

FOREWORD

In 1995, I was asked to advise on a multi-lateral project to assess the impact of pre-departure intercultural effectiveness training on development advisors' performance in the field. In large part, the goal of the research was to answer the age-old question in the training field: "Does our training make a difference in people's performance?" This is a laudable goal, but when asked for my advice as to whether the Centre for Intercultural Learning should support the study, I responded: "Not yet."

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The reason was simple: a clear, concise statement of the performance we expect of an interculturally effective person did not exist. Intrinsicly, we believe that learning makes a difference. Just ask a drowning man how valuable swimming lessons might have been. However, the impact of training is not often so obvious. This is particularly true in the field of intercultural effectiveness. How do you know if a person is or is not drowning in a new culture?

Given the many thousands of people who had been trained in intercultural effectiveness, my notion was perhaps heretical. Was I asserting that for the past three decades, we, in the intercultural field, really have not known what we are doing? Well, yes and no. The research into the profile of the Interculturally Effective Person (IEP) has shown that there is a common understanding among theoreticians and practitioners of what defines intercultural effectiveness, and yet, little exists in terms of a defining statement. What is it that you do or do not do, say or not say, that would indicate to an observer that you are, in fact, interculturally effective?

In the profile of the Interculturally Effective Person, our Major and Core Competencies may appear similar to what is currently available from other sources. The step forward we are making is in describing the actual behaviours that one would exhibit to be deemed interculturally effective. The real challenge has been to move beyond "adaptation", "coping", "respecting", "accepting", and "integrating" to *actual behaviours* you can see or hear.

To borrow from Robert Mager, we have attempted to "de-fuzzify" our descriptions of performance. Anything less would have meant we had simply re-shuffled a comprehensive collection of immeasurable performances. The Centre for