FINDING UNITY AND COMMUNITY IN DIVERSITY:
AN EXPLORATION AND EXAMINATION OF THE HISTORY OF INTERCULTURAL
COMMUNICATION AND THE USE OF EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION IN THE
DEVELOPMENT OF AN INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION CURRICULUM
WITH A SERVICE LEARNING COMPONENT

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ABSTRACT

A new global community has emerged due to innovative technologies, increased trade and travel, and mass media. The subsequent increase in intercultural encounters presents new challenges including a heightened propensity toward miscommunication and conflict. The study of intercultural communication addresses these challenges through the development of cultural awareness and intercultural communication competencies. It is a discipline which aids in reducing conflict, promoting a world that recognizes and values diversity. This project examines the history of the study of intercultural communication and the use of experiential learning to further the exploration and theoretical development of its concepts and practices. The project then builds upon John Dewey’s *theory of experience* and pragmatic philosophy through the design and development of an intercultural communication curriculum with a service learning component—a curriculum which empowers students to unite people and build communities through the collective knowledge of multiple cultures.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Years ago, while thumbing through a science textbook I came across an image of the earth. It is an image that many scholars have seen—the earth as a small blue marble nestled in a blanket and black. It is an image that serves as a reminder of how small and fragile the earth is. It also serves as a reminder of how connected the earth’s population truly is despite geographical border. For generations man’s image of the earth was much different. It was ethnocentric view that simply experienced the “world” through our immediate interaction with those of shared culture. It was a world in which geographical borders and cultural boundaries were one in the same.

Statement of the Problem

The world is ever-changing, and though geographical borders may remain, the cultural boundaries are eroding as people log on to the Internet, watch global mass media, chat with friends around the world, or simply buy products or services provided by another country. A new global community is emerging. It is a community filled with diversity in culture. With this flow of people, products and information “lives…are shaped, sometimes unexpectedly, through contact with linguistic and cultural others who they would once not have encountered” (Dooley, 2009, p. 498). Though new communication technologies have served to unite us as people, without effective intercultural communication knowledge competencies these technologies can serve to divide us as people as well.

The Goal

New technologies introduce new challenges, making it imperative for every culture to expand their cultural awareness and to learn to interact with their global neighbors. Therefore, the study of intercultural communication is of critical importance in the postsecondary
classroom. This project examines the history of the discipline of intercultural communication and explores how experiential learning and pragmatisim can be utilized to enhance the study of intercultural communication. This project then builds upon the “organic connection between education and personal experience” (Dewey, 1938, p. 25) through the design and development of an intercultural communication curriculum for the postsecondary classroom, which incorporates a service learning component to the educational process.

The resulting curriculum, entitled *Finding Unity and Community in Diversity*, seeks to empower students to take an active role in the learning process and to “connect theory to practice” (Endres & Gould, 2009, p. 234) by way of meaningful service to their communities. Multiple opportunities are offered throughout the curriculum in which students can experience intercultural communication by engaging in strategic intercultural encounters. These encounters will aid in the development of the skills and strategies necessary to navigate differences in cultures.

*Finding Unity and Community in Diversity* also encourages each student to examine their unique multi-cultural identity through critical examination, reflection and discussion. As students learn about and explore the complexity of their identities, they are also offered opportunities to learn from one another. “We will never understand racism, class, social justice, international development, or the person sitting next to us without quietly listening to the stories of those who experience the world in different ways” (Bennett & Salonen, 2007, p. 46). The seamless integration and encouragement of the development, recognition and exploration of cultural awareness within the classroom greatly enhances students’ understanding and recognition of cultural diversity that surrounds them outside of the classroom, both domestically and globally.
Students who utilize the curriculum will gain a comprehensive understanding of culture as a whole and how culture influences (and may inhibit) the communicative process. Because culture is a complex social construct, it can be difficult to define because it encompasses every aspect of an individual’s life and their perception of their world (Keshishian, 2005; Eagleton, 2000). Culture has been described “a body of common understandings … the sum total and organization or arrangement of the groups ways of thinking, feeling, acting. It also includes the physical manifestations of the group as exhibited in the objects they make—the clothing, shelter, tools, weapons, implements, utensils, and so on. In this sense, of course, every people—however primitive—has a culture, and no individual can live without culture” (Ina Corrine Brown as cited in Caputo, Hazel, McMahon, and Dannels, 2002, p. 297). Finding Unity and Community in Diversity encourages students to examine cultural differences and identifiers and build intercultural communication competencies through reflection of their personal experiences, evaluation of their experiences, and by seeking solutions to intercultural communication difficulties through the application of knowledge they received in the classroom.

Importance of the Study

Universities across the United States are recognizing the value of intercultural competencies as a beneficial component to academia and have increased their commitment to “teaching diversity and multiculturalism” (Platt, 2002, p. 41). “With global citizenship and civic engagement as core missions in higher education, intercultural competence becomes central across disciplines” (Bennett & Salonen, 2007, p. 50). The field of intercultural communication provides a particularly useful perspective for developing intercultural competence, as “it aims to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for effective and appropriate interactions across cultures” (Bennet & Salonen, 2007, p. 48). By exploring the history of intercultural
communication and experiential learning, this project has developed an intercultural communication curriculum that will guide students to an advantageous position when they graduate to the global marketplace.

*Definitions of Terms Used*

Class: “social stratification based on both birth and individual achievement” (Macionis, 2004, p. 2002).

Culture: “the relatively specialized lifestyle of a group of people (values, beliefs, artifacts, ways of behaving) that are passed from one generation to the next by means of communication” (DeVito, 2004, p. 36).

Experiential Education: “a philosophy and methodology in which educators purposefully engage with learners in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills and clarify values” (Association for Experiential Education, 2007).

Multi-cultural: descriptive term of “group makeup or perspective...a culture blended of individuals who come from many different national backgrounds” (Caputo, Hazel, McMahon, and Dannels, 2002, p. 291).

Intercultural Communication: “communication between persons who have different cultural beliefs, values, or ways of behaving” (DeVito, 2004, p. 52).

Linguistic Relativity (Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis): the idea that “people perceive the world through the cultural lens of language” (Macionis, 2004, p. 38).

Service Learning: “a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development” (Jacoby as cited in Soukup, 1999, p. 21).

Organization of Remaining Chapters

The project is divided into five chapters: 1) the introduction to the importance of the study; 2) a review of the literature and philosophical assumptions; 3) the scope and methodology of the study; 4) the introduction and presentation of the curriculum; and 5) a summarization of findings.

In Chapter 1, current trends, including innovative communication technologies, mass media, and global trade, were listed, establishing why it is important for scholars to expand their studies to include intercultural communication.

Chapter 2 will explore the history and development of intercultural communication through a review of relevant literature. The chapter will also examine the correlation between experiential learning and the study of intercultural communication.

Chapter 3 will define the scope, limitations, methodology of this project, and the philosophical and theoretical basis used to frame the project.

Chapter 4 will introduce and present a stand-alone intercultural communication curriculum with a service learning component developed for a postsecondary classroom.

Chapter 5 will identify limitations and benefits of the project, summarize the project, and offer recommendations for further study and exploration.
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Theoretical Basis

World War II is often cited as an example of one of our earth’s darkest periods—the mere mention of it conjuring images of intercultural intolerance and hate. Paradoxically the same period of history would foster the introduction and study of a new discipline—intercultural communication, a discipline, which at its very core, aims to create a deeper understanding and acceptance of the beliefs, values and behaviors of cultures different than our own. Intercultural communication is a discipline, which aids in reducing conflict through the promotion of a world that values diversity in culture and fosters appreciation of differences as well as similarities. This project will review the historical basis for intercultural communication as a discipline based on practical application, examine the development of intercultural communication education and theories, and assess how to incorporate service learning as a component of intercultural communication education in order to continue the tradition of creating a better society for all.

The Literature

Derived from the war effort, the study of intercultural communication is rooted in the work of Foreign Service Institute anthropologists and linguists of the 1940’s and 1950’s. “The United States emerged from World War II as a major world power. However, the American diplomatic corps was not particularly effective. According to Rogers, Hart, & Miike (2002), American diplomats seldom learned the language or the culture of the country to which they were assigned” (p. 8). Failed diplomacy efforts, the increase in globalization, and a renewed sense of the interconnectedness of the world as a result of World War II, brought heightened attention to the need for cultural awareness as well as skillful and persuasive diplomats. In
response, the United States Congress passed the Foreign Service Act of 1946, which established the Foreign Service Institute as part of the Department of State.

The Foreign Service Institute was charged with developing training curricula, including foreign language skills, for American diplomats that would be serving abroad (Leeds-Hurwitz, 1990; Rogers et al., 2002). The curricula would build upon the linguistic method of language training, which “emphasized appropriate use of the spoken language” (Leeds-Hurwitz, 1990, p. 265) and “the importance of cultural understanding” (Rogers et al., 2002, p. 8) by maintaining a model of native speakers as foreign language instructors.

George L. Trager, a well-respected linguist with post-doctoral study at Yale University, joined the Foreign Service Institute as a resource in the School of Languages. Though Trager’s focus was on language education at the school, Trager recognized that language has profound and important influence within a society through his work and continued communication with former colleagues at Yale, Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf. Sapir and Whorf developed the principle of linguistic relativity (Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis), which contends that “people perceive the world through the cultural lens of language” (Macionis, 2004, p. 38.)

Influenced by Sapir and Whorf’s work, Trager (1958) further understood the need to expand training in the school beyond traditional foreign language instruction.

Language has been indicated as being only one of the systematic arrangements of cultural items that societies possess. A culture consists of many such systems—language, social organization, religion, technology, law, etc. Each of these cultural systems other than language is dependent on language for its organization and existence, but otherwise constitutes an independent system whose patterning may be described….The full statement of the point-by point and pattern-by-pattern relations between the language and
any of the cultural systems will contain all the ‘meanings’ of the linguistic forms, and will constitute the metalinguistic levels. (p. 7)

Trager would later work with cultural anthropologists to help create better understanding of the cultural systems of the languages for which he offered instruction, helping to develop the metalinguistic levels he described.

One of the cultural anthropologists was Edward Hall. Hall was recruited and joined the Foreign Service Institute in 1950 as the director of the Point IV Training Program. Hall brought a wealth of personal experience of diverse cultures to the project as well as intellectual knowledge.

Hall was raised in the culturally diverse American Southwest. As a young anthropology student with the University of Denver, Hall worked for the United States Indian Service on Navajo and Hopi reservations where he learned “firsthand about the details and complexities of one of the world’s most significant problems: intercultural relations” (Hall as cited in Rogers et al., 2002, p. 5). Hall would later pursue graduate work at Columbia University where he earned his Ph.D. in anthropology and post-doctoral study in sociology and cultural anthropology (Rogers et al., 2002). During World War II, Hall left academia to serve as an officer and commanded an African American regiment in both Europe and the Philippines.

It was in 1951, at the Foreign Service Institute, that Hall was afforded the opportunity to build practical value of his work in anthropology (Rogers et al., 2002). Hall was hired as a professor of anthropology and charged with the task of “working to ensure that students (Foreign Service Institute trainees) obtained general anthropological training to complement their specific language training” (Leeds-Hurwitz, 1990, p. 267). The initial training addressed beginning instruction of the language of the country of assignment, orientation to the mission and its philosophy, limited study of the country and area, and a small amount of
time devoted to anthropological and linguistic generalizations, including culture as a concept, change as a process, and common American assumptions. (Leeds-Hurwitz, 1990, p. 267)

Hall recognized that though the subject matter of the trainings was often interesting to the trainees, “there seemed to be no ‘practical’ value attached to either what the anthropologist did or what he made of his discoveries” (Hall, 1958, p. 32). Anthropological studies traditionally focus on the “internal pattern of a given culture. In giving attention to intercultural problems, they have examined the impact of one culture upon another. Very little attention has been given to the actual communication process between representatives of different cultures” (Hall & Whyte, 1960, p. 12).

Like Trager, Hall recognized the crucial connection between culture and communication. However, Hall was guided not by Sapir and Whorf, but by examination of the work of a leader in his own field of study, American anthropologist, Franz Boas. According to Hall, Boas “laid the foundation of the view which I hold that communication constitutes the core of culture and indeed of life itself” (Hall as cited in Leeds-Hurwitz, 1990, p. 273).

The role of the anthropologist in preparing people for service overseas is to open their eyes and sensitize them to the subtle qualities of behavior—tone of voice, gestures, space and time relationships—that so often build up feelings of frustration and hostility in other people with a different culture. Whether we are going to live in a particular foreign country or travel in many, we need a frame of reference that will enable us to observe and learn the significance of the difference in manners. (Hall as cited in Leeds-Hurwitz, 1990, p. 274).
Hall recognized that identifying cultural differences would allow for a greater understanding of the overall uniqueness of each culture and therefore enhance communication. Foreign Service workers “were not interested in theories of culture and communication; rather, they wanted specific guidelines for getting along in the countries they were visiting” (Martin & Nakayama, 2004, p. 43). Once cultural differences are identified they could then be acknowledged and studied so that trainees could move to a greater understanding between cultures. The aforementioned *frame of reference* could then be used to develop and build practical skill sets for their assignments abroad.

Hall began a collaborative relationship with Trager and they began to “meet every weekday afternoon to discuss”, dissect, and “reconceptualize” (Rogers et al., 2002, p. 9) the Foreign Service Institute’s anthropological curriculum in order to compliment the language training. Their collaborative intellectualism would unite linguistic and anthropological theory and practice (Rogers et al., 2002) and spark the birth of a new discipline—intercultural communication.

Hall and Trager introduced their pioneering paradigm of intercultural communication in a 1953 Foreign Service training manual entitled, *The Analysis of Culture*. The team introduced communication as a primary element of culture and emphasized the importance of nonverbal communication. By stressing “the micro-level aspects of space and time as they affected nonverbal communication” (Rogers et al., 2002, p. 9), the training offered a new way of looking at communication across cultures. Hall and Trager’s work was incorporated into a “four-week orientation workshop for mid-career diplomats and technical assistance workers” (Rogers et al., 2002, p. 9).
Between 1950 and 1955, Hall trained approximately 2,000 Foreign Service diplomats and technical assistance workers in classes of thirty to thirty-five students (Rogers et al., 2002, p. 10). Hall found that for the training to be effective, it was critical that trainees learn about the culture in which they would be working, as well as the nonverbal codes that have been constructed in that culture. Without cultural awareness of these nonverbal codes, many opportunities for communication would be compromised. In the training there was a notable shift from the traditional “meta-culture” analysis of instruction of societies as a whole to a “micro-culture” analysis—the study of “tone of voice, gestures, time, and special relations as aspects of communication” (Hall as cited in Leeds-Hurwitz, 1990, p. 268).

“The methods of training were highly participatory and experiential” (Rogers et al., 2002, p. 10), focusing on fostering cultural awareness of personal behavior including out-of-awareness behavior like body communication. This nonverbal form of communication is an intricate part of the socialization processes of each culture (Archer, 1997) and “operates at a subconscious level.” (Martin & Nakayama, 2004, p. 237). “The analysis of nonverbal communication at FSI (Foreign Service Institute) dealt particularly with out-of-awareness behavior, the unknowing and often uncontrolled dimension of interpersonal communication influenced by the subconscious” (Rogers et al., 2002, p. 9). Hall sought to develop understanding that others (both domestically and internationally) may not necessarily interpret our behavior as we do or how we expect them to interpret our behavior.

Hall and Trager’s shift from meta-cultural instruction to micro-culture instruction presented a challenge as educators. There was little information available on micro-cultural analysis of specific cultures across the globe. Therefore, Hall created his own instructional materials. Hall found details of his personal experiences and the experiences of practiced trainees
living overseas to be valuable learning aids in the classroom. “He specifically listened to the problems Americans were having once they arrived at their destinations. These stories served as an additional resource for improved training” (Leeds-Hurwitz, 1990, p. 269).

After leaving the Foreign Service Institute, Hall continued his study of culture and communication and published two books that would influence educational scholars from multiple disciplines, including scholars from the field of communication, to further explore the relationship between communication and culture. In 1959, Hall published *The Silent Language* in which Hall contends, “culture is communication and communication is culture” (Hall, 1959, p. 186) and “introduced the notion of proxemics, the study of how people use personal space to communicate” (Martin & Nakayama, 2004, p. 43). In 1966, Hall published *The Hidden Dimension*, in which he expounded upon his concept of proxemics (Martin & Nakayama, 2004). Hall’s research and resulting texts remain influential to the study of intercultural communication, ranking Hall as “the second most-cited intercultural communication author (Rogers et al., 2002, p. 15).

While the origins of the intercultural communication are interdisciplinary, with influence from linguists and anthropologists, the study of communication became “increasingly centered in the discipline of communication” (Martin & Nakayama, 2004, p. 45). After Hall’s introduction, communication scholars of the 1960s and 1970s began to explore the concept of intercultural communication. “The study of intercultural communication first appeared as part of communication study in the late 1960’s via books such as Alfred Smith’s *Communication and Culture*, and through courses taught in communication departments” (Hart as cited in Rogers et al., 2002, p. 14). In 1970, the International Communication Association established a division of intercultural communication (Hart as cited in Rogers et al., 2002, p. 14) and the first textbook
dedicated to the subject was published in 1973. Within the following decade over 200 colleges and universities across the United States offered one or more courses in intercultural communication, with 60 offering graduate intercultural communication courses” (Kitao, 1985, p. 15).

Despite the transition to the field of communication, anthropological concepts can still be found in the core of intercultural communication objectives.

“The great lesson of anthropology is that when the stranger is no longer imaginary, but real and present, sharing a human social life, you may like or dislike him, you may agree or disagree; but, if it is what you both want, you can make sense of each other in the end.” (Appiah, 2007, p. 99)

The ability to make sense of each other in the end lies at the core of intercultural communication theory, while the study of intercultural communication fosters the development of “knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for effective and appropriate interactions across cultures” (Bennet & Salonen, 2007, p. 48). “As the global community continues to integrate, all of us, willingly or unwillingly, must learn to deal with a social order characterized by escalating levels of contact and communication with people of other cultures” (Samovar, Porter, McDaniel, 2009, p. 7).

Intercultural communication education gives students the knowledge and skills necessary to not only deal with the social order cited by Samovar, Porter, and McDaniel, but to heighten their cultural awareness, become more effective communicators and ultimately bridge what others may perceive as cultural barriers. It is a skill which is beneficial for both personal and professional relationships.

Increased globalization and recognition of its benefits have spawned great interest in intercultural communication education. Universities across the United States have become
increasingly committed to teaching diversity and multiculturalism (Platt, 2002, p. 41).

Intercultural communication is recognized as “one of the fastest growing areas in the field of communication since the 1960s and 1970s” (Kim, & Gudykunst, 1999, p. 172).

With the increased interest and study, the development of intercultural communication theory has expanded far beyond the examination and development of practical communicative skills of international workers, travelers, and immigrants. The definition of intercultural communication has broadened to include domestic intercultural encounters such as age, gender, race, and social class. “Intercultural communication is treated, therefore, as a process of social interaction…All encounters are viewed as intercultural to an extent, and the degree of interculturalness of a given encounter would depend on the degree of heterogeneity between the life experience of communicators” (Kim & Gudykunst, 1999, p. 173). Therefore students can often find richly diverse intercultural communication experiences in the classroom and their own backyards. The validity of intercultural encounters in “their own backyard” can be found in the development of principal intercultural communication theories. Leading communication theorists, Gerry Philipsen and Howard Giles, study domestic intercultural communication and have developed foremost theoretical frameworks that are now used to further explore intercultural communication theory in both domestic and international settings.

Communication professor and ethnographer, Gerry Philipsen immersed himself in the study of different cultures in a Chicago community where he served as a youth worker. Through the lens of an ethnographer, “a naturalist who watches, listens, and records communicative conduct in its natural setting in order to understand a culture’s concept [sic] web of meanings” (Griffin, 2009, p. 414), Philipsen began to recognize speech codes, “historically enacted socially
constructed systems of terms, meanings, premises, and rules, pertaining to communicative conduct” (Griffin, 2009, p. 414) and developed speech codes theory.

Communication professor and social psychologist, Howard Giles studied “interethnic communication…between two bilingual groups in the same country” (Griffin, 2009, p. 388) and developed communication accommodation theory which examines how persons attend to communication through accommodation, “the constant movement toward or away from others by changing your communicative behavior” (Griffin, 2009, p. 389). Recent scholars have applied communication accommodation theory to intergenerational communication context.

Philipsen and Giles’ theories are only a few of many intercultural communication theories that offer a lens through which to build greater understanding of intercultural communication encounters. However, it is the application of the theory that allows students to gain full comprehension of intercultural encounters and to develop intercultural communication competencies. Just as Hall’s trainees at the Foreign Service Institute called for practical application and specific guidelines to help them become better diplomats, today’s intercultural communication students should be offered the opportunity to put theory into practice.

There is no doubt that Hall used the examination of personal experiences (both his as well as his students) as an educational strategy because he lacked educational materials, however Hall also recognized an “organic connection between education and personal experience” (Dewey, 1938, p. 25) and found great educational value in the experiences as ways in which to strengthen intercultural competencies. Despite the marked increase of theoretical knowledge of intercultural communication as well as intercultural communication learning materials, both communication and culture remain extremely complex social constructs (Keshishian, 2005) which require application of theory in order to enhance comprehension.
Incorporating experiential education in the intercultural communication education process is crucial. Experiential education is “described as a philosophy and methodology in which educators purposefully engage with learners in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills, and clarify values” (Association for Experiential Education, 2007). John Dewey (1909), pre-eminent American philosopher and educational theorist, shared a story in his book *The Moral Principles of Education* that sheds light on the importance of experiential education.

I am told that there is a swimming school in a certain city where youth are taught to swim without going into the water, being repeatedly drilled in the various movements which are necessary for swimming. When on [sic] of the young men so trained was asked what he did when he got into the water he laconically replied, ‘Sunk.’ (p. 248)

*Sunk*—though the young man’s response was intended to be literal, the metaphorical value his answer commands pause. How many students around the world leave their classrooms with little more than a theoretical base of the subject matter discussed? The unique challenges of intercultural communication (the vast richness of diversity and opportunity for everyday encounters) also lend themselves to prime learning opportunities which allow students to make connections between communication theory and their personal experiences.

The design of the curriculum developed in this project will be guided by the pioneering work of John Dewey and the educational philosophy of pragmatism. In his 1938 book, *Experience and Education*, Dewey proposed a new educational theory based on experience. Dewey’s “theory of experience” asserts that “amid all uncertainties there is one permanent frame of reference: namely, the organic connection between education and personal experience” (Dewey, 1938, p. 25). Dewey goes on to clarify that for an experience to have genuine
educational value it must adhere to two principles—continuity and interaction. Continuity refers to the experiential continuum in which humans are sensitive to experiences and their behavior is affected by their experiences (Dewey, 1938). Thus experiences and the educative process “can be identified with growth….not only physically but intellectually and morally” (Dewey, 1938, p. 36). The principle of interaction “assigns equal rights to both factors in experience—objective and internal conditions” (Dewey, 1938, p. 42) and notes that past experiences interact with the present situation, creating experience. According to Dewey (1938):

the two principles of continuity and interaction are not separate from each other. They intercept and unite…. Different situations succeed one another. But because of the principle of continuity something is carried over from the earlier to the later ones. As an individual passes from one situation to another, his world, his environment, expands or contracts….What he has learned in the way of knowledge and skill in one situation becomes an instrument of understanding and dealing effectively with the situations, which follow. The process goes on as long as life and learning continue. (p. 44)

Dewey helped to shape the philosophical tradition of the pragmatists in regards to education.

Pragmatic philosophy seeks to empower students through personal experience by encouraging students to reflect upon their experiences, evaluate their experiences, and ultimately seek solutions through problem-solving skills and the application of the knowledge they received in the classroom (Stanford University, 2008). “For Dewey each individual was an organism situated in a biological and social environment in which problems were constantly emerging, forcing the individual to reflect and act, and learn” (Stanford University, 2008). The application of this philosophy in this curriculum would be to incorporate opportunities of personal experience.
Though Dewey stresses the importance of personal experience, he also believed that educational institutions (and educators) have a moral responsibility to promote social order and progress in the communities in which they serve.

The moral responsibility of the school, and of those who conduct it, is to society. The school is fundamentally an institution erected by society to do a certain specific work—to exercise a certain specific function in maintaining the life and advancing the welfare of society. (Dewey, 1909, p. 246)

Dewey contended that education served a broader social purpose and “is the fundamental method of social progress and reform” (Dewey, 1897, p 234). The work and spirit of Dewey inspired a modern day emerging trend in education—service learning.

Deemed a union between service and learning, service learning offers educators a way in which to “encourage students to connect theory and practice” (Endres & Gould, 2009, p. 421). “Service learning commonly involves two concepts that distinguish it from student volunteering or community service: 1) students engage in active reflection on their community experience, and 2) community learning is linked to academic learning” (Kendall, 1999 p. 191; Olney & Grande as cited in Kendall, 1999, p. 191). Students are also encouraged to critically reflect on what they have learned by examining their experiences and discussing it with others (Souza, 1999, p. 87). Therefore service learning is more than simply serving or volunteering; true service learning fosters an environment in which students can learn through practical application of theory and reflection of their work (Endres & Gould, 2009, p. 421).

Service learning also “offers a way to bridge the divide between the community and the university” (Endres & Gould, 2009, p. 421). Dewey (1909) contends that schools, and the administrators and teachers who conduct education, have a moral responsibility to society. “The
school is fundamentally an institution erected by society to do certain specific work,—to exercise a certain specific function in maintaining the life and advancing the welfare of society” (1909, p. 246). The integration of service learning and higher education demonstrates the importance of civic engagement and volunteerism in the students’ community, encouraging students (as well as those in the community they work with and serve) the opportunity to learn from one another (Endres & Gould, 2009, p. 421).

Incorporating service learning into intercultural communication education may be a courageous step for some communication instructors as it requires instructors to relinquish some control of the students’ learning environment, as well as “reconceptualize their current teaching methodologies and use nontraditional teaching methods” (Stacey & Foreman, 1999, p. 57). However, it empowers students to take an active role in the learning process and explore what they have learned in the classroom, in a way that simple reading comprehension cannot. Educator, Parker Palmer (1990) addresses the potential fear of relinquishing some control in the classroom,

> good teaching requires courage—the courage to expose one’s ignorance as well as insight, to invite contradiction as well as consent, to yield some control in order to empower the group, to evoke other people’s lives as well as reveal one’s own. (p. 16)

Relinquishing some control in the classroom by incorporating service learning as an instructional tool has obvious rewards for intercultural communication educators. First, it allows students to connect theory to practice. Second, it empowers students to take an active role in the learning process and continued growth in knowledge. Third, students gain firsthand experience on which to build awareness and share a framework of reference, and fourth, it encourages service and volunteerism in their communities.
Research Objectives

Experiential learning has served as an effective educational strategy for intercultural communication since the birth of the discipline. In the beginning, the examination of personal intercultural communication encounters and experiences offered insight as well as a basic framework from which to build effective intercultural communication competencies. While the discipline has grown and new intercultural communication theories have emerged, the importance of experiential learning should not be negated. This project expands the experiential learning model to include meaningful service to the community in the form of the addition of a service learning component to an intercultural communication course curriculum. “Service learning is designed to help students learn course content by engaging in practice while also demonstrating the importance of community or civic engagements, and encouraging students and community members to learn from one another (Endres & Gould, 2009, p. 421). Like the Foreign Institute trainees who were at the forefront of the discipline, intercultural communication education students who act in service to their communities will be empowered to not only build intercultural competencies, but a better world overall.

The discipline of communication is about the business of improving communication praxis at the individual and community levels. It is a study of how and why we argue and reflect as we do in the construction of social reality….By linking individual learning and public service, by offering the opportunity to put principles into practice and glean principles from practice, service learning is a perfect pedagogical partner to the study of communication praxis. (Applegate & Morreale, 1999, p. XI, XII). Therefore, service learning offers an optimal learning opportunity for the intercultural communication scholar. Regardless of considerable research interest in the area of service
learning, there remains a need to examine service learning in the intercultural communication educational setting and the resulting challenges and rewards. The aforementioned educational philosophies and service learning strategy will be used to frame the development of the intercultural communication curriculum which would support such an endeavor.
CHAPTER 3: SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

While the United States Congress recognized an emergent need to bring heightened attention to enhanced cultural awareness in the mid-1940s, innovative technologies and increased global trade of the 21st Century have amplified the need for skillful, persuasive, and effective intercultural communicators. The worldwide trends listed in Chapter 1 lend support to the argument that intercultural communication education is critical for modern-day scholars. The primary objective of this project is to incorporate a service-learning project within an intercultural communication course curriculum, offering scholars the opportunity to bridge the divide between communication theory and practice through personal experience and service to the communities in which they live.

*The Scope of the Study*

The project is divided into five chapters. In Chapter 1, current trends, including globalization, were listed, establishing why it is important for scholars to expand their studies to include intercultural communication.

In Chapter 2, the history and development of intercultural communication as a discipline was investigated. Numerous books, journal articles and media resources, from multiple scholarly disciplines, were reviewed, studied, and analyzed. A strong link between experiential learning and the development of the discipline and study intercultural communication emerged.

Chapter 3 will define the scope, limitations, methodology or this project, and the philosophical and theoretical basis used to frame the project.

The curriculum is introduced and presented in Chapter 4 in the form of a curriculum guide. The guide outlines and defines the goals and objectives of each unit of study, as well as a clear guiding philosophy of the course. The curriculum guide is divided into two sections: 1)
theoretical guidance for the educator and 2) application and assignment models designed for student interaction. The theoretical guidance portion of each unit includes:

1) Unit goals and objectives;
2) Instructional resources (resources, reading assignments, visual aids, etc.);
3) Basic framework of instruction (class preparation guide, activities, strategies); and
4) Assessment suggestions to aid in measuring achievement of unit goals and objectives.

The application and assignment models designed for student interaction include:

1) A sample lesson plan for each unit;
2) Discussion outlines and dialogue suggestions;
3) Classroom activities; and
4) Sample assessments.

The curriculum guide serves as a planning tool for intercultural communication educators and seeks to aid them in the preparation and implementation of an undergraduate course in intercultural communication. The curriculum guide, developed for a twelve-week semester, is divided into three sequential instructional units.

Chapter 5 identifies limitations and benefits of the project, summarizes the project, and offers recommendations for further study and exploration.

Limitations of the Study

The intercultural communication course is designed in such a way as to encourage critical thinking through the implementation of a highly experiential and reflective service learning component. It is developed for the undergraduate student of a university or community college,
therefore study is directed with the following limitations in mind: 1) designed as a one-semester course (12 week session); and 2) introductory content of intercultural communication theory.

**Methodology of the Study**

This project seeks to enhance the study of intercultural communication through the expansion of the experiential learning model to include a service learning component. The aim of the project is to collect, explore, and evaluate: 1) established service learning components of undergraduate communication curricula; and 2) best practices of service learning in the undergraduate communication classroom. The methodology utilized in the development of the resulting curriculum builds upon the application of the aforementioned service learning components and best practices in the intercultural communication classroom.

In order to collect established service learning components of undergraduate communication curricula, a survey and request for curricula samples was distributed via the National Communication Association’s *Communication Research and Theory Network* listserv (www.natcom.org/CRTNET). The communication listserv was selected for surveying because it provided access to approximately 7,265 subscribers, including communication education professionals from numerous colleges and universities. The survey included the following questions:

1. Are you (or is your department) offering a lower-division communication course that includes a service learning component?

2. If such a course were currently being offered, would you please send me a copy of the course curricula and any related materials that may be available?

The survey method provided a relatively small selection of curricula and was on a strictly voluntary basis. The author encouraged participation in the survey and promoted honest
feedback by designing the survey in a way that protected the confidentiality of the participants. In order to ensure confidentiality of the curricula provided by the survey, all collected curricula was assigned a code upon receipt and any information that could link the survey to a particular survey participant or educational institution was removed.

Additionally journal articles and books that focus on best practices and service learning from all disciplines were examined in order to glean skills and strategies that will enhance the study of intercultural communication.
CHAPTER 4: THE PROJECT

Introduction

In the advent of the study of intercultural communication Hall used the examination of personal experiences (both his as well as his students) as an educational strategy because he lacked educational materials. However, Hall also recognized the value of intercultural encounters and “the organic connection between education and personal experience” (Dewey, 1938, p. 25). A half a century later—despite the birth of the discipline of intercultural communication, the development of multiple intercultural communication theories, and the collective knowledge of countless communication scholars—little can compare to the wisdom gained with practical application of communication theory. Guided by the recognition of this intrinsic value of practical application, Dewey’s “theory of experience,” and pragmatism, the intercultural communication curriculum designed and developed for this project weighs heavily on personal reflection of cultural awareness and identity development; and includes a service-learning component which offers students the opportunity to build upon intercultural communication concepts and theories through strategic intercultural encounters.

Project Description

Finding Unity and Community in Diversity serves as an introductory course of the field of intercultural communication. The course explores the union of culture, communication, context and power and the benefits and barriers therein. Emphasis is given on the analysis of intercultural communication concepts and theories; cultural awareness and the development of identity; and application of intercultural communication theory to everyday intercultural encounters through service learning. This course will address the following topics: culture, power, and communication; historical influences that affect intercultural communication; the relationship of
language (both verbal and nonverbal) and culture; popular culture; and the influences of privilege, gender, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic class on identity, intercultural encounters and the communication process.

*The Project*

The curriculum, entitled *Finding Unity and Community in Diversity*, can be found in the appendix and can be removed from this paper as a stand-alone curriculum guide.
CHAPTER 5: SUMMARIES AND CONCLUSIONS

This project has examined the historical context of intercultural communication and found a strong correlation between experiential learning and pragmatism in its study. From the advent of the discipline, scholars from multiple fields of study including (anthropologists, linguists, and communication) utilized experiential learning to further the exploration and theoretical development of intercultural communication concepts and practices. From the father of intercultural communication, Edward Hall, to modern day communication theorists, scholars have found great value in the “organic connection between education and personal experience” (Dewey, 1938, p. 25). Therefore the design, development, and incorporation of a service learning component to an intercultural communication curriculum are natural extensions of the study of intercultural communication for the undergraduate.

Limitations of the Project

Despite the natural extensions there were limitations to the project. According to Dewey, “there is more than a verbal tie between the words common, community, and communication. [People] live in a community in virtue of the things they have in common and communication is the way in which they come to possess things in common” (Dewey, 1974, p. 113). Dewey’s recognition presents the first limitation, the mere practice of communication aids in the development or fragmentation of community (Applegate, 1999, p. 13). The service learning component may be to idealistic for the study of intercultural communication. The service learning component intentionally requires students to step out of their cultural comfort zone and into contact with a more culturally diverse set of individuals. Educators, as well as students, must be conscientious of the sensitive nature of the concepts and practices they are studying—particularly when they are approaching or collecting oral histories from interviewees. In a model
setting, the student would be offered the opportunity to apply the human element to communication theory and hone intercultural communication competencies and critical listening skills. The interviewee would feel that their personal experiences were valued and be offered the opportunity to contribute the experiences to collective knowledge and study of the discipline, as well as build a sense of community through the increase in awareness of cultural diversity.

However, without establishing an element of trust in the process of collecting the oral history, students may encounter the perils of intercultural communication and risk offending the interviewee thus fragmenting the sense of community as opposed to building it.

The second limitation of the project is the scope of the project. While numerous books, journal articles, media resources and a request for curricula samples was distributed via the National Communication Association’s Communication Research and Theory Network listserv (7,000+ subscribers), only a few intercultural communication course syllabi with service learning components were found and no full intercultural course curriculum were found. The expanded review of communication course syllabi and curricula with service learning components proved more fruitful. Upon review of the syllabi, they revealed that many communication educators have found many different ways in which to successfully connect communication theory and practice including: students volunteering at homeless shelters or food pantries; teaching new immigrants language skills; designing media campaigns for non-profits; and having students write scripts and present skits to build awareness of campus crimes. Though diverse, the sample of course curricula and syllabi with service learning components was limited.

Further Study Recommendations

After exploring the history of intercultural communication, this project focused on the benefits of service learning in the study of the discipline and the value of increased intercultural
competencies, as a way in which students can unite people, build upon the collective knowledge of multiple cultures, and ultimately create a better world for all. There is “a special reflexive relationship between the study of communication as a means for constructing social reality and service learning as a pedagogy designed to enhance social life and communities” (Applegate, 1999, p. 13). Communication educators at the 2000 Hope College National Communication Association Faculty Development conference also recognized this relationship and the importance of connecting communication competencies with social responsibility. They established and recommended a core goal for curricular development that includes this connection. “An undergraduate degree in communication should educate individuals to be capable of assessing situations and crafting appropriate communicative responses to interact effectively with diverse others and to participate as socially responsible members of their increasingly mediated and complex communities” (Rosenthal, 2002, p. 22). Service learning opportunities not only allow students a way in which to connect and build upon what they have learned in the classroom through practical application, it also allows students to learn about issues that affect their community and “moves students to consider others and their needs as part of their education” (Soukup, 1999, p. 22). Further study and exploration of experiential education methodologies and ways in which service learning opportunities could be integrated into communication curricula would benefit communication scholars and educators.

This project also established significant benefits of incorporating service learning into communication curricula for educational institutions, educators, and students, particularly in the study of intercultural communication. Service learning opportunities are as broad and vast as the needs of the communities that surround higher institutions of learning. While a diverse array of opportunities may be available, they must include one crucial element—the ability to align the
service learning component to the overall course theme. Study of the incorporation of a service learning component to curricula found that this alignment is one of the greatest challenges facing communication educators. Sharing strategies for integrating service learning in the curriculum; evaluating course outcomes and assessments of impact; and ways in which partnerships with community members/organizations were approached, developed and nourished would also be beneficial for communication educators and warrants further study and exploration.

**Conclusion**

With the advent of the 21st Century, a new global community has emerged due to new communication technologies, increased travel and trade, and mass media. It is a community filled with cultural diversity, both globally and domestically. The new global community introduces new challenges. As people cross geographical borders, either physically or through the assistance of technology, many find that cultural barriers may remain. These cultural barriers can lead to increased miscommunication, frustration, and potential conflict. Universities have recognized the importance of effective intercultural communication as a way in which they can build global citizens and position students in an advantageous position of being able to effectively communicate with diverse cultures. The study of intercultural communication allows students to explore their identity development, expand their cultural awareness, and build intercultural competencies.

This project explored the history of intercultural communication. Birthed from the knowledge and personal experiences of scholars (anthropologists, linguists, psychologists) from multiple disciplines, intercultural communication is a unique field of study that initially addressed the need for effective diplomacy strategies for Foreign Service members. Hall and Trager, fortuitous founders of the discipline, identified a critical connection between
communication and culture. Guided by the anthropological model of recognizing cultural
diversity and developing cultural awareness, Hall’s trainings were rooted in what would evolve
as a core concept of intercultural communication—the ability to “make sense of each other”
(Appiah, 2007, p. 99) despite cultural diversity. Hall (1959) contended, “culture is
communication, communication is culture” (p. 186) and with the help of Trager, developed the
first intercultural communication training, which was “highly participatory and experiential”
(Rogers, et al., 2002, p. 10). Hall found immense value in the personal experiences of himself
and his trainees and used them as resources to heighten cultural awareness and build intercultural
competencies.

A half a century later, intercultural communication theorists offer multiple lenses through
which to build greater understanding of intercultural communication encounters, both
domestically and globally, as well as skills and strategies to help bridge cultural divides. Yet, it is
the application of the theory that allows students to gain full comprehension and to develop
intercultural communication competencies. The study of intercultural education presents unique
challenges including the complexity, rich diversity (domestically and globally), and sensitive and
personal nature of culture. Experiential education is an ideal teaching methodology which
addresses the aforementioned challenges through strategic intercultural encounters, allowing
students to connect intercultural communication concepts, practices, and theory to personal
experiences and practice.

Inspired by the work of renowned educational philosopher, John Dewey, and the “theory
of experience,” this project revealed a need to examine ways in which experiential education and
pragmatism could be used to enhance the study of intercultural communication and found a
modern day trend in education—service learning. Service learning, a form of experiential
education, is an ideal strategy through which students can not only connect theory to practice, but can participate in community service and civic engagement. It offers many benefits for both students and educators including the empowerment of students to take an active role in the learning process and multiple frames of reference for educators to teach and expound upon intercultural communication concepts.

Recognizing the inherent benefits of service learning, an intercultural communication curriculum, Finding Unity and Community in Diversity, was designed and developed with the incorporation of this form of experiential education. Connecting a service learning component to newly introduced intercultural communication concepts, theories and practices proved challenging. To address this challenge a highly versatile service learning component, which included the collection of oral histories, was designed. The collection of oral histories—each assignment with strategically defined intercultural encounters—offers multiple opportunities for students to interact with a demographically and culturally diverse set of individuals and allows educators the ability and versatility to shape or introduce new encounters to match classroom study.

The curriculum was also influenced by pragmatic philosophy, thus encouraging students to reflect and evaluate their experiences through critical classroom discussions, reflective essay assignments, weekly reflective journal entries, and a final project that requires students to heighten cultural awareness in their community. The assignments allow students to think critically of their experiences and motivate students to seek solutions to intercultural communication barriers by combining what they have learned in the classroom with their personal experiences. Classroom discussions offer students the opportunity to learn from one another.
Finding Unity and Community in Diversity is an intercultural communication curriculum designed to aid students in effective communication with a wide variety of cultures they may encounter when interacting with their global neighbors as well as their neighbors next door. By engaging students in meaningful service to their communities and heightening their awareness of the rich and vast diversity of cultures, the curriculum will build intercultural communication competencies and skill sets that will enhance their intercultural experiences. Students will learn how to effectively communicate with diverse cultures and navigate cultural codes and cues that exist beyond the simple translation of language. Like the Foreign Service Institute trainees that studied under Hall, the students will become diplomats able to use their enhanced intercultural competencies to unite people and to build upon the collective knowledge of multiple cultures—leading the way to a global community that values diversity and is as appreciative of its differences as it is of its similarities.
REFERENCES


