

SIETAR Europa: Film Festival, Tallinn, Sept 19 2013

Transcript of Webinar presentation:

**Using documentary film in teaching and training intercultural communication**

by John Twitchin, Director, Centre for Intercultural Development (CI-CD)

Handout 1: Titles of the illustrative extracts shown from Intercultural Training Films in the library of the Centre for Intercultural Development (CI-CD):

*'Teaching with Foreign Languages'* Series for BBC based on 'Intertalk' (Univ. of Jyvaskyla)

*'Doing the Lambeth Talk'* (Doctors being consulted by Indian and Portuguese patients)

*'Counselling and Advice across Cultures'* (Public Advice services to cultural minorities)

*'Crosstalk 1'* (Bank exchange: misunderstanding of intonation + Job interview misperception)

*'Successful at Selection'* (Job Recruitment interview: Polish intercultural case-study)

*'Crosstalk 2 – Performance appraising across cultures'* (Chinese staff in Bank of America)

*'Marketing across cultures'* (Qantas Sales Presentation to Japan Airlines)

*'What makes you say that? Pt2 -Asian Encounters'* (Business meetings: Vietnam +Indonesia)

*'What makes you say that? Pt3 -Teams and Meetings'* (Turn-taking: Filipino manager; decision-making meeting of multi-cultured group of managers [Greek, Italian, Malaysian...]  
Plus Asian meeting styles (Japan and Indonesia)

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For list of legal copies for university libraries, and integral support manuals and handbooks,  
visit [www.cicd.uk.com](http://www.cicd.uk.com) OR Email enquiries to [johnntwitchin@diversityworks.co.uk](mailto:johnntwitchin@diversityworks.co.uk)

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JT (IN VISION): Tere, Tere!

Now, palun, here's a good thing to say to me in reply: '**BO-RE**'.  
Yes, now more loudly: '**Bore**'. '**Bore**'. Now 'Da'...That's it, 'Da'.  
Put them together, what do you get? '**Bore Da**'! Bore Da!  
Diolch yn fawr! Wonderful - you're speaking WELSH!

It happens I was brought up in Wales by an Estonian grandfather, in a refugee centre with Latvian and Polish families displaced by the War. So, at least on my mother's side, eestlane olen.

But from my English father I got an unusual family name: 'Twitchin'. To tell the truth I've never liked it. Apparently it's an old Anglo-Saxon word meaning 'a fork in the road'. Nothing more interesting or romantic than that!

Tell the person next to you – in just a few words - what your name means, and how you've felt about it all your life. Yes - how you've felt about your name all your life.

PAUSE (Countdown 40 secs)

I'm sure we all have ice-breaker exercises like that, to get people talking. If you feel I've interrupted your exchange just as it was getting interesting, that only proves it's a good exercise! Something you can continue over lunch.

Now I know some of you train global managers; some of you teach university students; some of you make films. Here at the Centre for Intercultural Development, we do all those things: we have experience of making almost three hundred training programmes for broadcast by BBC TV; many hundreds of training and coaching sessions for managers; and teaching and guest lectures at many universities.

We're all interested in gathering film evidence of genuine intercultural exchanges – first, for research, and second, to make our own visual aids for teaching or training. Students read abstract, theoretical concepts in textbooks – but film can bring these to life with memorable images that give them real-life illustrative meaning. And international managers really appreciate seeing examples of cultural exchanges at work: it convinces them of their own need for intercultural skills.

Today, I've been asked to illustrate the documentary approach to intercultural communication. I'll show extracts from training films. You'll appreciate this is a presentation, not a training workshop, so I can't give the full context, or full academic analysis, of any one film. The aim is to suggest some ideas for making your own documentary training films, and for using them interactively in teaching or training.

All the films in our CI-CD library are documentary – there are no dramatised, scripted scenes with actors – they show only genuinely spontaneous talk in intercultural exchanges. As such, they offer useful evidence for linguistic research, and as teaching resources they avoid the danger of simplistic stereotypes. We analyse the film evidence using the academic tools of 'applied interactional socio-linguistics'. Some of you may use the term 'discourse analysis'.

Some documentary films show public service interactions with cultural minority groups. Some show negotiations and meetings in international business – not just across Europe, but also between Europe and Asia.

Most university libraries have copies, so at the start of this transcript I've listed the titles of film extracts (in Handout 1) - for you to check out which you know already.

Also on Handout 1, reproduced on the next page, there's a list of 12 points of cultural difference that those training films show happening in real-life talk in the workplace.

**Intercultural Communication: 12 points of cultural difference illustrated by the documentary teaching/training films in CI-CD library**

1. High or Low Context: How much un-stated local context is needed to infer/ understand meanings? Do words carry the whole meaning explicitly and overtly - or is meaning hinted at more implicitly, 'between the lines'? (Overlaps with 2. below.)
2. Direct or Indirect ways of stating/asking things or disagreeing - eg blunt Western direct straightforwardness vs. Asian indirect 'narrative/proverbial' style, which avoids specifics and negativity of 'No' by using face-saving hints OR 'Yes' meaning 'I hear you' or 'It would be unkind to disagree', rather than agreement committing to action.
3. Formal or Informal styles of greeting/respect ('distant'/guarded, or warm/chatty?)
4. Turn-taking style (When to speak? Interrupting or overlapping? Gaps of silence?)
5. Body Language ie, Proximity; Smiles (as warmth, embarrassment or anger?); Eye Contact (bold; subservient; showing respect?); Touch; Making meaning via Gestures
6. Effects of a first (mother-tongue) language on use of English as a learned, 2<sup>nd</sup> language: *Grammatical structures* (eg verb at the end; Chinese 'Topic – comment'); whether 1<sup>st</sup> language has definite and indefinite articles (a; the), past/future tenses, plurals, pronouns, or hypothetical conditionals (can = could; will/must = might); *Accents; Intonation* (eg whether meaning is carried by stress on syllables or on words in a sentence); *Idiomatic expressions: Literal vs Figurative*
7. Politeness (If, When and How to request/ask questions; use of Please/Thanks)
8. Time: Concepts and Attitudes (Linear from past to future? Speed confused with 'efficient', or mindfully 'here and now'? 'Time is money' or 'Time is relationship'? Punctual or loose (ie, go with the flow)? Short-term pragmatic or long-term holistic?)
9. Low Key or Expressive (How emotion is, or is not, demonstrated: cool reserve or animated? Tone of voice (loudness/softness) as signal of anger/rudeness/irritation or emphasis/animation/involvement?)
10. Ways of structuring information or answers: how points are ordered (What seems logical/relevant? Key point of answer first or last? Linear logic or Narrative style?)
11. Ways to influence/win confidence/argue persuasively: verbose or quiet? Using local 'buzz words' and images, and primacy of 'face' and Relationship before Task?
12. Different linguistic 'scripts', ie differing cultural assumptions about role/powers of a front-line or managerial job, or about the purpose, structure, and 'normal' steps ('rituals of procedure') to be followed in workplace interactions – ie, how we each think a team meeting, negotiation, recruitment/appraisal interview, counselling session, presentation, consultation, training, or customer service exchange, 'should' be done/ conducted, and what implied actions/outcome can be expected.

At the end of the presentation, there is a Handout 2. This suggests ways of using documentary films interactively. Of course, with experience we all find our own ways of using film effectively as a visual aid. Handout 2 outlines just one approach that tutors and trainers tell us works well for them.

If you teach intercultural communication you'll be familiar with the pioneering work of Professor John Gumperz, world-leading expert in socio-linguistics at University of California, Berkeley. I learned interactional linguistics from him; and I made several documentary training films with him for BBC TV. I'll show some clips in a minute.

But first, you'll see that Number 6 on the Handout refers to mother-tongues. So let's kick off the viewing with a clip from a film about multi-lingual approaches in schools and in college courses of international marketing. It was funded by the European Commission and originally made for a Finnish university.

#### FILM EXTRACT 1: 'TEACHING WITH FOREIGN LANGUAGES'

“(Classroom scene) ..... [DUR: 5.18] ...the policy here is to value positively any language the students know how to use.”

Here in Britain that film triggers useful discussion with teachers and businesspeople. As you know, language learning is disgracefully undervalued here – and that film certainly helps to puncture any feelings of English complacency or superiority! But my main work isn't about languages – it's about intercultural communication: how misunderstandings happen between people from different cultures when they're using English as a Lingua Franca. Learning how to analyse such misunderstandings in terms of socio-linguistics can get students through examinations. But for busy managers, simply *recognising* misunderstandings isn't enough. They need to be able to *act as their own cultural mediator*. This means they need a repertoire of practical communication skills for repairing or preventing misunderstandings that are created by cultural contrasts like those listed on Handout 1. The training films in the CI-CD collection all supply such skills in integral support manuals and handbooks.

You'll see that number 12 on the Handout refers to the linguistic concept of 'script'. A typical example of 'script' is what we do and say when we consult a doctor.

Let's look at an extract from a documentary training film for doctors made in Lambeth in South London. Doctors need to be sensitive to their patients' cultural 'scripts' and their different ways of expressing anxiety and emotion. The commentator is Professor Celia Roberts of King's College, London.

#### FILM EXTRACT 2: LAMBETH TALK

“In the Lambeth surgeries...[DUR 4.40] .....are hard for limited English speakers to interpret.”

By the way, I should say that it's unlawful to copy any of these clips without the copyright holders' permission. Email me for information about getting legal copies for a university library or for training.

If you get any problem with the email address given on the Handouts, here's an alternative address: [cicd.jt@gmail.com](mailto:cicd.jt@gmail.com)

To make a medical training film like ‘Doing the Lambeth Talk’, the first step is to research what communication problems typically arise in health care, and how much doctors need training in intercultural awareness and skills to handle these. Step Two is to install a locked-off camera to collect evidence of real-life interactions between doctors and their patients; Step Three is to make a linguistic analysis, and explain misunderstandings in debriefing of each sequence through commentary and flashbacks on screen. (DISPLAY Manual) Step Four is to supply a support manual that sets out the research background, plus tried and tested ways of using the film interactively.

Of course hospitals and doctors’ surgeries aren’t the only places where cultural minorities communicate in their own style of using English. What about Schools? The Police? Social Services? Law Courts? They all also need intercultural communication skills, and CI-CD has made training films for all of them. For example, in Britain, we have ‘Citizens’ Advice Bureaux’, agencies which offer free help on problems at work, or in housing. Now if I need legal advice, I’d expect to

**FILM EXTRACT 3 A (“OPENINGS – 1A”) [DUR: 0.20]**

(V/O) first, Make an appointment; second, Wait my turn in a quiet waiting room, and third, Be welcomed into a private office by an adviser who treats my problem with complete confidentiality.

Very briefly, tell the person next to you: Would you similarly expect privacy?

PAUSE COUNTDOWN (20 secs)

JT: Research and surveys showed that people of Asian background were not attending their local advice office. They said they didn’t get good customer service. Instead, they were travelling by train to another city to attend an Asian community centre. So we set up a small amateur film camera on a bookcase at the centre - to find out why they were so much more successful at winning the confidence of Asian Britons. Here’s a glimpse of what we saw:

**FILM EXTRACT 3 B (“OPENINGS” 1B) [DUR 1.37]**

- (V/O) This interview was conducted with no words at all...
- (V/O) So much for privacy and confidentiality...

JT IN VIS: As I said, that was filmed only with a small amateur camera, so it looks a bit blurred. But what a different ‘cultural script’!

**FILM EXTRACT 3 C (“OPENINGS” 1C ) [DUR 40 secs]**

(V/O) The adviser was dealing with lots of cases all at the same time. There were no introductions; people handed him a paper symptom of the problem and expected him to solve it. He addressed people in whole family groups, usually through the oldest person. His office was the waiting room; clients had been sitting for hours listening and learning from each other’s cases; and there was no privacy at all.

In effect, he was running a communal assembly, or public seminar, with clients who clearly valued collective solidarity.

IN VIS: Needless to say, before any broadcast or distribution of research film like that, you have to have the permission of all the participants.

We found we could reveal differing cultural ‘scripts’ by simply cutting together the openings of Asian-British consultations – and counterpointing these with openings by native-English people. Many English advisers told us that simply seeing that contrast inspired them to be much more culturally sensitive in working with minority groups.

[(DISPLAY C& ADV Manual)] Documentary evidence like that doesn’t stand alone.. To become useful as a learning resource it needs a support manual that sets out the discourse analysis, and that outlines group exercises for teachers/trainers to use before, during and after the viewing. (Incidentally, you just experienced a mini-pre-viewing exercise when I asked you to reflect on what you’d expect to happen in a legal advice office.)

FILM EXTRACT 4 A [“Crosstalk 1 A”]

“Listen, Mrs Green... [DUR 1.26] ....worth looking at part of it again.”

The presenter there mentioned the film ‘Crosstalk’. It’s the documentary most famous in universities around the world as the original documentary training film on intercultural communication. I made it together with Professor John Gumperz, originally for broadcast by BBC TV. If you already know it, you’ll probably remember the sequence of the customer in the bank.

FILM EXTRACT 4 B [“CROSSTALK 1B”]

‘The film begins... [DUR 0.19] ....I got my account in Wembley’ (FREEZE on ‘Wembley’)

JT (V/O): If you haven’t seen this film before, what do you think the bank clerk is feeling about this customer at this moment? You might think it’s an unfair question: after all, we’ve heard only a few words. And you haven’t even seen the clerk’s face yet.

IN VIS: All the same, have a guess. Tell the person next to you: Do you think the clerk likes this customer, and wants to be as helpful as possible to him?

PAUSE (COUNTDOWN 20 secs)

Most native-English speakers can already tell that the clerk is irritated. This is partly because of the customer’s formal manner; and partly because he doesn’t use the word ‘please’. (I know ‘please’ is only conventional mantra, but as you know, we English miss it if it’s not there!)

FILM EXTRACT 4 C: [“Crosstalk 1 C”]

“To the English ear...[DUR 3.28]...irritation is all-too-likely to result on both sides”

You’ll see that Number 6 on the Handout refers to first-language intonation patterns. We’ve just seen an example of how these can produce misperceptions of meanings. ‘I want to deposit some money’ sounds very odd to native English speakers. What else would you deposit in a bank? Through his words, the Indian customer thinks he’s conveying that he wants to deposit some money (as opposed to withdraw money). But for native English speakers, it sounds like he’s putting stress on the wrong word.

Teachers of languages and linguistics know that Indian languages are syllable-timed - a bit like French, or West African English. They're different from native English, which clusters phrases and uses stress on different words to carry contrastive meanings. That bank sequence confirms how strongly we're influenced by the intonation patterns of our mother-tongue – unless we're fully bi-lingual – and how easily this can cause intercultural misunderstandings.

That documentary 'Crosstalk' goes on to show a recruitment interview. Imagine for a moment that you're being interviewed for a new job. The employer asks: Why do you want to work here, in this particular organisation? Tell the person next to you – How would you answer? What sort of things would you say in reply?

PAUSE COUNTDOWN 25 secs

Here in UK, candidates usually reply by referring to their relevant work experience, and go on to make favourable comments about the good reputation of the organisation. Let's see what happens in this intercultural exchange:

FILM EXTRACT 4 D ("Crosstalk 1 D")

"Why are you applying ...[DUR 1.37]..... desperately need one"

This was another case of number 12 on the Handout: Mr Sandhu answered according to his Indian cultural 'script'. In an Indian job interview Why do you want to work here? is asked more as a test of honesty. So an answer like 'Because you pay a bigger annual bonus' or 'I desperately need a job' is OK there. But in Britain it sounds as if he couldn't care less about the job. And when he was asked Why do you want this particular job? we heard him say 'I'm not particularly interested in this particular job – any job in a library'. He doesn't realise how those word stresses sound in native-English usage. Unfortunately they create negative impressions and misperceptions of intentions. The tragic truth is that this sort of intercultural misunderstanding leads to a lot of unintentional discrimination.

(DISPLAY) Again, to use the film interactively, it needs the full analysis and teaching exercises set out in the Crosstalk Manual.

Briefly tell the person next to you: Have you ever experienced intercultural misunderstandings in a job interview?

PAUSE (COUNTDOWN 25 secs)

While we're thinking about recruitment, here's a clip from another documentary training film. The commentary is again by Professor Celia Roberts:

FILM EXTRACT 5 'SUCCESSFUL AT SELECTION'

(Music..) "Candidates.... [DUR 3.55] .....judge on the style rather than the content of their responses"

Just in case you're unsure why it matters whether you say 'We' or 'I' in the UK, then let me confirm Celia Roberts' point: in an individualist culture like US or UK, a job

interviewer wants to hear what you've achieved personally. Talk of 'we' is heard as evasion or even trying to cover up failures.

This is an intercultural issue that can prove a big hurdle for cultural minorities – especially if they are required to attend American-style performance appraisals. With John Gumperz I filmed some interviews of Chinese staff at Bank of America in San Francisco. From that documentary coverage we made 'Crosstalk 2' – an intercultural training film used by management trainers and universities around the world.

**FILM EXTRACT 6 A** ('Crosstalk 2 – performance appraising across cultures')

"Good morning....[Dur 6.03].....can be avoided"

If you haven't seen this film before, tell the person next to you: What's your impression of Molly's career potential? D'you think she's doing well at the bank – or nothing special?

PAUSE COUNTDOWN (25 secs)

In fact Molly is a very successful assistant branch manager. She won more new customers than anyone else in Bank of America that year.

We went on to film her in that same office, as a manager conducting appraisal with San-San, a more junior staffer, also of Chinese cultural background.

**FILM EXTRACT 6 B** (Crosstalk 2 B)

"Good morning San-San....[Dur 1.15] ....I'll try my best"

On that admittedly very brief showing, what do you think of San-San's work potential? Tell the person next to you: would you promote San-San?

PAUSE (COUNTDOWN 20 secs)

Alright, you've shared your first impressions - now for the facts. Here's the senior manager who knows San-San's work best.

**FILM EXTRACT 6 C** (Crosstalk 2 C)

"What was most...[DUR 2.04] ....that values self-effacement"

So her manager thinks San-San is a 'crackerjack' - exceptionally competent. Clearly, we were simply seeing Molly and San-San doing appraisal in a typically Chinese communication style.

Again, you've just experienced me stopping and starting a film - to ask questions and help focus reflection on each sequence. In training I give a lot of time to questions before, during and after any showing, that provoke self-reflection - by individuals, or in pairs or small groups. (DISPLAY 'Crosstalk 2' manual.) Support manuals set these questions out, alongside detailed discourse analysis.

Incidentally, management trainers among you will have noticed the serious issues raised there about how unfair and misleading intercultural appraisal can be.

OK. It's time to turn attention to international business.

Let's first try an Exercise of Imagination. Imagine you are Head of your National Airline's Food Catering Department. You're organising a sales presentation for a visiting delegation from Japan Airlines. Describe in a few words to the person next to



you: how you think this would start? How are the Japanese visitors welcomed? Would they sit in rows? Would you make a persuasive speech, pitching for sales in an informal, friendly style? And - What language would be used?

PAUSE (COUNTDOWN 25 secs)

Alright. Now let's see how the Australian airline QANTAS began a sales presentation to Japan Airlines.

FILM EXTRACT 7 A (QANTAS - A)

“(Food lay-out on table) [DUR: 2.20] ...are they suitable? Oh, most definitely.”

Incidentally, before we go on, tell the person next to you – Do you think that was a genuine intercultural event, or did it appear artificially staged for the cameras?

PAUSE COUNTDOWN (15 secs)

In fact, it was a real event. But it can seem staged to us as Europeans if we're not familiar with the culturally sensitive marketing that appeals to Japanese companies.

FILM EXTRACT 7 B (Qantas B) [DUR: 0.40]

[V/O] You noticed the formal, ceremonial entrance; the carefully ritualised exchange of talk, conducted strictly in order of rank; the use of Japanese language with the senior manager (this was partly to ensure no loss of face in front of his staff in case his English wasn't as fluent as theirs). No hard-sell speech; people speaking only when called upon; thoughtful silences; certainly no interrupting or joking.

(IN VIS) That culturally sensitive marketing won Qantas a major contract that day.

In preparing Western executives for doing business in Asia, it's a basic fundamental to explain Handout numbers 2 and 11. Asians tend to have a more indirect style of talking; they tend to avoid precision and saying No, in order to preserve face and promote harmony; and it's vital to establish Relationship before tackling Task.

FILM EXTRACT 8: (WMYST – Asian Encounters 1)

“In the Western cultures...[DUR: 0.33] ...a skill they need to develop.”

Now let's imagine you're in business, and through emails, faxes and phone calls you've arranged a mutually beneficial deal with a company in Indonesia. Your lawyers tell you it's time to fly over there for a face-to-face meeting to seal the deal. In just a few words, tell the person next to you: how would you prepare? And what would be the first things you'd say?

PAUSE (COUNTDOWN 30 secs)

Now let's see the start of a meeting I was able to film while making a training documentary in Indonesia.

FILM EXTRACT 9 (BATARA)

“The city of Jakarta.... [DUR 1.40] ...they’re used to at home.”

What an intercultural disaster we see there! There was no relationship-building at all – just a casual greeting: ‘Thanks for your time, Batara’. Incidentally, only a monocultural Westerner would use a first name like that at a first meeting in Asia. And then he instantly imposed his own task-centred agenda.

We saw Batara react by saying ‘Tell me again what was in the fax’. Of course he didn’t mean that literally – he was talking *indirectly*. It was his Asian way of signalling a negative message on the lines of: ‘You’re embarrassing me with your dominating hard-sell and contractual approach. And I can’t possibly report to my President-Director that you can reliably give face.’ Unfortunately, because Jonathan doesn’t realise this, he carries on in the same way, making the situation worse. Later in the film, Batara reports that he sees Westerners doing this in Indonesia all the time.

In the full broadcast film we don’t just analyse what goes wrong there – we also illustrate how such meetings can be handled successfully.

**FILM EXTRACT 10** (WMYST? – Asian Encounters 2)

“Knowing about the need for relationship....[DUR 3.08] ...the art of listening.”

On the Handout list of 12 cultural differences, number 4 refers to silence – and also to different turn-taking styles. How someone gets a turn to speak can give power of influence in meetings. Of course we all know that turn-taking differences are relative: in meetings, people from Greece and Italy may seem like fast-talking interrupters to Scandinavians. But then Swedes and Norwegians can also be seen as interrupters by Finns who prefer talk with longer pauses between turns.

In teaching or training I sometimes introduce the topic of turn-taking by showing documentary film of analogous gender differences within a society. I show all-men meetings and all-women meetings – plus of course some that mix men and women. Drawing attention to their differences of communication style puts overlaps of gender and culture on the training agenda. That might be an idea for you to develop.

Anybody who attended the Intercultural Conference at University of Konstanz last year will remember the talk given by my Australian Associate, Dr Margaret Byrne. (We’ve made several documentary training films together.) I filmed her introducing culturally different turn-taking styles at a business seminar in Asia.

**FILM EXTRACT 11** (Telstra)

“This can be.... [DUR: 4.09].....picture of each person’s position emerged”

This film is extremely interesting for intercultural trainers. It shows a real decision-making meeting of a culturally mixed group of trainee managers. We see them experimenting with 5 different turn-taking styles, each one ‘user-friendly’ to different cultures. We see them discovering experientially how different patterns affect outcomes.

I wonder if this is something worth doing in your own documentary training films? Tell your neighbour what examples of culturally-sensitive meeting styles you know about. If you’re not familiar with any, then have a guess about how meetings are conducted by Japanese managers in Japan.

PAUSE COUNTDOWN (25 secs)

FILM EXTRACT 12 (Semarang Mtg)

“This is the first meeting.... [DUR 4.32] .....or tackle problems”

So in Japan they don't use meetings for problem-solving; and they have a junior person as 'meeting-master'. (This is because a junior person has the least face to lose.) But this does raise an interesting question: how much could the Australian managers be missing out on their Japanese and Indonesian colleagues' contribution by running meetings in a monocultural, and essentially Anglo-American, way? (DISPLAY WMYST?) Again, that documentary has a support Manual setting out a range of meeting styles useful for handling mixed cultural teams.

Share this thought with your neighbour: If you train managers or students for working globally, how important is it to equip them with skills for handling culturally mixed teams? And if you already do that, what communication skills do you teach for drawing positively on diversity in culturally mixed teams?

PAUSE (COUNTDOWN 25 secs)

As trainers and teachers we all want the most expert and up-to-date training resources. I mentioned Dr Margaret Byrne just now. If you know her work, you'll be interested in her new book [(cf BOOK Slide)] for Westerners on doing business in Asia. It was published just last month! Not just the most authoritative, but the very latest resource.

(In VIS) I'm about to stop. If you have questions about using documentaries interactively – contact me by email: my address is on the Handouts. If any problem, here's an alternative email address: (SLIDE) [cicd.jt@gmail.com](mailto:cicd.jt@gmail.com)  
We can then fix a time to talk on the phone or by Skype.

If any of you come through London, do come and visit the Centre for Intercultural Development. We have a huge library of books, documentaries and trainer's manuals on intercultural communication for you to browse through.

Finally, a brief summary of Handout 2. It sets out a way of helping people learn from documentary film (rather than simply watching it with interest). The first step in using documentary interactively is to determine *what learning point is embodied in the content of the film*. The next step is to plan discussion questions around the theme of the film to use in advance of showing the film – or even better, if there's time, to also design some experiential role-plays on the theme.

You've noticed how I've posed questions before showing film extracts. In workshops I give much more time to this. Asking questions and doing role-plays in advance provokes self-reflection. It helps people *engage much better* with the *content* of a film. To me, it's then vital to pause a film to de-brief each sequence. With students, de-briefing includes academic analysis. With international managers it includes supplying practical intercultural communication skills they need to achieve effective outcomes in different countries, especially in leading teams in change management. In training, I always ask managers in pairs or small groups to work out what they would do and say in handling interactions like the ones they've just seen on film.

Then after they've seen a film, I never ask people just open-endedly to 'discuss it'. That usually produces only anecdotal exchange of opinions about the film *presentation* – little more than desultory television criticism. To help ensure groups register and develop the *content* points of documentary film, I always facilitate a carefully designed *structured discussion* – in other words, setting an agenda for small group discussions, with whole-group report-backs.

For follow-up in training managers we don't just give them checklists of skills. We also do simulations to give them actual practice in the communication skills needed for handling intercultural exchanges. Without prior practice, I find managers' new communication skills all-too-often collapse under the pressure and stress of their first real-life application.

Thanks for your attention...

Meanwhile, I hope the Festival proves interesting and useful....Head Aega!

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## Webinar HANDOUT 2:

### **Using intercultural documentary films in teaching and training: background**

Film of authentic workplace interactions is 'gold dust' for tutors and trainers: it's invaluable research material for analysis by teachers and students of intercultural communication, and it's direct evidence for managers of the need for training in intercultural awareness and skills. Screening real-life exchanges supplies the lively, memorable images that give meaning to the abstract theories students read about in textbooks. However, to *learn* from film, trainees and students need the 'conceptual weapons/tools' of applied socio-linguistics, to understand *how and why* the misunderstandings they see on-screen are happening. Managers additionally need *practical communication skills* for repairing - or better, preventing – misunderstandings at work: ie, competence to act as their own cultural mediators. Their new skills need practice in simulations if they are not to collapse when applied in the stress of a real meeting/interview.

It is only bad teachers who show a film as a substitute for taking proper trouble to create experiential and discovery methods. All good teachers and trainers know the importance of making any documentary teaching/ training resource 'their own'. They research how to deploy the film *interactively* as a *visual aid* to stimulate a *process of effective learning*. We all of course develop our own ways of using documentary film through experience over time. But *at least to start with*, rather than 're-inventing the wheel', it's good to examine carefully any integral trainer's support manual - to check the purposes a training film was designed for, and to prepare to deploy any tried and tested exercises and recommended discussion points.

That may seem an obvious point, but so many teachers don't bother to do it. They lose a lot of learning impact by assuming their students and trainees will benefit enough from simply watching a film. I headed research projects for BBC TV Continuing Education Dept., the Open University and the European Broadcasting Union into the learning effects of different TV presentation and graphic styles. All the evidence showed that students/trainees actually gain very little learning from viewing a film straight through. Their customary frame of mind in watching TV or cinema is one of *passive entertainment*, ie, taking only visual interest in the *presentation*, and wondering only what a film might show next. They relapse into this ingrained habit when a training film is screened in lecture hall or training room. But students and managers need quite the opposite, namely *active learning*, ie, developing insight, understanding and skills based on the film's *content*. Such learning results from how well the topic, and then each sequence in turn, is introduced, and then de-briefed, *interactively*. People learn best when they relate *experientially* to the *content* of a film: ie, when the teacher or trainer uses the film as trigger stimulus to a process in which trainees make their own sense

of each point of content, registered in relation to what they already know or need to act upon. Before viewing, it's good if a group shares what they already know on the theme, and develop their understanding of it experientially. I often do initial role-plays on the theme of the film, drawing on the work/cultural experience trainees have brought to the session. They can then compare their own linguistic/emotional experiences in the training room with the real-life workplace exchanges on-screen: it helps them relate to the film evidence with much better insight. Also, managers should be helped to work out for themselves whether what they see on screen represents good or bad practice, rather than just be told this. They should be asked what they would do/say to achieve a different/better result, ie enabled to work out what skills they need to avoid damaging intercultural misunderstandings and ensure positive outcomes.

#### Summary for USING documentary training films

1. preparation: determine what learning points are embodied in the film;
2. before screening: use discussion questions or experiential role-plays to stimulate trainees' self- reflection on how the theme relates to their own experiences and to register 'where they are at' – ie, what they already know/think about it;
3. during viewing: use pause points to de-brief each sequence to check on comprehension, to clarify and explain the detailed linguistic analysis, and to stimulate thought and responses about 'good' or 'bad' practice shown on-screen;
4. after viewing: facilitate structured discussion of the learning points (this to help keep focus on content, not just presentation) and supply checklist of intercultural skills;
5. follow-up: do practice of communication skills for intercultural workplace situations.

#### Summary for MAKING documentary training films

1. Conduct research (via universities, employers, voluntary agencies,) into patterns of inter-cultural stress/ difficulty/ breakdown in services for cultural minorities, or in international managing/negotiating. Make notes of such interactions - to be able to prove later that the intercultural exchanges shown on film are recurrent and genuinely representative. Intercultural training films need to be based on authoritative statistical evidence of comparative outcomes among cultural groups or in international business.
2. Negotiate access to workplaces to film real exchanges involving people from two or more cultures. For credibility, these should be events happening anyway – ie, not organised artificially for the cameras. Authentic documentary captures genuinely spontaneous talk on film: meetings/interviews should be not be scripted; participants shouldn't know why they are being filmed, nor what the film is seeking to exemplify.
3. To demonstrate the 12 cultural contrasts on Handout 1, film some 'mono-cultural' meetings of similar purpose - ie, analogous exchanges between native-speakers.
4. After filming, have precisely detailed, accurate transcripts made of the sound tracks.
5. Commission expert *socio-linguistic* analysis of that transcribed evidence, especially all intercultural misunderstandings. It is vital for the film commentary to clearly distinguish 'interactional linguistic' from 'psychological' explanations of these.
6. In editing, present those analytic findings via commentary, graphics and flash-backs.
7. Build in Pause Points - signalled by commentary, by questions graphically on-screen, or by freeze-frames - to indicate where tutors/trainers should de-brief each sequence and check comprehension of key points. Add opening Menu for accessing sections.
8. Before the final edit, pilot the effectiveness of film and ways of using it interactively.
9. To ensure effective use of the film, provide Notes/Manual setting out context of the training need; academic research background; introductory exercises before viewing; fuller linguistic analysis of the exchanges shown on screen; de-briefing for each sequence; exercises and discussion points for structured follow-up; checklists of recommended good practice and practical skills of intercultural communication.

NEW: 'Business Success in the Asian Century – practical guide for working in Asia' by Dr Margaret Byrne. <https://www.abbey.com.au/book/business-success-in-the-asian-century.do>