ONE VERSION OF INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE'S FUTURE

Contents

Acronyms

- TIIS - Talaria Intercultural Interaction Skills, as in TIIS workshop or TIIS model
- TFM – Talaria Facilitation Method

Part I: Touring Apollo Productions

The year is 2020. Suzanne, a journalist and intercultural expeditionary, has been invited to visit Apollo Productions, a large global organization reputed to have attained a high level of intercultural competence. Five years ago, they underwent a concerted effort to accelerate their individual and collective intercultural competence development. Suzanne is at Apollo's offices for the day. Marian, Director of the Global Learning and Performance Group, is hosting Suzanne. Suzanne's goal is to learn all she can about how they were able to accelerate their intercultural competence level. In particular, she wants to learn more about a key intervention she has heard about. This intervention, the TIIS Workshop, was one of the key strategy elements five years ago and remains the foundation of their global learning and performance approach.

Cultural Audits

They first go to a conference room where a new project team meeting is taking place with ten members representing four countries. One of the first discussions revolves around establishing team processes.

The group begins with a cultural audit in which each team member explains how his or her culture typically addresses several select work processes with which this team will be involved. The processes include conflict management, virtual communication, giving and receiving feedback, performance management and leadership styles. Suzanne is struck by how much every member knows about the business behavior cultural value drivers - not only of their own culture but the other members' cultures as well.

The team leader sets the tone for the team's management of cultural differences.

> OK everybody, I'm looking forward to working with you all. We have a lot of different cultural influences represented here in our team, with members from Brazil, India, the U.S. and Germany. I'd like to spend this morning's meeting starting to create our team process norms. For example, I can guess our American and German members likely prefer a more monochronic approach to the way we handle time, while perhaps our Indian and Brazilian members might be driven more by polychronic values. This will of course affect our project planning deadlines and punctuality in

meetings. I'd like to take a few minutes to get you all involved in an open discussion right now to create our punctuality norm, and then our deadline norm.

Later in the meeting, a team member makes a request.

> As you all probably know, my national cultural value orientation around change and innovation is restraint. As an individual, that's what I prefer as well. However, given our ambitious innovation goals, I would like to adapt to a more risk-oriented style. I'll rely on you all to act as cultural guides for me and help me understand those behaviors. I also hope you can empathize with me when I am outside my comfort zone and keep an open dialogue to enable me to understand the nuances of risk-orientation behaviors.

Eventually, they end the cultural audit piece of their agenda and have a working document that can be used as reference for making team norm decisions.

Lunchtime Intercultural Chatter

At lunchtime with Marian, Suzanne observes three people at a table. They seem to have just met each other and they are from three different functions: engineering, government relations, and business development. Also, they represent three different cultures. Marian explains to Suzanne that the norm at Apollo has been established whereby people make a point to meet new people over lunch.

One of the three, Adesh, is a Sikh business development manager from the Indian state of Rajasthan. Sofia is a Danish engineer and Pedro, a Brazilian, is a government relations associate. Sofia asks Adesh, "I am new to the office here and I noticed that you, like some other men in this office, wear a turban. Would you mind explaining the significance and meaning of your turban. Adesh smiles widely, "I'd love to and thanks for asking. I am Sikh."Adesh goes on for about ten minutes, explaining Sikhs and various other things about his culture. Adesh asks Sofia what she has found culturally challenging when working with Americans and how she has been adapting.....

Suzanne overhears at the table next to her a similar question, with a white American woman, Kirsten, asking an African-American man, Michael, what he finds most challenging about working within a white mainstream American dominated culture. "Well, you know Apollo has come a long way toward reducing the gaps created by lack of understanding dominant and nondominant culture dynamics. It's really less of a challenge as a member of the formerly non-dominant culture," and then lets out a hearty laugh. He goes on,"You know, with widespread intercultural competence fluency, those dynamics generally fall by the wayside." Marian looks over toward Suzanne and comments.

> You can see we have come a long way toward reconciling dominant and nondominant culture dynamics. It's been a long process and continues, but everyone feels really good about how far we've come so far. I think that you can see here at the cafeteria that one of the most inclusive communication types is just asking someone about their cultural differences with you and thereby deeply recognizing them for who they are.

Pedro chimes in.

> Yes, we now have a generally high organizational intercultural interaction skill level. Those interpersonal conversations are now more in-depth and inclusive. Additionally, we are more inclusive at an organizational level. Our performance management process and formal performance appraisal process take into account the ability to manage and adapt to cultural differences. Even longer than five years back, there was something included in our annual performance appraisals related to what we called cultural diversity. However, at that time, it was really more on a surface level. Now, we have the TIIS performance model and other performance models with which we can measure intercultural interaction workplace performance.

I'll never forget the first time I encountered the beginnings of this organizational intervention.

> I had been working on a project with a very multicultural team. At our closure team meeting, the senior manager, a white mainstream American who had sponsored the project, joined us. He said, "It's been an extremely successful project. Everyone on the team has performed at a high level technically and socially. I want to express special thanks to those of you from other cultures outside of white mainstream American culture – to those of you from nondominant cultures. Those nondominant cultures include other countries as well as some cultures within the United States. In addition to the technical work, you have worked hard to participate on this team, which has basically been operating with white mainstream American culture values and norms. I know that the change of behavior on your part was not easy. So, I would like the white mainstream members of our group to give a round of applause to our nondominant culture colleagues. One last thing, I can guess that you are all surprised by my comments. My white mainstream American colleagues in the group may be wondering just what I am talking about. I always say a little head scratching can be healthy and I advise my white mainstream colleagues to pay attention to coming events regarding intercultural competence development here at Apollo Productions. There is an old saying that goes like this – what you don't know that you don't know can hurt you more than what you know you don't know."

With that, he left the meeting. Of course, there was curiosity and confusion on everyone's part, nondominants and dominants alike. Some people in the group were uncomfortable, which was a given in those days whenever you brought up cultural differences. I don't know if I would have approached it like he did, but it made an impact. For me, as a nondominant culture member, it made me feel more recognized. I realized that even if I was the one who needed to adapt, at least it would be recognized.

Suzanne thanks Michael and Pedro for sharing as she starts walking down the hallway with Marian. They overhear the following part of a conversation:

Jack: How do you like your new role Jill?
Jill: It's pretty good. My biggest challenge is that my new manager values status-based authority and power and isn't really adapting from that. I find it hard to overcome my very egalitarian perception of him as arrogant and dictatorial. We are beginning to have cultural adaptation discussions though.

Suzanne also hears this: An American named Frank passes by a group of Marathi engineers who are having lunch together. He calls out to them with a smile, "Hey, it's the Marathi Mafia lunch group again!" The group laughs and asks Frank to join them for lunch. He responds by saying, "Thanks guys, but tomorrow might be better. I need some time at lunch." One of the Marathis humorously says, "Ever the individualist American, eh? Enjoy your own space (air quotes on space)!" Everyone, including Frank, gets a good laugh.

Suzanne mentions this interaction to Marian, expressing her perception that it seemed a bit sarcastic and wondering if the open expression of intercultural differences was going in the right direction. Marian explains that their intercultural corporate culture has loosened up and that all kinds of humor are used now. She goes on to explain that Frank and this Indian group became close when they worked together on a project in Australia where they had jovially adopted the Australian sardonic style of teasing.

While Suzanne is sitting with Marian in her office, a line manager comes in looking for someone to talk to about his team doing the advanced Intercultural Interaction Skills Workshop. While he's waiting, Suzanne asks him how it feels to work in an organization using cultural differences as the way into establishing good working relationships. He responds with the following thoughtful reply.

> Well, you know I remember some years back when people were pretty nervous about discussing cultural differences. One thing I like about the current state is that it's much lighter. A lot of humor emerged and tension released once we developed this ability to recognize and discuss our cultural differences with each other openly and proactively. Most importantly to our organizational effectiveness, we can now more quickly sort out the causes of work problems. We

can more quickly sort out which causes are cultural and which ones are not, along with reconciling who needs to adapt – and how - for the cultural gaps.

Five years ago, we couldn't see the cultural differences and so we couldn't deal with them. We see now the awkwardness with which we worked interculturally. Time, efficiency, and morale were all negatively affected by our low level of intercultural competence. I remember a particularly bad time during the first year of a joint venture in China. Many of those days resulted in frustration. We Americans would talk together about how our Chinese counterparts didn't want to have discussions among the group before making decisions and how they were afraid to take responsibility for work assignments – at least those were our perceptions. On the other hand, I now know that they perceived us as not wanting to make decisions – especially our leaders - and that we talked too much and they wondered why we didn't have a leader that just laid everything out for us. I'm sure they went home at night and complained about how frustrating it was working with us. So, they complained among themselves about us and we complained among ourselves about them. It didn't occur to us to talk with, instead of about, each other. You know, in those days, there was always a lot of frustration expressed behind the scenes, but because of our somewhat paranoid diversity and inclusion ideology, we didn't talk of those things in public.

Our business strategy implementation was stalled because we couldn't get our intercultural act together enough to figure out how to make the people processes work; the processes that form the foundation from which the strategy can take off. Much of the time, we judged and stereotyped our intercultural counterparts because we didn't know that there were cultural reasons for the issues. Decision making, conflict resolution, meeting facilitation, performance management and every other human work process was being impacted by our cultural differences and we didn't understand it.

The way I remember it, the main reason we didn't talk openly and proactively about cultural differences was the simple fact that we didn't know how to. We didn't have a language and process for it. Since it was something we didn't understand – the unknown - we feared it. The TIIS Workshop and its foundational interaction skill model enabled us to begin communicating with each other about cultural differences and the fear has largely subsided. It is strange to look back on our generally rudimentary condition before.

(The manager leaves and Suzanne asks Marian how they've developed up to this point).

Part II: Marian's Take on Apollo's Intercultural Competence Development History

Magical Thinking and More

Marian
Five years ago our organizational intercultural competence level was quite low. Except for a few people who were more advanced, we were generally seeing intercultural interactions from our own cultural viewpoint. We tried to attribute differences to things like personality traits and individual differences and generally felt like people across cultures are basically the same. It was a very warm and fuzzy place to be. Also, when you believe we are basically the same and avoid the cultural differences, then *Voila!* – there is nothing to work on. If we are only open minded all will be well! Nobody wanted to leave that cocoon (laughs and then reflects for a few moments).

At some point we realized that our avoidance of cultural differences was causing us to over emphasize similarities to the point that our version of diversity and inclusion was a kind of magical thinking mode - not conscious or critical at all. We had created a language which twisted our thinking and confused us about how to establish effective intercultural relationships to achieve superior work results. The jargon of terms like "leverage diversity, unleash the exponential synergy of diversity" sound fantastic when you're in a magical thinking mode. It sounded so good that nobody ever asked, "What does this look like in the real world? What are those specific behaviors?" When we did ask, nobody could give us a good answer. We realized that we needed something strategic and systematic to address our needs.

We changed the language from" differences are bad and a problem" to "differences are a challenging problem and require hard work to reconcile in order to achieve our organizational goals together." As we experienced the development of our intercultural competence, it became clearly evident to us that reconciliation of the differences is where the real depth of relationship and work results lies.

Suzanne
Marian, several times now I've heard you remark on changing equations or changing language…

Marian
Yes, I'm glad you noticed. Language affects perception and attitudes, which in turn affect behavior change. Part of our intercultural competence development strategy, which I will talk about in a few minutes, was our change management strategy. Seven years ago, people didn't really conceptualize that we were in a situation that required a systematic change approach. But of course, that was the norm in those days – until someone develops a high level of intercultural competence, they can't really comprehend what the intercultural stuff is all about. It is a consciousness thing. It was particularly challenging when some of us first started to develop our intercultural competence. When we tried to talk about it with our colleagues, of course they couldn't understand. Since most of them were still downplaying differences, they couldn't see what we could see. One of the first lessons I learned from Talaria, and Reinart in particular, was that it was fruitless to get people's understanding from talking about it. Reinart would say, "You explain real well Kid, but you might just as well be speakin' Martian to most people right now, for all the good it does….the tellin' is what we need, but tellin' is best done after the showin.' " Most people thought that intercultural competence development was about getting all the information on customs and how to do things. You know, we "tell people stuff" about cultural customs or how to negotiate the way they do.

Suzanne
You know, that reminds me of the ISPI (International Society for Performance Improvement) publication, *Telling Ain't Training*. That book was published some years ago, but is still in use.

Marian
Right! That book, as well as all of ISPI's work, was influential in our work with Talaria. The larger training industry was changing toward a Performance Improvement (PI) methodology for human performance improvement. However, the intercultural competence development field lagged behind in this regard. However, PI, particularly the performance-based training aspect of it, has been essential to our development. It's understandable that we didn't gravitate toward PI five years ago because we didn't have a clear picture of the specific needed workplace performance to effectively interact with intercultural counterparts. Of course now the Talaria Intercultural Interaction Skills model provides that definition. PI will inevitably continue to grow in its influence on our field.

[Go to www.ispi.org for more information on PI]

You know, I also mentioned we stopped using that kind of organizational jargon around cultural differences, or cultural diversity as we used to say. Saying something like "embrace cultural diversity as an opportunity and leverage the differences" made it sound like it was easy. It sounded like an advertisement that tells you it will be easy to lose 50 pounds in two months. That kind of statement becomes vacuous and bounces off people. It sets up unrealistic expectations. When you've experienced intercultural organizational change, have significantly adapted your own cultural behaviors, and in advanced cases facilitated intercultural counterparts' cultural behavior change, you realize a more realistic and useful statement is, "Cultural adaptation is complicated and messy but I'm committed to you in the process of working through it. We're in this together."

What exactly diversity was we couldn't quite grasp. At times the message was that it meant getting various ideas from people who are different from us. While there was some of this going on, most of the different ideas were really pieces of surface culture differences information. Our Greek colleague might describe different foods in her hometown and our British colleague might go into detail about the history of the famous Cornish "pasty" dish. Anyway, we were supposed to learn from and include colleagues different

from us but we could never quite put our finger on what the difference was other than superficial characteristics like skin color, ethnicity and religion. Also, the fact of having people with those different surface characteristics on our team or at our meetings meant that we were practicing inclusion of diversity. Never mind that the non-dominants were accommodating to the dominant behaviors. Of course at the time we didn't understand those dynamics. We celebrated the fact – we are a diverse team! Hooray! But you know Suzanne, the surest way to kill an idea or movement is to celebrate it before it has actually been realized. That's what we were doing - celebrating something that didn't exist was the dynamic.

There was a behavior that was being taught back then, as it still is today. Style-switching was being taught in some intercultural competence development efforts back in those days. You know, doing things like the other culture does it in order to be successful. You go to work on a Mexican team in Mexico and you adapt to their indirect communication style, hierarchical relationships and collectivism. Problem was that often the way it was taught to us, it didn't really come out as a strategic skill – a skill that could be replicated and adjusted in a variety of contexts. It came out as more of a procedure, with scant attention paid to nuance and context. Also, with the advent and proliferation of multicultural teams, it became apparent that this type of style-switching to one culture from one other culture was not going to be as relevant or effective. Style switching is one of eleven skills in the TIIS skills model. If you don't develop the other ten skills, then your style-switching ability may be limited to light style-switching, as opposed to heavy style-switching.

Suzanne
I've heard you differentiate between light and heavy style-switching a few times today. Please tell me more about that.

Marian
Cultural differences truly provide a remarkable source of richness for interactions, learning, and growth that leads to accomplishing goals together. There's no learning window within the similarities. The deep relationships and heavy adaptation lie within the differences. Think of deep relationships in our own culture. How well do we really know someone until we have some kind of a difference between us? With intercultural competence, the differences are given permission to emerge in a non-conflict mode. You know, five years ago, we used to believe that the better relationships were those in which we found similarities. We've learned that the similarities take care of themselves, and so from a developmental perspective, we pay our attention to the differences. In general, human goals are similar. We all want to have good relationships with others, to gain mutual trust and respect. In the workplace we all want to achieve profitable growth and produce quality products. However, the means to these ends are deeply affected by cultural differences. Decision making, conflict management, performance management and every other human interaction process are culturally impacted.

Deep relationships and intercultural organizational success are why those of us working interculturally love it and thrive on it. But more needs to be said and recognized about the struggle. If we don't do this, people can become quickly disillusioned, thinking that cultural adaptation is easy. What we really unleashed was the ability and desire to learn about each other in-depth so that we could achieve better organizational results together. All of our offices are quite dynamic in national cultures and domestic culture variety. Five years ago, we would see people interacting with intercultural counterparts all day every day and yet very rarely having cultural difference discussions. Let me say this with emphasis Suzanne:

> Once we accelerated our intercultural competence development, we realized that there's no stronger way to include others and get better organizational results than to openly and proactively recognize, explain and reconcile the cultural differences together. Looking back now, the fear that previously existed to openly recognize and explain cultural differences looks primitive to us.

Marian Speaks of Organizational Change and Talent Management Practices

Suzanne

I have a really good sense of where you were, or were not, as an organization seven years ago and you have started identifying some of the main factors which led you all to the current state. I want to ask you more about capacity building and your change management strategy.

Marian

OK Suzanne. I know that you will be back to observe a Talaria Intercultural Interaction Skills Workshop and a Talaria Facilitation Method Develop-the-Facilitator Workshop. In line with the showing before telling principle, I will wait until after you experience those two interventions to share some of my observations about them over the years. They have been, and continue to be, the strategic anchors of our intercultural competence development. First, I would like to explain three key elements of our strategic plan. The following three have been impactful: 1) a dedicated HR unit dealing with intercultural competence development, 2) the intercultural dialectic, and 3) *conscientização*. The dialectic and *conscientização* are very interrelated.

Suzanne

Whoa, hold on a minute Marian! (laughing). What language are you speaking, both literally and figuratively?

Marian

(laughing along) I guess the dedicated HR group probably isn't what you are asking about. *Conscientização* is actually Brazilian Portugese. The direct translation to English is conscientization. For the sake of simplicity, let's call it critical consciousness or awareness. And the dialectic is...well...let me explain them both. First, just a few words about the dedicated HR group.

Suzanne

Great.

Marian

Early on in our effort, we realized that we wouldn't be able to achieve a high level of performance results for a while. Until we could realize a tipping point with organizational competence as a whole we needed to have intercultural change agents – HR-type professionals who were interculturally fluent. We already had a change management group as part of our shared services model. It was ironic that we were investing a lot into our global business, and yet we hadn't recognized the need for this critical intercultural component, the component that can't really be seen and understood until you gain some intercultural skill to make it work. Of course this was because most of us still had such a low consciousness and competency level; we didn't know that we didn't know. It was a challenge for anyone with a fluent level of intercultural competence in those days because almost nobody around them had even a mediocre level of competence and so it was extremely challenging to get the organization to mobilize around intercultural competence – but then that's the nature of organizational change, isn't it?!

Suzanne

Definitely.

Marian

We, as with many companies then – and even now – thought that the global part of HR could be managed by the same people who were managing domestic business. In fact, just the other day I was looking at some old recruiting job postings for global learning and development manager. We didn't really see the difference between the skill needed for a global person and a non-global person. If you looked at our qualifications and experience descriptions, they were largely tactical. The very first paragraph often related to delivery channels or specific aspects of performance improvement technology – "experience with web-based training and LMS, familiarity with the ADDIE model etc." The intercultural part, when it was there at all, was sometimes literally the last qualification listed. Seeming like an add-on, it usually went something like, "experience working in a diverse environment." Oh, we loved to engage in magical thinking in those days!

A huge gap in the way we approached it then was that there was very little understanding of how culture impacts cultural learning and performance styles, and even if there was, there was little understanding of how to reconcile the differences. The Talaria Facilitation Method (TFM), performance-based and universally applicable to participant audiences and facilitators, has made a huge impact on that score.

Since intercultural competence requires a heightened level of critical consciousness, you can't lead people to it unless you also have a high consciousness level. You can't expect a person who is still stuck in the cultural difference avoidance mentality to facilitate a process in which participants are led to fluent intercultural competence. So, we actually created an HR intercultural center and we had several "facilitators". These were people with a high degree of intercultural competency and at least something of an HR background. Most of what they did was to facilitate meetings between intercultural stakeholders so that they could pay attention to the intercultural dynamic. They also led the global learning and development strategy and implementation effort. I guess I should say "we" since I was deeply involved from the beginning as a member of that group.

Talaria Intercultural also provided a lot of assistance to us in those early days, helping us to form the strategy and find the right people to manage it.

Suzanne
I noticed earlier you mentioned that it was a "Global Learning and Performance Group" and I also noticed that you used the term "develop-the-facilitator" instead of "train-the-trainer." More change of language to stimulate a change in attitudes?

Marian
Right you are Suzanne, a change in attitudes but more importantly, (shouting the following out) **A CHANGE IN WORKPLACE JOB PERFORMANCE!**

Suzanne
(with levity) I'm noting here for my article, "their rise to a high level of intercultural competence has, at the foundation, an emphasis on job performance."

Marian
(chuckling) Right. You know, all of the past gaps in intercultural competence development, the confusion, the lack of direction, the fuzzy nature of it – everything that wasn't happening was because of the relatively little emphasis on performance in the workplace. We didn't have a universally applicable model of skill behaviors that acted as the answer to the questions, "What does fluent intercultural competence look like during interactions between intercultural counterparts? What do they do? What do they say?" What specific behaviors do we need to collaborate with counterparts to explain cultural differences and then jointly determine who needs to adapt - and how - in order to achieve organizational goals.

Suzanne
Is that what the TIIS model provided for you?

Marian
Yes, that was the biggest piece of it. Additionally, it helped us to think and act behaviorally in general. So, we changed a lot of language to help people transition to a more performance-oriented approach. This also had to do with the realization that the way we were accustomed to learning (or trying to learn) five years ago was often not focused on performance change toward contributing to organizational effectiveness. Some of the language changes we made were:
- Changing Apollo University to Apollo Center for Performance Improvement. Think of how we shoot ourselves in the foot when, in a professional organization, we use terms like "university" and "report cards." Psychologically, it puts people back into that university mentality of dependence, which is not focused on preparing people specifically for improving job performance. In general, when engaged in university learning, students acquire knowledge and then are tested to see how well they learned

it. Unless your university education is technical, there is little thought or intention to use this knowledge back in your workplace.

- ▪ Global Learning and Performance (L & P) instead of Training or Learning and Development, Facilitators instead of Trainers, and Participants instead of Students.

All of these language changes contribute to moving toward an approach that is employee and learner-centered, and focused on workplace performance change. This is in contrast to many of the past efforts that were trainer-centered and more focused on training program performance than workplace performance.

Suzanne
I have an observation. It seems like what you just explained would aid you in your talent management practices, in particular with multicultural talent. Has this made a difference?

Marian
Why, yes it has as a matter of fact. Employees everywhere are beginning to realize job positions that are non-global and non-intercultural will soon be a thing of the past. So, our track record and our approach to intercultural skills development is a large part of our Employee Value Proposition (EVP). If you think about recruiting, retaining and developing employees, most of the intercultural component of talent management still lies in developing employees, since there is a relatively small pool of interculturally competent candidates. However, this population is starting to grow. You may be interested to know that our global retention rate, both in North American and global markets, has significantly risen over the past five years.

Apollo Productions' Relationship with Talaria Intercultural

Suzanne
What was Talaria Intercultural's role in getting you started five years ago?

Marian
They were significant. Together with them we came forth from the cloud of unknowing and kissed the cheek of the moon. It was.....

Suzanne
Wait...sorry for interrupting, but were you just talking about astrology or something?!

Marian
(laughing) Oh, I'm sorry Suzanne. You know, I make these references to songs and poems sometimes. I see intercultural stuff everywhere, it seems. Anyway, that is a line from an old Leonard Cohen song.

> [Come forth from the cloud of unknowing
> And kiss the cheek of the moon
>
> - "The Window" on *Recent Songs]*

Marian
Even though I'm sure Leonard had nothing of the sort in mind, I thought "that's a good way to put intercultural consciousness raising. Five years ago it was like we were in a cloud of unknowing about intercultural organizational dynamics and intercultural competence development. You know, when you are in a cloud, you don't even know that you don't know. (chuckles to herself) I am now reminded of the first Talaria consultant with whom we worked. I believe I have mentioned him before. His name is Reinart. He was a Cohen fan and so when we had a workshop that was successful, he would exclaim to me, "Well, Kid, there'll be a whole lotta makin' out with the moon tonight." If the workshop didn't go well, he would say, "Well Kiddo, sorry to say there will be no lunar kisses on this night."

Suzanne, given your name, I guess you must get a lot of Leonard Cohen-related remarks.

Suzanne
Oh yeah, for sure. People inquiring as to whether or not I'm really half-crazy is the big one. You know, Leonard's *Recent Songs,* from which you made the lyrical reference*,* is my favorite album of his. I just love the gypsy violin and oud arrangements. By the way, is Reinart his family name or given name?

Marian
(reflecting for a few moments) You know, I don't know and I have never really thought about it. That's just what we have always called him. You know, he just seems like such a Reinart (laughing). Also, I can tell you that I want to be here with you, but not because I think you are half-crazy (both chuckle).

Suzanne
Besides an affinity with them regarding Leonard Cohen, what else drew you to Talaria?

Marian
At that time, I worked closely with them and managed the contract. They were a small boutique-type group, and still are. They focused on a few key in-depth interventions that got us going and laid a capacity-building foundation. We sometimes call on them now, but for the most part we are fairly self-sufficient in addressing our global learning and performance needs. That actually was one of the attractions with them in the beginning. They emphasized that their mission was to help us to help ourselves – to build our own capacity to solve our own intercultural competence related problems and develop our own strategy. Reinart would often say, "Just tryin' to work myself out of a job Kid. You oughtta be ready to kick me outta here by the end of the year." He's an older guy - kind of an irascible curmudgeon – but in a humorous and sweet way. Most importantly, he really did lead us toward organizational capacity building with our global learning and performance improvement. I also liked that Talaria was more oriented to providing substance and not trying to sell us through slick marketing. I've come to have the perception that the less substance providers have, the more they rely on slick marketing and branding.

Suzanne
You mentioned capacity-building. What does that look like?

Marian
Well, it looks like the team meeting you observed at the beginning of the day – the one in which they started the meeting by conducting a cultural audit. Five years ago, there would have been very little capability to hold that particular meeting. Everyone in that group possesses a high level of intercultural competence. They can fluently apply intercultural interaction skills, resulting in successful management of cultural differences. In addition to the knowledge of their colleagues' specific cultures, they have developed the capability to proactively and openly discuss cultural differences and to collaborate in reconciling the differences. In two hours of meeting time, they resolved who would adapt and how regarding most of their potential team processes, which are all impacted by culture. Among these processes were meeting facilitation and participation, decision making, performance management, conflict management, presentation styles, and managing cultural differences within a matrix organization.

What they did in two hours often didn't even happen at all in the old days. If it did happen, it took eons longer and was much less efficient. From an organizational effectiveness perspective, I think back on how much time, energy, efficiency, and morale were negatively impacted five years ago when we had little intercultural interaction skill. Polychronics were consistently coming to meetings late and monochronics had negative perceptions of that. Egalitarians were trying to mentor and empower their hierarchical direct reports. The hierarchicals kept waiting for instruction and so little would happen because their egalitarian manager wouldn't even know that their direct reports were waiting for them to give specific and detailed direction. This was because the egalitarian manager would expect their direct reports to come to them and ask if they didn't understand, which is often difficult for hierarchical employees to do.

So, we are now more independent in solving our own intercultural-related problems.

Suzanne

So, what was different with Talaria compared to what you had been doing with your intercultural competence development efforts?

The Old Days

Marian

The very first thing they helped us to see was how relatively ineffective many of our efforts were five years ago. Before our work with Talaria, we were spending a fair amount of resources on training in the form global leadership, mobility, teams, working with specific countries, and global diversity and inclusion. Looking back, we had low expectations of program outcomes. Also, we didn't really have a lot to compare it with. Add to all of this that none of us internally had a high level of intercultural competence. This prevented us from even knowing how to judge success. After observing programs, I remember speaking to our providers' trainers with banalities like, "I thought that went very well – they were very interactive!"or "I think they must have gained a lot of awareness today," or "These materials are great – your slides look very professional." Occasionally, we would talk of the possible impact on their workplace performance. That usually ended in non-behavioral or surface-level ruminations like, "I think they will be able to be more indirect now with their Asian colleagues." Because we ourselves couldn't really identify what workplace performance was, other than some protocol and etiquette behaviors and some light style-switching behaviors, our thought process didn't really reach out any deeper into what it should look like in the workplace.

That should actually be the first service a provider supplies their client – a vision of what effective intercultural workplace performance is, and then a concrete workplace performance model to operationalize that vision.

So, in terms of the ends, Talaria helped us to see that in the programs in those days, we usually didn't have clear, concrete workplace performance models. We were boarding a train (the training program) with no clearly identified destination.

In terms of the means, we began to see that even if we would have had clear workplace behavioral ends in mind, we generally weren't employing the means - the effective Learning and Performance process (training and development in those days) to achieve workplace performance improvement. So, we could see that many of our expended resources were wasted on efforts not resulting in workplace performance change and building our own capacity. Granted, I am simplifying a bit. Different providers were doing a better job than others and some companies were doing better at managing their intercultural competence development approach. However, I think the picture I am painting here would be recognized by most providers and consumers of intercultural competence development in those days.

Suzanne

Can you speak a bit more about the means?

Marian

Talaria's work with us addressed both the ends and the means of intercultural competence development interventions – the "what" and the "how." Up until that point, we didn't really see the "how" as something to consider. There was just this kind of assumption that providers conveyed the "whats" - the content - by means of a Power Point Parade and exercises and small group discussions with the large group reporting out. We didn't see actual workplace performance behaviors being practiced during the training programs. Of course that was because the providers themselves weren't providing workplace performance models as the basis for the training. We had never heard of "job aids" that people would take back to the workplace and use as tools to continue the skill practice that they had started in the training program.

There was, at some point, a proliferation of cultural self-assessment instruments. These were sometimes online. I think these were good for the early stages of intercultural competence in which we were working. They provided a way into the intercultural language and process that needed to be developed. However, we found that often the provider's facilitators didn't use that tool within a performance-based, experiential problem posing process which results in clearly identifiable workplace performance, beyond

light style-switching. Again, some providers were better than others at this. Also, it was a little bit difficult to transfer our learning into workplace performance when we needed to be agile in managing cultural differences. A Chinese supplier in Australia couldn't do an impromptu online assessment with their Australian customer in the moment when a cultural difference issue emerged!

The primary purposes of assessments were to clarify cultural values, uncover work style preferences, and learn to use the cultural value language with intercultural counterparts. We found, and continue to find, that the Talaria Facilitation Method (TFM) accomplishes these purposes of online self-assessments more directly, efficiently, with less time, and in-depth – not to mention how much more cost effective TFM is!

We now fully understand that an effective Learning and Performance workshop moves people in their skill development so that they can continue to work toward fluency back in the workplace. With Talaria, the workshop materials are the same materials that we use as job aids to help us perform the new skills back in the workplace. So, we came to learn that all the "whats" were of little use without effective "hows" that transfer learning to workplace performance. Of course the Talaria Facilitation Method was the primary "how" which helped us to understand this – and act - on that understanding.

Basically, in those days the majority of the focus was on the training program itself rather than workplace performance. There was little, if any, attention paid to workplace performance. The one exception to this was light style-switching. We would learn how to do light style-switching to the other culture's behaviors. This would sometimes be procedures like protocol and etiquette, like how to present your business card in Malaysia or use chopsticks in Japan. Sometimes it would be style-switching to another culture's organizational interaction processes. For example, we would learn about the predominant style of problem solving in Timbuctoo (smiling) and the values underlying it. But because we didn't practice it in the training program, see it modeled, or see it done in different contexts, we would often be at a loss as to how to start style-switching once we were in the real situation. Now that we use a performance-based learning & performance process along with its systematic experiential problem solving learning methodology, we have, as you can see, accelerated our intercultural competence development.

Suzanne
It seems like from what you have been saying, the primary difference in the "whats" –   which is huge – is that you now have a concrete workplace performance model – the Talaria Intercultural Interaction Skills model - on which to base all of your development efforts. Other than that, the "whats" haven't changed that much.

Marian
That's right Susanne. Even five years ago, we really had more "whats" than we needed. They weren't effectively communicated though, without the appropriate learning and performance process. So actually, all the good work that was being done regarding the "whats" was not being used to full effect. I'm telling you Suzanne, it really became evident to us that another form of magical thinking was going on at the time – that if the provider had solid content and attractive materials, somehow some way the participants would learn the content and transfer to behavior change, no matter the learning and performance process, or lack of one.

Suzanne
Related to style-switching – even light style switching – I've experienced myself coming out of a training program feeling like I knew about how to do things in Patagonia (both laugh). Just keeping in line with mentioning all of the hot business locations like Timbuctoo.

Marian
I appreciate that Suzanne.

Suzanne
But then when I got to Patagonia, it was much more complicated. I didn't understand nuance and context. It was like, where do I start? Also, the approach to style-switching development wasn't at all addressing other complexities, like the multicultural nature of the work - not just two cultures interacting anymore. Also, the determinations of who should style-switch and when and how weren't being dealt with. I can

remember going to a Working with Vietnam training program a few years ago when I was with a past employer. About midway through the first day, one of the participants asked the facilitator, "It seems like you are telling us that we need to adapt to the Vietnamese customs and work processes when we work with them. Shouldn't they be adapting to our practices and customs too?" The facilitator looked befuddled and couldn't really answer the question at all. She said, "let's explore Vietnamese practices some more and then come back to that question." She never did get back to it. It struck me at the time that it was a key foundational understanding to have when working interculturally.

So, it seems to me that something like the TIIS model, used for proactively and openly discussing cultural differences and reconciling them in real time, is indispensable. It makes sense. Cultural adaptation is so complicated – how can we expect to do it successfully without being able to communicate directly with intercultural counterparts in the moment?

Marian
Exactly. There was always some implicit understanding that the reason we were in those workshops was to learn how to do it "their way," but with little attention to the big picture of intercultural competence development to help decide how, when, and why to adapt. We didn't really get close to the question, "How can we adapt to behavior which is counter to our values – not consistent with what we believe to be right and wrong organizational behavior?" Why are we learning about how to try and interact with other cultures instead of learning how to talk directly with intercultural counterparts in order to collaborate on decisions about who should adapt and how in the here and now?

Suzanne
With a large global organization like Apollo Productions, you must have needed support from other providers besides Talaria.

Marian
Right, you would think so. We chose Talaria as our primary provider because they are a boutique organization. Their business model is to work with a single client, or perhaps just a few clients at a time. They started out doing the TIIS Workshop at our headquarters office and then that expanded to a global roll-out, in which they spent all of their time with Apollo for a few months. The TIIS Workshop and TFM are both very idiosyncratic. They felt, at the time, that it was best to do it themselves to maintain the quality and consistency. Over the past couple of years, they have started collaborating with other facilitators and have become a bit larger. But I would still consider them a boutique operation. In particular, we became sold on them when we saw the effectiveness of TIIS and TFM with our employees in Asia, Latin America and   Africa. We realized the universality of these two interventions.

Suzanne
So now you use the Talaria Intercultural Interaction Skills as a workplace performance model for managing cultural differences. Surely, there must have been other kinds of workplace performance models for managing cultural differences before that?

Marian
As far as I know, there really wasn't much. You know, Patrick first started developing this model based on interactions he was having as an intercultural competence development facilitator and manager over the course of nine years of working and living in Asia. He was beginning to incorporate elements of the current TIIS model in his training and management, but wasn't really that conscious of it at first. I do know that a guy named Joerg Schmitz influenced Patrick when Schmitz began writing in a systematic way about something similar to TIIS. Apparently, he had developed a fairly universal process for openly discussing cultural differences and then negotiating their resolution. Patrick said that Schmitz' work helped him to conceptually better understand differences between style-switching and reciprocal adaptation. The terms Schmitz used were "cultural dialogue" and "cultural mentoring." Schmitz also provided some good model dialogues to demonstrate what cultural dialogues should look like in the workplace. I don't know whether or not Schmitz and/or his organization ever really worked on this extensively. If they did, I don't know what means they used to transfer the learning of the processes to workplace performance. You can read Schmitz' book, *Cultural Orientations Guide*, for more detail. It's still in print and it is quite good. I think it might be good for your readers to keep in mind that, as Reinart

would say, the "tellin' is much better accomplished after doin' the showin' first." This would apply to any kind of workplace performance changing intervention. Talaria has developed "accelerated learning activities" in which Patrick or Reinart can enable you to experience a slice of the TIIS Workshop and give you a fairly good sense of it from a one-hour experience. Even better if you have two hours to spare!

Suzanne
Am I right that the TIIS Workshop can be done in any intercultural work context?

Marian
(responds with the comment below)

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So, through Talaria, we began to understand that our intercultural work needed a universal set of workplace skills that would enable us to interact effectively with counterparts. Universal means that it is as relevant to a senior global leader as it is to a staff engineer who is part of a multicultural team. The skills enable us to effectively manage cultural differences – the core competency involved within any intercultural work context, whether it is global leadership, teams, global diversity and inclusion or working with specific cultures. We use the TIIS model as the foundation for any kind of intercultural competence development program. Suzanne, you have seen here during your visit to Apollo that we are truly establishing a common intercultural language and process for reconciling cultural differences.

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Suzanne
Can I get a little more detail on the TIIS Workshop and TFM method?

Marian
Let me do this – let me give you a brief hand-out I brought along to give just an overview of both Talaria interventions. After you look that over, we can get into the dialectic.

Suzanne: Excellent. I really appreciate the preparation you put into our meeting Marian.

Marian: Sure, glad to do it Suzanne. Also, of course the publicity we get feeds into our ability to attract, retain, and develop talent, so I appreciate our time together as well. Besides, our exchanges of song and book references are fun!

(Marian hands out the following overview for Suzanne)

Talaria's Two Key Performance-Based Interventions: Brief Overview

Talaria uses two intercultural competence development interventions; the TIIS Workshop to primarily address the ends, and TFM - the workshop's Learning & Performance process - to primarily address the means. When used in concert with each other, they result in a potential high degree of learning transfer to effective job-based performance.

TFM
The Talaria Facilitation Method (TFM) is used to facilitate and structure the discussion phase of experiential learning activities toward workplace performance improvement. Experiential activities include real world problem posing scenarios put into forms such as critical incidents, longer case studies, and role-plays. Applying the critical adult learning principles of experiential and problem-solving learning, it is a method that can be used with participant groups for any kind of human interaction skill (soft-skill) development, including intercultural competence development. Talaria Intercultural's Patrick Burns created the method more than 25 years ago. It is a universally-applicable tool that he has used for many years in training trainers to effectively apply the experiential and problem-solving approach. It is especially powerful when used by trainers and with participant audiences from hierarchical, indirect and risk-averse cultures. The elements comprising TFM systematically provide conditions whereby typical participants from hierarchical, indirect and risk-averse cultures learn how to safely and comfortably participate in an active, independent and assertive learning mode. Facilitators from those cultures learn

how to facilitate a participatory learning/performance process. A by-product of participating in the method is overall problem-solving skill enhancement.

Not only does TFM enable facilitators to work more effectively in multicultural training program and problem-solving meeting facilitation, it is a tremendous vehicle for accelerating intercultural competence. Barbara Baker, a former faculty member at the School for International Training, wrote the following regarding TFM:

> I see this product as being very useful to the general field of intercultural training. It strikes me as a simple, concrete tool that can be readily explained and utilized, and instrumental in effecting profound changes in training and learning styles...it provides a structured, non-threatening means to encourage and accept various opinions, to think about the consequences of different choices, and to experience creative problem-solving.....I see another application of the method with adolescent and young adult groups to encourage the development of responsible decision making.

Apollo Productions has nearly 50 facilitators worldwide who have participated in the Develop the Facilitators workshop and become certified to use it. I will refer you to a more detailed description of TFM and wanted to mention it now too because it is the core of the TIIS Workshop learning & performance process.

Talaria Intercultural Interaction Skills (TIIS) Workshop

The TIIS Workshop is a capacity-building and job-based performance improvement program. Participants accelerate behavioral intercultural competence through development of a specific and concrete set of universally applicable interaction skills which enable them to better perform the critical intercultural competency - managing cultural differences.

These skills comprise the TIIS model, which is the foundation of the workshop.

TIIS Skills Model Outline

The skills enable intercultural counterparts to **proactively and openly collaborate** with each other through application of the following three primary behaviors:

1) Questioning cultural assumptions

2) Recognizing and explaining cultural differences and similarities

3) Together with counterparts, determining the type of cultural adaptation needed to accomplish relevant organizational goals.

   The three numbered items above are the model's primary behaviors. There are 11 progressive and specific skills grouped among the three primary behaviors.

During the workshop, the skill model is presented and practiced in several different forms, including those below:

➢ Facilitator modeling with accompanying participant feedback
➢ Modeling by characters in experiential learning activities, such as enacted dramas, written critical incidents, and guided visualizations. The source of critical incidents is often the participants' own past experience.
➢ Participant practice and accompanying feedback from other participants and the facilitator.

Workshop participants develop the capacity to apply the skill model in the workplace. It is a strategic model in that it can be practiced and adjusted within an environment of dynamically changing circumstances. The skills can be practiced in any culture with any cultural group. They are also helpful for resolving cultural differences within any human work process that is impacted by cultural differences, such as leadership, decision making, problem solving, performance management, managing teams, and managing conflict.

It is also strategic because it serves as a foundation for further intercultural competence learning and performance activities. Many past TIIS Workshop participants have remarked that if they had participated in the TIIS Workshop first, they would have benefitted more from prior participation in global/intercultural training programs such as Leadership, Teams, Working with Culture Z, Global Diversity and Inclusion, and Working in a Matrix. The TIIS Model identifies a core set of interaction skills that can be used to manage cultural differences in any intercultural/global work context.

When used most effectively, the TIIS skills are the foundation of any Intercultural Competence Development program context, such as those identified in the paragraph above.
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(Suzanne and Marian have finished discussing the intervention overview).

Marian
Unless you have any questions, let's get into critical consciousness and the dialectic.

Suzanne
Great, I am very curious!

Part III - The Intercultural Dialectic and Critical Awareness

The Dialectic's Beginnings

Marian
So, as we started to work with Talaria, particularly in the TIIS workshop and TFM Develop-the-Facilitator workshop. We identified a group of five people, including me, in the Global Learning and Performance Group who would guide our intercultural competence development strategy. We five, who hailed from four different national cultures and who all had fairly extensive intercultural experience, were accelerating our competence level at a fairly brisk pace, thanks to the facilitated learning inputs from Talaria.

In one meeting, we were talking about the dynamics of adaptation and the forces that work against people adapting. We were using the TIIS skills during our discussion. In addition to the lack of intercultural critical consciousness that enables us to even see cultural differences, what is it deep down that can prevent people from any culture to readily adapt? The example we were hashing over was that some cultures value handling power dynamics in an egalitarian way whereas other cultures value hierarchical power relationships. We could see how these two values and the behaviors they drive are in opposition to each other. It was difficult for Westerners to adapt in a heavy way to hierarchical behaviors such as establishing an almost paternal relationship with their direct reports and micromanaging by initiating all their direct reports' work and actively monitoring their direct reports. When they tried these behaviors, they often felt like dictators and ogres, which made it challenging to authentically adapt. Conversely, most Asian managers, for example, had a hard time adapting to the more egalitarian leadership and management behaviors. These behaviors generated a perception of weakness and ineffectiveness. The discussion was fairly intense because a Chinese member of our group was currently struggling with overseeing a multicultural team whose members were primarily Swedish and based in Sweden. On the other hand, another member of our group was Canadian and having some challenges working with a predominately Mexican group in Mexico.

At one point in the discussion, seemingly out of the blue, Claude, the French member of our group of five, quietly said, "Hey, this is a kind of intercultural dialectic." The other four of us looked quizzically at each other. I was thinking that Claude must have been daydreaming and had accidentally spoken out loud.

Claude looked at our inquiring looks and then went on somewhat excitedly:

> You see, we are exploring two seemingly opposing ideas. In our discussion today, we have identified that, within our own separate cultures, one way is generally the right way and the other is wrong. We realize that this right and wrong is not so relevant interculturally, that we are not searching for a final answer that is either right or wrong. We have established that the adaptation decision depends more upon what is effective – which behavior, in the specified cultural context, will accomplish our group's goals and contribute to organizational effectiveness. It is this common group goal which really acts as the catalyst for dialectical explorations. The Oxford Dictionary defines dialectical as, "*the process of thought by which apparent contradictions are seen to be part of a higher truth*." This means that two opposing ideas can be true at the same time and there is always more than one way to think about a situation. We are not engaged in trying to make each other comfortable as much as we are trying to help each other to accept discomfort rather than struggle with it. Using the TIIS skills, we have been entering into the two core dialectical strategies; problem solving and validation. We have been validating our two colleagues' feelings and thoughts and hopefully they have been self-validating. The TIIS Empathy skill is significant for this validation to take place. In the dialectic, this kind of validation should make the prospect of change seem more possible. At its heart, any kind of dialectic searches for a balance between acceptance and change.

I asked Claude how he came up with this and he said that in a previous life he had been a psychologist and had used Dialectical Behavior Therapy. He said that it hit just at that moment in the meeting that we could use the basic principles of that approach to help people understand cultural adaptation.

Suzanne
So, I assume you didn't ask everyone to go into therapy (laughing)?

Marian
No, we didn't get into head shrinking, but we adopted the dialectic principles and found that the intercultural dialectic framed the adaptation experience in a way that employees could understand. The phrase "accept discomfort rather than struggle with trying to find comfort"was key. Having this discomfort validated by the group of people around you is one of the dynamics in our "being in this together." Dialectical discussions address the question, "How can we authentically behave in ways that are counter to our values?" There are several significant types of opposing ideas, or contradictions, in our search for authentic adaptation. First, there is the overall contradiction of acceptance vs. change. Then there is the organizational cultural value contradiction; collectivism vs. individualism, monochronic vs. polychromic time, relationship vs. task orientation etc.. Third, there is difference vs. similarity . Validating someone's cultural similarity mindset prepares them for learning about how it is somewhat dysfunctional and works against meaningful intercultural relationships. It also helps them to prepare for the discomfort in the beginning stages of cultural difference acceptance.

The dialectical investigations of contradictory intercultural forces, through use of the TIIS skills, also helps people to develop a few other related skills which contribute to their intercultural competence, including:
- Increased awareness of their emotions, which is closely related to the TIIS skill, "can self-regulate need for control and certainty, and tolerate lack of interaction closure and ambiguity."
-Increased ability to validate other's views, which is closely related to the TIIS empathy skill.
-Increased ability to balance your needs with the demands of others, which is closely related to the TIIS skill, "can practice behavioral flexibility – can style switch to partners' business practices and communication styles in order to achieve organizational goals and maintain relationships.

Suzanne
As we are talking about this, my memory travels back to a college philosophy course. We studied Socrates and Plato. Didn't Plato use something he called the dialectical method?

Marian

And they say that we don't use our college education in the real world! (both laughing). Yes, I don't know a lot about it, but basically with that method, two or more people would express opposing views toward establishing the truth of the matter. Think back on the meeting in which the intercultural dialectic idea was hatched. Since we believe in cultural relativism – not everyone does – we know that we can't find more truth in egalitarian practices than in hierarchical practices. The truth in each culture is not more or less, but just different. For our dialectical discussions, the truth is not something lofty, but rather you could say the truth is utilitarian. The practices that should be used are the ones that will contribute to organizational effectiveness. Those of us in multicultural organizations have a great opportunity to integrate our various members' cultural practices through this galvanizing and unifying notion of a common goal.

This has to do with the dynamic of opposing forces in our life and how we deal with them. A dialectic exists when you have thoughts and/or feelings that are opposites, contradictory, or in competition. There is often a black and white or all or nothing dynamic that accompanies it. Here's what I mean….whether it is between cultures or within our own culture, we deal with opposing forces on a daily basis. You want to contribute to charity but also want to build up wealth for the sake of your family, Christianity teaches charity and forgiveness and then we go to our corporate cube and try to smash the competition. This is natural, but most people, at least in our culture, are not conscious of the dynamic. This causes the dynamic to be a contradiction, which is negative and can cause undue anxiety and neuroses. Most people want to be in a state of certainty – to be free of doubt. They view doubt as some kind of weakness and so they often unconsciously deny the opposing part of the contradiction when acting. Just as cultural differences are hidden from most people, the unity of the opposing forces is hidden from most people. On top of that, my personal belief is that as Americans, our penchant for action and decisiveness over observation and reflection further perpetuates the contradictory state.

The goal is to see that the inherent contradictions aren't negative. In other words, they don't have to be dual forces which work against each other. In order for that to happen, critical consciousness of the duality is necessary. The resolution of this contradictory state is to reach a level of consciousness in which you can take two opposing viewpoints and see the truth and/or the possibility that both can be good, useful, and/or beneficial etc. Then an acceptance of the opposing forces is possible. Conscious acceptance of the competing forces results in the ability to more evenly select actions that balance the various competing needs of the people around you (including yourself) in various situations. This then is a transition from the contradictory state (negative and unconscious) of the dialectic to what we at Apollo Productions call a state of paradox acceptance (positive and conscious).

We started making strides once our consciousness shifted to the understanding that cultural differences can be viewed as a positive and productive paradox and are not necessarily a contradiction. It was this dynamic that helped us to get over a major hump in the road on the way to fluent intercultural competence.

The accepted paradox means that we act in opposition to our values but it is not a contradiction. We see that it is for the greater good of the organization and that means for us individually as well. Also, we are rewarded by a type of relationship depth with our counterparts that we could never have with people from our own culture. We see that both ways are true according to our cultural values. We need to have the dialectical discussions with our counterparts. TIIS is like a tool you can use to build a dialectical discussion. Without the direct and open communication with counterparts, our adaptation level would have remained stunted.

Suzanne

You know Marian, I really have inductive learning tendencies. Can you illustrate this dialectic dynamic in our intercultural adaptation context?

(Go to the next page.)

A Case of Heavy Adaptation

Marian
Sure Suzanne. You know, everyone needs a lot of illustrations and examples to understand this abstract stuff. That's why we use experiential problem solving learning methodology!

If you can give equal consideration and respect to both or all opposing viewpoints, you will likely be able to craft better solutions to the contradiction and, in so doing, create an accepted paradox. Thoughtful reflection is one way to do this. The other way to do it is to enter into dialectical discussions with other multicultural groups and/or individuals using the TIIS skills. Again, whether or not you manage to sincerely respect all viewpoints, the common goal is always in mind. One of the TIIS skills is the fluent ability to adapt behavior to any specific intercultural context in which you operate, resulting in making everyone involved successful. This skill is related to the general dialectic skill of balancing your own needs with others. By giving respect and consideration to all viewpoints, different configurations of adaptation to solve the intercultural problem will usually emerge. Sometimes it is a straightforward, fairly complete adaptation to one other culture. Sometimes the adaptation solution will be a new unique behavior, or combination of behaviors. We came to call this type of adaptation "heavy adaptation." Let me relate the following example to you.

Two years ago, Robert, one of my colleagues with a fairly fluent intercultural competence level, was given a two to three-year expat assignment to Nigeria...

Suzanne
Sorry to interrupt, but I actually was wondering how this all works with expats compared to people who do just short-term work assignments. You know, my journal's audience is particularly interested in the global mobility area.

Marian
Sure, that's OK Suzanne. In answer to that question I would say, even corporate relo refugees need love too.

Suzanne
(looks curiously at Marian) I'm afraid to ask where this one is going...(playfully)

Marian
(laughing) Oh, Suzanne, I hope you don't mind these song and book references – they just help me to integrate my intercultural understanding with the non-intercultural world.

Suzanne
No, not at all Marian! I do the same thing all the time.

Marian
All right, your question couldn't help but bring to mind James McMurtry and his song "Out Here in the Middle." It's an oldy but goody.

Suzanne
James McMurtry? I don't know of him. Is he any relation to the novelist Larry McMurtry?

Marian
Is he ever! James is Larry's son. I've enjoyed reading several of Larry's books. I was always struck by the mastery with which he could create a sense of place – a particular kind of American sense of place. A few years ago, I discovered James and his music. Once I heard him, I couldn't believe that I hadn't heard of him before. Anyway, it is uncanny how he does the same thing as his father – creating a sense of place and vivid characters, only he does it through the medium of rock and roll, blues, and a little bit of funk thrown in.

Suzanne
So, how does the song you mentioned relate?

Marian
A few years ago, I took a sabbatical from Apollo. We have a benefit where you can do that and then return to your position. So, I took a couple of months to write the outline of a book I had always been thinking about. Even over the years of full-time employment, I would write pieces in my free time.

So, I stayed in a small and very quiet Midwestern town in the heart of a particularly frigid winter, so that there would be no distractions. It is the kind of town where everybody waves at you as they drive by. Everyone knows everyone. In the diner where I had breakfast each morning, people would almost always greet others with the same question, "Whadda ya know Hank? Or What's new Hank?" to which Hank would inevitably reply to either question, "Not much Norm." I grew up in that kind of town. I could really understand the people there and it was kind of nostalgic for me. Anyway, one evening I was listening online to Pandora radio and this song I mentioned came on. It was like nothing I had ever heard. McMurtry was actually fairly prolific, so I listened to most of his catalogue over the two months there. I associate his music with my writing time and stay in that small town. I like his style of rock and roll rhythm and the lyrics, as I mentioned, chronicle an America that most of our intercultural colleagues usually won't ever see and would have a hard time understanding. In addition, this song was very poignant because my fiancé at the time wasn't with me. He was working in Bhutan.

Suzanne
So, can you give me more of a flavor of McMurtry – perhaps sing a few verses?

Marian
Sure, I'd love to sing a verse. Just bear with my singing ability. Hopefully I can carry the tune just enough…
(Marian sings)

> We got tractor pulls and Red Man chew
> Corporate relo refugees that need love too
> We ain't seen Elvis in a year or two
>
> We got justification for wealth and greed
> Amber waves of grain and bathtub speed
> We even got Starbucks
> What else you need?
>
> (chorus)
> Out here in the middle
> Where the center's on the right
> And the ghost of William Jennings Bryan preaches every night
> To save the lonely souls
> in the dashboard lights
> Wish you were here my love
> Wish you were here my love

["Out Here in the Middle," *James McMurtry and the Heartless Bastards, Live in Aught-Three*]

Suzanne
That's quite good Marian. I am definitely going to check into his music.

Marian
Oh, and to answer your question about the relevance of the dialectic to expats, our intercultural competence development efforts relate to every context of intercultural work, whether it be expats, global teams, leaders, global diversity and inclusion, or learning to work with a specific culture. The TIIS Workshop is a foundational experience for people working in any of those contexts. When we first started

doing the workshop, we got feedback from participants that they would have benefitted more from expat, leadership and teams workshops if they had first participated in the TIIS workshop. The TIIS workshop helps people to understand the large picture of intercultural competence development and then learn the needed skills to realize it in workplace performance. Now, the TIIS skills model is integrated into all of our intercultural workshops and coaching programs.

Anyway, going back to an example of the relationship between adaptation and the dialectic... Two years ago, Robert, one of my colleagues with a fairly fluent intercultural competence level, was given a two to three-year expat assignment to Nigeria, where his staff had a relatively low level of intercultural competence...I can use the same aspect of his experience there as we were talking about earlier – the hierarchical and egalitarian contradiction. On the one hand, his core value was strongly egalitarian. His Nigerian direct reports had a strong preference for hierarchical relationships. So, his organizational mission could be successfully accomplished only if his direct reports adapted to more egalitarian behaviors. This had to do with a lean organizational structure and the need to prepare the Nigerian staff for assignments in Europe and North America. So, there was a contradiction – he would fail if the staff continued to act according to their values. On the other hand...there are a lot of "on the other hands" expressed in dialectical discussions Suzanne...

Suzanne
I see that.

Marian
So, on the other hand, Robert would likely be unable to gain credibility as their manager, in the form of trust and respect, if he practiced egalitarian management practices. This was likely another failure situation. So, it looks like a rock and a hard place, right? He came up with the following strategy, which I will simplify. He determined that he would basically adapt to the hierarchical practices during his first three to four months there, or until he gained credibility as their manager. It was uncomfortable for him because he felt like a micro-manager. But because he was adept in the intercultural dialectic, he could float along with this discomfort, knowing it would lead to a greater success in the end. Also, he had validated for himself that it was natural to feel this discomfort and that it is like just another part of the job when you work within an intercultural context. So, he closely monitored people, directed from the top down, got to know his employees' personal lives, acted as a mentor, and used hierarchical performance management practices. By the end of three months, he was tired! This kind of adaptation takes energy out of you. After the first three months, he had established an adequate degree of credibility so that he could, in effect, use the *cred* to facilitate the performance changes in his staff. This effort required him to also do a fair amount of intercultural training and coaching. He of course used the TIIS skills extensively to accomplish this.

Robert related to me that after this assignment he had gained a greater appreciation of the hierarchical values and their resultant behaviors. That is what happens when you actually act out the viewpoint that is in opposition to your own. Now, Robert is steeped in the dialectic and has a fluent level of intercultural competence. He said, "Now when I move in and out of different cultures, it is like pushing a button to go back and forth between different cultural behaviors."

Suzanne
That was helpful Marian. Can you explain the difference between light and heavy adaptation?

Marian
Well, briefly, light adaptation is when you can use chopsticks in Japan or hold individual meetings before a group meeting with hierarchical and risk-averse employees. Light adaptation doesn't involve nearly as much ambiguity, emotion, or need to create something new and unique to the situation, like in Robert's case.

The TFM process and TIIS model are actually cases of heavy adaptation. When you observe them you will see their universality.

In the case of TFM, Patrick created it some years back when he was working in a large cross-cultural training program located in the Philippines. The program was located in a United Nations Refugee Processing Center there. The training participants were Vietnamese, Laotian and Cambodian refugees. You might remember the "boat people" phenomenon which occurred after the Vietnam War?

Suzanne
Sure, a friend of mine used to work for the International Commission on Migration.

Marian
So anyway, his role was to train and oversee teams of Filipino trainers who were doing cross-cultural training with the refugees in order to prepare them for resettlement here in the United States. He soon discovered that the goals of the training program, which of course were all behavioral, could not be accomplished in the current cultural milieu that drove the training/learning process. The Filipino trainers came mostly from formal education backgrounds – school teachers and principals. The classrooms were characterized by prescription, high power distance between trainers and participants (of course they were referred to as students and teachers there), teacher-centered interaction and a one-way didactic and prescriptive approach to instruction. In short, it was much like what a school in the Philippines or Laos was like.

He knew that behavior change could best be achieved by using experiential problem-solving methods and applying adult learning principles, which are based on egalitarian, direct communication, and risk-tolerant values. Therefore, the trainers and participants couldn't engage unless the experiential learning activities approach and adult learning principles were somehow adapted for their use. TFM emerged from that assessment. By the way, everything is relative in our field. Five years ago, our views of the participant and trainer roles weren't all that different from the Asian context in which Patrick found himself. TFM is the core component of the TIIS learning and performance process, so the workshop enables universal cultural participation and facilitation. The TIIS skill model is also of course universal. We can de-brief this as a heavy adaptation example once you participate in the program.

Suzanne
Great, thanks Marian….Can you just speak a little bit more about the dialectic?

Marian
Sure Suzanne. Even five years ago, we had of course already experienced some cultural training in which we had learned about different cultural value dimensions. We were faced with the prospects of style-switching to behaviors that weren't consistent with our own values. Now, how did most organizations handle this dialectic? How did we handle this dialectic back then?

Suzanne
Well, I can guess at a few things. First of all, you probably didn't handle it, but rather avoided it.

Marian
Right you are! I think this is a common dynamic with the dialectic, whether intracultural or intercultural. Getting to paradoxical acceptance is hard work and at times painful. One can be challenged with tons of ambiguity, challenges to personal and cultural values, increased fear of failure, identity confusion and feeling like you are a stranger in a strange land. That is, you experience these uncomfortable and unfamiliar feelings and thoughts - **if all is going well -** on the way to paradox acceptance (laughing loudly).

Suzanne
Yes, no pain no gain, right? I know this is not a conscious thing, but probably one of the reasons people remain stuck in a stage of minimization – "all cultures are the same" - is to avoid having to face the dialectic at all. As you mentioned earlier, the dominant/nondominant accommodation dynamic probably perpetuates this contradictory state. Also, I can guess that people tend to stereotype, partly out of fear and ignorance, partly as an over-simplification dynamic and, overall, out of a lack of intercultural competence fluency. They probably look at those value dimensions on a kind of black or white scale, which you mentioned is typically part of a dialectical contradiction – all or nothing.

Can you explain a bit more about the relationship between TIIS, dialectical discussions and how they affect adaptation decisions?

Marian
Hey Suzanne, you are talking like an Apollo Productions person…maybe you would like to apply for a job here. So anyway, in order for us to effectively work together at a high level and establish deep relationships in an extremely diverse context, we needed a process for resolving this dialectic – this intercultural dialectic. As I mentioned earlier, the state of intercultural competence at that time was one in which we were all inside of ourselves. We needed to get outside ourselves and have dialectical discussions.

This consisted of multicultural pairs and groups discussing the opposing ideas, emotions and thoughts involved in their work together. With this discussion, coming to some resolution and acceptance of the opposing forces was possible, making conscious decisions about cultural adaptation more effective and complete. At first, we used our intercultural facilitators to moderate these discussions. Remember, our intercultural facilitators were at a high level of intercultural competence.

There were three precepts to our dialectical discussions:

First, our primary dialectical discussion tool is the TIIS skills model. Through the TIIS Workshop, we had already been learning and using the skills in the workplace, but we didn't have this dialectic conceptualization. So, once we became conscious of the dialectical process, it put our use of the skill model into an even clearer perspective – you know, we could then better see the forest for the trees. This also was really the great catalyst to us seeing that consciousness and skill are both built through a reflexive relationship with each other. They simultaneously feed off of each other in an integrated manner. This eliminated the previous segmented approach to intercultural competence in which people believed that we first needed some kind of total internal cultural awareness and then we could proceed to applying this awareness to new behavior.

Secondly, we all accepted that adaptation is hard work and that we are all in this together, in contrast to the old diversity and inclusion mantra "embrace the differences." We realized that some meaningful adaptations are done begrudgingly.

The third thing was realizing that we have a common goal – organizational success. We are in this organization to primarily achieve a common goal, to gain intercultural competence not because it is "the right thing to do," but rather because it is the effective thing to do. Five years ago, it was common to hear our CEO say something like, "We will diligently pursue global diversity and inclusion because it is the right thing to do." Yay, we are doing the right thing! It was that killer celebration dynamic again Suzanne. We have a saying within the Global Learning and Performance Group now, "If they say it is the right thing to do, it probably isn't."

Suzanne
Hmm, is the development of cynicism part of the intercultural competence development process?

Marian
(laughing) Well you know Suzanne, having thick skin is still a part of the gig – it's needed protection.

Suzanne
So, did the people at Talaria Intercultural have a background in dialectics?

Marian
Not exactly. I mean, Patrick devised the TIIS skill model based on a simple literature review and his own intercultural experience over the years. He was surprised when we came to him after our meeting in which Claude originated the dialectic notion. Patrick loved the serendipity of the interrelationship between the dialectic and the TIIS skill model. It was also consistent with Talaria's capacity building approach. We demonstrated that we were transitioning into a more self-sufficient mode; better able to solve our own intercultural organizational challenges.

Suzanne
What kind of literature review did Patrick conduct?

Marian
He basically started out by researching the question, "What are the concrete and observable behaviors that reflect a high degree of intercultural interaction skill?" He spent a lot of time on it. He of course found that many of the definitions of intercultural competence were more awareness and knowledge oriented than behavioral and specific. He said at first he found thirty-some behaviors. Then he used the Constant Comparative Method – a data analysis method used in qualitative research. With this method, you basically narrow down your results by using, in this case, the common behaviors found in all of your sources. This got him down to around 23 I think. Then he synthesized, integrated and prioritized to get these 23 into 11 skills. This is a number that is practical for development purposes. He had been using the skills a lot over the years of his working and living in other cultures, but of course wasn't so conscious of what he was doing and hadn't framed it into a systematic model. His own experience contributed to the final shape of the TIIS model as much as anything.

Suzanne
It sounds like you really got into the qualitative research aspect of this with Patrick.

Marian
Yes, I certainly did. We need more qualitative and action research. Getting back to the dialectic, there is another benefit to our people developing dialectical abilities. One, they use this ability in their personal lives as well. This ability, which most people don't have, helps to stabilize people's lives. They become more conscious of the contradictions in their own lives and find a better balance between acceptance and change. They also find better balance between fulfilling their own needs and responding to the demands of others. Lastly, they don't feel the need to conform to societal behaviors as much as they did before. In short, they are happier.

So, in summary I would say that the Intercultural Dialectic really propelled us. It helped people to conceptually understand the practices of explaining cultural differences and adapting to achieve organizational goals. The TIIS skills model is the tool we use to hold dialectical discussions. Intercultural work organizations are a great place to develop the ability to see truth in two opposing ideas; we have the common group goal as the galvanizing factor to determine which behavior will be the best among the behaviors, which are all truthful and valid.

Suzanne
Right, hey, let's go have lunch and continue the discussion. I can face my usual daily dialectic between wanting to eat healthy or eat enjoyably……I know that isn't exactly a dialectic example, but at any rate, I am really hungry right now!

Marian
OK, if you'd like, over lunch we can talk about the critical consciousness piece we have developed that complements the dialectic.

Suzanne
Sounds good Marian.

Critical Consciousness – Attacking Magical Thinking

(At the restaurant)

Suzanne
OK Marian, I am looking forward to hearing about this critical consciousness business.

Marian
You know, five years ago, when we started this concentrated intercultural competence development process, we didn't anticipate that we would be enlightened.

Suzanne
Wow, that's kind of a big word Marian (smiling and raising an eyebrow in humor).

Marian
It is Suzanne, that's for sure. I don't mean it as spiritual enlightenment but more like critical consciousness-raising – seeing the light sort of thing. It's like in the beginning of that process the main dynamic was that we were beginning to realize we didn't know that we didn't know. We couldn't see cultural differences because our critical consciousness regarding culture's impact on organizational behavior had not been adequately developed – starting to recognize you don't know that you don't know is a big leap toward the genesis of critical consciousness.

Suzanne
Is it possible to give me a more specific definition of critical consciousness in this context?

Marian
Sure Suzanne. One definition I am particularly fond of came from one of our Latin American employees several years ago. I was de-briefing with her after she had participated in the TIIS workshop and had completed the Intercultural Development Inventory® as part of the workshop. She expressed it this way, "These activities are big learning for me. I have learned something about myself that I didn't even know it existed." To me, the little bit of broken English she used actually enhances the meaning of her message. It was a very articulate way to say, "I didn't know that I didn't know."

You know that Talaria Intercultural was largely responsible for facilitating this five-year long development process. Their work was influenced by the late great Paulo Freire, and in particular his seminal work, *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. He was a Brazilian educator and philosopher who was a leading advocate of critical pedagogy. As the title of his book suggests, his work revolved around the effects of institutional education on perpetuating power inequalities in society. His approach to education is largely designed to reduce these inequalities. It was operationalized in literacy programs in Latin America and Africa during the 60s. His work was threatening to the power elite in Brazil at the time and so he was exiled from Brazil for a number of years. Years later he was vindicated when a new government invited him back and appointed him Minister of Education. Freire is famous for saying, "No matter what kind of educational work you do, if you haven't been fired from a job for trying something new to empower learners, you aren't trying hard enough." I may not have that quote exactly, but you get the idea. While his influence has waned since the heady 60s, to this day he remains a hero for many people involved with nonformal education work and educational reform of formal educational systems in some nations.

Suzanne
So, this seems a bit radical for your organizational setting, doesn't it? Shall I start calling you Comrade (laughing)?

Marian
(laughing along) Right….I don't think our CEO or the shareholders would be very interested in the power changing aspects of Freire's work. However, Freire's work greatly informs us on the dynamics of learning toward behavior change. In our case, we would say, "workplace performance improvement." This is particularly the case when workplace performance improvement is dependent upon a critical consciousness-raising process. This is the case with intercultural workplace performance improvement.

I recommend you check out www. Freire.org for more information, but three of his approaches; 1) conscientization, or critical awareness/conscisousness, 2) *praxis* (action/reflection), and 3) codification, have particularly influenced Talaria and then of course Apollo as well.

Critical Consciousness

Here is a simplification of Freire's definition of critical consciousness:

The process of developing a critical awareness of one's social reality through reflection and action. Action is fundamental because it is the process of changing the reality.

He posited that we all acquire social myths which have a dominant tendency, and so learning is a critical process which depends upon uncovering real problems and actual needs.

We began to look at the minimization of cultural differences around the world as a social myth. In our organizational case, the dominant tendency was manifested in dominant/nondominant culture interactions and relationships. The social myth of cultural similarities helps to perpetuate the assimilation of dominant-culture behaviors by nondominant culture members.

The brief phrase in Freire's definition about 'action changing the reality' is very significant. The other key component is that the action to change reality is a result of reflection and action working simultaneously together. What happened was that intercultural competence, diversity and inclusion, global business – whatever you want to call it – was put into a behavioral perspective through our work with Talaria Intercultural (pausing). Up to that point, there was this mindset and awareness emphasis on global diversity and inclusion and intercultural competence. Looking back on it now, it seems like a kind of magical thinking dynamic. There was this vague idea that in the recesses of our own minds somewhere we could gain this mindset of appreciating and accepting other cultures and that through some kind of symbiosis we would learn from each other and work better together. This vague idea was accompanied by a lot of empty rhetoric that reinforced magical thinking – "leverage diversity, appreciate the synergy, open yourself up to diverse ways of thinking etc etc." (looking frustrated). The rhetoric was empty because people generally couldn't identify the actions associated with those slogans. So, the work Talaria did helped us to realize that you need to take action. The main piece that was missing in intercultural competence development efforts five years ago was lack of a workplace performance description. Something to answer the question, what does workplace performance look like when people are interculturally competent and when groups and organizations are truly inclusive? What specific behaviors do we need in order to collaborate with counterparts to explain cultural differences and then jointly determine who needs to adapt, and how, in order to achieve organizational goals. The Talaria Intercultural Interaction Skills model provided us the foundation for action - specific behaviors that could change our reality and move us toward a critical consciousness of cultural differences and the actions we could take to reconcile the differences.

Praxis (action/reflection)

Freire's take on action and reflection as intertwined processes:

It is not enough for people to come together in dialogue in order to gain knowledge of their social reality. They must act together upon their environment in order critically to reflect upon their reality and so transform it through further action and critical reflection.

Praxis resonated with us. It is about action and reflection, and we would add "facilitated new learning inputs." Transferring knowledge to the action of workplace performance is a reflexive process. Action and reflection interact with each other in a continuous cycle when engaged in experiential problem solving learning. So, TFM also incorporates this dynamic.

Codification

One of Freire's other concepts relevant to us was Codification. Here is how he defined it:

This is a way of gathering information in order to build up a picture (codify) around real situations and real people. De-codification is a process whereby the people in a group begin to identify with aspects of the situation until they feel themselves to be in the situation and so able to reflect critically upon its various aspects, thus gathering understanding. It is like a photographer bringing a picture into focus.

Suzanne

I really can't think of a more succinct description than this of the multi-layered learning and performance process within TFM! The way you described to me the problem solving chart that is created by the participants in the course of an activity seems just like a photo.

Marian

Precisely! Also, I wanted to say one other thing about the effects of the social myth concerning cultural differences minimization. Once we developed intercultural critical awareness, we could see the dominant/nondominant culture dynamics that were previously hidden from us. Take meetings, for example. The meetings seemed great to the dominant culture participants, which in Apollo Productions were white mainstream Americans. The nondominant culture members were generally accommodating to the white mainstream styles of interaction processes such as meeting facilitation and participation, decision-making, performance management etc. The nondominants were basically acting like the white mainstream culture in order to survive! Meanwhile, nondominants would go home at night and talk with their husbands or wives about how hard these Americans were to work with. I remember one conversation in those days with a relationship oriented Tamil colleague, Raj, in which he referred to his American colleagues as robots. He couldn't articulate it at the time but he was talking about the American value of task and achievement orientation. (Suddenly remembering something and excited) Oh you know Suzanne, with enlightenment you begin to see deep-culture evidence all around you, including in books.

Suzanne

Right, not only books, but James McMurtry songs…(laughing)

Marian

Exactly (laughing). When Raj was talking about his robot perception, I could really relate to it. I was reminded of a passage in E.L. Doctorow's novel, *Ragtime*. The following narrator quote is describing typical New Yorkers during the industrial revolution in the early 20th century, "The hard pull of rampant achievement had sucked the life out of their flesh."

Suzanne

Yes, I can relate to that Marian. You know, the Asian colleagues in my group spend almost every evening in virtual meetings with us back here and then continue to work full daily schedules. I don't know how long this acceleration of global business demands can go on before spiraling out of control.

Also, it so happens that I am a Doctorow reader myself. I have a quote from his book, *The Waterworks,* in my bag. Sometimes when I am with my 18-year old son, I pull it out and review it to put our cross-generational interactions in a, shall we say, more neutral perspective. The passage communicates to me that generational differences have always, and will always occur. From that eternal perspective, the differences seem more amenable to me, and that they serve an inevitably positive purpose in our evolution. That is to say, not a pain in the you know what! (Marian laughs).

Here, you can read it for yourself (hands the passage to Marian):
_____

(A young artist hands the older narrator his painting of a younger woman they both know).

> Perhaps it was an effect of the art – it was of such intimacy, this portrait – but I felt that I had stumbled upon the inner workings of this generation.....who were all so different from my own…each in his own character, to be sure, but with this common quality of creating gaps in my understanding of what was happening to them, of what fate they were seeking for themselves….as if I had lost some of my hearing and could not always get the sense of their words, though the tones were clear enough.

_____

Marian

I'm going to have to check out *The Waterworks*.

Suzanne

That reminds me. I have to pick up my son from school in an hour. I think our time has about come to an end for today Marian. It's been a wonderful conversation and I hope I can visit again.

Marian

Well, you're always welcome Suzanne.