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# **Intercultural Communicative Competence: A Necessary Ability for All**

**By Alvino E. Fantini**

## **Abstract**

In today's world, there is a growing need to promote intercultural communicative competence (ICC) due to increasingly multilingual and multicultural societies. Moreover, more people today have contact across cultures than ever before in human history. For these reasons, ICC has become a national and international imperative and a necessary ability for all. In response, many higher education institutions seek to internationalize curricula; however, often without a coherent plan to provide intercultural education to all students. ICC is promoted primarily through study abroad programs; however, only a small percentage of students participate. Similarly, civic aid organizations in various countries promote ICC through international service programs; however, only a small percentage of their populations participate. This paper explores these activities in the United States -- with references to other countries -- and proposes a definition of ICC that includes host language ability as a fundamental component. It then considers the benefits of ICC based on data from two research projects conducted in eight countries. These studies identify attributes attained by participants in intercultural exchanges, and assess their impact on the lives of participants. The positive benefits of developing ICC are cited including their contributions toward promoting tolerance, understanding, and respect for an increasingly diverse world.

## **Keywords**

multilingual-multicultural societies, diversity, intercultural education, intercultural communicative competence, civic aid organizations, impact of intercultural experiences

## **Bio-sketch**

Dr. Alvino E. Fantini is professor emeritus at World Learning's SIT Graduate Institute in Brattleboro, Vermont, USA, which he helped found in 1963. With degrees in anthropology and applied linguistics, he has been engaged in the fields of language education and intercultural communication for over 50 years. His research interests include bilingualism, language development, and cross-cultural matters. Fantini has worked in the U.S. and abroad with intercultural exchange programs, development projects, and the U.S. Peace Corps, and he has conducted hundreds of workshops around the world. He served on a National Advisory Panel to develop Foreign Language Standards for U.S. education and is past president of the Society for Intercultural Education, Training, and Research (SIETAR). His most recent publication is *Intercultural Communicative Competence in Educational Exchange: A Multinational Perspective* (Routledge, 2019).

## **Introduction**

The United States of America is known as a land of great diversity, diversity that has existed from its inception and which continues to increase -- due not only to continued immigration but also to refugees, undocumented workers, increased international travel, and aided by globalization. This immense diversity has produced a vibrant mix -- and sometimes a clash -- among peoples of different cultural, ethnic, religious, and linguistic backgrounds. The country's history is replete with examples of such conflicts, some of which are well known. Additionally, recent events across the country -- from peaceful protests to acrimonious manifestations -- provide abundant examples of underlying conflicts, which have produced repercussions abroad as well. Although these issues are long-standing, earnest and widespread discussion is now occurring regarding how diverse societies can adapt societal changes, respecting different and sometimes conflicting conceptions of identity.

These discussions raise anew the issue of how individuals in multicultural societies can live together peacefully and productively. Existing laws, practices, and educational systems, among others, from the national to the local level, are being scrutinized. Educators, in particular, are being called upon to rethink their curricula in order to help students better examine questions of individual and national identity -- and, in the process, to be taught about intercultural communication and intercultural communicative competence, and the knowledge, attitudes, skills, and awareness that are needed to ensure tolerant and diverse democratic societies.

While the situation in the U.S. has been much in the news, it is not alone in dealing with growing multicultural populations. Examples exist around the world: in Spain, friends and colleagues often questioned why Americans are "racist," yet fail to recognize their own intolerant attitudes toward and treatment of the Romani people, Serbian refugees, Moroccans, Africans, Latin Americans, and others. Graffiti in cities across European countries reflect animosity towards certain ethnic or racial groups. In Japan, children of Korean-Japanese or Caucasian-Japanese couples termed "hafus," are looked down upon. These and other examples point to the underlying truth that most societies around the world need to re-examine their self-understanding as communities and re-conceptualize the sense of identity they derive from their shared histories, customs, and diverse peoples -- while also addressing the discrimination and prejudices that human beings often carry within themselves.

In order to work on such issues, acquiring a better understanding of intercultural communication and developing intercultural communicative competence (ICC) assume paramount importance. The challenge, however, is that both educators and policy-makers need to have a better understanding of the related and underlying concepts and tools. More specifically, within the field of intercultural education, educators must commit to a coherent and well-developed curriculum -- one that begins in the earliest years of a child's education and continues on through the highest levels of the educational process -- one that respects individual difference and diversity, while also enhancing international understanding.

## **Give Me Your Tired, Your Poor**

“Give me your tired, your poor, your teeming masses yearning to breathe free.” These welcoming words are inscribed at the base of the Statue of Liberty standing in New York’s harbor. This statue, gifted to the United States by France in 1885, was a sign of friendship between the two nations to celebrate America’s Declaration of Independence. After a stormy crossing, Lady Liberty entered the New York harbor where it received a triumphant arrival from New Yorkers and stands to this day.

There is no doubt that the sentiment expressed at the statue’s base has helped to welcome many newcomers to the country. Too often, however, it has also been followed by a slew of other words, terms that reflect the prejudice directed against one group or another, ethnic slurs hurled at groups that are despised. Such terms exist for nearly everyone, terms normally used when the person named is not present. A list of nearly 60 such terms has been identified -- some more offensive than others -- that reflect negative attitudes towards specific nationalities, ethnicities, religions, races, sexual orientations, and even physical characteristics, terms we need to eliminate from our English vocabulary.

A first generation American myself, I was raised in many ways as though my family was still living in my parents’ and grandparents’ small village in central Italy. This practice is rather common for many children of immigrant parents who naturally continue to do what they are accustomed to, what they know best. In my home, we spoke Italian, ate Italian food, played and sang Italian music, and maintained many Italian customs and traditions. Assimilation is normally a slow process, occurring over two to three generations. As I learned about the immigrant experience of other families -- both in the U.S. as well as in other countries -- I wondered: Is it not possible for immigrants to retain their own heritages while also adapting and assimilating to the mainstream? Does assimilation necessarily require discarding one’s former language and culture? More importantly, is there not an advantage to having individuals become bilingual-bicultural with access to both languages and cultures?

Inspired by these early experiences, I chose to pursue a life dedicated to exploring more of the world: taking exchange students to Europe and Latin America; working with U.S. Peace Corps training programs; teaching in universities in several countries; and marrying a woman from South America. The lessons that resulted from each experience led to the realization that diversity can and should be viewed as an asset, not a liability. Of course, not everyone is able to have such experiences abroad and not everyone recognizes that diversity and difference can be assets. So, a variety of questions arise: how can we help *all* individuals to value and preserve their backgrounds -- whatever they may be -- and also to view those of others as an asset? How can we help individuals, beginning early in life, to appreciate and accept diversity?

## **The Importance of Second Languages and Cultures**

A critical dimension in any attempt to grapple with questions regarding diversity and assimilation, personal and national identity, is language and culture. Individuals raised within a

given language and a given cultural milieu -- i.e., a single “linguaculture” – become members of a community with shared ways of thinking, conceptualizing, communicating, interacting, and behaving. On the other hand, that shared linguaculture excludes all others. This is the dual nature of every linguaculture – each one provides a common bond among those who share within it but also presents a barrier to those who do not.

Moreover, individuals raised within a single language and cultural milieu do not have easy access to difference -- that is, to *other* ways of thinking, conceptualizing, communicating, interacting, and behaving. Therefore, it is not uncommon for monolingual-monocultural persons to think that their own way is both “natural” and “best.” They have no other way of accessing, understanding, or appreciating another view of the world.

Contrastively, individuals brought up with two (or more) linguacultures deal in an ongoing way with the differences, tensions, contributions, and alternatives inherent in each system. They experience a constant dynamic between two different ways of being in the world. As a result, they can more easily imagine other systems with which they are not familiar. For monolingual-monocultural individuals, the biggest impediment to entering and participating in a second linguaculture is often their singular success within their native one and their limited and confining experience that provides them with only one way of knowing the world. This limited yet secure experience often breeds an attitude of misunderstanding, fear, disdain and, if their linguaculture is dominant in society, it may also produce actions that limit, control, dominate, and attempt to eliminate differences that are unfamiliar and uncomfortable.

While the U.S. is commonly cited as one of the most multilingual-multicultural countries in the world, its diversity is due primarily to the constant influx of new arrivals who add their imported languages and cultures to the native English-speaking population. It does not reflect the number of native English-speaking individuals who study or speak other languages. In fact, The Modern Language Association (MLA) reports that the number of students enrolled in foreign languages has dropped continuously for over a decade:

The decline in (language) programs coincides with a decline in the number of students signing up for foreign-language courses. The 9.2 percent drop in enrollments from 2013 to 2016 was the second largest on record, according to the MLA's "short report" of its findings, released last year. Measured since 2009, the decline is 15.3 percent. That suggests a "trend rather than a blip" . . . Overall, indicators "provide little reason for optimism" (cf. Johnson 2019)

This trend presents a troubling situation at a time when for multiple reasons, including diplomatic and geopolitical reasons, the U.S. could benefit from a population able to navigate the diverse cultures and languages of our world.

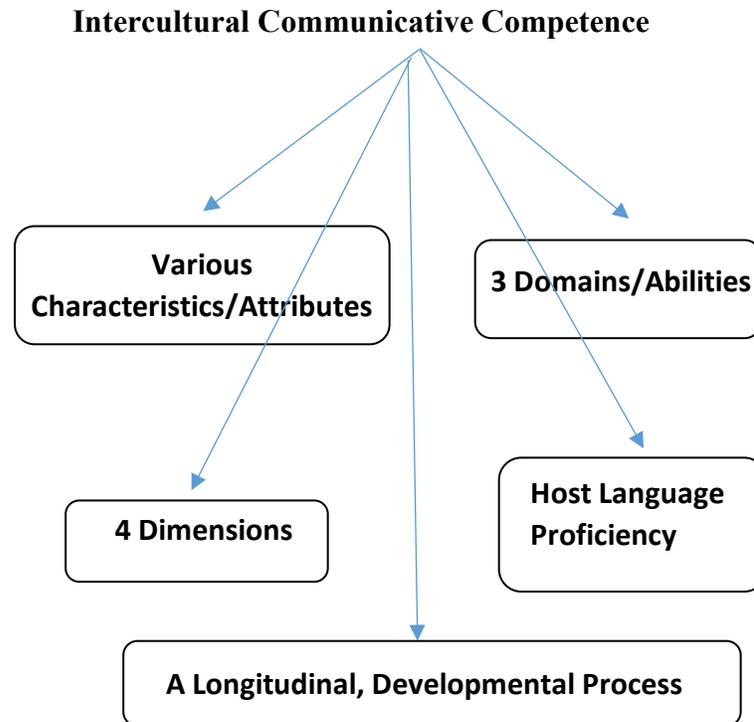
## **Reconceptualizing Intercultural Communicative Competence**

The need to increase and enhance the competence of individuals in other languages and cultures has thus become a necessity. In countries such as the U.S. with increasing diversity, this is a *sine qua non*. However, other countries around the world face a similar situation -- that of rapidly changing and more diverse populations. Therefore, developing intercultural communicative competence has become a national and international educational imperative.

It is worth reconceptualizing and redefining what is meant by ICC before going forward. There is not complete unanimity when defining exactly what constitutes ICC despite a large body of literature regarding its nature, owing to the work of many educators: cf. Martin (1989), Samovar and Porter (1991), Lustin and Koester (1993), Wiseman and Koester (1993), Byram (1997), Martin and Nakayama (2000), Alpetkin (2002), Deardorff (2004), Humphrey (2007), Almeida (2020), and Jackson (2020), among others. To resolve varying concepts of ICC, a “Delphi Study on Intercultural Competence” is currently underway, involving 66 intercultural experts from eight nations -- Australia, Canada, China, Germany, Japan, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the USA. The purpose of this study, spearheaded by Xiaodong Dai, Associate Professor at Shanghai Normal University, is “to explore the possibility of reconciling and integrating the multiple cultural perspectives on intercultural competence and develop a model that has validity across cultures” (Email, Xiaodong Dai, July 24, 2020).

Moreover, the literature utilizes varied terms to refer to such competence -- e.g.: transcultural communication, cross-cultural communication, global competence, ethnorelativity, international competence, and intercultural communication, among others. While the most commonly used term is intercultural competence, this author recommends the term intercultural *communicative* competence (ICC) to stress the fact that *communication* (through the host culture language) is fundamental to such competence. Host language ability needs to be highlighted as a basic component of ICC given that it is commonly omitted by interculturalists. Said another way -- without also entering into the language of the host culture, one’s ability to understand and access the host culture is severely limited (cf. Fantini in Jackson 2020, pps. 267-282).

Hence, the definition proposed here is the following: “ICC is a complex of abilities (including host language proficiency) that are needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself.” Any definition, of course, requires further elaboration for operational use. To this end, a review of the intercultural literature was conducted in six languages and spanning approximately 50 years to identify a range of ICC components. These are depicted in the figure below (cf. Fantini 2019, pps. 35-38):



**Figure 1. Components and Aspects of ICC**

To elaborate further:

(1) The *various characteristics/attributes* commonly cited include items such as flexibility, humor, patience, openness, and suspending judgment, among others.

(2) The *three domains* are the ability to (i) establish and maintain relationships, (ii) communicate with minimal loss or distortion, and (iii) collaborate in order to accomplish something of mutual interest or need.

(3) The *four dimensions* are (i) awareness, (ii) attitudes, (iii) skills, and (iv) knowledge.

(4) *Host language proficiency* is indispensable to be able to communicate within the host culture as well as to access directly the view, which hosts hold of the world.

(5) Finally, degrees of ICC attainment evolve over time through an ongoing *longitudinal and developmental process*.

This definition and these components served as the basis to formulate the design and scope of the research projects and to guide the questionnaires that elicited the outcomes summarized below.

## **Intercultural Education and Intercultural Experiences**

Many institutions of higher learning now seek to internationalize their curricula. However, they often lack a clear plan for providing intercultural education to all students. Moreover, developing ICC abilities -- especially in a classroom context -- must be based on a comprehensive understanding of ICC and include all of its components. It also requires innovative educational approaches that differ from those traditionally focused primarily on developing knowledge (but rarely on awareness, attitudes, or skills). Since most educators are unaccustomed to addressing areas other than knowledge, they need to rethink the content of their lessons in addition to their teaching approach.

Educational changes will require shifting from a *teacher*-centered classroom to a *learner*-centered one, as well as adopting and utilizing both inductive and deductive techniques, examining both theory and practice, using considerable small group work, experiential activities, focusing on both content and process, and considerable emphasis on students processing material through a variety of engaging activities.

Perhaps more importantly, educational changes would require the enhanced use of content derived from the participants' own life experiences -- derived with, from, and about each other. In other words, they should be based on and informed by what students share, how they differ, why they differ (i.e., the influence of language and culture in their lives), how they view each other (i.e., their etic and emic views of each other), and how they contribute to the expansion of each other's worldview. To this end, educators can also draw on another valuable resource -- the presence of international students from many countries present on most college campuses. Aside from needing intercultural orientation themselves, their presence provides an important resource for domestic students and attempts to foment interactions and develop relationships between both groups is to their mutual advantage.

In some ways, intercultural educational processes may be likened to cross-cultural entry processes wherein the sojourner passes through a variety of phases. One begins with entry into the group, learning about the host linguaculture(s) -- i.e., the classroom, the diverse students in attendance, new terms, concepts, and strategies. Students are faced with new educational experiences, which they adapt or question; they must deal with the consequences of their choices; and they undergo processes of accommodation (superficially or in a deep way), or alienation. The result is assimilation or acculturation, or possibly adopting contextualized behaviors during the experience (akin to bilingual-bicultural behaviors wherein code switching and behaviors change according to context).

## **Recent Research Findings**

Given the challenges of developing ICC within the four walls of a classroom, Study Abroad programs that some secondary schools and many colleges provide in the United States, offer an excellent intercultural option. Similar offerings exist in other countries including the well-known Erasmus programs in Europe. Intercultural educational exchange experiences have clearly shown their effectiveness in promoting the learning of other languages and cultures, in developing

relationships with persons from other cultures, and in their profound and lasting impact upon the future lives of students.

The many positive effects of these experiences upon participants are well known. They are best documented in two recent multinational research projects conducted by The Federation of The Experiment in International Living that involved over 2,000 participants and over 200 host families from Brazil, Ecuador, Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, Japan, Switzerland, and the United States. Participants from these eight countries had intercultural sojourns in 43 other countries. The ICC definition and components previously cited served as the basis for designing these projects, which occurred in two phases over a ten-year period. In addition to data obtained regarding the impact upon participants (both sojourners and host families), both the definition and components utilized were substantiated as valid ICC constructs (cf. Fantini 2019).

To conduct this research, questionnaires were distributed electronically and data collected from participants on SurveyMonkey formats. Participants included both those currently in programs and alumni up to twenty years after their program had ended. The responses were collected and tabulated first within individual countries in order to identify particular aspects pertaining to each nationality group. Data from all eight countries were then combined to form a multinational composite, representing universal aspects, common to all groups. In all cases, sojourners reported learning to speak another language and to adapt to another culture.

Moreover, research results also showed that intercultural sojourns had positive effects upon participants after their return home – effects upon subsequent career choices, obtaining employment, and causing profound attitudinal changes towards other people; in short, an expansion of their worldview. Sojourners became intrigued (rather than distanced) by cultural differences as they developed relationships with others, as they developed significant levels of intercultural communicative competence. In addition, host families included in this study also recounted positive experiences as they hosted visitors from abroad, producing a sort of “multiplier” effect upon all those engaged in the experience (Fantini, *Ibid.*).

Five questions, also posed to participants as part of the inquiry, elicited the following typical comments (Fantini 2019, pps. 222-228):

Q1. What impact did the sojourn experience have on your life and work?

- Changed the direction of my life, study, and work opportunities
- Changed my way of seeing things, expanded my worldview
- Made a great impact on my personal and professional life
- Learned another language, improved my language skills
- Now want to work in an intercultural, international area

Q2. What abilities were important to gain acceptance in the host culture?

Re Attitudes/Affect

- Willingness to understand new points of view, to try new things
- Respect, sensitivity, humility

- Tolerance, being non-judgmental
- Show acceptance, appreciation, interest, curiosity
- Flexibility, adaptability, acceptance

#### Re Skills

- Developed ability to adjust, accept, adapt
- Ability to communicate in the host language
- Ability to establish relationships and make friends
- Ability to be alone in a new culture
- Diplomatic skills

#### Re Knowledge

- Learned about host qualities, values, rules
- Learned to understand another culture

#### Re Awareness

- Developed self-confidence
- Enhanced self-reflection, introspection

Q3. What role did a homestay have in the experience?

- Most important aspect, positive, transformative
- Best way to enter the culture and learn the language
- Provided guidance, support, security
- Helped to feel part of a family and the culture
- Enduring relationship, continued contact after departure

Q4. How important was learning the host language?

- Essential, facilitates adjustment
- Needed to understand the culture
- Certain things (and feelings) can only be understood in the host language
- Learned how to communicate in alternate ways
- Has far reaching effects on education, life, and work

Q5. Anything else you wish to add?

- Predeparture orientation is important
- Became a whole new person, learned, and grew
- Made friends for life
- Best experience of life
- Recommend to other students, to everyone

In addition to the illustrative responses cited above, nine a priori assertions regarding the intercultural experience were explored. All assertions were firmly supported by participants in the research, as follows (Fantini 2019, pps. 229-236):

- ICC is a complex of abilities.
- Intercultural experiences are life altering.
- A family homestay is a compelling core component of the intercultural experience.
- Learning the host language facilitates ICC development.
- All parties in intercultural contact are affected to some degree.
- People are changed in positive ways.
- Some returnees lean toward specific life choices, lifestyles, values, and jobs.
- Returnees often engage in activities that impact on others.
- There are often surprising and unexpected other benefits

While educational exchange experiences make important contributions towards ICC development, another important way to live and learn abroad is provided through civic service programs. One of the most powerful intercultural experiences available to Americans is through participation in the U.S. Peace Corps. The mission of this volunteer program is to provide social, educational, and economic development abroad through technical assistance, while also promoting mutual understanding between Americans and the populations served. Peace Corps volunteers typically spend two years abroad after undergoing a three-month training program. Volunteers work in education, youth development, community health, business, information technology, agriculture, and the environment. Since its inception, nearly 60 years ago, more than 235,000 Americans have served in 141 countries (cf. [peacecorps.gov/about/history](http://peacecorps.gov/about/history)).

Happily, many other countries provide similar civic service experiences. While the main purpose is to provide aid and assistance through person-to-person contact with citizens abroad, service and aid programs typically require pre-departure training in language, intercultural communication, and specific technical areas to prepare volunteers for their sojourn. Volunteers learn to speak other languages and normally acquire considerable fluency, they learn to live in another culture on its terms, and commonly return with friendships that last a lifetime.

### **The Challenge of Limited Participation**

Academic Study Abroad and Peace Corps type experiences, then, are two excellent ways to prepare individuals to deal successfully with national diversity upon returning home. However, as one speaker noted at a conference sponsored by the Center for Educational Resources in Culture, Language and Literacy (CERCLL) at the University of Arizona (Tucson) in January 2020, a minimum of individuals engage in study abroad or international service learning. Educators should consider alternatives, she said, to the “dominant discourse” which assumes globalization, suggesting that they find more inclusive ways to internationalize campuses and to provide opportunities for all students, staff, and faculty to become “global learners” (cf. Larsen @ CERCLL, 2020).

Clearly, ICC development is important not only for those crossing borders or going across an ocean into another culture but also for those who remain at home. Developing ICC is essential for dealing with diversity on our own campuses, in our own neighborhoods and cities, and with other countries. This recognition suggests an important role for educators -- especially those in diversity studies, in foreign languages, and in intercultural education. Their challenge is to work together toward a common goal -- i.e., to develop ICC in order to better understand and respect the rich diversity of modern societies, in order to value difference while exploring commonalities, and in order to build dynamic, inclusive communities with a shared sense of identity. Such tasks are critical in our time.

A survey of intercultural courses offered in 50 plus colleges and universities in 11 countries conducted between 1992 and 1994 illustrated the status of the field at that time. The survey requested information regarding the context and parameters of the subject matter, the range of goals and objectives, content areas, and approaches to implementation. Common models, frameworks and schema, useful materials and resources, as well as assessment procedures were also collected (cf. Fantini and Smith 1997:125-148). A more current survey would be useful to ascertain how the field has developed in the ensuing years.

To move the field of intercultural communications further along, however, educators need to work together to develop comprehensive and ongoing curricula, in addition to adopting experiential educational techniques and strategies that promote reflection and critical thinking. This is the type of educational approach that can result in the development of ICC. Whatever the approach, however, its success must be gauged by students' tolerance, respect, and understanding of others with divergent viewpoints. Educators must design a type of education that results in an expanded way of viewing the world -- one that celebrates diversity while also respecting and not denigrating the mainstream culture; one that is tolerant and embraces differences -- including intellectual differences, often overlooked -- and which is also patient with the inability of some to be as open or tolerant.

### **The Benefits of ICC**

The benefits of developing ICC are well researched and well documented. However, the two research projects cited above, conducted by the Federation of The Experiment in International Living, are unique because they are one of few *multinational* efforts to document the positive impact of educational exchange upon participants from multiple countries (cf. Fantini 2019). Another very recent study involving students from multiple countries is an interesting work titled *Understanding Student Mobility in Europe* (Almeida 2020).

Looking out beyond one's own worldview when sojourning abroad has another important benefit that people returning from abroad often cite: it stimulates looking *in* as well as looking *out* -- that is, it provokes one to reflect upon the way one has previously understood the world. When exploring "otherness," one learns to understand and appreciate one's *own* heritage even more. This is aptly captured in a saying often heard among interculturalists, which states: "If you want to know about water, don't ask a goldfish!" In other words, it is difficult to have keen awareness of

the milieu one has been immersed in from birth if one has never been outside of that milieu. Don Juan in Castaneda's works raises a similar issue when he admonishes:

Who the hell do you think you are to say the world is so and so . . . just because you think it is so and so? Who gave you the authority? To believe the world is only as you think, is stupid. The world is a strange place . . . full of mystery and awe. (Castaneda 1972:88)

Hence, developing ICC plays an important role in today's world. ICC has the power to produce a paradigm shift, to produce a "crack in the cosmic egg" (cf. Pearce 1971), to expand one's worldview, to provide a profound life-changing experience that enhances one's capacity for tolerance, understanding, and appreciation of that which is different. In short, ICC aids people in discovering not only about differences but also about commonalities that all human beings share. It is essential for everyone.

Some time ago, Marilyn Ferguson pointed to such a development in her book, *Aquarian Conspiracy*. She described it as a development based on social transformation, resulting from personal, individual transformations, from changes that occur from the inside out, motivated by the development of new perspectives, from a wish to transcend our cultural myopia, and from a wish to address our common human needs (cf. Ferguson 1980).

### **Why do this?**

The question some may ask is: Why do this? Again, the response is related, on the one hand, to increasing diversity and increasing heterogeneity in the world. We are more in contact with each other than ever before in human history. We commonly encounter diversity in our daily lives. On the other hand, it is also necessary because of increased polarization among those with different perspectives, and a growing inability to have reasoned discourse with others who hold alternative or different viewpoints. The reactions provoked by such inability and intolerance are sometimes frightening.

Moreover, experience with diversity is no longer reserved for a specific time or place, and it need not refer only to ethnic, racial, or religious differences. Diversity refers also to intellectual diversity, to intellectual discourse, to differences in the way we conceive of and understand our communities, our countries, and our nations, especially in the context of the international community and the globalized world, our collective home. We are reminded that alternate views always exist, and we are challenged to explore them with a reflective and critical eye, yet in a caring and constructive way.

Other benefits also exist: It is common to hear individuals returning from an intercultural experience say, for example: "While in Greece, I learned so much about the Greeks but I learned even more about my own culture, about myself." The fact is that the more one learns about the Greeks (or any other people), one develops not only contrastive *intercultural* competencies but one also begins to see that Greeks are not all alike (that variations and diversity exist even within a single culture); hence, *intracultural* competencies. In addition, the process of reflection and introspection that so often occurs when one is in a new culture also promotes one to look at

members within one's native linguaculture at home as well (i.e., the *interpersonal*) and to develop a greater understanding of how one deals with oneself (*intrapersonal* abilities). We might portray the interconnections between the multiple aspects of this development in the following manner:

Intercultural <> Intracultural<> Interpersonal <> Intrapersonal

Happily, there are many indications that societal changes are occurring on a widespread scale. Institutions and professional societies are updating mission statements, developing new strategies, and assembling lists of resources to aid educators in their task. The challenge for them is to ensure that their conception of diversity is not limited to just the conventional understanding of the term but that it includes intellectual diversity as well. Professional organizations and universities are adopting several approaches, as exemplified in the following excerpts:

1) The Center for Educational Resources in Culture, Language, and Literacy (CERCLL) announced a "List of Resources for Social Justice and Anti-Racism in the L2 Classroom" with the following statement:

As a National Language Resource Center whose mission is to promote the integration of languages, literacies, and intercultural perspectives, CERCLL is committed to addressing the forms of inequity, racism, and discrimination that too often are left unexamined in that work. In order to do better ourselves and as a means of inviting others to join us, we are compiling a set of resources for language and culture educators. This includes a wide range of materials to read, watch, and listen to, which will help teachers to think about how anti-racist pedagogy might inform their practices (Email June 25, 2020).

2) The professional society, TESOL International, distributed an article in its *English Language Bulletin* titled "Effective anti-racist education requires more diverse teachers, more training:"

In the wake of ongoing protests for racial justice, young people in America are demanding change from their schools. Petitions are circulating all over the country in support of creating anti-racist education. One petition...calls on the district to "review and advance its curriculum, goals, and objectives as they relate to social justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion." "Education is the most valuable tool to dismantle racism and create a more equitable society," the petition reads. (Email July 14, 2020).

3) The Society for Cross Cultural Research (SCCR) wrote in its newsletter:

SCCR is a community in which we share explorations of phenomena across and within cultures.... As such, we aim to center dialogues about injustice at our meetings, including working to foster specific programming about social injustice globally and in the United States, institutional violence against marginalized individuals, and

the privilege of power in future meetings.... We...commit to addressing injustice in our work, teaching, and lives, and we encourage our membership to similarly be partners in this work, using their voices to also address inequity (Email June 18, 2020).

4) The University of Chicago's Professor Danielle S. Allen, an African-American scholar in the Departments of Classical Languages and Literatures and Political Science, delivered their annual "Aims of Education" address to incoming students in which she said:

Befriend the world...everywhere. Not only in your classroom and in the imagination, but also in Hyde Park and on the South Side of Chicago. After all, this will be your world for four years. Befriend it and ask the questions about race, opportunity, and citizenship relevant to understanding it. And befriend the wide world as you travel it, asking whys, wherefores, and what nexts. Look broadly and with an open spirit (Allen, September 20, 2001).

5) More recently, the University of Chicago's Dean of Students, John Ellison, sent the following letter to incoming freshman:

Welcome...to the College at the University of Chicago.... Once here you will discover that one of the University of Chicago's defining characteristics is our commitment to freedom of inquiry and expression.... Members of our community are encouraged to speak, write, listen, challenge, and learn, without fear of censorship. Civility and mutual respect are vital to all of us, and freedom of expression does not mean the freedom to harass or threaten others.... We expect members of our community to be engaged in rigorous debate, discussion, and even disagreement. At times, this may challenge you and even cause discomfort. Our commitment to academic freedom means that we do not support so-called "trigger warnings," we do not cancel invited speakers because their topics might prove controversial, and we do not condone the creation of intellectual "safe spaces" where individuals can retreat from ideas and perspectives at odds with their own. Fostering the free exchange of ideas reinforces a related University priority -- building a campus that welcomes people of all backgrounds. Diversity of opinion and background is a fundamental strength of our community. The members of our community must have the freedom to espouse and explore a wide range of ideas (Ellison, 2016).

These examples clearly represent an array of approaches to the issue of diversity -- yet all underscore the importance of implementing curricula and programs that achieve truly open education that is richly diverse, intellectually open and honest, and rooted in the basic principles of ICC.

## **Conclusion**

Together, language and culture form the most fundamental human paradigm; together, they mediate all that we think, all that we do, all that we are. They help us to formulate concepts, to create categories, to name and label, and to form images of the world around us. Because language and culture are so intimately intertwined with our understanding of reality, it is impossible to extricate ourselves from our native linguaculture; that is, until and unless we enter into at least one other system. In so doing, we, like the Roman god Janus, can see in two ways. As a result, we become aware of the role of our native language and culture and, more importantly, we can compare and contrast that with another system, a possibility not available to a monolingual-monocultural individual.

At the same time, it is important to recognize and remember that despite acquiring competencies that allow us to view in new ways, each view is firmly rooted in a cognitive terrain and one that serves as the core of our being. ICC development enables us to see the world from multiple perspectives; but it does not mean that we become rudderless, with no referent, or no “home” culture or worldview. However, hopefully that home culture or worldview, when expanded, helps us to realize that like so many things in life, truth often lies somewhere between the extremes.

In summary, ICC development is contingent on direct interpersonal experiences, new experiences, and different experiences with other human beings. It is contingent on developing relationships and interacting with diverse human beings. Through our exploration of new ways of being, we learn what we do not know. We explore different ways of knowing. We not only know more as a result, but we also know differently through participation in other worldviews.

Moreover, if entering a second linguaculture opens new possibilities, entering a third (or more linguacultures) offers a richer experience, lessening the chance of polarizing the world through comparison of only two modes. This notion echoes Einstein’s comment when he said: “No problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it. Consciousness is the state of being awake to ourselves, to our world, and the people we affect” (cf. Einstein 2020)

We conclude with an emphasis on the following main points:

- 1) We need to challenge our native linguaculture in order to see beyond.
- 2) Language is fundamental to any attempt to develop ICC and to access worldview.
- 3) Developing clear, coherent, and integrated curricula to develop ICC requires educators to work across disciplines and in multi-disciplinary ways.
- 4) Encourage families to preserve their multiple heritages and pass them on to their children, contributing further to an enriched multilingual-multicultural society.

5) Developing intercultural communicative competence is a necessary ability for everyone.

This process can lead toward a revision and expansion of societal models and result in building more dynamic and inclusive communities. In today's world, a positive view – and participation -- in cultural diversity is an important aspect of a democratic society.

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