

Claremont Cross-Cultural Interaction Skills Training

Executive Summary

Becky Reichard, PhD
Claremont Graduate University



TRAINING DESCRIPTION

While valuable, the typical diversity training or cultural etiquette training, which usually consists of memorizing customs and facts of a specific cultural group, falls short in preparing employees who need to effectively interact with customers or fellow employees from a wide variety of cultural groups and sub-cultures on a daily basis. While your employee may know how low to bow when interacting with a Japanese colleague, do they have the self-awareness and cross-cultural skills to in one meeting conduct negotiations with a middle-eastern client, place an order with a French-Canadian sub-contractor over the phone, and then resolve a complaint from a Hispanic employee that afternoon?

The Claremont Cross-Cultural Interaction Skills (CCCIS) training takes a new approach to preparing you and your employees for success in diverse cross-cultural interactions by building general competencies and psychological resources such as motivation, optimism, confidence, and resilience when engaging in cross-cultural interactions. Building these generalizable skills results in more flexibility and adaptability when interacting with individuals from a variety of different cultural backgrounds.

The CCCIS has been successfully pilot-tested demonstrating strong results in increasing participants'

- Confidence in their own cross-cultural skills
- Motivation to work with diverse cultures
- Overall understanding of different cultures
- Ability to overcome obstacles faced in cross-cultural situations

Our trainers have many years of both cross-cultural and organizational consulting experience and training. They have lived in at least two different countries and conducted hundreds of training sessions throughout their careers.

THE TRAINING TEAM



Michael Condren, M.A., is an organizational psychologist and ICF-certified coach with extensive experience training individuals and groups. He has worked with executives, entrepreneurs and teams in the areas of leadership development, strategic planning, and cross-cultural skills building. His international experience includes extensive time living and working in France, India and Ireland. (Michael.condren@cgu.edu)



Shawn Serrano, M.A., has worked in a number of culturally diverse environments, in the US and abroad (including two years in Brazil). He is currently working to help revitalize California's local economy through innovative workforce development research and training initiatives. Finally, he is also an organizational coach, mindfulness practitioner, and doctoral student at Claremont Graduate University. (Shawn.serrano@cgu.edu)



Maren Dollwet, M.A., has a diverse background by having lived in Germany, Poland, and the United States. She has strong interpersonal and language skills that enable her to effectively communicate with people from varying cultural backgrounds. In addition, she has experience both on the development of training content as well as the delivery of training to a wide range of clients across industries (e.g., service, manufacturing, non-profit). (Maren.dollwet@cgu.edu)



Natasha Wilder conducts research on cross-cultural participation in organizations. For her work, she draws on several years of experience as a consultant to non-governmental organizations while living in Central and South America. She speaks Spanish and Portuguese. (Natasha.wilder@cgu.edu)

TRAINING LOGISTICS

Participants

- This training is only relevant for employees who interact with customers, co-workers, or contractors from a different cultural background than their own.
- Training sessions range from 9-12 participants per session
- The training is geared towards supervisors – the requirements to participate in the training are that supervisors are over the age of 18 and supervise at least 1 other person
- Any type of organization (for-profit, non-profit, volunteer, university) from any industry is free to participate for a limited time only.

Training Duration

- The overall training consists of an in-person training session, lasting a total of four hours.
- There will be a short break halfway through the training session.

Location

- Training can be conducted on-site at your organization if at least 12 employees are willing to participate in the training
- Alternatively, your employees can sign-up and attend any of our training sessions offered on the Claremont Colleges campus.

Supplies

- We will provide all supplies needed for the training
- For on-site training, a quiet room that can easily seat up to 15 people with a projector to set up audio-visual training materials using a laptop computer is required.

Cost

- The cost of training is generally \$50 per employee, but for the first 200 employees of select organizations the CCCIS training will be free of charge as part of an applied research study conducted by a Claremont professor.

TRAINING FORMAT & CONTENT

Pre-Training

- Participants will complete a short survey assessing their cross-cultural skills (about a week prior to the training)
- This is an online survey that takes about 20 minutes to complete
- The results from this survey will be shared with the participants in the beginning of the training session – each participant will privately receive a “cultural profile” based on their results

In-person Training

Part 1: Building cross-cultural psychological resources (2 hours)

Timing	Activity	Description
00:00 – 00:05	Introduction	Participants are welcomed and have an opportunity to introduce themselves. The trainer outlines the training objectives and provides definitions of culture and cross-cultural experience.
00:05 – 00:15	Personal profiles	Participants receive their cultural profiles based on the pretest survey. Based on these results, participants identify their personal strengths and areas for improvement. The goal of this exercise is to build self-awareness.
00:15 – 00:45	Sharing a prior cross-cultural experience	Participants reflect on and share past cross-cultural experiences with the group. The objective of this exercise is to reframe past events and identify what was done well and what could have been done differently.
00:45 – 01:30	Cross-cultural scenarios	Participants are divided into small groups and each group is given a cross-cultural scenario. Each group identifies what could have gone better in the scenario and act out an alternative response through role play
01:30 – 02:00	Goal-setting	Each participant sets personal SMART goals related to cross-cultural work. These goals are shared with the group
02:00 – 02:05	Debrief survey	Before taking a short break, participants complete a short (5 minute) paper-based survey.

**** Break **** (10 mins., refreshments provided)

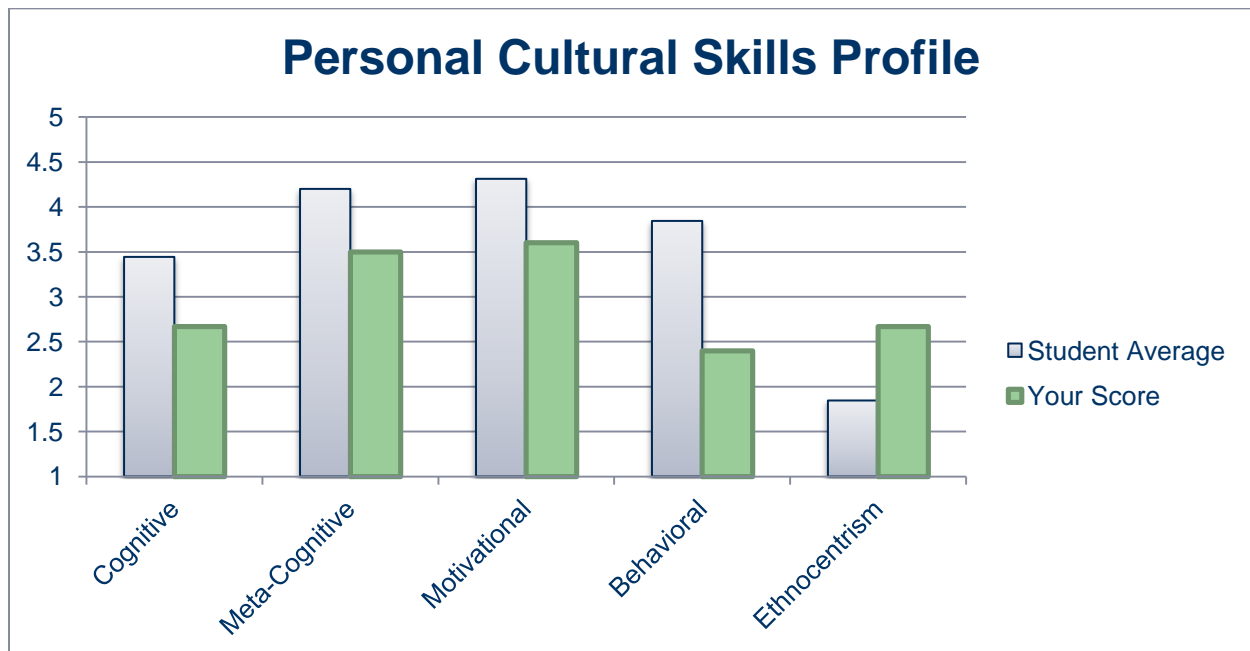
Part 2: Exposure to cross-cultural trigger event (1.5 hours)

Timing	Activity	Description
02:15 – 02:20	Introduction	Participants are briefly introduced to the second part of the training program.
02:20 – 02:25	Video 1	Participants watch a 5 minute video that shows a “freegan” dumpster diving.
02:25 – 02:40	Reflective exercise and dyad discussion	Participants are asked to take the perspective of the main figure and write about the experience shown in the video. They then share their impressions of the culturally novel event from the video with a partner.
02:40 – 02:43	Video 2	Participants watch a 3 minute video that shows a Chinese cooking show.
02:43 – 03:00	Reflective exercise and dyad discussion	Participants are asked to take the perspective of the main figure and write about the experience shown in the video. They then share their impressions of the culturally novel event from the video with a partner.
03:00 – 03:03	Video 3	Participants watch a 3 minute video that shows ritual scarring scenario from Africa.
03:03 – 03:10	Reflective exercise	Participants are asked to take the perspective of the main figure and write about the experience shown in the video.
03:10 – 03:20	Group discussion	Participants discuss their initial reactions to the videos and how these reactions may have changed through the perspective-taking writing exercise.
03:20 – 03:40	Debrief survey	Participants complete a paper-based survey and evaluation of the training.
03:40 – 03:50	Debriefing and thank you	Participants are debriefed on the training and are provided the opportunity to ask any remaining questions. Participants are then thanked and dismissed.

SAMPLE PERSONAL PROFILE

PERSONAL PROFILE for John Doe

The chart below shows your scores on the Culture Survey you recently completed. The questions on this survey assessed your perceptions of your current cross-cultural skills and attitudes necessary for successful cross-cultural interactions. Your scores are compared to norm, or average, scores that were calculated from a large group of U.S. undergraduate college students, a majority of which completed a semester abroad. Scoring above or below the average reflects whether you reported yourself as having more or less cultural skills and ethnocentric attitudes than the student comparison group. Therefore, your scores indicate your areas of strengths and areas of improvement. It is very important to note that all of these cross-cultural skills and attitudes described below are open to change and development. Identifying your strengths and areas of improvement will help you come up with developmental strategies to improve your future cross-cultural events.



Interpretation of Results

Cognitive Cross-Cultural Skills

This cross-cultural skill is composed of reasoning skills and high cognitive functions as well as the body of knowledge an individual has about a culture.

Example: A business leader from Japan walks into the conference, and the cognitively intelligent leader knows to offer the Japanese leader a seat next to him/her as part of the social gesture to show respect for the Japanese leader's rank.

Below Average: In accordance with your answers on the cognitive cultural skills, you rated yourself below average in cognitive cultural skills. This means that you may experience some difficulty in knowing and understanding other cultures and their practices. Given these results, we recommend that you focus on this area for potential growth.

Meta-Cognitive Cross-Cultural Skills

This cross-cultural skill represents the mental processes individuals make use of to gain and structure knowledge about different cultures. It involves the ability to reach one's goals in a foreign setting and being able to put patterns together.

Example: The business meeting starts with the Japanese leader, and your meta-cognitively culturally skilled leader knows from similar experiences that small talk is a necessary cultural component in their interactions. Being able to detect the cultural patterns, your leader is able to strategically turn the attention toward business after a few minutes of light conversation.

Below Average: In accordance with your answers on the meta-cognitive cultural skills scale, you have rated yourself below average in meta-cognitive cultural skills. This means that you may find identifying patterns and reaching personal goals in new cultural situations particularly challenging or difficult. Given these results, we recommend that you focus on this area for potential growth.

Motivational Cross-Cultural Skills

This cross-cultural skill refers to one's desire and ability to learn about foreign cultures and adapt to them.

Example: The business meeting proceeds, and at one point, there seems to be a lack of agreement on how teams should be managed. Your leader does not want to give off the impression that he or she is trying to outrank the Japanese leader in the decision-making. So with motivational cultural skills, your leader persists in appropriately negotiating a compromise.

Average: In accordance with your answers on the motivational cultural skills scale, you rated yourself average in motivational cultural skills. This means that while you have some motivation to put your cultural knowledge to use, there is still room for improvement. Thus, we recommend that you focus on this area for potential growth.

Behavioral Cross-Cultural Skills

This cross-cultural skill refers to one's ability to respond to an unfamiliar situation, or at least have the capacity to learn to do so.

Example: Suddenly, the Japanese leader makes an announcement that catches your leader off guard; and with behavioral cultural skills, your leader responds culturally and time appropriately.

Above Average: In accordance with your answers on the behavioral cultural skills scale, you rated yourself above average in behavioral cultural skills. This means that you have the necessary behavioral responses skills to interact in cross-cultural settings. In addition, you have the capacity to acquire new behavioral skills if required.

Ethnocentrism

This score reflects your perception of the level of value in cross-cultural relations. Higher scores indicate less value placed on cross-cultural relationships.

Example: Your leader, who is low on ethnocentrism, knew that interacting with a foreign leader would entail a level of understanding of other cultures and therefore takes time to use adaptive behavior for a more successful cross-cultural negotiation.

Below Average: In accordance with your answers on the ethnocentrism scale, you rated yourself below average in ethnocentrism. This means that you are more likely to perceive that you can gain unique and learning experiences through cross-cultural interactions.

SAMPLE CROSS-CULTURAL SCENARIO

The president of Janice Tani's firm asked her, as chief executive of the marketing division, and her staff (three male MBAs) to set up and close an important contract with a Japanese firm. The president thought his choice was especially good, as Janice (a Japanese American from California) knew the industry well and could also speak Japanese.

As she and her staff were being introduced to the representatives of the Japanese company, Janice noticed a quizzical look on Mr. Yakamoto's face and heard him repeat "chief executive" to his assistant in an unsure manner. After Janice had presented the merits of the strategy in Japanese, referring to notes provided by her staff, she asked Mr. Yakamoto what he thought. He responded by saying that he needed to discuss some things further with the head of the department. Janice explained that was why she was there. Smiling, Mr. Yakamoto replied that she had done an especially good job of explaining, but that he wanted to talk things over with the person in charge. Beginning to become a little frustrated, Janice stated that she had authority from her company. Mr. Yakamoto glanced at his assistant, still smiling, and arranged to meet with Janice at another time.

Why did Mr. Yakamoto keep asking Janice about the executive in charge? What might have gone wrong in this scenario?

Directions for the group exercise

Your role, as a team, is to develop a strategy that could make this scenario more effective. We encourage you to think of pertinent background information, dialogue, and anything else that you can come up with to make this situation most effective for Janice and Mr. Yakamoto. Keep in mind that you are not limited to including these two characters in writing your new script.

When you finish creating this revised situation, we ask that you present it in front of the group as a short skit. Please be prepared to discuss why you have created the situation as you have. Feel free to be as creative as you like!



For more information, contact

Dr. Becky Reichard

Becky.Reichard@cgu.edu

909-607-0457