

Evaluate, Analyze, Describe (EAD): Confronting Underlying Issues of Racism and Other Prejudices for Effective Intercultural Communication

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Abstract

Racism and other prejudices have hindered efforts to diversify and further many fields, including education, psychology, politics, law, and healthcare (Race for Opportunity, 2010). Although there are many ways to combat these prejudices, intercultural communication continues to be a vital component in assisting individuals and groups with valuing the past, understanding the present, and preparing for the future of communication in a global society (Sadri and Flammia, 2011, p. 19). This paper provides a brief overview of pertinent research and major theories related to communicating with people of different cultural backgrounds, as well as useful techniques and strategies to use when teaching in international or multinational classrooms, and working or consulting in international or multinational companies, organizations, and educational institutions. It also includes data collected via surveys and interviews that helps to shed light on underlying issues of racism and discontent in Japanese and Nigerian populations within Japan, and concludes with a description of a new approach to one of the most common intercultural communication exercises called the E.A.D. (Evaluate, Analyze, Describe). While this exercise has proved to increase cultural awareness and open the lines of communication between individuals from various cultural and lingual backgrounds, research also shows that other strategies may be necessary to achieve desired levels of communication.

Keywords: Intercultural communication; cross-cultural communication; racism; white racial models; Describe, Interpret, Evaluate (D.I.E) exercise.

Introduction

As educators, counselors, and other relevant professionals working with and managing groups of people from diverse racial and cultural backgrounds, there is an inherent, although often debated, responsibility to assuage prejudices. Discussing any type of prejudice in a learning environment, such as a classroom, an office gathering, such as an in-house workshop or retreat, or in other professional settings, such as international conferences or professional development seminars, is never an easy task, and it can be an extremely uncomfortable and painful experience for all those involved, particularly when the person leading the activity is exposing underlying prejudicial tension among the group. In settings where people of various national and cultural identities are working or learning together, underlying issues, such as racism or sexism, may reveal themselves. However, prejudices, such as racism (which “has parallel application for terms like sexism, classism, and xenophobia”), can lose their power and influence with increased cultural awareness, sensitivity, and effective intercultural communication (Baldwin et al., 2014, p. 123; pp. 128-130).

It is the goal of this paper, therefore, to support ways to increase both cultural awareness and sensitivity while enhancing communication between cultures. In order to contribute to this goal, this paper will reflect on:

- ♦ Pertinent literature that will assist in understanding prejudices, specifically racism, Acceptance (belief that all people have equal opportunities to succeed),
- ♦ Relevant literature that will also assist in understanding intercultural communication;
- ♦ Several continuing research studies that help reveal racial tension among different cultural groups; and
- ♦ The new intercultural communication exercise called the Evaluate, Analyze Describe (EAD).

It is possible that there will be individuals or small groups who choose to believe that prejudices, such as racism or sexism, could not possibly exist at their child’s school, their workplace or within their very community. Michael Brown’s death in Ferguson, Missouri, as well as other racially charged incidents across America, has affected not only this community, but the entire world, and has brought the issue of racism to the surface. Although, at this point in time, it is not certain if racism played a role in the shooting of Michael Brown, the comments left by readers of various MSN articles are telling of the underlying issues that permeate the world. Words to describe the police officer, who is white, ranged from “murderer” to “racist white devil”; however, the words used to describe the victim, who was black, ranged from “thug” to “criminal,” and the protesters were labeled the worst—“thugs,” “welfare thieves,” “uncivilized brutes,” and, probably the worst, “monkeys” (Salter, 2104; Zagier, 2014). These comments demonstrate that racism remains a considerable challenge to society.

It should be noted that although the E.A.D. is able to elicit a variety of underlying prejudices, including sexism, xenophobia, bigotry, stereotypes, and issues of power and privilege, by helping individuals discover harmful attitudes and derogatory beliefs and assisting with open, reflective communication, this paper will focus mainly on racism, as this issue has been most prevalent in recent news. Before delving into how to confront underlying issues of prejudice, it is important to understand some white race models that provided the foundation for this study and the development of the E.A.D. While these models all have the term “white” embedded in them, I choose not to include this term when consulting, counseling individuals, families, and groups, and teaching in educational institutions, as the models are still relevant and applicable to other non-Caucasian cultures. People of Color Racial Identity Models do exist, but the original intention of these models—to explain how members of groups of color adapted in unfair environments—other models are better applied when considering a variety of cultures and intercultural communication exercises, such as the E.A.D.

Race Models

The following three models have been classified as “white” race models, with more detail provided for Helms’ model for explanatory purposes. However, for the purposes of this paper and the research surrounding the intercultural communication exercise, the E.A.D., as well as taking into account other contingencies in a culture that may lead to racial identity; the “white” has been omitted, thus making the models applicable to any culture.

Helms’ (1984, 1995) (White) Racial Identity Development Model

Helms’ (1984, 1990) theory details the racial identity formation of White people, and Helms and Piper (1994) describe white Americans as “those Americans who self-identify or are commonly identified as belonging exclusively to the White racial group regardless of the continental source (e.g., Europe, Asia) of that racial ancestry” (p. 126). Within this model, racial identity “develops as we move from a lack of awareness of our own racial background to an awareness and integration of our race into our sense of who we are” (Daniels, p. 258), and this happens in six phases: contact, disintegration, reintegration, pseudo-independence, immersion/emersion, and autonomy (Helms, 1995).

Hardiman’s (1992) (White) Racial Identity Development Model contains stages, beginning with a naïve stage and ending with a stage that encompasses the internalizing of a nonracist identity.

- ♦ Stages: Naiveté (little or no awareness of race),
- ♦ Acceptance (belief that all people have equal opportunities to succeed),
- ♦ Resistance (denial system is destroyed, racist attitudes are acknowledged),
- ♦ Redefinition (biases and prejudices are confronted, and responsibility is accepted), and
- ♦ Internalization (nonracist identity is developed).

Rowe, et al.’s (1994) White Racial Consciousness Model consists of “types,” and moves from avoidant types to integrative types.

- ♦ Avoidant Type: Does not consider his or her racial identity; does not express concern over racism
- ♦ Dependent Type: Committed a superficial attitude toward race
- ♦ Dissonant Type: Uncertainty around his/her racial consciousness and other minority concerns; questions previously held beliefs
- ♦ Dominative Type: Holds very ethnocentric beliefs
- ♦ Conflict Type: Opposed to overt racism, but is opposed to programs that reduce or eliminate racism
- ♦ Reactive Type: Aware of racism and reacts to it
- ♦ Integrative Type: Comfortable with their race; governed by “the reality of what will make a difference” (Daniels, p. 261).

These models and their stages are listed here as a reference for when the E.A.D. is incorporated into a consultation, counseling session or classroom lesson plan. Now that the race models have been outlined, it is important to gain a deeper understanding of intercultural communication, and how it is applicable to a variety of business, academic, and psychological situations.

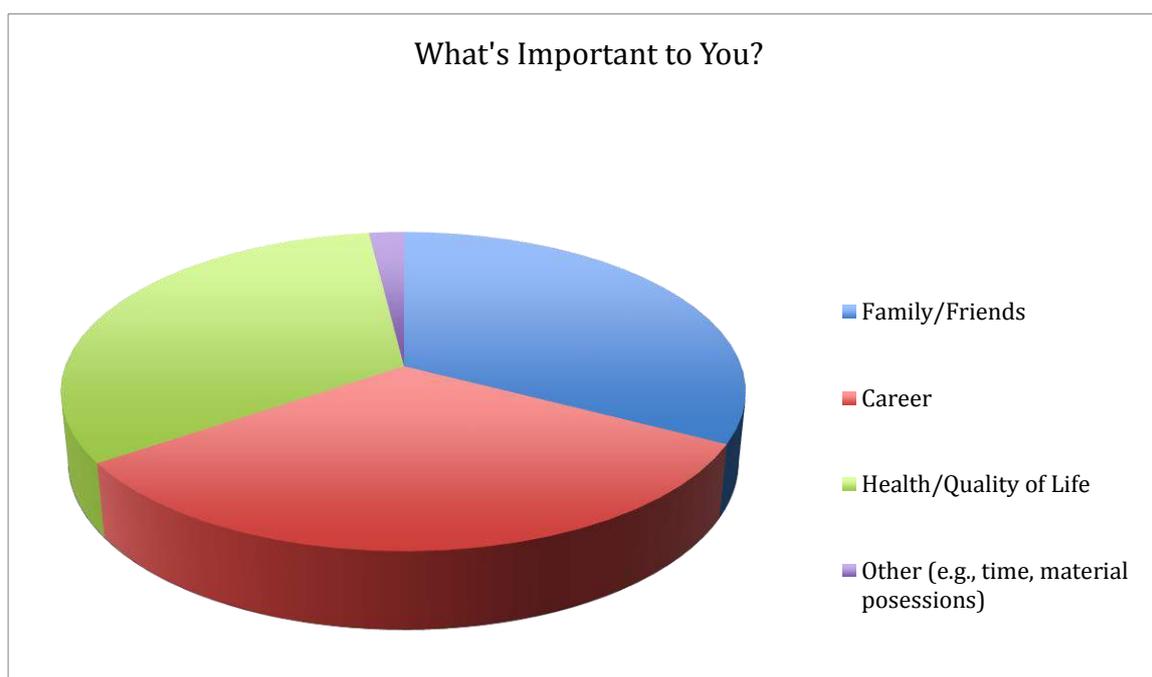
Intercultural Communication

Countless articles and books have indulged in the cliché observation regarding the world becoming smaller. The world is, in fact, becoming easier to access, both physically and virtually, thanks mostly to advancing technology, immigration, and globalization; however, it is deceiving

to believe that an accessible, multicultural world equals a diverse, accepting, and communicative one.

In an ongoing study, titled “What’s Important to You?” spanning from 2010 to 2014, I surveyed 500 people from the United States, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Egypt, South Africa, Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Denmark, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Russia, Ukraine, South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, China, Thailand, the Philippines, Australia, and New Zealand. Participants were asked to list the three things that are most important to them, with no further details given. The results continue to reveal 98% of responses fall into these three categories, as illustrated in Chart 1:

Chart 1. What’s Important to You?



Because the results are generally the same no matter which country one was born in, it would be easy to hypothesize that all human beings share something fundamentally in common regardless of race, language, and cultural and religious beliefs, and while some choose to believe that every human is part of one race—the human race—human beings are much more complicated than that, and cultural differences need to be respected and celebrated.

If humans are different, and these cultural differences must be acknowledged and respected, then an understanding of *culture* is in order. In 1871, Edward B. Tyler provided the first working definition of culture: “Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, arts, law, morals, custom, and any other habits acquired by humans who are members of a society.” Another definition by Kovel (1984) defines *culture* as “an evolving system of meaningful relations deriving from the sum total of the activities and institutions of a society” (p. 25). To extend these definitions, Klopff and McCroskey (2007) present two means of viewing culture—a broad version and a narrow version: the broad version includes “artifacts” (society’s manufactured items), “sociofacts” (society’s norms and laws), and “mentifacts” (cognition and emotion); the narrow version includes a more personal experience that influences how one thinks and behaves within that society (p. 21). From these descriptions, an image of what culture is and why it is so important can be formed.

Before delving any further, though, a definition of culture usually leads to other commonly heard terms, and it is imperative that we separate them because they are oftentimes used interchangeably, which is one of the missteps that leads communicators further away from communicating effectively interculturally. The terms in question are multicultural, cross-cultural, and intercultural.

- ♦ Multicultural means two or more cultures living alongside one another and while this involves some levels of tolerance and superficial social interactions, communication usually does not reach deeper depths than that.
- ♦ Cross-Cultural means two or more cultures living alongside one another and while there are attempts at reaching across cultural borders, there is a level of intentionality and community building that is necessary in order to build permanent bridges between cultures.
- ♦ Intercultural means social structures and interactions are defined by understanding, acceptance, respect, freedom, equality, diversity, and celebration.

Given these definitions, intercultural communication—“a communicative exchange between persons of different cultures”—and the training involved has never been more in demand (Klopf and McCroskey, 2007, p. 58). Intercultural communities should reflect social structures and daily interactions that are defined by understanding, acceptance, respect, freedom, equality, diversity, and celebration, and yet there are challenges to intercultural communication: cultural assumptions, prejudices, stereotypes, miscommunications, misinterpretations, and racism, to name just a few. Strategies to overcome these challenges are self-awareness, avoiding stereotypes, honesty, respect, inquiry, and acceptance of differences and the difficulties that naturally occur in communication.

Here is a summary of some of the notable researchers and their contributions to intercultural communication:

- ♦ Edward T. Hall (1990): Low Context Cultures (where explicit communication is important; e.g. The United States of America and Australia) and High Context Cultures (where norms are understood; e.g. France and Japan).
- ♦ Geert Hofstede (1991): studied interactions between national cultures (values in the workplace are influenced by culture) and organizational cultures (collective programming of the mind that distinguishes members of one organization from others).
- ♦ Fons Trompenaars (1997): Model of National Culture Differences, which includes individualist vs. collectivist societies.
- ♦ Milton Bennett (1977): Development Model of Intercultural Sensitivity and the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI). The IDI measures intercultural competence, with ranges from monocultural to intercultural mindset.
- ♦ Banks (2004): Views on Multicultural Education that include multicultural content integration and prejudice reduction.

This list is hardly exhaustive, but these researchers and their significant studies related to intercultural communication, race, and education, provide a backdrop for the following research project and, ultimately, the creation of the E.A.D. This study, conducted in Japan using two groups—Japanese and Nigerians—was conducted in order to obtain insight into possible underlying issues of racism, and to see how an intercultural communication tool like the E.A.D. can be applied.

Confronting Underlying Issues of Racism

Japan

Neither a history of Japan's racial tensions with other countries, such as China and Korea, nor the current extreme right-wing views of Japan's nationalist groups will be included because such historical events, such as the Nanjing incident (Askew, 2002), or modern acts of xenophobia, such as the attack on a Chinese tour bus (Jize, 2010), would not accurately depict Japan's current stance with regards to immigration and cultural diversity.

However, in order to obtain a glimpse into this current state of mind, 27 adult Japanese male and 23 adult Japanese females currently living in Japan were randomly chosen to participate in a brief survey. All participants were approached while in public, and were asked for two pieces of information: 1) their age, and 2) their immediate and honest response to one statement: "Say the first word that comes to mind when I say *Nigerian*" (the questions were asked in Japanese, but translated into English for this publication). Twenty-five (25) participants responded without hesitation, "怖い" ("Kowai,"), which is Japanese for *scary* or *I'm afraid*). Eighteen (18) of the female participants made facial and hand gestures to indicate their fear, and while at first not officially documented, seventeen (17) of the Japanese female participants, along with one (1) Japanese male participant, followed up their initial response with the word "やだ!" ("Yada!"), which has many translations, but most commonly is used to express the sentiment, "I don't want [it/to do it]"; surprisingly, a large portion of the participants referred to Nigerians in Japan as "犯罪者" ("Hanzaisha")—criminals. Table 1 shows the frequency of the words Japanese participants used to describe their perception of Nigerians in Japan.

Table 1. Frequency of the words used by Japanese participants

Frequency of the Words	Japanese Male Participants (n=27)	Japanese Female Participant (n=23)	Total
怖い ("Kowai")	6	19	25
犯罪者 ("Hanzaisha")	21	4	25
やだ ("Yada") (*used in addition to the two words above)	1	17	18

Kovel (1984) explores models of white racial identity development, and pointed to some startling research: "The less aware subjects were of their White identity, the more likely they were to exhibit increased levels of racism" (p. 265). While I am not suggesting the Japanese should be compared to white Anglo-Saxon Americans, I do think there is a connection between the racial identity models and current racial beliefs with regards to a small number of immigrants inhabiting a country like Japan where there is one dominant race. Again, the point of this survey was not to implicate the Japanese in acts of racial profiling, but rather reveal the need to further cultural awareness, sensitivity, and acceptance on a global scale. One way this can be achieved is through cultural education, and training people to communicate effectively with people from different cultures.

Nigeria

After collecting the data from the Japanese participants, nineteen (19) adult Nigerian men and eleven (11) adult Nigerian woman currently living in Japan were asked for two similar pieces of information: 1) their age, and 2) their immediate and honest response to one phrase: "Say the first word that comes to mind when I say *Japanese people*" (Note: This study took place in October 2014, in Tokyo). Table 2 shows the frequency of the words Nigerian immigrants used to describe their perception of Japanese people: ignorant, close-minded, rude, and racist.

Table 2. Frequency of the words used by Nigerian participants

Frequency of the Words	Nigerian Male Participants (<i>n</i> =29)	Nigerian Female Participant (<i>n</i> =21)	Total
Ignorant	4	1	5
Close-minded	2	0	2
Rude	6	9	15
Racist	17	11	28

There are many race models, and while the following are labeled “white race models,” I do not include “white” when I apply them to my research because I believe these models can be applied to all races. The most notable race models include Hardiman’s (White) Racial Identity Model (1992); Helm’s (White) Racial Identity Development Model (1995); and Rowe et al.’s (1994) (White) Racial Consciousness Model (Daniels, 2011). Kovel (1984) explores models of white racial identity development, and pointed to some startling research: “The less aware subjects were of their White identity, the more likely they were to exhibit increased levels of racism” (p. 265). Again, to be clear, while the Japanese should not be compared to white Anglo-Saxon Americans, I do believe, as Kovel (1984) stresses, that there is a connection between the racial identity models’ stages of awareness and current racial beliefs with regards to immigrants inhabiting a country where there is one dominant race.

Again, the point of these surveys was neither to accuse the Japanese nor the Nigerian populations of racial profiling, but reveal the need to further cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity, and cultural acceptance on a global scale, and this can be achieved, in part, through effective intercultural communication.

Discussion of EAD in Terms of Race Models

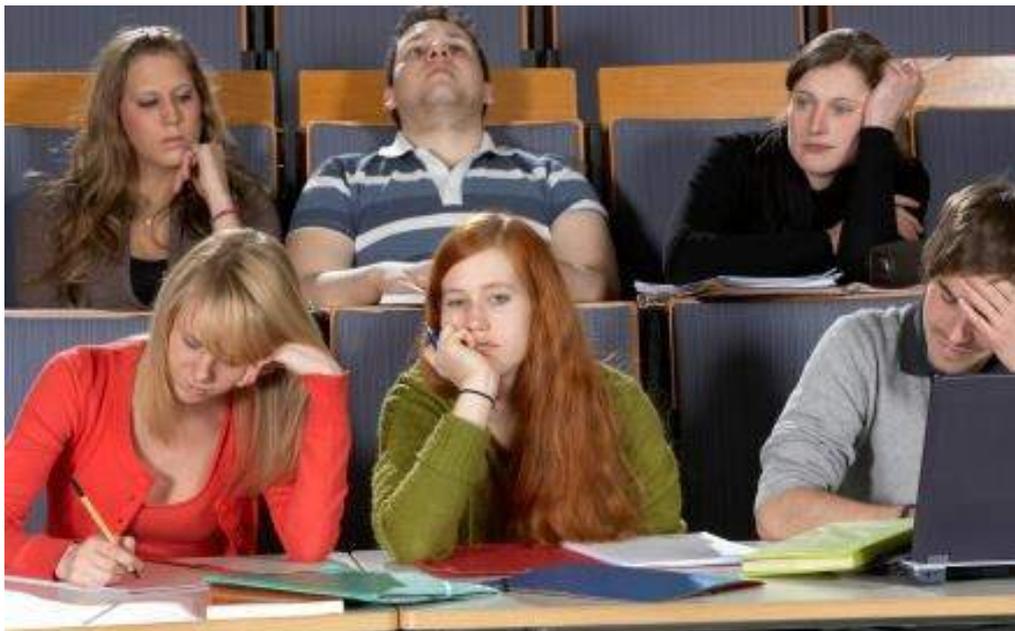
Hardiman’s (White) Racial Identity Model (1992); Helm’s (White) Racial Identity Development Model (1995); and Rowe et al.’s (1994) (White) Racial Consciousness Model collectively aim for individual autonomy that brings forth a deep internalization of a nonracist identity, leading to a level of comfort with one’s race and culture, and thereby being more accepting of others. In the next section, there will be a closer examination of the Describe, Interpret, and Evaluate (DIE), which is meant to “become aware of value judgments [and to] show the personal and cultural relativity of interpretations and evaluation” (Bennett, Bennett, and Stillings, 1977). The approach taken by the E.A.D. is in direct congruence with the goals listed in the above race models because it attempts to facilitate open communication among individuals from diverse racial and cultural backgrounds, uncover underlying racist or other prejudicial thoughts and beliefs, and accept others by creating a bridge between the differences that exist—a bridge of acknowledgement, acceptance, respect, and celebration. With this in mind, we will conclude with a detailed look at the E.A.D. and how it can be applied in a variety of educational, psychological, and other professional settings.

The E.A.D.

As stated earlier, the Describe, Interpret, and Evaluate (DIE) is one of the most common exercises used in intercultural training. The D.I.E. exercise asks participants to “describe, interpret, and evaluate” an ambiguous object or photograph (Bennett, Bennett, & Stillings, 1977). Finding the model and its acronym problematic, Nam & Condon (2010) suggested D.A.E. (Describe, Analyze, Evaluate), with “analyze” providing clearer directions for participants, compared to the previous term “interpret” (in other words, problem solving versus judging) (p. 84). However, when I applied these models to various situations—classrooms, teacher training

sessions, business and organization consultations, and psychological counseling sessions, I found that the participants/clients always struggled with *not* judging the pictures first. While the D.A.E. is more effective in its clarity, I found that by allowing participants to first evaluate a picture, they often expressed their true opinions about certain individuals or situations that were being displayed.

The E.A.D. is administered as follows: Before presenting the E.A.D. model to participants, explain that they are going to see an object, photograph or short video, or hear a scenario (e.g., a case study), and that the goal is to first evaluate or judge it, then analyze it, and finally describe it in the simplest of terms. I then show them a picture (or play the movie or read the scenario). One of the most common photographs I use is the following:



Sources (July 10, 2015): <https://www.flickr.com/photos/cybrarian77/6284697172/sizes/o/> and <http://www.thesociologicalcinema.com/blog/teaching-the-presentation-of-self-in-the-classroom>

Interestingly enough, when I use this photograph and conduct the D.I.E. or the D.A.E., about 98% of the time no one states the obvious—that all the students are white. When I conduct the exercise using the E.A.D., not only do participant immediately realize that all the students are white, but racially charged adjectives, such as “privileged,” become attached to the comments. This type of comment has led to incredibly honest discussions on race, power and privilege, and taking steps backward to then talk about analyses and descriptions opens the doors to further discussions and exercises that help begin to build (or in some cases repair) trust, respect, and open communication.

I began using more ambiguous or potentially controversial photographs, and decided to let them judge the photos first. I conducted two more research studies using the E.A.D. in two different settings within two different fields—education and psychology. The results were remarkable: Not only were racially charged comments made without censorship, but sexist and bigoted comments were openly made, as well. What followed was even more amazing: The individuals/groups began to openly discuss the roots of these comments, and worked to dispel them.

In order to measure its efficacy, in 2014, 180 university students in Japan (Japanese, Chinese, Korean, and Brazilian, ages 18 to 21 years old) were given the E.A.D. exercise as part of an English-language course. After completing the E.A.D. exercise, the students were given a survey to measure its effectiveness. Out of 180 students, 87% responded “Strongly Agree” when asked if

the E.A.D. helped them self-reflect and critically evaluate their personal beliefs and potential biases.

The E.A.D. has also proven to be effective in the field of psychology. Between 2013 and 2014, 20 Japanese, American, Canadian, and British clients who were between the ages of 29-52, and receiving regular, weekly psychological counseling, were also given the E.A.D. exercise. Out of 20 clients, 17 responded “Strongly Agree” when asked if the E.A.D. helped them self-reflect and critically evaluate their personal beliefs and potential biases.

Conclusion

Regardless of position or context, the E.A.D. intercultural communication exercise can help foster better relationships among clients, students and employees of varying cultural identities. If you are charged with improving work relations among your students or colleagues, or trying to help someone who is, and you suspect there is underlying racial tension or other prejudicial beliefs, there are many approaches you can take to confront these issues, and strategies to implement that will diffuse the situation. The goal is to confront prejudice head-on, and the E.A.D. accomplishes this goal by not asking participants to objectively describe what they see first, but instead, evaluate what they see; in other words, immediately answer the question, “How do I feel about what I see” (Nam & Condon, 2010, p. 85). By moving backwards through the D.I.E./D.A.E. process, people are able to move forward, confronting underlying racism, sexism or other issues that may be causing undue hardship and stress in the home, classroom or workplace. The goals for each and every session you use the E.A.D. should be to help those participating improve their self-awareness, cultural sensitivity, and effective intercultural communication.

The truth is that racism and other prejudices are a part of every society, and unfortunately will be for quite some time. It should come as no surprise to anyone, for it is embedded in who we are as racial and cultural beings, as Allport (1954) notes:

Everywhere on earth we find a condition of separateness among groups. People mate with their own kind. They eat, play, reside in homogeneous clusters. They visit with their own kind, and prefer to worship together. Much of this automatic cohesion is due to nothing more than convenience. There is no need to turn to out-groups for companionship. With plenty of people at hand to choose from, why create for ourselves the trouble of adjusting to new languages, new food, new cultures, or to the people of a different educational level? (p. 17)

Even though this observation was made over 60 years ago, this stark reality can still be applied to many cultural groups and communities today, and because of this, new research on race will continue to grow. Therefore, this new body of research, as well as new race models that may form, coupled with a focus on intercultural communication, would allow for further in-depth studies using the E.A.D. A longitudinal study would also help to solidify the efficacy of the E.A.D. in more fields, such as politics and law, but so far its use has proven to be an effective tool to assist with opening the doors of communication, and uncovering the underlying issues of racism and other prejudices that may be blocking them.

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