# Cross-cultural training: History, developments, future directions

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## Abstract:

As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, the days when employees worked in the same location with local people for extended periods of time are long gone (Gilson et al., 2015; Glikson & Erez, 2019; Lukić & Vračar, 2018). Today, a vast number of employees must cross national borders, both physically and virtually, to fulfill their workplace responsibilities (Gilson et al., 2015; Glikson & Erez, 2019). These international dynamics necessitate close interactions among culturally diverse individuals with different professional backgrounds, values, and expectations. Consequently, to achieve business goals, managers must understand and master the art of managing a culturally diverse workplace and working with employees, suppliers, customers, and partners from different cultural backgrounds.

**Keywords:** cross-cultural training | cultural differences | experiential learning | knowledge | trainees

## Article:

As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, the days when employees worked in the same location with local people for extended periods of time are long gone (Gilson et al., 2015; Glikson & Erez, 2019; Lukić & Vračar, 2018). Today, a vast number of employees must cross national borders, both physically and virtually, to fulfill their workplace responsibilities (Gilson et al., 2015; Glikson & Erez, 2019). These international dynamics necessitate close interactions among culturally diverse individuals with different professional backgrounds, values, and expectations. Consequently, to achieve business goals, managers must understand and master the art of managing a culturally diverse workplace and working with employees, suppliers, customers, and partners from different cultural backgrounds.

Not everyone is equipped to deal with this challenge. For example, between 16% and 40% of expatriates on international assignments experience culture shock due to lack of cultural awareness and cross-cultural competency, which can result in premature international

assignment termination (Andreason, 2003; Chen, 2019; Kassar, Rouhana, & Lythreatis, 2015; Sims & Schraeder, 2005). Considering this, there has been a burgeoning interest in training managers to lead and manage in a cross-cultural environment. Indeed, a growing stream of research shows that the effective navigation of cross-cultural differences depends on effective cross-cultural training and learning (e.g., Kassar et al., 2015; Yamazaki & Kayes, 2004). However, there is less clear guidance in the extant literature on how to best design cross-cultural training (CCT) programs so that employees can develop effective cross-cultural management knowledge, skills, and abilities.

The primary goal of this chapter is to provide guidance to managers and practitioners on how to successfully leverage CCT to develop employees' cross-cultural competence. The chapter will begin with an overview of CCT. In doing so, we will define the construct of CCT and its two major design types, provide a brief history of the field, and highlight the importance of CCT. Next, we will discuss the effectiveness of CCT, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of different training methods. The final section will review recent findings and provide a roadmap for the future directions of CCT.

**Two Views on CCT and Extant Typologies**

CCT programs are designed to improve employees' understanding of culture, teach employees how to adapt to different cultural environments, and provide tools for employees to interact with people from other cultures (e.g., Bennett, 1986; Black & Mendenhall, 1990; Stahl & Tung, 2015). Importantly, CCT programs are typically structured into one of two approaches in their design: (1) a *cognitive approach* and (2) an *experiential approach* (Bennett, 1986; Harrison, 1992; Taras, Gonzalez-Perez, 2014). The former involves learning concepts, terms, and theories to promote intellectual understanding of cultural differences (Harrison, 1992). It is grounded in traditional learning techniques in a classroom setting where knowledge and memorization are paramount (e.g., Bennett, 1986; Harrison, 1992). The latter involves a 'process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience' (Kolb, 1984, p. 41). In this regard, experiential learning approaches emphasize direct experiences and reflections rather than building knowledge using information-only approaches (Brislin, MacNab, & Nayani, 2008). In other words, cognitive methods involve passive listening, reading, writing, or Socratic discussion, whereas experiential methods entail 'learning by doing' where the learner plays an active role (Bhawuk & Brislin, 2000; Kim & Lyons, 2003); as Pruegger and Rogers (1994) put it, 'experiential learning begins with participant action' (p. 370). Taras, Muth, and Gitlin (2014) distinguished these approaches in their example of learning to ride a bicycle. Using a cognitive approach, a lecturer may provide detailed instructions on how to ride a bicycle, including the location of the pedals, operation of the brakes, importance of balance, and so on. However, while such an approach may provide the knowledge necessary for operating a bicycle, one cannot truly learn to ride a bicycle until one practices balance, rides on the road, struggles with turns, bumps, and the wind, all of which will occur when an experiential approach to learning is used.

In other words, the cognitive approach to CCT relies on the acquisition of theoretical knowledge and understandings, whereas the experiential approach involves the acquisition of specific behavioral competencies through experience, such as work in a global virtual team (GVT),

planned field experiences, and expatriate international assignments (Bird, 2014; Brislin et al., 2008; Yamazaki & Kayes, 2004). As we will see later in this chapter, the distinctions between the design and approach used in cognitive versus experiential learning have important implications for the success and effectiveness of CCT initiatives.

Beyond these two basic approaches to designing CCT, CCT programs differ with respect to the competencies they cover and the ultimate goals of the programs themselves (cf. Black & Mendenhall, 1990; Sit, Mak, & Neill, 2017; Yamazaki & Kayes, 2004; Chapters 32 and 33 in this volume). Scholars such as Brislin and colleagues (2008), Black and Mendenhall (1990), Sit et al. (2017), and Yamazaki and Kayes (2004) have offered their own typologies of these different approaches to CCT, which we synthesize here for readers designing training to meet these disparate goals. Based on our analysis of the literature on the different types of CCT, we have grouped these programs into four groups, each focusing on cultural *awareness*, *understanding*, *assimilation*, and *behaviors* respectively.

*Cultural awareness* programs (sometimes called cognitive training programs; Brislin et al., 2008) focus on identifying cultural differences and explaining the legal requirements and procedures that regulate interactions among culturally diverse individuals (Black & Mendenhall, 1990; Sit et al., 2017; Yamazaki & Kayes, 2004). These programs are typically offered as part of routine employee training and development. The goal is to educate trainees on the challenges created by cultural differences and provide trainees with guidelines for handling those differences. These programs tend to cover the traditions, history, language, and protocols of a country (Brislin et al., 2008). Such awareness programs tend to revolve around contrasting cultures and rely heavily on national cultural rankings, such as those offered by Hofstede (1980) and the GLOBE study (House et al., 2004), or cultural value tests administered as part of the training program.

*Cultural understanding* programs (sometimes called cultural self-awareness programs or cognitive management; Brislin et al., 2008; Hannigan, 1990) are defined as those that provide trainees with an understanding of how their own culture is different from others (Black & Mendenhall, 1990; Sit et al., 2017; Yamazaki & Kayes, 2004). Trainees generally begin by taking a cultural value test. The results of such tests are used to demonstrate where trainees' culture is placed on a continuum of cultural dimensions and how such placement compares to other cultural groups. This is used as a discussion point in the training session to learn the 'dos' and 'don'ts' when interacting with people from different cultures. The aim of these programs is to explain the nature of, and develop appreciation for, cross-cultural differences beyond a simple awareness of the difference to understanding the difference fully (Black & Mendenhall, 1990; Sit et al., 2017; Yamazaki & Kayes, 2004). The expected outcomes of these programs include the ability to recognize and tolerate cultural differences as well as increasing trainees' interest in international collaboration. Further, these programs are thought to reduce stereotypes and prejudices against other cultures by assisting trainees to develop an interest in the cultures of those they will be working with (Brislin et al., 2008). Understanding-based programs are generally offered as part of employee training and development, where they focus on celebrating and embracing diversity rather than simply recognizing and tolerating it.

*Cultural assimilation* programs (sometimes called cultural attribution programs; Brislin et al., 2008) are designed to reduce the culture shock often experienced by expatriates, teach trainees to interpret culture-specific behaviors, teach trainees to adapt to cultural differences, and, ultimately, get trainees accustomed to a new cultural environment (Cushner, 1989; Fiedler, Mitchell & Triandis, 1971). Such programs tend to present trainees with a series of scenarios or video recordings depicting certain incidents that could occur within different cultures (Black & Mendenhall, 1990; Sit et al., 2017; Yamazaki & Kayes, 2004). The trainees are then asked to interpret those behaviors from the perspective of different cultures. These programs often revolve around the demonstration and analysis of how people from different cultures can interpret the same behavior differently and are primarily designed for expatriates and immigrants. Specifically, these programs aim to help expatriates adapt to their new cultural contexts. This form of training is focused on providing knowledge of the traditions, protocols, food, clothing, and language of the host country. It is worthwhile to note that the term 'assimilation' in this context is used to denote the ability to adapt and thrive in a new environment, rather than 'assimilation' in the context of immigration that typically means 'blending in' and fully immersing into a new culture. Essentially, cultural assimilation training is designed to provide instructions for living in a new cultural context. These training programs are offered by numerous providers, many of whom specialize in a particular culture or region (Black & Mendenhall, 1990; Sit et al., 2017; Yamazaki & Kayes, 2004).

*Cultural behavioral* programs are designed for managers and members of international groups and rely on the principle of 'learning by doing' (Brislin et al., 2008). The goal of these programs is to assist trainees to acquire specific skills for cross-cultural collaboration, such as cross-cultural negotiation, conflict resolution skills, and management competencies. Often, the focus is on developing skills for cross-cultural teamwork and collaboration (Black & Mendenhall, 1990; Sit et al., 2017; Yamazaki & Kayes, 2004). In some cases, the focus is on developing the skills needed for performing specific functions, such as designing a management system for cross-cultural workgroups, and so on (Black & Mendenhall, 1990; Sit et al., 2017; Taras et al., 2013; Yamazaki & Kayes, 2004).

## A Brief History of CCT Approaches

Readers unfamiliar with the history of CCT may wonder how this field evolved. CCT has been a topic of research for over 75 years (Brislin et al., 2008). The earlier decades of research were grounded in the cognitive approach to CCT. Most of the training in the 1950s and 1960s was grounded in the cognitive tradition and offered using lectures, discussions, readings, and occasional video materials; the paramount emphasis at this point in time was on the prevention of culture shock (Brislin et al., 2008). In 1961, the Peace Corps was created in the United States, with probably the first large-scale CCT program that was actively refining training materials and mastering training techniques, as well as examining their effectiveness (Pusch, 2004).

By the end of the 1970s, multinational companies started sprouting and expatriation had become widespread, necessitating the need for CCT (cf. Pusch, 2004). By the late 1980s, cognitive CCT became common, and sometimes even required, in governmental agencies and private organizations. Much of these early training programs focused on reducing ethnic prejudice, particularly in countries like the United States where affirmative action policies had been

adopted by many organizations by that time. More specifically, cultural awareness training became a part of the orientation for newly admitted students, newly hired employees, and, in some cases, all staff members at many organizations (e.g., Carroll & Buchholtz, 2000; Fisher, 2004).

While less ubiquitous compared to these emerging cognitive training approaches, the initial programs that relied on the experiential approach were introduced as early as the 1960s. For example, the Peace Corps started experimenting with this approach in the 1960s when they set up a training camp in Hawaii, which was designed to mimic conditions in the Micronesian Islands in the Pacific Ocean and used for pre-departure training for Peace Corps going to that part of the world (Trifonovitch, 1973). However, it was not until the 1990s that the experiential approach to CCT started gaining popularity and programs that relied more on 'hands-on' projects and 'learning by doing' became more common. Around this time, the emphasis also started shifting from CCT as a compliance initiative related to anti-prejudice laws to one that emphasized effective cultural competence as a strategic priority (e.g., Carroll & Buchholtz, 2000; Fisher, 2004). Continuing this tradition, CCT programs today are designed to improve not only cross-cultural knowledge, but also cultural sensitivity and cultural intelligence (e.g., Rehg, Gundlach, & Grigorian, 2012).

**The Rationale of CCT in the Workplace**

In today's workplaces, the rationale of CCT from a business perspective is that CCT should improve organizational effectiveness by reducing prejudice, culture shock, and team conflict while improving group communication and cohesion (e.g., Caligiuri & Tarique, 2009). Consistent with this idea, CCT programs comprise a multibillion-dollar industry. In the 1990s, an estimated $10 billion was spent annually in the United States on CCT (Lubove, 1997), while this figure is likely even larger today.

CCT can contribute to organizational effectiveness in several ways as businesses become more international. First, business expansions generally require companies to look beyond the domestic market, which necessitates international travel, expatriation, cross-cultural negotiations, and other cross-cultural encounters. Furthermore, immigration is prevalent in most developed countries, particularly across Europe, North America, and Oceania. In 2017, migrant workers comprised more than 10% of the population in the developed world (United Nations, 2017). Today, an estimated 258 million people live in places other than their country of birth, representing a 69% increase since 1990 (United Nations, 2017). A total 57% (146 million) of these international migrants live in developed countries, while the others currently live in developing nations (United Nations, 2017). These situations make it difficult to escape the need to interact and work with people from other cultures, and effective CCT can aid these interactions.

Second, proficient cultural understanding is intimately tied to leadership competencies and leadership effectiveness in contemporary workplaces. For example, employers now expect their employees to demonstrate cross-cultural competence and sensitivity, especially those with management roles (cf. Black & Gregersen, 1999). In fact, many companies consider only candidates with international experiences for corporate leadership positions, such as those who

have completed international assignments (BGRS, 2016). Black and Gregersen (1999) found that up to 80% of medium to large companies send their personnel on short-term, cross-national assignments for cultural learning and development, a trend that likely persists up to the present. Such firms deem overseas expatriate assignments as a form of CCT, invaluable for professional development and believe the practice is worth the investment.

Third, poor cross-cultural understanding can result in workplace discrimination, whereas CCT can reduce stereotyping and prejudice (Osland & Bird, 2000). Employees with limited CCT tend to be ethnocentric and less culturally aware, which can hinder their performance in cross-cultural settings (Selmer, Torboin, & de Leon, 1998). The resulting cultural clashes can lead to xenophobia, particularly in the context when one culture is dominant in the society (e.g., Michailova et al., 2017; Shoham & Gavish, 2016; Stahl et al., 2016; Wodak, 2015).

## CCT Effectiveness

Despite the business rationale for CCT and the enormous sums spent on CCT (Lubove, 1997), it is unclear whether these programs are ultimately effective. Research efforts to understand the effectiveness of these programs are relatively sparse (Littrell & Salas, 2005). Most research focuses on training evaluations from participants' satisfaction standpoints; that is, participants rate their satisfaction with the training (Black & Mendenhall, 1990). There is less research examining how such training changes employee behavior and cross-cultural competence (Kirkpatrick, 1975; 1996).

### Conclusions from Expatriate Research

One area where a large body of research exists on the effectiveness of CCT is the effectiveness of training for expatriate international assignments (e.g., Littrell et al., 2006; Morris & Robie, 2001; Okpara & Kabongo, 2011). The plethora of research in this area is likely prompted and enabled by the fact that the effectiveness (and failure) of an expatriate assignment is relatively easy to define and measure. Scholars in this area have focused on international performance, which refers to the ability of workers to successfully perform their job duties in an international context. Research shows that experiential CCT approaches have positive benefits in terms of expatriate international performance, but that the effect sizes for effectiveness are moderate. For example, an early meta-analysis of 21 empirical studies returned relatively strong results for the relationship between CCT and performance ($\rho$ = .39) (Deshpande & Viswesvaran, 1992). Another meta-analysis of 41 empirical studies supported the notion that CCT is positively related to expatriate performance ($\rho$ = .26) (Morris & Robie, 2001). A later review by Littrell et al. (2006) concluded that CCT is generally effective in facilitating successful expatriate assignments. However, post-arrival training appears to be more effective than training before expatriation. To this point, a recent study by Wurtz (2014) found that pre-departure learning is less effective than post-arrival training (i.e., training received upon arrival to the country and immersion in the experiential environment of the host culture). Such a finding highlights that the effectiveness of these training programs is moderated by the design type (i.e., cognitive or experiential); it may be that pre-departure training tends to be more cognitive in nature while post-arrival training allows for experiential learning within the host culture. However, tests on

the moderating role of training methods are not available at this time because most studies do not identify training types and hence these data are currently unavailable.

A second important outcome that has been studied is expatriate adjustment, which refers to the extent to which an expatriate worker is comfortable in his or her work environment and interacting with others in an international environment (e.g., Deshpande & Viswesvaran, 1992). Current findings suggest that CCT has generally benefited expatriate adjustment, although the findings are mixed on *how* effective such training initiatives are. For example, Deshpande and Viswesvaran (1992) meta-analyzed the results reported in 21 empirical studies and found a strong relationship between CCT and expatriate adjustment ($\rho$ = .43). However, the effect size was relatively small in another meta-analysis by Morris and Robie (2001), who reviewed 41 studies on the topic and reported the effect size of only $\rho$ = .13. Further research is needed to determine when and under what conditions CCT is more or less effective for expatriate adjustment.

### Conclusions from Training Design Research

As mentioned previously, there are two general approaches to CCT design: a cognitive approach and an experiential approach (Bennett, 1986; Harrison, 1992). In general, both approaches are helpful to CCT. Cognitive training design in CCT appears to have the most benefits with regards to local cultural adjustment. For example, Puck and colleagues (2008) found that pre-departure training helped with language learning for expatriates working in a large international company. Similarly, the results from qualitative in-depth interviews of eight former expatriate managers (Taiwanese males ranging from 33 to 65 years old with 3 to 27 years of overseas assignment experience) showed that pre-departure language training facilitated the expatriates' cross-cultural adjustment and the development of their cross-cultural communication skills. These developments, in turn, improved trainees' ability to establish positive relationships with the local staff, improved trainees' ability to reach the goals of their overseas assignments, and consequently enhanced the managers' job-related performance (Ko & Yang, 2011).

However, there is evidence to suggest that cognitive training approaches to CCT design are not as effective as experiential training approaches to CCT (Caligiuri & Tarique, 2009; Rehg et al., 2012), especially from an expatriate adjustment perspective. For example, a survey of 339 expatriates from 20 German multinational corporations found that cognitive pre-departure CCT has little effect on general interactional or work-setting expatriate adjustments (Puck et al., 2008). Another recent survey of 226 Western expatriate managers working in Nigeria revealed that CCT had a generally significant positive effect on expatriate adjustment, with experiential training being more effective than cognitive approaches (Okpara & Kabongo, 2011). Additional research is needed to clearly evaluate the effectiveness of CCT using cognitive versus experiential formats, but based on this small body of research, experiential approaches appear to be the preferred design approach unless the CCT goal is cultural adjustment.

## Advantages and Disadvantages of Different CCT Methods

Although evidence seems to suggest that experiential training is more effective, every approach to CCT has its own advantages and disadvantages. As such, in this section we provide a detailed

analysis of the major CCT methods in terms of approach, purpose, learning processes, advantages, and disadvantages. Our goal with presenting this information is to provide practitioners with guidance on when different CCT approaches are preferred over others. The first half of the table provides an overview of cognitive approaches while the latter half provides an overview of experiential approaches (Bennett, 1986; Harrison, 1992).

When Should Cognitive Approaches Be Used?

As shown in Table 34.1, cognitive approaches (e.g., lectures, books, films) tend to be unidirectional didactic interaction tools. Trainees can only absorb information but cannot actively experiment, act, or observe the reactions to their actions from an applied standpoint. Thus, cognitive approaches have limited applications to achieve affective or attitudinal goals, such as cross-cultural sensitivity or positive interethnic attitudes (Pruegger & Rogers, 1994). They also tend to be less effective compared to experiential approaches (Bennett, 1986; Harrison, 1992). However, cognitive approaches are useful for educating trainees about cultures, cultural differences, and general cross-cultural issues, which can be beneficial when used in conjunction with the experiential methods. Additionally, compared to experiential methods, cognitive methods are generally simpler, more flexible, less expensive, and easier to implement (Bhawuk & Brislin, 2000; Lenartowicz, Johnson, & Konopaske, 2014). Conversely, experiential training demands more resources and requires additional skills, preparation, and guidance from the trainers, more work from the trainees, and in many cases, more time commitment from trainees. This suggests that cognitive approaches are preferred in situations where time and cost are concerns.

**Table 34.1.** Analysis of the purpose, learning mechanism, advantages and disadvantages of CCT methods*

| Training method | Type | Primary purpose | Primary learning mechanisms (Bandura, 1977) | Main advantages | Main disadvantages |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Cultural assimilators** (Bhawuk, 2001; Littrell et al., 2006) | Cognitive | Impart behavioral skills | Attention, motivation, and retention | Useful in learning behavioral 'dos' and 'don'ts' in social context, promotes intercultural understanding, feedback | Based on critical incidents only and require declarative knowledge, feedback, and active involvement of the teacher or trainer |
| **Cultural briefings** (Forster, 2000) | Cognitive | Convey declarative and procedural knowledge | Attention and retention | Useful in conveying factual information and instructions; large groups can be trained | Cultural briefings require motivation and constant attentional focus. It also may not be effective for strategic knowledge and skill development; effectiveness depends on factors such as how current and detailed they are |

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| **Live demonstration/ practical exhibition** (Liu, Cramer, & Reinkensmeyer, 2006) | Cognitive | Convey procedural knowledge; impart technical skills | Attention, motivation, and retention | Both knowledge and skills can be enhanced; can be used when a visual display or hands-on manipulation of object is required | Live demonstrations require space. These demonstrations may not be possible with large groups and may be ineffective without actual practice by the trainees |
| **Discussion** (Callahan, Kiker, & Cross, 2003) | Cognitive | Convey knowledge; generate participation; shape attitudes | Attention and retention | Can be used with lecture to engage and motivate; stimulates recall and participation; trainees' reactions can be assessed; idea generation is an outcome | Difficult to use as a stand-alone method; all trainees may not participate; trainer has to actively facilitate discussion; group size impacts learning |
| **Films, books** (Gallos, 1993) | Cognitive | Convey declarative and procedural knowledge | Attention and retention | Useful in conveying factual and procedural information; large groups can be trained; trainees can go back and watch/read repeatedly; reflective learning | Not effective for skill development; motivation and turnover could be potential issues; cognitive burden on the learner |
| **Intelligent tutoring systems** (Kulik & Fletcher, 2016) | Cognitive | Convey declarative and procedural knowledge | Attention and retention | Self-paced, interactive, provides instant feedback, and cost effective; large groups can be trained anywhere in the world | Not suitable for interpersonal skills; some trainees may not be able to maintain the pace; require use of technology; require alignment of testing and instructional goals |
| **Lecture** (Callahan, Kiker, & Cross, 2003) | Cognitive | Convey declarative or procedural knowledge | Attention and retention | Useful in conveying factual information and instructions or other types of process information; large groups can be trained | Lack of motivation; not effective for strategic knowledge and skill development; low idea generation, places cognitive burden on learner |
| **Mobile device-based training** (Ally, 2009; Henríquez-Parodi & Alon, 2019) | Cognitive | Convey declarative and procedural knowledge; develop technical skills | Attention, retention, and motivation | Cost effective and convenient; can be used with large groups; popular with millennials; ease of use for training 'on the go'; useful for declarative and procedural knowledge | Not suitable for complex learning or interpersonal skills; not all trainees use mobile apps; still in the development stages; only small chunks of information can be presented at a time |
| **Programmed instruction** (Ruiz, Mintzer, & Leipzig, 2006) | Cognitive | Convey declarative knowledge | Attention and retention | Self-paced; cost effective; large groups can be trained and assessed anywhere in the world | Not suitable for interpersonal skills; lack of engagement and motivation; some trainees may not be able to maintain the pace without active |

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| | | | | | trainer involvement; technology is required |
| **Self-study** (Nielson, 2011) | Cognitive | Gather declarative and procedural knowledge | Attention and retention | Useful in conveying factual and procedural information; large groups can be trained; self-paced; trainees can decide their learning routines | Not effective for skill development; self-motivation and retention could be potential issues; participant attrition issues |
| **Seminars** (Polite & Adams, 1997) | Cognitive | Convey declarative and procedural | Attention and retention | Useful in conveying factual and procedural information; large groups can be trained; some level of interactivity | Not effective for skill development; difficult to assess and enhance trainee motivation and engagement; time and space constraints |
| **Apprenticeship** (van Bodegom, Hafkamp, & Westendorp, 2013) | Experiential | Impart declarative, procedural, and strategic knowledge; develop technical skills and appropriate attitudes | Attention, motivation, retention, and behavioral reproduction | Feedback an issue; low motivation; lacks opportunity to develop work-related knowledge skills, and attitudes | Takes time, large groups cannot be trained, different trainees learn at different pace, interpersonal conflicts |
| **Case studies** (Mbarika et al., 2010) | Experiential or blended | Impart strategic knowledge; develop decision making and analytical skills | Attention, motivation, and retention | Useful in developing complex problem-solving and strategic skills; high trainee engagement and learning interest; can be administered individually or to groups | Requires imparting declarative and procedural knowledge first; time constraints; low psychological fidelity |
| **Coaching** (Brockbank, 2006; Taras, 2019) | Experiential or blended | Impart procedural and strategic knowledge; enhance managerial or executive competencies including technical and interpersonal skills and attitudes | Attention, motivation, and retention | Feedback; high motivation; opportunity to develop work-related knowledge skills, and attitudes; reflective learning | Resistance from existing employees; time-consuming; takes scalability issues – cannot coach a large number of trainees; scheduling conflicts |
| **Behavior modeling** (Taylor, Russ-Eft, & Chan, 2005) | Experiential | Convey procedural knowledge; show appropriate and inappropriate behaviors; enhance observational, behavioral, and technical skills | Attention and retention, behavioral reproduction | Provides an understanding of what constitutes appropriate behavior; useful in skills training; can be imparted via technology or face-to-face; cost effective; can be self-paced | Developing audio-video aids for behavioral modeling may be expensive; highly dependent on effective feedback to trainees; may not be possible to train large groups |
| **Business simulations/games** (Doyle & Brown, 2000; Hays & Singer, 2012; Thoumrungroje, | Experiential or blended | Impart strategic knowledge; enhance decision making and problem-solving skills | Attention, motivation, retention, and behavioral reproduction | Useful for complex concepts; motivation to learn; opportunity to practice; self-paced and interactive; useful in developing higher-order cognitive skills | May be expensive to administer; requires imparting of declarative and procedural knowledge first; requires |

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| Racela, & Chintakananda, 2019) | | | | | technology; moderate psychological fidelity |
| **Expatriate assignments** (Shay & Baack, 2004; Moeller Crossin, & Oliveria, 2019) | Experiential | Enhance cross-cultural knowledge, observational and behavioral skills; enhance managerial or executive competencies | Attention, motivation, retention, and behavioral reproduction | Real world exposure; opportunity to learn first-hand and adapt; opportunity to develop knowledge, skills, and abilities; helps in developing global managers | Conflicts can occur; mistakes can be costly; job performance may suffer; anxiety and culture shock outcomes; expensive |
| **Global virtual/ project teams/task force** (Lee-Kelley & Sankey, 2008; Gonzalez-Perez et al., 2014) | Experiential | Enhance cross-cultural knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) | Attention, motivation, retention, and behavioral reproduction | Real tasks and experience; opportunity to develop knowledge skills, and abilities; high value creation | Conflicts can occur; participants may have different levels of knowledge/skills/abilities and approaches to work; steep learning curve; mistakes can be costly; job performance may suffer; anxiety and culture shock outcomes |
| **Group workshops** (Garside, 1996) | Experiential or blended | Impart strategic knowledge; use of collaborative learning; develop interpersonal skills | Attention, motivation, and retention | Effective for higher level cognitive skills, communication skills, and attitude development; generates ideas; high motivation and engagement | Some trainees may not participate; need to impart declarative information via other methods first; group size challenges; conflicts can occur |
| **In-basket exercises** (Thornton & Cleveland, 1990) | Experiential | Impart strategic knowledge; develop decision making skills; enhance job-related technical and interpersonal skills | Attention, motivation, retention, and behavioral reproduction | Useful when preparing employees for new assignments or promotion; useful when written instructions can convey the situation well; high physical and psychological fidelity; gives trainee an opportunity to practice; simple | Large groups cannot be trained; trainee may get overwhelmed with tasks; limited scope; individual focused |
| **International trips/ planned field experience** (Baumanis et al., 2019; Panina, 2019; Pence & Macgillivray, 2008) | Experiential | Enhance cross-cultural knowledge, observational and behavioral skills | Attention, motivation, retention, and behavioral reproduction | Real-world exposure; opportunity to learn first-hand and adapt; opportunity to develop knowledge, skills, and abilities; allows for increased confidence; focuses on feedback and reflection | Anxiety and culture shock are possible outcomes; expensive and time-consuming; may not be possible for large groups |
| **Interactive multimedia** (Mishra & Sharma, 2004) | Experiential | Impart procedural and strategic knowledge; develop cognitive skills | Attention, motivation, and retention | Self-paced; interactive; provides instant feedback; cost effective; high motivation | Not suitable for interpersonal skills; requires the use of technology; some trainees may not be comfortable with |

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| | | | | | technology and multimedia |
| **Job instruction technique** (Boadu et al., 2008; Curtis et al., 2007) | Experiential | Convey procedural knowledge; enhance technical skills and appropriate attitudes | Attention and behavioral reproduction | Provides feedback; high motivation; opportunity to develop work-related skills | Lack of motivation; less effective for strategic knowledge; requires active trainer involvement and job expertise |
| **Mentoring** (Brockbank, 2006) | Experiential | Impart procedural and strategic knowledge; provide advice and guidance to new employees; enhance interpersonal skills and attitudes | Attention and motivation | Provides feedback; high motivation; opportunity to develop work-related knowledge, skills, and abilities; reflective learning | Need to find the 'right' mentor; requires the development of an effective one-to-one relationship; time-consuming; scheduling conflicts |
| **Role play** (Stokoe, 2014) | Experiential | Develop interpersonal skills and appropriate attitudes | Attention, motivation, and retention | Provides feedback; ability to emulate real work situations; useful for interpersonal skill and attitude development; cost effective; engaging and participatory | May not be possible for large groups; need for immediate and effective feedback; not suitable for declarative and procedural knowledge |
| **Virtual reality** (Seymour et al., 2002) | Experiential | Impart procedural and strategic knowledge; develop technical and cognitive skills | Attention, motivation, retention, and behavioral reproduction | High psychological and physical fidelity; large numbers can be trained located anywhere in the world; can be used when exposure to real setting is not possible; interactive and immersive; high motivation; low cost per employee relative to face-to-face training; improves performance | Virtual platforms can be expensive; not all trainees are used to technology; may not be effective for interpersonal skills and attitudes; not well developed in all training domains |

*Drawn and adapted from the works of Bandura (1977); Blanchard and Thacker (2013); Carroll, Paine, and Ivancevich (1972); Neider (1981); Shoenfelt, Eastman, and Mendel (1991), and other prior studies listed in the table.

## When Should Experiential Approaches Be Used?

Table 34.1 presents a summary of the various experiential training methods and their advantages and disadvantages. Together, experiential approaches appear to be useful in improving general skills, such as critical thinking, reasoning, and promoting positive attitudes (Bhuwik & Brislin, 2000; Pruegger & Rogers, 1994). In general, approaches that are more experiential tend to have better outcomes. As one example, short trips abroad provide opportunities for direct and real contact with other cultures (see Table 34.1); however, short trips are not fully immersive and tend to be costly. By contrast, full immersion into a new culture by way of an expatriate assignment provides high experiential learning opportunities, but has an even higher financial cost and additional challenges with living abroad. That is, expatriate long-term trips offer the best potential for learning but are the costliest and riskiest learning method.

One key point from Table 34.1 is that experiential methods tend to be effective because of their fidelity or similarity between training and real conditions (Kozlowski & DeShon, 2004). Knowledge gained through experience aids the development of skills and understandings (see Chapter 33). Experiential learning perpetuates a cycle in which experience provides opportunities to observe and conceptualize differences and then experiment again with new behavioral competencies (Kolb, 1984). Firsthand experience allows learners to receive immediate feedback and fully develop their understanding of interacting and working with representatives of other cultures.

## Technology and the Future of CCT

With increasing migration, international trade, and international tensions, the importance of effective CCT is only increasing. Anecdotal contemporary events such as Brexit, separatist movements in Catalonia, Quebec, and Crimea, the discussion about a wall between Mexico and the United States, and renewed tensions between the United States and the European Union with Iran, Russia, Korea, and China all speak to the importance of cultural understanding in the contemporary world. With the costly nature of most experiential learning initiatives (cf. the preceding section of this chapter and Table 34.1), we suggest that practitioners and educators explore the use of modern technology to create immersive learning experiences.

### Use of Communication Technology to Leverage Real-World Experiences

Rapid communication technology developments present new opportunities for organizations but also new challenges. Developments in communication technologies and considerable global integration have prompted a rise in global virtual collaboration in the workplace (Chudoba et al., 2005; Martins, Gilson, & Maynard, 2004). Approximately 60% of managers regularly complete tasks as members of geographically dispersed virtual teams (Hertel, Geister, & Kondradt, 2005). Modern communication technologies allow for easy collaboration across national borders, providing an excellent opportunity for ‘learning through experience’ by interacting with other cultures. Such opportunities are ripe for inclusion in formal CCT programs. Similarly, cross-cultural interactions are no longer a prerogative of expatriates and world-traveling executives. That is, office employees occasionally interact with their counterparts in other countries via WhatsApp, WeChat, email, Skype, or similar means. More research is needed regarding how these technologies could be leveraged for effective CCT. However, some current CCT methods place people from different national cultures together to experience international collaboration and experiment with these technologies. X-Culture (Taras et al., 2012; 2013) or GEE (Gilbertson & Cathro, 2014; Gonzalez-Perez et al., 2014) are examples of such learning initiatives that use modern communication technology.

### Use of Online Technology-Based Training to Leverage Real-World Experiences

Given the extent of the technological revolution and the pervasive digital engagement of the current workforce, computer-based training (CBT) or electronic training (Lee & Owens, 2004) may prove to be efficient and effective in supporting CCT. Various forms of CBT include programmed instructions, intelligent tutoring systems, interactive multimedia, virtual reality, and

web casting; each of these has varying degrees of fidelity, engagement, and trainee immersion (e.g., Burns & Capps, 2013; Lee & Owens, 2004; Zhang, 2005). Companies such as Maersk, Microsoft, and IBM have been using virtual reality platforms to train their globally distributed workforce in several domains. At present, several Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are freely available via Coursera, edX, Moodle, and other virtual platforms to assist in developing an understanding of diverse national cultures, overt manifestations of cultural differences, and how cultural differences influence human behavior in workplaces or social settings.

The effectiveness of CBT lies in its ability to provide trainees with convenient, interactive, and self-paced learning environments. The ICURA virtual reality immersive learning experience (Froschauer et al., 2010) likewise provides a high degree of psychological and physical fidelity akin to the real world. As we educate, train, and develop the millennial and i generations, who were raised in a digitized world, CBT may prove to be useful methods for providing CCT. Moreover, compared to face-to-face training, CBT, such as web-based training, is attractive to business organizations because of its economical, logistical, and instructional advantages (Hannum, 2001).

**Directions for Future Research**

Despite extensive research on CCT and its effectiveness, the extant literature lacks a full understanding of its full potential and the mechanisms by which different CCT methods operate. As a field we still do not have a solid theory for determining the appropriateness of a particular CCT approach and learning program over another depending on the audience and purpose of the training. Research aimed at developing and testing such fine-grained theories is long overdue.

We cited previous studies that tested the effectiveness of CCT, but several important questions remain unanswered. First, the question remains of the effect size and the relative effectiveness of cognitive versus experiential CCT methods. While we reviewed some evidence that suggests that experiential CCT may be more effective than cognitive CCT, some questions remain, such as: ‘Compared to cognitive methods, such as lectures and the use of textbooks, what is the expected rate of learning improvement from the utilization of experiential learning methods?’ ‘How would this effect differ across different types of experiential learning programs?’ ‘How will the rate of learning improve as the duration of the CCT program increases?'

Second, the utility of CCT has been largely ignored. Revealing a statistically significant improvement from before to after the training, a difference between a control (no training) and training group, or a difference between two training methods, does not completely inform managers whether or not the benefits of the training would outweigh its financial and time costs. Relatedly, such information does not show which training programs would yield the highest utility for a specific organization.

The challenge with research on CCT utility lies in the difficulty of defining and measuring the results of CCT, as well as isolating the effects of such training programs from the myriad of other organizational factors that may improve revenues and employee attitudes, reduce the number of conflicts, and lead to desirable job outcomes. The extant literature cannot answer important questions for managers in organizations, such as ‘How well does the training transfer

to improvements in workplace performance?' 'What is the expected return on investment for the training?' 'How quickly will the investment in the training program pay for itself?' As mentioned previously, experiential CCT programs tend to be more expensive than cognitive CCT programs, which begs the questions: 'Is the investment in experiential CCT (compared to cognitive CCT) worth the results?' 'Would it be sufficient to give the trainees some readings or offer a one-way lecture, or is a more elaborate and resource-demanding experiential training program worth the extra cost?' In other words, as a general rule we assume that experiential learning is better than lectures or readings and that longer training is preferred, but it is plausible that cognitive methods are preferred in the scenarios we have articulated in Table 34.1. Unfortunately, precise estimates of different CCT method effects are unavailable, and the methodologies for estimating the utility of CCT programs have yet to be fully developed. More research is needed that explores the relative efficacy of different CCT approaches to provide clarity and guidance for practitioners and managers on different CCT method utility.

Lastly, except for research in the context of expatriation, most research on CCT effectiveness has been conducted using student samples. It is unclear whether these findings can generalize to corporate training and development programs. Unfortunately, conducting this type of research in an organizational context has proven to be notoriously difficult. A proper evaluation would require a measurement of employee attitudes, behaviors, and productivity before and after the training. Further, access to employee performance records can be a challenge. Hence, researchers are generally not given the luxury of collecting these types of data for fear of leakage. As a result of these challenges, the evaluation of most corporate training programs is limited to simple satisfaction surveys at the end of the program. Unfortunately, enjoying the training does not guarantee its effectiveness in translating to meaningful work outcomes. Researchers who can address these limitations and conduct such evaluations in actual workplace contexts will contribute considerably to the field and will greatly advance our understanding of the comparative effectiveness of different CCT learning approaches.

## Conclusion

Cultural adjustment is a constantly evolving process, rather than an endpoint. As we reviewed in this chapter, there is a growing need for effective CCT. Our hope is that this chapter will provide guidance for managers and practitioners for developing and delivering effective CCT as well as spur further scholarly research on this important topic.

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