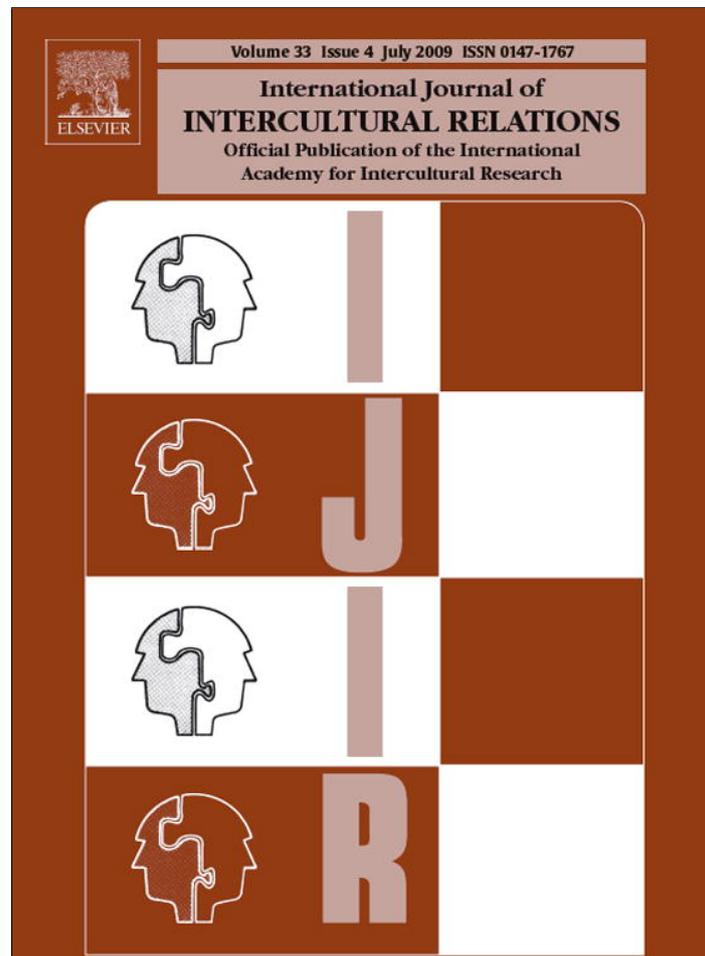


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## Intercultural competence through cultural self-study: A strategy for adult learners

Robert C. Weigl \*

Semester at Sea, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA, USA

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## ABSTRACT

The author presents a strategy for increasing adult intercultural sensitivity and effectiveness that has emerged from cumulative lessons of twelve years teaching cross-cultural psychology to undergraduates. Following a tightly structured protocol, learners complete a rigorous process of utilizing concepts of culture in a self-study exercise. Subsequently they are vastly more fluent in applying these concepts in research and in intercultural situations. Students internalize concepts of culture in a way that they comprehend the power of culture, through recognition, both cognitively and emotionally, of how they are the vehicles for the expression of culture. The author presents an explanation of processes that mediate this learning, and a set of five propositions for further exploring the connection between cultural self-study and intercultural competence. Offered are a detailed example of a self-study protocol and practical advice about pedagogical factors that can facilitate or restrain reflexive cultural learning. Throughout, students' writings are used to illustrate the feasibility and emotional power of the self-study process. This report is presented in the hope of stimulating exchange among teachers and trainers using cultural self-study with various populations, in different settings, for multiple purposes. Future studies of outcome, in terms of both knowledge and intercultural skill, are needed to advance development of the method.

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### 1. Introduction: cultural self-knowledge as foundational for knowledge of culture

I can turn an “ethnic Sonia” off or on. I can put on khakis with a polo shirt and sweater and have an intellectual conversation about the current state of the health care system, but I am multifaceted. I can just as easily get irked enough to start waving my hand in someone's face as my own head does an intricate swaying dance. Whether or not that is simply the Jersey girl culture seeping through or the Portuguese passion escaping, I have yet to tell. (From a 20-year-old college Junior, Immigrant from Portugal)

The above statement appears in the carefully crafted narrative of an undergraduate who is stretching herself, emotionally and cognitively, to describe her own cultural practices and identity. This self-study process culminates in a 2500 word report written following a detailed, eight step protocol. I have now read 376 of these cultural self-studies during twelve years of teaching cross-cultural psychology. Cultural self-study occasions remarkable personal awakening and growth in most students. Cultural concepts become intensely alive for adults when they are assisted in having an immediate experience of how they themselves function as the *vehicles* through which culture is expressed. The process promotes cognitive

\* Correspondence address: The Franklin Center, 801 Franklin Street, Alexandria, VA 22314, USA.  
E-mail address: [weiglrg@aol.com](mailto:weiglrg@aol.com).

complexity in the formation of cultural identity. More important perhaps, self-study promotes learning not only about self but also others, increasing intercultural literacy, curiosity, and skill.

After self-study, isolated Americans—and usually those of other nationalities too—are no longer able to dismiss the centrality of culture in their lives, and thereafter in the lives of others either. Minority students, such as Sonia above, bring a new clarity of vision to the interpretation of multifaceted intercultural lives. Cultural self-study at first may be a shock for isolated majority group members taught to prize a sense of personal autonomy, agency and uniqueness; focus on a culture programming shared with others is an odd reversal of experiential figure and ground, placing at the center of attention collective and categorical features of their lives. Initially struggling with the assignment, a young woman, in a drawl immediately identifying her origins, complained, “Why Dr. Weigl, I don’t have any culture; I’m from Texas.” After personal assistance and study, she later wrote a self-study delineating how she embodied critical features of the privileged, white, Protestant society in which she had grown up in Dallas. Minority, foreign, and bicultural students, in contrast, finally put to well felt words realities about themselves only vaguely known before. Bi-cultural persons like Sonia more fully describe contrasting cultures they embody and enact, comprising facets they may try to integrate into a composite identity. Realizing growth in identity formation, a young African American man for the first time came to recognize the functional value of being able to act both Black and White, this representing an accomplishment rather than evidence of his degraded status as an “oreo.”

### 1.1. *Origins and possible future of a cultural self-study method*

The self-study process was first developed for use by the Institute for Shipboard Education’s Semester at Sea program currently sponsored by University of Virginia, previously by the University of Pittsburgh. Using a converted ocean liner as a floating campus, Semester at Sea searches for ways to help young adults maximize their learning during visits overseas. In two successive experiences of taking groups of American undergraduates from many universities on globe circling voyages, I was startled to find that those who completed self-study were subsequently more sophisticated, sensitive, and motivated in conducting various forms of fieldwork ashore. In many subsequent land based semesters, I have found that the narrative self-study method introduced in this report inspires students in the design of cross-cultural research and intercultural interventions. After self-study students often show a sudden increase in their investment in these types of efforts. There is a transfer of learning from self to others. I frame below a set of hypotheses about why self-study promotes intercultural curiosity and competence; these hypotheses should be explored, challenged, and refined.

In this document I share a concise overview of a cultural self-study method, presented in many other forums (Weigl, 1997, 2000, 2002a, 2002b, 2007) in the hope of stimulating its use by intercultural trainers and by college teachers of cross-cultural psychology and intercultural communication. Through fostering dialog among multiple users in multiple settings, we will refine the method and show how to modify it for different audiences and different purposes. It is critical to establish a community of users to insure that the method receives critical evaluation during its development and to provide a constituency to advocate for a style of intercultural education diverging from current academic practice, pulling scholars away from primary commitment to a model of science which insists on the anonymity of the investigator and separation of the knower and the known. Self-study increases the student’s awareness of the role of her own culture in shaping discoveries.

Self-study is an optimal educational strategy for members of a group that may study, train, or work together over a period of at least a few months. The inclination to care about the assignment may arise more intrinsically for younger adults, as it constitutes a welcome addition to an ongoing search for self. With older, career oriented learners, it is wise to present the method as a prelude to a variety of payoffs: being more effective on jobs, managing people better, acquiring skills linked to promotions and career advancement. For all learners the process may evoke an eagerness to recover history lost during the immigration and resettlement of previous generations; this hunger has found expression in popular interest in genealogical research. Across all groups, cultural self-study also benefits from a widely shared healthy narcissism—that love for and interest in self that prompts activities like reading horoscopes and filling out personal questionnaires in popular magazines.

### 1.2. *Bi-directionality and empathy in intercultural learning*

Though in presenting a protocol for cultural self-study below I will introduce my own ethological and field oriented curricular foci, it is my belief that the effectiveness of cultural self-study does not rest on what particular themes or theory are taught, nor on whether we focus primarily on the “insides or outsides” of people, but on applying *all* learning to both oneself and cultural others. This *bi-directional application of ideas is at the heart of the process*. I insist that students first apply to themselves all ideas they will later use to take the measure of others. My emphasis on bi-directionality in learning has grown in transferring a piece of wisdom from clinical psychology into the intercultural arena. It is evident in the training of clinicians that those theories, regardless of specific content, used for helping a future therapist in his own therapy later he will use with the greatest understanding and subtlety in work with clients. This is a widely observed and developed, but surprisingly little discussed human dynamic. I have seen it constantly in the training of psychotherapists. Those concepts that are carefully parsed, differentiated, and applied in a process of self-construction and self-help later are most likely to be thoughtfully and reliably applied in a clinical situation.

I witness this same bi-directional learning now in a different context, the development of young interculturalists. Cross-culturalists and interculturalists alike will benefit enormously from knowing themselves before undertaking a range of

research and service ventures focused on others. Bond (1997) made a preliminary effort to understand this, but he is among the very few, and his collected reflections of eighteen cross-cultural scholars sadly reveal that most do not do engage in reflexive cultural study with any rigor or confidence. Our academic traditions encourage us to mask, not reveal ourselves, especially in finished products such as books and articles. A significant advantage with cultural as opposed to clinical self-learning is that, with the former, there is little need for protection of privacy. The cultural self-learning enterprise can be shared in a group of fellow learners. The learning can occur in a group as well as from solitary effort. Cultural self-study can be synergistic and public, bound by neither academic nor clinical rules of silence.

Having internalized a web of ideas of culture as part of self-construction, the self-studier in turn applies them more sensitively and carefully to understanding others. This “taking the measure” of self and other in the same terms stimulates the development of empathy in intercultural situations. Others such as Bennett (1993) and Bennett & Castiglioni (2004) have noted the central role of empathy in the development of intercultural sensitivity, particularly in crossing that “paradigmatic divide” between ethnocentric and ethnorelative world-views. I also recall the comment of former U.S. Peace Corps leader and current program head at the U.S. State Department’s Foreign Service Institute, Ray Leki, that empathic capacity is *the best* predictor of successful intercultural collaboration of U.S. personnel serving overseas. Those who feel culture operating in themselves are more likely to feel how cultural operates powerfully in others. Feeling the force with which culture impacts our lives, we can no longer dismiss it as an “unfortunate but reversible accident” (Kohut & Stokes, 2006) or merely decorative details imposed on a universal humanity. We have a strategy for reversing an American inclination to ignore culture, a foundation for success with immigration at home at the cost of not understanding other peoples abroad.

### 1.3. *The need to maintain an experiential perspective*

Some would deem it best to provide only a summary of technical procedures and formal content of self-study in a document such as this. I emphasize instead a certain qualitative perspective and particularly the need to allow students to give voice to their own discoveries about their cultural make-up. I believe this is essential to convey something of the depth of insight and momentousness of experience that emerges as someone carefully assesses her own culture. In the emerging process of legitimizing cultural studies in social sciences, there has been an emphasis on abstract theory and discourse without necessarily conveying the sense of how people live their culture (Weigl, 2002a, 2002b). It is my proposition here that this experiential wisdom, nurtured through self-study, will help generate theory more effectively connected what actually is being represented. There is room here for all, both teachers and students, to benefit from a naturalistic and experiential perspective.

## 2. “Active ingredients” in self-study

### *Two student comments about self-study:*

I believe this is a priceless exercise. Beyond understanding my own attributes, it prompts me to ask where these have come from and how I am changing over time. The questions asked are important, but I could only briefly touch upon them in this study. I have found it extremely difficult to do this cultural self-study justice in this amount of space under the pressure of time. Yet, because of its value, I plan to monitor, and revise this “paper” for the rest of this voyage and the rest of my life. Thank you.

It was not until this assignment, a Cultural Self-study, that I began to understand I was more than a check in a box (to indicate ethnicity on a college application). My life, who I am, what I do, and why I do it cannot be understood without first recognizing where I come from. Sometimes looking into a mirror more than yourself is reflected. Although my pale skin, blonde hair, blue eyes, and rounded features may beg to differ, I have an intimate and rooted heritage in Native American culture. On both my mother’s and father’s sides of the family there is a connection with Native American roots as close as my great-grandfather and great-grandmother. Also traceable on both sides of my family is Scots-Irish ancestry. The only other significant backdrop would be German, and it is the combination of all three that shape a great deal of who I am today.

These comments from a 20-year-old, blond, athletic euro-American man and an equally Nordic looking, but partly Native American 20-year old young woman from the Tennessee countryside reflect the importance and novelty of a cultural self-study experience. It is arresting and transformational. A large number of processes—or “active ingredients”—come into play in generating impact. At this point, five have emerged as particularly potent; learning disciplined subjectivity, making cultural concepts central in self-construction, making the categorical deeply personal, exploring culture in terms different from those through which it was acquired, and re-historicizing the self.

### 2.1. *Learning disciplined subjectivity*

The “dreaded armchair” of theoretical speculation and introspection was abandoned as positivism advanced as the paradigm for social sciences (Danziger, 1990). Thus officially rejected as a legitimate band for learning, a scholar’s subjectivity sometimes operates sloppily and in secret, driven underground where we will not learn how it inspired and shaped what we are told. Many students are socialized in this narrow empiricism and academic self-disguise. An alternative

is training adults to become disciplined, rigorous, operational students of their own living. This includes the demanding exercise of focusing on previously evanescent, preconscious, background, partly non-verbal aspects of life and carefully setting them to words. We evoke and strengthen capacities for self-observation. With the help of others, and practices like journaling and video, we can become the objects of our own cultural field study. Certainly perfection is elusive here, some error inevitable, and we may not “get it right” the first time, but this new area for discipline is an alternative to neglecting study of the subjective altogether. An emphasis on shared, explicit methodology, as provided here in a tight protocol for self-study, expands scientific rigor into an area—subjectivity—we have left, by default, free from our control or public scrutiny.

### 2.2. *Making cultural concepts central in self-construction*

As noted, those elements that can be embraced as “part of me” can be severely confined by self-stereotypes and communal models for self-construction (Chieu & Hong, 2006; Shweder & Bourne, 1984). Many white majority Americans with origins in northern Europe, like the girl from Texas, have no impetus to include elements of culture or ethnicity in their evolving self-definitions; in fact, many will insist they are not cultural at all. The self-study radically challenges these types of norms and instigates complex and sophisticated cultural self-labeling. Those students requiring some “jump starting” in this process, may find it in sections of McGoldrick, Giordano, and Garcia-Preto's *Ethnicity and Family Therapy*. (2005). Here one encounters separate chapters devoted to each of many national and or ethnic groups that migrated to North America. Though readers must be alert to dangers of over-generalization and simplification in these chapters, they provide startling flashes of self-recognition as learners read of particular originating cultures.

### 2.3. *Making the categorical deeply personal*

Particularly people from individualistic traditions and “the family model of independence,” (Kagitcibasi, 2005) incline toward self-description that emphasizes personal uniqueness, freedom to shape one's own destiny, and achievement through personal effort. In self-study, participants have a starkly contrasting experience, with a personal sense of authenticity emerging through identifying, then “owning” a geographical region, linguistic group, social class or sub-class, gene pool, ethnic group, religious faith, historical movement, age group, or gender. They are reminded of their membership in a group and thus of their *interconnectedness* with others. Certainly, these emphases in self-formation already are more salient among persons with collectivistic and out-group experiences, those exhibiting interdependent self-construal. For group oriented self-studiers, or the more startled from the ranks of the putatively unique, those descriptors referring to social categories emerge as suddenly stronger, as they move from the realm of background population factors into the foreground of personal self-description. As Kim (2008) has noted, so often the discovery of cultural identity is an “emotionally driven experience.” What may have been “arms length,” abstract categories used to denote and define others grow in emotional importance and meaning as they are used for self-discovery.

### 2.4. *Exploring culture in terms different from those through which it was acquired*

Looking at work such as that of Rogoff (2003) or Greenfield (1994, 1995, 1997), we are reminded that persons are enculturated through familial and communal processes in which self-awareness and self-direction play little or no role. Culture is acquired through mimicry, entrainment, language learning, vicarious conditioning, modeling, canalization, and practicing, more broadly described by Tomasello (1999) as the “yoking of the experience” of socialization agent and neophyte. The most sophisticated and conscious cognitive capacities have to be reserved for mastering the most challenging new practices and problems. In shaping socialization outcomes, muscle and implicit memory and an array of automaticities (Bargh, 2005, 2007; Bargh & Chartrand, 1999) are far more central than declarative and explicit memory. Self-study brings automatically acquired and maintained culture under the microscope of a range of sophisticated mental operations: hyper-focused inspection, alert proprioception, careful “thick” written description, searching analysis. For trainees/students this initially can feel forced, awkward, and intrusive. It is like explaining how you type with two fingers or why you cry in a movie; so many automatic and spontaneous processes ordinarily are wordless. Pleasures of self-discovery and mastery eventually over-ride discomforts. I am convinced that, for many, new self-monitoring and related emerging self-regulatory capacities help in suspending one's own culture to “try on” someone else's.

### 2.5. *Re-historicizing the self*

All scholars studying culture agree it is an historical product, the cumulative accomplishments and quirks that prior generations pass on through socialization to successors. I continually try to help students recognize that through their minds and bodies they are making present ways of life of many who came before them, whether they acknowledge this or not. Many contemporary persons, especially in the U.S., are non-traditional and ahistorical. Your average adult in the American Midwest named “Schmidt” or “Nelson” has no concept of himself as other than a mainstream American; countries of origin, migration histories, and related family sagas have slipped from collective memory. Recovering these can be a significant self-expansion, as selves made in the moment, emerging in the future now have a past too. Self-studiers often are excited to discover they are part of life narratives bigger than their own personal ones. Many, for instance, recover heroic, even mythic

histories of surviving oppression, adventuring beyond old homelands, exploring a frontier, succeeding against the odds, building an enterprise, fighting common enemies. History expands and enhances the self, enlarging its context in time and thereby increasing its complexity and coherence.

### 3. What of the cultural self-study—intercultural competence connection?

Mapping myself on cultural dimensions is incredibly difficult because I believe myself to be an eclectic mixture. I am a simple person, yet I do not fit neatly into one category or another, because every situation I encounter in my life calls for its own specific response. I have several different selves. I am not implying that I have a split personality. I merely am advocating that I am a highly adaptive individual and I am capable of a full spectrum of positions within these various cultural dimensions. In relation to individualistic and collectivistic cultures, I believe I lean more toward the collectivistic end; however, I would like to believe my true nature is more individualistic. I am a collectivist in that I have a tendency to be more affectionate; I have a tight extended family. I prefer to maintain harmony and cooperation among groups of individuals with whom I interact, and I feel an obligation to a group, more specifically, I feel an overwhelming obligation to my parents. In contrast to these traits, I am highly individualistic in that I move between several groups of friends; I am incredibly assertive. I require a great deal of personal space and in fact am annoyed by over-exposure to the same individuals. I am very outspoken about my personal rights and often agitated when someone attempts to invade what I believe to be my personal space. (From a 19-year-old woman of German-Irish background, from Minnesota)

It should not be a surprise that this young woman is becoming more careful in how she understands culture at play in others' lives too; she is disinclined as the result of her self-study to fall into mechanical attributions or the cavalier labeling of others. The second phase of her learning in the field showed significant empathy, evidenced in the sensitivity and complexity in perceiving and portraying others. As students interpret field notes, identify with someone targeted for discrimination, plan support for school teachers with culturally mixed classrooms, or design research to study the impact of social primes on minority student performance, they demonstrate that they have come to care about the people and issues involved. There is an enhanced capacity for inter-subjectivity in relation to cultural others. It is “feeling the form” of another culture described by [Bennett and Castiglioni \(2004\)](#). Self-studiers become warmer, more synchronous, and more attentive in intercultural situations. I have framed the following five propositions, which, in being challenged or supported, may shed light on how the increase of empathy emerges.

#### 3.1. Five propositions regarding the self-study and intercultural competence connection

**Proposition 1.** *Cultural self-studiers become more curious about other cultures.*

Culture emerges as among the most important of realities one scans for in entering social settings both at home and abroad. Concepts of culture assume a high salience and operate as a relatively complex web of ideas. Students become motivated, even excited about experiencing others' cultures. They have a heightened hunger for difference and are more likely to seek it out.

**Proposition 2.** *Concepts and categories used to describe oneself subsequently will be used more sensitively and accurately to describe others.*

Self-studiers have a more nuanced grasp of a set of key concepts. Like the young woman above, they have experienced the discomfort of being skewered on the point of someone else's theory, and thereafter are less likely to be casual in broadly characterizing others. They are alert to ways people vary individually or situationally, as they do themselves. The care they spontaneously show in culturally evaluating themselves later is likely to be extended to others.

**Proposition 3.** *Self-studiers are more likely to anticipate the pervasiveness and authority with which culture operates in others' lives.*

They have a sense that culture matters—really matters. The focus on categorical features of their own make-up has primed them to be alert to powerful collective and interdependent factors operative in other communities. They cannot see culture as superficial decorations of the universal. They know culture is an *essential* part of how they and others operate in their worlds.

**Proposition 4.** *Cultural self-awareness increases self-studiers' capacity to identify bias.*

Self-study heightens awareness of one's values and of the automatic way values infuse decisions and involvements in social settings. Though not sufficient in itself, reflexive study begins equipping us to identify how prejudices and values shape our pursuit of knowledge—through the questions we care to ask and methods we choose to get answers. We can learn to catch biases as they are elicited spontaneously, so that they are not the primary forces shaping our actual behavior in daily life or as students of social sciences.

**Proposition 5.** *Self-studiers discover an emerging capacity to arrest their automatic enactment of their culture in order to more accurately participate in the experiences of those from another culture.*

**Table 1**  
Factors restraining and facilitating the self-study process.

	Restraining	Facilitating
Student/trainee factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growing up in isolated majority group.</li> <li>• Denial or fear of cultural differences.</li> <li>• Extreme cultural hybridism.</li> <li>• Marked pain in examining cultural and social status.</li> <li>• Significant pathology in family of origin.</li> <li>• Trauma history—especially in refugees.</li> <li>• Myers-Briggs “S-Type”: Literal &amp; stimulus bound.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curiosity about own and others’ culture.</li> <li>• Beginnings of ethnorelativity.</li> <li>• International, especially living abroad, experience.</li> <li>• Minority group membership</li> <li>• Attendance at ethnically mixed schools.</li> <li>• Cultural knowledge related to achievement and career plans.</li> <li>• Myers-Briggs “N-type”: Intuitive and imaginative.</li> </ul>
Teacher/trainer factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exclusive commitment to quantitative methods.</li> <li>• Discomfort with subjectivity.</li> <li>• Belief that project is undoable or invades privacy.</li> <li>• Not covering essential concepts in class.</li> <li>• Disinclined toward cultural or other self-disclosure.</li> <li>• Defining culture exclusively as mind.</li> <li>• Does not support, coach, guide self-study process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Balanced mix of quantitative and qualitative perspectives.</li> <li>• Some background in field research.</li> <li>• Balanced focus on “objective” and “subjective” culture.</li> <li>• Models cultural self-disclosure.</li> <li>• Class coverage of all concepts for self-study.</li> <li>• Teaching journaling strategies to develop study content.</li> <li>• Anticipates student success in and enjoyment of the process.</li> </ul>

People in Alcoholics Anonymous say “you have to own something in order to dump it.” Perhaps a crude expression of complex reality, this simple aphorism captures an important message—awareness of ones own thoughts, behavior, and agency precedes controlling them or setting them aside. Regarding culture, this it is the same message Edward Hall (1976) left us. Those who know their own culture may have some capacity to reduce or regulate its influence. Within a state of rehearsed suspension, we increase our ability to take part as an appreciative beginner in a new culture. Without awareness, we are bound to endless, unnoticed repetition of our own cultural patterns.

Clearly, we must invest ourselves in testing these propositions. Where it might not be possible to observe, pre and post, in the field, we could develop survey instruments to check for attitudes and behavioral preferences related to each proposition and how they shift before and after self-study. We also can attempt content analysis of reflections on the self-study process provided by a cross-section of learners.

In presenting these propositions, I am not asserting that self-study is the only avenue toward intercultural empathy and competence. A few learners seem gifted, to have a knack or ear for other cultures. For most, many forms of training and life experience clearly are very important preparation for difference. I do want to emphasize the value of having self-study methodologies available, especially for those who have the most difficulty adapting to different cultural environs. The process seems particularly to speed the development of those who are culturally naïve, providing an early experiential foundation for ethnorelativity and behavioral flexibility.

**4. Training and pedagogy: restraining and facilitating factors**

Table 1 summarizes lessons derived from guiding undergraduates through the self-study process. Additional discoveries are needed with other groups and in other contexts for intercultural education. Focusing on the preferences, histories, and usual activities of teachers and learners should be useful in guiding self-study in settings within and outside universities. In many respects, this is a “methods” section, provided in the hope of encouraging others’ corrections and innovations.

*4.1. Student and trainee factors*

I find undergraduates *amazingly* open to the assessing themselves culturally; nonetheless, it is important to note student factors that might stand in the way of investment in the experience. Self-study is more difficult for those just emerging from isolated, homogenous communities. Some have grown up in situations where talk of differences made people uneasy, perhaps in ones where assertion of national citizenship is intended to foreclose consideration of cultural issues. Those young people who experience this avoidant mind frame as sanctuary will resist changing it.

On rare occasions I encounter a student who is so culturally hybridized it is difficult for him to discover distinct cultural origins. In general, I observe that those who find self-study quite manageable have experienced some cultural consistency in the first five to ten years of their lives and can describe culture(s) in a family of origin. Some people, however, have been subject to so many diverse models and influences, have traversed so many contrasting environments, that they have emerged as cultural “multi-morphs” whose adaptive style involves continually blending into new groups and navigating life with very few “hard programmed” operating instructions. I expect that those who exhibit extreme hybridization may be more common in the future, but they are a tiny minority of those I have taught and trained to date. We might expect that many of these hybridized people will display the type of intercultural personhood Kim (2001, 2008) describes.

There are also a few for whom painful emotions are evoked by cultural self-study. In a group of forty participants, I may encounter one who comes from such a pathologically disorganized family that awareness of this pathology trumps any emerging awareness of another “family culture.” The pathological family becomes socialization agent for its own problems, rather than faithfully transmitting the features of a larger community. Similarly, an occasional student who is a refugee—for instance one who had fled as a child with her family from the former communist Czechoslovakia—found that the assignment

pulled her into traumatic memories connected with multiple losses, violence, and wrenching transitions. One young Indian woman experienced the assignment as threatening because it led her back to what she believed were disgraced and stigmatized roots that previously had been kept secret. Adopted by a family of Brahmin caste, she had been taken from a community, two steps lower in the Indian social order, in which her biological parents had abandoned her as an infant. This woman in fact wrote a solid cultural self-assessment, but trainers may want to assign a more traditional alternative assignment for the occasional learner for whom self-study is troubling.

A least 80% of my students complete their assigned self-study protocol with success and enthusiasm. As the consequence of attending ethnically diverse schools—high schools particularly—some students have a facility for contact with other cultures and demonstrate an inchoate, emerging ethno-relativity. Their curiosity and sensitivity are readily mobilized and substantiated through self-study and a course in cross-cultural psychology. For a few, monoculturalism has become an insupportable confinement. Through the process of identifying the cultural features holding them “captive,” they are freer to adopt other perspectives and behaviors. Those who have protracted experiences of living abroad may already be “accidentally bicultural” (Bennett, 1993) and able to operationalize this hidden capacity. Overseas tourism alone seems not to be a potent facilitator of self-study, as too often it has included very little contact with local people. Even otherwise reluctant learners often are reachable when it becomes clear that good grades or career success hinge on expanding their cultural literacy.

Ethnic minority members, including foreign students, have a clear advantage in completing self-studies. They have lived crisscrossing cultural boundaries and may have confronted the denial or denigration of their differences. Forming some degree of reflexive, or owned culture, has been an essential, unavoidable part of their development, and hence, they have more to build on at the outset of their self-study. Group discussions about cultural self-understanding, ever so subtly, often reveal to White majority students that a familiar hierarchy of benefit or performance is being reversed. Nonetheless it is clear that high levels of difference within a group of learners facilitates cultural self-study in the entire group.

Successful self-study also may be impacted by certain personality and cognitive factors. Informally, I note that the best learners are those with more intuitive, poetic, and verbal capacity along with a tolerance for analyses not ultimately yielding tight categories or final answers. Clearly, the project places a premium on writing skills, though remarkable insights also come from those who do not write well. Those who need concrete, measurable results have a harder time with their assignment and like it less. In the table above I characterize these differences as representing the “intuiting” versus “sensing” polarities of one of the scales making up The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. The more concrete and quantitatively oriented learners, in the future, may benefit from the inclusion of questionnaires or personality inventories yielding numerical results. These could provide more concrete, specific anchors for narrative self-reports.

#### 4.2. *Teacher and trainer factors*

Teacher or trainer attitudes will have a huge impact on what students produce. My prediction is that those who are more exclusively identified with the “science” part of “social science” will be less comfortable with the process. Many texts and college teachers, from the very outset, guide students toward learning at a level that is very abstract and divorced from observable events. Some of my peers are not comfortable with dense subjectivity, no matter how disciplined. They may find it difficult to include a strong “feelings” or personal component in their classrooms and may mask this unease in stated worry about protecting student privacy. These teachers may insist—perhaps correctly—there is little connection between self-discovery and the learning they promote in class. Reluctant trainers or teachers, if proceeding with self-study, may communicate the message that the work is not doable or not very important. Most critically, perhaps, a teacher can undermine the process by not covering all of the material essential for participants to understand concepts they apply to themselves.

Teachers can use the self-study process with great benefit to enhance learning, motivation, personal growth, and early commitment to cross-cultural and intercultural work. Ideally these teachers see the need for an array of different research methods and understand the interplay between qualitative and quantitative approaches. Particularly, they recognize a vital role for field research skills, of which self-study represents one example, bridging culture theory and lived intercultural experience. A teacher or trainer who models self-disclosure about her own cultural make-up and encourages similar student self-expression does a huge amount toward making the process manageable for beginners. There is room here for humor and storytelling, as well technical communication. Some students will need coaching to complete their work, individually or in small group advisories. It is wise to provide basic instruction in journaling, using the rubrics of the self-study protocol for the topically organized, growing body of information and observations to support a written report. Overarching all of these particular details is a simple, expectable process-outcome relationship: when the teacher/trainer anticipates participant success and growth, often excellent work will follow.

Also noted in the table, in terms Triandis (1994) provides, a teacher needs to balance attention to “subjective” and “objective” culture. It may be easier for learners to begin with what they actually do, which, once discovered, provides an avenue to discover underlying cognitive processes. The outside leads to the inside domain of culture in the protocol in Appendix B. Some trainers and teachers may prefer to devise a protocol to reverse this direction, working from cognition to behavior.

### 5. The self-study protocol and its use by adult learners

Completing a self-study requires that learners follow detailed instructions for each of eight sub-areas of a protocol (Appendix B). The areas of study are listed in Table 2. Trainees are encouraged to construct their study either in the format of

Table 2

Eight categories for self-study.

1. Historical roots and longstanding memberships.
2. Beliefs, values, and worldviews.
3. Settings and scripts important in your socialization.
4. Group experiences.
5. Personal characteristics rewarded by your culture related to gender, age and social class.
6. The scripting of your personhood.
7. Cognitive style.
8. Overview of your cultural programming and identity.

a lab-like report, addressing each area of inquiry in series or, more creatively, to combine coverage of requirements in a more individualized, literary self-presentation. Instructions introduce the possibility of cultural hybridism and advise against simplistic self-stereotyping based on particular ancestries or the countries from which forbears have immigrated. As noted, the book *Ethnicity and Family Therapy* is recommended to those needing an outside aid to start the process.

There is no absolutely fixed menu of material that must be made part of self-studies. As noted, different teachers or trainers may have distinctive points of emphasis based on the history of their own study and intercultural experience. There may be different observed learner preferences: learners studying cultural issues for the first time might better retain particular concepts for self-study and fieldwork; some concepts may be favored due to the learning styles of different ethnic groups. The protocol and instructions here reflect my specific cross-cultural psychology curriculum and the contribution of large group of theorists, practitioners, and researchers<sup>1</sup> to whom I am indebted. I emphasize observable behavior and settings, as so often in taking Americans overseas I find they must depend on observable events for making inferences about people; too often they lack the foreign language skills to speak with anyone. We should hope that any protocol will be growing and changing based on lessons from previous self-studies and on the particular interests and needs of different groups of learners. At some point in the future, there may a few “standard protocols” which will promote comparisons of results from protocols with contrasting theoretical emphases. The logic underlying self-study hinges on promoting the *bi-directionality* of learning, so that, as stated previously, what is most critical is *not* specific content, but the application the same concepts or categories to oneself, and subsequently to people of other cultures.

More detailed discussion of self-study and illustration of learner response to the entire protocol is available in another document.<sup>2</sup> To provide impressions of how participants respond to the protocol, I touch briefly here on four of eight self-study categories: scripts and settings important in socialization, group experiences, the scripting of personhood, and overview of cultural programming and identity. What is important in the illustrative self-statements is not just what is said, but the depth of feeling and thought that has gone into their preparation.

### 5.1. Scripts and settings important in socialization

Though broad ecological considerations are important, as illustrated well in Berry's work (Berry, 2003; Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen, 2002), they emerge in personal experience at the more molecular level of behavior settings and the scripts, or, in Barker's (1968) terms, of “standing patterns of behavior” that are sustained in different settings. We become more alert to the power of settings and scripts through recognizing that they constitute the essential structure for delivering socialization lessons and these lessons becoming foundational for established social practices. Additionally, setting and script analysis leads to recognition of personal rootedness—in terms of aesthetic, identity, and epistemic needs or preferences—first in an intimate, and second in a larger ecology. Most of us have ties to particular physical terrain, or in some cases to more purely social terrain as defined by characteristic local players and their established interaction patterns. Whether physical, social, or both we are addressing the territories that constitute home and homelands in the lives of individuals and groups.

The work of three students illustrates setting and script analysis. In the first, a woman tells how her elementary school was founded on a profoundly rigid and hierarchical vision of a world order, and of her unhappy place in this order. Next, the reflections of a Korean woman bring us into an intimately experienced, alive, nearly anthropomorphized physical setting of childhood. In a third example, an Italian-American man talks of how family socialization regarding the use of public and private space transmits face maintenance strategies of a sub-culture very concerned with family honor.

<sup>1</sup> The eclectic group who have contributed to my efforts include Bargh (2005, 2007), Barker (1968), Bennett (1993), Bennett and Castiglioni (2004), Brewer (1996, 2007), Cole (1996), Cole, Yrjo, and Vasquez (1997), Greenfield (1994, 1995, 1997), Goffman (1959, 1971), Hastrup (1994, 1995), Hall (1959, 1976), Kim (2001, 2008), Moghaddam (1998), Shore (1996), Sullivan (1953), and the extensive intellectual contributions provided to cross-cultural psychology by John Berry, Harry Triandis, and Geerte Hofstede.

<sup>2</sup> AFS Intercultural Programs published the proceedings of a symposium convened by the author at the Academy of Intercultural Research 5th Biennial Conference, Groningen Holland, July 10, 2007. These proceedings include the paper Cultural Self-Study: a Strategy for Accelerating the Intercultural Growth of College Students presented by the author. This paper is available on line at [www.afs.org/downloads/files/IAIR\\_Symposium\\_VI\\_-\\_Internationalizing\\_Youth.pdf](http://www.afs.org/downloads/files/IAIR_Symposium_VI_-_Internationalizing_Youth.pdf).

### 5.1.1. *Memories of attending school in a small French town*

Seats had been assigned three months before at the beginning of the year. Helped by the recommendation from our past teachers, our new teacher is able to assign the top kids to the front rows and progressively assign kids all the way to the back row where only the mischievous and intellectually challenged sit. Two kids sit at a desk, only inches from two kids in front of them and those two on either side, in perfect rows from back to front, where the head of the class sits. In front of the huge chalk board and the world map is the largest, most intimidating oak desk for the teacher . . . In the classroom we learn French history, Math and Science. We also learn the hierarchy of life. We come to understand that assigned place in class parallels the assigned place we will take later in life. The front row will be the lawyers and the doctors, the middle rows will be business people, and the back rows will be the tradesmen ... all of which we are told are respectable. I see traits of the French School in myself still. I shy away from class questions or standing out. I still struggle with social ranking—in so many different contexts—because I was one of the children in the back. (From a 24-year-old French-American Woman)

### 5.1.2. *Remembering the walk to school in a Korean village*

I also realized that my physical surroundings were marked by a particularity of things—another feature of ecological context. No gate or shop or wall or house that I passed by on the road looked identical to each other. Each had its own distinctive qualities, eccentric quirks that made it unique. This seemed to infuse physical things with a kind of presence, a personality, which were, to my young mind, amusing, and in an odd way, comforting, for, in noticing these particularities you came to “know” the thing, and it became possible to have a relationship with it. My fierce belief in individualism, for example, finds its emotional core in my love of the particular, the personal rather than in an abstract notion of “rights.” (From a 38-year-old Korean immigrant woman living in Virginia)

### 5.1.3. *Public and private space as taught by an Italian mother*

My mom has a specific view of how our family should act in private and in public. Like I stated already, it is very much an Italian concept of not bringing shame to the family name. In public we are expected to act obediently and respectfully. Nothing less than that is socially accepted in our culture. My mom even corrected my dad for certain mannerisms he acts out in public. My family has this term we call “Mom’s fake face.” No matter how angry or upset she is, if thrown into a social setting, no one would ever know. She is always smiling and always cheerful. If she were having a bad day, she would never take it out on other people. I find myself following this exact public habit ... I will get out of my car pissed, but as soon as I’m in the public’s eye, I’m smiling and saying hello to people as if nothing is wrong. At home in the private setting we’re different. We just can let our small publicly unacceptable gestures be shown like belching, acting crazy and loud or even being mean to each other. (From a 19-year-old Italian-American man from Pittsburgh)

## 5.2. *Group experiences*

Following the protocol, students are urged to think of continuities between family life and life in other small groups, the former providing much of the socialization for operating in the latter. The family is where most persons form expectations about gender roles, the uses of authority, appropriate levels of dependence on others, obligations to others group members, appropriate divisions of labor, and many other interpersonal norms and scripts. Attitudes toward autonomy and interdependence prevailing in a family will color the favorableness of perceptions of extra-familial groups. [Moghaddam \(1998\)](#) has noted the strong American suspicion of groups, stemming from fear of how groups may compromise the integrity and authority of the individual. Below, a young woman meditates on residual needs and worries left behind after stern independency training at home. A young Jewish-American man recalls the collective warmth and distinctive style of his extended family, which prepared him for both intellectual competition and warm group memberships in the larger world.

### 5.2.1. *On tensions for an Anglo individualist when entering groups*

With such (severe) training in individualism, my family prepared me for operating in groups as a free-thinker and non-conformist, maybe even a bit of a rebel where unjust authority was concerned. However, more subtly, by failing to provide a closely knit group experience, they may have left me more vulnerable to social practices designed to promote group cohesion. Since I was deprived of a stable-feeling, secure, emotionally supportive group experience to begin with, I now feel more drawn to groups that offer this type of bonding. Unfortunately, I would also not be as effective or fit in as well as a group member, since my original family training didn’t prepare me for this type of interaction. Because of my individualist upbringing, I had to somehow resolve my wanting a sense of belonging with

also wanting a sense of autonomy. (From a 20-year-old woman of “Anglo and Quaker” background, living in Wisconsin)

### 5.2.2. *On assembling a big Jewish family*

There's an old adage that says if you have twenty Jews in one room, then you will have twenty different opinions. I would say this describes my family well. Mealtime at my family gatherings and at home is never dull. There is a tradition of debate, inquiry, and intellectualism that has been with the Jewish people forever. I was always encouraged to think about current events, to consider new ideas and challenge existing ones. There is always a mixture of laughter and banter at our typical family meal. Again, the food provides the center, around which the discussions usually occur. Academic as my environment may sound, it was not at all stuffy. Someone who arrives late to one to one of my grandmother's dinners and walks down the foyer can still hear continuous laughter resonating from the walls of the dining room. Humor is highly valued in our culture, and it is thought to be a major flaw when someone takes themselves or takes things too seriously. (From a 21-year-old American man of Eastern European Jewish Background, living in New York)

### 5.3. *The scripting of personhood*

Under this heading learners are encouraged to think of themselves not within popular personality classifications, but instead in terms of preferences for certain action orientations and styles, which I have called “cultural choreography.” This slant is inspired by the fusion of dance, anthropology, and social service in the writing of Janet Kestenbergh Amighi (Amighi, Loman, Lewis, & Sussin, 1999). This “choreography” embraces familiar topics such as proxemics, kinesics, patterns of physical contact, gestures, and facial expression. This provides a very appropriate context for also considering how persons—and groups—are programmed behaviorally to selectively favor or inhibit contrasting expressions of different motives and emotions. Under this heading students are asked also to consider their distinguishing speech patterns in terms of accent, argot, syntax, and vocabulary that identifies them with a particular region or people. The third example suggests how families teach patterns of interchange that form the bases for conflict management styles.

#### 5.3.1. *On South Indian, upper caste social patterns*

My cultural choreography reflects my Indian upbringing and how a young Indian girl should act. For instance, how I approach someone is relative to their status. If it is another classmate, I would walk up and smile a greeting. If it someone lower than me in the social chain, I would wait for them to approach me and give me the proper greeting. One of the main behaviors that has become automatized for me is the touching of the feet of older men and women. When I was in Paris, my friend and I were meeting our future father-in-laws. When we saw them, we didn't even think about being in a foreign public place. We just leaned down and touched their feet before we greeted them verbally. When we stood up, these older men were chuckling because the faces of surrounding Frenchmen were ones of horror and disbelief. With our automatized gestures, we displayed ourselves as “cultural others”—unconcerned that our behavior didn't fit our surroundings. (From a 23-year-old South Asian woman resident in Virginia)

#### 5.3.2. *On Portuguese aptitudes for dance*

Dance is part of Portuguese culture. On the dance floor, I remind my white friends that I, in fact, am not exactly as Anglo as I may appear to be. Not all stereotypes are true, of course, but white folks just cannot dance. I, on the other hand, was holding onto the coffee table in Portugal bobbing and swaying to Marco Polo (the Portuguese version of Elvis) before I could walk. The different country-like territories that Portugal is divided into each have their own traditional folk music and horribly outdated attire to match. So, it is no surprise that when salsa, meringue, or samba play at a club, I can easily find a rhythm and perform as I did when I was a bubbling toddler. Hip-hop music, however, is not associated with the Portuguese, yet I am also quite comfortable doing a high impact grapevine or having a dance-off with random club goers in Adam's Morgan (an ethnically mixed entertainment and residential district of Washington, D.C.). (From a 20-year-old Portuguese immigrant woman, a college Junior)

#### 5.3.3. *On learning to fight like an Anglo*

Outright aggression was also discouraged in our household. We were encouraged to solve conflicts instead through “talking it out” or “just ignoring” each other. Aggression, then, was more expressed through what my mother liked to call “snide comments,” sarcasm, displays of intellectual or moral superiority, passive aggressive acts, mocking, and displays of superior emotional control. A typical sibling argument might start with some complaint about an inconsiderate behavior, followed by a sarcastic comment, a rebuke that was intended to show how idiotic the comment was, an observation intended to undermine the rebuke. . . . This would continue until one either snapped or walked away. Since real violence was considered a loss of control and therefore a loss of the argument on principle, it broke out less and less as we grew older. Perhaps this was in line with my mother's Quaker, pacifist teachings;

however, it seems more to fit along the lines of Anglo self-control and autonomy. Interactions like I just described often kept us emotionally isolated from each other, unwilling to seek help from each other if it meant loss of face. (From 20-year-old of Quaker and Anglo heritage from Wisconsin)

#### 5.4. Overview of cultural programming and identity

Completing a self-study is really only a temporary stopping point in a process that should be ongoing across careers and lives. Many, like the young man cited in 2.0 recognize they are at the front end of a long process. Preliminary perhaps, the conclusions that self-studiers share, nonetheless, reflect huge, sudden leaps in self-understanding. Some summaries reflect emerging unitary views of one's culture and self.

Others summaries describe multiple facets of culture internalized and selectively enacted, depending on context and personal preference. As a teacher, many times I have been awed at the sophistication, eloquence, and maturity of student reports.

##### 5.4.1. From a Korean–American–Christian

It is impossible for me to pinpoint one single culture that I identify with completely. I was culturally programmed by the three major cultures of Christianity, Korea, and America (including subcultures that came with each). I will always have ingrained within me strong aspects of each culture. From the Christian influence, I am reminded of my beliefs and values: why I am here and how I am going to serve throughout my life. From the Korean influence, I will always carry respect for those who are above me, in age and experience. I will never forget how my mom always said it doesn't matter if you know the person or not, if you see an older Korean (and yes, we can tell if an Asian is Korean versus something else), bow your head. It is not a matter of your pride being put down, but an expression of honoring life. And finally, from the American influence, I've gained an adventurous, independent spirit that motivates me to go out there and experience new things, places, and people. The most important thing is interdependence. All three cultures have taught me the necessity we have for each other—for interlocked humanity. While this aspect may seem clear with the Christian and Korean cultures, I personally believe it is also true in the individualistic American culture. I feel that with so much emphasis on being an individual, it's not that Americans don't need each other, but that they forget they do. A foreigner once told me, some of the loneliest people in the world are Americans. And from my experiences as both "insider" and observing "outsider", I think it is true. (From 22-year-old Korean-American woman, a college Senior)

##### 5.4.2. From a very mainstream Euro-American

Reflecting on my self-study, I realize that I am essentially similar to my ancestors, my relatives, and my immediate family. Close family ties, open-mindedness, academic determination, hard work, and sacrifice seem like the strongest and most consistent features of my roots. Living in northern New Jersey, I believe, has amplified the intensity and speed with which my family members have led their lives. We have remained open-minded and low context out of necessity in order to survive in New York Metropolitan society. Though my personal time orientation, tendency toward collectivism, and formality with adults differs from cultural patterns in my geographical region, I am aware of my differences. When necessary, I can change or explain my cultural variations to avoid conflict or confusion. This realization of differences and this willingness to adjust my ways are, in themselves, recognition of individuality within my American culture. In accordance with an older American tradition, my family comes from an American "mold." Our roots represent generations of hard working extroverts trying to make the most of their lives while embracing "progress" or "change," valued in themselves, which might complicate as well as simplify our life plans. We strive to make the most of ourselves both for our own satisfaction and for the benefit of each other. Sharing what we have and what we gain with each other, we have simply expanded our definition of individualism to include those with whom we are closest. After all, no apple pie tastes as good and no Yankee games are as worth watching as those we can share with each other. (From a 20-year-old woman, a college Sophomore, from New Jersey)

## 6. Conclusions and directions for future work

The core message of this report is disarmingly simple: learn a set of concepts and categories to describe culture; apply them to yourself before applying them to others; intercultural empathy, curiosity, and skills grow from this process. As apparently phenomenological and personal as cultural self-study appears to be, it is not intended to supplant quantitative approaches. This bi-directional learning process outlined here should be subject to many forms of critical review and scrutiny, including quantitative evaluation. As noted quantitative self-assessments might help some learners. The hope is to develop researchers or practitioners with cultural self-knowledge shaping commitments to many different types of service and investigation, including those that are most strictly quantitative. It appears that, thus recruited, people are far more likely to approach subsequent work with their hearts as well as their heads. They become more motivated, empathic, and

sophisticated in their approach to cultural studies. In a most fundamental sense, reflexive cultural study is an antidote to naiveté. It reduces the likelihood of encountering those panels of graduate students at professional meetings presenting data arrays with sweeping abstractions, but without any apparent sense of the people who provided the data. It promises to promote development of trainers who anticipate the force and subtlety of the cultural programming of their clients.

As immediate practical, follow-up, we hopefully can form a web of colleagues interested in an exchange of ideas and methods as we experiment with variants of protocol content, of learners, and of purposes for which people are being trained. Through experimentation and active exchange of results, we will find ways to refine and streamline the self-study method. We need to look at the impact of repeated self-studies over time—helping learners trace continuing personal and professional development. We need more information on the use of the method with different age groups. Further, it is important to learn how those very concerned with practical outcomes—in areas such as business, health care, and diplomacy—can benefit most and be encouraged to take the time self-learning requires.

Just as importantly, we have to move well beyond observations and testimonials, to measure the impact cultural self-study. We need “pre and post” data on the cultural sensitivity of self-studiers. We need comparisons of attitudes, commitments, and skills of those who do and do not have self-study as part of intercultural preparation. These should contrast people who learn research and intercultural interventions through existing, accepted means with those for whom this preparation is enhanced through cultural self-study. We can assess outcomes in terms of differences in identity formation, looking for the increased presence of cultural features and increased complexity in understanding culture as aspects of self-definition. We can measure factors such as increased ethnic self-labeling, greater definition and integration of ethnic sub-identities, increased syntactic and conceptual complexity in describing oneself, awareness of historical roots of the self, and the use of collective-population variables for personal self-representations. Also, from a practical performance perspective, we need to know if self-studiers show growth in research skills, interventions they develop, and productivity in a range of professional roles in intercultural and overseas contexts.

Also, to be explored, I believe, is the use of these methods among established cross-cultural and intercultural scholars. Looking at [Bond's work \(1997\)](#), it appears that senior people in the field demonstrate a wide range of capacity for discerning cultural factors operative in their own lives and research. I anticipate that scholars would increase their creativity and also would discover a means to better control bias and error in research, if they precisely map their own formative cultures. Among social scientists, will internalizing theory at a personal level increase facility in using that theory? Post self-study we should check for possible increased sophistication in research: greater concern for external validity ([Sue, 1996](#)); increased concurrent effective use of both culturally specific and culturally general points of view; a greater awareness of values which may confine choice of research foci and methods, and the interpretation of results; a move toward integration of quantitative and qualitative methods; the generation of more finely and accurately detailed findings that provide practical instructions for policy and interventions, as well as contributing to theory development. The process should leave researchers sensitive to the ways they are confined as well as aided by their academic and professional cultures ([Weigl, 2002b](#))

A critical issue to examine is how transferable self-study methods are to learners from different cultures. What I have reported here was developed with American students, or, in some instances foreign students in the process of adapting to American ways. To what extent is the peculiarly self-focused nature of cultural study compatible with learning styles and preferences of other cultural groups? Paradoxically, Americans are both uniquely suited and ill-suited to carry out self-study. On the one hand, our confessional, therapy influenced, and self-concerned habits recently have been further exaggerated through participation in online vehicles for presenting oneself. On the other hand, the strong individualism encouraged in the United States leaves many in search of frontier, entrepreneurial, and missionary self-images, rather than the more communal and de-individuating cultural categorizations required in self-study. With structure and encouragement, Americans seem able to transcend their difficulties, our ego-involvement curiously aiding us to see ourselves as part of a flock. We nonetheless have to await reports from the field about groups of learners for whom self-study is or is not appropriate.

Most generally, it remains for teachers, trainers, and researchers to witness how momentous self-study can be. It brings order and delight to forms of self-discovery that previously we have left to private thought, informal anecdotal exchanges, and haphazard lessons from daily life in culturally complex environs. We can develop less familiar, but highly adaptive new forms of organized knowledge and consciousness. As scientists we can develop scholarship focused on private lives, opening them as windows facing toward more ordered learning about the ways the personal is infused with the cultural. Through formal strategies we can better feel, then define the shape of culture we each embody. I believe student contributions above illustrate this very eloquently.

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## Appendix A. An outline of concepts for use cross-culturally

This is a partial outline of materials for presenting the author's perspective on cross-cultural psychology. It has emerged both from teaching and designing the outline of an undergraduate text in the field. As noted in the text, the author believes what is most critical is not the specific theory and concepts chosen, but the application of the same ideas first to oneself, then to cultural others or what has been called "bi-directional learning."

### 1. Values

The largest area of study in cross-cultural research. Lends itself to questionnaire studies.

- Beliefs—values—world views; increasingly unconscious and general
- Discovery of implicit rules and etiquette operative in daily life.
- Values dimensions most studied are
  1. Individualism vs. Collectivism: emphasis on autonomy and "my rights" or interdependence and my duties.
  2. Power Distance: emphasis on hierarchy and chains of command; or on shared power and equality.
- World view dimensions
  1. Time focus: oriented more to past, present, or future.
  2. Orientation to nature: mastery, live in harmony, live in subjugation.
  3. The role of religion in revealing and maintaining culture.

### 2. Places

- The critical role of context/setting in human communities.
- How places constrain and direct behavior. (Example public vs. private settings.)
- The organization, meaning, and aesthetics of space.
- How ecology impacts subsistence patterns and ways of life.
- Rootedness: emotional, aesthetic, and epistemic ties to places and a sense of home or homeland.

### 3. Scripts

- Also referred to as practices, routines, rituals. Culture as "Praxis."
- The power of entrainment: mirroring, mimicry and synchrony.
- Cultural choreography: movement styles, use of body in space.
- What human needs and feelings are permitted or forbidden in common scripts.
- What scripts are supported in various settings.

### 4. Persons

- How separate and distinct are people?
- What personality styles are selected out and rewarded?
- Enacting personhood as shaped by cultural norms re age, gender, economic status.
- Rules and styles for "owning" culture as part of personal identity.
- What are expected personal skills and knowledge?

### 5. Groups

- How is the family organized?
- Are gender roles strongly differentiated?
- How does the family prepare members for taking part in other groups?
- What are in-groups and out-groups and how sharply are they defined?
- What are expectations for trust, loyalty, and dependence?

### 6. Meanings

- Different maps of the world and reality. Different mentalities.
- Different cognitive styles: analytic or aesthetic?; Pragmatic or spiritual?

- Ethno-theories: differing explanatory systems about causation and our impact on world.
- Culture as making thought “automatic”, saving attention for new problems.
- Socialization, experience and the creation of contrasting “cultural brains.”

## Appendix B. Model instructions for the conduct of self-study

Using material introduced in readings and class complete the steps of the cultural self-study described below. You may follow the steps as listed, or combine them into your own narrative format. Completed reports should not exceed 2400 words or about ten typed pages. Try to focus on the ways that you, your family, and your important groups represent larger, more inclusive cultural and co-cultural realities. Your work will be evaluated on the basis of the variety of concepts you use appropriately and evidence that you have made a genuine effort to deal with tasks which require some very deep reflection. No student, however, should in any way feel compelled to share information that she or he believes is private or personal. Keep in mind, though, that a degree of discomfort with this project is normal, as it requires making explicit things that usually remain implicit, automatic, and wordless—like how you drive a car or greet a stranger visiting your home. Many students have found this exercise, no matter how difficult, provides a very powerful and useful form of self-discovery. It is absolutely clear from the experience of hundreds of college students, that those who apply cultural concepts to themselves subsequently apply them to others with greater understanding, accuracy, and empathy

It is strongly recommended that you read the chapters in McGoldrick, Giordano, and Garcia-Preto (Eds.) *Ethnicity and Family Therapy* 3rd Edition (2005) relevant to your own cultural origins. As you do this you should keep in mind that some of us still clearly retain and express, at least in some settings, national cultural origins—most often those of immigrant predecessors. Some of us, however, are “hybrids”—our cultural automaticities have emerged from a combination of cultural traditions. Many of these traditions are not identifiable through use of any label like “Italian”, “German”, or “Korean”, etc. The origin of our cultural patterns may be very regional, international, or idiosyncratic.

1. *Historical roots and longstanding memberships.* Describe historical antecedents, which, even if nearly forgotten, still covertly influence thought, feelings, and behavior in your family. Consider immigrant beginnings and migration history, critical past experiences, valued traditions, characteristic likes and dislikes, views of persons of different ethnic and social groups. Think of institutions, religious and other affiliations, and social class memberships critical in shaping you.
2. *Beliefs, values, and world views.* What spoken, articulate beliefs were important as you grew up and what ones are important to you now? What other critical values, norms, and worldviews were much more taken-for-granted? Place yourself on three values dimensions we have discussed in class. (Such as Individualism and Collectivism; High and Low Power Distance, Masculinity vs. Androgeny, and the several world view dimensions described by Strodbeck.)
3. *Settings and scripts important in your socialization.* Describe four behavior settings and the characteristic scripts they supported—ones you believe were very influential or representative of cultural forces that shaped you. Describe the settings and their scripts in as vivid terms as possible, then note their significance. You might focus on a family context like a meal, family gatherings for a special events, participation in a peer group or team, a classroom, a neighborhood, a setting in nature important to you; or other settings.
4. *Group experiences.* How did your family function as a group? How were authority and affection managed? What did your family communicate about the relative importance of autonomy and interdependence? How did your family prepare you for operating in groups outside your family? Did you develop favorable or unfavorable attitudes about being a group member? What non-family groups were very important in shaping you? How were you taught to define in-groups and out-groups?
5. *Personal characteristics rewarded by your culture(s)* What concepts of gender role and of age grading influence you most? What aspects of personhood are most valued in the traditions from which you have emerged and to what extent do you embody these preferences? How is your concept of who you are influenced by social class factors (e.g. education and income of your family)? What particular skills do you use and display which are part of the expected, taken-for-granted accomplishments of people of your cultural groups? (Please note, cultural of origin influences are still present when you actively choose to act in opposition to these influences.)
6. *The Scripting of your personhood.* What sign equipment do you display that assists others in assigning you to some cultural category? What is your characteristic cultural choreography: that is, what is your characteristic movement style, tempo, kinesics, proxemics, and style of facial display? What motives and emotions do you display most comfortably and frequently? Are there ones you clearly were taught to suppress? What of your speech patterns? Do you have any accent or speech style that identifies you with particular origins? Are you more direct or indirect in expressing yourself? With what sort of people or situations do you synchronize most easily and comfortably.
7. *Cognitive style.* How would you characterize your most representative style of thought in terms of a few of the following dimensions: field dependent vs. independent; “we centered” vs. “me centered”; representing highly distributed vs. self-sufficient models of intelligence; associative-concrete vs. abstract; emotionally colored vs. rational; right brained vs. left brained; artistic vs. algorithmic; wide-angle vs. close-up. In what way does your cognitive style reflect anything that is cultural?

8. *Overview of your cultural programming.* How cultural are you? Do you find cultural influences emerge more strongly in some life settings than in others? What ethnic or cultural identity did you have prior to this self-study? Has your identity in this regard been changed through self-study? To what extent were you previously forced to define your culture because you had to deal with cultural labels, accurate or inaccurate, which others ascribed to you? To what extent do you believe your interests are served by separating from or *instead* more strongly joining the culture or cultures critical in shaping you?

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