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Self-Training Tool for Entering Multicultural Work Environments:

A “How Not to Offend Your Co-Worker” Guide

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### Abstract

The world is changing. College graduates have to go up against and face newer and stronger challenges that they may not be 100% prepared for. The goal of this study is to provide a way to successfully understand the environments college students are heading into and how to be able to appropriately and effectively navigate through them. In order to achieve this, this study will examine theories centered on an individual's ability to appropriate into a culture or community without creating conflicting views or overall conflict. A tool kit provided at the end of this study will allow individuals recently graduating from college to understand their own lack of knowledge in social issues that if not addressed can cause their inability to successfully participant in a work environment.

## Self-Training Tool for Entering Multicultural Work Environments:

### A “How To Not Offend Your Co-Worker” Guide

Senior year of college presents itself with variety of questions. What do you want to do after college? What kind of jobs are you looking into? Have you had any offers? As a senior, it is expected that you should know what you are going to do in the following year of graduating college. While I am not making the argument that you should be completely lost leaving when you leave college, but that there are some definitive confidences a person should have going into a brand-new environment.

A daily organizational work environment is a new setting for many college graduates. Accompanied by social issues and stigmas, an individual must adjust their competence levels to navigate the potentially puzzling new workforce environment. Individuals graduating universities are leaving a social setting that may have been complacent with their lack of intercultural understandings or intercultural competence. Workplaces may not be as forgiving and will hold employees to more appropriately higher standards. As individuals continue to navigate outside of their “safety”, this lack of competence prohibits them from being able to effectively assimilate, function and communicate within their newly established work environments.

The end goal of this capstone is to enable individuals to see the presence and absence of their own intercultural competence, and thus enable them to explore targeted ways to strengthen it. With this project I will create a self-training tool to help individuals address and remedy any lack of intercultural competence as they enter the workforce. It will be grounded in established literature, especially theory and research reflecting understandings of competent intercultural communication. The tool I have created helps a

person establish how and where their values and beliefs motivate them to fit within new social environments, as well as how those same values and beliefs could potentially puzzle or conflict with others in that new environment, and how to navigate those disparities. The tool comes from intercultural communication research finding it is important for people to examine what they already know, value, and believe in order to increase their conscious flexibility around their own presumptions and stipulations as they enter into new workplace relationships and environments.

### **Literature Review**

#### ***Cultural Fusion Theory***

The accumulation of strangers into a “dominant culture” while preserving the aspects of their own minority culture, simultaneously while the dominant culture is incorporating the new culture that is being introduced from strangers thereby assimilating into an “intercultural identity,” is known as culture fusion (Croucher & Kramer, 2016). The introduction of cultures builds barriers that are established by both parties through the lack of understanding or motivation to be accepting to the new culture. Research confirms that in order to successfully achieve culture fusion the adoption of “behaviors/traits” introduced by both dominant and newcomers must be allowed to transform their own established culture (Croucher & Kramer, 2016).

Transformations seen through this theory are based in understandings and predictions. Dublin (1978) accounted for two purposes that are needed in order to create an outcome from this theory. Unfolding and breaking down how the cultural fusion experience of a new-comer into a culture is understanding, while prediction is seen in a “repetitive pattern” that is distinctly affiliated with the hypothetical assumptions on the

course of cultural fusion. For the complete explanation and understanding of cultural fusion, there is a need for added descriptions surrounding the two purposes of the cultural fusion theory. This can be seen through explaining boundary conditions, assumptions, theoretical axioms, and theorems (Croucher & Kramer, 2016).

### *Boundary Conditions*

Boundary conditions offer specific perceptions to which circumstances are analyzed through. Cultural fusion takes on three boundary conditions:

- (1) Newcomers are primarily socialized in one culture and then move to a new culture
- (2) Newcomers are to some extent dependent on the dominant culture/environment
- (3) Newcomers and members of the dominant culture communicate with one another.

(Dublin, 1978)

Within the cultural fusion theory is the same perceptions that are taken from adaptation theories, which is where the primary boundary condition is rooted in. The difference between the two thought process' is the extent to how well the newcomer "can and/or should change/adapt" to the established culture (Croucher & Cronn-Milla, 2011; Kramer, 2003). The second boundary condition is a build off of the first in that in order for the newcomers to be able to function within the environment there a need or reliance on what is already known about the dominant culture. An expansion of this boundary looks at exactly how contingent the newcomers must be seen through their ability to assimilate into large aspects of an environment including "economic, social/cultural, and political needs (Croucher & Kramer, 2016)." However, the dominant culture also holds some reliance on the newcomer's ability to be receptive and facilitate an outcome seen through "globalized economic and political world (Croucher & Kramer, 2016)." Further

interpreted and expanded in theoretical axioms and theorems how dependent each party is of each other. Which leads to the final boundary, which is communication. Face-to-face interaction is imperative in the success of cultural adaptation and fusion. It is a crucial defining action that allows for an individual to adapt to a new culture.

### *Assumptions*

This study identifies a difference between the first and second assumptions and the third and fourth assumptions therefore will be separated into two subsections within the overall “assumption” section. Based on the theoretical framework of boundary conditions, cultural fusion theory has four assumptions on the motivators and drivers of human behavior:

- (1) “Humans have an innate self-organizing drive and a capacity to adapt to environmental challenges (Kim, 2001).”
- (2) Humans have an innate self-organizing drive and desire to maintain their cultural identities.
- (3) Cultural fusion of the individual with the environment occurs in and through communication.
- (4) Cultural fusion is an open, dynamic system that changes an individual and the surrounding environment.  
(Croucher & Kramer, 2016; Kim, 2001)

The first assumption is founded through a variety of scholars who confirmed that individual’s life goals are motivated by the surrounding environment that hold them accountable even through the development and struggles presented (e.g., Berry, 1992; Lysgaard, 1955; Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, 1936). All though each struggle and

change in an individual's life, there is that underlining motivation to overcome it through adjusting or modifying the way in which they will approach it. This leads into the second assumption, which is rooted in individual's ability to stay true to their identity while facilitating communication in unfamiliar environments. Cultural fusion theory perceives that there will always be a time in an individual's life where they are communicating to the dominant culture. The ability for the newcomer to navigate through the communication is as subsequently stated dependent on the dominant culture, however the same is said for the dominant culture being reliant on the newcomers susceptibility to the cultural communication being provided. The need for a constant "flow back and forth" is rooted in this second assumption seen through the negotiation of each identity (Kramer, 2013, 2014). While the first and second assumptions are generalizations of human behavior being introduced to what can come from cultural fusion, the third and fourth assumptions are focused in secondary process of cultural fusion of individuals (subsequent evolution than an individual goes through as a result of experiencing cultural fusion).

The third assumption labels the barriers that might be encountered in the process of communication within cultural fusion. Barriers emerge from the "open system where a multitude of variables such as individual's identity, personality/psychology, biology, demographics [socioeconomic, political, religious], host-culture acceptance, media [availability, options], and many more interact to affect newcomers' speed and levels of fusion (Croucher & Kramer, 2016; Contractor, 1994; Senge, 1990)." This "open system" provides a perception digressed to explain how these "conceptualizations" are bound to have a stronger affect on the newcomer, not saying that the dominant culture will not be affected by not to the extent in which the newcomer would be transforming to (Croucher



& Kramer, 2016). Cultural fusion puts more emphasis on the ability for the newcomer to make the necessary adjustments to the culture as well as additional effort from the dominant culture to be able to have a transformed culture and acceptance. Which is where the fourth assumption is rooted in, the conversion participants go through during the “open cultural fusion process (Croucher & Kramer, 2016).”

### **Theoretical axioms**

This section provides a more general look into the information provided in the boundary conditions and assumptions. In Croucher & Kramer’s study, three realizations came to light of what axioms can provide. The first stated as “true representations” within relationships as a product of the variables brought from cultural fusion (Dublin, 1978). The second perception argued it should represent “casual relationship” within relationships (Blalock, 1969). The final description, is more of an additive to the subsequent, focusing on “nature and function” of relationships and variables. These axioms provide universal truths around what can emerge from cultural fusion. Cultural fusion carries seven theoretical axioms:

- (1) Cultural fusion involves both acculturation and cultural maintenance.

Cultural fusion has main focus in the ability of an individual to be able to “fuse” into a new culture. This primary axiom focuses on human’s ability to emerge them into the new culture while also maintaining their own culture. Croucher & Kramer reiterate that newcomers/individuals entering a foreign or new culture experience conflict on whether or not to accept the “new system of behaviors (Croucher & Kramer, 2016).” This primary axiom however provides insight into the ability for newcomers to become apart of the new system while also being able to successfully maintain their own culture. For

example, Kim (2012) created an understanding that if an individual puts the effort in to comprehending or learning about the characteristics of the culture, is defined as acculturation. It is also argued by Kim (2012), that this is inevitable, especially if an individual wants to be able to assimilate into a culture. In this process, there might be a reduction of anxieties as well due to the realization of similarities that they hold. In contribution, the dominant culture is also participating in maintaining their own identity while observing/adapting the “behavior and identities” of the newcomers. This primary axiom explains the way in which cultural fusion is thereby achieved, through the “blending of learning new behaviors/traits (acculturation) and maintaining old behaviors/traits (Croucher & Kramer, 2016).”

(2) Cultural fusion brings about intercultural transformation.

The second axiom of cultural fusion is “the process of an individual fusing into a new culture transforms the individual (Croucher & Kramer, 2016).” There are unseen challenges that can be presented to being introduced to a new culture. It is difficult for any individual to easily assimilate into a new/foreign surrounding. Culture fusion acknowledges this transformation into a culture that provides all new culture, community, language, literatures, pop cultures, values, etc. and the stress of the process to fuse into all that encompasses the dominant culture.

(3) “Intercultural transformation is manifested in increased functional fitness, psychological health, and intercultural identity” (Kim, 2001).

The third axiom presents three important perspectives that are needed to understand the functionality of an individual experiencing culture fusion. The first argument is focused on the challenges of adapting to a new culture that changes the way

in which they act/ behave to the presented dominant cultures way of acting and behaving. Culture fusion's key emphasis is put on the blending or fusing of the two cultures, each adapting and assimilating into each others cultures. If the newcomer is taking a "maladaptation" to the dominant's culture, than culture fusion does not exist within that relationship (Kim, 2001). However, this argument also supports the notion of taking in the cultural adaptations and the newcomer making them their own. For example, North African immigrants and France each took cultural characteristics from each other and adapted them to fit their own, thereby achieving functional fitness in cultural fusion (Croucher, 2008).

The second argument is rooted in the affects of the psychological health that comes as a result of cultural fusion. "Research has demonstrated moving into a new culture can have a tremendous psychological effect on individuals (Kimbrow, Gorman, & Schachter, 2012; Lee, Ahn, Miller, Park, & Kim, 2012)." There is an unspoken realization that occurs in an individual when entering a foreign/new culture. This realization is a result of the change that must occur in the individual's own cultural system in order to assimilate into the progression of adapting a new culture. Through this research shows an increased amount of confidence in their abilities to function in the newly adapted environment (Church, 1982; Oberg, 1979).

However well an individual adapts to the dominant culture it is important that they establish an understanding of what the functionality is, which cultural fusion argues is communication. Therefore at the center of the third argument is the ability for both parties to be able to communicate in the same system. It is within this axiom that the study introduces social communication (interpersonal level of interaction) which is

defined as “two or more individuals interact with one another, knowingly or not” (Kim, 2001). In order for the complete adaptation to a culture a new comer must adapt through constant interaction and communication with the host culture.

- (4) Newcomer and host-culture intercultural transformation facilitates and is facilitated by communication competence.

Similar to the third axiom, the fourth is rooted in an individual’s ability to understand and be comfortable with communicating across multicultural borders. Apart of adjusting/ adapting is nurturing ones interests into the host’s media other forms of mass communication, thereby decreasing the disbelief of what is present in the host-cultures forms of communication.

- (5) Intercultural transformation facilitates and is facilitated by participation in host and minority (interpersonal and mass) communication activities.
- (6) Pressures placed on newcomers by the dominant culture influence and are influenced by the newcomers’ levels of intercultural change.

An overlooked aspect that the fifth and sixth axioms speak to is the hostile environment that can come into light if the host culture is not receptive to the newcomers. Croucher and Kramer specifically speak to three main environment conditions that can have an affect on the cultural fusion process. Along with receptivity of the host culture, there is also the stress (expectations) of the host culture on the newcomer to assimilate, and the intensity to which the newcomer tries to maintain their marginalized identity/culture (Croucher & Kramer, 2016). Within the fifth and sixth axiom the study is introduced to prejudice that can occur in cultural fusion. Prejudice, better described as threats, is seen in three major criteria: realistic threats, symbolic threats, and intergroup

anxiety (Croucher, 2013; Stephan & Stephan, 1993, 1996).

Realistic threats represent aspects within cultural fusion that represent the “economic, political, and physical threats to resources (Croucher & Kramer, 2016).” This threat comes in the form of competition. The more the host culture realizes that with the assimilation of a newcomer and the addition to the environment, the added resources needed to be accounted for which leads the host culture to feel threatened (Stephan & Stephan, 1996). Realistic threats are motivated by the symbolic threats. Symbolic threats are described as “group beliefs, values, and norms,” essentially the characteristics of a culture that incorporate into the overall environment conditions (Croucher & Kramer, 2016). As a newcomer is assimilating into a host (dominant) culture, there is the possibility that both groups feel as though there is too many inherited differences that cannot be fused, therefore creating conflict. Which leads into the final threat, which is intergroup anxiety, which singles out individuals’ fears (insecurities, anxieties, uncertainties, etc.) that occur while interacting with foreign identities. This threat can be described for both spectrums. This intergroup anxiety can be seen in the host culture having expectations of the newcomers assimilation, while the newcomers having to deal with the pressure of conforming to the assimilation (Croucher, 2013).

As Croucher and Kramer’s study on the environmental conditions evolved there were several conclusions of truths that contributed to established the sixth axiom. As they continued to examine the effect of culture fusion on immigrants, it emerged that as a newcomer’s motivation to assimilate into the host culture decreased as a result of the host’s consistent pressure for the newcomers to adopt their culture increased, along with the host culture’s openness to newcomers’ culture decreased (Croucher and Cronn-Mills,

2011). As the environment conditions produce stressors or threats (coming from either or both sides), the prejudices towards each other are likely to increase. Newcomers that are presented with fewer limitations or those limitations reflect more appealing/ relatable conditions the more likely the communication and functionality between newcomers and host culture is represented by a multicultural identity (Laurence & Vaisse, 2006).

“Overall, the amount of pressure placed on immigrants to transform to a host culture, the level of host-culture receptivity, and the response of minority/ethnic group strength/vitality are all integral parts of the fusion process (Croucher & Kramer, 2016).”

Thereby providing the explanation behind the sixth cultural fusion axiom.

- (7) A newcomer’s predispositions influence and are influenced by the newcomer’s levels of intercultural change.

While the fifth and sixth axioms are invested in proving the environmental conditions of cultural fusion, the final axiom investigates the newcomers’ internal conditions. As previously proved, a newcomer experiences a change while transforming/assimilating into a host culture. The more prepared a newcomer goes into the assimilating into the culture is the less of a threat they are to themselves or the host culture. The more knowledge the newcomer has over the culture the “better equipped they are to transform” (Croucher & Kramer, 2016). This can also be said of newcomers who find themselves closer to the host culture because of their ethnicity. Research argues that the adjustment can be easier if a newcomer presents ethnic characteristics/traits similar to the host culture (Collier, 1997; Phinney, 1992; Phinney & Rosenthal, 1992; Tajfel, 1978). However it does not just have to be ethnic similarities that make it easier for a newcomer to assimilate into the host culture, similarities such as physicality,

religion, linguistic, political preferences, and more provide a path to an easier cultural fusion because they present less of a threat (Croucher, 2008; Kramer, 2003; Pettigrew & Meertens, 1995; Stephan & Stephan, 1996). Through this examination of what makes a more appealing cultural adaptation, Kim (2001) identifies several identity characteristics that would also allow for an individual to succeed in cultural adaptation: openness, strength, and positivity.

Change is required that of an individual trying to achieve cultural fusion. Openness is a required trait because of how effective it is in allowing an individual to create a path for flexibility when trying to complete acculturation. Instead of going into cultural fusion with the idea of hesitation and anxiety, being open to the new possibilities allows for better potential assimilation. Strength reflects an individual's ability to have diversity in their personality traits. Oberg stated that "moving to a new culture will lead to culture shock (Oberg, 1979), thus there is a need for an individual to be able to adapt through their personal strengths (resilience, persistence, and resourcefulness) (Oberg, 1979; Croucher & Kramer, 2006). Lastly, positivity provides a positive outcome for newcomers entering a new culture. Positivity allows for a better overall outcome of cultural fusion and diverges from the path of negative "psychological effects (Kimbrow et al., 2012; Oberg, 1979)" that can add confliction to the cultural fusion process. Based on the research provided above the seventh theoretical axiom of cultural fusion is proposed.

### **Theorems**

Theorems are purposed with simulating the relationships between the theoretical standpoints provided in the research; specifically, the way that they interact when one changes and how that affects the other (Dublin, 1978). In accordance to the information

provided above (boundary conditions, basic assumptions, theoretical axioms), the subsequent nineteen theorems have been assumed/hypothesized.

- (1) The greater the host and newcomer communication competence, the greater the intercultural transformation.
- (2) A mixture of host and ethnic interpersonal and mass communication facilitates cultural fusion.
- (3) A mixture of host interpersonal and mass communication facilitates intercultural transformation (functional fitness, psychological fitness, psychological health, and intercultural identity).
- (4) The greater the host receptivity, the greater the newcomer use of host interpersonal and mass communication.
- (5) The greater the host receptivity, the greater the intercultural transformation of the newcomer and the host (functional fitness, psychological health, and intercultural identity).
- (6) The greater the host receptivity, the greater the cultural fusion.
- (7) The greater the host conformity pressure, the greater the newcomer use of minority interpersonal and mass communication.
- (8) The greater the host conformity pressure, the lesser the intercultural transformation of the newcomer and the host (functional fitness, psychological health, and intercultural identity).
- (9) The greater the host conformity pressure, the lesser the desire for cultural fusion.
- (10) The greater the host receptivity, the lesser the minority/ethnic group strength.
- (11) The greater the host conformity pressure, the lesser the minority/ethnic group



strength.

(12) Minority/ethnic group strength will affect cultural fusion depending on level of host receptivity and host conformity pressure.

(13) The greater the preparedness for change, the greater the newcomer and host use of minority/ethnic and host interpersonal and mass communication.

(14) The greater the preparedness for change, the greater the newcomer and host intercultural transformation (functional fitness, psychological health, and intercultural identity).

(15) The more similar the cultural proximity, the greater the newcomer and host use of host and minority/ethnic interpersonal and mass communication.

(16) The more similar the cultural proximity, the greater the newcomer and host intercultural transformation (functional fitness, psychological health, and intercultural identity).

(17) The more adaptive the personality, the greater the newcomer and host use of newcomer and host interpersonal and mass communication.

(18) The more adaptive the personality, the greater the newcomer and host intercultural transformation (functional fitness, psychological health, and intercultural identity).

(19) Higher levels of preparedness for change, cultural similarity, and adaptive personality facilitate greater cultural fusion.

Cultural fusion understands and poses the difficulties in an individual acclimating into a dominant culture as well as maintaining their own identity. As a result of this, communication becomes apparent in all aspects of assimilating into a successful cultural

fusion. Therefore, in order for this study to successfully provide a tool kit that can assist in analyzing and assisting in an individual's ability to culturally accumulate their own identity into an established identity there must be more investigation into intercultural communication. Intercultural communication will provide an insight to the abilities and functionality of communication seen at its more effective point in intersectionality.

### **Intercultural Communication**

Research argues that communication can provide an efficient and critical foundation to intergroup relations (Dodd, 1995; Gudykunst, 1986; Hall, 1976; Kim, 1986; Martin, 1993). Communication can be perceived as a conduit to the ability for a relationship to flourish in the competence of intersectionality. “ Factors that have been identified as central to intercultural communication competence, such as cultural knowledge and awareness, communication skills, and tolerance for ambiguity, strongly impact the favorability of intergroup contacts (Giles & Johnson, 1981; Gudykunst, 1986; Lustig & Koester, 1996). In many ways intercultural communication provides a more an effective navigation between cultural understandings and attitudes. While observing the research done on intercultural communication, it is noticed that there is three major barriers that arise within this form of communication: cognition (values, norms, etc.), affect (types and levels of emotional expressivity), and patterns of behavior (language, customs, communication styles, etc.) (Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern, 2002). The importance behind intercultural communication is taking the multicultural aspect, which requires the cognitive, affective, and behavioral adaptations. The challenge is in being able

to effectively communicate within an intergroup context. An individual should be motivated to participate in educating, informing, and actively interacting within an intercultural setting. Thereby being able to negotiate their own identity with others in an appropriate manner while also staying open to whatever the other individual has to offer. Intercultural communication poses the understanding of how complicated going into a multicultural conversation can be, researchers call this emotion (Gudykunst & Hammer, 1988; Neuliep & McCroskey, 1997; Stephan & Stephan, 1985; Yook & Albert, 1999). Feeling anxious, uncertainty, anger, sadness, or any other emotion is perfectly normal as an individual enters into a conversation. Intercultural communication examines exactly how that emotion motivates that individual to act however, once they are in that conversation. “Members of a dominant ethnolinguistic group may experience feelings of impatience and frustration when communicating with non-native speakers of language (Dodd, 1995; Giles & Robinson, 1990; Wiseman & Koester, 1993).” The frustration and barrier is the source problem that intercultural communication is addressing. Individuals enter situations not fully prepared for the communication they will need to appropriately precede without acknowledging the lack of cultural appropriateness. Ultimately, Spencer-Rodgers and McGovern (2006) research that the root to the negative assessments is seen in the lack of individual’s efforts to orient or educate themselves on the significant cultures around them.

### **Intercultural Communication and Prejudice**

Research on intercultural communication has made a significant connection to the motivations behind the way an individual chooses to negotiate them, emotion being a main influencing factor. “Anxiety and apprehension directly associated with

communication barriers has also been shown to predict inimical attitudes toward ethnolinguistic out-groups (e.g., non-native teaching assistants; McCroskey, 1998).” Negative associations can have the same type of negative affect while interacting within a intergroup contact, this can be said with what an individual perceives as being an appropriate way to communicate with others. These diverse variables have an influence on the ability to have an effective (effectiveness) communication patterns (Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern, 2002). The way in which emotion navigates and produces correlations between intercultural communication and prejudice is the main motivator for the result of this study. Emotion is a “significant source” to the hostility, anger, anxiety, and other negative connotations that come with intergroup conflict (Brown, 1988; McCroskey, 1998; Rubin & Smith, 1990). This disconnect is a result of what individuals are able to appropriately and effectively communicate within a cultured environments. These prejudices that are driven by the “ethnolinguistic out groups” are in reflection of the diverse societies that continually provide systematic barriers (Dovidio et al., 1996; Hamilton & Sherman, 1994; Stangor & Lange, 1994). Therefore, researchers of intercultural communication urge the appropriate and effective use of emotions in communication and contribute positively to the intercultural conversations that are surrounded by “stereotypic beliefs,” through the education and understanding of all forms of culture (Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern, 2002).

### **Intercultural Competence**

Intercultural competence (IC) is a key process people must master well enough to perform well with unfamiliar others. In Deardorff’s (2006) article *Identification and Assessment of Intercultural Competence as a Student Outcome of Internationalization*, IC

was examined to determine more consensus about what is involved in this sort of ability. Deardorff (2006) concluded that the top three common elements of IC were the awareness, valuing, and understanding of cultural differences; experiencing other cultures; and self-awareness of one's own culture. These common elements provide a way to increase an individual's intercultural competence. These elements pose anxieties to an individual's current identity, whether or not they could enter any conversation and sufficiently provide a culturally aware answer. This overall assumption was expressed in the definition of IC Deardorff's (2004) findings reflected: "the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes." Through integrating these basic cognitive communication skills an individual is able to work towards an "understanding of others' world views (Deardorff, 2006)." Understanding the perspectives of others, allows the competence of an individual to expand into an outcome of appropriate and effective communication. Consequently resulting in the ability for an individual to assess the motivations of their actions through their understanding of their culture.

Deardorff's findings illuminate the purpose of this project which is to develop an individual's ability to understand and navigate the key cultural elements present in a foreign-to-them environment. That cultural awareness is essential in enabling-

An individual's ability to communicate carries a heavy dependence on their adaptability to situations and how they handle themselves within it. The studies above provide the explanations and outcomes of being able to effectively integrate oneself into the environment around them. Through this form of integration through face-to-face interaction a person is able to break down the influences that prevented the individual

from absorbing and understanding the foreign information. This reliance becomes more than just a word of mouth, but something that can be seen as useful and in a way personal to the individual who went into the interaction with hesitant attitude. Through opening oneself to the possibilities that can be presented through the interactions and understandings of the newly found information can stimulate a transformation the standpoint to which an individual see's themselves in his or her culture. This study's tool is motivated with the intention of having an individual think. To think about what they know, what they don't know, or what they think they can change about themselves. As this study progresses into need for insights on not just an individual's ability to communicate, but what that says about them and who they are (beliefs, culture, and values).

### **Application**

The self-training tool for entering multicultural work environments is structured to examine the disconnect that individuals graduating college have with the rest of the world. A part of entering the work force is being able to actively, effectively, and appropriately communicate identity within the developing relationships. In the shadows of individual's emotions is the motivation to be evoked or navigate a conversation down a specific path, while not having a complete understanding of their cultures that they are interacting with. In accordance to the research, it was concluded that in order to successfully navigate through an environment that poses societal problems and intersectionalities, the only way to get through it is to look beyond the education of culture, but to explore through experience of the cultures in the environments they are placed within. The result of this study is seen in a tool kit. This tool kit will allow

individuals to be able to have a better understanding on where they stand in the world and how they understand the cultures that they are surrounded by. The tool kit is poses specific scenarios and questions that will allow a participant to analyze and examine the ways in which they lack or have a weak sense of intercultural competence. These scenarios and questions are supported by the research done in the literature review of this study. The overall aim of this tool kit is to open the perception of individuals entering a new or foreign environment. The tool kit is a result of the purpose and motivation of this study.

### **Conclusion**

In a world of ridicule filled with a lack of cultural understanding, it is even more important for individuals leaving college to be able to effectively function in the environments they are placed in. Through consulting this study's tool, they will not only learn about themselves but also the importance of intercultural communication. They will gain the ability to communicate themselves without portraying any negative characteristics to others. This tool will allow individuals to confidently go out into the world knowing and understanding that their point of view is important but also it is important to take in what others have worked just as hard to get noticed. A tool that allows them to reflect about situations where they will be called on to appropriately express ambiguity tolerance, empathy, uncertainty, and so many more factors that can impede one's ability to function in a foreign environment.

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## Appendix 1

## Self-Training Tool for Entering Multicultural Work Environments

**“What Would You Do?” Scenarios:**

1. You are entering a store that you visit often, at least 3 or 4 times a month. As you are walking around you notice there is a salesperson next to you and as you move around the store. And you know they are following you because you test them, by walking around the store (to specific places you don't spend much or any time at usually). As you continue to stroll through the store you are getting more tense, frustrated, and angry. After a couple more minutes you turn around and ask the employee “ I'm sorry, is there a reason you're following me?” To which they respond, “no, I just want to make sure that nothing happens in the store. It's just a matter of time before something is probably taken by people like you.”
  - i. How would you handle this situation?
  
2. You're newly employed at your local grocery store. On your first day, you are asked to shadow a suspicious person around the store. You ask “which individual?” to which your superior points out an middle aged Black man. You ask questions to try and clarify why exactly you are being asked to shadow them. To which your superior responds “he has done nothing suspicious yet, I just want to be ready for when he does shoplift, we always get black people in here trying to take stuff.”
  - i. How would you handle this situation?

3. You are in a business class that is structured around how well you can work in a group. The list of students is posted online and you are to start working with them the next class period. When you show up to the next class period, you realize that two of the students in your group are in class but working with other groups. You get the courage to ask them why they asked to be switched, to which they respond “ we don’t work well with women [men].”

i. How would you handle this situation?

4. You are starting a new job as a brand manager at a marketing firm in LA. You notice that the firm is filled with all races and is very open in how they accept all forms of diversity, which is one of the main reasons why you were interested. As you get settled with into your new desk you realize that the boss’ son, is talking to one of your co-workers asking them “where is the best Chinese food around LA?” To which the co-worker being questions answers “ I wouldn’t know I am not Chinese.” The boss’s son then asks “well sometimes I just can’t tell, but what does it matter you are all the same aren’t you?” The co worker in question puts their head down and doesn’t respond as if they are ashamed or just do not know how to respond

i. How would you handle this situation?



5. You're a cis-gendered woman who has just been promoted to a manager position. You realize that in your first week as manager a specific cis-gendered male has been obnoxiously and blunt about how you didn't deserve the promotion and refuses to do hard work under your "regime." The first week you let it slide because you wanted to allow them to get their frustrations out. However, their behavior and attitude continues into the next week. You decide it is time to pull them aside and ask them what is wrong. Once at their desk you ask to speak to them in private, to which they respond with a disgruntled attitude "what for?" to which you kindly respond, "work performance." The disgruntled individual then responds after a 30 seconds of staring at you "did you get your period this week and forget your tampons because you are acting like a real bitch."
- i. How would you handle this situation?
6. You are hanging out with your usual group of friends. You notice that one of your friends like to use specific words to describe other individuals. For example, "fag, gay, lesbian, faggot, etc.). You ask why they use that those specific words to describe those individual's. To which the individual in question responds, " it's just easier to label them as they want to be seen."
- i. How would you handle this situation?
7. Your best friend likes to use the word "nigger" to describe fellow co-workers.
- i. How would you handle this situation?

**Intercultural Competence Questions:**

1. Do you feel that the US population is well represented by the US government?
2. What do you associate the US congress and senate with?
3. Do you believe race to be nature or nurture?
4. How do you feel about the topic of diversity?
5. What are things you associate with a leader?
6. What do you do to promote
7. How would you educate your family on gay, lesbian, bisexual, and trans-gendered issues?
8. How do you handle stress?
9. What underrepresented group can you identify in the US?
10. What is your status?
  - a. Can you use it favorably?
11. How do you prefer to communicate with others?

Career Center, University of Portland. (2018). [RA Interview Questions]. Unpublished raw data.