualizing cultural difference. We saw that Bennett's model does not deal specifically with the concept of cultural depth, and that questions remain about the applicability of Bennett's model across cultures.

These ideas serve as the backdrop for more specific questions this study will seek to examine: 1) How can we best describe and measure cultural learning? 2) How can we describe the "depth" of cultural learning? 3) Can a developmental model of intercultural learning which incorporates the concept of cultural "depth" be developed?

3.1 Research Questions

3.1.1 Describing and measuring cultural learning

The first question that this research will consider is: How can we describe and measure cultural learning? Bennett has contributed some important insights and made some significant claims about the nature of cultural learning. His definition of "cultural sensitivity" as an increase in the ability to conceptualize other world views and raise cultural difference to a level of meta-awareness cuts across the fragmented and vague goals of intercultural learning described by many other authors. He claims that intercultural sensitivity can best be described in cognitive terms, and furthermore that intercultural learning follows predictable stages for people across all cultures. Equally importantly, Bennett claims that cultural sensitivity can be measured objectively.

Two objections have been raised about Bennett that this project will explore. Sparrow (2000) has described Bennett's cultural goals as being overly intellectualized and glorifying a Cartesian view which sees cultural sensitivity

as the process of finding an all-encompassing objective viewpoint with which to view cultural difference. According to Sparrow, intercultural competence is more marked by feelings of integration and identification with specific cultural communities, and not so much with finding an absolute objectivity about cultural difference. Another way to describe the competing claims of Sparrow and Bennett is to say that for Bennett the final goal of cultural learning is to go beyond the influence of any single culture, while for Sparrow the final goal is not so much philosophical but based on constructive human relations within new cultural contexts.

While these two views are not necessarily contradictory, they each contain a critique of the other. Sparrow seems to feel that Bennett is ignoring the emotional and human aspects of intercultural relationships with his (according to Sparrow) narrow cognitive focus. For Bennett, the kinds of relationships described by Sparrow as evidence of successful intercultural learning may be a byproduct of intercultural learning, but do not necessarily constitute intercultural sensitivity. One may have very successful relationships, and function well in another culture, without ever learning the broader lessons offered by relative world views. For Bennett, this means the ability to raise the issue of cultural difference to the meta-level of self-reflection.

A second doubt that has been raised about Bennett is whether his developmental stages apply for people from all cultures. Yamamoto (1998) found that Japanese did not describe their experience of difference in the terms predicted by Bennett. Further questions are raised by the predominance of American and Western European subjects in the studies which have been done to validate Bennett's theory. And finally, the six stages of development posited by Bennett's DMIS were not validated in research on the Intercultural Development Inventory, Bennett's multiple-choice testing instrument. Rather, five categories were validated. One of those categories – minimization – is a category that has been singled out for questions about its cross-cultural validity.

3.1.2 Describing the "depth" of cultural learning

The second question this study will examine is: How can we describe the "depth" of cultural learning? More specifically, this study seeks to compare the depth of sojourners' experiences, with their level of intercultural

sensitivity. The problem of how to define an experience as "deep" remains. We can not say, for example, that simply because someone lives in a foreign country for a relatively long time that they are necessarily being challenged to adapt to abstract cultural difference. Some expatriates, such as foreign workers living in closed foreign-only communities in countries such as Saudi Arabia, may be extremely isolated from certain kinds of cultural difference. A high-status English-speaking expatriate manager who uses English at work and lives in company-supplied housing may be buffered from cultural difference in a similar way.

Undoubtedly, the factors which make any individual's experience "deep" are both highly individual and contextual. Two people may react very differently to similar circumstances, and personality characteristics are known to greatly affect individual cultural adaptation (Matsumoto et al., 2001). At the same time, certain elements of a cross-cultural experience may serve as indicators of the degree to which someone has faced deeper cultural learning challenges. This study will focus on two possible measures: successfully forming intercultural relationships and successfully learning the host language.

Relationships as a measure of cultural depth

In her critique of Bennett, Sparrow (2000) focuses on successful relationships and integration within a community as a critical element in intercultural learning. This emphasis on relationships as a measure of successful cultural learning has been used by other researchers as well (Brislin, 1981; Hannigan, 1990; Imahori & Lanigan, 1989). Imahori and Lanigan (1989) argue that intercultural competence derives from "dynamic interactive processes of intercultural relationships" and that intercultural competence "should lead to an effective relational outcome." Successful relationships not only show that someone can get along with others and get things done, but that they have confronted a relatively more abstract level of cultural difference.

Good relationships with people in a new cultural environment serve not only as an end-product of intercultural learning, they can also be seen as a driving force. The desire to form good relationships with others can motivate cultural adaptation, and it is within the process of forming relationships that the deeper elements of self are brought into play. Also, by getting to know

people with a different world view we develop empathy and learn to better construe cultural difference as described by Bennett. Indeed, Sparrow argues that empathy is a natural by-product of successful relationships, and argues for relationships, rather than disembodied cultural awareness, as a measure of intercultural success.

Another strength of using successful relationships as a measure of cultural learning is that it lends itself to an interactive, process-oriented approach. This more process-oriented view of human interaction is articulated clearly in the work of Pierre Bourdieu. His work provides a theoretical base as well as terminology which fits well with the orientation of this study (Bourdieu, 1991, 1998; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). For Bourdieu, human behaviour can best be understood as an ongoing process of negotiating desired outcomes. But this process is not conscious or fully under the control of the individual. Our socialization and experiences give us a default setting, or "habitus", which Bourdieu (1991) defines as "a set of dispositions which incline agents to act and react in certain ways" (p. 12). This concept can be compared to the unconscious cultural programming described by Hofstede and others. For Bourdieu as well, the dispositions which make up the *habitus* operate at the pre-conscious level, and influence us as we take action in specific social contexts (in this case, intercultural contexts) called "fields". For Bourdieu, an individual operates in a variety of fields and accumulates social and material resources – or "capital". Bourdieu's writings emphasize the importance of recognizing the internal programming that one brings to the infinite number of contextual fields that one operates in. It also emphasizes the recognition that we are motivated by many different kinds of "capital", both formal and informal. In this view, we can say that forming successful relationships is an important form of capital in an intercultural environment. Cultural learning is necessary because our *habitus* does not fully prepare us for the intercultural fields that we encounter.

With this in mind, this study proposes that intercultural learning is developmental – it progresses to greater levels of intercultural sensitivity as described by Bennett. This process is related to an ongoing process of negotiating with cultural difference as we seek different kinds of "capital". The cultural difference we confront initially is at a very concrete level, but becomes more abstract as our experience deepens. One important measure of the depth of this deepening intercultural experience is our success in forming

relationships with members of new cultural communities. Given this view of cultural learning, one question that can be explored is how increased intercultural sensitivity as described by Bennett is related to forming deeper relationships with people in the target culture. Is it possible for someone to have relatively shallow intercultural relationships, yet still reach a high degree of intercultural sensitivity? Is intercultural sensitivity primarily a cognitive, abstract quality which may not depend greatly on deep relationships, or rather as Sparrow argues, a natural byproduct of successful intercultural relations? Put into its simplest terms: How deep do our relationships need to be to engender significant cultural learning?

Cultural depth and language learning

Relationships are formed primarily through the use of language. This is important to keep in mind in intercultural learning because the language used in any intercultural relationship is an important measure of cultural adaptation. In the case of an international company operating in a non-English speaking country, but which uses English as an official company language, local employees are in effect required to adapt their communication to the linguistic world-view of foreigners. An expatriate who needs to learn a foreign language in order to speak to colleagues faces a much deeper challenge in cultural adaptation than someone who does not.

Ability in the host language has been identified as a critical element of cross-cultural competence (Matsumoto et al., 2001; Olson & Kroeger). It is often assumed that it is not possible to fully know another culture without speaking the language of that culture (Byram et al., 2001; Damen, 1987; Kramsch, 1998). The connection between language and intercultural understanding goes back to the work of linguists Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf (Carrol, 1956; Sapir, 1921) who argued that language shapes our view of the world to such an extent that speaking a different language constitutes a different perceptual world.

Despite disagreement about strong and weak versions of the Sapir and Whorf hypothesis, it is widely agreed that learning to speak a foreign language well implies more than learning a new code to represent already familiar objects and ideas. Language represents the values and world view of its speakers and speaking a language implies membership – to some degree at least – of a community of speakers of that language. There has been a great

deal written about including cultural learning in the field of language education (Alptekin, 2002; Browning, Masako, & Haruko, 1999; Byram, 1987; Cates, 1997, 1999; Clarke, ; Damen, 1987; David, 1996; Higgings & Tanaka, 1999; James & Garrett, 1992; Parry, 2002; Valdes, 1986; Yoneoka, 2000). Most of what is written is from the perspective of encouraging the inclusion of more cultural and global content in language classes. It is also a reflection of the recognition on the part of language teachers that cultural learning and language learning should ideally go hand in hand.

Yet for sojourners, the connection between language and cultural learning is not always so clear. The rise of international English means that many expatriates are under less pressure to learn the language of their varying cultural communities. In addition, multiple postings can mean that gaining a linguistic competence for every new cultural environment is simply impossible. In this way, fluency in the host language simply becomes another item on the list of learning ideals for sojourners. In practice we do not have clear answers to questions such as: To what degree does language learning increase cultural sensitivity? Does more rudimentary language learning help learners achieve the kind of empathy that Bennett describes, or is a high level of language ability necessary for that effect? Is it possible to have highly advanced language skills, yet still be culturally insensitive? How about a high degree of cultural sensitivity without any foreign language skills?

Anecdotal evidence gives us some tentative answers to some of these questions. The term "fluent fool" is used to describe someone speaking a foreign language but acting in culturally inappropriate ways. And some people seem to be naturally empathetic to start with, meaning that they might gain intercultural sensitivity with relatively less foreign language learning. But questions remain which have immediate relevancy for sojourners. Should, for example, companies who do training for employees who will use English as a company language also invest in local language training for their employees? How is foreign language ability related to the kind of intercultural sensitivity described by Bennett? How can language materials be designed to reflect the role of language learning in increased intercultural sensitivity?

Schema for describing the depth of cultural experiences

We have looked at two ways to describe the depth of cultural experience – the relationships that one forms in another culture, and the language that is used in that relationship. These general guidelines, however, need to be formalized in such a way to allow for analysis of sojourners' descriptions of their experiences. The depth and quality of relationships are so contextual and subjective that simply asking a sojourner general questions about relationships such as "How did you get along with people in the (host community)?" might not provide information which could be compared in a meaningful way. To get around this problem, a schema for describing the relative depth of intercultural relationships is called for.

This study proposes that the depth of intercultural experiences can be expressed by defining a hierarchy of intercultural relationships, and qualifies those relationships by the language used. The premise of this approach is that the kinds of relationships we have in a new cultural community are a reflection of our ability to manage increasingly abstract levels of cultural and linguistic difference. According to this view, the first cultural differences dealt with by a sojourner are concrete, and become increasingly abstract as the level of cultural depth increases. First and most concretely are differences in the physical environment, such as streets, food and buildings. A tourist is dealing with this level of cultural depth. The cultural adaptation is concrete: learning to use chopsticks, learning the layout of the city, figuring out which button to push on the elevator. For some tourists, this may be the extent of their intercultural experience. It is important to point out that simply because cultural difference is extremely concrete does not mean that a cultural experience is easy. Eating strange food, being jostled by crowds in a hectic foreign city and sleeping in new surroundings can all be extremely stressful. The source of the discomfort, however, is concrete and relatively easy to identify.

Dealing with people, as opposed to objects, increases the level of intercultural abstraction. The most concrete relationships for sojourners are those that are functional and formalized, such as waiters, clerks in a store, and perhaps a receptionist or secretary in a work environment. Cultural difference confronted at this level of interaction is probably related primarily to language difference and secondarily to the style of interaction. That is to

say that the goals of the relationships are relatively concrete – to order food, buy something or make copies. The need to use a foreign language in these situations obviously increases the level of intercultural learning demanded as the adaptation required to get something done is much greater. In addition to the need to communicate, the style of interaction, such as whether one pays at the table or at the register, may also present challenges. These challenges are still relatively concrete, however, because they tend to be fixed and formalized.

The kinds of relationships described above are probably adequate to meet the needs of short-term sojourners. But longer stays mean deeper relationships. The goals and interaction in these one-on-one relationships are less concrete and functional, and imply deeper exposure to cultural difference. Again, the issue of language is important. An American working with English-speaking colleagues in a foreign country faces a very different challenge than someone who must work in a foreign language. If a sojourner has a relationship in her native language with a non-native-speaking host, it is more primarily the host who is adapting. If a sojourner is obliged to form friendships in a foreign language, she is forced to adapt more to the world view of the host cultural community.

An important distinction in defining intercultural relationships is whether they are one on one (friends, spouse) or within a group (working for a foreign company abroad). In the former case, each person may be adapting to the other, and may have interests or personality types in common which make relationship formation much easier. In the latter, the group functions with a set of cultural expectations and the learner is much more likely to be forced to adapt relationship strategies in order to get along. For this reason, the deepest intercultural experiences are related to developing relationships within a group of people in a new cultural environment. A student staying in a homestay family needs to adapt to the routines of the family, just as someone working in a foreign company exclusively with host colleagues will have to fit in with others (unless, perhaps, he or she is the boss). Whereas in a one-on-one relationship the host may adapt to the sojourner, when the sojourner attempts to function within a group much of that flexibility is lost.

The hierarchy of intercultural relationships can be summarized in this way (table 2):

Hierarchy of intercultural relationships	
Functional relationships	Short-term, information based, formalized and (relatively) predictable, non-negotiated (waiter, clerk, acquaintance), with physical environment
One-on-one relationship	Extended contact, negotiated, feel connection, may extend into social network of others (friend, spouse, colleague)
Group relationships	extended contact, negotiated, requires adaptation to norms of the group (working in foreign company abroad, home-stay)

Table 2

Based on the hierarchy of relationships defined above, we can compare the depth of a sojourner's intercultural experience – as determined by the relationships they had and the language they used – with a sojourner's level of intercultural sensitivity as defined by Bennett.

The hierarchy above is only intended as a general way of categorizing intercultural relationships, and is not intended as an absolute measure. It is assumed that intercultural relationships are too contextual to measure reliably. For example, while one-on-one relationships are defined as being less "deep" than relationships in a group of people in a host cultural community, certain one-on-one relationships, such as with a spouse with a different cultural background, may involve a much more abstract and demanding level of cultural adaptation than certain group relationships, such as staying with a home-stay family. Despite these limitations, this hierarchy allows sojourners' experiences to be categorized in a more structured and meaningful way. It also recognizes that in one-on-one relationships it is much more likely that there is cultural adaptation going on in both directions, and that sojourners' experiences are being mitigated by the cultural skills of people from the host community.

3.1.3 A cultural learning model incorporating cultural "depth"

The third question this study will examine is: Can a developmental model of intercultural learning which incorporates the concept of cultural "depth" be developed? Bennett (1993) defines increased cultural sensitivity as

"the construction of reality as increasingly capable of accommodating cultural difference" (p. 72). When Bennett says "construction of reality" he refers to the meaning that an individual attributes to phenomena. In practical terms, this refers to the fact that a German visiting Thailand is not, strictly speaking, having a "Thai experience" but rather a "German experience in Thailand". We construe meaning based on our own cultural frameworks, and it is the ability to better be able to construe a "Thai experience" that would constitute increased intercultural sensitivity for this German sojourner.

Bennett's (1993) definition of intercultural sensitivity does not deal directly with the question of whether this process is in or out of awareness. He does say that intercultural development is multidimensional, and has cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions (p. 26). Bennett's emphasis on the ability to raise cultural questions to a "meta-level" of reflection, however, suggests that he feels that it is primarily a conscious process. This is reinforced by his writings about "accidental pluralists" – people who have learned to function within more than one world view, yet who are unable to generalize this skill to other cultural environments. It is the ability to have a conscious recognition of cultural difference that constitutes development – not simply the ability to look at things from another cultural point of view. Bennett speculates that cultural learning starts at the cognitive level, as difference is recognized. Next, there is an affective reaction as difference is experienced as a threat. The reaction to this is behavioural – working towards a common goal. This leads to a cognitive consolidation of cultural difference into universal categories. Following this is further cognitive recognition of cultural differences followed by increased development of intercultural skills.

This rather complex sequence follows the stages of his developmental model and suggests a conscious element throughout the whole cultural learning process. Yet this raises some questions in terms of depth of intercultural experience. Given that cultural difference functions at different levels of abstraction, is it not possible that a learner could be accepting of difference at one level, while having a defensive reaction at another? A sojourner may love the food or literature of a host environment, yet still find deeper values or attitudes repugnant. Bennett's model does not seem to deal well with someone in this situation. In addition, a relatively shallow cultural experience might mean that it is relatively easy for a sojourner to adopt the philosophical view of acceptance for cultural difference. A deeper experience,

however, could provoke a negative, ethnocentric response. This can be explained in Bennett's model only by having the sojourner move *backwards* in the model, from acceptance to defense, for example.

One final difficulty is related to the *cultural distance* between a sojourner's home environment and their new cultural communities. Cultural distance simply refers to the degree of overlap between the cultural frameworks of different cultural communities. There is likely to be a greater cultural gap between an English teenager and a Chinese teenager than there is between an English teenager and an American teenager, simply because the English and American teenagers share language, more similar value orientations, more common historical and cultural frames of reference, etc. This is true at more implicit levels of culture as well. A German student living in the United States may find it easier to make sense of his American friends' sense of individualism than a student from, say, Senegal, simply because individualism plays a more prominent role in German cultural communities than Senegalese.

If this is the case, then is it not possible that a German could be at the acceptance or adaptation level of development vis-à-vis the cultural difference discovered in the United States, but not have achieved that same level of development towards other cultural difference? According to Bennett, the answer is "no". A person who is unable to transfer their relativism to a new context has not "fully achieved" an ethnorelative viewpoint because they are not able to generalize their experience from one cultural community to another (Bennett, 2003). If the German in this example was to go to Senegal and make ethnocentric judgments based on these deeper cultural differences, they are said to "have issues" in a previous stage of development. This implies that sojourners inhabit more than one stage at a time, further complicating the model.

Finally Bennett's model raises the question of whether it is possible to have the philosophical commitment to ethno-relativism, yet simply be oblivious to cultural difference. One of Sparrow's criticisms of Bennett is that his conceptualization of cultural sensitivity is overly intellectual. Conversely, is it not possible that someone could function from a deeply ethnorelative world view, yet not do so consciously as an act of meta-reasoning, but rather as a way of forming relationships and getting things done? Bennett's model would seem to negate this idea, yet this question seems open to debate.

3.2 Narrowing the research questions

The previous section focused on three general questions about cultural learning that have been raised in the process of reviewing current literature, and proposed a schema to allow for categorizing the depth of intercultural experiences. To shed some light on these broad areas of inquiry, this study proposes to focus on some more narrowly defined questions:

1) Can the stages of cultural learning predicted by the DMIS be used to describe the intercultural experiences found among expatriates?

2) What is the relationship between a sojourner's level of intercultural sensitivity, and the depth of his or her cultural experience?

3) Is it possible to describe a developmental model of intercultural learning which incorporates the "depth" of a sojourner's cultural experience which is consistent with the understanding of cultural learning described by Bennett, Sparrow and Yamamoto?

3.3 Method of enquiry

This study looks for guidance on how best to find some answers to these questions by reviewing the methods of inquiry for the four studies which form the theoretical base the present study is built on. They are, the research Bennett did, based on his Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity, to develop his Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) (Hammer et al., 2003), and also the study that Hammer et. al. did to validate the IDI (Hammer et al., 2003). Also, Yamamoto's (1998) research which evaluated Bennett's model in the Japanese context is reviewed, as well as Sparrow's (2000) study on successful interculturalists.

Three of these four studies are primarily qualitative studies, with only Hammer et. al. representing a more quantitative study. Hammer's study involved performing a variety of statistical analysis on the responses to the IDI. The narrow goal of testing an already existing multiple-choice instrument allowed for this more statistics-driven approach. The other studies involved more qualitative methods, two involving structured interviews (Hammer et al., 2003; Yamamoto, 1998), and one involving analysis of writings of long-term

sojourners (Sparrow, 2000). Qualitative methods of inquiry, such as those that involve observation, interviews, case studies, text analysis, content analysis and discourse analysis, are often used when studying highly contextualized and broad-based research questions. Also, they allow for a more phenomenological approach, allowing subjects to describe their experiences in their own way, thus decreasing the possibility of a researcher imposing a set of arbitrary categories on the data (Silverman, 2001).

The danger of imposing conceptual categories created by the researcher is of particular importance in this study because it seeks to use Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity as a starting point in analysis. The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) was created using structured interviews in which respondents were asked questions about their perception of cultural difference based on the categories predicted by the model. This may have led respondents to describe their intercultural experience in Bennett's terms, rather than their own. Yamamoto's study involved asking a group of sojourners about their experience of intercultural difference, but did not ask questions based on Bennett's model. Respondents' descriptions were analyzed to identify "emergent factors" or recurring themes which characterize respondents' experiences. Yamamoto found that many of the emergent factors identified did not fit Bennett's model.

There were also limitations to Yamamoto's study that the current study hopes to address. The interviews were conducted after respondents – Japanese university students – had been studying English abroad for five months. The limited range of their experiences, and the relatively short time of their life abroad makes generalizing based on her results extremely difficult. This study used respondents who had been living abroad from 1 to 20 years, from different countries and living in different contexts. It is hoped that this wider sample will help make it easier draw more generalized conclusions.

Finally, in Sparrow's analysis of the writing of long-term interculturalists, she looked for themes that characterized successful intercultural learning. She found that while some learners expressed their cultural learning experiences in the way predicted by Bennett, many others wrote instead about their feeling of connection to particular communities and people. One limitation of Sparrow's study is that was not focused on understanding the process of intercultural learning. Rather, she was looking at how to describe the successful end-product of cultural learning. The present

study hopes to incorporate her concerns about not defining cultural learning in too narrowly cognitive terms, and also try to look at a wide range of interculturalists at different stages of cultural learning.

3.3.1 Research format

This study used a series of structured interviews to ask 23 sojourners about their intercultural learning experiences using an initial set of questions related to the topics this study seeks to address, followed by open-ended follow-up questions. This decision was made based on the need to: 1) focus participants' attention on particular elements of their intercultural experience, such as their perception of cultural difference and the relationships they had with their cultural hosts, and 2) allow for an open-ended description of those experiences which did not presuppose the categories of intercultural sensitivity postulated by Bennett. There were several important considerations in structuring and carrying out the interviews:

1) It was necessary to find out how participants experienced cultural difference. A statement such as "Well, people in country X are lazy" provides insight into how the sojourner construes the cultural difference experienced. In Bennett's view of intercultural learning, a statement like this would indicate a *defense* stage of intercultural development. A respondent's level of intercultural sensitivity could then be compared with the language ability and the kinds of relationships the sojourner had.

2) It was important to avoid asking questions which would lead respondents to describe their experience artificially in terms of pre-existing categories. A question such as "Do you think cultural difference or similarity is more important for understanding people from other cultures?" leads the respondent to a particular way of looking at difference, and is avoided.

3) It was important to get contextual information about the sojourner's living situation. In one case, a respondent talked about using Japanese at work in Japan. A further question revealed that the respondent was negotiating overdue debt repayment with his company's customers, a task which required extremely highly developed language and interpersonal skills. This kind of contextual information is important for interpreting the depth

of sojourner's intercultural experiences.

The interviews were carried out in two stages. The purpose of the first stage was to develop and test both the research format, and refine the conceptual tools used in data analysis. An extensive series of questions was developed. The intention was not to ask all of the questions, but to discover which questions were most effective, and also to act as a guide for the interviewer in keeping the interview focused on the issues being studied. Notes were taken during the first-stage interviews. After the interview, the notes were shown to the participant to confirm that they accurately reflected the thoughts of the participant. The notes were a combination of direct quotations and summaries.

The questions on background information and expatriate experience were:

1) How long have you spent abroad? What was your living situation?
2) Can you describe for me your (foreign language) ability?

The questions in the second section related to cultural difference :

1) Did cultural difference make understanding host culture's people harder?
2) In your experience, is it possible to understand someone deeply even though you don't know much about their culture?
3) Are there parts of host community culture that you disagree with? Something you have trouble accepting? That you didn't like?
4) Did your feelings about your own country change as a result of being abroad?
5) Can you think of anything about host community's culture that you accept, but wouldn't adopt for yourself?
6) Did you change yourself in order to adapt to host culture? Or did you stay basically the same?
7) Do you feel that host community's people are different from you in some deep or fundamental way?
8) What do you think causes conflict or misunderstanding between people from different cultures?
9) Do you feel accepted in host country/community ?

The questions in the third section, related to relationships and communication with hosts were as follows:

1) When you speak (foreign language) does your communication style change?
2) Has life in host community changed how you communicate, how you look at things?
3) What have you learned about yourself from being in host community?
4) Who are the cultural hosts that you feel closest to?
5) What other close relationships did you have with cultural hosts? Many more? Or not so many?
6) What language do you speak with them?
7) Are there particular situations in host community, or particular kinds of host culture people that are hard for you to relate to?
8) Can you describe the relationships you have in which you use only host community language?
9) What's the most difficult thing about communicating in host community language?
10) Is it possible to have a deep understanding of another person or another culture if you don't speak that language?

During the second-stage interviews, the interview format and method was changed due to the results of the first stage. During the first-stage interviews, it became clear that the answers to many questions overlapped and made other questions redundant. Also, using a pre-determined list of questions increased the danger of leading the participant to describe their experience in a particular way – precisely what the open-ended format was designed to avoid. Thus, during the second stage interviews, more general questions were used. Interviews were started with the question "Can you tell me about your experience living in X?" Follow up questions were asked about cultural difference, relationships and communication, but care was taken to avoid leading questions. Finally, the method of recording the interviews was changed after the first stage interviews. Rather than taking notes, the interviews were recorded and then transcribed. This allowed for more natural interaction with the respondent (because note-taking was unnecessary) and gave a more precise record of what was said.

3.3.2 Criteria for choice of respondents

For both the first and second stage interviews, respondents were limited to people who had at least one year of experience living in a new cultural environment in which a foreign language was spoken. One year was chosen as a length of time implying a fairly deep intercultural experience in which relationship formation and language learning were most likely to be an issue. It was assumed that some sojourners living abroad for a year or more would be relatively isolated from cultural difference by their living situations, and would thus represent more shallow cultural learning experiences. The longest period in a foreign country for respondents to this study was 22 years, and the shortest was one year.

There was an attempt to include people with as wide a range of cultural experiences as possible. Interviewees were solicited informally by asking expatriates living in Tokyo and Paris to participate in the project. Some respondents were known to the researcher prior to this study and some were not. The decision was made to exclude respondents who have an academic or professional background in intercultural communication, to prevent responses from being affected by participants' knowledge of cultural learning theory.

3.4. The interviews

This section gives an overview of the interviews and data analysis. It starts with a discussion of the study participants, then describes the interview process. After that, the conceptual frameworks used for interpreting participants' experiences and the process used for analysis are discussed.

3.4.1 Study participants

This study has not tried to produce a scientific cross-sample of expatriate experience. The variety of circumstances that expatriates find themselves in is simply too broad for any single study to be representative of overall trends. Instead, since the ultimate goal of this study is to inform intercultural education, it focused on interculturalists who would most typically receive intercultural training either in a business context, or in educational institutions such as universities or high school. The participants in this study represent a kind of "elite" internationalism. They were expatriates by choice, nearly all had a university-level education and stable

living situations. Although they faced minority status and some may have faced a degree of prejudice, they generally were not greatly disadvantaged by their expatriate status. All of the participants spent at least a year (most of them more) living abroad, and could be considered "successful" insofar as they had adapted sufficiently to life in their new communities and chose not to cut short their stay. This does not mean that they were all happy about their situations or found their experiences easy, but the level of challenge they faced was certainly much less than, say, many political or economic refugees.

Limiting this study to those who are sojourners by choice was intentional, as was the decision not to interview sojourners who faced more extreme adaptive stresses. Sojourners in extreme situations, such as war refugees, must deal with adaptation issues which go beyond the scope of a study of cultural learning – such as experiencing violence, losing one's family, difficulties with visa status, witnessing atrocities, and experiencing extreme prejudice. Instead, the difficulties faced by advantaged sojourners like those in this study are the *least* any expatriate is likely to encounter. This may allow for insight into more subtle elements of intercultural learning, and show how cross-cultural experiences can be transforming and positive, not simply a psychological ordeal to be survived.

Asking personal questions about intercultural experiences can be uncomfortable or even offensive for those who are struggling in a new environment. Even with the "advantaged" sojourners in this sample, issues of privacy were raised. In two cases – that of a Burundi man working in France and a Nepalese student living in the Netherlands – interviews were ended and the results not included in this study because the participants seemed uncomfortable talking about the challenges of life abroad. This provided further evidence that the format of this study is not suited to sojourners facing high levels of stress. In such cases, what participants would say about their experiences might well be only a small part of what they feel or deal with.

Table 3 shows an overview of those who were interviewed for this study:

Name	Background	Intercultural experience
Jack	US	11 years in Japan, speaks little Japanese
Abdou	Senegal	studied in German, lives and works in France, trilingual
Donald	U.K.	Lived extensively in Japan and Switzerland, trilingual

Paul	US / Germany, son of diplomat	lived in many countries, trilingual
Steven	US	12 years living in Korea and Japan, speaks little Korean or Japanese
Mayumi	Japan	university in US, lived in Korea with Korean husband, trilingual
Rieko	Japan	one year study-abroad in U.S., bilingual
Yuko	Japanese parents, raised in India	lived extensively in India, Europe, US and Japan, trilingual
Adele	US	Middle East in Peace Corps, 7 years in Japan, scholar of Japanese literature, bilingual
Gunter	Germany	graduate school in US, three years expatriate manager in Japan
Gail	UK	10 years in France, has received French nationality
Linda	UK	lived in US as trailing spouse, now living in France, semi-bilingual
Andre	Switzerland, Italian father	studied and worked in Japan, quadrilingual
Liz	US, lived as child in Japan	spent junior and senior high school in Japan, went to US and returned to work as expatriate, bilingual
William	US	expatriate in Japan, Japanese spouse, semi-bilingual
Joanna	France	studied in Dublin, 1 year working in US, bilingual
David	France	lived and worked in US, bilingual
Neil	US	expatriate in Japan, Japanese spouse, semi-bilingual
Michiyo	Japan	living and working in France, bilingual
Philippe	France	Lived in U.S. as child, then Germany, trilingual
Eun-suk	Korea	Many years experience living and working in Japan, trilingual
Kensuke	Japan	Studied at university in the U.S.
Masako	Japan	Studied at university in the U.S.

Table 3

3.4.2 The interviews

As mentioned in previous chapters, the interviews were based on open-ended questions meant to tap into the narrative of participants' experiences. This was then used as a "data base" of intercultural experience that could be examined in light of existing theoretical frameworks meant to describe the process of cultural learning. When asked about their intercultural experiences, participants generally responded by talking about meaningful experiences and their interpretation of events and feelings. Participants did

not generally talk about *culture* as such. Rather, they talked about concrete experiences, often to illustrate their personal conclusions about their host cultural community. Detached statements about culture as an abstraction are rare. For example, Philippe – the names in this study have been changed to protect privacy – is a French researcher who studied in Germany. When he talks about life in Germany, he talks about trash. He recounts receiving a telephone call from the police, who had been notified by his landlord that he had failed to properly divide his garbage into the correct classifications used for pickup:

> **Philippe**: *It's very hypocritical but anyway this is the way they live. And I took my garbage pack out the wrong day, and in this garbage sack I had lots of non-plastic stuff like food and so on, and completely illegally and in this garbage sack I was stupid because I took an abstract that I was writing for a journal and there was my name on it, of course, as being an author of the abstract and I took it out and the person in charge of my building saw the* gelbasack*, opened the* gelbasack*, took out this piece of paper, realized it was me - and she also knew it was me because there were all these cigarette packs - and so she called the cops.*
>
> **Researcher**: *She called the cops?*
>
> Philippe: *Immediately. And how I knew this was the cops (was) because the cops called my laboratory saying "Okay, we know it's you." This is how the conversation actually started.*
> *"Philippe Bisch?",*
> *"Yeah."*
> *"We know it's you."*
> *"What do you mean?" I mean I was so far away from imagine that was my* gelbasack *that was the problem that, you know, when the police call you and they say "We know it's you!" it's like, "What did I do?" and you know . . .*
> *(They said) "We know it's you! You took your garbage, and we know that it's you and there's absolutely no way you can deny this." And so on, and "We want to meet you and you will have to pay for this."*
> *And I was like "What the fuck are you talking about? Yeah, I took out my* gelbasack *today, and wasn't I supposed to?"*
> *"No, no, no we want to meet you." So I had to go to a police station and there they explained to me for one hour the principles of German legislation on garbage and so on. And so they told me I had to pay 300 marks, or a 150 euros for this. 150 dollars for this!*
> *And I asked "But . . . I mean, how do you know this?"*
> *And they said "What did you expect? You take your garbage out and you don't expect the woman in charge of the*

building to know that?" So it's a common thing that every German does this.

His story is about cultural difference – in effect a horror story to highlight his feelings about his sense that Germans in general are overly concerned with rules and regulations – yet Philippe does not formalize his experience in abstract terms.

Embedded within narratives like this are the primary elements of cultural learning. In dealing with his new cultural environment, Philippe faces a demand for change. On the explicit level, that demand is simply a technical matter of being required to separate garbage in a particular way. Philippe's telling of the story, however, indicates that Philippe felt a deeper demand being made of him: adapt to a system which he finds extreme or face the consequences (in this case, enforced by the police!) How he reacts to experiences like this, and the way that his views about his cultural hosts (and himself) evolve over time, are the essence of his cultural learning process. Philippe recounts experiences that reflect his view of himself in relation to his intercultural environment.

The elements of this story operate on several levels at the same time. On the concrete, explicit level, this is a story of the rules about collecting garbage. Rules about garbage, however, are related to deeper frameworks of cultural expectations and values. Philippe finds himself at odds with a system of social expectations that he is not quite comfortable with. It is the systematic nature of his challenge that marks this as cultural learning. He is not simply responding as an individual to frameworks of meaning that he understands from an insider's point of view. He must negotiate relationships and meaning in an environment in which he is the outsider – that is to say he lacks the fuller complement of frameworks of meaning that those raised in Germany would have in dealing with life tasks.

It is sometimes argued that there is so much cultural diversity within any given cultural framework that generalizations such as "German culture" are meaningless. In a situation like the above, some might argue that some Germans would also find the caretaker's actions extreme, and in that sense, there is no difference between Philippe's reaction, and the potential reaction of some Germans. This argument says, in effect, that this conflict is one of individual values or preferences, rather than culture. But this argument misses the point that someone who had been raised in German society would

have a much deeper understanding not only of the rules of collecting garbage, but the thinking and world view which generates those rules.

The strongest evidence for describing experiences like this as cultural learning is that the sojourners themselves describe their experiences in these terms. They relate experiences that reflect a need to come to grips with learning the "rules of the game" in a new environment. For Philippe, his story seems to symbolize German unreasonableness. He is reacting based on his personal preferences and values, but those personal traits are highly influenced by the cultural frameworks he has been raised with in France (and the United States in his case). At the very least, a German who does not separate garbage in the way expected has a better understanding of the possible consequences (the building caretaker may well notice!) At a deeper level, Philippe faces a conflict of deeper, unspoken and unconscious norms, values and assumptions – the implicit elements of culture described by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner. For Philippe, it is not an issue of his individual values, it is about "Germans". His story is not about the caretaker having called the police (which even Germans may find extreme), but rather about Philippe's conclusions regarding the generalized system of expectations and deeper value frameworks which this story represents.

Philippe's story highlights the difficulties of coming to grips with more implicit levels of cultural difference. As with the Australian students described by de Nooy and Hanna (2003), his reaction to the more implicit layers of his intercultural experience are "natural". In this case, his reactions match very well cross-cultural studies that describe "German culture" as being more universalistic (trusting of rules, rather than adapting to particular circumstances) and lower context (the message is given importance, rather than the context that the message was given in – in other words, following rules "to the letter" is important) than "French culture" (Hofstede, 1983). Some might even call Philippe's reaction "typical" for someone from France. But for Philippe, cultural difference is not viewed in "objective" or abstract terms. Like the Australian students trying to make sense of university life in France, he simply reacts personally to the negotiation of his daily life in his new environment. The lessons that he does or does not draw constitute the degree to which he becomes more interculturally sensitive.

In this study, only those sojourners with the greatest degree of intercultural experience spoke about their experiences in the way attempted

by intercultural specialists; in neutral relativistic terms. This paralleled the findings about Australian students in France. While nearly all sojourners gain an increased understanding of the explicit layer of cultural difference – in this case, Philippe learned how to divide his trash – not all of them also gain an understanding of the systematic nature of the underlying layers of culture. In this example, Philippe interprets his experience as an example of an unreasonable obsession by Germans with rules. He does not approach German values and norms regarding trash collection as an equally viable alternative. And it is this conceptual or emotive leap – the ability to see a situation as reasonable based on the point of view of cultural others, that Bennett defines as the essence of successful intercultural learning.

Using the DMIS in interview analysis

The DMIS gives us a starting point for interpreting experiences such as Philippe's. This study accepts the premise behind the DMIS that how people talk about their intercultural experiences is a reflection of how they conceptualize the systematic differences found in other world views, and that intercultural sensitivity can be defined in terms of increased ethno-relativism. This study also accepts the proposition that intercultural learning is developmental, though not necessarily in the precise, universal and predictable stages of the DMIS. Seen in this way, the cultural narratives of the participants can give clues about the participants' level of intercultural sensitivity. Their stories reflect their phenomenology of difference. Philippe's description of events gives clues to his ability to accept the validity of other world views, and the degree to which he empathizes with the people in his new environment. This phenomenological approach reflects Bennett's understanding of intercultural sensitivity, but will not assume that the stages predicted by DMIS are absolute. It will instead see to what degree the stages and conceptual labels created by Bennett match the experiences of study participants.

This phenomenological approach can be illustrated with an example from a different participant, Joanna - a French woman who worked for a year in the United States. In describing her experiences of getting used to life there, she describes her general frustration with American attitudes about terrorism. When describing her inability to engage Americans in a conversation about terrorism she says, for example:

With the people I liked I tried to explain how the reality is, but with others I realized that they didn't have any interest in understanding the truth . . . They aren't going to change their mind so there's no reason to talk to them anyway.

Joanna makes these statements in the context of describing her feelings about Americans in general. She seems to feel that her view about terrorism represents "reality" and does not relativize her difference of opinion. She draws the conclusions that Americans generally do not recognize some important and self-evident truths and concludes that she could never live in the United States because of the unreasonable attitudes of so many Americans. Someone with a more empathetic view – more interculturally sensitive, in Bennett's terms – might have been equally frustrated with American attitudes, but would more likely have recognized and articulated the fact that American views – to the extent that they can be generalized - are largely influenced by their experiences and cultural background.

In Bennett's terms, Philippe and Joanna are conceptualizing difference in ways typical of the "defense" stage of intercultural sensitivity. They notice difference, yet denigrate it. In this way Bennett's clearly articulated ideas about stages of intercultural sensitivity are very useful. They give us a relatively neutral conceptual tool to examine statements about cultural difference. However, while it seems reasonable to categorize *statements* about cultural difference in this way, it is something else to – as Bennett does - categorize *people* as belonging to these discrete categories. An important part of the analysis of these interviews will be to see how useful these categories – *denial*, *defense*, *minimization*, *acceptance*, *adaptation*, *integration* – seem to be when used to describing sojourners' overall level of intercultural sensitivity.

It is hoped that using the DMIS as a starting point for analysis will clarify the question of whether the stages described by the model accurately reflect a universal and linear progression of intercultural learning. Beyond this, the analysis will focus on the depth of participants' intercultural experiences. It will look at reactions to both implicit and explicit cultural difference, and examine the mixed feelings typical of any complex experience. The ultimate goal of the analysis will

be to produce a model of cultural learning which combines the productive element of existing cultural learning models with an approach that can effectively describe the wide range of intercultural experiences typical of our increasingly interconnected world.

3.4.3 Interview format

In general, the first portion of each interview involved asking questions about the factual circumstances of the participants' intercultural experiences, place of birth, length of sojourn, etc. This factual information provided the framework for understanding the participant's experience and asking about cultural learning. Clarifying questions were asked to better understand the particular circumstances of a sojourn. A participant who stated that she "went to the U.S. to work" might be asked whether she was transferred to the U.S. from a non-U.S. company, or whether she was hired to work for a U.S. company. It was important to have as much contextual information as possible because intercultural contexts vary widely. Clarifying questions included things such as the working language of a company, what was studied in a university, etc.

After asking questions related to objective information, follow-up questions asked more subjectively about intercultural experiences. This included questions such as "How was it to live in X?" or "How was it getting used to life in X"? Participants were also sometimes asked questions such as "Did you find much cultural difference?" or "Did you have any difficulty getting used to life in X?" Although this risks pointing participants' attention more towards negative aspects of their experience, it became apparent that some participants felt they shouldn't "complain" about their experiences. This question was a way of "giving permission" to talk about the challenges of adaptation. In addition, because positive experiences and cultural commonality do not generally cause intercultural conflict, it seemed important to sometimes explicitly ask about adaptation difficulties.

Most frequently, general questions were enough to get participants speaking freely about their experiences. There were two areas of particular interest, however, that were asked about explicitly: 1) the kinds of relationships that participants had during their sojourn, and 2) their experience with foreign language learning. This included questions such as: "How would you describe your ability in (language)?" or "What language did

you speak with your wife's family in?" or "Who were the people from the host culture who you were closest to?" These questions were used both as a relatively neutral measure of the "depth" of cultural interaction and as a way to gain further insight into how the participant conceptualized cultural difference.

This line of questioning yielded rich results. Compare the statements about language and relationships of Jack and William. On the surface, their situations are similar – they are both Americans who have been living in Japan for a number of years, they are both teachers, and they both find their experience living abroad positive and rewarding. However, it seems that the depth of their experiences is different. First, William:

> *I was able to make Japanese friends, and also Chinese and Korean too. I have a few friends who can't speak English, so we had to speak in Japanese*
>
> *(the time when I speak the most Japanese is) when I talk to my girlfriends family. I guess hours can pass (only speaking Japanese). Her mother doesn't speak English. I can go a day speaking Japanese. I especially like to speak Japanese to people who don't speak any English. I'm tempted to insert English words for example if I know they speak English. It's hard for me to speak to my fellow teachers in Japanese.*

Then Jack:

> *. . . and the other English teachers that don't speak English very well avoid me. Other colleagues outside of the English department use a mix of Japanese and English, but I have much less contact with them, very little. I could go days without using Japanese, I'm sure I have . . .*
>
> *. . . actually I don't have that many Japanese friends, actually my male friends are all foreigners. Actually my only close Japanese friends have been my girlfriends. I don't have one close Japanese male friend*

Discussion of relationships and language has given a window on the degree to which William and Jack have had to adapt to some of the more implicit elements of cultural difference. They both are functional in terms of everyday life, but William seems to be adapting himself more fully to his cultural environment.

This is, of course, a very blunt instrument with which to measure the

depth of intercultural experiences. Reaching a particular level of foreign language ability does not guarantee cultural sensitivity and having friends from a particular culture does not mean that you understand them. However, cultural learning involves responding to demands for change experienced in a new environment, and language and relationships can be used as one measure of these demands. For William to function in Japanese with his wife's family he needs to learn things that Jack seems to have avoided. It seems reasonable, therefore, to guess that his cultural learning may be taking place at a deeper level than Jack's. As a next step, Bennett's model gives us the tools to contrast and compare the experiences of sojourners like William and Jack. By comparing their level of intercultural sensitivity with the depth of their cultural experiences, we may be able to start to better model some of the factors that are associated with deeper cultural learning, and gain insight into how this process unfolds over time.

The three elements, then, that made up the bulk of the interviews were: 1) factual information about the participants' sojourn, 2) general questions regarding the subjective experience of living in a new cultural environment, 3) questions about language and relationships, intended to examine more closely the depth of the participants' experience. These three elements were compared and contrasted in order to test existing approaches to understanding intercultural learning, and see how the complexity implied by differing depths of cultural experiences could be incorporated into a model of intercultural learning.

3.5 Data analysis – The phenomenology of experiencing difference

Data analysis consisted primarily of labeling and interpreting the statements that participants made about their intercultural experiences. This was, in effect, an attempt to categorize the phenomenology of difference of the participants. An important purpose was to find if their open-ended descriptions of their intercultural experiences fit well with the stages of the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity. This could then be followed by a more intuitive analysis looking for previously unnoticed or unpredicted patterns of their cultural learning.

The labeling of sojourners' statements first identified information about participants' living situation and experience abroad. This background information clarified the context of their sojourn and gave clues to the depth

and intensity of their intercultural experiences. Labeling then focused on identifying statements that were related to 1) cultural difference, 2) relationships, and 3) language learning. Statements related to cultural difference provide the raw material for understanding – in Bennett's terms – the level of intercultural sensitivity of a participant. Statements related to relationships and language learning gave more information about the relative depth of the experience of each sojourner. This allowed for a comparison of the cultural depth of sojourners' experiences and their level of intercultural sensitivity.

These relatively simple categories of analysis provided the tools for examining a wide range of questions related to intercultural learning. If, for example, statements about cultural difference seemed to fall naturally into the categories predicted by the DMIS, this would lend support to the DMIS. An understanding of a sojourner's general level of intercultural sensitivity could also be used to examine the role of language learning in cultural learning and the kinds of relationships sojourners with different levels of intercultural sensitivity are likely to have.

Labeling participants' statements about cultural difference also allows an examination of the complexity of their experiences. According to Bennett, a sojourner's characterization of cultural difference tends to cluster around a single stage of intercultural sensitivity, regardless of the cultural learning context. That is to say, if a German has become interculturally sensitive during a stay in Italy, moving to Ethiopia will not change that – you either have it or you do not. The possibility of having "mixed feelings" does not figure prominently in his work. These issues can be examined by looking at the statements of sojourners who have experience with multiple cultural contexts. Finally, the statements about cultural difference, relationships and language learning can be combined to give a profile of cultural learning at different depths of intercultural experience. After having catalogued and examined the statements with these questions in mind, the interviews were re-examined with an eye towards identifying statements which seemed significant, but which did not fall easily into any of the previously mentioned categories. This involved an attempt to identify "emerging themes" – threads of meaning that seemed to represent commonality of experience or recurring subjects of concern.

3.5.1 Resistance / acceptance / adaptation

One important question regarding the labeling of participants statements was whether Bennett's terminology - *denial, defense, minimization, acceptance, adaptation, integration* - should be used. One advantage to doing so would be that these terms are used in very specific ways to show stages of intercultural development and could be applied with some precision. Ultimately, however, it was felt that using these terms created the danger of forcing Bennett's conceptual framework onto sojourners' experiences, rather than letting their statements speak for themselves. Accordingly, it was decided to create an alternative conceptual framework (diagram 3) using the concepts of 1) *resistance*, 2) *acceptance* and 3) *adaptation*. These three labels represent different possible reactions to the demands of an intercultural environment. These terms are broader than the stages of DMIS, and were not assumed to be mutually exclusive. They differ from the terms of DMIS in that they do not try to measure a degree of absolute intercultural sensitivity, but instead refer to the reactions to a particular intercultural environment.

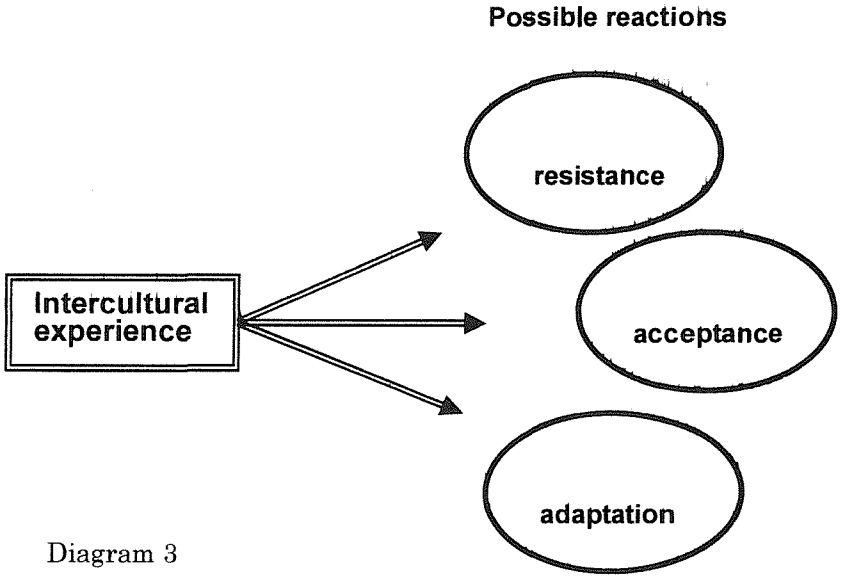

Diagram 3

Resistance is used broadly to describe negative judgments related to cultural difference. A key element of *resistance* is denigration, e.g. *"(Germans) are hypocritical"* (Philippe) and implies that the cultural difference was not

accepted or integrated into a sojourner's world view. *Resistance* is seen as different from dislike, in that resistance involves a negative judgment. One can dislike, say, raw oysters, yet not be bothered by others eating them. Resistance would be saying that raw oysters are disgusting, as are people that eat them.

Acceptance was used to label statements that suggested that the speaker recognized cultural difference and saw it as valid, yet did not necessarily try to make some kind of change in response. Take for example, this statement by Gunter, a German manager describing what he learned from working with Japanese engineers:

> *Japanese people were trying to collect details as much as possible, if they wanted to solve a problem, they collect details, details, details, and they ask questions, never-ending questions, then when they have the details they start to think about how to solve the problem. In Germany it's just the opposite. No one is interested in the details. Basically they come from the other side . . . they try first to get an overview and then maybe go to the details later.*

In this quote, Gunter is describing cultural difference in problem solving and cognitive styles. He compares what he sees as the German and Japanese approach, representing each as a viable alternative. Simply by looking at this statement, it is not clear what changes Gunter might make to his own problem solving strategies, (we can't say he has adapted to them) but he seems to have accepted them. His acceptance is also made apparent in further statements he makes.

"*Adaptation*" was used to label statements that showed that the speaker had changed something – consciously or unconsciously – in order to respond to the demands of an intercultural environment. Take, for example, this statement by Yuko, who has lived for extended periods in India, the U.S. and Japan.

> *When I get angry I prefer to speak English. I'm extremely polite in Japanese. I don't have the vocabulary to get angry in Japanese. The Japanese I know is polite, it's* aimai *(lit. vague). When I talk in Hindi, there's "tomorrow". My way of thinking in each language changes: in Hindi it's slower, there's "tomorrow", like something will happen; in Japanese it's* aimai *and in English it's more direct.*

Yuko clearly does more than accept that people do things differently in

different cultural environments. She has learned to change according to the needs of a particular cultural context. She talks about this in terms of the language she speaks, but the essence of what she says relates not only to linguistic change but behavioral and value-based change.

3.5.2 Deep vs. shallow

For the purpose of labeling sojourners' statements, in addition to assuming that *resistance, acceptance* and *adaptation* are all possible reactions to intercultural experiences, this study assumes that these reactions may be related to experiences that function at different levels of cultural depth. In other words, a sojourner could adapt to cultural difference that is highly explicit – such as learning to eat new food, or could adapt at the deeper levels of, say, values or communication styles. For example, Yuko talks about switching between different communication styles and languages. These kinds of changes involve adaptation of behaviors that normally function outside of conscious awareness. Contrast this with Jack, who has lived in Japan for 11 years. When he talks about cultural adaptation, he focuses on elements that are highly explicit: "*Japan is predictable. Lots of times that's a good thing. I know my train's going to come on time. I know I'm going to get good service.*" Jack has learned how to take trains, and gets good service, but does not seem to have adapted in the same way as Yuko does when she changes languages. The fact that he describes Japan as "predictable" seems to indicate that he is focused on explicit things – trains, ordering food, etc. At issue is not whether Yuko and Jack are aware of the cultural differences that they are adapting to, but rather whether the cultural difference they are reacting to operates at a relatively explicit or implicit level.

In order to distinguish between reactions to the more explicit elements of culture such as those mentioned by Jack, and the more implicit elements described by Yuko, the labels "deep" and "surface" were combined with the labels *resistance, acceptance* and *adaptation.* Thus, statements like the one abbve by Yuko was labeled "deep adaptation" and the one by Jack was labeled "surface acceptance". Throughout the analysis process, the terms "explicit" and "implicit" were used to refer to cultural difference, while the terms "surface" and "deep" were used to refer to intercultural experiences.

3.5.3 Other labels

The labels mentioned above acted as a starting point for analyzing participants' statements and for examining the usefulness of Bennett's categories. The cataloguing of statements was first considered simply as a way to organize the data to make analysis easier. In practice, this attempt became an important element in the analysis as themes emerged and commonalities became apparent. What had initially been intended to provide statements that could answer questions about Bennett's model, turned into a valuable source of unexpected patterns and insights. Other emerging themes which ended up being used to label statements by participants included the following:

Mixed states – Describes (seemingly) contradictory feelings or reactions to cultural difference. Typical of this is the quip "I love France. I just hate the French."

Horror stories – These are stories which sojourners used to justify negative reactions to cultural difference, and as a consequence to defend or justify ethnocentric judgments. Like Philippe's story, they typically seem intended to dramatize the unreasonableness of some element of the host culture environment.

Rapport - A feeling of deep ease or identification with the host culture. This term reflects the common-sense observation that some people simply enjoy a new cultural environment without easily being able to say why. They may have an especially strong desire to adapt to that environment.

Universalistic judgments – this was a label used to refer to statements that judge culture difference in absolute terms. This is seen as a form of ethnocentrism because the standard of judgment comes from the speaker's cultural perspective.

Cultural code switching – A number of sojourners talked about having different modes of behavior depending on the intercultural circumstance. This was often related to switching languages.

Identity Questions – Some statements indicated that sojourners were dealing

with questions about their personal identity raised by their intercultural experiences.

Deep relativism – A few sojourners reported having multiple, discrete cultural identities, and performed cultural code switching at a deep level of the self. This seemed to lead to a deeply relativistic view of cultural difference.

Triangulation – Having deep learning experiences with multiple cultures rather than simply one seemed to lend itself to deep relativism. Learners seemed to better escape from a bi-polar view of cultural difference.

Anomalies - Things which do not fit, are hard to explain, or call other theories or concepts into question.

Some of these concepts were eventually defined as important emerging themes, and were integrated into the overall data analysis, some of the most important ones are discussed separately later.

4 Interpretation

In this chapter, the results of the analysis in the previous chapter will be presented. First of all, the DMIS will be examined in light of the cultural learning experiences of the participants. Questions that have been raised about the model will be addressed, including: the usefulness of his fundamental approach to describing cultural learning, as well as the validity of his stages of intercultural sensitivity. Following this, the emergent themes will be examined one-by-one, with case studies and examples taken from the interviews.

4.1 Modeling intercultural learning

This study has accepted the fundamental premise that intercultural sensitivity can be defined as a form of cultural empathy, and this has been a primary lens through which the process of intercultural learning has been analyzed. At the same time, questions have been raised about how best to model intercultural learning, in particular the strengths and weaknesses of the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity. These points of inquiry include two general questions regarding: 1) the general validity of the stages described by the DMIS, 2) how to describe successful intercultural learning, in particular whether the DMIS is too focused on intellectual empathy. These two questions will be looked at in depth. Another question raised by some researchers was whether the stages of the DMIS were equally valid for people from different cultures. While this is an important issue, since during the analysis stage it was decided not to use the exact stages predicted by DMIS to evaluate participants' experiences, it is difficult to draw conclusions about this question. On the other hand, the broader questions of the validity of Bennett's model will be looked at in detail.

4.1.1 Bennett's stages

Are the stages of intercultural learning described by Bennett a valid representation of universal stages of intercultural learning?

Bennett and some other researchers argue that his model does represent a statistically verifiable approach to understanding stages of intercultural learning valid for people from different cultures (Hammer et al., 2003; Paige, 1999). Given the breadth of that claim, it is important that this study try to add whatever it can to the general debate regarding the overall

validity of the model.

Broadly speaking, the results of this study showed that in terms of analyzing intercultural experiences, Bennett's categories were extremely useful in interpreting *statements* about intercultural experiences, but were more problematic when applied overall to an absolute level of sensitivity of an *individual*. The principal research intended to validate the categories of the DMIS used multiple-choice questions designed with predicted stages of intercultural development in mind. The answers given by respondents tend to cluster around particular stages of development and this has been argued to indicate that sojourners are at a single stage of intercultural development (Bennett, 2003; Paige, 1999). One question that is raised is whether this result comes from the fact that the concepts are built into the questions being asked of participants. In this study, participants were asked open-ended questions, and it was therefore possible to see if how they talked about cultural difference corresponded to the stages of the DMIS.

Among the participants in this study, there were sojourners who seemed to accept and/or adapt to a certain kind of cultural difference, but not recognize or denigrate others. This occurred often enough in the data that an emergent theme *mixed state*, was created to describe it. This seems to call into question the ability to describe intercultural sensitivity in terms of being a single stage of intercultural development. One clear example of this was with David, a French man who went to the United States to learn to be an airline pilot. After living several years in the U.S. he got a job back in France as a flight instructor. David's work brings him into contact with students from all over the world. What's interesting about his description of the cultural difference he finds is that he is accepting and coolly analytic about certain differences among certain people, but extremely judgmental and prejudiced about certain others.

On the one hand, David seems to recognize at least intellectually that cultural difference represents differing, yet viable ways of viewing things or getting things done. For example, after describing the things that he does and does not like about American and French culture, he concludes by saying "*I would take the best of both worlds. There's pros and cons on each side. There's no perfect system.*" This would seem to indicate *acceptance* in Bennett's terms. This is echoed in other statements as well. When speaking about human relations with people, he says "*we don't feel the same things the same . . .*

we're not exactly on the same page. For people that travel the world it's easier to understand that people can react "whoops"". He seems to be saying that intercultural experiences make you anticipate cultural difference. Regarding his realization of the importance of cultural difference in human relations, he comments: " . . . *it was like, this is weird. Culture is a big barrier to people's relationships. I'm not saying it can't work, but because if you want to make it work it's going to work."* So, apparently, he recognizes the importance of cultural difference, and seems to accept the need to work around this.

In addition, based on his experience as a flight instructor, David articulates patterns of cultural difference that he has discovered using very neutral terminology – in almost the same way that intercultural researchers do. And while he may be guilty of over-generalizing, he seems to see both sides of some cultural questions in neutral terms:

> *One thing about the difference between the Latin culture and the English culture – in the English culture you have procedures and you follow them and they work all the time. If there is something that is not in the procedure and the system, people tend not to make any decisions to make it work, to circumnavigate the problem – it would just block the system. On the Latin side, there would be some procedures, but nobody will follow them so of course everything that is out of the loop, or unexpected or unforeseen will work, because they will make it work.*

David goes on to elaborate on the cultural differences he found in dealing with systems and procedures much in this vein, saying that if one has a cultural predisposition to accept rules and procedures (described by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner as a *universalist* orientation, as opposed to a *particularist* orientation – which focuses more on the needs of a particular situation or context) (1998) there is the danger of over-reliance on procedures and lack of creative thinking in a crisis situation. This is clearly an issue for commercial pilots like those David was training. On the other hand, someone with a more particularist approach is creative in a crisis situation, but sometimes had problems created by *too much* improvisation and ignoring rules that should be followed.

Based simply on the statements above, it would seem that David is clearly at least at the *acceptance* stage of the DMIS, and perhaps even at the *adaptation* stage. He seems able to accept and function within two competing cultural frameworks, at least in terms of his job as a flight instructor. However,

describing David in these terms does not easily fit with other statements he made, some of which seem to clearly contradict this view of him as a neutral observer of equally viable cultural phenomena. Talking about other experiences he has had, David says things that seem highly ethnocentric. For example, when talking about non-Western European or American pilots, a very different picture emerges:

> **David:** *I can feel the difference when I'm training other-culture pilots. I used to train a lot of eastern-country* (Asian) *pilots . . .* (refers to having trained Chinese) *Never fly with those people. They just don't understand anything, not even what can hurt. I mean if you fly into terrain it's gonna hurt! They don't get it, they don't understand it. It's just like, they have no clue what can happen.*
> **Interviewer:** *Why is that?*
> **David:** *Indoctrination. . . . they have no survival instinct – from what I felt in the training.*

David goes on to recount the story of a Chinese student pilot who was supposed to do a round-trip training flight. When he left the weather was good, but when he returned it was fogged in and he could not land with the level of training he had received, but he insisted on landing because his instructor had told him to come back to that airport. The traffic controller had to negotiate with him for 15 minutes to get him to go back. When describing the student-pilot's discussion with the air traffic controller: "*But the guy said "My instructor told me to come back" But the guy didn't understand that if he tried to land he would die!*"

It is possible, of course, that this particular student was not well suited to being a pilot, but David interprets this story in cultural terms. David's general description of the kinds of problems he faced with Asian students matches cultural comparison studies which describe Chinese culture as having high "power distance" relative to French or European cultures (Hofstede, 1983). Power distance refers to how comfortable people feel with explicit hierarchy. Cultures that score high on the power distance measure of cross-cultural comparison tend to emphasize vertical relationships – respect towards elders, explicit hierarchy in a company or organization, and explicit markers of politeness. One interpretation of this story is that the student pilot felt a heavier burden of responsibility towards following the instructor's directive to return to the same airport. In addition, cultural groups with a

more collectivist orientation can give the impression of indecisiveness towards people who are more oriented towards individualism. This could have played a role in David's interpretation of Asian student pilot problems as well.

At times, David shows a remarkable *inability* to relativize his experiences with Asian student pilots. Chinese learning to fly in English face a bigger linguistic challenge than Europeans, yet David's comment about language ability was simply "*Their English sucks, oh man.*" He goes on to tell the story a student pilot doing touch-and-go landings over and over again because he did not understand the air traffic controller:

> David - *"No communication. We'll never know (what they are thinking when they do something like that). Something would happen and they would not react. And they would let the airplane go, no reaction.*
> Interviewer - *So it's not just language?*
> David - *They're strange people. We lost seven aircraft in a year, belly landings, forgot to put down the landing gear, it's like stupid, I mean (joking) landing with the landing gear up, it's not very practical . . . it requires a lot of thrust to taxi . . . when the instructor was on board it was marginal, but sometimes when it was the step to make them fly solo, because sometimes it's better to make them do it on their own. Oh my God, flying with Chinese it's just like something that will get you gray hair really quick.*

It is hard to say why David draws such denigrating conclusions - such as *"they're strange people"* – from his experiences. It is possible that these reactions were built upon pre-existing prejudices against Asians, and that difficulties with students exacerbated them. At the same time, David was dealing with highly stressful situations and life and death consequences. If someone's behavior is "irrational" in these situations, it is a short step to drawing highly negative conclusions.

It is most likely that David's response to his Asian students is a potent mix of pre-existing negative stereotypes, reinforced by cultural difference that seems to justify those negative judgments. In this case, the kinds of cultural differences we can guess may have contributed to these problems (power distance, collectivism versus individualism) function at a very deep level of the self. Deep cultural difference seems more inexplicable, because the causes are harder to identify. It just does not "feel" right. In extreme cases, it seems pathological (*"they have no survival instinct"*.)

David's response to the stresses of teaching students from different

countries highlights a seldom-emphasized danger of intercultural experiences. Encountering difference can just as easily reinforce negative judgments as mitigate them. And if, as in David's case, negative judgments are reinforced by lived experiences, it would seem extremely difficult to engender greater tolerance after the fact. Furthermore, characterizing a reaction such as David's simply as "racism" or "prejudice" misses the point that there are systematic differences of values and behavior that create the problems in intercultural communication that he faces. David's attitude can be seen not so much as a moral failure, but that of resisting hidden elements of cultural difference. And since more and more expatriates are in a position to work across cultural boundaries, it seems particularly important to find models which describe reactions such as this in neutral terms, rather than in terms of absolute ideals.

To the degree to which David's varying reactions to his intercultural experiences are typical, they point to a serious difficulty with the DMIS. The DMIS posits that the ability to conceptualize cultural difference as a viable alternative world view defines intercultural sensitivity. Seen in these terms, David's mixed state is more than simply a question of liking or disliking certain cultural characteristics. It is David's conceptualization of cultural difference itself which is in question. Does he accept alternative cultural realities or not? The DMIS presupposes that learners are primarily in a single stage of intercultural learning. If so, we lose the ability to describe someone who has mixed reactions to cultural difference, such as David. This does not necessarily mean that the fundamental premise of the DMIS – that cultural empathy can be used to measure intercultural sensitivity – is wrong, it simply implies that cultural empathy may not be adequately described using Bennett's linear set of labels.

Overall, while the mixed reaction that David had towards cultural difference was the most striking example of "mixed states", other participants in this study also displayed a wide and often contradictory range of emotions and reactions to their learning environments. Without discarding the premise that construal of difference is an important indicator of one's overall level of intercultural sensitivity, the experiences of the participants in this study seem better modeled using concepts which allow for contradictory and complex reactions to intercultural experiences. It must be remembered, as well, that while the purpose of this study is to better model a learner's reaction to a

particular environment, the purpose of the DMIS is rather to judge a learner's overall level of sensitivity. Since any model can only be judged in terms of the purposes it is being used for, this study can not "prove" nor "refute" the DMIS. It seems, however, that the DMIS may have serious limitations in terms of acting as a pedagogical tool to help learners understand their own learning processes given the complex reactions typical of intercultural experiences.

4.1.2 Intercultural sensitivity and cultural depth

An important issue in terms of the applicability of the DMIS or any other model of intercultural learning is related to understanding how the depth of a cultural experience affects the ability to gain intercultural sensitivity. Can a tourist learn to be ethnorelative by passing through the predicted stages of DMIS in spite of a relatively superficial intercultural experience? Bennett (1993) does not address this question in detail, but implies that someone with limited experience living abroad could conceivably reach the *acceptance* level of intercultural sensitivity. According to Bennett, the nature of cultural empathy is such that it does not depend on the depth of the experience. From the point of "implicit" culture, however, it would seem that unless one has confronted more implicit cultural differences, it would be difficult for sojourners to even discover the deeper elements of cultural difference. How can something that hasn't been discovered yet be accepted?

The experiences of the participants in this study suggest an alternative to Bennett's discrete-stage linear view of cultural learning. It seems that not only do cultural learners develop views of reality that are progressively more capable of conceptualizing difference (cultural empathy), but that this process also entails an increasingly "deep" empathy – that which corresponds to the relatively more hidden elements of intercultural experience. This view rests on the premise that one can only accept or adapt to the degree of cultural difference that one has experienced. A tourist may accept the cultural difference she finds, but this does not mean that she would continue to accept the deeper elements of cultural difference if she stayed longer. Seen in this way, intercultural sensitivity, rather than developing along a single axis, develops both in terms of the degree to which difference is accepted and adapted to, and the depth of the experiences. This can be represented visually in the following way (diagram 4):

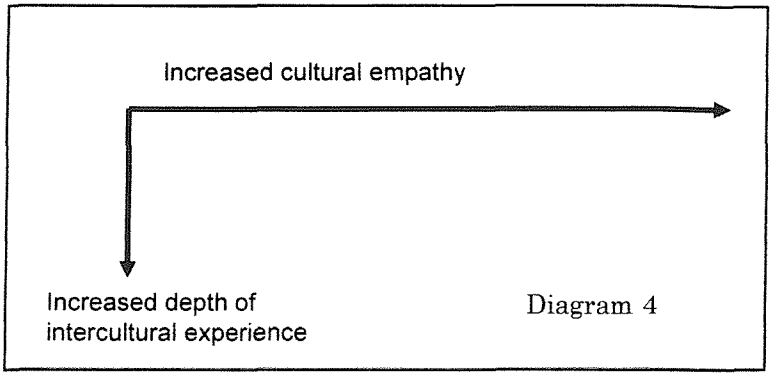

Diagram 4

We can maintain Bennett's definition of cultural empathy as entailing the recognition of difference as a viable alternative construction of reality. This is represented by the horizontal axis. The experiences of the participants in this study indicate, however, that explicit levels of cultural difference are relatively easier to accept than deeper ones. After all, it is not generally food, or architecture or clothing that create prejudice or negative judgments. But deeper cultural difference such as differing values, norms and underlying belief systems are not so easily integrated into one's world view. Cultural learning, then, would seem to entail resisting, accepting, or adapting to cultural difference at different depths of experience. This characterization makes it easier to understand the reaction of someone who might quip "I like France, it is just the French I can't stand." Presumably, "France" for this person is the food, the wine, the monuments, – all highly explicit, and "the French" refers to attitudes, values, communication styles etc. – more implicit. This person, therefore, has achieved only a "shallow" acceptance of cultural difference, and this statement represents a mixed state of cultural empathy. This mixed state is not easily labeled with Bennett's terminology. This view allows us to distinguish between the intercultural experiences of, say, a tourist, from those of a long-term resident abroad. The tourist may accept or adapt to cultural difference, but only at explicit levels – such as enjoying the food, or appreciating architecture. This also gives us a tool to view the relative depth of the experiences of different sojourners.

The statements of participants in this study support this "deep learning" view of intercultural sensitivity. Differing depths of intercultural experience and empathy were also apparent with Jack, discussed previously as the American living happily in Japan, yet avoiding deeper contact with

Japanese. Jack's intercultural experience seems to be focused on the most explicit elements of cultural difference. Speaking of whether adjusting to life in Japan was difficult, he says:

> *No. . . .Once I got here and I was set up it wasn't too bad . . . Japan is predictable. Lost of times that's a good thing. I know my train's going to come on time. I know I'm going to get good service. I was in the States a few weeks ago and some of the people behind the counter were pathetic.*

Jack does, of course, recognize obvious cultural difference, and seems to be relatively accepting of it. He sees both a positive and negative side to Japanese politeness, for example, mentioning the good service above, but also saying:

> *The Japanese ability to be patient has rubbed off on me. . . . They are attuned to other people's feeling, but a lot of times they limit themselves too by being too concerned with what other people think, and so they don't express themselves or do what they really want. Cause they are too worried about how other people view them.*

Throughout the interview, Jack expresses acceptance of cultural experiences with Japanese and satisfaction with his life in Japan. But one also gets the impression that Jack, despite having spent more than 10 years in Japan, is experiencing cultural difference only at the most explicit levels. As mentioned earlier he seems to avoid deeper engagements with Japanese, and states clearly that he is not interested in going any deeper than he has already.

> *I have the feeling that it's not really possible (to adapt to Japanese culture), so I haven't really tried. . . . Japanese society as a whole will never fully accept me. There's a sense that there's a barrier there. I didn't feel, it wasn't even worth trying to break that barrier down. I'm happy on this side. If the culture was accepting and open, and not this "us vs. the outsider", then I'd be more apt to get closer to them, because I'd feel wanted.*

Intellectually, Jack accepts difference, yet chooses not to engage more deeply. Compare this to Adele, a woman who at the time of the interview was finishing a doctorate in Japanese literature. She has studied Japanese for 8 years, and has spent a total of 4 1/2 years living in Japan, first as an assistant English teacher in a Japanese high school, three years teaching at a Japanese university, and seven months as a visiting scholar on a research grant. In spite of her investment of time and energy learning Japanese, and her commitment

to being a teacher of Japanese in the future, she has overwhelmingly negative things to say about her experiences:

> *And here people look at you semi-suspicious. Women look at me another way and men look at me in this skuzzy-scary monster way . . . I'm dedicating my life to this country, but as I walk through the streets I think, "Why here?" And I don't share the value system that I see here. In the States there's an opposing faction, but in the streets in Japan I'm overwhelmed by all the bad "isms" of modernization. I don't like the young people, their self-centeredness . . . I never thought it was a healthy society to be a part of. I'm not a group person in general. . . . I've come to realize that this current modern Japan . . . I don't like, I don't like the neolism, the selfishness of young kids. Yesterday I was walking at (university) and there were four individuals all talking on their cell phones at the same time. That represents what I can't stand about here. There are some things that are easier now, but unfortunately the things that make living here easier, represent Japan losing its culture. I wonder how long it will be until you have to travel to the ends of the earth to see Japanese architecture.*

It is not clear precisely what Adele is referring to when talking about Japan "losing its culture" but it seems more related to the explicit, artistic elements of Japanese cultural phenomena. As for the implicit elements, she has only bad things to say. In spite of this, she has learned Japanese, gives presentations in Japanese at academic meetings, has Japanese friends that she speaks to only in Japanese (though she expresses great frustration with these relationships). According to the DMIS, Adele is clearly in the *defense* stage of intercultural sensitivity. Jack, on the other hand, is at acceptance or adaptation. Yet are these characterizations adequate to describe their cultural sensitivity? In his more than 10 years in Japan, Jack has avoided deeper contact with Japanese culture, while Adele has struggled to go deeper in the face of frustration and distaste. So who is the more successful learner? This question highlights a weakness of Bennett's characterization of intercultural sensitivity as involving a single stage on a linear continuum.

Perhaps a better point of comparison for Adele would be William, mentioned previously, who has made efforts to get to know his wife's family, and who uses only Japanese with them and with other friends. His involvement with Japanese culture seems to be at a depth more similar to Adele's. As with Jack, William's statements indicate acceptance and adaptation, but at a more implicit level than Jack.

The cultural learning experiences of sojourners like David, Jack,

William and Adele, seem to point to a fundamental limitation of the DMIS. By defining cultural learning only in terms of a broad category related to intellectual empathy, it loses sight of important distinctions in the quality of one's intercultural experience. Because globalization involves radically different depths of intercultural experiences – from the most explicit and non-threatening, to the extremely deep and challenging – this approach seems too limited. In addition, as with David, a sojourner may have an intellectual acceptance of explicit cultural difference that is not threatening, but have strong resistance to more implicit cultural difference.

4.1.3 Empathy and cultural distance

This study has raised questions about the linear stages of intercultural sensitivity of the DMIS, based on the differing depths of possible acceptance or adaptation to cultural difference. Closely related to the depth of an intercultural experience is the cultural distance between the sojourners' home cultural environment, and the host cultural environment. It might be expected that the more different a new cultural environment is from what we are used to, the deeper one's intercultural experience would be. Examining this question may also shed light on whether, as Bennett says, the intercultural sensitivity that one gains in one cultural environment will automatically transfer to another.

It is generally assumed that greater cultural distance makes for more challenging intercultural experiences. Paige (1993), for example, lists the degree of difference between a sojourner's own culture and the host culture as a factor which contributes to the psychological intensity of an intercultural experience. And indeed, this may explain to some degree David's inability to make an empathetic leap with his Asian flight students. The experiences of other participants, however, indicated that it would be misleading to say that increasing cultural distance automatically means that an intercultural experience is deeper. In this study, the demands of the specific context of the sojourner's living situation at times seemed even more important in trying to understand an individual's cultural learning than broadly-defined cultural distance.

Examining the experiences of the sojourners in this study highlighted the distinction between an intercultural experience that is *demanding* and one which is *deep*. A *demanding* intercultural experience can be defined as one

that requires a great deal of change on the part of the sojourner in order to function. A *deep* intercultural experience is one that touches upon elements of culture that normally function out of everyday awareness. A British university student who decides to hitchhike through rural Africa may find that adapting to the food, transportation systems, lodgings and basic communication is extremely demanding, even though his intercultural contact is relatively superficial. On the other hand, a British expatriate in the United States may find that while the demands of everyday life are easy to deal with, attempts to form deeper relationships with Americans or to function in American organizations may require adaptation at a very deep level. The experience of the expatriate in the U.S. is deep (and probably demanding as well) while the hitchhiker's experience is demanding without necessarily being deep.

One example of a contrast between the adaptive difficulties caused by cultural distance relative to the depth of an intercultural context was with Mayumi, a Japanese woman who first lived in the United States as a university student. Later, she married a Korean man and moved to Korea. Mayumi gives an articulate account of the adaptation process in these two situations. In theory, the cultural distance between Korea and Japan is much less than that between Japan and the United States. Korean and Japanese societies share many deep-rooted cultural characteristics, such as an emphasis on explicit hierarchy and a preference for high-context communication. Many common cultural value orientations in Korea, such as a Confucian emphasis on respect towards elders, the importance of effort and study or an acceptance of hierarchy, are easily recognizable for Japanese. Japanese and Korean belong to the same language family (Altaic), and the two languages share similar grammatical structures, systems of deferential language and a high number of cognates. Mayumi refers to the ease with which she learned Korean:

> *It was easy to learn Korean. It took me less time (than English). I studied first in the States, and I had Korean friends. I took a semester and learned to write the basic alphabet. Then I visited for 5 days to Korea, and I thought it would be cool to learn. Then I met my husband and I went to live in Korea and I studied there for about six months of classes.*

In fact, Mayumi, refers to the ease of expressing her personality in Korean relative to English. When talking about ways in which her personality

changes depending on the language she speaks, she says:

> *I think there is some parts that I change because of language. The differences are more obvious between English and Japanese. I can present my personality more easily in Korean because of that.*

Yet despite this cultural and linguistic similarity, and the fact that she is married to a Korean, she describes adaptation to life in Korea as being extremely difficult:

> *I had a very mixed feeling. I became strongly attracted to Korea, but at the same time it wasn't easy because I was Japanese. One thing that was great about Korea was that I didn't stand out as foreigner. No one realized I was Japanese so I was able to mingle more smoothly. At the same time, they expected me to behave like a Korean, and assumed similarity. But there were subtle differences which were hard to accept, and I tried to be accommodating and then got frustrated and finally exploded at the end. Very close family relationships, and I had to call my mother-in-law every day, and I was nervous talking to her in Korean without knowing what to say. My husband was working late and we had a lot of things we had to do with the family.*

Mayumi also talks about the difficulties of adapting to life as a student in the United States, but primarily as a challenge that she dealt with successfully:

> *I was (happy), for the most part. It was hard, especially in the beginning. Mostly because to get along with the people the same age, I was able to understand my professors talk, but my friends used very colloquial forms and the content was very difficult. They would be talking about TV programs. The things they talked about were every different than the things I was used to talking about. I didn't feel like I was my true self. I hated it because I didn't seem like my usual self – I'm outgoing but I wasn't seen that way. I was seen as a quiet Asian girl. I thought the food would be difficult but it wasn't. Also, there were few Japanese at the undergraduate level so there wasn't much support. It was tough in the beginning, mostly for social reasons, not academic.*

In spite of these understandable difficulties, Mayumi integrated into University life in the U.S., made friends, and describes herself as having been happy with life there. She had a circle of American friends, and an American boyfriend. Her stories about life in the U.S. were primarily about having overcome the difficulties of adaptation, while in Korea it seems certain issues could not be resolved. In addition to her statement above about having mixed

feelings about her Korean experience, and having "exploded at the end" she talks about difference that seemed to have left lasting frustration:

> *My mother in law could come to my apartment unannounced. I left Korea a couple of times that I got stressed out. When I wasn't there my mother in law would go and clean up for me, making me feel like a failure when I returned. She even bleached the teapot. Of course she felt she was being kind, and I didn't take it as an offense, and I felt a bit angry at my husband for letting her do it. Don't get me wrong, I really love his parents. I don't think I could live with them, because of the differences in customs. I have lots of complaints against their son but not them.*

It is important to point out that Mayumi does not find Koreans' attitudes unreasonable. She does not blame her mother-in-law, because she sees their behavior in cultural terms, yet that does not fully mitigate the frustration she felt.

An obvious lesson in Mayumi's accounts is that the degree of cultural distance does not automatically translate to increased intercultural learning demands. The pressures Mayumi faced seemed more related to the depth of the relationships and roles she played – a student in the U.S. and a wife and daughter-in-law in Korea. It is easy to imagine that the social pressures she faced with her Korean in-laws were in many ways greater than those faced as a student at an American university. It also may be that certain elements of Korean culture were difficult for Mayumi personally. In describing cultural difference between Korea and Japan, Mayumi effortlessly produces a list of things that she seemed to find difficult.

> *The fact that it's the wife's job to make the phone call to the mother. Also, a sense of privacy. In Japan you don't open someone's refrigerator. They do that in Korea. They might look at your photo album without asking or open the closet. Also they tend to be very straightforward compared to Japanese and show anger much more easily. Sometimes it's scary because they shout at you or scream at you in the street. We were parking somewhere we shouldn't and my husband left me for a few minutes. A person came up to me and started yelling at me and I didn't know what to say and how to handle that situation. In Japan people might ask you, but there he just started shouting. There's that tendency. In Korea waitresses don't smile, because that's seen as cheapening the woman. They seemed very unfriendly. Or, for example, taking off your shoes. In Japan, for example you turn the direction of the shoes of the guests and put them in order. In Korea you don't ever change the direction or straighten them up. They might take offense. Now that I think of it, there are lots of differences, like how to pay. Even the eating*

habits. They use spoons to eat the rice.

The stress that Mayumi felt in Korea is palpable, while the reasons these things are difficult is less clear.

Mayumi's statements about privacy (refrigerator, photo album, closet) and the expressive communication style of Koreans relative to Japanese refer to highly implicit cultural difference – things which are experienced intuitively or affectively. Why these particular things caused problems for Mayumi is unclear. It is possible that there were elements of Mayumi's cultural experience in the United States that better matched Mayumi's personality. At the same time, she mentions highly explicit customs such as using spoons to eat rice, or not changing the directions of shoes left in an entryway (in Japan, it is common for a host to change the direction of shoes at the entryway to make them easier to put on when guests leave). One possibility is that cultural similarity makes small explicit differences like these even more obvious, since one tends to assume similarity rather than difference.

Another participant who faced cultural adaptation challenges in more than one culture was Linda, a British woman who first lived in the United States with her family as a trailing spouse, and then who after divorcing went to live in France. In a way that parallels Mayumi to a certain degree, Linda has highly negative things to say about her experience in the United States compared to her life in France. This is in spite of the obvious challenges in France of learning a new language and dealing with cultural frameworks that are, in theory at least, more different from those found in Britain.

Linda talks about her experiences in a very personal way, without the kind of detachment the Mayumi displays when expressing her frustrations in Korea. Compare her statements about life in the United States with those of life in France. In the United States, Linda says:

> Linda - *Everyone said Americans are so open, it will be great, but when we were going into our first house the neighbors wouldn't talk to us because we were renters not owners . . . They had such a snobbish attitude. It was unbelievable. I detest things like that. . . . They just didn't like outsiders, especially the English.*
>
> Interviewer - *How could you tell?*
>
> Linda - *By the fact that no one would speak to me. Even when we moved in, the one neighbor came with a bottle of wine, but after*

that I didn't meet anyone for 9 months. Later, I decided to have a party together with that neighbor, and we invited everyone in the whole neighborhood, and they came, and they said "Oh, I'm sorry, I should have come." Some of it was my fault . . . There was a group of people that had coffee and I was supposed to go and do that with them, a kind of coffee klatch, but I hate that kind of thing. I hate having to forcibly go and meet people. It was partly my state of mind because I didn't really want to be there. Things got better after that, but I was still doing things I didn't want to do just to survive.

Linda's description of her life in France, on the other hand, is much more positive:

I'm still on a voyage of discovery. I know I want to be here but I'm still learning how I feel about everything. But I think it's exciting. . . . I'm still changing and adapting. I'm happier because my marital circumstances have changed. I'm getting used to things. I'm trying to become or look or sound more French. . . . I just couldn't take the whole money thing where we lived (in the U.S.). In Paris you can be poor or rich and you are accepted. People will talk to each other no matter what class you belong to. On the level I operate on it seems that people will talk to anyone, even a homeless person. That's something I really like. I hate class and snobbism.

As with Mayumi, it is hard to say why specifically Linda had more trouble getting used to life in the U.S. than in France. It seems apparent, however, that a sojourner's individual circumstances (student vs. daughter-in-law, trailing spouse vs. sojourner by choice) can be larger factors in an individual's cultural learning than abstractions about presumed cultural distance. In addition, a learner's personality may simply be more suited to a particular set of cultural frameworks. The issue of personality will be more closely examined when looking at the emergent theme "rapport".

Linda and Mayumi's experience highlight the difficulty of describing cultural learning with the kind of exclusive labels used by Bennett. People have complicated reactions to new cultural environments, some of which may be contradictory. The demands of a particular learning context are also clearly important, including the relative depth of the experience, and the kind of demands being placed on the learner. Bennett's description of cultural learning does not give us the terminology to make these important distinctions.

4.1.4 The goals of intercultural learning

Sparrow (2000) has argued that the DMIS focuses too exclusively on intellectual empathy as a goal of intercultural learning, and argues for a need to go beyond the focus on "enhanced cognitive awareness, to a view of identity development which is interactive, highly dependent on context, and ultimately rooted in gender, race, ethnicity and religion" (p. 173). The narrative of the sojourners introduced above raises similar concerns. In particular, the depth of one's cultural experience seems to be an important element in characterizing intercultural learning, as does the particular situation and personality of a sojourner.

Another point raised by Sparrow is what she sees as the difficulty, or impossibility, of ever going "beyond" one's cultural frameworks in the way that Bennett describes at the higher levels of his model – the "integration" stage. According to Bennett, at advanced stages of cultural learning, one no longer has a primary affiliation with a single culture, but rather is engaged in a constructive marginality. Sparrow finds this view, which originated with Adler's description of the "multicultural man" (Adler, 1977), to be overly intellectualized, and to reflect a particularly male, Cartesian view of development as a process of finding an ultimate objective point of view from which to observe reality. For Sparrow, intercultural learning is closely wedded to a feeling of connectedness to particular cultural communities, not the kind of detachment described by Bennett and Adler.

Proponents of either of these views could find support in the experiences of the participants in this study. As with Mayumi's accounts of the challenges of adapting to life in Korea and the U.S., many participants emphasize relationships, describing the process of cultural adaptation as an attempt to gain entry into a community. When someone feels shut out – as with Linda in the United States – sojourners have very negative reactions. A typical comment related to gaining acceptance into a new cultural community was made by Neil, an American living in Japan:

> *Once you demonstrate that you have some ability to speak the language, people treat you more as an ordinary person. Maybe you won't get the special treatment, but at the same time you feel more part of the group instead of always being outside.*

Adele, the American researcher in Japan, on the other hand, expressed

terrible frustration with her inability to connect with Japanese and make friends. When asked about the Japanese that she felt closest to, she talked of a female Japanese friend, but immediately expressed frustration with the relationship:

> *What I'm finding difficult is that we don't have a lot to talk about. She invited me out with her friends because then she doesn't have to spend intense one-on-one with me, and her friends are the bimbos from hell. They all carry those live rabbit bags, rabbit fur bags, they wear those bimbo shoes. . . . then there was a woman who I tried to study calligraphy with, but then I realized she was using me to meet western men.*

Ultimately, Adele blames her difficulties in part on foreigners: "*I've always found that when I live in Tokyo there's such a huge foreign community that you have to work hard to meet Japanese.*" Ultimately Adele seeks community among those who she finds that she has the most in common with, saying that her friends "*are nearly all foreign academics here studying in Japan.*" Even Jack, who manages to skim along the surface of Japanese culture, seems to have managed this by finding a circle of friends, in his case foreigners, supplemented by Japanese girlfriends.

So Jack has come to terms with his intercultural environment by limiting himself to a community of his choosing. In a sense, he is a successful cultural learner, because he has found a personal equilibrium that has allowed him to live and work in Japan for more than 10 years. At the same time, he hasn't made a connection with deeper levels of community in Japan. He is in the situation described by Neil:

> *It's very easy in Japan to find a situation where you can just speak English. There are people who get comfortable in that bubble and never get motivated to study.*

It should be pointed out that Jack's Japanese ability is limited, and that his comfortable isolation is both linguistic and cultural.

Despite his apparent level of comfort, few people would say that Jack is a truly successful cultural learner. Sparrow's ideas about connection to a host community seem important here. Regardless of any intellectual acceptance that Jack might have regarding cultural difference, he has not

succeeded in forming ties with Japanese, and his intercultural experience is necessarily more limited as a result. This is also what makes Mayumi's account of adapting to life in Korea and the U.S. impressive. In spite of negative feelings about certain elements of Korean culture, and difficulties with language learning and socializing in English, she has managed to form positive relationships, even with people (her mother-in-law, for example) that she finds difficult to deal with for cultural reasons. Mayumi is engaged in an active process of forming relationships and forming community that mark her as a very successful learner in Sparrow's terms.

However, this view of cultural learning as a process of forming relationships with people from a new cultural community does not necessarily contradict Bennett. In Mayumi's case, it could be argued that it was precisely her ability to accept cultural relativism and empathize with people even when she felt uncomfortable that marks her as a successful learner. She does not like her mother-in-law bleaching her teapot, but manages to depersonalize this with her understanding that this is a question of custom. In Bennett's terms, Mayumi is at the adaptation stage, or perhaps even the integration stage. She does cultural code-switching, accepts other cultural world views as viable alternatives, even when she does not like them, and even talks about the kind of identity questions that Bennett associates with high levels of intercultural learning, saying things like "*I haven't really figured out who I am yet, or I haven't accepted my self yet.*" This brings us back to the question of whether it is possible, as Bennett says and Sparrow doubts, to in some way "go beyond" one's cultural orientations. This is a question of what represents the successful "end-product" of cultural learning.

4.1.5 Going beyond culture?

Whereas Sparrow refers to successful learners as feeling strong connections to particular communities, Bennett (1993) talks about not feeling that one totally belongs in ANY cultural community. In this study, there were three participants who seemed to match Bennett and Adler's (1977) description of the "multicultural" person. That is to say, even more so than Mayumi, they seemed to have learned to function comfortably in multiple cultural frameworks, to be fully engaged in their social environments, and not feel limited by a primary cultural affiliation. This is not to say that they did not feel a primary affiliation, but they each talked about their identity in

terms of multiple frameworks as much as in terms of membership in a particular community.

Two of these three sojourners grew up in many different cultures due to the circumstances of their family and childhood. Paul is an American citizen, son of a diplomat, who was born in Nepal, raised in Morocco, Europe and the United States. He has German grandparents and grew up speaking English, French, and German. Paul describes his identity in terms of a multiplicity of perspectives. For example:

> Paul: *I sometimes feel like I am a bridge, between cultures or groups, with a foundation on both sides, but also a foundation in the middle which doesn't belong to either side.*
>
> Interviewer: *How would you describe your cultural identity? How American do you feel?*
>
> Paul: *On one level I've always seen myself as a world citizen, and then I'd have to drop down one level and say German American. My mother's German, but my father also has a strong German cultural identity. His parents spoke German and he learned German and his grandparents came over from there and we have maintained ties to family there that go back 100 years.*

So even when Paul "drops down" a level of abstraction, he does not define himself as an American, but as a "German-American". But he feels like a bridge between cultures not only between Germany and the United States, but in a more general way related to adapting to different cultural circumstances.

> *When I moved to India from Morocco my mother spoke to me in French and I refused to speak in French. I told her "but they don't speak that here" and I refused to speak. I had lots of Indian friends, and lots of Moroccan friends . . . people from countries all over. . . . You are as many people as languages that you speak. When you speak a different language your thought patterns change and your gestures change. . . .*
>
> *I don't always feel like I fit in. You overlap to a certain degree, but there's always a place that doesn't overlap, and so your identity is always separate in some way.*

Paul illustrates his shifting identity by talking about how he code shifts in different languages. He is clearly referring to highly implicit parts of cultural identity when referring to changing "thought patterns" and gestures. Notice that while Mayumi and other participants described

their adaptation process in terms of joining or being accepted by other cultural communities, Paul defines himself by a degree of *separateness*, saying that there's "*always a place that doesn't overlap*" and describing himself as a bridge with a more solid foundation in the middle than on either side.

So Paul describes himself as being American, with strong German roots, yet always detached in some way. His stories of growing up are stories of ongoing adaptation – cultural learning as a primary focus of identity:

> *In Morocco I actually spoke better French than English. That had to do with the maid Fatima, and I went to a French nursery school. In that sense I didn't have a developed sense of being an American. According to my mom she once took me to the bazaar and I spit in the face of a man that my mom was haggling with.*
>
> *When I was about 5 or 6 my family got home leave and we took an extended period over Christmas and we went to Germany, but I didn't want to go, so my grandmother promised me a cowboy outfit. And it was the first time I saw snow and it was the wildest thing. I showed a snowball to each of my relatives and said "It's cold". We first went to Nuremberg, and stayed with my aunt and uncle and I felt really out of place, out of my comfort zone, culture context. I had never seen so many Caucasians. And only Caucasians. Having grown up in Morocco and India I wasn't used to so many white people. I felt really uncomfortable. First time I saw television . . .*
>
> *When I moved to India from Morocco my mother spoke to me in French and I refused to speak in French. I told her "but they don't speak that here" and I refused to speak. I had lots of Indian friends, and lots of Moroccan friends . . . people from countries all over. . . .*
>
> *I had culture shock coming back to the States in High school. We lived there from 73 – 77, then went to France and came back to home leave in 79, then permanently in 81. Each time I came back, in the US things change faster than in other places. I used to measure change by the kind of cash register in McDonalds. That was what I looked at. And they are still changing . . .*
>
> *In high school I had to start grade 12 in the US, and high school was like 4 times bigger than the Canadian school in France and everyone had been in the school for many years, and it was one of the few times of my life that I didn't make many friends. I just didn't feel like I had anything in common with people. Other guys were talking about cars, and I didn't have any interest.*

In his description of going back to high school in the U.S., Paul refers specifically to trouble making friends, yet overall it seems that he was capable of integrating into a wide range of cultural communities, and code-switch between different languages. He certainly does not express the kind of frustration of someone like Adele, who hates Japanese culture so much, or even Mayumi, who struggled to adapt to life in Korea. Adaptation, it seems, is

a primary and integral part of his cultural identity.

This view of having cultural adaptation at the center of one's identity closely mirrors Bennett's (1993) description of the end-product of cultural learning in the DMIS. As quoted earlier in section 2.4.3:

> *. . . marginality describes exactly the subjective experience of people who are struggling with the total integration of ethnorelativism. They are outside all cultural frames of reference by virtue of the ability to consciously raise any assumption to a meta-level (level of self-reference). In other words, there is no natural cultural identity for a marginal person. There are no unquestioned assumptions, no intrinsically absolute right behaviours, nor any necessary reference group.* (p. 63)

This description seems to match Paul's discussion of his cultural identity. He has a meta-level ability to see all behavior existing in equally viable, yet varying cultural contexts:

> *When you go somewhere, the way that people do things is simply the way people do things and so you adapt to that. Of course it doesn't mean that you don't judge, or that you like it, but you adapt. It also has to do with the environment that you are used to. When things are different it might create some internal tensions, but you adapt. . . . You just get used to the way people expect you to do things.*

Paul does not imply that he is equally comfortable everywhere, or that he does not have personal preferences about how to do things. But he recognizes that his personal preferences are simply that, and is capable of understanding different expectations about behavior at a meta-level.

Another participant whose description of her intercultural experiences closely mirrored Paul's, and who matches very well Bennett's description of the DMIS's most-advanced state of cultural learning, was Yuko. Yuko is a Japanese citizen who was raised first in India (16 years) speaking Japanese with her family and Hindi and English in school and with friends. She later lived in the United States, and finally went to live for an extended period for the first time in Japan. Yuko's first language learned was Hindi, but she now feels most comfortable in English and then Japanese. She learned written Japanese by visiting Japan on holidays and by being taught by her parents. Like Paul, Yuko defines her cultural identity not in terms of

connection to a primary cultural community, but rather to the process of cultural learning itself.

> *I was a very fast learner. I went to an international school. Me and my brothers and sisters are chameleons . . .*
>
> *The important thing is knowing what the rules are. When I first came to Japan it took me three years to learn how to slurp . . .*
>
> *With me and my sister borders don't matter, and it's no longer about language. My brother, who has lived in Japan less than I have, and he has the least Japanese tutoring only speaks Japanese, so nobody would realize that he spoke English. A lot of people are surprised that he can speak English. His English is really good. I have an American friend who has never spoken to my brother in English. She would speak to me in English and to my brother in Japanese. He (the brother) has that big chameleon thing. He says "Yuko you're not a very good chameleon". When my sister speaks she throws in different words from different languages because she feels they express things better.*

Yuko's use of the word "chameleon" is striking, as is her statement that "borders don't matter". Yuko is very aware of the fact that different cultural contexts involve different expectations about what is normal, and like Paul, while she finds cultural expectations that she does not like, she recognizes that they represent a viable reality, and that one can use those varying cultural frameworks to express an individual identity. In Yuko's case, the process of adapting to life in Japan as a university student and company employee is remarkable. Because she was socialized outside of Japan, Yuko knew only Japanese language, without a deeper understanding of cultural expectations. She made a very conscious effort, however, to learn and adapt. Her account of learning to be "submissive woman" after having been raised in the cosmopolitan environment of international schools, and places such as Europe and the United States, is fascinating:

> *. . . I worked very hard at adapting and blending in. So, I was able to get even very traditional friends. One way I decided to improve my Japanese was to get a part time job at Itoyokado* (a Japanese department store – a traditional working environment). *Also I wanted to work for a Japanese company. Going to an international school you represent your culture and country, but having never lived here you get a stereotypical view of Japan so I wanted to experience a Japanese company so I worked there. The reality is very different from the stereotypes. The sempai-kohai* (lit. superior–subordinate) *concept, the whole hierarchy. I don't think*

anyone can understand it . . .

Well, I went through the whole range, I tried everything once. Serving tea, opening the elevator doors for me, the whole aisatsu, *(lit. greeting - also refers to ceremonial speeches/introductions) it's hard to put my finger on it. Now I live my way, but when I came here I tried really hard to blend in, the way of socializing, you know when you have an opinion, the way you express it people might think you are pushy. When you do* settai *(socializing with customers for the purpose of relationship building), I was just a* kazari *(lit. decoration, meaning she was meant to be seen but not heard.), I was not part of the* settai. *They needed a young female to pour so they brought me along instead of being there to contribute the business. I spent so many evenings pouring beer and translating . . .*

It's a give and take. Being Japanese in one situation asks for it. Since my name is Japanese I'm a Japanese and they expect a very submissive person. The salespeople think they can get their way with me because I am young. But I can yell when I want to, or speak up when I want to, when the situation calls for it. But at the same time it doesn't mean that I don't know what the manners are. I just choose. For example I don't send ochuugen *or* seibo (seasonal gifts), *and I send Christmas cards instead of* nengajo (New Year's greeting card).

One striking thing about Yuko's account is her reference to "trying everything once." The examples she gives, such as serving tea and being a "decoration" that pours drinks for customers, refer to parts of Japanese culture that are the most traditional, and could be considered the hardest for foreigners – particularly those with a background emphasizing individualism and gender equality – to get used to. She seems proud of having been able to get "traditional friends", and chose a job at a very traditional department store (one in which staff is trained in proper bowing etiquette and honorific language, and in which staff greets customers at store opening in uniforms with deep bows). This is quite a different world from her previous experiences, feeling most comfortable in English, going to international schools, studying in the United States, and hanging out with friends from all over the world. Yet for Yuko, like for Paul, this conscious process of cultural adaptation seems to be an important part of her cultural identity.

Notice that Yuko does not seem to be trying to "find her roots" in Japan. She wants to understand the cultural "system". Once having learned the system, however, she makes choices about how to express herself as an individual – yelling at salespeople and sending Christmas cards rather than New Year's greeting cards. She is proud of her success integrating and

forming relationships with Japanese, yet maintains an identity separate from this:

> *In my first apartment, when I invited my Japanese friends over they saw me just like a typical young Japanese girl. But when I moved I decided to change it . . . My aunt was very surprised when she visited my (new) apartment because when I talk to her I'm really Japanese, but when she came to my apartment she saw a very different side of me.*

So, like Paul, Yuko seems the archetype of the "constructive cultural marginal" described by Bennett. Given that she is so flexible, and clearly is a member of multiple cultural communities, one wonders if she has a primary affiliation – as Sparrow's description of successful interculturalists suggests. But when asked if there were people from a particular culture that she felt most comfortable with, she says: "*Third culture kids. For example my best friends are people that grew up in more than one culture and speak several languages.*" It seems that Yuko is a cultural marginal to the core.

While Paul and Yuko do not invalidate Sparrow's point that feeling connected to and gaining membership in particular cultural communities is an important marker of intercultural learning, they do lend weight to Bennett's idea that in some ways at least, it IS possible to go *beyond* a single cultural affiliation and achieve a kind of constructed cultural identity. So it could be argued that constructive cultural marginality represents a kind of end-product of very deep cultural learning. However, both Yuko and Paul were raised in circumstances that are extremely rare, speaking multiple languages and being exposed to many different cultural frameworks. One could almost say that multi-culturalism IS their culture. This is echoed in Yuko's statement that the people she feels most comfortable with are "third-culture kids" – people who have been raised in multicultural environments like she has.

This does not mean that this "third culture" is just another cultural framework like any other. They are certainly more adapted intercultural learners than people growing up in more limited intercultural contexts. But the fact remains that they were, in effect, *forced* to adapt by virtue of their international background. We can't assume, however, that being raised in a multicultural environment automatically confers this "beyond culture" state. In the case of one participant – Liz – though she was raised in a bicultural environment, as a child she "chose" a primary cultural affiliation. Liz's case is

discussed in the section on the emerging theme "rapport".

Ultimately, the participants in this study support both Bennett's idea that a form of deep intercultural relativism can represent an end-product of intercultural learning, as well as Sparrow's idea that forming relationships with members of a host cultural community is an important element of intercultural adaptation. Perhaps this is not surprising since there is no absolute contradiction between these two views. Of perhaps greater importance in terms of developing a model for intercultural learning is the concept of "depth", and the need to recognize the complexity and contradictions inherent in intercultural experiences. For all that Sparrow's and Bennett's views of intercultural learning have to offer, they do not seem to adequately address these issues. Any model of intercultural learning developed from this study will need to do so. But before that is attempted, it is important to look at other themes that emerged from the experiences of the participants in this study. They will provide additional pieces to the puzzle of intercultural learning which will need to be integrated into any new model.

4.2 Emerging themes

The previous section examined the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) in terms of its usefulness to describe the cultural learning of the participants in this study. During the process of categorizing sojourner's accounts, a number of themes came up which do not easily fit into the DMIS. This section will examine some of these themes, with an eye to how they compare to existing models of cultural learning, and how they can inform new models.

4.2.1 Cultural depth and mixed states

In the analysis of Bennett's model of intercultural sensitivity it was pointed out that at least some sojourners have seemingly contradictory reactions to their intercultural experiences. Furthermore, is was argued that these *mixed states* often involve reactions to both implicit and explicit cultural difference, and both surface and deep intercultural experiences. One can accept certain things at a certain level, while resisting others at a different level. This distinction seems of critical importance as we try to understand the different depths of intercultural learning in our increasingly interconnected world. Not only does it call into question Bennett's assertion that a cultural

learner is at any given time at a single "stage" of intercultural learning, this element of intercultural experience is little explored in the intercultural literature.

One of the few researchers who touches upon the theme of different depths of intercultural experience is Hanvey (1979). Hanvey has created a model of intercultural learning that describes cultural learning in terms of an increased awareness of cultural difference, starting with visible traits, and culminating in having an awareness of how another culture feels from the insider's perspective. Hanvey describes the mode of intercultural experience that corresponds to these different stages of awareness, in addition to corresponding modes of interpreting intercultural difference. His model can be represented in the following way (diagram 5):

Level of Cross-Cultural Awareness	I Awareness of superficial or very visible cultural traits: stereotypes	II Awareness of significant and subtle cultural traits that contrast markedly with one's own.	III Awareness of significant and subtle cultural traits that contrast markedly with one's own.	IV Awareness of how another culture feels from the standpoint of the insider.
Mode	Tourism, textbooks, *National Geographic*	Culture conflict situations	Intellectual analysis	Cultural immersion: living the culture
Interpretation	Unbelievable, exotic, bizarre	Unbelievable, frustrating, irrational	Believable, cognitively	Believable because of subjective familiarity

Diagram 5 – Based on that found in Moran (2001)

This model recognizes that superficial intercultural experiences, such as tourism, are substantively different from the deeper experience of cultural immersion. It also recognizes that shallow intercultural experiences involve only the explicit – or in Hanvey's terms, *visible* – traits of a culture. The highest level of awareness, according to Hanvey (1979), require more than simple exposure:

> ...it is not easy to attain cross-cultural understanding of the kind

> that puts you into the head of a person from an utterly different culture. Contact alone will not do it. Even sustained contact will not do it. There must be a readiness to respect and accept, and a capacity to participate. The participation must be reinforced by rewards that matter to the participant. And the participation must be sustained over long periods of time. (p. 51)

The participation that Hanvey refers to involves social approval from members of the culture, and thus reflects Sparrow's emphasis on participation in a cultural community as a measure of successful intercultural learning. Hanvey's model also places a cognitive acceptance of cultural difference at a lower level of awareness than acceptance based on "subjective familiarity". This "subjective familiarity" may be similar to what Bennett describes as the construction of an alternative world view in the adaptation stage of his model.

While Hanvey's model deals to some degree with different depths of intercultural experiences, it still does not resolve the fundamental problem of sojourners who experience conflicting reactions to a cultural environment. Hanvey's notion of *awareness,* though less precisely defined than Bennett's definition of *intercultural sensitivity,* supposes a single measure of intercultural development which progresses step-by-step in a linear fashion. In addition, in Hanvey's model, explicit cultural difference engenders interpretations which find the new culture *unbelievable*, *exotic*, or *bizarre.* This seems to overlook the common-sense observation that many travelers simply find the food, architecture and clothing in foreign culture *beautiful* or *interesting*. These adjectives would seem to correspond to at least an intellectual acceptance of cultural difference.

A final difficulty with Hanvey's model is that the stages of the model represent only two broadly defined categories of intercultural experience: 1) shallow ones such as tourism, textbooks and travel magazines, and 2) cultural immersion: living the culture. The intermediary stages in his model refer to conflict situations and intellectual analysis, which are more properly reactions to an environment, rather than degrees of depth of an experience. Thus, we are left without categories of experience for those sojourners who have mixed reactions to a range of different experiences, and the stages he illustrates are of limited use in visualizing the varying depths of experiences.

Finally, there is one researcher that focuses on the mixed nature of sojourners' reactions to intercultural experiences. Kim (1988) stresses that cultural learning takes place during repeated encounters with cultural

difference. This produces "cultural stress" which can cause learners to retreat back into their own cultural world. As cultural learners vacillate back and forth between these two states, they increase their "functional fitness" (p. 68) and their "psychological health" (p. 69). Still, while this model recognizes changing reactions to cultural difference, and recognizes that progress may not be stages in a simple linear process, Kim's model does not account for conflicting states, and also does not take into account the difference between implicit and explicit cultural difference.

How then, can we represent the mixed states found among the participants in this study? One solution is to map cultural empathy and the depth of intercultural experience as shown in section 4.1.2 together with the reactions to intercultural difference that were used in analyzing participants' responses to their intercultural environment: *resistance*, *acceptance* and *adaptation*. This can be illustrated as follows (diagram 6):

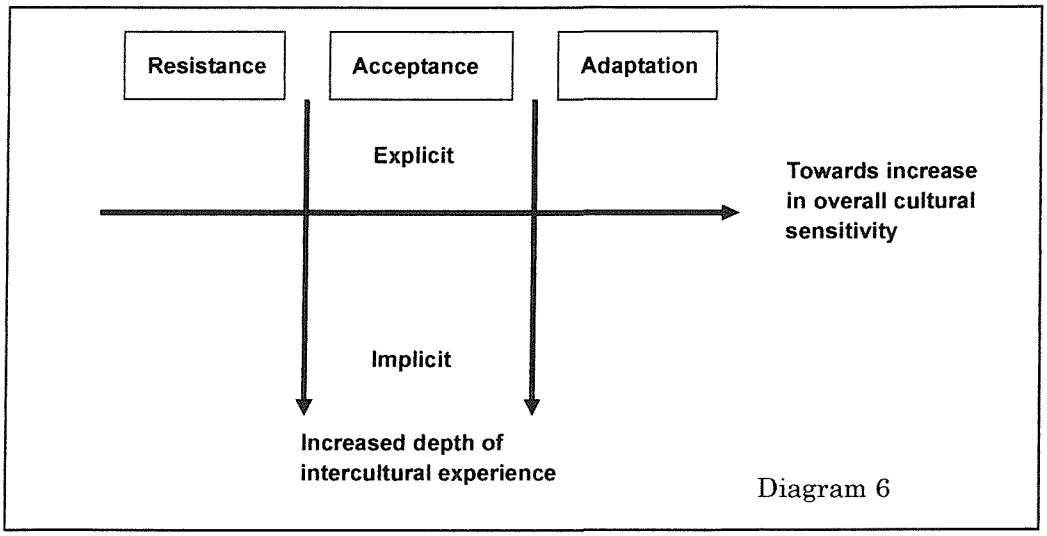

Diagram 6

Visualized in this way, cultural learning is represented as ever increasing cultural sensitivity. The intercultural experiences that lead to that empathy, however, can be relatively shallow, as characterized by experiencing only the most explicit elements of a new cultural environment, or relatively deep and incorporating more implicit elements of cultural difference. A tourist, therefore, may have a full range of reactions to his environment, including

resisting it, accepting it or adapting to it. These reactions, however, would remain in the realm of explicit culture – the portion of the diagram above the horizontal line. With increased exposure to a cultural environment, a learner may confront deeper levels of cultural difference and have reactions that correspond to the portion below the horizontal line.

This view allows us to incorporate different depths of intercultural learning, and also the mixed states found among sojourners in this study. The quip, *"I love France. It's just the French I hate"* could be illustrated as follows:

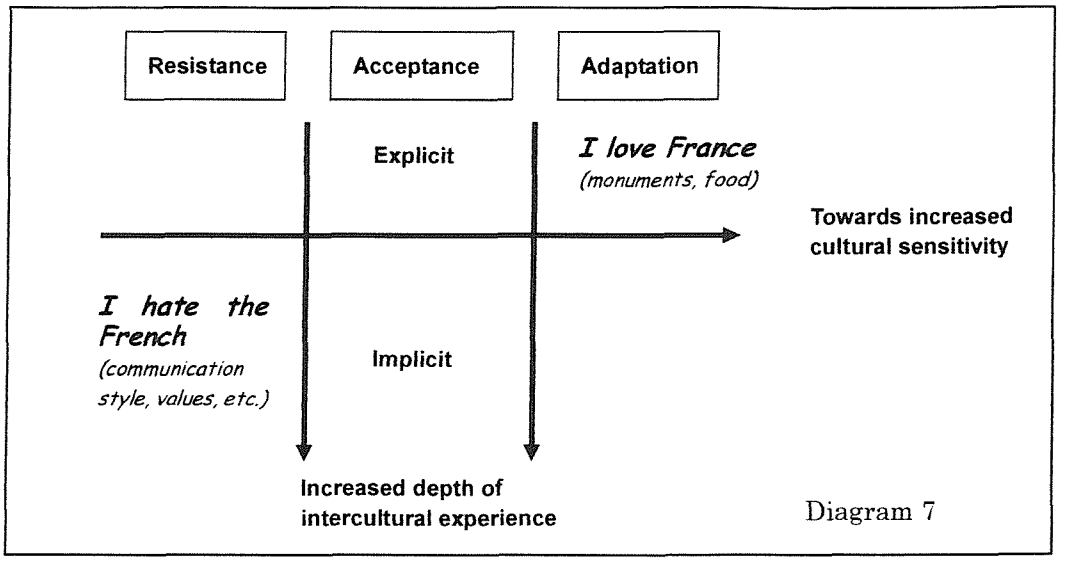

Diagram 7

Thus, this sojourner may actively adapt herself to France at the explicit level – perhaps by becoming an expert on French wine, or visiting all the art museums in Paris – while at the same time resisting deeper levels of French culture by, say, detesting the way that the French talk to each other, or what they value. The ability to visualize a sojourner's reaction such as this allows us to illustrate the degree to which a superficial acceptance of cultural phenomena may mask deeper resistance.

Diagramming intercultural experiences in this way gives us a powerful tool to characterize cultural learning. For example, David's reaction to the cultural differences he found training pilots from Europe and Asia could be visualized as follows (diagram8):

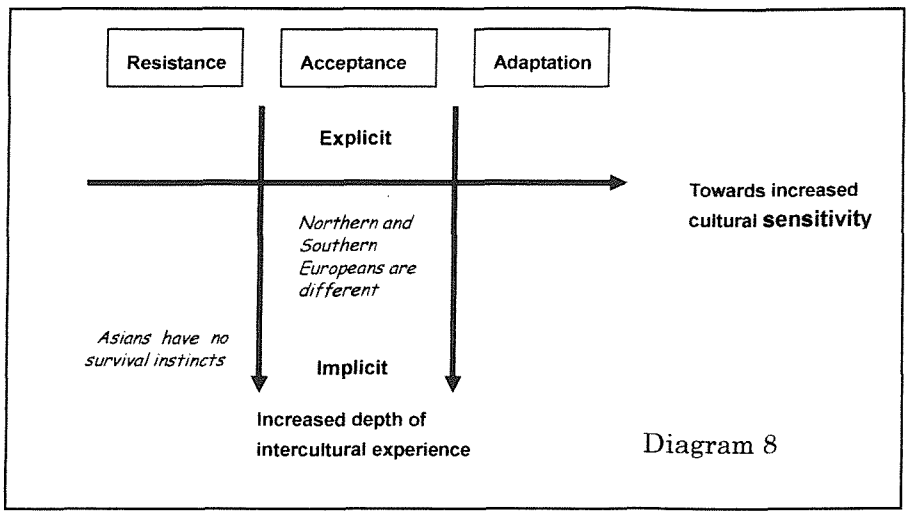

Diagram 8

In David's case, he is able to accept the cultural differences encountered training pilots from different European countries, but his experiences with Asian pilots create resistance that is expressed in terms of prejudice. His experiences with Asian pilots were demanding because of the greater cultural distance, and the degree to which cultural difference was implicit. Perhaps the differences David reacted so negatively to with Chinese students functioned even further out of awareness than the differences he described among Americans and Europeans. This contrast is shown by placing his reaction to Chinese in a "deeper" position than that of his reaction to Europeans.

The findings related to the cultural depth and mixed experiences of the participants in this study seemed the most significant in terms of improving models of cultural learning. The following section examines an emerging theme that also seems to be related to the depth of cultural learning.

4.2.2 Rapport

One challenge of intercultural education is the difficulty of understanding why people react to new intercultural environments in such different ways. In this study, also, sojourners had a wide range of responses to their host environment. The differences between these reactions involve at least two considerations. First, different people deal with stress in different ways. Matsumoto (2001), for example, has created a measure called the Intercultural Adjustment Potential Scale which purports to characterize the psychological coping strategies which help with intercultural adjustment.

These include emotion regulation, critical thinking, and openness/flexibility. Seen in this way, reactions to intercultural learning environments can be at least partially explained by the greater ability of some individuals to deal with the stress of intercultural adaptation.

In this study, however, it seemed that there was another highly personal element at play. It seemed more simply that some people's personalities were particularly suited – or not suited – to a particular new cultural environment. Jack, for example, was happy with life in Japan and was not stressed even though he spoke little Japanese, while another American, Adele, had spent years learning Japanese and investing herself in the culture yet had extremely negative reactions to cultural difference. It does not seem enough to say that Adele simply had less openness and flexibility than Jack.

Adele was mentioned as someone who certainly did not feel comfortable in Japan. It is informative to compare her with Andre, a Swiss man who studied Japanese, graduated with a master's degree from a Japanese university (taking his classes and writing his thesis in Japanese) and then worked in Japan before returning to Switzerland. He reports that he was fascinated by Japanese culture, and felt a tremendous mysterious attraction:

> *I was so desperately trying to integrate into Japan . . . it became kind of a religion for me. (I started to believe that) I am kind of by destiny bound to Japan. It's crazy. . . . I actually kind of admired Japan without even knowing it and projecting a lot into it. . . . I tried to be more Japanese than the Japanese themselves. . . . (While in Japan I felt) I love Japanese aesthetics. I love everything. I feel so good because people tell me "Hey Andre, you're so good at Japanese" Wow you look great. I would like to know you.*

It seems that Andre's reaction to Japan can not be explained simply as a result of his particular coping strategies. While his case is extreme, others also sometimes spoke of a naturalness they felt in a new culture. Neil, for example, says:

> *Yes I am (happy living in Japan). . . . When I came back the second time from New York, I felt immediately, "I'm back home." I didn't have any readjustment period. . . . In fact, I had more of a problem with getting along with my American and British colleagues (than with Japanese).*

> *I'm not hard-core competitive like Americans are. . . . I've learned many things about how different I am from many Americans. I wasn't a misfit when I grew up, but I wasn't the one in the popular crowd. Maybe I fit the profile of someone who would fit life in Japan. . . . I'm willing to do more to fit into this culture than would many Americans.*

Another person who seems to feel a certain ease – a *rapport* – with a new cultural environment is Gail, a British woman who has moved to France and acquired French citizenship after more than 10 years there. While talking about why she came to France she says:

> *I think there was a kind of fascination. People say that the British and the French find it very hard to get on, and you know, they could easily be at one another's throats. I've never had any problem with that. There's obviously the joke about Waterloo and the 100 years war, and things like that that are annoying. I just think also that French people live for communication a lot more, and I need to communicate, and I think especially when you are growing up and becoming an adult you want to feel the communication is easier. And with the French communication is very easy. Cause they like to talk.*

Some of what Gail says echoes the statements of Linda, the British woman who felt so much more comfortable in France than the U.S.:

> *I'm still on a voyage of discovery. I know I want to be here but I'm still learning how I feel about everything. But I think it's exciting. . . . I'm getting used to things. I'm trying to become or look or sound more French . . . In Paris you can be poor or rich and you are accepted. People will talk to each other no matter what class you belong to. On the level I operate on it seems that people will talk to anyone, even a homeless person. That's something I really like. I hate class and snobbism.*

The *rapport* that these sojourners describe seems quite diffuse, and not entirely related to the particular circumstances of a sojourn. If there are some people who felt at ease – or *rapport* – with their new environments, there were others who felt ill-at-ease. Adele's difficulties in Japan have been mentioned, as has the British woman Linda's preference for French culture over American.

Another example of a lack of rapport, or *negative rapport* - is Joanna, the French woman who disliked American attitudes about terrorism.

Joanna: *After a while in the States, I was like "Wow, where am I?" I didn't appreciate parts of American culture. For me it was a great experience, but just if I look back, I couldn't have stayed in this country. I was definitely not part of it. For one year it was great, but . . . It was not groovy enough for me.*

Interviewer: *Your comment "I couldn't have stayed in this country" is interesting for me.*

Joanna: *It didn't improve my opinion about Americans, especially the foreign policy of the country. I think I'm too politically conscious. It's too important to ignore that when you are in the country. Especially in the United States. They dominate the whole world. Their behavior influences the rest of the world. You cannot be indifferent.*

Once again, what bothers Joanna is diffuse; it is not "groovy" enough for her, and she apparently finds Americans overbearing. The parallel that can be found between both these strongly positive and negative reactions is that they are highly personal, and seem to be generated not only by predictable elements of cultural difference, but by the particular personality of the sojourner. While this result may not be surprising, it does raise issues related to developing a model for intercultural learning.

Obviously, someone like Adele, who seems to feel a strong negative rapport with Japanese culture, will clearly face difficult adaptive challenges. But how about people who feel positive rapport to a particular culture? Does this mean that they are overall better cultural learners? or is their identification with their host culture simply a product of a good match between personality and environment? If so, does that mean that while they may fit well into a new environment, they won't easily gain the more generalized intercultural empathy described by Bennett? Bennett (M. J. Bennett, 1993) refers to this issue indirectly when speaking of *accidental biculturals*, people who happen to grow up in two cultures, but who still are ethnocentric. According to Bennett, the ability to switch back and forth between different cultural points of view does not automatically confer intercultural sensitivity. It is the ability to abstract meaning about the significance of cultural difference that marks true intercultural sensitivity.

If Bennett's view is valid, could this mean that sojourners who feel a great affinity towards a host culture may fail to learn some of the broader lessons offered by intercultural experiences? The results of this study are not clear in this regard, but there are some clues. Andre, for example, the Swiss

man who was so enamoured with Japan, ended up coming back to Switzerland and eventually rejecting the life he had created in Japan. In discussing Japanese culture, he seems unable to relativize his experience. Perhaps because his attraction to Japan was so personal, he does not find cultural difference very important:

> *I think that within (the same culture) we can be as different as people are between Switzerland and Japan. And there were people like (his ex-girlfriend) who I got so very well along with because it was kind of souls that we had that went very well along with each other. Non-verbal communication, whatever it was, we were just understanding each other very well. And NO, I do not think that the culture has such a really big influence.*

Yet even as he dismisses the importance of culture, he seems to have run into some powerful barriers of implicit difference:

> *I was so burned out. Now that I'm here back again I do not feel any desire of going back to Japan . . . I do read Japanese. I do speak and write Japanese. (I experienced) all of these prejudices (that Japanese have). They weren't even meant in a negative way. As a foreigner, they were astonished and they showed their astonishment. And I got tired doing that. . . . Although I wanted to prove the world that I can become 100 percent Japanese and feel very much at home there, that I preferred (returning to Switzerland and) being myself and having the possibility to being myself and to live straight away in a place where it easy for me to live . . . In Japan it would have cost me so much more energy. And I would have been frustrated that I can't express what I really want. . . . And here I just can use few words. And speak so very naturally and they do understand perfectly. I know they do understand me. It is very important to get that feedback. I did not get that feedback in Japan.*

And so unlike Mayumi, who disliked her mother-in-law cleaning her house while she was gone, and unlike Yuko, who chose to work at a conservative company in order to learn the "system" of Japanese culture, Andre seems not to have fully accepted the prospect that Japanese cultural values and communication styles represent a valid alternative world view. He has not achieved the meta-view of cultural difference emphasized by Bennett. Interestingly, Andre uses precisely this word when describing his feelings about the cultural discoveries he is making now that he is back in Switzerland:

> *Giving birth to myself again in my own culture here I do rediscover*

> *it and yes I'm back again. It's not learning about my culture in a distant way, on a meta-level, kind of looking down upon my culture and I learn something. I'm living it now. I am living my culture again and this feels good. . . . Here, I'm back. I do not think about myself. I do not learn about my culture. I just live it and I feel right.*

One final clue to Andre's state of intercultural sensitivity is related to offhand comments he made just after the interview was officially over (though he was later asked for permission to include them). In discussing France he expressed distaste for the French in general, saying:

> *Their time has passed. It might be that something new is coming but, desperately they're trying to adhere an old heritage, the* Alliance Francaise, *and they have tried to keep their language from changing, having everything in their own words, they do not talk about software, it's* logiciel. *So much force trying to, forcedly trying to keep the culture and its own identity.*

So once again, Andre does not seem to be viewing other cultural points of view as valid alternatives. This is in spite of his deep intercultural experiences, and an apparent facility for languages. In addition to Swiss German, High German, and Japanese, Andre speaks excellent English, in addition to Italian and French.

The other participants in this study who expressed a positive rapport for their host cultural environment were not nearly as extreme as Andre in their cultural learning. It was difficult to tell whether they had the kind of detached meta-level cultural empathy emphasized by Bennett. Ultimately, these observations raise more questions than they answer, but it seems that the question of whether a personal affinity towards a particular cultural environment greatly contributes to intercultural sensitivity merits further examination. It also highlights once again, the importance of the hidden sides of our identity. The overall tone of Andre's interview, for example, paints the picture of someone who felt alienated by certain elements in his home cultural environment, and felt an attraction to another environment that seemed to offer an escape. This dynamic can function at the unconscious level, and had his language education or study abroad preparation included more of an emphasis on the hidden nature of intercultural learning, he might have had more opportunities to reflect on his motivations and reactions when going to Japan. This might have, in turn, spared him some of the difficulties he

encountered.

4.2.3 Relationships and Language learning

In this study, questions about language learning were used as one measure of the degree to which sojourners were adapting to the demands of their intercultural environment. There were limitations to what could be learned in this way. One of these was related to the difficulty in evaluating participants' actual level of language ability (since they were simply self-reporting), and the other involved the degree to which knowledge of a foreign language reflected deeper involvement with the host cultural environment. In spite of these difficulties, several themes related to intercultural learning and language learning came up.

Among the participants of this study at least, learning a foreign language didn't seem to necessarily bring with it a high degree of cultural sensitivity. Andre, who spoke at least four languages at a high degree of proficiency, seemed not to have gained much cultural relativism in the process. One participant, Mayumi, referred to speaking a foreign language *too well.* In discussing how she is perceived by the English speakers she knows, she says:

> *The reason I give the impressions of being nice is that I love learning languages, and so my linguistic skills were advanced. But my perception is that I don't have the social skills to match my linguistic skills.*

Could it be that a high language learning aptitude can even be a disadvantage in terms of cultural learning? Could Andre and Mayumi's experiences refer to the acquisition of the external forms of language more easily than the underlying value system and codes of interaction? Andre seems to have felt extremely frustrated by communication difficulties in spite of highly advanced linguistic skills. When discussing how frustrating it was not to be able to express his emotions in Japanese, he says:

> *Here (in Switzerland) I can get angry also. I can have real relationships and it doesn't cost me a lot of energy. It's so easy for me to pick up the phone at 11:30 to ask (my friend) why doesn't she come over for a wine and we talk until 2 o'clock in the morning. And I have so many friends here. And for them it's so easy for me . . . In Japan it would have cost me so much more energy. And I would have been frustrated that I can't express what I really want. Here I can do that in my own mother tongue which is*

Swiss-German dialect, and I feel very, very free here.

And here I just can use few words. And speak so very naturally and they do understand perfectly. I know they do understand me. It is very important to get that feedback. I did not get that feedback in Japan. Only with very, very few people. And even if I wanted to get it I felt I could not express myself to the extent that I wanted to. I couldn't express myself as perfectly as I wanted to.

One gets the impression that Andre feels that Japanese never express their emotions. This, of course, is not true. Many Japanese may express their emotions in a reserved way, but it is part of a code that other Japanese understand. One illustration is the story of the Japanese man who came home from work and was served tea by his wife soon after arriving. Upon tasting it he discovered that it was only lukewarm. This alerted him to the fact that his wife was upset with them, and he understood that it was because he had promised to be home much earlier. Andre clearly wants more verbal feedback than this man received.

Both Mayumi and Andre make specific references to being "good" at learning languages, and make reference to the difference between linguistic skills and cultural skills. Much more common, however, were participants who talked about language learning in terms of how it gave them access to another social world. For these participants, learning a foreign language helped create the kind of meaningful relationships that characterize successful intercultural learning for Sparrow (2000). Some examples include, William:

In Hiroshima I went every Saturday to this all-volunteer classes and that's how I learned the basics of Japanese grammar and conversation. And actually that class pulled me out of my solitude because I met people and made friends there . . .

There was a woman at my university who didn't speak any Japanese and I used her as an anti-role model. I could see how she was seen in the school. She seemed unhappy. She was seen as lazy, and detached and not interested in getting involved. I decided early on that I didn't want to be like her . . .

It seems to me that the people who are bilingual are happier, they travel more, their conversations don't slip into a dark zone of complaints and frustrations . . . My girlfriend I usually speak English too, I'm kind of ashamed of that.

Also Neil.

Once you demonstrate that you have some ability to speak the

language, people treat you more as an ordinary person. Maybe you won't get the special treatment, but at the same time you feel more part of the group instead of always being outside.. . . (W)hen someone came from (the phone company) and I could talk to them. I could interact with people. That has been a pleasant result of learning more Japanese.

Or Mayumi, a Japanese student who studied in the United States for a year:

With Americans, if I don't speak English well, I may think that I understand Americans but in fact not really understand them at all. It's necessary to involve myself with them. I thought that I spoke pretty good English before I went, but you unless you really get into the culture, it's not possible to know.

My parents came over to me and told me that I had become Americanized. When I talk with my roommates, I show more emotion. Like they say "Hi! How are you doing!?" and I started to adapt to that way of expressing myself. I felt that I have to adapt to their way of communicating. When I'm happy, I have to show I'm happy, and when I'm sad I do that.

In fact, most participants did talk about language learning in this way. Those that did not tended to be those who had little language ability relative to the time they had spent abroad. Jack, having spent more than 10 years living in Japan, for example, says the following:

My Japanese language ability is pretty low. I can have a basic conversation, talk about what they did or what they are going to do, making plans, I can express my feelings on some topics, I'm limited in vocabulary and grammar. . . . I've only learned what I needed to learn to survive and get by . . . what I need in my job, being an English teacher. I don't have a chance to use Japanese. I've made some attempts at times, joining language schools. I guess there are other things I've been interested in. I can experience the culture doing other things. I can experience the culture with people through English.

I passed the nihongo kentei *third level (Japanese proficiency exam – equivalent to lower intermediate) years ago, if I had to take it again I'd probably fail. If I listen to the news I don't understand a thing. Dramas are much, much easier. I don't use it. I went to the post office today. They said "sign" and I said "*hai*"* (yes/okay). *I really don't have the opportunities. I would have to create opportunities. For example I could go to the store, even though I don't need tunafish I could ask for the tunafish. I could call a department store on the phone and ask for something.*

It is hard to guess what precisely Jack means by "experience the culture with

people through English", but he does not seem to be looking at *culture* in terms of relationships. Even more remarkable is his statement that he does not have the chance to use Japanese. His example of creating an opportunity to use Japanese by asking for something he does not really need in the supermarket seems to be a reflection of how little he sees Japanese as a tool for interaction and relationships. The shallowness of his linguistic ability reflects his isolation – the extent to which he keeps himself at the explicit levels of cultural learning. This makes his reported satisfaction and enjoyment of his life in Japan that much more remarkable.

Another participant who has spent six years in Korea and six years in Japan without much foreign language learning, is Steven:

> *I tried to study on my own and also went to a language school for three months while in Korea. Students often tried to help. That's about my language experience. I developed a survival / functional ability, not conversational. Ask for directions and buy stuff in the store. I could tell them I'm a teacher, and what subject I teach, but not in depth. Couldn't discuss and abstract topics, basically functional stuff.*

Like Jack, Steven is focused on the explicit elements of cultural learning:

> *But (cultural adaptation) wasn't that big of a problem because once you get your lifestyle settled you don't need to be shopping every weekend . . .*
>
> *For me, learning a culture starts with their history. To me the history will give lots of clues to current behaviors customs and values, and trying to learn how the local people think and behave . . .*
>
> *(Cultural understanding) helped me understand why things worked the way they did. For example if I wanted to see someone, and I was told that I couldn't, it helped me understand that it was because of their status. It even helps with body language. Once I was in a restaurant sitting with my back to the door and suddenly everyone stood up and bowed. What gave me the clue was that it was a very deep bow. That let me know that the person who entered the room was very important . . .*
>
> *There's a lot of people who say that if you are foreigner there's always a limit (to what you can understand culturally). It's a question of degree. I'm sure that being fluent in the foreign language would help. But there are also other ways of getting that information, like how I did.*

So Steven sees himself as having gained a high degree of cultural insight without speaking a foreign language. But has he?

If we look at Steven from the point of view of Sparrow and her emphasis on integrating oneself into a new community, Steven seems still relatively isolated. He, like Jack, is an English teacher who communicates largely thanks to the foreign language skills of others. His role in Korean and Japanese society, as with Jack, is insulated by his ability to play the role of the foreigner deserving of special treatment. He faced the need to adapt to Korean and Japanese social norms, but only insofar as they are related to what is expected from a foreigner speaking English.

On the other hand, unlike Jack, Steven sometimes refers to cultural difference in much the same way that Bennett describes it, as a process of understanding another world view. When asked about the frustrations of cultural learning, he says:

> Steven: *It took me a couple of years to figure out, but I had to learn that before I got really pissed off, I had to stop and ask someone all the details of the situation, because there is something that I don't understand. Usually that would involve going to friends or students and asking them to explain "Why are things that way?" That was my best tool for dealing with the culture. Step back a bit and find out what piece of information I was missing because I found out that nearly invariably there was something that was missing.*
>
> Interviewer: *Can you give examples of the kinds of problems that you resolved this way? Something that you learned that helped you?*
>
> Steven: *I can't think of specific examples in that respect, but another coping strategy was learning to see things from the Korean perspective. One of the hardest things for me when I went there was grading. At my university they gave me a piece of paper that said, most of our students will get a B grade. And with my western way of thinking, I though, "No, I don't give anything. The grade you get is what you earn." But seeing things from their perspective helped me rationalize and say "I can do this." For example they were saying at the beginning of the semester and saying that so many students are going to give a "B", whereas in the States many teachers grade on a curve, so it's basically the same thing. It's just a question of when you do it. The reason they said a "B" was that it's important how many students get jobs who graduate from their university, so we'll move our curve up so that they can all get good jobs, then students are happy and parents are happy and everyone is happy.*

Steven's statement about learning to see things "from the Korean perspective" sound remarkably like Bennett's description of cultural sensitivity. Does this mean, then, that Steven gained cultural sensitivity without learning Korean or Japanese? Or perhaps his cultural understanding represents an intellectualization without deeper understanding. This is the danger that Sparrow warns of when critiquing Bennett's description of intercultural sensitivity. One clue to this question is Steven's use of the word "rationalize" when describing his process of coming to grips with the Korean grading system. Not only does "rationalizing" not imply acceptance – it is, rather, a form of justification – his ultimate conclusion is that the Korean system was "basically the same thing" as what he was used to in the United States. This sounds like Bennett's description of *minimization,* in which cultural difference is recognized yet its importance is downplayed. It seems that Steven has trouble recognizing the deeper layers of difference implied by using different standards to grade students. If so, this matches the view of him as someone who has remained on the surface of his intercultural experiences.

Another clue to Steven's state of mind is his reference to a need for cultural "information" in order to solve the puzzles of life in Korea. In a different portion of the interview he talks about learning the history of a country in order to understand people's behaviour. Significantly, he was unable to give an example of how learning Korean history helped in daily life. Factual information, such as the history of a country or cultural group, is an explicit cultural phenomenon – a product of culture like architecture and food. In that sense, while information may be abstract in terms of analyzing a society, that does not make it an implicit part of that society's cultural frameworks. Seen in this way, in spite of an intellectual empathy, Steven may not have gone beyond the explicit level of culture, and one suspects that the depth of his intercultural relationships is more limited as a result.

4.2.4 Cultural code switching and deep cultural relativism

While Steven's account of his cultural learning emphasizes looking at things from another cultural perspective, he does not go so far as to say that he shifts in and out of different modes of behaviour or world views. His empathy seems to be a kind of mental projection. Overwhelmingly, the participants who had high degrees of language skills and who had integrated themselves further into host cultural groups described the empathy they

gained in terms of cultural code-switching – a shift into a different framework of communication or meaning. This is true of Abdou, a quadrilingual Senegalese living in France who says that when he goes back to Senegal, he shifts perception and puts on his "Senegalese glasses" to look at the world from the Senegalese point of view. Paul, the multilingual son of a diplomat says:

> *(Y)ou are as many people as languages that you speak. When you speak a different language your thought patterns change and your gestures change. And when people tell jokes in that language you understand but you couldn't necessarily explain that to people in another language. The reference points and assumptions are just so different.*
>
> *When you are in an environment, like in Germany if you come to a pedestrian crossing you come to a red light and you don't cross, whereas in the US you would go ahead, or probably France too. Or eating, in the U.S. you put one hand on your lap, but not in Europe. And this time when I came back to the US I found myself putting my hands in my pockets more. I find that I'm more on time when I'm in Germany.*

And Yuko, the Japanese woman who grew up in India, Europe and the U.S., also speaks of how changing languages involves a deep shift in meaning.

> *When I get angry I prefer to speak English. I'm extremely polite in Japanese. I don't have the vocabulary to get angry in Japanese. The Japanese I know is polite, it's* aimai *(lit. vague). When I talk in Hindi, there's "tomorrow". My way of thinking in each language changes, in Hindi it's slower, there's tomorrow, like something will happen, in Japanese it's* aimai *and in English it's more direct. . . . In Japan Hindi doesn't come out. When I went back to India it comes right back.*
>
> *I strongly believe that it's not possible to be culturally sensitive if you only speak one language. Otherwise you can't understand how people think. . . . The reason you become a chameleon . . . you want to fit in and you want to get along. So you try hard. A lot of third culture kids try to get along and not be too different.*

So these sojourners who seem to be highly advanced cultural learners emphasize the connection between language learning and cultural learning.

One interpretation of Steven's empathy, and the code shifting described by the more integrated sojourners with better language skills, is that Steven had achieved a sort of cognitive empathy, but that it did not

incorporate deeper elements of cultural difference associated with participating deeply in a cultural community. Seen in this way, the connections to new communities that Sparrow talks about reflect an opportunity to experience a new cultural environment at a deeper level. If that is accompanied by the kind of cognitive empathy that Bennett describes, one can truly be said to have accomplished a high degree of cultural learning based on the ideas of both Sparrow and Bennett.

A counter example that supports this idea is Adele, the American who felt such frustration with her life in Japan. Her language learning – while at a high level – seems to be stymied by her inability to form constructive relationships in Japanese. This, in turn, seems to be a byproduct of her strong resistance to some of the deeper elements of Japanese cultural frameworks. As pointed out before, when asked about her attempts to form friendships with Japanese, she reports nothing but frustration:

> *I've always found that when I live in Tokyo there's such a huge foreign community that you have to work hard to meet Japanese. . . . What I'm finding difficult is that we don't have a lot to talk about. (One Japanese friend) invited me out with her friends, because then she doesn't have to spend intense one on one with me, and her friends are the bimbos from hell, they all carry those live rabbit bags, rabbit fur bags, they wear those bimbo shoes. . . . then there was a woman who I tried to study calligraphy with, but then I realized she was using me to meet western men . . . My friends are nearly all foreign academics here studying in Japan*

Finally, Adele talks about what she has learned from her experiences of living in Japan and learning Japanese, saying "*I think one thing I've learned is that I really like the Unites States, and I'm glad that I was born there.*" Taken together, these examples seem to point strongly towards the importance of language learning as an entry point for experiencing the deeper elements of cultural difference. It seems to be the experience of these deeper elements that help sojourners attain the high degree of intellectual empathy described by Bennett, and the connections to the host cultural community described by Sparrow.

There is one final sojourner whose case may shed some light on this question. Gunter is a German manager who lived in Japan for three years and managed a team of Japanese engineers. His previous intercultural experience had included a year of graduate school in the United States and a relationship

with an American girlfriend. Working in Japan, Gunter had a close working relationship with his team of Japanese engineers, but spoke to them in English. While he did study Japanese, his language ability was rudimentary. In spite of this, he seems clearly to have engaged in an intense cultural learning experience:

> *At the beginning I had really big problems at work . . . to understand how (Japanese) think, how they do their jobs, for example, I had to ask them, . . . it was not clear for me if they understood what they had to do or not . . . I did not know that I had to give this information in a totally different way from in Germany, where you explain something to someone, and they give you the feedback if they don't understand, but in Japan they don't give you the feedback . . . I had to find out how to get this information. . . this was a big problem at the beginning but at the end it was no problem at all.*

Gunter's statement that at the end of his time in Japan that cultural difference was no problem at all reflects his insightful description of cultural differences in problem-solving strategies:

> Gunter: *Japanese people were trying to collect details as much as possible, if they wanted to solve a problem, they collect details details, details, and they ask questions, never-ending questions. Then, when they have the details they start to think about how to solve the problem. In Germany it's just the opposite. No one is interested in the details. Basically they come from the other side . . . they try first to get an overview and then maybe go to the details later.*
>
> Interviewer: *How did you figure that out?*
>
> Gunter: *That was easy to figure out, just by dealing with the customers for example. When we had a problem they were asking for detailed investigations, it was completely incredible for me and for my colleagues in Germany. We couldn't understand why Japanese people need so much information to solve problems. And later after a few months working with them, I thought that it was good that they tried to get so much information to get a good conclusion in the end.*

Gunter's experience is striking. He seems to have come to grips with highly implicit cultural differences without having learned Japanese. His statement that it was "easy" notwithstanding, differences such as this are highly diffuse and many people who work across cultures never achieve this kind of insight. Gunter even relates a story about having a meeting with Americans shortly after arriving in Japan. He expresses

relief that he could work with people who are more *normal*. By the end of his stay, however, he enjoyed working with Japanese more than with Americans.

So what allows someone like Gunter, who did not speak Japanese well, and who spent only three years in Japan, to gain a depth of understanding that Jack seems not to have managed? One simple answer is that he simply was more curious, accepting, open, etc. than less successful sojourners. This conclusion, however, only takes us back to the typically idealized qualities of intercultural education. A more functional view is that it was the negotiated quality of the relationships he had with Japanese engineers and customers that made a large difference. He engaged in relationships, found difficulties, tried new approaches and came to a constructive understanding of the people he was involved with. He seems to have attained a deeply accepting stance towards cultural difference, even if his experience was not extensive enough to learn the language and experience a Japanese world view from the inside. In this sense, his experience supports both Bennett's view of intercultural empathy as not dependent on the specifics of a sojourn, and Sparrow's view of the importance of a deep personal engagement within a new cultural community. It may be that his constructive engagement has given him a deeper acceptance in three years than Steven has found in 12 years in Asia. Whereas Steven refers to cultural difference as a process of learning to explain things that are initially upsetting, Gunter seems to recognize and be capable of working within two different systems.

> *I could never say the German way is better or the Japanese way is better. Both have advantages and disadvantages, I think we need both, definitely.*

It seems to be this deeper empathy, related to cultural code-switching but not necessarily related to language, which defines highly functional interculturalists. It seems that in many ways, both Sparrow and Bennett are correct.

4.2.5 Identity questions and triangulation

One element of Bennett's discussion of cultural empathy that finds support in this project is that cultural learners who achieve a deep empathy with another culture, and who code switch between different cultural worlds often confront questions about their personal identity. Jack and Steven, who both had long experience abroad and, in Steven's case, a fairly articulated view of the need for understanding other cultural viewpoints, did not mention identity issues in their discussion of cultural learning. Adele's statement about her identity was that her American identity had been reinforced – she was glad that she was born in the United States.

Learners who did mention questions about their identity included all of those who had deep experiences in several different cultures, including Abdou, Yuko, Paul and Mayumi. While the first three talk about their intercultural selves primarily from the perspective of having resolved identity issues, Mayumi gives the impression of still grappling with them:

> *I didn't feel like I was my true self. I hated it because I didn't seem like my usual self – I'm outgoing but I wasn't seen that way. I was seen as a quiet Asian girl. I thought the food would be difficult but it wasn't.*
>
> *I try to accommodate to the other person, but sometimes that's at the expense of my true identity. If I continue to do that I reach a threshold, but when I got to the point that enough is enough, than I kind of retreated and tried to be more true to myself.*
>
> *I think there is some parts that I change because of language. The differences are more obvious between English and Japanese. I can present my personality more easily in Korean because of that. Sometimes I really feel a difference in behavior or how to talk to people in different languages and I don't know which approach to take. In that sense I . . . do change. I guess there are changes that I make but that I don't notice them*
>
> *I haven't really figured out who I am yet, or I haven't accepted my self yet.*

Unlike Paul, Abdou and Yuko, who seem to be highly comfortable shifting between different cultural realities, Mayumi seems to feel that there are limits to how much she can change and still be her "true self". She apparently hasn't fully resolved the potential conflict between having a stable sense of self and shifting between different social and cultural frameworks. Given her

apparent deep acceptance of the validity of other cultural world views, however, she may well be at the threshold of the kind of "integrated marginal" state constructed by the other three.

Confronting cultural difference at very deep levels can easily be threatening. Joanna's distaste for Americans who do not see "reality", and Adele's conclusion that she was happy to be born in the United States seem indicative of this. Some participants in this study seemed to deal with this issue by, in effect, isolating themselves. Jack and Steven seem to be in this category. Some others seemed to have felt a good personal fit between their personalities and their host cultural surroundings. William and Neil seem to fall in this category. As noted, only a few sojourners seemed to have resolved the deeper issues of identity and shifting cultural frameworks.

One participant who spoke specifically of cultural identity issues was Liz. She lived in Japan with her family as a very young child. She then lived there again from age 11. At the time, she seems to have been well on her way to forming an identity within Japanese cultural frameworks:

> *(I) stayed in international school for 2 years and most of the other students were Japanese and after class everyone spoke Japanese. I was looking for friends and so had to speak Japanese. . . . In Jr. High School I tried to be Japanese. I wanted to be the perfect little Japanese girl – I had the backpack and all the gear. I actually liked the uniform. I loved riding the train. . . . It was very natural. I was reading a lot. My friendships were in Japanese. Every morning I used to ride the same train in the same car and there was this businessman who rode it too. We would always sit together and he would help me with my homework.*

At this point, however, something happened:

> *I was 13 years old. I think I had a little identity crisis. I wanted to hang out with Americans for a while. I hung out with the swim team over the summer and I wanted to be with them. I think it was the first conscious decision to be American.*
>
> *Being around Americans I felt a sense of relaxation . . . not trying to fit in. I was too tall, I was too bulky. I didn't speak the language. With the Americans I fit in and I liked it. I had several really close Japanese friends and that was really hard. That was the downside. My very best friend I still keep in touch with. I felt like I was letting her down.*

This decision seems to have been a critical juncture for Liz. She eventually

went back to the U.S. and developed her identity as an American. She maintained a strong interest in Japan, however, and did not lose the Japanese that she had learned. She studied Japanese in college, and later got a job in Tokyo working for an American organization. She married an American.

In spite of her continued involvement with Japan, and her subsequent improvement of her Japanese – she reads Japanese newspapers as part of her job – Liz seems to never have regained the feeling of being an insider in Japan. She talks almost as though Japan has failed her. She does, however, identify with Japan. She speaks about this primarily in the context of her work with Japanese businesses:

> *I don't want Korea to pass Japan. I identify with a lot of Japanese. I talk with my husband and we say aren't we glad we have an option. (Because, as Americans, they have the choice of leaving the country.) I don't like it when I'm this cynical. I go to Korea and I come back with this big high because Korea has figured some things out. They've made some big changes.*
>
> *It's hard to respect Japanese leaders when things are, from an American's perspective, so backwards. To be honest, my business in the last three months couldn't be better. I'm a pretty competitive person too. I love the program on NHK about the creative Japanese inventors of the past. I just wish there were a little more pride in oneself here. Patriotism is taboo, loyalty to companies is going out the window. Creativity is just starting to be valued, so where do you get the esteem? And most of my Japanese friends, we start talking about the economy and we all get depressed. I get out of Tokyo every weekend and I try not to think about it. I do ask myself if I should start cutting my losses and start learning Chinese.*
>
> *In personal situations I've been known to use bad Japanese to be the stupid* gaijin *(foreigner). Recently I got free admission to a museum by saying "*nihongo tabemasen*" (I don't eat Japanese (language)). And it worked!*

Given the depth of Liz's involvement with Japan, it is perhaps surprising that she is willing to pretend to be an ignorant foreigner simply for the sake of gaining admission to a museum. This seems to reflect, however, a fundamental feeling that her identity is not attached to any potential she might have for being an insider in Japan. It is as though her decision at 13 has carried through into her adult life. The strength of her "non-Japanese" self is evidenced by her statement that she sometimes feels she should "cut her losses" and start learning Chinese.

Liz seems to root her identity clearly in a particular culture –

American. She has this in common with all the participants in this study, with the exception of the three "integrated marginals": Yuko, Paul and Abdou. In addition, like most other participants, she has primarily a binary experience of cultural difference. She faced a choice of American and Japanese identity. For most participants in this study, cultural learning primarily involved experiencing a single new environment. Once again, the primary exceptions to this were Yuko, Paul and Abdou, all of whom had deep intercultural experiences in multiple cultural settings. Yuko, Paul and Abdou were also multilingual.

The differences between the experiences of these participants hints at the possibility that there is a qualitative difference between having deep intercultural experiences in two cultures and multiple cultures. When someone experiences two cultural frameworks, only a binary comparison is possible (diagram 9):

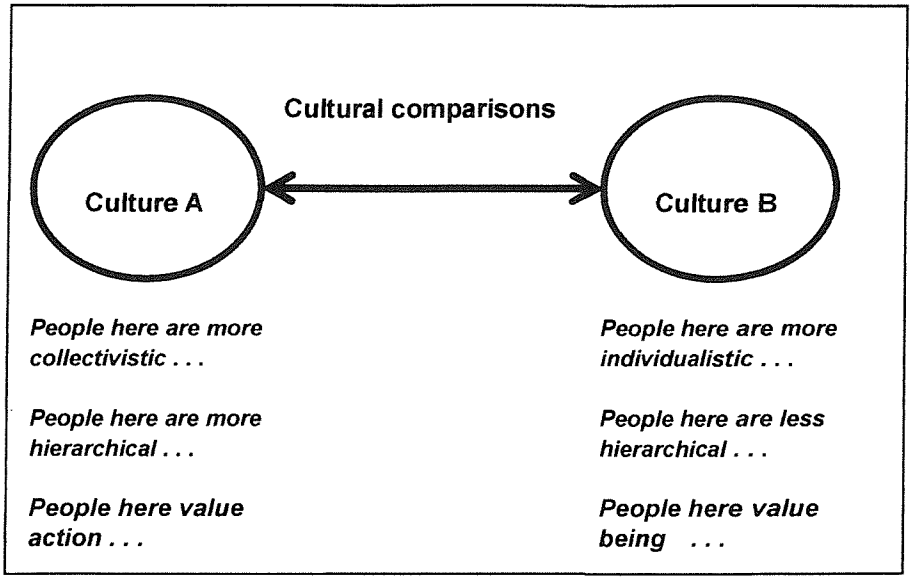

Diagram 9

Someone who has three or more deep experiences, on the other hand, can do a kind of *triangulation*, in which they recognize not only that it is possible to look at the world in a different way, but also a greater sense of the range of possible differences. For example, someone who has experienced the relatively collectivist cultural frameworks in India, as well as the relatively individualistic frameworks of England, who then has a deep intercultural

experience in Japan, will be exposed to much more nuanced views of collectivist and individualist thought. The sense of community among Hindus, and the sense of community among Japanese colleagues may both be collectivist relative to a traditionally British view of the individual, but having this third point of comparison makes it much easier to extrapolate as to the potential for other combinations of cultural characteristics (diagram 10).

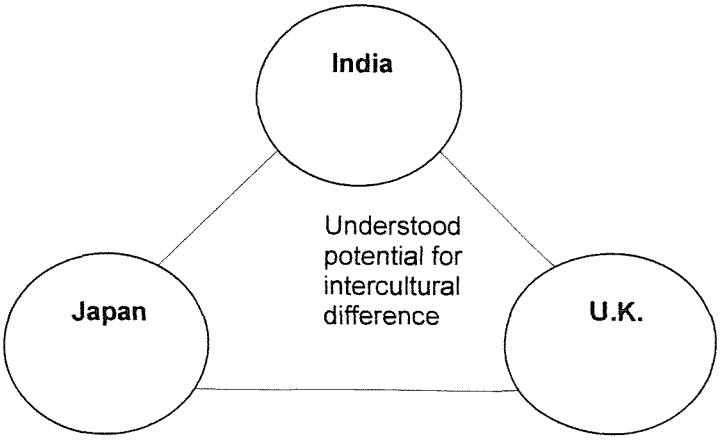

Diagram 10

A sojourner who can *triangulate* in this way could therefore more easily escape an *either / or* view of cultural difference. No longer would belonging to a particular set of cultural frameworks imply an absolute choice. It would instead represent a set of choices within the context of an infinite variety of potential cultural difference. When integrated marginals like Yuko or Paul speak about their identities – as chameleons, for example, or bridges which have their strongest support in the middle – they seem to be functioning in this triangulated fashion.

This does not seem to be related simply to speaking more languages – since Andre, for example, spoke multiple language – but rather to being deeply accepting of cultural difference, and having deep experiences in multiple cultures. The one other multi-lingual participant who had deep experiences in more than one culture – Philippe, who told the horror stories

about German trash collection – seems to be fundamentally less accepting of cultural difference. Mayumi, who seems quite accepting of cultural difference, may be struggling with the identity issues which arise from having had this kind of triangulated experience.

At the very least, it can be said that language learning seems to play a large role in intercultural learning. It acts as an entryway into other cultural frameworks. When cultural difference is accepted at a deep level, experiences within multiple new frameworks could encourage the development of the deep relativism and the cognitive empathy indicative of advanced intercultural learning. If, as it seems, speaking multiple languages and participating in multiple communities is qualitatively different from being bilingual or bicultural, education which focuses on developing multiple languages and multiculturalism could conceivably contribute to greater intercultural understanding.

4.3 Anomalies

During the course of this project, the descriptions of the intercultural learning of some participants were difficult to interpret. In one case, a Japanese woman, Michiyo, spoke in detail of things that she liked and disliked about living in Paris, but had trouble remembering her feelings about getting used to life there. Her experience may have been related specifically to Japanese cultural expectations about cultural difference referred to by Yamamoto (1998). In a study of Japanese study-abroad students, she found that participants tended not to draw conclusions about the ultimate worth of their new cultural environment – they tended simply to report the differences they noticed. It may be that this is related to Japanese cultural assumptions which often regard Japanese as fundamentally different from other cultural or ethnic groups. In this way, encountering cultural difference is seen as normal and unremarkable. On the other hand, Michiyo's inability to remember may have simply been due to the length of time (7 years) that had passed since she first started living in Paris. Unfortunately, because of the limited number of Japanese participants in this study, it was difficult to draw meaningful conclusions about this question.

Another sojourner whose statements defied an easy interpretation was Donald. He was a British expatriate living in Switzerland who had lived in Japan for a number of years. Donald's manner seemed nearly a parody of

aloof British upper-class intellectualism. Donald spoke of his experiences in an extremely detached way, yet had succeeded in adapting to life in Japan. He spoke excellent Japanese, and worked in Japanese doing debt collection for a bank. This requires delicate intercultural skills, but it seems that Donald did very well. There was miscommunication in the interview because the interview questions were premised on the idea that cultural learning implies coming to terms with the demands of cultural difference. Donald, however, doesn't fully accept this premise. When asked about cultural difference, he says:

> *Japanese culture actually resembles British culture a few decades ago. I'm thinking of trivia like business cards and certain types of (garbled) and the way in certain social situations you use certain formulas of speech.*

Uncertain about Donald's attitude towards cultural difference, the researcher asked questions aimed at exploring this area. But Donald seemed not to be overly concerned with cultural difference despite his high level of involvement abroad.

> **Donald** - *(S)ome people are good communicators and others aren't and it just has to do with temperament and I think you can train to some extent but I think it really comes down to ingrained factors, partly to do with nationality but I've also seen, not to run down British, I've seen a manager in the British bank, a manager who was a bad communicator replace someone who was a good communicator. And neither spoke a word of Japanese, but the message of the good communicator got across.*
>
> **Researcher** - *So you don't feel like you're changing selves when you . . .*
>
> **Donald** - *I think living in Japan definitely has some sort of effect but that probably has to do with reinforcing things that were already there. Like a German colleague saying the British were preferred indirectness and in Japan that trait gets reinforced a hundredfold . . .*
>
> *. . . I would say that a lot of things that are uniquely Japanese. Some of them that I can't quite remember . . .* Natto *(a dish made with fermented soy beans), I think.*
>
> **Researcher** - *Obviously your interaction with Japanese customers in Japanese is going to be different than it would be if you were dealing with British customers . . .*

Donald - *Actually, I don't think that's so at all, because it always behooves you to be polite to customers, and any organization has need of treating the customer with respect, whether it's Japanese or English*

I just found that the crowding got to me, but that's got nothing to do with Japanese culture, because the country is mountainous and everyone has to live crammed into the coastal plains, so you can't blame culture.

The way that Donald spoke of cultural difference was not typical for someone with his depth of intercultural experiences. For a tourist to say that Japanese culture is like that of his own country in the past would not seem so unusual, but for someone in Donald's position it was. One interpretation of Donald's experience comes from the developmental model of intercultural sensitivity. Donald's attitude toward culture could be described as *minimization*, a recognition of cultural difference yet a downplaying of its importance.

Within the framework used in this study for interpreting intercultural experiences, it is clear that Donald is focused on the most explicit elements of cultural difference, such as business cards and the forms of language. What is unusual is that he learned to function in demanding intercultural situations without, apparently, noticing or concerning himself with deeper elements of cultural difference. This could be described as a sort of *rapport* in which Donald does not feel a conflict with his new environment because it matches part of his personality, and he therefore has little problem integrating what he learns into his normal way of doing things. This is hinted at by his statement that Japanese have many qualities of traditional British culture – which Donald, judging from his manner, seems to be very comfortable with. It also may mean that Donald is particularly focused on explicit elements of culture because the adaptation needed to speak Japanese did not threaten any of Donald's more deeply held values. While this is plausible, the fact that Donald managed to master Japanese and later German while living and working abroad, yet not concern himself greatly with cultural difference is, at least, unusual compared to the other participants in this study.

Of greater importance than affixing any single label to Donald or any other participant in this study, however, cases like Donald are a reminder that any conceptual framework to model intercultural learning can be at best a general guide to understanding a process. It does not need to supply categories to fit every conceivable type of intercultural reaction. This model supplies a

set of distinctions – explicit vs. implicit culture, for example – which can act as tools to examine intercultural experiences. We can not expect them to create a measure that can be used to make absolute judgments. While further research may be needed to clarify the experiences of sojourners such as Michiyo and Donald, overall, the concepts used to interpret the intercultural experiences seemed to form a fairly unified view of intercultural learning. Most of the participants seemed to fit comfortably into the conceptual frameworks that were produced as a result of the analysis, and this indicates that it is possible to articulate a cogent view of cultural learning that broadly satisfies the goal of this study to incorporate the different depths of intercultural experiences into a developmental model of intercultural learning. The next chapter will attempt to synthesize these ideas into a unified whole.

5 Towards a new model of intercultural learning .

Previous chapters have outlined both the theoretical background of current models of intercultural learning, and pointed out some of their weaknesses. Interviews were carried out in the hopes that they could inform the creation of improved ways of understanding intercultural learning at different depths and intensities of experience. This chapter attempts to outline a working consensus about cultural learning in the form of a formal model of intercultural learning. It is written based on the theoretical frameworks presented so far, and informed by the experiences of the sojourners interviewed in this study.

5.1 The Implicit Difference Model of cultural learning

5.1.1 The nature of cultural learning

The model of intercultural learning presented in this chapter will attempt to describe the process of cultural learning typical for sojourners who have intercultural experiences in the context of travel, study abroad, an exchange program, or life as a working expatriate. As we have seen throughout this study, cultural learning refers to the process of dealing with the systematic stresses of encountering cultural difference. This model will attempt to use the concepts highlighted by this study to visualize the intercultural learning process. Hopefully, this can be used as a tool in intercultural education and function as a lens through which sojourners can view their experiences.

Throughout this study it has been clear that cultural learning is different from typical learning, such as in school, in two important ways. First, it is systematic – that is to say, sojourners must deal with whole systems of meaning. In effect, they learn how things work so that their new environment becomes more predictable. Learning the money of a country or how to use the subway system in a new city are obvious examples of this. Once the system is understood a sojourner can function more freely. Perhaps the most involved system of cultural learning is language.

The second important characteristic of cultural learning highlighted by this study is that cultural learning involves social systems. Learning a new computer language, although it is systematic, is not cultural learning. Humans are social, and much of our sense of self comes from the communities we participate in. Social interaction can be stressful enough even in the best of

circumstances. In a challenging new social environment, the pressure on our sense of well-being increases exponentially. The stress that can be engendered simply by attempting to order food in a poorly spoken foreign language highlights how deeply we are affected by the roles we play and relationships we have with the people around us. And even concrete learning tasks - learning the subway system in a new city, for example - have a social element insofar as they change our level of participation in a new social environment. Longer stays and deeper involvement present greater challenges as we find that our normal communication style, values, priorities and tastes need to be adapted to our new surroundings. How we respond to these demands is the essence of cultural learning.

5.1.2 Intercultural contact – intercultural failure

Intercultural contact often fails. This failure takes many forms, including war and discrimination, but also in the early-return rate for expatriate workers, failed joint ventures, alienated immigrant populations, divorced international couples, or even ruined vacations. But there was a less obvious form of failure apparent among the participants of this study – intercultural contact that reinforces negative judgments. This kind of failure seems to take place without those involved recognizing what is happening. This is typified by the horror stories that Philippe tells about Germans, or the distaste for Americans that Joanna learned in the United States. Longer stays abroad can result in detachment, such as in the case of Jack and his superficial Tokyo lifestyle, cynicism or chronic complaints about cultural surroundings such as Adele's powerful dislike for Japanese culture. Even worse, negative attitudes often become deeply embedded because they are the result of personal experiences. The embittered sojourner will say, in effect, "I know how bad it is because I've been there!"

The key to successfully meeting the deep challenges of intercultural learning involves the recognition and acceptance, at a very deep level, of the validity of other world views. The contribution of Bennett in helping define what this means has been very valuable. Among the participants in this study, there seemed to be a fine line between accepting difference and resisting it. The former seems to lead more towards empathy and constructive adaptation, while the latter leads more towards frustration and self-justification. Most people seem to have mixed intercultural experiences, going through a variety

of reactions to what they find in a new cultural environment. In the end, the ability to accept difference determines to a large degree whether we use intercultural experiences as a stimulus to personal growth, or whether we further entrench our previously learned cultural viewpoints.

5.1.3 Explicit vs. implicit frameworks of meaning

Few participants in this study expressed difficulty adapting to the explicit elements of intercultural experience. When they did, such as when Philippe complained about the trash collection system in Germany, the complaints seemed to be focused on the symbolic elements of those cultural products. Another example is Adele's distaste for how Japanese young people use their cell phones. More concrete problems, such as difficulty eating food, were barely mentioned. Granted, it had been some time since the participants in this study had faced these initial challenges, yet it still seemed that they were not the primary cause of long-term adjustment difficulty.

Instead, this study reinforces Hall's (1959) view that dealing with differences in implicit culture is the primary challenge of intercultural learning. This is particularly difficult because we experience implicit culture primarily on the level of feeling or intuition. In a new environment, the habits that guide our everyday lives are greatly altered. Normally these habits free our attention for other things, but in a new environment we face ongoing demands for change. We also rely heavily on intuitions about what things mean.

5.1.4 Intercultural experiences: demanding and deep

Related to the importance of implicit cultural differences, this study has highlighted the ways in which the experiences of short-term travelers and longer-term expatriates are different. A short stay generally only allows for a kind of "surface learning" based on experiencing the most explicit elements of culture – visiting temples, eating new food, visiting markets. Someone who spends a year traveling to 52 different countries will gain a lot of cultural knowledge, but most of it will reflect the most visible elements of a society's values and lifestyles. A second person may spend that same year in a rural village of a foreign country learning a new language and participating in village life. The experience will be less varied but much deeper. That is not to say that one learns more by staying in the same place. Rather, what is learned

is less obvious.

The distinction between these two types of learning highlights the difference between intercultural experiences that are *demanding* and those that are *deep.* A demanding intercultural experience is one that requires a great deal of change and adjustment on the part of a visitor. A deep intercultural experience is one that requires adaptation or adjustment at the deeper level of implicit culture. In this way, a college student from Spain who hitchhikes for six months in rural Africa may have an extremely demanding experience – requiring great flexibility, curiosity and openness. Still, the experience will probably only touch on the layers of culture one is exposed to over a short period in any one place. It probably won't involve learning a new language, developing close ongoing relationships with local residents, or adapting to the deeper values of the communities visited.

There is anecdotal evidence that American expatriates living and working in Britain have a surprisingly high rate of early return – that is, they give up and return home before completing their assignment. If this is indeed true, and while there are different interpretations for the reasons for this, this study hints that one factor may be that Americans in the U.K. often have more trouble adapting to British culture than they initially expect. In terms of explicit culture, the differences that Americans face are not that great. Language, shopping, transportation and the routines of everyday life are not radically different from what Americans are used to. With a longer stay, and as Americans attempt to integrate into life in the U.K., however, powerful implicit differences emerge, such as differences in: communication styles – the value placed on openness vs. discretion, for example; social relations – the ways people make friends or socialize, for example; expectations related to hierarchy – the level of formality required at work, for example. These deeper differences are deceptive because they are not readily apparent until one has tried to participate more fully in relationships and social expectations in the U.K. In spite of the relatively short cultural and linguistic distance between the U.S. and the U.K. (relative to some other cultural settings), an American in this situation may have an extremely *deep* intercultural learning experience. This could perhaps be summarized by saying that the American going to live in the U.K. may simply not expect to have to change in order to get along. The fact that change is necessary to better integrate, and the fact that the differences encountered are so abstract and difficult to define must

certainly create stress.

The most challenging intercultural experiences are those that are both *demanding* and *deep*. Many studies of culture shock have focused on Peace Corps volunteers because they often found themselves in cultural learning situations that required great change not only at the explicit level of food and daily life, but at the deeper levels of language learning, relationships and values. As communication and transportation technology brings about greater interconnectedness and technological convergence, short-term stays in new cultural environments are becoming steadily less demanding. The demands of deeper intercultural experiences, however, are similar to what they have always been. They demand adjustment at very deep levels of the self.

5.1.5 Demand for change

A subtle, yet powerful element of deep intercultural learning seen in the participants in this study is its inevitability. All the participants reacted in profound ways to their experiences. The sojourner who seemed the least changed by their experiences, Jack, had isolated himself to a remarkable degree. This inevitability can be described by saying that one's environment demands change, and willing or not, one responds to that demand in any number of ways.

It is, perhaps, counterintuitive to think that an environment can demand change of a sojourner. After all, the sojourner has the freedom to act as she or he sees fit. Yet if one wants to use the subway, one must understand the price of the ticket and which platform to stand on. The subway system is impersonal, but the rewards for knowing how to use it create a tension between what one wants or needs, and the lack of understanding about the system. On a deeper level, the human need for community and meaning are so deeply engrained that sojourners automatically seek to integrate their new experiences into their personal identity. This seems to be a distinguishing feature of the deeper experiences of longer-term expatriates.

Travelers and tourists often feel great freedom as they explore a new city walking unfamiliar streets. The experience of longer-term expatriates, on the other hand, can involve a tremendous loss of freedom. While tourists rely on a support system of hotels, guidebooks and facilities made for them, expatriates must adjust themselves to systems that are not designed with

them in mind. What was easy back home – knowing which detergent to buy – becomes energy-consuming abroad. And since it is not the exotic elements of the culture which are creating these demands, but simply the act of everyday living, expatriates are placed under much more adaptive pressure. As we have seen, these demands can be adapted to to different degrees. One can learn about and try local food, or go across town to the international supermarket (if there is one). One can spend time with other expatriates speaking one's native language, or one can take language classes and try speaking to the fish seller at the market. Our particular response to the demands we face for change defines our cultural learning. The degree to which we resist difference, accept it or adapt to it determines to a large degree our long-term intercultural development.

5.2 The cultural learning process

Any model of intercultural learning must recognize that the goals that each individual brings to a sojourn are different – adventure, language learning, making money – and involve both concrete things and more general "life goals". In this sense, the goals of cultural learning are highly personal, with each person deciding if their experience abroad has been satisfactory. But the experiences of the sojourners in this study remind us that cultural learning itself is a process independent of all these other goals. And while all of the reactions listed above – resistance, acceptance and adaptation – are "normal", they are not all equal, and they do not lead to equal outcomes.

As we have seen, intercultural educators sometimes define the goals of cultural learning in terms of personal qualities and ideals, such as increased cultural awareness, appreciation of cultural difference, tolerance for ambiguity, flexibility etc. At other times, success is measured externally, by comparing, say, language ability, knowledge of cultural information, rate of early return from assignments, etc. The former qualities are useful reminders of the general qualities that contribute to having a positive experience. Unfortunately, they are often deeply rooted in our personalities and not easy to change. The latter qualities represent important markers of success, but they are only signposts that do not give a clear view of what to strive for.

Describing the goals of intercultural learning has been an important aim of this study. We have seen that the most successful sojourners were those who manage to accept at a deep level the validity of cultural difference. This

acceptance leads to a progressively more empathetic and adapted relationships with one's cultural hosts and environment. For the purposes of this model **empathy** will refer to the ability to see things from the point of view of one's cultural hosts. As our understanding of other cultural worlds deepens, our view becomes increasingly ethnorelative. We learn not to judge things from a single absolute cultural standpoint – ethnocentrism – but to look at a situation from the point of view of our cultural host. This does not mean we like or adapt to every element of our surroundings, and new cultural frameworks never replace what we already know. Simply, we recognize at a deep level that people's behaviour and the meaning of events needs to be interpreted in the context of the world view that created it.

5.2.1 Responding to cultural difference

The results of this study supports the idea suggested by many intercultural educators that cultural learning is developmental (Adler, 1977; Bennett, 1986; M. J. Bennett, 1993; Candlin, 1991; Goldstein & Smith, 1999; Hammer et al., 2003; Hanvey, 1979; Kim, 2001; Tomalin & Stempleski, 1993; Ward et al., 1998; Weaver, 1993). Though different researchers and educators describe this process in different terms, this model follows Bennett's premise that cultural learning progresses (or has the potential to progress) from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism in a somewhat predictable manner. This model also accepts Sparrow's (2000) assertion that this most often goes hand-in-hand with developing satisfying relationships with people in host communities. Combining these two premises gives a view of cultural learning as a progression that involves initially being an outsider who is limited to an outsider's viewpoint, to a fuller participation in a community with a corresponding shift of perspective to that more like an insider (diagram 11).

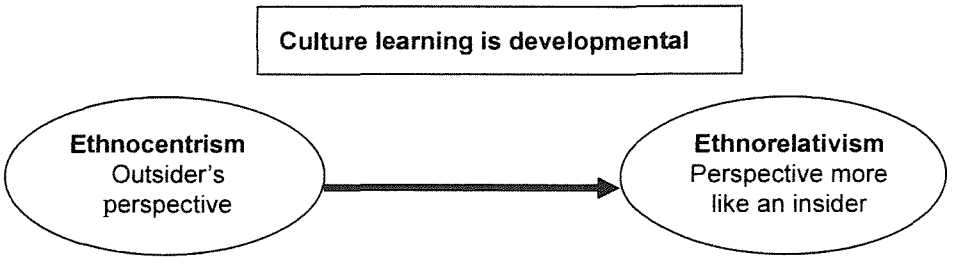

Diagram 11

Not everyone, however, progresses smoothly or in the same way towards ethnorelativism. The demands of intercultural experiences provoke different reactions in different sojourners. This study has characterized these reactions as: **resistance, acceptance,** and **adaptation.** In practice, most people have all three reactions - resisting some things, while accepting and adapting to others. For example, tourists often experience some of the more obvious elements of cultural difference, like new foods, clothing, architecture, etc. The reaction to this may range from resistance - "Raw fish? That's gross!" to acceptance -"Well, sushi is okay, but I wouldn't want to eat it every day," to adaptation - "I tried everything! You should see how good I am with chopsticks now!" Deeper elements of cultural difference – an expatriate businessperson working with local staff may encounter cultural difference in communication styles, values and world views, for example – can also be resisted, accepted or adapted to. It is not uncommon for sojourners to accept superficial elements even as they resist deeper ones. "I love Korean culture, but I sure wish my local staff would speak up in meetings." In the same way, it is possible to accept deep differences ("Well, that's just the way things are here.") without necessarily adapting to them.

As we have seen, this process of cultural learning can be represented visually in this way (diagram 12):

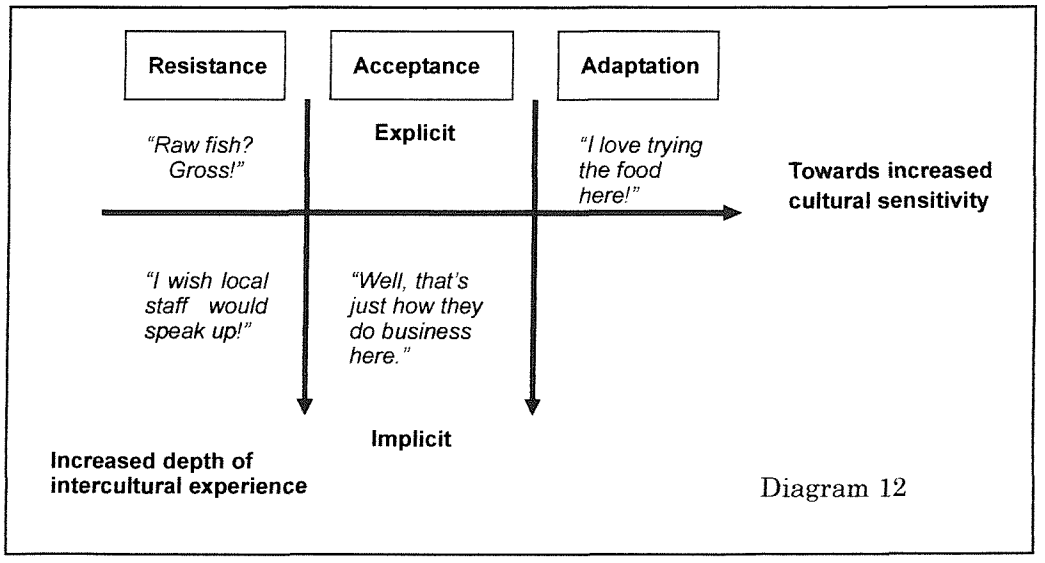

Diagram 12

Based on what the participants in this study have said about their experiences,

as well as the ideas that have informed this study, we will now look in more detail at some common patterns of cultural learning that have been identified.

5.2.2 Resistance

Resistance is perhaps the most natural reaction to an intercultural experience. Difference is experienced as something to be avoided, denigrated or fought against. This may involve something as simple as a disinclination to try local food, simply because one prefers to avoid dealing with it. At a more subtle level, it could involve feeling that the people in a new environment are somehow backwards, inefficient, unsophisticated, aggressive, immoral, subservient or unenlightened. This model argues that *resistance* is not related to whether one likes or dislikes something, but rather whether one denigrates it. Someone may, for example, be perfectly open to trying new food, but simply find that a particular dish is not to his taste. *Resistance*, on the other hand, involves a negative judgment, such as "The bread here isn't nearly as good as that back home" or, "You can't trust people there." For short-term or superficial experiences, it may be possible to avoid *resistance* entirely. A tourist who returns from a trip praising everything she experienced has probably managed this. For longer or deeper intercultural experiences, it would seem nearly impossible to avoid experiencing resistance at least sometimes, although a commitment to accepting things as they are regardless of personal preference probably helps a great deal – something well illustrated by Mayumi's reactions to her mother-in-law's cleaning of her teapot.

Some people seem to avoid obvious forms of *resistance* simply by isolating themselves in their new environment and avoiding deeper contact with it. They may live primarily in an expatriate community, and some report great satisfaction with their experiences. They are, in effect, limiting their experience to more superficial, and often less demanding challenges. Long-term expatriates who do not speak the host language well, such as Jack and Steven, are typical examples. Often, they are able to do this because their position in the host community brings with it the status and resources to allow them to hold themselves apart from the expectations of someone with an insider status in the host community. There is nothing inherently wrong with this approach, but as the length of the sojourn lengthens, isolation can lead to frustration and negative judgments. This was found in the case of Linda, the English woman in the United States who waited a year before finally giving a

party so that she could meet her neighbors. It seems that for most people, it is difficult to indefinitely avoid the deeper demands that an intercultural environment places on us.

Some people who report little resistance to their new surroundings seem to feel a special "rapport" with their new environment. They may find that the expectations of the new environment somehow match their personality or values, such as was the case with William and Neil. This kind of rapport often leads to a positive intercultural experience, but it can also be a mixed blessing. In some cases, an initial feeling of rapport gives way to disillusionment as the deeper levels of cultural difference come into play, as happened with Andre and his enamored relationship with Japanese culture, and Adele, who studied Japanese literature and loved traditional Japanese culture, yet found so little to relate to among the Japanese that she knew.

Resistance can be generated by deeper involvement with culture as more hidden elements of a cultural environment increasingly come into play. In Andre's case, for example, what he had initially felt was Japanese refinement, he started to experience as coldness. While initially he felt very welcomed by a Japanese sense of hospitality and the interest people expressed in him, he later experienced this as an unwillingness to accept outsiders. *Resistance* that is entrenched may give a sojourner the feeling of a need to return to one's "true self". In Andre's case, he returned to Switzerland and started a new career, concluding that he could be his "true self" in Switzerland, and claimed to have absolutely no interest in returning to Japan. In Liz's case, she made a conscious decision as a teenager that she wanted to be American, and never recovered the feeling of belonging that she initially experienced in Japan.

A feeling of rapport can also bring about a deeply satisfying experience in a new environment. Some well-adapted sojourners, like William and Neil, seem to be those who feel a strong rapport for their new environment, sometimes with little desire to return to their cultural roots. Neil's comment regarding living in Japan was, in effect, "I feel at home here." This may come from a simple match between a person's personality and their new environment. As we have seen, Neil describes himself as being less "aggressive" than many Americans, and says that he was somewhat a misfit in the rural town where he grew up. He feels at ease with the collective values and reserved communication style he finds in Japan. It is important to

recognize, however, that sojourners who report these feelings about their environment may be sheltered from deeper levels of intercultural demands by an insulated status as foreigners. In Neil's and William's case, if they were forced to live and work exclusively in Japanese, for example, rather than being English teachers who are not expected to have a deep understanding of Japan, their reactions might change. Mayumi's difficulties adjusting to married life in Korea highlight this. One participant, Eun-suk, a Korean professor with many years of experience living and working in Japan still expresses frustration with the difficulty she finds making friends with her Japanese colleagues. Unlike William or Neil, however, she is afforded no special status as a foreigner that might protect her from demands for change.

Reversal

Though there weren't sojourners in this study who fell in this category, based on anecdotal evidence, there may be another disadvantage with having a strong rapport with one's new environment. One danger is *reversal,* in which a sojourner feels such rapport for their new environment that they denigrate their original cultural environment. This can involve "going native" and adopting the prejudices of the new environment, or simply feeling that the new environment is better than the old. This has been described as a relatively common experience among Peace Corps volunteers, who at times would return to the United States decrying its materialist, selfish, capitalistic, shallow, etc. values and lifestyle (Bennett, 1986). Ultimately, *reversal* is a form of resistance, since it involves denigrating cultural difference, although what's being denigrated is one's home cultural environment, rather than one's host environment. The root cause is a lack of acceptance of the validity of a particular worldview. Reversal can be represented visually in the following way (diagram 13):

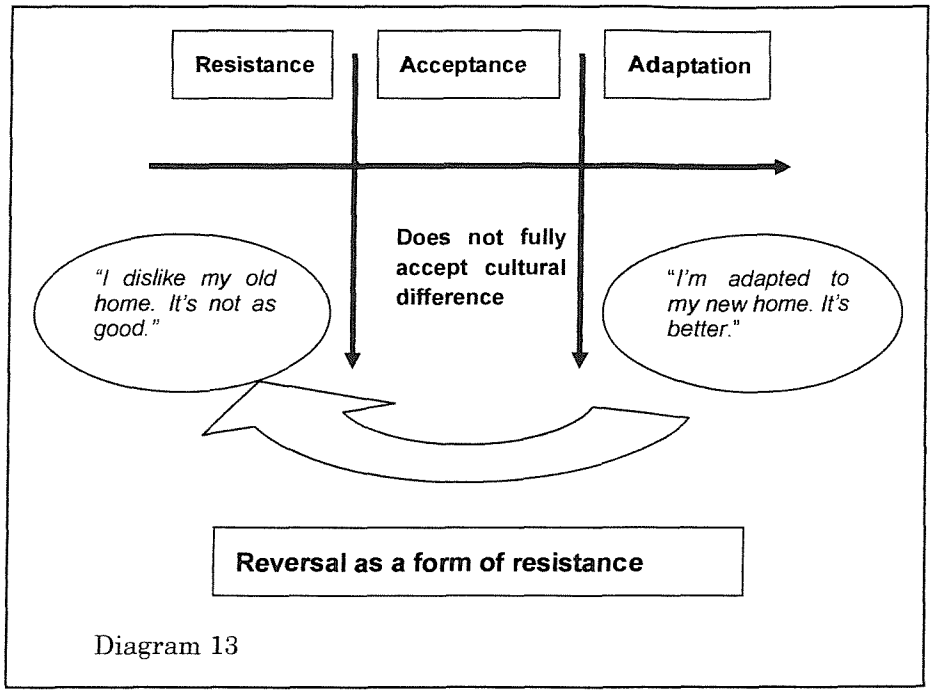

Diagram 13

To see further how resistance is experienced, we will examine how it comes into play both at the surface as well as the deeper levels of intercultural experiences.

Surface resistance

This study has highlighted the fact that although initial reactions to a new environment may vary widely, a sojourner's reaction often depends on *cultural distance*, the *demands* of one's surroundings, and the *depth* of those demands. For the purposes of this model, *cultural distance* refers simply to the degree to which a new environment is different from what one is used to. For newly arrived sojourners, the differences experienced are usually explicit and obvious, such as the contrast between the damp, quiet streets of an English country village, and the hot, clanging bustle of the streets of Calcutta. The greater the difference, the greater the cultural distance.

But being in a vastly different environment does not in and of itself constitute a cultural *demand.* The demand comes from needing to adapt to that difference in some way. A German tourist who descends the gangplank of her cruise ship to walk the streets of Rio de Janeiro may wander far from the tourist areas, venturing into dusty Favelas a world apart from the ordered

streets of Stuttgart, but if that same tourist returns to the ship having faced few needs to adapt she will have faced few demands for change. The experience may be impressive and meaningful, but in many ways it has not been as demanding as the experience of, say, a traveler from Stuttgart doing a low-budget trip through Brazil. The latter will face the challenges of finding food, transportation and lodging, and will interact much more with Brazilians. These two distinct travelers are both dealing with similar degrees of cultural distance, but different degrees of cultural demand. The low-budget traveler will probably also have a deeper intercultural experience, due to being exposed to cultural difference that is not obvious to someone simply walking around.

Surface resistance involves finding these explicit parts of an intercultural experience unreasonable. Sometimes this is simply a result of unfamiliarity, as when not understanding the bus system can make bus stops and signage seem chaotic. If one concludes that the system is "inefficient", one experiences a form of surface resistance. In fact, efficiency is in the eye of the beholder, and those that understand a system well generally find ways to use it to their advantage. This does not mean that, say, hitchhiking as a form of public transportation – as is done in Cuba – is as predictable as the subway system in Tokyo, but it does mean that Cubans have evolved a system of public transport in keeping with their circumstances. Recognizing this mitigates the negative reactions that a Japanese traveler in Cuba might feel, and leads a sojourner toward acceptance, rather than resistance.

Perhaps the most challenging aspect of superficial intercultural contact is that explicit cultural products have symbolic significance. Philippe's experience with the trash collection system in Germany represents this. In Philippe's case the trash system bothered him not for what it was, but for what it represented. A Swedish woman who visited Saudi Arabia, for example, might find gender separation intolerable. The veils many women wear could represent an affront to deeply held values related to gender roles and egalitarianism. It is a short step from this negative reaction to developing a powerful resistance to parts of a traveler's experience. It takes a powerful commitment to initially setting aside personal reactions to avoid this.

This is not a form of moral justification, nor does it imply that one changes one's values. Rather, a traveler in this situation can recognize that at least some part of her reaction comes from cultural conditioning, and not an

absolute standard of good and bad. Having recognized this, the Swedish sojourner could seek to understand how gender roles are experienced from the point of view of Saudis. This would at least contextualize Saudi cultural expectations and allow for a more nuanced view of Saudi gender roles. One British woman in Saudi Arabia was shocked when a Saudi woman, rather than seeing herself as a victim, expressed pity for her British guest, saying that it must be difficult not to have the support and care of a husband and male relatives.

The experience of a conservative Muslim from Tunisia visiting the United States illustrates a similar dynamic in the opposite direction. This traveler saw American society as self-evidently dysfunctional. Provocative (by his standards) clothing among women, combined with his knowledge of the divorce rate and the limited (by Tunisian standards) family life of Americans convinced him that Americans had no respect for women or families, and that many women seemed to have little respect for themselves. Like the Swedish woman in Saudi Arabia, if he returned to Tunisia without trying to learn how Americans view gender or families, his resistance could easily harden into a self-fulfilling set of negative judgments.

These two examples remind us that while an intercultural experience may be short or superficial, the effects can be profound. A disadvantage of short sojourns is that one does not have the opportunity to more deeply explore the point of view of people in the host environment. Worse yet, deeply rooted judgments based on superficial experiences are often not recognized for what they are – intercultural experiences. The Swedish woman in Saudi Arabia and the Tunisian man in the United States risk returning home with less tolerance than before they visited, since their brief experience has confirmed that the other place was backward, unjust or immoral.

Deep resistance

The expatriates in this study provide ample evidence that staying longer in a new environment implies, but does not guarantee, a deeper intercultural experience. Life abroad is more convenient than ever, and expatriates increasingly have the possibility to create a cocoon of familiarity in the midst of a new cultural world. This is particularly true of expatriate professionals working abroad. The accoutrements of everyday life back home can often be found abroad, and there may be little need to learn a foreign

language when local staff already speaks English or another shared tongue. In spite of this, more prolonged contact and deeper relationships generally confront expatriates with cultural demands that they did not notice, or felt only intuitively when they first arrived.

Gunter, the German manager in Japan, found the requests of his Japanese customers and his team of Japanese engineers baffling. When faced with a problem they asked for more data than he could imagine would be useful. It seemed to him that they had no plan for solving the problem, but they simply were mindlessly collecting information in the hope that somehow things would work out. He was also frustrated by the fact that he could not tell if his engineers understood his instructions or not. He sometimes assumed that they did, only to find out later that they had gone to someone else to get help. All of this took place in English (a foreign language for all involved), but he felt that the difficulties were much deeper than simple linguistic miscommunication.

Gunter's cultural learning challenge is of a different magnitude than the travelers mentioned in the previous section. Whereas the short-term visitor was simply drawing conclusions about things of symbolic importance then returning home, Gunter had to stay and continue working with people who were relying on a different framework of values and communication styles. This situation has the potential to generate great frustration, and generally only later, deep insight. As with the surface resistance mentioned above, deep resistance implies making negative judgments about one's experience – feeling, perhaps, as one sojourner did, that Japanese are inefficient in their working habits because they have been educated to be passive.

Deep resistance seems to be characterized by an *absolute judgment,* in which a group of people is found lacking based on a principle that the sojourner assumes to be universal, yet which is based on ethnocentric assumptions. Values like this are deceptive because while they appear to represent stable concepts, they often embody deeper assumptions about reality. One example given in the business world is of an American company attempting to introduce a system of pay based on performance in a Latin American subsidiary, arguing that it was "fair" and "motivating". Local staff, however, complained that this was neither "fair" nor "motivating", since it implied that one had to compete with one's colleagues (which local staff felt

distinctly un-motivating) and it wrongly assumed equality. One may work hard, yet still not perform at the level of a more experienced or talented colleague.

The hidden assumptions that form the basis of deep resistance are often those that function at the deepest level of the self, and which are least conducive to dispassionate analysis. Sojourners who are unable to accept that some of their deepest feelings and values represent a predictable cultural response, rather than insight into some absolute reality, run the risk of stressful intercultural experiences. This can lead to cutting short an expatriate assignment, cynicism, resentment or deeply rooted prejudice. David, the Frenchman who as a flight instructor for commercial pilot's license worked with many Chinese students, found them impossible to teach. Communication difficulties and reactions which he found bizarre (insisting at great risk on following instructions rather than breaking procedure, for example) led him to conclude that "those people don't have any survival instinct", something which he explained by their cultural "indoctrination".

His use of the word "indoctrination" gives a hint that he finds their behaviour less than human. This is the biggest danger of deep resistance. When one dehumanizes people from other cultures, they become simply objects to be dealt with, and lose the normal consideration afforded to those we feel more of an affinity with. Given the violence and conflict frequently engendered by cross-cultural contact, it seems that this reaction may be less rare than one would hope. When our deepest values and beliefs are threatened, one natural response is a defensive retrenching. Transcending this response requires the willingness to "bracket" or set aside one's response, attempting to discover the hidden assumptions that make something difficult or offensive. Once again, acceptance of the validity of alternative views is the central requirement of this more constructive approach.

This is more difficult than it may appear, however. Sojourners are often caught up in the particular details of a conflict or situation, and may not have the mental or emotional energy to spare for this kind of challenge. It appears that those who have empathetic personalities to start with – those who tend to be good at looking at things from the perspective of someone else – find it easier to do this. In the case of Gunter, he discovered that his engineers in fact had a highly functional way of solving problems. Unlike the approach he was used to, however, in which one maps out the solution to a problem and

then gathers the information to put it into effect, he found that his Japanese coworkers tended to gather information as a way of defining the solution. Their approach was more "bottom up", and while their information gathering sometimes took longer, they were also able to avoid mistakes caused by incomplete knowledge in the planning stages.

His experience highlights the insights that are gained from deep cultural learning. Assumptions that have never been examined before get called into question, and are then put into a larger perspective. In this case, he learned a new approach to problem solving, understood more deeply an element of his own cultural frameworks, and more easily maintained constructive working relationships and an effective management style. What could have created deep resistance resulting in embedded negative judgments, instead involved a deep acceptance that gave him deep insight.

5.2.3 Acceptance

If there has been any common thread that runs through the experiences of all the participants in this study, it is that acceptance is the essential ingredient of all cultural learning. Stated as a definition or an ideal, it is neither abstract nor difficult. Acceptance involves the recognition of a simple reality – that one's own perspective is not absolute but is conditioned by one's experiences. But acceptance as a concept and acceptance as a response to intercultural challenge are two different things. While a philosophical commitment to acceptance may be desirable, it does not guarantee an accepting response to actual experiences. This is one area in which Bennett's ideas about empathy as a philosophical viewpoint seem open to question.

Acceptance involves the cognitive process of beginning to construct a functional alternative world view. At some deep level, one recognizes that there is a different, yet valid system of meaning at work, and that recognition helps that alternative reality become integrated into one's world view. Gunter came to see the problem-solving styles of his co-workers not as an aberration, but as one piece of a larger system of shared meaning that, with effort, he could enter into. His acceptance is not contingent on how well he understood the world view of his colleagues per se, but rather his fundamental recognition that their actions were reasonable and systematic, in spite of being based on different assumptions and reasoning.

Surface acceptance

Nearly everyone, it would seem, is accepting of difference to some degree. Difference that is not threatening is easy to accept and recognize as valid. This is why exotic food rarely creates prejudice. As long as the food does not violate one's value system, it can be accepted as valid, regardless of whether one enjoys eating it or not. The ease with which many people accept explicit, non-threatening cultural difference is one reason that so many tourists come home with positive impressions after a short vacation. Having said this, the food that tasted exotic the first week of a trip may have lost its appeal by the second week, and this increasing degree of demand may push someone who initially reacted with acceptance to shift to resistance.

One test of acceptance is the ability to not denigrate something even when it is not liked. This can be as subtle as the difference between saying "The food there was bland" and "The food didn't have much seasoning." Acceptance does not require that we like something, only that we do not pass judgment on it. Obviously, the more demanding difference is, the more difficult it can be to maintain acceptance. This is particularly true when, as with the Saudi veils for the Swedish visitor, explicit products of culture are representative of deeper values. This is also true when cultural difference threatens one's ability to function as one would like. One common example of this is the frustration with the inability to accomplish even simple tasks in a foreign language. Buying a train ticket or finding an address can become extremely stressful. At times like this, it is easy to respond by becoming increasingly critical, slipping into resistance in spite of the intellectual intention to enjoy the adventure of it all.

Deep acceptance

One result of this study that seems to have significant implications for intercultural education is that deep acceptance of cultural difference is still relatively rare, even among the highly educated, experienced and successful interculturalists in this study. This is not because people are willfully prejudiced, but because one can't accept cultural difference at a deeper level until one has engaged with it. Gunter may have received intercultural training that prepared him for differences in working styles between Japanese and Germans, but deeper acceptance could still only come when he had the

chance to try to put that knowledge into practice. Deeper levels of cultural difference are felt intuitively, and may not even be recognized on the conscious level.

Much more common is the experience referred to previously of Australian students who participated in a study of cultural adaptation during a year abroad in France (de Nooy, 2003). As we have seen, researchers were interested in finding out how students dealt with the challenges of subtle cultural differences in information gathering between Australian and French universities. The challenge for students involved differences in the systems for diffusing information at the French university. They required, for example, a more informal style of seeking information. It was a high-context process, meaning that understanding how the system worked was extremely important in getting things done efficiently, and information was often offered in an individualized, rather than a uniform format. At issue is not whether French or Australian universities are more efficient at diffusing information. Rather, students needed to learn that the *strategies* that they use to get information are informed by understanding of the system that they are operating in. When one's accustomed strategies do not work as expected, one can either blame it on "inefficiency", or more productively try to understand the underlying logic at work in the new environment.

For the most part, these students did not identify the frustrations they had as resulting from cultural difference in information gathering strategies. In other words, they lived through a cultural experience without discovering hidden patterns of cultural difference. There were a few students who talked about "working the system" – i.e. they understood that there was an alternative approach to getting things done in France. But even these students referred to this as an unavoidable way to deal with what students overwhelmingly agreed was the "inefficiency" or the "bureaucracy" of the French university. They did not recognize that their understanding of what constitutes, say, efficiency, was premised on Australian ways of doing things. In one example, their expectation that, for example, it was "normal" for each student to receive an identical information package upon arrival, in spite of potential differences in student circumstances or needs, gave them the impression that French administrators were being inefficient or bureaucratic by only giving them the information that they specifically requested. They failed to grasp that there was an underlying logic to the French system which

was just as "normal" as the Australian system.

It is important to point out that overwhelmingly, these students described their experience in France in positive terms. They certainly learned a lot about French society and culture. But they also walked away with embedded negative judgments about certain elements of their experience. This seems typical of the mixed nature of intercultural experiences. We react differently to different elements of our experiences. Herein rests a fundamental challenge of deep acceptance of cultural difference. The act of recognizing that something is cultural is often more difficult than might be expected, and requires a deep-seated understanding that there are different systems in play. In order to discover these differences, we must not only have the willingness to set aside our judgments, but also the longer-term experience of having grappled with a new way of doing things.

5.2.4 Adaptation

For the purposes of this model, adaptation simply means accepting change in oneself. This involves learning something new – knowledge, behaviour, point of view – in order to respond to the demands of one's environment. Everyone adapts to a new environment to some degree if only by, for example, addressing only certain people because not everyone speaks one's language. In addition, a certain amount of adaptation is often enjoyable, as when one learns the history of the country one is visiting or has fun trying out words in a foreign language. In the short term, adaptation does not imply permanent change, as a sojourner can go back to their familiar environment before needing to change any life routines. As time goes on, however, choices must be made about the degree to which one integrates changes into existing life patterns since adapting a single behavior is different from adapting a pattern of behaviors. Travelers who start to crave familiar foods, interaction and habits confront this difference. Adaptation does not imply replacing one's *culture* with a new one. It simply means adding to existing knowledge, skills and perspectives. The process can be likened to learning a foreign language. Just as learning a new language doesn't mean losing one's native language (unless it happens at a very young age), cultural adaptation is an additive process. It involves learning to step into a different set of expectations without giving up what one has already.

Choice seems to be an integral part of the adaptation process. Adapting

requires a choice at the conscious or unconscious level not to resist change. Because of this, accepting cultural difference acts as an important foundation for cultural adaptation. Occasionally, sojourners find themselves in a position in which they are compelled to change while not having fully accepted difference. This seems to be the case for Adele, who was required by her studies of Japanese literature to live in Japan and interact with Japanese – something she found distasteful. This process of *enforced adaptation* can be extremely stressful. Another example of this is when an immigrant must learn a new language and adapt to life in a place they'd rather not be simply for the sake of supporting a family back home. People in this situation probably isolate themselves from their new environment as much as possible. Another example involves highly-paid expatriates who dislike their surroundings, but are loath to give up the money (and perhaps prestige) that returning home would entail. Psychological stress and cognitive dissonance are engendered to the extent that sojourners adapt without accepting difference. This can be represented in the following way:

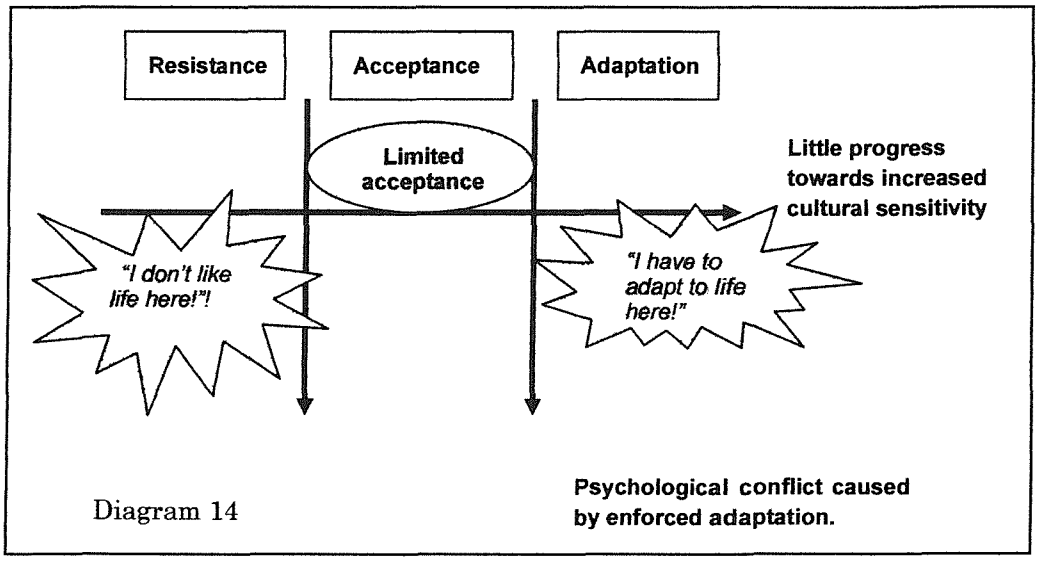

Diagram 14

Psychological conflict caused by enforced adaptation.

The lack of acceptance and psychological stress caused by enforced adaptation probably prevents the sojourner from making much progress towards deeper cultural empathy. Indeed, Adele concluded broadly that she was glad that she was born in the United States. In practice, of course, few people ever reject

absolutely a new cultural environment, and one's experiences usually involve a mix of all of these different states. The important factor among the participants in this study, however, seems to be that adaptation only leads towards cultural learning and empathy when it is founded on an acceptance of difference. The deeper the acceptance, the easier it is to accept the change entailed by adaptation.

Surface adaptation

It is possible to adapt to superficial difference with limited exposure to new cultural frameworks. Tourists may quickly learn the transportation system, memorize key phrases in a foreign language, or learn a different style of greeting. These things often aren't threatening in and of themselves, but most people have different levels of tolerance even for surface adaptation. Research by psychologists such as Matsumoto (2001) has identified important characteristics of successful sojourners, including flexibility, tolerance for ambiguity and the successful management of one's emotions. These qualities enable a sojourner to more quickly feel at ease in a new environment and probably increases acceptance of difference.

Surface adaptation can be extremely demanding, as for a Spanish hitchhiker traveling for months through rural Africa. For sojourners who remain in the same place, surface adaptation usually implies dealing with the immediate needs of everyday life: finding lodgings, familiarizing oneself with one's neighbourhood, learning where to shop for food and daily necessities, figuring out how to communicate sufficiently to meet the minimal requirements for one's new life. Many sojourners manage this without undue levels of stress. This is at least partially because the challenges of adapting to explicit cultural difference are relatively straightforward. Learning to use chopsticks or figure out how to use a bus system may not be easy, but the tasks are explicit and it is relatively easy to ask for help, measure progress, and integrate new information into one's daily life. At this point, the experience of longer-term sojourners starts to vary widely.

Deep adaptation

Deeper adaptation requires significant changes in how we communicate and carry on relationships with the people around us, and ultimately, how we view ourselves and the world. Among the sojourners in this

study, this often involved learning a foreign language, and in-depth relationships with people from the host culture. We have also seen, however, that some people function relatively well by accepting more explicit cultural difference without adapting in deeper ways. Much depends on the expectations of our cultural hosts. Expatriates who play the role of outside expert sometimes even report that adapting too much to their environment can be counterproductive. One expatriate commented that speaking the local language imperfectly reduced his effectiveness and made him seem incompetent.

For those who are less insulated – such as Mayumi, who faced the need to interact with her mother-in-law every day and fulfill family obligations – having a satisfying lifestyle and rewarding relationships may require deep-seated adjustment. The level of adjustment could be described as an equation of (N +). N refers to "Need" – the minimum requirements a sojourner faces in carrying out their daily lives. The + refers to any additional adaptation beyond that which is minimally required. Some expatriates find that the minimal change needed for them to function is beyond their personal level of flexibility or desire to adapt. People in this situation may opt to return home before their planned stay is finished.

Of course, this study focused only on sojourners who managed to remain in their new cultural environment. Yet even among sojourners who stay, a wide range of different reactions seem to be common. Whereas one person may strive to learn the host language and adapt to their cultural hosts, another in a similar circumstance may spend time almost exclusively with expatriates in a sheltered community. The contrasting experiences of Jack's sheltered life and William's efforts to learn Japanese illustrate this. It is hard to say why some people adapt more easily than others, except to refer to the psychological traits mentioned above. One important factor, however, is the degree to which one is able to fully accept cultural difference at a deep level. It seems that sojourners who consciously or unconsciously resist the difference they encounter find it much more difficult to adapt at deeper levels and gain deep cultural empathy.

5.3 Biculturalism, language and community

One of the deepest levels of intercultural adaptation is biculturalism. Someone who has developed this state has learned to do a form of cultural

code switching. Several participants in this study mentioned that they shift language, communication styles, body language and perspective as they learn to function at deeper levels in their new environment. As we have seen, this seems to be highly correlated with bilingualism and taking part in host cultural communities. Steven and Jack, who both spent a long time abroad without speaking a foreign language well, seem to bear this out. As for the type of relationships a sojourner has, one-on-one relationships seem to be qualitatively different from functioning in a group. William and Neil talk about the challenges adapting to life as a member of their spouse's family both as something rewarding and challenging. Mayumi found daily telephone calls to her Korean husband's mother extremely stressful, as was the role she had to play with other relatives. Gunter needed to adapt to the working style of the engineers and customers he worked with. What these situations all have in common is that they involve a sojourner stepping into a community whose rules they must learn in order to participate more effectively. In one-on-one relationships, hosts can more effectively give special treatment, giving the visitor a special status that insulates him from cultural demands.

Of course, we have seen that there are long-term expatriates such as Jack and Steven, who are quite happy with their life abroad in spite of not speaking the host language well. They seem to be limited, however, in the relationship they have with their host communities and often function as an "outsider" even after years of residence. Steven claims that speaking the host language is not absolutely essential for cultural learning, and says that he has learned about Korean and Japanese culture through talking to people in English. Jack seems to view language skills simply as a way of accomplishing everyday tasks, and not as a conduit for forming or deepening relationships with Japanese.

People in this situation may have a quite sophisticated understanding of cultural difference, at least at the conceptual level, and may also function very well in their particular environment. Their cultural understanding, however, does not seem to involve the kind of cultural code-switching found among those who are more fully bicultural. The relationships they are able to form are also more limited, since they often rely on their status as a foreigner who receives special treatment. What may not always be apparent to sojourners such as Steven and Jack is that when they use their own language rather than their hosts' language, they are being adapted to, rather than

adapting themselves. It may be that there is a kind of meeting half-way between expectations. This kind of relationship is easiest one-on-one. The participants in this study who become bilingual and bicultural concluded that speaking the host language is essential for the deeper levels of intercultural understanding. Presumably, this is because many of the deepest differences found can only be experienced when one takes part in host communities and functions more as an insider than an outsider.

5.3.1 Deep adaptation and identity shifts

As bicultural sojourners shift back and forth between different language and modes of behaviour, they may create, in effect, multiple selves – a Spanish self, and Chinese self, for example. Abdou, for example, reports that when he returns from France to visit Senegal, he puts on his "Senegal glasses" to look at the world in the Senegalese way, and becomes in effect a different person than when he is in France. These shifts may be disconcerting and create identity conflicts, a feeling of alienation, or culture shock when returning to one's home environment. Mayumi reported this kind of internal identity conflict. Sojourners who feel a strong rapport for their host cultural environment may have somewhat less trouble with this, since they may feel little conflict between the identity they have developed in their new environment compared to their original home environment. For other sojourners, shifting between different selves can raise the question of what one's "true self" is. Andre, Joanna, Adele and Linda all provide examples of sojourners who felt that they could not be their true self in their new environment. Resolving this dilemma may represent one of the ultimate challenges of intercultural learning.

5.3.2 Deep cognitive empathy

It seems to be true that, as Sparrow (2000) argues, for most sojourners successful cultural learning results primarily in a sense of belonging and engagement in a new environment, resulting in cultural empathy – the ability to switch cultural points of view. Some bicultural sojourners seem to absorb their cultural lessons without a great deal of conscious reflection. Sojourners who have a high degree of rapport with their new environment may be particularly likely to react in this way. Often, their membership in their host cultural community seems to be a product of their

"true self" and does not call into question deeper issues of identity. This has been said to be particularly true for what some have called "accidental biculturals" – those who have as a simple product of their upbringing been exposed to two cultures in the process of growing up (M. J. Bennett, 1993). Often they are the children of international marriages who grew up speaking two languages.

This kind of less-reflective biculturalism seems to be quite different from that experienced by those who have dealt with progressively deeper adaptation challenges while learning to accept deep-seated cultural difference first as an outsider, and then as an insider in a new cultural environment. Having passed through these development stages seems to allow for a transcendent view of cultural difference. These sojourners may develop what this model will refer to as *deep cognitive empathy* – the ability to look at cultural difference on the meta-level, with a deep and conscious acceptance of the validity of different world views. This can lead to the seemingly contradictory state in which a sojourner feels a sense of detachment at the same time that he participates fully in different communities. This experience has been described as the feeling of being on a fence, interacting with people on either side who can't see each other. One has a kind of meta-perception, recognizing one's own role as a cultural bridge. The understanding that one's perspective is functioning at a more inclusive level than the less culturally experienced people one deals with does not seem to inhibit forming positive relationships with people on both sides.

5.3.3 Beyond adaptation

One important question that this study has asked is related to whether it is possible, as some say, to go beyond one's cultural frameworks (Adler, 1977; J. Bennett, 1993). Judging from the experiences of the sojourners in this study, the answer seems to be a qualified "yes". *Deep cognitive empathy* may lead to a sense of self that goes beyond a single, or even dual cultural framework. Sojourners like Yuko and Paul seem to find a positive sense of identity in switching back and forth between multiple cultural points of view. All the sojourners in this study who reported this were multilingual, and often describe their experience of switching languages as shifting selves. They are comfortable with this process, however. This degree of intercultural adaptation certainly seems rare, and it may be easiest for people who have an

empathetic personality in addition to the opportunity for multiple experiences in other cultures.

This study has speculated that one factor which may make this process more likely can be called *triangulation*. Triangulation refers to a sojourner who has had deep experiences in more than two cultural settings and who speaks multiple languages. This may allow her to no longer look at cultural difference in binary terms, comparing cultural environment A with B, as is more common when sojourners have experienced only two cultures at a deep level. Instead, experiencing multiple cultural frameworks allows these sojourners to draw broader and deeper conclusions about the role of cultural difference in human life. In this study, this process has been represented in this way:

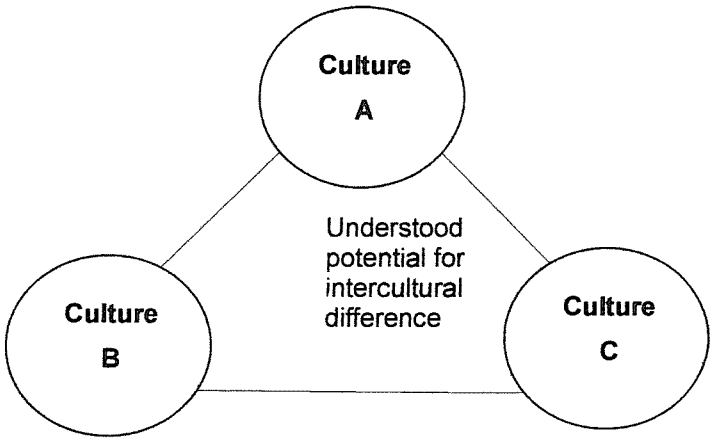

Diagram 15

In this diagram, we can see how making a three-way comparison offers a much richer set of experiences from which to draw conclusions about cultural difference.

Although people in this situation represent an appealing ideal – rather like the heroes in an intercultural action movie – it seems that they are exceedingly rare. Few people even in today's interconnected world have the

variety and depth of intercultural experiences to reach this level of intuitive understanding. The circumstances that lead to this are rare – spending perhaps years in multiple cultural environments, learning languages, forming relationships and functioning in a wide variety of social and cultural situations.

5.4 Defining intercultural learning goals

Understanding the end-product of intercultural learning has been an important goal of this study. Understanding the successes of intercultural learners can act as a signpost in intercultural education, and successful sojourners can be learning models. We have seen highly successful interculturalists, such as Paul and Yuko, and thus need to consider if they should serve as the model for intercultural learners – something to strive for. As we have seen, however, the kind of deep cognitive empathy and "beyond culture" state they reported are so rare that it may not be appropriate to consider their experiences as the target of intercultural learning. For most sojourners, success may more reasonably be defined not by an abstract meta-consciousness of cultural difference, but rather by the ability to accept difference at a deep level, and use this acceptance as a base to build relationships and develop communication skills in new cultural communities. It remains, then, to find ways to apply this insight.

Clearly defining learning outcomes is a critical first-step in intercultural education. If positive outcomes are too vague, or unrealistic, or do not reflect the lived experiences of learners, or reflect only a small part of a larger process, education can lead only to limited results. A parallel from the world of language education is that if learning goals focus too exclusively on one element of language – learning grammar, perhaps – succeeding in one area can inhibit learning in another. It can also mean that learners who have a predilection for a particular learning style may not be well served by education based on this limited view. Thus, students who are good at memorizing verb endings and constructing sentences may do well in a class where more intuitive learners struggle. Not only does this create frustration for the intuitive learners, but may give the grammar-oriented learner a false sense of accomplishment – since he may find that all the learning done in the classroom is difficult to apply to real life communication.

The need for an inclusive definition of success is apparent in

intercultural learning as well. As we have seen, intercultural learning goals are sometimes defined in terms of ideals such as increased sensitivity or cultural awareness. This type of holistic goal may seem too vague to a business executive focused on concrete results and a problem-solving approach to tasks. A focus on learning the history of a country, on the other hand, may appeal to someone oriented towards an abstract informational approach to learning, yet may frustrate someone with a more relationship-oriented approach to one's surroundings. Because this model attempts to integrate both concrete elements of cultural difference as well as more abstract ones, and because it sees intercultural learning as taking place at both the cognitive and affective level, it may be possible to use it to design educational initiatives which go beyond more uni-dimensional definitions of intercultural learning and success. Towards this end, in the next chapter we will look at how the model of cultural learning suggested by this study may inform intercultural education. It will focus on some prospective "key insights" or principles which have emerged from this study that may have implications in designing intercultural education materials and training programs.

6 Implications for intercultural education and continued research

The term "intercultural education" encompasses an extremely broad range of settings, including: language education, corporate cross-cultural management training, pre-departure training for exchange students, university courses in intercultural communication or global issues, and more. The learning activities in these different settings also vary widely, with the role of cultural learning sometimes playing a more supplementary role (as in language education) or a more primary role (as in pre-departure training). Naturally, the specific learning activities (readings, lectures, role plays, case studies, discussion) vary widely as well, and are often as much a product of the institutional setting as of any particular educational or cross-cultural theory.

One focal point for all intercultural settings, however, is the need to define learning goals. These are both a product of the educational context and the particular pedagogical approach used. As a way to show how the ideas from this study could be applied, this chapter will examine some of the challenges of determining cultural learning goals, and then discuss how ideas presented in this study can provide a conceptual framework to do this. This conceptual framework is discussed in terms of providing intercultural educators with a "vocabulary of intercultural experience" or terminology to make the process of intercultural learning easier to talk about and plan activities around. There will be specific examples given from foreign language education and a course in intercultural learning taught at a Japanese university. It is hoped that these examples can illustrate how the general lessons of this study can be applied in more concrete ways. After this, some issues raised in this study that may merit further study are examined.

6.1 Abstract vs. concrete learning goals

One challenge of intercultural education is that intercultural experiences are extremely diffuse, and therefore difficult to articulate or define. It is difficult to say at what point one is having an "intercultural experience." Is it when we notice something different from things back home? When we learn something new? When we feel puzzled? When we have an insight into something? The difficulty of characterizing intercultural experiences creates pedagogical challenges. A learner needs to understand the goals of both their educational as well as their intercultural experiences. This may be straightforward if one is focusing on traditional cultural learning such

as the history or literature of a country, but for more applied approaches, goals are difficult to define. How does a learner know if he has achieved, say, "cultural sensitivity"? And how does that relate to his everyday experience in a new environment?

The pedagogical challenges implied by this are especially acute in educational settings in which cultural learning is a primary focus, such as university courses in intercultural communication, or pre-departure training for sojourners. This is doubly true when educators attempt to use broadly defined abstract pedagogical goals, such as "awareness", "tolerance" or "appreciation of cultural difference" as the focal point for activities. Intercultural education which focuses on these abstract goals often relies on activities such as value clarification discussions and other "awareness raising" activities (Gaston, 1984; Hanvey, 1979; Ingulsrud et al., 2002; Tomalin & Stempleski, 1993; Tomlinson, 2000). A difficulty with this is that activities can be far removed from the actual experience of living in a new environment. The gap between the concrete experience abroad, and the abstract goals of, say, "awareness" is simply too large.

When intercultural education is culture specific – it focuses on preparing a sojourner for an experience in a particular cultural environment – it is in many ways easier to define intercultural learning goals. To a certain degree, educational goals can be described in terms of knowledge, the things one must "know" to get along in a new environment. In many educational settings, this takes the form of learning the history or literature of a country, or learning taboos or social conventions. These learning tasks are more straightforward than the more abstract goals mentioned earlier, and have the advantage of easily fitting into traditional classroom settings. Ultimately, however, the same dilemma emerges. Information that is abstract – literature and history for example – is only distantly related to the day-to-day challenges of intercultural experiences. Information that is highly concrete – such as rules for how to eat or tips on bargaining in a marketplace – are effective only in particular circumstances. In addition, in both cases, a focus on information does not adequately reflect the whole-body, affective as well as intellectual nature of intercultural experience. It misses precisely the kind of "awareness" goals that were referred to previously.

In a discussion that pits abstract learning goals against concrete ones, it is easy to overlook the possibility of focusing not on intellectual goals at all,

but rather psychological and affective ones. Research in cross-cultural psychology by Matsumoto (2001), for example, has shown that the psychological and emotional coping strategies of sojourners are good indicators of the potential success or failure of an intercultural experience. Based on this, Matsumoto argues that intercultural education should focus attention on coping strategies, rather than cultural difference itself. This insight highlights a hidden assumption behind much intercultural education – that understanding cultural difference mitigates the emotional and psychological impact of an intercultural experience. Matsumoto's argument seems to be that the particular source of intercultural stress – different value orientations, say, or communication styles – is less important than understanding and reinforcing the emotional and psychological coping mechanisms in play during intercultural experiences.

One strength of this view is that it focuses attention on the ongoing process of intercultural learning, rather than treating cultural phenomena as objects that can be dissected and served up to learners. But it would seem to go too far to say that understanding cultural difference has no place in intercultural education. After all, it is the difference found in a new intercultural environment that places the affective demands highlighted by Matsumoto on sojourners. In the same way, it would seem unproductive to ignore the affective elements to simply focus on cultural information. Finally the intellectual or "awareness" oriented goals of intercultural education also seem important. Evidence for this in this study comes from the difficulty that many sojourners had in even identifying reactions to particular phenomena as being cultural in nature. Help for learners in becoming aware of the hidden side of intercultural experiences seems important as well.

A vocabulary for intercultural experiences

While it can't be said that ideas developed in this study solve the difficulty of defining intercultural learning goals, the conceptual frameworks developed may provide a starting point for intercultural education that brings together concrete, abstract, intellectual and affective strands of the intercultural experience. In this study, intercultural experiences have been described as being a reaction to intercultural difference. This reaction has been characterized as involving *resistance, acceptance* and *adaptation.* The ideal goal of intercultural learning has been described as empathy, or at very

advanced levels *deep cognitive empathy*. It has been said that *acceptance* leads learners towards progressively more empathetic adaptation, and points out that it is possible to have reactions to cultural phenomena that operate at varying levels of awareness. Relative to the learning goals that we have looked at, this set of terminology encompasses several different previously separate elements. First of all, the clear progression towards empathy represents cultural learning as a process. The importance of cultural difference is seen in the emphasis on the importance of distinguishing between explicit and implicit cultural phenomena. And the emphasis on learners' reactions to intercultural demands – in particular the category of *resistance* – reflects a recognition of the importance of affective elements of the experience.

It is important to point out that although these terms may seem similar to the categories used by Bennett to describe levels of intercultural sensitivity (*denial, defense, minimization, acceptance, adaptation, integration)*, in terms of their application in intercultural education, there are important differences. While Bennett's terms attempt to define discrete, universal levels of intercultural sensitivity, the terms used in this study describe a reaction to intercultural difference. Bennett's terminology is used primarily in testing instruments that seek to quantify intercultural sensitivity. This may allow, for example, companies to evaluate employees who will receive a posting abroad, and could help intercultural trainers sequence training activities (M. J. Bennett, 1993). What is less clear, however, is how Bennett's model and his terminology in general can be used to help sojourners interpret their own lived experience. Put differently, how does it help a learner to be told that she is at, say, the *minimization* stage of intercultural sensitivity? Indeed, this might even be counterproductive as learners may take issue with their "score" on intercultural sensitivity. For his part, Bennett does not refer to using his scale as something to be taught to intercultural learners, but rather to those who are responsible for intercultural learners.

This is an advantage of the terminology used in this study. *Resistance*, *acceptance* and *adaptation* provide a way for sojourners to characterize their past and future intercultural experiences in terms that are connected to broader intercultural goals. It functions as a sort of "vocabulary" for describing one's experiences. A learner could be asked, for example, to describe elements of her intercultural experience that she resisted, accepted and adapted to. When this question is tied to an understanding of how acceptance can lead to a

more empathetic and functional view of a new environment, it may help develop cognitive empathy and encourage the suspension of judgment.

It is striking that among the typical goals of intercultural learning there is little emphasis on the possibility of negative outcomes. This study has highlighted the reality that intercultural contact can reinforce or create negative attitudes and intolerance. This is a serious problem because such negative attitudes are embedded in the lived experience of sojourners and not easily altered. Terms such as *culture shock* or *culture stress* articulate the psychological stresses of intercultural adaptation, but do not go so far as characterizing the long-term possible negative consequences of intercultural learning. For terms like "cultural awareness" there seems almost no negative counterpart, other than "not being aware". Words such as *intolerance, racism,* and *prejudice* accurately describe negative attitudes towards cultural difference, but they are pejorative. Few learners would say "I'm intolerant" to describe an intercultural reaction. In this sense, Bennett's use of the term *defense* seems more neutral, since it describes a cognitive reaction to cultural difference. At the same time, it would seem that few learners would want their intercultural experiences described as "defensive".

In this sense also, the terminology developed in this study may be of use. *Resistance* as a term seems less prejudicial than *defense*, and since *resistance* describes a reaction to an experience and not an absolute measure of intercultural sensitivity, it would seem easier for learners to feel comfortable applying it to themselves. In this study, we have seen that a fundamental challenge of intercultural learning is for learners to identify the more implicit levels of intercultural difference as being cultural. For Philippe, Germans were simply unreasonable in their trash sorting, and for David, Asian students had no "survival instincts". The challenge for learners like this is to identify what precisely they are resisting. This implies going beyond the superficial level of explicit behavior – separating the trash – and examining the reasons for one's particular reaction. In this sense, the term *resistance* may serve to mitigate some negative reactions by providing a relatively neutral label for the experience. This neutrality seems important if learners are going to reflect openly on the deeper layers of their personal and cultural identities and gain greater intercultural awareness.

Another strength of these terms is that they revolve around the simple unifying goal of *acceptance*. This study has described *acceptance* as the

primary element that allows for deep levels of adaptation and the development of cognitive empathy. For intercultural learners, the challenge is two-fold, to recognize the importance of *acceptance* as a factor in enhancing their intercultural experience, and to recognize that resistance to difference functions not only at explicit levels but deeper ones as well. Put differently, it is not enough to know that acceptance is important, it must also be realized that discovering the cultural differences that need to be dealt with is not that easy. Fortunately, as a goal of intercultural training, *acceptance* is relatively easy to describe, give examples for, predict difficulties for, explain the importance of, etc. In addition, since most people accept a certain degree of intercultural difference, the task of an intercultural educator becomes not so much changing a learner's attitudes or awareness, but rather helping learners explore acceptance and resistance more fully.

Applying the vocabulary of intercultural experiences

The concepts *resistance, acceptance* and *adaptation* can be integrated into existing intercultural training techniques. For example, one common intercultural training technique makes use of "critical incidents", or narratives describing an instance of cross-cultural conflict or misunderstanding – and involves asking learners to make cross-cultural judgments. If, in addition, learners are asked to imagine themselves in these situations and imagine their reaction in terms of *resistance, acceptance* and *adaptation,* they can use these incidents in a more personal way. Thus, the use of critical incidents becomes not only a way to highlight the particular points of intercultural conflict, but a kind of virtual intercultural experience with an emphasis on the *reaction* to cultural difference, and not simply on having the "correct" interpretation of a given intercultural situation. This shifts emphasis towards a more process-oriented or developmental view of intercultural learning. Intercultural education that focuses on cross-cultural comparison can also benefit from these concepts. Rather than simply describing cultural difference as something to be quantified, as in "When in the Middle East you should be prepared to eat with your fingers," emphasis can be placed on how one might react (or has reacted to) differences. In other words, it is not the specific cultural differences that are the defining characteristic of intercultural learning, it is one's reaction to differences found.

For culture-specific intercultural education, such as pre-departure

training for study-abroad students or expatriates, *resistance, acceptance* and *adaptation* lend themselves to a case-study approach. The stories of those who have "gone before" can be an entry point for learners to examine their potential reactions to their new environment. To use an example from the study of Australian students learning to deal with French universities, pre-departure training could focus on having prospective students analyze the stories of other students from previous years. Learners could analyze stories, as well as specific statements such as "The French are incredibly bureaucratic" in terms of whether this represents *resistance* or not. This may help learners to be more aware of their reactions to cultural difference and encourage the suspension of judgment and increased empathy.

Another common culture-general training activity is games such as Bafa Bafa (Carroll, 1997) or Barnga (Thiagarajan & Steinwachs, 1990) in which learners have a controlled intercultural experience in the form of card games or role play. Generally, this involves a debriefing after the game in which participants discuss their reactions to their experience and trainers try to connect those things with the kinds of reactions that intercultural learners have. The terms *resistance, acceptance* & *adaptation* seem very well suited to this kind of debriefing. Not only do they give participants a vocabulary to talk about their subjective reactions in neutral ways, they are connected to larger goals of empathy and suspension of judgment and thus lend themselves to functioning as a bridge to understanding the larger goals of intercultural learning.

These are just a few examples of the ways that these terms may be able to be applied to a variety of intercultural education contexts. Their potential usefulness hinges on their ability to join theory and practice – to serve as a bridge between the intercultural experiences and the conceptual goals of intercultural learning. They incorporate both the intellectual and the affective, focus on development over time, highlight the importance of recognizing cultural difference at both explicit and implicit levels, and provide a neutral set of terms for intercultural learners to describe their experiences. In theory, at least, they pull together a number of important yet previously separate strands of the intercultural experience.

6.2 Explicit / implicit culture - surface / deep intercultural experiences

Just as intercultural experiences are diffuse, the elements of an intercultural experience that cause problems or create resistance or misunderstanding can be difficult to describe or characterize. An expatriate manager who will work in a foreign country may want to know what "problems" he is going to have working with, say, Malaysians. But attempting to answer a question like that presents a challenge to intercultural educators because cultural differences that are easy to explain are often the easiest to deal with. Rules of etiquette, or a list of cultural taboos – pointing the feet at someone in Thailand, asking about salary in the United States – are relatively straightforward to learn, but provide little guidance outside of very particular situations.

As we have seen, the deeper challenges of intercultural learning involve reacting to cultural phenomena which have deeper symbolic meaning – such as when Philippe reacts to the requirement to separate garbage in Germany – or more simply the stress of learning new life routines in a new environment. In both these cases, the salient feature is the implicit nature of much intercultural difference, and the fact that our responses to a new environment take place largely at the unconscious level. And while the understanding that cultural frameworks function at different levels of conscious awareness is built into the very foundations of intercultural theory (Hall, 1959), this fundamental insight seems not to have become a major component of intercultural education. As we have seen, however, explicit vs. implicit intercultural phenomena, and their experiential parallel of surface and deep cultural learning, are at the core of this model of intercultural learning. Finding a way to make productive use of these organizing principles seems a primary challenge in intercultural education. One result of this study which may be a step in that direction is the visual representation of intercultural learning which has been used to make the intercultural learning profiles of the participants of this study (diagram 16):

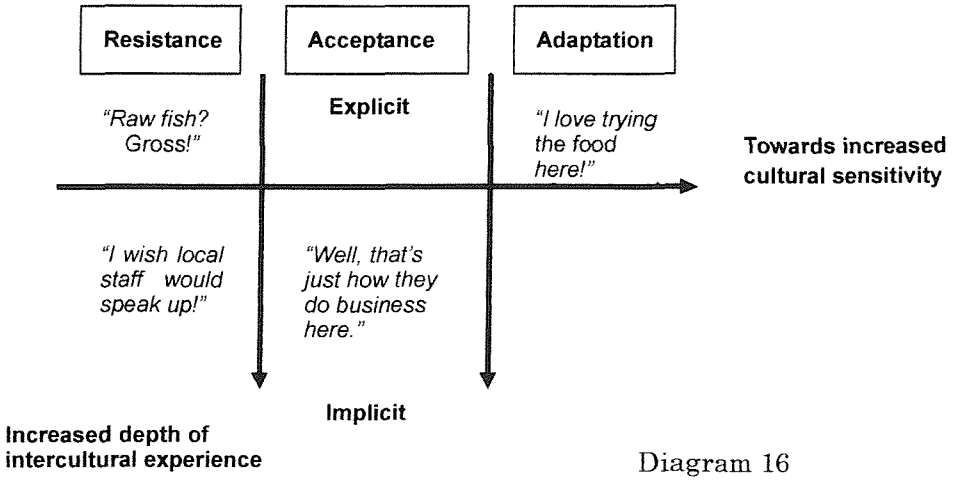

Diagram 16

It should be possible to include this kind of diagram or visual representation in materials that describe cultural difference and intercultural experiences. This diagram lends itself both to a case-study approach to intercultural learning, in which the experiences of other intercultural learners are discussed and interpreted, as well as activities in which learners talk about their own experiences and use this diagram to clarify their own reactions to an intercultural experience. One attempt to do this will be discussed below.

Integral to this characterization of intercultural learning is the distinction between "surface" cultural learning and "deep" cultural learning. As discussed previously, this refers not so much to how much emotion we feel in an intercultural context, but whether the cultural phenomena that provoke the reaction are relatively explicit or implicit. In practical terms, this distinction seems important for distinguishing between the experiences of travelers who do not have an opportunity to experience the hidden side of a new cultural environment, and expatriates who go further into a new cultural community. The expatriates in this study seemed to seek a comfortable depth of intercultural learning – isolating or integrating themselves depending on their reaction to their environment. An awareness of the importance of the choices that lead to increased isolation or integration would seem to fit well with intercultural education in a wide range of contexts.

The terms *explicit/implicit* and *surface/deep* can be useful pedagogically because they provide a conceptual lens through which to

examine intercultural experiences and cultural phenomena. The challenge for learners is not understanding the concepts per se, but coming up with examples from their own intercultural experiences, or explaining the implicit elements of their own cultural background. The gap between the conceptual understanding of these terms and the challenge of applying them was seen in a class with American students. They understood easily that the norms dictating when it is generally appropriate to call someone by their first name or shake hands are largely implicit, yet they had much more trouble determining what those norms were. The attempt to isolate and articulate these implicit elements of one's intercultural experience or one's usual cultural environment would seem to lead toward the goal of cultural awareness pursued by many educators.

This is not to say that these terms are new. As we have seen, the implicit vs. explicit nature of cultural phenomena is a foundation of intercultural communication theory. What is new, however, is that these terms have been connected to a larger framework of intercultural learning. In addition, the corollary of explicit and implicit cultural phenomena – *surface* and *deep* intercultural learning – is not commonly used in intercultural education. It should be possible to design learning activities around evaluation of the depth of an intercultural experience. One example is to ask learners to compare the traveler who visits 50 countries in a year, and the one who stays in the same place but goes more deeply into the host community. Profiles of expatriates who are relatively more or less integrated into their host cultural communities could be used in case studies, and learners could be asked to describe their own cultural experiences in these terms.

The distinction between explicit versus implicit cultural phenomena and *deep* versus *surface* intercultural learning seems particularly important for expatriates in today's increasingly interconnected world. In the past, sojourners had less choice about the degree of depth of their intercultural experiences. Today, it is much easier for expatriates to insulate themselves within a cocoon of familiarity and long-distance relationships. Increasingly, deeper intercultural experiences may be a conscious choice – a reflection of a better understanding of what one has to gain by going deeper into a host community, rather than simply as a reflection of a need for psychological survival. Perhaps sojourners can also more consciously retreat to more familiar environmental cues when they feel high degrees of stress and

increased resistance. This approach to intercultural learning may help modern day sojourners more fully take advantage of all the learning possibilities inherent in our new global age.

6.3 Relationships, language learning and intercultural learning

This study highlighted the importance of using relationships with people from the host cultural community both as a measure and goal of intercultural learning. Closely related to this is the importance of language learning, since learning the language of a host community not only allows for relationships with hosts with no foreign language ability, it allows sojourners to more fully step into the perceptual world of their hosts. Relationship formation, then, could be described as the meeting point between language education and intercultural education. This insight may provide new ways for language teaching methodology and materials to encourage intercultural learning. As noted in section 2.2, Byram (1987; 1997; 2001) has made significant contributions in this area, which the results of this study may complement.

One area of language education that an emphasis on relationship formation could be applied is in the teaching of English to speakers of other languages. Unlike foreign language learning in which the language spoken has a relatively clearly corresponding "target culture", English is often learned as an international language. This means that for a Korean learning English, it is not possible to learn specific norms related to speaking English, since the learner does not know what cultural background the people they may speak with will come from. It could equally be Philippine, Nigerian or Australian. In this context, language educators who want to focus on issues of intercultural understanding or cultural difference must do so in a culture-general way. Since typical goals of culture-general educational are often highly abstract, language learners face the additional challenge of dealing with these topics in a foreign language.

During the course of this study, the concept of "cultural performance" and the emphasis on relationships in intercultural education have been applied to curriculum planning in a private university in Japan (Shaules, 2003, 2004) as well as the development of an English skills textbook with intercultural themes (Shaules, Tsujioka, & Iida, 2004). In terms of curriculum planning, the focus on relationships served as a criterion for course planning.

Courses that emphasized speaking were focused on giving learners practice presenting personal opinions about social topics. This led to a final exam in which students were required to give in-class presentations in English. The goal of the course was to lead students towards the linguistic ability to offer their opinions and express their personality in intercultural relationships. In the case of the teaching materials developed, intercultural concepts were presented in the form of personal narratives of people from around the world who commented on cultural issues from their own cultural environment. Students used value-clarification questionnaires as a basis for discussions about the issues raised by the narratives. It was hoped that this pseudo exchange of opinions could foster empathy and act as preparation for future intercultural relationships. For a more detailed description of the thinking behind these initiatives, see Shaules (2004).

Teaching "cultural learning" at a Japanese university

Another example of how the concepts that have emerged from this study could be applied to intercultural education settings comes from a university course in Japan taught by the researcher. The subject of the course was "intercultural learning" and concepts from this study were incorporated into the materials and class activities. This was done in two ways: 1) the course was structured around the key concepts from this study, 2) The visual model of the cultural learning process presented in this study was used in class activities and student presentations. As a part of this, case studies were created using profiles of sojourners with quotations pertaining to the different intercultural reactions representing deep and surface *resistance*, *acceptance* and *adaptation*. Also, students – many of whom had significant experience living in other cultural environments – were asked to discuss their own cultural learning in terms of the concepts and processes that had been discussed in class.

As a pedagogical tool, the concepts of *resistance, acceptance* and *adaptation* seemed to work well, and were easily adapted by students to discuss their reactions to their intercultural experiences. This highlighted the importance of a neutral set of terminology to characterize intercultural learning experiences. The diagram used in this study to describe intercultural learning seemed to help learners conceptualize critical themes of cultural learning, including the recognition that: 1) intercultural learning is

developmental since in the diagram, development progresses from left to right towards cognitive empathy, 2) intercultural experiences may be either superficial or deep – represented by the vertical axis, 3) it may be possible to go "beyond culture" represented by going "out of the box" towards deep cultural empathy.

When students were asked to put their reactions to intercultural experiences in the corresponding boxes of the intercultural learning diagram, they did so without problem. One student, when talking about having spent a month in Australia on a homestay program did this in the following way (diagram 17):

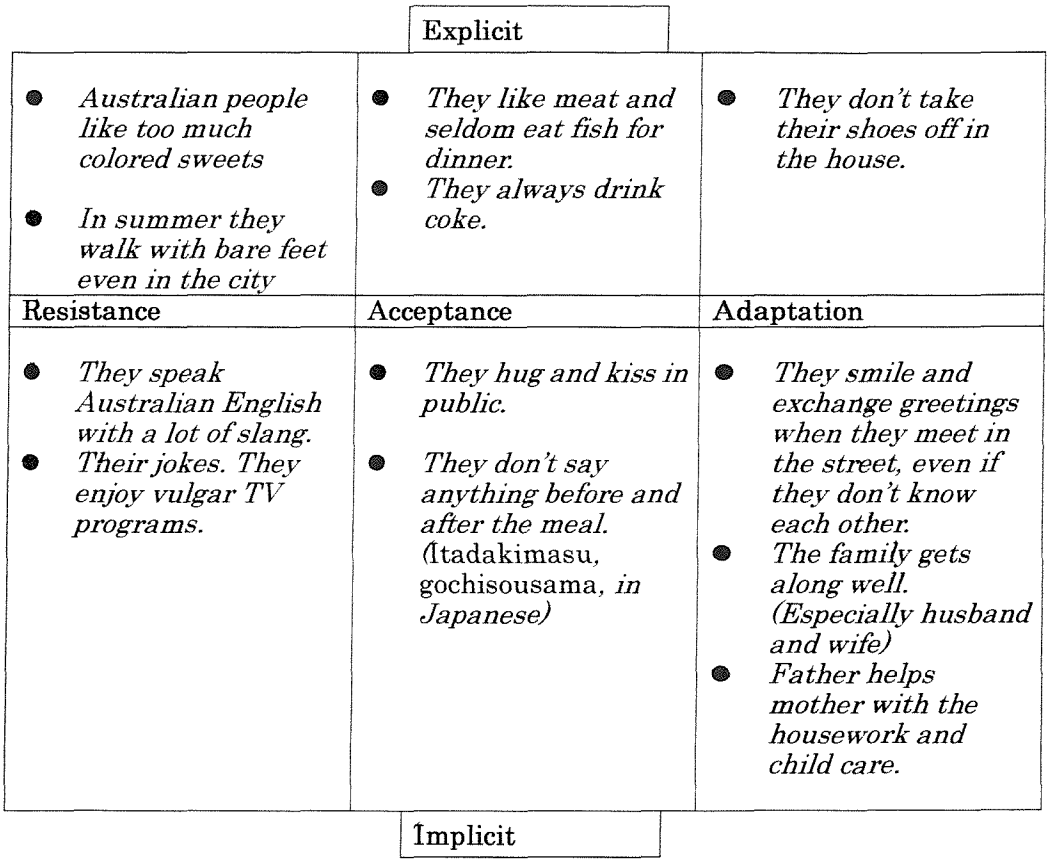

Diagram 17

While not everything written in these boxes corresponds perfectly with the concepts as presented, the use of the diagram as a tool for reflection seemed very successful. Another successful element of this diagram was the way that students used the term *resistance* when discussing their experiences, saying

in classroom discussion, for example, "Yeah, I really resisted having to use polite language in Japanese" or "I felt lots of resistance about having to be on crowded trains." As hoped, *resistance* was interpreted as a neutral term.

6.4 Principles for intercultural education

The examples described above represent only a few tentative steps towards applying the results of this study. Of course, the specific approaches taken depend greatly on the particular teaching context. At the same time, throughout this study a number of organizing principles have emerged which may be able to act as a guide in other settings. These can be represented in the form of statements about cultural learning that should be kept in mind for intercultural education. They represent a distillation of the most important elements of the cultural learning experience as examined in this study.

Cultural learning is developmental

This principle reminds us that cultural learning is an ongoing process with no absolute end state or final goal. This means that learners' attention is most productively focused not on absolute ideals or rigid categories of cultural difference, but rather on the process of discovering and reacting to cultural difference.

Successful cultural learning implies recognition of cultural difference

Acceptance of other world views is challenging because it is easy to react to implicit cultural difference without recognizing that the source is cultural. Intercultural education initiatives should, therefore, give learners the opportunity to do critical reflection on the hidden nature of intercultural experiences, values, norms and hidden cultural assumptions.

Successful cultural learning implies acceptance of cultural difference

Acceptance of the validity of other world views at a deep level leads towards increased empathy, improved relationships with cultural hosts, easier adaptation to new cultural environments, an ability to suspend judgment, biculturalism and the ability to gain deep cognitive empathy. The importance of acceptance makes it a useful organizing principle for intercultural learning initiatives.

Resistance to difference is natural.

It is important not to "moralize" intercultural learning by implying that one state of intercultural learning is superior to another. Everyone resists, accepts and adapts to difference to varying degrees in different settings. It is the awareness of this process that constitutes the salient feature of intercultural learning.

Cultural learning involves relationship formation

The human need to create meaning and form relationships with others is the driving force behind intercultural learning. This is true as we try to make sense of a new environment, and as we relate to cultural hosts. Relationship formation is also a measure of success in intercultural learning, and can be used as an organizing principle in language education. Language education should involve learning about other cultures and expressing one's own personal and cultural identity in a new language.

6.5 Further research

This study has focused on areas of intercultural learning – in particular deep and surface cultural learning – that are not often the subject of intercultural research. Throughout the interview process and during the analysis of the data, a number of issues emerged which were beyond the scope of this particular study. One area that was touched upon but not explored in depth was the transformational nature of intercultural experience. Many participants discussed intercultural learning issues in terms of personal growth and questions of identity. This was also seen in the papers and presentations by students in the course in cultural learning. Repeatedly students commented on how valuable it was for them to examine their intercultural experiences. Students who had faced the challenge of moving to another culture for long periods of time often came to discuss issues after class, asked for further reading, and in more than one case decided to write graduation theses on the subject of intercultural adaptation. Mayumi, the Japanese woman who lived in the United States and who had such trouble living in Korea, commented after her interview was over that the act of talking about her experiences had been therapeutic, and thanked the researcher repeatedly.

It would be interesting to study these "life transforming" experiences

in more depth. This could be done not only with those who had positive experiences, but also those who continue to have deep resistance to cultural difference. What do these "resistors" feel that they have learned from their experiences, and how does this contrast with those who have more positive experiences? In contrast to Mayumi, for example, when Adele – the Japanese literature researcher who resisted her experience in Japan – was asked what she had learned from her experience, she said in effect that she learned that she was lucky to have been born in the United States. Jack, the American in Japan who manages to live successfully on the surface of Japanese culture, said that he must have learned something, but that he was not sure what it was. These statements give tantalizing clues about the extent to which intercultural experiences can be, or not be, transformative, and seem to deserve further attention.

The strong reactions to intercultural experiences shared by the participants in this study speak to the depth and transformative power of intercultural learning. One point for possible further study that this issue raises is the emotional states of sojourners during their different reactions to intercultural experiences. Some researchers in the field of cross-cultural psychology emphasize the importance of managing emotions and stress during intercultural adaptation. (Matsumoto et al., 2001) It would be interesting to combine studies focusing on implicit and explicit cultural difference and the emotional states of sojourners. This might examine questions such as whether the stress or emotion engendered by explicit cultural difference is qualitatively different from those engendered by implicit cultural difference. Put more simply, is the stress of travel and learning a subway system different from that of adapting to new values?

Similarly, it would be interesting to focus more on sojourners' perception of themselves in relation to their intercultural experiences. In particular, it would be interesting to see if travelers who report intense reactions to shallow yet extreme intercultural experiences – a first time American traveler hitchhiking through rural South America, say – feel that these intense yet explicit experiences change how they view the world. This could be compared with sojourners who have had deeper intercultural experiences of, say, having lived abroad and studied a new language for a year. At issue is whether deeper intercultural experiences are necessary to have a deep or lasting impact on values and attitudes towards cultural difference. It

may be that a short stay in a very different cultural environment has a lasting impact on sojourners' view of themselves or their culture, or perhaps one tends to revert to one's usual view of the world once one is back home.

Another possible area of exploration relates to the ways in which one's childhood environment has (or does not have) an impact on intercultural empathy. For example, does someone who grows up in a relatively more multicultural society have a tendency towards greater intercultural empathy? In terms of parenting, there are questions about whether growing up with parents who are culturally empathetic affects the level of children's intercultural empathy. And if so, what do culturally empathetic parents do to pass this on to their children? This issue seems of particular importance in increasingly multicultural societies, as educational systems need to reflect diversity and embody the kind of empathy found among successful interculturalists.

These questions provide just a brief glimpse of some of the questions that the results of this study raise. Undoubtedly, as the process of globalization and increased intercultural contact continues, there will be even more areas to explore.

7 Conclusion

This study has attempted to shed some light on cultural learning. We have seen that one difficulty of understanding the range of intercultural experiences in our more connected world is that cultural difference exists at both explicit and implicit levels. For this reason, cultural learning takes place at many different levels of the self, not only intellectual but also affective – and often out of everyday awareness. This study has proposed a cultural learning model intended to be used as a starting point for intercultural education, and as a way to make more explicit the hidden nature of much intercultural learning.

For intercultural educators, this study highlights a need to focus on the qualitative differences between various intercultural experiences. A traveler, sheltered expatriate, and an integrated long-term sojourner face different challenges. Failure on the part of sojourners to recognize this can contribute towards the tendency to make judgments based on superficial experiences. In addition, since sojourners react differently to similar circumstances, it highlights the need to compare our intercultural experiences with those of others. This can help uncover hidden cultural assumptions and put our reactions and judgments into a broader perspective.

As pointed out in the introduction, our more interconnected world has given rise to the notion that we are now living in a "global village" where cultural difference may be less problematic than in the past. This study has highlighted the possibility that this may not be as true as we might like to think. While it is true that many interculturalists adapt successfully, and there is an increase in inclusive multicultural communities, it is also true that cultural convergence on the explicit level can be misleading. Jack has experienced life in Japan for more than 10 years, yet his perceptual world seems not to have changed much at the deeper levels of self. Put differently, while the interconnectedness of our global village is very obvious, many deeper differences remain hidden.

We must also remember that the participants in this study are among the most privileged interculturalists in the world. Not only do they come from advantaged socio-economic circumstances, for the most part they chose their intercultural experience. A study of sojourners who had returned early from postings abroad because of intercultural stresses would likely have painted quite a different picture of intercultural learning. And this does not account

for the millions of people in the world who have enforced intercultural experiences – economic and political refugees, for example. It also does not deal with what may be the most difficult challenge of intercultural learning – the embedded resistance to difference that can come with prolonged enforced exposure.

The deep embedded resistance that was found in sojourners like David – who concluded that Asians have no 'survival instinct' – is perhaps the most troubling aspect of this study. This same dynamic can be seen in reports of ethnic conflict throughout the world. Discouragingly, it seems that prejudice is more easily passed on from generation to generation than empathy and tolerance. This may mean that distrust of a particular ethnic group or people with particular physical characteristics become a deep part of one's implicit values and world view. Given the challenge for even advantaged interculturalists to accept change at deeper levels of the self, it is not surprising that so much cultural conflict can be so persistent.

One striking finding of this study has been that among these privileged sojourners deep intercultural sensitivity is so rare. Even among well adjusted long-term sojourners, negative judgment and resistance remains. And if this is true for those living in the midst of intercultural difference, it may be even more so for majority members of a multicultural community. Sojourners in this study faced powerful demands for change in their everyday lives. But this is less true for someone whose experience with difference does not come from travel, but from contact with people from a cultural or ethnic minority at home. For better or worse, it seems that many people achieve a level of intercultural sensitivity necessary for them to function comfortably, but not necessarily much more. This may reflect the realities of our evolutionary biology which dictates not that we strive to fulfill our greatest potential, but simply that we fit into our environment in a way which lets us perpetuate ourselves. As a species, we clearly have succeeded at least in the short term. As individuals and communities, however, the experiences of highly developed interculturalists point towards an ongoing developmental struggle with our tendency to rest within the limits of our perceptual routines.

Ideally, this study hopes to inform the educational choices of future intercultural educators. The ultimate challenge of understanding cultural learning is not only to examine the process, but to find ways to pass on the understanding that intercultural experiences bring. With this in mind, during

an unrecorded conversation with Yuko – perhaps the most highly-developed interculturalist interviewed – the researcher asked whether she thought that her cultural understanding could be passed on to other generations. Her reply was that it could not, since it is a product of a highly unstable, albeit constructive, upbringing. She said that even with highly intercultural parents, a child will naturally take on the world view of the community that he or she grows up in, and have, just like everyone else, a primary cultural affiliation. This acts as the starting point for intercultural exploration. Yuko feels that increased intercultural contact has led only to shallow intercultural understanding. If she is correct – and the results of this study do not contradict her – then as has been the case throughout human history, it remains up to each generation to discover the deeper truths of human learning. Hopefully, however, today's interculturalists can leave clues about the capacity for human development. Fortunately, the increased intercultural contact in our new global village not only creates potential conflict, it also provides new means of communication and allows for the formation of new, more accepting multicultural communities.

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