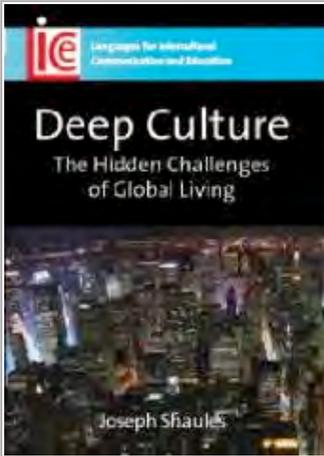


<i>Deep Culture: The Hidden Challenges of Global Living</i>		
Author:	Joseph Shaules (2007)	
Publisher:	Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters	
Pages	ISBN	Price
Pp. xi + 272	978-1-84769- 016-6 (paper)	\$39.95 US



According to the introduction, the principal goals of this book are (1) "to present a new model of intercultural learning that is both straightforward and theoretically sound; and (2) to focus attention on the importance of deep cultural difference" (p. 2). The introduction also makes a clear distinction between *intercultural contact* and *intercultural adaptation*: For example, many people might travel overseas and observe different religious or cultural festivals, but very few people will actually have to adapt to these differences on a permanent basis. It is this process of adaptation to *deep culture* when living as a "sojourner" (the term the author uses to describe someone living overseas for a period of time in a new culture) that is discussed throughout the book. *Deep culture* refers to "the unconscious frameworks of meaning, values, norms and hidden assumptions that we use to interpret our experience" (p. 2).

The book is divided into two parts. Part 1, The Intercultural Experience, takes a look at the cultural learning experiences of 22 sojourners in a variety of different countries and examines the concept of deep culture in depth, including different ways in which deep culture creates obstacles to cultural learning. Part 2, A Model of Cultural Learning, provides an easy to interpret model for *intercultural learning*, which is supported by further detailed examples of successful and unsuccessful cultural learning.

Chapter 1, "Intercultural Contact in the Global Village," discusses how globalization is bringing more and more people into cultural contact. However, according to Shaules, these cultural interchanges do not always lead to any sort of deeper cultural understanding, but can sometimes even end up reinforcing prejudice or stereotypes.

Instead of moralizing about what people should learn as a result of intercultural experiences, the author attempts to look at both the positive and negative outcomes of cultural interchange as experienced by the 22 sojourners interviewed, and then tries to understand the reasons behind them. A short overview of different theories of intercultural learning is offered on pages 18-23.

Chapter 2, "Objections to Culture," is an overview of the different interpretations of the word "culture" from the 17th century to present times, showing how the concept of culture changes and adapts to the thinking and beliefs of the time, while Chapter 3, "Understanding the Deep Structure of Culture," describes various theoretical frameworks that have been created to try to conceptualize culture and cultural differences in modern times. As an example of the latter Shaules offers, on pages 39-40, Terreni and McCallum's "cultural iceberg" (2003), in which concepts or beliefs on the tip of the iceberg, above water level, are characterized as primarily within a person's awareness: instances might be dancing, games, and music. Contrastingly, concepts on the iceberg below water level are primarily beyond awareness, such as conceptions of justice or approaches to problem solving. The relationship between language and thought and related theories such as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis are also discussed.

Chapter 4, "Deep Cultural Difference and Increased Prejudice," tackles the reality that not all cultural exchanges lead to positive outcomes. Shaules gives clear examples of situations where increased cultural contact has led to reinforcing prejudice and stereotyping. The author also makes an interesting distinction in this chapter about being able to "dislike" something in a foreign culture without judging it. He illustrates this variance with an example: If someone criticizes Korean food by simply saying it is too spicy, then they are probably making a negative value judgment about the culture and are unable to understand the culture beyond their personal reaction, whereas if someone says they don't like Korean food, as spicy foods don't agree with them, then they are probably expressing a personal opinion based on their own circumstances.

"What is Successful Cultural Learning?" introduces the complex issue of desired outcomes of intercultural learning and looks at how the depth of intercultural experiences can be quantified, whereas the last chapter in Part 1, chapter 6, examines the ongoing process of intercultural learning and what contributes to a positive or negative outcome. I found the distinction Shaules makes among the three stages—*Resistance, Acceptance and Adaptation*—of his Deep Culture model particularly useful. Resistance refers to "the unwillingness to change in response to the adaptive demands of a new cultural environment" (p. 150). Acceptance refers to "perceiving as valid alternative interpretations of the cultural phenomenon that one experiences" (p. 166). Adaptation refers to "allowing for change in oneself as a response to adaptive demands from a different cultural environment" (p. 180).

In Part 2 of the book Shaules describes in greater detail his model for intercultural learning and validates that model through many practical examples of intercultural

learning taken from a study he carried out on 22 sojourners in a variety of host countries. Chapter 7 highlights the model as a whole and the three ensuing chapters each focus on one of the three stages of the model.

Chapter 11, "Resistance and Rapport—Why Not Everyone Reacts The Same," looks at why some participants in the study adapted more easily to new cultures than others did. It also considers external factors that seemed to help predict varying depths of intercultural learning and the success of particular sojourners, as well as discussing whether or not the cultural distance between the sojourner's home and the host community played an important role in the sojourners' reactions to adaptive demands. Switching to the interior, "Beyond Adaptation" deals with personal identity: how the sojourners' sense of their identity evolved as their membership in their new cultural community changed.

The final chapter, "Implications for a Global Village," highlights the importance of understanding that it is natural for intercultural experiences to have both positive and negative outcomes. Shaules argues that there is a lack of vocabulary for intercultural experiences, especially to describe negative outcomes, and that the task of an intercultural educator is "not so much changing a learner's attitudes or awareness, but rather helping learners explore acceptance and resistance more fully" (p. 227). The book ends with a summary of its main ideas under the heading *Principles for Intercultural Education* and a two-page Conclusion which reiterates the importance of ongoing study in the field of intercultural learning. At the end of the book there is a *Glossary of the Intercultural Experience*.

I found *Deep Culture* useful for helping to understand the extremely complex process of intercultural learning and for offering a simple but solid model to conceptualize it. However, although the book is described by the publisher on the back cover as being a "straightforward guide to understanding the hidden cultural challenges of living abroad," I think it might not be such an accessible read to someone not in the intercultural-education field. Positioned as such, it is a great shame that many sojourners, who would benefit greatly from gaining an awareness of the ideas and theories put forward in this book, may never read it—which leaves the onus on intercultural educators to convey such fruitful ideas to the people who could use them.

References

Terreni, L., & McCallum, J. (2003). *Considering culture*. Ministry of Education, New Zealand. Retrieved March 27, 2006, from <http://www.ecd.govt.nz.running/profdev.html>

Fiona Cromarty-Lawtie
Late of Université Libre de Bruxelles
<flawtie@gmail.com >

© Copyright rests with authors. Please cite TESL-EJ appropriately.