

Internationalization of Higher Education: Preparing Faculty to Teach Cross-culturally

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The need to effectively prepare faculty to teach in a cross-cultural environment has become imperative in the context of globalizing higher education (Deardorff, 2009; Verbik, 2007). Many higher education institutions around the world have internationalized their degrees and programs, and they have established foreign branch campuses to provide their intellectual resources in other countries (Altbach, 2010; Armstrong, 2007). In this paradigm, faculty members are contracted from the home campus or from an outside organization to teach in the foreign branch, but they receive little formal preparation to teach in this type of environment (Lewin, 2008; McBurnie & Ziguras, 2007). Faculty members are unaware of culturally competent pedagogical strategies on how to respond in culturally sensitive ways, and thus they lack the ability to successfully communicate and work with learners from other cultures (Paige & Goode, 2009). This paper focuses on preparing faculty to teach cross-culturally at international branch campuses. Using Darla Deardorff's process model of intercultural competency, I will develop a framework that focuses on three core elements of Deardorff's process model—attitudes, knowledge and comprehension, and skills—that will help faculty members to teach internationally. In the paper's conclusion, I will suggest best practices and discuss the implications of intercultural competency for transnational teaching.

“Internationalization” in the context of higher education is understood in a variety of ways. It can be interpreted differently depending on various stakeholders, such as governments, educational institutions, governing boards, faculty members, and academic programs (Zolfaghari, Sabran, & Zolfaghari, 2009). For instance, Ellingboe (1998) explains that internationalization is a complex process of integrating an international perspective into a higher education institution “that involves many stakeholders working to change the internal dynamics of an institution to respond and adapt appropriately to an increasingly diverse, globally focused, ever-changing external environment” (p. 199). In the same vein, Zolfaghari, Sabran, & Zolfaghari (2009) describe the internationalization of higher education as the “integration and infusion of an international dimension as a central part of a university's programs” (p. 5). This process may include reforming the curriculum in order to reflect an international scope, or it may encompass international research activities. This paper is based on Knight's (1999) comprehensive definition of the internationalization of higher education as “the process of integrating an international/intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of the institution” (p. 16) and will focus on one stakeholder – the faculty member.

Many universities have engaged in the internationalization of higher education through transnational education initiatives (Altbach & Knight, 2007). One of the main manifestations of transnational education is the branch campus, which is a joint venture between two higher education institutions and involves the transporting of programs and degrees from one country (the home country) to another (the foreign

country) (McBurnie & Ziguras, 2007; Verbik, 2007). Universities are ready to internationalize higher education in order to respond to the current educational climate by infusing diversity into their student population, interacting with multicultural populations, and creating an international learning experience (Greenholz, 2000; Otten, 2003; Wang, 2008).

Within the branch campus model, faculty members fly in from the home country to teach students in the foreign country, which is known as *transnational* teaching (Smith, 2010). Transnational faculty members are hired to provide their expertise in a specialized area, or they are called upon to enrich the offerings in the foreign branch institution (Bodycott & Walker, 2010). McBurnie and Ziguras (2007) point out that faculty members generally have a demanding schedule since they must simultaneously manage their courses at the home campus while teaching intensive blocks of classes at the branch.

International teaching opportunities such as these have increased due to the lucrative business ventures that many universities have undertaken in order to internationalize their higher education degrees and programs. However, faculty members are not sufficiently prepared by their institutions to meet these challenges (Bodycott & Walker, 2000; Crabtree & Sapp, 2004; Dunn & Wallace, 2006; Hollis & Guzman, 2005; Leask, 2008; Smith, 2010; Teekens, 2003). Many faculty members do not receive sufficient preparation to teach students from diverse populations in international branch campuses, let alone formal intercultural competency training (Smith, 2010; Wang, 2008). For instance, in a study of lecturers from three North American universities, none of the participants were involved in pre-departure training for transnational

teaching (Gribble & Ziguras, 2003). If transnational faculty members do receive cross-cultural teacher training, it is often basic and generalized, and it deals with student learning styles, rather than helping faculty members gain the competencies needed to negotiate other cultures (Gribble & Ziguras, 2003; Leask, 2008, Otten, 2003).

Organizations have been created to monitor transnational teaching, such as the Global Alliance for Transnational Education (GATE), which has generated standards stipulating that transnational faculty members must have the appropriate expertise and intercultural awareness to teach in transnational environments (Greenholz, 2000). However, the extent to which these requirements are being monitored is unclear. Moreover, little scholarly research, with the exception of anecdotal information and isolated experiences shared at conferences, has been conducted in regards to how transnational faculty members develop the necessary skills to teach in cross-cultural environments (Gribble & Ziguras, 2003; Smith, 2010). It is evident that intercultural teaching standards are not being adequately monitored, resulting in the fact that transnational faculty members receive inadequate intercultural preparation to teach in branch campuses.

This lack of research in regards to preparing faculty to teach cross-culturally in international branch campuses is surprising given that teaching faculty members are the “primary facilitators of students’ learning” (Johnson, 2003, p. 22). If they are not prepared to teach in a cross-cultural, globally diverse setting, then how can they provide an equitable educational environment for their students? In this paper, I will focus on preparing faculty to teach cross-culturally at international branch campuses. Using Darla Deardorff’s process model of intercultural competency, I will develop a framework that focuses on three core elements of Deardorff’s process model—attitudes, knowledge and comprehension, and skills—that will help faculty members to teach internationally. In the paper’s conclusion, I will suggest best practices and discuss the implications of intercultural competency for transnational teaching.

Process Model of Intercultural Competence

According to Deardorff (2009), intercultural competence is defined as a person’s ability to interact effectively and appropriately in cross-cultural situations based on his or her intercultural attitudes, knowledge and comprehension, and skills. Deardorff depicts intercultural competence, like the definitions offered in recent discussions, as a non-static process that involves the recognition of being in a particular cultural context, the appreciation of cultural differences, and the development of general strategies to adapt to cultural

difference (Bennett, Bennett, & Allen, 2003; Paige & Goode, 2009). Deardorff’s definition is also in agreement with that of Hiller & Wozniak (2009), who argue that being intercultural competent means having the capacity to be sensitive to other cultural systems and the ability to approach cultural “others” without feeling insecure or threatened.

Deardorff’s process model of intercultural competence was developed using a grounded theory approach by surveying experts in the field of international education in the United States in order to develop a consensus of what constitutes intercultural competency. The elements that the experts agreed upon were classified and placed into a framework of three core elements through which to acquire intercultural competence: (1) attitudes, (2) knowledge and comprehension, and (3) skills (Deardorff, 2009). Based on these findings, Deardorff argues that one can enter the process of developing intercultural competence at any point, but she also highlights that attitudes are a significant starting point.

Deardorff does not offer direct, concrete definitions of the three core elements that she discusses; however, other cultural experts who have commented on Deardorff’s work have summarized the terms that she uses. Attitudes encompass valuing and being open to other cultures (Paige & Goode, 2009), having a positive outlook towards different cultures, being motivated to understand other cultures, and resisting ethnocentric behavior (Teekens, 2003). Knowledge and comprehension is described as having cultural self-awareness; developing culture-specific information, such as familiarity with the ways in which one’s gender role is viewed in other cultures; and developing linguistic knowledge (Paige & Goode, 2009). Skills entail enhancing the aptitude for engaging in critical self-reflection and reflexivity and communicating across cultures (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). One’s level of intercultural competence depends upon moving through these three core elements effectively.

When the core elements of attitudes, knowledge and comprehension, and skills act together, they produce two desired outcomes: (1) a shift in one’s frame of reference, in which “adaptability and flexibility play a central role” (internal), and (2) a shift in effective behavior in “intercultural situations and communication” (external) (Deardorff, 2009, p. 338). The process of gaining intercultural competence evolves over time. In order for this evolution to take place, there must be willingness, a conscious attempt, and a desire to achieve intercultural competence even though this process can be complex and overwhelming (Trimble, Pederson, & Rodela, 2009). The advantage of adopting this process model is that it can be used as a framework for best practices in order to cultivate intercultural proficiency as well as to provide a starting

point at which to mentor and train international teaching professionals (Deardorff, 2009).

Attitudes

The first core element in the process of acquiring intercultural competence is attitudes. When faculty members are preparing to teach cross-culturally, it is critical for them to learn to respect and value other cultures (Deardorff, 2009). It is also important to examine their intrinsic motivation for teaching internationally, openness to other cultures, and ethnocentric assumptions.

Valuing Other Cultures

This may be onerous as transnational faculty members face the challenge of adjusting to the branch institution in the foreign country without the usual support of co-workers, family, or friends (Bodycott & Walker, 2000; Debowski, 2003). Also, inadequate cultural preparation prior to the faculty member's departure may lead to a lack of cultural confidence that can spiral into negative viewpoints that devalue other cultures (Hollins & Guzman, 2005; Walters, Garri, & Walters, 2009). The success of intercultural competence rests upon the transnational faculty member's ability to view other cultures in a positive way (Hiller & Wozniak, 2009). Leask (2004) points out that faculty from Adelaide, Australia, who were sent to teach at a branch campus in Hong Kong stressed the importance of negotiating one's attitudes and appreciating the ideas and opinions of those from the foreign culture. Even though developing intercultural understanding must begin with the teacher's attitude (Crabtree & Sapp, 2004), the university sending the faculty members abroad must recognize the value of providing them with the opportunity to enhance their knowledge of the culture in which they are being sent to teach. Otherwise, feelings of anxiety, frustration, confusion, and disorientation may develop.

Motivation

Apart from valuing other cultures, examining what intrinsically motivates transnational faculty to teach cross-culturally and to learn about other cultures is a key factor in developing intercultural proficiency. Being enthusiastic and curious about other cultures increases faculty members' global savvy, "enhances their ability to understand people," and augments "their capacity for dealing with uncertainty and managing tension" (Gregerson, Morisson, & Black, 1998, as cited in Bennett, 2009, p. 128). Opal (2001) defines "curiosity" as being open and having a sense of wonder beyond the limits of what is accepted understanding,

even if it causes a feeling of being overwhelmed. This internal drive to suspend assumptions and judgments allows people to be open to multiple perspectives (Bennett, 2009). Furthermore, motivation can shift internal frames and strengthen intercultural adaptability and its outcomes (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). For instance, if a transnational faculty member naturally enjoys being in new cultural contexts, his or her innate enthusiasm will affect cross-cultural teaching in a positive way. In other words, one's motivation to teach in a cross-cultural setting will greatly influence the type of experience one will have, a topic that should be explored in pre-departure training.

Openness to Other Cultures

Another aspect of the attitudes needed for intercultural competence is the ability to be receptive to other cultures. Dunn and Wallace (2006) point out that, when transnational faculty members teach in a cross-cultural environment, they must be open to other cultures by suspending their judgments. Critical discussions regarding beliefs and cross-cultural teaching should take place during professional development seminars, where seasoned transnational faculty members share their experiences with new transnational faculty members. These seminars could address the importance of navigating ambiguity and the unease of being in cross-cultural situations in order for faculty members to better cope with being in a foreign context (Hiller & Wozniak, 2009).

Ethnocentricity

Understanding one's ethnocentric assumptions is another important facet in developing the attitudes necessary for intercultural competency. Ellis (2006) explains that *ethnocentricity*, a belief that one's culture is superior to others, narrows perceptions, inhibits learning and communication, and leads to misunderstandings. It also causes conscious and subconscious alienation when communicating with others from different cultural backgrounds. Leask (2004) argues that transnational teaching is an opportunity for faculty going abroad to overcome ethnocentrism by learning about other cultures rather than expecting students in the foreign country to be more like the dominant culture (Ellis, 2006). Therefore, transnational faculty members must be cognizant of tendencies to construct differences according to their values, beliefs, and perceptions, as this creates a binary of "us" and "them." This "othering" causes those of different cultures to feel less valued as human beings, reinforces dominant views, creates stereotypes, and promotes discrimination (Kim & Hubbard, 2007). Thus, cross-cultural teaching in an international branch

campus should be seen as an opportunity to learn about oneself and other cultural perspectives. Therefore, the department sending transnational faculty members to branch campuses should provide pre-departure training that both encompasses ways for them to examine and challenge their ethnocentric assumptions and promotes other cultural viewpoints (Storti, 2009). Paige and Goode (2009) explain that those who receive intercultural competency training have more expertise and confidence when dealing with cultural issues, as opposed to those who do not.

Knowledge and Comprehension

Knowledge and comprehension is the second core element in the dynamic process of developing intercultural competence. When a faculty member is preparing to teach in international branch campuses, it is important to examine his or her cultural self-awareness; develop culture-specific knowledge, such as how gender roles are perceived in other cultures; and understand both the local language and the function of language within cultures.

Cultural Self-Awareness

Teaching cross-culturally in an international branch campus is an opportunity for transnational faculty members to examine their cultural self-awareness, which is described as an understanding of “how the culture(s) we are raised in contribute to our individual identities, our preferred patterns of behavior, our values, and our ways of thinking” (Paige & Goode, 2009, p. 336). Cultural self-awareness is the basis for intercultural competency because it allows us to understand ourselves as cultural beings and makes it easier to recognize other cultural practices, respect other cultures, and manage cultural challenges (Bennett, 2009; Paige & Goode, 2009). Greenholz (2000) believes that it is a prerequisite for advancing through the stages of intercultural competence. The ability to comprehend one’s cultural norms and expectations, as well as recognition of cultural differences, provide a strong foundation for cross-cultural teaching. However, many institutions that send their faculty members to teach in branch campuses do not support opportunities for the development of this type of knowledge (Dunn & Wallace, 2006). This gap may be due to the lack of time, resources, priority, or competing interests. Nonetheless, it is essential for transnational faculty members to receive some form of preparation, whether it is cultural mentoring or case study activities that allow faculty members to explore their culture, individual identity, and ways of thinking.

Gender Roles

Being aware of how gender roles are viewed in various cross-cultural settings is an important aspect of developing the knowledge and comprehension necessary for intercultural competency. Teekens (2003) explains that gender roles are culture-specific and implicitly learned. For instance, some students may find it difficult to adjust to having a male faculty member teach a course as this may not be what they are accustomed to in their home country (Merriam, 2007). Also, teacher-centered societies such as India and Japan hold strong gender stereotypes that are deeply embedded in their cultures (Merriam, 2007). Crabtree and Sapp (2004) provide their own example of how Robin Crabtree’s gender and race were viewed differently in Brazil in comparison with her experiences of teaching in American classrooms. For instance, Crabtree was taken aback when a male student approached her, “placed his hand on her shoulder and gazed directly at her while he asked a question about one of the course assignments” (p. 118). Her uncomfortable reaction to this situation forced her to examine her own assumptions about gender roles and to recognize that she and the student held different attitudes towards gender role boundaries. By engaging in professional development opportunities, intercultural competency seminars, or workshops, transnational faculty members will have the opportunity to consider these difficulties in advance by examining their gender roles. It will also enable them to gain the skills needed to avoid obstacles in communication and social interaction, as well as mismatched expectations between themselves and students in the foreign country (Hiller & Wozniak, 2009).

Language

Apart from the need for transnational faculty members to examine culture-specific information, such as gender roles, the use of language is another fundamental aspect of acquiring intercultural proficiency. Language is one of the key means by which cultural knowledge is shared and revealed. According to Whorf (1952) as cited in Smith, Paige, and Steglitz (2003), the use of language is not only a means of conveying ideas, but it also shapes one’s ideas and mental thought processes. In other words, what we think and perceive about the world, particularly cross-cultural experiences, is how we talk about it with others. Language conveys so much more than what is uttered and how it is used because it carries assumptions about the culture itself (Teekens, 2003). For example, the use of “direct or indirect communication,” “implicit cues of social communication,” or the “explicit use of

communication” all frame the interplay between language and culture (Smith, Paige, & Steglitz, 2003, p. 105). Moreover, the use of language functions in tandem with non-verbal behavior, such as body gestures, touch, eye contact, and interpersonal distance to others, which are all significant to intercultural competence. Learning to make adjustments to the appropriateness and effective use of language in a cross-cultural context is a fundamental aspect of preparing faculty members to teach in international branch campuses.

Preparing faculty to teach cross-culturally also requires that they learn the language of the foreign culture or improve their language skills, depending on the duration of the transnational teaching contract. However, McBurnie and Ziguras (2007) and Lewin (2008) indicate that, in addition to receiving inadequate training to instruct diverse learners, faculty members are often oblivious to the native language used in the foreign branch. Paige and Goode (2009) state that those who are unable to speak the language required to function in a foreign country will find intercultural experiences to be more stressful and will feel more isolated. Thus, faculty members who know the language of the target country will feel more comfortable with cross-cultural teaching experiences (Dixon, Borman, & Cotner, 2009).

Skills

Skills are the third core element in the process of developing intercultural competence. They involve self-reflection, reflexivity, and the development of one’s communication abilities. Though these skills are not specific to intercultural competence, they are crucial to processing knowledge about one’s own culture as well as other cultures (Deardorff, 2009).

Self-Reflection

A core element of skills development for intercultural competency is self-reflection. Smith (2010) describes self-reflection as “noticing, making sense, making meaning, and working with meaning” in order to transform learning experiences (p. 114). Mezirow (1998) describes three levels of reflection that facilitate cultural transformation: (1) content reflection, (2) process reflection, and (3) premise reflection. Content reflection refers to what we perceive as the problem surrounding roles and relationships. For instance, what is the role of the faculty member in the classroom: Is it the seer on stage or mentor? Process reflection involves an analysis of the way in which one’s perception of the situation shapes one’s actions and one’s evaluation of the given context (Mezirow, 1998). In other words, how well does a faculty member

negotiate his or her cross-cultural adjustment (Smith, 2010)? Lastly, premise reflection pertains to being aware of why we perceive the things we do, a process that leads to perspective transformation (Mezirow, 1998). For example, Crabtree and Sapp (2004) discuss the ways in which Crabtree negotiated the three levels of reflection in a positive way while she taught in Brazil, since she was willing to adjust her ways of thinking. When Crabtree began teaching in a Master’s program organized by a U.S. university in Brazil, she was confounded by the regular interruption of her class for coffee breaks, which are a daily occurrence in Brazilian culture and “are determined by the cultural norms” of the country (p. 117). This stage represents content reflection, and Crabtree moved past this step and entered the stage of process reflection by recognizing her North American cultural context and realizing that “Brazilians and North Americans place different values on various moments in the educational process and daily schedule. . . .” (p. 117). After coming to this realization, Crabtree was able to undergo Mezirow’s process of perspective transformation by “developing a more flexible and negotiated learning environment” (1998, p. 120) that took into consideration the students’ expectations based on Brazilian cultural norms, as well. By reflecting on the ways in which Crabtree’s cultural beliefs and values affected her perceptions of teacher-student interaction, she realized that it was easier for her to learn to adapt to the local culture, which resulted in a positive cross-cultural learning experience.

Reflexivity

Littlejohn and Domenici (2007) explain that reflexivity denotes having a critical perspective of one’s interaction with others. When we are being reflexive,

- (1) we are aware of the ways in which our interpretations and actions are influenced by others,
- (2) we become conscious of the rules that guide our context, and
- (3) we are able to explore other contexts and rules for interpreting an action in a situation. (p. 146)

In other words, being reflexive means that we are engaged in a process of meta-cognitive construction, thus gaining the tools needed for intercultural competency. For example, Fransman (2003), as cited in Crabtree & Sapp (2004), indicates that reflexivity is required for teachers to transcend existing cultural divides and avoid cultural biases. Reflexivity opens up opportunities to explore different ideologies of other cultures, because merely being in a cross-cultural teaching environment does not enhance intercultural competency. However, the ability to constantly reflect

on the significance of the experience will move faculty members towards a more positive intercultural experience (Greenholz, 2000). If faculty members are not provided with professional development opportunities to learn about or practice reflexivity, there is a greater likelihood that they will experience difficulties understanding different cultural rules and situations, which may lead to a negative teaching experience at the branch campus. Teekens (2003) also stresses that more effort should be made to prepare faculty members to practice reflexivity as part of pre-departure training.

Communication Skills

Having the ability to negotiate different cultures requires effective communication skills, which are a key component of developing intercultural competence. Hannigan (1990) indicates that communication skills include the ability to enter into a meaningful dialogue and successful management of miscommunications. Learning these basic skills is not only beneficial to cross-cultural teaching in a branch campus environment, but it is also an important attribute to have in our diverse global society. An advantage of effectively dialoguing across cultures is that it bridges differences and creates a collective meaning, which could be beneficial when discussing challenging topics in a transnational classroom (Littlejohn & Domenici, 2007). Communication through dialogue has the potential to foster problem-solving and critical thinking skills, to expand one's knowledge base (Ellis, 2006, Wang, 2008), and allow deeper assumptions and meanings to be explored (Simpson, Large, & O'Brien, 2004).

Hannigan (1990) also argues that a key ingredient of communication through dialogue is possessing active listening skills. Littlejohn and Domenici (2007) point out that active listening requires suspending judgment; attending to what is being said, and how it is expressed; and asking clarifying questions. All of these steps exemplify meaningful communication. In developing intercultural competence, it is crucial that faculty members have an opportunity to practice these skills during pre-departure workshops or training sessions (Storti, 2009) through role-playing, case studies, invitational dialogue, and other exercises.

Conclusion

This paper uses Deardorff's process model of intercultural competence as a framework for the preparation of faculty members to teach cross-culturally in international branch campuses. As universities internationalize their degrees and programs through branch campus arrangements, faculty members who are

tasked with teaching transnationally have an increased responsibility to develop the competencies needed to work with people from different cultural backgrounds (Otten, 2003). Transnational faculty members must examine their attitudes toward other cultures, including appreciating other cultural viewpoints as well as understanding their motivation to teach in a foreign context. Developing this competence also means embracing other cultures and challenging one's ethnocentric beliefs. In addition, faculty members teaching abroad must build their knowledge and comprehension of different cultures by practicing self-awareness, examining how their gender roles are viewed in certain cultural environments, and determining how language (verbal and non-verbal) is used to convey ideas and thoughts. Furthermore, developing self-reflexive skills will enable transnational faculty members to think critically about their experiences and interaction with cultural others. Most importantly, acquiring effective communication skills through meaningful dialogue and active listening will provide these faculty members with the key elements of meaningful cross-cultural communication.

It is clear that transnational faculty members must develop the necessary intercultural competencies to successfully teach in cross-cultural environments. It is equally important for transnational faculty members to respond to learners from diverse backgrounds in a way that is positive, appropriate, and respectful to their culture (Hofstede, 1986). Therefore, through pre-departure and ongoing training, faculty members must transform their attitudes, knowledge, and skills in order to facilitate positive interactions with learners from other cultural backgrounds (Otten, 2003; Storti, 2009). Gaining the culture-specific knowledge and principles required to function in other contexts can be fostered through case studies, role-play, discussion groups or individual reflection activities, and other exercises to develop the core elements of intercultural competence (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). However, transnational faculty members undergoing this type of training must understand that developing such competencies is an ongoing process that involves the deconstructing and reconstructing of one's fundamental values, beliefs, and perceptions.

In order to pinpoint the type of training that will be most useful for faculty members teaching in cross-cultural environments, it is advantageous to assess and measure their level of intercultural knowledge and sensitivity in order to tailor professional development programs to their needs. For instance, faculty members can evaluate their level of intercultural sensitivity and worldviews by completing the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), based on Hammer and Bennett's developmental model of intercultural sensitivity (Cushner & Mahon, 2009). Results of the inventory can be used to customize professional development programs.

While professional development and pre-departure and ongoing training opportunities are needed to support transnational faculty in branch campus environments, policy structures must also be in place to support these endeavors. There must be a commitment by the institution at various administrative levels for these types of programs to move forward (Otten, 2003). One of the greatest challenges to cross-cultural teaching and learning is that it must compete with traditional policy interests and key decision-making bodies whose focus tends to be revenue generation (Paige & Goode, 2009). If policy-making bodies are not interested in supporting transnational faculty, then they will override and negate intercultural competency training initiatives. Thus, the institution in the home country must be willing to invest in intercultural competency training (Moodian, 2009).

Universities who have transnational teacher training initiatives in place should also conduct assessments in order to enhance their programs. Palomba and Banta (1999) define assessment as the “systematic collection, review, and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purpose of improving . . . learning and development” (p. 4). Assessment is seen as a key force for “both monitoring and improving standards” in transnational learning environments and plays a vital role in the legitimization of educational experiences (Torrance, 1997, p. 320). Therefore, focusing on elements of intercultural competence, such as the faculty member’s ability to listen, take multiple perspectives, and communicate cross-culturally, is an important aspect of gauging cross-cultural experiences. Assessing transnational teacher training can help identify those transnational members who want to be involved in temporary cross-cultural teaching opportunities, as opposed to those who would like it to be a lifestyle choice and then develop a model suitable to their needs.

Developing intercultural competence is a very complicated and stressful process, as one has to manage situations in which a great deal of information is unknown (Wiseman & Koester, 1993). Furthermore, interacting with people from different cultures can create feelings of uncertainty and anxiety. Uncertainty refers to one’s inability to predict or explain other people’s behavior (the fear of the unknown) (Wiseman & Koester, 1993), whereas anxiety is described as the fear or anticipation of negative consequences. It is natural to experience ambiguity, uncertainty, and anxiety when teaching in a foreign environment, but these situations can be viewed as opportunities for personal growth and learning about oneself and others. Therefore, it is essential for faculty members to foster resiliency and the ability to adjust to ambiguous situations with minimal discomfort, as this capability will be an important asset for transnational teaching.

Overall, Deardorff’s (2006) process model of intercultural competence is a valuable guide and a practical framework in which to develop the competencies needed to teach in cross-cultural environments. However, her model must extend beyond merely acquiring the attitudes, knowledge and comprehension, and skills; it also needs to take into account the ability to adapt to other cultures, navigate one’s emotions, learn intercultural sensitivity, and manage conflict, as these are also rudimentary aspects of developing cross-cultural competency. Furthermore, as Deardorff’s model suggests, gaining intercultural competence is a non-static and complex process. Thus, it is best to combine her model with other cultural models (i.e., compositional, co-orientational, adaptational models, etc.) in order to create a hybrid model suited to helping transnational teachers in the current trend of globalization.

Developing intercultural competence is essential for cross-cultural teaching initiatives and, in general, for navigating the continuum of globalization. Spitzberg and Changnon (2009) project that “cultural diversity will manifest in the global market place making intercultural competency an extremely important skill” (p. 337). Cultural diversity has already permeated academia at a local level as many North American universities have implemented diversity plans to increase cross-cultural engagement between faculty members and students. As people become more globally mobile, the ability to respect and value other cultures is not only imperative to educational systems around the world but to producing globally-minded citizens, preparing them to work in international contexts and creating a more democratic society.

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