Understanding Global Competencies Through a Personal Lens

Rui Niu-Cooper
Grand Valley State University, USA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The story in this case study—about a student, a faculty member, and some feedback on a university class assignment—illustrates that people can have radically different understandings of the same situation due to their background and cultural experiences. Thus, it is important that we not allow our assumptions and perceptions to overly influence what happens around us as we interact with others. If we learn to effectively use these three global values/competencies, among others, we could avoid potential international misunderstandings.

GLOBAL COMPETENCIES

Core Concepts:
- ◦ One's own culture and history is key to understanding one's relationship to others.

Values and Attitudes:
- ◦ Valuing multiple perspectives.

Skills:
- ◦ Recognizes, articulates and applies an understanding of different perspectives (including his/her own).

Behaviors:
- ◦ Commits to the process of continuous learning and reflection (Global Competency Matrix, 2014).

CASE BACKGROUND

This chapter documents perspectives from some of the life experiences I have had as an associate professor born and educated in China. My story describes how one foreigner discovered the influence of her interactions with native-born American students in an American university. The story establishes a platform for readers to understand the critical role that global competencies play, particularly in relation to being open to others, valuing multiple perspectives, and questioning prevailing assumptions.

I was born in China and grew up in Tibet. The contrast between the environments, values, and norms of Tibet and mainland China formed an openness to new experiences in my life from an early age. I completed my undergraduate education in a university in Southwest China, majoring in English language and literature. While there, I experienced more differences among people and learned even more to value others' opinions and thoughts. I wanted to pursue a deeper understanding of English literature, which I believed greatly influenced Western culture, norms, and values and could not be thoroughly comprehended without an understanding of Western philosophy and immersion in Western culture. I went to Canada, where I earned a master's degree in education. There I acquired knowledge of Western Education, including pedagogy, Canadian school systems, Canadian students, parents' expectations of their children, and the various interactions among principals, teachers, students, parents, and community members. More importantly, I learned about Western values and social norms through interactions with people around me.

During this learning process, I experienced culture shock, life surprises, and puzzles that could not be easily explained. However, because of these experiences, I realized the importance of open-mindedness and of understanding issues and problems and comprehending situations by standing in others' shoes. I also learned about the value of integrating others' perspectives in collaborative work and problem solving, and not using my own assumptions to judge others. Everything that happened provided me with insights, which brought new ideas and created new opportunities. I came to believe that if people integrate the perspectives of all participants in a situation, things can be accomplished in a more effective way with fewer after-event issues to deal with.

With this in mind, I decided to pursue doctoral studies in teacher education, with a focus on helping teachers to understand, and therefore to teach, English language learners (ELLs) and bilingual students in the United States. I saw the struggles between many U.S. students and their teachers. The students often came from diverse backgrounds—including language, culture, social class, and economic status—while their teachers predominantly came from middle-class European backgrounds. During these years of study, I saw that U.S. ELLs needed teachers who

19 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/understanding-global-competencies-through-a-personal-lens/197902

Related Content

Efficient Graph Matching
Diego Reforgiato Recupero (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 736-743).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/efficient-graph-matching/10902

Realistic Data for Testing Rule Mining Algorithms
Colin Cooperand Michele Zito (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 1653-1658).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/realistic-data-testing-rule-mining/11040

Semi-Supervised Learning
Tobias Scheffer (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 1787-1793).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/semi-supervised-learning/11060

Meta-Learning
Christophe Giraud-Carrier, Pavel Brazdil, Carlos Soaresand Ricardo Vilalta (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 1207-1215).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/meta-learning/10976

DFM as a Conceptual Model for Data Warehouse
Matteo Golfarelli (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 638-645).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/dfm-conceptual-model-data-warehouse/10888