GlobalPeople

Frameworks & Models

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The GlobalPeople Growth Model

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The GlobalPeople Growth Model

How can people grow in intercultural competence and develop the skills and qualities needed to function effectively in a globalising world?

The GlobalPeople Growth Model for Global Skills identifies the three key components, as illustrated in Figure 1 below:

- The contexts for fostering personal growth
- The development mechanisms for enhancing personal growth
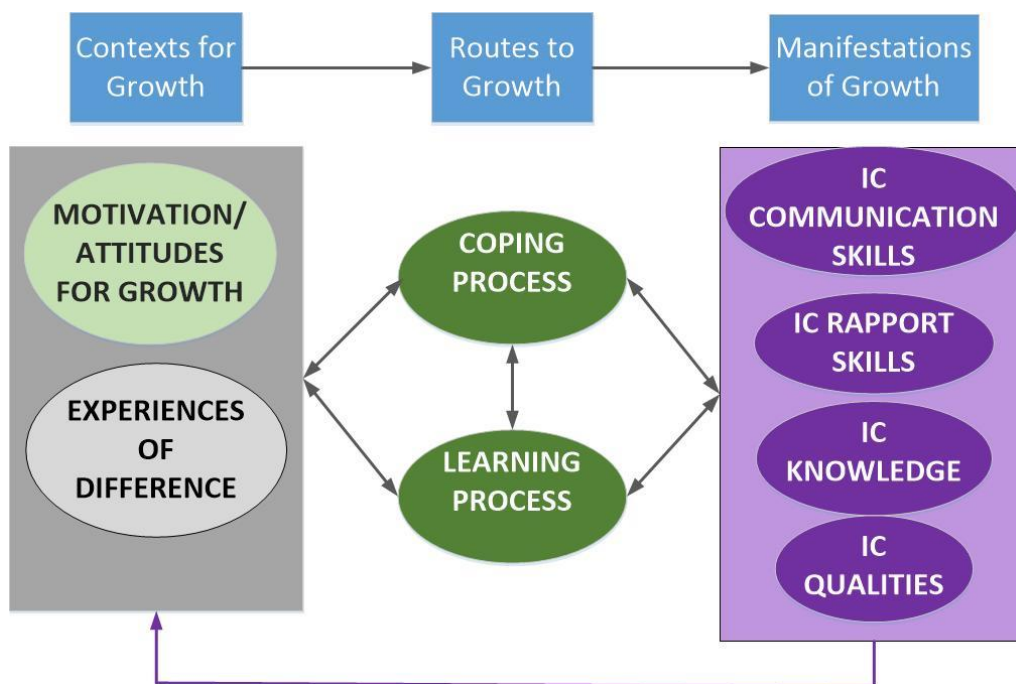- The growth outcomes being aimed at.

Fig.1: The GlobalPeople Growth Model for Global Skills

Contexts for Growth

The starting point for planning purposes is Contexts for Growth – ensuring that people are experiencing as rich a context as possible. As can be seen from Fig. 1 above, there are two key elements to this: people's motivation or attitudes towards growth and their experiences of difference.

Positive attitudes and strong motivation are always important: people need to be curious, open and interested in differences around them. In other words, they need a 'spirit of adventure' (The Intercultural Profiler, WorldWork). This helps them move out of their comfort zones and experience the differences that can stimulate their growth. For example, mixing with people from different backgrounds, working in teams with people who have different styles of communication, and mixing socially with people who have different interests, can not only be exciting and challenging but also an important stimulant for growth. To a greater or lesser extent, such differences can cause mental and emotional challenges and it is this disequilibrium that stimulates growth (cf. Kim 2001)[1].

Routes to Growth

The disequilibrium is traditionally known as culture shock and it is important that the stress is not so great that people withdraw. They need to be helped to develop coping mechanisms – to understand the nature of culture shock and acquire suitable strategies for handling it. However, it is also important to remember that they should not be cushioned too much from difference, because growth requires a certain amount of stress. The stress needs to be handled through improved coping mechanisms, not simply removed.

The anthropologist Edward Hall (1976, p.46)[2] has said "Most cross-cultural exploration begins with the annoyance of being lost." This reiterates that cultural adaptation and growth has an emotional aspect to it, but it also hints at another – the element of 'being lost'. People are typically unsure how to behave in unfamiliar contexts, and so some learning is required. Sometimes it can be supposedly simple things like ways of greeting. Other aspects, such as adopting different turn-taking styles or levels of formality, can be even more challenging. For this, people need to be helped to observe carefully, to reflect on the differences they notice, and to have the opportunity to seek advice and explanation from someone with more insider understanding. Then they will be in a better position to make appropriate adjustments to their behaviour.

Manifestations of Growth

The third element of the Global People Growth Model is the competencies that we want people to acquire as a result of their developmental experiences. Following the outcomes from the Global People eChina -UK project, we have identified four main clusters of global competencies that people need when living, working or studying in culturally diverse contexts: intercultural communication skills, rapport management skills, personal qualities, and intercultural knowledge. More details of these, including their sub-components and illustrative examples, can be found on the Global People website.

In other words, the Global People Growth Model for Global Skills indicates the following elements are important for strategic planning:

a. People's motivation or attitudes towards developing global skills and qualities;
b. People's opportunities for experiencing differences that can stimulate personal growth;
c. People's resilience in coping with the stress of experiencing differences;
d. People's opportunities for noticing, reflecting on and learning from their experiences of difference;
e. People's understanding of the intercultural competencies they are developing through their learning experiences.

A more detailed figure is shown on the next page.

Footnotes

[1] Kim, Y. Y. (2001). *Becoming Intercultural. An Integrative Theory of Communication and Cross-Cultural Adaptation*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

[2] Hall, E. T. (1976). *Beyond Culture*. New York: Doubleday.

Contexts for Growth → Routes to Growth → Manifestations of Growth

MOTIVATION/ ATTITUDES FOR GROWTH
Curiosity/Interest
Opennness
Spirit of Adventure

EXPERIENCES OF DIFFERENCE
- Discomfort
- Critical incidents
- Diverse friends
- Role models
in
- Everyday life
- Study/work life
- Social life

COPING PROCESS
Understand culture shock
Develop coping strategies

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROCESS
Observe → Reflect
Accommodate

ICC COMMUNICATION SKILLS
- Active listening
- Stylistic flexibility
- Language Adjustment
- Building of shared knowledge

ICC RAPPORT SKILLS
- Sensitivity to context
- Emotion regulation
- Interpersonal attentiveness

ICC KNOWLEDGE
- The 3Ps of culture
- Information gathering skills
- Task-relevant (e.g. historical, political, legal) local information

ICC QUALITIES
-Self-awareness
- Interpersonal sensitivity
- Emotional resilience
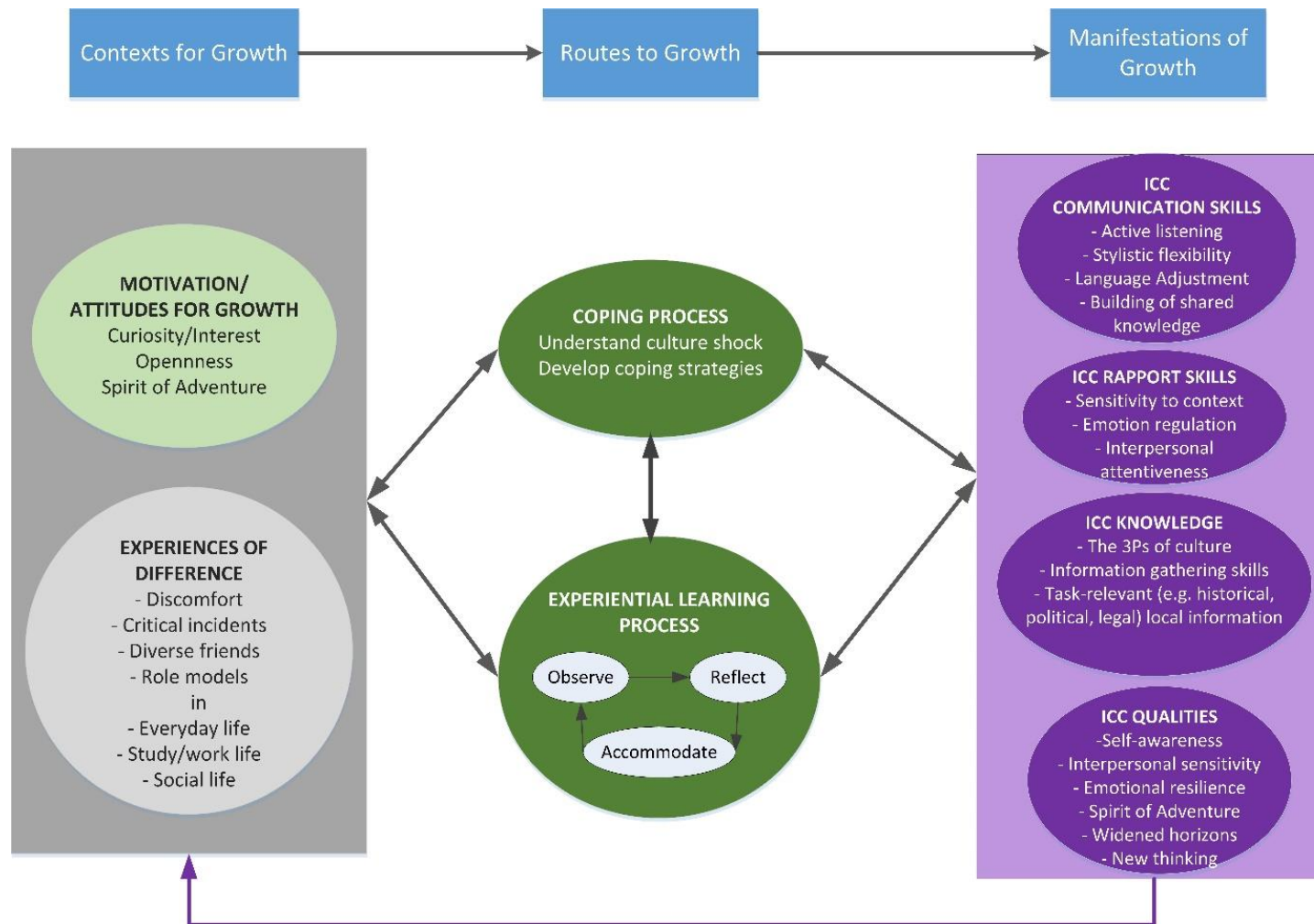- Spirit of Adventure
- Widened horizons
- New thinking

Fig.2: The GlobalPeople Growth Model for Global Skills: detailed view