
BUILDING CULTURAL COMPETENCE

Innovative Activities and Models

Edited by

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Foreword by

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CHAPTER 2

THE DEVELOPING ART OF INTERCULTURAL FACILITATION

Janet M. Bennett

Let us begin this chapter on how to be an effective and appropriate facilitator by making it clear that *no one* can tell you how to be an effective and appropriate facilitator. That said, it is long overdue in our profession to have a stimulating dialogue about facilitation skills unique to our field, approaches modified for their cultural context and impact. For decades we have borrowed methods from other disciplines, whether outdoor activities in the sixties, encounter groups in the seventies, human resources in the eighties, games and simulations in the nineties, online adventures in the new century, or tried-and-true lectures for all times. Each may have its place. However, *that place is culturally contexted.*

OUR FOCUS

It is not our goal to review the history of the field (Pusch, 2004), nor will we examine the usefulness and limitations of distinct methods in our work (Fowler & Blohm, 2004; Kohls, 1995). Intercultural training design models, the underlying theories that give an educational foundation to our efforts, have also been explored elsewhere (Bennett, 2003, 2008; Bennett & Bennett, 2004). This chapter is not about new methods and design strategies but rather explores a few modest thoughts on the adaptations we make to create a culturally responsive learning environment,

whether we are teaching about culture or across cultures or on any topic. These are the unwritten, and frankly often unresearched, bits of tacit knowledge passed from one facilitator to another. And of course, as such, they are subject to reconstrual by all experienced facilitators who have succeeded quite well, thank you, without these particular whispered bits.

A basic instructional design model (Hodell, 1997) details the essential steps required to create new learning opportunities: analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation. In the case of Hodell's model, development and implementation are ultimately about facilitation, which is the focus in this chapter, with particular attention to *culturally responsive* development and implementation. Once a careful needs assessment and analysis have been completed, and a conceptually grounded design has been created (as discussed in Chapter 1), how does our intercultural context affect our development of the program, our implementation of that design, and the overall facilitation of the training?

WHAT COMPETENCIES DO WE NEED?

To be a successful facilitator across cultures, or to train others about culture, the competent facilitator needs a skill set, mind-set, and heart set that sometimes

seem so demanding as to be unobtainable. Michael Paige's (1993) seminal article on facilitator competencies suggests a lengthy list of desirable skills and characteristics, and the chart of facilitator competencies in Box 2.1 provides some concrete details.

WHAT IS FACILITATION?

The word *facilitation* often connotes having a guide on the side rather than a sage on the stage, as the oft-quoted American phrase goes. The implication is that if the facilitator stays off the stage, learners will find their own answers to questions; this is no doubt true—at times. But an intercultural facilitator is both a bit of sage and a bit of guide, and has quite a few other roles as well. We are beginning to collect data that suggest a knowledgeable sage has a great deal to offer the learner experiencing new cultures (Paige & Goode, 2009; Vande Berg, Connor-Linton, & Paige, 2009). And the notion that all learning includes experiential learning has some truth to it (Chapman, McPhee, & Proudman,

2008). However essential experiential learning may be, it is nevertheless not sufficient to achieve intercultural competence in a vacuum. According to George Kelly (1963), learning from experience requires more than being in the vicinity of events when they occur (p. 73). Intercultural learning is an integration of the experience and our ability to *construe* that experience. Some interculturalists call this *sense making*, and urge sojourners to find cultural mentors to support their learning (Osland & Bird, 2000; Osland, Bird, & Gundersen 2007; Vande Berg et al., 2009). Such transformative learning often occurs more readily when a qualified facilitator is present.

A facilitator is therefore in a position to heighten intercultural learning. For example, he or she can move the learner beyond simple explanations for behavior: "My counterpart overseas lied to me when he said the report would be done by the first of the month." Instead, the facilitator of intercultural learning can probe issues of saving face and indirectness (Ting-Toomey, 1999).

BOX 2.1 Intercultural Facilitation Competencies

The effective intercultural facilitator has the ability to:

- comprehend the role of training and facilitation in the host culture;
- communicate clearly to nonnative speakers of the language used in the program;
- facilitate multicultural groups (including taking turns, participation, use of silence, etc.);
- "code shift" from one communication style to another;
- paraphrase circular or indirect statements for linear and direct group members;
- express enthusiasm for the topic in culturally appropriate ways;
- suspend judgment of alternative cultural norms;
- recognize culture-specific risk factors for trainees (loss of face, group identity, etc.);
- develop multiple frames of reference for interpreting intercultural situations;
- demonstrate good judgment in selecting the most appropriate interpretation in a transcultural situation;
- ask sensitively phrased questions while avoiding premature closure;
- avoid ethnocentric idioms, slang, and aphorisms;
- interview a cultural informant to obtain needed information on subjective culture;
- recognize ethnocentrism in goals, objectives, content, process, media, and course materials, as well as group interaction;
- motivate learners based on their own values;
- deliver programs in a variety of methods;
- interpret nonverbal behavior in culturally appropriate ways;
- monitor the use of humor for cultural appropriateness;
- display cultural humility;
- operate at ethnorelative stages of development; and
- be culturally self-aware.

How does this work? In a program, the facilitator can design experiences to maximize curiosity. During the event, he or she can reduce anxiety for the learners in the new context. As the sage on the stage, the facilitator can prepare them for the intercultural situation by selecting concepts, scaffolding those concepts to structure a foundation for the experience, providing frameworks for real-time issues that develop, and suggesting alternative perspectives. As the guide on the side, the facilitator can probe the experiences for greater depth, connect experiences to concepts, coach respectful curiosity, and support skills development. Intercultural facilitators are both guides and sages.

HOW DO WE MOTIVATE OUR LEARNERS?

Raymond Wlodkowski (2008) offers us yet another framework for considering our facilitation process: his time-motivation continuum for structuring motivational strategies for adult learners. He suggests it is beneficial to change the approach to motivation we use in our work, depending upon where we are in the course schedule—beginning, middle, or end. He notes that at the beginning of a program, we must establish inclusion, building an environment early in the process that communicates a welcoming atmosphere in which participants feel respected and connected. Further, he notes it is necessary to develop a positive attitude among the learners and to diffuse any negative preconceptions individuals may have about the topic, previous learning, or their ability to connect with the materials. During the middle of the program, the facilitator best motivates learners through strategies that provide meaningful engagement and challenge, including the participants' own values and perspectives during the learning opportunity. Finally, at the end of the learning event, participants want to know they learned something and can apply it in their own world, so strategies that focus on mastery and validations of their accomplishment are the most motivating. In all, Wlodkowski sequences 60 distinct motivational strategies (pp. 382–385), each with a selection of activities that promote engagement. One outcome of this approach is that facilitators can readily recognize that what we do to motivate a group of Chinese engineers is distinctly different from what we do to motivate a group of German professors; what we do to motivate them at the beginning of a program is different from what we do near the end.

WHAT ARE THE CORE CONCERNS OF A CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE FACILITATOR?

While there are no doubt countless ways a facilitator needs to adapt to the intercultural context, three areas are core to successful facilitation/learning:

- adaptation to balance challenge and support,
- adaptation to different cognitive styles and learning styles, and
- adaptation to culture-specific preferences.

These adaptation responses are grounded in a learner-centered orientation to programs. As educators we can rely on the theoreticians to inform our content, but when it comes to successful facilitation, we start with the learner. How will he or she learn most readily? What lowers the learner's anxiety and frees up his or her curiosity? We know something about this—not everything, but something.

How Do We Adapt Programs to Balance Challenge and Support?

Risk reduction is part of an inclusive climate and may involve transforming our monocultural techniques. Calling on people by name, targeting the silent observer to respond to the next question, requiring role playing, conducting activities that give minimal time to reach a conclusion, creating artificial competition—all may create discomfort for certain cultures. As we seek to engage in risk reduction for learners, interculturalists must recognize that much of what we do pushes individuals outside their comfort zone, whether we are talking about sexual orientation or the various aspects of culture shock in India.

Our learners may feel inherently threatened by even our most basic concepts. While I was conducting a training session on using third person intermediaries to resolve conflict, I found some participants horrified that anyone on earth could do such a thing and quite resistant to the idea that this abomination could occur in their organization. To an interculturalist, conflict interventions are routine; to those unfamiliar with this strategy, the idea assaults core values of honesty and forthrightness. I needed to balance this challenge with a substantial amount of support, with practical comparisons of American use of third person intermediaries. In the United States, we pay for mediators and lawyers, while the rest of the world often uses intermediaries for free.

And isn't pushing people beyond their comfort zone vital for new learning to take place? Well, yes and no. Yes we need to challenge our learners; if we don't, they may sleep or get bored, but in any case they learn little. However, if we over-challenge them, they also learn little. They tend to flee the learning environment psychologically and become resistant, or they vote with their feet and leave physically, or they suggest *you* depart from future learning events. Based on a simple but useful concept from Nevitt Sanford (1966), Bennett (2008) suggests that balancing challenge and support in the program reduces resistance, limits frustration, and enhances the potential for deeper learning.

The idea of risk management is further substantiated in the anxiety/uncertainty management theory developed by Bill Gudykunst (1995), who suggests that effective intercultural communication requires that our uncertainty (cognitive, involving knowledge and predictability) and our anxiety (affective, involving emotional disequilibrium) are balanced between our minimum and maximum thresholds. If we maximally challenge, we limit learning. If we minimally challenge, we limit learning. In other words, what is the optimal level of challenge? How can we develop equilibrium between what we teach and how we teach it to potentiate insight?

It must be acknowledged that some facilitators are quite committed to the idea of high risk, high gain learning. If you push the learners far beyond their comfort zone, they suggest, the group will experience stress that replicates the intercultural experience. This in turn fosters learning by simulating the real-life rigors of intercultural interaction. There are various rationales for this, including the French Foreign Legion syndrome ("I learned on my own; you will learn best on your own."), the Titanic syndrome ("Let's plan a disaster and see how the trainees handle it."), and the Clean Slate syndrome ("Preparing the learners ruins the freshness of the experience."). While definitive research comparing the comfort versus discomfort proposition does not yet exist, various models support the notion that creating programs that balance challenge and support has a better potential of positive outcomes for many learners (Bennett & Bennett, 2004; Pettigrew, 2008).

How Do We Adapt to Thinking and Learning Styles?

Part of this balancing includes careful attention to the style differences of the members of the group. Two

style differences in particular affect our facilitation: cognitive styles and learning styles. The thoughtful facilitator will likely spend the rest of his or her life observing, assessing, and responding to style differences in these areas. No sooner does it seem somewhat clear how members of familiar cultures think, learn, and communicate, when suddenly our classrooms are occupied by less familiar cultures, and we are left to decipher new cultural perspectives. Globalization guarantees a lifetime of these learning opportunities for us as facilitators, and we fail to enjoy this quest at our own peril as professionals.

Often based on cultural influences, individuals bring different cognitive styles to the learning room. They have distinctly different logics, characterized by Nisbett (2003) as Eastern and Western thinking styles. For instance, he suggests that Westerners develop a scientific mind-set from the earliest age:

The rhetoric of scientific papers consists of an overview of the ideas to be considered, a description of the relevant basic theories, a specific hypothesis, a statement of the methods and justification of them, a presentation of the evidence produced by the methods, an argument as to why the evidence supports the hypothesis, a refutation of possible counterarguments, a reference back to the basic theory and a comment on the larger territory of which the article is a part. . . . this rhetoric is constructed bit by bit from nursery school through college. (p. 74)

In contrast, Easterners tend to learn an entirely different set of logical principles that confound the Western observer. The formal rules differ, the basic assumptions vary, organizational patterns diverge, and dialectical approaches deviate. And this rhetoric is also constructed bit by bit from nursery school through college (Bennett, 2009).

Facilitating a session in a single cognitive style privileges one group of participants and leaves others at a higher risk of feeling excluded. For instance, traditional education in the United States, as well as other countries, often privileges cognitive styles that demonstrate critical thinking in terms of linear logic and separate ways of knowing (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Yershova, DeJaeghere, & Mestenhauser, 2000). If we want to balance thinking styles in the classroom, we can add metaphors to our logic, allegories to our lessons, stories to illustrate our significant points, and authentic cultural materials that reflect other ways of knowing.

Adaptation to learning styles is the second strategy we use to foster culturally responsive facilitation. While there are some controversies about the impact of culture on learning styles (Barmeyer, 2004; Edmondson, 2007; Irvine & York, 1995; Kolb, 1984, 2007; Oxford & Anderson, 1995; Smith, 2001; Yamazaki, 2005), nevertheless, adequate evidence exists for making sure we facilitate group interactions with a commitment to addressing culturally influenced learning styles.

What precisely does this mean? If we base our discussion on the most frequently used learning styles assessment in intercultural facilitation, Kolb's (2007) Learning Styles Inventory, it means we can readily identify our learners' different styles and respond to them accordingly. While we want to avoid rigidly characterizing anyone's style, it helps to be attentive to learning styles in the classroom so responses can be framed most effectively. Experience with learning styles allows us to hear a question, observe a behavior, or watch a reaction to an exercise and make some educated assessments of the learning style and respond in the presented style. The seemingly "over" participating student may simply be a concrete learner, eager to anchor his or her learning with stories and examples. We facilitate that student's learning by connecting his or her story to the ideas we are discussing. The silent, seemingly shy participant may be a reflective learner, enjoying contemplative, connective time. We give the learner time and space, lowering risk in the classroom. For the more abstract learner, we recognize that examples may be less useful, but citations and theoretical syntheses are deeply valued. And for the active learner, we may find that coaching a new perspective is helpful.

How Do We Adapt to Specific Cultures?

The third area of adaptation for facilitators involves culture-specific preferences, knowing enough about the culture we are working with to modify our facilitation role to meet expectations. For example, the American preference for first names is far from universal, as is casual attire and allowing food in class. These informal preferences in the learning environment in the United States paradoxically may cause discomfort in other cultures, where a more formal context is preferred and is indeed more relaxing because it is expected. Maintaining a hierarchical status in the class may be perceived as arrogant in one culture and a sign of well-deserved credibility in another. Individual achievement and lighthearted competition

may be sharply dissonant with a collateral culture where group ownership and thoughtful interdependence are more normative. Research on value orientations is plentiful, and understanding these contrasts serves us well as educators.

Finally, while seemingly obvious, the successful facilitator needs to be well read on current issues in the cultures of the participants in the course. Has a civil rights incident occurred locally? Has a Middle Eastern woman been profoundly affected by recent events? Has a lawsuit been filed? Has the group you are working with experienced learning that contradicts the intercultural perspective? This local knowledge can help us place the comments from our participants in context and help prevent our misinterpretation of their behavior.

HOW DO WE SELECT AND SET UP ACTIVITIES?

The process of selecting activities has traditionally consisted of identifying the latest collections of exercises and simulations and stringing the best of them together to create a stimulating program. Developments in intercultural instructional design and increasing audience diversity, however, have put those days behind us, and instead we are now typically faced with much more complex challenges, a few of which appear in the checklist in Box 2.2.

After attending to these primary questions, several other significant issues remain. One of the concerns is the level of language proficiency in the group: Is the range of vocabulary required for the activity manageable? A second concern is whether required aspects of the activity violate cultural norms. For instance, if the exercise requires directness, it may not succeed in a culture that emphasizes indirectness. A third concern is whether we have developed a classroom climate that supports the level of risk taking required by the activity. For example, if we open a program with a high-risk simulation, the group may not have developed adequate cohesion to handle the roles comfortably. Yet another concern is the availability of authentic cultural materials relevant to the age, class, gender, educational level, status, physical ability, and ethnicity of the participants.

The success of any particular module in a program is also dependent on how the facilitator sets up the activity and debriefs it. Thoughtful, systematic setups are worth the time involved, since they frame the intercultural learning expected. Box 2.3 provides

BOX 2.2 Selecting Learning Activities

Select an activity by assessing:

1. How appropriate is this activity for the concept being explored?
2. Does this activity balance the challenge of the content?
3. Does this activity further movement in the learning cycle by
 - a. building on the learner's existing experience? (concrete)
 - b. offering reflection and connection? (reflective)
 - c. examining a concept or framework? (abstract)
 - d. applying a concept in a pragmatic, relevant way? (active)
4. Is it appropriate in the pacing and sequencing of the learning?
5. Does it fit with the group's predominate cognitive, learning, and communication style, or does it contrast with the predominate style and thus serve the nondominant style?
6. How does this activity work for different cultures? Review the activity through the various cultural filters present in the classroom (nationality, ethnicity, race, gender, age, class, religion, physical ability, etc.). For whom will this activity seem most natural? For whom will it seem most alien? Is it sufficiently beneficial to those for whom it is alien to take that risk? Why or why not?
7. Will various culture groups likely resist this activity? How? Are the participants developmentally prepared for this activity and the content it teaches?

a brief checklist for setting up an activity. Equally critical is the debriefing, which emerges organically from the setup, addressing the stated objectives, the indicated concepts, and the established debriefing questions. In addition to focusing on the anticipated learning, the debriefing should also provide opportunities for unanticipated insights, observations from various cultural frames, and the random, rich spontaneous comments that often emerge in intercultural groups.

HOW DO WE RESPOND TO RESISTANCE?

In training facilitators, we find the issue that intimidates most new facilitators is how to address resistance in the group. The idea of resistance itself may be a barrier to effective facilitation, allowing us as "perfect" interculturalists to deride our participants as obviously engaged in counterproductive behavior (i.e., Could they be racist? Could they simply be ignorant?). Judith Katz (1992) has suggested there are no resistant learn-

BOX 2.3 Setting Up Activities

1. Introduce the activity, emphasizing (as appropriate) the cultural concept or framework being explored.
2. Relate the planned activity to participants' context, and establish its relevance.
3. Provide the participants with the necessary cultural data, history, or background to enhance their learning during the activity.
4. Deliver inoculations to address resistance and fear.
5. Clearly state the objectives for using the activity, as well as a specific question you expect them to answer or specific observations you expect them to make.
6. Supply the participants with written objectives, guidelines, and checklists, as appropriate.
7. Outline the specific debriefing questions you will use after the activity.

ers, only *fearful* learners. This remarkably simple frame shift allows us to construe resistance in an entirely different way: What is this learner afraid of? What is presenting a barrier to his or her learning? And most importantly, what can we do to facilitate the learner's comfort, reduce anxiety, and open up the learning environment to his or her concerns? After some probing, a seemingly resistant learner who had complained about "all the minorities stealing our jobs," confessed he was worried about his young son never getting a decent job. While the facilitator may never know what really prompted his protest, fear seems a fair enough bet, and responding in that vein is a nonadversarial approach that turns the heat down, not up. Developmentally, this may not be the right time to argue the data on stolen jobs. This is a time to keep the learner and his or her allies on board without adding to the resistance: "Your son has a better chance to get a job than most if he learns from you at an early age to interact across cultures successfully, including learning a second language."

Such an approach adheres to the fundamental principle that the effective facilitator rarely meets force with force. When we tangle with a participant in an adversarial way, the odds are that some of the participants will think, "Thank heavens someone finally took that person on!" Meanwhile, other participants will say, "Maybe I am next; I will just hide out in silence until this class is over." What may simply seem to be a difficult dialogue in some cultures may intimidate learners from other cultures where such interactions seem like altercations. As an Asian professor in computer technology once informed me, "Remember, any confrontation may be perceived as a personal confrontation and as such, may be an unrecoverable error. Your relationship may be terminated."

When we are working with a multicultural group—and who of us isn't?—the odds suggest that reducing anxiety is more likely to create a receptive climate for some of the difficult topics we may wish to explore.

So-called resistance usually emerges around fairly predictable issues. The learners may resist the *content* of the program or the *methods*. In the content area, typical responses may differ somewhat based on whether the topic is global differences or domestic issues.

Resistance to global topics often emerges from the participants' self-perceived expertise:

- "I have lived overseas for four years already!" (a global manager)

- "I never have culture shock." (a U.S.-based frequently flying consultant)
- "Just be yourself; that's all that really matters." (a study abroad student)

Or it may emerge from the perceived goals of the organization:

- "We don't have time for this. We're trying to do business here." (a busy executive)
- "Teeth don't have culture." (a professor in a dental school)
- "We're trying to treat cholera, not understand these people." (a humanitarian relief worker)
- "This is a virtual team. We have very little time together, so intercultural competence doesn't really come up." (a team manager)

On the domestic side, in discussing social justice issues or organizational inclusion, there are also challenges to the content being discussed:

- "This is all just political correctness." (a corporate supervisor)
- "Why are we spending taxpayers' money on this, when city government is already broke?" (a government manager)
- "We already have too many things to think about in our overcrowded classrooms without worrying about diversity." (an elementary school administrator)

These comments represent only a small sample of frequently heard statements of resistance to content; there are also many statements of resistance based on the methods you are using in your program:

- "Is this going to be all touchy-feely?" (a military leader)
- "We need more role plays." (a government executive)
- "I want to hear other people's stories." (a humanitarian aid worker)
- "Just give me the dos and don'ts; I don't need more than that." (a study abroad student)

To respond to the myriad comments that seem to constitute resistance, the fleet-of-foot facilitator needs to develop a collection of inoculations. Inoculations are used to prevent "dis-ease" in the group

that may be caused by a reaction to an idea or method. As facilitators, we introduce a controlled form of the objection early in the program to reduce the reaction and therefore avoid the dis-ease. Inoculations are most often presented at the beginning of the program, to ward off the inevitable questioning of your professional credibility, the necessity of the program, and reactions to the content.

First, they can provide a safety net for the participants (“Ah, I am not the only person who has felt this way; our facilitator understands!”). A clear example of this is the use of the inoculation when facilitating highly experienced, perhaps even expert, audiences: “I know that all of you are very experienced in working across cultures, and in fact, you know much more about the specific cultures you have worked with than I ever will. But what I have to offer today is . . .”

Second, like the inoculations we tolerate to ward off disease, facilitation inoculations provide a small dose of the possible objections and an immediate antidote: “I suspect that some of you are wondering whether this program is full of touchy-feely activities, and I want to promise you that none of you have to confess your secret feelings today!”

Third, inoculations can address learning style differences: “We’re going to start the morning by laying a foundation of the definitions and concepts, and then proceed to put those ideas into practice for your workplace.”

As part of the needs analysis, the wise facilitator lists all the possible objections his or her particular audience may offer, and systematically develops responses to them prior to beginning the course. For instance, a group of new facilitators were developing inoculations for a class of busy supervisors who have little or no experience with intercultural learning, limited amounts of perceived diversity in their workplace, and little felt need to learn about it. What follows are a few of the sample inoculations and possible responses they developed during their train-the-trainers program as they assessed their own audiences’ likely resistances.

INOCULATION: Some of you here today might think that this cultural competency program is a waste of time.

RESPONSE: However it is a part of our mission statement just like safety is. I believe this program will not only help us meet our mission statement but will make this organization an even better place to work for all of us, and I believe it is worth our time.

INOCULATION: Nobody is going to force you to like working with different people.

RESPONSE : What we want to do here today is to get you to a comfortable place in working with other people.

INOCULATION: Some of you may think this is just another Flavor of the Month program.

RESPONSE : However, our organization has adjusted its mission statement to include diversity as a core value. The organization is committed to creating a welcoming work environment for all employees. This commitment is here to stay.

INOCULATION: Some of you may have previously attended a diversity class and would rather go to the dentist than do that again.

RESPONSE : I believe this class is different. There will be no finger pointing, accusations, or group hugs. This class will open discussion on learning skills to help you to live and work in a world that continues to grow more diverse every day.

A FEW FINAL THOUGHTS

As we consider the changing arena of intercultural learning, allow me to offer a few final thoughts. The world of our work is transforming, and current trends suggest that our professionalism requires new levels of intercultural facilitation competence.

First, facilitation is becoming much more specialized. In the 1980s we may very well have entered classrooms where the discussion of culture was little short of revolutionary, and the question on the floor was, What is culture, anyway? Today we might just as easily face questions about the distinct communication patterns among the Yoruba, Ibo, and Hausa tribes.

Another trend suggests that among these tribes, the expatriate executive needs specific skills for performance appraisals, conducting meetings, interviewing, coaching, and mentoring. This reflects the trend toward very specific work-related programs that address significant professional functions.

Further (and isn’t this gratifying?), there is a trend toward increasing numbers of well-educated, culturally experienced participants, who still seek and value additional development of their intercultural competence. This new audience demands highly sophisticated programming that directly addresses their specific needs. Such an audience was less typical only two decades ago.

A fourth trend reflects the interface between global and domestic intercultural issues. Those experiencing intercultural contrasts wherever they are may be seeing White male Serbians, Asian Brazilians, Black Italians, and bicultural/biracial individuals. This rainbow classroom means the facilitator has to be comfortably familiar with both cultural and racial issues, competent to move adeptly among the many concerns, and careful about making assumptions about participants.

So, yes, we are faced with the conclusion that the intercultural facilitator has to be a generalist and a specialist, global and domestic, able to dance to the many melodies the world presents. And this new understanding highlights the last trend, the demand for professionalization of intercultural facilitation. The world asks a lot of us now in terms of our own preparation, our own intercultural competence, our own advanced certifications. And it rewards us with a sense that our field can make a difference in this world that truly needs what intercultural competence is all about.

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