

Intercultural LINK



YOUR SOURCE FOR INTERCULTURAL LEARNING IN THE AFS NETWORK VOLUME 1 - ISSUE 1 - NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2010



This issue and the next will feature special content from the 2010 AFS World Congress, our annual global leadership gathering, held this year in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Intercultural Learning: The Heart & Soul of AFS

MELISSA LILES, DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTIONAL INTELLIGENCE,
AFS INTERNATIONAL

Welcome! For the past year and a half, *AFS Intercultural Link* has been shared as a news and resource publication for the over 43,000 AFS volunteers and 800 staff around the world. Today, we are delighted to be able to share it with you, our extended AFS family. Whether you are one of our 400,000 alumni, a member of a hosting or sending family or are just curious about intercultural learning (ICL), we invite you to join the thousands of AFS-active schools and millions of AFS friends and supporters around the world in our ongoing work.

This publication is intended to be your window into various intercultural learning issues, projects and discussions taking place at AFS. Through it, we aim to share our 90+ years of

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knowledge and experience in the field with you. Even with our rich history, as a learning organization, we are dedicated to keeping open our ears, eyes, minds and hearts, and we ask that you share your reactions and feedback with us as you read this and future issues.

At this year's AFS World Congress, our annual global leadership meeting that took place in October in Buenos Aires, Argentina, we reaffirmed our longstanding commitment to enriching the field of intercultural learning. We are pleased to share here selected content from the event:

✓ Highlights from the provocative presentation **“Looking ahead to ICL tomorrow: What are the implications for AFS?”** delivered by guest speaker Dr. Darla Deardorff (page 9)

✓ A review of the **interactive ICL art installations** that were on display at the World Congress (page 8). If you're an AFSer, check out the internal version of *AFS Intercultural Link* to get detailed instructions and materials to help you re-create these exhibits in your organization

✓ A transcript about how the field at large has expanded in recent years: an overview of the dizzying realities of the broader **ICL field today** (pages 10-11)

More from the 2010 Congress will be featured in our next issue.

We invite you to get reacquainted with **AFS's Educational Objectives** (page 4) and discover how our learning opportunities start even before participants official enroll in an AFS program: **AFS**



Trainers, including special guests Roberto Ruffino, Andrea Sebben and Annette Gisevius, at an AFS Core ICL Competency Development Program event in October 2010

Hungary shares an overview of its fun-filled and learning-focused student selection camps (page 12).

As we expand to reach ever wider audiences, **AFS Germany shares outcomes from its first Summer Academy on Intercultural Experience**, held in collaboration with Karlshochschule International University on page 6.

Check out pages 13-14 for an **interview with Thiago**, renowned gaming and innovative learning expert, about his take on the field, AFS, and how he explores intercultural learning through games—something near and dear to our experiential learning hearts.

Finally, we feature on page 5 a reprint of **an excellent article by Dr. Milton**

Bennett, a longtime AFS supporter, that explains in easy-to-understand terms his **Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS)**. Our friends at AFS France share some playful new illustrations of the different stages of this model.

So, although 2010 is soon coming to a close, we are proud to be able to begin offering *AFS Intercultural Link* to you, all of our friends and fans. Your source for all things intercultural at AFS and beyond, we hope you will find this newsletter informative and inspirational and look forward to your feedback and suggestions. We plan to have Spanish and Portuguese versions of it available in the new year.

In the meantime, I wish you a wonderful end of year and a 2011 filled with peace, joy and learning.



Dr. Darla Deardorff at the 2010 AFS World Congress

Network and Partner Initiatives: Intercultural Dialogue Day 2010

THOMAS JÜRGENSCHELLERT, VOLUNTEER, EFIL

30. Sept.

30. Sept.
DIALOGUE
INTERCULTURAL DAY

This year's Intercultural Dialogue Day (IDD), which is celebrated in Europe by European Federation for Intercultural Learning (EFIL) members, lived up to previous IDD's, demonstrating the creativity of AFS. It can easily be said – and seen – that IDD 2010 was a huge success, spreading diversity and intercultural learning to those who already knew AFS, and introducing the organization to new friends and supporters.

EFIL, the umbrella advocacy organization for AFS in Europe, is happy to send out our IDD 2010 booklet to those interested in seeing the full spectrum of what happened on 30 September 2010. Contact us at: thomas.juergenschellert@afs.org.

In the meantime, enjoy these highlights!

Cultures 100 Clichés (Cultures without Cliches)

EFIL also initiated with AFS France a photo contest in which all member countries could take part. The idea was to take pictures of the perceptions of a culture without focusing on stereotypes. From 22 November to 5 December, the public was invited to vote for their three favorite pictures. You can see these and the winners online.

<http://afsphotocontest.isgreat.org>

Germany

AFS Germany started the song contest: "Sing a song!" From amateur to semi-professional bands, the contest was open to anyone to present a song that captured the feeling of taking part in an exchange and generating curiosity about intercultural experience. The winning song may well become the new AFS song for Germany! You can listen to the song at: www.afs.de/worldwideweg

Belgium Flanders

AFS Belgium Flanders organised a seminar about the impact of intercultural exchange on the participant after his/her return. Speeches were given by experts and a subsequent panel discussion took place that focused on intercultural learning aspects.

Czech Republic

A whole week of events focused on Intercultural Dialogue, including debates in the libraries of Prague and Jicin, intercultural patchwork by secondary school pupils in Usti and Liberec, information tents on the banks of the river in Pisek, *All ways are going to Bilovice* by Moravian volunteers, and many others.

Latvia

In more than 20 AFS schools in several cities in Latvia people have joined together to draw and colour circles. Drawings have been exhibited as a digital presentation during the 20th anniversary celebration event on 1-2 October in Riga. During the celebrations, a video was shown of AFS staff, volunteers and participants in Ghana, also drawing circles and taking part in IDD!



Egypt

In Egypt, seven chapters from North Egypt to Upper Egypt joined in the festivities on Intercultural Dialogue Day. A festival hosted in the National Library of Port Said City and sponsored by the Indian embassy included a talk about intercultural dialogue.



Hungary

A quiz was offered and presentations were given by exchange students about their host countries. In addition, AFS Hungary prepared a talent show.

Italy

Sixty AFS alumni, who went to 20 different countries in the 2006-2007 school year, were invited to meet and reflect on the school systems of their host countries as they compared to the school system in Italy. The results of the research were presented in a crowded public conference on IDD in Milan.

Croatia

Volunteers met on the main square, *Trg bana Jelačića*, in the capital city of Zagreb, with lots of material and a goal of spreading intercultural spirit. They used flyers, flags, T-shirts and energizers to promote AFS and IDD.



Switzerland

In Basel and Bern passersby were invited by volunteers to participate in intercultural speed-dating sessions. AFS had prepared questions and answers from multicultural domains that invited the participants to get to know each other. The aim of this game was to promote intercultural dialogue in a fun way.

Serbia

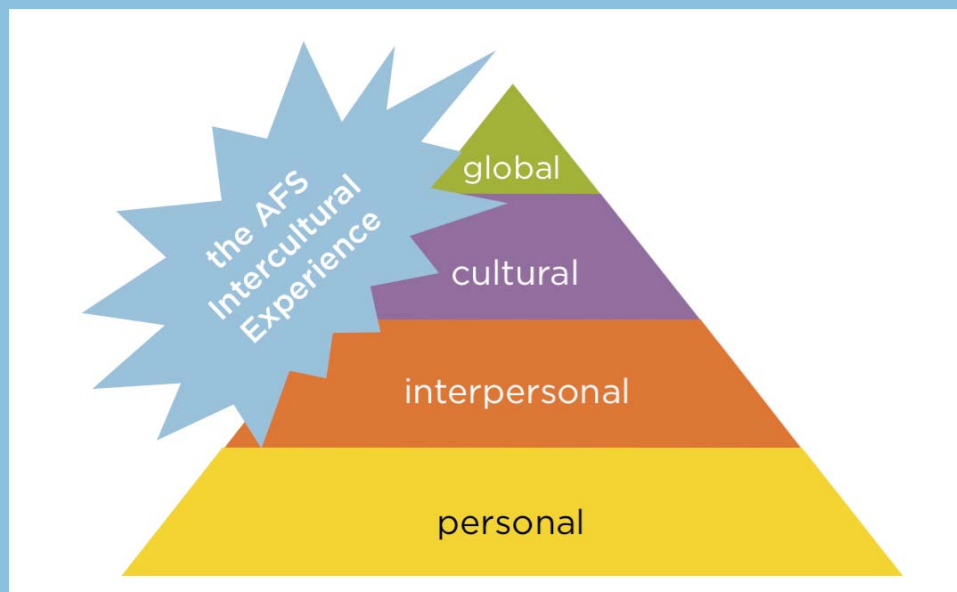
For the second year running, Serbia took part in IDD in Negotin, a town in Eastern Serbia. The aim was to promote AFS programmes and the concept of intercultural dialogue among students from smaller towns. Through various workshops, local students had an opportunity to interact with exchange students hosted



Did You Know?

AFS's Educational Goals

ARYN BLOODWORTH, INTERCULTURAL LEARNING INTERN, AFS INTERNATIONAL



Developed in 1984 and refined in the 1990s, 2000 and, most recently, 2005, AFS's Educational Objectives are important to our status as an educational institution.

AFS International is currently rewriting www.afs.org to call more attention to our educational content and methodologies. For example, in addition to our goals for sojourners and host families, we will also highlight such elements as the rigorous AFS Orientation Framework that is supported by Regular Reflection Points facilitated by trained AFS volunteers (these are also known as monthly contact "mediated interventions" for learning).

Stay tuned in 2011 see this and more at our website and those of the 50 AFS member and affiliated organizations. In the meantime, here is a summary of the Objectives that are often pictured in a pyramid formation.

AFS Educational Objectives

AFS is committed to Intercultural Learning. Through AFS programs of all types, people are introduced to differing values, ways of life, and patterns of thought in completely new environments. This experience enables AFS participants to acquire skills, attitudes, and knowledge useful throughout their lives as they attempt to cope sensitively and intelligently with the urgent challenges of the world of tomorrow. Similar learning often is

acquired by others who come into close contact with participants on AFS programs. Learning through an AFS experience involves growth and change four areas.

1. Personal Values and Skills

Participants are able to turn difficult situations into opportunities for reassessing their values, stretching their capacities, and practicing new skills while gaining awareness of previously hidden aspects of themselves.

2. Interpersonal Relationship building

AFS participants become fully involved in daily living and working arrangements with a variety of people in the new environment, which are transferable to many other settings during the participant's lifetime.

3. Inter(cultural) Knowledge and Sensitivity

The AFS exchange experience deepens participants' insights into their home culture as well as their knowledge of their host (or visiting) culture—its strengths and weaknesses—from the perspective of an outsider.

4. Global Issues awareness

AFS sojourners become able to empathize with their hosts' perspective on some of these problems, and thus to appreciate that workable solutions must be culturally sensitive, not merely chronologically feasible.

Concepts & Theories:

The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity

DR. MILTON BENNETT, MEMBER OF THE AFS INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) is widely accepted as a research-based intercultural communications model. Although the concepts behind the model are sophisticated, this article, written by the model's author, Dr. Milton Bennett, presents them in a straight-forward and easy to understand manner. We are grateful to the author for his permission to reprint this article.

To help bring the model to life, Julien Peyre of AFS France shares delightful illustrations of the various stages. The original French version of this illustration as well as a French and Spanish translation of this article is available, too. Please contact aryn.bloodworth@afs.org.

The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) was created by Milton J. Bennett, Ph.D., (1986, 1993) as a framework to explain the reactions of people to cultural difference. In both academic and corporate settings, he observed that individuals confronted cultural difference in some predictable ways as they learned to become more competent intercultural communicators. Using

concepts from cognitive psychology and constructivism, he organized these observations into six stages of increasing sensitivity to cultural difference.

The underlying assumption of the model is that as one's *experience of cultural difference* becomes more complex and sophisticated, one's competence in intercultural relations increases. Each stage indicates a particular cognitive structure that is expressed in certain kinds of attitudes and behavior related to cultural difference. By recognizing the underlying cognitive orientation toward cultural difference, predictions about behavior and attitudes can be made and education can be tailored to facilitate development into the next stage.

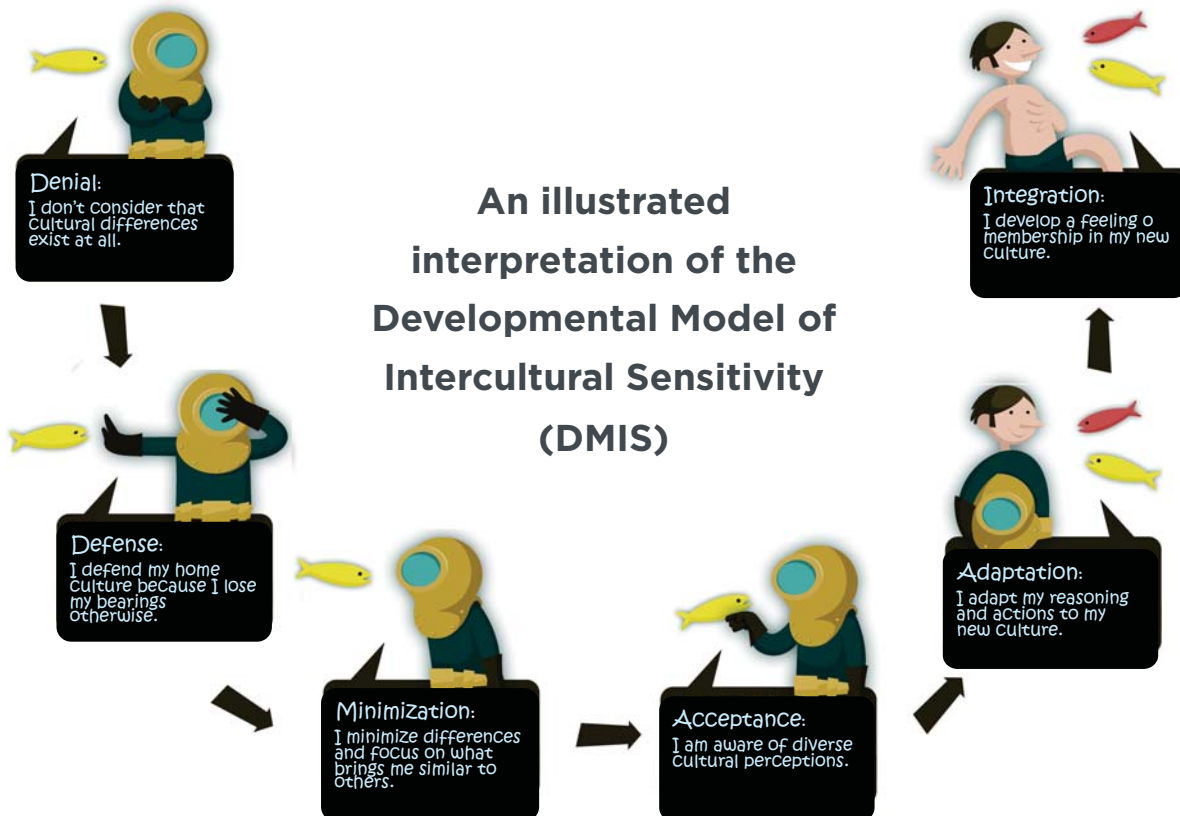
The first three DMIS stages are *ethnocentric*, meaning that one's own culture is experienced as central to reality in some way.

DENIAL of cultural difference is the state in which one's own culture is experienced as the only real one. Other

cultures are avoided by maintaining psychological and/or physical isolation from differences. People at Denial generally are disinterested in cultural difference, although they may act aggressively to eliminate a difference if it impinges on them.

DEFENSE against cultural difference is the state in which one's own culture (or an adopted culture) is experienced as the only good one. The world is organized into "us and them," where "we" are superior and "they" are inferior. People at Defense are threatened by cultural difference, so they tend to be highly critical of other cultures, regardless of whether the others are their hosts, their guests or cultural newcomers to their society.

MINIMIZATION of cultural difference is the state in which elements of one's own cultural world view are experienced as universal. Because these absolutes obscure deep cultural differences, other cultures may be trivialized or romanticized. People at Minimization



Continued from page 5...

expect similarities, and they may become insistent about correcting others' behavior to match their expectations.

The second three DMIS stages are *ethnorelative*, meaning that one's own culture is experienced in the context of other cultures.

ACCEPTANCE of cultural difference is the state in which one's own culture is experienced as just one of a number of equally complex worldviews. Acceptance does not mean agreement—cultural difference may be judged negatively—but the judgment is not ethnocentric. People at Acceptance are curious about and respectful toward cultural difference.

ADAPTATION to cultural difference is the state in which the experience of another culture yields perception and behavior appropriate to that culture. One's worldview is expanded to include constructs from other worldviews. People at Adaptation are able to look at the world "through different eyes" and may intentionally change their behavior to communicate more effectively in another culture.

INTEGRATION of cultural difference is the state in which one's experience of self is expanded to include the movement in and out of different cultural worldviews. People at Integration often are dealing with issues

related to their own "cultural marginality." This stage is not necessarily better than Adaptation in most situations demanding intercultural competence, but it is common among non-dominant minority groups, long-term expatriates and "global nomads." The DMIS has been used with great success for more than 20 years to develop curriculum for intercultural education and training programs. Content analysis research has supported the relevance of the stage descriptions and has suggested that a more rigorous measurement of the underlying cognitive states could yield a powerful tool for personal and group assessment.

AFS Network & Partner Initiatives:

Summer Academy on Intercultural Experience 2010

MANUEL SCHWINN, DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AFS GERMANY



Group work: Academy participants in action

In a joint initiative, AFS Germany and Karlsruhochschule–International University teamed up to offer the first "Summer Academy on Intercultural Experience," from August 16th to September 3rd in Karlsruhe, Germany.

Topics in the inaugural university-level academic program were intercultural management, intercultural communication, intercultural teams and leadership, cultures and conflicts, and intercultural training and coaching. Courses were workshop-style, where theoretical content taught by the University's academic staff was complemented by practical lessons from AFS trainers. Students—who ranged from

ages 18-33—were able to earn academic credit for use towards their undergraduate-level degree efforts.

In addition to classroom work, the Academy featured excursions and evening lectures for participants in order to gain additional insights

into various intercultural issues as well as the exploration of German and European culture. Highlights included lectures by Dr. Horst Harnischfeger, the former Secretary General of the Goethe Institute who is also an AFS Germany alumnus and former EFIL board chair, and Dr. Christoph Vatter of Saarland University who spoke on the subject of intercultural aspects in English, German and Canadian television sitcoms.

The makeup of the Academy's 26 participants, 10 trainers and 5 faculty members spanned 15 countries across five continents: Argentina, Austria, Australia, Brazil, China, Czech Republic, Dominican Republic, Finland, Germany, Great Britain,

Lithuania, Macedonia, Malaysia, Poland, and the USA. This diverse learning and living atmosphere encouraged students to put into practice what was taught in classes. During breaks and evening activities many discussions about intercultural topics continued and self reflection played an important role both during and after the "school day."

Overall satisfaction with the event and the learning atmosphere was high as expressed by these participant quotations:

"...the group was truly international and enhanced the openness to share knowledge and experience within the group."

"I really enjoyed the great combination of theoretical and practical parts which enabled me to have the opportunity to exercise what I learned. And, of course, I appreciate the positive attitude of participants and staff."

"The evening lectures were excellent and added high points to the Summer Academy."

Due to generous donations and funding (including eight scholarships from the AFS International Diversity Fund), all 26 participants received financial support that included either a reduction of program tuition or a contribution towards transportation and accommodation costs.

Based on the positive experiences this year, AFS Germany and Karlsruhochschule-

Continued from page 6...

International University plan to establish the Summer Academy on Intercultural experience as an annual academic program. For 2011, 50 participants are expected, of

which 25 are likely to be international students. The 2011 Summer Academy will run from July 31st to August 14th. Courses will include those in intercultural

management, cultures and conflicts, European Union enlargement, sustainability, and Corporate Social Responsibility in a multicultural context.

Concepts & Theories:

Hofstede's New Dimension: Indulgence versus Restraint

ARYN BLOODWORTH, INTERCULTURAL LEARNING INTERN, AFS INTERNATIONAL

There is a new dimension to researcher Geert Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions to make sure you are aware of: Indulgence versus Restraint. Hofstede defines Indulgence as a tendency to "allow relatively free gratification of basic human drives related to enjoying life and having fun," and Restraint as a belief that these types of gratification should be limited and people should be prevented from partaking in indulgence by "strict cultural norms."

This dimension helps to make understanding cultural differences more tangible by focusing on some of the below-the-surface values that dictate visible behaviors. It is based on

Minkov's World Values Survey, which analyzed 93 countries on their observable behaviors and values, and seeks to discover how happy people feel versus how satisfied they are with their lives. It debuted in the latest edition of the book, *Cultures and Organizations*, by Hofstede, along with his son, Gert Jan Hofstede, plus Michael Minkov.



Indulgence



Restraint

Indulgence versus Restraint addresses questions of happiness, and whether people believe in enjoying life and having fun (Indulgence) or controlling these desires (Restraint).

The research has shown that there are statistical correlations between certain behaviors and a country's ranking relative to other nationalities.

Examples of Indulgence include behaviors such as working and playing hard, valuing leisure time, optimism, extroverted personalities, high levels of spending and feelings of control over life. In contrast, Restraint contains more work and less play, an emphasis on obligations, pessimism, perceptions of helplessness, cautious spending and more neurotic personalities.



AFS: Our Mission & Vision

AFS Intercultural Programs is an international, voluntary, non-governmental, non-profit organization that provides intercultural learning opportunities to help people develop the knowledge, skills and understanding needed to create a more just and peaceful world.

We pursue our mission by providing quality intercultural learning opportunities for a growing number of young people, families, other stakeholders and wider audiences, thus developing an inclusive community of global citizens determined to build bridges between cultures.

Real life experiential learning, supported by structured reflection, is the core of our programs. We endeavor to link our intercultural learning opportunities to the defining global issues facing humanity. We reach out to past, current and future participants, volunteers, and other stakeholders using the media and technology they use.

Volunteers and volunteerism are who we are. Our organization brings about changes in lives through and for our global community of volunteers.

We are recognized as an educational organization by schools and the appropriate authorities. We work to create a regulatory environment that supports our programs.

As a learning organization, we welcome change and critical thinking. We are innovative and entrepreneurial in advancing the strategic directions, working together with others whenever appropriate.

To learn more about our global network and get involved today, visit www.afs.org.

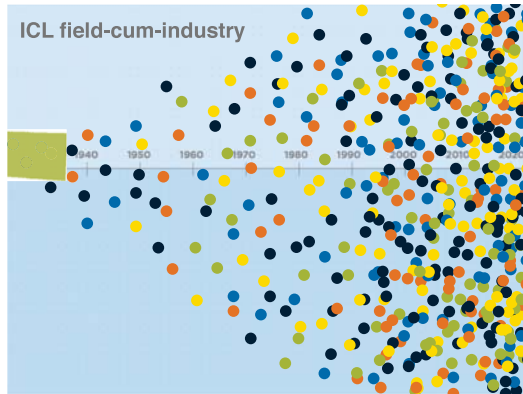
AFS World Congress 2010: Interactive ICL Art Exhibition

ANNETTE GISEVIUS, INTERCULTURAL LEARNING EXPERT, AFS GERMANY

Accompanying the World Congress this year was the AFS Intercultural Learning Exhibition, a series of six fun, informative “installation art” pieces. As some ICL concepts admittedly can be abstract or difficult to grasp when we only talk or read about them, these interactive displays breathed life into the ideas to make them both accessible, engaging and (quite literally) tangible! Two of the artworks are highlighted here.

ICL TIMELINE

Inspired by a graphic that demonstrates the speed and depth at which the field has grown (especially in the past 20 years), viewers were invited to walk through this timeline in order to discover key intercultural facts and happenings...and maybe add one or two of their own.



HOFSTEDE'S CULTURAL DIMENSIONS

Our readers will know that the model of cultural dimensions developed by Dutch social psychologist Geert Hofstede is

among the best-known models that describe the differences between cultures. It is widely used in intercultural trainings around the world, including across the AFS Network. This installation aimed to visualize the six dimensions of differences that he has identified in order to provide the viewer with a starting point for discussion and reflection.



Additionally, visitors were invited to not only view, but to interact with the art by answering questions in a short about how they handle inequality, their inclinations to depend (or not) on others, their tendencies when encountering uncertainties, etc. The resulting scores let them place themselves on each of the scales drawn between the extremes of each dimension.



Individualism versus Collectivism



High Power Distance versus Low Power Distance



AFS World Congress 2010:

What ICL Today Means for AFS Tomorrow

BASED ON A PRESENTATION BY DARLA DEARDORFF

Sharing her reflections on how ten global trends in the intercultural learning field might impact AFS moving forward, Dr. Darla Deardoff, who is Executive Director of the Association of International Education Administrators and editor of and editor of *The SAGE Handbook of Intercultural Competence* (2010), was a keynote speaker at the AFS 2010 World Congress in Buenos Aires this October.

Now more than ever, emphasized Dr. Deardoff, growing numbers of corporations, governments and other civil actors are calling for intercultural or – as it is increasingly called – global competencies. This is at the same time that the so-called “global teen” emerges, for better (greater exposure to concepts, people and things from other cultures) or worse (this exposure is often relatively superficial resulting in a false sense of confidence of knowledge about other cultures).

As the number of competency development programs and providers rises, AFS can distinguish itself from this competition by strengthening the structured content of its offerings and facilitating regular reflection points (such as those outlined in the AFS Orientation Framework), accompanied by appropriate learning assessments for participants.



She also discussed how new coaching methods and online tools are being integrated into programs and the how access to international opportunities is changing, in part driven by more technology-enabled methods of communication.

AFS volunteers and staff can view Dr. Deardoff’s full presentation, as well as the hour-long question and answer session that followed, on the web. If you are an active AFS volunteer and would like to watch this, please contact your local office for online access information.

Become an AFS volunteer today!

AFS is proud to work with over **43,000** active volunteers around the world who run our programs, and work towards realizing the AFS mission of a more just and peaceful world through intercultural understanding. Visit www.afs.org to begin your volunteer experience of a lifetime.



News You Can Use: The “Intercultural” World Today

In a session themed “Intercultural Learning Today” at the 2010 World Congress in Buenos Aires, four speakers who represent the voice of ICL today: Elis Motta of Brazil, Michael Rosak of the Czech Republic, Annette Gisevius of Germany and Jason Lee of Malaysia (currently based in Singapore)—all of whom were among AFS’s 2010 Summer Institute for Intercultural Communications (SIIC) scholars—delivered a presentation about the realities of “Intercultural” outside of AFS in contemporary society. This is a transcript of that address, full of interesting artifacts, some of which may be surprising.

Today, ICL is both “ICL, the field” and much more than “ICL, the field.” Many concepts extend beyond an academic definition and are now more broadly “intercultural.”

We posit that this reality speaks to the growing recognition of the very real need that we have to be able to live and work together—even when we don’t understand or necessarily like those who we consider to be Other.

GLOBALIZATION

We know that the world is globalizing. This means that it is evolving, revolving, re-inventing itself every day, hour, minute; where there is no finished product and a “work-in-progress” status is the new norm...change that is faster, more complex, and more systems oriented... and is the constant. It’s not “either/or” but “and/then/plus something new.” It’s increasingly mobile, especially with twenty-somethings and teens so that what were 3rd culture kids in the past are now 4th and 5th culture kids.



It’s also a world in which we move more into, out of, and across classes, nationalities, wealth, circumstances through travel and in our communities and where contemporary trends like urbanization impact our day-to-day lives.

CONNECTED

Instantly connected, super-connected, hyper-connected by mobile, text, online, Facebook, iPad, iPhone, viral, Skype, Google, gaming, and FourSquare—virtual is actual so that we’re here physically but there and there and there all at the same time. Always on, 24/7, time zones are suggestions not realities. Interconnected: my problem is your problem is our problem...but also collaborative: my solution can make your solution better can make our solution best.

In other words, it’s not your parents’ world.

PROGRAMS

“Intercultural” has become a catch-all, a password for all kinds of programs and activities today such as language learning, volunteer abroad vacations, work and intern abroad, au pair, “eco” tours, sports camps abroad, cooking abroad and other activities abroad, study tours, expat tours, global education, youth ambassador programs, and arts ambassador programs

Gap year, gap month, home-stay abroad, international class tours and field trips, international education, multicultural

studies, poli-cultural studies, cross-cultural studies & trainings, international education and study abroad, not to mention, of course, student exchange programs.

This is because there is a recognized need for intercultural competencies – whether they are called this or otherwise by those who want them. This is no longer a “nice to have” or isolated academic concept.



BUSINESSES

It is called for more and more by businesses and corporations. This is whether they work through international supply and distribution chains, are local firms that have multicultural and diverse workforces, or are global companies that move staff around the world.

To respond to business needs across all sectors, the Society for Intercultural Education, Training and Research (SIETAR) exists as an industry group with national organizations in 15 countries and growing, in addition to SIETAR Europe and SIETAR Global.

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And, services like Cartus, Net Expat and the Workforce Mobility Association have thousands of consultants who include intercultural training alongside traditional global employee relocation packages.



CIVIL SOCIETY/GOVERNMENT

It is called for more and more by governments and civil institutions. In the US, soft diplomacy initiatives range from the government sponsored Youth Exchange and Study or YES program to the privately funded US Center for Citizen Diplomacy. The Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs has supported youth to study there via the JENESYS (Japan-East Asia Network of Exchange for Students and Youths) program that we are familiar with—but it has also launched the “300000 Foreign Student plan” to recruit that many higher education students in Japan.

In Germany, over 200 organizations are running the government’s Weltwärts program and, the independent Institute for Cultural Diplomacy is based there. The United Nations’ Alliance of Civilizations was formed in 2003 to promote intercultural dialogue.

The Sister Cities and Twin Towns programs, Peace One Day initiative, and Mayors for Peace.



Governments as diverse as Malaysia and the Dominican Republic have called for developing more intercultural

understanding in their people and are backing this with related policies.

Today there are numerous European Union policies and objectives that are related to intercultural. Promoting an awareness of the importance of cultural and linguistic diversity within Europe, as well as of the need to combat racism, prejudice and xenophobia.

Inward and outward mobility of teachers and trainers within the Lifelong Learning Programmes. And Council of Europe programs such as The European Year of Citizenship through Education in 2005 and the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue in 2008.

ACADEMIA

This is not to say that it isn’t a real and growing part of academia. It is called for more and more by universities, schools and local communities.

Universities are including intercultural in their mission statements, for example, the University of Tennessee, the University of Tampa, University of Washington, Berlin University and Maastricht University.

Additionally, universities across the globe are turning their attention to the assessment of intercultural competency development in students who participate in exchange programs, as well as those students who are only exposed to domestic learning opportunities; there are over 100 intercultural assessment tools available today.

Internationally, there are at least 25 masters’ degree programs dedicated to intercultural communication or intercultural relations. There are another 13 intercultural-focused doctoral programs.

And there are more than 100 intercultural-related graduate degree programs located in Argentina, Australia, Austria, Canada, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark, England, Finland, France, Germany, Indonesia, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Russia, the United States—and Singapore.

The number of intercultural academic centers around the world are growing including the Center for Intercultural Communication in Canada, the Institute for Intercultural Studies in the US, Intercultural Studies Center in Indonesia and the Centre for Applied Cross-Cultural Research New Zealand.

Academic journals include *The Journal of Intercultural Communication*, *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, *The Intercultural Journal*, among many others.

EXPERTS

There are many established experts in the field such as Janet Bennett, Milton Bennett, Fons Trompenaars, Michael Paige, Bruce Labrack, Peggy Pusch, Geert Hofstede. And many new and emerging stars like Nagesh Rao, Janet Osland, Thiagi, Tatiana Fertlemeyster, Stella Ting-Toomey and Darla Deardorff.

POP CULTURE+



Consider that there are now also online intercultural “IQ” tests, iPhone apps like “Culture GPS,” and 10,800,000 hits for the word “intercultural” on Google. Intercultural appears in media, like the

movie “Outsourced” and the television show “Aliens Among Us.” It appears in more and more organizations, papers, associations and conferences.

It's also what today's and tomorrow's parents want and what we want for our children.

Altogether, this means ICL is today a real, growing field that has become an industry in its own right.

All of this is just what we know of: think of how much else is out there that we haven’t learned about yet. It’s not a matter of simply finding what we’re looking for. It’s happening.

The world is such that it can only happen more...not less—whether we’re involved or not. The question is: **What role do we—do you—want to have in it?**

Pre-Program Learning: A Weekend of Self-Discovery

CSILLA FODOR, ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR, AFS HUNGARY

We recently put a call out to AFS Partners to share how they incorporate Intercultural Learning opportunities for would-be AFSers during the sojourner selection processes. This approach—baking in experiential discovery and reflection time even before the program begins—is another way we demonstrate our ongoing dedication to education. This issue features the practices of AFS Hungary’s “Weekend of Self-Discovery.”

THE INTERVIEW

We run selection weekends and, as for all AFS Partners, one of the main parts of these events is the applicant interview. During these discussions we try to get as much information as possible about the student’s personality, habits, family background, as well as what might have influenced her/him the most in making her/his identity.

We start by asking questions about everyday situations or simply about how much time they spend during the day on certain things. Towards the end of the interview, we get more specific in our questions, by asking the students how they might react in certain situations during their exchange year. For example, “Your host family takes you to church twice a week. What would you do?” Flexibility and openmindedness are the first important characteristics needed in developing cultural competencies. Assessing whether a candidate has these traits is one of our main goals.

COGNITION AND SELF AWARENESS

In order to test a student’s knowledge about the world around them, we have them complete a test with questions about Hungary or important Hungarian personalities. We might ask “Who is the prime minister?” or “What is the current form of government?” The test also contains questions about Europe and the world and, such as “Where is the main building of the European Union?” or “What are the seven wonders of the world?” Afterwards, we ask the candidate to locate countries on a world map to test her/his geographical knowledge. Finally, we consider self-awareness, and ask the student to fill out a short SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis about themselves to

reflect on their own personality and who they are as cultural beings.

Another task we assign is a country presentation about Hungary. This has two major reasons: First of all, we want AFS students to be prepared to be in the role of a representative of their home country. Secondly, we would like for them to think about the typical things that represent their home country in a thoughtful way. Later in the weekend, they show what they prepared to their peers and AFS volunteers in a talent show. Students who do not prepare an appropriate presentation experience how embarrassing not being prepared can feel—especially in the context of getting ready to live outside of their home country. But, more importantly, we include this exercise in order to demonstrate the basic intercultural competence building block of being aware of oneself and having the ability to reflect on one’s own culture. Although national identity is only one aspect of our cultures, it is important that they know where they come from and what imprints or makes them who they are in order for them to better compare and contrast their own culture against different ones.

Another key component is to invite the students to join in a provocative discussion about various topics. We hand the students a list of controversial statements which they have to discuss in a group that we observe. Typically, the conversation becomes intense and emotional. This is the reason we have a second “debrief” discussion afterwards. We talk about respect, tolerance and other competencies you need when faced with different points of view in order to

avoid negative outcomes. We make the connection that these traits are important parts of intercultural learning and that we believe one of the primary goals of this is to develop the capability of tolerating different opinions and ideas, engaging with difference.

EDUCATIONAL GAMES

On the second day we usually play an intercultural game called “Eurorail,” where the candidates have a list of 20 personality profiles of different nationalities, professions, ages, etc. They are supposed to, first for themselves and later in a group, pick the three personalities they would like to travel with the most and the least in one cabin on a train. This game also focuses on the above-mentioned topics and adds the element of discussing these around stereotypes and prejudices. This conversation is not only crucial for a potential exchange experience, but also for everyday life in Hungary.

CULTURAL INFORMANTS

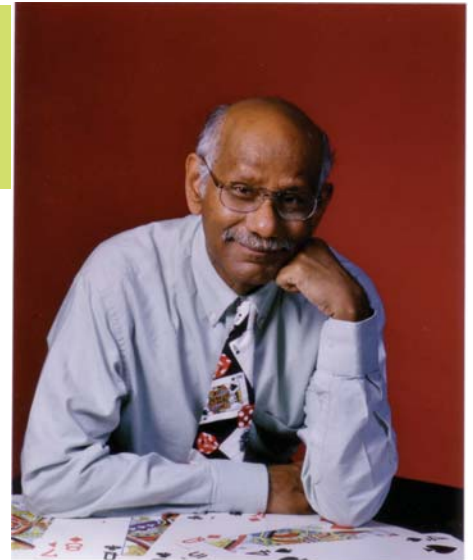
Finally, on a practical note, we give applicants the possibility to meet former exchange students and families who are able to answer country-specific questions. This is a great opportunity for them to actually talk to people who have already experienced a particular foreign culture. Often interesting conversations evolve and students develop more accurate impressions of different national cultures. And, at the very end we always offer the candidates the chance to change their country preferences in case the weekend impacted their earlier choices.

The basic intercultural competence building block of being aware of oneself and having the ability to reflect on one’s own culture is the importance of knowing where you come from.



ICL Beyond AFS: Interview with 'Thiagi'

CAROLYN REHN, SR. ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING SPECIALIST,
AFS USA



Dr. Sivasailam Thiagarajan, more commonly known as Thiagi, is a consultant and game developer with a focus on intercultural learning (ICL). He is the author of 40 books, 120 games and simulations, more than 200 articles and currently writes the newsletter, Thiagi GameTheory. Thiagi also works with AFS USA and has provided AFS International with feedback on the AFS ICL Core Competency Development Program. He talks to Carolyn Rehn, Senior Organizational Development and Learning Specialist, about his entry into the ICL field, his work developing games and ICL across cultures.

How did you get involved in the intercultural field?

India is an intercultural milieu. I grew up in South India in a small, eclectic neighborhood where four different languages were spoken. We had Hindus, Muslims, Christians and others. Diversity was normal for us, and we dealt with our differences often with laughing and humor. When I came to the United States, I didn't like the extremely patronizing attitude I experienced towards persons from third world countries—I was irritated by the stereotyping. When I started working at Indiana University I saw that cultural diversity work held possibilities as a cause and as a career. I started as a consultant, helped develop the international student center, helped with the creation of a mission statement, and yes, even got a T-shirt made up with the mission printed on it.

What has been your greatest influence in developing games?

I started developing games when I was a young man in India teaching high school physics. I needed to teach my students how the internal combustion engine works. The group was not particularly motivated and I

knew I had to do something different. I divided 50 students into 5 teams of 10 and then sent them out into the community to find a carburetor and bring it back. Well, they ended up "borrowing" the carburetors from the neighbors' cars. We examined them for about 15 minutes, and they all went and put them back where they found them. (I probably was lucky with that!) The students were completely engaged and energized by this activity and learned more than me standing up and just giving them a boring lecture. I learned that creating lessons that were interactive was going to make for better teaching than what I was doing, and from that I started designing games and experiential activities.

Check Thiagi games at

<http://www.thiagi.com/games.html>

Some especially relevant to AFS are:

- ✓ Clock on the Ceiling
- ✓ Newton
- ✓ Barnga

How do you choose project topics?

I decide based on two principles. The first question I ask is, "Does this project involve learning that someone will use?" I am interested in improving performance. One of my current projects is working with New York City employees to train them how to evacuate the city if a serious emergency should occur. High performance in a situation like this is essential. My second principle is asking the question: "Is this for a noble purpose?" As examples I have done work for the United Nations Peacekeeping Force and the International Red Cross, as I believe all of these projects are for a noble purpose. My current project here with AFS USA as a Youth Exchange and Study Program (YES) group leader and in facilitator training also fits that principle.

What is the main focus of Workshops by Thiagi?

"Improving Performance Playfully." Our goal is to change the level of performance but

to do it in a way that is engaging and that creates real learning.

We believe that knowledge is not enough—the knowledge needs to produce results.

How does this aspect relate to intercultural learning or communication?

I believe that all intercultural learning should be experiential. I have designed a series of games that teach core intercultural concepts. I have one that teaches the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) in a fun and engaging way, and I designed the game Barnga, which is an intercultural simulation-type game. I also have some games that I call jolts—they are two-minute experiences that challenge or change perspective.

Do you find more variation among participants of different cultures than of participants from the same country? Please explain.

Part of the answer to this question is, "How do you define diversity?" I have found that learning style and communication style can actually make more of a difference in a training than cultural or ethnic differences. The differences that I find most challenging and the hardest to bridge are fundamentalist religious ones. Whether it is fundamentalist religious Christians, Muslims or Hindus, it is very hard to open up their minds to other views. The religious differences in the US are increasingly a hard division and it is of concern to me.

Do you have a favorite game? Can you tell us about it?

My favorite training games tend to be jolts. They take less than three minutes and teach people the meaning of life. Among the jolts,



improving performance playfully

Continued from page 13...

my favorites are "Clock on the Ceiling," which dramatically demonstrates the impact of different perspectives, and "Newton," which illustrates principles of conflict management. Both of these are described in my website. My favorite recreational games are word games. I enjoy playing Scrabble. I also love playing a game called Word Zap on my computer.

What do you wish more people would understand about intercultural work?

In intercultural work, I wish that more people would understand that there are many invisible differences (such as personality type, learning style preference and religion) that make a big difference in the workplace and the community. I also wish that people would focus more on cultural universals that

make us all human beings in addition to cultural differences, which are also important. In addition to paying attention to diversity, I wish people would pay attention to inclusion. After all, the most creative ideas come from collaborators who are different from each other and who thrive on reconciling these differences and synthesizing new ways to looking at reality.

Conference Updates: European Association for International Education 2010 Annual Conference

ANNA COLLIER, INTERCULTURAL LEARNING PROJECT CONSULTANT, AFS INTERNATIONAL

We are pleased to be able to report on the three main topics discussed at the **European Association for International Education (EAIE) 2010 Annual Conference** held in Nantes, France, from 15-18 September, which over 3600 educators and professionals attended. The EAIE is a nonprofit organization which advocates for and helps facilitate the internationalization of higher education in Europe and around the world.

The following themes were recurrent in conference workshops, sessions and poster presentations:

Aligning desired study abroad learning outcomes with global workplace skills and community needs

Universities and study abroad program providers are revising participant learning objectives to meet 21st century workforce demands, as well as the participants' social needs as they enter an ever more globalized and interconnected world. They are attempting to identify and develop intercultural and global competencies that study abroad experiences provide, and which can

lead to greater employability for program participants in the future.

Internationalization of campuses

The European Union is in the process of evaluating the success of its current programs, which are aimed at increasing international mobility in higher education: The Bologna Process, the Erasmus Programme and the Erasmus Mundus Programme.

The impact of the digital era on study abroad

Discussions focused on integrating digital elements into the 21st century study abroad experience and being aware of the opportunities and challenges these communication modes present to the experience of study abroad.

Although these discussions focused on Europe, most of these issues are not unique to the region. AFSers can read the full meeting report, including summaries of conference sessions, via the AFS Inbox and AFS Leaders website. If you are an active AFS volunteer and do not have access to these, please contact your local office for more information.

As a part of our efforts to gain a better understanding of global insights and happenings in intercultural learning outside of AFS, we attended three key educational conferences in 2010: SIETAR, NAFSA and EAIE.

The three **top themes** were:

- #1. Incorporating digital elements** into the process of intercultural learning
- #2. Intercultural skills increasingly recognized and valued** in the workplace
- #3. Emphasis on assessment** of intercultural competence and global skills

We look forward to sharing more emerging intercultural learning trends and insights as we continue our efforts to look at the field and our place within it in 2011.

EAIE 2010
NANTES

15-18 SEPTEMBER
MAKING KNOWLEDGE WORK



ICL Field Conferences & Events

November

SIETAR-USA 2011 Conference: Risk and Resilience in an Intercultural World, Call for Proposals;

Deadline for session proposals: 1 November 2010; Denver, CO, USA; www.sietarusaconference.com

Qualifying Seminar for administrators of the Global Competencies Inventory;

12-14 November 2010; Portland, OR, USA; <http://www.intercultural.org/gci-seminars.php>

December

AFS Core ICL Competency Development Program committee meeting;

6-8 December 2010; New York, NY, USA; contact Laura Kline-Taylor at Laura.Kline-Taylor@afs.org

Early 2011

APAIE 2011 Conference and Exhibition;

9-12 March 2011; Taipei Taiwan; <http://www.apaie.org/conference/2011>

IMI 12th Annual Conference on Intercultural Relations;

AFS may be presenting; 10-11 March 2011; Washington, DC, USA; <http://www.american.edu/sis/imi/conference/index.cfm>

The Forum on Education Abroad Seventh Annual Conference;

AFS will be presenting; 6-8 April 2011; Boston, MA, USA; <http://www.forumea.org/>

If you are aware of upcoming conferences in the intercultural area, please advise Aryn Bloodworth at aryn.bloodworth@afs.org



Connecting Lives, Sharing Cultures

YOUR SOURCE FOR INTERCULTURAL LEARNING IN THE AFS NETWORK

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Your Feedback Welcomed

Please share your comments, suggestions and questions or propose topics for consideration in future issues of *AFS Intercultural Link*.

Submissions can be AFS-specific or part of the larger Intercultural Learning (ICL) field. Simply send your feedback to Aryn Bloodworth at AFS International: aryn.bloodworth@afs.org

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