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Innovations in International Teaching and Learning

PEDAGOGY IS PART OF OUR PROFESSIONAL responsibilities. Yet, little research is done in the area. The Academy of Management has developed a specialized research journal, *Learning and Education*, for example, to distribute research on the topic. The Academy of International Business is yet to establish such a journal, but a few other outfits have filled the gap, e.g., *Journal of International Business Education*, *Journal of Teaching in International Business*, *Journal of International Education in Business*, to mention a few. Publications in peer-reviewed journals also need to be supplemented by “how to” insights and “best practice” cases for those teaching and researching international business. It is the latter which is the focus of this special issue.

This issue contains three insightful articles on the practice of teaching and learning international business. The first article, written by Anne-Wil Harzing of the University of Melbourne with a multinational collaborative team, examines cross-cultural differences in the names and academic titles of teachers. This article is not only interesting to globetrotting professors, but it can also be used as a point of discussion for teaching about the role of culture, gender, age, language, inter/intra-national diversity, social distance, formality and hierarchy in international business. Inappropriate address of someone’s title can lead to misperceptions regarding respect, authority and communications.

The second article, written by J. Mark Munoz and Jon F. “Rick” Bibb of Millikin University, outlines the formation of a course that is becoming increasingly popular among international business undergraduate students: international business consulting. While high caliber schools and MBA programs have long implemented global consulting, this practice is much less common among undergraduate programs. The article sets the rationale for implementing international business consulting in undergraduate education, discusses the context for the course development and learning outcomes, and makes suggestions for professors wishing to implement such a course in their institutions.

The third article in this Special Issue shows how to use movies in the pedagogy of international business. William R. Pendergast of California Polytechnic State University uses the classic movie *Gung Ho* to illustrate cross-cultural models and to teach about a variety of issues relating to international management. This movie allows instructors to discuss Hofstede and Swartz models of culture and to understand the importance of cultural distance. Constructs highlighted by the movie include individualism, collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, conservatism, motivation, incentives, authority and leadership, work values, etiquette, communication, diversity and transnational human resource management. While movies are meant to entertain, their value in teaching about international business can be great in the skillful hands of a seasoned professor. Pendergast’s use of *Gung Ho* may inspire others to use their favorite movies depicting realistic cross-cultural differences and international management.

AIB Insights continues to seek articles of relevance to the teaching of international business and comparative management systems. Teaching about cultures, developing new international courses and stimulating student interest through pedagogical innovations is, to a great extent, our contribution to the field, our students and our respective institutions. Please keep them coming!



Ilan Alon, Editor

What's in a Name?

Cross Country Differences in Preferred Ways of Address for University Teachers

Anne-Wil Harzing, University of Melbourne, Australia

Country collaborators: Joyce Baldueza, Wilhelm Barner-Rasmussen, Cordula Barzantny, Anne Canabal, Anabella Davila, Alvaro Espejo, Rita Ferreira, Axele Giroud, Kathrin Koester, Yung-Kuei Liang, Audra Mockaitis, Michael J. Morley, Barbara Myloni, Joseph O.T. Odusanya, Sharon Leiba O'Sullivan, Ananda Kumar Palaniappan, Paulo Prochno, Srabani Roy Choudhury, Ayse Saka, Sununta Siengthai, Linda Viswat, Ayda Uzuncarsili Soydas, Lena Zander.

THIS ARTICLE SHOWS THAT THERE are large differences among countries in the way students normally expect to address their teachers. Using a scenario-based study among MBA students in 22 countries, we find that students in Northern Europe have a tendency to be more informal and address their lecturers with their given name. Academic titles such as Dr. or Professor are more common in other countries, including the USA.

Gender-based options such as Madam/Sir and Mrs./Mr. followed by the family name are especially popular in France, the Netherlands, Greece and Turkey. Some gender differences in preferred ways of address are also apparent: students are rather more likely to see a male teacher as a professor and are more inclined to use the given name for female teachers. Male students in particular appear to make some level of distinction in the way they address male and female teachers.

In a recent cross-national study we presented respondents in 22 countries with short scenarios describing a concrete managerial problem (see Harzing et al. 2009; Zander, Mockaitis, Harzing, et al. 2010). The scenarios included a predefined set of possible solutions, and we asked respondents to rank their top three solutions. Our respondents were local MBA students in each country in question. They were on average 32 years old, with nine years of work experience. International students were excluded from our sample. The resulting sample sizes ranged from 41 for the Philippines to 168 for Portugal, but for most countries they were around 100. Data were collected with a paper and pencil survey in-class between September 2005 and May 2006. Questionnaires were translated into the local languages.

As scenario-based questions are not yet very common, we included a "warm-up" scenario to help our respondents get used to the format. This scenario queried to the way students are expected to address their teacher. Students were presented with the following question: *Imagine*

that you are doing an MBA degree at a university in the USA as an international student. One of your teachers is a 40-year old woman named Maria SMITH (Maria is her given name, Smith is her family name). She has a PhD degree/doctorate. In the first seminar she indicated that she has no particular preference as to how you address her. How would you normally address her when you talk to her in class? Please rank the best three alternatives from 1 to 3. Students were presented with eight answer alternatives: Maria, Mrs. Smith, Professor Smith, Dr. Smith, Dr. Maria, Madam/Mrs., Professor, Teacher. An alternative male version (Peter Smith) was used in half of the cases.

“...the very substantial variety between countries in their preferred ways of address leads us to conclude that home country norms are likely to have also played a significant role in many countries.”

We report the results from this scenario, concentrating mainly on differences between countries. As the scenario asked students to picture themselves as studying in the USA, we can expect respondents to have accommodated their responses to some extent to the U.S. setting. However, the very substantial variety between countries in their preferred ways of address leads us to conclude that home country norms are likely to have also played a significant role in many countries. This is confirmed by anecdotal evidence acquired from all countries in our study. Hence, our results might provide some interesting insights into country differences in the preferred way to address teachers. Our paper also presents teachers with an interesting case study to discuss in their class as an introduction to cross-cultural differences in a setting that is close to students' daily experience.

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What Are the Most Popular Ways to Address Your Teacher?

Overall, the most popular option was Dr. Smith, with Professor Smith coming a close second. Apparently, most MBA students prefer to address their teachers in a relatively formal way, using their official title and family name. Formally speaking the scenario did not contain enough information to assess whether Maria/Peter was a full professor and hence the slight preference for Dr. Smith is not surprising. These two alternatives were followed by three others that were nearly equally popular: Professor (without a family name), Mrs./Mr. Smith, or Maria/Peter. Less popular was Madam/Sir without a family name. Teacher and Dr. Maria/Peter and took up the last two places.

Gender and age differences

For most of the options, there were relatively few differences between the female and male version of the scenario. However, Maria was significantly less likely to be addressed as Professor Smith and significantly more likely to be addressed with the Dr. title and given name (Dr. Maria). Apparently, students are rather more likely to see a male teacher as a professor and are more inclined to use the given name for female teachers.

Differences are also apparent for the student's gender. Even when controlling for country differences, male students are significantly less likely to call their teacher Professor Smith and are significantly more likely to call their teacher by their first name than female students are. Male students seem to perceive less social distance between themselves and their teachers than female students do.

The two gender effects also seem to interact. Female students generally make few distinctions between male and female teachers. The only difference we found is that they are slightly more likely to address their female teacher with Dr. Maria than they do their male teacher with Dr. Peter. Male students display this tendency as well, but in addition are significantly less likely to address their female teachers with Professor Smith than they do for their male teachers. They also have a slightly higher tendency to address their female teachers as Teacher or Mrs. Smith than they do for their male teachers.

There were also some age effects, with older students being more likely to address their teacher by their given name and less likely to address them as Dr. Smith or Madam/Sir. This could again be reflective of a perception of lower social distance between students and teacher for older students.

Differences between Countries

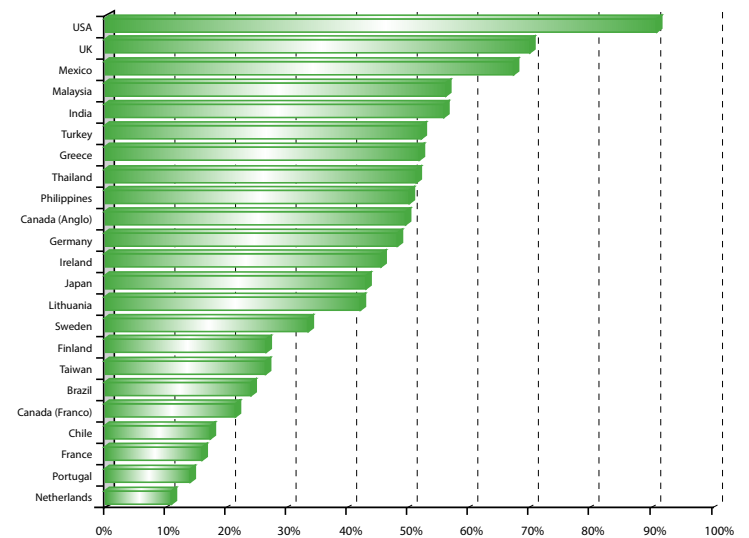
Although all students were asked to imagine themselves doing an MBA in the USA, there were very large differences in preferred terms of address *between* respondents in different *countries*. So even though we asked our respondents to tell us how they would address their teacher

if they studied in the USA, apparently many of them were still strongly influenced by their home country norms. In the next five sections we will discuss the five most popular options in a little more detail.

Dr. Smith

The most popular option overall was Dr. Smith, with 42% of the students ranking this as their first or second option. However, as Figure 1 shows, large differences between countries are apparent. In the USA, nearly all students picked Dr. Smith as their first or second preferred way to address their teacher.

Figure 1: Percent of students ranking Dr. Smith as their first or second preferred option



Dr. Smith was also a very popular option in the UK and Mexico, and in a large number of countries around half of the students would see it as their first or second choice. In some countries (e.g. Greece and Japan) this seems clearly influenced by the US setting of the scenario, as this way of address is not normally very popular in these countries. Countries in which the Dr. Smith option is not popular at all include the Latin countries (Brazil, Chile, France and Portugal) as well as the Netherlands.

Canadian students were quite divided in their choice for this option. While students with English as their native language were among the many countries in which about half of the students would see this as an appropriate option, the Francophone students joined the Latin countries and the Netherlands in their limited support for this option.

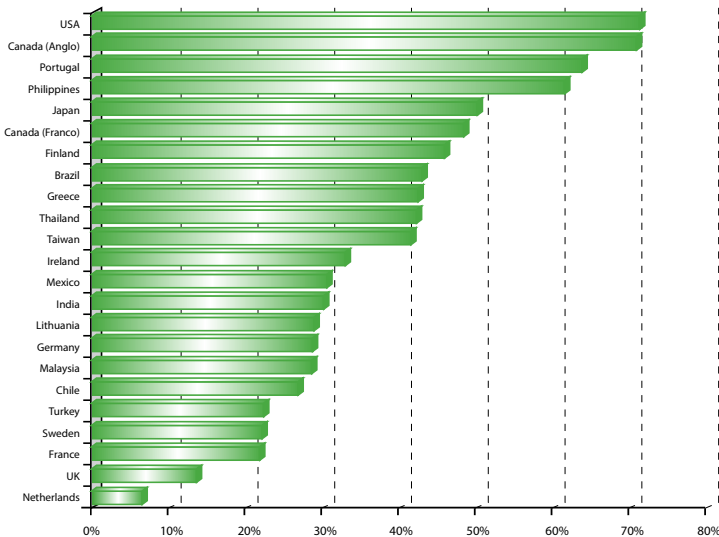
Interestingly, even within the group of Francophone students there was a difference in the extent this option was preferred, depending on the language of the questionnaire (questionnaires were randomly distributed in French and English in this group). Of the Francophone students responding to the questionnaire in French, only 15 percent preferred this as their first or second option, while for the Francophone students responding to an English-language questionnaire, this was 25 percent.

Professor Smith

The next most preferred option was Professor Smith. Overall, 37 percent of the students picked this as their first or second choice. As

Figure 2 shows, the USA is again at the top of the list, indicating clearly that academic titles are used frequently in the USA. Interestingly, even though Dr. Smith was quite popular in the UK, Professor Smith is not at all popular.

Figure 2: Percent of students ranking Professor Smith as their first or second preferred option



Canada is closer to the U.S. than for the Dr. Smith option. However, this is true more so for the English-speaking, who are identical to the USA in their preference for Professor Smith (71%). Francophone students chose Professor Smith as their first or second option in only 48 percent of the cases. For Francophone students responding to a French questionnaire, this percentage goes down to 40 percent.

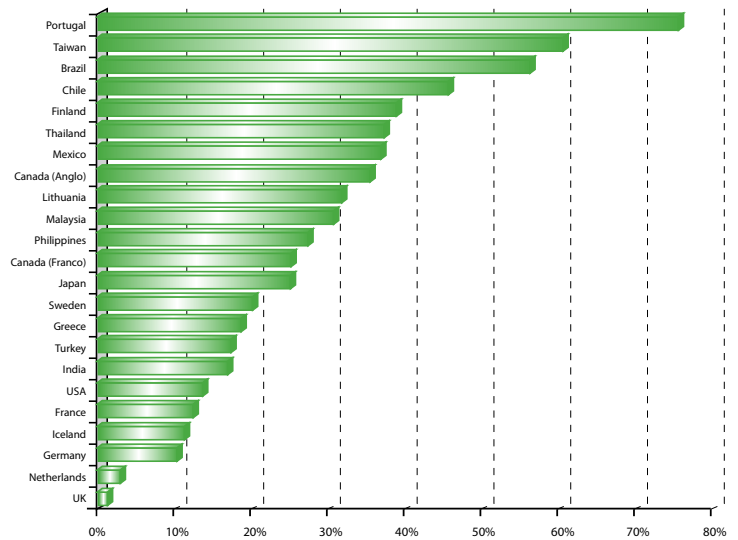
Other countries in which Professor Smith is a very popular option are Portugal and the Philippines. The Netherlands again scores lowest, with only 6 percent of the students picking this as their first or second most preferred option.

Professor

As Figure 3 shows, the use of the Professor's title without a family name appears to be very popular in Portugal, with three quarters of the students seeing it as their first or second most preferred option. Overall, only 28 percent of the students do so, and there are only two other countries in which this option is popular with more than half of the students: Taiwan and Brazil.

Many of the same countries that did not like the Professor's title when it was followed by the family name don't like using the title on its own (without a family name following) either. It is a very unpopular option in the UK, the Netherlands, Germany, Ireland and France. Somewhat surprisingly, it is not very popular in the USA either, but that is largely caused by the overwhelmingly strong preference for Dr. or Professor Smith, leaving little room for other options.

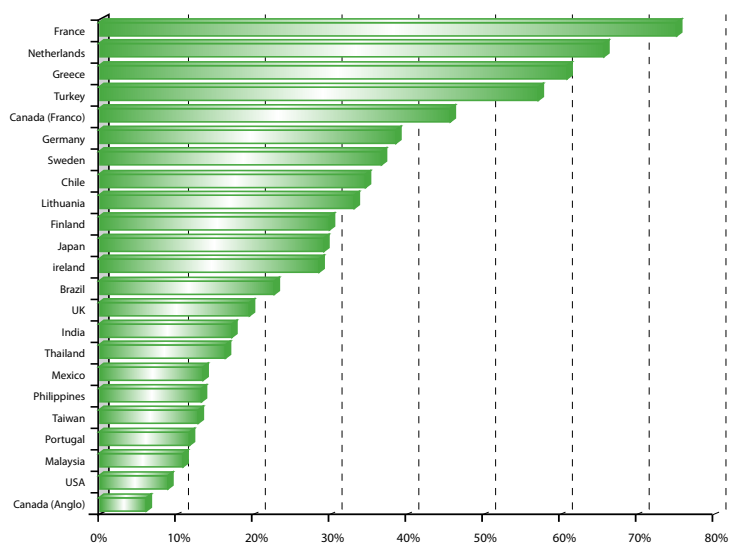
Figure 3: Percent of students ranking Professor as their first or second preferred option



Mrs./Mr. Smith

The gender-based Mrs./Mr. Smith was a surprisingly popular option. In fact, 31 percent of the students saw this as the first or second most preferred option. However, as Figure 4 shows, the preferences for this option differ greatly between countries, with 58–76 percent of the students in four countries (France, the Netherlands, Greece and Turkey) seeing this choice as highly appropriate.

Figure 4: Percent of students ranking Mrs./Mr. Smith as their first or second preferred option



Some of the Northern European countries also display some tendency towards this choice, with 30–40 percent of the students picking it as their first or second choice. In Canada, the French influence again was very apparent. Although only 6 percent of the native English speaking

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students chose this as their first or second option, no less than 46 percent of the Francophones did.

As was the case for Dr. and Professor Smith, the language of the questionnaire reinforced this difference for the two groups of Canadian students. Whilst only 33 percent of the Francophones responding in English chose this as their first or second preferred option, 70 percent of the Francophones responding in French did.

In other countries, however, the Mrs./Mr. Smith option doesn't seem to be popular at all. In general, students in Anglophone countries do not seem to see this as a viable option. This might, however, be partly caused by the more explicit use of the Ms. (to avoid the choice between Miss and Mrs.) alternative in these countries. This might have led students to see Mrs. as an inappropriate option.

Given Name (Maria/Peter)

As Figure 5 shows, country differences for the given name option (Maria/Peter) are even larger. Reflecting the general level of informality in Britain, virtually all of the British students had a strong preference for addressing their teachers by their given name. This tendency was also strong in Ireland and the other Northern European countries (Germany, Netherlands, Sweden and Finland). It was also quite popular in Chile and Brazil.

Readers might be surprised by the relative informality displayed by German students. German culture is normally considered to be rather formal, with a high importance attached to academic titles. Our results might be influenced by the idiosyncratic nature of our sample: German students enrolled in an English-language MBA program run by an English institution and delivered largely in the Netherlands by Dutch and

Figure 5: Percent of students ranking Maria/Peter as their first or second preferred option

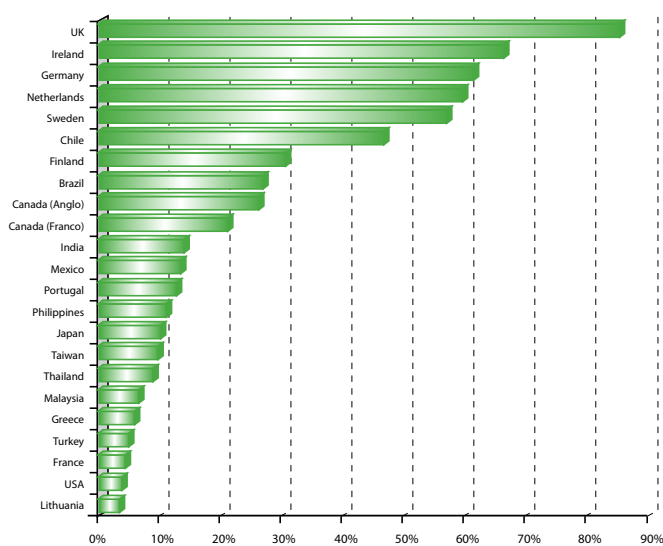


Table 1: How to address your lecturer? Top 3 choices in 22 countries

Country	First choice	Second choice	Third Choice
Brazil	Professor	Professor Smith	Maria/Peter
Canada	Professor Smith	Dr. Smith	Professor
Chile	Maria/Peter	Professor	Mrs./Mr. Smith
Finland	Professor Smith	Maria/Peter	Professor
France	Madam/Sir	Mrs./Mr. Smith	Professor Smith
Germany	Maria/Peter	Dr. Smith	Mrs./Mr. Smith
Greece	Mrs./Mr. Smith	Dr. Smith	Professor Smith
India	Dr. Smith or Madam/Sir	Madam/Sir or Dr. Smith	Professor Smith
Ireland	Maria/Peter	Dr. Smith	Professor Smith
Japan	Professor Smith	Dr. Smith	Mrs./Mr. Smith
Lithuania	Teacher	Dr. Smith	Mrs./Mr. Smith
Malaysia	Dr. Smith	Dr. Maria/Dr. Peter	Professor
Mexico	Dr. Smith	Professor Smith	Professor
Netherlands	Mrs./Mr. Smith	Maria/Peter	Madam/Sir
Philippines	Professor Smith	Dr. Smith	Madam/Sir
Portugal	Professor	Professor Smith	Dr. Smith
Sweden	Maria/Peter	Dr. Smith	Mrs./Mr. Smith
Thailand	Dr. Smith	Professor Smith	Professor
Taiwan	Professor	Professor Smith	Teacher
Turkey	Mrs./Mr. Smith	Dr. Smith	Professor Smith
UK	Maria/Peter	Dr. Smith	Mrs./Mr. Smith
USA	Dr. Smith	Professor Smith	Professor

British lecturers. This choice of sample was necessary because MBA programs are unusual in Germany. However, this direct exposure to different forms of address might mean that our German students were far more likely to adjust their home country norms than were students from any other countries. German respondents were also among the oldest in the sample. As discussed above this will also have increased the tendency to see their teachers as peers and hence use a more informal way of address.

In Canada, the influence of the French language was apparent again. Overall, this option was less preferred by Francophones than by Anglophones. However, the language of the questionnaire made a huge difference. Although nearly 30% of the Francophones responding in English chose this as their first or second option, only 5 percent of the Francophones responding in French did. Finally, in most of the other countries, it is clearly not done to be on a "first name basis" with your teacher.

Remaining Alternatives

The three remaining alternatives ("Dr. Maria/Peter", "Teacher" and "Madam/Sir") were less popular overall and chosen as the first or second in only a very limited number of countries. Only Malaysian students chose the "Dr. Maria/Dr. Peter" alternative frequently, with 40% picking it as their first or second choice. The only other countries where more than a handful of students chose this as their first or second option were Thailand, Mexico, India, Turkey and the Philippines.

Only Lithuanian students chose the option of “Teacher” frequently, with nearly 50% picking it as their first or second choice. Clearly this is a very common way to address one’s teacher in Lithuania. The only other countries where more than a handful of students chose this as their first or second option were Taiwan, Japan, Mexico, Turkey, Brazil and Thailand.

Madam/Sir (without a last name) was a very popular option in France, with nearly 70 percent picking it as their first or second choice. It was also popular in India and the Netherlands, with nearly 50 percent of the students choosing it as either their first or second preference. The only other countries in which more than a handful of students chose this as the first or second option were the Philippines, Chile and Canada. In Canada, the French influence was very apparent again. Although only 9 percent of the native English speaking students chose this as their first or second option, 30 percent of the Francophones overall did so, increasing to 50 percent of the Francophones responding in French.

What Are the Preferred Ways to Address Teachers in Each Country?

Table 1 lists the top three choices in each country in our dataset. It is clear that there is very substantial variety across countries in how students prefer to address their teachers or how they feel teachers in the USA should be addressed.

However, some broad patterns can be discovered. Students in the Northern European countries (Sweden, Finland, Germany, Netherlands, UK, Ireland) seem more likely to be on informal terms with their teachers, often calling them by their given name. Sweden, Germany and the UK even show a completely identical pattern of preferences in this respect.

The “Maria/Peter” option is also quite common in Chile and Brazil. Gender-based options (Mrs./Mr. Smith or Madam/Sir) are popular in France, Greece, Turkey and the Netherlands. Lithuania and Malaysia display unique preferences for Teacher and Dr. Maria/Peter.

If a student would need to address his or her lecturer without knowing his or her preference, the safest option might be Dr. Smith. This is the preferred first or second choice in three quarters of the countries in our study. Professor Smith is a good alternative as this is acceptable in most of the remaining countries and a frequent choice in many countries. Only the Netherlands seems to be largely averse to any sort of academic title, with none of the top three choices containing academic titles.

Discussion: The importance of Country Differences

Large differences exist between countries in the way students address their lecturers. Although all students were asked to imagine themselves studying for an MBA in the USA, country differences are so large that we can safely assume that in many cases home country norms have played a strong role in their responses.

Our data do suggest, however, that respondents in some countries may have made a more conscious effort to adjust to what they *believed* to be typical U.S.-based forms of address. We already discussed the German example above. In Brazil Professor [Family name] is normally not a very common way to address teachers, and hence students might have accommodated to what they assumed to be the norm in the USA. This would have been helped by the fact that our Brazilian students were more likely than students in many other countries to have spent some time in the USA.

Finland also provides an interesting example. In general, students appear to avoid direct forms of address in Finland, but in situations where they are “forced” to use a form of address, they will typically use the teacher’s first name (as is reflected in our data), although this does depend to some extent on the level of seniority of the teacher. Hence the frequent choice for Professor in Finland might have been influenced by the U.S. setting. Alternatively, the fact that there is no generally accepted norm of address in Finland, might have led many students to pick this generic academic title as their second choice.

Mexican students showed a pattern of preferences that was virtually identical to that of the USA. Its geographical closeness to the USA and the fact that many students have spent some time in the USA might have contributed to this. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that Dr. [Family name] and Professor [Family name] are also a very common choice for Mexican students in Mexico.

Another reason for the similarity between the Mexican and US results could also be that our data were collected in El Paso, very close to the Mexican border, and US results might have been influenced by Mexican norms. In order to assess this possibility, we compared students who had Spanish as their mother tongue and had one or both parents born in Mexico, with students who had English as their mother tongue and had both parents born in the USA.

If there was a clear Mexican influence, we would expect the former group to display more “Mexican” norms in terms of address than the latter group. However, this turned out not to be the case. The groups did not differ significantly on any of the options and in fact were extremely close on most options. In addition, the broad similarity of Anglo Canadian norms of address to those displayed in our U.S. sample seems to suggest that it is unlikely that our US results were caused purely by sample idiosyncrasies. However, anecdotal evidence does indicate that first name address is common in some universities in the USA and hence norms of address for teachers might display some regional variety in the USA.

In Germany, the use of academic titles is very common, and our results are rather at odds with this, showing a dominant preference for addressing the teacher on a first-name basis. It is likely that the direct exposure to Dutch and British lecturers and their penchant for informality has influenced the German students’ perception of what appropriate norms of address are in the USA, even though in reality US norms might be much closer to their home country norms.

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Some of the significant differences that we found between countries would certainly seem to be related to general cultural differences, such as the higher level of informality in Northern Europe and the generally higher level of power distance in Asian and Latin countries (see e.g., Adler, 2007; Hofstede, 1980/2001). However, the general lack of formality in the US culture is not reflected in the educational setting. This could be due to the fact that Professor (typically used for all university teachers rather than only for those who are full professors) and Dr. appear to be seen more as professional titles in the USA. Hence their use would not necessarily be as reflective of a high level of formality or power distance as it might be in other countries. Gender-based options were surprisingly popular in some European countries, most notably France, the Netherlands, Greece and Turkey. As yet it is unclear why this is the case.

Implications for Students and Teachers

This informal study shows that potential for confusion and offense is clearly present with respect to the best way to address your teacher. Students coming from Northern European countries would do well to become a bit more formal in their behaviour when they go and study elsewhere or write to academics in other countries. In fact, most teachers would expect written forms of communication to be more formal (particularly in their first interaction with a student) than face-to-face communications. Students from the USA and many Asian and Latin countries might need to suppress their discomfort when teachers in Northern Europe invite them to address them by their given name.

It is important to note that it is not only the relationship between student and teacher that varies within different culture settings and when one either studies or teaches abroad, but also perception amongst students themselves. It is not uncommon for some students who would normally address their teachers formally to find it disrespectful when other students are more informal. These students also tend to find it

hard to comprehend why a teacher would accept what they perceive as disrespectful behavior.

For teachers, knowledge of the cultural differences in addressing teachers will help teachers understand their students better and build the rapport that is crucial in maintaining a healthy student–teacher relationship. Being aware about students’ different perceptions of “distance” between student and teacher help us to think about different ways to engage students. IB professors are probably more cross-culturally aware than many other professors, but all of the collaborators of this paper still learned something from our results. It certainly makes us want to set a norm upfront in our classes to increase students’ comfort level.

This short paper could function as a case study and an ice breaker for those teaching international students and in international settings, not only to understand *why* we have variations within the class, but also to debate how one feels with different ways of addressing others. This can be extremely useful in exemplifying how business dealings can also be impacted upon by people’s attitude. First impressions are often important!

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Anne-Wil Harzing is Professor in International Management at the University of Melbourne, Australia. Her research interests include international HRM, expatriate management, HQ-subsidiary relationships, cross-cultural management and the role of language in international business. She has published about these topics in journals such as *Journal of International Business Studies*, *Journal of Organizational Behaviour*, *Strategic Management Journal*, *Human Resource Management*, and *Organization Studies*. Her books include *Managing the Multinationals* (Edward Elgar, 1999) and *International Human Resource Management* (Sage, 2010). Since 1999 she also maintains an extensive website (www.harzing.com) with resources for international and cross-cultural management as well as academic publishing and bibliometrics.

International Business Consulting: Pedagogy for a Global Economy?

J. Mark Munoz, Millikin University, USA
Jon F. "Rick" Bibb, Millikin University, USA

EDUCATORS AROUND THE WORLD CONTINUALLY seek new models to facilitate global business learning. Based on the authors' experience in teaching an international business consulting (IBC) course at the Tabor School of Business, Millikin University in Illinois, this article describes the pedagogical model and evaluates its suitability for imparting international business lessons. Insights and recommendations are offered to readers for assessment of program suitability in their curriculum and to determine its appropriateness in the advancement of global business learning.

Value Proposition to the School

Course development should often be tied to the university mission and goals. IBC is well-aligned with Millikin University's mission of "democratic citizenship in a global environment" and the Tabor School of Business' departmental plan which emphasizes "entrepreneurial-focused, integrated foundation for graduates' professional and personal achievement, and be a learning partner valued by the business community."

Also important are links to the accreditation standards. The Tabor School of Business is accredited by the Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP). ACBSP stresses the relevance of educational and business process management, including curriculum development in global management. IBC meets the ACBSP requirements in at least three areas: (1) learning-centered education—since it emphasizes active learning and problem-solving approaches; (2) faculty and staff participation and development—because faculty acquire and develop new skills and leverage abilities for private sector development; and (3) partnership development—with opportunities where internal and external linkages are cultivated (ABPSP, 2010).

In addition, the academic literature sets forth at least five reasons why an international business consulting course is needed in the curriculum: (1) active learning methodologies stimulate critical thought and heightened concept retention (Foyle, 1995; Kane, 2004; Lammers and Murphy, 2002); (2) assumption of real world roles leads to longer and better concept retention (Specht & Sandlin, 1991); (3) engagement in real-life cases increases appreciation for theory and practice, teamwork, and communication skills (ACNielsen, 2000); (4) field courses offer pedagogical flexibility, facilitate peer learning, and heighten student analysis

and uncovering of solutions (Kent et al., 1997; Tueth & Wickle, 2000); (5) courses offering international insights and cross-cultural perspectives enhance student experiences and prepare them to succeed in global business (Beck et al., 1996).

The international business consulting course has the potential to also: (1) teach responsibility and accountability, since there is a committed deliverable; (2) train students to be creative and resourceful, since they work with limited resources; (3) help students develop the ability to deal with chaos and uncertainty, as consulting projects require managing unpredictable market forces; (4) challenge students to work through complex business angles since diverse factors shape a consulting project; (5) enhance writing and presentation skills since a written report and presentation is required; (6) encourage teamwork since the project is team-based; (7) expose students to work pressure since there are deadlines; (8) develop professionalism and confidence as students interact with corporate executives; (9) heighten cross-cultural awareness and sensitivity since students collaborate with foreign-based executives; and (10) increase students' appreciation and understanding of global business since projects involve foreign products and overseas markets. Given the many benefits of the course, the next section evaluates the model of IBC as it was implemented in a private liberal university in the US Midwest.

The IBC Model

To provide an institutional, program, and course perspective of IBC, the authors characterize the operational structure. Relevant information is offered in Table 1, while a shortened syllabus is provided in the appendix.

The IBC operational structure suggests that even with a small size and budget constraints, a course that serves the needs of students, the curriculum, and the international community is possible. Figure 1 illustrates the process of building the IBC course.

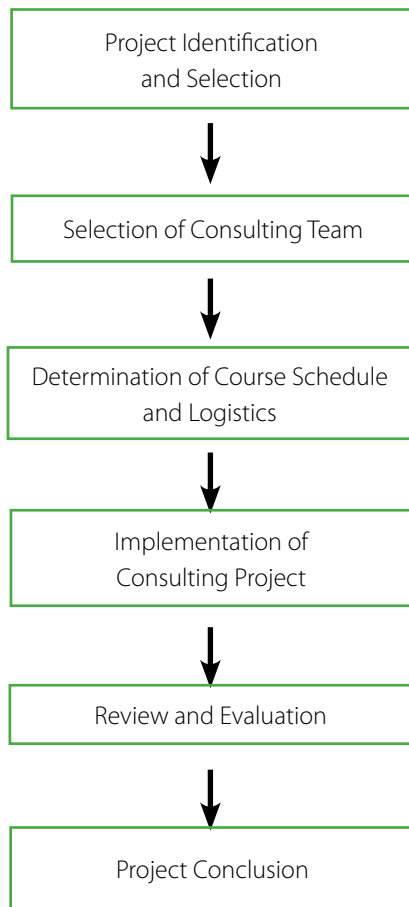
Assessment of learning is becoming an important ingredient of our pedagogical outcomes. A focus on favorable student outcomes is related to teaching implications in Table 2. Course preparation and planning, and active involvement and flexibility on the part of the instructor, are key to leading a successful global consulting course.

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Table 1: IBC Course Details

Small university setting	IBC is a business school course offering at Millikin University, a private liberal arts university in the US Midwest with about 2,500 undergraduate students.
Integrated with the Entrepreneurship curriculum	Required for Entrepreneurship majors, the course is open to juniors and seniors. It is an optional elective for all other business majors.
Course length	Course duration is one semester. In cases where comprehensive research is required, it extends to two semesters and students travel overseas for about 3 weeks for research.
Small class-size	There are 8–10 students in a class, which aids manageability.
Course requirement	Faculty consent is required. A strong GPA and courses such as Economics, Accounting, Marketing and Entrepreneurship are pre-requisites. Students are screened for self motivation, initiative, and interest.
Meeting time	Class meets weekly for 3–4 hours. Students meet with instructors outside of class to discuss research progress.
Student recruitment	Participating students are recruited through e-mail, word of mouth, school posters, and personal invitation.
Student diversity	One consulting project had students originating from four countries: US, Mexico, France, and Korea. Aside from being culturally diverse, IBC is multi-disciplinary and attracts students from fields other than business.
Project and client selection	Prospective projects and clients are identified by instructors through business networks. Project ideas are discussed and consensus is reached to proceed or not. Consulting projects are coordinated with the Dean for scheduling.
Course format	IBC format varies depending on the project. Ten students are broken up into 3 or 4 teams and are assigned research topics aligned with consulting goals. Each week, teams present findings and participants critique data quality and completeness. When needed data is complete, research is collated and findings and conclusions are drawn. A comprehensive consulting report is then submitted to the client.
Collaborative teaching	IBC is typically taught by two instructors and 2–3 guest consultants. One instructor takes the lead, and the other lends support. Instructors and consultants bring industry and research experience with specializations in International Business, Marketing, Economics, and Entrepreneurship. Guest consultants often undertake the “client’s role” to help the students appropriately focus their research on client needs.
Course budget	No budget is provided by the institution. When travel is necessary, expenses are shouldered by the students. In certain instances, minimal budget is requested from the company (client) to cover research-related expenses.
Company collaboration	Students collaborate closely with a designated executive in the company. Within the first two weeks, students sign a confidentially agreement and project contract with the client.
International projects	IBC courses have strong international orientation. The course model is flexible and include activities where students: (1) assist foreign companies identify suitable markets or partners in the US, (2) help US companies understand market potential overseas, and (3) collaborate with overseas universities on a research project.
Course deliverables	By end of the semester, students submit to the client a professional report summarizing research findings, analysis, and recommended courses of action. When required, a list of potential partners with full contact information is offered. In some cases, formal presentations are required.
Course outcome	Despite the challenges of instructing an unstructured and results-driven undergraduate course, completed research projects were almost always professionally done. Most clients expressed admiration for the work quality, and despite the heavy workload, students provided consistently above average instructor ratings and categorized the class as among the best and most fulfilling in the business school.

Figure 1: International Business Consulting (IBC) Course Development



The Teaching of IBC

Teaching IBC is complex and demanding. Academic literature cites challenges associated with active and experiential learning. It is difficult to mimic the real-life in an academic setting (Brooks et al., 2002). Successful real world learning requires prior knowledge of the subject, goal commonalities, and utilization of broad and dynamic perspective (Allard-Poesi, 2005; Billimoria, 1998; Slavin, 1988), and these attributes are hard to cultivate among undergraduates, especially when faced with project deliverables and timelines. Instructing undergraduate students differs significantly from post-graduates due to the former's limited corporate and research exposure and often lack of ability to integrate business concepts.

Despite pedagogical constraints, IBC offers varied and significant opportunities for international learning. Some projects pertained to the sale of a foreign product into the US. In the course, students examined the country's culture, economic environment and business frameworks. They learned the challenges associated with product importation, marketing and distribution, and strategized from the viewpoint of an international seller. The experience involved interaction with foreign executives and management of language, cultural, and geographic barriers. It developed skills such as market research, business analysis, networking, teamwork, and strategy formation.

IBC is suitable for instructors who have industry experience and are grounded in contemporary business. It is ideal for entrepreneurial-minded instructors interested in international business and market research. Instructors with large international networks may have access to interesting projects. In addition, strong networks with local international companies and partnerships with universities in foreign countries can positively impact opportunities for successful international based projects.

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Table 2: IBC Course Learning Assessment

Learning dimension	Student Comments	Teaching Implications
Product/project type	<i>Interesting products make the course exciting.</i>	Consider student preferences and local resources/expertise.
Teamwork	<i>Bonding of the team is essential.</i>	Provide teamwork pointers and set guidelines early.
Consulting methodology	<i>Need to be clear about the process early on.</i>	Describe expectations and the path ahead.
Report writing	<i>Need support in writing and editing.</i>	Provide ample time for editing and re-editing work.
Development of analysis and conclusions	<i>Need more instruction, guidance and time in developing project conclusions.</i>	Schedule extra sessions for fine-tuning of conclusions.
Managing complexity	<i>One of the most demanding and challenging courses in the entire institution...yet I had an amazing time.</i>	Maintain high level of challenge but frequently discuss and review expectations.
Managing diversity	<i>Working though diverse individuals and viewpoints were difficult.</i>	Provide training and guidance on diversity management.
Application of learning	<i>Amazing opportunity for real world, hands-on experience.</i>	Explore additional angles where students practice what they learn.
Business skills development	<i>This course helped me gain a wide variety of business skills.</i>	Emphasize business skills that are a priority in the curriculum and workplace.
Career impact	<i>One of the best courses I've ever had...will really aid me in the future.</i>	Review and match student learning with current and future business career requirements.

“ IBC is suitable for instructors who have industry experience and are grounded in contemporary business. ”

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Administration support is essential for IBC success. Specifically, the following are helpful: (1) travel budget for the exploration and evaluation of overseas consulting projects and partnerships, (2) self-development and business networking support for consulting course instructors, and (3) flexibility in course scheduling. Administrators looking to implement similar programs stand to benefit by training instructors in business consulting skills such as market research, entrepreneurship, business development, international sales and marketing, and global strategy.

Having taught seven IBC courses in the past eight years, we suggest the following:

Take on viable projects. Refrain from consulting projects detached from instructor competencies, with large or unclear scope, and require inaccessible resources.

Form a strong team. Successful consulting projects require a committed and talented group. Instructors should strive to engage the best students, co-instructors, and executives they can find. Weak teams will inevitably result in poor results.

Clarify expectations and goals. Successful IBC projects need full client cooperation. One executive in the company has to become the champion and dedicate about five hours each week collaborating with students. When securing client commitment and setting goals, clarify that the project is an undergraduate academic endeavor and the course purpose is teaching/learning first and consulting second. Quality output is sought but cannot be guaranteed. Discussing limitations and timelines upfront is critical.

Plan and secure budget. There are expenses associated with market research such as communication and transportation expenses, purchase of competing products, and facilitating activities like surveys, interviews, taste tests and focus group discussions. Budget should be planned and secured prior to project commencement.

Network. Networking is key: industry contacts, on-ground collaborators, and academic research partnerships enhance the consulting experience and contribute to success. Developing on-ground liaisons with overseas universities leads to project support and cross-cultural interactions for students.

IBC has countless challenges. Yet, collaborating with students passionate about learning and committed to international business leads to the completion of top-rate international consulting projects. Assessment and evaluations suggest that while the IBC model is far from being a perfect pedagogical tool, getting students involved in foreign products and real-life business situations heightens global business learning.

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Appendix

Syllabus Excerpt: International Business Consulting

Course Overview

This course provides students the opportunity to apply business concepts in a real-world setting. Operating as a team, students will collaborate to provide research and consulting service to a Nepal-based food company (client) seeking to sell products and find partners in the US. The company manufactures a popular Asian food product with wide patronage in Southeast Asia. The course will lead to an exploration of the food industry, competitive landscape, and viable marketing and business development strategies. At the end of the semester, students will complete a Business Development Plan with a List of Strategic Partners.

Course Objective

The objectives of this course are as follows: (1) train students to engage in the practice of professional business consulting within an international context, (2) develop market research skills, and (3) apply business analysis and entrepreneurial skills through the creation of a real-life Business Development Plan that meets the needs of the client. Students will act as “trade commissioners” and “company ambassadors” and will establish business relationships with professionals. Knowledge in international business, sales and marketing, market research, management, economics, and entrepreneurship will be tested and applied. Students are poised to enhance their skills in international management, research, networking, enterprise analysis, project management, business development plan creation, and consulting.

Course Prerequisite

Junior/Senior standing and consent of the faculty

Consulting Assignment

Through this class, students will help the client understand challenges and opportunities associated with market entry into the US. Company information, product description, timelines and the client’s research and business needs will be discussed in class. Client deliverables may change due to the evolving needs of the client.

As consultants, students are expected to provide the following services to the client:

1. Develop a detailed list of potential strategic partners and business contacts useful to the client.
2. Prepare a written report detailing the business assessment and evaluation process as it relates to business development.
3. Prepare a comprehensive Business Development Plan by the end of the semester with information such as trade shows participation, marketing costs, management of barriers to entry, and best strategies for partnership development.

This course is proactive, action-oriented and customer-driven. Throughout the semester, students are expected to collaborate closely with the client and identify activities and contacts that further the client’s business agenda. The course format is flexible and centered on meeting client’s needs.

Grades

Being an action-oriented course, grades will be largely based on actual practice and results rather than theory. This emphasis on action is reflected on the grading criteria listed below :

Class Attendance	100 points
Class Participation	100 points
Journal of Quality/Extent of Client Interaction	200 points
Business Development Report	400 points
Client Evaluation*	200 points
TOTAL POSSIBLE	1000 POINTS

As a point of clarification, the Journal of Quality/Extent of Client Interaction is a written document that tracks all client interactions. This may come in the form of official memos, correspondences, noted topics of conversations, recorded recommendations, and proposed solutions among others. This journal should be chronologically arranged and placed in a binder for the instructor to read. A progress report based on the journal will be presented in class during each weekly meeting.

The business development report will include a formal report summarizing research findings, highlights of the activities conducted, and recommended business development activities for the client. It should present a thorough background of the market, the product-industry fit, opportunities and challenges, as well as identification of potential partnerships and relationships that would be beneficial to the client.

J. Mark Munoz (jmunoz@millikin.edu) is an Associate Professor of International Business at the Millikin University in Illinois. He was a Visiting Fellow at the Ash Institute, Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. A graduate of MBA and PhD in Management from the University of San Jose, his research interests include globalization and international entrepreneurship. His work has appeared in several journals including *International Entrepreneurship Management Journal* and *Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship*.

Jon F. “Rick” Bibb (rbibb@millikin.edu) is an Associate Professor of Marketing at the Millikin University in Illinois. He has received a B.S.BA in Marketing and MBA in Marketing from the University of Missouri – Columbia. He has completed doctoral course work at the University of Kentucky in Marketing and Applied Research Methodology. He is chapter advisor for the Millikin Marketing Association.

Gung Ho: A Fresh Look at a Video Classic for Teaching Cross-Cultural Management

William R. Pendergast, California Polytechnic State University, USA

FILMS THAT SERVE AS “VIDEO CASES” can be excellent pedagogical devices to teach cross-cultural management in international business. Films engage student interest and provide a reasonable facsimile of cross-cultural interactions that is often more vivid than written case studies and more realistic than simulations or role plays enacted by inexperienced students. At the same time, it is important to recognize that films are entertainment, and while they provide a useful framework for instruction, they represent neither reality nor scientific documentation or research.

The film *Gung Ho* appeared in 1986, starring Michael Keaton and directed by Ron Howard. This pedigree whets student appetites, and the comedy retains their attention. The film runs 110 minutes, which fits exactly the time period for my class. I show the film in one class and debrief it during half of the next class. Alternative arrangements could be made for out-of-class viewing. In advance of the film, I distribute discussion questions for students to read as a guide. It is an amusing movie, and although I absent myself from most screenings, I never tire watching it. While nearly 25 years old, the film appears reasonably contemporary (except for the dated Fiat vehicles in the factory, filmed in Argentina), largely avoids stereotypes, and touches themes of Japanese and American culture that are central to a cross-cultural management course. It can be used alone or in combination with a written case on a Japanese-American venture such as Japanese-American Seating (Miller & Geringer, 1992). This article outlines the principal cultural themes in the film.

Gung Ho depicts a U.S. automobile company in Pennsylvania experiencing closure at a time of economic crisis. The local auto-workers’ union leader Hunt Stephenson (Keaton) visits Assan Motors in Japan to propose a buyout. Assan acquires the company and sends Japanese managers to resuscitate it. The union agrees to reach the seemingly impossible output of 15,000 cars each month (a standard in Japanese factories) in return for a restoration of their wages. The film portrays interactions between the Americans and Japanese that provide material for probing cross-cultural issues.

The film appeared in 1986, shortly after the creation two years earlier of the first Japanese-American joint venture between Toyota and General Motors in Fremont, California—a contemporaneous origin that appears more than coincidental. New United Motor Manufacturing, Inc. (NUMMI) was an innovative experiment that served the interests of both GM and Toyota (Wilms et al., 1994) and eventuated in the creation of a “third culture.” Poignantly, GM and Toyota announced the termination

of NUMMI in 2009 following GM’s bankruptcy and Toyota’s trials from the recession. Following *Gung Ho*’s appearance in 1986, Toyota used the film in its training programs as an example of how not to manage Americans (Business Week, 2007).

Opening Scenes

The principal characters in the movie include Hunt Stephenson; Oishi Kazuhiro, Japanese factory manager; Sakamoto, Chairman, Assan Motors; Audrey, Hunt’s girlfriend; and Buster, an American factory worker.

As the film begins, Hunt Stephenson embarks on a solo trip to Japan to convince executives at Assan Motors to purchase the American factory. Due to his lack of preparation for this foreign assignment, he gets lost in a rice paddy and lugs a heavy projector and screen from the US, only to find that the Japanese conference room is fully equipped with high-tech equipment. His video presentation on the American company to Japanese executives is filled with inept cultural quips and images. It is greeted with reserved silence by the Japanese, whose conservative dark suits contrast with Hunt’s light khaki outfit. Hunt returns despondent to the US, assuming that the Japanese lack of questions about his presentation indicates their lack of interest. Despondency turns to jubilation when Assan sends a team of managers to take over the plant.

This initial episode provides ample material to discuss the merits and cultural bases of solo versus team negotiation, preparation for a foreign business trip, communication and presentation style, the use of humor and colloquialisms, the meanings of silence, the role of assumptions, and the relationship between cultural values and style of dress. The iconic opening sequence raises issues of Japanese “management development” that are addressed below (see Motivation and Incentives).

Individualism, Collectivism and Uncertainty Avoidance

Throughout the film there are vivid examples how the Japanese group ethos contrasts with American individualism. The colorful American workers customize their individual work-spaces on the factory floor with boom-boxes and decorative items while Japanese managers work anonymously in teams, clothed in uniform smocks. They engage in obligatory group calisthenics before work. For recreation, the Japanese engage in group swimming and turn out for a softball game in neat uniforms and choreographed warm-up exercises while the Americans

“ The film shows that the Japanese mindset includes a holistic and tightly controlled view of the work system that serves the purpose of uncertainty reduction. ”

wear a cacophony of cutoffs and plaid shirts. As Japanese factory manager Kazihiro says: “Team. That is what has raised us—one, with one purpose.”

The Japanese approach softball as a game of finesse and interdependence with well-placed bunts that advance other players, while Americans swing for the fences and rely on brute, individual force. After the ball game, Hunt remarks: “We pitch for distance.” Kazihiro responds: “For us, it’s accuracy.”

The film shows that the Japanese mindset includes a holistic and tightly controlled view of the work system that serves the purpose of uncertainty reduction. The Japanese insist on cross-training in job functions for all employees. For the Japanese, intelligence resides in the system or process (Kazihiro: “there is one way to run the factory”). Conformity brings predictability, reduces uncertainty and contributes to zero defects. This echoes a key principle of the Toyota way: “The right process will produce the right results.” At Toyota, all work is highly specified as to content, sequence, timing and outcome (Spear & Bowen, 1999). In *Gung Ho*, the Japanese install video monitors in the American factory to ensure close monitoring of behavior.

The American workers want specialized jobs that fit their personal skills. For Americans, intelligence resides in the individual (Hunt: “Let the guys do what they do best”). American workers seek to bend the system to accommodate individual skills and preferences despite the unpredictability and defects that result. Specialized skills complement the high level of employee mobility that characterizes the American labor market.

While debriefing the film, I highlight Japanese systemic thinking by showing two revealing photos from James Fallows’ article in *The Atlantic* magazine titled “The ‘Way’ versus ‘A’ Way” (Fallows, 2007). One photo shows two identically dressed Japanese workers systematically fueling an airplane precisely according to the rule book, and the other photo shows two Chinese workers fueling the same model plane in an ad hoc, improvisational way (Fallows, 2007). A process-orientation and prescribed work procedures are hallmarks of Japanese management (Yu and Meyer-Ohle, 2008). I also introduce students to research in psychology that contrasts the Asian holistic perceptual and mental framework that places the individual in the context of the group with the Western analytical focus on constituent parts (Masuda & Nisbett, 2001; Masuda et al., 2008).

The preceding discussion provides an opportunity to discuss an often

overlooked distinction between Geert Hofstede and Shalom Schwartz. Hofstede presents Uncertainty Avoidance and Individualism as two separate cultural value dimensions. Schwartz, on the other hand, views the cultural value of Conservatism (Embeddedness) as incorporating behaviors that reduce uncertainty and insecurity and thereby preserve the group (Schwartz & Bardi, 1997). In Schwartz’s idiom, the holistic or systemic characteristic of Asian culture serves the preservation of group cohesion as well as harmony through the reduction of uncertainty.

Motivation and Incentives

American workers appear throughout the film to be motivated by financial incentives and individual rewards. The union agrees not to strike and works towards a Japanese-standard monthly output of 15,000 cars in order to restore their wages. Revealing a less-than-total commitment to company goals, however, they try to hedge their bet by asking for a partial raise if they fail to meet the target.

Japanese workers, by contrast, work for the good of the company and subordinate themselves to the firm. In Japan, on average, workers use less than 50 percent of their paid holidays and tend to take vacations only when their employers close for business. Both white- and blue-collar workers are expected to do homework called *furoshiki zangyou* (wrapped work). Voluntary (unpaid) overtime can amount to more than 100 hours per month and since 1969 has led to legal verdicts of *karoshi*, or death from overwork, that award compensation to surviving spouses and children. Exemplifying the contrast between extrinsic (financial) and intrinsic (affiliation) motivators (Herzberg, 1959), Kazihiro says to Hunt: “When production is down, Japanese worker stays longer.” Missing the point entirely, Hunt responds: “OK, overtime – time and a half is standard.”

The film’s memorable opening scene portrays Hunt’s accidental intrusion into Assan Motor’s “management development” session during his visit to Japan. He finds Kazihiro and Japanese colleagues foaming at the mouth while screaming self-criticisms and wearing “ribbons of shame” in a frenzied bout of group humiliation in retribution for their management failures.

The salience of punitive incentives, whether extrinsic or intrinsic, as well as the prevalence of apology and confession, has a colorful history in East Asia. Line workers at the Five Star Beer brewery in China suffered the negative reinforcement of salary cuts for incidents of sloppy label-

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ing and inaccurate bottle fill-levels (Golden & Gleave, 1998). In a recent experiment with incentives at a Chinese high-tech manufacturing facility, Hossain and List observed that incentives framed as “losses” resulted in higher productivity gains than incentives framed as “gains” (Hossain & List, 2009). These examples reflect the general phenomenon of *kiasu*, a Hokkien Chinese word meaning “fear of losing.” This phenomenon is associated with a focus on preventing losses as opposed to gaining rewards and is characteristic of “tight,” structured cultures (Gelfand, Nishii, & Raver, 2006).

The “ribbons of shame” incident at Assan Motors, described above, also reflects the widespread emphasis on confession and apology throughout East Asia (Wagatsuma & Rosett, 1986; Haley, 1986). In Japan, apology (and confession in the criminal justice system) elicits absolution and reintegration into social relationships because it demonstrates submission to the prevailing order. Public humiliation and shaming as sanctions are not uncommon in Asia and elsewhere (Whitman, 1998). At its South Carolina manufacturing plant, for example, the Chinese manufacturer Haier installed yellow “footprints” on the factory floor where weak performers were expected to stand and explain their poor performance (Everatt, 2003). This practice did not play well with American workers.

Authority and Leadership Style

Hunt’s leadership style is charismatic and depends on his personal ability to elicit empowerment from union members. His recurrent invocation of stardom in “the big game” during high school basketball draws on shared historical memories and a tradition of extra-curricular sports that reinforces cohesion among the men. (In a humorous counterpoint at the end of the film that illustrates the cultural relativity of leadership behavior, Hunt tries the same tactic on the visiting Chairman of Assan Motors. Invoking his buzzer-beating victory in “the big game,” he asks the Chairman: “Do you know what I mean?” He gets a quizzical, stone-faced response: “Not at all.”)

In contrast to Hunt’s reliance on the approbation of the men, Japanese leadership is top-down and arises from position rather than empowerment by followers. Japanese employees consistently show obsequious deference to Assan’s Chairman Sakamoto.

Work Values

The relationship between work and personal life is a central theme in the film. The Japanese expatriate employees live for their jobs, consistent with the centrality of work in Japanese culture (England & Quintanilla, 1994). Kazuhiro remarks to Hunt: “The only measure of a worker’s value is work; work is everything.” He complains to Hunt: “I do not understand American workers. They come five minutes late, leave two minutes early, stay home when sick, put themselves ahead of the company.” In contrast, at home in the evening, Kazuhiro can spare no time

to assemble a bike for his son. When Hunt inquires “How does your family like America?” Kazuhiro admits: “I didn’t ask.” At the factory, an American worker creates an uproar by requesting permission to leave early to take his child to the doctor. Later, when visiting Chairman Sakamoto learns that a Japanese manager’s wife is having a baby, he says accusingly: “You want to leave.” The manager responds meekly: “No sir, I want to stay and work.” The Japanese distaste for industry-wide unions like the UAW and their effect on the workplace emerges clearly and provides an opportunity to explore the very different role of company unions in Japan.

Besides the centrality of work, the film also contrasts the Japanese workers’ commitment to quality (zero defects) with the American satisfaction with “good enough.” The film hits its comedic climax as Japanese and American workers together race against the clock to reach the 15,000 car target by cutting corners on things like engines, windshields, wheel lug-nuts and seat anchors.

Etiquette

Numerous episodes highlight differences in etiquette between the cultures. The Americans are caught off-guard when the arriving Japanese remove their shoes on the red carpet at the airport. Hunt’s lame effort to establish rapport with the Japanese in Tokyo by recalling that “my dad was over here with the army in 1940” and his compliments on the “oriental” décor of their conference room demonstrates the negative effect of poorly selected conversational topics. His frequent use of colloquialisms and off-color humor fall flat with the Japanese. Later, when Japanese executives arrive at the American plant, Hunt fumbles a business card exchange as well as seating protocol at the meeting. After dinner at Kazuhiro’s house, when the Japanese women arise demurely in unison to leave, Hunt’s girlfriend Audrey asks: “Nobody minds if I stay, right?” Despite a chorus of silence by the remaining men, she turns to Hunt and says: “See, it’s okay.” Hunt magnifies the impropriety by hoisting a cigar from his pocket and lighting up in the presence of his employer.

Communication

Hunt’s communication style is direct and to the point, replete with colloquialisms, metaphors and humor that fail to resonate with the Japanese. As Edward Hall observed: “The essence of effective cross-cultural communication has more to do with releasing the right responses than with sending the ‘right’ messages” (Hall, 1959).

Hunt invites questions following his presentation to Japanese executives in Tokyo: “I know you have a lot of questions—go crazy.” Unnerved at their silence, he remarks, “You have a long day of staring ahead of you,” and assumes that he has failed in his mission. Towards the end of the film, the humorless Chairman Sakamoto gives new meaning to a neutral communication style when he says to Hunt: “I like you. You make me laugh.”

Management of culturally diverse organizations presents both challenges and opportunities.

When Kazuhiro communicates indirectly with Hunt: “I see what you are saying,” Hunt assumes that Kazuhiro thereby agrees with his proposal. This example of ambiguous Japanese speech invites an exploration of other forms of indirectness that can create communication problems between high and low context cultures. These include “mitigated speech,” popularized by Malcolm Gladwell in *Outliers* (Gladwell, 2008), and the use of intermediaries to convey unpleasant information.

Diversity, Learning and Convergence: Transcultural Management Techniques

Management of culturally diverse organizations presents both challenges and opportunities. The opportunities include a potential for improved decisions, more effective alignment with diverse external markets, and an expanded pool of employee talent, as well as the satisfaction of legal requirements and ethical imperatives. The challenges arise from the defensiveness and withdrawal that diversity may bring (Putnam, 2000), miscommunication from differences in language and cultural meanings, and the reconciliation of divergent preferences that arise from different cultural values. Successful management of cross-cultural organizations builds value by transcending these challenges and leveraging the opportunities.

A key issue in successful cross-cultural management is the transferability of management practices within a multinational organization. Assan executives clearly intend to transfer Japanese management practices to America when they provide Hunt with a copy of their labor policies, eliciting his response: “Why can’t we run the plant the way we did before?” Beechler and Yang showed that the transferability of HRM practices depends on internal and external contingencies such as a company’s administrative heritage and management philosophy, corporate strategy and headquarters-subsidiary dependence relations, the nature of the industry, and the local labor market environment (Beechler & Yang, 1994).

The film includes examples of learning by representatives of both cultures that leads to some convergence in their behavior, recalling the “third way” that Wilms and Hardcastle (1994) observed at NUMMI. Late in the film, blustery Buster the factory worker adopts the systematic Japanese approach and instructs a fellow American worker that the proper way to weld a car’s underbody is to do it “here, here, here and here” rather than as the worker sees fit. Kazuhiro gradually absorbs the American appreciation for the quality of life, a more humane attitude towards work, and an open communication style. He exclaims in frustration to his Japanese managers, in the presence of Chairman Sakamoto: “This is Looney Tunes. Tell him we have things we can learn from

Americans.” In a penultimate scene, when the Japanese Chairman decides to accept the month’s car production despite remaining defects, his sycophant nephew blurts out in an unaccustomed act of insubordination: “are you crazy?” Americans come to appreciate the value of teamwork, in the spirit of the film’s translated title, “working together.” The film ends with both Americans and Japanese firing up calisthenics to the tune “Working Class Man.”

Most of the cultural convergence in the film occurs almost accidentally and imperceptibly. I use this opportunity to introduce students to several more explicit management techniques that can help bridge differences in culturally diverse organizations. These include ways to deconstruct stereotypes, communication strategies that ensure understanding such as active listening and demonstration, techniques to encourage widespread participation despite cultural inhibitions such as deference and face-saving, and integrative negotiation skills that can help reconcile the inevitable divergent preferences that arise from deeply-held cultural values.

John Shook, a participant in the NUMMI experiment, invokes Edgar Schein regarding strategic culture change when he reports that the NUMMI experience demonstrates that “the way to change culture is not to first change how people think, but instead to start by changing how people behave—what they do” (Shook, 2010). At NUMMI, this meant defining precisely job procedures for American employees, giving workers the means to successfully do their jobs, and viewing problems as opportunities for improvement. The key insight that Shook draws from NUMMI: “It’s easier to act your way to a new way of thinking than to think your way to a new way of acting.”

Notes

Gung Ho in Chinese means “working together.” During the 1930s, it was the motto of Chinese industrial cooperatives that replaced industries seized by the Japanese. The phrase was adopted during World War II by Major Evans Carlson of the United States Marine Corps and became an unofficial Marine Corps slogan meaning “can do.”

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Case studies that include striking examples of mitigated speech or the use of intermediaries are: *Ellen Moore (A): living and working in Korea* (1997), Ivey Management Services; *Johannes van den Bosch sends an email* (2000), Lausanne: IMD; *David Shorter* (1991), Ivey Management Services; and *Bob Chen* (1991), Ivey Management Services.

William R. Pendergast (wpenderg@calpoly.edu) is Professor of International Management at the Orfalea College of Business at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. He came to Cal Poly from the Monterey Institute of International Studies, where he was Dean of the Fisher Graduate School of International Business, and from the Czech Management Center in Prague, where he was CEO and Founding Dean. His PhD and MA are from Columbia University and his BA is from the University of Notre Dame.

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Academy of International Business
7 Eppley Center
Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI 48824-1121
USA

Tel: +1-517-432-1452
Fax: +1-517-432-1009
Email: aib@aib.msu.edu