

## Short-term Student Exchange using Double Loop Learning Framework of Heutagogy

Cheong Jan Chan<sup>1</sup>, Siao Ern Wong<sup>2</sup>, Shien Wei Lee<sup>3</sup>, Joshua Rickard<sup>4</sup>, Phyllis Chze Woon Toh<sup>5</sup>, Camellia Siti Maya Mohamed Razali<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Center of International Affairs, Tottori University, 4-101 Koyama-Minami, Tottori, 680-8550, Japan, <sup>2,3,5,6</sup>Department of Music, Faculty of Human Ecology, Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400 UPM Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia, <sup>4</sup>Center for International Education, Kumamoto University, 2-40-1 Kurokami, Chuo-ku, Kumamoto-shi 860-8555 Japan  
Email: chanupm@gmail.com

### Abstract

This paper traces the outcomes of an experimental student exchange program based on the concept of Heutagogy, self-determined learning. The program, which was carried out between Japanese and Malaysian students in 2018 and 2019 was aimed at challenging the traditional structure of a short-term exchange program, in which students might learn about a new culture in a limited top-down fashion, for one that favours deep interaction and reflection between participants in both societies. The program utilised online resources in order to create a longer period of interaction building up to the in-person exchange. Results were presented in an integrated model combining cultural adjustment levels with learning levels. The program has produced profound outcomes in providing real cross-cultural interactions and self-examination.

**Keywords:** Cross-Cultural Learning, Plural Coexistence, Student Exchange, Student Mobility, Japanese Students

### Introduction

The exposure-based model of short-term exchange program (hereto referred to as SSE) for student mobility has been popular among the universities in Japan. This model assumes a context in which Japanese students are primarily unexposed to the multicultural world outside their country, and students of the world are generally unfamiliar with the unique social-cultural environment of Japan. This current practice of students paying cordial visits to a foreign country has stopped short of any real-life situation between students: participants were often fixated as a group rather than as an individual. It did not consider the multiplicity of a person's identity and the complex connectedness in the virtual world today. Such an expository model with top-down teaching methods could hardly justify tertiary-level academic activities. In this paper, we report the use of heutagogy's double loop framework in an SSE program and demonstrate how evidence of deeper exchange can be determined. We question the depth of exchange in the currently run mobility programs.

### **Literature Review**

Here we trace the kind of experience, the targeted competence, and the evaluation models that are applicable to participants of short-term exchange programs. We refer to literatures from the fields of intercultural experience, intercultural competence, global leadership, heutagogy. This is to show the nature and learning outcomes envisioned in any student mobility programs, and why heutagogy is relevant for a deeper exchange experience.

### ***Intercultural Experience and Real Work Experience***

A student mobility program is, by design, a learning process through experience. It prepares students by giving them prior experience for multicultural interactions in their future workplace. Exposure-based mobility programs until now have been done in loose structures of on/off mode (meaning, doing is completion) and were yet to be assessed using any framework of competence. It is vital for education planners to have a good grip on the kind of experience, and its level, that a mobility program aims to produce. To better understand the intercultural experience and the kind of exchange that a mobility program shall provide, we turn to the discourse of culture shock, a field of study that documents and analyses the experience of expatriates or sojourners settling down during their mid-long term stay in overseas for our reference.

Despite criticism by some scholars of the lack of empirical validity (Ward et al., 2010; Berardo, 2006, 2007), the U curve theory for culture shock remains influential and is still being discussed today (Schneider & Barsoux, 2003:188). The U curve theory, first proposed by Lysgaard (1955), describes stages of emotional adjustment that a sojourner goes through in the period of residing in a foreign culture as "honeymoon", "culture shock", "adjustment", and "mastery" (Oberg, 1960). For student mobility, culture shock is a challenge and an avenue to grow simultaneously. Culture shock is characterised by a sharp drop into intense anxiety from the initial stage of euphoria when one comes into experience a new culture place.

Being challenged culturally offers a transformation process from being ethnocentric to a more ethno-relative world view or life view. In coping with a new culture, one may respond negatively as "denial of difference", "defence", "minimisation of difference", or positively as "acceptance of difference", "adaptation to difference", and "integration". The developmental stages of intercultural sensitivity offered by Bannett (1986, 2004, 2017) are illustrative. Here we ask, of the response of which stages a student shall aim if an SSE program is to prepare them for the future workplace?

Any short-term visits, the SSE program included, embed elements of tourism. The context of short-term group visits to another country, in any capacity or purpose, would encourage complementary elements of ceremonies and social gatherings, exposure to knowledge of local situations, and excursion to historical-cultural sites. The structure of the SSE program itself, at the same time, possesses a range of flexibilities and potentials to be shaped into the experience of various emphasis, from, for example, mere recreations to topical-based observation.

One frequently cited source for this is Cohen (1979, 2019)'s typology of tourist's experiences published decades ago, where a tourist's level and nature of engagement were divided into five modes in the succession of the depth of engagement with the destination place. The "recreational mode" equates the experience with other entertainment activities for general well-being like cinema, or television, for one to 'enjoy'. The purpose of tourists of "diversionary mode" in taking a tour is to obtain relief from being away from home or whatever place that forms the centre of one's life; hence the focus is not the destination but, negatively, the home or the centre of life from which the tourists come from. The participants remain indifferent to the new cultural environment at the first two levels. The "experiential mode" in Cohen's typology denotes the experience of values, aesthetics, and the life of others that could associate with one's search for the renewed meaning of or reexamination of his/her current society, culture and lifestyle. The higher two levels of tourist experience are the "experimental mode", where one no longer complies with the centrality of home culture and becomes a "seeker" looking for an alternative in various directions. Finally, the "existential mode" denotes the end where tourists are fully committed to a cultural centre of their choice, often characterised by the experience of having received "enlightenment", found "new life", and so on. Cohen's typology remains subjective and highly narrative.

Theory of the U curve and Cohen's modes of travellers are some available references in considering the nature, depth and level of intercultural experience that a student mobility program could provide. Ideally, learners shall surpass the initial stage of euphoric, detached and indifferent mode and experience the cultural difference in some shock, or at least in a state that activates questioning of one's cultural or societal norms. Learners shall be at least in the beginning of cultural shock experience or at level 3 in Cohen's modes. In other words, learners experiencing a certain level of discomfort, and being challenged in a situation that needs working out their own's strategy for adjustment, could serve as evidence of a launch of a process towards intercultural competence.

What does global leadership literature say about the intercultural experience? We found an emphasis on real work experience. A Rand study on global leadership (Bikson et al. 2003, Osland 2018:96) summarised four integrated skills. They are 1) substantive depth of the business process, 2) managerial ability, 3) strategic international understanding, and, cross-cultural experience based on real work experience. For cross-cultural experience, it says "Academic instruction and language acquisition are no substitutes for real work experience in another culture." If an SSE program mirrors a future workplace, learning outcomes shall feature most of all real (work) experience. Following the Rand study, components of an SSE could cover 1) knowledge content (know the stuff), 2) interpersonal skills (working with people), 3) intercultural understanding (in both global and local terms), and most of all, 4) real interactions in exchange.

### ***Intercultural Competence and Global Leadership***

The ultimate target of a student mobility program is intercultural competence, a skill set that enables one to navigate cultural challenges in today and the future workplace. Intercultural competence is "the appropriate and effective management of interaction between people who, to some degree or another, represent different or divergent affective, cognitive, and

behavioural orientations to the world” (Spitzberge and Channong, 2009:6). Since its inception in the 1970s, intercultural competence has been conceptualised around cultural adjustment, assimilation, and adaptation. These terms are often used synonymously. Within the context of internationalising Japanese universities, this falls under the category of global leadership (MEXT, 2022) as they seek to produce a workforce that is convergence in the world outside Japan. For universities in Malaysia, human skills or soft skills (Shakir, 2009; Ahmad, 2013), which cover poor self-management and interpersonal communication skills, have been emphasised as a remedy to improve the unemployment rates (Norliza at al., 2017) of local university graduates.

Cross-cultural communication involves consciousnesses of other's cultures and one's culture (Mendenhall et al., 2008:92). The emphasis on awareness of one's culture can be seen in the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (IES) developed by Mendenhall, Stevens, Bird, Oddou, and Osland

(Mendenhall et al., 2008, 2013:119, 2018:157). It features three dimensions and six sub-dimensions in understanding intercultural competency. The first dimension, "continuous learning", regards the cognitive aspect that contains "exploration" of other's cultures and "self-awareness". The second dimension, "interpersonal engagement", has a "global mindset" or interest in other's culture, "relationship interest", or interest in maintaining a relationship with people from other cultures. The third dimension, "hardiness", deals with emotional challenges, where "positive regards" refers to an effort to be non-judgemental of others' culture, and "emotional resilience" is the strength needed to cope with cultural differences. An SSE program, therefore, has both outward and inward focus simultaneously. It cultivates awareness of both cultures of others and self; broadens the participants' worldview while increasing self-resilience.

Intercultural competence, meanwhile has everything to do with the affective capacities of a person. Jokinen's Integrated Framework of Global Leadership (Mendenhall et al., 2008:66-67) illustrates global leadership in three layers: fundamental core, mental characteristics, and behaviour skills. The fundamental core involves self-awareness, personal transformation, and inquisitiveness, while mental characteristics involve work motivation, "social judgement skills", "empathy", and "acceptance of complexity and its contradictions". Global leadership is approached not as a list of competencies but as individual potentials from which competencies would develop. It features the quality of a person, like motivation and empathy, rather than certain skill sets.

The emphasis on human skills in global leadership training is further confirmed in Bird's Framework of Nested Global Leadership Competencies (Mendenhall, 2016:96), where "valuing people", "cross-cultural communication", "teaming skills", "empower others", "inquisitiveness", "global mindset", "flexibility", "character" and "resilience" were listed among the 15 competencies summarised from the initial 160 competencies from global leadership research literature.

From the literature above, intercultural competence emphasises affective domain in Bloom's learning taxonomy (Bloom, 1956; Shabatura, 2022). Intercultural competence is tantamount

to motivation, as it involves many personal qualities that are not merely skill and knowledge-based, such as awareness, emotional resilience, non-judgemental attitude, a mindset that is open and global, flexibility, and character. Therefore, any learning program targeted at intercultural competencies is only effective if it delivers a deepening or change of perspectives and values within the learners, which could only be achieved through deep learning. This requirement of deep learning and human values is where Heutagogy as a delivery method fits in.

### ***Heutagogy and double-loop learning***

The quest for student-centred learning has been an overarching theme for education practice at public schools and varsities for years. Andragogy was proposed by Knowles (1970) to advocate the learner's self-directed approach to learning, contrasting it with the instructive mode of pedagogy. When Hase and Kenyon (2000) proposed heutagogy, it was a foundation set on the 1950s' humanistic theory coupled with the empowered individual space in the 21st century. The central idea of heutagogy, that is, for the learners to set (or at least negotiate) learning objectives, choose their delivery method and determine the way of assessment, sounds viable only when a high rate of individual accessibility of information is available.

With the feature of double-loop learning and empowerment of the learners, heutagogy enables a focus on the process of learning. In a larger perspective, Hase and Kenyon envisioned heutagogy to go as far as to produce learners who could analyse the problems behind the system and could even handle the mundane weakness or "evils" in our social systems, the kind of evils that was depicted in John Ralston Saul's "Unconsciousness Civilisation" 1997.

Heutagogy owes its idea of self-determination to Carl Roger (Roger, 1959; Witty, 2007), who, writing in the field of psychological therapy, proposed the practice of client-centred therapy. Roger's advocate of a "person-centred" approach to therapy pathed ways for the trend of a student-centred approach in education. Self-determination, for Roger, is understood here not as a form of consciousness or will but as an idea that humans have a natural strive, the inherent capacity to grow and learn irrespective of circumstances. Translated to the field of learning, Heutagogy's tenet has been that solution for learning lies in the inherent quality of the learner, and the way learning takes place is best to be determined by learners themselves, in exercising their capacity to learn how to learn. An illustrative explanation of Heutagogy from an application perspective for lifelong learning, including the diagram for single and second-loop learning, was provided by Blaschke 2012.

What differentiates heutagogy from the concept of Knowles' (1970) self-directed learning, which recognises the values of random and daily experience in learning, is the idea of double-loop learning. Double-loop learning, the defining feature that contributed to a paradigm shift from teacher-centred learning to heutagogy, was an idea borrowed from Argyris & Schon (1996), who wrote in the field of organisational learning. In organisational learning, double-loop learning refers to how an organisation makes a solution not merely by rectifying errors within its immediate routine but by reviewing the underlying mechanism of the routine itself.

The distinction between single and double looped was traced to Ross Asby's Design for a Brain in 1960 in it that, which takes a single loop as a change of behaviour within an established system while a double loop as a change of values in the framework that will, in turn, change the way the system is supported. In the analogy of a thermostat's function, a single loop is about changing the degree of certain variables within the limit of a setting. In contrast, a double loop denotes the change of the setting itself to perform a better solution (Argyris & Schon, 1996).

In heutagogy, the single-loop is the usual process of any learning that goes from teaching delivery, outcomes, and assessment. At the same time, the double-loop urges the learner to take a step back to see a larger picture, that is, to reflect on the entire process about the initial intention set for the course. A simple way to put double-loop learning is to "learn about learning". When this analogy of double loop learning of reviewing the mechanism, system or setting on which the daily routine operates is applied to the case of an individual learner, it inevitably involves a change of viewpoint, the sense through which the learner sees things, of values, and understanding of the learner. The change of the learner, rather than the acquisition of a certain skill and knowledge, produced in the double-loop process makes Heutagogy essentially a humanistic rather than constructivist or technical-centred approach to learning.

### **Problem Statement**

Short-term mobility programs are based on the exposure model by which intercultural exchange remains superficial. An exposure program keeps participants detached from the culture and society they visit, remaining at a level akin to recreational tourists (Cohen, 1979) or the state of "honey moon" in the Lysgaard'(1955)s U curve theory of culture shock<sup>1</sup>. The research team opined that exposure type of mobility programs is becoming less a niche but more redundancy for universities because similar programs abound in high schools.

The quality of student exchange programs generally lacks examination. Despite the high cost invested in internationalisation to improve graduate employability and university ranking, the structure, modes and effectiveness of student mobility programs have yet to be examined as pedagogy proper. Given the above, there are needs for alternative ways of running an SSE program that could move the mode of experience towards Cohen's mode 3 (experiential) and beyond, or in Lysgaard's U curve at a point that students could experience a certain degree of shock and emotional adjustment. There is also a need to provide observable data of learning outcomes of the affective domain like a change of values, perspective, and motivation after taking an SSE program.

### **Research Questions**

This study seeks to improve the practice of short-term student mobility programs or SSE (short-term student exchange) by incorporating the framework of double-loop learning of

---

<sup>1</sup> By recreational tourist, we refer to Cohen's (1979) mode 1-2 (recreational and diversionary). Both Cohen (1979); Lysgaard's (1955) theory are covered in Literature Review section.



Heutagogy in moving toward cultivating real interaction and a deeper level of learning. We ask:

1. How could experience in a student mobility program be interpreted to differentiate those recreational and the real interaction?
2. How do we determine learning experience as evidence for the operationalisation of second-loop learning for a student mobility program?

### Methodology

This action research uses heutagogy as a strategy for intervention for an improved version of the SSE program. As a case-based study (Keith, 2003:25-26; Kisin, 2015), this study aims at improving and understanding a new intervention made, as well as to improve the surrounding environment of the practice. An exposure-based SSE is replaced by a double-loop SSE that features self-determined group works instead of top-down classes. Other changes include a period of online interactions before the visit and equal participation from Japanese and Malaysian universities. The changes are summarised below.

Table 1

*Summary of Interventions in an SSE Program Using Double-loop Framework of Heutagogy*

	<b>Program until now</b>	<b>New Intervention</b>
<b>Model</b>	Exposure-based	Double-loop / Heutagogy
<b>Approach</b>	Constructivist exposure	Self-determined learning
<b>Visit Period</b>	10-14 days	10 days
<b>Prior-visit interactions</b>	none	4 months
<b>Participants</b>	mainly guest participants, approximately 10-20. There is no host participants but some "local student assistance" or "local student buddies".	equal number of guest and host participants, 6-12 from each side
<b>Topic</b>	General knowledge and culture of host country, introductory language of host country	Topic of research selected and decided by group
<b>Activities</b>	Mainly lectures and site visits, complimented by group works, presentation and sometime performance.	Mainly group discussion and fieldwork, complimented by lectures and site visits
<b>Post program reflection</b>	General questionnaire on effectiveness of program. Short essay of personal feedback.	Reflections writing focused on the change of perspectives before and after the program. It features the change of understanding of the subject matter, observation of work process and teammates, and

		changes that happened within the participant oneself.
--	--	---

Evidence for deep learning is usually accompanied by self-discovery, change of perspectives, and change of values. This study is to understand how the second loop occurs in an SSE program. The learning cycle of Heutagogy (Eberle, 2009) is localised into the current practice, as shown in the diagram below.

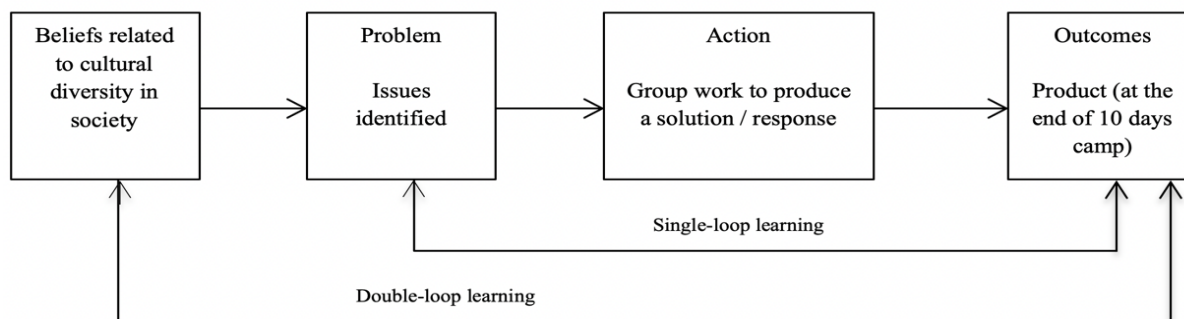


Figure 1 Double Loop Learning Cycle of Heutagogy (Eberle, 2009) Applied to an SSE Program

Participants are a mixture of undergraduate and graduate students of various majors (music, mass communication, literature, law, science, engineering, mathematics) from Malaysia and Japan. They had responded to the Call for Application and had passed an online interview for the program. Two contrasting social environments marked the backgrounds of participants: one is perceived as culturally homogeneous, and the other multiple and polarised. Students worked in teams attempting to solve academic problems but, in the process, subject themselves to the actual acculturation that occurred during their cross-cultural teamwork. The designed structure of the program in the sequence of double loop learning is shown below in Figure 2.

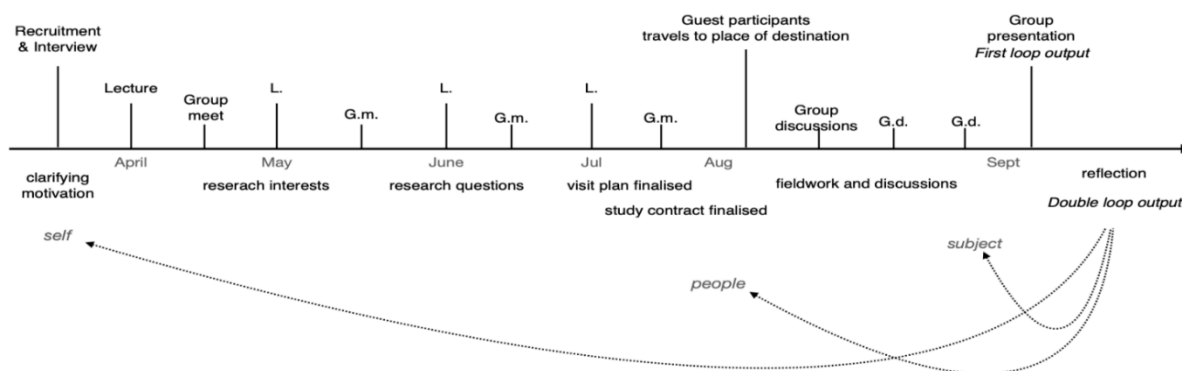


Figure 2 Design of a SSE Program Using Double Loop Learning Framework

A post-project guided reflection featured four main questions. Q1 asks if a change of understanding of subject matter has occurred in learning. Q2 and Q3 ask what was observed during the group work process regarding cross-cultural communications and interactions. Q4 asks if a change in self-image, self-efficacy, and the like has happened. and is essentially a



question for double-loop learning. Three researchers analysed and coded the reflections individually, where analysis results later were cross-examined and merged manually and through discussions.

The scheme of analysis comprises two components. To determine the level of experience, we seek evidence of interactions that happened beyond the surface level. We looked for evidence of cultural adaptation that could take the form of surprise, shock, discomfort, negotiation and change of views and behaviours. To determine the evidence for double-loop learning, we look for a) reflection that involves self-reorientation, particularly those involving a clear old-new contrast of view, perspective, and others; b) awareness of the underlying mechanism or system of the surface operation. These mentions fall beyond the single-loop cycle and question the “rules of the game”.

### Result

The host-guest structure of the SSE program has two inherent positions. While the host participants (HP) gave a fresh look at the society they live in, the guest participants (GP) checked the reality of a place of otherness. A reorientation in conceiving the study topic is an entry point to the second-loop thinking process, which eventually alters learners’ motivation and valuing towards it. In cross-examining the themes identified by three researchers, we found that participants’ assumption about multicultural society has changed. They also reflected their own culture through interaction with the new culture, learning to see from other cultures’ viewpoints. The primary outcome of the research is presented here as a model by combining analysis results and research literature, showing how to trace experience quality and deep learning in an SSE program.

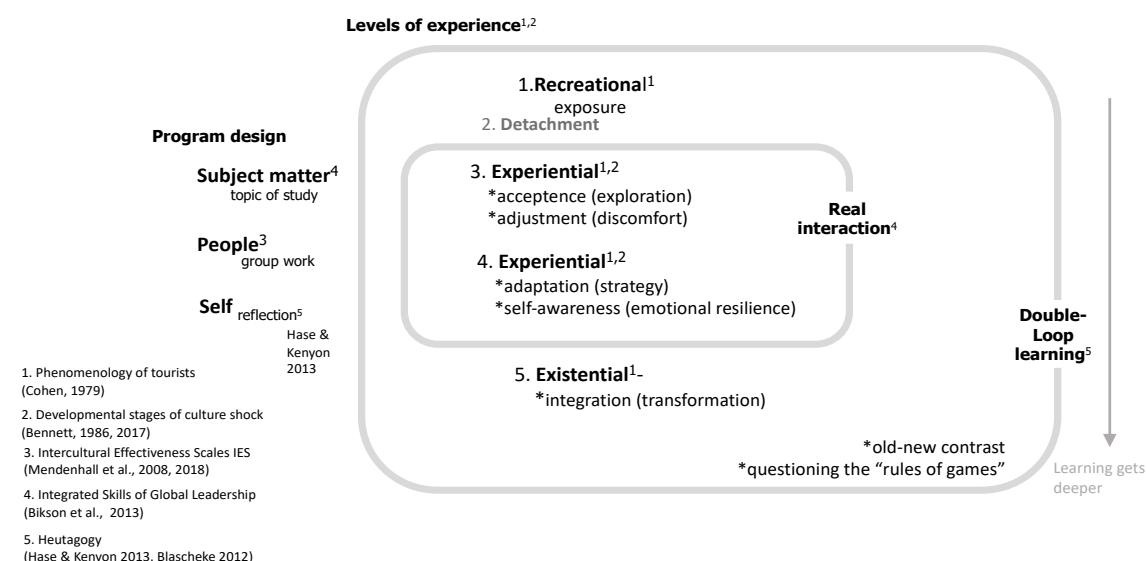


Figure 3 Levels of Experience and Learning in a Short-term Student Exchange using Heutagogy

We derived multi-level themes based on the three-panel concurrent codes done according to the analysis scheme. Figure 3 is then synthesised from the themes and research literature. A

program design for SSE involves three components: subject matter, people, and self. In our case, it is the subject of plural co-existence in a multicultural society; Malaysian and Japanese participants are divided into groups; and individual participants. Levels of experience are divided into five stages. Experiential I and II are considered as interactions akin to the real workplace, conveniently called "real experience", to be differentiated from the recreational one on the surface and the existential one at the contemplative end (in response to research question 1). The double loop learning happens by reflecting on what was done; hence falls beyond the experience. Learning gets more profound when it produces changes in a transformative way, i.e. an old-new contrast, or when it questions the principles, facts or ideas behind the operations, i.e. questioning the "rules of games" (in response to research question 2).

### ***Recreational Stage***

Novice travellers from Japan would experience the culture shock familiar to recreational tourists. First-time travellers in Malaysia observed physical-spatial conditions like the traffic system and high automobile dependency, behavioural culture like the frequent and blatant-like use of hand gestures often named "power of the hand", and social situations like the predominant migrant merchants in the city centre (N6). Due to the high level of homogeneity and uniqueness of the social-cultural set-up in Japan, novice Japanese travellers overseas face challenges in terms of cultural, safety and dietary adaptation (Ha7). Sources of discomfort for the first time travelling Japanese students include a conservative mindset rooted in the general mode of Japanese communication and socializing language barrier to expressing in English, and a lack of confidence in navigating uncertainty due to the fear of failure.

They were *rewriting their imagination*. Social and cultural diversity is one challenge the Japanese students felt confronted with. One claimed to have experienced "quite a lot of culture shocks" (U4); another was surprised that people live harmoniously "more than he had imagined" (J4). The experience of being in a real multicultural place challenged their imagination based on textbook information. Participants claimed that they had no sense of the reality of their prior knowledge of Southeast Asia until the visit was made (Y4). The reality of multicultural society discovered was unexpected; one said,

*"(M4) It made me realize that small ordinary matters like scenery in the town, school education, have a huge influence on the society as a whole".*

Another said her imagination of a conflict-filled plural society was overturned with an authentic experience of a society of mutual respect and acceptance. Participants eventually moved into real interaction from this recreational observation stage as they began their group work with their Malaysian counterparts.

### ***Experiential Stage I***

As interaction deepens, participants discovered realities that were not easily accessible to recreational tourists.

### Accepting Cultural Realities

Participants were *reacting to diversity*. The guest participants encountered a sense of wonder in a multilingual environment within the team, which contrasts sharply with the monolingual environment of their home country (U5). Dealing with multilingual group partners, on the other hand, confronted the Japanese students' view of what is a familiar social environment, and they could struggle to accept a social reality new to them as "ordinary". In the case of U5, a participant had to utilise imagination to cope with the culture shock by drawing an analogy with the intra-dialect differences in monolingual Japan. Another participant struggled with having a "bad impression" of other cultures and claimed that her resistance toward cultural diversity had reduced at the end of the program (N4).

The participants also discovered some *harsh social realities*. Both host and guest participants noticed the issue of social polarisation in Malaysia through their fieldwork. Some managed to conclude that Malaysia is a "plural but polarised" society where citizens constantly do what could be called "language trading" in their daily life (Y6). A participant was sharp in noticing the discriminative method used in day-to-day communication, where people consciously adopt different communication styles and content when speaking to conversants of different backgrounds (D6). Some participants were critical of the respondents manipulating their presentation to the researchers, including "expected correctness" in representing a multicultural nation (H6); and the "dodginess" in some public events (C6).

*Language and ease of expression* became major issues for the participants. Some gave insights on intimacy and expressiveness between the use of first and second language in both sides of participants. Participants found that the ease of using a particular language affects the temporal character of the speakers (N5). When the Malaysians trade languages frequently in their daily speech, their personality "altered" accordingly. Emotion and animation were reduced when one spoke in a second language (R5) as shown below.

"(R5) *In my group, I realized when Japanese members speak among themselves; they speak with their own emotions but this does not happen when they are using English to speak with Malaysians. It is the same for [the] Malaysian Chinese [meaning the Malaysian participants].*"

*Peer observation* yielded cultural differences in behaviours between host and guest participants. Japanese participants would bring up discussion topics from unique angles that surprised the Malaysians (K5). On the other hand, Malaysian participants had a higher sense of urgency in discussing societal problems (T6). They were also more vigilant than the Japanese in public places (O6, J6).

### Adjustment (Discomfort)

The discomfort was one recurring item in the reflections the participants gave while engaging in intercultural interactions. Evidence of discomfort was identified at various levels, but it is usually derived from observation and leads to negotiation. The participants felt discomfort over the difference in *communicative behaviours*-a difference between a collective and reserved manner of communication and one that is individual and frank. A guest participant mentioned that "Malaysian expect clear answers in their daily conversations....Japanese

people answer in a relatively vague way” (O5). Another said, “In Japan... it is difficult to express an opinion as we would adjust to each other by observing facial expressions. In Malaysia, each person tended to clarify his or her opinion as an individual” (J5). The discomfort over differences in behaviours became intense at times. Some Malaysian participants were irritated by their being constantly, attentively, and collectively observed by their Japanese counterparts (F5).

### ***Experiential Stage II***

Intercultural group work is like negotiating a shared space; it is a balancing act of value judgement on how much space to give and take (F4:3-4; D4). Being aware of the cultural differences in the surroundings and peer behaviours in an intercultural workplace, participants adjusted their course of thinking and actions, creating personal strategies to navigate through the situation.

### **Adapting Cultural Differences**

An early step to overcome cultural differences is to *reorientate oneself* or to imitate the counterparts, adjusting to the situation one-sidedly with new strategies. Some figured out “a new way” of connecting with their counterparts of different cultural backgrounds by expressing themselves more directly, without hesitation and with a bit of playfulness (Y5). Some even tried to adopt the discriminative communication style-meaning speak differently according to the identity of the discussant (D6).

Moving ahead, some participants took the step of *clarifying differences*. They understood the importance of communicating cultural differences and negotiated expectations to ensure smooth group work (T5). Some host participants took proactive measures to help with cross-cultural communication. One participant acknowledged that uncertainties and surprises marked the process of communicating in an intercultural setting (K5). The participant was aware of underlying dynamics in group communication, including possible compromise when interacting with members of other cultures, and resorted to “be extra alert and careful” in conveying thought (K5). Another was self-aware of counterparts' language barrier, providing probing questions during discussion (W5).

*Mutual adaptation* has eventually taken place where both sides have adjusted their communication styles, moving the level of interaction closer to that of real work experience mentioned in the Rand study (Bikson et al., 2003). A participant said that at the end of the program,

“(G5)... *the Malaysian students have learned to think more before making the communication; in response, we Japanese have learned to share our opinions more than we could initially do*”.

There were incidences where participants were *engaging in cross-cultural conflict*. We documented a head-on conflict between two contrasting ways of communication, the direct and truthful way contrast with the indirect and thoughtful one (F5). The Malaysians' direct manner of inquiring and the indecisive Japanese way of responding traumatised both sides as the group work prolonged, as shown below.

*“(F5) I found this [team members’ being observant] out during our field work, which made me became a bit cautious and a bitttttttt uncomfortable because I care about others’ thoughts towards me. ...”*

### **Self Awareness**

Self-awareness accompanies experiences at multiple levels and comes with different degrees of depth. Interactions with others most evidently trigger self-awareness. Japanese participants were called into the examination that their communication norms might hinder a person from expressing thoughts and feelings directly (Ha5), as shown below.

*“(Ha5) After all, the Japanese have a conservative culture. I thought. Students from different cultures expressed their opposition and opinions in meetings and discussions. However, we Japanese thought deeply, "It was irrelevant if this was said" and "The flow of the talk was different", and that stopped us from being more participative in giving comment.”*

Example Y5 mentioned earlier was evidence of self-awareness and personal transformation. For some, cross-cultural interactions activated monologues of self-description (D7). Cases of self-awareness overlap with those described in the next section, as self-examination falls beyond the single loop learning cycle.

One prevalent case of self-awareness was when the participants discovered the *ignorance of their own’s society and culture*. A shared reflection by the host participants is that they realised that they were ignorant of their own culture (F6, H6, H6, R6), as

*“(F6)...Malaysians do not have enough knowledge even about our own country’s history”.*

There was an incidence when a host felt like a guest during fieldwork. Malaysian participants’ textbook imagination of multiracial harmony was challenged when they interacted with people on the streets in the historical city of Melaka (C6, K6). Guest participants also found themselves inadequate in explaining their society satisfactorily to host participants.

### **Double Loop Learning**

Double-loop learning here refers to 1) any changes in understanding about self or 2) insights into dimensions behind the learning system or the supportive environment at large. Acknowledging subjectivity in interpreting data, we report only cases anonymously agreed by the panel as double-loop learning.

### **Discovery of Self**

Self-discovery in an SSE program through group heutagogy comes in different levels of depth and intensity. A general sense of self-discovery overlaps with “Self Awareness” of Experiential Stage II. Self-discovery, in a general sense, includes an instance of a participant who “surprised himself” by being outspoken and behaving in an “out-of-character” way situated by necessities in a cross-cultural setting (O7). To a lesser degree, other participants admit that they felt changes in their thoughts and behaviour (C7, G7, Y7).

The changes in self-understanding reached a new level when the reflections showed signs of *self-determinedness*. While each reflection defers and is unique to the participant's personality and background, they shared a passion for future improvement in their study lives. One participant *self-affirmed* her natural attitude in carrying herself upon team members' feedback (U7). The participant discovered that her personality harmonises with the host community. She experienced a change from feeling inferior in English proficiency to becoming more confident with herself and "decided" to live the way she wanted, with her true self, instead of being influenced by others.

There were also instances of *self-transformation*. A cross-cultural conflict with Japanese students has caused a host participant to "think more" (F7). The participant became more observant and attentive to others' needs in providing help and care. Admitting the core of belief was challenged, the participant describes the result as a "new self". Some guest participants were inspired after they experienced how English was actually used in cross-cultural setting. One discovered that attitude is the key to overcoming language barriers in intercultural communication (Q7). Another's attitude towards speaking English has changed, and were motivated to have more exchange activities in future (M7).

Cross-cultural interactions could trigger one to reexamine *self-identification*. A guest participant realised that the environment in his home country might not bring out the best in him (T7). A host participant had a "rude awakening" to being multilingual but lack of depth in her cultural competency, describing herself as having an "identity crisis and language difficulties" (K7), as shown below.

*"(K7) Identity crisis and language difficulties. (laugh) There is not ONE language which I can use to fully express myself. It is always in the form of rojak<sup>2</sup>. Being multilingual might be an advantage but it actually has a lot of cons."*

### **Insights to the "rules of game"**

Reflections at the deepest level were insightful and phenomenological. Some participants discovered some untold but authentic insights of a multicultural society that could only be gained from first-hand experience in the field; others illustrate a change in their way of knowing after sessions of discussion with their cross-cultural counterparts.

### ***Insights into Effective Communication***

Some participants realised the importance of the affective dimension behind the issue of language difficulties, that *attitude is key to effective cross-cultural communication*. Intention and effort to communicate were more determining than language precisions in the effective use of English (M6, M5, Q5). A participant redirected her focus from language deficiencies to conveying thought, which motivated her to express herself. Understanding and respecting each other sustains ongoing communication (Q5). Consider the quotes below.

---

<sup>2</sup> Rojak is a local salad dish with a mixture of fruit, vegetables and fried stuff in Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia.



(Q5) *"language is not the main barrier to communicate....Attitude communicated is the most effective way to communicate with group members from different cultures"*.

(D5) *"I learned that even if you have different nationalities and different living environments if you want to get long and communicate with them, they will walk up to you "*.

Statement D5 above shows the participant gained the confidence to communicate when his counterparts were supportive. A participant's willingness to speak depends on the listeners' attitude.

A show of willingness to get connected goes a long way in cross-cultural communication.

### ***Insights into Multicultural Society***

Participants also discovered that the key to plural co-existence is an attitude of mutual respect between different cultural groups (D4, T4, Y4, Ha4). Participants' assumptions of multicultural society changed with the added dimension of respect, as one observable code of behaviour underlying plural co-existence. Consider the texts below.

(D4) *"I felt that it was also important to value my own culture. I learned in this program that for communication purposes, it is important to respect each other's culture and value one's own culture"*.

(T4) *"Prior to participating in the program, we believed that in a multicultural society, we needed to recognise that interracial people should understand and accept each other, but the actual interviews showed a sense of respect for each other among them"*.

Statement T4 above tells that the textbook's plural co-existence formula is being replaced by a formula discovered in actual observation. Participants displayed a more engaging understanding of what is lacking and what it takes to make a plural society work. Here we see a renewed and personalised view of the subject matter of plural coexistence, which is evidence of second loop learning.

### ***Learning How to Learn***

A participant narrates the experience of *a change of paradigm in perceiving things*, which is a clear outcome of learning how to learn (H7). The reflection implies a shift from intellectualising experiences to engaging the affective faculties in learning, or simply a shift from head to heart in approaching learning. The reflection begins with looking deep into the issue of lack of motivation. The participant looked into how his/her thought process worked and conflicted with the open-ended interactions with counterparts. *"..as I need to set my way aside"* is a clear notion of cultural adjustment, as shown below.

*"(H7) Another thing that comes to my attention is the way my mind functions. I've been training to interpret things/informations by looking at how they link to each other, what do they tell us, and how can we utilize such messages. And it was different in this program, much different, I would say. We can think widely across the topics, which allows bigger coverages in many aspects.....as I need to set my way aside, and to adapt this new way"*

Another participant experienced *a paradigm change in the way of knowing*. He shared revealing moments through the discussions and interactions (W7b). The participant differentiates between gaining new knowledge and what one could learn by experiencing. Experiential knowledge could inspire and motivate one to learn in an essential way. [SEP]

**Discussion**

***Interactions akin to Real Work Experience***

We identified that interaction akin to real work experience from global leadership literature as one of the desired goals for short-term student exchange programs. To determine the level of experience the learners obtained, we compared their statements to the domain of global human resource training and tourists’ experience. Tourists’ sensation is inherent in any intercultural contact. SSE participants would have their tourist-like moments before they could move on to the stage of real life or workplace interaction. The task of analysis in identifying real interaction is to identify reflections that fall outside of recreation nature. The findings show distinctions between recreational and non-recreational statements. An SSE program produces both learning outcomes in proportion. As our analysis is statement-based and not person-based, the actual situation is such that depending on times and situations, a person could experience either quality or both.

In analysis, we merged Cohen’s experiential stage of tourists’ phenomenology with global leadership theories. The findings show that the recreational sensations were described holistically, including general observations of scenery, behaviours of the locals, food, and excitement over “trivial matters” in the eyes of the locals, such as the design of traffic lights. As a result, we propose a concept of “real interaction” conceptualised in stages of intercultural adjustment (Refer to Figure 3 for the new framework proposed, SSE with Heutagogy). We borrow terms from Bennett’s (1986, 2017) developmental stages to form four types of experience quality: accepting a cultural difference, adjusting to it, adapting it, and becoming self-aware through interacting with others’ cultures. While the first three stages move in succession, self-awareness could be present at all levels with different depths.

The findings regarding interactions in the student exchange program that involves the two stages of recreational and experiential is summarised as below.

**Recreational Stage**

is a stage of perceiving and observing the impact of the place of visit. It may involve,

<b>Holistic experience</b>	that mentions cultural and physical differences like landscape and food intake
<b>Problem-solving</b>	that is reported in a general manner
<b>Positive comments</b>	that is reported in a general manner
<b>Unexpected encounters</b>	that caused rewriting of prior imagination one had on the place of a visit.

Figure 2: Experience Quality in Recreational Stage in a Student Exchange Program

## Experiential Stage

is a stage participants need to respond to, cope and manage the cultural differences with their counterparts. It may involve,

<b>Demanding realities</b>	One could see the cultural realities that, in some ways, demand the person to form his/her own response to them.
<b>Non-categorical truth</b>	One needs to cope with a version of cultural diversity that falls outside the pre-existing categories in home culture or against the textbook knowledge.
<b>Integrated, non-linear phenomena</b>	For example, the choice of language affects communicative personality; communication corresponds with the background with whom one is speaking, among others.
<b>Contrasting mind process</b>	Concern, discomfort and conflict over the contrasting process of thinking and communicating between the host and home culture.
<b>Self-awareness</b>	The self-awareness that comes gives a third person a look at one's own culture, accompanied by the awareness of what is lacking, both the lacking in the culture itself and ignorance of own culture..
<b>Reorientation</b>	A process coping strategy. One adjusts to the cultural differences and develops new personal strategies in interpreting the phenomena and responding to counterparts.
<b>Mutual adaptation</b>	is a situation where participants try to imitate each other, taking on the cultural style of the counterpart, in various degrees and ways.

Figure 4: Experience Quality in Experiential Stage in a Student Exchange Program

The findings contained observation, feelings, and thinking tied to specific group work contexts that would not be possible otherwise. Multi-lingual characteristics of Malaysians are commonplace, but insights into Malaysians' culturally discriminative modes of relating in their daily communications, as well as the change of personalities (at least from the outlook) that accompany language trading, go beyond surface-level understanding. Another example is the difference in style of communication between Japanese and Malaysians. The participants verbalised the differences in detail and struggled through them with discomfort, pain, and negotiation, and some groups arrived at mutual adapting to the style of other cultures. Japanese is commonly known for their collective and reserved behaviours. However, the participants had first-hand insights through interaction that these behaviour patterns derive from good will to be considerate of others' feelings and conditions. The particularity and situatedness of the SSE program provided an impactful exchange.

### ***Double-loop Learning in a Mobility Program***

Any learning program involving intercultural teamwork could not avoid the non-singular nature: the subject matter will not be the only purpose of learning. Activities of visit and intercultural exchange such as tours, overseas visits, and short-term mobility are by nature reflective. Applying a double loop framework helps to crystallise the holistic nature of a student mobility programs.

The analysis panel scrutinised reflections for double-loop by specifying the conditions as either those that display clear prior-post program contrasts in the change of understanding, beliefs, or valuing; or insightful discovery of dimensions that lie behind the operation of a system. In order to differentiate a double-loop reflection from ordinary reflection, we deal away with the condition that any insights gained outside the learning topic could be regarded as double-loop. This also means a self-reflection does not immediately qualify as deep learning.

Our finding concerning double loop learning is summarised below, rephrased using the term deep learning as a substitute for double loop learning for better application. DL by concept does not interfere with the quality of interpersonal communication (the content in Figure 4), meaning it runs parallel with intercultural competency and global leadership discourse. It is about personal growth from a humanistic education perspective.

## Deep Learning

A condition of learning beyond the surface of the immediate learning outcomes; has long-lasting impacts on the learner's motivation in both the subject of learning and the act of learning itself.

**Self-discovery**

Participants discover new dimensions about self, going through a self-transforming process, or deepen/her awareness over subtle issues or crises in self-identity and identification.

**Experiential knowledge of the subject**

A gain of experiential knowledge of the subject of learning that is authentic and original to the learners, meaning certain "truth from the ground", discoveries derived from the situation learners placed in.

**Experiential knowledge of the process**

A gain of experiential knowledge about the learning process itself.

Figure 5: Deep Learning Quality in a Student Exchange Program

Our finding shows no lack of cases that provide substantial insights that qualify for questioning game rules. More than one participant "came out" from negotiating cultural differences and found themselves with an added dimension in their self-image. Some participants ended with an identity crisis after engaging with the group project in searching for what a desired multicultural society is. Instead of questioning the knowledge and skills related to the subject matter, the learners questioned themselves as an actor in partaking in the project. This realisation is simultaneously personalised and diverse according to the personality and background of the participants. These findings are clear evidence of deep learning.

Evidence for double-loop was also found in some specific but insightful observations of tacit rules operating beneath a multicultural society, griped in the form of experiential knowledge, meaning these insights were gained through participants' attentive observation along the fieldwork. A practical attitude of mutual respect was commonplace in Malaysia. The participants also discovered a crucial component in effective intercultural communication - the attitude of trying to connect and express. They discovered that language proficiency was not a requirement as critical as they imagined it to be. Two senior participants gave vivid

narratives of how they were enlightened by gaining knowledge experientially, which ignited fresh motivation for further inquiries.

### **Conclusion**

Heutagogy is a viable approach for short-term student exchange programs to produce a deeper level of exchange and usher into deep learning. The process of executing group work was highly diverse as decision-making was collectively self-determined and not guided. The result of self-determination is apparent in the uniqueness of each narrative. The depth and level of persuasion are commonly high, but the content is different. As coaches, we observed a group that had almost abandoned proper research procedures but managed to make in-depth observations of the different communication mechanisms between the Japanese and Malaysians. Another group indulged in organised discussions and found no time to complete the task.

This paper demonstrates that higher-level student exchange, such as real interactions and double-loop learning, can be determined and analysed using a coherent framework with clear operationalised definitions. In this research, real interactions were constructed by pulling together related discourse of culture shock, tourists' experience, intercultural competency and global leadership. Double-loop was localised with specific terms to be distinctive from ordinary self-reflections.

Issues remain with the redundancy of principles matching Heutagogy for human skills training programs. From the perspective of coaches, it is arguable if undergraduate students (at least from Malaysia and Japan) have the aptitude (meaning academic maturity) for self-determined learning. It is also arguable that self-determination and not peer interaction should be credited the most in bringing such humanistic outcomes for the learners. The group work process was rewarding and beneficial, but the end-product of the first loop, meaning the task outcome of the subject matter, received little scrutiny. Nevertheless, the double-loop framework was an effective tool, especially for evaluating a student exchange program's subjective quality of learning outcomes like personal growth.

### **References**

- Bennett, M. J. (2017). Development model of intercultural sensitivity. In Kim, Y. (Ed.), *International Encyclopedia of Intercultural Communication*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Bennett, M. J. (2004). Becoming interculturally competent. In J.S. Wurzel (Ed.), *Toward Multiculturalism: A Reader in Multicultural Education*. Newton, MA: Intercultural Resource Corporation.
- Bennett, M. J. (1986). A developmental approach to training for intercultural sensitivity. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 10(2), 179–196.
- Bikson, T. K., Treverton, G. F., Moini, J., and Lindstrom, G. (2003) *New Challenges for International Leadership: Lessons from Organisations with Global Missions*. Santa Monica, C.A: RAND.
- Blaschke, L. M. (2012). Heutagogy and lifelong learning: A review of heutagogical practice and self-determined learning. *International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning*, 13(1), 56-71. [index.php/irrodl/article/view/1076/2113](http://index.php/irrodl/article/view/1076/2113) (2 June 2017)

- Bloom, B. S. (1956). *Taxonomy of educational objectives, handbook I: The cognitive domain*. New York: David McKay.
- Berardo, K. (2006). The U-curve of Adjustment: A study in the evolution and evaluation of a 50-year old model. Luton Business School: University of Bedfordshire, UK
- Berardo, K. (2007). Alternatives to the U-Curve Model. Diperoleh daripada culturocity.com (05 May 2018).
- Cohen, E. (2019). Posthumanism and tourism. *Tourism Review*. DOI: 10.1108/TR-06-2018-0089. (06 March 2019)
- Cohen, E. (1979). A phenomenology of tourist experiences. *Sociology*, 13(2),179-201.
- Deardorff, D. K. Eds. (2009) *The Sage Handbook of Intercultural Competence*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications
- Eberle, J. (2009). Heutagogy: What your mother didn't tell you about pedagogy and the conceptual age. In *Proceedings from the 8th Annual European Conference on eLearning*, October 29-30, 2009. Bari, Italy
- Hase, S., and Kenyon, C. (2000). *From andragogy to heutagogy*. Ultibase, RMIT. <http://ultibase.rmit.edu.au/Articles/dec00/hase2.htm> (7 May 2020)
- Hase, S. and Kenyon, C. (2013) *Self-determined learning: heutagogy in action*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Keith, R. (2003). *Qualitative Inquiry in TESOL*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kisin, N. (2015). Keith Richard's Qualitative Inquiry in Tesol. *Methodical View* 6, 261-264
- Knowles, M. (1970) *The Modern Practice of Adult Education: Andragogy versus Pedagogy*, Associated Press, New York.
- Lysgaard, S. (1955). Adjustment in a foreign society: Norwegian Fullbright grantees visiting the US. *International Social Science Bulletin*, 7, 45-51.
- Oberg, K. (1960). Culture shock: Adjustment to new cultural environments. *Practical Anthropology*, 7, 177-182.
- Mendenhall M. E., Osland J. S., Bird, A., Oddou, G. R., Maznevski, M. L., Stevens, M. J., and Stahl, G. K. (2013). *Global Leadership: Research, Practice, and Development*. New York: Routledge.
- Mendenhall M. E., Osland J. S., Bird, A., Oddou, G. R., Stevens, M. J., Maznevski, M. L., and Stahl, G. K. (2018). *Global Leadership: Research, Practice, and Development*. Third edition. New York: Routledge.
- Mendenhall, M., Stevens, M. J., Bird, A., Oddou, G., & Osland, J. (2008). Specification of the content domain of the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale. Chesterfield, MO: The Kozai Group
- MEXT Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. (2022). *Top Global University Japan*. <https://tgu.mext.go.jp/en>
- Osland, J. S. (2018). An Overview of the Global Leadership Literature. In Mendenhall et al, *Global Leadership: Research, Practice, and Development*. New York: Routledge
- Saul, R. J. (1997) *The Unconsciousness Civilisation*. New York, The Free Press.
- Rogers, C. (1959). A theory of therapy, personality and interpersonal relationships as developed in the client-centered framework. In (ed.) S. Koch, *Psychology: A study of a science. Vol. 3: Formulations of the person and the social context*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Schneider, S. C., & Barsoux, J. L. (2003). *The 4 Stages of Culture Shock*. United States: Prentice



Hall.

- Shabatura, J. (2022). *Using Bloom's Taxonomy to Write Effective Learning Outcomes*. University of Arkansas. <https://tips.uark.edu/using-blooms-taxonomy/>
- Shakir, R. (2009). Soft skills at the Malaysian institutes of higher learning. *Asia Pacific Education Review* 10, 309–315 (2009). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12564-009-9038-8>
- Ahmad, S. B. S. (2013). Soft Skills Level of Malaysian Students at a Tertiary Institution: A Comparative Case Study Based on Gender, Area of Residence and Type of Schools. *International Journal of Asian Social Science*, 2013, 3(9):1929-1937
- Spitzberg, B. H., Changnon, G. (2009) Conceptualizing Intercultural Competence. In Deardorff, D.K. Eds. *The Sage Handbook of Intercultural Competence*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2-52.
- Ward, C. A., Bochner, S., & Furnham, A. (2010). *The psychology of culture shock*. East Sussex, United Kingdom: Routledge. Witty, M. (2007). Client-centered therapy. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 36, 35-50.