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Building a Global Community

Sally Gelardin
The Job Juggler

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Contributors

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Introduction

My first experience providing training in another country was an eye-opener. As co-instructor of the Career Development Facilitator training in Istanbul, I only had time to

present half of the presentation material due to language barriers and technology challenges.

When I asked participants what their hesitations and fears were about the training, they responded that often presenters from other countries don't respect their prior experience and knowledge. "That won't happen in this training," I assured them. As usual, I learned more from my participants than they did from me.

What inspired me to present a workshop at the NCDA 07 Conference and to offer this paper on "Adapting Career Resources from One Culture To Another" is that my Global Career Development Facilitator (GCDF) Istanbul training participants had made such compelling multicultural presentations that I wanted to share them with a larger group of career practitioners.

Since my Turkish colleagues were not able to join me in the workshop presentation on teaching career competencies across cultures through the use of multi-sensory tools at the 2007 NCDA Conference, I feel very fortunate to share their perspectives through VISTAS Online. As it turned out, I also had the good fortune to connect with additional creative colleagues in the U.S. and abroad who graciously agreed to contribute their wealth of experience to the paper and/or the workshop. All are Career Development Facilitators or CDF Instructors (and one Master Trainer); most are counselor educators.

Objectives

Hopefully, in the future, easily accessible online diversity (and other career competency)

exercises that appeal to a variety of learning styles will be available to career educators and career practitioners. The specific objectives for providing these exercises are as follows:

- (1) to overcome language barriers and honor cultural heritage,
- (2) to build self-esteem and help individuals get in touch with inner self and unexpressed thoughts,
- (3) to allow individuals to express strengths and career-related concerns that relate to work and life in non-threatening ways,
- (4) To provide online multi-cultural, multi-modal exercises that can be easily adapted from one country to another and can be instantly accessed online from anywhere in the world.

Delivery Models

Giles and Ruth developed a beautiful metaphor of an iceberg to give us an opportunity to understand different perspectives. Their [Iceberg Concept of Culture](#) uses an iceberg to symbolize "an abstraction, a set of ideas, norms, customs, traditions, symbols and assumptions about life." According to Giles and Ruth, to understand someone else's culture, it is important to know one's own -- there are things which are obvious in every culture and there are others which are "hidden under water", e.g. the unconscious, body language, etc. If you are not aware of your biases, it could be helpful to take [Project Implicit's test](#) to learn about how you make implicit associations.

To share career development competencies and to adapt career resources from one culture to another, career educators and practitioners can employ multimodal tools, such as world music, pictorial cards, and other brain-based (multi-sensory) tools. According to the Wikipedia definition, "[Multimodal interaction](#)" refers to multiple ways of interfacing with a system. Multimodal tools, based on the multi-intelligences discussed by [Howard Gardner](#), are

especially useful for counselors to work with families on career development issues. These assessment tools are included in the [Tightrope Model of Career Decision Making](#), which includes a similar process to other widely used decision-making models (i.e., [Krumboltz](#), [Knowdell](#)), including the following skills: (a) assess strengths, (b) explore resources, (c) identify current or future goal, (d) take action.

What makes the Tightrope Model unique is that it assesses more than the usual attributes: skills, interests, values, and personality traits, and even family or environmental influences. The model includes assessment of two additional factors: (a) preferred learning styles and (b) primary inner motivations.

Preferred Learning Styles

Since most individuals learn through the multi-senses, employing visual, kinesthetic, auditory, and often multiple senses, can stimulate self-understanding and improve career decision-making. Just as walking a tightrope requires concentration on the present so that the tightrope walker doesn't fall off the tightrope, the Tightrope Model gently guides an individual in career transition away from past regrets and fear of the future to be in the "Zen" here and now. Challenges are easier to manage and problems are easier to solve when one operates from a state of present awareness.

Primary Inner Motivations

In her videotape, [The Forces within Us](#), English chose to represent the three motivations within each of us by calling them the Goddesses of survival, passion, and quiescence –

Survia, Passia, and Quiessa ([English, 1998](#)). According to English, by paying attention to our [primary motivations](#), we can improve our ability to make career decisions.

Exercise Format

Following was the suggested outline for each exercise:

- Icebreaker
- Purpose of presentation
- Rationale (why topic is important)
- Learning Objectives (1-3)
- Materials (what materials will participants need)
- Participants (who are your participants; i.e., CDF students)
- Setting (classroom, group seating, etc)
- Time Required
- Lecturette (brief - key points)
- Exercise (brief)
- Assessment of Learning Objectives
- Discussion

Road To Success Game

An especially delightful multicultural exercise, designed by Maha Alhendawi, my former CDF and counseling student from the country of Qatar, was the "Road To Success Game."

M. Alhendawi is now a doctoral student in Special Education at Virginia Commonwealth University. Her game is not only helpful for understanding cultural biases (CDF

Competency: Using Your Helping Skills with Diverse Populations), but also is an example of an informal assessment tool (CDF Competency: The Role of Assessment in Career

Planning). The game can be used with several players (CDF Competency: Working with Groups). If the players are searching for a job that involves diverse populations, then the game could be helpful to prepare for the interview or for working with others on the job

(CDF Competency: Job-seeking and Employability Skills).

I was intrigued by M. Alhendawi's exercise, both because it appeals to a variety of learning preferences (kinesthetic and visual), as well as one's inner motivation to have fun. To extend the multicultural learning experience, I asked my eLearning CDF students to apply The Road to Success Game to their own cultural background or to that of their clients. It was such an eye-opener to compare Maha's [Qatar drawing cards](#) with those of a Marin County CDF student or those of a CDF student whose origins are from Scotland. For example, in Qatar, a country with an incredible juxtaposition of Eastern and Western cultures, the first thing your host offers you when you visit is tea, then coffee. In health-conscious Marin, the first thing your host offers, more often than not, is mineral water, and in Scotland, a guest is usually offered tea only.

Working/Serving Others

Dr. Fidan Korkut, an instructor at Hacettepe University in Ankara, Turkey, created an exercise entitled "Working/Serving Others." She uses this workshop to prepare her students to learn about various work settings and decide which population they would like to work with. Dr. Korkut prepared a questionnaire with 16 questions related to working with different populations, based on an exercise from Richard Bolles' Parachute Workbook.

Family/Career Values Map

Dr. Dean W. Owen, Jr. , Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey, created the

"Family Career Values Map." The purpose of his exercise is to clarify and allow exploration of the ways and extent to which parents and other elder family members influence many aspects of an individual's career development process. The experience of drawing lines between personal icons and each of the values they consider important, and then by drawing a line between their family icon and each value the family is thought to value, allows participants to compare, both kinesthetically and visually, their values with those of their family. The map then becomes a basis of discussion (listening and speaking), for a group of students or for a student/counselor session.

Field Choice Map

Together Dr. Korkut and Dr. Owen created a Field Choice Map to explore the importance of identifying areas or broad fields of interest and ability. In Turkey, all 9th grade high school students are required to identify one of six fields in which they will concentrate their academic preparation during high school. This choice will determine not only the emphasis in high school study but will determine which area of the national university admission exam they will be permitted to take. Essentially this choice, made in the ninth year of school, will have long and far reaching consequences for every Turkish student. This process of recording their interest and ability/achievement in each of six fields highlights complementary and conflicting patterns of interest and ability in the six foundation fields.

Promote Yourself as a Professional

Each contributor created an exercise that related to his or her own strengths. For example, M.

Fulya Kurter, Director of Bahcesehir University Career Center and Istanbul-based counselor and psychodrama group therapist, is an experienced career administrator, whose work requires public relations skills. She created an activity entitled "Do Your Self Promotion as a Professional," inspired from the one of the games that is used in psychodrama group work and that is published in a book by a leading Turkish psychodrama group therapist Deniz Altinay (300 Warm Up Games, 1998). Altinay's game was adapted by M. Kurter to meet the objectives below.

In M. Kurter's exercises, similar to the "elevator speech," participants write on a piece of paper in two or three sentences why they need to be chosen as a career counselor or as a career development facilitator. When they finish, they put their paper in a basket. Then all participants pick up one "ad" from the basket and read out loud what it says. The participants then have to guess who is the owner of that "ad." The exercise is finalized after each of the participant's ads is read out loud and others in the group have identified the person who wrote the ad. Through this exercise, we learn about how others perceive us both individually and as a part of a culture, and how we perceive ourselves. When M. Kurter presented this exercise at the CDF training, I discovered that relationships are very important in the Turkish culture.

I wonder if anyone would guess what I would write in M. Kurter's exercise. Usually my colleagues see me running around conferences. I prefer small intimate gatherings, with only one or two other people, in a beautiful outside garden setting. Here's what I would write, " I sit in my writing garden under dappled sunlight, inviting others to share their life stories. Together we bask in filtered light, figuring out how to create the future by reflecting upon the

past and being fully in the present."

Cafe Philosophe

The closest I came to realizing my dream was at an NCDA conference several years ago, when I brought together a group of career authors and poets to discuss philosophical issues related to life and work. In a candlelit outdoor evening setting of "Cafe Philosophe," we created a ["listening circle."](#) In this native American Indian activity, whenever individuals want to tell a story or recite a poem, they take the speaking stick. After a few minutes, the speaker passes the stick to the next person who is ready to speak and so it goes. The stick continues around the circle, with each person speaking in turn and the rest of the group listening. When the speaker passes the stick around the whole circle with no one speaking -- the stick is returned to the center and the listening circle is complete.

What Form of Transportation Are You?

Two more relationship-building multicultural exercises deserve to be shared. One was designed by Roberta Floyd, Detroit area-based Master CDF Trainer. She lays out on a table a bag full of toy vehicles (cars, pick-up trucks, fire engines, etc.). Then she asks the group, "Which method of transportation represents you the most? What vehicle do you identify with and why?" Her region of origin, home of Ford Motor Company, is an example of how her environment influences her use of visual and kinesthetic tools to teach career competencies.

Honoring and Adapting to Cultural Differences

This exercise was designed by Deeta Lonergan, a career counselor and trainer based in

Alaska. Ms. Lonergan designed an exercise on how people of different cultures introduce themselves. Alaskan native cultures are rich in storytelling. These stories are often accompanied by drumming and are acted out with dancing movement. In the Alaskan native culture, families of origin are important cornerstones of personal identity. Storytelling, drumming, and dancing appeal to several brain-based ways of learning (i.e., auditory, kinesthetic, verbal, inter-psychic). Imagine if interviewers asked an Alaskan native interviewee to present their stories through these multi-sensory ways, instead of just a dialogue of words!

Conclusion

The exercises above are just the tip of the “iceberg concept of culture” to give you a flavor of how multi-modal tools can be adapted from one culture to another. Through these exercises, we have provided you with a career and culture tool kit to achieve the following learning outcomes: (1) overcome language barriers and honor cultural heritage, (2) build self-esteem and help individuals get in touch with inner self and unexpressed thoughts, and (3) develop skills to support your students/clients to express their strengths and career-related concerns in non-threatening ways. We set up Internet links so that you can immediately access these multicultural exercises.

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