Developing Intercultural Communication Skills for Academic Advising
Web Event Handout

Overview
The rapid internationalization of our institutions of higher education has created a climate in which all education professionals are required to work with students and colleagues who do not share our worldview or cultural norms. Intercultural competence has become an expected skill set for all of us in higher education today, yet few of us have had more than rudimentary exposure to the field of intercultural communication. In this Web Event, sponsored by NACADA's Global Engagement Commission, our panelists will discuss essential concepts of intercultural communication and their application to academic advising. They will consider the need for paying attention to cultural differences, challenges and opportunities of culturally diverse environments, understanding cultural differences and their impact on academic advising, and more.

Pre-Event Activity
In the pre-event period prior to the webinar, the following poll question will be available for participants to take part in. Event group facilitators may wish to ask their group members to arrive a few minutes early to have time to discuss and reach consensus on how to respond to the poll. Our panelists will share their thoughts about this scenario — and others — during the broadcast.

Three Indonesian students living in the United States were invited by their advisor to participate in a cross-cultural training workshop. They did not want to participate, nor did they have the time. Rather than tell the professor they couldn't attend, they just didn't return his calls and didn't show up to the workshop. Why did they behave this way?

- This was the appropriate way to handle the situation.
- They did not want to offend their professor, whom they regard as an authority figure.
- Ignoring someone is better than saying "no".
- The professor should have understood the difficult situation they were in.
- All the above.

Recommended Resources


NEW!

Resources for Building Self-Awareness

Books/Workbooks


This workbook provides tools such as analytical essays, narratives, poems which can be used towards examining what it means to be white in the U.S. and for addressing fear, shame, and guilt as barriers to dismantling racism. The authors provide readers with ways of identifying the small daily acts and larger organized ways that pose a barrier to our achieving social justice and equality. The experiential activities are very effective in helping readers understand the importance of confronting racist systems, joining the struggle for social justice and ending privilege.


In this chapter, the author stresses the importance of incorporating cultural diversity into our classrooms. She argues that to be a social justice ally we have to go beyond acknowledging diverse people and acquiring cultural competence skills. We must also find ways to change the experiences of those who are often marginalized and isolated in our society. The chapter includes two great activities. The first helps readers identify their multiple social identities and how valued by society these different identities are. The second, What are your knowledge and comfort levels?, allows readers to rate their knowledge on different groups of students and to rate their comfort level in working with them.

Web Resources


The Implicit Association Tests (IAT) are based on the premises that implicit biases are pervasive, people are often unaware of their implicit biases, implicit biases predict behavior, and that people differ in levels of implicit biases depending on their group memberships. The IATs are designed to measure implicit attitudes and beliefs that people are either unwilling or unable to report. Topics range from political views to issues related to ethnic groups. After taking a test, participants are asked to report (optionally) their attitudes toward or beliefs about these topics, and provide some general information about themselves. Sessions require 10-15 minutes to complete. Each time you begin a session you will be randomly assigned to a topic. You can take as many IATs as you want. At the end of each session, you will get some information about the study and a summary of your results. The free online tests can be found at: https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/demo/

Facing History and Ourselves: Helping classrooms and communities worldwide link the past to moral choices today. Founded in 1976, they are an international educational and professional development nonprofit organization whose mission is to engage individuals of diverse backgrounds in an examination of racism, prejudice, and antisemitism in order to promote the development of a more humane and informed citizenry. By studying the historical development of the Holocaust and other examples of genocide, individuals make the essential connection between history and the moral choices they confront in their own lives. http://www.facinghistory.org/.
Resources for Learning About Diverse Populations


This book is a collection of theoretical concepts, personal essays, and action sections, which challenges the reader to take action to end oppressive behavior and to affirm diversity and social justice. It includes over 90 essays from some of the most distinguished scholars in the field and it covers a wide range of social differences and injustices such as racism, sexism, Anti-Semitism, heterosexism, classism and ableism.


This book provides the conceptual framework, historical background, and rationale for understanding the need and importance of social justice teaching and practice. The book provides teachers/facilitators user-friendly pedagogical approaches to issues of oppression. The book is a good foundation for engaging the complex and often daunting problems of discrimination and inequality in our society today. The accompanying CD-ROM includes extensive appendices for participant handouts and facilitator preparation.


The handbook is comprehensive and it covers a wide range of topics such as what advisors need to know about student success, principles for effective academic advising, the importance of recognition and reward to quality advising, conceptual, relational and informational issues surrounding effective advisor training and development, and the importance advising plays on a variety of campuses. This latest edition has an expanded section on the changing college student population. Chapters 8, 9, 12, and 13 contain detailed information on advising diverse student populations.

Resources for Learning About Cross-Cultural Issues

Concepts: Culture and cultural differences such as individualism/collectivism concept of self; universalist/particularist societal responsibility; monochronic/polychronic time orientation; internal/external locus of control


A self-guided cross-cultural training workbook with a lot of activities (and suggested answers) to help with the understanding of culture and cultural differences. This book is designed for anyone who wants help "figuring out" the behavior of someone from another culture. The author takes readers step by step through the concepts that govern the process of intercultural communication and cross-cultural interaction and then offers creative activities that challenge readers to apply what they are learning. Very user friendly.


A unique book/workbook with dozens of activities, dialogues, stories, incidents, and two full simulations focusing on the authors' five dimensions of culture -- power distance, collectivism versus individualism, femininity versus masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term versus short-term orientation. The book is fun, playful and expertly written. The authors, leading experts in intercultural training, do a wonderful job in coaching readers through the process of building awareness, knowledge and skills in effective intercultural learning.

Concepts: Understanding U.S. cultural values


The book provides a general understanding of U.S. American culture, values, assumptions as well as communication styles. Especially important for advisors who work with international students as a tool to help them understand and function effectively in this country. The newer edition (2002) features a new chapter on race and ethnic relations.

Concepts: Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity


This is a collection of articles (classic and contemporary) exploring the building blocks of intercultural communication. Chapter one not only offers an in-depth introduction to the field if intercultural communication but it also introduces the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity. This well-known model offers an insight into the way individuals deal with differences. This is an essential resource on cross-cultural understanding and multiculturalism.
Concept: Differences in communication styles; the staircase model of intercultural communication; differences in nonverbal communication; differences in conflict resolution style


This student-centered textbook offers great information on the fundamental concepts of intercultural communication. Chapters also include a lot of examples, questions, activities, and stories. Although mostly used as a textbook, the stories and examples make it easier for the reader to connect with the concepts. Chapter titles are written in the form of posed questions (e.g.: *Why Study Intercultural Communication?*) and they offer a balanced view of both international/intercultural communication issues as well as U.S. domestic diversity issues. Each chapter ends with an "intercultural toolkit" offering the reader an opportunity to review the concepts covered and put them into practice.

Concepts: Cultural intelligence


Packed with dozens of engaging stories, case studies and cartoons, this book provides a great way for readers to understand and work effectively with people from other cultures. The author defines what cultural intelligence is and provides in-depth exploration of the skills necessary for acquiring cultural intelligence. Geared towards improving workplace communication, it focuses on five basic culture scales, and it not only helps the reader examine his/her own cultural style but it also helps them determine that of others. This book is unique is the sense that it helps readers move beyond knowledge acquisition towards actually developing culturally-sensitive behaviors.

Concepts: Culture shock and cross-cultural adjustment


A quick read on cross-cultural adaptation with numerous hands-on suggestions for dealing effectively with the overseas experience. It was written as a practical guide for U.S. Americans going overseas but a lot of the concepts covered also apply to international students spending time in this country. Readers learn how to avoid stereotypes, how to explore the mysteries of culture, and how values and different ways of thinking influence behavior. The book also offers basic strategies for getting to know your hosts, managing culture shock, and developing intercultural communication skills. Postscript 1: *So You Are Going Back Home* may be helpful to advisors working with international students as they need to consider going home as part of the complete cycle that includes: leaving, settling overseas, and returning home.


This practical guidebook describes the personal challenges inherent in a cross-cultural experience. The author reflects on the process of adjusting to another culture and the importance of anticipating differences, managing the temptation of withdrawing, and gradually adjusting your behavior to fit the new environment. The book includes many examples of cross-cultural misunderstandings coupled with writings of some of the world’s greatest writers and poets. Storti pays special attention to the process of dealing with culture shock. He offers an easy-to-understand model of cultural adjustment, tips on how to master the process, and help on developing strategies appropriate to the new environment.

NACADA Resources on Advising Specific Student Populations

**NACADA Clearinghouse of Academic Advising Resources**
Clearinghouse articles on advising different student populations can be assessed at [http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Special-Populations-Index.aspx](http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Special-Populations-Index.aspx)

**NACADA Books**

*Advising Special Populations: Adult Learners, Community College Students, LGBTQ Students, Multicultural Students, Students on Probation, Undecided Students*; Linda Huff & Peggy Jordan (Eds.). ([http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Store.aspx?name=special%20populations&name=special%20populations](http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Store.aspx?name=special%20populations&name=special%20populations)).

NACADA Recordings on CD


Advising ESL and International Students. (60 minutes). (http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Product-Details/ID/REC049CD.aspx)

Advising International Students from China. (34 minutes). (http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Product-Details/ID/REC042CD.aspx)


Developing Intercultural Communication Skills for Academic Advising

A Panel Discussion

The rapid internationalization of our institutions of higher education has created a climate in which all education professionals are required to work with students and colleagues who do not share our worldview or cultural norms. Intercultural competence has become an expected skill set for all of us in higher education today, yet few of us have had more than rudimentary exposure to the field of intercultural communication. In this Web Event, sponsored by NACADA’s Global Engagement Commission, our panelists will discuss essential concepts of intercultural communication and their application to academic advising. They will consider the need for paying attention to cultural differences, challenges and opportunities of culturally diverse environments, understanding cultural differences and their impact on academic advising, and more.

Webinar Outline

- Cultural Demographics
- Cultural Diversity
- Culture and the Advising Relationship
- Cultural Competence in Academic Advising
- Cultural Competence - Moving Forward

All statements made during this webinar are intended as Guidelines only.

To apply any Cultural Characteristics to all individuals of a particular group would be unwise and disrespectful to the individual.

Understanding the culture is a starting point in the relationship.

Demographic Changes

College and universities today embody a greater multiplicity of ethnicities, religious affiliations, cultures, sexual orientations, and ability levels than ever before in the history of higher education

(Dreasher 2010)

Why pay attention to cultural differences?

Number of Students Studying Outside Their Country of Origin 1975 to 2010

Top Five Destinations for Tertiary Studies Abroad
of all foreign students followed worldwide

- United States: 17%
- United Kingdom: 13%
- Australia: 6%
- Germany: 6%
- France: 6%
- Other: 52%

Education at a Glance 2013: OECD Indicators

TOP PLACES OF ORIGIN OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS - 2011/12

1. China 38%
2. India 14%
3. South Korea 10%
4. Saudi Arabia 7%
5. Canada 5%
6. Taiwan 4%
7. Japan 4%
8. Vietnam 4%
9. Mexico 3%
10. Turkey 3%

Other 52%

Total: 764,495

http://www.iie.org/opendoors

NEW INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ENROLLMENT - USA

2004/05 2011/12

Undergraduate: 59.943 90.903
Graduate: 61.350 92.211
Non-Degree: 10.653 45.353
Total: 131,846 228,467

Retrieved from http://www.iie.org/opendoors

Total Enrollment of International Students (2005 – 2010) CANADA

- 2005-2006: 118,707
- 2006-2007: 123,243
- 2007-2008: 129,572
- 2008-2009: 165,372
- 2009-2010: 200,372

Source: Statistics Canada

Percentage of Academic Level 2000 and 2008 Enrollment (CANADA)

- Bachelor’s degree:
  - 2000: 58.4%
  - 2008: 66.6%
- Master’s degree:
  - 2000: 22.3%
  - 2008: 18.2%
- Ph.D.:
  - 2000: 12.7%
  - 2008: 12.1%

Source: Statistics Canada
The New Reality for Academic Advisors

- Academic advisors today no longer have the option of working solely with students who share the same worldview, cultural norms, or even language.
- In order to serve our students effectively, we need to increase our awareness of differences so we can respond to our students’ needs appropriately.

Opportunities and Benefits

- Diversification of campus community
- Exposure to new cultural perspectives
- Intercultural interactions lead to gains in communication skills, the ability to empathize and an openness to new ideas
- Consistent intercultural interactions increase individuals’ likelihood to challenge personal beliefs and embrace new perspectives.

Challenges and Fears: Scenario

An instructor reports the Chinese students in his class did not know how to participate in the first day ice-breaker. The instructor had asked students to stand-up, state their name, where they are from, and to tell an embarrassing story about themselves.

The instructor noted the students’ names were “unintelligible,” and that “they” all said they were from China, excepting one student who said “Beijing.” The instructor also said only one student told an embarrassing story while the other students stayed silent.

The instructor’s conclusion was that the Chinese students cannot speak or understand English, and therefore are not equipped to take his class.

But is there more to this story?
Challenges of Multicultural Institutions

Language problems leading to miscommunication and misinterpretation

Biases against the unfamiliar

Incorrect assumptions and stereotyping

Conflicting values

Expectations that others will conform

Language Problems Leading to Miscommunication

• Accents equated with ignorance of the language
• Differences in the use of silence
• Differences in intonation
• Conversations in a foreign language considered derogatory
• Nonverbal differences

Incorrect Assumptions and/or Stereotyping of Diverse Cultures

• Often out of ignorance or lack of information
• When people don’t fit our stereotypes, we tend to think they are the exception

Biases Against the Unfamiliar

• “They won’t look you in the eyes.”
• “They lead you to believe you are being understood when, in reality, you are not.”
• “They smile at everything and even giggle at serious matters.”

Conflicting Values

**Western Cultures**
- Individualism/Independence
- Informality
- Directness
- Control over environment
- Equality
- Conflict can be positive

**Eastern Cultures**
- Group well fare/Interdependence
- Formality
- Indirectness
- Fate/destiny
- Hierarchy/Rank
- Conflict is negative

Expectation that Others Will Conform to the Dominant/Host Culture

• Examples of U.S. cultural values:
  – Showing initiative
  – Aggressively seeking promotion
  – Accepting public praise
  – Speaking up in meetings
  – Participation in decision making
  – Dealing with problems in an openly manner
  – Informality
What is the impact of “culture” on the advising relationship?

Characteristics of Culture

- Culture is learned, not innate
- Culture is shared and it defines the boundaries of different groups
- Culture is always changing and evolving

What are some cultural differences that may impact the advising relationship?

Differences in communication styles:

It is not only what we say but also how we say it

Differences in Communication Styles

- Pauses and silences
- Saying “no”
- Direct and indirect communication
- Communication context
Differences in Communication Styles

Pauses and Silences

- Cultural groups differ in the relative emphasis placed on speaking and silence
- For some groups, silence = possible breakdown in the communication process
- For others, silence = respect and deference

Implications for advising
- Silence communicates as much as the spoken word
- We need to become more comfortable with the absence of words
- It is possible advisees are using silence to achieve better communication

Differences in Communication Styles

Saying “No”

- In some cultures, it is inappropriate to say “no”, thus the tendency of “softening” the negative by
  - Answering a question with another question
  - Turning you down gently by saying: “Maybe I can do it, I’ll let you know.”
- It is possible “yes” means: “Yes, I understand you” and not “Yes, I agree with you.”

Implications for advising
- Keep in mind the tendency of some groups to “soften the negative”
- Avoid asking “yes” or “no” questions
- Provide students with options so they can reject what they do not want without feeling they have offended you

Differences in Communication Styles

Direct versus Indirect

Direct Communicators
- Say what they mean, mean what they say
- See no need to read between the lines
- Believe it is best to tell it like it is
- Are less likely to imply and more likely to say what they are thinking
- Are likely to mean “yes” when they say “yes”

Indirect Communicators
- Say what they mean, mean what they say
- See no need to read between the lines
- Believe it is best to tell it like it is
- Are less likely to imply and more likely to say what they are thinking
- Are likely to mean “yes” when they say “yes”

Consider the following example:

“Three Indonesian students living in the United States were invited by their advisor to participate in a cross-cultural training workshop. They did not want to participate, but did they have time. When they asked if they could participate in another workshop, they just didn’t return the call and didn’t show up to the workshop. Why did they behave this way?”

(Adapted from Martin, J. N. & Nakayama, T. K. (2000). Intercultural communication contexts.)
Differences in Communication Styles
Direct versus Indirect Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct Communicators</th>
<th>Indirect Communicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Don’t always say what they mean or mean exactly what they say</td>
<td>• Don’t always say what they mean or mean exactly what they say</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Require that you read between the lines</td>
<td>• Require that you read between the lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Are more likely to suggest or imply than to say what they think</td>
<td>• Are more likely to suggest or imply than to say what they think</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Feel they can’t always tell it like it is (What if that upsets the other person?)</td>
<td>• Feel they can’t always tell it like it is (What if that upsets the other person?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mean “maybe or even “no” when saying “yes”</td>
<td>• Mean “maybe or even “no” when saying “yes”</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Implications for advising
• Remember that different students place different priorities in telling the truth, being honest, preserving harmony, and trying to avoid conflict
• Individuals in all cultures may be more or less direct depending on the situation

Differences in Communication Styles
Consider the following exchange between two Japanese women:

Mrs. Kurogi: Hello, Mrs. Yamashita...Your son Toji is entering his high school karaoke contest, isn’t he? I envy you, because you must be so proud of his talent. You must be looking forward to his future as a pop singer...I am really impressed by his enthusiasm — every day, he practices so hard, for hours and hours, until late at night...

Mrs. Yamashita: Oh, I’m so sorry...Toji is just a beginner in karaoke singing. We don’t know his future yet...He is such a silly boy singing so late. We didn’t realize you can hear all the noise next door. I will tell him to stop right away. I am so sorry for all your trouble, it won’t happen again.

Source: Ting-Toomey and Chung, 2005, p. 173

Differences in Communication Styles
Communication Context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Context</th>
<th>Low Context</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High-Context Communicators</td>
<td>Low-Context Communicators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Intention or meaning can best be conveyed through the context (e.g., social roles, status, or positions) and through nonverbal channels (e.g., pauses, silence, tone of voice).</td>
<td>• Intention or meaning is best expressed through explicit verbal messages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Preference for indirect verbal mode (self-humbling talk, nonverbal subtleties).</td>
<td>• Preference for direct verbal mode (straight talk).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Emphasizes a roundabout way of expression.</td>
<td>• Emphasizes individual-centered expressions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The receiver assumes the responsibility to infer the hidden or contextual meanings of the message, to “read between the lines”, and decode the nonverbal subtleties that accompany the verbal message.</td>
<td>• Speaker is responsible for constructing a clear, persuasive message that the listener can decode easily (= sender-oriented values).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Differences in Communication Styles

Communication Context

Implications for advising
• Practice reading “between the lines” and decoding the nonverbal subtleties accompanying advisee’s verbal messages

What other kind of communication do we need to understand?
What is not being said also matters

Differences in Nonverbal Communication

65% to 93% of any message may be transmitted through non-verbal communication
(Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005)
(Mehrabian, Albert; Wiener, Morton 1967)

The Use of Personal Space

Personal Boundaries
How close is close? What is the ideal distance?

Knowing When to Touch

• High-Contact Cultures (i.e., French, Russian, Latin American, Italian)
  Touch and Kiss
  Face each other

• Low-Contact Cultures (i.e., Chinese, Japanese, Korean)
  Engage in little if any touching
  Speak in lower tone

• Cultural variations on Handshakes

Patterns of Eye Contact

• Preference
• Intention
• Misinterpretations
The Use of Time

Major Time Orientations
• Monochronic
• Polychronic

Position of Selected Cultures

What can advisors do to develop cultural competence?

Cultural Competence
A Necessary Skill for Academic Advisors

Step 1
Developing Self-Awareness
• Advisors need to have a strong understanding of how their personal beliefs, biases, values, stereotypes, prejudices, and privileges affect their way of thinking, behaving, and functioning.
• This is an essential element in the understanding of others.

Step 2
Acquiring Knowledge and Information
• Knowledge about issues affecting underrepresented populations, their cultural background, as well as the barriers limiting their access and success at the institution is essential.
• Culturally competent advisors have knowledge and understanding of their own cultural values and how they differ from those of other cultures.
Step 3
Developing the Necessary Skills for Advising Across Differences

In order to work effectively with diverse student populations, advisors need to:
- Increase their comfort level in working with differences.
- Gain an understanding of how they deal with differences.

The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity

- **Denial**: Individuals are unable to see differences
- **Defense**: Individuals see differences but they are labeled negatively
- **Minimization**: Individuals see differences but deep down we are all the same
- **Acceptance**: Cultural differences are less threatening
- **Adaptation**: Individuals are able to change their behavior to interact effectively across differences
- **Integration**: Individuals thrive on cultural differences and are able to look at situations from multiple perspectives

How to Assess Your Cultural Competence Level

**Intercultural Development Model – IDI (M. Hammer)**
- Provides concrete steps individuals can take so they can become more culturally competence
- Cross-culturally valid and reliable assessment tool for building cultural competence
- 50-item questionnaire, available online and in a paper-and-pencil format that can be completed in 15-20 minutes
- Each individual profile is accompanied with a customized “intercultural development plan” – detailed action steps for the individual to further develop his/her cultural competence

The D-I-E Framework

**Description: What We Actually See**
- Factual information that can be verified through the senses
- Information is non-judgmental and not effected by our opinion
- Anyone seeing the situation would describe it in the same way
The D-I-E Framework

Interpretation: What We Think About What We See

• Attach meaning to the description—what did we see?
• We then make assumptions and interpret things based on our own underlying cultural patterns

The D-I-E Framework

Evaluation: How We Feel About What We Saw

• Can be positive or negative based on understanding and interpretation of the behavior

Example Scenario

• The description is Pablo, an advisee, is late for his advising appointment
• Pablo’s advisor may interpret his behavior positively or negatively based on the advisor’s perspective of the behavior
• Pablo’s behavior and the advisor’s understanding of the behavior influences the evaluation attached to it

What do we need to keep in mind when working across cultures?

Final Thoughts