

**Guidelines for Cross-
Cultural Assessor
Training in
Multicultural
Assessment Centers**



Martin Lanik, PhD

Global Assessor Pool

Alyssa M. Gibbons, PhD

Colorado State University

Cultural Influences in ACs



Design & Administration

Assessed Competencies
Types of Exercises

Candidate's Reaction

Perceptions
Local Practices

Feedback

Form
Feedback-Giver
Appropriateness

Stimulus

Language
Conceptualization

CULTURE

Candidate's Response

Response Format
Implicit Theory
Demand Characteristics

Ratings

Rater Biases
Response tendencies

Observation & Judgment

Demographic Similarity
Cognition and Perception
Implicit Theory

Interaction of 3 Cultures



Culture of
the Designer



Culture of
the Candidate



Culture of
the Assessor

Implications for Assessor Processes



Observation and recording

Protestant
Relational
Ideology
Analytic vs.
holistic thinking
Cultural norms

Classification

Analytic vs.
holistic thinking
Formal logic vs.
dialectism

Rating

Cultural response
sets
Implicit theories

Bad news... good news!



- The bad news...
 - Assessors already have a difficult task in one-culture ACs.
 - Little research on ACs and culture.
 - Infinite possible combinations of cultures.
 - Where to start?!?
- The good news...
 - Lots of research in other areas.
- Cultural psychology + principles of training design = 7 guidelines for cross-cultural assessor training.

1: Identify the appropriate cultural framework.



| | Global | Multidomestic | Transnational |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Business Strategy | Centralized | Locally responsive | Blended |
| Scoring | Uniform | Dependent on location | Uniform |
| Comparison of Candidates | Across all locations | Within the same culture/location | Across all locations |
| Focal Culture(s) | Culture of company's origin | Candidate's local culture | All cultures in the organization |
| Calibration | Across all ACs | Within each AC | Across all ACs |

2: Create a need for change.



- Demonstrations of cultural bias:
 - Intergroup Attribution Exercise
 - Implicit Association Test
 - Father-Son Exercise
 - Etc.
- Debrief and discuss!
- Emphasize the moral obligation to assess ALL candidates fairly, regardless of culture!

3: Establish a framework for understanding culture.



- General models of cultural values help trainees put what they learn in context.
 - Hofstede's 5 dimensions
 - Project GLOBE
- Specific models of business norms and practices fill in the details.
- Seek input from members of the focal culture(s).
 - Don't perpetuate inaccurate stereotypes!

4: Choose an evidence-based training strategy.



- Information processing training:
 - Targets differences in information processing (e.g., analytic/holistic, relational vs. task-focused).
 - Teaches trainees to attend to information they would otherwise ignore. (e.g., Sanchez-Burks, et al., 2007; cf. examples from Masuda & Nisbett, 2001)
- Reattribution training:
 - Targets differences in norms and attribution processes.
 - Teaches trainees to explain a person's behavior in the same way that someone from that person's culture would. (Befus, 1988; Forsterling, 1985; Littrell & Salas, 2005)

5: Align training with the cultural philosophy of the AC.



| | Global | Multidomestic | Transnational |
|---|---|--|---|
| Goal: | Maintain consistency with original company. | Fit the needs of the local culture at each location. | Balance consistency with responsiveness. |
| Identify candidates who succeed: | In the culture of the company HQ | In their own local cultures. | In any of the relevant cultures. |
| Interpret behavior as: | Someone from the culture of company HQ would. | Someone from the candidate's culture would. | Someone from the candidate's culture would. |

6: Consider culture in the design of assessor processes.



- Rating forms and processes.
 - You only get what you ask for!
- Opportunities for observation.
 - May need some nonverbal opportunities.
- Assessor discussion and consensus.
 - Consider norms for group behavior, effects of group diversity.

7: Evaluate based on training objectives.



- Make sure trainees are learning what you're teaching!
 - Declarative knowledge about target culture(s).
 - Alignment of mental models with the target culture(s).
 - Metacognitive skills and self-regulation about thinking styles and cultural biases.
 - Attitudes about the target culture(s).
 - Self-efficacy about inter-cultural assessment.

Concluding thoughts...



- Culture is a challenge!
- Urgent need for good AC-specific research!
 - Need to draw on other areas of psychology in the meantime.
- No easy answers!
 - Guidelines are about asking the right questions.

Questions? Comments?



Please feel free to contact me at

Martin.Lanik@GlobalAssessorPool.com

Thank you!

