



“... The truth is, you could be an American and have less identification with your own country as an expat in another, same here for me. So, it’s not about nationalities or where we come from, or the color of skin we have anymore, or even the cultural ways of living and communicating, it’s a whole area of intelligence that we as coaches should have as part of our competencies in order to coach in the new world of interculturalism. It’s in essence our ability to perceive the client as a new island that is yet to be explored without presumptions about what kind of culture they may bring to the session. It’s the intelligence of reading behind what we see, hear or observe, letting go of our own past experiences.”

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INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCY IN THE FACE OF 'DISRUPT'

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Terms and definitions

K. Gilbert and P. Rosinski (2007) define culture as “the characteristics of one group that distinguish it from another” (Kate Gilbert and Philippe Rosinski, 2008). Culture therefore is an internal process that exhibits itself in the form of the obvious: artefacts, language, body gestures, social habits and literature (Hofstede, 1994). The concept of a group regardless of their geographical location, nationality, religion, gender, generational, organizational or social stratification, indicates inclusion of different elements from the above, specific to this group. *Culturality* is my preferred term here indicating culture in motion (Abdullah-Preteille, 2006). *Intercultural* on the other hand is defined as “pertaining to or taking place between two or more cultures”¹. Thus, training, coaching and consulting becomes a continuous spiral of learning and growth processes. Intercultural competency, on the other hand, is defined by most theorists and researchers in the field as ‘an individual ability to function effectively across cultures’ (Kwok Leung, 2014).

Cross cultural management theories

(Hofstede, 1994) Model on *Cross-cultural Management* consists of five dimensions; power distance, individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term orientation. Rosinski (1999), came up with 18 dimensions grouped in seven categories corresponding to critical challenges faced by people everywhere, regardless of their role or position. The dimensions have emerged from a synthetic analysis of a range of theoretical frameworks developed by eminent anthropologists, communication experts, and cross-cultural researchers, including Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961), Hall (1983), Hofstede (1997, 2001), Trompenars and Hampden-Turner (1998), among others². Other researchers also contributed to the field from different angles such as expatriate adjustment, expatriate selection and training, expatriate performance,

¹ www.Dicotionary.com

² <http://www.philrosinski.com/cof/>

global teams, cross cultural training and intercultural communication. Most of the research addressed in different ways the intercultural competence.

Intercultural Competence (IC) models

The explanation of IC produced over 30 models and more than 300 constructs across the literature. A closer look shows three outcomes: a psychological factor (cultural adjustment), behavioral factor (cooperation), and performance on the job (global leadership) (Kwok Leung, 2014).

CQ or Cultural Quotient Model

Inglis & Steele (2005), describes “What happens when there is a gap between our operating beliefs of how the world works and the contradictory evidence presented by what we observe in the world around us?” They explain that there is a gap between how the individual conceptualizes life and their ability to implement what they conceptualize. It’s defined as “the integration of the reasoning ability, emotional capacity and social cognition required to function at the level of complexity demanded by current life challenges” (Jan Inglis and Margaret Steel, 2005). They call this ability Complexity Intelligence (CI).

In other studies, this is also recognized as Cultural Intelligence or CQ. CQ is defined as “the ability to make sense of other cultural behaviors and gestures and adjust one’s response to them accordingly”, with the two most important skills being *confusion acceptance* and *suspending judgement* (R Brislin, R worthley and B Macnab, 2006).

CQ is an individual’s capability to detect, assimilate, reason, and act on cultural cues appropriately in situations characterized by cultural diversity. Thus, it is domain-specific and has special relevance to multicultural settings and global contexts (Linn Van Dyne, 2012). CQ complements other forms of intelligence, such as IQ, social intelligence, and practical intelligence because intelligence is more than the ability to grasp concepts and solve problems in academic settings. CQ consists of four measurable sub-dimensions:

1. Meta-cognition: Planning, Awareness and Checking.

Individuals with a high metacognitive CQ have heightened consciousness of how their own culture influences their behavior and their interpretation of intercultural situations. They plan for interaction and are aware during interaction of their own perceptions and of the others from the other culture. During intercultural interactions, they actively check to see if their interpretations are consistent with the intentions of others. This checking regulates their mental ability to comprehend and assimilate new knowledge.

2. Cognition: general and specific cultural knowledge.

Here, we use the cross-cultural management bulk of research to inform the general and specific context. Culture-general knowledge is defined as knowledge of the universal elements that constitute a cultural environment. Understanding the general elements that characterize culture is important because it provides people with an organizing framework for thinking about possible ways that cultures might be similar and different. Cultural specific knowledge organizes behavior in that specific context. Reading and training courses are useful here.

3. Motivational

Individuals vary in how they are motivated. CQ research identified three sets of motivating factors: Intrinsic, extrinsic and self-efficacy to adjust. Intrinsic is defined as valuing culturally diverse experience in and of itself because it is inherently satisfying. While extrinsic is valuing the tangible, personal benefits that can be derived from culturally diverse experiences. Self-efficacy is having task-specific confidence in culturally diverse situations.

4. Behavior

Based on intercultural communication research CQ classifies communication behaviors into three broad categories: (i) types and range of verbal behaviors, (ii) types and range of verbal behaviors, and (iii) specific speech acts – the words and phrases used to convey specific messages.

To expand on these dimensions please refer back to the book (Livermore, 2011).

What Interculturality model or framework to use?

- Coaching through the cultural dimensions may work but it does not address the CQ of an individual client and their complexity Intelligence CI.
- Coaching with the CI model is a good start to venturing into the complexity of Intercultural transition where the coach realises the process and supports the client through it but it does not address dimensional or sub-dimensional process.
- Coaching with CQ in mind seems to be the most useful model in raising the coach and the client's cultural awareness level.
- Coaching Interculturality requires competencies that uses a deeper framework than the dimensions in cross-cultural management literature.
- We need a framework that enables a coach to dissect the layers of an Individual and group CQ to navigate through their own purpose and workable beliefs in the midst of the confusion, raising their CQ level as they progress in a continuous spiral motion.

My Approach

Inglis & Steele (2005), have identified three characteristics pertaining to the process of change or transition in adults which can be a model for Interculturality coaches: (1) first the client develops a recognition that a gap exists between their operating beliefs and the current conditions facing them; (2) then the coach encourages the client's perseverance to stay engaged in the resulting confusion, contradiction and frustration as they detach themselves from familiar operating beliefs and navigate the gap. At this point the coach has to remain patient and not

push the client to any conclusion; and (3) third the exposure and openness to a new conceptual framework which validates their recognition of the gap. At this point the coach can guide the client to how this finding can be helpful in their specific context.

I recommend a more direct and deep approach involving elements of the cultural identity of the group or groups the client(s) belongs to in relation to their work, organizational culture, subcultures, purpose, processes, structure and governance. The cultural identity plays a big role in defining an individual belief system, personal values, social behaviors and communication, and their own identity. The cross Intersection between the organization and the society is where the conflict of values, beliefs, and identity arise or even worse, the conflict of cultures and subcultures. The model I use is an intersection between the coach, client and the intercultural interaction(s), allowing them to influence each other's motion. Meanwhile the coach asks the client to think and reflect, they hold the space for CI to take its course. The coach is the generator and director of the wheels.

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