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The Benefits and Challenges of Becoming Cross-Culturally Competent Counseling Psychologists: Presidential Address

P. Paul Heppner
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The central thesis of this article is that focusing on cross-cultural competence will enhance both the science and the practice of counseling psychology. Developing cross-cultural competence is a lifelong journey, replete with many joys and challenges, that will (a) increase the sophistication of our research, (b) expand the utility and generalizability of the knowledge bases in counseling psychology, (c) promote a deeper realization that counseling occurs in a cultural context, and (d) increase not only counseling effectiveness but also the profession's ability to address diverse mental health needs across different populations around the globe. In the future, (a) counseling psychologists will be expected to have an array of cross-cultural competencies, which emphasizes the need to systematically train students to acquire such competencies, and (b) counseling psychology will no longer be defined as counseling psychology within the United States, but rather, the parameters of counseling psychology will cross many countries and many cultures.

A major focus of my presidency of the Society of Counseling Psychology (SCP) has centered on the internationalization of counseling psychology. It seemed to me that cross-national relationships have tremendous potential to enhance the basic core of the science and practice of counseling psychology, both domestically and internationally. My observations were a result of my professional international travels and experiences during the past 20 years, many discussions with colleagues interested in international issues, as well as working with and training international students for the past 15 years.

This article was presented as my presidential address on August 20, 2005, at the 113th annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, Washington, DC. I want to express my sincere gratitude to several wonderful colleagues who gave so thoughtfully and generously of their time to provide feedback on earlier drafts. I very much appreciate their feedback and support: Lisa Flores; Kwan, Kwong-Liem; Michael Mobley; and Mary Heppner. Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to P. Paul Heppner, Department of Educational, School and Counseling Psychology, University of Missouri–Columbia, 16 Hill Hall, Columbia, MO 65211; e-mail: HeppnerP@missouri.edu.

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In essence, it seemed to me that the time was right to examine ways of enhancing communication and to explore mechanisms among counseling psychology leaders in many countries. Focusing on cross-cultural issues is consistent with counseling psychology's current multicultural focus, and in my view, one enhances the other. It also seemed to me that the SCP could play a major role in not only facilitating cross-national collaboration but also in facilitating the integration of international students studying in the United States in the SCP.

The central thesis of my presidential address is that focusing on cross-cultural competence in particular will enhance both the science and the practice of counseling psychology. For example, I have been studying applied problem solving and coping for more than 30 years. I have been very aware that most of the research studies published in psychology journals are conducted on U.S. samples, and most, if not all, of the instruments used to assess coping have been developed from a Western perspective. Recently, my colleagues and I developed a collectivistic coping inventory based on Asian values. I will speak more about this later, but in general, the study's results revealed very different coping constructs than did the previous research based on Western cultures. Cross-cultural research can expand and greatly enhance the knowledge bases in psychology. In short, I will maintain that increased cross-cultural competence will increase the sophistication of our research and expand the utility and generalizability of the knowledge bases in counseling psychology. Moreover, greater cross-cultural competence will promote a deeper realization that counseling occurs in a cultural context and will increase not only counseling effectiveness but also the profession's ability to address diverse mental health needs across different populations around the globe.

By way of introduction, I want to provide some context or background for my talk. In my early years, I grew up in North Dakota and Minnesota. My father had less than a sixth grade education; my mother had less than an eighth grade education. At that time, their parents believed that they were much more useful working on their respective family farms than attending school. I grew up in a low socioeconomic-status family but did not recognize this for many years because it seemed that we were like everyone else around us. Very few people I knew traveled farther than one or two states away from either Minnesota or North Dakota, and none traveled to other countries (other than Canada, which was not far away). The exceptions were my uncles, many of whom had served in the armed services during World War II.

North Dakota was quite flat, and I recall as a child wondering what mountains would look like and how high they would be. I had difficulty imagining a comparable sight, as I had never seen tall buildings or structures. My dream of seeing mountains was realized in my early 20s when Mary (my life partner

now of 32 years) and I took a honeymoon to Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado, a park that we have now visited over 100 times. I also remember being fascinated with other countries and cultures, especially Africa and Asia, but I never thought I would ever go to either of these continents. I did not have a schema for what life would be like on those continents and could not see myself in any of their countries.

I want to now fast-forward to today. In the short life of a relatively young counseling psychologist, I have taught graduate-level courses in Ireland, Taiwan, and South Africa. I have been invited to give keynote addresses, presentations, and workshops in Ireland, Taiwan, South Africa, China, England, South Korea, Hong Kong, Norway, Sweden, the United Arab Emirates, and Singapore. I have published collaborative research with colleagues living in Taiwan, South Africa, and Turkey. Who could have predicted these events? In part, the world is very different today from when I was growing up in the 1950s. I am amazed at how much I have learned on these international journeys. After my first trip to Taiwan in 1989, I remember expressing appreciation for how much I had learned in 2 short weeks to my host, Professor Lin, Hsin-tai, a professor at National Changhua University. He smiled and told me of a famous Chinese saying: "Walking ten thousand miles takes you farther than reading ten thousand books." Now, I do not believe that I am too unusual these days in terms of international travel and collaboration with international colleagues. But I do believe the counseling profession can and must do much more to more systematically train the next generation of professionals to be cross-culturally competent.

Becoming cross-culturally competent is a lifelong journey (see, e.g., Kiselica, 1998), one that a person is always working toward. For example, my own cross-cultural journey has involved living and working in six countries, consisting of three Fulbright awards and three visiting professorships or faculty exchanges. There have been many critical events in my journey; I will briefly note eight of them. While in college in the early 1970s, I remember Mary's sister, Carol, participating in organized tours to Western Europe and the Caribbean; her photographs and purchases seemed so novel and even exotic, and she became an early role model portraying that it was possible for people like her, as well as Mary and me, to experience these faraway places. Another early critical event involved a 4-week trip to Western Europe in 1973; my best friend from high school, Brad Sleeper, studied in France for a semester, and then, 2 years later, he guided our small group through Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and France. The experience was profound as it not only opened my eyes to a much broader world, but even more important, it provided me with a sense of efficacy for managing travels in other countries. Other critical events were (a) a Fulbright Fellowship in Sweden in 1985, which broadened my worldview of psychology, models of psychotherapy,

and graduate training; (b) an invitation to speak in Taiwan in 1989, which not only greatly broadened my worldview but opened the door to future collaboration in Taiwan, including a later Fulbright Fellowship in 2002; (c) 8 months in Ireland in 1994 on a Fulbright, which allowed me to become more deeply immersed in another culture than ever before and enabled me to develop more intimate professional and personal relationships; (d) 2 months in 1995 traveling and working in postapartheid South Africa for 1 year with Mary, Helen Neville, and Sundiata Cha Jua, which deepened my understanding of oppression, racism, privilege, resilience, and the struggle; (e) 13 racial/ethnic minority and international doctoral graduate advisees beginning in 1979, all of whom taught me so much about themselves, their culture, and me as a White Westerner; and (f) discussions with international leaders spanning 7 weeks in 2004 and 2005, which deepened my understanding of the many opportunities and benefits of international collaboration.

I also want to emphasize at the outset that there are many significant challenges in the journey to become cross-culturally competent. I will give one example now to illustrate the type of challenges I am talking about. This past December, I spent a week in China exploring a possible collaborative relationship with Professor Hou, Zhijin, and several administrators in the School of Psychology at Beijing Normal University. At the end of that week, an important business dinner was scheduled to discuss our ideas with the vice president, the dean, and the assistant director of international relations of their university. We were seated around a traditional round table, and a wide range of food was brought and placed on the middle turntable. Of course, we were all using chopsticks, and although I am not an expert in using chopsticks, I like to believe my chopstick skills are acceptable and have many times received compliments from my Asian colleagues on my use of chopsticks. As the discussion proceeded, the vice president and later the dean, sitting on each side of me, started to take food from the various serving dishes and place it on my plate. Well, as the meal progressed, this was starting to get to be a little of a problem in that I was getting more food than my stomach could comfortably hold. In addition, I was feeling a little bit slighted, as I interpreted their food giving as an indication that my chopstick use was not up to grade. So, at one point, I said something to the effect of "thanks, but I think I can do this" (meaning serving myself). As the dinner ended, it seemed to have been successful not only interpersonally but also professionally in terms of the agreements that we reached.

Later that evening, as this was my last night in Beijing, I indicated to Professor Hou that I realized there were many things I did not know about Chinese culture, that I wanted to learn, and that I would appreciate feedback about anything I did that was inappropriate. She quickly indicated I had done very well, but then there was a bit of a pause, and she said, "There was one

thing . . . when someone puts food on your plate, it is a sign of respect, a way of honoring you.” On one hand, I was very grateful to learn more about Chinese customs, but at the same time, I started to feel this tremendous wave of embarrassment coming over me. I quickly had an image of me as an American in his Western-independent way, saying, “I can do this myself, thank you!” Oh, how embarrassing! I immediately asked my host to please apologize to the dean and the vice president for me.

The moral of the story is that faux pas in cross-cultural situations will happen and that these faux pas are an essential part of the cross-cultural journey. The more knowledge we have about other cultures, the more effective our interactions and collaborations will be with international colleagues. Conversely, the less that we know about the customs of another culture, the more obstacles we will likely encounter in our relationships as we try to communicate and collaborate with our international colleagues. Sometimes, our lack of knowledge can be a significant detriment in our international relationships. In short, there have been many challenges in becoming cross-culturally competent, and sometimes, these challenges are outside the realm of our awareness, making them even more difficult. Thus, it is essential that the coming generations of counseling psychologists begin their journeys in cross-cultural competence as a part of their graduate training.

GLOBAL CHANGE AND INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION

I want to very briefly address global change and international collaboration. As is abundantly clear, the world is rapidly changing and quickly becoming a global village with increased communication, travel, migration, and trade across many countries. This has been amply documented in a number of arenas, and it is very clear that countries are becoming increasingly interdependent economically, socially, and culturally. In this context of global change, I will focus mostly on changes within psychology and counseling psychology.

As several people have observed, “The world is internationalizing at a much faster pace than the field of psychology” (Leong & Ponterotto, 2003, p. 383), and there are many examples of how slow psychology has been to change. For example, a former colleague once said something like “multiculturalism is a fad” and “not many of our students will be working with students from other countries.” Now, this was in Missouri in the 1980s, which is a predominantly White state, but fast-forward to today and consider another example. My good colleague Dr. Lisa Flores and I codirect the Center for Multicultural Research, Training, and Consultation at the University of Mis-

souri. We are working with a Latino mental health center in Kansas City, Missouri, that employs approximately 25 bilingual therapists who conduct 90% of their sessions in Spanish. There is a huge need in Missouri for multiculturally based counseling, and our training programs need to prepare more counselors to be multiculturally competent. Simply put, multicultural counseling and cross-cultural counseling are not fads. That train has left the station long ago, and it is now abundantly clear that multicultural and cross-cultural perspectives are changing the way we conceptualize all aspects of the counseling process and, in essence, the very heart and soul of counseling from assessment to counseling outcomes.

Although change has sometimes seemed quite slow, there have been some significant changes in counseling psychology in the United States. For example, three decades ago, there were few international students in counseling psychology doctoral programs, practice and research was not often being conducted with international clients or colleagues, and there was very little communication with international colleagues. Moreover, there was little evaluation of dominant Western counseling theories from international perspectives. Today, there is an increasing number of international students in our programs, and international issues are part of their training curricula. For example, 20% of our counseling psychology doctoral students during the past 7 years at the University of Missouri have been from countries other than the United States. I understand that in the counseling and personnel psychology program at the University of Minnesota, approximately 50% of its entering students in the past few years are from other countries. It is much more common that we coauthor papers with colleagues and students from countries other than the United States (e.g., 5 of my 10 most recent publications have been coauthored with international colleagues). There is growing awareness of different cultural values, and there are discussions about limitations of applying counseling techniques from one culture to another. In short, there are many global changes that have created greater interdependence around the world economically, socially, and culturally. Although there has been an increase in the internationalization of psychology, the pace and the depth of the changes in the field have been slow.

In short, counseling psychology and the larger field of psychology need to and can go further to prepare ourselves to be cross-culturally competent. Given the level of technology today, it is almost as easy for me to collaborate with a colleague in Taiwan when writing a research manuscript as it is with a colleague from Iowa. There are also many more opportunities for collaboration with colleagues around the world today; we should seize and capitalize on these opportunities. Moreover, the complexities of the problems around the globe demand a wide array of problem-solving perspectives that cross

disciplines and cultural boundaries. A good example of the complexity of some of the world's problems is the growing AIDS epidemic as well as the December 2004 tsunami; many of the societal needs of the new millennium are multidimensional and cross national boundaries, which subsequently necessitate cross-national collaborations. All of this means we need to go further to prepare ourselves and our students to be more effective, cross-culturally competent scientist-practitioners in the future.

CHALLENGES TO BECOMING GLOBALLY COMPETENT

There are many challenges to becoming globally competent. In this section, I will briefly discuss a few of these challenges as well as relate these challenges to cultural encapsulation within counseling psychology.

Ethnocentricity

As several people have indicated, "The biggest impediment may well be the ethnocentricity of Western psychologists . . . many of whom seem to have little awareness or sympathy for altering a psychology curriculum that both reflects and supports their personal values, epistemologies . . . and training cultures" (Marsella & Pedersen, 2004, p. 414). Ethnocentricity is a major obstacle and challenge to becoming cross-culturally competent counseling psychologists. For example, relatively few U.S. scholars cite international scholars in the primary counseling psychology journals. A recent survey compared the involvement of scientists from one country with that of their counterparts across national boundaries (Altbach & Lewis, 2005). In 13 of the 14 countries, 90% of the respondents reported that it was very important for them to be connected with international activities and scholars in their own scholarly activities. The one country that did not share this level of endorsement was the United States, where approximately 60% of the scientists regarded connections with international scholars as very important.

Xenophobia

Xenophobia is an unreasonable fear, distrust, or hatred of strangers, foreigners, or anything perceived as foreign or different. An example of this is a former neighbor whose family had traveled to China; he had told his wife and daughter, "If you don't know what it is, don't eat it." Now, this is not an uncommon kind of reaction, and in a way, it might be seen by some as a light,

humorous example. However, xenophobia can also reflect very deep fears and can result in horrific, hateful acts. In short, our conscious and unconscious anxieties, distrust, and fears of new and different things can be a significant challenge in our cross-cultural development.

Difficulty in Accepting Others' Worldviews

I want to start this issue with a personal example, a time when Mary and I experienced our first earthquake. We were in Hualien, a city on the eastern side of Taiwan and an area known to have frequent earthquakes. On our first day, we had just entered a restaurant to have dinner with our host, Professor Lin, Meei-ju, from the National Hualien Teachers College. We had just been seated at a table, and as we were looking at the menu, there was a kind of jolt that we had never experienced before. It felt like stone crunching on stone, a deep foundational jolt, the kind of a movement that made the walls and the floor of the restaurant feel very small and weak. I looked across the table at Mary, her eyes were very large, and there was a look of fear on her face that I rarely see. I felt my adrenalin soar. My mind was racing in terms of what we should do. Should we move away from the window? Dive under the table? Living in the Midwest, I was very familiar with ways of responding during a tornado, and those were strategies that we would use in a tornado, but I was unsure what to do in this situation. I looked over at our host, and she was as calm as could be, pensively studying her menu. We asked what that jolt was, and she replied, "Oh, it was just a small tremor [earthquake]. . . . It's releasing pressure . . . it is a good sign." Well, this "good sign" did not make sense to Mary and me. Meei-ju could see that we did not believe what she was saying, and she then repeated that this was a good sign and that there was no need to worry. Although, intellectually, we could understand the utility of accepting others' worldview, emotionally we were not buying it! The moral of this story is that sometimes it is hard to get past our deeply engrained worldviews, even when we are consciously trying to understand and accept others' worldviews.

How does the difficulty of accepting another's worldview relate to our work in counseling psychology? I will give one example. Sometimes, we have difficulty understanding the implications of international studies that are based on different worldviews and, thus, do not understand the relevance to the practice of counseling in the United States. For example, a colleague and I had submitted a manuscript for review in one of our major counseling journals. When we received the editorial feedback, we found that one of the reviewers had quite emphatically questioned, "What does this study conducted in Taiwan have to do with counseling in the United States?" It is important to note that this study was a standard counseling process-and-outcome study. That is, we were studying constructs such as the role of coun-

selor and client characteristics (e.g., counselors' problem-solving appraisal and clients' expectations) in understanding the working alliance in the initial stages of counseling. Our results were not only consistent with some findings in the United States but were also extending the literature in significant ways in that we found that counselors' problem-solving appraisal was strongly associated with clients' initial rating of the working alliance (for more details, see Wei & Heppner, 2005). But the reviewer could not see any relevance of this research to our work as counseling psychologists in the United States.

Sometimes, when it is hard to understand the context or worldview underlying a new research finding, it is also hard to understand the relevance of those findings. Subsequently, we sometimes prematurely reject those ideas. And, sometimes, in that process, we ignore or discount others' worldviews when we do not understand their perspectives and relationships among constructs. An international colleague confided to me that her worldviews, and thus her assumptions, affect the way she conceptualizes a study and the way she writes the rationale for a study. Subsequently, she receives many questions from journal reviewers about the rationale and assumptions of her studies. It struck me how much more difficult it is for our international colleagues to develop a convincing rationale for a study than it is for those of us from the predominant culture, because our assumptions are often shared by many of our colleagues (and reviewers). These and other situations when I served as the editor of *The Counseling Psychologist* have led me to believe that reviewers and editors need considerable cross-cultural awareness and cross-cultural competencies in evaluating articles from international authors. In short, there are many challenges in accepting others' worldviews, cognitive as well as emotional, conscious and unconscious, and these challenges are directly related to many aspects of the work of counseling psychology.

Accepting Differences Across Cultures as Simply Differences

Sometimes, when research is conducted using some of the same constructs and instruments that have been so successful in the dominant U.S. culture, the results are not replicated in another culture. I heard a student say something to the effect of "If the factor structure of an instrument is not replicated in another culture, it means that the instrument is flawed." My perception is that it is all too easy to fear (and get defensive) that the lack of replication in another culture will weaken and even destroy the utility of an instrument. Underlying this logic is the assumption that the factor structure obtained from U.S.-based research represents the true reality, or the standard against which other cultural groups are compared. It is difficult to remember that we are only talking about external validity and the limits of our research

as they are defined within a cultured context (Sue, 1999). Most important, we forget that cross-cultural research may lead us to important and exciting new discoveries that will help provide a more complete and sophisticated picture of the constructs that we are investigating. Perhaps even the lack of an instrument's replication or the role of a construct in another culture will lead us to develop new constructs to more fully understand phenomena. A challenge is to accept cultural differences across constructs as simply differences as opposed to a right or wrong reality.

Universality Assumptions

“The theories, research, practice originated in the U.S. . . . are assumed to be universally applicable. When they are transported to other cultures . . . it is simply transposed. There has often been little regard to the applicability of the theories and practice” (Cheung, 2000, p. 123). The notion of the applicability of findings from one culture to another is a very critical issue in expanding our knowledge bases in psychology. This issue became very clear to me in 1989 during my first visit to Taiwan. I remember talking to my international colleagues and asking them what issues they were grappling with at that time. One of the first issues they mentioned was the applicability of some Rogerian conditions to counseling in their culture, namely, unconditional positive regard. They indicated that clients often seemed disappointed and even frustrated when counselors would respond with unconditional positive regard statements—because in their culture, elders and teachers are typically consulted for advice. And, in fact, the term *counselor* in their culture means teacher. So, in essence, using techniques such as the accepting, nondirective Rogerian conditions was inconsistent with the client expectation for active advice and guidance related to the teacher role of counseling.

On one hand, it is easy to understand our confidence in the knowledge bases in Western psychology. For example, there are thousands of empirical studies that have examined the counseling process and a myriad of counseling outcomes (e.g., Wampold, 2001). We have also been training therapists for more than 50 years and have a great deal of information from both our scientific and our practice activities. Thus, it is easy to understand our confidence in very well-established findings across many different counseling situations. Conversely, none of these reasons provides a good rationale for external validity or the applicability of our findings from one culture to another. Sometimes, lacking a cultural or contextual understanding of our research results in a misguided sense of confidence. In short, we assume that what works in one culture will work in another, and this is not only a misconception but also a challenge to remember.

Personality Styles and Dispositions in Protecting Our Ego

I have been struck in my travels about how our personality style and disposition play a critical role in how we respond to various cross-cultural situations. For example, I remember being in a museum in southern France and an American woman being quite upset that all the descriptions of the paintings were in French. She was complaining to the museum staff that she could not read the painting descriptions and was demanding her money back. Conversely, I cannot recall any museum in the United States having descriptions of art objects in French. Problems can occur when we encounter difficult, new situations (e.g., different languages, currencies, food, customs) or feel a need to be in control across many familiar and unfamiliar situations. I have felt that my immersion into other cultures has been an “exercise in humility,” and this is a lesson that I have learned many times.

To give a concrete example, I will describe a situation Mary and I encountered in Taiwan as Fulbright scholars in 2002. We were living in Taipei in a nice apartment in the same building along with another 10 to 12 units. Similar to many buildings in Taiwan, it had an exterior gate that was basically the front entrance to the building, which everyone passed through to access the apartment building. One day, an official-looking flyer appeared on the side of the gate facing the street; we did not think much of it, in part because it was in Mandarin, and we could not read it. As time went on, however, we started to wonder what this persistent flyer was about and even joked a bit about it. Maybe there was going to be a concert in the small park outside our apartment, or maybe it was announcing some sort of renovation to our building.

About a week later, we left for South Korea for 7 to 10 days. When we returned, we were a bit surprised to find that persistent flyer was still there. A day or so later, we came into the building and were headed up the stairs to our apartment. A neighbor rushed up the stairs behind us, looking rather anxious and out of breath. He held the flyer up and said emphatically, “Pay now! Serious!” We took the flyer and immediately called our graduate assistant (Wang, Yu-Wei), who lived nearby. Suffice it to say, we learned that this flyer was a notice not of an upcoming concert but that our electricity would be turned off by that afternoon because we had failed to pay our electricity bill.

As we began to reflect on the possible ramifications of this situation, several thoughts came to our awareness. We speculated about our neighbors’ interpretation of these events and quickly identified several very negative interpretations, such as “Ah, these Americans come over here and refuse to pay their utilities.” We remembered that this flyer had been on the gate for many weeks now, possibly indicating our “stubborn refusal” to pay the bill. How embarrassing it was! We also were aware that it was very difficult to

communicate the situation to most of our neighbors because of the language barrier, thus meaning that there was not an easy way for us to tell them that we did not know the flyer was directed toward our delinquency and that we were really very reliable Midwesterners who paid our bills on time.

There is often a lot of ambiguity in international immersions, and it is common to make faux pas or cultural mistakes and, hopefully, to learn from our “experiences in humility.” We are novices as we immerse ourselves in new cultures, and we need a lot of help to navigate new customs and rituals. How we respond to those events, and whether we blame others to protect ourselves or to save face, is a very important challenge in developing relationships with our international colleagues.

Overemphasis on Internal Validity

We have been trained to emphasize and perhaps overemphasize internal validity in our research (Sue, 1999). For example, one of my former colleagues once said something like, “We regard race as a nuisance variable—we try to remove its variance from our investigations.” Often in psychology, we strive for the most parsimonious designs, most homogeneous groups, and least confounded designs. It is hard to argue against internal validity, and eliminating as many as extraneous and confounding variables as possible is often a useful design strategy. However, removing the cultural context of our research can also create significant problems in the external validity of our research. The tension between internal validity and external validity can be nicely depicted by Gelso’s (1979) notion of the bubble hypothesis: the more emphasis on one area (e.g., internal validity), the more bubbles are created in other areas (e.g., external validity).

The issues inherent in these challenges might sound familiar to many of you. For example, more than 40 years ago, Gilbert Wrenn identified a number of issues related to counselors’ cultural encapsulation, which also apply to cross-cultural competence. I will very briefly apply five important issues from his 1962 book *The Counselor in a Changing World* to the previous discussion of challenges.

1. Reality is defined according to one’s cultural assumptions. The example that I provided earlier about the journal reviewer questioning the applicability of a study on the counseling process in Taiwan to the United States is a good example of defining reality based on one’s cultural assumptions.
2. People become insensitive to cultural variations among individuals and assume their own view is the only right one. This issue was depicted in our difficulty in accepting our host’s worldview in interpreting the utility of the tremor in Hualien.

3. Assumptions are believed to be true and are often not based on evidence or even rational consistency. There is a great deal of evidence from the information-processing literature and elsewhere today showing that, indeed, our beliefs and assumptions are often not based on evidence, or even rational consistency, and that it is even very difficult to change our beliefs after we are confronted with disconfirming information (see, e.g., Gambrell, 1990). The story about the flyer on the front gate is an example of following our assumptions while lacking information.
4. Our solutions are technically oriented strategies, unrelated to a cultural context. The example of transposing unconditional positive regard into Taiwanese culture is a good example of simply taking one strategy that has worked in one culture and applying it to another culture with little consideration of the cultural context.
5. Everyone is judged from the viewpoint of one's self-reference criteria without regard to another person's cultural context. The American woman demanding her money back because the French language was used to describe paintings in the French museum is such an example.

Clearly, Wrenn's (1962) observations are relevant four decades later. Our worldview is critical in working toward cross-cultural competence. "We don't see the world as it is. We see the world as we are" (Anaïs Nin). This is a very hard issue, and unfortunately, we often misinterpret events when we lack information, such as in the chopsticks example that I related earlier. There are a host of impediments or challenges in becoming more cross-culturally competent. I have mentioned just a few of the challenges that prevent us from becoming more culturally sophisticated scientists and practitioners. All of these challenges can create significant problems in our collaboration with international colleagues. Most important, it can be very easy to offend our international colleagues, and it can also be very easy for us to feel offended as we immerse ourselves in other cultures. As a consequence, our international relationships are often weakened, and our ability to learn from each other personally and professionally is in turn reduced.

INCREASING GLOBAL COMPETENCE AND COLLABORATION

How do we learn to become globally competent counseling psychologists? To paraphrase Janet Helms (1992), a global perspective is not just a "nice to thing to have." Rather, learning about different cultural groups is essential to the development of broad knowledge bases about human behavior across cultures, which is in turn essential for effective counseling around the world.

There are many, many ways to increase our cross-cultural competence, and I will discuss just a few examples. I strongly encourage readers to consult an excellent article by Marsella and Pedersen (2004) that has many more ideas for becoming cross-culturally competent. With a positive and reflective approach to acquiring new knowledge, there are few limits on what can be learned to enhance cross-cultural competencies in counseling psychology.

Enhancing Cross-Cultural Awareness and Knowledge

A key element in becoming cross-culturally competent is to increase our awareness and knowledge of a myriad of cross-cultural issues. We know from the multicultural-training literature that experiential activities and immersion in multicultural activities is very useful in promoting multicultural competence (Kiselica, 1998). Thus, one avenue may be to develop and promote cross-cultural immersion experiences for graduate trainees in counseling psychology. An example of such an immersion experience is study-abroad programs. Although students often desire to have study-abroad learning experiences, they often do not participate in such opportunities. For instance, data suggest that when entering freshmen are asked whether they are interested in participating in a study-abroad experience, between one half to two thirds indicate that they would like such an opportunity within their undergraduate years (Hudzik, 2004). Unfortunately, the research also suggests that approximately 3% of all undergraduates will actually engage in a study-abroad experience during their undergraduate years (Hudzik, 2004).

So the question is, how can we promote cross-cultural immersion experiences for our graduate trainees? Study-abroad programs have typically been for one semester or for an entire academic year, but it may be difficult for graduate students to engage in a study-abroad experience for this length of time. A strategy to deal with this is to develop cross-cultural immersion experiences for a much shorter time, such as 2 weeks. A very good colleague, Li-fei Wang (National Taiwan Normal University [NTNU]) along with Lisa Flores and I (University of Missouri–Columbia [MU]) have been involved in developing a 2-week cultural immersion program. In this program, a group of students from NTNU will visit MU for 10 days to participate in a cultural immersion program focusing on a wide range of professional, social, and personal activities; the following year, a group of MU students will visit NTNU for similar purposes. (As of this writing, we have completed our first immersion experience with 14 NTNU students visiting MU; we were very touched by the many positive outcomes that we observed in the NTNU graduate students as well as in the MU faculty and students.)

Another way of increasing cross-cultural awareness and knowledge may be to require formal coursework in cross-cultural training for counseling psychologists. I am well aware of my first reaction to such an idea, that being there is just not sufficient time to add another course into the training curriculum. As I reflect on my own first reaction, however, I am also aware that it is exactly the type of reaction that many in the counseling profession made in the 1980s when requiring a multicultural course in the training curriculum was first considered. We need to reexamine our assumptions and training goals on this issue.

Another approach would be to require competency in a second language. This idea was prevalent many years ago in most U.S. universities but has fallen by the wayside as universities have subsequently eliminated this educational requirement or have substituted statistical or computer language proficiencies. However, it may be time to revisit our assumptions, as proficiency in numerous languages is becoming essential for the work that many of us do in counseling psychology today. For example, without being multilingual, it would be difficult to understand a host of professional issues (e.g., complexities in translating inventories to another language) as well as the depths of accompanying psychological issues in acquiring and using a second language (e.g., feelings of inadequacy in the process of learning the new language).

Promoting learning opportunities with international students within our training programs or on our campuses is another excellent way of increasing cross-cultural awareness and knowledge. We could learn much more from the international students currently enrolled on our campuses. My sense is that we have many lost opportunities in our training programs for expanding our awareness and knowledge of cross-cultural issues. I will give one example again from our MU campus, this one pertaining to what we refer to as the Language Partners Program. In this program, university faculty, students, and staff volunteer to meet on a regular basis (e.g., weekly) with an international student to provide opportunities for the student not only to practice their English language skills but also to learn more about various aspects of American culture. Volunteers in this experience are often quite surprised at not only how much they themselves learn about the international students' home culture but also how enriching it is to engage in these conversations for 1 hour each week.

Integrating cross-cultural issues and knowledge in the counseling curriculum is another strategy. We know from the multicultural-training literature how essential it is to integrate multicultural issues in textbooks as well as the curriculum. Looking at my own writing for example, I was struck with how few international examples my coauthors and I have in our textbook

Research Design in Counseling (Heppner, Kivlighan, & Wampold, 1999). Subsequently, in the third edition of this book, we are now consciously adding international studies and topics throughout the text.

A wide range of data supports the overall lack of information that Americans have about other countries (see Hudzik, 2004). Another plan for facilitating cross-cultural knowledge and awareness is to read international novels, view international movies, or read various news sources that provide information about other countries and their social, political, and economic situations. Similarly, personal and professional international travel is often an excellent opportunity to learn about other countries and their various cultures. From my own experience, I have found that being a tourist is a useful way of increasing my cross-cultural awareness and knowledge but that actually living and working in another culture increases my cross-cultural awareness and knowledge significantly more than does being a tourist for a short time.

One final example is to develop regular communication opportunities with international students and colleagues. For example, one of my colleagues at MU has been working to develop relationships between a class of third graders in Taiwan and a class of third graders in Hallsville, Missouri. He has indicated that it is simply wonderful to watch students develop relationships through the technology that is now available to observe each other's classrooms as well as talk to each other via the computer.

In short, there are many, many activities that we can use to enhance the cross-cultural knowledge and awareness of faculty and graduate trainees in counseling psychology. At this point, there is a need for systematic models to train the next generation of counseling psychologists to obtain cross-cultural awareness and knowledge.

Promoting Cross-Cultural Research

Cross-cultural research has the potential to greatly enhance our knowledge bases in counseling psychology. I will illustrate this point with one example from my own research program. In 2001, Mary and I, along with three of our graduate students—Lee, Dong-Gwi (now at Purdue University), Park, Hyun-Joo (now at the State University of New York in Albany), and Wang, Yu-Wei (now at Southern Illinois University)—and international colleague Wang, Li-fei of NTNU, created a research team to develop a collectivistic coping inventory. We were very aware that the previous coping research was based not only on Western conceptualizations but also on instruments constructed and validated in Western cultures. Our goal was to develop a coping inventory based on Asian values as well as looking at primary and secondary ways of control (see Weisz, Rothbaum, & Blackburn,

1984). The process of developing the inventory was extremely interesting, and it took us well over 6 months to develop what we felt was a suitable pool of items that would reflect a wide range of Asian values as well as various types of personal control. On several occasions, on our way home from work at the university, Mary and I would marvel at the stimulating conversations that we had with our research team in the item-development phase and, in essence, how much we were learning from the conversations about various styles of coping in some Southeast Asian cultures.

To make a long story short, we developed the items and collected data from more than 3,000 students in Taiwan. In conducting the data analyses, we were quite struck with the different factor structure that was obtained from our sample. In fact, when I initially studied the computer printout indicating the factor loadings and factor structure, I suspected an error in the statistical analyses. In particular, the first factor combined seemingly incongruent items such as accepting the problem along with reframing the event and problem-focused self-efficacy items; I had never seen such items loading together in a Western coping inventory. I discussed the possibility of an error with the student who had conducted the analyses and asked if he could re-run the analysis because the factor structure resulted in what seemed to be uninterpretable—that is, uninterpretable based on my uninformed Western perspective! A few days later, the student returned, indicating that he had indeed conducted the analyses again, had double-checked all the statistical procedures and statements, and had obtained the exact same results. Upon discussing the factor structure with colleagues and students in Taiwan, however, they indicated that this factor structure very nicely depicted how they cope with stressful life events. (For more details about this study, see Heppner et al., in press).

In short, there are many excellent opportunities to learn more about a psychological phenomenon (e.g., coping) by developing inventories to assess constructs in a particular culture based on the values and assumptions of that specific culture. Sometimes, Western inventories are applicable and are useful in predicting outcomes in other cultures. Typically, in the past, we have appropriately emphasized the need to translate and back-translate inventories, with the assumption that if those translations have been successful and the factor structure is replicated in that culture, then the instrument has a suitable estimate of validity in that culture. However, these procedures may tell us only part of the story in assessing constructs in another culture. When culture-specific inventories are developed, unique and useful information may be found about constructs that were previously not well understood from a specific cultural context, and this information can be very valuable for theory construction as well as to inform our applied work such as individual counseling.

There are a number of ways to promote cross-cultural research. One method is to develop cross-national research teams, as I described above. This idea is an attractive alternative for many people and can often result in very interesting and novel studies. It is also important to note, however, that the cultural assumptions of the individuals working on international research teams can often create obstacles and challenges (as articulated in the previous section), and thus, it is not always easy work. Nonetheless, cross-national research teams are an excellent strategy for promoting and expanding cross-cultural knowledge bases in counseling psychology. In addition, we can develop collaborative research programs with departments from other countries as well as research teams with international scholars from our home institutions or other universities in the United States.

Another strategy is to conduct research on immigrant or international populations in the United States. This strategy can provide very useful information, but I want to briefly illustrate how easy it is to assume that such research is not possible. For example, one of my former graduate students, Giovanna Suarez-Renaud, communicated that she would like to conduct her dissertation on the relationships of acculturation, acculturative stress, problem-solving appraisal, and psychological symptoms among Mexican immigrants in the Midwest. As we discussed the study, I liked her research questions, but I was concerned about obtaining a sufficient sample size of what we anticipated to be 100 participants, in large part because I was not aware of many Mexican immigrants in the community she had identified. She informed me that, based on preliminary discussions with various leaders in the Mexican immigrant community, there was indeed a sizeable population of Mexican immigrants. After she fully developed her dissertation proposal and a formal proposal meeting was held, one of the first questions, and the major concern of the committee, centered on obtaining a sufficient sample. The end of the story: Giovanna was able to obtain the sample of over 100 Mexican immigrants, and she graduated.

In short, a number of strategies can be used to increase the cross-cultural knowledge base in counseling psychology. At this point, there seems to be a sufficient number of counseling psychologists as well as trainees in the United States and abroad interested in international issues such that a wide range of research teams is possible.

Promoting Cross-Cultural Counseling Supervision and Consultation

There are many ways to promote the development of knowledge and skills related to cross-cultural counseling, supervision, and consultation. For example, international conferences can be developed in which colleagues from

various countries can share their knowledge with each other. The Minnesota International Counseling Institute, which has been conducting such international conferences for the past 18 years, is an excellent example (for more details, see Skovholt, Hansen, Goh, Romano, & Thomas, 2005).

Another strategy may be to promote cross-cultural practica experiences. For example, at the University of Missouri, we have been developing practica aimed at providing career services specifically for international students or international community members. After a year of program development, we now have a new program on campus titled International Students Career Services, which provides a wide array of jobs programs to students from outside the country. Although previously, few international students would attend the career workshops through the MU Career Center, as workshops specifically aimed at international students were developed, enrollments for many now number between 30 to 50 students. These workshops as well as other programs provide not only important services to international students but also excellent training opportunities for graduate trainees to acquire and enhance cross-cultural outreach and counseling skills.

Promoting Cross-Cultural Teaching

Personally, I have found that teaching (especially team teaching) within cross-cultural exchange programs has greatly facilitated my cross-cultural awareness, knowledge, and skills. This has been a particularly rich area for me and has provided some of the most rewarding teaching experiences in my career. Cross-cultural teaching experiences can be obtained through being a visiting scholar, a Fulbright Fellow, and many other faculty exchange mechanisms.

WHAT CAN THE SCP DO TO PROMOTE CROSS-CULTURAL COMPETENCE?

The past presidents of the SCP have reflected strong interests in the cross-cultural arena, such as Louise Douce who promoted globalization of counseling psychology as her presidential theme in 2001. During my presidency, one focus has been to communicate with international leaders in counseling psychology and to explore ways that we can collaborate, learn from each other, and enhance our cross-cultural competencies, while promoting the development and future of counseling psychology across national boundaries. During my presidency, I was fortunate to be invited to deliver keynote addresses as well as other invited presentations ($N = 15$) in Taiwan, South Korea, China, the United Arab Emirates, and Singapore. I will talk briefly of

a few of the ways I have learned that collaboration across countries is possible to promote the welfare of counseling psychology around the globe.

In December 2004, I visited South Korea and interacted with leaders of the Korean Counseling Psychology Association. In one of the discussions with President Kim, Jung-Taek, from Sogang University, I asked what kind of professional issues the association was most concerned about at this time. President Kim indicated that one of its pressing professional issues was defining counseling psychology as distinct from clinical psychology. Given that the SCP has focused on this issue for many years in the United States and that we had just completed our petition to the Commission for the Recognition of Specialties and Proficiencies in Professional Psychology, we had a 350-page document that depicted the unique aspects of counseling psychology (and distinguished our specialty from clinical psychology). I asked my host if he would like a copy of our petition, and he eagerly indicated he would very much like to see our document. In turn, I learned from other discussions with my Korean colleagues that they were doing a number of things, for instance in the practice arena, that were quite unique to their cultural context and yet also seemed potentially relevant to societal needs in the United States. In short, developing professional relationships across countries is an excellent way to find common intersections of current concerns in our professions and to benefit from each other's development.

I also visited the National Taiwan Normal University, specifically within the Department of Educational Psychology and Counseling, for 4 weeks in November 2004. This was my fourth visit, and it built on our previous collaborative work. The visit was particularly focused on exploring mechanisms for promoting professional collaboration with the Chinese Guidance Association, the major counseling psychology organization in Taiwan. As a result of many discussions with the leaders in counseling psychology in Taiwan, we identified a number of goals that would facilitate international collaboration, such as reducing international membership affiliate fees for our Society, financial support for leaders to attend the annual American Psychological Association (APA) convention, strategies for promoting communication among international counseling psychology leaders, as well as mechanisms to promote cross-cultural collaboration in research, training, and practice. I subsequently used our ideas as a basis for similar discussions with colleagues in South Korea, China, and the United Arab Emirates.

As a result of these and other discussions, the executive board of the SCP approved a reduction of the international affiliate membership fees to basically our cost (\$17 a year). In addition, through the generous support of Sage Publications, we were able to develop Sage Fellows, in which a number of leaders from other countries received financial support to cover the convention fees for the APA's 2005 Annual Convention. Also, based on discussions

with counseling psychology leaders from other countries, I appointed a special task group consisting of 12 subgroups aimed at various goals, such as initiating the development of a section in our Society to focus on international issues. One of these subgroups was chaired by Larry Gerstein (Ball State University), who was able, in a very short period, not only to develop a mission statement but also to obtain more than 50 members who indicated interest in and commitment to being a member of such a section if it were formed in the Society. Subsequently, the SCP executive board approved the development of a Section-In-Formation for International Issues.

I also broadened the International Scholars Breakfast and Reception for visiting scholars in the Hospitality Suite at the annual APA convention, initially established by Douce under her presidency in 2001. For example, in collaboration with Fred Leong (University of Tennessee), the current president of Division 16 (Counseling) of the International Association of Applied Psychology, we cohosted the breakfast. With the help of another subgroup chaired by Johanna Nilsson (University of Missouri–Kansas City), we put additional structures in place for inviting individuals to attend this breakfast and to promote networking within the group of 80 individuals who attended that breakfast. In addition, Leong and I identified ways that our two organizations may be able to collaborate in the future.

Based on conversations with counseling leaders during my international visits, we developed a commitment to communicate and collaborate among our counseling organizations from Taiwan, South Korea, China, and the United States and held our initial meeting in the Hospitality Suite at the APA's 2005 Annual Convention. The meeting was exciting and gratifying in terms of the number of ideas that were generated to promote additional communication across our organizations (e.g., Web sites and journal abstracts in multiple languages), and it reaffirmed our commitment to continue collaboration among our countries.

Along with Wang, Yu-Wei (Southern Illinois University–Carbondale), and Oksana Yakushko (University of Nebraska–Lincoln), we developed a convention orientation for international students (more than 60 international students attended) not only to promote an introduction to the convention but also to identify key activities for students to attend, network, and develop interpersonal relationships to create a smaller group within the large APA convention. In addition, the International Forum was used for a symposium by our international colleagues, titled "Counseling in East Asia." Faculty from Taiwan, South Korea, and China delivered an outstanding symposium on the state of counseling in their countries. More than 70 individuals attended this symposium, indicating the strong interest in this topic.

Another example of collaboration pertains to my visit to the United Arab Emirates in April 2005. This was my initial immersion into a Middle Eastern

culture, and my 10 days there greatly furthered my understanding of that culture and the role of Islam in the culture as well as in counseling. In this visit, they asked if I could provide a keynote address on counseling psychology's use in addressing societal needs to provide additional support for the counseling psychology profession in their country. That was a very easy assignment, as counseling psychology has a long history in the United States of addressing societal needs for well over 50 years (e.g., Heppner, Casas, Carter, & Stone, 2000; Whiteley, 1980). In short, there are common elements in the development of counseling psychology across national boundaries, and the voices of counseling psychology leaders from one country can support and lend credence to the voices of counseling psychology leaders in another country.

In sum, there are many ways the Society can promote cross-cultural competence, and given the responses at the convention, there seems to be a very strong interest in doing so at this time. As more structures are developed within our professional organizations to promote these types of discussions and collaboration, counseling psychology will become greatly broadened and strengthened around the globe.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The traditional modality of cross-cultural "collaboration" has often been to "help" international colleagues acquire the "norm" from U.S. scholars and our scholarship. Such cross-cultural collaborations are not only ethnocentric but also short-sighted and disrespectful. For true and genuine collaboration to be meaningful and culturally competent, a more appropriate goal is to promote increased understanding of the cultural context of human behavior through collaboration across countries. It is also important to note that within countries, there may be significant differences within ethnic groups, such as with the Mandarin-, Taiwanese-, and Hakka-speaking Chinese in Taiwan as well as with the Chinese born and raised under British colonial rule and the post-1997 immigrants from the People's Republic of China in Hong Kong (Kwan, K.-L., personal communication, September 15, 2005). It is also important to not assume homogeneity across countries in the same region, such as Southeast Asia. Although there are many similarities between professional issues in counseling psychology in South Korea, China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, there are also quite significant differences due to sociopolitical histories as well as ways in which counseling professionals configure their professional identities among other types of psychologists and helping professionals (Kwan, K.-L., personal communication, September 10, 2005).

As I have maintained, a key issue in the future of counseling psychology is enhancing cross-cultural competence. Developing cross-culturally competent counseling psychologists will increase international collaboration, enhance the sophistication of our research, expand our knowledge bases, increase the range of our counseling interventions, and in essence, increase counseling effectiveness across a wide range of populations. This is a lifelong journey and one that is not accomplished easily within any one new culture. Such a lifelong journey implies that both counseling psychologists and graduate trainees in counseling psychology can engage in a wide range of opportunities to systematically promote their cross-cultural competencies across different cultures around the globe.

Developing global competence and international collaboration can be very exciting and very hard work at the same time. There are many challenges, of which I have identified just a few: ethnocentricity, xenophobia, accepting different worldviews, universality assumptions, overemphasis on internal validity, and personality styles and dispositions. As I have indicated, it is all too easy to offend our international colleagues and, at the same time, all too easy for us to become anxious or feel offended as well. If I had to predict just one area that would enhance counseling psychology the most in the future, it would be our multicultural and cross-cultural competencies, in which a continued focus in the next 10 to 20 years will significantly advance the profession. At this point in time, we have the most to learn in these areas, and increasing our knowledge bases in multicultural and cross-cultural counseling will most significantly alter the way that we conceptualize and conduct our research and practice in counseling psychology.

We trainers need to challenge ourselves around the degree to which we are teaching the next generation to perceive counseling in a context that is both multicultural and cross-cultural. Many counseling programs today are seeking new faculty with strong multicultural competencies to promote those of their graduate trainees; similarly, new faculty with strong cross-cultural competencies can promote those of the next generation of counseling psychology graduates. It is possible to systematically train our graduates to be more cross-culturally competent, just as we are now learning to train our graduates to be multiculturally competent. Curriculum changes (e.g., adding multicultural courses and infusing multicultural issues), new textbooks, and cutting-edge conferences that address multicultural issues, as well as faculty with growing multicultural competencies, have all contributed to the multicultural competencies of counseling psychology graduates. Similar curricular and training strategies can promote the cross-cultural competencies of the next generation of counseling psychology graduates. My hunch is that future counseling psychologists will be expected to have an array of cross-cultural

competencies and will be able to work collaboratively around the globe. Other disciplines have already moved significantly into this arena, most notably our colleagues in business and journalism.

In terms of the big picture, it is a great time to be a counseling psychologist. We have strong research and practice skills, and we have strong knowledge bases and professional organizations in many different countries. Although we have made considerable progress in the past 25 years in terms of multicultural competencies, we still have a distance to go. Most important, we now have a critical mass of counseling psychologists in the United States and abroad who are interested in and committed to multicultural as well as cross-cultural issues. In the 2000 *Handbook of Counseling Psychology*, my colleagues and I (Heppner et al., 2000) concluded that counseling psychology can no longer be defined by Division 17, or now the SCP, but rather, counseling psychology has grown and encompasses several organizations, such as the SCP, the Council of Counseling Psychology Training Programs, the Association of Counseling Center Training Agencies, the Academy of Counseling Psychology, and so on. In the future, counseling psychology will no longer be defined as counseling psychology within the United States, but rather, the parameters of counseling psychology will cross many countries and many cultures. These new roles and identities will not only strengthen the counseling psychology profession but also decrease the cultural encapsulation as cautioned by Wrenn (1962). The next 25 years will be very exciting for what students today will learn and how they will learn to train their students to be cross-culturally competent as well as to develop effective and long-term collaborative relationships with counseling psychologists around the world. The next generation will be critical in implementing cross-cultural competencies, and I very much look forward to witnessing and participating in these developments.

In closing, I am very aware of how many people have helped me during my cross-cultural journey. I want to thank (a) my parents who encouraged my inquisitiveness, explorations, and acceptance of others; (b) my doctoral advisor Dave Dixon, who brought me into this professional world of counseling psychology and helped me develop personally and professionally in so many ways; and (c) my wonderful colleagues at the University of Missouri–Columbia, who provide such a rich, stimulating, and caring working environment—this includes my past Missouri colleagues, such as Helen Neville and our honorary counseling psychologist Sundiata Cha Jua. I could not ask for better colleagues. And I want to thank (a) my wonderful students who have taught me so much over the years; (b) my colleagues within the SCP such as Fred Leong, whom I continue to learn so much from on this cross-cultural journey; and (c) my international colleagues who have generously provided me with many opportunities to experience their cultures, which has greatly

enhanced my own cross-cultural competence. Finally, I want to thank my wife, Mary, whose support and guidance have been so central and important in my life, for sharing many cross-cultural journeys with me that have been the source of so much meaning and joy in our lives.

Finally, I want to say that I am proud to be a counseling psychologist. It has been my privilege and honor to serve the SCP as president during the past 12 months (August 2004 to August 2005). Serving as president of the Society is clearly a high point in my career, and I feel very fortunate not only to have had this opportunity but also to have been able to devote myself to the mission of counseling psychology.

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