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Design for Cross-Cultural Learning by Mildred Sikkema and Agnes Niyekawa. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, 1987. 97 pp.

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As international travel and migration become more common and cultures that used to be geographically separated come into contact, intercultural education is receiving increased recognition, both in the academic world and in popular books such as Hall's (1976) *Beyond Culture*. Indeed, intercultural education teachers and teacher trainers have at their disposal several excellent curriculum guides and training manuals (e.g., Landis & Brislin, 1983; Seelye, 1984).

What distinguishes Mildred Sikkema and Agnes Niyekawa's *Design for Cross-Cultural Learning* from similar guides and manuals is its focus on the design of cross-cultural learning programs that "prepare students to function effectively in any culture or subculture and . . . help them grow toward becoming . . . more flexible and creative" (p. 7). A student in such a cross-cultural learning program is expected by the authors to become "not . . . a specialist in relation to a given culture but . . . a cross-culturally

flexible person who can understand and deal comfortably and effectively with people from different cultures" (p. 20). And the authors believe that programs based on their design can be instituted "anywhere in the educational process from high school through graduate and professional training, or, indeed, in cross-cultural training for adults outside formal educational contexts" (p. 1).

The book begins with two chapters on the psychology of cross-cultural learning. The authors argue that "learning how to learn another culture is a more important goal than learning the specifics of another culture" (p. 18). They believe that this sort of learning requires "learning to cope with ambiguities and experiencing the attendant culture shock" (p. 19). Sikkema & Niyekawa's cross-cultural learning program thus calls for maximization rather than minimization of culture shock. Following this conception of cross-cultural learning, students participating in their program would be told about the nature of cross-cultural learning in general but would have to find out for themselves--by trial and error--the do's and don't's of the particular culture they wish to acquire.

In Chapters 3, 4, and 5, Sikkema & Niyekawa describe the three stages of their program: a) a weekly pre-field seminar during the academic term prior to going abroad, b) the actual field experience of eight weeks in another culture (accompanied by a weekly on-site field seminar and the keeping of a daily journal), and c) a post-field weekly seminar which requires the submission of two written "learning summaries." The final chapter of the book is an analysis of the cultural learning that took place in an actual program based on Sikkema & Niyekawa's model, during which Hawaiian social work students from a "cosmopolitan mix of ethnic groups" (p. 44) spent eight weeks learning the culture of Guam.

Three appendices follow the short (60-page) main text of the book. Appendix A provides specific facts and figures for implementing the authors' design for cross-cultural learning, including the ideal student living arrangements (dormitories are recommended over family homestays); the qualifications of the two faculty members needed to conduct the pre-field, field and post-field seminars; the learning objectives; the course outline; suggested activities and readings; even the grading procedure and number of academic credits students should get for participating in the program (three for the pre-field seminar, four for the field experience, and three for the post-field seminar, a total of ten credits). Appendix B contains a selection of responses and comments made by the

Hawaiian students in the Guam program from their journal entries and field seminar. Appendix C offers suggestions for educators who wish to adapt Sikkema & Niyekawa's model to existing study abroad programs.

Design for Cross-Cultural Learning is, at first glance, an appealing book (ignoring minor problems like excessive repetition of the main points, insufficient variety in the examples, the absence of page numbers in the table of contents, the lack of an index, and an unorthodox citation system). Unlike most curriculum guides that arrive on the desks of educators, it contains a nice mix of theory and practice and calls for a healthy combination of cognitive and affective learning. Moreover, unlike most books on multicultural and intercultural education, it is not about how to teach students particular cultures in the classroom, but about how to get students to independently be able to learn other cultures.

It seems to me, however, that Sikkema & Niyekawa carry this laudable goal a little too far. For while some of the skills acquired in learning a second culture can facilitate the learning of other cultures in the future, to make this the sole aim of an intensive cross-cultural learning program would be a gross injustice to the efforts of both the students and the teachers, not to mention the "native speakers" of the second culture. A similar pedagogical focus would be making students take an intensive second language course not to learn the target language itself but to experience the process of language acquisition and become more adept at learning other languages in the future.

The authors are also unnecessarily rigid, I think, in their recommendations to educators wishing to use their learning design. Appendix A describes in excruciating detail what Sikkema & Niyekawa regard as the ideal cross-cultural learning program. On the other hand, Appendix C, aimed at those who wish to adapt their design to existing international education programs, is only 2 1/2 pages long and comes with a warning that programs the authors have seen that deviated from the basic design were "significantly weaker than those which followed this outline closely" (p. 95). Despite its brevity, however, Appendix C may be the most useful section of the book, since most American (and foreign) academic institutions are unlikely to send students abroad exclusively for cultural learning but may be willing to give greater recognition than they do now to the cultural component of their own study abroad programs.

All in all, *Design for Cross-Cultural Learning* is an interesting book which should prove useful to administrators and designers of both study abroad programs for American students and orientation programs for immigrants and foreign students in this country. But the book should not, I feel, be used as the authoritative manual its authors evidently intend it to be. Rather, it can serve as a source of ideas for improving the cultural learning component of already existing international and intercultural education programs. Language teachers wishing to incorporate "culture" into their language courses would be better advised to consult resources that address their needs more directly (e.g., Damen, 1987; Valdes, 1986).

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One of the more important issues cutting across the various subdisciplines of applied linguistics is the choice of research