GLOBAL SIM LABS
BEYOND THE EXPECTED

ACADEMIC WHITEPAPER 01 · FOUNDATIONAL PAPER

The Knowing-Doing Gap

From Possessed Capability to Produced Cross-Cultural Performance

> *Competence is not merely something an executive possesses, it is something they must continually produce.*

An executive summary of the foundational paper on capability, conversion and evidence in cross-cultural management performance.

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ABOUT THE PAPER

The full paper is free on request and sent to you directly.

THE ARGUMENT IN BRIEF

Capability is not complete until it survives conversion.

— **Knowledge matters, but it is an input.** Sophisticated intercultural theory already extends beyond cultural awareness. The unresolved question is whether possessed capability becomes effective behaviour when the situation demands it.

— **Performance is produced in motion.** Executives must perceive, interpret, choose, enact, read response and recalibrate while another person is simultaneously interpreting and adapting.

— **Culture is a hypothesis, not a verdict.** National patterns can change probabilities and improve preparation, but they cannot diagnose a particular individual with certainty.

— **Evidence must match the claim.** Knowledge, self-perception, reputation, judgement, observed behaviour and transfer are different forms of evidence. One should not be silently substituted for another.

— **Conditions matter.** Pressure, ambiguity, novelty, status and consequence change the conditions under which capability must be produced. They do not reveal a fixed or hidden "true self".

— **Development should resemble the capability.** If adaptability is the target, development must require behavioural generation, consequence, feedback and recalibration – not merely recognition of the right answer.

CENTRAL PROPOSITION

Competence is not merely something an executive possesses.

It is something they must continually produce.

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ABOUT THE PAPER

THE ARGUMENT IN THREE QUESTIONS

What can your managers actually produce?

A manager can leave a difficult cross-cultural conversation feeling it went well — and still have missed the one thing that mattered. Possessed capability is what a person brings into the room. Produced performance is what becomes visible once those resources have to work.

01 CONVERSION

Do this person's resources actually become effective behaviour, here, now?

02 EVIDENCE

What does what we observed actually justify us claiming?

03 ADAPTATION & TRANSFER

Does the performance hold as the situation changes — and last beyond one encounter?



AN INTEGRATIVE PERFORMANCE HEURISTIC — CAPABILITY CAN FAIL AT ANY STAGE

Culture changes the odds. It does not determine the person.

The same silence can mean several things. Cultural knowledge should widen the list of possible explanations — not close it. The conversation itself is how a manager finds out which one is true.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE

OBSERVATION	The counterpart falls silent after a proposal.
POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS	Deference · weighing the proposal · unclear authority · unspoken disagreement
NEXT USEFUL QUESTION	*"What would need to be true for this to work on your side?"*

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THE FULL PAPER

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It is something they must continually produce.

In the full paper

- Nine sections, from the comfort of knowing to performance evidence
- Culture as hypothesis, not verdict — and why the counterpart moves too
- What counts as effective performance: four domains of consequence
- The evidence gap, and what happens when performance demands rise
- GSL's AER™ lens, five questions for development design, and full references

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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For more than 25 years, Malcolm has worked where expert knowledge meets unfamiliar expectations, across Europe, the USA and Asia. He has coached and advised hundreds of senior executives for the Financial Times and Nikkei, founded and led N4MI, a London-based, 40-person political-risk consultancy, and designed communication programmes for senior officials at the European institutions.

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THE FULL PAPER

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