THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN A CHANGING WORLD

With the September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the face of intercultural relations radically changed for most Americans. Intercultural conflicts that may once have seemed distant or peripheral to our lives now confront us with undeniable immediacy. In this climate, the study of intercultural communication takes on special significance, offering tools to help us grapple with questions about racial profiling, hate crimes, religious differences, and other, related issues that have intensified since September 11. Recognizing that these circumstances call for more advances in the field, intercultural communication scholars are turning their attention to these questions and conflicts.

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Since we wrote the second edition of this book, the field of intercultural communication has grown and changed at a rapid pace, almost as quickly as our world has been changing. Those who study, teach, and conduct research in intercultural communication are faced with an increasing number of challenges and difficult questions to address: Is it enough to identify differences among people? Are we actually reinforcing stereotypes in emphasizing differences? Is there a way to understand the dynamics of intercultural communication without resorting to lists of instructions? Don't we have to talk about the broader social, political, and historical contexts when we teach intercultural communication?

Such questions are driven by rapidly changing cultural dynamics—both within the United States and abroad. On the one hand, the continued expansion of the European Union, NATO, and the African Union (formerly the Organization of African States) reflects movement toward unity. Also, technological advances have increased our ability to communicate with diverse cultural groups. On the other hand, events such as the continuing conflicts between India and Pakistan over Kashmir, disputes between Northern Ireland and Great Britain, and the war with Iraq illustrate ongoing intergroup conflict. These extremes demonstrate the dynamic nature of culture and communication.

We wrote this book in part to address questions and issues such as these. Although the foundation of intercultural communication theory and research has

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always been interdisciplinary, the field is now informed by three identifiable and competing *paradigms*, or ways of thinking. In this book, we attempt to integrate three different research approaches: (1) the traditional social-psychological approach, which emphasizes cultural differences and the ways in which these differences influence communication, (2) the interpretive approach, which focuses on communication in context, and (3) the more recent critical approach, which underscores the importance of power and historical context in understanding intercultural communication.

We believe that each of these approaches has important contributions to make to the understanding of intercultural communication and that they operate in interconnected and sometimes contradictory ways. In this third edition, we have further extended a *dialectical* approach that encourages students to think critically about intercultural phenomena as seen from these three perspectives.

Throughout this book, we acknowledge that there are no easy solutions to the difficult challenges of intercultural communication. Sometimes our discussions raise more questions than they answer—which we believe is perfectly reasonable at this point in time. Not only is the field of intercultural communication changing, but the relationship between culture and communication is—and probably always will be—complex and dynamic. We live in a rapidly changing world in which intercultural contact will continue to increase, creating a heightened potential for both conflict and cooperation. This book provides the tools needed to think about intercultural communication as a way of understanding the challenges and recognizing the benefits of living in a multicultural world.

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SIGNATURE FEATURES OF THE BOOK

Students usually come to the field of intercultural communication with some knowledge about many different cultural groups, including their own. Their understanding is often based on observations via television, movies, the Internet, books, personal experiences, news media, and more. But many students have a difficult time assimilating information that does not readily fit into their preexisting knowledge base. In this book, we move students gradually to the notion of a *dialectical framework* for thinking about cultural issues. That is, we show that knowledge can be acquired in many different ways—through social scientific studies, personal experience, media reports, and so on—but these differing forms of knowledge need to be seen dynamically and in relation to each

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other. We offer students a number of ways to begin thinking critically about intercultural communication in a dialectical manner. These include:

- An explicit discussion of differing research approaches to intercultural communication, focusing on both strengths and limitations of each

- Ongoing attention to history, popular culture, and identity as important factors in understanding intercultural communication

- "Student Voices" boxes in which students relate their own experiences and share their thoughts about various intercultural communication issues

- "Point of View" boxes in which diverse viewpoints from news media, research studies, and other public forums are presented

- Incorporation of the authors' own personal experiences to highlight particular aspects of intercultural communication

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NEW TO THE THIRD EDITION

To reflect the increasing influence of modern technology in our multicultural world, we have **expanded our coverage of technology and intercultural communication.** For example, in Chapter 1, we discuss how increased mediated contact with people who are similar and different can provide communities of support. We also discuss the cultural issues surrounding "identity tourism" whereby people take on false identities in communicating on the Internet.

Our **increased discussion of the implications of religious identity** in Chapters 5 and 11 is prompted by awareness of the important role religion plays in intercultural communication. For example, in Chapter 5, we note that religion often is conflated with ethnicity and/or race, making it difficult to view religious identity simply in terms of belonging to a particular religion. In Chapter 11, we explore the role religion can play in exacerbating and/or resolving intercultural conflicts.

The **addition of new content concerning the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks** acknowledges the importance of these events in intercultural communication. For example, in Chapter 2, we use the attacks of 9/11 as a case study to show how this one intercultural event can be viewed and analyzed from three very different paradigmatic perspectives. And in Chapter 5, we explore examples of stereotyping in the aftermath of the attacks.

We have also **increased coverage of the important topics of stereotyping and prejudice.** For example, in Chapter 5, we note that prejudices arise from normal cognitive functioning, and we identify and describe ways in which prejudices serve us in everyday life—not to excuse prejudice but to explain why it is so widespread.

Reflecting recent global demographics, we have **expanded our discussion of migration and intercultural communication.** For example, in Chapter 8, we explore the impact and trends concerning worldwide migration and discuss how tensions between old and newly arrived immigrants can lead to intercultural challenges both in the United States and abroad. In Chapter 5, we note the impact of migration in light of the increasing numbers of multicultural families and relationships.

Acknowledging the increasing interest in understanding and resolving intercultural conflict, we have added **new material on mediation and intercultural communication.** For example, in Chapter 11, we identify and describe alternative approaches to resolving conflict used by indigenous peoples in many societies and what these strategies have to offer in helping us understand and resolve contemporary conflicts. In Chapter 12, we continue the focus on resolving intercultural conflicts and developing productive relationships, even in the face of very difficult cross-cultural situations, such as war, oppression, and genocide. We note the potential power of dialogue, forgiveness, and transformation as strategies for meeting these incredible challenges.

We have also added **new content on cross-cultural notions of conflict.** For example, in Chapter 11, we identify characteristics that distinguish high- and low-conflict societies and explore reasons some societies have high levels of intercultural conflict and others do not.

Finally, we have provided **updated references and examples.** For instance, our explorations of intercultural communication take into consideration recent developments in the former Yugoslovia and the former Soviet Union, as well as the events surrounding the 9/11 attacks and the subsequent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

The Online Learning Center, at www.mhhe.com/martinnakayama, provides interactive resources to address the needs of a variety of teaching and learning styles. For every chapter, students and instructors can access chapter outlines, sample quizzes with feedback, crossword puzzles using key terms, and Internet activities. For instructors specifically, the Online Learning Center offers an online *Instructor's Resource Manual* with sample syllabi, discussion questions, and pedagogical tips designed to help teach the course in general and to help meet the special challenges arising from the controversial nature of much of the material.

In addition, a computerized *Test Bank* that allows instructors to edit and add their own questions is available in both Windows and Macintosh formats.

CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK

Intercultural Communication in Contexts is organized into three parts: Part I, "Foundations of Intercultural Communication"; Part II, "Intercultural Communication Processes"; and Part III, "Intercultural Communication Applications."

Part I establishes the history of the field and presents various approaches to this area of study, including our own. We begin Chapter 1 with a focus on the dynamics of social life and global conditions as a rationale for the study of intercultural communication. We introduce ethics in this chapter to illustrate its centrality to any discussion of intercultural interaction. **In this edition, we have expanded our discussion of the impact of technology on intercultural communication.**

In Chapter 2, we introduce the history of intercultural communication as an area of study and present the three paradigms that inform our knowledge about intercultural interactions. We also introduce the notion of a dialectical approach so that students can begin to make connections and form relationships among the paradigms. **We utilize the example of the 9/11 attacks to help explicate the three paradigms.**

In Chapter 3, we focus on four basic intercultural communication components: culture, communication, context, and power. **In this edition, we have extended our discussion of conceptualizations of culture and our critique of Hofstede's value framework as a caution against generalizing and stereotyping cultural groups based on their value orientations.**

Chapter 4 focuses on the importance of historical forces in shaping contemporary intercultural interaction. **We have expanded our discussion of the United States internment camps for Japanese Americans during World War II and placed more emphasis on history textbooks as an important arena for cultural identity.**

Part II establishes the factors that contribute to the dynamics of intercultural communication: identity, language, and nonverbal codes. Chapter 5 on identity is enhanced by **a new section on cross-cultural notions of identity.** We also have **extended the coverage of religious identity and multicultural identity, as well as the concepts of prejudice, stereotyping, and "isms."**

Chapter 6 addresses language issues and **includes new sections on code switching and globalization and expanded coverage of interlanguage.**

Chapter 7 focuses on nonverbal codes and cultural spaces **and includes new examples of postmodern cultural spaces.**

Part III helps students apply the material on intercultural communication presented in the first two parts. Chapter 8 addresses intercultural transitions. **We have extended our discussions of the role of religion in adaptation and "living on the border." We have also further developed our discussion of the tensions between old and new migrants and added more information on international migration and its effects on intercultural communication.**

In Chapter 9, we focus on popular and folk cultures and their impact on intercultural communication. **We have added new, more recent examples of popular culture resistance and English language dominance, and we present Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding model to help students conceptualize the consumption of popular culture.**

Chapter 10 explores intercultural relationships. **We have added a new section on cross-cultural differences in notions of friendship and have expanded our discussions of intercultural dating and marriage, as well as gay**

and lesbian permanent relationships. We have also extended our discussion of intercultural relationship dialectics.

In Chapter 11, we focus on intercultural conflicts. **We have added a section on cross-cultural differences in conflict orientations as well as new material on mediation. We have also revised the section on gender, ethnicity, and conflict.**

Finally, in Chapter 12, we turn to the outlook for intercultural communication. We have developed our discussion on motivation and the difficulties in achieving effective intercultural communication. **We have also added new notions of dialogue, forgiveness, and transformation as key parts of "Applying Intercultural Knowledge."**

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Nancy L. Street, *Bridgewater State College*

Erika Vora, *St. Cloud State University*

Lee B. Winet, *State University of New York, Oswego*

Gust A. Yep, *San Francisco State University*

Second Edition Reviewers

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Susan Walsh, *Southern Oregon University*

Jennifer Willis-Rivera, *Southern Illinois State University*

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In spirit and conceptualization, our book spans the centuries and crosses many continents. It has been shaped by the many people we have read about and encountered. It is to these guiding and inspiring individuals—some of whom we had the good fortune to meet and some of whom we will never encounter—that we dedicate this book. It is our hope that their spirit of curiosity, openness, and understanding will be reflected in the pages that follow.