**COGNITIVE BEHAVIOR THERAPY AND DEVELOPING Cross-CULTURAL COMPETENCE**

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(Based on “Making a Difference in the Classroom: Developing Global Leadership Competencies in Business School Students” by Mark E. Mendenhall,Lisa A. Burke**,** Audur Arna Arnardottir, Gary R. Oddou, and Joyce S. Osland (in press). *Handbook of Global Leadership Research: Making a Difference*, edited by Lena Zander)

**RESEARCH BACKGROUND ON DEVELOPMENT**

* “Researchers seem to agree that global leadership development is a nonlinear process that involves cognitive (i.e., engaging in activities that build intellectual awareness and knowledge); affective (i.e., enhancing emotional awareness and affective growth), and behavioral (i.e., building skills and changing behavior) elements, but few studies have investigated the specific processes by which global leadership competencies can be developed” (Pless, Maak & Stahl, 2011, p. 239).
* CCC is an important dimension of global leadership (Mendenhall & Osland, 2002).
* Personal transformation resulting from experience is the centerpiece of the four extant global leadership competency development (GLCD) models (Black & Gregersen, 2000; Oddou & Mendenhall, 2008, 2013; McCall & Hollenbeck, 2002; Osland & Bird, 2008, 2013). The first two are based on Mezirow’s (1978) three-phase process of perspective transformation: 1) exposure to a disorienting dilemma, or *Contrast*, 2) engaging in self-examination and exploration of options to make sense of the dilemma and solve it, or *Confrontation*, and 3) cognitive, affective, and behavioral integration of insights gained in the previous stage*, or Replacement.*
* Mezirow describes his stage model as a “process of becoming critically aware of how and why our assumptions have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand, and feel about our world; changing these structures of habitual expectation to make possible a more inclusive, discriminating, and integrative perspective; and, finally, making choices or otherwise acting upon these new understandings” (1991, p. 167).
* Similar to what Bennis & Thomas (2002) term “*crucible experiences*,” the Contrast phase functions as a trigger event -- situations, events, or experiences that deeply challenge the worldview of individuals, and force them to physically, emotionally, spiritually, or culturally adapt in order to survive. Such crucible experiences are unique to each individual; the same experience is not perceived as transformative by everyone.
* The Chattanooga GLCD Model (Osland, et. al., 2012) centers on the variables within these experiences that make them crucible-like in nature. The model holds that the higher the degree of complexity, affect, intensity, and relevance that are inherent within a cross-cultural encounter, the higher the probability that the encounter acts as a “crucible experience” and thus increases the “trigger potential” for global leadership or ICC competencies to emerge.
* International service learning research found enhanced intercultural competencies of cultural empathy and sensitivity, nonjudgmentalness, cosmopolitan thinking, managing complexity, self-awareness, ethical literacy, interpersonal skills, and relationship management. They were developed simultaneously at the cognitive, affective, and behavioral levels through the necessity of the individuals of having to: a) resolve cultural and ethical paradoxes, b) construct a new “life-world”—a new perspective of self and the world to survive and make sense of their daily experiences in the challenging cross-cultural contexts they were in, and c) cope with the adversity and strong emotions that were kindled as they confronted realities they had never experienced (Pless et al., 2011).
* The process of expatriate transformation involved “letting go” and “taking on” new ways of behaving, thinking, and sense-making in novel, challenging cross-cultural environments (Osland, 1995).
* Caligiuri and Tarique (2011; 2012) found results similar to those of Pless et al. (2011), in that immersion in “high-contact/highly challenging” cross-cultural experiences increased global leadership competencies in managers. However, they also found that there was a dynamic interplay between personality traits and “high-contact/highly challenging experiences” for managers who were higher in extraversion, emotional stability, and openness. These managers benefitted the most from development programs in terms of skill growth.
* Furuya and his colleagues (2009) found similar results across long term expatriate assignments for Japanese managers: those who had higher levels of interpersonal global leadership competencies before their overseas assignment increased the levels of those competencies during their experiences, compared to peers who were lower on those competencies before departure.

Bottom line: high-contact, high-challenge crucible events plus personality traits can result in personal development, especially if personal reflection takes place. Some people will be able to “move the needle” farther than others, due to individual differences and motivation. Some competencies may be more malleable than others. Good assessment measures are needed to provide baseline and progress data.

**COGNITIVE BEHAVIOR THERAPY (CBT)**

* CBT, the leading clinical therapy method in many countries, is used by psychologists world-wide to assist people to improve competencies in order to assist them to lead more productive lives in the social realm. Its core assumption is that cognitive thoughts mediate one’s emotions – external events do not determine emotional responses, what determines emotional responses is the cognitive interpretation of the event (Beck, 1976; Dobson & Dozois, 2001).
* CBT research found that when individuals focus on improving either their *cognitions*, *emotional* regulation, or *behavioral* tendencies, such efforts positively impact each of the other areas as well in a “radiation effect.”
* CBT methods share these core characteristics and: 1) operate within a clear, limited time-frame; 2) place the responsibility for developing self-awareness regarding cognitions and behavior and subsequent competency development on the individual; and 3) clearly state the main goal is for people to “learn new behavioral, interpersonal, cognitive and emotional-regulation skills” (Meichenbaum, 1986, p. 347).
* Although the CBT change process is normally undertaken with the help and guidance of a therapist, it is also an effective self-directed methodology, usually either: 1) computer-based, where individuals take themselves through the CBT process via software or online programs, or 2) workbook based, where individuals undertake a personal development program by following assignments outlined in an instructional program, both of which have been found to increase cognitive and behavioral change over time (Cash & Lavallee, 1997; Cuijpers, Donker, Johansson, Mohr, van Straten, & Andersson, 2011).

**Applying CBT in Developing Business Students’ Intercultural Competence**

* Four professors have utilized CBT principles in business school classes (undergrad and graduate courses in international and cross-cultural management and business and global leadership) across various regions of the United States and Europe for 3-7 years and have observed efficacious results. Virtually all students make progress, albeit in various degrees, ranging from slight progress to significant progress in the competencies they chose to focus upon.
* Among the most common used assessments in industry and academia, in alphabetical order are: Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI), Cultural Intelligence (CQ), Global Competencies Aptitude Assessment (GCAA), Global Competencies Inventory (GCI), Global Mindset Inventory (GMI), Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (IES), Intercultural Readiness Check (IRC), and the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ). Bird & Stevens (2008, 2013) comprehensively review these inventories and provide comparative information on instrument reliability, validity, cost, usability, etc.
* After receiving and reflecting upon assessment feedback regarding interpersonal competencies that are important for global leadership effectiveness, students are asked to select a competency they desire to improve over the course of the term. This personalized goal setting helps motivate students to take ownership for their own development (Klimoski & Amos, 2012). Once students select the competency they want to focus on, they are tasked to develop a concrete and measurable plan where they work on improving the specific competency on a daily basis, and practice buffering negative thoughts (Beck, 1976).
* To ensure students’ on-going reflection and some level of support from the instructor, “weekly email reports” (or blog reports) are assigned to make certain that self-reflection occurs throughout the entire term rather than just at the end. These reports also act as useful accountability mechanisms (Burke & Saks, 2009) to help students stay engaged in the PDP process throughout the academic term. Students are not graded on the content of their emails, rather they are simply penalized points if they do not send the email on the specified day.
* Students are not evaluated against each other or to some standard in terms of the degree of progress they make; instead, they are rewarded for simply pursuing their personalized plan. The final self-reflection report is graded by the instructor in comparison to those of their class cohort (for a comprehensive description of the PDP process, please see Mendenhall et al., 2013).
* Sample syllabus excerpt: *Based on the assessments you receive in class, select a global managerial competency that you would need to improve in order to enhance your success on your overseas assignment. Develop a concrete plan of how you can improve in this area and work your plan every week throughout the semester. Report to the instructor each week during the semester on Monday mornings, via email, on the results you experienced during the past week of working your plan. In these emails feel free to update your plan based upon your progress. Penalties will occur if the email reports are late or ignored. At the end of the semester, provide a seven-page (minimum) analysis of your personal development program, which would include a description of your current progress to date, what you learned about “how to learn” from the experience, and other learning insights the project triggered within you.*

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