

Objective: To provide the structure for a programmed series of interactions between a visitor and a host culture resident counterpart for exchanging feedback on their alternative perspectives.

TIME REQUIRED	Several days
RISK LEVEL	Low
PARTICIPANTS NEEDED	Any number of participants, plus a facilitator
PROCEDURE	<p>Please take the following steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ask the participants to work through the eight steps listed in Exhibit 5.2. In doing each step, the participants should set aside about an hour free from outside distraction. 2. Advise the participants to do no more than two steps in any one day, but at least one step a week. 3. After the participants have proceeded through the steps, ask them to report back what they have discovered by providing a written report or by discussing learned experiences in a group setting.
DEBRIEFING	<p>The structured experience makes it possible to move step by step in examining an important cross-cultural relationship for both participating partners. After completing the experience, the partners may want to discuss what they learned with the facilitator. Some discussion questions are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How is your culture different from that of your partner? 2. How is your culture similar to that of your partner?

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3. Were you able to find common ground across cultures, and if so, how?
4. What problems did you encounter in your discussions?
5. How will you use what you learned in this experience?

INSIGHT

Structured interaction provides the opportunity to systematically learn more about another person's culture and how your culture is perceived by that person.

Step 1

There is a significant body of research evidence that increased interethnic contact is more likely to occur under unfavorable conditions with negative results than under favorable conditions. Unfavorable conditions apply when the contact situation produces competition between groups, when contact is unpleasant and involuntary, when contact lowers the status of either group, when members of either group are frustrated by failure, when the two groups have conflicting moral standards, and when the minority group is of lower status. The immediate and urgent task facing contemporary society is to match the demographic redistribution of culturally defined groups both nationally and internationally with an appropriate educational response. The Cross-Cultural Tradeoff experience is an attempt to bring two persons from different cultures together in a structured interaction under favorable conditions.

Step 2

The things that one of you hears may not be the same as what the other person is saying. Misinterpretation is particularly likely when the communication is across cultures, when we may easily confuse cultural differences with interpersonal differences. Our culture teaches us about a role we are expected to follow and about the roles we can expect others around us to follow. The problem is that different cultures teach different roles. Think about the culturally defined role you have toward your partner and how that role makes you feel good or bad. Then think about the culturally defined role your partner is expected to have toward you and how that makes you feel good or bad. Because each of you is talking about your own feelings about yourself and one another, it doesn't matter whether those feelings are justified or not. Save your criticism and evaluation until later, when you both better understand each partner's expectations.

Make a list that is as specific as possible about the following:

- things about my cultural role that make me feel good
- things about my cultural role that make me feel bad
- things about my partner's cultural role that make me feel good
- things about my partner's cultural role that make me feel bad

After you have made the list, exchange papers, read what each of you has written, and discuss your feelings with one another until each of you can restate the other person's role to the other's satisfaction.

Step 3

You have to know one another before you can really trust one another. You also have to know yourself. You may think you know yourself and one another, but you may be wrong. In this step you will be able to help one another discover whether or not you see one another in the same way.

Go through the list of adjectives and make a check mark beside the most appropriate adjective in each of the four columns:

- you as you see yourself
- you as your culture would like you to be
- your partner as you see him or her
- your partner as his or her culture would like him or her to be

Make about 10 checks under each column. Also, place an X beside those adjectives that would be least appropriate. Write in any specific comments or explanations that would help your partner understand your choice.

Try not to confuse the picture of you or your partner as you are with the picture of you or your partner as you would like him or her to be. Feel free to add as many new adjectives as you want.

(continued)

Exhibit 5.2 *Eight Steps in the Cross-Cultural Tradeoff Experience (Continued)*

Adjective	Me as I see myself	Me as my culture wants me to be	You as I see you	You as your culture wants you to be
1. Adventurous				
2. False				
3. Affectionate				
4. Ambitious				
5. Anxious for approval				
6. Appreciative				
7. Argumentative				
8. Big hearted				
9. Neat				
10. Competitive				
11. Complaining				
12. Critical of others				
13. Demanding				
14. Distant				
15. Dogmatic				
16. Dominating				
17. Easily angered				
18. Easily discouraged				
19. Easily influenced				
20. Efficient				
21. Encouraging				
22. Enthusiastic				
23. Forgiving				
24. Frank, forthright				
25. Fun-loving				
26. Giving of praise readily				
27. Good listener				
28. Helpful				
29. Indifferent to others				
30. Impulsive				
31. Intolerant				
32. Jealous				
33. Kind				
34. Optimistic				
35. Loud				

(continued)

Exhibit 5.2 *Eight Steps in the Cross-Cultural Tradeoff Experience (Continued)*

Adjective	Me as I see myself	Me as my culture wants me to be	You as I see you	You as your culture wants you to be
36. Independent				
37. Orderly				
38. Needs much praise				
39. Obedient				
40. Rebellious				
41. Resentful				
42. Responsible				
43. Sarcastic				
44. Discourteous				
45. Self-centered				
46. Self-respecting				
47. Self-satisfied				
48. Sentimental				
49. Showing of love				
50. Shrewd, devious				
51. Shy				
52. Sociable				
53. Stern				
54. Submissive				
55. Successful				
56. Sympathetic				
57. Tactful				
58. Talkative				
59. Teasing				
60. Thorough				
61. Thoughtful				
62. Touchy, cannot be kidded				
63. Trusting				
64. Uncommunicative				
65. Understanding				
66. Varied in interests				
67. Very dependent on other				
68. Well mannered				
69. Willing worker				

(continued)

Step 4

First, go back over the adjectives you checked and those your partner checked. Look for similarities and differences. Instead of the two of you, there are really four people. There is you as you see yourself, you as your partner sees you, your partner as he or she sees himself or herself, and your partner as you see him or her. Look for surprises in comparing the adjectives you checked with those your partner checked. Whether you decide to change your views or not is still up to you, but knowing what others think should help you decide.

Place your paper and your partner's paper side by side and compare the following:

- your view of yourself and your partner's view of you
- your ideal for yourself and your partner's ideal for himself or herself
- your real view of yourself and your ideal for yourself

Discuss the way you view yourself and the aspirations or goals you have with your partner. Are you being fair to yourself? Are you being fair to your partner?

Step 5

Conflict-producing elements of a culture are evident where incompatible values coexist, as in valuing ambition and humility, competitive success and sympathy for the loser, or frankness and tact. These dilemmas can be confusing in our home culture and even more disturbing when we seek to understand someone else's culture. The confusion is particularly likely to result in conflict when an individual or minority group is being acculturated to a dominant majority value system foreign to them. Cultures vary in how they deal with these areas of potential conflict. Surrounded by a cocoon of pretended reality, the culturally encapsulated individual is able to evade reality either by saying his or her way is always the best way or by saying that each individual should be allowed to do whatever he or she wants to do. Neither alternative is likely to produce a satisfactory partnership. This step tries to help you and your partner work out a better compromise in your relationship.

Take a look at the differences between your partner and yourself to see if you really want to change or not. If you allow these differences to control you, they may lead you to (a) get mad at the other person over some small detail; (b) give in to the other person even when you believe you are right; (c) deliberately embarrass the other person in some way; (d) not speak to the other person; (e) pretend that you really do not care, although you really do; or (f) run away from the other person. Discuss the differences and come to an agreement that either the differences are too small to bother with or that each of you can compromise your expectations in some way to accommodate the other.

Which is the best way to handle differences? There are a number of cues to help find the best way. Can you still work with the other person? Does the way you and he or she handle differences strengthen your relationship with one another? Can both of you accept this way of handling your differences? Does this way of handling differences solve the problem permanently? Does this way of handling differences hurt you or the other person? Can you think of a better way than you have been using?

Up to now your partner and you have been sharing information. The next few steps will help you to take action. This step has two moves:

1. The first move builds on the positive shared feelings and on things your partner and you have in common. This may set guidelines for conduct that you both want to continue and a basis for the future.
2. The second move focuses on differences, disagreement, and conflict between your partner and yourself. In this move you can seek to clarify the difficulty and find ways to work together.

Complete the following sentences:

- Differences and disagreements between you and I are:
- The source of our disagreement seems to be:
- I handle these disagreements by:

(continued)

- You handle these disagreements by:
- I might try:
- You might try:
- I think this way might work because:

Step 6

In this step you bring together all the information you have collected about yourself and your partner from previous steps and work out a plan for the future. Unless you decide to put what you now know to work in some way, you will be disappointed in the Cross-Cultural Tradeoff experience as well as in each other. From step 2 you might want to do more things that make your partner feel good and avoid things that make him or her feel bad. From steps 3 and 4 you might formulate new goals for yourself or revise your expectations about your partner. From step 5 you might find new ways to prevent misunderstandings.

It is not easy to change what you are used to doing. You might try out several new approaches to see if they make any difference, leaving you and your partner free to change your minds again later. You will need each other's help to make the decision a success.

Besides seeking help on problems or difficulties in the relationship with your partner, you might find that he or she can help you on some of your own personal problems as well. Use the following outline:

- Situation, problem, or difference:
- What I intend to do about it:
- What I might do in spite of myself:
- How I would like you to help me:

Step 7

Now you may review your relationship with your partner. By now you have had a chance to try out the approaches you decided on in step 6 and might want to make additional changes. You might want to review what both of you said in earlier steps or add new ideas to what you wrote.

The whole idea of the Cross-Cultural Tradeoff experience is to help both of you learn from each other and share your feelings and reactions, views and ideals, and areas of agreement and disagreement. You should be able to work together better now than before you started.

Trade ideas with your partner about how the approaches you tried out worked or didn't work. Be willing to change your approach if you find something that might be better.

Step 8

You have completed the Cross-Cultural Tradeoff experience, although you may want to return to one or more of the steps later. You may find that the trust you have together now would make it a completely new game when played again. You may want to apply approaches from the Cross-Cultural Tradeoff experience to your day-to-day relationship.

Conclusion

We spend years of formal study analyzing the history of people and nations, language structure, laws of nature, and mechanics of operating tools and machines. But one of the most important subjects has not been studied. Each of us depends on many intercultural relationships, which we allow to develop haphazardly and spend little time analyzing. We can help ourselves and others by taking a look at these cross-cultural relationships. The Cross-Cultural Tradeoff experience provides an opportunity to do just that.

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