TEACHING CULTURAL COMPETENCE:

WHAT MULTICULTURAL MANAGEMENT

COURSES CAN LEARN FROM DIVERSITY

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In today's global economy, multicultural management is widely taught in American BBA and MBA programs. Unfortunately, these courses often encourage fundamental misunderstandings of when, how, and how much culture matters in business. They teach about national cultural differences in ways which encourage stereotyping and ethnocentrism. Instead, these courses need to develop managers' cultural competence -- critical thinking skills to analyze and work with culturally complex individuals in culturally complex business situations. Concepts and materials for developing these skills can be drawn from social psychology and state-of-the-art diversity training/education.

There can be little debate that culture -- "the logic by which I give order to the world" (Carroll, 1988: 3) -- strongly influences the success of business enterprises today. In a multicultural world and global economy, cultural misunderstandings constantly threaten firms' ability to operate efficiently, cooperatively and fairly (Tung, 1998; Storti, 2001; Caligiuri, 2000)   Did a merger between a Japanese-owned firm and an American-owned firm fail because of inferior products and poor pricing strategies or because the managers were personally incompatible and the organizations' operating styles too disparate? Was a clash of cultures the cause of the merger's poor performance or merely a symptom? BBA and MBA education cannot simply make managers aware that *culture matters*. It must equip them with specific skills and knowledge to understand exactly *when, how, and how much culture matters* in such concrete interpersonal and organizational situations.

Unfortunately, undergraduate and graduate courses in multicultural management (also called "cross-cultural management") are often not well designed to accomplish this goal.   In this paper, we first describe the multicultural management competencies

required for managerial success and major gaps between those target competencies and current teaching. We relate these failures to multicultural management courses themselves, especially their tendency to emphasize national cultural differences. We then outline an alternative teaching approach designed to enhance managers' cultural competence, largely by teaching information from disciplines such as social psychology and workplace diversity/inclusion.

WHAT MANAGERS NEED TO KNOW
ABOUT MUTICULTURAL MANGEMENT

American Business schools began to internationalize their curricula more than 50 years ago (Albers-Miller et al., 2000: 56-57). The process accelerated during the 1980s with support from the U.S. Department of Education for Centers for International Business Education and Research (CIBERs) and evolving accreditation requirements by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business International (AACSB). AACSB (2007: 1) now directs business schools to prepare students for a business environment of strong and growing global economic forces, differences in organizational and cultural values, and cultural diversity among employees and customers.

According to current management education thinking, the personal competencies responding to these requirements include flexibility, resourcefulness, tolerance for ambiguity, and ability to articulate a vision, as well as "global" competencies including (Cant, 2004: 177):

- Cultural self-awareness -- an understanding of the cultural conditioning shaping the manager's own values, assumptions and beliefs (Adler, 1991; Sokuvitz & George, 2003).

- Cultural consciousness -- sensitivity and adaptability to operate outside the comfort of the manager's own culture (McCall & Hollenbeck, 2002);

- Multicultural leadership -- the ability to collaborate with and lead individuals with diverse cultural perspectives, as well as multicultural teams (Mendenall et al., 2001).

- Multicultural negotiations – an understanding of individuals' varying negotiating approaches, styles and "rules of the game."

- Global mindset or "global thinking" -- an appreciation of the strategic implications of global commerce (Kanter, 1994).

DO MULTICULTURAL MANAGEMENT
COURSES TEACH THOSE SKILLS?

Courses in multicultural management are generally taught within the field of international management or international business (IB). To differentiate itself from other fields of business teaching with which its courses often appear to overlap and compete -- such as marketing, finance, and strategy -- IB tends to highlight *differences among nations* as one of its central, unique foci (Rosenzweig, 1994: 4).

This focus, in turn, strongly influences the content of multicultural management courses, leading them to devote considerable instructional attention to IB research on "national cultures." This research typically involves frameworks distilling the essence of national cultures into a small number (usually fewer than 10) of dimensions. The most widely-cited studies in this tradition describe how nations differ in overall culture (Hofstede, 1980a, 1991), relationship orientations (Trompenaars, 1994), and leadership (House et al., 2002).

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The earliest, most influential framework first appeared in Geert Hofstede's (1980a), *Culture's Consequences.* Hofstede analyzed survey data collected between 1967 and 1973 from more than 88,000 employees of one company, IBM, in 40 countries. Using factor analysis, he classified these 40 nations along four cultural dimensions -- individualism-collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity-femininity.

This work remains some of the most widely-cited IB research and has inspired thousand of studies in the same spirit. Most prominently, Tompenaars (1994) studied managers from 23 countries and distilled their relationship orientations and other attitudes into five dimensions: universalism versus particularism; individualism versus communitarianism; neutral versus emotional; specific versus diffuse; and achievement versus ascription. GLOBE (House et al., 2002) surveyed managers in the financial services, food processing and telecommunications industries in 62 "societies," clustering societies that were similar along nine cultural dimensions: uncertainty avoidance; power distance; societal collectivism; in-group collectivism; gender egalitarianism; assertiveness; future orientation; performance orientation and humane orientation.

Despite its prominence, such research has been strongly criticized for over-simplifying complex cultures, generalizing from a limited number of companies or industries, failing to reflect changes in cultures over time, and ignoring within-country cultural heterogeneity (Sivakumar & Nataka, 2001; Kirkman et al. 2006: 286). For example, McSweeney (2002: 4, 28) challenges Hofstede's assumptions that national cultures are "implicit, core, systematically causal, territorially unique and shared." Others have challenged such research for implying that Western culture is universally

superior in a world divided between a "developed and modern" side and a "traditional and backward" side (Fougere and Moulettes, 2006: 16). Still others criticize it for not controlling ethnocentrism and parochialism (Bartholomew & Adler, 1996; Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars, 1997).[1]

Hofstede himself warns against applying his cultural dimensions, which he intended as descriptions of national cultures, to individuals (Hofstede, 1991: 253):

> We do not compare individuals, but we compare what is called *central*
>
> *tendencies* in the answers from each country. There is hardly an individual
>
> who answers each question exactly by the mean score of his or her group:
>
> the "average person" from a country does not exist.

Nevertheless, Kirkman et al.'s (2006: 288) review of 180 empirical studies incorporating Hofstede's framework found that the majority ignore his warning and analyze individuals, groups, or firms, not nations.

The empirical findings in such studies themselves demonstrate the inappropriateness of applying national patterns in sub-national analyses. When national average characteristics are used to predict or explain the behavior of individuals, groups or firms associated with a nation, "…the relatively low amount of variance explained by the cultural values in many studies underscores the existence of the many other forces besides culture (which) determine the behavior and attitudes of individuals in societies" (Kirkman et al. 2006: 313). For instance, Palich et al. (1995) found that Hofstede's cultural dimensions of independence, uncertainty avoidance and masculinity accounted for *only 2.7%* of the person-to-person variance in employee commitment. In such cases, the research itself teaches that *culture does not matter very much.*

Social psychologists raise similar objections to such misapplications in their concept of stereotyping. For purposes of this article, stereotyping may be defined as applying to an individual, work group or firm generalizations which have been documented for a broader entity, such as a nation. Stereotyping is a normal tendency in the thinking of all persons, who constantly seek mental shortcuts to summarize their experiences and cut through complexity. However, it leads to misjudgments and misperceptions when the generalizations have little power to predict the characteristics or behavior of the entities to which they are being applied. Social psychology counsels that, in dealing with individuals or small groups, behavior can be effectively understood and predicted only by assessing the individuals or groups themselves, taking account of the full range of their specific characteristics and contexts (Bielby, 2000).

THE ROLE OF THESE NATIONAL FRAMEWORKS
IN MULTICULTURAL MANAGEMENT TEACHING

Despite such warnings, courses in multicultural management typically devote considerable attention to describing IB research on national cultures and applying their findings to individuals, groups, and firms. The temptation to do so is strong. Instructors often justify teaching multicultural management within IB by arguing that they offer content which other, domestically oriented faculty do not, namely, IB's insights into national differences. But management is an applied field, with the majority of practical situations for which BBA and MBA programs seek to prepare their students arising at the individual, work group, or firm levels, not the national one. The confluence of these two circumstances makes almost inevitable attempts to use information about national cultures to guide managers' sub-national business actions.

To be sure, many textbooks and instructors in multicultural management courses explicitly warn against stereotyping. But then they contradict their own warnings by presenting material which does precisely that. For example, an on-line course module on international negotiations -- a process involving individuals and groups -- offers the advice that "Scandinavians tend to be uncomfortable with much bargaining at all" (MSU, 2007). A student could hardly be blamed if, attempting to apply his newly-learned multicultural management skills, he blunders into a sales presentation to Ikea with a plan to hold firm on prices because Scandinavians are culturally programmed to avoid the confrontation involved in hard bargaining. His professor has led him to believe that knowing that the firm is Scandinavian tells him just about everything he needs to know. Not prepared to encounter the actual Ikea buyer -- a Greek who was raised in Canada, trained in the Harvard negotiating program, spent 20 years as a buyer in China, and whose deals must be approved by a boss who is French -- the student will soon curse his misperception. The student will have encountered not the single-dimension national average described in his multicultural management class but *a culturally-complex individual in a culturally complex business situation*.

Proponents of teaching students about broad national cultural frameworks sometimes reply that "serious students" will learn the material in sufficient depth to avoid such naïve interpretations. For example, when Graen (2006: 95) cautioned the GLOBE project about the danger that broad interpretations of their national-level findings would foster stereotypes, GLOBE replied (House, et al., 2006:109):

Our position is that anyone interested in cross-cultural research would go beyond the first GLOBE book prior to entering into cross-cultural interactions.

Therefore, we do not believe that the scores on cultural dimensions and leadership would cause serious students of culture, or intercultural managers, to form stereotypes, but rather to seek out information beyond the first GLOBE book [House et al. (2004)].

Experience both in and out of the classroom suggests that BBA and MBA students, however intelligent, are rarely "serious students" in the sense of reading scholarly books and original research articles at the level expected of Ph.D. candidates. Their training in interpreting research methodologies and complex statistical analyses is limited at best. Reflecting career objectives to work in actual businesses, they typically focus on "bottom line messages" and "take away lessons" as summarized in lectures and textbooks. These circumstances place them at great risk of remembering generalizations about national culture as simple stereotypes.

Instructors and researchers often reinforce rather than combat the tendency to misapply national-level cultural generalizations to individuals, groups and firms. For example, one article from GLOBE offers "…in-depth action-oriented and context specific advice, congruent with GLOBE findings, for effectively interacting with employees from different cultures" (Javidan et al, 2006: 67). Through a hypothetical American executive leading hypothetical work teams in Brazil, France, Egypt and China, the article purports to "…show the range of leadership responses that should be effective in each cultural setting" (Javidan et al., 2006: 73). Among other advice, the article states that, in working with the French team, "[t]heir low humane orientation culture may mean that they are not particularly interested in being supportive of others, even in the same organization, especially if they are from separate in-groups" (Javidan et al, 2006: 67). It

also counsels that, because the Chinese culture is very high on "in group collectivism," the Chinese team will not be interested in anything outside of their in-group. "Chinese managers are very negative towards worldly leaders who have a global outlook. In contrast, Americans admire such leaders" (Javidan et al., 2006: 83). The GLOBE researchers may understand the research basis for such statements and the implications of terms such as "typical" sufficiently to apply these statements in a nuanced way. However, BBA and MBA students often eagerly take such guidance literally.

FRAMEWORKS ENCOURAGE
STUDENT STEREOTYPING

Those teaching national cultural frameworks often argue that, even recognizing that their information is partial, the frameworks nevertheless provide useful information to which students should be exposed. For example, one instructor suggests a "cautious" teaching approach that presents cultural generalizations as one perspective among many, updates the material frequently, and avoids normative judgments (World Bank, 2007: 39).

Other observers argue that, even when cautiously introduced, these cultural frameworks reduce managers' ability to deal with culturally complex individuals in culturally complex situations, rather than enhance it. This outcome arises because the information the frameworks provide offers such limited predictive power in concrete business situations, while it simultaneously rigidifies individuals' attitudes, limits their perceptions, and reinforces cultural divides. Thus, when the instructor cited in the previous paragraph applied his cautious approach in management training for World Bank staff, many trainees recommended that the material be removed. Even when "cautiously" taught, these trainees viewed the national cultural generalizations as

inaccurate, prejudicial, distracting from more important concerns, and encouraging a formalistic, distant, and static way of approaching difference which enhanced "us vs. them" attitudes (World Bank: 2007: 39-40). Echoing those negative judgments, "master teachers" in multicultural management have characterized the problem of stereotyping as an "ugly risk" (Boyacigiller et al., 2003: 5).

Social psychology provides extensive documentation of this risk. As a universal tendency in everyone's mental life, stereotypes require constant vigilance to control their biasing influence. They distort perceptions and judgments in myriad ways, both conscious and unconscious, operating so automatically, swiftly, and subtly that managers often believe themselves perceptive and unbiased even when they are being the opposite (Bielby, 2000; Devine, 1989; Bodenhausen et al., 1998). For example, usually without being aware of it:

- Individuals tend to seek out information confirming stereotypes at a greater rate than information contradicting them (Erber & Fiske,1984).

- Especially when under time pressure, individuals notice and remember information which confirms stereotypes more than information contradicting them (Macrae et al.,1994).

- When information is ambiguous, individuals fit it to confirm stereotypical expectations (Hilton & Von Hippel, 1996).

- When recalling objective facts about an individual, memory errors tend to confirm stereotypes (Darley & Gross, 1983).

- When information contradicts a stereotype, the stereotype tends to be maintained by attributing the inconsistency to temporary circumstances or by creating subcategories with their own stereotypes (Myers, 1990: 363).

- Even when individuals are explicitly informed about the invalidity of stereotypes, their propensity to rely on the stereotype is not eliminated, and their reliance on actual information is not increased (Nelson et al.,1996).

- Individuals may bolster their stereotype-based judgments by assuming that factual information went into the judgment, even when it did not. The illusion of having received factual information tends to make individuals more confident in their judgments and the judgments themselves more extreme (Yzerbyt et al.,1994)

- Distinctive people are often perceived as more influential than they actually are and are seen as causing whatever happens within a group (Taylor et al., 1979).

- Individuals' judgments are particularly prone to distortion by stereotypes in complex, ambiguous situations calling for subjective decisions (Bielby, 2000; American Psychological Association, 1991).

Given such likely consequences, why would instructors risk unleashing such de-skilling forces in the minds of their students, especially when the counterbalancing "benefit" is information with questionable predictive power?

**"US VERSUS THEM" COMPARISONS
ENCOURAGE STUDENT ETHNOCENTRISM**

The previous section discussed stereotyping as a process of mis-applying generalizations without referring to the content of the generalizations. However, when generalizations are applied to cultural groups of which a person does not consider himself a part, the

content is often negative. In that circumstance, the negative content amplifies the destructive impact of the stereotyping process, turning mere cultural misunderstanding into inter-group hostility in the form of "us versus them" and "we are superior to them." Social psychologists label this process "prejudice," an irrational attitude of hostility against an individual, group or race or their supposed characteristics (Mor Barak, 2005: 135). In multicultural management, the same process is referred to as "ethnocentrism," the tendency to think the culture of one's own group or nation is superior to that of others (Drever, 1952:86).

Reviewing 16 widely-used international business and multicultural management textbooks, Tipton (2006) found "some truly remarkable errors of fact and interpretation" that create a negative view of the foreign "other." For example:

- Consider the British habit of automatically lining up on the sidewalk when waiting for a bus. This surface cultural trait reflects "the deep cultural desire to lead neat and controlled lives." (Ball et al. 2004: 292; Ball et al. 2006: 178; quoted in Tipton, 2006: 11)

- South Korean business practice reflects Confucian thought in its rigid organizational structure and unswerving reverence for authority. As a result, "Korean employees do not question strict chains of command." (Wild et al. 2006: 65, quoted in Tipton, 2006: 11; see also Deresky, 2006: 105, and Holt & Wigginton, 2002: 306).

- In a "culture quiz" designed to stimulate awareness of cultural differences, question #5 asks, "In Ethiopia, when a woman opens the front door of her home,

it means…?" The correct answer is "D: She has agreed to have sex with any man who enters" (Hodgetts et al., 2006: 532).[2]

Such statements are each indefensible and offensive, but the harm they do collectively does not stop there. Tipton (2006) argues that the common message of such statements is that only a "…certain set of values is appropriate for managers, and the texts' implicit purpose was to inculcate those values" (Tipton, 2006: 13). In this interpretation, the texts deliberately portray exotic cultural "others" negatively, to provide a foil against which the target audience, American students, can form their own identity. The goal is to mold these students into a new generation of Western-style managers rather than equip them to engage with cultural differences in a neutral way.

Social psychology again provides reinforcing details concerning how such mental processes operate. Like stereotypes, prejudice and ethnocentrism often powerfully influence managers' perceptions and judgments without the managers' being aware of it. For example, under the label of "in-group bias," social psychological research has established that:

- Members of one's own group tend to be granted the benefit of the doubt in circumstances where members of other groups are not (Pettigrew, 1979).

- The same behavior may be given a different interpretation depending on whether the person is a member of the perceiver's group. For example, negative behavior by members of other groups tends to be attributed to their fundamental disposition, while negative behavior by members of one's own group is attributed to circumstances. ("They failed because they are incompetent. We failed because

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our efforts were diverted to a higher priority.") (Hewstone et al., 1982; Swim & Sanna, 1996).

- Individuals remember members of their own group more than members of groups to which they do not belong (Park & Rothbart ,1982).

- Evaluators tend to judge members of groups to which they do not belong more extremely than members of their own group; good performers are seen as better, and poor performers are seen as worse, than otherwise (Linville & Jones, 1980; Jones, 1997: 224).

As with stereotypes, why would courses in multicultural management risk unleashing such de-skilling forces in the minds of their students, especially when there is so little counterbalancing "benefit?"

**CORRECTING MULTICULTURAL
MANAGEMENT TEXTBOOKS**

The fact that many of the examples of ethnocentrism cited by Tipton (2006) appear in repeated editions of widely-used textbooks is consistent with his interpretation that these items support the authors' pedagogical intentions. That is, he asserts that, reflecting their "professional isolation, politics and patriotism," the authors deliberately include such statements to emphasize differences between "us" and "them."

We offer a more benign explanation. The errors may reflect an incremental approach to updating textbooks which tends not to purge incorrect or obsolete content but instead adds new material and additional explanations. For instance, one standard textbook repeats a table from an article published in 1980 describing differences between Middle Eastern and Western managers in leadership and decision-making. However, text

accompanying this table states that, according to more recent research, there "may be much greater similarity between Middle Eastern and Western leadership styles" (Hodgetts et al., 2006: 413).

Side-by-side contradictory information creates confusion and ambiguity for students. Our experience is that, in such circumstances, students rarely track down footnotes or carefully weigh the evidence behind each alternative and simply remember the more stereotypical version. They are often reinforced in doing so by how textbooks are organized. When over-simplified information entered the textbook first and nuanced explanations are added later, the former typically commands more prominent placement, with the latter appearing in footnotes or brief comments inserted into pre-existing text.

One illustration of the importance of placement is triggered by IB's tendency to describe firms' participation in international markets as an evolution over time from domestic corporations to global corporations. In one widely-used multicultural management textbook, a prominently-placed table relates a firm's "stage of evolution" to the importance of multiculturalism to the firm (Hodgetts et al., 2006: 166, quoting Adler, 1991: 7-8). According to this table, in domestic firms, "cultural sensitivity" is only "marginally important." Only as firms evolve from domestic-only operations toward global operations and alliances does cultural diversity become important. Only then does what was once "nice to understand" become "imperative for survival and success" (Adler, 1991: 121).

Scholars and practitioners of workforce diversity will, of course, be shocked by this assertion. Their concerns are hardly ameliorated by two paragraphs within the three pages discussing this table noting that "domestic multiculturalism" is also important to

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firms although it is for the most part outside the scope of the book. From the textbook's contradictory messages, students can hardly be blamed if some conclude that they can safely ignore the subject of multicultural management unless their employer sends them overseas.

For today's students, the distinction between "domestic" and "international" multicultural issues is as obsolete as the table's 16-year old description how U.S. firms "evolve" into firms which participate in international markets. Today's business school graduates need multicultural management skills even if they never work for a large global multinational corporation (MNC) or hold a position whose target market is outside the U.S. For example:

- Businesses involved in international markets include not only large, long-established MNCs but also small and new firms, individual entrepreneurs and networks of businesses in loose relationships. In 2005, 97% of US exporters had fewer than 500 employees, together accounting for 29% of export value (US Dept. of Commerce, 2007);

- Leading business schools are no longer exclusively located in the U.S. Among the 21 top-ranked graduate business schools world-wide, nine are not American (*Financial Times*, 2007).

- Firms tend to be enmeshed in a complex web of multiple stakeholders, including investors, government regulatory agencies, employees, community residents, and non-governmental organizations. Each of these stakeholders carries its own "culture" to understand and deal with.

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- Where once working in international business typically meant expatriate assignments, it can now equally involve arrangements such as short-term developmental assignment, international commuting, extended business travel, or participation in virtual global teams (Cartus Corp., 2007).

Consider, for example, one real-life firm -- a small California-based subsidiary of a large chemical company which sells to US-based manufacturers with production facilities in Asia and Eastern Europe (Lifelong Learning, 2004: 1). An employee of that firm might supervise a culturally-diverse workforce in California, engage in international sourcing and selling without leaving his or her desk, and participate in work teams linked electronically around the world. This manager's business reality simply does not fall within vintage 1991 table described above.

REDESIGNING MULTICULTURAL
MANAGEMENT COURSES

One obvious implication of the previous section is that many textbooks in multicultural management -- as well as instructors' lecture notes -- need a thorough housecleaning. Obsolete, incorrect, contradictory, offensive, stereotypical, ethnocentric, or otherwise flawed content needs to be eliminated. Exposing authors and instructors to the information presented in diversity education/training would enhance the sensitivity they bring to this task.

Such actions need to be part of a more fundamental re-conceptualization of multi-cultural management courses. The core of that re-conceptualization needs to reduce the focus on national cultural differences in favor of individuals -- both the student as an

individual and the individuals with whom he or she will interact as a future manager (Sederberg & Holden, 2002).

A first step in this transformation is to decouple the concept of "culture" from the geographically-centered IB definition of "differences between nations." Instead, culture should be defined to reflect the multiplicity of influences which make individuals *unique*, *culturally complex*, and certainly not predictable based on their nationality alone.

A second step is to eliminate the distinction between "domestic multiculturalism" and "international multiculturalism." The course needs to equip managers to deal with culturally complex people in culturally complex situations *wherever encountered*.

A third step is to refocus instructional attention from "the exotic other" to the manager himself or herself. To help students begin to recognize distortions in their own perceptions and judgments, they might be assigned to take the brief web-based test of Project Implicit (Project Implicit, 2007). Since 1998, this website has demonstrated that implicit biases are pervasive, predict discriminatory behavior, and apply internationally (Dunham et al., 2006).

After raising students' awareness of the own biases, redesigned multi-cultural management courses should provide information on the forms of bias, both conscious and unconscious, and practical means for controlling them. Useful instructional materials on these subjects can be found in the social psychological research cited throughout this paper and current courses on discrimination or diversity (e.g. Bell, 2007: 65-86; Jones, 1997).

The concept of *cultural intelligence* provides a useful unifying theme for redesigned multicultural management courses. Christopher Early and his colleagues

define cultural intelligence (CQ) as a manager's ability to operate in a variety of situations over a career, whether they arise from cross-functional assignments within a company, diverse work teams, or foreign postings (Earley & Mosakowski, 2004: 2). This ability has at least four components (Ang et al., 2007: 6-7):

- *Metacognitive intelligence* -- the ability to acquire cultural knowledge, recognize cultural assumptions, understand cultural norms, and perceive others' cultural preferences before and during interactions.

- *Cognitive intelligence* -- knowledge of economic, legal, values, and social systems in different cultures and subcultures.

- *Motivational intelligence* – the desire to learn about and function in situations involving cultural differences, based on intrinsic interest and confidence in one's ability to deal with them.

- *Behavioral intelligence* -- exhibiting situationally-appropriate verbal and non-verbal actions, including words, tone, gestures and facial expressions, when interacting with people from different cultures.

Earley and Mosakowski's (2004: 1) short-hand is that CQ is about using the head (cognitive), heart (motivation) and body (body language, cues) to "…tease out of a person's or group's behavior those features that would be true of all people and all groups, those peculiar to this person or this group, and those that are neither universal nor idiosyncratic.

They also note that CQ requires learning to live with ambiguity. A critical lesson for students is to suspend judgment while gathering observations, looking for patterns, and registering differences -- knowing when to draw conclusions about individuals or

situations without stereotyping. This approach requires thinking before acting, which may take time -- exactly the opposite of making snap judgments about individuals based on single characteristics such as nationality.

Personal cultural intelligence alone does not fully equip a student for effective multicultural management, however. The work groups and firms in which they will be employed also affect outcomes in multicultural situations, and future managers need to be prepared to understand and improve these aspects of their work situation (Tan & Chua, 2003). Cross and his colleagues define c*ultural competence* (CC) as "a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals and enables that system, agency or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations" (Cross et al., 1989: iv-v).

Instructional materials on how managers can assist work groups and firms to be more culturally competent can be found in current courses on organizational behavior, human resource management, or diversity (e.g., Bielby, 2000; Kochan et. al., 2003; and Bendick et al., 2001). However, many of these materials are "framed in the context of workforce diversity in the US" and demographic groups protected against employment discrimination under U.S. law (Johnson et al, 2006: 529). Instructors may have to be creative and innovative in making these materials applicable to multi-cultural management (e.g. Vonk, 2001; NASW, 2001, Cross et al., 1989).

CHALLENGES INSTRUCTORS WILL FACE
IN FOCUSING ON CULTURAL COMPETENCE

While reconstructing multicultural management classes as we have proposed would produce better-trained future managers, instructors who adopt this approach should not expect that this will be easy or popular. Two challenges are likely to arise.

The first challenge is the amount of work involved. Teaching materials compatible with this new approach are available. In addition to sources cited throughout this paper, books by Earley & Ang (2003) or Mor Barak (2005) might make appropriate core textbooks, and relevant suggestions from "master teachers" of multi-cultural management are included in Boyacigiller et al. (2003). Nevertheless, instructors will need to invest considerable effort in course redesign, as well as personal retooling.

The second challenge is the likely response from students. Our experience is that students expect cross-cultural management courses to require less work than "course with numbers," and applying generalizations about national characteristics support this expectation. Instead, the new approach pushes students to develop critical thinking skills, deal with ambiguity, and avoid simple answers to complex questions. In addition, like all of us, students are less than pleased to learn about their own biases. Although they may silently thanks their former professors in later years for making their multicultural management course tougher than expected, in the short term, instructors may receive less enthusiastic student reactions.

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[1] For further critiques, as well as rebuttals, see Au (1999), Gelfand et al (1996), Gibson & Zellmer-Bruhn (2001), Hofstede (1980b: 44), Morris et al (2004), Oyserman et al. (2002), Tinsley & Pillutla (1998), and Williamson (2002).

[2] The source of this answer is a 1991 newspaper article. Among the quiz's 30 questions, 27 were derived from sources more than a decade old (Hodgetts et al., 2006: 532-534).