DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN ENTRY-LEVEL TECHNICAL PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION COURSES: QUALITATIVE INSIGHTS ON TEACHING MATERIALS, SOFT SKILLS, AND THE USE OF THE INTRODUCE-PRACTICE-APPLY-REFLECT (IPAR) MODEL

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Abstract: I provide considerations for TPC instructors and programs regarding developing students' IC skills.

I start by examining key conversations and found that issues teaching IC arise when frameworks, texts, and/or individuals do not define key terms related to culture and IC. To address this issue and create a strong foundation, I establish some of the terms that I use throughout this project, such as Small culture, intercultural communication (IC), and soft skills (SSs). I argue that IC is a type of SS, and SSs require development in three domains: cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioral.

I then present three studies. First, in chapter three, I conduct a content analysis of textbooks in the field because textbooks are the primary tool used by many instructors, especially those who may feel uncomfortable teaching IC (Brunsmeier, 2017; Matsuda & Matsuda, 2011). I establish that textbooks may have some issues (such as defining culture and using reductionistic examples). I argue that while textbooks provide several opportunities for developing the cognitive domain (related to IC information), instructors should add supplemental activities that address the attitudinal and behavioral domains.

In chapter four, I present a model (known as the Introduce → Practice → Apply → Reflect (IPAR) model) that can potentially address all three domains and can be used to develop students' IC skill. I argue that this model can address each domain; however, I also argue and suggest that instructors should be intentional by including several opportunities for attitudinal development.

In chapter five, I present findings from a study that used the IPAR model. This study focuses on students' perceptions of how helpful certain activities were to their IC development. Most students rated the activities where they worked with individuals outside of the academy as the most helpful (interviewing and a client-based project).

In chapter six, I discuss how these projects build upon previous knowledge, and I argue that this project offers several additions to the field. Some of those additions include key definitions, the IPAR, and information related to how one can *develop* students' IC skills rather than simply teach *about* IC.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this dissertation, I hope to address concerns related to teaching intercultural communication (IC) in entry-level service technical professional communication (TPC) courses and provide considerations for instructors and programs. One main research question that guided my project was *how can instructors develop students' IC skills in their class?*

I developed several, follow-up sub-research questions that turned into the studies described in each of the main chapters. To begin this project, I wanted to look at conversations surrounding teaching culture and IC, especially as they relate to TPC classrooms. I found that many times, issues arise when frameworks, texts, and/or individuals do not define key terms related to culture and IC. Without definitions, a complex topic like culture becomes even more nebulous and difficult to understand and teach.

In the second chapter of my dissertation, I share some of these conversations and establish some of the terms I use throughout this project. For example, I argue that a Small cultures understanding of culture is a beneficial definition to use in TPC courses. Further, I make the connection between IC and soft skills (SS) and argue that IC is a SS, and IC is connected to many other types of SSs.

I also argue, like several other scholars, that to develop SSs, an instructor must include activities that develop students' attitudinal, cognitive, and behavioral domains related to IC. I define key terms like SSs (among others) and then offer recaps of these key terms at the beginning of each chapter in the dissertation because I believe these to be foundational for teaching and conceptualizing IC.

After providing this contextualization and current conversations regarding culture, I examine one of the primary tools instructors use for teaching IC --- textbooks. This study is the first of my three studies. Specifically for this project, I hoped to learn more about how textbooks discussed culture. I start with this study because textbooks are the primary tool used by many instructors, especially those who may feel uncomfortable with or those who have limited time to research and create activities to teach IC and develop students' IC skills (Brunsmeier, 2017; Matsuda & Matsuda, 2011). Since textbooks are a primary instructional tool, I conduct a content analysis related to how culture is presented in textbooks. Specifically, I focus on how textbooks portray and define culture. Through this analysis, I establish that textbooks may have some issues (such as not defining culture and using reductionistic examples to explain culture). However, I argue that textbooks can be used to develop some of the cognitive domains (or informational knowledge) related to culture, especially if some examples are explored and interrogated in class. Conversely, I argue that textbooks use ineffective exercises which do not allow for attitudinal and behavioral development.

While textbooks may be the primary source to teach *about* IC, I argue that to *develop* students' IC skills, instructors may need more resources to assist them --- especially having resources that can assist instructors in developing students' behavioral and attitudinal domains. In Chapter Four, I revisit the idea of soft skills, and I present a potential model (known as the "Introduce → Practice → Apply → Reflect" (IPAR) model) that can potentially address all three domains and can be used to teach such challenging and/or conceptual topics as soft skills. I extend this argument by sharing that one of

these SSs can include IC. I present this model and some of the main findings related to using this model, in a TPC class. I argue that this model can address each domain; however, I also argue and suggest that instructors should be intentional and should add several activities that support attitudinal domain development when using this model. Particularly, these activities can be added in the practice, apply, and reflect portions.

I present a third study where I used this model to teach students about IC and develop students' IC skills. Specifically, this chapter focuses on some of the activities that were used in the IPAR model. I wanted to better understand which of these types of activities students perceived as to be the most helpful to developing students' IC skills. The findings were intended to help instructors choose which activities to pair with the IPAR model. Students developed a portfolio project through the course of a semester, and students rated each of the activities on a scale of 0-5 on the activity's level of helpfulness. This study extended seven semesters and included two institutions: a Public Affairs institution and a Land-Grant institution. The Public Affairs mission institution had three pillars: ethical leadership, cultural competence, and community engagement, and the institution required that classes and programs incorporate these pillars throughout all classes for students to gain a nuanced understanding of these concepts. I wanted to analyze students' responses across the institutions to not only see which activities were deemed most helpful, but also to find whether there were any potential differences between students who attended these two institutions. However, I found that there were little differences in the way of what students found helpful. Additionally, most students rated the activities similarly and found that interactions with individuals outside of the academy were the most helpful (interviewing an individual in their field related to culture and doing a client-based project).

I provide definitions that instructors can use and interrogate through their classes, present the IPAR model that can help them scaffold and develop activities with, and then provide specific activities and

suggestions of how to *develop* students IC skills rather than just teach *about* IC. The following chapter overviews offer a more detailed summary of what topics are included in each chapter.

1.1. An Overview of Chapter 2

Chapter Two presents a current literature review regarding the history, models, and arguments surrounding intercultural communication. The main focus of this chapter is to provide the key terms, their history, and their definitions as they relate to this dissertation project. I posit that much ambiguity and difficulty in teaching IC stems from the vague definitions of the terms connected to IC, such as culture, intercultural communication, and others. This chapter also includes the connection of IC with soft skills (SS), a foundational connection used throughout this project.

1.2. An Overview of Chapter 3

After establishing some context and the foundation knowledge related to IC, I found that textbooks are the primary resource used in TPC courses, and instructors often choose these textbooks for various reasons. Some of these reasons may be related to IC, but often, instructors choose textbooks based on other core objectives of the course. Instructors who are uncomfortable with or are new to ideas surrounding IC may rely primarily or solely on textbooks to educate students about IC (Matsuda & Matsuda, 2011). For this reason, it is beneficial to understand how textbooks present IC topics.

Chapter Three presents a textual analysis of professional, technical communication (TPC) textbooks. This study particularly examines how culture and intercultural communication (IC) are presented in textbooks since many instructors rely on this tool. I illustrate some common potential issues found within textbooks, such as reliance on reductionistic factoids and stereotypes, outdated sources, and a lack of defining culture throughout the texts. I also connect back to Chapter Two to discuss the

connection of IC as a type of SS that requires not only cognitive development (that often accompanies textbooks) but attitudinal development as well. Because of the limitations with textbooks for teaching IC, the following chapters explore additional teaching methods for IC instruction.

1.3. An Overview of Chapter 4

While Chapter Three discusses some of the issues associated with only using textbooks to teach IC, chapter four attempts to provide a solution that all instructors can use in their courses. I also build upon chapter two's brief introduction of the connection between SS and IC. I explicitly argue that IC is a type of SS. I also discuss the common difficulties in teaching SS, which, similar to the difficulties of teaching IC, stem from a vague definition or a lack of definition for SS. I use a modified version of Bay's (2021) definition of SS and then discuss how a model for teaching SS to teach IC was developed. This model stems from both the current literature as well as my experiences in the classroom. This model is referred to as the Introduce → Practice → Apply → Reflect (IPAR) model. While I suggest that this model can be used to teach several abstract or conceptual objectives in the classroom, such as SSs, this chapter will focus on how it can be beneficial for teaching SSs, specifically IC.

Chapter Four discusses the IPAR model much more in depth, but this overview offers a quick conceptualization of this model:

- **Introduction**: Students are introduced to the abstract concept(s), concepts are defined, an overview of how this concept relates to the course (and potentially outside the course to illustrate transferability) is provided, and examples of the concept are provided.
    - Domain developed: Cognitive

- **Practice**: Students are asked to put the foundation (**introduction**) knowledge into practice to help further develop their understanding and application.
    - Note: A feedback loop must be included in this stage. This feedback loop allows students to receive feedback and implement that feedback. Peers and/or the instructor can provide feedback. The practice stage should mostly be low-stakes assessments (such as low point writing assignments, quizzes, responses, discussions, and other activities) rather than high-stakes assessments.
    - Domain developed: Cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioral (depending on activity)
- **Apply**: Students are asked to use information from the introduce, practice, and potentially reflect stages and apply them to experiences in a client or community partner project.
    - Note: It is crucial that this stage also has a feedback loop component with feedback from the client/community partner and/or the instructor. I argue that getting both is more effective as the client/community partner can often discuss the holistic project. In contrast, the instructor might discuss more of the nuances related to soft skills/TPC. The Apply stage should be a high-stakes assessment.
    - Domain developed: Behavioral (and possibly attitudinal)
- **Reflect**: Students are asked to reflect on content they have learned, what they need to continue to develop, and how it can relate outside of the classroom context.
    - Note: While this stage can occur at any (and potentially multiple) point(s), it is crucial to have students reflect at the end of the entire experience to help the metacognitive transfer of the concept.
    - Domain developed: Attitudinal

It is also worth noting that this model is not a lock-step model. In other words, instructors do not need to teach these stages in the exact order; additionally, these stages can be revisited at any stage to better assist the students' learning and development of the SS.

I suggest that many instructors, especially those who teach TPC courses, may already use the IPAR model but may not name this approach. I argue that naming and sharing this naming with students can help students better understand the intentional scaffolding the instructor is using and better conceptualize SS, and help them transfer this knowledge of SS to other situations.

I also introduce a portfolio project that relied on the IPAR model and discuss some of the findings from that study. I offer more in-depth findings in chapter five. In chapter four, however, I focus on some of the activities that students found the most helpful in developing their understanding of SS, especially related to IC. Many of these experiences related to "real" or authentic experiences where students worked with a client, group, or interviewed a professional in their field. These findings support previous findings from scholars such as Anthony and Garner (2016). I present students' perceptions of the IPAR model, which was highly rated and was found to be a helpful tool in the classroom.

1.4. An Overview of Chapter 5

Chapter five offers a textual analysis of the portfolio project. This portfolio project was conducted in entry-level, service TPC courses over multiple semesters at two institutions. This chapter illustrates how the portfolio project used the IPAR approach and encapsulates both the model and students' development of IC throughout the semester.

Regarding the IPAR model, the portfolio project had students complete the following:

- Introduction activities that included prompt activities, narrative reading and responses, and textbook reading reflections
- Practice activities that included prompt activities as well as an interview with a professional in their field.
    - Feedback Loop: Within this first feedback loop, students get feedback on the practice activities from the instructor and/or their peers.
- Apply activities included working with a client and a group to develop a formal report as well as deliverables to the client
- Reflection activities included reflections at the end of every activity and a reflection at the end of the portfolio project.

In addition to completing these activities, students ranked (similar to Anthony and Garner's 2016 study) the helpfulness of these activities in their development of learning IC. Students found "real" or authentic activities to be the most helpful, supporting findings from Anthony and Garner's (2016) study.

1.5. An Overview of Chapter 6

Chapter six offers a discussion and conclusion that traces the chapters' connections to the project's holistic findings. As a recap, chapter two offers an introduction of key concepts related to IC as well as crucial definitions, chapter three offers an analysis of one of the most-used teaching methods (textbooks) for teaching IC and its pitfalls, chapter four offers a solution in the form of the IPAR model for teaching IC and other SS. Chapter five explores findings from a multi-semester, multi-institutional portfolio analysis that used the IPAR model.

I connect to issues related to providing a vague (or complete lack of a) definition for terms related to IC. Many of these issues cause teaching IC and SS related to IC to become more complex, if not altogether impossible. Further, I suggest that for instructors to do this, they need to develop their toolbox by having definitions for abstract or conceptual topics to address limitations found when using only textbooks. I revisit the IPAR model and revise the intercultural development inventory (IDI) survey as potential tools they can use.

I also discuss the limitations of this project and provide calls for future studies. Two of these limitations include the project's lack of measuring the degree of growth related to IC development and the need for future testing of the IPAR model. While students in the portfolio project reported growth, I explore how a future study with monetary resources may benefit from using the IDI survey as a pre-and post-survey in conjunction with the IPAR model to fill this gap.

This chapter ends with an overview of contributions to the TPC field. These contributions include core definitions related to IC and a model the field can use both in research and the classroom, a connection of SS to IC, and the need to develop students' IC awareness related to goals and trends in TPC. Some of these goals relate to objectives of service, entry-level TPC course, which often relates to preparing students for the writing and communication they will be doing in other courses and outside of the course. Some of these trends include making students more informed global citizens who interact in helpful ways, especially as it relates to social justice projects (Bay, 2021).

1.6. Goals for this Dissertation Project

While the larger goal for this dissertation project is further conversations regarding instruction as it relates to IC, I have several more specific goals for this project. These goals include:

- Assist TPC instructors with their goals to incorporate opportunities for students to develop their IC skills and abilities, both in face-to-face, online, and hybrid settings.
- Provide research that can lead to sustainable future research initiatives (Melonçon et al., 2019).

I recognize that the main challenges for instructors teaching IC are due to a lack of time available to prepare materials or time to understand the information, needing the training to understand and develop their own IC knowledge and abilities, and a lack of adequate resources to support their IC instruction (Matveeva, 2008). While it cannot give instructors more time, I hope to help instructors in the following ways:

- Save instructors time by presenting a holistic overview of conversations surrounding IC as it intersects with instruction from previous research and the present studies.
- Offer resources for instructors throughout this dissertation and is compiled in the discussion chapter to aid instructors.
- Present definitions that can be used and interrogated in classroom activities, including when using textbooks.
- Provide the IPAR model for instructors and programs to use to support all domains of learning.
- Share some activities for teaching IC and students' perceived views of how helpful these activities were to their learning.

I also recognize differences in the modality of entry-level, service, TPC courses. As TPC programs move toward partial or fully online programs (examples include University of Texas El Paso, University of Pennsylvania, University of California: Berkeley, University of Michigan, Park University, Missouri State University, among many others), it is essential to recognize how IC

instruction can be different and developed for different modalities. Several chapters will discuss these considerations, and a larger conversation surrounding the instruction of IC in different modalities will be explored in the final chapter.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

I define key terms and present some of the theoretical frameworks used throughout this project to understand culture in this chapter. Specifically,

- In Section 2.1 - I define an entry-level, service TPC course and reasons to incorporate intercultural communication (IC) into these courses. In other words, in this section I focus on the background information related to culture.
- Section 2.2 - I argue the necessity of a strong theoretical and pedagogical framework when teaching IC in TPC courses. In this section, I focus on the rationale for my work.
- Section 2.3 - I extend this argument by presenting previous definitions and frameworks for studying culture. In this section, I explore previous conversations related to this topic.
- Section 2.4 - I present overarching problems with definitions and frameworks that were explored in 2.3. In this section, I highlight the issues from previous conversations.

- Section 2.5 - I suggest that a Small culture's definition can combat many of the issues associated with previous definitions related to culture. In this section, I illustrate my use of this specific term (Small culture) to define culture throughout the rest of the project.

- Section 2.6 - I use the definition of a Small culture as a building block to define IC. In this section, I illustrate how this term will be used throughout the project.
- Section 2.7 - I share how these terms will be used throughout the project to create a theoretical and pedagogical framework. In this section I illustrate how I fill a need in the TPC field.

2.1. Defining Entry-Level, Service Technical/Professional Writing Courses and Presenting the Need to Teach IC in These Courses

In this project, I examine IC topics, components, and activities within an entry-level, service technical/professional writing (TPC) course. Before culture and IC can be defined, it is helpful to have a common understanding of how the term entry-level service TPC will be used throughout this project. Each term: 'service,' 'TPC,' and 'entry-level' will be unpacked, and then I will proved an explanation of how this term will be used throughout the project.

The first term to unpack is **service**. **Service** refers to the role the course serves within an institution. Behrens (1980) states that a service writing course is one that "address[es] itself to the cross-disciplinary requirements of general curriculum" (p. 562). In other words, a service course can assist students by preparing them for the writing they may

encounter in their other courses (Behrens, 1980). More specifically, Carter, Anson, and Miller (2003) state that TPC service courses are usually the introductory TPC courses intended for all majors instead of only technical writing majors. They further state that these courses are often housed in English departments and have Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) elements, but these service courses can be housed in any discipline (Carter et al., 2003). For example, a biology course that has a strong writing focus could act as a service course (or at least have service components within it).

Service in this project relates to how the TPC course serves writing or communication requirements within the institution, a department, or serves a need within a specific organizational unit. For example, in this project I use two service TPC courses. One course serves (or fills) several college/departmental requirements within the university, such as general education requirements for human development and family science and various engineering departments. This course also serves the needs within the engineering technology department by fulfilling ABET accreditation needs such as Criterion 3a, which states "an ability to apply written, oral, and graphical communication in well-defined technical and non-technical environments; and an ability to identify and use appropriate technical literature" ("Criteria for Accrediting Engineering," 2021). While TPC courses often serve this specific need, sometimes this need can be served by other courses such as composition or in-house engineering courses.

Technical/Professional Communication (TPC) must also be unpacked and defined as it relates to this project. TPC is often referred to as technical/professional writing as well. I

will be using the communication umbrella term to encapsulate the written, verbal, and nonverbal communication that is taught within these courses.

Further, I recognize that technical writing and professional writing have different meanings. While technical writing typically refers to writing related to technical genres such as software documentation, professional writing refers to writing related to workplace-related genres such as emails or reports. Often, institutions will use technical writing and professional writing interchangeably, especially as it relates to their entry-level, service professional writing course.

The umbrella term TPC was chosen for this study to encompass either term an institution may use to follow institutions' nomenclature. As TPC relates to this project, students who take this entry-level, service TPC course will most likely be professionals who write rather than professional writers or career writers. In other words, many of these students will most likely have careers or jobs where writing will only consist of an aspect of their job duties, whereas professional or career writers write for most of their job duties (Schneider & Andre, 2005). For example, Schneider and Andre state that engineers and managers would be professionals who write, whereas TPC communicators or journalists are career writers (2005).

The last term that needs to be defined as it relates to this project is **entry-level**. This term relates to one of the first TPC courses a student can take. This course may require prerequisites such as another academic writing course or require a specific academic standing, such as being a sophomore standing to take the course. The term service means

service in the sense that both could relate to the same course, but both terms have slight distinctions, and both are needed to understand the entry-level service TPC course fully. Alone, entry-level TPC courses can refer to any of the entry-level courses a student could take. Adding the service portion of the term clarifies that this is a course that is not only for TPC students but may also have other focuses for non-career writers. Conversely, if this course was solely focused on service TPC courses, the service component could relate to grant writing, documentation, or other various TPC courses that might serve various needs. Thus, the entire term, entry-level, service TPC course, is needed for this project.

Since all portions of the term have been defined, the distinctions between this project and others can be explored. I diverge from other projects that might focus solely on how IC relates to entry-level TPC courses for TPC majors or various upper-level, service TPC courses. The intention to focus on the entry-level, service TPC courses stemmed from the idea that regardless of a student's major, discipline, or year in school, students should have the tools to engage in IC activities and opportunities effectively. By focusing on a course geared toward upper TPC electives or only classes for TPC students, many types of students are left out of this instruction. While not every student will take an entry-level, service TPC course, studying these courses are beneficial because it allows one to study a broad demographic of students, and results can be more broadly applicable.

For clarity and simplicity, I will use TPC courses to signify entry-level, service TPC courses, unless otherwise noted.

2.1.1. Rise of IC in TPC Classrooms

After establishing the term *entry-level, service TPC course*, it is now essential to understand how IC relates to these courses. Since the 1990s, a great deal of literature has focused on the need to study IC and integrate this subject within TPC classrooms. Several researchers have provided pragmatic reasons for incorporating IC education in TPC classrooms, such as:

- Addressing business/workplace needs,
- Better communicating with others, and
- Developing soft skills (Miles, 1997; Robles, 2012; Tippens, 1993; Weiss, 1993).

2.1.1.1. To Address Pragmatic Business/Workplace Needs.

Addressing pragmatic business/workplace needs is one of the most prominent reasons scholars give for teaching IC in all TPC courses. Tippens (1993) and Weiss (1993) suggest that teaching and developing students' IC skills will better prepare them to communicate and interact in the workplace, leading to more job opportunities. While these additional opportunities could include working with other teams, departments, or organizations, Weiss (1993) posits these opportunities could refer to working with people all over the world, especially as organizations wish to enter new markets and stay competitive in a globalized world.

2.1.1.2. To Better Communicate with Others.

While pragmatically preparing students for the interactions they may encounter in the workplace plays an essential role for a service course, there are other reasons to teach IC in TPC courses. Another reason scholars suggest teaching IC is because of its potential to

help students communicate with others in all situations, not just in the workplace, more effectively. Miles argues that we need to sensitize students to cultures beyond those they already know to help them communicate with others (1997). In other words, sensitizing students to other cultures can lead students to better understanding these cultures and respecting them more. This respect and knowledge can lead to better communication that lessens the chance of stereotyping or "Othering" behavior.

Othering is the view of believing someone is different from you, usually while viewing yourself as "'normal' 'civilized' or 'superior'" (Holliday, Kyllman, & Hyde, 2017 p. 24). This Othering behavior can be both intentional or unintentional. Holliday, Kyllman, and Hyde argue that anyone can "fall into the trap of Othering" when we "reduce people to less than what they are" (2017, p. 24). This behavior usually stems from stereotyping and prejudices and is closely related to "Easy" answers. Easy answers are stereotypical thoughts/actions which fail to acknowledge the complexities of humans. People can often resort to Easy answers when they encounter an IC communicative situation. Developing a foundational awareness and sensitivity to other cultures can help prevent these behaviors and help one recognize and avoid Othering or Easy answers. Scholars, such as Schulz (2008), suggest that recognizing one's behavioral shortfalls (like Othering) can be a beneficial step to learning and improving oneself and communicating interculturally.

By incorporating IC lessons into a TPC classroom, instructors can heighten students' awareness of culture while recognizing Othering behaviors or Easy answers. This heightened awareness of cultures can help students identify and question these behaviors in their daily life and, in turn, communicate more efficiently and respectfully.

2.1.1.3. To Develop Soft Skills.

A third reason to teach IC is related to the need for students to learn soft skills in TPC courses. Soft skills is a complex term with many definitions as well. Often, the term 'soft skills' is mentioned refers to "attitudes and behaviors displayed in interactions among individuals that affect the outcomes of various interpersonal encounters" (Muir, 2004, p. 96). However, this study argues they are not just attitudes or behaviors but skills that can be developed. Another helpful definition for conceptualizing soft skills might be Bay's (2021) definition that states soft skills, especially as they relate to TPC and TPC, are the "rhetorical skills that require individuals to learn how to read and respond effectively to different workplace situations, people, technologies, and problems" (p. 13). I argue that combining these understandings to provide a strong definition of SSs. I define ***soft skills as the cognitive, behavioral, affective, and rhetorical skills that allow "individuals to learn how to read and respond effectively to different workplace situations, people, technologies, and problems"*** (Bay, 2021, p. 13).

Understanding that soft skills are skills, not just traits one is born with, allows for the possibility for an individual to develop these abilities. This understanding of soft skills is known as soft skill development theory, and as it relates to IC, IC development theory (Lee et al., 2012). While soft skills (SS) will be explored more deeply in a later chapter, I suggest that by teaching IC in a TPC course, students can develop a multitude of other SS at the same time.

I suggest that IC is a SS within the interpersonal communication SS umbrella. Interpersonal skills are the ones that then make up "emotional intelligence, leadership qualities, team skills, negotiation skills, time and stress management, and business etiquette" (Deepa & Manisha, 2013). As one can see, by developing one of these SS, you start developing many others. However, to develop SSs, you must develop students' cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains (Lee et al., 2012). Simply addressing one domain will most likely not lead to a strong SS. Like developing any skill, developing SS is a process, one that can be cyclical and take a great deal of time and practice to develop.

Even so, TPC programs and classes should still work to develop these abilities, partially because many businesses emphasize the need/desire for graduates to possess adept soft skills (Nealy, 2005; Robles, 2012; Stanton, 2017). While this desire for soft skills could mean many different ideas regarding attitudes and behaviors, many employers focus on soft skills related to communicating orally and written (Robles, 2012; Stanton, 2017). Employers and recruiters believe that graduates lack soft communication skills and other soft skills (Schulz, 2008). While organizations and scholars recognize the need for developing soft skills, scholars believe that soft skills can be taught and learned. For example, one soft skill would be communication; however, for communication as a soft skill, there is not much literature discussing meaningful ways to teach students these soft skills (Schulz, 2008; Stanton, 2017). I suggest that teaching IC may be one way to create meaningful interactions to teach and develop students' communication soft skills.

I acknowledge many soft skills fall within the communication and interpersonal skills umbrella, such as "emotional intelligence, leadership qualities, team skills, negotiation skills, time and stress management, and business etiquette" (Deepa & Manisha, 2013). However, to narrow the focus, I am specifically interested in ways teaching IC can develop soft communication skills, whether verbal or written. I tried to capture some of this skill development through reflections in a portfolio project. One of the specific studies I will focus on is a soft skill portfolio students in a TPC course complete that integrates both IC and soft skill development and has students self-reflect, assess, and report information regarding their understanding of both.

I posit that by teaching IC and helping students acknowledge other cultures, giving them time to practice and receive feedback on their IC skills, and applying these skills, their overall communication skills and soft skills will also improve. By teaching IC as a soft skill, not only would students start learning more about the complexities of communication, but they would also more easily be able to engage in more respectful and meaningful dialogue with others because they would be more aware of possible Othering behaviors and Easy answer pitfalls. Additionally, I acknowledge it assists all three goals (addressing workplaces needs, communicating better, and developing soft skills). Students would be more cognizant of thinking about the other party they are communicating with and thus will have developed their IC communication and general communication soft skills. In other words, developing these skills are not just beneficial for the workplace, but this development is also beneficial for daily interactions and one's own personal growth.

2.1.2. Multimodal Considerations for Teaching IC

I want to briefly discuss the need for multimodal considerations regarding the teaching of IC. Many of the conversations regarding IC refer to face-to-face IC (Arasaratnam-Smith & Doerfel, 2005); however, there are many reasons to include multimodal discussions and considerations for IC. These multimodal settings include online, telecommunication, among others. There are many reasons for including these considerations. Firstly, as seen through the COVID-19 pandemic, much of communication was done in multimodal settings --- many of these multimodal settings will continue (perhaps not to the same extent, but these settings will still occur) in the future, so preparing students for these situations is essential. Secondly, as shared previously, several TPC programs are moving courses, including their entry-level, service TPC course (and with it, IC education) online. As courses and programs go online and include IC, they must consider the multimodal aspect of their course as it intersects with objectives (such as IC) of those courses. Later chapters will explore these considerations more in-depth.

2.2. The Need for a Strong Theoretical Framework and Pedagogical Methods

I have established the reasons and needs for teaching culture and IC, and in this section I will provide a stronger understanding of these terms. Culture is a very complicated and nuanced topic. It is essential to have a strong definition of culture and a theoretical understanding of culture before teaching this topic in the classroom. Once this base understanding is achieved, instructors must use a framework to teach culture and IC. This definition and framework should exist to create consistency within our field to aid in understanding this highly complex topic.

While developing a solid definition and understanding of culture is complex, the following sections explore previous scholars' definitions and frameworks for teaching culture. While many of these definitions/frameworks can be valuable starting points for teaching culture, I argue that many of the following frameworks and defintions can easily lead to Easy answers because of how the framework defines (or lacks defining) culture. After presenting these other frameworks and definitions, a final definition of Small culture is given as an understanding of culture, which can mitigate many of the problems presented in the previous frameworks. I will then suggest that a Small culture understanding of culture can lead to a framework that instructors can use that allows for the nuances of culture while attempting to mitigate the Othering issues and Easy answers. I will also suggest that using this Small cultures understanding to develop a framework can also attempt to meet each of the previously stated reasons for teaching IC, including addressing business/workplace communicative needs, better communicating with others, and developing soft skills.

2.3. The Evolving Understanding of Culture

Culture is a term that has hundreds of definitions. Atkinson (2004) suggests that in the mid-1950s, there were over 160 different definitions of culture, and the number of definitions has continued to grow over the years. This vast number of possible definitions illustrates the complexity of the concept. I suggest that there must be a solid definition of culture to create a robust framework for culture and create a shared understanding in the field.

Even though there are hundreds of definitions of culture, there are commonalities among definitions that focus on shared beliefs, values, and thinking. These commonalities stem from Kluckhohn's (1951) definition, explored in the next section. After exploring Kluckhohn's definition, I will offer scholars' critiques of this original definition. After presenting these issues, in section 2.3, I will present common frameworks of culture and present inherent issues with these frameworks due to the definitions they use (or lack using). I will also present an overview of common issues within the explored definitions and frameworks, and then finally I will share how a definition of Small cultures can combat some of the issues mentioned in the previous definitions and frameworks.

2.3.1. Kluckhohn's Definition of Culture.

One of the most widely accepted definitions of culture comes from Kluckhohn's (1951) definition. He defined *culture* as "patterned ways of thinking, feeling and reacting" (p.89). This 1951 definition gave several scholars a solid foundation for understanding culture as groups who share commonalities of thinking and feeling. This definition also allowed scholars to adapt this definition based on the research they were conducting. Just like previous scholars, I suggest that, while this definition is a starting point for understanding culture, I also push against the 'reacting' portion of the definition.

2.3.1.1. Issues with Kluckhohn's Definition.

Scholars have argued the need to move to definitions of culture that remove the 'reacting' portion of Kluckhohn's (1951) definition. Scholars such as Braumann (1996), Collier (2015), Holliday (2005), and Zamel (1997) all have issues with the portion of Kluckhohn's (1954) definition that suggests understanding a culture will lead to almost

'clairvoyant tendencies' of knowing how one person in a culture may act or react. In other words, the emphasis on reacting can be problematic because this understanding removes the agency from an individual in the culture and places all the agency with the culture itself. Instead of viewing people as individuals within a culture who can make their own decisions and react in unique ways, this lens suggests that all people within a culture will all react in the same manner. Scholars such as Braumann (1996), Collier (2015), Holliday (2005), and Zamel (1997) are quick to emphasize the need to recognize that every person has agency and every individual can make decisions similar, counter, or unrelated to the perceived belief about their culture. Those who use Kluckhohn's definition of culture would be more likely to fall prey to Easy answers (as discussed in the previous section) or reductionist thoughts. Reductionist thoughts, in this sense, refers to reducing a person down to presumed ideas about his or her culture.

Take the following scenario as an example. A father was inviting his son's classmates to his son's birthday party, which would take place at a local restaurant. He decided to invite everyone in the class, all but one young Muslim student. He decided that he would not invite this student because the party falls during Ramadan. The father wanted to respect her fasting during Ramadan and believed she would not attend because the party revolved around food. The Muslim student, hurt by not being invited, told her parents. Her parents had a conversation with the father to understand why the daughter was not invited. After both parents talked, the father learned that the family makes exceptions for fasting during Ramadan, including exceptions for their children to attend special events. The father wrongfully assumed how another would react (not attend) to the invitation

based on one part of their culture (specifically a religious culture), and this assumption led to a negative communicative experience.

While the father's motives may have been well-intentioned, he still assumed that all people who subscribe to a culture (Muslim religion) would react the same way (not attending activities that involve food during Ramadan due to preconceived notions of that culture), instead of accounting for the possibility that people within a culture could make individual choices counter or unrelated to the common understandings of that culture. The father fell prey to an Easy answer of what he thought the family would do because his view of culture was also tied to the idea that knowing a culture would allow one to know how individuals in a culture might react.

While this example was set outside of the classrooms, scholars also believe this definition inside the classroom can lead to various issues. For example, an instructor might tell his students, "if you use concise, blunt text with your Russian client, they will appreciate it more and continue to work with you." In this example, the instructor is suggesting that by doing "x" (using concise, blunt writing), a specific reader will do "y" (react with appreciation and continue working with someone). This line of thinking is reductionistic and, therefore, problematic. Holliday warns that reductionist or essentialist comments such as '[x] culture always believes [y]' can be problematic because the agency is focused on the culture rather than on an individual (2007). In the same scenario, people might believe that all people who are a part of this culture will want and appreciate short, blunt writing. This mindset removes the possibility that individuals or groups within this same culture might react in other ways. In other words, these reductionistic and

essentialistic ideas remove the agency from an individual in the culture and instead presents a false, essentialist view of what everyone in the culture does or wants.

2.3.2. Previous Frameworks

As evidenced in the previous section, Kluckhohn's (1951) base definition can lead to various Easy answers and problems. I suggest that many common frameworks to understand or teach culture can also run into similar Easy answer issues related to Kluckhohn's definition because of how the frameworks define or fail to define culture. Before presenting and exploring Small cultures as a solution to Easy answers and how it can be used as a framework, the project explores three of the most common frameworks (High- and Low-Context, Dimensions of Culture, and Information-Acquisition). I explore issues associated with individual frameworks and common issues amongst all three frameworks to argue for a new framework to teach IC that uses a more holistic definition to combat these common issues.

2.3.2.1. The "High- and Low-Context" Framework.

The first framework which will be investigated is the High- and Low-Context framework. Edward Hall created this framework. Hall is credited with founding the field of IC after his book The Silent Language (1959). The book uses an anthropology lens to discuss how culture and non-verbal interactions play a part in communication. However, it can be challenging to pinpoint what Hall means when discussing culture directly when reading Hall's work. Reading *The Silent Language* (1959) and *Beyond Culture* (1989), it is clear that Hall associates culture as a form of communication.

Additionally, he presents culture in a nationalistic frame as evidenced by comparing American, Arab, Japanese, and other nationalities as cultures and illustrating differences among these cultures (1959, p. 51). However, the actual definition, outside of nationalities, is a bit indistinct. This unclear definition of *culture* is a common theme amongst all three frameworks.

While Hall describes culture as communication between nationalities, the High- and Low- portion of the framework refers to a culture's value regarding the context of communication: whether indirect communication (High-context) or direct communication (Low-context). In other words, High-context cultures refer to cultures that use language and rely heavily on context (such as body language, the status of the person, among other contextual factors) to understand the meaning. Conversely, Low-context cultures refer to cultures that rely on language and rules that are explicitly known. Within this framework, the High-/Low- view of culture is viewed on a sliding scale.

Hall suggests countries like Iraq and Japan would be considered more on the High-context side of the culture scale. They rely on implicit understandings of communication and rules, partially based on societal respect for class systems or individuals' ages. For example, there might be additional rules for formality in either country if you are speaking with someone from a higher class or an elder. Conversely, Russia would be considered more of a Low-context culture because Hall suggests Russians prefer straightforward communication or documentation without the need for additional pleasantries or other implicit rules.

2.3.2.1.1. Issues with High- and Low-Context Framework.

Even though Hall suggests that several cultures typically embody elements of both High-context and Low-context, there are several issues with this view of culture: firstly, his definition of culture is tied to the idea that culture is only focused on communication styles at a national level (Rogers, Hart, Miike, 2002). This definition does not allow for the more nuanced understandings of culture or communication because of its unclear definition. Viewing culture only on a nationalistic level could lead to issues such as Easy answers. These Easy answers go back to similar ones discussed, such as reductionist beliefs like referring to all "x" people as preferring "y."

I suggest that the second problem regarding this framework is that the framework fails to acknowledge the flexibility and adaptability of cultures. In other words, this view of culture's/nation's communicative styles/preferences are static. This understanding is problematic because this view assumes that these cultures/nations will always prefer to have this type of communication style, for all time, in all social situations. This view reinforces essentialist ideas of cultures.

Thirdly, this framework may make it difficult to equip students with the tools to navigate communicative experiences with other cultures. They will need to memorize what side a culture belongs to (either the High- or Low-context side).

Finally, I suggest this type of understanding of culture is associated with communication across culture or cross-cultural communication rather than IC (Rogers, Hart, Miike, 2002). Cross-cultural communication focuses on the differences between cultures and

communicating with another culture based on these differences (Nolan, 1999). While focusing on differences can be one way of understanding culture, I try to move beyond this idea and focus more on IC, recognizing similarities and possible differences. I suggest that all three explored frameworks also focus more on cross-cultural communication than IC, which may illustrate a need for a new definition and framework. Cross-cultural communication and IC will be explored more in the IC section of this chapter.

2.3.2.2. Dimensions of Culture Framework.

Geert Hofstede developed the Dimensions of Culture framework in 1981. This framework addresses several dimensions and aspects of culture that impact communication, specifically in the workplace. Hofstede's work is widely recognized in management and organizational practices because the data originated from an extensive IBM database composed of employees' self-reported responses. These employees represented over 40 countries. This data was collected from IBM between 1967 and 1973 (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010). From these responses, Hofstede developed four (and later revised to five and then six) dimensions of culture:

- Individualism/Collectivism,
- Small/Large Power Distances,
- Uncertainty Tolerance/Avoidance,
- Masculinity/Femininity,
- Long/Short-term Orientation (the fifth dimension that was added later), and
- Indulgence/Restraint (the sixth dimension that was recently added).

Both the Dimensions of Culture framework and the High-/Low-Context framework suggest culture is only related to national culture, and both focus on cross-cultural communication rather than IC. However, the Dimensions of Culture framework is slightly more nuanced, but even with these subtle nuances, this framework still has inherent issues, which will be explored in the following section.

To better understand this framework, each of the dimensions will be explained, related to how they connect to cross-cultural communication, and example nations that fall into those categories are provided.

Individualism/Collectivism refers to the extent people as a society within a nation feel "independent as opposed to interdependent members of larger wholes" (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010). In other words, individualistic nations are more likely to view society as focused on the individual, and within the nation, individuals are expected to look after themselves (Hofstede, 2011). Conversely, collectivistic nations categorize society and focus on the collective "we," and, as a society, people expect one another to work as a collective and take care of one another. Regarding cross-cultural communication, one might argue that individualistic societies (such as the United States) are known to speak their mind and prioritize tasks/work duties over relationships. In contrast, collectivistic societies (such as China) prefer harmony in the workplace and view relationships as more important than the tasks at hand (Hofstede, 2011).

Small/Large Power Distance refers to the " extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions (like the family) accept and expect that power is distributed unequally." (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010). In other words, this dimension suggests that society and its leaders endorse some level of inequality (Hofstede, 2011). Small Power Distance countries, such as Israel or Denmark, refer to a nation whose lower-class perceives less inequality than Large Power Distance countries. Conversely, a Large Power Distance country would refer to a nation's society that acknowledges a hierarchy and accepts that hierarchy, such as Iran or Kuwait. As this dimension relates to the workplace, Small Power Distance countries expect employees or subordinates to be consulted, and a hierarchy is only established for convenience; conversely, employees in Large Power Distance countries expect to be told what to do, and all levels of employees are expected to listen and abide by the hierarchy created (Hofstede, 2011). Taking this dimension a step further, it could be implied that regarding cross-cultural communication, one should understand these roles that the society holds before they start communicating or work with that nation to assimilate and work well with these countries.

Uncertainty Tolerance/Avoidance refers to a country's ability to deal with ambiguity (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010). A country with a high level of tolerance would refer to a nation whose society generally allows for various opinions and ideas. In contrast, a country that scores high in avoidance would hypothetically believe in absolute truth and be less likely to be receptive to counter ideas. In other words, the society in an Uncertain Tolerant nation (such as the United States) would be "comfortable in unstructured situations" such as new, surprising, or unknown situations. In contrast,

Uncertainty Avoidance societies (such as Russia and Argentina) would prefer laws or rules to be in place so they would not have to deal with those situations (Hofstede, 2011, p. 10). As this dimension relates to cross-cultural communication, it could be inferred that if one was working with an Uncertainty Avoidance nation, one should try to stray away from vague or deviant ideas to best work with this type of group.

Masculinity/Femininity refers to "the extent to which the use of force is endorsed socially" (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010). In other words, masculine nations (such as China) typically appreciate high levels of achievement, assertiveness, and material rewards. Feminine nations (such as Iceland) are those that prefer cooperation and assisting the underprivileged. In feminine countries, values between men and women are very similar and are centralized around caring for the weak; in masculine countries, there is a dynamic difference between male's and females where males are more likely to be assertive, and women are on the modest, caring side (Hofstede, 2011). Hofstede further argues that dimensions such as Masculinity/Femininity are significant because societal issues are solved through these values (2011). As this dimension relates to the workplace and cross-cultural communication, one might need to be aware that more traditional gender roles are given and possibly followed in masculine societies. Those roles will continue in the workplace and communicative interactions.

The other two dimensions added to the original four dimensions are Long-/Short-Term Orientation and Indulgence/Resistant.

Long-/Short-Term Orientation refers to flexhumility (Long-Term) and monumentalism (Short-Term) which relates to how a nation deals with change. Whereas Uncertainty Tolerance/Avoidance deals with change regarding other people, Long-/Short-Term Orientation deals with changes towards economic growth. Long-Term Orientation countries believe that the world, more specifically the future, is changing, and they must prepare. Further explained, this dimension is correlated with economic growth (Hofstede, 2011). Hofstede added this dimension, which is based on Bond's 1987 work regarding Confucian Work Dynamism. Bond'sBond's study was slightly different from the original IBM study and only focused on 23 countries with a history of Confucianism. Hofstede received permission from Bond to use this dimension, which he later renamed because, he argued, many of the participants had not heard of Confucius (2011). This dimension links Long-Term Orientation with Confucian Work Dynamics or characteristics such as "perseverance, thrifty, ordering relationships by status" among others (Hofstede, 2011, p. 13). Russia and China are considered to lean more to the Long-Term side. Conversely, Short-Term Orientated countries like Morocco are said to prefer social spending and experience slow economic growth for smaller countries, among other characteristics. Similar to the previous dimensions, when communicating or working with nations, one could have preconceived ideas about society, which could lead to unintentional Easy answers/behaviors.

Lastly, the sixth dimension is Indulgence/Restraint. This dimension deals with the level of perceived freedom and support for fulfilling one's passions. "Indulgence stands for a society that allows relatively free gratification of basic and natural human drives related

to enjoying life and through restraint stands for a society that suppresses gratification of needs and regulates it by means of strict social norms" (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010, p. 18). Hofstede argues that this dimension focuses on happiness research, tied explicitly to a nation (2011). In other words, a country that falls on the indulgent side (such as the United States) might have more of their society perceive personal life control, more of society declaring themselves happy, and freedom of speech is seen as an essential aspect of that country (Hofstede, 2011, 16). Conversely, a Restrained nation (such as Turkey, Russia, China, or Pakistan) would have less of the society self-identify as feeling happy, the nation viewing leisure as less important than work, the nation having higher rates of police officers per population, and freedom of speech (as viewed by society) not being a primary concern for the nation (Hofstede, 2011, 16).

2.3.2.2.1. Issues with the Dimensions of Culture Framework.

Dimension of Culture has some inherent issues as well. Like the High-/Low-Context framework, this framework also presents an unclear definition of culture and presents this term as only meaning national cultures; this framework presents communicating across cultures or a cross-cultural communication framework, instead of an IC framework; and presents a static view of culture. As stated in the High-/Low-Context framework section, viewing cultures as national cultures does not allow for cultures' nuances. This view can lead to Easy answers such as reductionist views. The Dimensions of Culture framework essentially equates nation with being a culture and does not allow for the various other types of cultures within a nation, such as subcultures, nor does this definition allow for the possibilities that cultures may extend past the nation's borders and may include

culture being tied to religion, occupations, or various other groups. Furthermore, due to the focus on national cultures, this framework can present an essentialist view of cultures due to the grouping of an entire society together and suggesting that thousands or more people within that nation all relatively believe, feel, or behave in the same manner (Holliday, 2013).

Due to equating cultures as nations, scholars also suggest that this framework presents crude comparisons of culture, which can be problematic (Baskerville, 2003). For example, Fang (2005) argues specifically against the Individual/Collectivist dimension and argues that there are circumstances where society can behave as "both individual and collectivist" depending on the group within the nation, and argues that "subcultures can differ dramatically from national culture" (364). His argument further supports the idea that a more nuanced definition of culture should be used as a framework.

Additionally, since this framework relies on self-reported data gathered between 1967-1973, the framework does not easily allow for the possibility that these cultures can change (unless new data is gathered or new dimensions are presented, which has occurred only twice). For this reason, I suggest this framework has a static view of culture, which can also lead to Easy answers.

Lastly, unique to the Dimensions of Culture, some scholars have argued that this framework presents false dichotomies (Beamer, 2000). The current project agrees with this statement and suggests that the Dimensions of Culture framework presents an either-or understanding for each dimension when, in reality, cultures are rarely either-or

comparisons. Further, many times the dimensions presented as working in competition with one another can work in harmony with one another. In other words, the dimensions suggest that the characteristics presented are opposites and work conversely to one another, which may not be accurate.

For example, for the Long-/Short-Term Orientation, Long-Term Orientation is associated with strong economic growth; however, one of the characteristics for Short-Term Orientation is that "service to others is an important goal;" however, it can be argued that service to others is essential and noted in countries with strong economic growth. Countries with strong economic growth tend to have more people volunteer because these individuals both have the opportunity or ability to serve or volunteer. Tov and Diener (2008) argue that countries with a high gross domestic product, a standard indicator that economists use to understand economic health, tend to have more volunteers because of the monetary capital. In other words, these categories within these dimensions are presented as opposing, when in reality, they are not necessarily opposing nor are an accurate either-or comparison.

2.3.2.3. The Information-Acquisition Framework.

A third framework that is commonly used, especially in TPC classrooms, is the Information-Acquisition framework. This framework started emerging in the 1990s and usually lacks defining culture but implies culture refers to national culture and focuses on a cross-cultural perspective (or the differences between cultures). Additionally, this framework usually focuses on practices exhibited by another culture (usually at a national level) and then gives strategies for interacting with that culture based on the practices

(Matveeva, 2007). Beamer (1992) and Thrush (1993) are credited with pioneering this framework. Thrush (1993) states that the Information-Acquisition framework can initially help students learn more about the "knowledge of cultural differences in communication strategies and an awareness of how those differences affect the communication process" (p. 281).

2.3.2.3.1. Issues with the Information-Acquisition Framework.

Similar to High/Low Context and Dimensions of Culture frameworks, the Information-Acquisition framework has similar issues, such as an unclear definition that implies culture refers to national culture, leading to Easy answers such as essentialist views. Additionally, all three frameworks emphasize cross-cultural communication, or the differences between cultures, rather than on IC, which recognizes both similarities and differences.

The Information-Acquisition framework suggests using hypothetical formulas to understand cultures. Zamel (1997) argues that using and assigning formulaic methods for teaching culture creates an inherent reductionist perspective. In other words, Zamel posits that by suggesting a formula can be used if the culture meets specific characteristics, one reduces an entire nation down to those characteristics, which can apply to the other frameworks as well.

Unique to the Information-Acquisition framework, this framework is commonly mentioned within TPC materials. Further problematic, many times these materials present IC in negative ways such as "barriers to effective communication, passive recipients of

the productive writing of mainstream American students, or as exotics who live and work within an endless litany of fun facts to know and tell" (Miles, 1993, p. 181). Miles suggests instructors think about the international students in TPC classrooms and how they may see themselves or their national cultures presented in textbooks or TPC materials, especially if these instances are portrayed negatively (1993).

For the issues presented regarding each framework, I suggest using or creating a framework that starts with a more nuanced definition of culture and that actively tries to combat Easy answers.

2.4. Overarching Problems with the Mentioned Frameworks

The previous section explored three frameworks: High-/Low-Context, Dimensions of Culture, and Information-Acquisition approach. It also explored the focus and issues of each framework. As a recapitulation, Table 1 below illustrates the focus and issues with each of the frameworks.

Framework	**Focus**	**Issues**
High-/Low-Context	Communicative style preferences	• Views nations as culture • Suggests culture is static • Focus is on cross-cultural communication instead of IC
Dimensions of Culture	Cultures role in impacting communication in the workplace	• Views nations as culture • Possibly suggests culture is static

		• Focus is on cross-cultural communication instead of IC • False dichotomies within dimensions
Information-Acquisition	Cultural differences in communication strategies and how differences affect the communication process, especially inTPC situations	• Views nations as culture • Suggests culture is static • Focus is on cross-cultural communication instead of IC • Can present IC in a negative fashion • Suggests formulaic solutions

Table 1: Overview of Cultural Frameworks

While each framework has a specific focus and issues, there are three common issues all frameworks have in common:

- Presenting culture as meaning only national culture,
- Suggesting culture is static and unchanging, and
- Focusing more on the differences and cross-cultural communication than IC.

The previous section also discussed how these issues could lead to other issues such as Easy answers.

This section more deeply explores Easy answers and focuses explicitly on how Othering, essentialism, reductivism, Western culture lens, ethnocentrism, and eurocentrism can be a

byproduct of the inherent issues within Kluckhohn's definition and the frameworks previously explored. The following sections are within 2.4. will explore these terms/issues, suggest that many of these issues are linked to the frameworks having a definition that equates culture only with national culture. Finally, this section will end by suggesting that a new definition and framework might be more beneficial.

2.4.1. Easy Answers

As previously defined, **Easy answers** refer to the stereotypical thoughts and actions that are based in part when one fails to acknowledge the complexities of humans (Holliday, Kyllman, & Hyde, 2017). In other words, Easy answers mean believing in the most basic understanding of interaction, event, or experience; many of these Easy answers are based on stereotypes and prejudices. Weiss argues that stereotypical behavior occurs when we fail to "align our images of other people with actuality" (1993, p. 203). Weiss suggests that when one hears information about another culture, one should critically evaluate whether that statement is reflective of a whole population in a culture or whether it is a blanket statement/stereotype. I suggest that Easy answers are the umbrella term for all the issues, such as Othering or essentialism.

Easy answers can be problematic because they reduce all people in a group/population into a homogenous group and do not allow for individuality or for the individual to possess agency. In a previous section discussing Kluckhohn's (1951) definition of culture, one of the main critiques was that the definition did not allow for an individual's agency but instead suggested the culture possessed all agency. In other words, if one knew what culture another belonged to, they could believe (with Kluckhohn's (1951)

definition) how another would react or behave simply based on a culture the other belonged to. In other words, Kluckhohn's definition suggests that people can be reduced down to common ideas about that culture. While some common ideas about culture might be beneficial, these ideas still need to be critically examined, as Weiss suggests. While this concept may sound like common sense, sometimes the critical examination portion is easy to forget when exploring culture and IC topics.

Suppose one does not critically examine the ideas presented about culture. In that case, one could be led to an inaccurate view of another, leading to incorrect representations of another, Othering behavior, misunderstandings, and communicative issues. Because all three frameworks lack a solid definition of culture and instead suggest culture only means national culture, these frameworks provide blanket statements/stereotypes for entire people making up nations. I suggest that if one were to use these frameworks alone, they would need tools to examine culture or IC critically. Otherwise, they could be led to Easy answers.

For example, if one were to use the Dimensions of Culture framework, one would see that Bulgaria scored a 16 on the Indulgence/Restraint scale. This score suggests that people in Bulgaria are closer to the Restraint side and "do not put much emphasis on leisure time and control the gratification of their desires. People with this orientation have the perception that their actions are Restrained by social norms and feel that indulging themselves is somewhat wrong" ("Country Insights: Bulgaria," 2019). If one were to use this framework, one might believe that almost all Bulgarians are pessimistic and simply focused on work. This easy answer could have further ramifications, such as an

individual not visiting or working with Bulgarians. This idea could also lead one to jump to the Easy answer that Bulgarians are not friendly (because they are pessimistic and focused on work).

This understanding of Bulgarians, and the framework in general, is problematic because it makes several assumptions that lead to Easy answers (all Bulgarians are pessimistic, focused on work, and not friendly). The assumptions inherent within the Dimensions of Culture framework that specifically can lead to Easy answers include:

- The first assumption that everyone surveyed in the original study is representative of the entire nation,
- A second assumption is that people in this nation all fall into an either-or characteristic of a dimension, and
- A third assumption is that everyone in a nation has homogenous beliefs, histories, and understanding (Baskerville, 2003).

The third assumption differs from the first assumption because the first assumes that the IBM employees who took this survey are representative of their entire nation. In contrast, the third assumption suggests that all people within a nation are a homogenous grouping. Holliday argues that members within a nation will have "heterogeneous histories, divergent interests, and antagonistic interpretations…" (2013, p. 55) because, within cultures, there are various conflicting beliefs because of the complexity of human nature. If one views culture in the way previously described, one can be led to Easy answers, which attempt to create a "simple formula" for communicating with others. Using a simple formula is often a reason both the Dimensions of Culture and Information-

Acquisition frameworks are critiqued. I argue that the third assumption is problematic and relates to all three frameworks.

By creating these simple formulas for communicating with others, a person is led down the "slippery slope" logical fallacy because the simple formulas are reductionist and because one may unintentionally reinforce the dominant culture. Dominant culture is a term that will be explored more thoroughly in a future section, but it refers to the culture and beliefs/activities/values that culture holds compared to others. More specifically, with this lens, cultures are viewed in a hierarchical standing; the dominant culture would be the culture that many believe to be the right way or the most prominent way of doing/believing/valuing something. If the belief/activity/value in question is different from the dominant culture, that belief, activity, or value can be viewed as strange, wrong, or less than the belief/activity/value the dominant culture holds.

For example, if the Bulgaria example is used again, an American could have read information about Bulgaria. In this case, the dominant culture might be the United States, whose society prefers more leisure time than work according to the Dimensions of Culture framework. The American could then believe that because the United States scores high on the indulgent side and enjoys leisure overwork, their view (or the dominant culture) is inherently better than the other view. Further explained, the reader may believe that indulgence and leisure are better. This example illustrates how the dominant culture can be reinforced when one believes in Easy answers. Before providing a solution to Easy answers, several other types of Easy answers will be explored.

2.4.2. Othering

Othering can be viewed under the umbrella of Easy answer. As mentioned previously, Othering refers to believing other people or groups, based on their culture, are different from themselves while viewing oneself as usual or superior to the other people or groups (Holliday, Kyllman, & Hyde, 2017). While this sounds similar to the dominant culture, these terms are slightly different. One can engage in Othering behaviors without being a part of a dominant culture. In other words, in the Bulgarian example, a Bulgarian (who, in some situations, might not be considered to be in the dominant culture) could view Americans (who might be considered to be the dominant culture) as less than (according to the Dimensions of Culture) because the Bulgarian might believe the Americans put too much emphasis on leisure activities. The Bulgarian, who might not have traveled to the United States, but only knows about the country through media, and the Dimensions of Culture framework, might think Americans are inferior and believe that Americans should focus more on work instead of leisure activities. To encapsulate the example more closely, Othering firstly assumes and accepts stereotypes (Easy answers) and then views oneself as superior (or inferior) to the other culture based on the Easy answer understanding.

2.4.3. Essentialism and Reductivism.

Essentialism is another type of Easy answer. Holliday, Kyllman, and Hyde (2017) define essentialism as believing a "universal essence, homogeneity and unity in a particular culture" and reductivism as "reducing cultural behavior down to a simple causal factor" (Holliday, Kullman & Hyde, 2017, p. 1). In other words, one could have an essentialist

attitude that all people in that culture do/believe "x" or "y," or one could reduce a culture down to specific characteristics or behaviors.

For example, an essentialist thought might be, "All Russians are blunt." As mentioned previously, stereotyping is an Easy answer, and essentialism is a more extreme type of stereotyping. This essentialistic view is often found when using formulaic frameworks or methods of teaching IC such as Low-/High-Context, Dimensions of Culture, and the Information-Acquisition frameworks. Further, frameworks like these that focus on essentialist or reductionist attitudes lead to "implicit Othering" (Holliday, 2013, p. 68).

These scholars and I strive to make readers aware that essentialism is an Easy answer and that people are usually much more complex than a simple formula. This argument relates to the previous idea that cultures are groups made of "heterogeneous histories, divergent interests, and antagonistic interpretations…" (Holliday, 2013 p. 55) and combats the assumption that nations are filled with homogenous people. This idea also relates to accounting for an individual's agency. The decisions/beliefs/actions/values the individual has or makes may be similar, counter, or unrelated to the culture they belong to.

2.4.4. Eurocentrism, Western Culture Lens, and Ethnocentrism.

I suggest that a Western culture lens, ethnocentrism, and eurocentrism are all Easy answers. Each of these three terms relates to how one positions culture. These terms relate to how one views a particular area or culture as the correct or standard culture.

For example, Eurocentrism positions that the central culture (or normal culture) is Western European culture. Eurocentrism frequently will position Western European culture as the standard (or dominant culture) and view and treat all other cultures as Other and/or have an essentialist view of other cultures.

Slightly different is a Western culture lens. Instead of focusing solely on European culture, a Western culture lens focuses on a more general idea of the values and cultures held in the "West." Similar to eurocentrism, people who subscribe to Western culture view Western culture and values as the standard (or dominant) culture and view other cultures as inferior.

Lastly, ethnocentrism bridges the ideas of Eurocentrism and Western culture. Ethnocentrism views one's culture (Western culture, a national culture, among other cultures) as the standard or dominant culture and views and treats all other cultures as Others. In other words, Western culture and eurocentrism are both forms of ethnocentrism. Many times individuals unconsciously hold ethnocentric beliefs (Voss & Flammia, 2006).

Regarding dominant culture, any person can view their culture as the standard or dominant culture and view others as less than. The problem with these views of cultures is that they fail to recognize and understand other perspectives of culture adequately. By failing to understand these other cultures, many who subscribe to these three terms of culture often fall into Easy answers when describing or trying to understand another culture. Hall and Hofstede's work has been critiqued because of the Western,

ethnocentric, and eurocentric perceptions of non-Western cultures (Kumaravadivelu, 2008). Because the nature of textbook creation typically follows main ideas in the field, TPC textbooks may have started using some of Hall, Hofstede's, or other scholars' ideas who use a Western, eurocentric, or ethnocentric view of culture.

One of the most common critiques of TPC textbooks (regarding how culture) is that the authors view culture in a eurocentric, Western, or ethnocentric fashion. In other words, many times, authors will position the United States as the dominant, national culture where Western (or particularly the United States') values are the standard and normal (Matveeva, 2007). These textbooks will then position interactions with other cultures or nationalities as a hurdle to overcome because their values, practices, or ideas are different. Furthermore, these textbooks suggest that all technical writing is done by what they view as the dominant culture (United States) and fail to recognize that other cultures also have technical writers (Matveeva, 2007; Miles, 1993;). These examples of textbooks using the United States as the dominant culture illustrate the textbooks authors' adherence to Western culture and ethnocentrism ideas because the authors are positioning the values of the United States as the standard or correct values and placing other nationalities as Others (or less than) that one must accommodate or deal with. These authors fall into those Easy answers, whether (un)intentionally or not, by failing to look outside the dominant culture and view other cultures' values, practices, and ideas as valuable aspects to the technical communication interaction. Weiss (1993) warns against textbooks using a Western view of understanding culture because of the negative stigma

on IC. For these reasons, I suggest there is a need to study current textbooks, and one of the following chapters will focus on analyzing current TPC textbooks

2.5. A Possible Solution to Easy Answers: Thick Description

As one can see, several issues related to culture need to be addressed when teaching IC. Instructors need to provide students with the tools to combat these issues. One cannot simply provide cultural information without a critical investigation of these understandings. Otherwise, negative stereotypes can be perpetuated instead of developing IC skills and abilities (Briguglio, 2006).

Holliday, Kullman, and Hyde offer "thick description" as a solution. They define *thick description* as looking at any social event from different angles/aspects (2017, p. 9). This term originates from both anthropology and qualitative research and involves two elements:

- "Deriving meaning from a broad view of social phenomena which pieces together different, interconnected perspectives."
- "Exploration, in which sense is made from an ongoing emergence of social phenomena, which may not immediately seem to connect, and which may indeed be unexpected" (Holliday, Kyllman, & Hyde, 2017, p. 10).

In other words, thick description is a tool that helps foster critical reflection that challenges Easy answers by questioning what one knows about culture and being open to other possible perspectives or answers. As seen with the many types of Easy answers, one of the biggest challenges in defining and teaching culture is allowing for the complexities

of culture. If instructors do not allow for these complexities, both instructors and students can be lured into believing and accepting these Easy answers.

As seen in the previous frameworks, many of these inherent Easy answers stem from using a definition that equates culture with only meaning national culture. However, thick description is often associated with defining culture with a more nuanced understanding of culture, such as the Small culture's definition. I also suggest that Deardorff's (2006) Observe, State, Explore, Evaluate (OSEE) tool is a concrete example of how thick description can be used. With this tool, individuals observe an event. They objectively state what they notice, explore various explanations for the event, and finally evaluate which explanations are most likely. While one cannot truly know the full explanation without working closely with someone in the culture, this tool allows individuals to encounter each experience as unique and reduce the chance of using Easy answers. If they do encounter Easy answers, they can explore a variety of other possible explanations. I suggest that many of these Easy answers can be combatted or avoided by using a more nuanced understanding of culture and by using thick description as a tool with Small cultures. Additionally, this dissertation suggests that, regardless of the definition or framework one uses, thick description should still be used to challenge Easy answers.

2.6. Moving Away from Easy Answers and Big Culture

I posit that many of these Easy answers and problems found in the mentioned frameworks stem from a lack of a comprehensive, nuanced definition of culture. Additionally, I posit that whether these frameworks define culture or not, they typically

use a Big culture understanding of culture. Big culture refers to defining culture on a national or territorialized understanding of culture. Holliday is quick to argue that the fundamental issue with this lens is equating cultures to solely meaning nations or territories (1999). Holliday is not alone in viewing culture at a national level as problematic. Weiss (1993) argues that viewing nations as "monolithic entities" can lead to stereotyping that may be far from the truth, and when examined in a business setting, can lead to the loss of clients and markets (p. 201).

I suggest that if one were to teach Big culture in a critical and very intentional manner (such as using Thick description in tandem with teaching Big culture), this framework could be used as a productive first step to introducing the idea of culture. However, because of the focus of Big cultures focused solely on meaning national culture, the ease in which one could fall into Easy answers, Othering responses, essentialist thoughts or base their understanding solely on Western Culture, eurocentric, or ethnocentric ideas, suggests there are more potential issues than advantages with this framework. Instead, a more robust definition that does not as quickly fall into these issues may be more beneficial.

2.7. Presenting Small Cultures Definition as a Solution

I suggest that Kluckhohn's definition and the High-/Low-Context, Dimensions of Culture, and Information-Acquisition frameworks use a Big culture understanding of culture, which relates to culture only on a national or territorial level. I argue that many of the issues within these frameworks relate to this Big cultural understanding. In place of a Big culture lens, I propose that using a Small culture's definition is a more beneficial and

productive way to understand the culture, which can help combat and/or avoid issues presented in the previous definition and frameworks. Using a definition that allows for understanding culture in a more nuanced way than simply meaning national culture, this definition attempts to reduce the number of overgeneralizations, stereotypes, and reductionist issues that can come with viewing culture in a Big culture fashion (Holliday, 1999). A de-territorialized concept of culture that includes more subtleties, such as social cultures (Bhabha, 1994), can be more beneficial. One of the frameworks that focus on culture in this way is Small culture.

Adrian Holliday introduced Small culture in the late 1990s, and much of his work is foundational to the present study. Holliday defines small culture as:

> "A dynamic, ongoing group process which operates in changing circumstances to enable group members to make sense of and operate meaningful interactions within those circumstances…[that is characterized by] a discernable set of behaviors and understandings…, and small culture is thus 'the sum of all the processes, happenings, or activities in which a given set or several sets of people habitually engage" (Holliday, 1999, p. 248).

In other words, key features of this small culture definition include the following understandings:

- Culture is a group with processes that can constantly evolve based on events, situations, and group members ("ongoing group process which operates in changing circumstances");

- Culture serves as a way for one to understand and interact with others ("enable group members to make sense of and operate meaningful interactions within those circumstances");
- Culture is usually recognizable by common behaviors and understandings ("discernable set of behaviors and understandings"); and
- Culture comprises commonly practiced processes, happenings, or activities ("the sum of all the processes, happenings, or activities in which a given set or several sets of people habitually engage").

Holliday also states in his definition that there are typically discernable sets of behaviors, or processes, happenings, or activities that a culture might participate in. To further unpack some of Holliday's definitions, it could be inferred that these ongoing processes refer to the activities that the group does and participates in, which, while primarily constant, can evolve based on changing circumstances. For example, if we were to look at a specific New Zealand rugby team as a culture, they might have certain behaviors or activities such as performing a haka before a game; attending practices, or shaking the other team's hands after a game; and while the game rules-based are relatively constant, they can change based on a variety of reasons.

Small culture is a helpful definition to use when studying culture because it focuses on the subtleties of a particular group of people, such as beliefs, behaviors, and worldviews, rather than only examining national culture (DeCapua, 2018; Holliday, 1999; Yu, 2012; Yuen, 2011). What is unique and helpful about this definition, compared to Big culture, is that Holliday acknowledges that each member of a culture will bring their individual

experiences to this Small culture which can challenge the understandings of that culture or add to that complexity of the culture. In other words, because each of the group members brings their unique backgrounds and ideas to the group they can shape the idea of the culture. Ultimately, this understanding that members can individually shape a culture can help reinforce the idea that individuals in a culture have agency and act accordingly, counter, or are unrelated to the common understanding of that culture. Further, this definition pushes past the idea that agency is tied to the culture, which was a problem with Kluckhohn's definition and the previous frameworks. This change in focus can help prevent or combat essentialist or reductionist views.

Additionally, unique to Small culture, this term focuses more on the activities within a group than the nature of the group itself. Rather than focusing on the characteristics of the culture or how a culture may react in any given situation, this term focuses on activities of the group. Because this definition focuses on a group of people who have similar beliefs, behaviors, and worldviews. This definition could also be beneficial for examining, becoming more aware, and becoming more competent within organizational cultures one might encounter in the workplace. Prominent scholars in the field, Constantinides, St. Amant, and Kampf (2005), argue for the need to study culture in ways that include corporate and organizational culture as a type of culture, using the lens of a Small culture could help solve this issue. Additionally, scholars suggest that using a more inclusive lens for culture can help raise intercultural awareness and sensitivity in the TPC field (Yu, 2011). Small culture could raise this awareness and sensitivity compared to Big

culture since this framework focuses on more of the nuances within culture rather than solely on a national level.

It should be noted that Small does not refer to the size of the culture, and Small cultures can exist in one another. For example, a high school might be a Small culture, and within that culture is a sophomore class Small culture.

2.7.1. Adding to the Small Culture Definition

For this project, a small line will be added to the definition to include a line about small cultures that can explicitly refer to occupation, gender, class, and so on to facilitate students' comprehension of Small cultures better when first introduced to this topic. Holliday mentions several times in his book that occupation, gender, class, among other groups, are examples of Small cultures. By including this small line in the definition at the beginning of a class, students can more readily understand what Small cultures entail.

In other words, the Small culture definition that will be used throughout this project is the following:

> 'The sum of all the processes, happenings, or activities in which a given set or several sets of people habitually engage' which are commonly illustrated by a discernable set of behaviors and understandings that are open to change based on interactions among group members and various changes in circumstances" (Holliday, 1999, p. 248). Small cultures can refer to occupation, gender, class, among many other cultures.

Summarized, Small cultures attempt to move beyond territorialized constructions of culture; it allows for one to have multiple cultures, or co-cultures, and a dynamic concept that can change based on the individuals in the culture. The individuals in the culture shape the culture and can act counter to certain aspects of the culture. I will use a Small culture understanding as the base foundation for this project.

2.7.2. Terms Related to Small Culture

In the following sections, I will explore terms that have commonalities to Small culture. Many of these terms refer or relate to groups or group dynamics. These sections will explore these terms, illustrate similarities between Small cultures and other terms, and then argue why Small culture was a more suitable term for this project than others. These terms include discourse community, a community of practice, dominant discourse, and identity/intersectionality. While these terms will not focus on subsequent chapters, this dissertation suggests several of these terms could still be beneficial if taught with Small culture.

2.7.2.1. Discourse Communities.

The term discourse communities have several definitions similar to culture, as noted by many scholars such as Swales, Razzante, and Holliday. According to Swales (1990), discourse communities are groupings that exhibit six characteristics:

- Common goals
- Participatory mechanisms (such as meetings or correspondences),
- Information exchange,
- Community specific genres,

- Highly specialized terminology, and
- High general level of expertise (p.29).

To illustrate an example, Swales provides the Hong Kong Study Circle as a discourse community. He states that this group is interested in growing their knowledge of stamps of Hong Kong and their uses (1990). Swales shares how he worked to become a full member of this group and meet each of the characteristics of that discourse community. However, discourse communities and Small cultures are slightly different. Holliday suggests that discourse communities are very similar to Small cultures. However, discourse communities are "inherently linguistic -- the place where the construction of small cultures is expressed and maintained through language" (2007, p. 162). In other words, where discourse communities focus more on linguistic features, small cultures can focus on linguistic and non-linguistic activities within a group. As it relates to this project, I suggest that the defining difference between discourse communities and Small cultures may be that while discourse communities have community-specific genres and highly specialized terminology, Small cultures may or may not have these characteristics. Swales defines *genre* as "discourse of any type, spoken or written, with or without literary aspirations" (p. 33). He further explains that these genres further the aims of the discourse community and "articulate the operations" of the group, or in other words, help one assimilate into the discourse community (p. 26).

I contrast from discourse communities in the sense that students will be asked to reflect upon not only the genres, both written and unwritten, of groups they belong to and the client they are working with, but they will also have the opportunity to reflect on non-

verbal/linguistic characteristics as well. For example, in a specific company's team meetings, one may know (not from being told but from observing) that, at team meetings, lower-level employees are expected to listen and not contribute. In other words, instead of having genres that help one know the operations or workings of a group, one may pick up these understandings through a multitude of other ways, such as non-verbal cues or observations. While one can still assimilate to this aspect of its culture, it has less to do with genres than soft skills. As previously mentioned, soft skills as they relate to this study refer to "attitudes and behaviors displayed in interactions among individuals that affect the outcomes of various interpersonal encounters" (Muir, 2004, p. 96). While one still has to learn about the workings of a group and assimilate to them, in discourse communities, these workings are illustrated through both written and verbal genres. In contrast, in Small cultures, these workings can be illustrated in both written and verbal genres amongst several other ways.

Similar to the idea of Small cultures possibly using or not using genres, they may or may not use specific terminology. In other words, as mentioned previously regarding how one can belong to various small cultures simultaneously, one may belong to the culture of soccer player. Various terminologies relate to soccer, such as clear, dribble, yellow card, among several other terms. One also belongs to the Small culture of the specific soccer team they play for. This specific soccer team has its own culture within a larger grouping of soccer. This small culture may or may not have other terminologies that new members must understand, such as the name of plays or live changes. It is possible that this sub-culture could or could not have these additional terms. For these two reasons of the

possibility of a lack of genres (both written and non-written) and the possibility of a lack of specific terminologies, these two terms (Small culture and discourse community) are slightly different.

I posit that one can join a group by understanding the unwritten and written genres of a group and by understanding the specific terminology and through several other exciting factors and interactions, possibly illustrated through soft skills. For this reason of possible additional ways to assimilate into a group, the framework of the Small culture fits better for this study.

2.7.2.2. Communities of Practice.

Communities of practice refer to a grouping that shares similar values and beliefs. More specifically, communities of practice are "groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly" (Wegner-Trayner & Wegner-Trayner, 2015, p. 5). Within a community of practice, some individuals desire to increase their learning/skill in one aspect. They find a group that will help develop this learning/skill, and together they work to improve this learning/skill. While a community of practice may sound similar to discourse community or Small culture in that all terms deal with groups with shared interests, each term also slightly differs. A community of practice focuses on the education aspect within a group; a discourse community has a strong focus on the language within a group; a Small culture has a strong focus on the activities within a group. A Small culture may or may not be invested in the educational purposes of the group (Holliday, 2007).

For this study, *community of practice (CoP)* was not chosen as the term for understanding groups. While CoPs typically have an educational aspect, and some Small groups do form for education purpose (like within classrooms), I made the intentional decision to use Small culture as the term for two reasons:

- Firstly, CoPs are formed when individuals *want* to learn a skill; students did not have input in the choice of learning the skill, so they may or may not have wanted to learn more about culture.
- Secondly, I focused on the activities of the Small group, and students were asked to try to assimilate into a group (the client they will work with), which focuses on the activities of the group.

I believe while CoP is a very beneficial and strong, Small culture for this instance, was a better fit because this term allowed for students to understand and reflect on the processes, values, happenings, attitudes, beliefs, and activities of the group they were asked to work with, so they could make more meaningful interactions and texts for that Small culture.

2.7.2.3. Dominant Discourse.

Another term relevant to Small cultures is dominant discourses. Razzante (2018) suggests that dominant discourses refer to the primary or central cultural group and the co-cultural groups communicated to. Razzante's (2018) study and definition suggest that there is a hierarchy between the dominant group and then the 'co-cultural' group(s) during communicative activities (Cárdenas, 2012; Flammia & Voss, 2011). This term relates to the dominant culture term explored in earlier sections referring to the belief that one

culture is better or placed higher in a hierarchy than another. The dominant culture was brought up in conjunction with Western, ethnocentric, or eurocentric views, leading to Othering and other Easy answers. The dominant discourse is a term that is slightly similar to discourse communities in the sense that this term focuses on understanding communicative (both written and unwritten) practices between the two groups.

This term contrasts with discourse community because dominant discourse is not necessarily focused on how one assimilates into the group, but rather which group(s) have their genres, languages, or other discourses prioritized over other groups. In other words, the dominant discourse would be the group that is seen as the standard to assimilate to (regardless of different genres/discourses in your subculture or sub-group). Dominant discourse can be a very beneficial tool for helping one understand how dominant discourses marginalize the way other groups look at the world (Holliday, 2007). However, the dominant discourse is not an effective term (compared to Small cultures) for helping one easily understand cultures in both an introductory and nuanced fashion. However, I argue that using a Small culture's definition with teaching dominant discourse could be an incredibly enriching project in the classroom. For example, in many technical writing textbooks, the dominant discourse is presented as Western countries such as the United States. By presenting this view of communication as the standard and dismissing other views of how to communicate, arbitrary hierarchies are created, along with creating a sense of Othering in textbooks. Teaching dominant discourse alongside Small cultures could be a fruitful future study or endeavor for

teaching students about possible inequities and biases within communication; however, this concept was not the focus of this project.

For this study, while the Small cultures term will be the basis of understanding culture, for the case studies, there may be instances in class where dominant discourse is mentioned in the classroom. However, the focus will be on small cultures and activities of the culture rather than dominant discourse.

2.7.2.4. Identity and Intersectionality.

The last term to identify and explore is identity. One of the more commonly recognized definitions of identity states that identity is how a person self-constructs how others view themselves (Rex, Mason & Mason, 1988). One could self-construct their identity by the organizations they belong to or what religion they adhere to, among other choices. While this definition is a good starting point for understanding identity, it would be critiqued by several cultural identity scholars and identity negotiation scholars because this definition focuses solely on how one thinks they are perceived and how they see themselves while ignoring issues of power and privilege as well as ignoring the idea that one has very little control of how others view oneself.

Instead, a more nuanced definition might be Hall's definition that identity is "a matter of 'becoming' as well as 'being'" (1990, p. 225). Orbe and Bardhan (2012) further explain this definition by stating that identity is more a verb than a noun. In other words, identity is something you develop and change over time, not static. Additionally, Brauman was one of the first to suggest that one can possess and develop and claim several identities

because there are a "multitude of identity domains that are important" (1996, p. 54). Sobre-Denton and Bardhan go on to further state that these identities one possesses are "multidimensional, relational, open to change, and negotiable through communication" (2013, p. 5). In other words, identities are open to change and are negotiable, and up to a certain point, some identities can be performed. For example, one person might claim "teacher" as one of their identities, and while in the classroom, they can perform this identity by exhibiting characteristics such as a more professional tone and language; wearing clothing that is deemed more appropriate for this identity, such as dress clothing, among making other choices. There is a sense of salience with identities, and there are also identities that can change and be reprioritized from situation to situation.

This updated understanding of identity allows for the issues of power and privilege that relate to identity. Sobre-Denton and Bardhan posit that identity is interwoven within power structures and privilege and argue that one can have several powers and privileges allotted to/denied based on their identities within power structures. These power structures can be used to create hierarchies amongst people that can lead to discrimination. This idea of discrimination based on identities is similar to intersectionality, which Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991) coined as "a way of framing the various interactions of race and gender" and how they are used to discriminate against others. Crenshaw specifically focused on how these two identities are related to the abuse and discrimination of Black women (p. 1296). Since her foundational definition and works, other identities such as class, ethnicity, and religion have been added to this

understanding of intersectionality to better understand how these identities work within power structures and discrimination.

Additionally, it should be noted that individuals can guess (whether correctly or incorrectly) at identities another possess. In other words, even when one identifies with a specific identity, others may not readily know that person claims that identity. Further explained, one may assume another's identity based on one's understanding of that identity based on their understanding of that social construction (Brauman, 1996). This idea of assuming an identity of another can also be applied to guessing another's culture and possibly treating or communicating with another differently based on that assumption. In other words, identity can reflect how an individual selects identities based on personal reflection and how society labels other's identities based on social construction.

When learning more about identities or cultures, it should be noted that one should be careful of taking another's reported activities to be a representation of an entire group. Holliday (2013) argues that while some identities are socially constructed, individuals can also define their own identities and cultures. For example, one might define one of their identities as a medical resident, and that medical resident may follow certain activities within the hospital's Small culture. Holliday suggests that when one can choose or define their identity or culture, they can create a representation for that identity or culture. When that individual talks with another person, either person can fall into the trap of Easy answers. In other words, the person who identifies as a medical resident could suggest that their experience is representative of all medical residents

(essentialism); on the other hand, if a medical resident does not imply their experience is representative of all medical residents, the other individual could still assume that all medical residents have that experience.

While identity relates to how one view themselves and how others view that person, I suggests that Small cultures focus more on the activities within a culture that might or might not be tied to an identity. I agree with Holliday, Kullman, and Hyde (2017) that, with both identities and cultures, one can be led down the same issues of Easy answers and essentialistic thoughts, so teaching identities in conjunction with Small cultures may be beneficial. However, the focus of I will not be on identities or the process of selecting identities. Instead, this project is focused on the activities within a culture and how one can learn about that culture while mitigating Easy answers.

2.7.3. How Small Culture will Guide this Project

I posit that using thick description, a tool commonly associated with Small cultures, can help combat or eliminate Easy answers associated with understanding or defining culture. The definition of Small cultures presented previously will be used as the definition throughout this project. For the case studies within this project, both the Small cultures definition, thick description tool, and reflective log will be used as the framework to teach students about culture.

The Small culture understanding also serves as the basis for defining IC, which will be explored in the next section. I posit that a Small culture understanding of IC is foundational to understanding how culture relates to communication, workplace

interactions, and how soft skills may be involved within these types of communicative interactions.

2.8. The Evolving Understanding of IC Communication

Intercultural communication is a term almost as hotly contested as culture. There are two reasons IC is difficult to define. One reason it is difficult to define is that there are various definitions of culture one could be using when they discuss IC. Secondly, this term can be difficult to define/understand because sometimes people use this term as an umbrella term for intercultural, intracultural, and international communication (DeVoss, Jasken, Hayden, 2002). While each of these terms has different meanings, I posit that intracultural communication refers to communication within a culture and international communication refers to communication occurring between multiple nations, which can also be referred to as cross-cultural communication. Cross-cultural communication refers to communicating with different cultures, emphasizing the differences between the cultures. Cross-culture communication often views cultures as being national cultures. In other words, many times, cross-cultural communication uses a Big cultural understanding of culture. Cross-cultural communication focuses on understanding a specific culture's values that might affect communication (Nolan, 1999). As mentioned in previous sections, several issues can arise when using a Big culture framework to understand cultures, such as Othering and essentialist views.

While each of these terms has different implications and meanings, individuals often refer to intercultural as meaning all or one of these other terms, which can confuse. I focus on defining IC rather than intracultural or international communication.

2.8.1. Defining Intercultural Communication

Most of this chapter has led to defining IC. In TPC literature, many researchers use Sadri and Flammia's (2011) working definition of IC, referring IC to "interactions among members of diverse cultures" (p. 9). I suggest that using their definition, IC would mean interactions between two or more cultures at a very base level. It should be noted that, while Sadri and Falmmia agree that culture can be more nuanced than simply national culture, their work focuses on national culture (2011). I suggest their use of focusing solely on nations refers more to cross-cultural communication rather than IC.

However, a more nuanced understanding could be from English for Specific Purposes (ESP) scholars Lario de Oñate and Vázquez Amador's (2013), who argue IC refers to "communication between people of different cultures and the way culturally-different groups come together, interact and communicate" (p.172). By understanding culture as Small cultures, this definition would mean two individuals from different Small cultures who are interacting at the most base level. Using this understanding, IC's emphasis is not necessarily on the differences, but rather similarities too.

For example, one person might share several Small cultures with another they are speaking to, but the current communicative context has to deal with a differing Small culture. For example, two students at the same college are discussing what they will be doing for the holidays. One starts discussing some of their Jewish background and activities with their church while the other student shares they do not practice a religion. While both are students who share a Small culture of students at the same university (and

possibly share several other Small cultures), the current type of communicative context is focused on different Small cultures they belong to (Jewish and non-religious) and what activities they may engage in over the holidays (both similar and possibly different). Using a small culture definition, one recognizes that commonalities might exist amongst the Small cultures, pushing past the idea that the differences among cultures are the most crucial aspect of communication.

Additionally, this definition is focused more on the activities. I suggest that viewing IC through a Small cultures lens allows one to recognize that people have commonalities through shared cultures and rather than just focusing on perceived differences. Additionally, by using the Small culture's definition as a foundation to build an understanding of IC definition, issues regarding Othering, essentialism, Western culture, ethnocentrism, eurocentrism, and Easy answers can be limited because the base understanding of culture does not focus on entirely on culture concerning national culture.

In summary, I suggest that the definition for ***intercultural communication*** **is an interaction between two or more participants of differing Small cultures.** This definition will shape future chapters, specifically, the chapters focused on case studies and pedagogical implications.

2.8.2. Defining Competency

The term competency needs to be established to build the foundation for intercultural competency (ICC). Competence can typically refer to the general ability/ease to complete

a task, or it can refer to 'not just contingent surface behavior but [...] to deep-seated traits, habits, or virtues' (Flemming, 2009, p. 9), which include a psychological domain (Witte & Harden, 2011, p. 7). In other words, if using the first type of understanding of competency, basic car maintenance competency could refer to one's ability to change their car's oil and filters. Witte and Harden (2011) suggest that this understanding of competency is popular in education because using predetermined tasks, goals, and objectives that can be easily measured and assessed. If individuals can easily complete these predetermined competency tasks, they can be classified as competent with essential car maintenance.

The second type of competency requires a potential psychological, attitudinal, and or mindset/worldview adjustment that may not be easy to assess. For example, social justice competency, assessed on awareness, knowledge, and skills (Flores et al., 2014), has competency aspects that can and cannot be easily measured. While knowledge and skills might be objectively assessed, the true awareness one has, primarily as related to the "ongoing self-examination of biases, prejudices and stereotypes" (p. 1006-1007) with the hopes of combating these issues, can be more challenging to measure. Further, students may provide performative-based responses, skew the accurate understanding of their thoughts/beliefs. In other words, individuals can "display particular characteristics or make the appropriate choices in an assessment situation that says something significant about their knowledge and understanding of what is required, but it is unlikely to reveal whether these behaviours are habitual" (Flemming, 2009 p. 9). Individuals can respond or perform in a way that they think an individual (teacher or supervisor) wants to

see/read/hear. However, they may not make the psychological or behavioral growth/change to become more competent, even if they share what they have. Thus accurately assessing one's ICC is difficult.

I agree with Witte and Harden's (2011) argument that ICC refers to the second understanding of competency. Further, I argue that competency is a sliding scale that includes cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioral domains with a benchmark to assess base-level requirements for all three domains.

2.8.3. Defining Intercultural Communication Competency (ICC)

Nadan provides a beneficial connection between the domains of competence as they relate to IC. Nadan (2016) suggests three domains for cultural competence: cultural knowledge, cultural skills, and cultural awareness. I suggest that these domains are the same. Cultural knowledge of learning about another culture refers to the cognitive domain, cultural skills are the skills one practices which refer to the behavioral domain, and cultural awareness, where one investigates their values, beliefs, attitudes, biases, prejudices, refers to the affective domain. With IC and competency defined, we can start putting these definitions together to define intercultural competency (ICC).

Intercultural Communication Competence then could refer to having developed all three domains: cognitive, behavioral, and affective domains related to a predetermined benchmark.

2.8.3.1. Assessing ICC.

With ICC established, setting a universal benchmark and assessing whether that benchmark has been met can be messy and complicated because there is no consensus among researchers and programs. For example, Wang and Zhu (2011) suggest acknowledging cultural similarities and differences in the lowest level of cultural competence. However, this dissertation project argues against this type of benchmark because it only includes the cognitive domain.

The essence of a benchmark that many scholars refer to is "interacting appropriately and effectively with those from other cultural backgrounds" (Sinicrope et al., 2012; Moeller & Nugent, 2014). This benchmark may then include the cognitive, behavioral, and attitudinal domains.

While many researchers or organizations can lack sharing specific criteria for benchmarks, the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU) provides very clear and useful criteria for each benchmark. The AACU built a rubric that assesses whether benchmarks, milestones, or capstones (highest level of competency) have been met. More specifically, their rubric to assess ICC measures knowledge (cognitive domain), skills (behavioral domain), and attitudes (attitudinal domain). This rubric is included in Appendix A but in a simplified way. The rubric assesses one's self-awareness and basic understanding of culture (knowledge), empathy and communication abilities (skills), and curiosity and openness to learning more about a culture (attitudes). I suggest that the AACU's rubric can be a beneficial tool for assessing one's ICC and can be used in TPC research as a standard tool for measuring students' ICC. While I do not

necessarily establish a competency threshold for instructors or programs, as that is outside of the scope of this project, I suggest that developing IC skills is closely related to competency, and programs and instructors may wish to develop these skills as they relate to a competency. To assist instructors and programs, I've provided some resources regarding IC competency handouts and rubrics in the resource appendix (see Appendix A).

2.9. Chapter Summary

In summary, in this chapter I presented the scope of the course that was studied. Later in this dissertation. I then provided three reasons why IC is taught in these courses:

- To meet pragmatic workplace needs,
- To be a more effective communicator, and
- To develop SS.

I then argued that to meet these goals, the TPC field needs agreed-upon terms and definitions commonly to teach IC effectively. In this chapter, I laid the groundwork to share many of the conversations surrounding IC in TPC related to instruction. Definitions of significant terms and frameworks were explored. Limitations and associated issues surrounding teaching this complex topic were also explored.

In this chapter, I argued that an imperfect but more nuanced understanding of culture could be understood as Small cultures. I also explored using this term to define other key terms used in this project, such as IC and ICC. An overview of these definitions include:

- **Small culture -** "The sum of all the processes, happenings, or activities in which a given set or several sets of people habitually engage' which are commonly

illustrated by a discernable set of behaviors and understandings that are open to change based on interactions among group members and various changes in circumstances" (Holliday, 1999, p. 248). Small cultures can refer to occupation, gender, class, among many other cultures.

- **Intercultural communication** - an interaction between two or more participants of differing Small cultures. This definition will shape future chapters, specifically, the chapters focused on case studies and pedagogical implications.
- **Intercultural Communication Competency** - having developed all three domains: cognitive, behavioral, and affective domains related to a predetermined benchmark.

A list of the definitions established and used in this dissertation can be found in the terminology appendix (see Appendix B).

These new understandings help contextualize and understand how textbooks, often the primary resource for teaching IC, present IC topics. Further, I develop a framework (also referred to as model in this dissertation) for teaching IC, which will be introduced and explained in a later chapter. As mentioned previously, a framework is needed to provide continuity among TPC instructors and programs. Weiss argues for the need for a framework for teaching IC --- something beyond practical experience but a conceptual framework that we can provide our students so they will be "better prepared to meet, work, and communicate with persons from other cultures" (Weiss, 1993, p.198).

In this chapter, I illustrated an implicit need for intentional IC pedagogical research. Without having essential, nuanced, agreed-upon understandings in the field for abstract concepts like IC, instructors cannot effectively teach IC. Without critically exploring these topics and developing IC skills, more harm than good can occur, such as students having negative stereotypes reinforced (Briguglio, 2006) or students believing in other Easy answers. Further, I recognize that instructors can feel uncomfortable with their own IC abilities and teaching IC for a variety of reasons, such as a lack of time available to prepare materials or time to understand the information, needing the training to understand and develop their own IC knowledge and abilities, and a lack of adequate resources to support their IC instruction (Matveeva, 2008) or just general lack of comfortability surrounding the topic (Brunsmeier, 2017). This chapter attempts to provide a foundation for instructors.

CHAPTER III

CASE STUDY 1: RE-EXAMINING IC COMPONENTS IN TPC TEXTBOOKS

3.1. Overview of Key Definitions for this Chapter

Perhaps unconventional, but for the ease and accessibility for readers, I will start this chapter with the new definitions that will be introduced in this chapter, then provide the pre-established terms that help ground conversations relevant to this chapter.

New definitions for this chapter include:

- **Intercultural Component (IC component)** - intercultural materials and examples listed within textbooks (Matveeva, 2007).
- **Factoid** - information about other cultures presented as facts but is usually based on stereotypes (Matveeva, 2007). Factoids are a type of IC component.
- **Othering** - A term used when one views or imagines another from a different culture from them as inferior based on their values, customs, practices, or activities being different from them (Holliday, 2013).

A previous chapter in this dissertation provided definitions for Small culture, IC, and ICC, all relevant terms for this chapter. These definitions include:

- **Small culture** - "The sum of all the processes, happenings, or activities in which a given set or several sets of people habitually engage' which are commonly illustrated by a discernable set of behaviors and understandings that are open to change based on interactions among group members and various changes in circumstances" (Holliday, 1999, p. 248). Small cultures can refer to occupation, gender, class, among many other cultures.
- **Intercultural communication (IC)** - an interaction between two or more participants of differing Small cultures. This definition will shape future chapters, such as the chapters focused on case studies and pedagogical implications.

3.2. Chapter Introduction

As I discussed in the previous chapter, there are several conversations surrounding IC as it relates to TPC settings. I hope to explore the conversations surrounding IC as it relates to pedagogical settings in this chapter. I explicitly examine one of the methods for disseminating IC in entry-level, service TPC courses: course textbooks. I focus on the representation of culture and IC in TPC textbooks because textbooks are the primary resource that instructors, who are new or uncomfortable with teaching IC, use to disseminate IC information (Brunsmeier, 2017; Matsuda & Matsuda, 2011).

From this study, I found several similar findings to previous scholars' work. These similarities include:

- **Using a large number of factoids, examples, and tips without using evidence to support these claims.**
- **Relying on Easy answers and territorialized understanding of cultures.** Textbooks often present culture in a Western, ethnocentric fashion, sometimes painting other national cultures in an inferior way (in many of the texts).
- **Lacking a clear definition of culture, and when descriptions are provided, these descriptions often change throughout the book.** I found that many of the books lack a clear definition of the term culture, and while some used a national/Big culture understanding throughout, many textbooks would change their understanding of culture throughout chapters without acknowledging that the description of culture had changed, thus leading to potentially confusing or ambiguous understandings for their readers. I argue that with this finding, it would be beneficial for instructors to establish a definition of culture and intercultural communication in their classrooms that they interrogate and use alongside any texts used in the classroom.
- **Presenting the act of IC in more positive ways (as compared to previous studies).** Textbooks have started to include intentional lines about promoting and acknowledging other cultures, respecting other cultures' preferences, and accommodating communication to the target culture while presenting culture more positively. This view may suggest textbooks are beginning to change (albeit in subtle ways) from Western-only preferences to

respecting/acknowledging/adapting to other preferences and addressing critiques from previous scholars' regarding negatively presenting culture.

- **Providing a great deal of opportunities for cognitive domain growth, but little in the ways for the other two domains.** Lastly, exercises and text in the book promote a great deal of opportunities for cognitive domain growth, but there are little opportunities for attitudinal and behavioral opportunities for growth. Further, there are some issues with textbooks, such as Othering and use of reductionistic factoids, some information may be detrimental to IC skill development, especially as it relates to attitudinal.

3.2.1. Literature Review

IC representations in TPC textbooks have been significantly researched (e.g., Matsuda & Matsuda, 2011; Matveeva, 2007; Miles, 1997; Thrush, 1993). Some scholars have analyzed textbooks regarding IC topics to understand positions the field may have about various topics within technical writing (Miles, 1997). Matveeva studied IC components in TPC textbooks, which she describes as intercultural materials and examples listed within textbooks (2007). However, to my knowledge, there has been no follow-up research examining IC components in textbooks for almost a decade. As TPC programs continue developing and integrating more IC topics into their classrooms, it is beneficial to reexamine how TPC textbooks position and discuss IC topics since textbooks can be a principal resource for disseminating IC information in a TPC classroom. Additionally, analyzing textbooks can be beneficial because they can share (un)intentional views about

specific topics, such as culture (Miles, 1997). I have also chosen to examine textbooks to see how they may be used to develop students' IC skills.

3.2.2. History of Research Regarding IC Components in Textbooks

In the early 1990s, many researchers started focusing on ways to teach IC. Specifically, they started looking at how textbooks could address various needs associated with teaching IC. In the 1990s, scholars found that textbooks lacked a deep and nuanced understanding of IC (Miles, 1997; Thrush, 1993).

In the 1990s, many textbooks started including IC components. ***Intercultural (IC) components refer to a wide range of different ways to provide information about IC information, such as using factoids, strategies, exercises, sidebars, checklists, chapter summaries, subsections about intercultural communication, among other ways.*** While there are many different components, factoids, strategies, and exercises were most commonly found in textbooks in the early 1990s (Thrush, 1993). Furthermore, out of these three strategies, scholars mention factoids as one of the most problematic IC components.

3.2.3. Issues with IC Components in TPC Textbooks

Factoids are a type of IC component. Within textbooks, ***factoids are information about other cultures that are presented as facts but are usually based on stereotypes*** (Matveeva, 2007). Additionally, these stereotypes are often based on Big or national views of cultures, which is contrary to the suggested understanding of Small culture presented in a previous chapter. These factoids were most likely included in textbooks to

illustrate contrastive writing styles and writing strategies of other cultures (Miles, 1997). Additionally, scholars such as Thrush (1993) suggested these factoids were helpful to learn about national cultures. However, soon after her piece was published, many researchers became more critical of this IC component.

Miles was one of the first scholars to criticize factoids as an IC component in textbooks (1997). Miles found factoids highly problematic because they focused on stereotypical suggestions or differences of cultures. Miles explained that these factoids typically focused on differences from an American (or Western) viewpoint, and the "information presented exoticizes and often trivializes the customs, habits, and roles of cultures" of other non-Western cultures (Miles, 1997, p. 188). Matveeva continued this argument against factoids, and both Matveeva (2007) and Miles (1997) argued that the inherent problem with factoids is that they provide "decontextualized information" about a culture rather than strategies to "identify and understand cultural differences" (Matveeva, 2007, p.179). Both scholars argued that by presenting several factoids in textbooks, students are given a great deal of information to memorize about many cultures and what to do and what not to do when interacting with those specific cultures. These scholars suggest that presenting information in this way is problematic because students are expected to remember "a mind-boggling array of faux-pas" after reading the textbook rather than being provided strategies for interacting and communicating with others (Miles, 1997, p. 188). Further, these scholars warn that factoids could easily lead one into reductionist thinking about a group of people, leading to counter-productive communication practices. In other words, one could interpret that these scholars were arguing for textbooks to

present rhetorically sound strategies that help students navigate cultural encounters to better and more responsibly communicate with other cultures.

Scholars have continued to study textbooks and have found more of the same issues within textbooks, such as using factoids, using reductionist views, negatively presenting IC experiences, and presenting the IC partner as "Other." ***Othering is a term used when one views or imagines another from a different culture from them as inferior based on their values, customs, practices, or activities being different from them.*** Othering is commonly associated when one views people from different cultures as less (valuable/smart/sophisticated) than oneself (Holliday, 2013). However, researchers from the 2000s have been more explicit about calling out these issues.

Matveeva (2007) expresses that, unfortunately, textbooks are still using the same problematic components from the 1990s; this argument suggests that textbooks share a shallow understanding of culture. Other scholars, such as Holliday (1999), Yuen (2001), and Yu (2012), echo her claim and further posit that, in general, these textbooks tend to focus on a Big cultural understanding and provide a surface-level understanding of both culture and IC, rather than the more nuanced understanding which can be beneficial for students who need to develop IC competency—developing strategies.

Matveeva continues to argue that, in addition to using the same problematic components, when textbooks do include other IC components, the components do not go deeper than providing "checklists" at the end of chapters of how to accommodate intercultural readers (p. 158). These checklists and tones can negatively present IC experiences; negatively

presenting IC experiences is not new in textbooks. Miles (1997) argues that textbooks usually use negative terms or negatively phrase IC experiences, primarily when related to international issues or when working with non-native English speakers. Miles further argues that textbooks lump working with non-native English speakers with individuals with disabilities, and textbooks present both communicative interactions in negative fashions. Miles also shares how non-native English speakers are presented as Othered audience members and never presented as the writer (1997), which speaks to a problematic Western framework, where textbooks assume writers are native speakers and all others are passive recipients.

Echoing Miles' work, Matsuda and Matsuda's research continued to focus on the claim that Othering can also refer to textbooks' stance that a writer needs to "accommodate" the audience (2011). This idea of "accommodating" relates to the negative tone that books used regarding IC that were presented in Miles (1997) and Thrush's (1993) articles. Rhetorically, the word accommodating can make it seem that rather than active, mutually reciprocal exchanges between two participants, one has a negative experience of tailoring all interactions to the other. Even after examining more recent textbooks, Matsuda and Matsuda found that, while textbooks suggested focusing on respecting each other's cultures, these textbooks still presented information in a very Western fashion, suggested that IC communication usually only happened with non-native English speakers as the audience members, and used reductionist frameworks (2011). While understanding a reader's needs/beliefs/attitudes is essential for audience awareness, stereotyping one's audience in such a reductionist way can be problematic.

Researchers advocated and created call-to-actions for instructors and administrators because of the ongoing conversations regarding textbooks over the past two decades. Researchers like Yuen (2011) state that instructors need to be more critical textbook users, or even better, to write these textbooks with more inclusive components. However, as previously mentioned, instructors can be limited on time and resources, so in this chapter, I intend to do some of the work and provide suggestions to support TPC instructors and programs who wish to develop students' IC skills. This study examines whether these textbooks have changed.

Matsuda and Matsuda (2011) rightfully state that textbooks are commonly and quickly updated. Hence, the chances are that by the time this dissertation is completed, many of the textbooks that have been analyzed will have updated versions. However, similar to Matsuda and Matsuda's work, this study intends to determine whether themes from the past two decades continue or if textbooks have shifted how they present IC information and components. While textbooks may have been edited by the time this project is finished, the general findings within these textbooks will still most likely be the same or very similar.

While previous scholars have studied textbooks from the mid-1990s and 2005-2007, my work adds to the literature and theoretical understanding of culture in the TPC field to enrich the literature by analyzing textbooks published during 2015-2018. There have been advances in the field after 2007 to learn more about intercultural communication and how this topic is presented in and outside the classroom. Technical Communication

Quarterly dedicated an entire issue to new directions of intercultural professional communication because they recognized the need to study cultural frames. Ding and Savage (2012) stated that the field is interested in cultural frames that move "beyond the nation-centric mindset and to investigate alternative approaches to straightforward applications of cultural heuristics and cultural dimensions" (p.1). This study will analyze if our textbooks have changed from national cultural heuristics and addressed previous scholars' critiques.

3.2. Methods

I attempt to understand if textbooks have started to use a more nuanced understanding of culture and nuanced IC components in textbooks.

3.2.1. Research Questions

This study was interested in answering two research questions.

- RQ1: How do textbooks describe culture, and have they kept up with the demands/needs shared by scholars in the TPC field?
- RQ2: Have textbooks addressed previous scholars' concerns regarding the portrayal of culture in textbooks?
- RQ3: What opportunities for domain development do textbooks provide?

3.2.2. Conducting a Qualitative Textual Analysis

I chose to conduct a qualitative textual analysis of several TPC textbooks to answer these questions. Firstly, to select textbooks, I used Matsuda and Matsuda's (2011) method of looking at publisher webpages to find what textbooks were being published for TPC

courses. To focus more on the textbooks used as the leading course textbook, reference textbooks were excluded. This choice aligned with Matsuda and Matsuda's (2011) study. Unlike Matsuda and Matsuda's study, I was open to the option of studying textbooks that were online textbooks since many institutions are now incorporating blended, hybrid, and online TPC courses.

After reviewing six publisher websites, I found five textbooks published between the years 2015-2018 that are regularly used. The following textbooks were selected for meeting this criterion.

These textbooks included the following:

Johnson-Sheehan, R. (2017). Technical communication strategies for today (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Pearson.

Lannon, J. M., & Gurak, L. J. (2017). Technical communication (14th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Markel, M. (2015). Technical communication (11th ed.). Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's.

Markel, M. (2017). Practical strategies for technical communication (2nd ed.). Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's.

Tebeaux, E., & Dragga, S. (2018). The essentials of technical communication (4th ed). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

For these textbooks, I would also like to provide some caveats. I wanted to see if there were differences based on the type of book and modality for some of the texts. For

example, the Markel's 2017 textbook is a briefer version of the 2015 text. I included both to see if the descriptions or inclusion of IC components differed. I found that the texts did indeed have several differences. Not surprisingly, the larger text had more examples of culture relating not only to Big culture but also organizational/corporate and Small culture. While some instances in the shorter text, many of the examples focused solely on Big and corporate culture. However, for the guidelines, both texts used consistent guidelines.

Regarding modality, the Johnson-Sheehan's textbook is offered either as an e-book with an educational platform or a print book. While initially the print and the e-book/online platform were examined to understand if the e-book/platform offered different activities/practices related to culture than compared to the print version, I found that topics unrelated to IC had different interactive activities; however, regarding culture/IC, the vast majority of the activities were identical. Since these activities were similar, I decided to focus on the print version of the textbook for my analysis. However, for future studies, it may be beneficial for others to examine print textbooks versus their e-book/educational platform counterpart, especially as online texts and open source options become increasingly used.

This analysis included several phases.

3.2.2.1. Phase 1: Recording Instances of IC Components.

Phase 1 included the recording instances of IC components. More specifically, similar to Matveeva's (2007) initial strategy, I started my content analysis by first logging every

instance of the word culture and descriptions similar to culture (for example, terms related or that included intercultural, international, cross-cultural, multicultural, globalization, multinational, and culture, among others). To capture these instances, I analyzed textbooks using a line-by-line method (Saldaña, 2020), which is also Matveeva's (2007) initial strategy. I decided to study all aspects of the textbook, including callouts, activities, and exercises presented in textbooks. By intentionally including all aspects, specific activities and exercises, which were designed to be geared explicitly to help readers build their IC competency, one can better understand if these textbooks are supporting more nuanced understandings of culture in the field as well as serving as a helpful pedagogical tool in the classroom.

Content analysis allows a researcher to share topics' relative frequency and importance with readers (Anderson & Arsenault, 1998, 101-102). Similar to Matveeva's (2007) study, I also counted the frequency of terms and pages dedicated to culture for comparison's sake. For example, culture and intercultural communication were two terms counted for frequency and how many pages included intercultural instances. While this step was done for comparison's sake and to illustrate the relative frequency of instances, I acknowledge that recording frequency and examining term distribution in chapters do not present the complete picture of how culture-related topics have been incorporated into textbooks. I also used Matsuda and Matsuda's (2011) method of analyzing more content and contextualization surrounding how terms were distributed.

In other words, when logging instances in sections, boxes, icons, segments, chapters, among other ways these terms were presented, I also used hand-written memo writing to

help me keep track of (and later analyze) my data. This memo included contextual information regarding each instance. For each instance, I recorded a snapshot of content being discussed, chapter location, how the content was presented (callout, paragraph, activity, among others), other contextual information that would help me analyze the data later, and potential initialization codes. For example:

- Snapshot: "Documentation designed for transcultural readers should be mindful about the meanings of symbols and images in other cultures" (Johnson-Sheehan, 2017, p. 240).
- Chapter/Page(s): Design Principles, p. 240 (1 page)
- Content Presented as a single bullet point
- Other Contextual Information: Next sentences focus on evidence/examples, focus on transcultural readers/communicating across cultures, focus on design, focus on symbols, focus on differences between cultures, guideline, cognitive domain
- Initial Codes: Transcultural readers, documentation design, image and symbol meanings

While previous scholars may have also recorded this type of contextual information, I wanted to include some of this contextual information to understand how/where instances of culture were presented in textbooks. After I collected this information, I created a summary of what chapters included intercultural information and how many pages (including allocated to each chapter) were included in the textbooks. I was intentional to ensure that if there were multiple instances/snapshots of culture collected on the page (say two instances on page 240), I only counted that page once. I also created a summary

of how culture was presented (bullet point, callout, among others) and how often it was presented in that manner.

To summarize the first phase, I captured data surrounding the instances of culture in each textbook, analyzed which chapters and how many pages each textbook dedicated to culture instances. This phase was crucial to start later phases of analysis.

3.2.2.2. Phase 2: Intermediate Coding.

While Phase 1 was beneficial for having initial data of how instances were presented, I still wanted to more deeply understand how culture was presented in textbooks (Saldaña, 2020). I did intermediate coding to identify commonalities better and analyze connections among open codes to understand better these initial codes (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). In other words, I used the initial memo I created in Phase 1 and started analyzing these snapshots of content/initial codes to see if there were conceptual relationships between codes (Saldaña, 2020). For example, using the example from above, I added two new bullets. The first bullet used the contextual information to assign more conceptual relationship codes. These codes helped identify the essence of what the snapshot was and how it was similar to other instances. For example, the same instance we examined above dealt with transcultural differences, design guidelines, and precisely image and symbol design considerations.

- Snapshot: "Documentation designed for transcultural readers should be mindful about the meanings of symbols and images in other cultures" (Johnson-Sheehan, 2017, p. 240).
- Chapter/Page(s): Design Principles, p. 240 (1 page)

- Content Presented as a single bullet point.
- Other Contextual Information: Next sentences focus on evidence/examples, focus on transcultural readers/communicating across cultures, focus on design, focus on symbols, focus on differences between cultures, guideline, cognitive domain
- Initial Codes: Transcultural readers, documentation design, image and symbol meanings
- *Conceptual Relationship: Transcultural differences, design guidelines, image and symbol design considerations*

These conceptual relationship codes are essential to help a researcher recode and recategorize codes to understand better the context of how these topics are presented (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011; Saldaña, 2020). These codes helped me analyze instances throughout the textbooks to understand better how they were related and then assign intermediate codes. When I examined this code as it related to other instances, it was clear that the purpose of this sentence was to illustrate image design considerations for various cultures.

So as a final step for this stage, I added a bullet for the intermediate code on my memos.

- Snapshot: "Documentation designed for transcultural readers should be mindful about the meanings of symbols and images in other cultures" (Johnson-Sheehan, 2017, p. 240).
- Chapter/Page(s): Design Principles, p. 240 (1 page)
- Content Presented as a single bullet point.

- Other Contextual Information: Next sentences focus on evidence/examples, focus on transcultural readers/communicating across cultures, focus on design, focus on symbols, focus on differences between cultures, guideline, cognitive domain
- Initial Codes: Transcultural readers, documentation design, image and symbol meanings
- Conceptual Relationship: Transcultural differences, design guidelines, image and symbol design considerations
- *Intermediate Code: Image design*

As seen in the example above, the author wanted to include how image/graphic designs should change based on different cultures. I added conceptual relationships and intermediate codes in this stage and then analyzed the holistic or overall findings from all of my memo writing. These intermediate codes allowed me to understand better why the author has discussed culture in textbooks. The following section describes in detail my findings from this project.

3.3. Findings

The following sections describe the main findings from each phase of data collection.

3.3.1. Instances of IC Components

During phase 1, types of codes, instances of intercultural communication, pages, number of pages, ways codes were presented, and chapters that included IC information were all recorded. During the initial (or open) coding, 1,500 instances of intercultural information in the textbooks were coded. This initial coding analyzed text line-by-line and identified

"conceptual recurrences and similarities in the patterns in the data" (Birks & Mills, 2017 p. 89). These codes were very fractured (or did not help to understand the context of the instance fully), as is familiar with initial coding (Glaser, 1967); however, this phase was constructive to learn what types of components are being used in textbooks.

As mentioned previously, similarly to Matveeva's (2007) study, the present study was interested in discovering how many pages were dedicated to IC components. Overall, 219/2,782 pages, or roughly 8% of pages, included some IC content. While three of the textbooks had the same rough mean, there were two outliers. Tebeaux and Dragga's textbook had only ten pages or 2.5% of pages, including IC content; on the other side, Lannon and Gurak had 84 pages or 12.2% of pages, including IC content.

3.3.2. Presentation of IC Content

Additionally, Phase 1 included an analysis of how IC content was presented throughout the chapters. Table X illustrates the instances of how IC topics were presented in each textbook. The four most common ways IC topics were presented in textbooks include a single bullet point mentioning something regarding IC, an end-of-the-chapter activity with an IC component or an end-of-the-chapter activity that focused entirely on IC, a sentence or phrase regarding IC in a section otherwise not related explicitly to IC, and an entire section dedicated to IC information.

This information is presented in Table 2. The table is organized by most frequent to least frequent IC components.

Types of IC Content	Instances in Specific Textbooks					Total Instances
	A	B	C	D	E	
Single bullet point	1	7	5	5	15	**34**
End-of-chapter activity		2	4	5	23	**34**
Sentences/Phrases in Non-IC Section	4	7	6	5	9	**31**
Entire section	1	8	2	7	11	**29**
Figure		2	4		2	**8**
Callout				1	5	**6**
Several bullet points			1	1	3	**5**
Guideline point	4				1	**5**
Subsection			1		4	**5**
Checklist item	1	2		1		**4**
Several checklist items			2		2	**4**
Activity in chapter				1	2	**3**
Paragraph		3				**3**

Several guideline points		1		1		**2**
Total Instances						**173**

Table 2: IC Content in Textbooks

3.3.3. Descriptions of IC Components

The following descriptions illustrate the ways textbooks presented IC topics:

- **Single bullet point.** If there was only a single bullet point about IC information amongst other bullet points about other topics, information was coded as a single bullet point. I wanted to distinguish a single bullet point from several bullet points because I hypothesized some textbooks might include only a small amount of IC information (single bullet point) as a way to provide lip service (Miles, 1993) as compared to more substantive details that might come with several bullet points.
    - Example: "• Documentation designed for transcultural readers should be mindful about the meanings of symbols and images in other cultures" (Johnson-Sheehan, 2017, p. 240).
- **Several bullet points.** Several bullets were coded when two or more bullets dedicated to IC topics were included within a list.
    - Example: "Differences in Content. Cultures have different expectations about the content in technical documentation.
        - • When doing business, people in China tend to trust existing relationships…
        - • In Mexico, South America, and many African countries, considerations of family are often more important…

        - • In the Middle East, negotiation and bargaining are common and expected…
        - • Norwegians and Swedes will usually assume that your initial offer is near the final offer....
        - • In many parts of Asia, the reputation of the writer or company can be essential for establishing the credibility of the information…" (Johnson-Sheehan, 2017, p. 34-35).
- **Checklist item.** A checklist item was coded when there was only one item regarding IC content within a checklist. A single checklist item was coded differently from several checklist items because the single bullet point was coded compared to several bullet points.
    - Example: Designing Online Documents. Did you….
        - ☐ design for multicultural audiences? (p. 191)" (Markel, 2017, p. 194).
- **Several checklist items.** Several checklist items were coded when there were two or more IC items within a checklist.
    - Example: "Checklist: Writing and Designing for Blogs, WIkis, and the Web…
        - Global issues
            - ☐ Is the writing clear enough for non-native speakers of English to understand and can it be easily translated? (613)
            - ☐ Does the page avoid cultural references and humor? (613)

        - ☐ If appropriate, does the page offer different language options? (613)
            - ☐ Are colors and visuals used appropriately? (614)" (Lannon & Gurak, 2017, p. 615).

Guideline point. A guideline point was usually a bullet point that offered a tip or way to act when encountering another culture. Guidelines were different from bullet points because where guidelines focused on how to act, behave, or respond when encountering a culture, bullet points were coded as any other content related to IC. Additionally, guidelines were different from checklists because guidelines were not reductionistic. These guidelines were typically included within a section about a different, overarching topic.

- Example "Guidelines: Planning Your Design. Follow these four suggestions as you plan your design.
    - • Analyze your audience…
    - • Consider multicultural readers…
    - • Consider your purpose…
        - • Determine your resources…" (Markel, 2017, p. 161).

Several guideline points. Several guideline points were instances of two or more IC guidelines listed.

- Example: "Writing for Readers from Other Cultures. The following eight suggestions will help you communicate more effectively with multicultural readers.
    - • Limit your vocabulary...

- • Keep sentences short...
- • Define abbreviations and acronyms in a glossary…
- • Avoid jargon unless you know your readers are familiar with it…
- • Avoid idioms and slang…
- • Use the active voice whenever possible…
- • Be careful with graphics…
    - • Be sure someone from the target culture reviews your document…" (Markel, 2017, p. 68-69)

A figure. A figure was coded anytime a figure was explicitly dedicated to IC information. Figures often helped to explain a complex cultural topic further.

- Example: "Figure 14.5 Email Message Written to a Global Audience" (Lannon & Gurak, 2017, p. 319).

A callout. A callout was coded anytime information was set aside from the main content. Callouts usually focused on providing a summary of a central idea from the text. These callouts were separate from the text (usually located in the margins).

- Example: Computers, especially networked computers, have increased the opportunities for people to work across cultures" (Johnson-Sheehan, 2017, p. 35).

Sentences/phrases in non-IC section. These were keywords, phrases, or sentences about IC topics that were embedded in unrelated IC content. These sentences would not make up an entire paragraph.

- Example: Section: Determining your readers and their perspectives

        - IC Component: “A host of factors determine your readers’ perception: education, family, geographic and cultural background, job responsibilities….” (Tebeaux & Dragga, 2018, p. 17).

A paragraph about IC content is embedded in a chapter. A paragraph was coded as anytime an entire paragraph (or multiple paragraphs) about IC were embedded in a section about another topic.

- Example: Chapter: Oral Reports
    - Within a section about analyzing your audience, “If you will be visible to your audience in a live or video presentation, be aware that hand gestures you use routinely may have different meanings in other cultures. Also, the clothing you choose to wear should be selected with the culture of the audience in mind; you want your audience to pay attention to what you are saying instead of what you are wearing” (Tebeaux & Dragga, 2018, p. 290).

A subsection about culture within a chapter about other information. A subsection was a section about IC topics that was embedded within a different TW topic. These were typically a heading level three, if a chapter level heading was considered one.

- Example: Chapter 8: Communicating Persuasively
    - Section: Crafting a Persuasive Argument
        - Subsection: “Understanding the role of culture in persuasion” (Markel, 2015, p. 182).

Entire section dedicated to IC content. An entire section was coded when an entire section about IC content was included in a chapter. These were typically a heading level two, if a chapter level heading was considered a heading level one.

- Example: Chapter: Understanding Ethical & Legal Considerations
    - Section: "Communicating Ethically Across Cultures" (Markel, 2015, p. 36)

Activity within the chapter's content. An activity was coded anytime a specific activity related to IC within the chapter's text. These instances were coded separately from the end-of-chapter activities to understand better if these activities were more organic since they were paired more closely with content.

- "Examining cultural variables in a business letter…
    - 1. How does the difference in the salutation….
    - 2. Does the first paragraph of the second letter have any function beyond delaying the discussion of business?
    - 3. What is the point of telling Mr. Kirisawa about his own company?
    - 4. To a reader from the United States, the third paragraph of the second letter would probably seem thin. What aspect of Japanese culture makes it effective in the context of this letter?
    - 5. Why doesn't the writer make a more explicit sales pitch at the end of the second letter?" (Markel, 2017, p. 70-71).

End-of-chapter activity. An end-of-chapter activity was coded any time an activity was at the end of the chapter that included IC elements.

- Example: “Global. Search the Internet using the keywords “international business culture” to learn about the style preferences of one particular culture. Then, in a one-page memo to your instructor and classmates, describe the style preferences of that culture and give examples of how these preferences differ from the style guidelines presented (i.e., for North American English) in this chapter” (Lannon & Gurak, 2017, p. 235).

3.3.4 Chapter Distribution of IC Components

Further, this phase analyzed which chapters had IC components. While not every chapter had the same chapters nor the exact name of chapters, generalizations to describe these chapters were used instead. As seen in Table 3, the topics discussed IC topics the most were chapters dedicated to the audience, designing visuals, designing pages/content, ethics, teamwork, and oral presentations. It should also be noted that IC topics were less prevalent in the chapters regarding the professional writing genres themselves, such as instructions, proposals, reports, definitions, and descriptions.

Chapter Topics	**A**	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**	**Total**
Audience	1	4	4	7	13	**29**
Design visuals	2	4	2	3	7	**18**
Design Pages		4	2	4	3	**13**
Ethics		2	5	3	3	**13**
Teamwork		2		3	6	**11**
Oral Presentation	5	1	2		3	**11**

Intro to TC		2	2	1	4	**9**
Letters and Memos		2	1	2	4	**9**
Web Writing/Social Media		1			6	**7**
Organizing content		3			3	**6**
Email and Text	1				5	**6**
Research		1			4	**5**
Instructions			4		1	**5**
Proposals	1	1		1	1	**4**
Job			2		1	**3**
Preface					2	**2**
Style and tone					2	**2**
Informal Reports				1	1	**2**
Formal Reports				1	1	**2**
TW as a process					1	**1**
Definitions					1	**1**
Descriptions					1	**1**
Back Matter Content		1				**1**
Total Instances Per Book	**10**	**28**	**24**	**26**	**73**	**161**

Table 3: Chapter Distribution of IC Components

3.3.4.1. Connections/Relationships Between Codes.

AsI mentioned previously, there were initially 1,500 instances of codes from Phase 1. During Phase 2, focused (or intermediate) coding to make initial connections between the codes to identify "conceptual patterns" in the data (Birks & Mills, 2017, p. 95). These codes led to a better understanding of what intercultural content is presented in textbooks

and how the content was being presented. This focused coding led to 374 unique codes being developed. From this focused coding, several themes developed. Some of these themes that describe the codes are listed below. There were two categories of codes: Types of factoids/examples and content topics.

Types of Factoids/Examples

- **Factoid without a cited source (53 instances).** This code was used anytime a "fact" about a culture was used without a source.
    - Example: "In the Middle East, negotiating and bargaining are common and expected, even in technical fields. A lack of negotiations can even be viewed as a sign of disrespect" (Johnson-Sheehan, p. 2017, p. 35).
- **Factoid with a source cited (9 instances).** This code was used anytime a factoid was accompanied by a source.
    - Example: "African cultures rely on storytelling for authenticity. Arabic persuasion is dependent on universally accepted truths. And Chinese value ancient authorities over recent empiricism" (Byrd and Reid, 1998, p. 109)" (Lannon & Gurak, 2017, p. 155).
- **Example with a source cited (50 instances).** This code was used anytime there was an example of culture that was not presented as an absolute or factoid, or an example of how culture might relate to the topic. These examples were presented without any evidence or source.
    - Example: "About 75 percent of the people using the Internet are nonnative speakers of English, and that percentage continues to grow as more people

from developing nations go online (Internet World Stats, 2013)" (Markel, 2015, p. 286).

- **Example without a cited source (41 instances).** This code was used anytime there was an example of culture that was not presented as an absolute or factoid, or an example of how culture might relate to the topic while also being accompanied with evidence like a reference.
    - Example: "Also, direct eye contact is not always a good indicator of listening; some cultures find it offensive" (Lannon & Gurak, 2017, p. 98).

Content Topics

- **Focus/emphasis on cultural differences (31 instances).** This code was used anytime the text focused on the cultural differences between groups/cultures, but that was not an example or other code.
    - Example: "How might cultural differences shape readers' expectations and interpretations?" (Lannon & Gurak, 2017, p. 17).
- **Symbols differ between cultures (29 instances).** This code was used anytime that different symbols between cultures were explicitly discussed.
    - Example: "The illustrations you use may also have to be changed as symbols in one culture may have an entirely different meaning in another culture" (Tebeaux & Dragga, 2018, p. 300).
- **Document design differs between cultures (28 instances).** This code was used anytime that document designing changing based on a culture was discussed.

- Example: “Readers from other cultures may scan a page differently. The design needs to take their preferences into account” (Johnson-Sheehan, p. 2017, p. 39).

- **Color meanings differ between cultures (20 instances).** This code was used anytime that color changing or having a different meaning based on a culture was discussed.
  - Example: “The colors in your illustrations might have implicit meanings for your readers (e..g, the color red implies danger in some cultures but happiness in others)” (Tebeaux & Dragga, 2018, p. 105).
- **Writing for a global audience (19 instances).** This code was used anytime that writing specifically for a global audience was discussed.
  - Example: “To connect with all readers, technical documents need to reflect global and intercultural diversity” (Lannon & Gurak, 2017, p. 4).
- **Have target culture review the technical document that is being created (17 instances).** This code was used anytime the author suggested having a target culture review documents before sending them out.
  - Example: “If your readers come from another culture, try to have your draft reviewed by someone from that culture. The reviewer can help you see whether you have made correct assumptions about how readers will react to your ideas and whether you have chosen appropriate kinds of evidence and design elements” (Markel, 2015, p. 54).
- **Formality level differs between cultures (16 instances).** This code was used anytime that formality changing based on a culture was discussed.

    - Example: “In many other countries, this informality is potentially offensive” (Markel, 2015, p. 381).
- **Ethics regarding writing to other cultures (14).** This code was used anytime ethics was discussed in conjunction with culture.
    - Example: “If you know something about a culture’s habits or business practices and then use this information unfairly to get a sale or make a profit, you are behaving unethically” (Lannon & Gurak, 2017, p. 66).
- **Accomodate to the other culture (14 instances).** Like having a target culture review the document, accommodating to other culture codes was used when the authors took a non-ethnocentric view and suggested tailoring technical writing/communication to the ways the audience would prefer. These codes were specifically coded when culture was also discussed (and not, for example, just audience analysis).
    - Example: “You want your documents to fit the needs and values of the people who are most likely to read them” (Johnson-Sheehan, 2017).
- **Tone differs between cultures (13 instances).** This code was used anytime that tone changing based on a culture was being discussed. These codes were slightly different from the code regarding formality. While formality might contain specifics like suggestions for titles or content, tone codes were more general suggestions.
    - Example: “Also potentially offensive is U.S. directness” (Markel, 2017, p. 261).

- **Evidence preferences differ between cultures (13 instances).** This code was used anytime that evidence preferences (research-based, examples, among others) were mentioned about cultural preferences.
    - Example: "In many non-Western cultures, tradition or the authority of the person making the claim can be extremely important, in some cases more important than the kind of scientific evidence that is favored in Western cultures" (Markel, 2017, p. 120).

A further explanation of factoids and examples may be necessary to distinguish the two concepts. For this study, a 'factoid' was coded as content in a textbook that stated 'y' culture does 'z.' In other words, a 'factoid' was an instance when the book stated that a culture does, behaves in, or believes a certain way. If the textbook provided a study or a source to add credibility to the statement, the code was labeled as 'factoid with a cited source;' however, the vast majority of factoids were not accompanied by research or evidence. Slightly different, an 'example' code did not target a specific country or culture; instead, the textbook would suggest that someone or a country might do 'x' or the textbook would provide an example of how writing might have to shift depending on cultures with an example about tone or formality. It should be noted that factoids and examples are different in that factoids were stated as absolutes, whereas examples were stated as suggestions or possibilities.

The other codes mentioned above were initially interesting because they were some of the most recurring initial themes in the textbooks. However, intermediate coding

provided a more meaningful and richer understanding of the data through more recursive analysis.

3.3.4.2. List of Intermediate Codes.

The main 16 intermediate codes (with one notable subcategory) are listed below:

- Reasons to know IC info,
- How to learn more about IC/culture,
- Use of examples or factoids,
    - Topics mentioned in examples or factoids,
- Other types of cultures (outside of nation),
- Culture is tied to audience awareness,
- Usage of other words than IC to describe communicating with other cultures,
- How culture related to goals of the textbook,
- Defining culture,
- Frameworks used to describe culture,
- Focus on cultural differences,
- Agency and culture,
- Ethics and culture,
- Guidelines/best practices for communicating with other cultures,
- How genres change with cultures,
- The use of negative language when discussing communicating with other cultures, and
- Characteristics of culture.

3.4. Discussion

Before discussing the findings of this study, it may be beneficial to restate the common critiques from Miles (1993), Matveeva (2007), and Matsuda and Matsuda's (2011) to help compare studies. Their foundational critiques included:

- The negative portrayal of non-Native English speakers or lack of portraying non-native English speakers as TW
- Using a negative tone to discuss intercultural communication
- Activities relying on ESL students to teach culture to other students
- Relying on factoids
- Relying too much on tips (or guidelines, as coded in this study)
- Using poor exercises to teach culture referred to shallow understandings of culture being used in the exercise.
- Focusing too much on stereotypes

3.4.1. Characteristics of Culture

This study found that many, but not all, textbooks mentioned and/or discussed cultures outside of solely national cultures. While this article agrees that learning about international communication is very important in TPC courses, when discussing cultures, it is also essential to understand how to communicate with other cultures outside of national cultures. As mentioned previously, Constantinides, St. Amant, and Kampf (2005) suggest that incorporating more about corporate and organizational culture can be beneficial for students to prepare for the workplace and increase their IC awareness and

sensitivity through using a more inclusive lens as compared to national culture lenses (Yu, 2011).

Four of the five books mentioned and/or discussed other cultures such as corporate/organizational culture, gender culture, government culture, community culture, neighborhood culture, and media culture, as these cultures relate to TPC. For example, Johnson-Sheehan's textbook states, "Learn the culture of the community. Listen to and learn before your post. Most communities have a distinct culture, which influences how and when people post, link, and reply" (p. 380) or from Tebeaux and Dragga's textbook "...Do research on the organization, its problems, its corporate culture, the perspectives and attitudes stemming from its corporate culture…" (p. 226). However, these other types of culture were not usually explored as profoundly as national culture. It is worth noting that several previous studies focused on national/Big culture to define culture. Thus, when they did their analyses, they often focused on Big/national culture instances throughout. However, when I applied the Small culture definition, I found that many textbooks include elements of Small culture throughout. Most likely, these terms have been included before my studying this topic; however, other scholars have used different definitions of culture to analyze textbooks.

As previously noted, the descriptions of culture often change throughout textbooks without providing definitions. However, some chapters in some textbooks did use a Small culture (such as corporate, organizational, and other) understanding of culture. It should be noted that only one textbook defined culture while the others relied on cultural characteristics to describe culture; even though one of the textbooks did define culture,

the descriptions being used by all textbooks related to both national culture and Small culture topics.

From the analysis, most textbooks describe culture as having:

- Its own set of assumptions,
- Unique characteristics,
- Changes over time,
- Unique values,
- Unique expectations, and
- Customs that should be respected.

These characteristics of culture were then exemplified in other ways through the codes such as guidelines/tips for communicating with another culture, including active listening to learn the culture's characteristics, values, expectations, values, and other aspects of the culture --- or how these characteristics permeate into educational, technological, business, and other aspects of life. Most characteristics serve to develop students' cognitive domain.

3.4.2. Use of Factoids/Examples

Regarding factoids as compared to examples, it should be noted that Matveeva may have also characterized some examples as a factoid. As a quick reminder, I defined factoids as statements about culture that were provided as absolutes/facts, such as Americans use a thumbs-up gesture to signal good work. While this statement can be true, it is also reductionistic, as mentioned earlier, and does not account for nuances, such as this

gesture meaning "go," "I understand," among other understandings. Conversely, examples were statements that might appear at first to be factoids; but examples are not absolute and therefore allow for the possibilities of other options. In other words, an example might be Americans may use a thumbs-up gesture to signal a variety of positive meanings such as good work, go, I understand, among other meanings. An instance was also classified as an example if it provided an elaboration of a concept. Body language and gestures may have similarities and differences among cultures, such as using hand gestures, the space between speakers, and frequency and intensity of eye contact.

While I distinguish these two terms, I also recognize that previous scholars may not have used differentiating terms. While I argue that allowing for distinctions between the two statements can help readers better understand that cultures are neither static nor homogenous, I will discuss these findings together to better compare these findings to previous scholars' findings regarding factoids.

As shared previously, although Matveeva suggested factoids may have a place in IC teachings, she did not expand on how they could be beneficial. Instead, she warned that these factoids could come from research findings out of context either for time or place (2007). I agree with her second assessment that factoids can be dangerous; however, if one were to use the previously given distinction between factoids and examples, examples could be beneficial to illustrate samples or ideas to help students better conceptualize complex topics without providing the reductionistic absolute language of factoids.

Regarding factoids, I think it is worth noting again that there were 53 factoids without sources compared to only nine factoids with sources. For the most part, textbooks use statements that are presented as absolutes without any statement of credibility to support these "facts." Besides several factoids being reductionistic, there is no evidence shared with readers that these statements are even accurate. Further, when these factoids are presented with evidence, the evidence used comes almost entirely from before 1999. The mean average of 1995 is the publication year for the article/source being used. As echoed by Matveeva, these articles may be outdated. For example, Lannon and Gurak's textbook argued that 60% of business ventures between the US and other countries fail, and the textbook argued that it has to do with cultural differences. This source comes from 1997, and most likely (if this source was not taken out of context), it does not still apply twenty years later when digital communication has become commonplace in the workplace, as has intercultural business ventures.

While this observation might suggest that textbooks might rely on older sources, I found that topics unrelated to IC have much more current TPC literature to support those types of factoids and examples. For example, topics regarding social media and oral presentations have research for the past 5-10 years, but the vast majority of evidence and literature for IC is grossly outdated. I suggest that some of these factoids might be outdated and not true to the extent (or at all) presented in textbooks. Additionally, most examples seemed to develop students' cognitive domain by providing information. I suggest that textbooks might benefit from using more up-to-date sources to support claims being made about cultures.

The most recurring topics used for examples and factoids included:

- Meanings of symbols (29)
- Document design preferences (28)
- Meanings of colors (20)
- Level of formality to use (16)
- Direct vs. indirect styles (15)
- Evidence preferences (13)
- Tone preferences (13)
- Importance of relationship-building (13)
- Avoiding humor (13)

3.4.3. Use of Tips

One of the critiques brought up by Matveeva was that tips in textbooks are overwhelming, and students may not remember all of them and what culture they relate to (2007). I want to note that I used the term "guidelines" to code data in this study as that was the term that I felt best described the data I analyzed. However, I suggest that this term is synonymous with Matveeva's (2007) term of tips. In other words, guidelines were tips or suggestions on how to approach communicating with another culture.

I agree that the likelihood students will retain the overwhelming tips/guidelines provided and remember which culture they apply to is minimal. However, I argue that these guidelines can give students an initial awareness of questions they can ask to best communicate with a target culture by understanding some of the ways that TPC can

change based on cultural preferences. Further, these guidelines may help students start thinking about how these topics relate when they work with other cultures.

For example, some of the most common guidelines include:

- Be aware 'x' factoid
- Avoid using idioms
- Use short sentences
- Tips for active listening
- Have someone from the target culture review the document
- Adopting and being accommodating to the target culture's preferences
- Show respect while writing (to both the person as well as the cultural preferences)

While asking students to remember a specific factoid could be problematic because the factoid may be based on the idea that cultures do not change, many tips/guidelines can be beneficial for showing students how communication can change for other cultures and promoting a non-ethnocentric view of writing. I argue that while many of these tips/guidelines develop students' cognitive domain, they also have the potential to implicitly develop attitudinal and behavioral domains as well. For example, statements such as "having someone from the target culture review the document," "adopt and be accommodating to the target culture's preferences," and "show respect while writing" all suggest that textbooks have been evolving in the views of culture and are providing some rhetorical strategies for IC. Further, students can take these guidelines and then apply them the next time the situation arises. It should be noted that these three mentioned

guidelines that promoted a non-ethnocentric view were consistently reinforced throughout the textbooks.

3.4.4. Focus on Stereotyping

Matsuda and Matsuda critiqued the abundance of stereotypes in TPC textbooks (2011). The present study suggests that stereotypes are still being used in textbooks, primarily through factoids, examples, and tips/guidelines. As mentioned previously, factoids presented without evidence or very dated evidence suggest that these textbooks view cultures as static (regardless of how they explicitly characterize culture), and textbooks reinforce the most extensive culture views through examples, factoids, and tips/guidelines.

For example, Lannon and Gurak use several factoid examples without evidence or evidence from the 1990s or earlier, which focuses on stereotypes of culture. One example is when they cite Byrd and Reid's (1998) study "African cultures rely on storytelling for authenticity. Arabic persuasion is dependent on universally accepted truths. And Chinese value ancient authorities over recent empiricism)" (p.154). Instead of suggesting that cultures might have different evidence preferences such as storytelling, empirical findings, relationships, or other types of evidence, a source (and understanding of culture) more than 20 years old is used. These sources could either be more generalized or accompanied with more recent scholarship that does not present stereotypes through suggesting entire nations are homogenous. In other words, softening statements to "People in 'x' culture may prefer 'y' or 'z.' However, one should also note that individuals in the culture may also behave differently and may view evidence

differently..." could be more beneficial in conjunction with more recent evidence to illustrate that cultures (especially national cultures) are not absolute nor completely homogenous as well as sharing evidence that is more recent and more likely to support these claims. Additional teaching activities should be implemented to address factoids.

It should be noted that textbooks that use more current evidence typically showed more nuances of culture and combatted stereotypes. For example, in Markel's Practical Strategies for Technical Communication, he mentions, "If a US student casually asks a Japanese student about her major and the courses she is taking, the Japanese student might find the question too personal --- yet she might consider it perfectly appropriate to talk about her family and her religious beliefs (Lustig & Koester, 2012). Therefore, you should remain open to encounters with people from other cultures without jumping to conclusions about what their actions might or might not mean" (p. 50). This example does not rely on categorizing the entire nation of Japan a certain way, and it also has students reflect on how individuals in a national culture might differ compared to one's preconceived ideas (thus not relying on stereotypes) while still being positive and open to interactions with other cultures. While many IC components can support the cognitive domain of development positively, some also can potentially be detrimental to this development. I argue that instructors and programs may want to add additional activities to challenge some of the assumptions a textbook may make and work to develop attitudinal and behavioral domains.

It should also be noted that some textbooks such as Markel and Johnson-Sheehan call out the dangers of stereotyping. For example, in Johnson-Sheehan's textbook, he suggests,

"You should also be careful not to rely on simplistic cultural or ethnic stereotypes when you are working with people from other cultures. It is wrong to assume that all people of a particular culture or ethnic group think alike and behave specifically. Negative stereotypes can be especially misleading and destructive, especially when prejudiced assumptions are used to define a whole culture or ethnic group" (p. 30). These small notes in textbooks may be helpful reminders for students to be critical of the factoids, examples, or tips they are reading and help prevent stereotypical assumptions.

3.4.5. Negative Portrayal and Negative Tone

Miles was one of the first scholars to critique the negative portrayal of non-native English speakers and the lack of these students being presented as TPC communicators in textbooks (1993). Mile's article mentioned that the textbooks she analyzed presented communicating with non-native English speakers as a negative experience with little to no focus on non-Native English speakers as TPC communicators. Miles was concerned with the overall negativity surrounding intercultural communication.

Related to non-native English speakers being TPC communicators, Markel's Technical Communication textbook specifically dedicates an appendix for ESL technical/professional writers outside of the standard grammar or citation appendices. I suggest that Markel acknowledges that non-native English speakers are TPC communicators and might be providing resources that would be beneficial for these writers. Additionally, Johnson-Sheehan's and Markel's Practical Strategies for Technical Communication textbooks briefly mentioned TPC communicators outside of the dominant U.S. culture. For example, Markel's Technical Communication textbook

specifically referenced Bell's (1992) idea of a hybrid, third culture and suggests that a student "cannot know how much [another] is trying to accommodate [to] your cultural patterns" (p. 100). However, even for these rare instances that showed other communicators or cultures as TPC communicators, the focus of many of these textbooks was still to support and focus on the TPC dominant U.S. culture and to view non-native English speakers outside of U.S. as the audience and receivers of technical information, rather than as the possible generators of technical documents.

As it relates to the negative portrayal of non-native English speakers, many textbooks use softened language, even if there are hints of negativity still used. For example, textbooks might characterize experiences communicating with non-native English speakers with terms such as issues, difficulties associated with translation, and so on. However, both of Markel's textbooks frequently present the idea that a great deal of non-native English speakers read technical documents, as illustrated by "About 75 percent of the people using the Internet are non-native speakers of English, and that percentage continues to grow as more people from developing nations go online (Internet World Stats, 2013). Therefore, it makes sense in planning your online documents to assume that many of your readers will not be proficient in English" (p. 191). These statements are presented chiefly as facts or in positive ways. For example, both of Markel's textbooks frequently suggest that TPC writers should accommodate the culture they are communicating with and create an open exchange and dialog between the two cultures to learn the preferences of the two parties who are communicating.

As it relates to Miles' (1993) and Matveeva's (2013) critique of the negative tone used when discussing IC, negative examples and experiences were in the minority used in the textbooks I analyzed. For example, a negative experience included in Lannon and Gurak's textbook was the previously presented statistic "Roughly 60 percent of business ventures between the United States and other countries fail (Isaacs 43), often, arguably because of cultural differences" (p. 50). While the textbook then stresses the importance of learning the customs and values of the culture you are communicating with, this example seems to serve as a scare tactic. It is problematic because this article is from 1997, suggesting other variables (lack of advanced technology, for example) may have been at play with business ventures failing rather than these differences the authors suggest. While these overt examples were seldom used, a negative tone was still used frequently in most textbooks. Negative tones were coded when IC was discussed as problems, issues, struggles, or failures. These tones can potentially affect cognitive and attitudinal domain development in a potentially harmful way. In other words, students can internalize some of these sentiments, which would be counterproductive to developing IC skills.

3.4.6. Use of Othering

Scholars also critiqued the use of Othering in textbooks. For example, Miles also critiqued grouping IC with communicating with persons with disabilities and pointed out that these groups were presented as Others (1993). While this grouping still occurs, the present study found that these instances more often occurred in the chapters about

audience analysis and considerations for various groups or sections about collaboration. In other words, these instances were not focused on Othering necessarily.

Further, many of these instances were presented positively regarding advocating or being sensitive to the needs of a specific audience. Interestingly, Markel's Technical Communication textbook grouped IC near a section about gender where he makes the argument that "The differences in behavior between two men or between two women are likely to be greater than the difference between men and women in general" (p. 77). If one were to view this as a statement of gender as a culture, it could be implied that Markel is stating that there are more similarities than differences amongst groups. While this idea of similarities was mentioned a few times elsewhere, most of the textbooks focused on the differences of cultures. While these differences were presented, there did not seem to be an emphasis on the U.S. or dominant culture being superior or having superior preferences to other cultures, so it did not appear that Othering was used in the textbooks.

3.4.7. Using Weak Exercises to Teach Culture

Weak exercises refer to teaching only to one domain, emphasis on ESL or international students teaching culture to native speakers/non-international students, or a focus on big culture without investigating the limitations of territorialized understandings of culture. Miles critiqued textbooks' emphasis on exercises that rely on ESL or international students to provide details to the class about their national culture and the focus on cultural differences (1993). I agree that this emphasis is problematic because it suggests that these students have a representative experience of an entire nation/culture, which is

problematic and reductionist. While this type of exercise might be a useful starting point, exercises that focus more on critical reflections of one's own cultures might be beneficial, or creating dialog may be more beneficial.

While this strategy of relying on international and ESL students to teach a classroom about a culture/Nation is still used, specifically in exercises and activities -- for the most part, the Lannon and Gurak textbook was the only textbook that used this type of exercise. "Use the questions on page 50 as a basis for interviewing a student from another country or culture. Be prepared to share your findings with the class" (p. 58). This study suggests that this type of exercise can be harmful to the international student and relates to Matveeva's critique that exercises are one-directional and/or surface level (2007).

The present study found that, for the most part, exercises regarding culture have not evolved. For example, Lannon and Gurak's textbook repeatedly mentioned how IC topics were fundamental to the new edition; however, several chapters did not have any IC content outside of the end-of-chapter activity that included one exercise focused on IC activities. Further, these activities that lacked chapter context were superficial (i.e., look up 'x's nation to see how 'chapter topic' is different for their culture), one-directional (focusing on only how the reader should write to another culture without thinking of one's own culture and preferences), and/or relied on asking an international student how [insert chapter topic] differed in their country. These types of chapter exercises, especially related to the textbook that did not discuss those topics in the chapter content itself, seemed more like lip service than actual tools to investigate and develop IC knowledge. As shared before, I suggest that instructors may want to add supplemental

activities that can develop, especially ones that target the attitudinal and behavioral domains.

Matveeva also argues that there is a danger in the lack of discussion with exercises regarding IC This same issue is still present in textbook exercises. For example, in the Johnson-Sheehan text, the authors give the following exercise "With a group of people from your class, create a slideshow that explores the needs, values, and attitudes of people from a different country or culture" (p. 42). These exercises are surface-level and do not allow students to reflect on their own culture critically. Slightly more nuanced is Markel's (T.C.) exercise where students are asked to assess their university's page for prospective students and draft sections of where to live on campus, social activities on or near campus, and a section discussing if English is not the international student's native language (p. 79). This activity is more beneficial because it has students reflect on their own culture with activities they enjoy/think others would enjoy. However, this example does not explicitly illustrate to students that they are analyzing their culture as well. While some exercises are becoming slightly more nuanced, for the most part, these exercises are still not encouraging discussion nor reflection on one's own culture. Therefore, if instructors want to use these exercises, they may need to supplement them with other activities that help students challenge these ideas, investigate their own cultures, and challenge the idea of cultures as static.

3.5. Conclusion

It was clear that textbooks have started becoming slightly more nuanced in understanding culture. However, it also became evident that there are areas where textbooks are lagging

and/or areas where critiques from Miles' (1993), Matveeva's (2007), and Matsuda and Matsuda's (2011) critiques still apply. These data have led to the main implications regarding the (un)intentional views that textbooks share regarding culture.

3.5.1. The (Un)intentional Views of Culture

Firstly, the textbooks I analyzed lack the definition of culture and only provide characteristics of what culture means. As presented previously, many of these textbooks still equate culture as meaning national culture unless they say otherwise. For example, when Tebeaux and Dragga mentioned corporate culture or when Markel mentioned community culture, these examples were beneficial, but the standard view of culture as national culture. The lack of definition and/or assumption that the default understanding of culture is national culture can be problematic for various reasons. Firstly, not stating an explicit definition, but rather descriptions of the text causes inconsistencies throughout books that use comprehensive understandings of culture. These inconsistencies may confuse students and muddle their understanding of what is and is not considered a culture. For example, culture may be described in one chapter. However, when it discusses other cultures, such as corporate culture, the culture portion may be characterized or explained in another fashion. It may be beneficial for these textbooks to choose a holistic definition of culture that can still apply to these various types of cultures explored. Then, an instructor can use this definition and/or challenge it with one they are using in their course.

Secondly, the high quantity of factoids, examples, and tips/guidelines (especially without any supporting evidence) promotes the idea that cultures are static and entirely

homogeneous. The high quantity also reinforces stereotypes. Even though textbooks characterize culture as dynamic, their factoids, examples, and tips/guidelines do not support their explicit characterization. By updating examples and factoids, students can better understand the nuances of culture and mitigate stereotypical tendencies.

Thirdly, the use of poor exercises to teach culture and intercultural communication is still prevalent (although there seems to be less emphasis on relying on ESL/international students). Instead, some poor examples imply that the student does not have any culture they can reflect on or does not prompt the student to reflect and interrogate their cultures. Instead, superficial activities of asking someone about their culture or looking up a random nation to find specific information about it (usually potential factoids) are used. These examples are poor for three reasons:

- They often want to provide reductionistic/factoids about a culture,
- Many of these activities do not provide the ability for students to reflect on what they are researching (instead, students provide quick answers to information they lookup), and
- These activities do not allow a student to interrogate their own cultures in this manner.

I argue that because exercises are still surface-level or weak, instructors may want to consider adding their activities and exercises where students interrogate reductionistic statements, like factoids; reflect on the information they find in literature and websites and how that relates to the students'/class' understanding of culture, and explore opportunities where a student can reflect on their cultures and how those cultures relate to

the concepts presented in the textbooks' chapter. These types of activities can support both attitudinal and behavioral development.

However, a promising trend found in textbooks is promoting and acknowledging other cultures, respecting other cultures' preferences, and accommodating communication to the target culture while presenting culture more positively. This view may suggest that textbooks are beginning to change (albeit in subtle ways) from Western-only preferences to respecting/acknowledging/adapting to other preferences and negatively addressing critiques of presenting culture.

3.5.2. Pedagogical Implications

This chapter is partially intended to understand how textbooks have evolved in their understanding and incorporation of IC textbooks. However, it is also intended to assist instructors in choosing a textbook to teach IC if that is their goal. As previously mentioned, many of the critiques from previous scholars' are still valid. As instructors and researchers, we are still having similar conversations about how culture is presented even almost 30 years later.

Because of these similar conversations, this study has some suggestions for instructors looking for textbooks that use a more nuanced understanding of culture than the Big culture or national understanding of culture.

The most significant point to make is that the quantity of IC components does not necessarily matter. For example, the Lannon and Gurak had the most IC components;

however, for the most part, these components were surface-level bullet points, factoids, antiquated research, or an end-of-chapter activity that, like Miles (1993) worried, served as more of a lip service than creating rich content that challenges or opens up a dialog about culture.

Secondly, one of the best ways to quickly understand how a textbook views culture is to see if they define or describe the culture and, if so, how they define cultures. For example, do they provide descriptions typical to national cultures or extend the definition to small cultures? Only one textbook defined culture, so examining how textbooks describe culture could be beneficial. To do so, examining the audience analysis chapter or document design chapter might be the easiest way to learn about a textbook's view of culture because all of the textbooks had IC in both of these chapters. In these chapters, reviewing their citations/articles/evidence for IC topics and looking at how often and how they are using factoids would help an instructor better understand the textbook's positions about IC

I acknowledge that instructors choose a textbook for many reasons, and the quality of IC components is usually not the sole reason for selecting a textbook. For this reason, this article suggests that if an instructor is using a textbook that has an older understanding of IC but other beneficial topics, it may be helpful for the instructor to supplement the exercises or chapters with additional readings that focus on other types of activities that focus on cultures outside of national cultures or focus on incorporating activities that have students investigate their own culture, activities that open a dialog to understand the types of cultures one may encounter and how/why cultures change and develop, and ways

for students to develop skills to communicate with various cultures without relying on international students' experiences to be indicative of an entire nation or culture. My biggest pedagogical suggestion, based on the data from this chapter, was that textbooks may be limited in their ability to develop all three domains of knowledge, so instructors and programs should intentionally build opportunities to develop all three domains, especially attitudinal and behavioral.

3.5.2.1. Using Textbooks to Increase Students' IC Skills.

While instructors may want to use textbooks to increase students' IC skills, the findings presented in this chapter lead me to argue that textbooks may not be the best tool for instructors to use since they do not address all domains and have some potentially problematic issues. I suggest that textbooks only address the cognitive (knowledge) domain related to developing soft skills because most of the textbooks provided content with surface-level reflections. Further, I shared several issues related to how textbooks present IC components. For these two reasons, I suggest that textbooks are not the most helpful tool to increase students' IC skills.

However, if instructors want to use textbooks and increase students' IC skills, they may want to develop activities that address the attitudinal and behavioral domains. For example, since textbooks offer surface-level descriptions that do not offer much in the way of critical self-reflection, the instructor may consider having students reflect (attitudinal) and explore IC components, especially examples and explore potential issues surrounding examples such as stereotypes, reductionism, ethnocentrism, among others. To address the behavioral domain, they could have students use Deardorff's (2006)

OSEE tool. As shared in a previous chapter, I suggest that the OSEE tool is a thick description that allows one to explore alternatives to Easy answers (which may be presented in textbooks).

Further, for instructors who want to focus on developing students ICC, I suggest they may consider different pedagogical tools encompassing all three domains. The following chapter explores a potential tool to use instead of relying solely on textbooks.

3.6. Chapter Three Summary

In chapter three I started by discussing how textbooks are often used to teach about IC (Brunsmeier, 2017; Matsuda & Matsuda, 2011). I illustrated some of the previous studies of textbooks and what scholars' found regarding how textbooks portrayed IC, such as problematic IC like factoids and discussing IC in a negative way. I then discussed my research project, where I hoped to answer three research questions:

- RQ1: How do textbooks describe culture, and have they kept up with the TPC field?
- RQ2: Have textbooks addressed previous scholar's concerns regarding the portrayal of culture in textbooks?
- RQ3: What opportunities for domain development do textbooks provide?

I then discussed how I conducted a textual analysis for several key TPC textbooks. Specifically, I analyzed the IC components within these textbooks. I discussed findings regarding the instances of IC components, provided descriptions of the types of IC

components, provided chapter distribution of IC components, and then provided generalized findings.

For example, I found several similar findings to previous scholars' work, such as the high frequency of using factoids, examples, and tips without using evidence to support these claims. Additionally, many of the books presented culture in a Western, ethnocentric fashion, sometimes painting other national cultures in an inferior way.

Additionally, I found that many of the books lacked defining the term culture, and while some used a national/Big culture understanding throughout, many textbooks would change their understanding of culture throughout chapters without acknowledging that the description of culture had changed, thus leading to potentially confusing or ambiguous understandings for their readers. I argue that with this finding, it would be beneficial for instructors to establish a definition of culture and intercultural communication in their classrooms that they interrogate and use alongside any texts used in the classroom.

Thirdly, I found that some textbooks started to include intentional lines about promoting and acknowledging other cultures, respecting other cultures' preferences, and accommodating communication to the target culture while presenting culture more positively. This view may suggest textbooks are beginning to change (albeit in subtle ways) from Western-only preferences to respecting/acknowledging/adapting to other preferences and addressing critiques from previous scholars' regarding negatively presenting culture.

Lastly, exercises and text promote a great deal of opportunities for cognitive domain growth, but there are little opportunities for attitudinal and behavioral opportunities for growth. Further, there due to some issues with textbooks, such as Othering and use of reductionistic factoids, some information may be detrimental to educational growth.

CHAPTER IV

CASE STUDY 2: DESIGNING A MODEL TO TEACH SOFT SKILLS

4.1. Overview of Key Definitions for this Chapter

Perhaps unconventional, but for the ease and accessibility for readers, I will start this chapter with the new definitions that will be introduced in this chapter, then provide the pre-established terms that help ground conversations relevant to this chapter.

- **Soft skills** - The cognitive, behavioral, affective, and rhetorical skills that allow "individuals to learn how to read and respond effectively to different workplace situations, people, technologies, and problems" (Bay, 2021, p. 13).
- **Cognitive Domain -** The content one knows related to a concept. As it relates to IC, the cognitive domain helps "reduce the ambiguity and uncertainty that are inherent in IC interactions" (Sercu, 2004 p. 76). This domain references what information one knows *about* a culture or IC.
- **Behavioral Domain –** The actions or behaviors one exhibits related to a concept. As it relates to IC, the behavioral domain might include "behavioural flexibility" as well as the social actions one exhibits through both verbal and non-verbal actions (Sercu, 2004 p. 76). This domain references how one acts in an IC interaction.

- **Affective Domain -** The emotions, attitudes, and convictions one has related to a concept (Sercu, 2004). As it relates to IC, the affective domain might include being open-minded and feeling positive about an IC interaction. This domain references how one feels about an IC interaction.
- **Relativist Lens -** using a combination of a generalist and specialist lens to teach SS.
- **Introduce → Practice → Reflect → Apply (IPAR) Model -** Model consisting of four stages (Introduce, Practice, Reflect, and Apply) that instructors can use in their classrooms to develop conceptual topics, such as SS. As it relates to this project, the SSs instructors are developing is, and are connected to, IC.
- **Knowledge Transference -** The ability for a student to transfer knowledge learned in the classroom to other contexts and situations.

Previous chapters in this dissertation provided definitions for Small culture, IC, and ICC. These definitions include:

- **Small culture -** "The sum of all the processes, happenings, or activities in which a given set or several sets of people habitually engage' which are commonly illustrated by a discernable set of behaviors and understandings that are open to change based on interactions among group members and various changes in circumstances" (Holliday, 1999, p. 248). Small cultures can refer to occupation, gender, class, among many other cultures.
- **Intercultural Communication (IC)** - an interaction between two or more participants of differing Small cultures. This definition will be used to shape future chapters, specifically the chapters focused on case studies and pedagogical

implications.

4.2. Introduction

In the previous chapter, textbooks were analyzed since many instructors, especially those new or uncomfortable with teaching intercultural communication, use it as the primary source of disseminating IC information to students (Matsuda & Matsuda, 2011). I intentionally chose to include this study first to illustrate how IC is discussed in textbooks and to provide instructors with some suggestions if they want to teach about IC and use textbooks as their primary source in the classroom. Some of these suggestions for TPC instructors and programs include establishing a definition of culture and IC and then exploring that definition related to content presented in the textbooks and intentionally supplementing textbooks with activities that focus on the attitudinal and behavioral domains.

In this chapter, I would like to offer a distinction now. First, textbooks can be a good tool to disseminate information *about* IC (especially if the information is interrogated). However, suppose an instructor or TPC program aims to bring IC topics into the classroom to *develop* students' IC skills, competency or simply develop students' communication abilities. In that case, I argue that textbooks alone may not be sufficient to develop these abilities in ways that support instructors'/programs' goals.

While disseminating information about IC topics might be a worthwhile pursuit of its own, I acknowledge that many instructors or TPC programs may have additional reasons

for incorporating IC topics and lessons into their curricula. In this chapter, I argue that if instructors or programs want to develop these skills, we need to re-examine what IC communication is and how we can develop that skill.

In this chapter, I continue my argument that IC is a soft skill (SS). Through research, I argue that instructors must work to develop the attitudinal, psychological, and cognitive domains to develop soft skills. Many scholars have discussed how these domains are required for SS development, especially IC skill development (see Deardorff, 2006; Sercu, 2004). Each domain is vitally important in developing SSs.

As a reminder, the ***cognitive domain is the content one knows related to a concept***. This domain references what information one knows about a culture or IC. As it relates to IC, the cognitive domain helps "reduce the ambiguity and uncertainty that are inherent in IC interactions" (Sercu, 2004 p. 76). Often, textbooks provide a lot of opportunities for cognitive development resources regarding IC.

The ***behavioral domain refers to the actions or behaviors one exhibits related to a concept. This domain references how one acts in an IC interaction***. As it relates to IC, the behavioral domain might include "behavioural flexibility" and the social actions one exhibits through both verbal and non-verbal actions (Sercu, 2004 p. 76).

Lastly, the ***affective domain refers to the emotions, attitudes, and convictions one has related to a concept*** (Sercu, 2004). The affective domain might include being open-minded and feeling positive about an IC interaction as it relates to IC. This domain

references how one feels about an IC interaction. It is worth noting that the behavioral domain and affective domain are different. For example, one can negatively affect an upcoming IC interaction (affective domain) but still illustrate adequate communicative actions (behavioral). In a more concrete example, a student is excited to begin volunteering at a food pantry. While they may be excited (affective domain), if they have not researched the food pantry's mission and language the organization uses (cognitive domain), they may illustrate undesirable or offensive behaviors, such as using low-income individuals instead of shoppers or clients related to the pantry users (behavioral domain). While it was not their intent to display negative behavior, a mismatch of abilities regarding the three domains occurred. Thankfully, many times, these situations can be easily corrected. For example, the food pantry volunteer organizer might explain the mission and illustrate the rhetorical reasoning and implied respect for using the term shopper rather than a low-income individual. Thus, this correction serves to adjust beliefs about shoppers (attitudinal domain), using different language next time (behavioral domain), and learning more about the organization (cognitive domain).

I argue that it is essential to develop each of these domains so that there is no mismatch between domains. Additionally, I argue that students can more effectively develop the overall SS by developing each of these domains. In other words, if you develop the cognitive and affective domains, students are more likely to have a better understanding of favorable actions in different contexts (behavioral domain).

Going back to the content discussed in the previous chapter, many textbooks focus primarily (and sometimes solely) on developing students' cognitive domains (i.e.: making

students aware of factoids and providing information on IC topics. In the previous chapter, some of the critiques I provided regarding textbooks were that they offer little in the way of self-reflections, interrogating one's own culture, or practicing communicating in a variety of contexts/situations to develop these skills. I suggest that the activities in the previous sentence are some ways that one might develop the attitudinal and psychological. To summarize, I argue that while textbooks can be a useful tool for disseminating information about IC, they might not be the most helpful tool in developing students' IC attitudes (affective domain) and actions (behavioral domain).

Further, I want to acknowledge that the same instructors who want to teach about IC and develop students' IC skills may lack time available to prepare materials or time to understand the information, need training to understand and develop their own IC knowledge and abilities, and a lack of adequate resources to support their IC instruction (Matveeva, 2008) or just general lack of comfort surrounding the topic (Brunsmeier, 2017). For these reasons, I have dedicated this chapter to discussing SSs and have provided a tool named the Introduce → Practice → Reflect → Apply (IPAR) tool that instructors can use to develop students' IC skills. I argue that this tool can teach SSs like IC (and SS connected to IC). I suggest that this tool can be used to make conceptual topics more concrete by developing all three domains of learning. Further, because of this model's flexibility, the model can be used in various contexts/teaching situations (with a variety of different teaching activites), which can be beneficial for TPC instructors who may have different objectives, instructional method preferences/requirements, and other

unique situations. After presenting the conceptual understanding of the model, I will also provide data from incorporating this model into entry-level, service TPC courses.

4.3. Literature Review

The following literature review discusses the following topics:

- The need to teach SS, like IC, in TPC classes,
- The difficulty of defining SSs,
- The types of models for teaching SSs, and
- The emergence of the IPAR model.

4.3.1. The Need for Soft Skills (SSs)

Many scholars have shared how employers often look for and hope for a variety of well-developed SSs in their candidates. However, they often find that recent college graduates overestimate and/or do not have adequate SSs that the employers are looking for (Anthony & Garner, 2016; Robles, 2012).

This misalignment in expectations may be caused partially due to a lack of consistent benchmarks for various SS. In other words, an employer may believe that the benchmark for strong interpersonal communication skills is related to having successful interactions with prospective clients. In contrast, a recent graduate may view the benchmark for interpersonal communication as the ability and desire to communicate with various individuals. TPC instructors and programs may have some objectives related to meeting various SS expectations and benchmarks in their courses; however, there is little consistency of what these benchmarks should be. For this project's scope, I do not

suggest what that level of competency is or should be; however, I would suggest that if individuals are looking for a benchmark and competency language, the Measuring and Assessing of Soft Skills (MASS) project offers beneficial resources. Instead, for the purpose of this dissertation project, I hope to illustrate ways that instructors can increase SS (like IC) development in their courses and programs through analyzing student responses and instructor observations. A future, worthwhile project could study implementing the IPAR model and examine changes (if any) to students' growth toward a pre-established benchmark or competency.

For the purposes of this chapter, I hope to illustrate ways that SS can be taught because there is often little agreement on how SSs can be taught (Bay, 2021). One of the most difficult aspects of teaching SSs is helping students conceptualize the SS development done in a classroom and then having students transfer that knowledge to other settings (Botke et al., 2018). While students can more easily connect the transferability of more technical/hard skills such as using a coding program, they may have difficulties applying soft skills/techniques because of the imprecision involved in the application of soft skills (Laker & Powell, 2011). For the purposes of this project, I define knowledge transfer or ***transferability as the ability for a student to transfer knowledge learned in the classroom to other contexts and situations.***

While a challenging task, I hope to offer a model that instructors can use not only to develop these skills but also has a component where students can reflect on the transferability of these skills, thus hopefully aiding in the transferability of these skills through metacognitive activities. Further, I suggest that this model can be used in any

course, but it can be especially helpful in entry-level, service TPC courses, where much of this information may be novel to students. When examining the need for SSs, this entire project suggests that entry-level, TPC (and all TPC) courses should teach SSs. As mentioned in a previous chapter, service courses help students by preparing them for writing they will do in their other courses (Behrens, 1980); I further that argument by positing that service TPC courses should also help prepare them for the SSs they will encounter later in their program as well as outside of their program.

As it relates to this dissertation project's goal of teaching IC in entry-level, TPC courses, I hope that this model can help instructors develop SS, like IC (and other connected SS related to IC). Further, I hope this model can help students transfer this knowledge from entry level TPC courses to other courses and other contexts (such as personal and professional interactions).

4.3.2. Difficulty Defining Soft Skills

As shared in chapter two, defining SSs (similar to defining culture) is difficult due to the large number and various definitions used. For example, researchers argue that technical professional writing is a soft skill in itself (Pflunger et al. 2020); however, these authors do not provide definitions or distinctions of what they consider a soft versus a complex skill. One might assume they refer to hard skills like code, run statistics, or test prototypes. In other words, the problem with teaching and implementation of including soft skills in the classroom often results due to the "nebulous nature" of the definition and the competencies themselves (MASS Project, 2012 p. 56). Therefore, I suggest that there

is a need for a strong SS definition to better understand the nuances of SS development and inclusion within TPC curricula, so one can better understand and teach the concept.

To begin establishing a definition, I chose to focus on literature related to SS development in TPC literature because there has been a lot of foundational work done. One of the seminal pieces regarding soft skills is by Robles (2012), who states that soft skills are the "character traits, attitudes, and behaviors" that one possesses (p. 457) as compared to hard/technical skills that typically refer to technical/dexterial skills (p. 456). Bay (2021) extends this definition and states that soft skills tied to TPC are the "rhetorical skills that require individuals to learn how to read and respond effectively to different workplace situations, people, technologies, and problems" (p. 13). I use these understandings to define ***soft skills as the cognitive, behavioral, affective, and rhetorical skills that allow "individuals to learn how to read and respond effectively to different workplace situations, people, technologies, and problems***" (Bay, 2021, p. 13). In other words, I argue that rhetorical skills can be knowledge surrounding the specific context/instance of the interaction; practical skills relate to skills related to how one feels; behavioral skills relate to how one acts; cognitive skills relate to the pre-existing knowledge one might apply to the current situation. In more concrete terms, IC, as a SS, would refer to the cognitive, behavioral, affective, and rhetorical skills one uses in an IC instance. This definition will be explored further in this chapter.

While many previous TPC scholars focus on the emphasis of SS development just for the workplace, I agree with Bay's (2021) statement that they are also beneficial in various other settings. For example, effective communication can be beneficial when one is

working with workplace colleagues. Additionally, working with a volunteering team could also be beneficial to accomplish a specific goal or objective. Further, developing listening skills could help in a workplace meeting or helping a friend in need. Additionally, managing a project could help lead a workplace project to success or planning a successful personal event like a birthday or holiday gathering. These examples are meant to illustrate that developing SSs are beneficial for various reasons and hopefully illustrate the need to develop these skills. Much of TPC research discusses the transferability of skills. Like IC, I argue that SS is another helpful and transferable concept that can be emphasized in TPC courses and programs.

As I explain SS more in-depth, it may be helpful to have examples of SSs to help one conceptualize what might be considered a SS. Robles (2012) provides one of the seminal articles regarding SS in the workplace. Robles analyzed executives' lists of suggesting SSs that employees need and categorized them as the following:

- Communication,
- Courtesy,
- Flexibility,
- Integrity,
- Interpersonal skills,
- Positive attitude,
- Professionalism,
- Team work, and
- Work ethic (2012).

While this SS list is neat and compact (for conceptualization purposes) , SSs are much more nuanced than this list. Robles goes on to suggest that these SSs listed act more as umbrella terms for several other SSs. Robles event illustrates what some of these subcategories of SSs might include:

- "Communication - oral, speaking, written, presenting, listening.
- Courtesy - manners, etiquette, business, gracious, says please and thank you.
- Flexibility - adaptability, willingness to change, lifelong learner, accepting new things, adjusting, teachable..." among several others (2012, p. 455).

While helpful to have SS listed in categories, SSs are rarely this simple. To better understand SS, we need to acknowledge the ambiguity, complexity, and messiness of SS. I argue that this list presents a false dichotomy of categories. In other words, there is more overlap between umbrella and subcategories. For example, it would be difficult for one person to be adept in interpersonal skills but not communication skills. Several skills would overlap, such as listening, speaking, responding to the other, etc. As mentioned previously, I agree with scholars like Parrish and Linder-VanBerschot (2010) who argue that IC is a SS in itself, but it is one that requires several other SSs as well. For example, some of these other skills relate to communication, courtesy, flexibility, integrity, and interpersonal skills.

4.3.3. Lenses and Models to Teach Soft Skills

As it relates to this dissertation project, I want to take a moment to connect the complexity of culture and SS. Both of these concepts are very complex concepts and

require a solid framework to teach these concepts. In this section, I explore some of the lenses related to building a SS framework and then make an argument for using the relativist lens to create a SS framework.

In current literature, there are three types of theoretical lenses for teaching SS. They include the:

- Generalist lens
- Specialist lens
- Relativist lens

Moore (2004) explains that a generalist lens views soft skills as general enough to be taught separate from content and can still relate to any discipline. Individuals who use a generalist lens would create a framework to teach SS specifically as its unit with its objective, separate from other content.

Conversely, the second lens, known as the specialist lens, views SSs as those skills that cannot be separated from their disciplinary context (Moore, 2004). In other words, SSs cannot be taught independently but must be taught through disciplinary activities (Moore, 2004). Individuals who follow this lens would create a framework incorporating SS within units they already have in their courses. Objectives would then be tied to how SSs relate to these units.

However, more recently, research, like that presented in Davies' (2006) article and research associated with the Measuring and Assessing Soft Skills (MASS) project,

suggests a third lens known as the relativist lens. The relativist lens suggests a gray area between the two other lenses and, depending on the context, combining approaches/frameworks can be a worthy pursuit (Davies, 2006; MASS, 2012). An individual who uses the relativist lens might use both approaches. When looking at their course, they may have units that specifically focus on teaching one (or several) SS separately as their units. Then they may have units that combine SS with pre-existing units and disciplinary content. This lens allows instructors to develop objectives that focus on SS on their own and how they relate to disciplinary content. In other words, the relativist lens combines the strengths of the other two lenses.

I argue that the relativist model is the most helpful lens for developing SS because it allows for the flexibility of teaching SS outside of and within disciplinary contexts. In other words, this lens provides flexibility for exploring SS on their own and within projects and allows a framework that can meet the variety of contexts and objectives an instructor may have.

When thinking about the transferability of TPC content, developing students' understanding of abstract topics, like SS, might be helpful for students to take the time to explore the complexity of the concept. Additionally, instructors can then combine that concept with pre-existing concepts/objectives in their courses to illustrate the transferability of that abstract concept (see Gonzalez et al., 2010 for more on learning transfer). For example, regarding SSs, if the instructor had course objectives of developing students' critical thinking abilities, they may first discuss (from the generalist lens) what critical thinking is and allow students to do low-stakes critical thinking

activities outside of regular TPC objectives, to develop those skills. Then, once students have a better grasp of this concept, an instructor might want to include a specialist lens, and have students use that base understanding of critical thinking and apply it pre-established course objectives, such as critically thinking and problem-solving when it comes to document design for a webpage to meet a client's expectations. This combination of models is the relativist lens.

4.3.4. Developing a Relativist Framework to Teach SSs

As mentioned previously, many instructors already feel uncomfortable approaching IC in their classrooms. With the knowledge that: there are multiple lenses to teach SS, and one should incorporate activities that address the three domains (behavioral, affective, and cognitive domains) to develop SSs, it is enough to make any instructor feel overwhelmed. However, this section attempts to provide a framework for instructors that considers all of these ideas.

To build a framework to teach SSs in this manner, research (both theoretical and pedagogical) led to the development of this model. The research consisted of reading articles and books that discussed pedagogical research regarding the instruction of SS broadly, or more specifically IC, related to TPC (and fields outside of TPC). I examined over 20 articles and noted commonalities and limitations among these works when developing the model.

For example, most of the articles focused chiefly on activities that could develop such skills as readings, interviews, and projects (see Cárdenas, 2012; Chiper, 2015; DeVoss et al., 2002; Kramer Moeller & Nugent, 2014; Pasquale, 2015; Yu, 2012; among others).

However, while many articles offered ways to practice these skills, the commonalities between limitations shared by researchers were also very helpful in developing the framework. For example, several articles mentioned that many activities did not (or that they needed to) offer students the ability to reflect on concepts or self-explore (see Chiper, 2015; Gómez Rodríguez, 2015; Jackson, 2015; Kramer Moeller & Nugent, 2014; Lantz-Deaton, 2017; among others). Similar to the limitation associated with textbooks, not allowing students to self-reflect on their abilities and skills and then practice, not all domains of development are engaged. By analyzing the subtleties within the articles, examining the domains, and the relativist frame, I developed commonalities that I dub as the IPAR model.

4.3.5. Introducing the IPAR Model

As a reminder, the IPAR model stands for Introduction → Practice → Apply → Reflect. Each letter of the acronym represents a stage of the framework. While exploring this model, I suggest that this model can help teach a variety of conceptual topics related to TPC, thus aiding students' ability to transfer these concepts to a multitude of situations and contexts. However, for this project, I will focus on using it to teach IC as a SS.

I would also like to note that I believe that many instructors may be using a similar model, especially instructors who are using client-based projects; however, I argue that

by using a framework (and naming that framework, which is my goal), complex topics like IC and SS become more nebulous and more approachable. As previously stated, this framework developed largely by examining literature related to teaching SS. I also would like to note that this framework can be seen and used in fields outside of TPC --- see Cempellin's (2012) work related to art, museum studies, and the development of SS.

To summarize, I suggest that by naming and explaining this framework (to researchers, practitioners, and students), all related to the learning of SS can more clearly understand the concept and the scaffolding that goes into developing these concepts. By explaining this model to students, students will be able to see how abstract or complex concepts they may learn in TPC classrooms can be transferred to many contexts and situations (especially in the Reflect stage). The naming aids students' ability to see the scaffolding and development of SS, as well transfer these skills in various settings and reflect on them for future transfer settings. My last hope with providing this framework is that the TPC community can use and further develop this model to aid with students' learning.

Each of the stages within the framework will be explored in-depth, but a few characteristics of the framework should be noted to understand the basics of the framework. Firstly, while there are four main stages within the framework, these stages do not have to be completed in order. Instead, these stages can be recursive and/or concurrent based on context, student need, and various other factors related to the instructor's goals and situation. This framework is presented in order (I → P → A → R) as a sample scaffolding method for instructors, justification for this suggested use.

However, each section also shares rationales for why an instructor may want to deviate from this organization.

For a quick overview so that readers can conceptualize the stages. The stages include:

- Introduction: Students are introduced to the abstract concept(s) and are defined, an overview of how this concept relates to the course (and potentially outside the course to illustrate transferability), and examples of the concept.
    - Domain developed: Cognitive.
- Practice: Students are asked to put the base (introductory) knowledge into practice to help further develop their understanding and application.
    - Note: A feedback loop must be included in this stage. This feedback loop allows students to receive feedback and implement that feedback. Peers and or the instructor can provide feedback. The practice stage should mostly be low-stakes assessments (such as low point writing assignments, quizzes, responses, discussions, and other activities) rather than high-stakes assessments.
    - Domain developed: Cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioral (depending on activity)
- Apply: Students are asked to use the introduction, practice, and potentially reflect experiences in a client or community partner project.
    - Note: It is crucial that this stage also has a feedback loop component with feedback from the client/community partner and/or the instructor. I argue that getting both is more effective as the client/community partner can

often discuss the holistic project. In contrast, the instructor might discuss more of the nuances related to soft skills/TPC. The Apply stage should be a high-stakes assessment.

    - Domain developed: Behavioral (and possibly attitudinal)
- Reflect: Students are asked to reflect on content they have learned, what they need to continue to develop, and how it can relate outside of the classroom context.
    - Note: While this stage can occur at any (and potentially multiple) point(s), it is crucial to have students reflect at the end of the entire experience to help the metacognitive transfer of the concept.
    - Domain developed: Attitudinal

Each of the following sections includes a more detailed description of the stage and a connection to how this stage relates to this dissertation's goal of incorporating IC into entry-level, service TPC classes.

4.3.5.1. Introduction Stage.

In the introduction stage, instructors should provide essential knowledge of the abstract concept to help ground their understanding and create a shared understanding that will be shared by the class and referred to throughout teaching this concept. Much of this foundational knowledge helps to develop students' cognitive domain about the topic. This groundwork is especially paramount when considering the entry-level TPC course where students may not have much familiarity with concepts (Nadan, 2016). Further, when considering that entry-level TPC courses can be taught in various modalities, scholars

like Gunawarden (2003) suggest that having this type of foundation can help teach nuanced topics, like culture.

I suggest that, at minimum, instructors should define the concept, connect the concept to the course and its goals (as well potentially connect it to other situations), and provide examples of the concepts. For example, for the current project, this introduction stage included sharing key definitions for soft skills, Small cultures, and IC. Further, the researcher shared how these concepts were related to one another and work and personal contexts. The class then was asked to share examples of SS and Small cultures, in addition to ones that the instructor provided.

My goal in providing these stages and frameworks is not to limit an instructor to a specific pedagogical method for introducing a concept. The introduction portion of this model can be achieved through various ways (lecture, reading, class discussion, among others) to fit with the instructor's needs, situation, and goals. For example, while teaching entry-level service TPC courses, I taught in various contexts, such as online and in person. The same activity or even tool might not work for both contexts. For example, for this project, to incorporate IC information in person, I used short lectures alongside handouts and guided notes; when teaching online sections, I recorded micro-lectures accompanied by readings and guided notes(for definitions). To explore examples of culture and IC, I used Think, Pair, Share discussions for in-person classes and Slack and FlipGrid for online classes.

To recap, this model intentionally does not limit itself to providing definitive pedagogical activities for executing this framework because I recognize that each TPC instructor, course, and program has unique, situated contexts and objectives. Instead, I hope to provide information about the stages and examples in an attempt to take a daunting task like developing IC skills and make it more manageable and concrete for instructors.

4.3.5.1.1. Alternatives to When to Incorporate the Introduction Stage.

I suggest that the introduction stage is typically the only stage that should be completed first, although in certain situations may not be necessary. For example, an instructor may want to have a low-stakes opportunity for students to practice a productive failure (Dobson & Walmey, 2021), then go back to introduce the concept and work through the failure. For example, an instructor who may want to teach an abstract concept like user experience (UX) may have students try to document a process and then have others replicate it using their peers' documentation, all while knowing that students will encounter several points of failure. These points of failure can be leveraged as a meaningful learning experience to illustrate the challenges and complexities of the topic; then, the instructor can go back and introduce the concept of UX and situate it within the experience that students had. Additionally, for IC, an instructor may have students talk about their cultures or facilitate activities where students explore SS as a form of generative thinking. Then, the instructor may go back and provide the foundational Introduction knowledge and have students reshape or revisit those previously completed activities with the new information.

While this is one option of an alternative moment to include the introduction stage, the researcher suggests that for the majority of the time, instructors may want to introduce the concept, SSs in this example, first to create the shared and grounded understanding of the concept with the class.

4.3.5.2. The Practice Stage.

In the practice stage, students can explore and practice the conceptual topic or abstract idea more deeply. This stage also introduces a (or multiple) feedback loop(s) that allow students to get feedback from the instructor and/or peers, typically in the form of a low-stakes assignment or activity.

Like all of the stages, the practice stage can be accomplished in various teaching methods based on the teacher's goals, objectives, and preferences. As per the relativist model, I suggest that a teacher have practice activities that focus solely on SS (related outside of disciplinary context) and focus on activities that are tied to pre-existing course objectives and/or disciplinary topics and units.

The practice stage is helpful because it allows students to develop the cognitive, behavioral, and affective domains required for ICC development (Lee et al., 2012). Specifically, this stage can allow students to develop their behavioral and affective domains by allowing students to interact with others, whether directly or through feedback (Pasquale, 2015), as well as work on decoding complex situations and skills involved (Chiper, 2015), which can help shape these domains' development. Further,

learning through action, like with active, practice learning activities, is one of the most effective ways to teach SS (Khasanzyanova, 2017).

For this dissertation project, I incorporated a portfolio assignment that had many practice activities embedded within it. For example, while one of the course objectives was for students to develop SS related to their field, students had the opportunity to interview professionals in their field. After that interview, they also discussed some of the commonly noted SS in pairs and as a class, especially as they related to IC. This conversation served as a feedback loop where students learned from one another. At times, this peer feedback also sets students back on the right track. For example, one student shared that, even though his interviewee shared soft skills that were important to his field (business sales), the student did not think any soft skills were needed because he believed the sales team worked alone. However, a classmate gently suggested that interpersonal skills, listening skills, and IC skills would be necessary to serve clients best. By having the opportunity to share these ideas and receive feedback, students can refine their understanding of these abstract concepts (SS in this example). For this portfolio, I also gave students private feedback on more sensitive activities. For example, students completed prompt activities where they explored a miscommunication or issue they experienced related to a Small culture they belonged to and then were asked to reflect how that situation could have been more productive/favorable. This activity was not shared with classmates, but I provided feedback to reinforce students' understanding of key concepts. For example, if a student shared that someone used assumptions or Easy answers and they were unsure on how to approach the conversation in the future, I

provided feedback in the way of sharing tools such as Deardorff's (2006) Observe, State, Explore, Explain (OSEE) tool as a form of thick description that could be used. As a reminder, thick description and OSEE are used as tools to combat Othering. In this sense, feedback is used to both correct/guide students' learning and understanding and reinforce key concepts from the course.

4.3.5.1.2. Alternatives to When to Incorporate the Practice Stage.

The practice stage is a stage that allows for flexibility to be included concurrently with other stages to meet students' needs. This stage can be leveraged differently, and activities can be added/removed to meet students where they are in the learning process. As mentioned previously, the practice stage can be performed at any time, but often having some elements of practice before going to the apply stage can be beneficial because it allows students to get feedback and grow before they are required to apply what they have learned.

4.3.5.3. The Apply Stage.

The apply stage (as long as all other stages are also used) is one of the most critical stages to aid students' understanding of the transferability of the abstract concept being taught. In the apply stage, students have the opportunity to explore and practice the conceptual topic or abstract idea in a setting usually outside of academia. These types of projects are often referred to as client or community partner projects. This stage also includes a feedback loop where the client/community partner and/or the instructor provides feedback to the student, typically in the form of a high-stakes assignment activity, such as

a project presentation or grade tied to that activity. The apply stage can work very well with entry-level TPC courses (as well as other TPC courses) because students are often asked to work on these types of projects.

While the apply stage may sound similar to the practice stage, there are two main differences. Firstly, the practice stage focuses on low-stakes assessment with feedback, while they apply stage focuses on higher-stakes assessments that typically build on information learned through practice. Secondly, the apply stage focuses on using these concepts in a situation a student may encounter outside of the course. While both stages allow students to learn through action, the apply stage is linked to the enhanced acquisition of SSs (Khasanzyanova, 2017; Gonzales & Baca, 2017). The application stage should be incorporated into TPC classrooms, regardless of modality. In other words, even if the TPC course is online, it is possible (and should be encouraged) to allow for these application activities (Gonzales & Baca, 2017; Arasaratnam-Smith & Doerfel, 2005).

While this model works very organically with TPC courses, it can still be used by various other types of courses as long as there is an element of students working with a client or community partner. For example, Cempellin (2012) wanted to teach students about art analysis, scholarship in art history, and museum studies. First, she introduced students to foundational information regarding art history; she then had students practice learning this information through readings, interactive talks with experts, and exploratory writing assignments. For the application portion, she had students create a virtual exhibition designed for a museum. The students worked directly with the museum officials, created

the catalog layout, and provided guided tours. Students had to apply the previously learned abstract concepts of art analysis, scholarship in art history, and museum studies to successfully achieve this goal.

This framework, especially as it relates to the apply stage, can be built into programs. In other words, this framework is not limited to just a semester. For example, Bay's (2021) article focuses on teaching soft skills through the internship component common for many TPC programs. The researcher suggests that this is part of the application stage because students are using and applying previous knowledge (that they were introduced to and practiced in their previous courses) to this internship. While internships can be beneficial for students to apply these skills, Bay (2021) and the current researcher agree that adding a reflection phase --- either periodically or at the end of the internship can help students explore and self-analyze to solidify their understanding of these concepts.

Students (and the instructor) pitched project ideas for local community partners and clients related to the current project. Students then selected the project they wanted to work with. This project was similar to entry-level TPC classrooms where students work to fill an established need or identify and address a perceived opportunity/challenge. This project was a group project where students could apply several soft skills, but a focus was given to identify the IC skills needed and used between their team and clients, and sometimes between themselves and their team members.

As shared, the application stage can benefit a student's understanding of the abstract concept because it allows them to use their knowledge concretely. Further, students note

that applying their learned knowledge in a "real" way (which may refer to outside of academia) allows students to start seeing and understanding the value of these abstract concepts.

4.3.5.1.3. Alternatives to When to Incorporate the Apply Stage.

As mentioned previously, while the application stage can be performed, having some practice before going to the application stage can lead to a more successful project both for the students and client/community partner.

However, during the application stage, if there are concepts that need to be revisited, students can practice them alongside the application stage. For example, with the current project, for one section, when students started working with their clients, several students mentioned having some worries regarding their leadership abilities. So, during the next class, the instructor introduced some leadership topics such as ways to motivate team members, how to lead an effective meeting, among other topics to allow students to practice and then directly apply this information.

4.3.5.4 The Reflect Stage.

In the reflection stage, students have the opportunity to reflect on the work they already have metacognitively. This stage is crucial because it allows students to see connections of abstract ideas in concrete and transferable work. These reflections can be open or guided, but some guided reflection to allow students to focus on the transferability of the concept can be beneficial because the reflection allows the student to see how this

concept applies in multiple situations, potentially within and outside of the classroom (Bay, 2021; Laker & Powell, 2011).

The reflection portion of the model is paramount because experiences alone are not enough for students to develop all domains. Said another way, regarding IC, students who are just introduced to different cultures will not necessarily develop their abilities or competency. Instead, they need to reflect on their abilities and how those abilities relate to the experience (Jackson, 2015; Lantz-Deaton, 2017).

For example, with Cempellin's (2012) work, Cempellin had students reflect at the end of the semester on the readings they had in class, as the reflection related to those abstract concepts of art analysis, scholarship in art history, and museum studies. While Cempellin (2012) had students reflect on the readings they did in the course, it may be beneficial to reflect on how they used that knowledge (i.e., when they were working in the museum). In other words, students should reflect not only on the cognitive development they did in the course but also on the behavioral and affective development, as it relates to the abstract concept/objective.

For example, in the current project, students completed a reflective memo discussing several concepts from class, including soft skills and intercultural communication. Having a final reflection that encompassed all previous work for the concept/topic is beneficial because it allows students better to understand the scaffolding and development of the project and see how they developed their understanding of the topic.

4.3.5.1.2. Alternatives to When to Incorporate the Reflect Stage.

Like all the other stages, the reflection stage can be completed multiple times and concurrently and/or before other stages. For the current project, students completed practice activities followed by short reflections to understand students' comprehension of the topic better. Having both types of reflections (reflections tied to practice and application activities as well as a reflection at the end of learning) may be beneficial for instructors because it allows the students multiple opportunities to self-analyze their growth and notice areas they need to focus on (Jackson, 2015). Further, from a pedagogical stance, having multiple reflections allows instructors to analyze activities that greatly aid the students' understandings and activities that may need to be revised or omitted in future semesters if they were not beneficial.

4.4. Methods

The following section outlines findings from using the IPAR model in the entry-level, service TPC courses to teach SS, like IC.

4.4.1. Research Question

This study was interested in answering one research question.

- RQ1: Does the IPAR model allow students to develop the three domains required SS growth?

To answer this question, I used a portfolio method in conjunction with the IPAR method to easily track students' development (if any) throughout the semester. However,

portfolios allow a researcher to see a more longitudinal change (Kramer Moeller & Nugent, 2014). To track development, I analyzed students' reports and responses about their development and recorded my observations. Because this project is not necessarily focused on establishing a competency or benchmark related to IC, I had students provide written narratives and responses and rate activities on their (in)ability to shape their development of the IC (or another SS connected to IC). The following chapter will discuss more in-depth the helpfulness of studying portfolios related to studying IC skills.

4.4.2. Overview of Study

This project lasted three years and included seven semesters of data from introductory, service technical writing courses. Students who took this course and participated in this study ranged from first-year students to seniors and were in various majors. Further, this sample includes data from students at two public institutions. This study was conducted from Fall 2017 to Spring 2020.

4.4.2.1. Content Analysis

It focused on a content analysis of the portfolio project students completed in entry-level, service technical writing courses. The content analysis focused on students' responses to each activity in the portfolio, which followed the IPAR model. Many of these included mini-reflections throughout, such as with an introduction reflection, reflections for the practice activities, a reflection tied to the client/community partner project, and one tied to the very end of the project/using the IPAR model.

I used a line-by-line coding method to analyze all the portfolios (Saldaña, 2020). I logged every instance of words similar to IC or SSs connected to IC that I wanted students to develop. For example, some of the In Vivo codes included:

- soft skills,
- intercultural communication,
- communication, and
- skill.

Additionally, I coded words that might be under the IC, SS umbrella, which included terms like:

- empathy,
- problem-solving,
- listening, and
- patience.

As shared in a previous chapter, content analysis allows one to share topics' relative frequency and importance (Anderson & Arsenault, 1998, 101-102). So, during this stage, I also noted the frequency that some soft skills were mentioned. I suggest that frequency alone does not present the full picture of development, so it is important to also analyze the context surrounding codes, so I recorded more contextual information in a memo log regarding each instance and assigned initial codes to each instance. After analyzing all the reflections in students' portfolios, I started analyzing the codes to find relationships between frequent codes (Saldaña, 2020). For example, I would add the affective,

behavioral, or cognitive codes anytime students addressed content related to one of those domains. To keep track of connections, I added these connections to my memo.

4.5. Findings

This project attempted to answer one research question: Does the IPAR model allow students to develop the three domains related to SS growth.

4.5.1. Analyzing Domain Development

Going back to the idea that the cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains have to be addressed to develop SS, I analyzed students' responses on all activities to see if these domains were being addressed.

4.5.1.1. Cognitive Domain.

For the cognitive domain, students read prompts about SS, like IC (among others), were provided working definitions for key terms like soft skills, culture, IC, and others. Students also explored a generative thinking activity where they wrote down descriptions of SSs tied to IC. There are several SS related to IC (Parrish & Linder-VanBerschot, 2010), so not surprisingly, there were over 50 descriptions of SSs. For example, some of these SSs included:

- Communication,
- Problem-solving,
- Adaptability,
- Interpersonal skills,
- Ability to take criticism,

- Conflict resolution,
- Listening, among many others.

Many students discussed how they learned more about soft skills through the use of this model. All of the following excerpts were coded with a conceptual code of cognitive domain because these responses expressed knowledge they had gained. For example:

- "I like how simple the text was because it made it easy to follow [the concept of SS]. It broke down soft skills in a way where it was understandable, and I learned things I did not know before the article."
- "It helped me to understand that having a lot of soft skills cannot only help me excel in my career, but help me to understand culture as a whole."
- "This [project] was extremely helpful with my understanding of soft skills... It was also very insightful to think about which soft skills are important for my major."

4.5.1.2. Affective Domain.

Within the affective domain, students had the opportunity to reflect on what skills they believed they were adept in, ones they needed to work on, and how they continue to develop these skills. For skills that students thought they excelled in, communication was by far the SS skill most. The most frequently stated soft skills that students self-reported excelling in included:

- Communication,
- Work Ethic,
- Adaptability,

- Ability to Perform Well Under Pressure,
- Interpersonal Skills,
- Time Management, and
- Problem Solving.

Conversely, students had several soft skills they listed as ones they viewed not being adept in, including:

- Confrontation/Conflict Management,
- Delegation,
- Time Management, especially as it relates to self-motivation,
- Confidence/Decisiveness,
- Active Listening, and
- Adaptability.

Similar to the cognitive domain, several students discussed how their perceptions and attitudes about SS change through this model. The following excerpts were coded with a conceptual code of affective domain because these responses expressed how feelings/worldviews/attitudes changed. For example:

- "...it made me realize what I need to work on, as well as what I already have a good grasp on. I also think that this made me realize how many different small cultures I am going to be working with. Before this prompt, I did not really understand how many different cultures I would be working with."

    - Note: This response was coded as effective because of the nod to acknowledging areas of growth needed and a slight change in mindset shift regarding cultures one might work with.
- "I would have never thought that having an understanding of culture would be considered a part of a soft skill, but I realized that it is one of the most important because nearly every field involves people and environments with different cultures."
    - Note: This response was coded as affective due to a mindset shift regarding cultural understanding.

4.5.1.3. Behavioral Domain.

Lastly, similar to the three previous domains, students shared how, through this model, their actions changed. The following excerpts were coded with a conceptual code of behavioral domain because these responses expressed how actions or behaviors changed. All but the first example excerpts come from the Application stage: not surprisingly, responses reflecting on the Application stage yielded the most behavioral codes.

- "I think it was extremely helpful [to] understand and use these skills for honestly what may have been the first time since actually learning about them and it provided an opportunity to enhance them."
- "It was amazing getting to work with actual clients. I learned a whole new level of how to have professional communication and also how helpful it is to seek counsel. As a student, I should never stop learning. This gave me the opportunity

to really think outside of the box and use the resources that I was given in this project. I took so much from it."

- "Real life experiences are crucial in my opinion to getting ahead or improving in life. This project provided all of us a firsthand experience on how to act in a professional setting... This project challenged me and my group to go above and beyond a normal project. We were not constricted on creativity and were able to branch out wherever we wanted to and that was important to me in getting more motivation to work harder on this project."
- "It was extremely helpful working with a real client and developing my understanding of culture. Meeting with the client in person helped me build confidence in my social skills and communication abilities. Before this project I was always nervous to meet with team members in person and discuss the project, however, this project helped alleviate that."

4.5.1.4. Students General Comments Regarding Model.

While analyzing responses, I also found that several students also shared that using the IPAR model itself was helpful. For example:

- "This project was one of the best projects that I can think of to help students transition into a world where cooperation is necessary. It was also the best practice for the application of soft skills."
- "[In the beginning, we got] the groundwork for soft skills and culture in the professional workplace, I think that a real-life project is so much more beneficial than anything else. Also, reading about having good communication skills, team

skills, and technical writing skills means nothing unless you can actually utilize the skills in real life."

- "I thought soft skills were just something you said you had at interviews and didn't use them again. I'm realizing that they are [concepts] that you can develop and they help a lot when working with others."
- "I became more away of IC and my SS abilities. This project also helped me realize barriers I need to overcome to develop some of my weaker skills."
- "Soft skills are everywhere. Learning about them help you to better interact with others."

4.5.2. Knowledge Transfer

While this study did not do a follow-up after the course was over to measure transference, there were activities where students could provide how they might develop specific SSs. When students discussed how they might develop these skills, students often shared most often that they would:

- Get skills organically through time
- By "working" on the skill
- Remind self of soft skill
- Learning from mistakes

The findings will be elaborated upon more in the discussion section.

4.6. Discussion

As an answer to the research question, it was clear that students responded to their affective, behavioral, and cognitive development.

The portfolio project clearly illustrated students' development in understanding content related to SS (cognitive), as well as students sharing a newfound belief/development that soft skills were needed and valuable (attitudinal) and using these understandings to interact with their peers and clients (behavior), the degree of change was not precise. However, the degree of development was not as clear. This limitation was due partially to the lack of establishing benchmarks for students to use and compare throughout the semester. A future study establishing benchmarks and having students take a pre-and post-test would be beneficial.

Additionally, after conducting this study and analyzing the data, it was clear that the affective domain may need more emphasis, whether in a classroom or throughout a program. While students illustrated several ways they were developing the affective domain, this domain also seemed to need the most development, at least as it relates to SS.

4.6.1. Affective Domain Development

For the affective domain, while analyzing students' self-perceptions of SS they excel in, I found that students illustrated SS they excelled in by providing supporting details; however, there were some instances where students may have needed more support to develop accurate self-representations of SS they excel in.

It should be noted that a limitation of this question was not providing students a benchmark to compare that excellence too. For example, do they excel in that SS to the degree they would be effective using it in the workplace, or do they excel in it currently for certain circumstances? This study suggests that giving students more guidance to discuss this excellence to a relative benchmark may be helpful.

Regardless of this limitation, I wish to discuss these findings related to previous conversations and research in literature. Most students identified communication as a SS they excelled in. After communication, students reported work ethic, adaptability, ability to perform well under pressure, interpersonal skills, time management, and problem-solving as SS they excel in. Many times that students provided these examples, they offered some evidence. For example, if they listed problem-solving as a skill they excelled in, they would often relate it to working with a client and coming up with different solutions to meet the clients' needs.

However, regarding some skills, I did find some skills where students may have been overconfident in their abilities of specific SS skills, which was similar to Robles' (2012) findings. For example, communication and leadership were two mismatched skills. In other words, there were several instances where a student mentioned they excelled in leadership or communication. However, they lacked evidence, or there was evidence that was counter to that idea.

When examining final reflections as they compared to reflections in activities, students shared that they were expelled in their communication abilities; however, when reading reflections regarding their application practice, many times students would share that there were communicative problems, often due to their peers not responding to emails or group messages, or in general throughout the project. This contradiction can be seen in a couple of ways.

Firstly, it could be true that the student who shared this stance was correct: their peers were poor communicators, and they were effective. However, what might also be likely is that both parties needed to work on establishing communication expectations, and both worked on these skills.

The idea of arguing that peers or others are not adept in a SS, but oneself is, was a common finding during the analysis process, especially as it related to the application stage. While several students did suggest there were skills they realized they needed to develop during (and after) the application stage, many students shared they excelled (or were at least more adept) than their peers and/or clients they were working with. Further, these individuals would also share that if there were issues related to these skills, it was due to these other individuals' lack of skills. I want to pause and dissect this idea because of its potential assumptions and implications. Firstly, again, these individuals could be correct in sharing those difficulties in a project due to factors outside of one's control. However, again, what might be more likely is that one has some level of degree of responsibility tied to those road bumps or issues, which may suggest that there needs to

be more development regarding the affective domains, specifically through activities like self-reflection or peer/instructor evaluation regarding certain SSs.

To explain this idea more in-depth, let us take the following example of leadership or interpersonal issues reported by one group. One group's team lead shared in their reflection that their leadership abilities were "superior," and their team lacked interpersonal skills and how to take direction. They shared that they felt portions of the application stage were difficult because of their teammates' "inability" to get these tasks completed. In their reflection, this team member shared that they had adept leadership skills because they could delegate and expected their team members to accomplish these tasks on time when asked because (in their words) "that is what a leader does." One might expect their team members had a potentially different perspective. These team members shared that, from their perspective, the team lead did not complete any task outside of writing a portion of the project, assigned tasks in too short of a time frame (i.e., one day was given). When broached by team members to assist with more of the project, the team lead shared that it was not part of their role. While this example is one of the more extreme examples of overestimating their abilities, there were several other examples of overestimating abilities due to conflicting information provided in later reflections or by others.

I posit that while the overestimation of one's abilities may prove problematic in some scenarios if one is open to correction, one can still develop these skills. However, more problematic and potentially dangerous is overestimating one's abilities while blaming

others for perceived lesser ability. This line of thinking or believing one is superior to others and one does things correctly compared to others is closely related to Othering due to the refusal to be open to other perspectives or explanations. Allowing students more time to get feedback from one another on their SS in a safe, low-stakes, and potentially anonymous manner may be a beneficial follow-up study.

Additionally, other affective areas related to SS that students wished to develop included

- confrontation/conflict management,
- delegation of tasks/work,
- time management (mostly when related to self-motivation and not procrastinating),
- confidence and decisiveness when working with teams,
- active listening and engaging based on what has been learned through listening, and
- being adaptable.

While some of these skills may seem tied more closely to the behavioral domain, when analyzing them, it became clear they were tied more closely to the affective domain. While slightly tangential to the purpose of this chapter, I bring these skills up to illustrate not only some of the SSs that can be developed more but more to illustrate how that more emphasis should be put on developing the affective domain when using the IPAR model.

Regarding each of the skills that students hoped to develop more, students shared that regarding confrontation and conflict management, they felt uncomfortable speaking up in a group when they disagreed (affective) or unsure how to deal with a team member who was not being helpful to the group (affective).

Regarding delegation of tasks/work, while this might have to do with the behavioral domain, it seemed to stem from the fear of giving tasks to others and not knowing how they perform. Students reported this had to do with not knowing how to or because they felt they could do the task/work better than the others, so they wished to complete it themself. Regarding a lack of ability with time management and self-motivation (affective), students shared procrastinating (affective or behavioral), especially as it related to work in online courses or work in their life they did not view as meaningful. For confidence and decisiveness, students shared that they (and often their group) had Difficulty getting momentum to move forward because of a lack of decisions being made. This lack of decisiveness may also relate to not wanting to be perceived as confrontational or overly authoritarian in a group (affective). Lastly, students mentioned wanting to work on their active listening abilities, especially as it related to extracting and using essential information. For example, when working with clients, students mentioned that they wanted to find more about the gaps or needs the client had to make the project more beneficial for the client (affective).

While not as frequently reported, but reported twice, was the ability to take criticism/feedback. The researcher suggests that even though only a few students reported

this as a soft skill they needed to develop, it might be a SS that is worth giving students opportunities to develop. In the current project, some students' disconnect with their abilities (especially as it relates to comparing those abilities to perceptions of others' abilities) might be rectified by allowing students to give feedback to one another and then discussing ways to use that feedback. Since many students will work with others through team projects, at work, and in other scenarios where they will need to receive feedback, developing the skill to take that feedback objectively may be a valuable skill to develop.

4.6.2. Knowledge Transfer

As mentioned in the results section, students found the application activity that worked with a client and the practice activity of interviewing a professional as the most helpful to their SS abilities. These results align with Anthony and Garner's (2016) results of students reporting that connected or located outside of the classroom is the most helpful to their learning. Anthony and Garner (2016) and Bay (2021) suggest that students can see the transferable skills through these activities and engage students more deeply in content.

On a similar note, students shared ways they hoped to develop SS outside of the class. The most common responses included gaining the skills organically through time by "working" on the skill, reminding oneself of the skill, and learning from previous mistakes. The researcher suggests that these responses are all valid; however, having a more concrete plan may be helpful for students who want to develop these skills more intentionally. Instructors may want to consider having students reflect on the skills they

feel are weak and then create an action plan that involves all three domains so they can develop those skills.

For example, if a student shares that they want to develop their abilities to delegate tasks, they might come up with a plan that includes:

- Cognitive: Learn about how leaders choose how and to whom to delegate tasks to
- Attitudinal: Being open to delegating some tasks to peers (even if I believe that I can accomplish the task more effectively)
- Behavioral: In my next project, delegate a task that I might not have previously

4.6.3. Reflections on Model as it Relates to Learning

I would like to take a moment to situate this model in learning/development theories and previous scholarship. After building this model, I would like to share parallels this model has with already pre-existing learning theories.

To recap, this model is based on the idea that one can teach abstract concepts through introducing a topic (introduce), giving students time to practice the project (practice), use and further develop those skills in a client-/community-based project (apply), and then further develop those skills through reflection (reflect).

Firstly, I would like to share parallels of how this model relates to some of what researchers know about how learning occurs. I argue that this model incorporates distributed practice of learning, rather than massed learning which helps students learn the material and retain the

material. Distributed in this sense relates to going over the concept (IC) several times throughout the unit(s)/semester. Research has established that distributed practice helps an individual connect neural pathways to learn materials better than massed practice (Doyle & Zakrajsek, 2019). Massed practice would relate to a student cramming for a test, writing a paper the night before, or having all the material related to an abstract concept being taught all at once. Oftentimes with courses, instructors will go over great depth of one concept in one class. I argue that distributed practice is more beneficial, and it would require an instructor to consistently revisit material again and again over a longer period.

When revisiting material, the instructor could apply the material to new information that is being taught. This idea relates to transfer, which while was discussed in the previous section, relates to learning conceptual materials in multiple ways and applying them in new and different ways (Barnett & Ceci, 2002). An instructor could incorporate distrusted practice and transfer in both the **practice** and **apply** stages. While shared previously, transfer can increase with distance, or time, and when one uses distributed practice over a long period of time (say a semester), a learner is more likely to remember and easily recall the information because long-term potentiation has occurred (Ratey, 2001).

Throughout distributed practice and because students are having to apply material in multiple fashions, they are developing multiple neural paths in their brain to understand the material. This idea of creating multiple paths to retrieve information is known as elaboration (Doyle & Zakrajsek, 2019). Elaboration can occur when you are using multisensory techniques, which often would occur in the **practice** stage. For example, if an instructor provides a lesson on

intercultural communication, students are engaged only in hearing. But, through the practice stage, an instructor might have them write down notes (sight) and then discuss with a peer about what they've learned, potentially play a retrieval game like Kahoot! (touch/sight), or a multitude of other activities. The **apply** stage builds on this idea by having students apply this information in a new setting (transfer) and in a way that most likely will engage multiple sense. Schacter (2001) argues that the more ways we can use the information, for example like in the classroom activities and with a client, the more likely we will be able to recall the information in the future. Summarized, each of these multisensory approaches in the practice stage further aid in elaboration and thus students' ability to understand, use, and recall the conceptual topic.

Secondly, I would like to argue for the uniqueness of the **apply** stage, and why it is crucial. While practice could happen in a variety of ways, I wanted to make a concrete additional stage where students worked outside of the classroom to better understand, apply, and develop their knowledge of the concepts. Upon my own reflection of this model as compared to other educational theories, the **apply** portion of this project uses several concepts from constructivism. Constructivism focuses on the idea that students can create knowledge through experience, simulations, hands-on practice rather than learning only about the conceptual topics. Constructivism has been famously used in educational and educational psychology researchers like Maria Montessori (and thus Montessori practices) and Lev Vygotsky (cultural-historical theory). Both scholars focus on younger children but have the belief that learning happens through interaction (they focus on play for younger children) (Lillard, 2013; Pass, 2007). The **apply** stage is no different. This stage allows students to make their meaning through unique experiences outside of the classroom and help support distributed learning and transfer. Again, I

share this information as my own metacognitive reflections as glimpses of how this model is rooted in learning theories/understandings that have already been established.

4.6.4. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Studies

The introduction of a new model always comes with limitations, often related to its relative newness. This section wishes to present some of the limitations of this study and model and some suggestions for future studies.

Firstly, there is a need to test the effectiveness of this relativist model compared to a generalist or specialist model. Future studies could use this model to the others in future studies to find similarities and differences related to the effectiveness of this model and students' ability to see the transferability of content into other situations.

Secondly, other courses using this model and reporting on the findings would be beneficial. It should be noted that since the start of this project, this model has been used in other classrooms, such as upper-division, TPC courses (see Rieger & Lonelodge, 2021); however, future studies where the researcher is separate from the instructor would be beneficial as a sustainable research practice (Melonçon & St. Amant, 2020).

4.7. Conclusion

This section wishes to discuss some of the implications of findings from this study as they relate to the TPC field and, more specifically, related to pedagogical considerations. In this chapter, I shared some of the reasons surrounding the need for teaching SS, especially as it relates to students' personal and professional lives. Further, I illustrated

the connection between IC and ICC as a type of SS. I used this chapter to illustrate the different lenses for viewing and teaching SS: the generalist, specialist, and relativist model and argued that the relativist model might be the most helpful when teaching SS.

I then spent time discussing the creation of the IPAR model, which uses a relativist lens, and was created to allow instructors to teach complex or abstract topics (like SS) to students in ways that allow students to develop cognitively, behaviorally, and attitudinally as it related to the concept. This section discussed each portion of the model. The researcher posits that this model can fit the multitude of modalities that TPC courses are taught in. The model allows for flexibility to allow the instructor to use teaching tools that best serve the instructor's needs and objectives.

The chapter then discussed a sample preview of how this model was used to teach students in a TPC classroom, SS, like IC. It focused on some of the results students shared regarding their abilities and learning of SS and then discussed some of those findings. The researcher suggests that this chapter adds to the field in a few meaningful ways. It:

- Introduced a model that instructors can use to teach complex or abstract topics in a variety of teaching modalities
    - This model uses a relativist lens and allows for behavioral, attitudinal, and cognitive development regarding the concept.
- It presented some SS that students feel confident in and some that students hope to develop more.

- These findings can be incorporated into future research or teaching opportunities.
- Further, it illustrated that there might be some overestimation of SS abilities, indicating an area for TPC research and programs to focus on developing.

4.8. Chapter Four Summary

In this chapter, I began by arguing that while textbooks are a primary tool for disseminating information *about* IC (cognitive domain), to *develop* students IC skills, an instructor must acknowledge that IC is a type of SS, and as such to develop SSs one must develop all three domains of learning: cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioral. Further, I referenced back to some of the findings in chapter three to articulate that textbooks should be supplemented with activities that focus on the attitudinal and behavioral domains of teaching. I then presented a literature regarding the need to teaching SSs, like IC in TPC classes, the difficulty with defining SSs, models for teaching SSs, and then the emergence of the IPAR model. I share that the relativist lens that combines instruction that develops SSs both separately from and integrated into pre-existing objectives is a beneficial lens to use when teaching SSs, like IC. I then presented the IPAR model. The stages include:

- Introduction: Students are introduced to the abstract concept(s) and are defined, an overview of how this concept relates to the course (and potentially outside the course to illustrate transferability), and examples of the concept.
    - Domain developed: Cognitive.

- Practice: Students are asked to put the base (introductory) knowledge into practice to help further develop their understanding and application.
    - Note: A feedback loop must be included in this stage. This feedback loop allows students to receive feedback and implement that feedback. Peers and or the instructor can provide feedback. The practice stage should mostly be low-stakes assessments (such as low point writing assignments, quizzes, responses, discussions, and other activities) rather than high-stakes assessments.
    - Domain developed: Cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioral (depending on activity)
- Apply: Students are asked to use the introduction, practice, and potentially reflect experiences in a client or community partner project.
    - Note: It is crucial that this stage also has a feedback loop component with feedback from the client/community partner and/or the instructor. I argue that getting both is more effective as the client/community partner can often discuss the holistic project. In contrast, the instructor might discuss more of the nuances related to soft skills/TPC. The Apply stage should be a high-stakes assessment.
    - Domain developed: Behavioral (and possibly attitudinal)
- Reflect: Students are asked to reflect on content they have learned, what they need to continue to develop, and how it can relate outside of the classroom context.

- Note: While this stage can occur at any (and potentially multiple) point(s), it is crucial to have students reflect at the end of the entire experience to help the metacognitive transfer of the concept.
- Domain developed: Attitudinal

After presenting this model, I dived more deeply into each stage and provided several example activities and alternatives of when this stage could be conducted. After explaining the model, I discussed the research project, which analyzed student portfolios to answer whether the IPAR model allowed for students to develop SSs. Through my textual analysis, I found that students were developing and engaging each domain; however, the degree of development was not as clear. I argued that special attention should be made to adding affective domain activities and for future studies to potentially use pre- and post- rubrics to assess this development.

CHAPTER V

CASE STUDY 3: STUDENTS PERCEPTIONS OF ACTIVITIES

5.1. Overview of Key Definitions for this Chapter

Perhaps unconventional, but for the ease and accessibility for readers, I will start this chapter with the new definitions that will be introduced in this chapter, then provide the pre-established terms that help ground conversations relevant to this chapter. New definitions for this chapter include:

- **Competency -** using a predetermined benchmark to measure the level of the cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioral domains as it relates to a certain skill. Competence, then, would refer to an individual meeting a certain benchmark.
- **Intercultural Sensitivity** - an individual's "ability to discriminate and experience relevant cultural differences, and is defined in terms of stages of personal growth along a continuum of increasing sophistication in dealing with cultural differences. For this reason, intercultural sensitivity helps to assess intercultural competence" (Wang, 2013 p. 203-204).
- **Intercultural Communication Competency (ICC)** - having developed all three domains: cognitive, behavioral, and affective domains as it relates to a predetermined benchmark.

Previous chapters in this dissertation provided definitions for Small culture, IC, and ICC. These definitions include:

- **Small Culture -** "The sum of all the processes, happenings, or activities in which a given set or several sets of people habitually engage' which are commonly illustrated by a discernable set of behaviors and understandings that are open to change based on interactions among group members and various changes in circumstances" (Holliday, 1999, p. 248). Small cultures can refer to occupation, gender, class, among many other cultures.
- **Intercultural Communication (IC)** - an interaction between two or more participants of differing Small cultures. This definition will be used to shape future chapters, specifically the chapters focused on case studies and pedagogical implications.
- **Soft Skills** - "rhetorical skills that require individuals to learn how to read and respond effectively to different workplace situations, people, technologies, and problems" (Bay, 2021, p. 13).

5.2. Introduction

Currently, in this dissertation, I have explored the complexities related to teaching IC. Further, I established that many instructors feel uncomfortable teaching IC topics, so they rely on textbook representations of culture to teach IC. However, when analyzing textbooks, there are two main issues. Firstly, these representations have several problems related to Easy answers. Secondly, textbooks typically only allow students to develop their cognitive domain (due to limited depth of activities). However, as the previous

chapter illustrated, one needs to develop students' attitudinal, cognitive, and behavioral domains to develop SS like IC.

The previous chapter presented a model that instructors could use that engages all domains, which would be effective for instructors to teach complex topics, like IC. The previous chapter was needed to establish that this framework could be a tool students use in their classroom. In this chapter, I now discuss different types of activites for executing the IPAR model to teach IC and explore which ones can be practical tools for instructors, especially those who are new or uncomfortable with teaching IC.

As mentioned previously, IC is a current conversation within the technical and professional communication (TPC) field and classroom. TPC instructors and programs may choose to teach IC for pragmatic, workplace preparation, and more general reasons, such as sensitizing and helping students communicate well in a variety of settings and with a variety of individuals. Thus, teaching IC is to develop students' IC skills (and potentially competency). As noted in the previous chapter, the goal of this dissertation is not to establish what competency is for a program or instructor; but rather illustrate if growth has been achieved, according to students' responses. For TPC instructors and programs looking for a competency rubric with benchmarks, the MASS project (2012) and the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU, 2009) provide strong rubrics.

In previous chapters, specific attention has been given to how textbooks discuss this topic (Matsuda & Matsuda, 2011; Matveeva, 2007; Miles, 1997; Thrush, 1993). However,

outside of textbooks, there are several ways to teach IC communication. Some commonly mentioned methods include providing:

- Reflexive prompts
- Narratives that explore IC scenarios
- Textbook reading and activities
- Interview activities
- Client-/Community-Based Projects
- Portfolios
- Reflections

It should be noted that textbooks tend to encapsulate some of these other methods, such as prompts and narratives. However, as the chapter regarding textbook studies shows, many of these textbook activities provided a surface-level understanding. Most did not provide activities where students would reflect on their worldviews and understanding of culture (Rieger, 2020). Further, several previous studies shared limitations and called for follow-up studies. For example, some studies typically only provided a single semester as a case study, used only one institution, and/or using a particular course where this information was taught. While these one-shot case studies can provide interesting information, TPC scholars have recently also called for more sustainable research in the technical writing field (Melonçon & St. Amant, 2019). These scholars suggest that in order for research to be sustainable, "it needs to continuously grow, but to do so within a set of limits of what the field finds acceptable for quality and kinds of research" (Melonçon & St. Amant, 2019, p. 131). To make research more sustainable, these

scholars suggest having multiple-semester long case studies, case studies where the instructor and researcher are different individuals, providing a cross-institutional study, and/or using a more generalizable course so this information can be used in multiple settings.

In this chapter, I attempt to address these needs/concerns. This study builds from previous scholars such as Wang (2013) and offers a clear overview of how this study was conducted. Additionally, the data from this study consists of three years (seven full semesters), with more than twelve sections of an introductory, service technical writing course at two public institutions. This study was conducted from Fall 2017 to Spring 2020. Regarding longitudinal pedagogical studies, Melonçon et al. (2020) suggest that, since TPC has more than 50 years of published articles, it may be necessary to push past single, pedagogical case studies, which this study does.

The present study had several key findings, including:

- While students found all teaching methods helpful, the "real" interactions with individuals in their field or client/community-based projects were the activities that students shared that were the most helpful for their growth and development of IC. While perhaps unsurprising, this finding illustrates the need for the Application portion of the IPAR model and these opportunities in TPC classrooms.
- Prompts that had students reflect on stereotypes that Small cultures belonged to were a particularly effective tool for students to understand reductionistic assumptions and stereotypes issues.

- Students often discussed how the portfolio helped them grow in their IC understanding, primarily related to their field and/or future workplace.

5.3. Literature Review

To summarize previous chapters, in chapter two, I argued that Small culture is a beneficial lens for understanding culture compared to territorial or national, Big cultures. Chapter three was an analysis of how culture is presented in TPC textbooks. While textbooks can be a beneficial tool to start thinking about culture, they are typically limited in how they can help students develop complex understandings of various cultural issues because of their static view of culture and lack of defining culture. In this chapter, I focused on textbooks because these tools are often used by faculty who are new and/or uncomfortable with teaching IC. Due to the limitations of textbooks to adequately develop students' ICC, additional methods should be explored. I will focus on some of these additional methods as well as present a study of students' evaluations of these methods. Before the study is presented, key definitions that will be used throughout this chapter will be established.

5.3.1. Key Definitions

Several key terms, such as IC, have already been established. However, a deeper conversation of the nuances of these definitions may be helpful for readers to understand difficulties when discussing how to measure or assess these skills.

5.3.1.1 Competency.

Taking a step back to understand competency, as it relates to ICC, it may be helpful to understand the different types of competency.

For example, competency can typically refer to the general ability/ease to complete a task, or it can refer to 'not just contingent surface behavior but [...] to deep-seated traits, habits, or virtues' (Flemming 2009:9). For example, if using the first type of understanding of competency, basic car maintenance competency could refer to one's ability to change their car's oil and filters. Witte and Harden (2011) suggest that this understanding of competency is popular in education because using predetermined tasks, goals, and objectives that can be easily measured and assessed. If individuals can quickly complete these predetermined competency tasks (or benchmarks), they can be classified as competent with essential car maintenance.

However, they also argue that when assessing competency, especially as it relates to intercultural communication competency (ICC), the second understanding of competency is needed that requires a potential attitudinal and or mindset/worldview adjustment that may not be easy to assess. This attitudinal change refers to the affective domain. In other words, this type of ***competency refers to the level of development of the cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioral domains related to a particular skill, as measured by a predetermined benchmark.*** While the SS growth has been illustrated throughout the dissertation, I have not used a predetermined competency benchmark(s) throughout this dissertation.

IC is not the only SS that relies on this type of understanding of competency. For example, social justice competency, which is assessed on awareness (attitudinal), knowledge (cognitive), and skills (behavioral) (Flores et al., 2014), has competency aspects that can and cannot be easily measured. While knowledge and skills might be objectively assessed, the true awareness one has, primarily as related to the "ongoing self examination of biases, prejudices and stereotypes" (p. 1006-1007) with the hopes of combating these issues, can be more challenging to measure. Further, students may provide performative-based responses, skew the accurate understanding of their thoughts/beliefs. In other words, individuals can "display particular characteristics or make the appropriate choices in an assessment situation that says something significant about their knowledge and understanding of what is required, but it is unlikely to reveal whether these behaviours are habitual" (Flemming, 2009 p. 9). Individuals can respond or perform in a way that they think an individual (teacher or supervisor) wants to see/read/hear. However, they may not make the psychological or behavioral growth/change to become more competent, even if they share. Thus accurately assessing their ICC is difficult.

I agree with Witte and Harden's (2011) argument that ICC refers to the second understanding of competency. I agree with their statement that this understanding is messier and more difficult to assess. However, just because it is messy and challenging to assess does not mean that we, as researchers/instructors, should necessarily stray away from this goal. The following sections will illustrate rationales and examples of how to measure this skill.

5.3.1.2. Intercultural Communication.

Referring to the understanding of culture as Small cultures from the previous chapters, I argued that ***intercultural communication (IC) is an interaction between two or more participants of differing Small cultures***. These interactions can include the oral, verbal, physical, among other aspects of that interaction. For example, let us say that there are first-year TPC students (TPC student small culture) who will be working with an environmental protection agency (EPA) community partner (EPA small culture). The students do not have any knowledge of the EPA nor what they do. While they may have gone to that same college, the community partner might not know much about what TPC is nor what the students do, believe, or can do. Let us say the students and community partnerships have a meeting to discuss the organization's needs, the values of both, and the skills/abilities that the TPC students can provide. This communicative exchange could be considered a type of IC because, in this instance, students are communicating from different Small cultures (TPC students and EPA officials). However, they may realize that they have similar ones (going to the same college). Again, I argue that IC might be an instance where two different cultures are engaged. However, I also argue that frequently these interactions can allow one to see the connections of Small cultures with those we communicate with.

5.3.1.3. Intercultural Communication Competency (ICC).

With a clearer understanding of IC and competency, we can now discuss what these terms might mean together for intercultural communication competency (ICC). As mentioned in chapter two, while there are hundreds of definitions of intercultural

communication competency (ICC), most experts suggest that it includes the 'effective and appropriate behaviour and communication in intercultural situations' (Hofstede, 2009 p. 38-39). Chapter two also discussed the difficulties of understanding what affective or appropriate equates to and how that is measured. To combat this issue, chapter two suggested that ***intercultural competency (ICC) relates to developing all three domains: cognitive, behavioral, and affective domains related to a predetermined benchmark***. In other words, the act of working toward that predetermined benchmark would be working on one's competency; when one reaches that benchmark, one might be deemed competent in this skill.

I would also like to argue that, unlike some objective competencies, intercultural competency is more subjective and part of a continuum. This present study suggests that intercultural communication competency is a soft skill that can be developed similar to other soft skills such as communication, time management, and others. Whereas one might be deemed competent by completing some tasks for essential car maintenance, the exact objective measuring (competent or not competent) cannot easily be used with ICC. Instead, I suggest a continuum of one's competency-based on one's sensitivity, awareness, and skills and how these attributes are applied in various IC situations. In this sense, ICC is similar to the social justice competency example. While aspects of both can be objectively measured (knowledge of the topic), other aspects (sensitivity) are not "precisely measurable or accessible" (Witte & Harden, 2011, p. 7) because of the performative potential of these responses. In other words, it is almost impossible to know the affective or attitudinal mindset of individuals truly. However, even with this

limitation, working to develop students' ICC abilities is a worthy cause in itself, and while acknowledging this limitation, one can still work to teach and develop students' ICC abilities.

5.3.1.4. Intercultural Sensitivity.

With ICC defined, it may be helpful to differentiate this term from intercultural sensitivity. Wang (2013) shares that ***intercultural sensitivity refers to an individual's "ability to discriminate and experience relevant cultural differences, and is defined in terms of stages of personal growth along a continuum of increasing sophistication in dealing with cultural differences. For this reason, intercultural sensitivity helps to assess intercultural competence***" (p. 203-204). Many teacher-scholars start developing students' intercultural sensitivity and awareness of differences between cultures to aid in their understanding of cultures and develop an individual's IC skills and ICC and use this model at the beginning and the end of a unit/semester/natural endpoint to measure students' IC growth and ICC. Later in this chapter, Bennett's Developmental Model of Sensitivity will be explored to assess students' IC growth and ICC.

5.3.2. Teaching about Culture and Developing Students' IC Skills

Having the key terms defined, I can now discuss how instructors develop students' IC skills. Further, this section will explore how the Bennett Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) can be a helpful tool to measure students' intercultural sensitivity and help to establish skills and growth when using a pre-established rubric.

5.3.3. Developing Students' IC Skills

I suggest there are many reasons TPC programs teach about culture and IC. Some reasons include becoming a more conscious and better communicator in a variety of personal and professional settings. I suggest that when faculty teach IC, the goal is to develop students' IC skills. However, similarly to the limitations of assessing social justice competence, IC skills cannot be

"...[T]aught nor learned in a one-dimensional fashion. Since it includes a tacit knowledge and psychological traits including constructs of identity, it must be actively acquired by the learner, i.e. s/he must be inherently prepared to invest time and effort into the holistic process of learning, due to experiences of personal deficits in this regard. This investment-potential can only be realised by rich experiential learning which includes affective and psychological components of personal identity-construction and their cognitive, affective and behavioural expression. The process of learning intercultural experience and an acute awareness of the differences and similarities of the cultural constructs, norms, categories, and beliefs involved" (C.6, Witte, p. 102).

In other words, Witte refers to the attitudinal aspects required for one to develop their IC skills truly. Further, IC learning needs to be explorative, process-oriented, and address students' attitudes and worldviews. A student must do the work to recognize limitations in their own understanding and be willing to do the work to address these deficits. Witte further argues that if the learners do not "want to invest in the learning process, intercultural competence will remain at a low level," and even potentially regress (p. 104-105). However, I argue that even though teachers may not be able to truly assess the

attitudinal domain of students, providing them with opportunities to develop their IC skills is a worthy cause in itself. To help measure students' ICC, Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) can be a helpful tool to use. While in this project I do not focus on assessing competency, I argue that this model can be helpful for instructors who do wish to set a competency benchmark, or use this model to assess students' IC growth.

5.3.4. Bennett Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS)

One of the most famous and helpful models for understanding sensitivity is The Bennett Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (1993). This model has two main categorizations that students can fall into ethnocentric or ethnorelativism. Ethnocentric refers to viewing another culture based on your own culture, often minimizing differences and viewing one's own culture(s) as superior. Ethnorelativism acknowledges differences within cultures but strives not to view cultures in hierarchical ways (or view one as more superior than another). Instead, ethnorelativism refers to embracing and respecting cultures.

Within each of these categorizations are three stages for a total of six stages. Rather than presenting specific information about culture, this model focussed on "developing a broader and more complex worldview when approaching cultural difference (Wang, 2013). This model suggests that individuals should strive to move away from ethnocentric to more ethnorelativism understandings of culture. Using the figure below, individuals are encouraged to move from left to right with this model, with Integration being the most sensitive (or best) subcategory. It should be noted that while an individual

typically encounters stages from left to right, many times, individuals can revert to previous stages if they encounter difficult situations they cannot resolve due to cognitive dissonance.

Ethnocentrism			**Ethnorelativsim**		
Denial	Defense Reversal	Minimization	Acceptance	Adaption	Integration

Table 4: Ethnocentrism and Ethnorelativism Model

5.3.4.1. Ethnocentric Subcategories.

To better understand each of these stages, each stage will be described.

- Denial - Individuals believe there are no differences between cultures.
- Defense Reversal - Individuals may acknowledge that some cultures have differences, but they may feel those differences are threatening, so they view their culture/own activities as superior or "right." In this category, Othering is very common.
- Minimization - Individuals acknowledge that differences may exist, but they may trivialize or work from an assumed or stereotypical understanding of the differences.
    - Note: While minimization may seem at face value a tempting stage to stay in because individuals can focus on the similarities of humankind --- many times, these values and similarities are constructed from one's cultural framework. Further, at this stage, individuals can focus on "the smallness

of cultural differences, thus minimizing their significance" (Wang, 2013, p. 210).

5.3.4.2. Ethnorelativism Subcategories.

- Acceptance - Individual notices differences of other cultures and not attributing a "right" or "superior" judgment to these differences. A neutral understanding of differences marks this stage.
- Adaptation - Individual is willing to change or alter their communication, behavior, etc. to better understand and communicate with individuals of a different culture.
- Integration - Individual actively uses the information they have learned to change their behaviors, actions, etc. due to the ability to understand and look through activities through the lens of multiple cultures.

In summary, this developmental model hopes individuals will be able to view cultures through different worldviews and angles and then use that information to help individuals make intentional decisions regarding their actions. From the DMIS, the Intercultural Development Inventory was the specific tool to help assess an individual's level of sensitivity. The assessment is a 50-item questionnaire. Scholars, such as Wang (2013), have used this model as a pre-and post-test to assess students' IC sensitivity.

This tool can be beneficial because it allows instructors to "Evaluate the entire teaching and learning process [while] also offer[ing] students opportunities to foster the beginning

of a deeper understanding of the complex issues of culture (p. 215). For the purposes of this project, I did not assess ICC; however, I did want to analyze IC development.

5.4. Methods

This section will discuss how a portfolio project assessed students' IC development in an entry-level, service TPC course. This section will explore evaluation as research and empirical-classroom research as valid and needed forms of research. This section will also explore the differences between these types of research and the differences between teacher cases.

This section will then discuss steps taken to create a sustainable research project and research methods to assist concerns presented by scholars' (Melonçon et al., 2020) present regarding research projects in the TPC field. Finally, this section will discuss the specific methodology used and the rationale for this type of methodology.

5.4.1. Empirical Classroom-Based Research

Before presenting my methodology, I need to establish empirical classroom-based research and evaluation-focused research as valid types of research. Firstly, Melonçon et al. (2020) categorize TPC pedagogical and programmatic research into four categories:

- Empirical, classroom-based
- Programmatic
- Exposition, and
- Teacher Reflection.

I argue that the type of research this project focuses on is empirical classroom-based research with the characteristics of research taking place in the classroom with the overall goal of extending practices to other, outward locations --- such as other programs or classrooms (Melonçon et al., 2020). Comparing empirical, classroom-based research and teacher cases might help understand the differences between research and development.

5.4.2. Differences Between Research and Development

While pedagogical developments are essential, they alone are not considered research (Byram, 2007; Melonçon et al., 2020). Byram and Feng (2004) found that many publications were reports of the development of curriculum or materials or teaching methods that focused on learning outcomes, syllabi, or teaching materials that typically focused on a single semester experience. They argued that this information does not produce new knowledge, and without the production of new knowledge, a project is not research (Byram and Feng, 2004). That is not to say that pedagogical research does not exist. Instead, pedagogical research shares new information that can be used at other institutions or in other contexts.

Pedagogical research starts with a question, problem, or desire to improve one or more of the following:

- Classroom teaching approaches at the course level;
- Classroom teaching and student learning practice at the course level; and
- Programmatic approaches related to courses, curricular, or TPC program administration (Melonçon et al., 2020, p. 93).

For this project, I wanted to improve classroom teaching and student learning (entry, level TPC courses) level. To accomplish this type of research, one can conduct an empirical classroom-based study, conduct a programmatic study, create an exposition, or create a teacher reflection. I chose to conduct an empirical, classroom-based study. I argue that my methodology is empirical, classroom-based research because it allows students to evaluate the 'helpfulness' of prompts/activities to their learning.

5.4.3. Overview of Study

This section will focus on my research questions and problems, illustrate a connection to previous research and research questions. Then I will discuss how I collected data related to the primary research questions and explain my methods.

5.4.3.1. Research Questions.

This project focused on the following research questions:

1. **RQ1:** What were students' perceptions regarding the helpfulness of each of the following teaching methods in developing their IC skills?
    1. Reflexive prompts
    2. Narratives that explore ICC scenarios
    3. Textbook reading and activities
    4. Interview activities
    5. Client-/Community-Based Projects
    6. Portfolios/Reflection
2. **RQ2:** What activities do students find the most helpful to understanding IC and developing their ICC?

3. **RQ3:** Are there any noticeable differences in responses from students regarding which institution they attended?
    1. Note: One was a Public Affairs, 4-year public institution, and the other was a land-grant, 4-year public institution.

5.4.3.2. Explicating Methods and Defining Terms.

This study focuses on a content analysis of the portfolio project students completed in entry-level, service technical writing courses. This project lasted three years and included seven full semesters of data from twelve sections of an introductory, service technical writing course at two public institutions. This study was conducted from Fall 2017 to Spring 2020.

This section will discuss the portfolio and how the portfolio was analyzed as it relates to this study. Students were asked to complete a portfolio that included activities to have students develop and reflect on IC activities in these classes. This portfolio had a secondary aim to understand which methods students found as most helpful for expanding these skills and which methods the instructor found beneficial for students to learn these skills. Because "[intercultural] learning has to be explorative and experiential learning which can address students' affects, attitudes, and constructs of identity" (Witte, 2011, p. 95-96). Portfolios were chosen as the evidence to be analyzed for their potential abilities to capture this explorative, longitudinal growth. Portfolios were also chosen as the educational evidence to analyze because they encompass many other methods instructors have used to develop students' IC skills. Some of the most commonly mentioned methods, as previously mentioned, include:

- Reflexive prompts
- Narratives that explore ICC scenarios
- Textbook reading and activities
- Interview activities
- Client-/Community-Based Projects
- Portfolios/Reflection

5.4.3.3. Explanation of Portfolio Project

This portfolio project incorporated prompts, narratives, textbooks, client-/community-based projects, and interviews. While some studies have suggested that study abroad activities can also help develop students' IC skills, this portfolio project did not include any activities related to a study abroad opportunity. The study abroad option was not included for two practical reasons: firstly, because entry-level, service technical writing courses are not often linked with study abroad opportunities; secondly, a study abroad opportunity was not feasible for the courses/sections studied for multiple reasons (including reasons such as online-only students, COVID-19, financial concerns, accessibility, among other reasons).

However, study abroad opportunities alone do not develop one's IC skills. Often, reflections and learning about cultures are needed. The portfolio attempts to offer a wide range of activities to help develop students' ICC. This course used the Introduction → Practice → Apply → Reflect model (as described in Rieger & Lonelodge, 2021). This model is discussed in another chapter, but for an overview, students were introduced to

culture by the way of a Small culture definition, readings, and activities. Students could then practice to develop their IC skills learning with feedback from both the instructor and their peers. Students practiced through the portfolio methods mentioned above (prompts, narratives, textbook readings/activities, and interviews). This stage of learning served as a low-stakes assessment. Students then were asked to apply this knowledge in a client-/community-based project. Lastly, students reflected and evaluated the prompt or activity. This reflection was to aid with students' metacognitive transfer of information and as a chance for them to evaluate the helpfulness of the activity or prompt.

I argue that client-based and community partner-based projects are slightly different. I define a ***client-based project as a project typically working for a for-profit or private organization***; whereas with a ***community-based project, one works with a community partner who often works to serve a local community, focusing on social justice causes that are often not-for-profit.*** In other words, students may be working on a client-based project if they create technical instructions for an engineering professor. In contrast, they may be completing a community-based project if they offer translated medical documentation for a low-income health facility.

As shared previously, the portfolio consisted of several aspects, which will be explained further below. To view a sample of these prompts, please refer to Appendix A.

- Reflexive prompts - refer to two prompts students were given.
    - The first prompt introduced Small cultures, had students brainstorm Small cultures with feedback opportunities from their peers, and then reflect on types of Small cultures they belong to.

    - The second prompt had students reflect on a scenario regarding a Small culture they belong to, what characteristics make up that Small culture, and reflect on the potential of Small cultures relating to the workplace.
- Narratives that explore IC scenarios
    - Students read A Crash of Cultures (2013) narrative, and then they completed reflexive questions based on the narrative. This narrative offers another understanding of culture (cross-cultural communication) and discusses IC communication. Students reflected on the reading and how, if at all, it shaped their understanding.
- Textbook reading and activities
    - Students were asked to reflect on two different instances of culture being described/discussed in the core class textbook. Students were allowed to choose any instance they found in the textbooks to reflect upon. When readings were assigned, if there was a specific section in the textbook that discussed culture, the instructor made a note to tell students about the section. However, otherwise, she let students choose which instance of culture they wanted to discuss and reflect upon.
- Interview activity
    - The interview activity was tied to a job materials unit where students interviewed a professional in a field they were interested in and were required to ask questions related to ICC (some questions included: what types of cultures do you interact with, how important is it to work effectively with other cultures, among others).

- Client-/Community-based projects
    - Students also reflected on client-/community-based projects that they completed in the course.
- Portfolios/Reflection
    - Lastly, students were asked to reflect on the entire portfolio project to share any thoughts that were not encapsulated already.

Within each of these activities, students were also asked to reflect on the 'helpfulness' (as rated below) of the activity in aiding their intercultural understanding. As mentioned previously, IC skills cannot be taught in a one-dimensional fashion (such as with just having students read about IC in textbooks), and developing the attitudinal aspects related to IC skills requires reflection. Further, as explored in chapter two, simply having students read about culture is not efficient for developing students' IC skills due to the potential surface-level or vague descriptions of culture in textbooks. As part of the reflection regarding the helpfulness of the activity, students could assign a 0-5 for how helpful the prompt was for helping them understand culture/intercultural communication. The standard scale was provided to students:

0 = extremely unhelpful and problematic to furthering my understanding of culture

1 = extremely unhelpful in furthering my understanding of culture

2 = unhelpful to furthering my understanding of culture

3 = neither unhelpful nor helpful furthering my understanding of culture

4 = helpful to furthering my understanding of culture

5 = extremely helpful in furthering my understanding of culture

5.4.3.4. Data Collection

As mentioned previously, the current study hoped to answer the following research questions:

1. **RQ1:** What were students' perceptions regarding the helpfulness of each of the following teaching methods in developing their understanding of ICC?
2. **RQ2:** What methods do students find the most helpful to understanding IC skills?
3. **RQ3:** Are there any noticeable differences in responses from students regarding which institution they attended?

I conducted a qualitative content analysis of the portfolios that consisted of multiple recursive phases to answer these questions. I chose content analysis because this method allows one to share the relative frequency and importance of topics (Anderson & Arsenault, 1998). This process took several stages of coding. Over 80 students agreed to participate in this IRB-approved project. However, if a portfolio had more than two activities not completed, it was not analyzed when analyzing the data. Therefore, only 54 were analyzed. Out of the portfolios, 29 were from students at the Public Affairs institution, and 25 were students at the Land-Grant institution.

5.4.3.4.1. Phase 1: Open Coding.

Phase 1 included the initial organization and open coding of the data. First, I uploaded portfolios into MAXQDA (for better organization and accessibility of coding), and sorted portfolios by the institution students were from (Public Affairs institution or Land-Grant institution). Further explained, MAXQDA is a tool that assists in qualitative and mixed

methods data analysis. This tool assisted in quickly assigning codes and then filtering codes, which was especially helpful for a project that focused on portfolios from multiple institutions and several prompts within each portfolio.

Then, I went through every prompt in every portfolio and assigned open codes, using MAXQDA, within each of these activities. This study uses Saldaña's definition of codes as words/phrases that symbolize a summary or capture the data's essence (2021). To help with the organization of codes, all codes were assigned a descriptive code to "summarize the primary topic of the excerpt" (Saldaña, 2021, p. 6). In this case, the prompt plus the open code. For example, a Descriptive code such as "prompt 1," or "narrative" with the open code (e.g., prompt 1 - types of Small cultures, prompt 1 - defining culture, prompt 1 - aspects of Small culture). Data was coded when the researcher noticed it as a pattern (occurring more than twice). During this phase, a memo log was used to assist in coding the data to explore the relationships of the codes.

5.4.3.4.2. Phase 2: Intermediate Coding.

During Phase 2, I synthesized the open codes. I organized them into categories by moving toward a "consolidated meaning" that focused on a "category, theme, concept, assertion, proposition, or set in motion new line of investigation" (Saldaña, 2021, p. 13). To get to this consolidated meaning, I looked at the open codes and the memo log she kept to find these categories, themes, etc. Some of these categories include:

- How to assimilate into other cultures

    - Some lines I coded with this tag include "examine standard procedures," "learn priorities of an organization," and "just pay attention to what the environment is like and try to make a friend."
- Soft skills associated with ICC
    - Some lines I coded with this tag include "deal with conflict," "being flexible," "positive attitude towards others' beliefs."
- Culture related to the workplace
    - Some lines I coded with this tag include "I recognize the restaurant culture and how to talk and present myself" "Learning about the culture can help understand how to adapt and connect, this can apply to the workforce, just like schools each have a different culture you can learn the soft skills in the workspace to help you get along also perform your best," and "Getting along with and working well with your coworkers improves everyone's morale and synergy. Talking to all your coworkers before work starts, getting coffee or lunch with some coworkers, or bringing in donuts to the office would help you become part of the organization's culture."

5.4.3.4.3. Phase 3: Collecting Mean and Median Scores.

Finally, to answer the second research question, I collected the median and meant scores related to the "helpfulness" of each activity. Both the coding and the scoring were necessary to collect. While the codes, categories, and themes focused on content shared by students regarding culture and ICC, the scores clearly illustrated their beliefs of the effectiveness of these pedagogical applications. Content alone might not have illustrated

how helpful students found the project. Conversely, collecting only the scores would omit a great deal of the contextual data needed to understand students' IC sensitivity and understanding better. Both the mean and median scores were collected because both attempted to collect the "middle" score. While the mean may suggest the average score, it can sometimes be an inaccurate or unfair representation of data if outliers are included. Further, because the scale was only 0-5, these averages would be relatively close in score to one another. Therefore, the median or most recurring scores were also collected to create a more accurate and distinguished understanding of the helpfulness of activities.

5.5. Findings

As shared previously, this study analyzed 54 portfolios: 29 from students attending a Public Affairs institution and 25 from students attending a Land-Grant institution. The mean and median scoring will be presented, and then themes (both attributed to individual activities and holistic ones) will be shared. The discussion section will answer the third research question regarding any noticeable differences between students at different institutions.

5.4.1. Overall Ratings

Based on the students' feedback, the interview, followed by the client-/community-based project, was the most helpful assignment for assisting with their understanding of culture and intercultural communication. The least helpful assignment was the textbooks. However, all of these scores were still relatively close to one another.

Students used the following scoring system after completing each prompt:

0 = extremely unhelpful and problematic to furthering my understanding of culture

1 = extremely unhelpful in furthering my understanding of culture

2 = unhelpful to furthering my understanding of culture

3 = neither unhelpful nor helpful furthering my understanding of culture

4 = helpful to furthering my understanding of culture

5 = extremely helpful in furthering my understanding of culture

As a recap, the scores are rated in order of the mean average (highest to lowest):

- Interview: 4
- Client-/Community-Based Project: 4
- Narrative: 4
- General Prompt: 3.783
- Prompt with Personal Connection: 3.7432
- Textbook: 3.575

5.5.2. Differences Between Institutions

Additionally, this study sought to see if there were differences between institutions. The table below illustrates the scores between institutions compared to the overall total of scores (rounded to the nearest thousandth). The highest scoring activity (using both the mean and median) for each institution and the mean/median combined total scores are provided.

	Institution A - Public Affairs	Institution B - Land Grant	Combined total	Comments
General Prompt	Mean: 3.857 Median: 4	Mean: 4 Median: 4	Mean: 3.783	*Land-grant was slightly higher

			Median: 4	
Prompt with Personal Connection	Mean: 3.775 Median: 4	Mean: 3.743 Median: 4	Mean: 3.743 Median: 4	While these scored lower, they had more depth of information discussed
Narrative	Mean: 4 Median: 4	Mean: 4 Median: 4	Mean: 4 Median: 4	All exactly the same
Interview	Mean: 4.481 Median: 5	Mean: 4 Median: 4	Mean: 4 Median: 5	Highest rated one so far (MEDIAN)
Textbooks	Mean: 4 Median: 4	Mean: 4 Median: 4	Mean: 3.575 Median: 4	Public affairs scored much higher
Client-/Community-Based Project	Mean: 4 Median: 5	Mean: 4 Median: 5	Mean: 4 Median: 5	This project had the most varying degree of responses

Table 5: Scores from Student-Reported Perceptions of Activity Helpfulness

One of the most noteworthy scoring findings is how similar scores themselves are for each activity from both institutions (regarding both mean and median scoring). Secondly, the relatively high scores are worth mentioning, suggesting that all activities were somewhat helpful to students better understanding culture and/or IC. Thirdly, it appeared that the interviews and the client-based/community-based projects were the most helpful activities in the portfolio.

5.5.3. Details from Each Activity

The following section discusses some of the categories regarding each activity and then some of the holistic themes.

5.5.3.1. Prompt 1: Introduce Culture.

As shared previously, there were two prompts given. One prompt included activities that defined Small culture, an opportunity to explore types of Small cultures with peers, a reflection regarding some of the Small cultures they belong to, and whether this type of skill was related to other skills needed in the workplace. This prompt was used in an online class. Again, these prompts changed slightly whether the class was an in-person class or an online class. For the online class, below is one of the variations of this prompt/activity.

Prompt #1: Learning about 'culture.'

Please complete the instructions in order.

1. Read this description about culture: The word 'culture' is used in many different ways (often in combination with other words) and with various meanings. We are going to do a generative thinking activity now. Please write down several different uses of the word 'culture' (as well as cultural') that you have recently encountered in conversation, school, media, and everyday use.
    1. Answer:
2. Now, I would like you to make a post of FlipGrid sharing some of these ideas.
    1. After posting, please watch two others' videos. You do not need to respond to their videos at this time.
    2. After watching these Flipgrid videos, consider revising your understanding of the culture here. Were there any new types of cultural

information you learned about? Any understandings that you disagreed about? Were there any interesting understandings?

1. Answer:

Now, please read this short description of culture. "While there are many competing definitions of what culture means, two commonly recognized definitions are Big culture and Small culture. Big culture refers to viewing culture in a national sense (Japanese, American, Russian, etc.). Small culture refers to "The sum of all the processes, happenings, or activities in which a given set or several sets of people habitually engage' which are commonly illustrated by a discernable set of behaviors and understandings that are open to change based on interactions among group members and various changes in circumstances" (Holliday, 1999, p. 248). In other words, Small cultures refer to all the cultures one can belong to, such as ones related to occupation, gender, class, among many other cultures.

. After reading the description, please answer the following questions:

1. When you think about cultures in the Small culture sense, what cultures do you belong to? Answer:
2. Do you think it is important to learn about and become part of your work culture in the workplace? Answer:
3. If you think it is important, what are some ways you might try to learn and become part of the organization's culture? Answer:
4. Answer: from our previous work regarding soft skills, what type of soft skills might be involved in learning about and possibly assimilating into a workplace culture. Please explain.

Lastly, please rate this activity on its helpfulness in helping to further your understanding of culture and explain your rating in a few sentences.

. 0 = extremely unhelpful and problematic to furthering my understanding of culture

a. 1 = extremely unhelpful in furthering my understanding of culture

b. 2 = unhelpful to furthering my understanding of culture

c. 3 = neither unhelpful nor helpful furthering my understanding of culture

d. 4 = helpful to furthering my understanding of culture

e. 5 = extremely helpful in furthering my understanding of culture

1. Answer:

Students scored the first prompt with a mean score of 3.783 and a median of 4. Remarkably similarly scored was the second prompt with a mean score of 3.743 and a median of 4. There were very few discrepancies between the two different institutions.

While the scores were necessarily different, multiple students from the Public Affairs mission school mentioned that their other courses explored the culture and importance of cultural competency as one of the Pillars. They shared that they could see an application of culture in the workplace.

- For example, one student shared, "Understanding cultures is important in today's society. It would be a terrible thing to not be aware of this concept when starting in a new work environment. Knowing about different cultures and just being culturally competent can take anyone anywhere in today's world. That's why I think [Public Affairs Institution] has included that into its Public Affairs Mission.

The university wants to help leave a better mark on the world through its curriculum and standards. I do believe that the university is doing a good job at that" (Public Affairs Student, #20).

- "In other classes, we do learn a lot about cultures, so for those who have been attending this university for a couple of years already have a grasp about understanding your culture because of the cultural competency pillar. However, I think it is important to associate what soft skills are needed in the workplace to help get involved in workplace culture (Public Affairs Student, #14).

Further, many students shared how IC was a soft skill that should be reflected upon and developed.

- For example, one student shared, "I have never thought about soft skills before and I think knowing that soft skills consist of this makes me understand how important skills that you learn that are even just social skills will help you to improve how you achieve goals and fit in in the workplace" (Land-Grant Student, #2).
- Another student shared, "I felt that it was extremely helpful. I always knew the culture was important, but I never looked at it in many different ways like I did in this prompt. I feel that I better understand what soft skills are and how important they are in the workforce. At the very end of this assignment, I also feel that I will have a great grasp of soft skills and know exactly how to use them (Public Affairs Student, #43).

Some students from the Land-Grant institution described learning Small cultures as a novel concept to them, and they had not thought about how organizations could have cultures nor why knowing those cultures could be important.

- I liked how this prompt got us thinking about culture and how to implement company culture when hired. For example, one student shared, "I did not consider skills [like IC] as important on a resume [or workplace]. I think it's very important to consider company culture when job searching now" (Public Affairs Student, #59).

5.5.3.2. Prompt 2: Practice Exploring Small Cultures.

The second prompt included students' reflection on a Small culture they belonged to and possible experiences or prejudices they may have encountered when another outside of that culture did not have a nuanced understanding of culture or developed IC.

Prompt #2: Learning about issues related to culture

Please complete the activities in order.

1. Read an excerpt from UIC. "We are often tempted to over-, under-, or misinterpret what we see. One reason for this is the prejudices we all carry with us, and the surface, seductive easy answers which pass as evidence to support them. Table [1] presents two examples of such misunderstanding in particular domestic circumstances…" (p.19).

	Produced by underling universal cultural processes in small culture formation		
Observation	Prejudice	Easy Answer	Missed complexity of Small Culture Formation
Employees address their superiors/clients by given name and no title.	'They are less polite than we are.'	'They don't use a respectful form of address.' 'We value politeness, they don't.'	There are a large variety of possible ways of showing respect. Within this cultural environment using given names is approved by parents and does carry respect.
During meetings, entry-level employees are expected to keep quiet unless spoken to.	'They are more formal than we are.'	'They don't encourage open, critical discussion or entry-level employees voices.' 'We value critical discussion and all employees; they don't.'	In every cultural arrangement there are rules of formality. Within this cultural environment they are expressed in a particular way. There may be other times and places where open, critical discussion is encouraged. Additionally, this could be a time-saving strategy in meetings using a culture of respect.

Table 6: Table adapted from UIC Table 2.5

"This is where what might seem to be a fairly innocent misunderstanding turns into a more sinister Othering. This can be directed at any group of people, but it is most often associated with race, ethnicity, foreigners, or minority groups. There is the development of an accusatory tone as 'they' are compared with 'we'; and the Easy answers are couched as 'they don't'. In such cases the easy answers which imply some form of deficiency can become so established that they are very hard to undo" (p.19).

1. Now reflect on a time when you started a new job/internship, started your program, or a professional organization to which you did not initially belong and answer the following:
    1. Describe the time/organization. Answer:
    2. What prejudices might you have had when you started? Answer:
    3. What evidence did you have for these prejudices? What role did easy answers, values, and statements about culture play in this process? Answer:
    4. Now, try to reconsider the event and see a great complexity of who they are (which might undo the prejudices). (Questions adapted from p. 21) Answer:
2. How can this relate to or apply to soft skills in the workplace? Answer:
    1.
3. Read the following excerpt: "...We are beset by rumors about 'other cultures' which have developed over time for several reasons...These rumors lead us to imagine how cultural life is constructed, which may not be true or maybe exaggerated. A sample of this is the rumor or belief that British people are always punctual; the real-life observation is that people are often late for meetings and often do not leave their prior location until the meeting. They often decided to be late for social events to avoid being 'the first to arrive' (p. 61).
4. Answer: share your examples of behaviors you have observed which are different from what you have been led to believe. For example, you could think of people in different majors, fields, or anything else you would like to discuss. (Prompt adapted from p. 62).

5. Lastly, please rate this activity on its helpfulness in helping to further your understanding of culture and explain your rating in a few sentences.
    1. 0 = extremely unhelpful and problematic to furthering my understanding of culture
    2. 1 = extremely unhelpful in furthering my understanding of culture
    3. 2 = unhelpful to furthering my understanding of culture
    4. 3 = neither unhelpful nor helpful furthering my understanding of culture
    5. 4 = helpful to furthering my understanding of culture
    6. 5 = extremely helpful in furthering my understanding of culture
        1. Answer:

As illustrated, prompt 2 discussed students to reflect on a culture they belong to, potential prejudices they may have encountered when another did not fully understand or respect that culture, and how to develop their IC skills not to find themself in a similar situation.

While this score was just slightly lower than the other prompt, students tended to supply more feedback and tended to provide a bit longer, more in-depth reflections (connecting this topic to other concepts in other classes or their life), and often shared a deeper appreciation for this type of prompt. For example, some students shared thoughts such as:

- "I feel like I have [some] of the tools to handle situations where others think differently. This will [help me] grow as a leader and strengthen my ability to be impactful and respectful." (Public Affairs Student, #16).
- "I developed some thoughts in relation to thinking about behavior myths...and I greatly enjoyed having this challenge" (Public Affairs Student, #13).

- "I feel like it is important to take a step back and look at situations with a different attitude that you had before. I realized how many rumors or stereotypes were out there for different cultures from this prompt, and then thought about how many of them had been proved wrong" (Public Affairs Student, #14).
- "This prompt was very helpful in evaluating how I embraced and understand culture...I also feel like it was helpful as I sat down to do this. I was able to consider ways I may not have understood it as well, and can think about different ways to improve" (Public Affairs Student, #17).
- "This prompt was extremely helpful for me (5 rating). While I know what prejudice is, I always see it as one regarding race and not anything else. By evaluating a personal situation I've been in myself, I got to evaluate a time when I was being prejudged that I did not even realize. It makes me become more aware of other situations that I may have not realized prior to this exercise" (Land-Grant student, #5).
- "This prompt helped me to dissect a situation that happened to me in my everyday life for a small period of time that I wouldn't have thought about much more than a "circumstance" unrelated to culture. This prompt helped me see how various cultures come into play in our daily lives" (Land-Grant student, #28).
- "This prompt was challenging for me in the beginning and I love challenges, so I am going to say five. It also made me realize that prejudices can be very damaging for some people because they could possibly be missing out on a whole new world of opportunities" (Public Affairs Student, #20)

- "So far these prompts have required me to think more in-depth than most of my college writing assignments. But this prompt allowed me to challenge myself and see how far back I could reach for a significant cultural adaptation that involved me specifically. I feel like I was able to reach far enough back and find a significant moment that involved adaptability regarding culture. Getting thrown into a new environment at a young age is tough and I am glad I was able to adapt quickly and successfully" (Land-Grant student, #53).

However, not all responses had a great deal of introspection. Students who scored this prompt a 2 often shared that they did not understand how prejudices related to culture or that instances of prejudice were few and far between. These responses were typically vague responses with no evidence to support them. Both of these types of responses were found from Land-Grant institution samples. For example:

- "I never really paid attention to the way certain wordings or tones can come off to different cultures" (Land Grant Student, #4).
- "It has made me think about culture in ways I would not typically consider" (Public Affairs Student, #68).

5.5.3.3. Practice Exploration through Narrative

All students read and interacted with a narrative, A Crash of Cultures by Sam Racine in Yu and Savage's (2013) Negotiating Culture Encounters: Narrating Intercultural Engineering and Technical Communication text to understand better how culture might relate to workplace communication. This reading was chosen to help students explore a slightly different understanding of culture than the one presented in class so that they

could interrogate both definitions. Further, this example was chosen because it related IC to workplace settings. This narrative included solid and introspective questions and questions that used tools similar to thick description and the OSEE model. Some additional questions were added to it. This narrative was meant to help students practice some of the skills related to IC that we were learning. This prompt was used both in face-to-face and online class settings.

Narrative #1: Read Crash of Cultures (on LMS) and answer the discussion questions.

1. What type of culture did this example use? Big or Small culture? Something in between? Discuss your thoughts on using this type of culture.
    1. Answer:
2. Do you think these actions could have anything to do with anything outside of national cultures? Or do you think these actions, values, beliefs are solely related to national culture?
    1. Answer:
3. Discuss your experience working with people from other regions of your native country or people with different professional backgrounds from yours? These can be in-class projects. What difficulties have you encountered in such interactions? Do you find assumptions you can rely on to understand or work with people from certain regions of your country, of certain ages, or central genders or sexual identities, in certain professions, or certain social or organizational roles? Explain.
    1. Answer:

4. Sam identifies the "cast of characters" in her story by their professional roles. Keep in mind that she uses humor throughout the story. How do these character labels function in the story? Are they simply convenient ways to help readers visualize and separate all of the many characters in the story? Are they a type of stereotype? If they are stereotypes, do you think she is aware they could be perceived as unfair simplification?
    1. Answer:
5. The programmer from Texas comments, "Texans buy from Texans, Or from Mexico, because that's the same thing." Sam expresses incredulity at this, and it is undoubtedly a strange thing to say to many readers. What assumptions do you think the programmer is making? Is he expressing a political view? An economic reality? A sense of cultural unity between Texas and Mexico?
    1. Answer:
6. Does cultural identity, whether regional or professional, become less important for the team members as they carry out their tasks? Do the team members' cultural identities change through the team-building process? Does the team develop a cultural identity of its own? Explain.
    1. Answer:
7. Which characters in the story do you tend to identify with most? Do you identify with those characters most because of their regional culture, gender, professional identity, or other reasons? Explain.
    1. Answer:

8. Lastly, please rate this activity on its helpfulness in helping to further your understanding of culture and explain your rating in a few sentences.
    1. 0 = extremely unhelpful and problematic to furthering my understanding of culture
    2. 1 = extremely unhelpful in furthering my understanding of culture
    3. 2 = unhelpful to furthering my understanding of culture
    4. 3 = neither unhelpful nor helpful furthering my understanding of culture
    5. 4 = helpful to furthering my understanding of culture
    6. 5 = extremely helpful in furthering my understanding of culture
        1. Answer:

The narrative score was the most consistent scoring of all the activities. The mean and median total for both institutions was 4.

While students were fairly split in their assessment of how engaging the activity was (some shared that it was long, they preferred to discuss rather than read, among other thoughts), they still often shared that it was helpful. For example, some students shared:

- "It was a good read and an interesting story, but a little long and drawn out. It gave some good examples to reflect on but not the best way to learn more about communication" (Land-Grant Student, #55).
- "I just found this a little bit boring. I like to do more interactive activities when it comes to learning about things. Especially things like skills in the workforce I would like to do them more based on me" (Student Affairs Student, #65).

- "Honestly reading things like this do not interest me so it was hard for me to connect with this on a personal level" (Student Affairs Student, #23).

Many students discussed the importance of communication, including IC, in teamwork in work (or otherwise) settings. For example, one student shared:

- "I think it did help to see how the team needed to work to understand each other to be successful and establish a common culture. This assignment was helpful! That's just something I already kind of preach is the importance of compromise and empathy in teamwork. I swear, even just in the past few weeks, it has become increasingly evident how necessary this is heading into our adult and professional lives. Being insensitive to cultural and lifestyle differences will hinder a person's success. It may be more impactful in some fields than others, but in its least effect, refusal to adjust to anything beyond your norm will control aspects of a person's personal life (like honestly, stuff like this is becoming way too hard to be around- maybe I'm sensitive or old or something but I think being unable to empathize/adjust to others' situations or beliefs is immature, embarrassing, and not a quality I'd like in any friend of mine). So this definitely was another example of why flexibility and understanding culture (as a soft skill) is so necessary" (Student Affairs Student, #66).
- "It did help with showing a story of collaborative teamwork that we will all someday have to do" (Student Affairs Student, #45).

Interestingly, some students at the Public Affairs institution mentioned that some of the views presented in the narrative seemed "outdated," "close-minded," "reflects

stereotyping" because of its nature of focusing on regional or Big culture ideas. For example, some students shared:

- "...felt that it was more closed minded than it should have been or what she is trying to portray" (Public Affairs Student, #56).
- "I always know that people from different regions have different cultural backgrounds, however, there are exceptions too. In the article I just didn't see that. In fact, the article somehow reflects a sense of stereotype, which I don't quite agree" (Public Affairs Student, #48).

5.5.3.4. Practice through Interview.

While interviews may not always be associated with learning about culture, students were required to interview someone in their field for another project. Most of these interviews required students to ask the interviewee a handful of questions related to workplace expectations, SS in the workplace, and a few additional questions about communication, culture, and intercultural communication in the workplace.

Professional Interview Activity

For this interview, I want you to find someone in a field somewhat closely related to your field, and I want you to ask them a few questions about their job and then about how soft skills and culture relate (or do not relate) to their job. You can also ask them any questions you have about getting a job/interview, etc. If you have any concerns about finding someone to interview, please reach out to me early in the process, and I will help you find someone.

1. Interviewee #1 (Name & Occupation):
    1. Answer:
2. Some questions to ask:
    1. What are some experiences or opportunities that led you to this position?
        1. Answer:
    b. What are your favorite aspects about this job/your place of employment?
        1. Answer:
    c. What tasks/activities do you do on a typical day?
        1. Answer:
    d. What type of writing do you do? Do you think technical writing is important in this job?
        1. Answer:
    e. What soft skills do you think are the most important to have in this job? Can you share any stories of someone possessing or not possessing these soft skills?
        1. Answer:
    f. Do you interact with other cultures in this position? If you do, can you speak about it?
        1. Answer:

g. What tips would you give to college students about being successful in this type of position?

1. Answer:

Other questions you asked:

. Answer:

Notes from the interview (use as much space as you need):

. Answer:

What (if anything) did you learn that might be beneficial in your future (career goals or otherwise)?

. Answer:

What did you learn about soft skills regarding this field?

. Answer:

What did you learn specifically about culture based on this interview?

. Answer:

Lastly, please rate this activity on its helpfulness in helping to further your understanding of culture and explain your rating in a few sentences.

. 0 = extremely unhelpful and problematic to furthering my understanding of culture

a. 1 = extremely unhelpful in furthering my understanding of culture

b. 2 = unhelpful to furthering my understanding of culture

c. 3 = neither unhelpful nor helpful furthering my understanding of culture

d. 4 = helpful to furthering my understanding of culture

e. 5 = extremely helpful in furthering my understanding of culture

1. Answer:

Students scored the interview a mean score of 4 and a median of 5. The Public Affairs students' scored this activity higher than the Land-Grant students.

Common themes included students mentioning their appreciation of chatting with individuals in the field because these interviewees were experiencing and discussing culture and communication firsthand, how communication and culture-related specifically to the student's field, and having specific examples in their field were especially helpful. In many of these responses, students seem to weigh the advice from one person in their field higher than most of the other activities. For example, some students shared:

- "This activity made me go back and reference something in the book about culture that I may not have paid as much attention to the first time. It helped me understand the importance of keeping an open horizon to culture when dealing with written communication" (Public Affairs Student, #53).
- "It was nice to be able to hear from a professional about their experience in the workplace as well as their advice and knowledge from said experience. This interview also helped give us insight into what it is like communicating between the two different kinds of people you will generally be working with on many projects, which was again a nice thing to be able to hear about firsthand" (Land-Grant Student, #8).
- "This interview helped me think about how to create the right culture in my team once I am in a position to manage a team. I plan to host team building exercises and try to get to know my teammates on a more personal level. I will also always act with integrity and uphold my values. I now realize that these things will help promote the right culture in my team" (Land-Grant Student, #61).

- "This was more helpful than the previous prompt. Getting real responses from someone who is in the workforce was helpful" (Land-Grant Student, #70).
- "I feel as this interview gave me an inside look on what my future will look like. Speaking with someone who has been in the same shows I will be in only helps me prepare for the future" (Public Affairs student, #14).

Lower scores were often instances where students shared that this activity was done in other classes (mostly seen with the Land-Grant institution) and two students who shared that their interviewee did not mention anything about culture. For example, some students shared:

- "It was interesting to talk to someone with experience but not the best method for furthering my understanding" (Land-Grant Student, #55).
- "I have basically done a million of these career interviews so they are actually physically painful to do at this point (I'm pretty sure this gave me heartburn). I have also found out that you always get the same kind of generic responses about communication and team work, unless you are asking about technical things. I'll have to disagree that most places have a similar culture like he said, because I have worked in some radically different kinds of environments myself. I did like his insight on how some of the smaller ideas and practice are treated. Just in general, I have never really talked about workplace culture in one of these interviews before so the new angle was a bit refreshing" (Land-Grant Student, #5).

5.5.3.5. Practice through Textbook Readings.

For the textbook portion of the portfolio, students were asked to reflect on any two passages in their textbook and discuss what information they were analyzing, and then evaluate how helpful this information in the textbook was. All of the classes used an edition of Johnson-Sheehan's Technical Communication Strategies for Today. This activity was intended to introduce students to more ideas of culture and then practice (through retrieval) some ideas we had discussed in our class.

Textbook Chapter Reading, Culture Instance #1:

As you read through your textbook, please stop to reflect on how your textbook describes culture. Then, answer the following questions.

1. Refer to one instance in a chapter where your textbook discussed culture. Describe and reference the instance here.
    1. Answer:
2. How do you think the book defined culture? How does this description compare to our class definition of culture?
    1. Answer:
3. Did your understanding of culture change from this reference of culture?
    1. Answer:
4. Lastly, please rate this activity on its helpfulness in helping to further your understanding of culture and explain your rating in a few sentences.
    1. 0 = extremely unhelpful and problematic to furthering my understanding of culture

2. 1 = extremely unhelpful in furthering my understanding of culture
3. 2 = unhelpful to furthering my understanding of culture
4. 3 = neither unhelpful nor helpful furthering my understanding of culture
5. 4 = helpful to furthering my understanding of culture
6. 5 = extremely helpful in furthering my understanding of culture
    1. Answer:

Students scored the textbook passages with a mean score of 3.575 and a median of 4. The scores were the same across the two institutions.

Common themes included students sharing that they appreciated concrete examples of differences of cultures, how ethics and culture intersect, and the information reinforced ideas they already knew. For example, students shared the following responses:

- "This narrative was very helpful in me understanding intercultural communication. As stated above, I was interested to hear that certain colors, symbols, or words in our Western culture have very different meanings in other cultures. It was very eye opening to learn this, and will serve as an important lesson to make sure I do some research about the different cultures I will come into contact with when I'm engaging in business or communication with someone" (Public Affairs Student, #16).
- "I always knew that most cultures view things differently, but I never realized that something that seems insignificant, such as a color, can mean so much. I found this chapter to be very interesting, and it is something I will try to remember if I ever work with people from different cultures. I want to be careful not to

disrespect anyone with things that I may view as insignificant" (Land-Grant Student, #22).

However, worth noting, many times, these "concrete" examples were reductionistic, Big culture examples such as color preferences/meanings, eye contact, and gestures for different countries. For example, you can notice some of these issues in the following reflections:

- "I thought it was helpful, because it narrows down to eight traits, and it also gave us examples in terms of defining the traits, and I think each trait connects to culture. It made me realize that being a successful entrepreneur requires an individual to be more open-minded" (Public Affairs Student, #48).
- "I really am glad I read about how some symbols have different effects on different parts of the world. It made me more aware and educated me on such an important topic" (Public Affairs Student, #6).

5.5.3.6. Apply through Client Project.

As with many introductory technical writing classes, students had a client-based or community-based project they conducted during the semester. Students were asked to reflect on how they learned about the organization's culture and how this (if at all) influenced how they communicated with the client/organization. As mentioned earlier, this project was meant for students to apply what they learned in class and then reflect on the experience.

Client Project Reflection

1. How would you describe the culture(s) of the client you worked with for the group project? Did you notice any shared culture(s) between you and your client?
    1. Answer:
2. Did your understanding of these cultures affect how you created the project or what you did in the project? How so? Do you think you should have (if you did not)?
    1. Answer:
3. What soft skills do you think you used throughout this project? Explain.
    1. Answer:
4. Did your understanding of culture change from engaging in this activity?
    1. Answer:
5. Did your understanding of soft skills change from this reference of culture?
    1. Answer:
6. Lastly, please rate this activity on its helpfulness in helping to further your understanding of culture and explain your rating in a few sentences.
    1. 0 = extremely unhelpful and problematic to furthering my understanding of culture
    2. 1 = extremely unhelpful in furthering my understanding of culture
    3. 2 = unhelpful to furthering my understanding of culture
    4. 3 = neither unhelpful nor helpful furthering my understanding of culture
    5. 4 = helpful to furthering my understanding of culture
    6. 5 = extremely helpful in furthering my understanding of culture
        1. Answer:

Students scored the client-/community-based project a mean score of 4 and a median of 5. Compared at an institutional basis, the scores were the same. Students who scored this activity high (3.5 or higher) shared that it was helpful to communicate with a "real" person and receive "real" feedback. Many discussed being able to connect and apply previous aspects of the portfolio to this project. For example, some students shared:

- "It was extremely helpful working with a real client and developing my understanding of culture. Meeting with the client in person helped me build confidence in my social skills and communication abilities. Before this project I was always nervous to meet with team members in person and discuss the project, however, this project helped alleviate that" (Public Affairs Student, #47).
- "This project was one of the best projects that I can think of to help students transition into a world where cooperation is necessary. It was also the best practice for the application of soft skills" (PUblic Affairs Student, #34).
- "Real life experiences are crucial in my opinion to getting ahead or improving in life. This project provided all of us a firsthand experience on how to act in a professional setting. So that makes me rate this experience at a five out of five. This project challenged me and my group to go above and beyond a normal project. We were not constricted on creativity and were able to branch out wherever we wanted to and that was important to me in getting more motivation to work harder on this project" (Public Affairs Student, #20).

Conversely, students who scored this activity a 2 often shared that they did not directly communicate with the client/community partner or there was a poor outcome (group

member conflict, client/community partner conflict, or their project was not implemented). For example, a student shared:

- "I did not have much interaction with the actual client, so this prompt did not provide enough actual experience for it to have an impact on my understanding of culture and communication" (Land-Grant Student, #70).

5.6. Discussion

This section further explores the implications of the findings, compares findings, and illustrates the main points I want to illustrate from the data.

5.6.1. Helpfulness of Activities

As shared previously, the interview and client/community partner projects scored as the most helpful to students for learning or developing their IC awareness/skills. Many students shared appreciation for hearing from others (in their field or a field outside of academia), giving them thoughts and feedback, and applying the knowledge they learned. As shared in the previous chapter in this dissertation, students picked up on the differences textbooks shared. They appreciated the concrete examples; however, based on comments they shared, it would behoove instructors who use textbooks to have critical conversations of these representations of culture and the potential limitations.

When comparing data across all activities, it was clear that students preferred the practice and apply activities that focused on the "real" interactions, whether in the form of an interview or client-based project. While this might seem commonsensical, this finding was also interesting because it might illustrate that students put more weight on

perspectives in their field or value these perspectives more than activities confined to the classroom (i.e., textbook readings). It may be beneficial to add more of these opportunities within the IPAR model if an instructor wants to integrate this model into their classroom.

The second research question sought to find out if there were differences between students at either institution. I found that responses and scores were fairly similar across students at different institutions. While there may have been some slight critiques and recognition of generalizations (as illustrated in the public affairs students responses to the narratives), overall, the findings were similar.

5.6.2. Project Limitations

I would like to acknowledge three limitations in this study that future studies could address. These limitations included:

- Instructor as researcher
- Lack of a pre-and post-test
- The "messiness" associated with portfolios, both grading and analyzing them

5.6.2.1. Instructor as the Researcher.

One of the limitations of this study was that the author was also the instructor of the technical writing classes. Melonçon, Rosselot-Merritt, and St. Amant (2019) suggest that having instructors outside researchers (or researchers other than the instructor) can be beneficial and help with the sustainability of future studies. The present study agrees with their observation and has tried to present enough information and resources for future

studies to build from work done here. In other words, in this project, I have focused on multiple sections at multiple locations to attempt to extrapolate broader findings, rather than focusing on one case study, which Melonçon et al. (2020) suggests that provides "an incomplete picture of the larger population" (p. 102).

5.6.2.2. Lack of a Pre- and Post-Test.

This study initially hoped to follow Wang & Zhu's (2011) methodology by having students take a pre-and post-test to gauge their growth in the class. However, as mentioned previously, these pre-/post-tests were not a viable option in the course due to the cost associated with these tests. Future studies that could use the portfolio method alongside the pre-and post-test could provide a degree of difference in learning from using an overall portfolio project like this one and could add more to the field's knowledge. However, this project was not necessarily concerned with the degree of change, but more so, the perceived helpfulness of each of the activities.

5.6.2.3. "Messiness" of Research and Portfolios

The second limitation of the project is the portfolio itself. I would like to echo' Alvesson and Skoldberg's (2009) argument that researchers acknowledge the subjectivity and messiness of research. Meloncon et al. (2020) argue that "[d]oing so would create sustainable research by helping researchers identify the kinds of information to consider and report to help others attempt to replicate/test or build upon/apply their work. "Reflexive" in this sense is taking the time to

- Look back and consider alternative approaches;
- Question what went wrong and right;

- Define the strengths and weaknesses of different aspects of the research; and
- Clarify what the intended takeaway is for the audiences" (p. 118).

I would like to acknowledge some of that messiness to assist future researchers. Firstly, portfolios still seem to be a strong tool to use regarding alternative approaches, even though they have limitations. While portfolios can encapsulate growth over a semester (or more extended period) to help researchers identify growth and changes in thinking, attitudes, and beliefs, they also have limitations. Witte and Harden (2021) eloquently explain that the messiness is due to researchers/instructors analyzing/grading 'performance' rather than 'competence' (p. 76). Harden further explains that students can perform or share in their portfolios the answers they believe the instructor or researcher is hoping for. However, they might not have made that attitudinal shift or be sharing what they truly believe. Thus a researcher/instructor does not truly know if they are grading the growth or performance. In other words, growth or "Competence is more than mere knowledge since it includes affective and psychological traits which can have a transformative effect on the cognition and behavior of the learner. This transformative process is the aim of mediating and acquiring intercultural competence, not the finished and static end-product of 'the' interculturally competent learner. This process is open-ended; if the learner is prepared to invest into it for life, or at least for a long period of time, even after formal education has ended, and if the experiential learning environment is right, s/he will reach high levels of intercultural competence" (Witte, 2011 p. 105).

There is a second area of messiness associated with portfolios, and it has to do with grading, and the potential performance students may show. Portfolios can be tricky if an

instructor evaluates students' scores based on what the instructor wants students to achieve (i.e., get further to the ethnorelativism side of the DMIS model). They take points off when students do not meet these expectations; students may be more apt to perform, to get a higher score or less of a penalty. Thus, scholars have suggested using more of a complete grading system when using a portfolio assignment, so try to get as truthful thoughts from students as possible.

Even with the limitations surrounding portfolios, they still serve as a beneficial pedagogical tool to see students' growth throughout a semester, especially regarding finding activities that were beneficial to students' growth and understanding of specific topics. Georgiou (2011) suggests that because IC skills require affective development, having multiple data sources over a longer period, such as "those recommended by Lazar et al. (2007, p. 29-30): anecdotal records, observation checklists, observation rating scales, documentation of task-related behaviours, attitudes inventories, surveys, journals, interest, inventories, logs" (p. 171), one can better see students' growth. Said in another way, even with limitations, the portfolio model can be helpful to view growth over a longitudinal time.

5.7. Conclusion

Lastly, I wish to recap the chapter and provide some of the implications of findings from this study as they relate to the TPC field and, more specifically, related to pedagogical considerations.

In this chapter , I focused on an empirical classroom study that used the IPAR method and integrated commonly used teaching methods for IC instruction. These teaching methods included prompts (both exploratory and self-reflective), narratives, interviews, textbook readings, and a client project. These activities all had reflections portions as well. These activities culminated in a portfolio project that the researcher analyzed.

I discussed common findings from the activities themselves as well as more prominent findings amongst all activities. The main finding from this chapter was that students found activities within the practice and apply stage that dealt with "real" activities to be the most helpful to their learning. For programs that want to develop students' IC skills, developing more of these opportunities may be beneficial.

5.8. Chapter Five Summary

In this chapter, I started off by reminding the readers of the complexities in teaching IC. From findings shared in chapter three, textbooks address the cognitive domain of learning, but leave much to be desired regarding developing the attitudinal and behavioral domains. In chapter four, I illustrated a model that could then address all domains of learning that used a relativist lens, and could be used with a variety of teaching methods/activities/contexts. In this chapter, I then used that model to analyze students' perceptions regarding the helpfulness of certain teaching activities that are mentioned by scholars as being helpful for teaching IC skills. These activities included reflexive prompts, narratives, textbook readings, interviewing professionals in the field, client-based projects, and portfolio activities.

In this chapter I offered a few more additional definitions including intercultural sensitivity and intercultural communication competency. I argued that while my project does not focus on establishing what competency means nor assessing competency, I am interested in developing students' IC skills. I explored Bennett's ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism model and argued for activities that lead students toward the ethnorelativism side.

I then introduced my content analysis study where I analyzed a portfolio project. I found that students found the client/community partner projects as the most helpful in developing their IC skills. Further, while many appreciated the textbook examples, based on concerns shared in chapter three, it would behoove instructors to add supplemental critical reflection activities to chapter readings. Similarly, regarding the IPAR model, students preferred the **practice** and **apply** activities that specifically had them interacting with individuals outside of academia. I did not find any major differences between responses from students at different institutions.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION OF DISSERTATION PROJECT AND CONTRIBUTIONS

In this chapter I will provide an overview of each of the chapters, illustrating connections between each chapter, then I will provide an overview of some of the key findings from the entire project. I will end by discussing how my work contributes to the field.

6.1. Recap of Key Information in Each Chapter

This section will offer a recap of each of the main chapters from this dissertation.

6.1.1 Chapter Two Recap

Chapter two explored some of the main conversations and literature regarding the history, models, and arguments surrounding intercultural communication. The main emphasis of this chapter was to provide key terms related to IC, contextualization of these terms, and their definitions so a strong foundation was created for the rest of the dissertation project. I also quickly illustrated the connection between SSs and IC, which was a concept that was explored throughout the dissertation project.

6.1.2. Chapter Three Recap

Chapter two presented a textual analysis of TPC textbooks. I focused on textbooks because textbooks can be the primary tool for disseminating IC information, especially for instructors who are new or uncomfortable with teaching IC. In this chapter, I presented a content-rich, textual analysis studying several professional, technical communication.

While I argued that there are many reasons for instructors to select a course textbook, such as the textbook having great resources for other objectives, I argued that textbooks are not the ideal tool, when used solely. I suggest that textbooks are not the most helpful tool for several reasons:

- Most of the textbooks do not provide a definition for culture.
    - Because of this lack of definition, teaching an abstract topic (like culture) can be harder for students to comprehend. Further problematic, the descriptions of culture change throughout the text to meet the needs of the examples, which can cause confusion.
- Textbooks often rely on a Big lens view of culture.
    - This view can be problematic because it is often followed by national or territorialized stereotypes, many of which are reductionistic. Further problematic of this use of Big culture is the use of citations and studies used as evidence --- many of which are over 20 years old. While textbooks often used more current literature for other examples in textbooks (such as communication guidelines, using social media, among other topics),

citations regarding culture were often outdated, which potentially illustrate a lag in textbooks and their knowledge of current cultural conversations and research.

- To teach IC effectively, students need to develop cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioral understandings of culture. While textbooks provide some informational materials to help with cognitive development, there were limited opportunities for students to develop their attitudinal and behavioral understanding of culture.
    - Textbooks often provide glimpses of factoids, which can help with basic informational knowledge of cultures (again, factoids are problematic because they often rely on reductionistic stereotypes). HOwever, there were limited opportunities for students to develop their attitudinal understanding of culture. While prompts and activities can be helpful for students to develop this attitudinal aspect, many of the prompts were surface level and did not allow for reflection. Many of the prompts asked students to interview international students to learn more about communication preferences rather than having the student reflect on their own cultures, issues related to IC, and other deeper reflections that can allow for attitudinal growth.

Due to these limitations with textbooks, I argue that additional teaching methods need to be used in conjunction (or in lieu of) textbooks. The following chapters explored additional types of teaching methods for IC instruction.

6.1.3. Chapter Four Recap

Chapter four bridged the gap that using only textbooks leaves open when teaching IC. In this chapter, I argued that IC is a type of SS that requires students to develop both attitudinally and cognitively. I used Bay's (2021) definition of SS. I then argued, similar to Bay, that while SSs can be difficult to teach, it is a worthwhile process because students will need these skills in various situations.

I presented a scaffolding model that could be used to teach abstract or conceptual topics like SS and IC. I suggested that incorporating opportunities that allow students to reflect on transferability may potentially strengthen students retention and engagement of the material. This model was introduced as the Introduction → Practice → Apply → Reflect or IPAR model, which has four stages and at least two opportunities to incorporate feedback loops. While this model was presented as the IPAR model, I explained that this scaffolding tool is not a lock-stepped model and the instructor can incorporate stages out of order, visit stages multiple times, and potentially use stages concurrently. This model also incorporates low-stake assignments in the practice stage and allows for higher-stakes options in the apply stage when students work with a client or community partner.

While this model is offered and named in this dissertation project, I suggest that the model may be one that many courses (and programs) are already using but not fully

naming. The naming of this model can be beneficial for students better conceptualizing how activities and content build upon previous activities and content, thus helping them retain the information and apply or transfer the knowledge in other situations.

I introduced the portfolio project that used the IPAR model. While this project was discussed more fully in chapter five, I focused on themes from students regarding SS development, especially as it related to IC and the IPAR model. Some of the findings that were discussed in this chapter included:

- Students self-reported that "real" experiences, or activities where students interacted with professionals in their field, with a client, or with a group were the most beneficial for their learning and understanding of the concept of SSs and IC.
    - These findings echo Anthony and Garner's (2016) regarding developing students' SS abilities.
- Students often mentioned the organization of the materials as helpful for their understanding of SS and IC.
    - Students often discussed how they saw the connection to previous activities and were able to recall key content from previous units, illustrating students' ability to recall this information. Students were able to translate how SS, like IC, related in various situations from their personal to professional lives.
- Students self-reported as excelling in the following soft skills: communication, work ethic, adaptability, performing under pressure, interpersonal/teamwork, time management, and problem solving.

- Out of all of these skills, communication was the skills that the vast majority of students shared that they excelled in. Conversely, only one student suggested that they struggle with their communication abilities. However, when reading reflections, students shared they often experience group dynamics where team members were not communicating effectively, so there may be a gap of knowledge in communicating and interpersonal/team skills that still need to be developed.
- Seeing as many of these students were freshmen-junior status, they may excel at these skills, but similar to the Robles (2012) argues, students may be overconfident in their abilities in some of these SS and further development may be beneficial for their personal and professional lives.

- Regarding SS that students felt they needed to develop more, the most common ones include confrontation or conflict resolution, time management or self-motivation, active/thoughtful thinking, and confidence/decisiveness. These are SS that can be developed in all TPC courses. Again, the instructor would need to focus on developing both the cognitive and attitudinal domains of learning.
    - While not mentioned as frequently by the students, the researcher-instructor suggested that TPC programs may benefit from TPC programs focusing on SS such as delegation, adaptability, and the ability to use feedback/criticism in constructive ways could be beneficial SS skills to teach as many of these would be beneficial in students' personal and professional lives. Further, many of these skills are the ones that TPC jobs are advertised in job ads (Stanton, 2017).

6.1.4. Chapter Five Recap

Chapter five built upon the introduction of the IPAR model and the portfolio project to develop students IC knowledge and abilities, as presented in chapter four. Chapter five focused on the analysis of the portfolio, which used content-rich, textual analysis methods. This analysis included samples from students over multiple semesters at two institutions. I also focused on the ratings students gave to each activity as it related to its helpfulness of teaching and developing their IC knowledge and abilities.

Some of the findings from this study included:

- Students finding the interview and community/client project the most helpful for developing their IC abilities and skills.
- There were not many large differences between students at a Public Affairs and Land-Grant institution regarding responses or their perceived helpfulness of certain activities.

6.2. Main Takeaways from this Project

This section will discuss some of the main themes and connections between multiple chapters.

6.2.1. Lack of Definitions

In this dissertation project, I hoped to make clear that many of the ambiguity and difficulty in teaching concepts like IC and SSs stem from not using or sharing strong definitions of these terms with students. It is paramount for an instructor to use

definitions to allow students to build a foundational understanding that can be modified throughout their learning. Instructors cannot rely on textbooks to provide these definitions, especially ones related to culture and IC, as these texts often omit these definitions and provide descriptions that vary throughout. Because of the varying descriptions and lack of a strong definition, teaching abstract concepts and skills like SS and IC can be more difficult because students (and instructors) can view the learning objective as vague, like a moving target, or unable to measure.

The findings, especially those from Chapter 4 and 5, suggest that, by using the IPAR model, instructors can further reinforce definitions multiple times throughout this semester. The findings suggests that instructors need to develop an IC toolbox that accompanies the use of textbooks, if that is their primary tool for teaching IC. A later section in this chapter will provide instructors with some of these tools to better support them and their goals of incorporating IC development in their classrooms.

6.2.2. IC as a SS, Which can be Taught

To the researcher's knowledge, not much work has been done in the TPC field to connect IC as a SS, and through that lens, how to develop students IC skills and abilities. I hoped to create a clear understanding from chapter two to the present chapter that IC is a type of SS, and SSs can (and should) be incorporated in TPC courses. While chapter two offered definitions to illustrate the connection between these two concepts, chapter three illustrated the issue with only teaching the cognitive domain of IC and the need for addressing and developing students' attitudinal domain of learning regarding IC. Chapter three presents a potential model for instructors to use to develop this attitudinal domain,

and chapter four discusses more fully students' perceived understanding of IC through the use of this model as well as their perceived thoughts regarding the helpfulness of various activities to teach IC.

6.2.3. Findings Related to Teaching IC

It is not a coincidence that practice applications were the activities that students found to be the most helpful. From previous literature and the development of SSs to the activities that were most helpful in developing IC skills and abilities, students found that activities like interviewing a professional in their field, working with a client, or working with a team were the most helpful for their learning.

I suggest that this application also allows students to better transfer these skills to multiple settings and get feedback in a relatively safe (educational) setting, which can help them when they enter more intense (work and personal) settings.

Further, there did not seem to be much difference in which activities were most beneficial to students; however, I would argue that instructors should be intentional about adding activities that focus on the *practice* and *apply* stages and for instructors to be intentional about incorporating activities that focus on behavioral and cognitive domains of development since textbooks may need some supplement in that area.

6.3. Limitations of this Dissertation Project

This section hopes to address two of the main limitations of this project. Firstly, this project did not measure the degree of growth of SS like IC. While measuring this degree

of change, possibly through the use of the intercultural development instrument (IDI) survey at the beginning and end of the portfolio project would have been beneficial, the current project did not use this tool for two reasons. Firstly, this tool costs roughly $12-$18 (in 2021) per student. For some of the courses, it was not feasible to offer a course fee or pay for these surveys for students. I suggest that many entry-level, service TPC programs might find themselves in similar situations where this cost is not feasible, equitable, or accessible for a variety of reasons. However, this study suggested that growth can still be illustrated and self-reported through narrative form, as presented in the portfolio project. However, even with this potential solution, I do not want to downplay the degree of change in students' IC abilities.

I suggest that a potentially beneficial future study might focus on this growth, especially for programs that want to make IC development an integral part of their curriculum. I suggest that it might be helpful for programs that want to test this degree of change of IC throughout their progress of the degree. This future study could administer the IDI when a student enters the program and then at again administer the IDI survey when the student completes the program. This would allow a program to measure the degree of change as well as find areas where their program could improve IC curriculum. Further, by adding this fee as a part of a program, the department may have more resources (either funding or grant abilities) to secure funding for students to take this survey.

I suggest that while measurement in a class might be beneficial, I argue that a single course that focuses on SSs, like IC, would likely see minimal change as much of this information is intended to be used in a service aspect. Students in a class will start to

build their knowledge and abilities in a course, but much of the information they learn and the experiences they have will be more like seeds that are sowed in a course and will continue to grow throughout their life. For this reason, allowing for time (multiple semesters or years) could allow for students to see if those seeds came to fruition or if there needs to be more cultivation in the way of content or curricula development.

The second limitation of this project has to do with the testing of the IPAR model. This model, like all models, requires further testing in various settings to test its validity and reliability. While this model has been used in upper-division TPC courses to teach SS like ethics and active listening (see Rieger & Lonelodge, 2021), future studies where the researchers are not the instructors would be beneficial (see Meloncon, 2021 regarding sustainable research practices).

A future study that could be beneficial might include a researcher studying TPC courses that has the monetary funds to administer the IDI survey multiple times. The instructor could administer the IDI survey at the beginning of the semester, use the IPAR model throughout the semester, and then administer a post IDI survey to see what degree of change in students' IC abilities occurred, if any, throughout the semester. A control group would be needed for this study. In other words, the researcher would benefit from administering a pre and post IDI survey in courses that did not use the IPAR method to teach IC.

6.4. Contributions to the Field

In the final section of this dissertation project, I discuss some of the intended contributions of this project. These contributions include developed definitions for key terms like culture and intercultural communication and the IPAR model.

6.4.1. Core Definitions

I hoped to establish several core definitions to assist with future IC research and pedagogical goals.

- **Small culture -** "The sum of all the processes, happenings, or activities in which a given set or several sets of people habitually engage' which are commonly illustrated by a discernable set of behaviors and understandings that are open to change based on interactions among group members and various changes in circumstances" (Holliday, 1999, p. 248). Small cultures can refer to occupation, gender, class, among many other cultures.
- **Intercultural Communication** - an interaction between two or more participants of differing Small cultures.
- **Intercultural Communication Competency** - having developed all three domains: cognitive, behavioral, and affective domains as it relates to a predetermined benchmark.
- **Soft Skills** - The cognitive, behavioral, affective, and rhetorical skills that allow "individuals to learn how to read and respond effectively to different workplace situations, people, technologies, and problems" (Bay, 2021, p. 13).

6.4.2. IPAR Model

I introduced a model that can be used to teach abstract and complex topics, like SSs. This model allows for a relativist lens and allows for the development of cognitive, behavioral, and attitudinal domains.

The stages include:

- Introduction: Students are introduced to the abstract concept(s) and are defined, an overview of how this concept relates to the course (and potentially outside the course to illustrate transferability), and examples of the concept.
    - Domain developed: Cognitive.
- Practice: Students are asked to put the base (introductory) knowledge into practice to help further develop their understanding and application.
    - Note: A feedback loop must be included in this stage. This feedback loop allows students to receive feedback and implement that feedback. Peers and or the instructor can provide feedback. The practice stage should mostly be low-stakes assessments (such as low point writing assignments, quizzes, responses, discussions, and other activities) rather than high-stakes assessments.
    - Domain developed: Cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioral (depending on activity)
- Apply: Students are asked to use the introduction, practice, and potentially reflect experiences in a client or community partner project.
    - Note: It is crucial that this stage also has a feedback loop component with feedback from the client/community partner and/or the instructor. I argue

that getting both is more effective as the client/community partner can often discuss the holistic project. In contrast, the instructor might discuss more of the nuances related to soft skills/TPC. The Apply stage should be a high-stakes assessment.

    - Domain developed: Behavioral (and possibly attitudinal)

- Reflect: Students are asked to reflect on content they have learned, what they need to continue to develop, and how it can relate outside of the classroom context.
    - Note: While this stage can occur at any (and potentially multiple) point(s), it is crucial to have students reflect at the end of the entire experience to help the metacognitive transfer of the concept.
    - Domain developed: Attitudinal

This chapter concludes my dissertation.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Resources for Instructors and Programs

- Rubric for IC Competency
    - The Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU)'s Intercultural Knowledge and Competence VALUE Rubric. This rubric can be found using this URL: https://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/intercultural-knowledge
- Teaching Materials
    - The Measuring and Assessing of Soft Skills (MASS) Project has several teaching materials. You can find some teaching materials using this URL: https://maacce.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Soft-Skills-Learning-Materials.pdf

APPENDIX B: Definitions Used in this Dissertation Project

Affective Domain - The emotions, attitudes, and convictions one has related to a concept (Sercu, 2004). As it relates to IC, the affective domain might include being open-minded and feeling positive about an IC interaction. This domain references how one feels about an IC interaction.

Behavioral Domain - The actions or behaviors one exhibits related to a concept. As it relates to IC, the behavioral domain might include "behavioural flexibility" as well as the social actions one exhibits through both verbal and non-verbal actions (Sercu, 2004 p. 76). This domain references how one acts in an IC interaction.

Cognitive Domain - The content one knows related to a concept. As it relates to IC, the cognitive domain helps "reduce the ambiguity and uncertainty that are inherent in IC interactions" (Sercu, 2004 p. 76). This domain references what information one knows *about* a culture or IC.

Competency - using a predetermined benchmark to measure the level of the cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioral domains as it relates to a certain skill. Competence, then, would refer to an individual meeting a certain benchmark.

Factoid - information about other cultures presented as facts but is usually based on stereotypes (Matveeva, 2007). Factoids are a type of IC component.

Intercultural Communication - an interaction between two or more participants of differing Small cultures. This definition will shape future chapters, such as the chapters focused on case studies and pedagogical implications.

Intercultural Communication Competency - having developed all three domains: cognitive, behavioral, and affective domains related to a predetermined benchmark.

Intercultural Component (IC component) - intercultural materials and examples listed within textbooks (Matveeva, 2007).

Intercultural Sensitivity - an individual's "ability to discriminate and experience relevant cultural differences, and is defined in terms of stages of personal growth along a continuum of increasing sophistication in dealing with cultural differences. For this reason, intercultural sensitivity helps to assess intercultural competence" (Wang, 2013 p. 203-204).

Introduce → Practice → Reflect → Apply (IPAR) Model - Model consisting of four stages (Introduce, Practice, Reflect, and Apply) that instructors can use in their classrooms to develop conceptual topics, such as SS. As it relates to this project, the SSs instructors are developing is, and are connected to, IC.

Knowledge Transference - The ability for a student to transfer knowledge learned in the classroom to other contexts and situations.

Othering - A term used when one views or imagines another from a different culture from them as inferior based on their values, customs, practices, or activities being different from them (Holliday, 2013).

Relativist Lens - using a combination of a generalist and specialist lens to teach SS.

Small culture - "The sum of all the processes, happenings, or activities in which a given set or several sets of people habitually engage' which are commonly illustrated by a discernable set of behaviors and understandings that are open to change based on interactions among group members and various changes in circumstances" (Holliday, 1999, p. 248). Small cultures can refer to occupation, gender, class, among many other cultures.

Soft skills - "rhetorical skills that require individuals to learn how to read and respond effectively to different workplace situations, people, technologies, and problems" (Bay, 2021, p. 13).

APPENDIX C: Sample Activities Used in the Classroom

Prompt #1: Learning about 'culture.'
Please complete the instructions in order.

1. Read this description about culture: The word 'culture' is used in many different ways (often in combination with other words) and with various meanings. We are going to do a generative thinking activity now. Please write down several different uses of the word 'culture' (as well as cultural') that you have recently encountered in conversation, school, media, and everyday use.
    1. Answer:
2. Now, I would like you to make a post of FlipGrid sharing some of these ideas.
    1. After posting, please watch two others' videos. You do not need to respond to their videos at this time.
    2. After watching these Flipgrid videos, consider revising your understanding of the culture here. Were there any new types of cultural information you learned about? Any understandings that you disagreed about? Were there any interesting understandings?
        1. Answer:

Now, please read this short description of culture. "While there are many competing definitions of what culture means, two commonly recognized definitions are Big culture and Small culture. Big culture refers to viewing culture in a national sense (Japanese, American, Russian, etc.). Small culture refers to "The sum of all the processes, happenings, or activities in which a given set or several sets of people habitually engage' which are commonly illustrated by a discernable set of behaviors and understandings that are open to change based on interactions among group members and various changes in circumstances" (Holliday, 1999, p. 248). In other words, Small cultures refer to all the cultures one can belong to, such as ones related to occupation, gender, class, among many other cultures.

. After reading the description, please answer the following questions:

1. When you think about cultures in the Small culture sense, what cultures do you belong to? Answer:
2. Do you think it is important to learn about and become part of your work culture in the workplace? Answer:
3. If you think it is important, what are some ways you might try to learn and become part of the organization's culture? Answer:
4. Answer: from our previous work regarding soft skills, what type of soft skills might be involved in learning about and possibly assimilating into a workplace culture. Please explain.

Lastly, please rate this activity on its helpfulness in helping to further your understanding of culture and explain your rating in a few sentences.

. 0 = extremely unhelpful and problematic to furthering my understanding of culture

a. 1 = extremely unhelpful in furthering my understanding of culture
b. 2 = unhelpful to furthering my understanding of culture
c. 3 = neither unhelpful nor helpful furthering my understanding of culture
d. 4 = helpful to furthering my understanding of culture
e. 5 = extremely helpful in furthering my understanding of culture

1. Answer:

Prompt #2: Learning about issues related to culture

Please complete the activities in order.

1. Read an excerpt from UIC. "We are often tempted to over-, under-, or misinterpret what we see. One reason for this is the prejudices we all carry with us, and the surface, seductive easy answers which pass as evidence to support them. Table [1] presents two examples of such misunderstanding in particular domestic circumstances…" (p.19).

	Produced by underling universal cultural processes in small culture formation		
Observation	Prejudice	Easy Answer	Missed complexity of Small Culture Formation
Employees address their superiors/clients by given name and no title.	'They are less polite than we are.'	'They don't use a respectful form of address.' 'We value politeness, they don't.'	There are a large variety of possible ways of showing respect. Within this cultural environment using given names is approved by parents and does carry respect.
During meetings, entry-level employees are expected to keep quiet unless spoken to.	'They are more formal than we are.'	'They don't encourage open, critical discussion or entry-level employees voices.' 'We value critical discussion and	In every cultural arrangement there are rules of formality. Within this cultural environment they are expressed in a particular way. There may be other times and places where open, critical discussion is encouraged. Additionally, this could be a time-saving strategy in meetings using a culture of respect.

		all employees; they don't.'	

Table 6: Table adapted from UIC Table 2.5

"This is where what might seem to be a fairly innocent misunderstanding turns into a more sinister Othering. This can be directed at any group of people, but it is most often associated with race, ethnicity, foreigners, or minority groups. There is the development of an accusatory tone as 'they' are compared with 'we'; and the Easy answers are couched as 'they don't'. In such cases the easy answers which imply some form of deficiency can become so established that they are very hard to undo" (p.19).

1. Now reflect on a time when you started a new job/internship, started your program, or a professional organization to which you did not initially belong and answer the following:
    1. Describe the time/organization. Answer:
    2. What prejudices might you have had when you started? Answer:
    3. What evidence did you have for these prejudices? What role did easy answers, values, and statements about culture play in this process? Answer:
    4. Now, try to reconsider the event and see a great complexity of who they are (which might undo the prejudices). (Questions adapted from p. 21) Answer:
2. How can this relate to or apply to soft skills in the workplace? Answer:
    1.
3. Read the following excerpt: "...We are beset by rumors about 'other cultures' which have developed over time for several reasons...These rumors lead us to imagine how cultural life is constructed, which may not be true or maybe exaggerated. A sample of this is the rumor or belief that British people are always punctual; the real-life observation is that people are often late for meetings and often do not leave their prior location until the meeting. They often decided to be late for social events to avoid being 'the first to arrive' (p. 61).
4. Answer: share your examples of behaviors you have observed which are different from what you have been led to believe. For example, you could think of people in different majors, fields, or anything else you would like to discuss. (Prompt adapted from p. 62).

5. Lastly, please rate this activity on its helpfulness in helping to further your understanding of culture and explain your rating in a few sentences.
    1. 0 = extremely unhelpful and problematic to furthering my understanding of culture
    2. 1 = extremely unhelpful in furthering my understanding of culture
    3. 2 = unhelpful to furthering my understanding of culture
    4. 3 = neither unhelpful nor helpful furthering my understanding of culture
    5. 4 = helpful to furthering my understanding of culture
    6. 5 = extremely helpful in furthering my understanding of culture
        1. Answer:

Narrative #1: *Read Crash of Cultures (on LMS) and answer the discussion questions.*

1. What type of culture did this example use? Big or Small culture? Something in between? Discuss your thoughts on using this type of culture.
    1. Answer:
2. Do you think these actions could have anything to do with anything outside of national cultures? Or do you think these actions, values, beliefs are solely related to national culture?
    1. Answer:
3. Discuss your experience working with people from other regions of your native country or people with different professional backgrounds from yours? These can be in-class projects. What difficulties have you encountered in such interactions? Do you find assumptions you can rely on to understand or work with people from certain regions of your country, of certain ages, or central genders or sexual identities, in certain professions, or certain social or organizational roles? Explain.
    1. Answer:
4. Sam identifies the "cast of characters" in her story by their professional roles. Keep in mind that she uses humor throughout the story. How do these character labels function in the story? Are they simply convenient ways to help readers visualize and separate all of the many characters in the story? Are they a type of stereotype? If they are stereotypes, do you think she is aware they could be perceived as unfair simplification?
    1. Answer:
5. The programmer from Texas comments, "Texans buy from Texans, Or from Mexico, because that's the same thing." Sam expresses incredulity at this, and it is undoubtedly a strange thing to say to many readers. What assumptions do you think the programmer is making? Is he expressing a political view? An economic reality? A sense of cultural unity between Texas and Mexico?
    1. Answer:
6. Does cultural identity, whether regional or professional, become less important for the team members as they carry out their tasks? Do the team members' cultural identities change through the team-building process? Does the team develop a cultural identity of its own? Explain.
    1. Answer:

7. Which characters in the story do you tend to identify with most? Do you identify with those characters most because of their regional culture, gender, professional identity, or other reasons? Explain.
    1. Answer:
8. Lastly, please rate this activity on its helpfulness in helping to further your understanding of culture and explain your rating in a few sentences.
    1. 0 = extremely unhelpful and problematic to furthering my understanding of culture
    2. 1 = extremely unhelpful in furthering my understanding of culture
    3. 2 = unhelpful to furthering my understanding of culture
    4. 3 = neither unhelpful nor helpful furthering my understanding of culture
    5. 4 = helpful to furthering my understanding of culture
    6. 5 = extremely helpful in furthering my understanding of culture
        1. Answer:

Professional Interview Activity

For this interview, I want you to find someone in a field somewhat closely related to your field, and I want you to ask them a few questions about their job and then about how soft skills and culture relate (or do not relate) to their job. You can also ask them any questions you have about getting a job/interview, etc. If you have any concerns about finding someone to interview, please reach out to me early in the process, and I will help you find someone.

1. Interviewee #1 (Name & Occupation):
    1. Answer:
2. Some questions to ask:
    1. What are some experiences or opportunities that led you to this position?
        1. Answer:

b. What are your favorite aspects about this job/your place of employment?
        1. Answer:

c. What tasks/activities do you do on a typical day?
        1. Answer:

d. What type of writing do you do? Do you think technical writing is important in this job?
        1. Answer:

e. What soft skills do you think are the most important to have in this job? Can you share any stories of someone possessing or not possessing these soft skills?
        1. Answer:

f. Do you interact with other cultures in this position? If you do, can you speak about it?
        1. Answer:

g. What tips would you give to college students about being successful in this type of position?
        1. Answer:

Other questions you asked:

. Answer:

Notes from the interview (use as much space as you need):

. Answer:

What (if anything) did you learn that might be beneficial in your future (career goals or otherwise)?

. Answer:

What did you learn about soft skills regarding this field?

. Answer:

What did you learn specifically about culture based on this interview?

. Answer:

Lastly, please rate this activity on its helpfulness in helping to further your understanding of culture and explain your rating in a few sentences.

. 0 = extremely unhelpful and problematic to furthering my understanding of culture

a. 1 = extremely unhelpful in furthering my understanding of culture
b. 2 = unhelpful to furthering my understanding of culture
c. 3 = neither unhelpful nor helpful furthering my understanding of culture
d. 4 = helpful to furthering my understanding of culture
e. 5 = extremely helpful in furthering my understanding of culture

1. Answer:

Textbook Chapter Reading, Culture Instance #1:

As you read through your textbook, please stop to reflect on how your textbook describes culture. Then, answer the following questions.

1. Refer to one instance in a chapter where your textbook discussed culture. Describe and reference the instance here.
    1. Answer:
2. How do you think the book defined culture? How does this description compare to our class definition of culture?
    1. Answer:
3. Did your understanding of culture change from this reference of culture?
    1. Answer:
4. Lastly, please rate this activity on its helpfulness in helping to further your understanding of culture and explain your rating in a few sentences.
    1. 0 = extremely unhelpful and problematic to furthering my understanding of culture
    2. 1 = extremely unhelpful in furthering my understanding of culture
    3. 2 = unhelpful to furthering my understanding of culture
    4. 3 = neither unhelpful nor helpful furthering my understanding of culture
    5. 4 = helpful to furthering my understanding of culture
    6. 5 = extremely helpful in furthering my understanding of culture
        1. Answer:

Client Project Reflection

1. How would you describe the culture(s) of the client you worked with for the group project? Did you notice any shared culture(s) between you and your client?
    1. Answer:
2. Did your understanding of these cultures affect how you created the project or what you did in the project? How so? Do you think you should have (if you did not)?
    1. Answer:
3. What soft skills do you think you used throughout this project? Explain.
    1. Answer:
4. Did your understanding of culture change from engaging in this activity?
    1. Answer:
5. Did your understanding of soft skills change from this reference of culture?
    1. Answer:
6. Lastly, please rate this activity on its helpfulness in helping to further your understanding of culture and explain your rating in a few sentences.
    1. 0 = extremely unhelpful and problematic to furthering my understanding of culture
    2. 1 = extremely unhelpful in furthering my understanding of culture
    3. 2 = unhelpful to furthering my understanding of culture
    4. 3 = neither unhelpful nor helpful furthering my understanding of culture
    5. 4 = helpful to furthering my understanding of culture
    6. 5 = extremely helpful in furthering my understanding of culture

Answer:

VITA

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Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy in English at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in May, 2022.

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Katie Rieger currently serves as the Writing Center Director and an Assistant Professor at a small, private college. Her research interests include intercultural communication, programmatic and pedagogical topics, labor practices, and social justice. Prior to her current role, Rieger was the Assistant Director to the TPC program at Oklahoma State University. She has taught TPC courses for eight years, and she has also worked in and with writing centers for a decade.