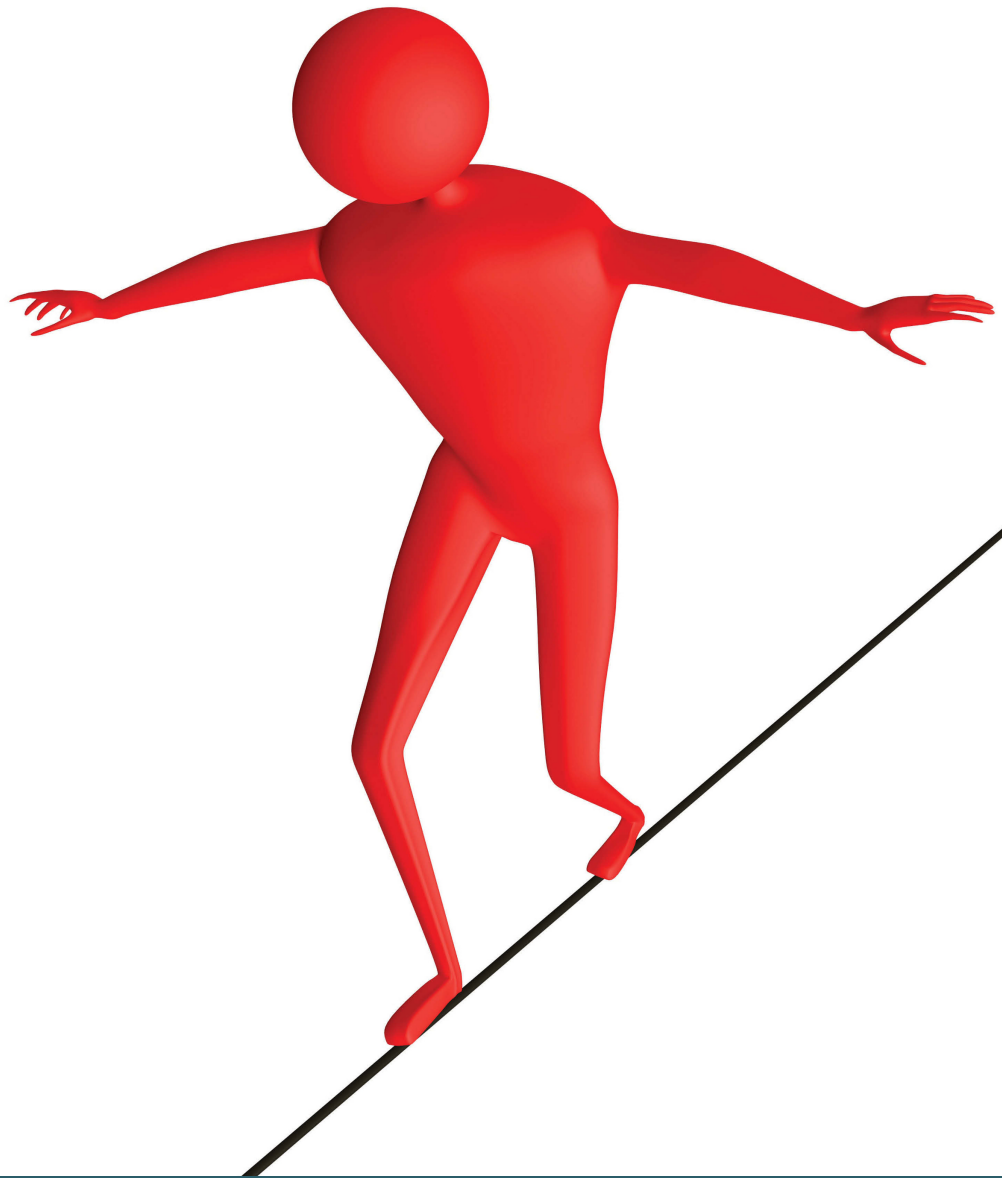# Intercultural Competence

Interpersonal Communication Across Cultures

EIGHTH EDITION

Pearson

Myron W. Lustig

Jolene Koester

Rona Halualani

Intercultural Competence

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Interpersonal Communication Across Cultures

Eighth Edition

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Pearson

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Preface

We live in very interesting times.

On the one hand, we are surrounded with unrelenting messages that encourage us to fear and distrust others: stories of hostile and combative enemies, of untrustworthy and duplicitous leaders, of dangerous threats to the ideas and to the people we care about, and of maleficent intentions directed at us by foreigners and even by locals who are "different." Given this view, it is easy to believe that people who are not like us should be avoided, and contact with them should be discouraged, lest suffering inevitably follows.

On the other hand, for many of us our individual social worlds are full of positive experiences. We have many "friends," for example, that we experience primarily or exclusively via social media such as Facebook. That's where we exchange illusions of intimacy and mirages of shared involvements. That's where we connect with people whose ideas and experiences we "Like" (👍) without having to experience the vulnerabilities that are a necessary part of ongoing interpersonal relationships. And since we only interact with people whom we choose to befriend, social media often provides us with an optimistic, though perhaps sterile, interpersonal world.

Taken together, these two tendencies might suggest to some that there is little about intercultural communication that is worth knowing. We authors respectfully disagree with that worldview.

Neither media-reinforced distrust of those who seem most different, nor isolation in ephemeral soap-bubbles with like-minded individuals, will prepare you to experience the richness of living in an intercultural world. Nor, for most of us, is an isolated and "culture-free" world even possible to achieve, were it desirable to do so. Innovations in communications, transportation, and information technologies—on a global and unprecedented scale—have created vast economic interdependencies, demographic shifts both within and across nations, and the greatest mingling of cultures the world has ever seen. These changes bring with them not just threats but also real and substantial opportunities to make your life, and the lives of countless others, better and more fulfilling than they might otherwise be. Consequently, competence in intercultural communication is vital if you want to function well in your private and public life. This need for intercultural competence creates a strong imperative for you to learn to communicate with people whose cultural heritages make them different from you.

Our purpose in writing this text is to provide you with sufficient knowledge, appropriate motivations, and useful skills that allow you to experience how cultural differences can affect your communication with others. We also offer some practical suggestions concerning the adjustments necessary to achieve intercultural competence when dealing with these cultural differences.

Acknowledgment of Cultural Ancestry

At various points in our writing, we were amazed at how subtly but thoroughly our own cultural experiences had permeated the text. Lest anyone believe that our presentation of relevant theories, examples, and practical suggestions is without the distortion of culture, we would like to describe our own cultural heritages. Those heritages shape our understanding of intercultural communication, and they affect what we know, how we feel, and what we do when we communicate with others.

Myron (Ron) Lustig lives, simultaneously, in two cultural worlds. One is a culture characterized by prejudice, discrimination, and marginalization. The other is a culture marked by privilege, access, and inclusion. As a Jewish American, Ron has experienced the hatred, fear, and malevolence that targeted him and marginalized him solely because of his religious beliefs. But as a white-skinned European American male, he has also experienced innumerable instances in which he could be and do whatever he desired, impeded only by the limits of his own abilities. The juxtaposition of these two cultural worlds—of prejudice and privilege—have made him deeply curious about and passionately concerned with issues of culture, social justice, and intercultural communication.

Jolene Koester is a European American woman who was raised in a working-class family in a tiny town in rural Minnesota. That town was very homogeneous, and cultural differences—or any differences—were neither appreciated nor tolerated. The first in her family to attend college, she found university life to be eye-opening and boundary-expanding. There she eagerly sought international education opportunities to interact with people from around the world, and these experiences started her on an adventure that continues to this day. While an undergraduate, she studied for year at a university in India. There she experienced the joys and tensions of adapting to another culture, which triggered an enduring interest in intercultural communication.

Rona Halualani has a multicultural background (Japanese American, Native Hawaiian, and White/European American). A typical day in Rona's life while growing up

included speaking Hawaiian to her father, attending a mainstream U.S. American school in California, and then attending Japanese language lessons in the evening. Rona was raised in a gender-egalitarian household in which both parents performed all household duties, and she is married to a Chinese American man who is the eldest son in a family that expects more hierarchy in responsibilities. As such, her notions of gender roles, desired traditions, and cultural expectations differ from her husband's. Together, they are raising fraternal twins (a boy and a girl) whose multiple cultural identities (Native Hawaiian, Japanese American, Chinese American, and European American) are being integrated successfully.

Our families, backgrounds, and the communities in which we were raised have influenced the cultural perspectives we provide in this text. Many of our ideas and examples about intercultural communication draw on these cultural experiences. We have tried, however, to increase the number and range of other cultural voices through the ideas and examples that we provide. These voices, and the lessons and illustrations they offer, represent our colleagues, our friends, our families, and, most importantly, our students.

Issues in the Use of Cultural Examples

Some of the examples in the text may include references to a culture to which you belong or with which you have had substantial experiences, and our examples may not match your personal knowledge. As you will discover in the opening chapters, both your own experiences and the examples we recount could be accurate. One of the tensions we felt in writing this text was in making statements that are broad enough to provide reasonably accurate generalizations, but specific and tentative enough to avoid false claims of universal applicability to all individuals in a given culture.

We have struggled as well with issues of fairness, sensitivity, representativeness, and inclusiveness. Indeed, we have had innumerable discussions with our colleagues across the country—colleagues who, like ourselves, are committed to making the United States and its colleges and universities into truly multicultural institutions—and we have sought their advice about appropriate ways to reflect the value of cultural diversity in our writing. We have responded to their suggestions, and we appreciate the added measure of quality that these cultural voices supply.

Importance of Voices from Other Cultures

Although we have attempted to include a wide range of domestic and international cultural groups, inevitably we have shortchanged some simply because we do not have sufficient knowledge, either through direct experience or through secondary accounts, of all cultures. Our errors and omissions are not meant to exclude or discount. Rather, they represent the limits of our own intercultural communication experiences, which is a limitation that holds for everyone. We hope that you, as a reader with a cultural voice of your own, will participate with us in a dialogue that allows us to improve this text over time.

Readers of previous editions have been generous with their suggestions for improvement, and we are very grateful to them for their comments. We ask that you continue this dialogue by providing us with your feedback and responses. Please send us examples that illustrate the principles discussed in the text. Be willing to provide a cultural perspective that differs from our own and from those of our colleagues, friends, and students. Our commitment now and in future editions of this text is to describe a variety of cultural voices with accuracy and sensitivity. We ask for your help in accomplishing that objective.

New to This Edition

There are so many improvements in this eighth edition of *Intercultural Competence* that we scarcely know where to begin in describing them. Certainly the most important improvement is the addition of Rona Halualani as a co-author. Rona's "voice" and steady presence is evident throughout the chapters in many ways.

Similarly, a major improvement in this text is due to Pearson's Revel platform, which provided many more options for presenting the material than what was previously available. The Revel platform offers what is perhaps the most innovative way of presenting course materials since the invention of Gutenberg's printing press, and it required us to rethink and reimagine how best to share with students the ideas we wished to convey. The result, we hope, is that students now have a fresh and lively approach to important ideas about intercultural communication.

Substantively, considerable progress has been made by scholars and practitioners of intercultural communication and related disciplines, and this edition reflects those changes. Many of the substantial changes may not be obvious to the casual reader. For instance, there is an extensive update of the data and research citations that undergird the presentation of information and ideas. These changes help the text remain contemporary; they appear at the end of the text in the Notes section, where they are available to the interested reader without intruding on the flow of the ideas. Similar changes occur in the end-of-chapter and end-of-text materials, where discussion questions and suggestions for further reading have been updated. Throughout, there are substantial updates to the Culture Connections

boxes, to the examples used to illustrate important ideas, to the photographs, to the illustrations and other graphic materials, and to the overall presentation of important ideas about intercultural competence.

Among the major substantive changes are the following:

- A heightened emphasis on current technologies and social media that affect intercultural communication
- Revised "imperatives" for learning to be interculturally competent
- Unique links to larger historical and societal contexts that highlight institutions of power (as in government, legal, and educational sources) and how these intermingle with issues of culture and intercultural communication competence
- A new discussion about multiculturalism, diversity, and a "post-racial" United States
- Revised information on the taxonomies of cultural patterns
- Discussions of stereotype threat, microaggressions, and cultural identity biases
- Explication of the fundamental "building blocks" of all interpersonal relationships
- Substantially updated material on health care, education, and business contexts
- Improved ideas on the perils and prospects for intercultural competence

Additional changes to this addition are too numerous to enumerate completely. Changes, updates, and many small improvements have been made throughout the title.

Unchanged in This Edition

Some things have not changed, nor should they. Our students and colleagues have helped to guide the creation of this eighth edition of *Intercultural Competence*. They have affirmed for us the critical features in this text that provide the reader with a satisfying experience and are useful for learning and teaching about intercultural communication. These features include:

- **An easy-to-read, conversational style.** Students have repeatedly praised the clear and readable qualities of the text. We have tried, in this and previous editions, to ensure that students have an "easy read" as they access the text's ideas.
- **A healthy blend of the practical and the theoretical, of the concrete and the abstract.** We believe strongly that a text on intercultural communication needs to include both a thorough grounding in the conceptual ideas and an applied orientation that makes those ideas tangible.

- **Culture Connections boxes that provide emotional connections.** The Culture Connections boxes exemplify and integrate important concepts while providing access to the affective dimension of intercultural competence. These boxes also illustrate the lived experiences of intercultural communicators. Many of the Culture Connections boxes are new to this edition, and we chose each selection carefully to provide the opportunity for students to "feel" some aspect of intercultural competence.
- **A strong grounding in theory and research.** Intercultural communication theories and their supporting research provide powerful ways of viewing and understanding intercultural communication phenomena. We also link the presentation of theories to numerous illustrative examples. These conceptual underpinnings to intercultural communication have been updated, and we have incorporated ideas from literally hundreds of new sources across a wide spectrum of inquiry. These sources form a solid bibliography for those interested in pursuing specific topics in greater depth. As we have done in the past, however, we have chosen to maintain the text's readability by placing the citations at the end of the text, where they appear in detailed endnotes that are unobtrusive but available to interested readers.
- **A focus on the significance and importance of cultural patterns.** Cultural patterns provide the underlying set of assumptions for cultural and intercultural communication. The focus on cultural patterns as the lens through which all interactions are interpreted is thoroughly explored in Chapters 4 and 5, and the themes of these two chapters permeate the concepts developed in all subsequent chapters.
- **Attention to the impact of technology on intercultural communication.** From Chapter 1, where we describe the technological imperative for intercultural communication that challenges us to be interculturally competent, to Chapter 12, where we analyze the perils and possibilities for living in an intercultural world, and throughout each of the intervening chapters, this edition is focused on the effects new technologies have on intercultural communication.
- **A consideration of topics not normally emphasized in intercultural communication titles.** Although it is standard fare for most texts to consider verbal and nonverbal code systems, we provide a careful elaboration of the nature of differing logical systems, or preferred reasoning patterns, as well as a discussion of the consequences for intercultural communication when the expectations for the language-in-use are not widely shared. Similarly, drawing heavily on the available information about interpersonal communication, we explore the dynamic processes of establishing and

developing relationships between culturally different individuals, including an elaboration of issues related to "face" in interpersonal relationships.

- **Pedagogical features that enhance student retention and involvement.** Concluding each chapter are discussion questions and writing suggestions that can be used to guide in-class conversations or serve as the basis for short, focused assignments. Similarly, the various Journal entries throughout each chapter provide students with a chance to integrate the chapter's ideas into their own cultural and intercultural experiences. A quiz at the end of each chapter further assesses students' understanding of core concepts.

Text Organization

Our goal in this title is to provide ideas and information that can help you achieve competence in intercultural communication. Part One, Communication and Intercultural Competence, orients you to the central ideas that underlie this title. Chapter 1 begins with a discussion of imperatives for attaining intercultural competence. We also define and discuss the nature of communication generally and interpersonal communication specifically. In Chapter 2, we introduce the notion of culture and explain why cultures differ. Our focus then turns to intercultural communication, and we distinguish that form of communication from others. As our concern in this text is with interpersonal communication among people from different cultures, an understanding of these key concepts is critical. Chapter 3 begins with a focus on the United States as an intercultural community, as we address the delicate but important issues concerning how to characterize its cultural mix and the members of its cultural groups. We then lay the groundwork for our continuing discussion of intercultural competence by explaining what competence is, what its components are, and how people can achieve it when they communicate with others. The chapter also focuses on two communication tools that could help people improve their intercultural competence.

Part Two, Cultural Differences in Communication, is devoted to an analysis of the fundamental ways that cultures vary. Chapter 4 provides a general overview of the ways in which cultures differ, and it emphasizes the importance of cultural patterns in differentiating among communication styles. This chapter also examines the structural features that are similar across all cultures. Chapter 5 offers several taxonomies that can be used to understand systematic differences in the ways in which people from various cultures think and communicate. Chapter 6 underscores the importance of cultural identity and the consequences of biases within intercultural communication.

In Part Three, Coding Intercultural Communication, we turn our attention to verbal and nonverbal messages, which are central to the communication process. Chapter 7 examines the coding of verbal languages and the influences of linguistic and cultural differences on attempts to communicate interculturally. Chapter 8 discusses the effects of cultural differences on nonverbal codes, as the accurate coding and decoding of nonverbal symbols is vital in intercultural communication. Chapter 9 investigates the effects or consequences of cultural differences in coding systems on face-to-face intercultural interactions. Of particular interest are those experiences involving participants who were taught to use different languages and organizational schemes.

Part Four, Communication in Intercultural Relationships, emphasizes the associations that form among people as a result of their shared communication experiences. Chapter 10 looks at the all-important issues related to the development and maintenance of interpersonal relationships among people from different cultures. Chapter 11 highlights the processes by which communication events are grouped into episodes and interpreted within such contexts as health care, education, and business. Finally, Chapter 12 emphasizes intercultural contacts and highlights the ethical choices individuals must face when engaged in interpersonal communication across cultures. The chapter concludes with some remarks about the problems, possibilities, and opportunities for life in our contemporary intercultural world.

A Note to Instructors

Accompanying the text are resources that are available to instructors who adopt the text for their courses. They provide pedagogical suggestions and instructional activities to enhance students' learning of course materials. Please contact your Pearson representative for these materials.

Teaching a course in intercultural communication is one of the most exciting assignments available. It is difficult to convey in writing the level of involvement, commitment, and interest displayed by typical students in such courses. These students are the reason that teaching intercultural communication is, quite simply, so exhilarating and rewarding.

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Available Instructor Resources

The following resources are available for instructors. These can be downloaded at http://www.pearsonhighered.com/irc. Login required.

- **PowerPoint**—provides a core template of the content covered throughout the text. Can easily be added to, to customize for your classroom.
- **Instructor's Manual**—includes chapter outlines, lecture support, and classroom activities.
- **Test Bank**—includes additional questions beyond REVEL in multiple choice and open-ended—short and essay response—formats.
- **MyTest**—an electronic format of the Test Bank to customize in-class tests or quizzes. Visit: http://www.pearsonhighered.com/mytest.

Acknowledgments

Many people have assisted us, and we would like to thank them for their help. Literally thousands of students and faculty have now reviewed this text and graciously shared their ideas for improvements. A substantial portion of those ideas and insightful criticisms have been incorporated into the current edition, and we continue to be grateful for the helpful comments and suggestions that have spurred vital improvements. Similarly, we are indebted to the students and faculty at our respective institutions, to our colleagues in the communication discipline, and to many people throughout higher education who have willingly shared their ideas and cultural voices with us. Finally, we wish to acknowledge and thank the crew at Pearson Higher Education for helping to transform this text from one that was ink-on-paper into the electronic Revel format that improves the presentation of our ideas.

We continue to be very grateful that the study of intercultural communication has become an increasingly vital and essential component of many universities' curricula. While we harbor no illusions that our influence was anything but minor, it is nevertheless gratifying to have been a "strong voice in the chorus" for these positive changes. Finally, each author would like to acknowledge the others' encouragement and support throughout the writing of this text revision. It has truly been a collaborative effort.

Myron W. Lustig
Jolene Koester
Rona Tamiko Halualani

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Chapter 1
Introduction to Intercultural Competence

In this, the second decade of the twenty-first century, culture, cultural differences, and intercultural communication are among the central ingredients of your life. As inhabitants of this post-millennium world, you no longer have a choice about whether to live and communicate with people from many cultures. Your only choice is whether you will learn to do it well.

These tourists study a map in India. Tourism is a major international industry, bringing people from many cultures into contact with one another.

The world has changed dramatically from what it was even a generation ago. Across the globe and throughout the United States, there is now a heightened emphasis on culture. Similarly, there is a corresponding interplay of forces that both encourage and discourage accommodation and understanding among people who differ from one another. This emphasis on culture is accompanied by numerous opportunities for experiences with people who come from vastly different cultural backgrounds. Intercultural encounters are now ubiquitous; they occur within neighborhoods, across national borders, in face-to-face interactions, through mediated channels, in business, in personal relationships, in tourist travel, and in politics. In virtually every facet of life—in work, play, entertainment, school, family, community, and even in the media that you encounter daily—your experiences necessarily involve intercultural communication.

What does this great cultural mixing mean as you strive for success, satisfaction, well-being, and feelings of involvement and attachment to families, communities, organizations, and nations? It means that the forces that bring people from other cultures into your life are dynamic, potent, and ever present. It also means that competent intercultural communication has become essential.

1.1: Imperatives for Intercultural Competence

The need to understand the effects of intercultural communication is growing. Because of demographic, technological, global, peace, self-awareness, and interpersonal concerns, intercultural competence is now more vital than ever.

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

1.1.1 Explain why the shifting demographic makeup of the country increasingly requires intercultural competence

1.1.2 Describe why technological advancements escalate the need for intercultural competence

1.1.3 Describe how globalization requires increased intercultural competence

1.1.4 Explain why the need to live peacefully with others requires intercultural competence

1.1.5 Describe why being aware of one's own worldview helps enable intercultural competence

1.1.6 Summarize how interpersonal relationships are improved through intercultural competence

1.1.1: The Demographic Imperative for Intercultural Competence

OBJECTIVE: Explain why the shifting demographic makeup of the country increasingly requires intercultural competence

The United States—and the world as a whole—is currently in the midst of what is perhaps the largest and most extensive wave of cultural mixing in recorded history. Recent census figures provide a glimpse into the shape of the changing demographics of the U.S. population (see Figure 1.1).

Culture Connections

If the world was a village of 1,000 people, there would be[2]

597 Asians	315 Christians
164 Africans	232 Muslims
99 Europeans	150 Hindus
86 Latin Americans (Central and South Americans)	71 Buddhists
	59 Folk religionists
49 North Americans	2 Jews
5 Australians/Oceanians	8 People practicing other religions
	163 Atheists or nonreligious

Figure 1.1 Changes in Cultural Groups within the U.S. Population

The United States now has more than 316 million people, of which about 63 percent are European American, 18 percent are Latino, 13 percent are African American, 5 percent are Asian American, and 1 percent identify as Native Americans, Native Hawaiians, or Pacific Islanders. About 3 percent of U.S. residents classify themselves as belonging to two or more cultural groups. If current trends continue, by 2050 the U.S. population of about 400 million will be about 46 percent European American, 30 percent Latino, 14 percent African American, 9 percent Asian American, and 1 percent Native American.[1]
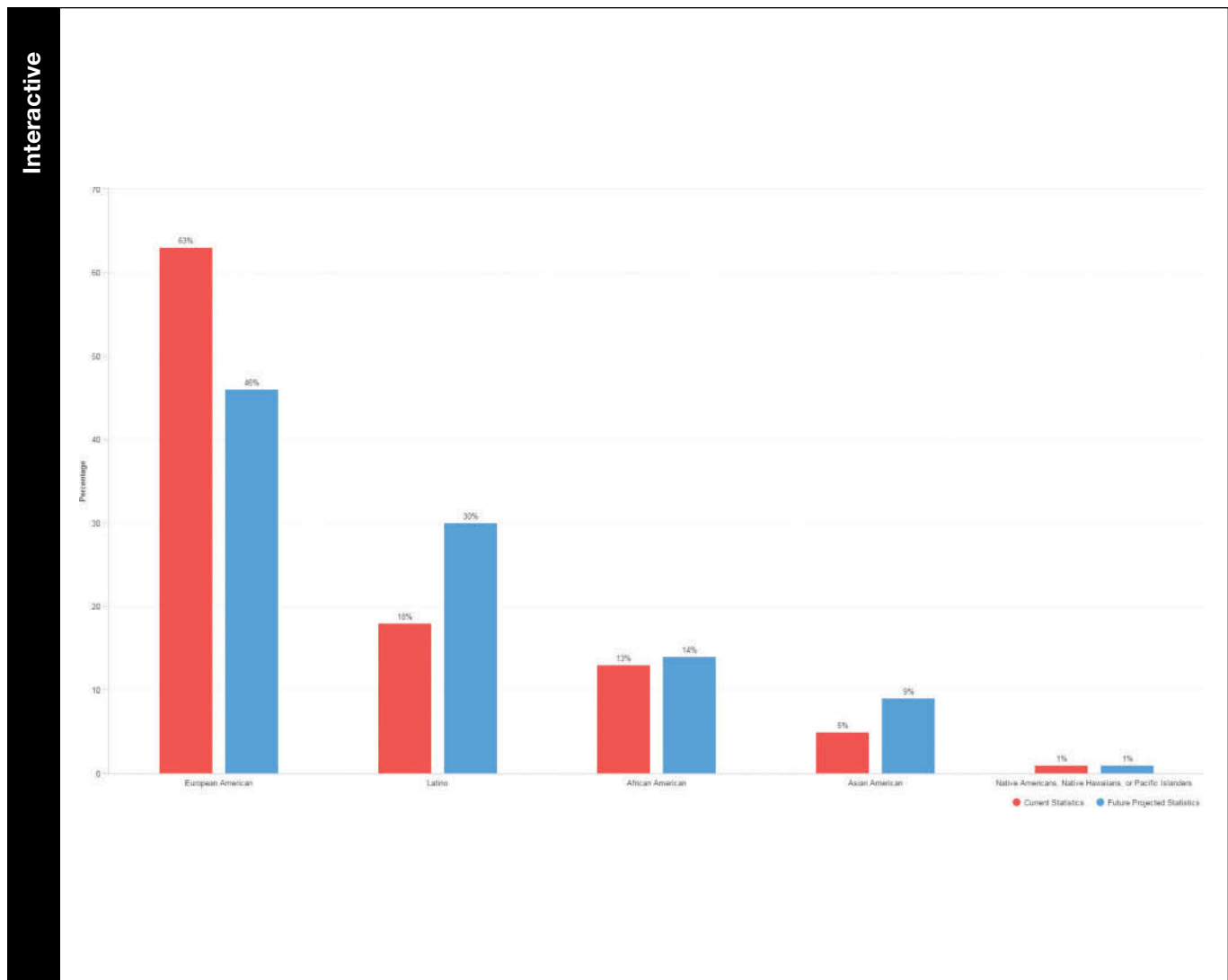
As Michael Scherer and Elizabeth Dias have said of these changes, "this is the story of promise for much of the country."[3] People are also becoming more comfortable with multiple racial and cultural identities. In 2010, about 9 million people identified with more than one racial group, an increase of 32 percent from the previous decade. While very small in terms of sheer numbers, by 2050 the multiracial population is expected to triple, and since most of those people will be children, the multiracial children's demographic is among the fastest growing.[4] Demographers attribute this population growth to more social acceptance of multiracial individuals; more than half of those who identified themselves as multiracial were younger than 20 years old.[5]

While population growth over the past decade among Latinos has been fueled more by natural increases (births minus deaths) than by new immigrants,[8] much of the overall U.S. population shift can be attributed to

The United States is a nation composed of many cultural groups. These immigrants are becoming new citizens of the United States.

Figure 1.2 Population Concentrations of Cultural Groups in the U.S.

Census figures indicate that cultural diversity is a nationwide phenomenon.[6] Cities such as Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas, Detroit, Fresno, Houston, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Memphis, Miami, New York, San Antonio, San Diego, and Washington already have "minority-majorities," and more than 10 percent of all counties within the United States have minority-majorities as well. Figure 1.2 shows the concentrations of various cultural groups in the United States.[7]
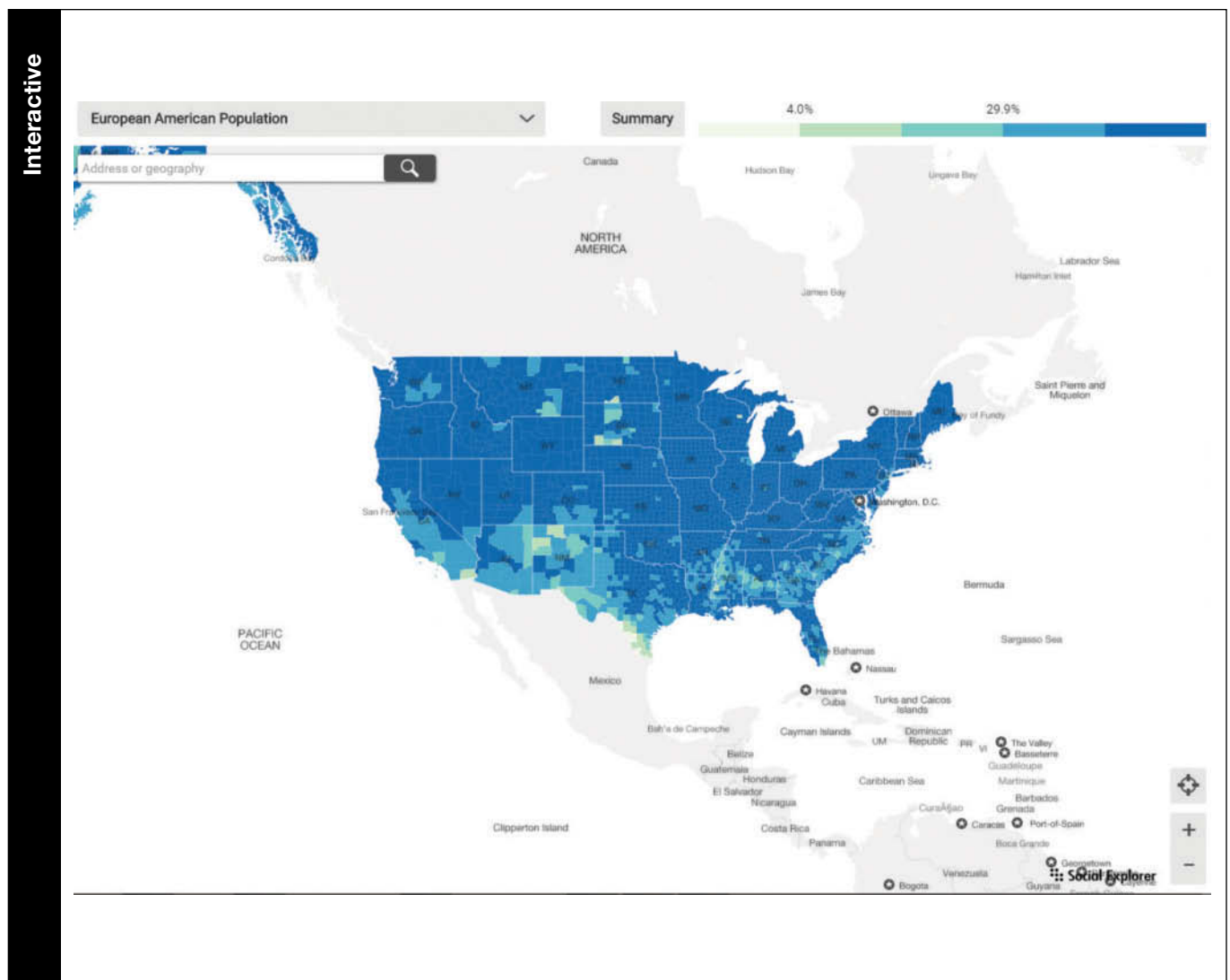
immigration (see Figure 1.3). In 2011, about 40.4 million people—or about 13 percent of the U.S. population—were immigrants, and there are 15 states with foreign-born populations greater than 10 percent.[9] As the population "bulge" created by the U.S.-born baby boomers "ages out" and thereby decreases in size,[10] census projections depict a nation that will be older, slower growing, and more culturally diverse than it is now. By mid-century, though European Americans will still be the largest cultural group, no group will constitute a majority of the U.S. population.[11]

THE MULTICULTURAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE UNITED STATES Recent data clearly show that the United States is now a multicultural society. Over 20 percent of the people in the United States—or one in five—speak a language other than English at home,[13] and that ratio holds for college students as well.[14] There are more Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists in the United States than there are Lutherans or Episcopalians. However, the "typical" foreign-born resident in the United States is actually quite different from what many people suppose. She or he has lived in the United States for more than 20 years. Of those over age 25, more than two-thirds have a high school diploma and more than one-quarter are college graduates. This latter figure is essentially the same as the college graduation rate of the native-born U.S. population. Foreign-born adults in the United States are likely to be employed, married, and living with their spouse and with one or two children.[15]

Figure 1.3 Three Great Waves of Immigration to the U.S.

In 1900, the proportion of European immigrants to the United States was 88 percent; by 1960, Europeans still composed 75 percent of the immigrant population. By 2009, however, only 12 percent of immigrants to the United States were European. Conversely, in 1900, only 3 percent of the foreign-born U.S. population was from Latin America, and 2 percent was from Asia. By 1970, shortly after the repeal of immigration laws that had excluded non-Europeans, only 19 percent of the foreign-born U.S. population was from Latin America, and 9 percent was from Asia. Now, more than half of the immigrants to the United States come from Latin America, and more than a quarter come from Asia.[12]
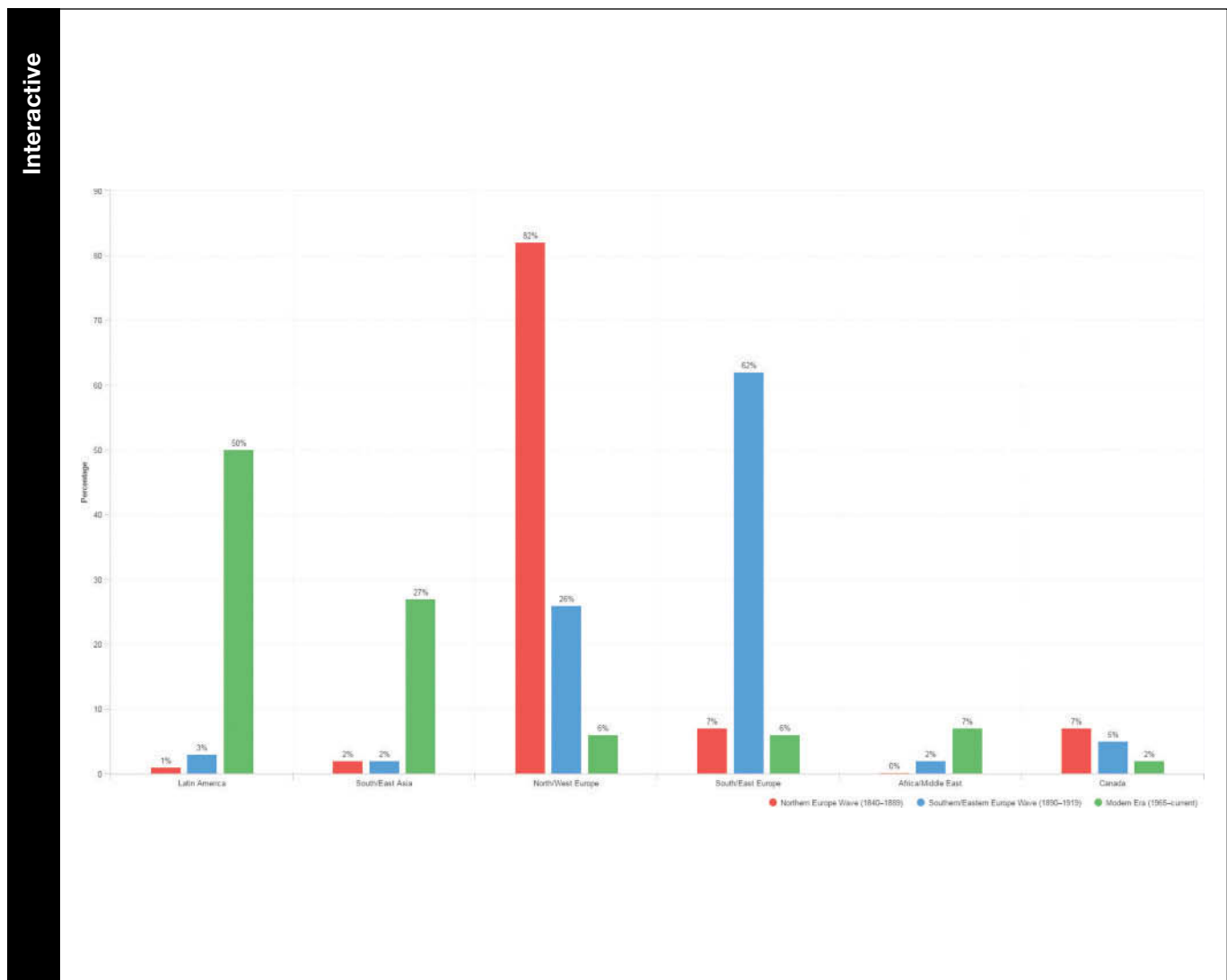
The head caretaker, Tryggvi, stood by the coffeemaker. The water dripping through the machine was the only sound in the empty building, which housed the university's history department. Soon the bustling cleaners would arrive, chatting and giggling, dragging their carts and vacuums out of the housekeeping room. The caretaker reveled in the silence and the aroma of brewing coffee. He had been employed by the university for over thirty years and had seen his share of changes, not the least of which was the complete turnaround in the nationality of the cleaners who worked under his supervision. When he started they had all been Icelandic and understood his every word; now his interactions with his subordinates consisted of hand gestures and loudly spoken one-word orders. The women were all recent arrivals from Southeast Asia, except for one woman of African descent. Until the faculty members and students arrived for the day, he might as well have been working in Bangkok.

—Yrsa Sigurdardottir

These shifts in society can be seen in every major cultural and social institution. In Los Angeles public schools, for example, one-third of the students speak a language other than English at home, and 92 different first languages are spoken.[16] Institutions of higher education are certainly not exempt from the forces that have transformed the United States into a multicultural society.[17] The enrollment of minority-group college students is increasing annually and now makes up more than one-third of all students (see Figure 1.4).[18]

Figure 1.4 International Students in the U.S. and Abroad

More than 886,000 international students attend U.S. universities, and estimates indicate that this number will grow to 8 million in 2025.[19]
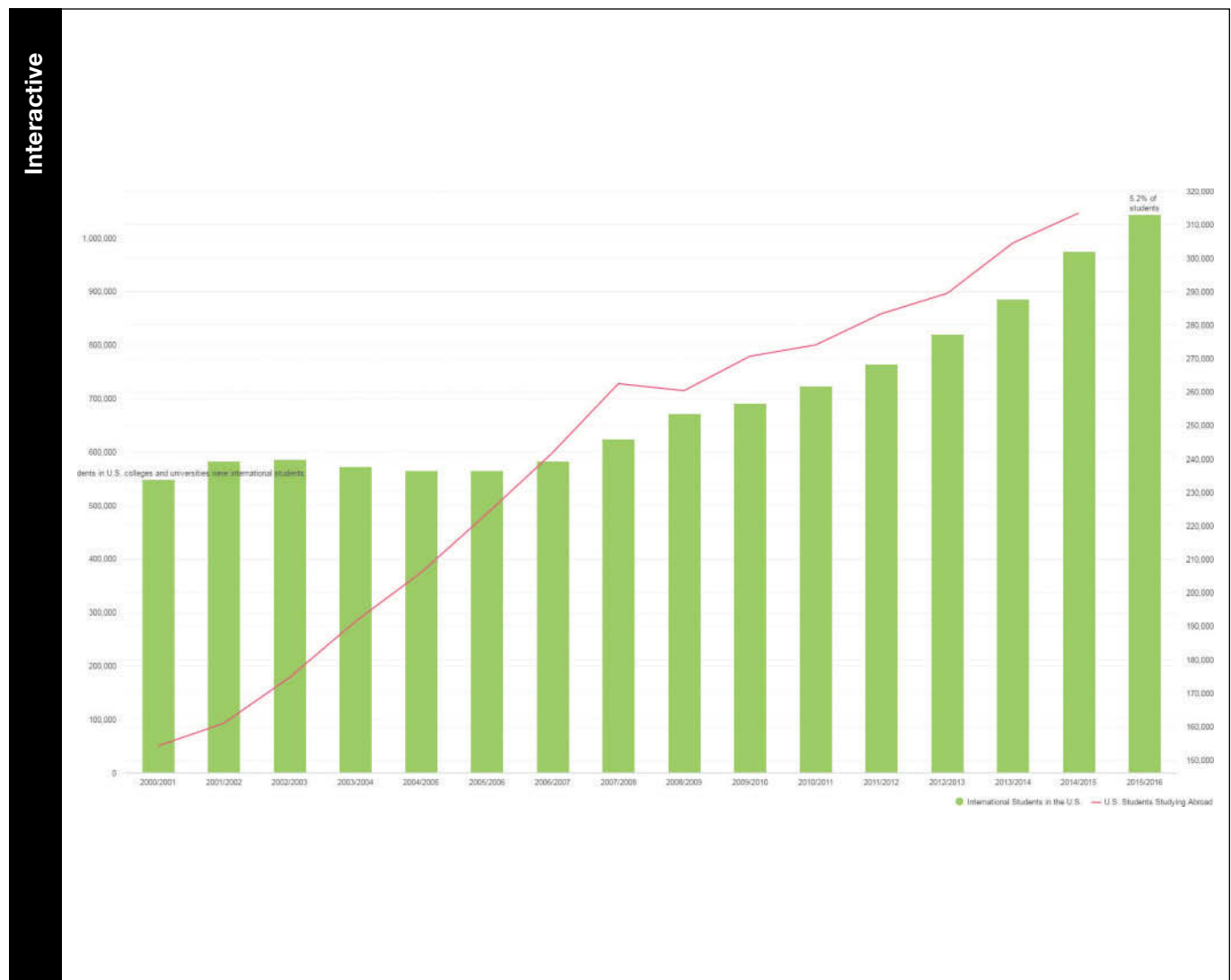
The United States is not alone in the worldwide transformation into multicultural societies. Throughout Europe, Asia, Africa, South America, and the Middle East, there is an increasing pattern of cross-border movements that is both changing the distribution of people around the globe and intensifying the political and social tensions that accompany such population shifts. This demographic imperative requires a heightened emphasis on intercultural competence.

1.1.2: The Technological Imperative for Intercultural Competence

OBJECTIVE: Describe why technological advancements escalate the need for intercultural competence

Marshall McLuhan coined the term **global village** to describe the consequences of the media's ability to bring events from the far reaches of the globe into people's personal lives, thus shrinking the world.[20] Today the term is used to describe the worldwide web of interconnections that modern technologies have created. Communications media such as the Internet, global positioning satellites, and especially mobile phones now make it possible to establish virtually instantaneous links to people who are thousands of miles away. In the past 15 years, the number of Internet users has increased by a staggering 741 percent, and more than half of the world's population now has access to the Internet from their homes.[21] Simultaneously, the number of mobile phone users is growing exponentially from almost zero in the 1990s to over 5 billion (about 69 percent of the world) in 2017. Of these users, 4.6 billion are on smartphones capable of connecting to the Internet.[22]

These women from Myanmar, checking their smartphone for information, demonstrate the technological imperative for intercultural competence.

Modern transportation systems contribute to the creation of the global village. A visit to major cities such as New York, Los Angeles, Mexico City, London, Nairobi, Istanbul, Hong Kong, or Tokyo, with their multicultural populations, demonstrates that the movement of people from one country and culture to another has become commonplace. "There I was," said Richard W. Fisher, president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, "in the middle of a South American jungle, thumbing out an e-mail [on my mobile phone] so work could get done thousands of miles away…. Technology, capital, labor, and ideas, now able to move at unprecedented speed across national boundaries, have integrated the world to an unprecedented degree."[23]

Modern information technologies allow people in the United States and throughout the world to participate in the events and lives of people in other places. Many world events are experienced almost instantaneously and are no longer separated from us in time and space. Scenes of a flood in China, of an earthquake in California or Virginia, of a drought in Texas, of a tsunami in Japan, or of a terrorist attack in Paris are viewed worldwide on local television stations; immigrants and expatriates maintain their cultural ties by participating in Internet chat groups; the Travel Channel and similar fare provide insights into distant cultures; and grandmothers in India use webcams to interact with their granddaughters in New York and London.

These increased contacts, which are facilitated by recent technological developments, underscore the significant interdependencies that now link people to those from other cultures. Intercultural links are reinforced by the ease with which people can now travel to other places.

Technology allows and facilitates human interactions, both across the globe and in real time. Such instantaneous connections have the potential to increase the amount of communication that occurs among people from different cultures, and this expansion will necessarily add to the need for greater intercultural competence. "The world is flat," as Thomas Friedman so aptly suggested, because the convergence of technologies is creating an unprecedented degree of global competitiveness based on equal opportunities and access to the marketplace.[24] Similarly, consider YouTube, which has encouraged the widespread dissemination of videos by anyone with access to an inexpensive digital camera. Unlike more restrictive and more expensive television stations, which require access to sophisticated equipment and distribution networks, Internet-based social networking tools such as Snapchat, WhatsApp, Facebook, Baidu, LinkedIn, and Google+, as well as technological innovations such as text messages, Skype, Twitter, and Yahoo Messenger, are used by an extraordinarily large number of people to connect with others whom they may have never met—and perhaps will never meet—in face-to-face interactions.

The technological imperative has increased the urgency for intercultural competence. Because of the widespread availability of technologies and long-distance transportation systems, intercultural competence is now more important than it has ever been.

1.1.3: The Global Imperative for Intercultural Competence

OBJECTIVE: Describe how globalization requires increased intercultural competence

Globalization is creating a worldwide marketplace. Consequently, the success of the United States in the global arena increasingly depends on individual and collective abilities to communicate competently with people from other cultures. Clearly, U.S. economic relationships require global interdependence and intercultural competence, since economic growth or retrenchment in one part of the world now reverberates and affects many others.

Fluctuations in the price of oil and other raw materials, changes in the economic health of U.S. trading partners, differences in international regulations that affect purchases and sales, and variations in the international competitiveness of U.S.-made products all contribute to the importance of the global imperative. Similarly, the integration into the workforce of workers from around the world is altering labor costs worldwide. Consequently, the economic health of the United States is inextricably linked to world business partners. U.S. international trade has more than doubled every decade since 1960, and it now exceeds $5.1 trillion annually.[25]

International tourism is one of the "growth industries" that is burgeoning worldwide, and the United States benefits substantially from it. In 2014, a record 74 million international tourists to the United States spent over $220 billion during their stays—or $600 million per day—and these figures are projected to grow by more than 4 percent annually for the foreseeable future.[26] By 2020, as many as 100 million Chinese tourists are likely to descend upon popular destinations throughout the world, and the United States is poised to garner a substantial share of this emerging global market.[27] International travel to the United States represents 11 percent of U.S. exports of goods and services and almost one-third of services exports alone.[28] Roger Dow, president of the U.S. Travel Association, summarizes the economic impact of international travel: "When visitors travel to the United States from abroad, they inject new money into the U.S. economy by staying in U.S. hotels, spending in U.S. stores, visiting U.S. attractions, and eating at U.S. restaurants—purchases that are all chalked up as U.S. exports that contribute positively to America's trade balance."[29]

> ### Culture Connections
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> I hated the term "Third World" and its arrogant implications of a modern day caste system not unlike the one that existed within the G7. Nations built on the backs of immigrants who worked more and earned less in hopes of building a better life that only left their children to ask: "Better than what?"
>
> —Gurjinder Basran

U.S. higher education is also a major service-sector export into the global economy. Each year the United States hosts more of the world's 4.5 million globally mobile college and university students than any other nation. These international students spend more than $27 billion on their living expenses, and about 74 percent of this total comes from sources outside the United States.[30]

Corporations can also move people from one country to another, so within the workforce of most nations, there are representatives from cultures throughout the world. However, even if one's work is within the national boundaries of the United States, intercultural competence requires a global worldview. The citizenry of the United States includes many individuals who are strongly identified with a particular international culture. Thus, it is no longer safe to assume that clients, customers, business partners, and coworkers will have similar cultural views about what is important and appropriate.

The U.S. workplace reflects the increasing cultural diversity that makes up the nation as a whole. For example, in recent years, the number of businesses opened by Asian Americans grew at twice the national average. These businesses generate more than $500 billion in annual

The global imperative for intercultural competence is exemplified by these Western and Middle Eastern businesspeople, who are developing their interpersonal relationships.

revenues and employ more than 2.8 million people.[31] The number of African American businesses also continues to grow at triple the national rate; about 2 million small businesses are now owned by African Americans.[32] Similarly, Latinos and Latinas are opening businesses at a faster pace than ever before. There are 2.3 million Latino-owned businesses that generate about $350 billion in annual gross receipts.[33]

In sum, the global imperative for intercultural competence is powerful, pervasive, and likely to increase in the coming years. As Andrew Romano says:

> For more than two centuries, Americans have gotten away with not knowing much about the world around them. But times have changed…. While isolationism is fine in an isolated society, we can no longer afford to mind our own business. What happens in China and in India (or at a Japanese nuclear plant) affects the autoworkers in Detroit; what happens in the statehouse and the White House affects the competition in China and India. Before the Internet, brawn was enough; now the information economy demands brains instead.[34]

1.1.4: The Peace Imperative for Intercultural Competence

OBJECTIVE: **Explain why the need to live peacefully with others requires intercultural competence**

The vision of interdependence among cultural groups throughout the world and in the United States has led Robert Shuter to declare that "culture is the single most important global communication issue" that humans face.[35] The need to understand and appreciate those who differ from us has never been more important. As the President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies has said,

> Nothing less is at stake than the nation's security. At a time when the resurgent forces of nationalism and of ethnic and linguistic consciousness so directly affect global realities, the United States requires far more reliable capabilities to communicate with its allies, analyze the behaviors of potential adversaries, and earn the trust and sympathies of the uncommitted. Yet, there is a widening gap between these needs and the American competence to understand and deal successfully in a world in flux.[36]

Witness the problems in Darfur, Chechnya, Zimbabwe, Central Asia, Indonesia, the Middle East, Afghanistan, Venezuela, Iraq, and Syria; in each instance, cultures have clashed over ideologies and the right to control resources. But such animosities do not only occur outside the borders of the United States. Consider the proliferation of such groups as the neo-Nazis, white nationalists, racist skinheads, and those with links to the Ku Klux Klan. The Southern Poverty Law Center has estimated that the number of hate groups is increasing; there are currently almost 1,000 hate groups in the United States, and hate groups flourish in every U.S. state.[37] Recent data on hate crimes suggest that there are more than 6,000 hate crimes committed annually against individuals because of their race, culture, religion, or social group membership. About 35 percent of these hate crimes are directed against African Americans, another 14 percent target Jews, an additional 7 percent are aimed at Latinos, and 1.6 percent of the U.S. hate crimes are directed against Muslims.[38]

The peace imperative for intercultural communication is exemplified by the goals and experiences of the athletes and fans of the 2016 Rio Olympics.

1.1.5: The Self-Awareness Imperative for Intercultural Competence

OBJECTIVE: **Describe why being aware of one's own worldview helps enable intercultural competence**

Because we live in a social world that is increasingly intercultural, an understanding of our own thoughts, feelings, habits, worldviews, judgments, and actions is essential to becoming interculturally competent. It is also vital that we understand how these views might differ from those who are culturally different from us. As we participate in intercultural interactions, we are "speaking for" or "speaking about" people from other cultures. This can happen when, in conversations with friends or family members, we are "speaking for" a culture as we describe why they think and act differently from what is common in our own culture. Similarly, when researching a culture as a class assignment, we may be "speaking about" that culture as we describe their tendencies and expectations.[39]

Understanding other cultures, even when we do so in our private thoughts, ideally requires an awareness of one's own cultural identity. So, too, should we be mindful of the dynamic power relations that exist among cultures. We may want to ask ourselves such questions as: How am I (and my culture) positioned in relation to this culture? Compared to them, for example, does my culture have more or less institutional and economic power and control? And how might this difference affect our intercultural communication?

Self-awareness is essential for intercultural competence. Who we are and what others presume about us as we interact with them constitutes our "standpoint" in the interaction. This is a critical component of intercultural communication. Our unique intercultural standpoint is anchored in our cultural identities but also in such social groupings as our gender, race, economic class, sexual orientation, nationality, preferred language, and more. Our standpoint, in turn, shapes how we view the world, interact with others, and are viewed and evaluated by those others.[40]

1.1.6: The Interpersonal Imperative for Intercultural Competence

OBJECTIVE: **Summarize how interpersonal relationships are improved through intercultural competence**

The quality of your daily life—from work to play to family to community interactions—will increasingly depend on your ability to communicate competently with people from other cultures. Your neighbors may speak different first languages, have different values, and celebrate different customs. Your family members may include individuals from cultural backgrounds other than yours. Your colleagues at work may belong to various cultures, and you may be expected to participate in intercultural and cross-national teams with them; a team leader in Chicago might have a supervisor in Switzerland and team members who are located in New York, San Francisco, Buenos Aires, Melbourne, Johannesburg, and Shanghai.

There are some obvious consequences to maintaining competent interpersonal relationships in an intercultural world. Such relationships will inevitably introduce doubt about others' expectations and will reduce the certainty that specific behaviors, routines, and rituals mean the same things to everyone. Cultural mixing implies that people will not always feel completely comfortable as they attempt to communicate in another language or as they try to talk with individuals who are not proficient in theirs. Their sense of "rights" and "wrongs" will be threatened when challenged by the actions of those with an

alternative cultural framework. Many people will need to live in two or more cultures concurrently, shifting from one to another as they go from home to school, from work to play, and from the neighborhood to the shopping mall. The tensions inherent in creating successful intercultural communities are obvious as well. Examples abound that underscore how difficult it is for groups of culturally different individuals to live, work, play, and communicate harmoniously. The consequences of failing to create a harmonious intercultural society are also obvious—human suffering, hatred passed on from one generation to another, disruptions in people's lives, and unnecessary conflicts that sap people's creative talents and energies and that siphon off scarce resources from other important societal needs.

1.2: Communication

To understand intercultural communication we must first understand more general communication. The term **communication** has been used in many ways for varied, and often inconsistent, purposes.[41] For example, Frank Dance identified 15 different conceptual components for the term,[42] and Dance and Carl Larson listed 126 different definitions for *communication*.[43] Like all terms or ideas, we chose our specific definition because of its usefulness in explaining the thoughts and ideas we wish to convey. Consequently, our definition is not the "right" one, nor is it somehow "more correct" than the others. Indeed, as you might expect, our definition is actually very similar to many others with which you may already be familiar. However, the definition we have selected is most useful for our purpose of helping you achieve interpersonal competence when communicating within an intercultural setting.

Communication is a symbolic, interpretive, transactional, contextual process in which people create shared meanings (see Figure 1.5). To understand what this definition means, we will explore its implications for the study of intercultural communication.