



Cross Cultural Mentoring

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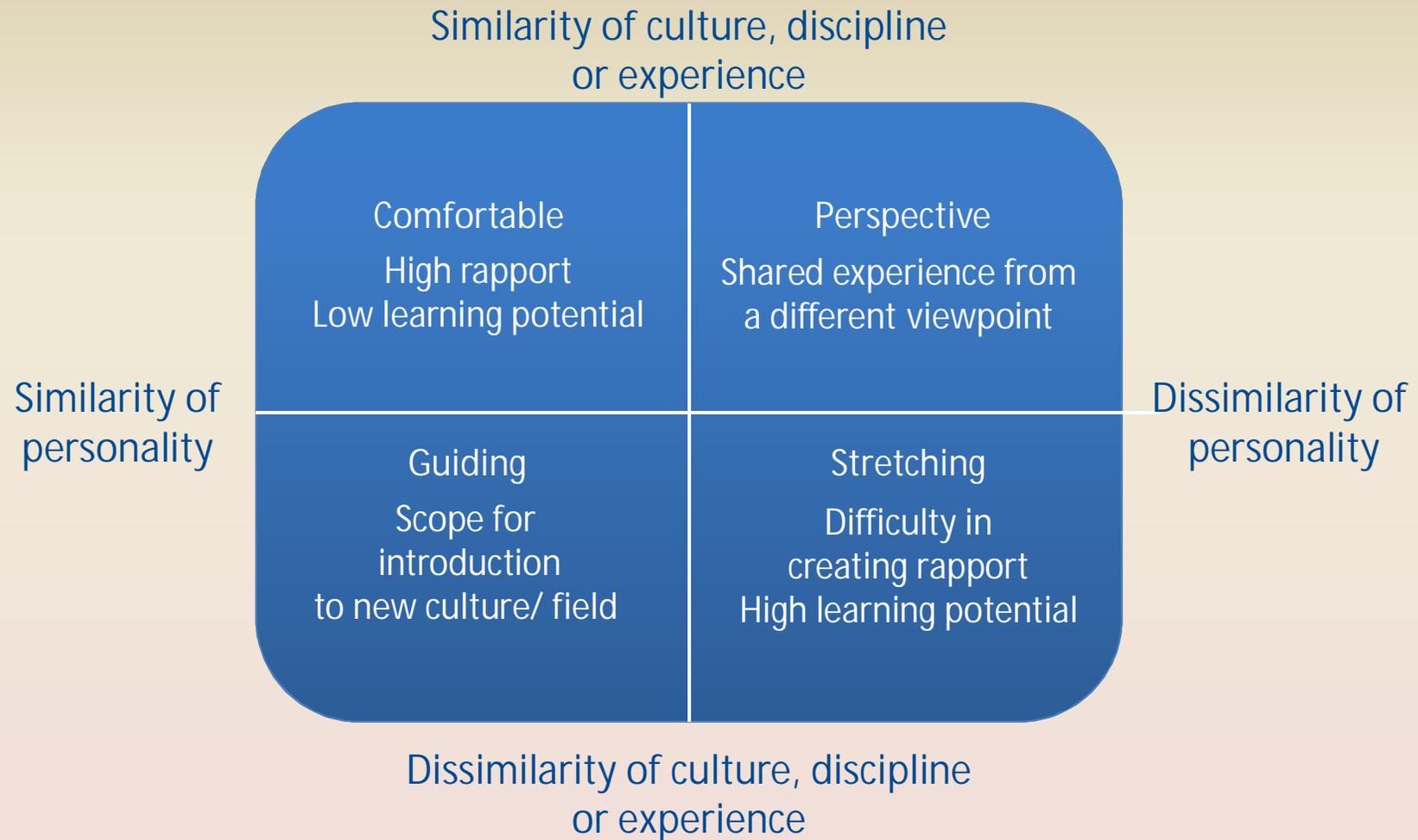
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So which mentoring relationship produces the most learning?

A diverse pair or a more similar pair?

...or is this a trick question?

Choosing who to mentor/be mentored by...



Cross Cultural Mentoring



Abercrombie & Kent



WWF – Magda (Polish Mentee)

- Difficulty talking in English
- Is the mentor's "courage" due to her Danish nature or her personality?
- Finds learning relationships with women easier
- More awkward with English mentor – "beats around the bush"

WWF – Gitte Seeberg (Danish Mentor)

- Language is a problem, Gitte lacks words in English and doesn't remember expressions
- Unsure of leading an organisation in Poland, so Gitte asks lots of questions to explore the differences
- Gitte feels it is not so much Danish/Polish cultural differences, but their personality differences that makes the relationship so interesting.
- They tend to think in the same way, but Magda lacks confidence in her decision making.

So how do you most effectively support cross cultural mentoring?

Do you need to do more than just make the participants aware of the potential challenges?

Cultural Differences

Some questions to ask:

- What might you do differently when you mentor or are mentored by someone who comes from a different culture?
- How might this impact on the way you give advice?
- How can you maintain your self awareness about the cultural differences once you are further into the relationship?

Process for supporting mentors/mentees in cross cultural programmes



1. Establish Your Rapport

Explore, understand and respect the differences

- Spend time building the relationship
- This is more than culture, explore personality, gender, profession, generation, family and life experiences as well
- Find things in common as well as difference
- Describe your different perspectives objectively

2. Bridge the Differences

Use empathy and communication skills to communicate across the differences

- If appropriate, slow speech, make it more distinct, listen carefully, ask more questions
- “Decentre” is actively pushing yourself away from your own “centre.” It involves moving into the mind of the other person to send messages in a way the other will understand, and to listen in a way that allows you to understand them from their own point of view. In effect, one has a bicultural tongue and bicultural ears.
- “Recentre” and establish a common reality and common rules

2. Bridge the Differences (cont)

We can slip up by assuming:

- The other person sees the situation the same way we do.
- The other person is making the same assumptions we are.
- The other person is (or should be) experiencing the same feelings as we are.
- The other person's understanding is (or should be) based on our own logic, not their feelings.
- If a problem occurs, it is the other person who has the "problem" or does not understand the logic of the situation.
- Other cultures are changing and becoming, or want to become, more like our culture and, therefore, the other person is becoming more like us.

3. Ongoing Progression

Ongoing progression in the mentoring relationship:

- Identify and resolve any potential cultural or other challenges in progressing the relationship
- Build on ideas
- Keep working on the relationship's development!