

Research Article

# Improving Intercultural Communication Competence: Fostering Bodymindful Cage Painting

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## Abstract

*The interconnectedness of the world because of the Internet and the interdependence due to trade liberalization have given rise to the need for future graduates to be more interculturally and globally competent communicators. Such competence can be improved through a process of Cage Painting, in which participants learn more about the effects of background, experience, and context on their perspectives. The effects of somatic-emotional states of the interactants on Cage Painting are considered for the first time in this paper. This emerged from Mindful Inquiry into Cage Painting simulation workshops over a 4-year period. This paper describes how Mindful Inquiry informed the integration of bodymindfulness into Cage Painting. Although significant additional efforts will be needed to refine and apply this integration into Cage Painting, we expect our work to promote transformative learning by emphasizing both the rational and extrarational aspects of developing intercultural communication competence. We also hope that this collaborative work will inspire others to elaborate, extend, evaluate, and even transform certain aspects of Bodymindful Cage Painting so that we all and those that learn with us can work toward broader understandings and coexistence in today's challenging world.*

*Key words: Bodymindfulness, Cage Painting, Intercultural Communication Competence*

## Introduction

Early attempts to provide *Global Learning* opportunities, in which students could interact with people located in other parts of the world, focused on simply getting connected using technology (e.g., Rimmington & Alagic, 2008). However, there were frequent misunderstandings that stemmed from cultural differences. It quickly became apparent that success in achieving common goals hinged upon improved understanding of cultures, their differences, and the effects of these on communication. Often when participants had little or no travel experience and were from relatively homogeneous cultural backgrounds, they were not aware of the effects of their own culture on their perspective. The *Cage Painting* metaphor was developed to explicate and conceptualize these effects (Rimmington, Gibson, Gibson, & Alagic, 2004). Consider the following scenario that illustrates an interaction between a new student, Simea, and a traditional classroom Teacher (role label capitalized for emphasis). By *traditional* we mean a classroom in which the Teacher is an authority figure, who imparts knowledge to the students, while they remain quiet and attentive. Simea is from a culture in which a teacher is more like a facilitator of learning, and students are expected to participate actively and ask questions. So there is a clash of classroom cultures.

Simea: *Excuse me sir. May I ask a question? Why are we trying to prove an obvious statement?*

Teacher: *Be quiet! You will not interrupt my presentation!*

Simea: *I didn't mean to interrupt. How do you expect me to learn if I can't ask a question? I am used to being able to ask questions.*

Teacher: *Well you did interrupt! I expect you to sit quietly and listen; otherwise you will not be able to learn.*

Simea: *Is there no other way to learn besides being quiet and just listening? I'm used to the teacher expecting me to ask questions. As a teacher, I would not expect my students to learn much if they were not allowed to ask questions at any time.*

Teacher: *I have been teaching for 25 years and I don't need students telling me how to do my job!*

Simea: *I can't learn in a classroom, which is under such strict control. Do you teach all your classes like this? If you have more students like me, they may have difficulty, too. What would you do in my situation?*

Teacher: *Why do you think that you will not be successful in my class?*

Simea: *As you can see, I come from a different type of classroom. I am going to have to adapt to your very strict classroom. So, I will need to make note of questions during your presentations and wait until the end to ask, unless you would be willing to accept my clarifying questions.*

As you can see, this interaction did not result in a satisfactory resolution to the classroom culture clash between Simea and the traditional classroom Teacher. The outcome was that neither person understood nor accepted the other's perspective. No middle ground was reached.

This line of conversation is one of a number of threads within the *Cage Painting*

scenario named *Disruptive Student*. This scenario serves as a script for the Disruptive Student simulation available in the Cage Painting Simulator (<http://gl.wichita.edu/cps/>). The outcome of this thread represents a failure to resolve the classroom culture clash between Simea and the Teacher. This provocative scenario title emphasizes the power distance disparity.

The Cage Painting Simulator is an online simulation game that was designed to allow learners to practice a set of Cage Painting strategies for questioning and sharing. These strategies provide a systematic means of learning about each other's background, experiences, and context and the way these affect his/her perspective. Learning outcomes from Cage Painting Simulator can be enhanced with guided reflective practice (Rimington & Alagic, 2008). This attention to reflective practice prompted consideration of mindfulness (Langer, 2000) during Cage Painting and intercultural communication.

During a workshop at the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, India in October 2006, this scenario—the Disruptive Student—presented a disorienting dilemma for some delegates. The idea of a student talking in an assertive manner to a teacher without regard to any hierarchy or protocol was so alien to these delegates that it triggered a pronounced emotional response. They wanted to immediately change the scenario to fit their understanding of classroom culture, and they became even more upset when they realized they could not change this particular scenario. They could write a new scenario but not delete the original. The power relationship between teachers and students in their classrooms was so ingrained that a student would never dare to talk to a teacher in such a manner. Their emotions provided an early sign of need for careful consideration of cultural assumptions and related feelings. Something more than being mindful was involved. The work of Nagata (2007) on bodymindfulness, an integral approach to becoming aware of and adjusting our inner state, helped us shed light on this event. Bodymindfulness can improve communication by focusing our attention on how our somatic-emotional experience (bodily sensations of emotion) affects our verbal and nonverbal behavior. Our taking into account the lack of bodymindfulness of the workshop participants could aid in our understanding of such emotional reactions. Perhaps the effects of the bodymind state, which had been implicit, could usefully be explicated as a “cage bar,” so its effect on intercultural communication can be captured. Our reflection on this event and the relationship between bodymindfulness and Cage Painting led us to the following research questions:

Q1. Cage Painting: *What have we learned so far from facilitating Cage Painting processes?*

Q2. Bodymindfulness: *What have we learned about the implicit impact of somatic-emotional states in Cage Paintings?*

Q3. Bodymindfulness & Cage Painting: *How do we envision bodymindful practices as an integral part of the Cage Painting approach for improving intercultural communication?*

## Prerequisites for Mindful Inquiry Into Cage Painting and Bodymindfulness

In this section, we are establishing our negotiated theoretical setting, including Mindful Inquiry as our shared research methodology, Cage Painting simulation as a conceptual and practical tool for improving intercultural communication, and the idea of bodymindfulness as a holistic approach to becoming aware of and adjusting our inner states in order to make more skillful communication choices. From this perspective, we will analyze the Cage Painting approach in terms of learning experiences and its potential improvements through integration of bodymindfulness.

### *Mindful Inquiry*

What is *Mindful Inquiry* for the authors of this paper? Coming from very different backgrounds, the authors define it as the interplay of philosophical traditions, education, and experiences. Bentz & Shapiro (1998) made explicit the background for their conceptualization of Mindful Inquiry: phenomenology, hermeneutics, critical social theory, and Buddhism. While Buddhism is understood at very different depths by the three authors, phenomenology, hermeneutics, and critical social theory provide some shared common ground. Two authors, Rimmington and Alagic, have based their theoretical approach to *Third Place Learning* (2008) on a theoretical bricolage emerging from critical social theory based on a dialectic worldview (Freire, 1970; Kincheloe, 2005; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997; Martin & Nakayama, 1999), social constructivist learning theory with an emphasis on transformative learning (Mezirow, 1991; Taylor, 1997), and situated cognition and reflective action (Langer, 1989; Nagata, 2006b; Schön, 1983) within social constructivist learning theory. Nagata (2003, 2006a) describes direct experiences with Mindful Inquiry as defined by Bentz and Shapiro, both as a researcher and as a teacher.

Bentz and Shapiro (1998) listed a set of 13 premises of Mindful Inquiry (pp. 6–7). The first six can be named as follows: (1) *Awareness*, (2) *Multiple perspectives*, (3) *Assumptions*, (4) *Human existence*, (5) *Bias*, and (6) *Power relationships*. While this first set of assumptions acknowledges certain values, the next set of premises suggests the necessity of engagement in social justice action. It goes beyond the idea of neutrality. It makes clear that “Inquiry often involves the critique of existing values” (p. 7). For example, premise 13, which says, “The development of awareness is not a purely intellectual or cognitive process but part of a person’s total way of living her life” (p. 7), stands out as the overriding purpose of our work in integrating bodymindfulness into Cage Painting.

As the authors searched for common ground in this paper, it occurred to Rimmington and Alagic that most of their writing had been guided by the first six premises listed above (1–6), and they realized that they had been doing a form of Mindful Inquiry. Similarly, Nagata focused on 1, 3–6, and 13 as particularly relevant to the intercultural education described in her article on Mindful Inquiry case studies (Nagata, 2006a). Bentz and Shapiro’s premises (7–12) relate to social action and represent types of understanding that emerge from an inquiry incorporating the first six premises (1–6). To integrate Cage Painting simulation and bodymindfulness, we

focus on the first set of premises (1–6) in addition to premise 13 as our tools of inquiry.

### ***Cage Painting***

Mackay (1994) proposed the *Cage* as a metaphor for the effects of background, experiences, and context on our perspectives. This metaphor was elaborated to the “process of explicating” those effects in the Cage Painting metaphor (Alagic, Gibson, & Rimmington, 2007; Rimmington, Gibson, & Alagic, 2007). This explication takes the form of dialogic coconstruction and negotiation of meaning and identity. Initially, our cages are invisible, which reflects a lack of awareness of the effects of our cultural background and life experiences on the way we see the world. This metaphor is a vehicle for becoming aware of one’s self and one’s biases and their interaction with reality with a view to transcending those biases to consider and to integrate multiple perspectives into the understanding of our viewpoints and those of others.

Rimmington et al. (2007) developed an online role-play simulation game, which allows the learner to interact with a synthetic character named *Simea*. The purpose of the Cage Painting Simulator (<http://gl.wichita.edu/cps/>) is to guide the learner toward the development of Cage Painting strategies as part of an intercultural communication heuristic that can subsequently be transferred to real interactions. Sometimes Cage Painting scenarios present minor differences in viewpoint, while others challenge our beliefs at the deeper level of our “meaning structures” (Mezirow, 2000). The latter, more challenging scenarios usually involve a larger power distance between the learner and *Simea* than the former scenarios. As educators we need to create optimal conditions or learning environments for transformative learning to occur. A characteristic of an ideal learning environment is one that allows the learner to proceed at his/her own pace through levels of increasing difficulty that fall within his/her zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978).

### ***Cage Painting Levels***

The Cage Painting scenario, which is *modular* in structure, comprises a template with four *Steps* (Figure 1) that correspond to four Cage Painting *Levels* only in the case of repeated *Good* choices (e.g., Rimmington & Alagic, 2008):

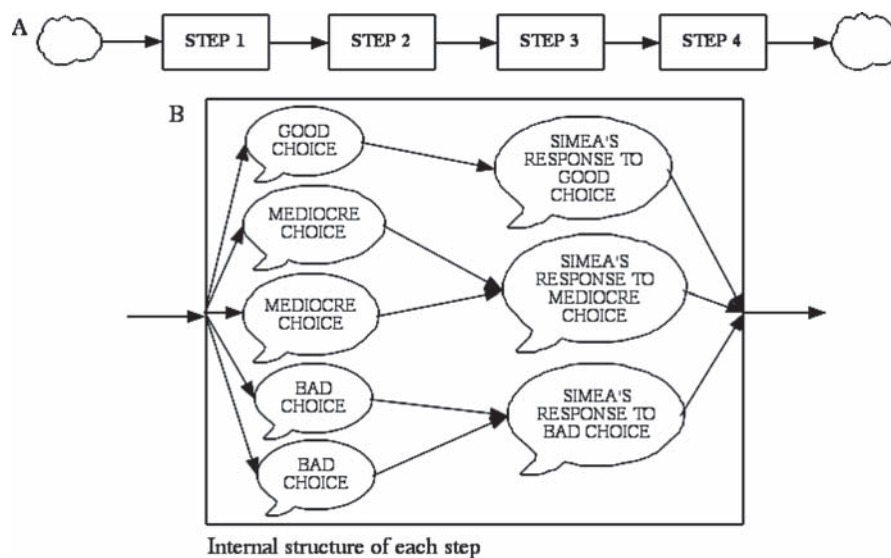
Cage Painting Level 1: Ask for the other’s perspective,

Cage Painting Level 2: Offer a self-critical perspective,

Cage Painting Level 3: Present self in terms of the other’s perspective, and

Cage Painting Level 4: Ask a question to elicit an answer in one’s own perspective.

The successive steps and levels are increasingly difficult (Figure 1). The first two levels include asking for the other person’s (*Simea* in the case of a Cage Painting simulation) perspective and sharing one’s own perspective. The second two levels require adoption of the other person’s perspective so as to be able to share about oneself from the other person’s perspective and to ask the other person a question so that he/she answers in one’s own perspective. Central to a Cage Painting simulation is a simulated chat session between the learner and *Simea*, a synthetic character of unknown culture who simultaneously serves as an interactant from another culture, a



**Figure 1. A. Stepwise structure of Cage Painting scenarios; B. the user's choices and Simea's respective responses.**

role model, and a mentor who helps the player to improve through the verbal exchange and by giving hints in a separate box on the screen. At each step, the learner may choose one of five choices (Figure 1B). The choices include: *Good* which represents the progressive Cage Painting Levels 1–4; *Mediocre* which represents one level below the Good choice; and *Bad* which represents two levels below the Good choice.

Simea: *Excuse me sir. May I ask a question? Why are we trying to prove an obvious statement?*

Good Choice: *Simea, it is not obvious and you should listen. Why did you interrupt me?*

Mediocre Choice: *Simea, you are confusing other students by interrupting me in the middle of my presentation.*

Bad Choice: *Be quiet! You will not interrupt my presentation!*

One outcome of a Cage Painting simulation is that learners realize that some thought needs to be put into analyzing each possible choice in terms of Simea's response. This encourages more active listening and consideration of multiple issues on an ongoing basis. One of those issues may be the bodymind states of Simea and of themselves.

### **Bodymindfulness**

Nagata's research into bodymindfulness has been pursued as a USAmerican using Mindful Inquiry to try to understand how to communicate more skillfully in her adopted culture of Japan (Nagata, 2002, 2009). *Bodymindfulness* is an approach to becoming aware of and adjusting our inner state, to which Anderson drew attention (Anderson, 2000; Nagata, 2008). The term *bodymind* emphasizes the systemic nature of lived experience, and mindfulness is a Buddhist concept and practice of cultivating awareness in the present. Bodymindfulness refers to holistic awareness of the state of our bodymind—body, emotion/feeling, mind, and spirit—that can enable

skillful communication choices in interacting with other people (Nagata, 2007).

Bodymindfulness can be interpreted in terms of one's own and another person's inner states and processing of them and their effect on thought and communication behavior:

- *Overlooking* somatic-emotional states and their effect on communication,
- *Attending* to inner states by sensing one's own bodymind in response to another person's communication,
- *Attuning* one's self and doing the necessary inner work using awareness of the likely effect of one's bodymind on one's communication with the other person,
- *Aligning* actions with one's intention to communicate skillfully, and
- *Resonating* to foster emotional resolution between interactants (Nagata, 2002, 2007).

Our whole self communicates; monitoring and adapting our dynamic inner state at a deep level can change our sense of being, our presence, and also how we express our inner state in language and behavior. Bodymindfulness provides a way to bring tacit knowledge into awareness and to use it intentionally to promote better communication. It is the foundation for self-reflexivity, the ability to have an ongoing conversation with your whole self about what you are experiencing as you are experiencing it (Nagata, 2005). The link between theory and practice in intercultural studies is self-reflexivity, a type of self-awareness which is an accelerated form of hermeneutic reflection that has been ingrained by ongoing effort (Nagata, 2005), such as that promoted by Cage Painting and the Cage Painting Simulator.

Bodymindfulness focuses us at a deep, prereflective level of our somatic-emotional experience. By becoming aware of what our body is sensing and how that underlies our feeling and thinking, we can begin to understand the sources of our perceptions, interpretations, and behavior and to recognize how our whole self is communicating at that time. Cultivation of bodymindfulness is a means of attuning to and monitoring ourselves regarding what is happening in the here and now, whether we are interacting physically or virtually at that moment or communicating asynchronously. Qualitative reports from practitioners of bodymindfulness have revealed that it enhances self-awareness, improves communication skills, and promotes new ways of being and doing (Nagata, 2007). These responses confirm that bodymindfulness offers a starting point for cultivating self-reflexivity and fosters an ongoing process of transformative learning that integrates both rational and extrarational— affective, somatic, intuitive, and spiritual— aspects of intercultural communication (Nagata, 2006b).

In "Emotion and Intercultural Communication," Matsumoto, LeRoux, and Yoo (2005) explain the relational importance of being able to regulate our inner psychological processes. They point out that "negative feelings" such as anger, frustration, and resentment can easily take over our thinking and feeling during conflict. They assume that only when individuals regulate such feelings can they reduce the chance of being overwhelmed by them. Individuals can then "expand their appraisal and attribution of the cause of the differences" (p. 19). Thus, only by managing our emotions skillfully is it possible to free up our cognitive resources.

## Mindful Inquiry: Fostering Bodymindful Cage Painting

The authors' understandings of Mindful Inquiry are used to coconstruct meaning from their experiences with Cage Painting and bodymindfulness as they explore theoretical considerations of their interplay within an intercultural communication competence development context. In order to establish grounds for such a theoretical and practical endeavor, we first report on our research analysis of Cage Painting simulation implementation during the last 4 years and then outline our inquiry into bodymindful Cage Painting.

### *Data Analysis: Evolution of the Cage Painting Simulator*

Rimington and Alagic have conducted workshops about Cage Painting and writing new scenarios for the Cage Painting simulation at the Center for Intercultural Communication in Khabarovsk, Russia; the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad (IIMA), India; Monterey Tec in Mexico; and in Wichita, Kansas in a variety of contexts. Focusing our thinking on Mindful Inquiry premises, we summarize major learning points from these experiences in Table 1, which chronicles our quest to find the optimum level of scaffolding for workshops of different lengths. *Scaffolding* refers to various instructional strategies that support learners' progress toward a learning outcome such as modeling, simplification, guidance, examples, formative feedback, hints, and so forth. Within a Cage Painting simulation, the scaffolding comprises: Simea's modeling and prompting, plus the Hint box, plus the cage bars darkening as the learner makes progress.

During a workshop in Khabarovsk, Far East Russia in November 2005 (Table 1, Row 1), it became apparent that users wanted to write their own scenarios specific to their particular discipline and intercultural experiences. At that time there was no facility for writing and adding new scenarios. The Cage Painting Simulator was implemented on compact disk with three fixed scenarios, all related to business. That experience confirmed the need to develop a new online version of the Cage Painting Simulator that allows users not only to play scenarios but also to write new scenarios or new versions of existing scenarios. The online version of the Cage Painting Simulator with three new, modular scenarios (Figure 1) concerned with *smiles*, *project management*, and a *disruptive student* was tested at Wichita State University (WSU) and used during the workshop at the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad (Table 1, Row 2). The Disruptive Student scenario, partially illustrated above and in Table 2, evoked the strongest response or disorientation for learners. Workshop teams began writing a number of scenarios but were unable to complete them. They got into interesting discussions, negotiations, and sharing from their own experiences so there was not enough time to complete the task. Careful analysis of the situation revealed that the amount of scaffolding was insufficient for the allocated time. Designing the range of five choices (Figure 1B) at each of the four Steps (Figure 1A) as well as progressing through Cage Painting Levels were time consuming and not easy to conceptualize in one-time attempts.

As they reflected, participants shared excitement about the opportunity provided by this setting to analyze some cultural misconceptions through open dialog (Table 1,



**Table 1****Q1: What have we learned so far from facilitating Cage Painting processes?**

Event/Location/Author (Glyn Rimmington-GR; Mara Alagic-MA)/Date	Number of teams	What have we learned considering instructional design and educational aspects of Cage Painting simulation?
1. Visit Khabarovsk (GR) Nov 05	N/A	CD-based tool is limiting; Need for more and varied scenarios; Need for guide/template and online-access
2. 3 <sup>rd</sup> International Intercultural Communication Competence Conference Ahmedabad, India (MA & GR) Oct 06	8	Challenge of appropriately scaffolding the designing process; Participants' cultural competence and perspective-taking ability affects scenario design; Some participants found the Disruptive Student scenario unacceptable; Not easy to follow-up after the conference and finalize scenarios
3. 4 <sup>th</sup> International Intercultural Communication Competence Conference, Monterrey, Mexico (GR & MA) Feb 07	6	Participants discussed a need for dialectic thinking, empathy, and consensus; Choices as levels of politeness; Sharing of mutual perspectives; Online evaluation
4. Intercultural Communication Competence course Wichita (MA) Jun 07	4	Need to grasp multiple perspectives and cultural competence to be able to write a scenario; Relating scenarios to local variations or incidents; International scholars mentoring collaborative scenario design for 4 groups of students (Global Mentors); Scenario writing needs to be better underpinned with understanding of Cage Painting Levels; Scaffolding challenges: Some students were frustrated and impatient to carry on while others tried different approaches from the one offered.
5. Graduate course Wichita (MA) 2007-2008	4	
6. Prep. for 5 <sup>th</sup> International Intercultural Communication Competence Conference Wichita, Spring 08	3	Mentoring 3 future Cage Painting facilitators; One facilitator able to write a scenario quickly; Authors prefer different formats
7. Online (GR) Feb 08	1	Once a week for 6 weeks with colleague in Khabarovsk using Skype and Google Docs to write a scenario together; Better to work by threads
8. Online (GR) Feb 08-ongoing	6	Cage Painting practice via e-mail with students from Khabarovsk before writing scenarios; Cage Painting Levels can be practiced with instructor's careful scaffolding.
9. 5 <sup>th</sup> International Intercultural Communication Competence Conference Wichita, May 08	3	Participants completed partial scenarios. Facilitators reflected on practicing Cage Painting Levels in real-life situations
10. Online with Khabarovsk (GR) May 08	7	Simplified exercise to fit into two classes in 1 week; Worked only on Good and one Bad thread; Selecting certain threads is appropriate for scaffolding.
11. Intercultural Communication Competence course Wichita (MA) Jun 08	5	Students can imitate an existing scenario, but how much did they learn? Students recognizing importance of avoiding cultural stereotypes

*Row 2*). They had many suggestions for our future work. In our analysis, we observed some premises of Mindful Inquiry: For some participants, this raised awareness of self and others, multiple perspectives, and tacit assumptions along with bias. The disorientation that occurred when confronted with the Disruptive Student scenario had its roots in a clash of power distances in different classroom settings.

In a subsequent workshop at Monterrey Tec, Mexico (*Table 1, Row 3*), we more carefully facilitated the process with scaffolding so participants could, to some extent, step through the train of thought behind the development of the Cage Painting scenarios. This proved more successful and confirmed our perception that completion of scenarios will have to continue online after the workshop.

During the summer of 2007 and the 2007/2008 school year (*Table 1, Rows 4 & 5*), we had opportunities to integrate the Cage Painting Simulator into the learning environments of two graduate classes at Wichita State University. This allowed time for thorough study and evaluation of the Cage Painting Simulator, as learners designed more scenarios. Learning teams were mentored by some of our colleagues from other countries/cultures as they collaboratively designed new scenarios (Alagic & Rimmington, 2008). Three students from these classes offered to facilitate a 1-day workshop for international delegates at the 5<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Intercultural Communication Competence in Wichita, Kansas during May 2008 (*Table 1, Row 6*). Preparation for this workshop comprised writing and critiquing more challenging scenarios as well as preparing materials and designing the workshop so teams could complete a scenario in 1 day (*Table 1, Row 9*). The latter was accomplished by having workshop teams finishing scenarios that were partially incomplete by filling in the blanks. Subsequently the Facilitators (*Row 9*) have been practicing Cage Painting levels in various contexts. During 9 months of weekly meetings to prepare for the workshop, Rimmington and Alagic and the three graduate students learned and recorded various ways of facilitating the Cage Painting scenario design process and of improving learning outcomes from such activities (*Table 1, Row 6*).

These various ways of facilitating the Cage Painting scenario design process have been applied in subsequent online workshops and classes during the spring and summer of 2008 (*Table 1, Row 11*). During a collaborative scenario design using online chat/video conferencing (Skype.com) and online shared documents (Google Docs) with a colleague in Khabarovsk (*Table 1, Row 7*), it was helpful to work in threads, first entering scripts for Good, then Bad, and finally for Mediocre categories. During the spring of 2008, Rimmington practiced Cage Painting strategies with six Russian students using e-mail (*Table 1, Row 8*). This was done to investigate whether this would help with writing scenarios in the fall of 2008. Later in May 2008, he worked using Skype videoconferences and chats with seven teams in a class in Khabarovsk over two 2-hour sessions (*Table 1, Row 10*). During that time the teams first completed the Title, Context, Goal, Culture Clash, along with Good, Mediocre, and Bad endings. In the second session, the teams wrote the Good thread and one Bad thread. This is another way of compressing the scenario authoring process.

In each of these workshops, it became increasingly apparent that the emotional or bodymind state of participants needed to be considered during Cage Painting and the Cage Painting scenarios, that scenario designers often needed to suspend their as-

sumptions about other cultures, be aware of power relations, and transcend their biases. We speculate that bodymind state corresponds to one or more bars of the cage in terms of the effect that it may have on a person's perspective as well as on the way he/she communicates.

### ***Data Analysis: Disruptive Student Scenario***

Q2: *What have we learned about the implicit impact of somatic-emotional states, bodily sensations of emotion, in Cage Painting simulations?*

The Disruptive Student scenario was the first one that had a significant power distance between players, and it was not easy to complete it. Furthermore, as already mentioned, this scenario caused a negative emotional reaction within some participants (Table 1, Row 2). Some participants even said that they wanted to redesign it. The intent of such a simulation was to confront the learner with a disorienting dilemma that would be considered a clash of cultures.

However, the aim in a Cage Painting scenario is to challenge the learner's intercultural communication and position on the cultural proficiency continuum (destructiveness, incapability, blindness, precompetence, competence, proficiency) introduced by Lindsey, Roberts, and Jones (2005). The level of emotional responses exhibited in the behavior and feedback of workshop participants differed with cultural background and amount of experience working or living within different cultures. At one end of the continuum, there were those who believed that students, who behave in this manner, must be dismissed; at the other end, there were those who tried to understand each other with a view to negotiating a way of being able to coexist in the classroom.

Part of the cultural blindness or even destructiveness (Lindsey, Roberts, & Jones, 2005) may be the lack of control over emotions such as anger or indignation felt by the person playing the role of the teacher. To proceed in an agitated state would be likely to incite the same response from the other party to the disagreement, and the situation would quickly deteriorate, as illustrated at the beginning of this paper. However, if the teacher senses his/her emotional state and waits to calm down and then questions himself/herself about this reaction, it may become possible for him/her to proceed with the Cage Painting needed to negotiate a mutually acceptable outcome. In the case of the person who has a strong emotional reaction, he/she is expecting a large power distance to be accepted and for his/her authority to prevail. The disruptive student, who is from a culture in which the power distance between teacher and student is relatively small, could easily become emotionally upset when faced with a teacher who requires maintenance of a higher power distance. In a similar fashion to the more culturally competent and bodymindful teacher, he/she could sense the effect on his/her emotional state and bring it under control in order to then calmly negotiate a solution. The complete Disruptive Student simulation is available at <http://gl.wichita.edu/cps>.

### ***Disruptive Student: Utilizing Bodymindfulness in Cage Painting***

We have explicated some of the Mindful Inquiry premises implicit in the evolution and implementation of Cage Painting. To continue our Mindful Inquiry, we ana-

lyze Disruptive Student at each Cage Painting Level with two additional tools: somatic-emotional tone and bodymindfulness processes. As a starting point for consideration of inner state, Nagata suggested somatic-emotional tone designations to illustrate how they may affect communicative behavior. The labels are not meant as the only possibilities, and future Cage Painting simulation learners may want to discuss them. Cage Painting Levels and bodymindfulness processes are illustrated below in Figure 2.

We speculate that there is a null state for Cage Painting in which a person has no awareness of the effects of a person’s background, experiences, or context on their perspective (Cage Painting Level 0). It is highly likely that a person at Cage Painting Level 0 is also unaware of his/her inner state, that of others, and their interaction with communication, in other words he/she is lacking bodymindfulness (Figure 2). Once a person becomes aware of his/her perspective and its differences from other people and realizes the validity of other perspectives, he/she may practice perspective-sharing levels of Cage Painting (Cage Painting Levels 1 & 2). It is likely, but by no means certain, that this same person may be aware of his/her inner state and that of others and how these interact with communication. Thus he/she may attend and attune to his/her inner state. If a person is bodymindful, it will enhance or support Cage Painting in general. After a period of Perspective Sharing, two people may have

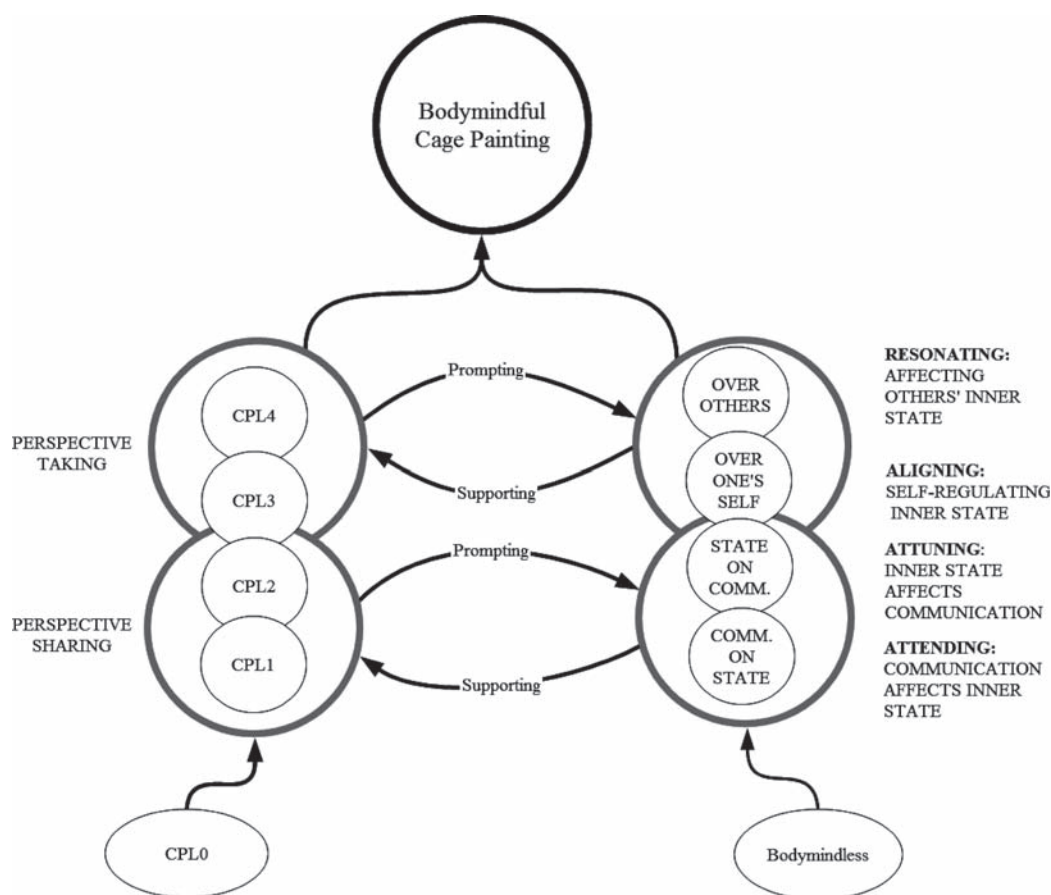


Figure 2. Interplay of Cage Painting levels and bodymindfulness processes leading to Bodymindful Cage Painting.

learned enough about each other's perspectives to be able to take the other person's perspective (Figure 2, Perspective Taking: Cage Painting Levels 3 & 4). In other words, he/she will be able to see things from the other person's point of view.

Developing the ability to sense inner state and its interaction with communication is the foundation for aligning bodymind state with the intent to communicate effectively. This is helpful, for instance, when dealing with a situation in which someone is overly anxious. One may try to align one's inner state to have an intended effect on the inner state of another person recognizing, of course, a dependence on the other person's willingness to regulate his/her bodymind state in that manner. Being able to resonate emotionally depends on being attuned to one's own inner state and how well one can sense the inner state of the other person.

When Cage Painting, a bodymindful person can adjust his/her inner state in order to respond in a fashion associated with calmness and composure rather than reacting rashly or heatedly to the previous message that was inconsiderate of his/her feelings. This is similar to the process of mindful reframing described by Ting-Toomey and Oetzel (2001). Communicating in this way reflects thoughtfulness that can defuse a potentially deteriorating interchange. The most challenging level of Cage Painting, Cage Painting Level 4, considered in the context of bodymindfulness, involves using one's own inner bodymind state in order to achieve effective communication. Another way of saying this is: Cultivating peace within can contribute to fostering it around you. Of course, mutual efforts to resonate present a favorable situation. Knowing the person well typically makes this easier, but cultivating the highest level of bodymindfulness facilitates using it in new situations with unfamiliar people (Nagata, 2002).

We now deliberate on how bodymindfulness in Cage Painting scenarios may be explicated by exploring bodymindfulness in the context of one specific scenario, Disruptive Student (see <http://gl.wichita.edu/cps> for details). Cage Painting simulations offer low-risk opportunities to practice (a) the intercultural communication heuristic (Cage Painting strategies) and (b) bodymindfulness and self-reflexivity when considering the alternative responses and choosing the most skillful behaviors that will move learners through the four Cage Painting Levels to be able to reflect the perspectives of self and others (Rimmington & Alagic, 2008). As an illustration, Table 2 shows only Step #3 (see Figure 1) of the Disruptive Student scenario that has been enhanced with suggestions of possible somatic-emotional tone and bodymindfulness processes.

Cage Painting levels are indicated in the Script column. The authors' shared conceptualization of somatic-emotional tones and bodymindfulness processes (shown in the right column) were determined intuitively for the ongoing conversation between Simea and the learner (Table 2). If you role play this conversation and compare your choices of somatic-emotional tone and bodymindfulness processes with those of the authors, they may be different. We realize that there are many factors influencing the way we all perceive our own somatic-emotional tones and bodymindfulness. While this is a subjective process, it does prompt a learner into more thoughtful communication.

Consideration of bodymindfulness adds another dimension to Cage Painting

**Table 2**  
**The authors' interpretation of Somatic-Emotional Tone and Bodymindfulness Processes in the Disruptive Student Scenario (Step #3)**

Script	Somatic-Emotional Tone & [Bodymindfulness]*
<u>Good Choice:</u> If I were teaching where you are from, I would need to adjust to students asking me questions at any time. (Cage Painting Level 3)	<i>Calm &amp; Reflective</i> [a3 or r]*
<u>Mediocre Choice:</u> I'm used to order in my classroom where the students don't ask questions until the end of the presentation. (Cage Painting Level 2)	<i>Determined &amp; Firm</i> [a1 or a2]
<u>Mediocre Choice:</u> I have always taught in this manner, and the students seemed fine with my teaching style. (Cage Painting Level 2)	<i>Uncomfortable &amp; Defensive</i> [a1]
<u>Bad Choice:</u> How do the teachers where you are from maintain control over learning in such a chaotic classroom? (Cage Painting Level 1)	<i>Disapproving but Curious</i> [o or a1]
<u>Bad Choice:</u> I have been teaching for 25 years, and I don't need students telling me how to do my job! (Cage Painting Level 0)	<i>Angry &amp; Righteous</i> [o]
<u>Simea's Response to Good Choice:</u> Thank you for understanding this from my point of view. If you were a student and had a question that requires an immediate answer, how would you get the teacher's attention? (Cage Painting Level 4)	<i>Calm, Authentic, &amp; Seeking a Solution</i> [a3 or r]
<u>Simea's Response to Mediocre Choice:</u> To be successful as a student in your classroom, I need to learn without asking questions until the end of your presentations. If you were a student where I am from and used to being able to ask questions at any time, how would you adapt to this situation? (Cage Painting Level 4)	<i>Eager to succeed &amp; Solution-oriented</i> [a3]
<u>Simea's Response to Bad Choice:</u> [You are expecting students to learn without being able to ask questions in context. If you have more students like me, they may have difficulty, too.]* What would you do in my situation? (Cage Painting Level 4)	<i>Persistent &amp; seeking a Solution</i> [a3]

(\*Legend (see p. 45): [o] overlooking, [a1] attending, [a2] attuning, [a3] aligning, and [r] resonating

simulations. It involves increased awareness of one's inner state; whether one is tense, relaxed, energetic, or listless in general or experiencing a specific emotion. It is worth considering one's inner state when receiving communications, either face-to-face, by phone, or online. Some may evoke feelings of anger, insult, indignation, happiness, mirth, or self-doubt, and so on. Sometimes the spoken words or written text will have a surface meaning and deeper, hidden meanings that may be quickly sensed on a somatic-emotional level, typically referred to as gut feelings. Whether the interactions occur face-to-face or when communicating virtually, or even when role-playing with Simea, learners can use bodymindfulness to consider the other person's "face" or self-esteem and the feeling and thinking that may be underlying it.

## Conclusion: Fostering Bodymindful Cage Painting

*Q3: Bodymindfulness & Cage Painting: How do we envision bodymindful practices as an integral part of the Cage Painting approach for improving intercultural communication?*

In conclusion we deliberate on possible ways of facilitating improvement of intercultural communication through integrated interplay of Cage Painting and bodymindfulness. From our experiences, the most challenging way, but probably the most promising one in terms of integrated learning, is the one that we illustrated in the Disruptive Student scenario. Incorporating bodymindfulness throughout simulations promises a holistic approach to improving intercultural communication, at least in terms of overcoming preconceptions and stereotyping (Rimington & Alagic, 2008). We could refer to this as bodymindfulness integration *within* Cage Painting simulations. In addition to this kind of integration, there are multiple ways of *encompassing* Cage Painting simulations with critical reflection that focuses on somatic-emotional tones and bodymindfulness. This could take the form of pre- and post-reflective questions at different stages of exploration and authoring of Cage Painting scenarios/simulations. One more approach is promising: designing some scenarios that are concerned with somatic-emotional tones and bodymindfulness processes in order to deepen learners' understanding of the effects and application of these factors on intercultural communication. We name this approach *Centering Cage Painting on somatic-emotional tones and bodymindfulness processes*.

We conclude this paper with the hope that readers will join us in pursuing some of these approaches: bodymindfulness integration *within* Cage Painting simulations, *encompassing* Cage Painting simulation with critical reflection focusing on somatic-emotional tones and bodymindfulness, and *centering* Cage Painting on somatic-emotional tones and bodymindfulness processes.

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