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Chapter

Imperatives for Intercultural Communication

Chapter Objectives

This chapter enables you to

- 1 understand the key concepts:
 - 1) the Chinese character as cultural concept: 道/dao, the way;
 - 2) community as the goal of communication.
- 2 describe the characteristics of a global village.
- 3 understand why studying intercultural communication in the age of globalization is important.
- 4 become aware of the importance and necessity of intercultural education for a community of shared future for mankind.

Key Concepts

The Chinese character 道/dao

- 道/dao, metaphor for the way or path for Heaven, earth, and the myriad things to travel along (道乃天地万物必行之路之隐喻);
- the ultimate harmony of humanity with Heaven, earth, and the myriad things (道乃天地万物之大和);
- the way leading to a community of shared future for mankind (人类命运共同体乃大道之行也).

According to the earliest Chinese dictionary, *Shuo Wen Jie Zi*, the character 道/dao means the way along which one walks. The philosophical concept of 道/dao, the way, is the root and origin of, or the universal norm for Heaven, earth, and the myriad things. The way human beings must take here metaphorically refers to the path that does not permit crossroads. Zhang Zai, a great philosopher in the Song Dynasty regarded the ultimate harmony as the way, which embodies the notion of the unity of humanity with Heaven, earth, and the myriad things. In this book we regard harmony/unity of humanity with Heaven, earth, and the myriad

things, i.e., a community of shared future for mankind as the way. This anthropocosmic vision serves as the perspective on intercultural communication education for this human life community and global citizenship.

At the beginning, the Chinese character 道/dao was written like 𨔵, which etymologically consists of the pictograph 辵/zou on the left, meaning walk; and the pictograph 首/shou on the right, meaning head. The pictograph 辵/zou consists of the pictograph 彳 on the top, meaning “to walk” and the pictograph 止 at the bottom, meaning toes, symbolizing foot. So 道/dao has the meaning of walk. 首/shou, head, consists of two parts, the hair-like pictograph on the top and the face-like pictograph at the bottom. The pictograph 首/shou has the meaning “to lead.” As 道/dao is a homophone to the word 导/dao, meaning giving directions, it thus has the meaning of giving directions on the journey of human life. 辵/zou, on the left of the character 道/dao, suggests that the way is dynamic, meaning that all things are constantly evolving: They are forever on the way in the right direction, which was considered to be the Great Unity by Confucius in ancient times.

Community as the goal of communication

Communication is the precondition of community and unity. Community is the goal of communication. Without communication, there will be no unity or community. Without community, there is no reason for communication to exist. So, a community, which is in nature a communication unity, must be included in the process of communication not only as an integral part but also as the ultimate goal.

By extension, a global community is not only an integral part of the process, but also the ultimate goal of intercultural communication. To prepare for the goal of a community of shared future for mankind fulfills the meaning of intercultural communication among people of different social and cultural origins. This is where the educational value, rather than the practical value of intercultural communication, lies. The implication is obvious: The building of a community of shared future for mankind through intercultural communication is the ultimate goal of human beings.

Warming-up

Activity What is a global village like?

Imagine and describe what a global village is like. How important is intercultural communication for the villagers in the global village? Discuss with your partner and share what you know about intercultural communication.

Explore and Be Aware of the Technological Imperatives for Intercultural Communication in the Age of Globalization of the 21st Century

Why is it important to study intercultural communication and to strive to become interculturally competent in a multicultural and global society? Do you think that globalization can occur without intercultural communication? Do you think that people of the world can live harmoniously in the global village as neighbors? We can come up with a bunch of reasons as to why intercultural communication is not only important but also necessary for human beings in the 21st century. We would like to focus mainly on the imperatives of globalization, the imperatives of communication technologies in particular.

The famous media prophet and guru, Marshall McLuhan, envisioned in the 1960s that the world was going to shrink into a global village. Today, we are virtually living together in the global village as neighbors and hopefully like brothers and sisters as the effect of the highly developed communication technology, the newly developed electronic technology in particular.

Marshall McLuhan foresaw the global village

Marshall McLuhan was the first person to popularize the concept of “global village” and to consider its social effects. His insights were revolutionary at the time, and fundamentally changed how everyone has thought about media, technology, and communications ever since. McLuhan chose the insightful phrase “global village” to highlight his observation that an electronic nervous system (the media) was rapidly integrating the planet—events in one part of the world could be experienced from other parts in real time.

“Today, after more than a century of electric technology, we have extended our central nervous system itself in a global embrace, abolishing both space and time as far as our planet is concerned.” (Marshall McLuhan)

The advent of the Internet, the most revolutionary advance, and other worldwide communication technologies, combined with highly developed transportation systems, have interrelated almost every one of us to events in the most remote parts of the world, interconnected every one of us to people we may never meet face-to-face from around the world, and made every one of us all over the world interdependent upon each other. The highly developed communication technology, just like an electronic nervous system as imagined by McLuhan, has made it possible for us to extend ourselves into, adapt to, integrate and identify with multicultural others or other communities. The term “glocalization” popularized by Roland Robertson—local in spirit but global in character or culturally distinct but globally integrated—illustrates the distinctive characteristics of the concept of globalization.

Globalization starts with the globalization of economies. Economies seem to merge across the globe through rapid collaboration and cooperation. However, we are not going to address this aspect as an imperative for intercultural communication. We would like to start our discussion mainly with the highly developed communication technologies and intercultural education as important imperatives because they are our immediate concerns.

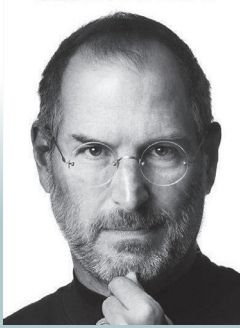
1 Explore and be aware of the imperatives of globalization, communication technologies in particular

The global society today as a result of the highly developed communication and communication technology, the Internet-enabled technology in particular, can also be characterized in terms of interrelatedness, interconnectedness, and interdependence across space and time, or simply living together. Nowhere is remote in the way that so many places were remote a century, or even a generation ago. Our lives—no matter where we live—are influenced, even shaped by decisions that are made and events that happen far away and at the same time our decisions and the events that happen in our culture influence and shape others no matter where they are. Everybody in this modern world, to a greater or lesser degree, extends into and integrates with others and other communities. We are indeed living in an age where all humans are interconnected, interrelated, and interdependent through intercultural communication.

实现万物互联 极速网络颠覆未来生活

全球传播学大师麦克卢汉断言，媒介即人体延伸，在移动互联网高速发展的今天，从某种意义上讲，手机等移动终端已超越原有通信工具的功能，成为人体的延伸。这种极速网络给人带来的绝不仅是一种冲浪的快感，它将“颠覆”人类日常生活的方方面面。高速移动互联网与智能手机已经成为人类感知外界的一部分，万物互联成为可能。目前，人们花费在移动终端上的时间已大大超过在电视机前的时间。不久的将来，全球电子设备都将带有和智能手机相关的技术。

The world is interconnected and humans are interdependent due to the effect of communication technologies. In fact, we are living in an Internet space or World Wide Web. We feel indebted to the great pioneering and revolutionary inventors who have helped us to be able to become neighbors in the global village.



Steven Paul Jobs (February 24, 1955–October 5, 2011) was an American pioneer of the personal computer revolution of the 1970s (along with engineer, inventor, and Apple Computer co-founder, Steve Wozniak). By the time of his death in 2011, he was considered the entrepreneur, marketer, and inventor, who revolutionized six industries: personal computers, animated movies, music, phones, tablet computing, and digital publishing.



Tim Berners-Lee coined the term “World Wide Web.” He wrote the first World Wide Web server, “http,” and the first client program (a browser and editor), “World Wide Web,” in October 1990. He wrote the first version of the document formatting language with the capability for hypertext links, known as HTML (Hypertext Markup Language). His initial specifications for URLs, HTTP, and HTML were refined and discussed in larger circles as web technologies spread.

2 Can the integrating Internet automatically lead the world to a harmonious community of shared future for mankind?

Globalization promoted and enhanced by the highly developed communication technology in the 21st century is a multidimensional process. It applies to the whole range of relations—social, cultural, economic, political, and interpersonal. Its effect, be it positive or negative, can be felt directly and indirectly, consciously and unconsciously on all aspects of life, from the food we eat, the air we breathe, the water we drink, the TV we watch, the living conditions, lifestyles, values, beliefs, behavior, social and cultural identities, to wars and the sustainability of our environment.

Globalization not only provides opportunities for human prosperity but also has the potential to make humans live in what is characterized, to borrow from Leach, as “a runaway world”—a world out of control, full of dilemma, uncertainty, insecurity, fear and panic. Social, cultural, economic, ecological, and environmental crises are imminently endangering the sustainable development of the environment and the life of human beings and all other forms of life in the world.

The highly developed communication technology and media on the one hand help communication; on the other hand they hinder communication and human relationships. While they facilitate communication and human relationships, miscommunication and conflict are also facilitated. It may be justified to say that the age of instant communication is also an age of instant miscommunication and instant conflict or even worse.

In short, the effect of communication technology is two-edged. It may benefit us as human beings and it may also threaten us as a human species. Globalization can shrink the world into a global village in which people of different cultures may hopefully live together like brothers and sisters, but it can also tear the world asunder, bringing disasters to human beings.

However, for better or worse, we are being propelled into a global order that no one fully understands, but which is making its effects felt upon all of us. We are living in a global village, where we either choose “to live together as brothers, or to perish together as fools,” (Martin Luther King)—we are living in a global village not only with reverence but also a sense of awe. The highly developed Internet cannot automatically lead to an Internet space or a global community of shared future for mankind. We are badly in need of a spiritual central nervous system, the anthropocosmic world view and the values and ethics derived from it. This spiritual central nervous system will truly enable us to extend ourselves into and integrate with multicultural others or other communities, among which the largest one is a community of shared future for mankind, and eventually the whole universe.

Activity Explore, understand and interpret the effect of globalization

The following are different perceptions and interpretations about the globalizing world. Try to understand and identify the distinctive features of the views expressed by each perception and discuss with the class which expresses the views that fit in with your perception of the global world. Make critical evaluations if possible.

(1) A global village as an interconnected & interdependent community

Describe how you think you are interconnected and interdependent in the world. Give some examples or facts to support your view. Discuss how the metaphor of “village” suggests specific kinds of relationships.

(2) A global society as a melting pot & salad bowl

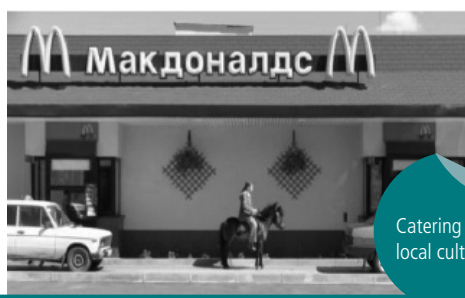
Is a global society a melting pot, or should it be a salad bowl with different cultures combined together but each keeping distinct? Which perception do you prefer? Discuss and make critical analyses.

(3) Globalization as cultural extension & integration

Do you agree with the viewpoint that the Silk Road and the Belt & Road Initiative are processes of intercultural communication? What are the differences between the two?

(4) Glocalization as localization & globalization

Economic globalization is very visible in the presence of some (mainly American) symbols for enterprises in many countries of the world. McDonald's is perhaps the most famous and has led to the coining of the term "McDonaldization." But there are many others. Often they are companies selling food and drinks and it might appear surprising that food and drinks which are a matter of very local tastes and variations, even within one country, can be "globalized" as if everyone had the same tastes. In fact these companies also cater for local tastes even though they are global companies. Think about your own experience. Have you become more used to tastes in food and drinks from other countries as a consequence of glocalization? Is this a trend we should encourage?



Catering for local culture

(5) Glocalization as local in spirit but global in character



A dynamic balance between Chinese and American cultural traditions

Have you seen or heard of the movie *Kung Fu Panda*? Describe how it is glocalized. Make a brief critical analysis and evaluation.

3 Understand the meaning of the “call for global ethics” : the negative effect of globalization

However, globalization also creates, as we just mentioned, a runaway world, a world that is out of control. This obviously is an imminent threat to human life.

Globalization, some argue, creates a world of winners and losers, a few on the fast track to prosperity, the majority condemned to a life of misery and despair... [In the last decade of the 20th century] the share of the poorest fifth of the world's population in global income has dropped from [an already miserable] 2.3% to 1.4%... [while] some global corporations sell goods that are controlled or banned in the more prosperous countries of the North to less developed countries instead... Rather than a “global village,” this is more like “global pillage.”

David Held

While messages of email and other worldwide media travel across the planet in seconds and financial transactions stretch across the globe almost just as fast, drugs, corruption, violence, nuclear weapons, terrorism-related wars and threat are just as quickly organized on a transnational basis. What is more, the most important threats to the human species, human life community and other living animals and plants—global warming, ozone depletion, pollution, killing and trading of animals and many others—are not in any way less intensified .

Activity Understand and critique: cultivate the awareness of green ecology

(1) Global pollution

Discuss with your partner what ethical communication we should have to counter the downside of globalization such as global pollution. Is there any moral or ethical principle that you think can serve as the basis for an active response to the negative effect?

(2) Global warming: causes and effects

Researchers have long been asking what causes global warming. Some claim that they have found out some of the causes. Try to discuss one or two causes and the effects of global warming, either provided by the Internet or from your own experience.

Become Aware of the Imperatives of Intercultural Education for a Community of Shared Future for Mankind

Globalization is the inevitable and irreversible trend of human development in human history, especially in the 21st century. We humans today are experiencing a world that is highly developed and at the same time the world is confronting the danger of being torn asunder. The dark side of globalization may lead to the worsening of weather conditions, increase of pollution, widening of world inequality, and imminent threat to world peace, which can be characterized in terms of a runaway world as aforementioned. This world situation can also be described as, to modify Shakespeare a little bit, “something rotten in the world.” So much so that, the critical question arises: How should we human beings deal with the increasing “rotteness” of the world?

To be interdependent and live together peacefully for survival, and to build a harmonious community of shared future or a human life community take on the most important significance and urgency for intercultural education in the 21st century. It is in and through being interdependent and living together or in and through a global community that the salvation of the world lies. Stated differently, it is in and through the education of responsible and civil global citizens that we can eventually survive and flourish, and maintain the sustainability of the future of our human beings.

Community is not something that is imposed from outside. Human communities of whatever kind are actively constructed through communication by people from different cultures, and people that participate in the building derive their identity from their own communicatively constructed social structure. The construction of human life community and human identity are the two sides of the same coin. They are the same process, happening at the same time, inseparable from each other, reinforcing each other.

We would like to argue throughout the book, in Chapter 12 in particular, that a community of shared future is inherently embedded in the process of intercultural communication. Inherent in the intercultural communication, intercultural dialogues on an equal footing in particular, are the communicable values and ethics that form what is called a community of shared future for mankind and the intercultural communication in this community. A human life community as such is not something as traditionally defined within national territory, or within the boundary of a national culture and history, or in terms of national residency sharing the same culture and history.

of shared future through intercultural communication is the ultimate goal of intercultural communication.

The intercultural challenges today push teachers and learners of intercultural communication in the direction of greater intercultural, global and anthropocosmic learning, perceptual refinement, and self-reconstruction in terms of self-extension into and integration with others. Intercultural education including foreign language education today has a particular and significant role in preparing young people to cross boundaries—linguistic, cultural, social, political, racial and religious, etc. Intercultural education should not only be ready to prepare for the human life community and its responsible citizens who are economically, technologically or professionally successful, who are capable of dealing with the technical problems and crises presented by the runaway world but, most importantly, be ready to prepare people who are more culturally, interculturally, socially and morally responsible. Intercultural communication education in this vision has a special contribution to make to the global society. It constitutes a great social and cultural resource providing indefinite potentials for learners in their (re-)building of a better world and better, more broadened and richer personhood than their primordial personal selfhood and nationhood. This implies a particular form of nationhood toward the attainment of the full meaning of humanity.

The full range of missions of intercultural education aims at cultivating both practical values and educational values. The teaching of a foreign language as a *lingua franca*, without exception, should aim at cultivating both practical and educational values. That is, intercultural and foreign language education have two purposes at the same time: practical and educational purposes, aiming at cultivating learners linguistically, culturally, socially, psychologically, morally and ethically so that they will be able to 1) practically, communicate effectively in the multicultural, pluricultural, and ideologically and politically diverse global village and 2) educationally, prepare themselves for a community of shared future for mankind and global citizenship. The accomplishment of these twofold purposes completes the whole range of communication and intercultural communication.

Global challenges are in fact challenges to education at all levels. There has been an increasingly heightened awareness that education worldwide has never been seen as being so responsible for the common fate or future for human beings. Education has never been so much regarded as the promise of the future of human beings.

Preparing for a human community based on shared future and common interests by responsible global citizens, which once seemed distant and peripheral to us, is now far more imperative and immediate and takes on the highest significance and the most important urgency.

Unfortunately, in the field of both foreign language and intercultural teaching, we have been too much concerned about and too busily engaged in the instrumental value of language and intercultural education. The most important value—the educational value, has been belittled, and even ignored.

Education should not only be concerned about who the learners are but about who they ought to become. Every individual in the global society has multiple identities. Just as there are multiple

layers to everyone's identity, there are multiple discourses of identity and multiple discourses of recognition to be negotiated. The most important social identity to be acquired through intercultural communication is the identity of global citizen in a community of shared future for mankind. In fact, everyone on this earth is in practice a potential world citizen in a linguistic, cultural and social sense, in so far as all of us are involved in certain structures and processes that, to an increasing extent, are worldwide.

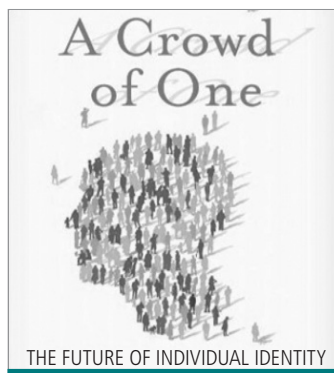
Almost all the peace-loving people of the world, in one way or another, express their wish to become responsible global citizens, even though their ideas about what a global citizen is like differ from one another. The following activities demonstrate the differences as to what a global citizen is like in different cultures.

Activity 2 What is a global citizen like?

The following are three metaphors about what a global citizen is like seen in different cultures. The first two metaphors proposed respectively by John Henry Clippinger and Paul Pederson show that a global citizen is someone that embraces all humanity. The third one proposed by Professor Jia Yuxin (author of this book) shows that a global citizen is someone that embraces multiple identities, of which the global identity is the most important and perfect.

Search on the Internet or in whatever way you can to understand the metaphors, make a comparison between them and figure out the culture that each of the metaphors represents.

-
- (1) Clippinger uses the brain-as-the-container metaphor and describes a global person as a crowd of one.



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- (2) Pederson uses the chair-as-the-container metaphor and describes a global person as someone sitting in what is supposed to be a chair here in which “thousands of people are seated.”

-
- (3) Professor Jia Yuxin uses the heart-as-the-container metaphor to describe a global person as someone who embraces multiple identities, of which the most important one is the global identity.



It is clear that being global for an individual means embracing multiple identities and, ideally, the whole of humanity. Regarding the issue of identities, some of them are social and ethnic, some are cultural/national, some are sub-national, some are intercultural and global, and some are personal. Some identities are old and some are new. Some are permanent and some are temporary and transitory. For example, one person is a Chinese, British, German or Egyptian, etc. And a scholar, teacher and learner. However, that person may have been a sportsman, a manager of a company or the chairman and president of an international or intercultural association just for several years. Who you are in fact is dynamic and forever changing. One keeps on transforming and redefining oneself—one is forever extending oneself into, adapting oneself to and integrating with multicultural others, other communities, the world and the whole universe. One is always forming new identities, the most significant one being the global identity.

Activity 3 Explore, discover and reconstruct your identity

Who are you? Who do you wish to become or what ought you to become through intercultural education? Use different symbols—the brain, the chair, the heart, or something else you prefer as metaphorical containers. Then explain why you choose this particular cultural image rather than something else to demonstrate your identities. Explain if your choice is in line with your national culture or your personal preference.

Assignment

Today, with the advancement of communication technologies, we are closely related to and connected with cultural others. We are truly living together like neighbors in the global village as envisioned by McLuhan. The impact of communication technology on our everyday communication is staggering. We do not use them only to communicate with others.

Write a short passage (within 300 words) about the above topic. Think of how you use communication technologies to communicate with others in any given day, and what other uses you make.

The following examples may be of help for you:

- *I email my...to tell them the...*
- *I text messages to my friends about...*
- *I am a netizen and often go online to...*
- *I often join my friends in my blog to...*
- *I...to gain information about different people and their cultures...*
- *I...to make contact with people who are different from us...*
- *I learn from cultural others through...so that I will be able to widen my horizons to discover and develop relationships with them and reflect upon myself, transform and redefine myself in the direction of becoming an intercultural person.*

Chapter Review

In this chapter, our experiential learning focuses first on technological imperatives for the study of intercultural communication. Then, it focuses on the educational imperatives, the imperative of the global communication in particular.

As the effect of the highly developed Internet and other worldwide communication technologies, combined with highly developed transportation technologies, we human beings today are able to live in the global village envisioned by media prophet, Marshall McLuhan.

However, at the same time, the global village is confronting the danger of being torn asunder. Human beings have never been so powerful, nor have they been so vulnerable and thus so much interdependent for survival. This is the reality of the global society we are living in today.

This chapter argues that to be interdependent so that all the people in the world survive, prosper and live together with others peacefully and to build a harmonious community of shared future for mankind take on the most urgency for intercultural education in the 21st century. It is in and through the education for responsible and civil global citizens that we humans can eventually survive and flourish, and maintain the sustainability of the future of human beings.