Assessing Communication Competency for Intercultural Adaptation

BRENT D. RUBEN

One of the recurrent problems associated with interpersonal, group, organizational, and intercultural training in communication is the assessment of outcomes. An approach is suggested for the evaluation of training and selection of programs utilizing behavioral assessment of participants' communication competence. The method involves the systematic collection and analysis of behavioral observation data along one or several predetermined dimensions by one or more observers. Preliminary use of pilot instruments indicates that the methodology provides a relatively efficient technique for generating reliable assessments of interactive competence in a variety of social settings. A range of uses of behavioral assessment techniques in communication training are discussed, and an application in intercultural adaptation training and selection is explored in some detail.

A recurring problem associated with interpersonal, group, and organizational training is the assessment of outcomes. Do participants change as a result of a particular training experience? Along what dimensions do they change? Will the changes be manifested in non-training situations? How can behavioral effects of training be assessed? Variously phrased, these and related questions are posed with interest and concern by clinical psychologists, guidance counselors, professional trainers, organization consultants, and facilitators of interpersonal, group, or organizational processes. Identifying appropriate training or selection dimensions for one's purposes and determining how their presence or absence may be validly, reliably, usefully, and efficiently assessed is clearly not a trivial matter. When the results of evaluation influence decisions about particular individuals as well as the evaluation of the training program itself, the issues at stake are even more critical. This is the case, for example, when participants in training will be recommended for selection into or out of a new position or for additional training and instruction, based on assessed training outcomes.

One approach that may be used in the evaluation of training outcomes in interpersonal, group, organizational, or intercultural settings is a behavioral assessment of communication competency. This method involves the systematic collection and analysis of behavioral observation data along several predetermined dimensions, across one or more observers. Preliminary use of behavior observation instruments described here indicates that the method provides a useful, relatively efficient technique for generating reliable assessments of an individual's communicative competency in a variety of social settings.

Assessing Interactive Competence

Efforts to devise methods for evaluating training outcomes are hindered by the fact that what a person knows or intends is often poorly reflected in his behavior. This gap between knowledge and performance has been the focus of continued interest and concern, both in communication and in the applied behavioral sciences in general. A familiarity with theories of interpersonal, group, organizational, or intercultural dynamics does not necessarily correlate with an ability or desire to behave in a manner consistent with those theories. Although it may well be the case, as Lewin suggested, that "there is nothing so practical as a good theory," it must also be said that there is nothing about a good behavioral theory that assures its practice.

For example, an individual may be highly articulate on the literature of leadership but unable to demonstrate those understandings in his own behaviors. Even an awareness of and familiarity with relevant skills does not guarantee the ability to consistently display them behaviorally.

In many cases, the presence of inconsistencies between one's verbal/cognitive competencies and one's behavioral competencies is

---

1 Systematic attempts to define "effective," "successful," or "competent" communication behavior are relatively scarce. The notion of communication competence, used interchangeably with communication effectiveness, is discussed in this paper as a dyadic concept. For a particular interaction to be termed effective or a person to be termed competent, the performance must meet the needs and goals of both the message initiator and the recipient (Ruben, 1972; Wiemann, 1976). The term "communication competence," as used in this paper, is based on the work of Wiemann, who credits the original of the phrase to E.A. Weinstein (1966).
Assessing Communication Competency for Intercultural Adaptation

BRENT D. RUBEN

One of the recurrent problems associated with interpersonal, group, organizational, and intercultural training in communication is the assessment of outcomes. An approach is suggested for the evaluation of training and selection of programs utilizing behavioral assessment of participants' communication competence. The method involves the systematic collection and analysis of behavioral observation data along one or several predetermined dimensions by one or more observers. Preliminary use of pilot instruments indicates that the methodology provides a relatively efficient technique for generating reliable assessments of interactive competence in a variety of social settings. A range of uses of behavioral assessment techniques in communication training are discussed, and an application in intercultural adaptation training and selection is explored in some detail.

A recurring problem associated with interpersonal, group, and organizational training is the assessment of outcomes. Do participants change as a result of a particular training experience? Along what dimensions do they change? Will the changes be manifested in non-training situations? How can behavioral effects of training be assessed? Variously phrased, these and related questions are posed with interest and concern by clinical psychologists, guidance counselors, professional trainers, organization consultants, and facilitators of interpersonal, group, or organizational processes.

Identifying appropriate training or selection dimensions for one's purposes and determining how their presence or absence may be

validly, reliably, usefully, and efficiently assessed is clearly not a trivial matter. When the results of evaluation influence decisions about particular individuals as well as the evaluation of the training program itself, the issues at stake are even more critical. This is the case, for example, when participants in training will be recommended for selection into or out of a new position or for additional training and instruction, based on assessed training outcomes.

One approach that may be used in the evaluation of training outcomes in interpersonal, group, organizational, or intercultural settings is a behavioral assessment of communication competency. This method involves the systematic collection and analysis of behavioral observation data along several predetermined dimensions, across one or more observers. Preliminary use of behavior observation instruments described here indicates that the methodology provides a useful, relatively efficient technique for generating reliable assessments of an individual's communicative competency in a variety of social settings.

Assessing Interactive Competence

Efforts to devise methods for evaluating training outcomes are hindered by the fact that what a person knows or intends is often poorly reflected in his behavior. This gap between knowledge and performance has been the focus of continued interest and concern, both in communication and in the applied behavioral sciences in general. A familiarity with theories of interpersonal, group, organizational, or intercultural dynamics does not necessarily correlate with an ability or desire to behave in a manner consistent with those theories. Although it may well be the case, as Lewin suggested, that "there is nothing so practical as a good theory," it must also be said that there is nothing about a good behavioral theory that assures its practice.

For example, an individual may be highly articulate on the literature of leadership but unable to demonstrate those understandings in his own behaviors. Even an awareness of and familiarity with relevant skills does not guarantee the ability to consistently display them behaviorally.

In many cases, the presence of inconsistencies between one's verbal/cognitive competencies and one's behavioral competencies is

---

1Systematic attempts to define "effective," "successful," or "competent" communication behavior are relatively scarce. The notion of communication competence, used interchangeably with communication effectiveness, is discussed in this paper as a dyadic concept. For a particular interaction to be termed effective or a person to be termed competent, the performance must meet the needs and goals of both the message initiator and the recipient (Ruben, 1972; Wiemann, 1976). The term communication competence, as used in this paper, is based on the work of Wiemann, who credits the original of the phrase to E.A. Weinstein (1966).
content focus of such an instrument is on attitudes, feelings, or behavior, the mode of generating data is essentially participant self-report and is both cognitive and verbal in nature. Although such competence is most appropriately evaluated through verbal measurement methods, behavioral competencies are best assessed through behavioral measures—measures of competency that reflect an individual's ability to display concepts in his behavior rather than his intentions, understandings, knowledges, attitudes, or desires.

Methodology

The behavioral assessment method is reasonably straightforward. The goal is the systematic collection and analysis of an individual's behavior relative to a predetermined set of criterion dimensions. By observing individuals in situations—either contrived or natural—that are analogous to those for which they are being trained or selected, it should be possible to make reasonably valid predictions about how likely those individuals are to display similar behaviors in future situations.

Such methods require the user to make some assessment of the situation for which training or selection is being conducted, with the goal of specifying the major component behaviors necessary to effective functioning in that environment. Additionally, it is necessary to construct and implement (using a simulation, game, or structured experience) an analogous situation during which it will be possible to observe and record the behavior of the individuals involved.

The time during which individual behaviors will be observed and rated will vary, depending on specific purposes, logistics, etc. It may be useful to base behavioral assessments on observation over several hours, during which participants are involved in a particular structured experience. It may be useful also to base assessments on behaviors observed over the total training or selection program. It may be appropriate to base observations solely on behaviors noted during regular or formal activities, or it may be appropriate also to include behavior during coffee breaks, informal discussions, and meals. This kind of decision must be made to take into account the implications it will have for the design of training and to reflect the particular goals of particular programs.

Pre-test and Training

Especially during developmental stages, it is desirable to have observational ratings completed by several different raters (perhaps with different orientations) to determine the extent to which ratings may vary as a function of the observer. Usually, raters should be familiar with the indices well in advance of use. It is also important to encourage raters to avoid attaching personal meanings to the concepts, terms, or notions described on the indices and instead to endeavor to
not a matter for serious concern. Few of us regularly operate in a manner that is totally consistent with what we know, believe, understand, or intend, but in some cases, the verbal/cognitive-behavioral gap can be problematic. Training and the assessment of training provide a particularly clear case in point. Recognizing the possibility that often what one "knows" and how one "acts" seem at least somewhat disparate, toward which shall training and assessment efforts be directed?

Consider the following example from the context of interpersonal communication training. An understanding of the communication dynamics that occur between interacting individuals who are meeting for the first time might include reference to their goals for the interaction, styles of communication, language and nonverbal presentation patterns, cultural and geographic backgrounds, experiential breadth, etc. Additionally, an analysis of such an interpersonal interaction might draw upon ideas of perception, beliefs, attitudes, values, tolerance for difference and ambiguity, etc. But the capacity to articulate such a framework is no guarantee of the capacity to function competently in terms of those variables. Motivation, "good will," and appropriate intentions are also poor predictors of effective outcomes. Knowing that the initial phases of social interaction involve a reasonable amount of pro forma ritual as a precursor to the development of a relationship is unlikely to have a predictable effect on the ability to perform the ritual phases of interaction with ease, comfort, or adeptness, regardless of one's intellectual commitment to or cognitive awareness of their importance or inevitability.

Verbal/cognitive competency—the capacity to conceptualize and articulate variables, dimensions, and issues that need to be taken into account to explain or predict effective functioning in a particular situation—may be a necessary condition for communicative or social competence. Behavioral competency—the capacity to display behaviors that are defined as appropriate and functional by others—is a sufficient condition for effective social functioning and is probably at least a minimum condition for success in many task-oriented situations.

Communicative competence is the ability to function in a manner that is perceived to be relatively consistent with the needs, capacities, goals, and expectations of the individuals in one's environment while satisfying one's own needs, capacities, goals, and expectations.

**Behavioral Assessment of Communicative Competency**

Training and evaluative efforts may focus on either verbal/cognitive competence, behavioral competence, or both. The relative importance in training and assessment that is attached to each will, of course, depend on the nature of one's objectives.

A variety of paper-and-pencil instruments are available for evaluating an individual's verbal and cognitive skills. Whether the content focus of such an instrument is on attitudes, feelings, or behavior, the mode of generating data is essentially participant self-report and is both cognitive and verbal in nature. Although such competence is most appropriately evaluated through verbal measurement methods, behavioral competencies are best assessed through behavioral measures—measures of competency that reflect an individual's ability to display concepts in his behavior rather than his intentions, understandings, knowledges, attitudes, or desires.

**Methodology**

The behavioral assessment method is reasonably straightforward. The goal is the systematic collection and analysis of an individual's behavior relative to a predetermined set of criterion dimensions. By observing individuals in situations—either contrived or natural—that are analogous to those for which they are being trained or selected, it should be possible to make reasonably valid predictions about how likely those individuals are to display similar behaviors in future situations.

Such methods require the user to make some assessment of the situation for which training or selection is being conducted, with the goal of specifying the major component behaviors necessary to effective functioning in that environment. Additionally, it is necessary to construct and implement (using a simulation, game, or structured experience) an analogous situation during which it will be possible to observe and record the behavior of the individuals involved.

The time during which individual behaviors will be observed and rated will vary, depending on specific purposes, logistics, etc. It may be useful to base behavioral assessments on observation over several hours, during which participants are involved in a particular structured experience. It may be useful also to base assessments on behaviors observed over the total training or selection program. It may be appropriate to base observations solely on behaviors noted during regular or formal activities, or it may be appropriate also to include behavior during coffee breaks, informal discussions, and meals. This kind of decision must be made to take into account the implications it will have for the design of training and to reflect the particular goals of particular programs.

**Pre-test and Training**

Especially during developmental stages, it is desirable to have observational ratings completed by several different raters (perhaps with different orientations) to determine the extent to which ratings may vary as a function of the observer. Usually, raters should be familiar with the indices well in advance of use. It is also important to encourage raters to avoid attaching personal meanings to the concepts, terms, or notions described on the indices and instead to endeavor to
adopt the definitions provided as closely as possible. Video training tapes could be used to instruct the observers.

Analysis

A number of analyses are possible with the observational data generated through behavioral assessment. After examining questions of interrater reliability and considering data pertinent to the measurement central to the objectives for which the instruments were utilized, it may be useful to correlate each participant's behavioral profile with the profiles of each other participant and subsequently to explore whether groups of participants exhibit similar behavioral patterns. Results of such analysis could be used in a training program redesign, and if these data can be related to subsequent success in a reference situation, they can be used in the selection of future participants.

Use

The merits of gathering behavioral assessment data are most apparent whenever people are being selected or trained for positions or situations in which the consequences of failure are high and mistakes may be irreversible, whenever an individual will move into an intact team or working unit, whenever the time available for adaptation or adjustment is not extensive, and whenever the perceptions of others in the environment are essential to the satisfaction of the goals and objectives of the individual being selected or trained.

**INTERCULTURAL ADAPTATION: A CASE STUDY**

Many of the contexts for which training and/or selection techniques are seriously undertaken embody at least several of these conditions to some extent. One context in which these characteristics and attendant problems are especially significant is the intercultural adaptation program, through which participants are being trained or selected for sponsored, intercultural assignments of rather short duration (six months to five years) to begin or continue projects of some concern to both the sponsor and the host culture.

In such situations, communicative competency is vital. Even more clearly than in one's own culture, the ability to be successful in completing a task role in another culture is directly related to an individual's communication ability. The capacity to operate in both social and task situations in a manner that is perceived as appropriate by colleagues, subordinates, and superiors from one's own or from another culture is essential. In such contexts, cognitive/verbal competence and preparation may be important and quite useful well before departure—especially from a therapeutic perspective. Even more important are behavioral competencies, which become critical almost from the outset of interaction in a new or differing culture.

**Dimensions of Intercultural Behavior Competence**

A decision to use behavioral assessment methods for selection and training in intercultural communication and adaptation begins with an attempt to specify the relevant components of cross-cultural behavioral competence.

There has been considerable research concerning with identifying those communication behaviors that contribute to effectiveness within one's own culture. Wiemann (1976) identified three main schools of thought about face-to-face interaction. The first he characterized as the human relations or T-group approach, typified by the work of Argyris (1965), Bochner and Kelly (1974), and Holland and Baird (1968). The second orientation, the social skill approach, is reflected especially in the work of Argyle and Kendon (1967), and the third is essentially a self-presentation approach suggested in the work of Goffman (1959, 1963, 1967), Redick and Wood (1973), and Wein stein (1969).

Efforts to consider how these approaches generalize to crosscultural face-to-face interaction have been minimal. Available to help link the study of intracultural effectiveness to intercultural competency are case studies and anecdotal reports of behaviors that reportedly lead to failure and others that seem associated more often with success (Goff, 1962; LaBarre, 1964; Barne, 1972; Samovar & Porter, 1972; Chu, 1974; Kunkhiro, 1974; Sarbaugh, in press). Based on an integration of these sources with findings from studies of intracultural competence, seven dimensions of importance to intercultural competency were identified. These are display of respect (Carkuff, 1976a); interaction posture; orientation to knowledge; empathy (Carkuff, 1969b); self-oriented role behavior (Benne & Sheats, 1948); interaction management (Wiemann, 1975); and tolerance for ambiguity.

Selected Dimensions

**Display of Respect.** The ability to express respect and positive regard for another person has been shown to be an important component in effective interpersonal relations. The expression of respect confers status upon the recipient, contributes to self-esteem, and fosters positive regard for the source of the communicated respect. Respect is conveyed in a variety of ways—through eye contact, body posture, voice tone and pitch, and general displays of interest. Attending behaviors may be expressed in varying degrees, ranging from highly positive displays of respect and regard to minimal regard, or even disregard.

---

Ruben 339
adopt the definitions provided as closely as possible. Video training tapes could be used to instruct the observers.

Analysis

A number of analyses are possible with the observational data generated through behavioral assessment. After examining questions of interrater reliability and considering data pertinent to the measurement central to the objectives for which the instruments were utilized, it may be useful to correlate each participant's behavioral profile with the profiles of each other participant and subsequently to explore whether groups of participants exhibit similar behavioral patterns. Results of such analysis could be used in a training program redesign, and if these data can be related to subsequent success in a reference situation, they can be used in the selection of future participants.

Use

The merits of gathering behavioral assessment data are most apparent whenever people are being selected or trained for positions or situations in which the consequences of failure are high and mistakes may be irreversible, whenever an individual will move into an intact team or working unit, whenever the time available for adaptation or adjustment is not extensive, and whenever the perceptions of others in the environment are essential to the satisfaction of the goals and objectives of the individual being selected or trained.

INTERCULTURAL ADAPTATION: A CASE STUDY

Many of the contexts for which training and/or selection techniques are seriously undertaken embody at least several of these conditions to some extent. One context in which these characteristics and attendant problems are especially significant is the intercultural adaptation program, through which participants are being trained or selected for sponsored, intercultural assignments of rather short duration (six months to five years) to begin or continue projects of some concern to both the sponsor and the host culture.

In such situations, communicative competency is vital. Even more clearly than in one's own culture, the ability to be successful in completing a task role in another culture is directly related to an individual's communication ability. The capacity to operate in both social and task situations in a manner that is perceived as appropriate by colleagues, subordinates, and superiors from one's own or from another culture is essential. In such contexts, cognitive/verbal competence and preparation may be important and quite useful well before departure—especially from a therapeutic perspective. Even more important are behavioral competencies, which become critical almost from the outset of interaction in a new or differing culture.

Dimensions of Intercultural Behavior Competence

A decision to use behavioral assessment methods for selection and training in intercultural communication and adaptation begins with an attempt to specify the relevant components of cross-cultural behavioral competence.

There has been considerable research concerned with identifying those communication behaviors that contribute to effectiveness within one's own culture. Wiemann (1976) identified three main schools of thought about face-to-face interaction. The first he characterized as the human relations or T-group approach, typified by the work of Argyris (1965), Bochner and Kelly (1974), and Holland and Baird (1968). The second orientation, the social skill approach, is reflected especially in the work of Argyle and Kendon (1967), and the third is essentially a self-presentation approach suggested in the work of Goffman (1959, 1963, 1967), Rodnick and Wood (1973), and Wein- stein (1969).

Efforts to consider how these approaches generalize to crosscultural face-to-face interaction have been minimal.2 Available to help link the study of intracultural effectiveness to intercultural competency are case studies and anecdotal reports of behaviors that reportedly lead to failure and others that seem associated more often with success (Goff, 1962; LaBarre, 1964; Barne, 1972; Samovar & Porter, 1972; Chu, 1974; Kunkhiro, 1974; Sarbaugh, in press). Based on an integration of these sources with findings from studies of intracultural competence, seven dimensions of importance to intercultural competence were identified. These are display of respect (Carkhuff, 1969a); interaction posture; orientation to knowledge; empathy (Carkhuff, 1969b); self-oriented role behavior (Benna & Sheats, 1948); interaction management (Wiemann, 1975); and tolerance for ambiguity.

Selected Dimensions

Display of Respect. The ability to express respect and positive regard for another person has been shown to be an important component in effective interpersonal relations. The expression of respect confers status upon the recipient, contributes to self-esteem, and fosters positive regard for the source of the communicated respect. Respect is conveyed in a variety of ways—through eye contact, body posture, voice tone and pitch, and general displays of interest. Attending behaviors may be expressed in varying degrees, ranging from highly positive displays of respect and regard to minimal regard, or even disregard.

---

2Specialized treatments of aspects of interpersonal intercultural communication and cross-cultural advisor effectiveness are provided in Kealey (1976), Lanthier (1975), Racicot (1975), and Ruben (1975).
Interaction Posture. The ability to respond to others in a descriptive, non-evaluating, and nonjudgmental way is often positively related to effective interpersonal functioning. Descriptive responses, unlike their opposite, seem to foster the development of a supportive climate and indicate a concern for the other persons involved in the interaction. In addition to being of use in improving the fidelity of information transmission, non-evaluative postures seem likely to increase the receiver's regard for the source of non-evaluative messages and thereby improve the quality of the relationship.

Orientation to Knowledge. Different people explain themselves and the world around them in different terms. Some people tend to view their knowledge and perceptions as valid only for them; others tend to assume that others' beliefs, values, and perceptions are valid for everyone. Presumably, the more a person recognizes the extent to which knowledge is individual in nature, the more easily he will be able to adjust to other people in other cultures, whose views of what is "true" or "right" are likely to be quite different.

Empathy. The capacity to "put oneself in another's shoes," or to behave as if one could, has been suggested as important to the development and maintenance of positive human relationships within and between cultures. Individuals differ in their ability to display empathy. Some people are able to project an interest in others clearly and seem able to obtain and reflect a reasonably complete and accurate sense of another's thoughts, feelings, and/or experiences. Others may lack interest—or fail to display interest—and may be unable to project even superficial understanding of another's situation. This capacity may be critical to effective interaction for both intra- and intercultural communication.

Self-Oriented Role Behavior. Individuals function in a variety of roles within group settings. Behaviors that involve the initiation of ideas, requests for information, seeking of clarification, evaluation of ideas, etc., are directly related to a group's task or problem-solving activities. Behaviors that involve harmonizing, mediation, gatekeeping, attempts to regulate the evenness of contribution of group members, compromising, etc., are related to the relationship-building activities of a group. The capacity to be flexible and to function in both sorts of roles in either a balanced or a cyclic fashion can contribute to effectiveness within an organizational context. A third category of role behaviors, sometimes displayed by individuals in an interpersonal or group context, are individualistic roles that function in negative ways from the group's perspective. Behaviors such as being highly resistant to ideas of others; returning to issues and points of view previously acted upon and/or dismissed by the group; attempting to call attention to oneself; seeking to project a highly positive personal image by noting achievements, professional qualifications, etc.; and attempting to manipulate the group by asserting authority are dysfunctional in intercultural situations as well as in intracultural contexts.

Interaction Management. People vary in the manner in which they "manage" (or fail to manage) interactions of which they are a part. Some are skillful at governing their contribution to an interactive situation so that the needs and desires of others play a critical role in defining how the exchange will proceed. Effective management of interaction is displayed through taking turns in discussion and initiating and terminating interaction based on a reasonably accurate assessment of the needs and desires of others. Other individuals are less proficient at these dimensions and proceed in interactions with little or no regard for time sharing and initiation and termination preferences of others. Presumably, skill in interaction management is as important between members of differing cultures as it seems to be between individuals from a single culture.

Tolerance for Ambiguity. The ability to react to new and ambiguous situations with little visible discomfort is an important asset when adapting to a new environment. Although most people probably do react with some degree of personal discomfort to new environments, some people are able to adjust quickly to those around them. Excessive discomfort resulting from being placed in a new or different environment—or from finding the familiar environment altered in some critical ways—leads to confusion, frustration, or even hostility, which may well be dysfunctional to the development of effective interpersonal relations within and across cultural boundaries. Some people seem to meet new or changing situations as a challenge; they appear to function best wherever the unexpected or unpredictable may occur and seem to adapt quickly to the demands of a changing milieu—a capacity that may be essential to rapid cross-cultural adaptation.

Index Development

For each component dimension, operational definitions were generated so that each component was characterized in terms of specific and observable behaviors. Each dimension was seen as continuous, and operational definitions of each of several anchor points along a continuum were developed to facilitate differentiation of the degree to which a particular behavioral pattern was displayed.

The intercultural behavioral assessment indices were developed in a form that was intended to be easily administered by untrained observer(s) with efficiency and reliability. Thus, each index is self-contained and each includes instructions necessary for its use (see Appendix A, p. 346).

Preliminary Use

Following the completion of several pilot tests to determine the dimensions to be included in assessment, refine the descriptions, and explore the amount of training necessary for raters prior to using the
Interaction Posture. The ability to respond to others in a descriptive, nonevaluative, and nonjudgmental way is often positively related to effective interpersonal functioning. Descriptive responses, unlike their opposite, seem to foster the development of a supportive climate and indicate a concern for the other persons involved in the interaction. In addition to being of use in improving the fidelity of information transmission, nonevaluative postures seem likely to increase the receiver's regard for the source of nonevaluative messages and thereby improve the quality of the relationship.

Orientation to Knowledge. Different people explain themselves and the world around them in different terms. Some people tend to view their knowledge and perceptions as valid only for themselves; others tend to assume that their beliefs, values, and perceptions are valid for everyone. Presumably, the more a person recognizes the extent to which knowledge is individual in nature, the more easily he will be able to adjust to other people in other cultures, whose views of what is "true" or "right" are likely to be quite different.

Empathy. The capacity to "put oneself in another's shoes," or to behave as if one could, has been suggested as important to the development and maintenance of positive human relationships within and between cultures. Individuals differ in their ability to display empathy. Some people are able to project an interest in others clearly and seem able to obtain and reflect a reasonably complete and accurate sense of another's thoughts, feelings, and/or experiences. Others may lack interest—or fail to display interest—and may be unable to project even superficial understanding of another's situation. This capacity may be critical to effective interaction for both intra- and intercultural communication.

Self-Oriented Role Behavior. Individuals function in a variety of roles within group settings. Behaviors that involve the initiation of ideas, requests for information, seeking of clarification, evaluation of ideas, etc., are directly related to a group's task or problem-solving activities. Behaviors that involve harmonizing, mediation, gatekeeping, attempts to regulate the evenness of contribution of group members, compromising, etc., are related to the relationship-building activities of a group. The capacity to be flexible and to function in both sorts of roles in either a balanced or a cyclic fashion can contribute to effectiveness within an organizational context. A third category of role behaviors, sometimes displayed by individuals in an interpersonal role, are individualistic roles that function in negative ways from the group's perspective. Behaviors such as being highly resistant to ideas of others; returning to issues and points of view previously acted upon and/or dismissed by the group; attempting to call attention to oneself; seeking to project a highly positive personal image by noting achievements, professional qualifications, etc.; and attempting to manipulate the group by asserting authority are dysfunctional in intercultural situations as well as in intracultural contexts.

Interaction Management. People vary in the manner in which they "manage" (or fail to manage) interactions of which they are a part. Some are skillful at governing their contribution to an interactive situation so that the needs and desires of others play a critical role in defining how the exchange will proceed. Effective management of interaction is displayed through taking turns in discussion and initiating and terminating interaction based on a reasonably accurate assessment of the needs and desires of others. Other individuals are less proficient at these dimensions and proceed in interactions with little or no regard for time sharing and initiation and termination preferences of others. Presumably, skill in interaction management is as important between members of differing cultures as it seems to be between individuals from a single culture.

Tolerance for Ambiguity. The ability to react to new and ambiguous situations with little visible discomfort is an important asset when adapting to a new environment. Although most people probably do react with some degree of personal discomfort to new environments, some people are able to adjust quickly to those around them. Excessive discomfort resulting from being placed in a new or different environment—or from finding the familiar environment altered in some critical ways—leads to confusion, frustration, or even hostility, which may well be dysfunctional to the development of effective interpersonal relations within and across cultural boundaries. Some people learn to meet new or changing situations as a challenge; they appear to function best wherever the unexpected or unpredictable may occur and seem to adapt quickly to the demands of a changing milieu—a capacity that may be essential to rapid cross-cultural adaptation.

Index Development

For each component dimension, operational definitions were generated so that each component was characterized in terms of specific and observable behaviors. Each dimension was seen as continuous, and operational definitions of each of several anchor points along a continuum were developed to facilitate differentiation of the degree to which a particular behavioral pattern was displayed.

The intercultural behavioral assessment indices were developed in a form that was intended to be easily administered by untrained observer(s) with efficiency and reliability. Thus, each index is self-contained and each includes instructions necessary for its use (see Appendix A, p. 346).

Preliminary Use

Following the completion of several pilot tests to determine the dimensions to be included in assessment, refine the descriptions, and explore the amount of training necessary for raters prior to using the
instruments, the indices were tested on a group of trainees bound for overseas assignments. The primary goal was to determine whether behavioral assessment measures could be useful in the selection of participants for intercultural posts. The initial phases of the research, which are presented here, involved some critical tests of behavioral-assessment techniques, including a consideration of the problems of interrater reliability and an exploration of the extent to which observational data of this sort would be useful for defining profiles of behavioral “types.”

**Interrater Reliability**

A major question about the use of behavioral measures in general, and behavioral observation in particular, has to do with the problem of rater reliability. To what extent are the observations of one rater predictive of the observations and assessments of other observers? How much training is required to insure that individuals with different backgrounds, biases, outlooks, prejudices, etc., can provide essentially interchangeable ratings of participants they observe?

In doing this study, these questions were important because (1) relatively untrained raters would perform assessments; (2) raters would generally be of diverse education and backgrounds; and (3) time available for training of raters was minimal. Highly reliable ratings are critical because such assessments might, at some point, provide a basis for the selection or rejection of candidates for cross-cultural assignments.

The intercultural behavior assessment indices were completed by each of three staff members, without collaboration, at the conclusion of a seven-day intercultural adaptation training program, following the instructions provided. The three staff members had little prior experience working together before the planning and execution of the program and had quite different educational and vocational backgrounds. Each rater completed assessments for each participant, based on all observational data available. That is, observations of participants during coffee or cocktails and during meals, as well as during formal training sessions, were used to make the ratings.

The participant group consisted of adult and young adult members of eight families—nineteen persons—scheduled for cross-cultural assignments within several months.

The ratings of each of the three staff members for each index dimension across all participants were compared using the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation. For observational assessment of this sort, the correlations were quite encouraging.

With regard to Display of Respect (A), Empathy (D), Self-Oriented Role Behavior (E), and Interaction Management (F), all interrater correlations were significant at the .001 level.

**Interaction Posture** (B), **Orientation to Knowledge** (C), and **Tolerance for Ambiguity** (G) yielded interrater correlations that were significant at least at the .05 level.

The other indices, **Task Role Behavior** (E), and **Relational Role Behavior** (E), also yielded interrater correlations in the appropriate direction, but fell short of the .05 significance level. For Index E, for example, the correlations were .314, .289, and .838, yielding significance levels of .09, .11, and .001 respectively. For Index E, correlations of .338, .589, and .359 led to significance levels of .07, .001, and .06 respectively. In both cases, Rater II apparently accounted for the relatively lower correlations. Subsequent analysis and review of the indices involved suggested that an ambiguity then present in index instructions may have been the source of the discrepancy.

**Q-Factor Analysis**

Because it is illustrative of additional analytic uses of behavioral assessment data, a summary of the results of Q-factor analysis (Stephenson, 1953) will be presented and briefly discussed.

The ratings of each participant from the three raters were averaged for each of the seven indices. Subsequently, the assessments of each participant were correlated with the assessment of each other participant. The data were Q-factor analyzed. Factors were constructed to cluster subjects who were similarly rated across the indices. Q-analysis yielded three participant types.

**Type I**

Type I individuals, seven in all, were most notably characterized by a high rating on Index C (Orientation to Knowledge), Index G (Tolerance for Ambiguity), Index F (Interaction Management), and Index A (Display of Respect), in that order. Characteristic also of Type I participants was a low rating on Index E, (Self-Oriented Role Behavior).

**Type II**

The six Type II individuals were most notably characterized by a high rating on Index A (Display of Respect), Index G (Tolerance for Ambiguity), and D (Empathy). Characteristic also of Type II participants were low ratings on Index E, (Task Role Behavior), E, (Self-Oriented Role Behavior), and Index F (Interaction Management).

**Type III**

The six Type III individuals were most notably characterized by a high rating on Index E, (Self-Oriented Role Behavior). Characteristic...


With regard to Display of Respect (A), Empathy (D), Self-Oriented Role Behavior (E), and Interaction Management (F), all interrater correlations were significant at the .001 level.

Interaction Posture (B), Orientation to Knowledge (C), and Tolerance for Ambiguity (G) yielded interrater correlations that were significant at least at the .05 level.

The other indices, Task Role Behavior (E) and Relational Role Behavior (E), also yielded interrater correlations in the appropriate direction, but fell short of the .05 significance level. For Index E, for example, the correlations were .314, .289, and .838, yielding significance levels of .09, .11, and .001 respectively. For Index E, correlations of .338, .589, and .359 led to significance levels of .07, .001, and .06 respectively. In both cases, Rater II apparently accounted for the relatively lower correlations. Subsequent analysis and review of the indices involved suggested that an ambiguity then present in index instructions may have been the source of the discrepancy.

Q-Factor Analysis

Because it is illustrative of additional analytic uses of behavioral assessment data, a summary of the results of Q-factor analysis (Stephenson, 1953) will be presented and briefly discussed.

The ratings of each participant from the three raters were averaged for each of the seven indices. Subsequently, the assessments of each participant were correlated with the assessment of each other participant. The data were Q-factor analyzed. Factors were constructed to cluster subjects who were similarly rated across the indices. Q-analysis yielded three participant types.

Type I

Type I individuals, seven in all, were most notably characterized by a high rating on Index C (Orientation to Knowledge), Index G (Tolerance for Ambiguity), Index F (Interaction Management), and Index A (Display of Respect), in that order. Characteristic also of Type I participants was a low rating on Index E, (Self-Oriented Role Behavior).

Type II

The six Type II individuals were most notably characterized by a high rating on Index A (Display of Respect), Index G (Tolerance for Ambiguity), and D (Empathy). Characteristic also of Type II participants were low ratings on Index E, (Task Role Behavior), E, (Self-Oriented Role Behavior), and Index F (Interaction Management).

Type III

The six Type III individuals were most notably characterized by a high rating on Index E, (Self-Oriented Role Behavior). Characteristic

---

342 Ruben 343
also of Type III participants were low ratings on Index C (Orientation to Knowledge), Index F (Interaction Management), Index E, (Relation-Oriented Group Roles), Index D (Empathy), Index G (Tolerance for Ambiguity), and Index B (Interaction Profile).

Overview of Q-Analysis

Type I individuals generally tended to base understanding on personal knowledge, exhibited a high tolerance for ambiguity, showed high interaction management (turn taking and receiver-oriented initiation and termination of discussion) and high display of respect to others with whom they interacted. They also exhibited little self-oriented role behavior in groups. To the extent that these behavioral competencies are important in intercultural interaction, Type I participants should be successful in interpersonal interaction in their host cultures.

Type III individuals represented almost the exact opposite of Type I participants. Type III participants exhibited a high degree of self-oriented role behavior in groups. (This, in fact, is the only index on which they ranked high.) They had low ratings for orientation to knowledge, interaction management, relational or group maintenance behavior in groups, empathy, tolerance for ambiguity, and interaction posture. To the extent that these latter behaviors are important to successful interaction in a new culture—as they are apparently perceived to be within one’s own culture—Type III individuals might be expected to encounter some difficulty in effective interpersonal and group functioning across cultural boundaries.

Type II participants generally displayed respect and indicated behaviorally some tolerance for ambiguity; some degree of empathy was also displayed. They received low ratings for task role behaviors, self-oriented role behaviors, and interaction management. Type II participants appear to be essentially a low-profile group that exhibits a mixed behavioral pattern in terms of those dimensions one might expect to be critical to intercultural functioning.

Implications

There are, of course, still some important issues to be resolved about the use of behavioral assessment in intercultural adaptation training and selection. How predictive are the indices used? Does the Type I individual, in fact, adapt efficiently to the cross-cultural environment? Do assessments made in one’s own culture generalize to behaviors in another culture? Are some of the dimensions central to competent adaptation in one culture but not another? These questions require follow-up investigation.

Such studies of participants are planned to address these issues. Several in-the-field measures of cross-cultural functioning in interpersonal, group, and organizational contexts will be obtained. To identify patterns of relationship and behavioral predictors of success and failure, these outcome ratings can then be compared to behavioral-assessment data gathered for the individuals during training. Based upon these data, the indices can be further refined and augmented as appropriate and may serve as an important input to the design of subsequent training programs and the selection of participants.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing case discussion provides an introduction to behavioral assessment methods, a discussion of several such indices, and a sense of their applicability in interpersonal, group, or organizational communication training or selection contexts. Although there are some aspects of intercultural adaptation that may be unique, most of the issues dealt with are generic in nature. The problems of identifying and specifying training or instructional goals, selecting analytic techniques, and evaluating outcomes are familiar to all whose concerns are with the human condition—analysis or change.

Although it has previously been acknowledged that human attitudes, values, motives, beliefs, and cognitions certainly play an important role in the dynamics of human interaction, it is likely that, in terms of prediction, what one does is the best indicant of what one will do at some future time or place. To the extent that this is accurate, it seems appropriate to balance our concern with cognitive/conceptual learning with an increased emphasis on behavioral communication training and the assessment of behavioral outcomes. Behavioral assessment techniques provide one means of proceeding in such a direction.
also of Type III participants were low ratings on Index C (Orientation to Knowledge), Index F (Interaction Management), Index E (Relation-Oriented Group Roles), Index D (Empathy), Index G (Tolerance for Ambiguity), and Index B (Interaction Profile).

Overview of Q-Analysis

Type I individuals generally tended to base understanding on personal knowledge, exhibited a high tolerance for ambiguity, showed high interaction management (turn taking and receiver-oriented initiation and termination of discussion) and high display of respect to others with whom they interacted. They also exhibited little self-oriented role behavior in groups. To the extent that these behavioral competencies are important in intercultural interaction, Type I participants should be successful in interpersonal interaction in their host cultures.

Type III individuals represented almost the exact opposite of Type I participants. Type III participants exhibited a high degree of self-oriented role behavior in groups. (This, in fact, is the only index on which they ranked high.) They had low ratings for orientation to knowledge, interaction management, relational or group maintenance behavior in groups, empathy, tolerance for ambiguity, and interaction posture. To the extent that these latter behaviors are important to successful interaction in a new culture—as they are apparently perceived to be within one’s own culture—Type III individuals might be expected to encounter some difficulty in effective interpersonal and group functioning across cultural boundaries.

Type II participants generally displayed respect and indicated behaviorally some tolerance for ambiguity; some degree of empathy was also displayed. They received low ratings for task role behaviors, self-oriented role behaviors, and interaction management. Type II participants appear to be essentially a low-profile group that exhibits a mixed behavioral pattern in terms of those dimensions one might expect to be critical to intercultural functioning.

Implications

There are, of course, still some important issues to be resolved about the use of behavioral assessment in intercultural adaptation training and selection. How predictive are the indices used? Does the Type I individual, in fact, adapt efficiently to the cross-cultural environment? Do assessments made in one’s own culture generalize to behaviors in another culture? Are some of the dimensions central to competent adaptation in one culture but not another? These questions require follow-up investigation.

Such studies of participants are planned to address these issues. Several in-the-field measures of cross-cultural functioning in interpersonal, group, and organizational contexts will be obtained. To identify patterns of relationship and behavioral predictors of success and failure, these outcome ratings can then be compared to behavioral-assessment data gathered for the individuals during training. Based upon these data, the indices can be further refined and augmented as appropriate and may serve as an important input to the design of subsequent training programs and the selection of participants.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing case discussion provides an introduction to behavioral assessment methods, a discussion of several such indices, and a sense of their applicability in interpersonal, group, or organizational communication training or selection contexts. Although there are some aspects of intercultural adaptation that may be unique, most of the issues dealt with are generic in nature. The problems of identifying and specifying training or instructional goals, selecting analytic techniques, and evaluating outcomes are familiar to all whose concerns are with the human condition—analysis or change.

Although it has previously been acknowledged that human attitudes, values, motives, beliefs, and cognitions certainly play an important role in the dynamics of human interaction, it is likely that, in terms of prediction, what one does is the best indicator of what one will do at some future time or place. To the extent that this is accurate, it seems appropriate to balance our concern with cognitive/conceptual learning with an increased emphasis on behavioral communication training and the assessment of behavioral outcomes. Behavioral assessment techniques provide one means of proceeding in such a direction.
APPENDIX A

A—Respect

Participant: ____________________________
Rater: ____________________________
Date: __________

Instructions: There are different degrees to which individuals express respect or positive regard for other persons around them. These behaviors may take many forms ranging from verbal and nonverbal expressions of minimal interest and regard to statements, gestures, and tones that are extremely supportive and demonstrate high regard and respect. Please indicate on a 1 to 5 continuum which pattern of expression was most characteristic during observation.

DESCRIPTION

1. The verbal and nonverbal expressions of the individual suggest a clear lack of respect and negative regard for others around him or her. By his or her actions the individual indicates that the feelings and experiences of others are not worthy of consideration or that others are not capable of acting constructively on their own. Examples include a condescending tone, lack of eye contact, general lack of interest, etc.

2. The individual responds to others in a way that communicates little respect for others' feelings, experiences, or potentials. The individual may respond mechanically or passively or may appear to ignore many of the thoughts and feelings of others.

3. The individual indicates some respect for others’ situations and some concern for their feelings, experiences, and potentials. He or she may indicate some attentiveness to others’ efforts to express themselves.

4. The individual indicates concern for the feelings, experiences, and potentials of others. The individual responds to enable others to feel worthy of interaction and provides others a sense of being valued as individuals.

5. The individual indicates a deep respect for the worth of others as persons of high potential and worth. He or she indicates (through eye contact, general attentiveness, appropriate tone, and general interest) a clear respect for the thoughts and feelings of others and seems committed to supporting and encouraging their development.

B—Interaction Posture

Participant: ____________________________
Rater: ____________________________
Date: __________

Instructions: Responses to another person or persons in an interpersonal or group situation range from descriptive, nonevaluative to highly judgmental. Indicate on a 1 to 4 continuum which interaction pattern was most characteristic during observation.

DESCRIPTION

1. High Evaluative. The individual appears to respond to others' verbal and nonverbal contributions in a highly judgmental and evaluative manner. He or she appears to measure the contributions of others in terms of a highly structured, predetermined framework of thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, and values. Responses therefore communicate clearly whether the individual believes others to be "right" or "wrong." Reactions are made in declarative, often dogmatic fashion and will closely follow the comments of others, indicating little or no effort to digest what has been said before judging it.

2. Evaluative. The individual responds to others verbally and nonverbally in an evaluative and judgmental manner and measures the responses and comments of others in terms of a predetermined framework of thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, and values. The framework is not totally rigid but does provide a clear basis for determining whether others' contributions are "right" or "wrong." Reactions to others tend to follow fairly closely on the heels of termination of discussion by other interactants, but there is some break, indicating a minimal attempt to digest and consider others' ideas before responding positively or negatively.

3. Evaluative-Descriptive. The individual appears to measure the responses of others in terms of a framework based partly on information, thoughts, attitudes, and feelings gathered from the particular interaction and the individuals involved. He or she offers evaluative responses, but they appear to be less than rigidly held and subject to negotiation and modification. The time lapse between others' comments and the individual's response suggests an effort to digest and consider input before reacting either positively or negatively.

4. Descriptive. The individual responds to others in a manner that draws out information, thoughts, and feelings and provides evaluative responses, but only after gaining sufficient input to the extent that the evaluative framework fits the individual(s) with whom he or she is interacting. He or she asks questions, restates others' ideas, and appears to gather information prior to responding evaluatively.

RATING

1 2 3 4 5

(Place "x" to indicate position on continuum)
APPENDIX A

A—Respect

Participant: ____________________________
Rater: ________________________________
Date: ____________________________

Instructions: There are different degrees to which individuals express respect or positive regard for other persons around them. These behaviors may take many forms ranging from verbal and nonverbal expressions of minimal interest and regard to statements, gestures, and tones that are extremely supportive and demonstrate high regard and respect. Please indicate on a 1 to 5 continuum which pattern of expression was most characteristic during observation.

DESCRIPTION

1. The verbal and nonverbal expressions of the individual suggest a clear lack of respect and negative regard for others around him or her. By his or her actions the individual indicates that the feelings and experiences of others are not worthy of consideration or that others are not capable of acting constructively on their own. Examples include a condescending tone, lack of eye contact, general lack of interest, etc.

2. The individual responds to others in a way that communicates little respect for others' feelings, experiences, or potentials. The individual may respond mechanically or passively or may appear to ignore many of the thoughts and feelings of others.

3. The individual indicates some respect for others' situations and some concern for their feelings, experiences, and potentials. He or she may indicate some attentiveness to others' efforts to express themselves.

4. The individual indicates a concern for the feelings, experiences, and potentials of others. The individual responds to enable others to feel worthy of interaction and provides others a sense of being valued as individuals.

5. The individual indicates a deep respect for the worth of others as persons of high potential and worth. He or she indicates (through eye contact, general attentiveness, appropriate tone, and general interest) a clear respect for the thoughts and feelings of others and seems committed to supporting and encouraging their development.

RATING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

(Place "x" to indicate position on continuum)

B—Interaction Posture

Participant: ____________________________
Rater: ________________________________
Date: ____________________________

Instructions: Responses to another person or persons in an interpersonal or group situation range from descriptive, non-evaluative to highly judgmental. Indicate on a 1 to 4 continuum which interaction pattern was most characteristic during observation.

DESCRIPTION

1. High Evaluative. The individual appears to respond to others' verbal and nonverbal contributions in a highly judgmental and evaluative manner. He or she appears to measure the contributions of others in terms of a highly structured, predetermined framework of thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, and values. Responses therefore communicate clearly whether the individual believes others to be "right" or "wrong." Reactions are made in declarative, often dogmatic fashion and will closely follow the comments of others, indicating little or no effort to digest what has been said before judging it.

2. Evaluative. The individual responds to others verbally and nonverbally in an evaluative and judgmental manner and measures the responses and comments of others in terms of a predetermined framework of thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, and values. The framework is not totally rigid but does provide a clear basis for determining whether others' contributions are "right" or "wrong." Reactions to others tend to follow fairly closely on the heels of termination of discussion by other interactants, but there is some break, indicating a minimal attempt to digest and consider others' ideas before responding positively or negatively.

3. Evaluative-Descriptive. The individual appears to measure the responses of others in terms of a framework based partly on information, thoughts, attitudes, and feelings gathered from the particular interaction and the individuals involved. He or she offers evaluative responses, but they appear to be less than rigidly held and subject to negotiation and modification. The time lapse between others' comments and the individual's response suggests an effort to digest and consider input before reacting either positively or negatively.

4. Descriptive. The individual responds to others in a manner that draws out information, thoughts, and feelings and provides evaluative responses, but only after gathering sufficient input to that the evaluative framework fits the individual(s) with whom he or she is interacting. He or she asks questions, restates others' ideas, and appears to gather information prior to responding evaluatively.

RATING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

(Place "x" to indicate position on continuum)
C—Orientation to Knowledge

Participant: ____________________

Date: _________________________

Rater: _________________________

Instructions: Different people explain themselves and the world around them in different terms. Some personize their explanations, knowledge, and understandings, prefacing their statements with phrases such as "I feel" or "I think" and might say "I don't like Mexican food." Others tend to generalize their explanations, understandings, and feelings, using statements such as "It's a fact that," "It's human nature," etc. This pattern could lead an individual to say "Mexican food is very disagreeable," indicating that the food is the basis of the problem rather than the person's own tastes. For each individual, indicate on a 1 to 4 continuum the pattern of expression that was most characteristic during the period of observation.

DESCRIPTION

1. Physical Orientation. The individual treats perceptions, knowledge, feelings, and insights as inherent in the people and objects being perceived and assumes other people will always share the individual's perceptions, attitudes, and feelings if they are mature, knowledgeable, or insightful. Given this, differences with others' perceptions imply that the other person is "wrong" or lacks maturity or knowledge. Such an orientation might lead to a statement such as "Mexican food is too hot." The individual of this orientation might use phrases such as "We've all experienced," "It's human nature," "That's inevitable," "What else could they have done," etc.

2. Cultural Orientation. The individual treats perceptions, knowledge, feelings, and insights as highly generalizable from one individual to another within a culture and assumes that other persons of similar cultural heritage will almost always share the individual's perceptions. This may be shown by a statement such as "North Americans find Mexican food far too hot for their tastes." He or she may use phrases such as, "In my country," "Canadians are generally," "Africans are a highly intelligent people," "In this culture," etc.

3. Interpersonal Orientation. The individual treats perceptions, knowledge, and feelings as personal to some extent, but potentially generalizable to others to some extent, also, and tends to assume that others in an immediate group will share the individual's perceptions, feelings, or thoughts (as with friends, colleagues, family, other members of a group). An individual whose orientation to knowledge is of this sort might say "No one in my family would like these tacos," or may use phrases such as "We feel," "My husband and I believe," "Most of you in the group know that," "People in my profession," etc.

4. Intrapersonal Orientation. The individual treats perceptions, knowledge, feelings, and insights as personally based, as shown by a statement such as "I don't like Mexican food," which makes clear that the mismatch between the food and the taster is a consequence of the taster's particular tastes, perceptions, likes, etc., and may have nothing necessarily to do with Mexican food. He or she sees that differences in perception between people are not problematical. Examples of phrases that may be characteristic of this orientation are "I feel that," "It is my view that," "I believe," etc.

RATING

(Place 'x' to indicate position on continuum)

1 2 3 4

D—Empathy

Participant: ____________________

Date: _________________________

Rater: _________________________

Instructions: Individuals differ in their ability to project an image that suggests they understand things from another person's point of view. Some individuals seem to communicate a fairly complete awareness of another person's thoughts, feelings, and experiences; others seem unable to display any awareness of another's thoughts, feelings, or state of affairs. For each individual, indicate on a 1 to 5 continuum which pattern of behavior was most characteristic during your observations.

DESCRIPTION

1. Low-Level Empathy. The individual indicates little or no awareness of even the most obvious, surface feelings and thoughts of others. The individual appears to be bored or disinterested or simply operating from a preconceived frame of reference that totally excludes the other person around at a particular point in time.

2. Medium-Low Empathy. The individual may display some awareness of obvious feelings and thoughts of others. He or she may attempt to respond based on this awareness; often the responses seem only superficially matched to the thoughts and feelings of others involved in the interaction.

3. Medium Empathy. The individual predictably responds to others with reasonably accurate understandings of the surface feelings of others around, but may not respond to, or may misinterpret, less obvious feelings and thoughts.

4. Medium-High Empathy. The individual displays an understanding of responses of others at a deeper-than-surface level and thus enables others involved in interaction to express thoughts or feelings they may have been unwilling or unable to discuss around less empathic persons.

5. High Empathy. The individual appears to respond with great accuracy to apparent and less apparent expressions of feeling and thought by others. He or she projects interest and provides verbal and nonverbal cues that he or she understands the state of affairs of others.

RATING

1 2 3 4 5

(Place 'x' to indicate position on continuum)
C—Orientation to Knowledge

Participant: ____________________________

Date: _________________________________

Rater: __________________________________

Instructions: Different people explain themselves and the world around them in different terms. Some personalize their explanations, knowledge, and understandings, prefacing their statements with phrases such as "I feel" or "I think" and might say "I don't like Mexican food." Others tend to generalize their explanations, understandings, and feelings, using statements such as "It's a fact that," "It's human nature," etc. This pattern could lead an individual to say "Mexican food is very disagreeable," indicating that the food is the basis of the problem rather than the person's own tastes. For each individual, indicate on a 1 to 4 continuum the pattern of expression that was most characteristic during the period of observation.

DESCRIPTION

1. Physical Orientation. The individual treats perceptions, knowledge, feelings, and insights as inherent in the people and objects being perceived and assumes other people will always share the individual's perceptions, attitudes, and feelings if they are mature, knowledgeable, or insightful. Given this, differences with others' perceptions imply that the other persons are "wrong" or lack maturity or knowledge. Such an orientation might lead to a statement such as "Mexican food is too hot." The individual of this orientation might use phrases such as "We've all experienced," "It's human nature," "That's inevitable," "What else could they have done," etc.

2. Cultural Orientation. The individual treats perceptions, knowledge, feelings, and insights as highly generalizable from one individual to another within a culture and assumes that other persons of similar cultural heritage will almost always share the individual's perceptions. This may be shown by a statement such as "North Americans find Mexican food far too hot for their tastes." He or she may use phrases such as, "In my country," "Canadians are generally," "Africans are a highly intelligent people," "In this culture," etc.

3. Interpersonal Orientation. The individual treats perceptions, knowledge, and feelings as personal to some extent, but potentially generalizable to others to some extent, also, and tends to assume that others in an immediate group will share the individual's perceptions, feelings, or thoughts (as with friends, colleagues, family, other members of a group). An individual whose orientation to knowledge is of this sort might say "No one in my family would like these tacos," or may use phrases such as "We feel," "My husband and I believe," "Most of you in the group know that," "People in my profession," etc.

4. Intrapersonal Orientation. The individual treats perceptions, knowledge, feelings, and insights as personally based, as shown by a statement such as "I don't like Mexican food," which makes clear that the mismatch between the food and the taster is a consequence of the taster's particular tastes, perceptions, likes, etc., and may have nothing necessarily to do with Mexican food. He or she sees that differences in perception between people are not problematical. Examples of phrases that may be characteristic of this orientation are "I feel that," "It is my view that," "I believe," etc.

RATING

1 2 3 4 5

(Place "x" to indicate position on continuum)

D—Empathy

Participant: ____________________________

Date: _________________________________

Rater: __________________________________

Instructions: Individuals differ in their ability to project an image that suggests they understand things from another person's point of view. Some individuals seem to communicate a fairly complete awareness of another person's thoughts, feelings, and experiences; others seem unable to display any awareness of another's thoughts, feelings, or state of affairs. For each individual, indicate on a 1 to 5 continuum which pattern of behavior was most characteristic during your observations.

DESCRIPTION

1. Low-Level Empathy. The individual indicates little or no awareness of even the most obvious, surface feelings and thoughts of others. The individual appears to be bored or disinterested or simply operating from a preconceived frame of reference that totally excludes the other persons around at a particular point in time.

2. Medium-Low Empathy. The individual may display some awareness of obvious feelings and thoughts of others. He or she may attempt to respond based on this awareness, often the responses seem only superficially matched to the thoughts and feelings of others involved in the interaction.

3. Medium Empathy. The individual predictably responds to others with reasonably accurate understandings of the surface feelings of others around, but may not respond to, or may misinterpret, less obvious feelings and thoughts.

4. Medium-High Empathy. The individual displays an understanding of responses of others at a deeper-than-surface level and thus enables others involved in interaction to express thoughts or feelings they may have been unwilling or unable to discuss around less empathic persons.

5. High Empathy. The individual appears to respond with great accuracy to apparent and less apparent expressions of feeling and thought by others. He or she projects interest and provides verbal and nonverbal cues that he or she understands the state of affairs of others.

RATING

1 2 3 4 5

(Place "x" to indicate position on continuum)
Group & Organization Studies

E—Role Behavior

Participant: 
Date: 
Rater: 

Instructions: Indicate how often participants exhibited each pattern of role behavior during the time periods observed.

DESCRIPTION

Task Roles. Individuals differ in the extent to which they engage in behavior that contributes to group problem-solving activities. Activities associated with the completion of tasks include initiation of ideas, requesting further information or facts, seeking of clarification of group tasks, clarification of task-related issues, evaluation of suggestions of others, or focusing on task. Indicate with “x” how often participants displayed task behaviors.

1 never 2 seldom 3 occasionally 4 frequently 5 continually

Relational Roles. Individuals differ in the extent to which they devote effort to building or maintaining relationships within a group. Group-development activities, as they are sometimes termed, may consist of verbal and nonverbal displays that provide a supportive climate for the group members and help to solidify the group’s feelings of participation. Behaviors that lead to these outcomes include harmonizing and mediating squabbles and/or conflicts between group members, attempts to regulate evenness of contributions of group members, comments offered relative to the group’s dynamics, indications of a willingness to compromise one’s own position for the sake of group consensus, and displays of interest (nods of agreement, eye contact, general attending behaviors), etc. Indicate with “x” frequency of displayed relational behavior.

1 never 2 seldom 3 occasionally 4 frequently 5 continually

Individualistic Roles. Some individuals operate in groups in a highly individualistic manner and, as a consequence, may serve to block the group’s efforts at both problem solving and relationship building. Behaviors of this sort include displays by individuals who are highly resistant to ideas of others; return to issues and points of view previously discussed and acted upon or dismissed by the group; attempt to call attention to him- or herself; attempt to project a highly positive image by noting achievements, qualifications, vocation or professional experience or other factors that are designed to increase the individual’s credibility; attempt to manipulate the group by asserting authority through flattery, sarcasm, interrupting, etc.; actively avoid and resist participation, remain insulated from group when individual feels he or she is not getting his or her way, etc. Indicate with an “x” the frequency of individualistic behavior displayed.

1 never 2 seldom 3 occasionally 4 frequently 5 continually

F—Interaction Management

Participant: 
Date: 
Rater: 

Instructions: People vary in their skill at “managing” interactions in which they take part. Particularly with regard to taking turns in discussion and initiating and terminating interaction based upon the needs of others, some individuals display great skill. For each participant, indicate on the 1 to 5 continuum which pattern was most characteristic during your observations.

DESCRIPTION

1. Low Management. Individual is unconcerned with taking turns in discussion. He or she may either dominate or refuse to interact at all; be unresponsive or be aware of other’s needs for involvement and time sharing; initiate and terminate discussion without regard for the wishes of other individuals; continue to talk long after obvious displays of disinterest and boredom by others; or may terminate discussion—generally withhold information—when there is clear interest expressed by others for further exchange.

2. Moderately Low Management. The individual is minimally concerned with taking turns in discussion. He or she either dominates or is reluctant to interact; is often unresponsive to other’s needs for involvement and time sharing; initiates and terminates with minimal regard for the wishes of other individuals; and initiates and/or terminates conversations with minimal regard for other individuals.

3. Moderate Management. The individual is somewhat concerned with taking turns in discussion. He or she may tend to dominate or provide low interaction profile from time to time, person to person, or topic to topic and show some concern for time sharing and initiating and terminating interactions in a manner that is consistent with the needs of others.

4. Moderately High Management. The individual is quite concerned with taking turns in discussion. He or she seldom either dominates or is reluctant to interact with most persons at most times and shows a concern for time sharing and initiating and terminating interaction in a manner that is consistent with the needs of other participants.

5. High Management. The individual is extremely concerned with providing equal opportunity for all participants to share in contributions to discussion. In the initiation and termination of discussion, he or she always indicates concern for the interests, tolerances, and orientation of others who are party to discussions.

RATING

1 2 3 4 5

(Place “x” to indicate position on continuum)
**Group & Organization Studies**

**E—Role Behavior**

Participant: ______________________

Date: ______________________

Rater: ______________________

Instructions: Indicate how often participants exhibited each pattern of role behavior during the time periods observed.

**DESCRIPTION**

Task Roles. Individuals differ in the extent to which they engage in behavior that contributes to group problem-solving activities. Activities associated with the completion of task include initiation of ideas, requesting further information or facts, seeking of clarification of group tasks, clarification of task-related issues, evaluation of suggestions of others, or focusing group on task. Indicate with "x" how often participants displayed task behaviors.

1 never, 2 seldom, 3 occasionally, 4 frequently, 5 continually

Relational Roles. Individuals differ in the extent to which they devote effort to building or maintaining relationships within a group. Group-development activities, as they are sometimes termed, may consist of verbal and nonverbal displays that provide a supportive climate for the group members and help to solidify the group's feelings of participation. Behaviors that lead to these outcomes include harmonizing and mediating scraps and or conflicts between group members, attempts to regulate evenness of contributions of group members, comments offered relative to the group's dynamics, indications of a willingness to compromise own position for the sake of group consensus, and displays of interest (nods of agreement, eye contact, general attending behaviors), etc. Indicate with "x" frequency of displayed relational behavior.

1 never, 2 seldom, 3 occasionally, 4 frequently, 5 continually

Individualistic Roles. Some individuals operate in groups in a highly individualistic manner and, as a consequence, may serve to block the group's efforts at both problem solving and relationship building. Behaviors of this sort include displays by individuals who are highly resistant to ideas of others; return to issues and points of view previously discussed and acted upon or dismissed by the group; attempt to call attention to him- or herself; attempt to project a highly positive image by noting achievements, qualifications, vocational or professional experience or other factors that are designed to increase the individual's credibility; attempt to manipulate the group by asserting authority through flattery, sarcasm, interrupting, etc.; actively avoid and resist participation, remain insulated from group when individual feels he or she is not getting his or her way, etc. Indicate with an "x" the frequency of individualistic behavior displayed.

1 never, 2 seldom, 3 occasionally, 4 frequently, 5 continually

---

**F—Interaction Management**

Participant: ______________________

Date: ______________________

Rater: ______________________

Instructions: People vary in their skill at "managing" interactions in which they take part. Particularly with regard to taking turns in discussion and initiating and terminating interaction based upon the needs of others, some individuals display great skill. For each participant, indicate on the 1 to 5 continuum which pattern was most characteristic during your observations.

**DESCRIPTION**

1. Low Management. Individual is unconcerned with taking turns in discussion. He or she may either dominate or refuse to interact at all; be unresponsive to or unaware of other's needs for involvement and time sharing; initiate and terminate discussion without regard for the wishes of other individuals; continue to talk long after obvious displays of disinterest and boredom by others; or may terminate discussion—or generally withhold information—when there is clear interest expressed by others for further exchange.

2. Moderately Low Management. The individual is minimally concerned with taking turns in discussion. He or she often either dominates or is reluctant to interact; is often unresponsive to other's needs for involvement and time sharing; initiates and terminates with minimal regard for the wishes of other individuals; and initiates and/or terminates conversations with minimal regard for other individuals.

3. Moderate Management. The individual is somewhat concerned with taking turns in discussion. He or she may tend to dominate or provide low interaction profile from time to time, person to person, or topic to topic and show some concern for time sharing and initiating and terminating interactions in a manner that is consistent with the needs of others.

4. Moderately High Management. The individual is quite concerned with taking turns in discussion. He or she seldom either dominates or is reluctant to interact with most persons at most times and shows a concern for time sharing and initiating and terminating interaction in a manner that is consistent with the needs of other participants.

5. High Management. The individual is extremely concerned with providing equal opportunity for all participants to share in contributions to discussion. In the initiation and termination of discussion, he or she always indicates concern for the interests, tolerances, and orientation of others who are party to discussions.

**RATING**

1 2 3 4 5

(Place "x" to indicate position on continuum)
Group & Organization Studies

G—Ambiguity Tolerance

Participant: ________________________________
Rate: ________________________________
Date: ________________________________

Instructions: Some persons react to new situations with greater comfort than others. Some individuals are excessively nervous, highly frustrated, and/or hostile toward the new situation and/or the persons who may be present (who may be identified as sources of their problems). Other persons encounter new situations as a challenge; they appear to function best whenever the unexpected or unpredictable may occur and quickly adapt to the demands of changing environments. On the 1 to 5 continuum, indicate the manner in which the individuals observed seemed to respond to new and/or ambiguous situations during observation.

DESCRIPTION

1. Low Tolerance. The individual seems quite troubled by new and/or ambiguous situations and exhibits excessive nervousness and frustration. He or she seems slow to adapt to the situation and may express hostility toward those in authority or leadership roles. Negative feelings may also lead to verbal hostility directed toward other individuals present in the environment and especially toward those perceived to be in control of the immediate environment.

2. Moderately Low Tolerance. The individual seems somewhat troubled by new and/or ambiguous situations, exhibits nervousness and frustration, is somewhat slow to adapt to the situation, and may express some hostility toward those perceived as in control.

3. Moderate Tolerance. The individual reacts with moderate nervousness and frustration to new or ambiguous situations, but adapts to these environments with reasonable speed and resilience. There are no apparent personal, interpersonal, or group consequences as a result of individual’s uneasiness. Those perceived as being in leadership or authority positions may be the target of minor verbal barbs—through sarcasm, joking, and mild rebukes—but there are no significant signs of hostility.

4. Moderately High Tolerance. The individual reacts with some nervousness and frustration to new or ambiguous situations. He or she adapts to the situation quite rapidly with no personal, interpersonal, or group-directed expressions of hostility. Those in leadership and authority positions are not a target for verbal barbs or sarcasm, nor are other individuals in the environment.

5. High Tolerance. The individual reacts with little or no nervousness or frustration to new or ambiguous situations. He or she adapts to the demands of the situation quickly with no noticeable personal, interpersonal, or group consequences and seems to adapt very rapidly and comfortably to new and/or changing environments.

RATING

1  2  3  4  5

(Place “x” to indicate position on continuum)

REFERENCES


Group & Organization Studies

G—Ambiguity Tolerance

Participant: ____________________________

Rate: ____________________________________

Date: ________________________________

Instructions: Some persons react to new situations with greater comfort than others. Some individuals are excessively nervous, highly frustrated, and/or hostile toward the new situation and/or those who may be present (who may be identified as sources of their problems). Other persons encounter new situations as a challenge; they appear to function best when the unexpected or unpredictable may occur and quickly adapt to the demands of changing environments. On the 1 to 5 continuum, indicate the manner in which the individuals observed seemed to respond to new and/or ambiguous situations during observation.

DESCRIPTION

1. Low Tolerance. The individual seems quite troubled by new and/or ambiguous situations and exhibits excessive nervousness and frustration. He or she seems slow to adapt to the situation and may express hostility toward those in authority or leadership roles. Negative feelings may also lead to verbal hostility directed toward other individuals present in the environment and especially toward those perceived to be in control of the immediate environment.

2. Moderately Low Tolerance. The individual seems somewhat troubled by new and/or ambiguous situations, exhibits nervousness and frustration, is somewhat slow to adapt to the situation, and may express some hostility toward those perceived as in control.

3. Moderate Tolerance. The individual Reacts with moderate nervousness and frustration to new or ambiguous situations, but adapts to these environments with reasonable speed and resilience. There are no apparent personal, interpersonal, or group consequences as a result of individual’s uneasiness. Those perceived as being in leadership or authority positions may be the target of minor verbal barbs—through sarcasm, joking, and mild rebukes—but there are no significant signs of hostility.

4. Moderately High Tolerance. The individual reacts with some nervousness and frustration to new or ambiguous situations. He or she adapts to the situation quite rapidly with no personal, interpersonal, or group-directed expressions of hostility. Those in leadership and authority positions are not a target for verbal barbs or sarcasm, nor are other individuals in the environment.

5. High Tolerance. The individual reacts with little or no nervousness or frustration to new or ambiguous situations. He or she adapts to the demands of the situation quickly with no noticeable personal, interpersonal, or group consequences and seems to adapt very rapidly and comfortably to new and/or changing environments.

RATING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Place ‘x’ to indicate position on continuum)

REFERENCES


*Brent D. Ruben* is director of the Institute for Communication Studies and associate professor of communication at Rutgers University. He is author of numerous articles and book chapters on communication theory and application. He is founding editor of the *International Communication Association Communication Yearbook*. Dr. Ruben serves as a consultant in interpersonal, group, and intercultural communication.