Preparing Teachers for Diverse Classrooms:

Developing Intercultural Competence

by

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ABSTRACT

This mixed methods study was conducted within a highly diverse K-12 public charter school setting to address a need for targeted professional development related to the development of intercultural competence for teachers in public schools, given the growing gap observed between the cultural backgrounds of K-12 public school teachers and their students. The study examined the influence of a ten-session professional development workshop training series on (a) the development of intercultural competence in teachers as measured by the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) and (b) teacher capacity for self-reflection on potential personal biases, awareness of others from different cultural backgrounds, managing emotions while navigating complex conversations regarding cultural and racial differences, and making meaningful and authentic connections with students and families from the different cultures which make up the school community. The Intercultural Development Continuum and Transformative Learning Theory were utilized as theoretical frameworks for this study. Participants were introduced to concepts related to intercultural competence, engaged in group discussion both in person and online, reviewed tools and strategies for classroom implementation, and completed the Intercultural Development Inventory at the beginning and conclusion of the workshop sessions. Following the series of workshop sessions, quantitative data analysis indicated growth of approximately 14% for the group of participants on the Intercultural Development Continuum, and qualitative data analysis provided evidence of participant progression through the stages of Transformative Learning Theory, resulting in new patterns of action and behavior. Discussion of findings include implications for practice and for further research.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF STUDY

National Context

Approximately 50.8 million students are expected to attend public elementary and secondary schools for the 2019-2020 school year in the United States of America, according to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2019a). The racial and ethnic profile of these students reflects the increasingly diverse population of the country, with more than half of the students attending public schools coming from minority backgrounds. To support the public educational needs of these students, public school systems nationally are expected to employ about 3.2 million full-time-equivalent (FTE) teachers in the fall of 2019. The racial and ethnic profile of these public elementary and secondary school teachers looks considerably different from the students they are teaching. Although minority students (defined as all racial/ethnic groups except for White) account for more than 53% of students attending public elementary and secondary schools in the United States, 80% of their teachers are White (Table 1). Given this growing racial and ethnic disparity, it is crucial to consider whether public school teachers are sufficiently equipped with the skills they require in order to meet the needs of increasingly racially and culturally diverse classrooms.

Table 1

Racial/Ethnic Profile of Public School Students & Teachers (NCES, 2015-2016)

	Students	Teachers
White	46.6%	80%
Hispanic	27.4%	9%
Black	15.2%	7%
Asian	5.3%	2%
Two or more races	4.1%	1%

According to NCES, between 2000 and 2016, the percentage of children ages 5 to 17 who were White decreased from 62 to 52 percent, and the percentage who were Hispanic increased from 16 to 25 percent. Data from NCES for 2015-2016 (NCES, 2019b) further shows that while schools with more racial and ethnic diversity in their student populations also see greater diversity in their teachers, schools comprised almost entirely (90%+) of minority students employ approximately 45% White teachers (see Table 2 below).

Table 2

Public School Demographics and Teacher Backgrounds (NCES, 2015-2016)

School Population	White Teachers	Minority Teachers
<10% minority students	98%	2%
10% - 24% minority students	96%	4%
25% - 49% minority students	90%	10%
50% - 74% minority students	80%	20%
75% -89% minority students	69%	31%
>90% minority students	45%	55%

While the reality of this data portrays far greater numbers of White teachers entering the public education workforce compared to minority teachers, a more significant question is how well prepared are *all* teachers to support the educational needs of an increasingly diverse student population? Research indicates that teacher preparation programs have not been able to sufficiently prepare teachers for the challenges posed by racially diverse classrooms nor the difficult conversations that these teachers engage in with their students while facilitating instruction (Matias, 2013; Howard & Milner, 2014; Lin & Bates, 2014; Utt & Tochluk, 2016; Bloom, Peters, Margolin, & Fragnoli, 2015, 2016).

Marchitello and Trinidad (2019) extensively examined successful teacher preparation programs in minority-serving institutions of higher education and concluded with the following eight essential recommendations for these institutions: (1) conduct a comprehensive curricular review to incorporate diverse perspectives and experiences, (2) incorporate high quality courses dedicated to culturally relevant pedagogy as well as multicultural education and embed their principles throughout the program, (3) guard against overburdening candidates of color with unnecessary responsibility in helping their white peers confront their identities, stereotypes, and biases, (4) expose candidates to diverse settings, students, educators, and experiences across a variety of roles throughout their education and training, (5) align field and classroom experiences and facilitate candidates' critical reflection on those experiences, what they're learning, and how it relates to their own perceptions and beliefs, (6) build strong relationships with districts, charters, families, and community organizations to better prepare candidates for the schools and students they will eventually serve, (7) increase faculty and teacher candidate diversity, and (8) provide trainings on diversity, equity, and inclusion for faculty. Marchitello and Trinidad (2019) go on to state that:

> A key part of preparing all teacher candidates to serve diverse students is ensuring they have the skills necessary to support all students regardless of background and treat them with respect and dignity….to that end, school and organizational leadership should provide ongoing training on diversity, equity, and inclusion. (p. 32)

In other words, teacher preparation programs must intentionally emphasize explicitly helping future teachers identify their own prior experiences as they relate to interacting with students from diverse backgrounds, as well as provide the skills necessary for them to meaningfully and authentically connect with these students.

In reviewing literature related to both pre-service and in-service teacher skills associated with multicultural student instruction, studies indicate that teachers teaching in public elementary and secondary schools do not feel sufficiently equipped to meet the needs of racially and culturally diverse classrooms, primarily due to a lack of adequate preparation as teacher candidates or a lack of professional development as teachers (Castro, 2010; Young; 2010; Yuan, 2018, Bryan-Gooden & Hester, 2018). Young (2010) found that three major challenges facing the implementation of culturally responsive teaching practices include the need to: (a) raise the race consciousness of educators and encourage them to confront their own cultural biases, (b) address systemic roots of racism in school policies and practices, and (c) adequately equip pre- service and in-service teachers with the knowledge of how to implement theories into practice(p. 257).

Ellerbrock, Cruz, Vásquez, and Howes (2016) corroborated this finding, stating that teacher avoidance of diversity-related topics in the classroom typically stem from "a lack of knowledge of diversity issues and little understanding of how to foster supportive and inclusive classroom environments," as well as "few skills for handling potentially inflammatory comments" resulting in teachers feeling inadequately prepared to address the needs of racially and ethnically diverse classroom settings (p. 229). Additionally, a 2018 survey of New York City teachers indicated that less than one in three teachers felt they had received sufficient training during their teacher education programs, professional development in their school working environments, or access to resources in helping them understand how to discuss issues of race and ethnicity in the classroom (Bryan-Gooden & Hester, 2018).

These studies all present a compelling need for more professional development opportunities tailored specifically for pre-service and in-service teachers to adequately prepare them for the diverse classrooms they face. Without specific, targeted, and intentionally-planned professional development, teachers are left to determine how to best respond to the needs and concerns of students on their own, and are often unsure of how to respond in culturally appropriate ways that best support their students and foster a constructive classroom learning environment.

In order to fully prepare teachers for their multicultural classrooms, professional development for pre-service and in-service teachers must include opportunities for critical self- reflection, ways for developing awareness of others, assistance in learning how to manage emotions associated with cultural situations, and strategies for making meaningful connections with their students and their families. The reviewed studies indicated that an intentional emphasis on the development of these types of skills is crucial for teachers to successfully navigate often difficult interactions with students from diverse backgrounds, and providing planned professional development sessions around these key topics is an important step in supporting classroom teachers.

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Local Context

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In 2006, I began working with a small group of individuals to form a K-12 International Baccalaureate public charter school in our North Texas community. In a county experiencing tremendous annual growth with over 750,000 residents at the time, along with an increasingly diverse racial and ethnic population, we saw the need for a college preparatory internationally- focused educational option for area families within the local public education system.

Over the subsequent two years, I had the privilege of spearheading the school's formation process, generating community interest, writing the school's charter application for the Texas State Board of Education, and completing all necessary requirements for approval. This resulted in our charter being awarded in 2008. Our final state approvals were received in 2011, and we opened the school for the 2012-2013 school year serving approximately 950 students in grades K-9. Our school is presently in its ninth year of operation, serving approximately 1,400 students in grades K-12. Since the school's inception, I have held the position of school leader, working closely with our faculty and students to date.

The school's racial and ethnic student demographics changed over time as its academic reputation for offering the rigorous and well-recognized International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum spread locally. In the school's first year of operation, White students made up just over half of the school's population. Now in its ninth year of existence, White students comprise approximately 27% of the school's population. The percentage of minority students at the school has increased significantly from 43.6% in its first year of operation to 72.9% at the present time, with 42 different home languages represented by students (Table 3).

Table 3

Research Location Demographics

School Year	Minority Students	White Students
2012 – 2013	43.6%	56.4%
2013 – 2014	48.5%	51.5%
2014 – 2015	51.9%	48.1%
2015 – 2016	54.9%	45.1%
2016 – 2017	61.1%	38.9%
2017 – 2018	66.5%	33.5%
2018 – 2019	71.6%	28.4%
2019 – 2020	72.9%	27.1%

It is important to note that admission to the school is conducted using an annual random lottery process. Siblings of currently enrolled students and children of faculty/staff members are exempted from the lottery to the extent there is space available. The increase in minority students is primarily attributable to word-of-mouth recommendations from families of enrolled students. As of the fall of 2019, the racial and ethnic profile of 81 teachers at the school is made up of 85.2% White teachers, 2.5% Black teachers, 8.6% Asian teachers, and 3.7% teachers of two or more races. This data largely mirrors national NCES data, with 72.9% of minority students at the school being taught by 85.2% White teachers.

In the following pages, I outline two significant staff development experiences which provided the foundation for this study and helped me further define the problem of practice within my local context, leading to the two primary research questions explored.

Action Research Cycle 1

In February 2019, a cultural sensitivity training session was held for all faculty members to address parent questions regarding the ability of teachers to successfully interact with students of diverse backgrounds. The session was led by a highly-qualified Black female attorney from the school's law firm, who frequently offered this training to the firm's school district clients. The content of the session included an overview of the school's changing demographics, as well as review of the seminal article titled "White Privilege: Unpacking The Invisible Knapsack" by Peggy McIntosh (McIntosh, 2003). The presenter also shared personal vignettes about her own experiences as a Black woman and invited attendees to share their lived social, cultural, and racial experiences as well.

Several staff members took this opportunity to talk about various situations they had personally experienced, with many of them engaging in open vulnerable conversation with each other in a group setting. Following the session, feedback requested from staff members yielded highly emotional responses questioning the purpose of the training and whether such training was necessary at all.

Responses also indicated obvious discomfort with the discussion about race and culture, as well as insight into minority staff member perceptions regarding unconscious bias experienced from colleagues. When asked what participants took away from the session, comments related to their perceptions as to the purpose and necessity of the training included, "Some teachers have issues, but rather than deal with those teachers, we all get a lecture." Another staff member stated her unhappiness with the whole discussion by sharing, " Frustration. I teach at an IB school that is very diverse. If I had racial issues, I would not be teaching here."

One staff member asked, "Why are we having this training? Are we not aware enough?" while another expressed, "I needed to do work in my classroom rather than sit and have implications made about my character," and "I honestly felt that I received nothing of benefit from the last training session." Additional comments included "I'm upset that we had to spend the time on this," as well as "It is obvious that we will make a mountain out of a mole hill." One staff member stated, "I am confident that I treat all my students fairly, regardless of their race/ethnicity, etc., so I do not have any desire to spend more time on this," while another stated "I do not need additional support as I'm confident in my ability, reasoning, and open- mindedness to be inclusive and sensitive to others."

Obvious discomfort with the discussion about race and culture was evidenced by statements such as, "I found the article offensive," and "There was not enough time to discuss how those of us who are *not* a minority are left out," and also that "We should be discussing how whites are now the minority here."

One staff member stated, "I was surprised by the overwhelming emotion (almost anger) that was displayed," and "In all honesty, I did not take away a lot. I felt very uncomfortable and pretty much stopped listening. This was not a productive use of time for me." Another staff member stated, "Some people are hyper-sensitive," while yet another stated, "We need to be better about being able to discuss topics that might be a bit uncomfortable to navigate." One staff member expressed, "People felt attacked and insulted. I was surprised at how intense some of the staff's reactions were," while another staff member explained, "My concerns are that some of my fellow staff members are not willing to have an open and frank discussion about their/our prejudices." Insights from staff members also included an increasing awareness of minority experiences resulting from the session demonstrated by statements such as, "There is a large divide with our staff and our understanding of cultural biases," and "More than anything, I took away that my co-workers are hurt by the carelessness of others." One staff member stated, "We may not think we are being racist, but some comments we make could be viewed that way," while another stated, "Weed out the staff that are intolerant. They can't teach acceptance and appreciation for other cultures and religions if they don't feel it in themselves." Additional comments included "I learnt about filling the cultural gap with better communication and trying to understand other people better," and that "We should be more aware and open-minded to others' beliefs and customs."

Some participants expressed fear of being viewed as racist and potentially altering their behavior as a result, exhibited in comments such as, "I have personally become way more lenient of our African American and Hispanic kids (minorities that commonly get in trouble), just because now I am concerned that I am being a racist. Now I am not being fair to White or Asian students, as I am the same with them in my expectations." Another staff member stated, "The training somehow encourages some black students with behavior issues to continue their behaviors," while another expressed, "It felt as though the issues of the African-American community was the purpose of the training session."

In reviewing the feedback received from staff members, four main themes emerged related to areas in which teachers wanted additional support: (1) how to improve self-reflection on potential personal biases, (2) how to increase awareness of others from different cultural backgrounds, (3) how to manage emotions while navigating complex conversations regarding racial and cultural differences, and (4) how to make meaningful and authentic connections with students and families from the different cultures which make up the school community.

The first theme of **how to improve self-reflection on potential personal biases** was demonstrated in staff comments such as, "I would like a way to become better aware of our own unconscious biases," and "I would like to better understand biases and how to reflect individually on these." One staff member expressed desire for, "Support for people of color and white people both in understanding themselves and where they are better," while another explained, "I would like to discuss/ talk through more scenarios where we can be sensitive to biases and learn more how to teach tolerance both in our actions and in our words."

The second theme of **how to increase awareness of others from different cultural backgrounds** was evident in comments such as, "I wish we could understand other cultures that are represented in our school...for example, what is considered rude or inappropriate that we are unaware of?" and "I would love to hear what it is truly like for other cultures trying to assimilate into our communities. What do they find puzzling? What is offensive? What would they like Anglo teachers to know and understand about them?" Another staff member said:

> I would enjoy actual training in cultural differences that might be helpful in relating to parents and students and coworkers...rather than focusing on slights and biases, or sharing stories and opinions about past wrongs. I would really rather receive information that will help as we move forward. I'm not denying biases and discrimination exist. But I also feel there are a lot of misinterpretations that go on because we don't understand each other and have preconceived ideas...on ALL sides.

The desire to better understand students and families from different cultural backgrounds was also reflected in this comment:

> We spent some time talking about race relations, but we also need training about different cultural norms. We have families from so many different nations at our school, I think we should spend some time getting to know about customs or behavior patterns that may not be like our own culture in America. This training could help us understand why some students, and parents, act the way they do.

Another staff member explained, "I would like a better understanding of the social norms and expectations, as well as the educational norms and expectations of different cultures (not races!)," while another stated, "I would like some more experience about how to interact with people with different cultures, knowing more about their mindsets and why they do what they do." The distinction being made between race and culture is one that participants repeatedly underscored, leading to the necessity of further discussion regarding the connection between the two.

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The third theme of **how to manage emotions while navigating complex conversations regarding racial and cultural differences** was reflected in statements such as, "I wish we could have actually have a discussion about race without getting offended," and "I would like an opportunity to ask questions and discuss topics without others jumping to conclusions about my beliefs. I was surprised about how defensive some staff members became when some of these "hot button" topics were addressed." Another staff member wanted support in, "How to respond when students blame teachers for being racists and we are not," and also, "How to respond to someone who is stating that they discriminated against." One teacher wanted to learn more about, "How to raise awareness of the racism that students use against each other. I would like to see more discussions being had with students as to racism," while another expressed, "I would like to know how we can respectfully hold each other accountable for cultural awareness with each other, in our classrooms," and also wanted more assistance in practicing "Empathy exercises/scenarios."

The fourth theme of **how to make meaningful and authentic connections with students and families from the different cultures which make up the school community** was demonstrated in comments such as, "If we want to be connecting with families, it would be helpful to know some items to be sensitive to when speaking with parents from various cultural backgrounds. Be specific. Give us strategies, insights, and keep it positive," and "I would like support in learning about positive ways to be inclusive with my students." One teacher asked for "small group discussions" in which "teachers from the different programs/age groups can come together to see how teachers deal with race at the different age groups."

The four themes represented in staff responses to the initial cultural sensitivity training emphasized the need for targeted intentional support in these areas for classroom teachers. Their responses underscore the prior research reviewed above that posit teachers are not coming to schools prepared to navigate such nuanced and complex conversations with their students. This leads to the necessity for school leaders and administration teams to create environments conducive to supporting classroom teachers with the skills needed to bridge cultural differences successfully and respectfully.

Action Research Cycle 2

A brief follow-up training session was held in April 2019 with the same presenter returning to the school to continue working with the school's staff and faculty. Given the initial reaction to the first training session, this follow-up session focused on providing teachers with supportive strategies and began with a brief discussion regarding stereotypes, colorblindness, and suggestions on how to talk about race and identity. This was followed by a small group discussion and reflection exercise regarding educators' Common Beliefs using resources from the Teaching Tolerance program of the Southern Poverty Law Center.

As part of this follow-up session, staff members were asked to complete a Common Beliefs survey individually and then discuss their responses within their small groups. Using a scale of 1 – 5 (with 1 being "Agree Strongly" and 5 being "Disagree Strongly"), participants were asked to respond to the 13 statements listed in the table below.

Table 4

Common Beliefs Survey (https://www.tolerance.org/professional-development)

1. I don't think of my students in terms of their race or ethnicity. I am color blind when it comes to my teaching.

2. The gap in the achievement among students of different races is about poverty, not race.

3. Teachers should adapt their instructional practice to the distinctive cultures of African American, Latino, Asian and Native American students.

4. In some cultures, student are embarrassed to speak in front of others so I take this into account and don't call on these students in class.

5. When students come from homes where educational achievement is not a high priority, they often don't do their homework and their parents don't come to school events. This lack of parental support undermines my efforts to teach these students.

6. It is not fair to ask students who are struggling with English to take on challenging academic assignments.

7. I believe that I should reward students who try hard, even if they are not doing well in school because building their self-esteem is important.

8. I try to keep in mind the limits of my students' abilities and give them assignments that I know they can do so that they do not become discouraged.

9. Students of different races and ethnicities often have different learning styles and good teachers will match their instruction to these learning styles.

10. Grouping students of different levels of achievement in instruction may benefit some students, but it can undermine the progress that could otherwise be made by higher- achieving students.

11. Before students are asked to engage in complex learning tasks, they need to have a solid grasp of basic skills.

12. With all the pressures to raise student achievement, finding and using examples of the cultural, historic, and everyday lived experiences of my students takes away (or could take away) valuable time from teaching and learning what matters most.

13. Talking about race with my colleagues could open up a can of worms – little good is likely to come from it.

Discussion among staff members varied from teachers who strongly agreed with several of the statements to those who strongly disagreed with the statements, with a lot of conversation around personal expectations, professional expectations, and parental expectations. Following the discussion, participants were asked to anonymously complete a self-assessment form from the World of Difference Institute of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL). This form gathered feedback in response to 11 questions related to their own practices related to promoting a bias-free educational environment, with responses ranging from: (1) I haven't thought about this, (2) I need to do this better, or (3) I do this well. Seventy-eight self-assessment forms were received back from staff members, with a range of responses indicating varying levels of personal practice. The results of the self-assessment are displayed in the table below (Table 5).

Table 5

ADL – Assessing Yourself Checklist (https://www.adl.org/media/2203/download)

How effective are you in promoting a bias-free educational environment?			
	I haven't thought about this.	I need to do this better.	I do this well.
1. Have you recently read any books or articles, or watched any documentaries to increase your understanding of the particular hopes, needs and concerns of students and families from the different cultures that make up your school community and beyond?	16	26	36
2. Have you participated in professional development opportunities to enhance your understanding of the complex characteristics of racial, ethnic and cultural groups in the U.S?	22	31	25
3. Do you try to listen with an open mind to all students and colleagues, even when you don't understand their perspectives or agree with what they're saying?	2	8	68

4. Have you taken specific actions to dispel misconceptions, stereotypes or prejudices that members of one group have about members of another group at your school?	15	21	42
5. Do you strive to avoid actions that might be offensive to members of other groups?	8	8	62
6. Do you discourage patterns of informal discrimination, segregation or exclusion of members of particular groups from school clubs, committees and other school activities?	15	6	57
7. Do the curricular content and wall displays in your classroom reflect the experiences and perspectives of the cultural groups that make up the school and its surrounding community?	18	22	38
8. Have you evaluated classroom materials and textbooks to ensure they do not reinforce stereotypes and that they provide fair and appropriate treatment of all groups?	18	13	47
9. Do you use classroom methods, such as cooperative learning, role-playing and small group discussions to meet the needs of students' different learning styles?	3	12	63
10. Do students have opportunities to engage in problem-solving groups that address real issues with immediate relevance to their lives?	3	24	51
11. Do you use a range of strategies, in addition to traditional testing methods, to assess student learning?	3	10	65

Based on this information, 91% of participants believed they did well with regards to trying to listen with an open mind to all students and colleagues, even when they did not understand their perspectives or agree with what they're saying (Question 3). Seventy-nine percent of participants also believed they strived to avoid actions that might be offensive to members of other groups (Question 5).

Forty-one percent of participants felt they needed to do better with participating in professional development opportunities to enhance their understanding of the complex characteristics of racial, ethnic and cultural groups in the U.S., while 29% had not thought about this (Question 2). Thirty-three percent of participants felt they needed to do better with reading books or articles, or watching documentaries to increase their understanding of the particular hopes, needs and concerns of students and families from the different cultures that make up the school community, while 21% had not thought about this (Question 1). A combined total of 70% of survey participants were unable to indicate that they engaged well in professional development opportunities specifically focused on increasing faculty understanding of the characteristics of the various racial, ethnic, and cultural groups within the school community, which clearly indicates a need for further professional development in this area, given the highly diverse (72%+ minority) student population of the school.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose for conducting this action research project was to follow up on prior action research cycles by addressing the need for targeted professional development opportunities related to the development of intercultural competence among teachers, and to do so in a manner that responded to the four main areas of support requested by teachers, which were: (1) self- reflection on potential personal biases, (2) awareness of others from different cultural backgrounds, (3) managing emotions while navigating complex conversations regarding cultural and racial differences, and (4) making meaningful and authentic connections with students and families from the different cultures which make up the school community.

Research Questions

With the highly diverse student population of the research setting reflecting a microcosm of national-level racial and ethnic changes in public education, my primary area of focus was within the context of a K-12 International Baccalaureate charter school setting. Given the data collected from previous action research cycles, and the demonstrated need for targeted professional development for the school's faculty and staff on the subject of intercultural competence, the two specific research questions I investigated in this research study were the following:

Research Question #1: How and to what extent does participation in a ten-session professional development training workshop impact the development of intercultural competence in teachers as measured by the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)?

Research Question #2: How and to what extent does participation in this professional development training workshop influence teacher capacity for:

(a) self-reflection on potential personal biases,

(b) awareness of others from different cultural backgrounds,

(c) managing emotions while navigating complex conversations regarding cultural and racial differences, and

(d) making meaningful and authentic connections with students and families from the different cultures which make up the school community?

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH

Supporting the needs of a rapidly growing racially and ethnically diverse population of students within the public education system is a topic of critical importance, given the rate at which student demographics are changing nationally. With the majority of teachers within the country's public education system coming from vastly different backgrounds compared to their students, equipping teachers with intercultural competence skills and culturally responsive teaching strategies is essential to help them connect successfully with their students. Evidence of the positive impact of culturally responsive teaching practices on student achievement, attendance rates, and other desirable outcomes is growing (Aronson & Laughter, 2016; Byrd, 2016; Morrison, Robbins, & Rose, 2008). The first part of this chapter discusses theoretical frames related to the development of intercultural competence and transformative learning. This is followed by a review of related literature associated with these two areas and a brief discussion of implications for this research study.

Intercultural Development Continuum

The Intercultural Development Continuum (Hammer, 2012) is a model for the development of intercultural competence which builds upon the work of Milton Bennett (Bennett, 2004). The Intercultural Development Continuum (IDC) presents progressive stages of development of intercultural competence and is based on five stages, or distinct developmental orientations, which are the result of extensive research conducted by Mitchell Hammer (2012). Intercultural competence is seen along this Intercultural Development Continuum as increasingly complex ways in which individuals experience

and respond to cultural differences they encounter with others. In order to make the shift from a monocultural mindset to an intercultural one, the IDC envisions individuals moving through the five stages of Denial, Polarization (consisting of Defense and Reversal), Minimization, Acceptance, and Adaptation. These are further defined as follows by Hammer (2012):

- **Denial**: In this stage, individuals have typically had very limited experience with other cultural groups and tend to have broad stereotypes and generalizations about other cultures, demonstrating little interest in learning about the cultures, practices, and values of other groups. Often, this occurs with members of a dominant cultural group as they have many more opportunities to interact with others similar to them, and generally may choose to limit interactions with those who are culturally different from them.

- **Polarization**: In this stage, individuals tend to be judgmental about cultural differences, resulting in either a "Defense" position of their own cultural practices considered superior to others, or a "Reversal" position where other cultures are considered better than their own. Hammer (2012) goes on to state that "within Defense, cultural differences are often perceived as divisive and threatening to one's own cultural way of doing things, while Reversal is a mindset that values and may idealize other cultural practices while denigrating those of one's own culture group" (p. 121).

- **Minimization**: In this stage, individuals can focus either on: (a) emphasizing similarities between themselves and those from other cultural backgrounds, due to a limited degree of cultural self-awareness, which is typically practiced by members of

the dominant cultural group, or (b) emphasizing similarities intentionally as a means of fitting into the dominant cultural group, which is typically practiced by those who are not members of the dominant cultural group.

- **Acceptance**: In this stage, individuals are able to acknowledge and appreciate similarities and differences between their own culture and others, and can see how certain behaviors make sense in the context of a specific culture. Hammer (2012) explains that individuals in this stage may struggle with behaviors that may be normal with a different cultural context, but considered unethical from their own cultural viewpoints.

- **Adaptation**: In this stage, individuals are able to shift their perspectives and understand differences in culture easily, drawing on various methods to do so, while connecting with those from other cultures in meaningful authentic ways that bridge any gap that may exist. Hammer (2012) states that those "with an Adaptation mindset typically engage people from the host culture in deep and meaningful ways while consciously focusing on learning adaptive strategies (p. 124).

Figure 1

Graphic representation of the Intercultural Development Continuum (Hammer, 2012)
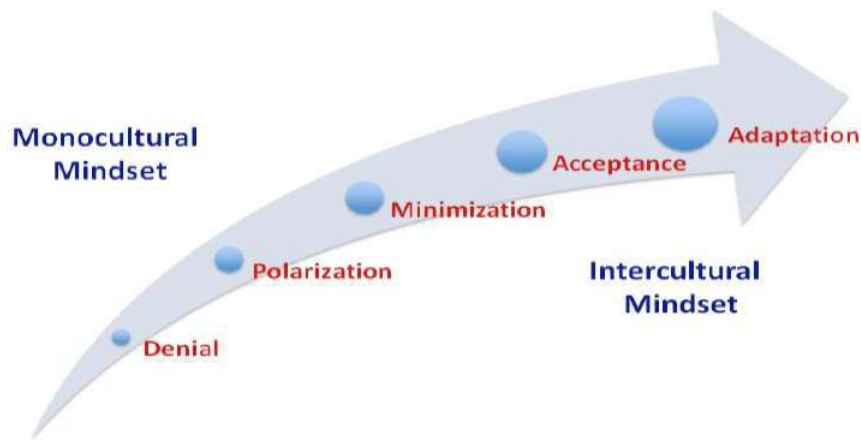
The Intercultural Developmental Inventory (IDI) was initially developed as an instrument to measure the orientation towards cultural differences as described in Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003). This model was developed as a framework to explain how individuals experience and navigate cultural differences. Since then, it has evolved to become a highly-regarded theory-based tool to measure stages of development on the Intercultural Development Continuum (IDC). This tool has been translated for use in 17 languages.

The IDI assesses intercultural competence, defined as the capability to shift cultural perspective and appropriately adapt behavior to cultural differences and commonalities. It assesses the complexity with which individuals experience cultural differences. The instrument is comprised of 50 questions (see Appendix A) delivered in an online format and analyzed according to five subscales corresponding to the stages of the IDC (see Figure 1).

Analyses generate an unweighted Perceived Orientation score and a weighted Developmental Orientation score. The Perceived Orientation score refers to where an individual believes their own developmental stage to be, and how they see themselves when interacting with culturally diverse individuals and groups. The Developmental Orientation score refers to an individual's primary orientation toward cultural differences and commonalities along the IDC, as assessed by the IDI instrument. The difference between the two scores is referred to as the Orientation Gap and reflects areas for growth. The IDI has been psychometrically tested and found to demonstrate predictive, content, and construct validity and reliability across multiple cultural groups, as well as cross-cultural generalizability.

Hammer (2011) conducted cross-cultural validity testing of the IDI, building on the previous work of Paige, Jacobs-Cassuto, Yershova, and DeJaeghere (2003) and Hammer, Bennett, and Wiseman (2003). He found the inter-scale correlations supported the five stages of the IDC. Wiley (2017) conducted a series of independent psychometric analyses to further investigate the performance of items and scores from the IDI and found items to have moderate to strong correlations with the IDI total score and with the subscales that they were assigned to.

Related Studies

The Intercultural Development Continuum (IDC) and the Intercultural Developmental Inventory (IDI) have been utilized extensively to assess stages of progression in the development of intercultural competence. The IDC is based on the premise that progression is developmental, not static, and that individuals progressing along the continuum are unlikely to experience regression of intercultural competence. DeJaeghere and Cao (2009) administered the IDI as a pre-test and post-test assessment to a group of 86 elementary school teachers in an urban school district in order to determine whether engagement in ongoing professional development provided by the school district over a period of two years had a measurable impact on their intercultural competence levels. The initial Developmental Orientation mean score placed the group at a high stage of Minimization on the continuum. After completion of the professional development initiatives, the final Developmental Orientation mean score had increased with statistical significance, though still within the Minimization stage. The authors concluded that "it is possible for schools to improve the intercultural competence of teachers through a concerted effort of professional development and assessment"

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(DeJaeghere & Cao, 2009, p. 445) and suggest that schools consider the creation of developmentally appropriate training for staff members in order to meet their individual needs for growth in this area.

Kruse, Didion, and Perzynski (2014) utilized the IDI as a tool to assess the intercultural competence levels of nursing faculty, staff, and students. In the initial phase of a larger interventional study, they focused on developing culturally relevant care skills in healthcare workers to meet the needs of increasingly diverse local communities. The study involved 314 participants with their IDI results indicating that the large majority of participants were at the Minimization stage of the Intercultural Development Continuum. Specifically, the authors found that more faculty and staff were in the Acceptance and Polarization developmental stages compared to students, while more students scored in the Minimization stage compared to faculty and staff. The authors concluded that the IDI provided individuals with a "valuable self- reflection tool to assess cultural development….allowing for self-reflection and awareness to the reality of cultural development, attitudes, and values." (p. 8) It also, at an institutional level, provided a "framework to assist in the examination of department policies, procedures, faculty development opportunities, and curriculum design" (p. 8). Future recommendations for research included using the IDI in a longitudinal format to assess the usefulness of curriculum interventions.

Jackson (2015) analyzed the development of intercultural competence using the IDI in three cohorts of students taking a semester-long course in Hong Kong returning recently from study abroad experiences. The course was designed to address concerns related to re-entry following study abroad experiences and provide an opportunity to

continue development of skills gained through the study abroad experience. At the beginning of the course, combined cohort scores were at the low end of the Minimization stage on the IDC, while upon completion of the course, cohort scores moved up to the high end of the Minimization stage of the IDC. The author emphasized the importance of creating a safe open environment that allow for active sharing and listening by all participants, as well as, the importance of diversifying the types of activities that participants engage in. She concluded by encouraging other educators to "experience first hand the merits of critical praxis by developing intercultural transition courses or workshop in their own context" (p. 98).

Beutel and Tangen (2018) investigated the impact of an undergraduate university course for approximately 40 pre-service teachers in Australia. The course was designed to explore the prior intercultural experiences and background they brought with them as future teachers of diverse students. The authors used the IDC to portray the mindsets of participants along the continuum in the various stages, finding one teacher at the stage of Denial, 15 teachers at the stage of Minimization, 19 at the stage of Acceptance, and five at the stage of Adaptation. They recognized that teachers in the Acceptance or Adaptation stages of the IDC had intentionally and purposefully engaged in experiences with others different from themselves and had taken time to reflect deeply on those experiences. The authors concluded that providing learning opportunities which allow teachers to challenge old ideas, implement new ones, and practice reflecting on becoming educators equipped to serve a range of diverse learners is what is needed to develop intercultural competence for future educators (Beutel & Tangen, 2018, p. 177).

Green, Tulissi, Erais, Cairns, and Bruckner (2018) researched the impact of an intentionally-designed training program on 35 post-secondary students in Canada over a four-month period, aimed at improving their intercultural competence, as measured by the IDI. The program involved participation in four pre-program workshops and a week-long immersion session. The authors found that the IDI scores of participants increased significantly by approximately 8%, with the gap between Perceived Orientation and Developmental Orientation decreasing as well. The authors concluded that designing an intentional program that provides a range of pedagogical approaches will have a positive impact on developing student intercultural competence (Green, Tulissi, Erais, Cairns, & Bruckner, 2018, p. 60) and recommended additional research in this area.

Acheson and Schneider-Bean (2019) reviewed the Intercultural Development Continuum and the developmental process of intercultural competence, presenting a non-linear model which incorporates all five stages on the IDC. While acknowledging that each stage grows from the prior stage, the authors ask readers to consider a pendulum-based approach to this developmental process (p. 57). In considering the stage-based approach, the authors conclude that the IDC contributed a great deal to the development of intercultural sensitivity, and offered benefits both for individuals working to understand their own intercultural competency levels and for instructors working to design curriculum addressing this subject (Acheson & Schneider-Bean, 2019, p. 58).

In these studies utilizing the Intercultural Development Inventory to assess progress along the Intercultural Development Continuum, intentionally-designed programs appeared to have a positive impact on participant growth along the continuum, resulting in personal reflection and development of intercultural competence skills.

Transformative Learning Theory

Transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 1997) provides a basis for the process of creating change in an adult's frame of reference which is built over time and the direct result of individual experiences. As the theory explains, adults acquire a cumulative body of experiences over their lives, based on their individual interactions with others which leads them to develop certain ways of thinking. These experiences help build individual assumptions – frames of reference – through which they view all experiences and interactions with the world and those around them. Mezirow (1997) explains that "we have a strong tendency to reject ideas that fail to fit our preconceptions, labeling those ideas as unworthy of consideration - aberrations, nonsense, irrelevant, weird, or mistaken. When circumstances permit, transformative learners move toward a frame of reference that is more inclusive, discriminating, self-reflective, and integrative of experience" (p. 5). In other words, as individuals engage in experiences that do not fit into their existing frames of reference, a process of determining how to incorporate such experiences into their current belief systems is generally triggered, as described below.

Mezirow states that these frames of reference have two aspects: *habits of mind,* which are broad, habitual ways of thinking, feeling, and acting that are difficult to change, and primarily the result of cultural influence and primary caretaker perspectives. These manifest themselves as *points of view*, which are more likely to change as individuals reflect on experiences and the potential need to modify existing assumptions. Mezirow (1997) further explains that the only way to transform frames of reference is "through critical reflection on the assumptions upon which our interpretations, beliefs, and habits of mind or points of view are based" (p. 7).

For example, this means that given the diverse demographic makeup of my school, teachers are highly likely to experience various situations that may not necessarily fit within their existing frames of reference as they engage with students from different cultural backgrounds. As a result, multiple opportunities for critical self-reflection, potentially leading to modification of their initial assumptions, are present within the research context for them to capitalize upon, allowing them to engage in this process of transformative learning.

The stages of transformative learning (Mezirow & Dirkx, 2006, p. 124) include the following:

- recognition that an alternative way of understanding may provide new insights into a problem;

- context awareness of the sources, nature, and consequences of an established belief;

- critical reflection of the established belief 's supporting epistemic assumptions;

- validating a new belief by an empirical test of the truth of its claims, when feasible, or by a broad-based, continuing, discursive assessment of its justification to arrive at a tentative best judgment;

- coping with anxiety over the consequences of taking action; and

- taking reflective action on the validated belief.

Within my context, for example, this could manifest itself as teachers engaging in an experience with either a student or fellow staff member that does not fit their present beliefs or assumptions – a disorienting dilemma. Such an experience is likely to cause dissonance with existing understandings and ways in which individuals make meaning.

Examples of such disorienting dilemmas potentially include: (a) a group of students calling their teacher racist, while the teacher believes himself/herself to be extremely open-minded and culturally experienced, (b) a group of students visibly changing their attitude and behavior towards a teacher after learning about his or her specific cultural background or prior experiences, and (c) colleagues sharing personal experiences of feeling marginalized as a minority while interacting with their peers, while their fellow teachers are unaware or actively feel they are trying to create a supportive environment.

These kinds of disorienting dilemmas are likely to lead to critical self-reflection, as individuals determine how to fit these experiences into their current life views and make sense of them. This reflective process typically is likely to shake initially-held core foundational beliefs and assumptions, leading to discomfort and anxiety, necessitating the use of coping mechanisms such as ongoing dialogue and internal reflection in order to lead to positive outcomes. Continuing this process hopefully leads to the modification of existing assumptions or the development of potentially new assumptions which incorporate the disorienting dilemma, thus resulting in new ways of acting and behaving, or new patterns of action that individuals begin to engage in.

Mezirow (1997) further explains that adult educators, upon understanding these stages, are in the position of being able to select specific practices, instructional materials, and strategies to further this process of "transforming frames of reference through critical reflection of assumptions, validating contested beliefs through discourse, taking action on one's reflective insight, and critically assessing it" (p. 11). This intentional and purposeful approach to supporting progress through these stages then potentially lead to lifelong changes in how individuals approach the world around them.

Figure 2

Graphic Representation of Transformative Learning Theory

A disorienting dilemma challenges current meaning perspectives → Critical reflection upon beliefs, assumptions, and values → Development of new or adjustment of existing meaning perspectives → Integration of new meaning perspectives through new patterns of action → (back to) A disorienting dilemma challenges current meaning perspectives
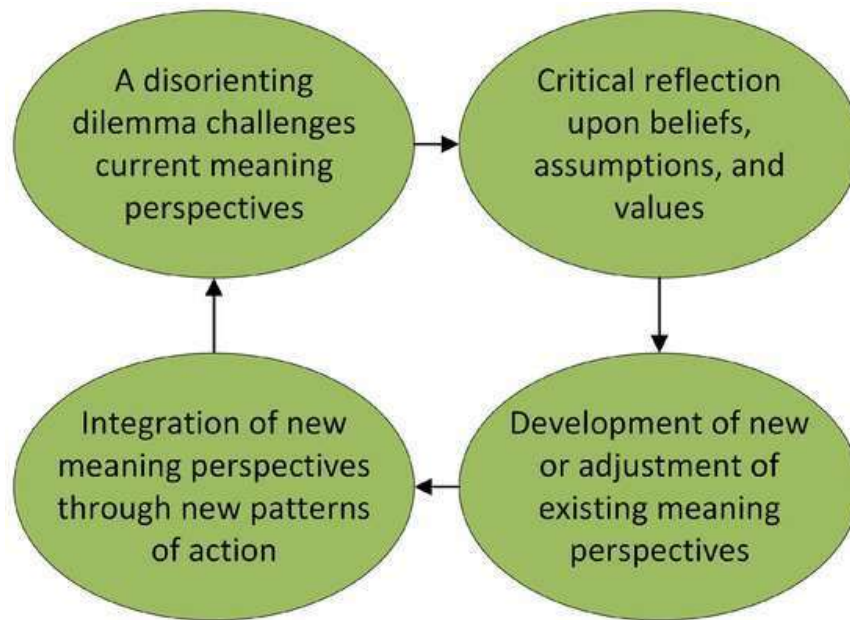
Note. Adapted from Van Bruggen, Nikolic, & Kwakkel, 2019.

Related Studies

Addleman, Nava, Cevallos, Brazo, and Dixon (2014) examined the experiences of 24 teacher candidates participating in a short-term cultural immersion experience to evaluate their learning in terms of three primary stages of transformative learning: (a) triggering experiences, defined as events that present discrepancies between what an individual has always believed to be true compared to what they have just experienced, (b) frame of reference examination, defined as a process of self-reflection and critical examination of an individual's own assumptions, and (c) transformative change, defined as active revision of one's prior assumptions, resulting in new ways of behaving and interacting with others.

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The authors found that participants demonstrated these three stages of transformative learning through the following primary themes identified in their research: (1) critical incidents as triggering events, (2) building schema through connections to theory and university coursework, (3) comparing differences—resulting in judgment, questions, and new perspectives, (4) peer processing of disequilibrium, and (5) self-discovery, new perspectives, and a resolve to reorient. These themes, as expressed by participants through self-reflection journals, small-group dialogue, and focus groups, aligned with the stages of transformative learning, resulting in their finding that "elements of transformative learning were clearly evident in the short-term practicum, as teacher candidates navigated the disequilibrium of a cultural immersion context" (Addleman et al., 2014, p. 198).

Christie, Carey, Robertson, and Grainger (2015) utilized three case studies involving the surveys, interviews, and focus groups to support the use of transformative learning as a tool for engaging adult learners in higher education and teacher preparation settings. The first case study involved a group of mature women engaging in a graduate course for adult learners. Their experiences in a learning environment at a later stage in their lives led to transformative change involving "questioning and rejecting some of the assumptions by which they had lived" such as that a woman's place was in the home and not in the workplace (Christie et al., 2015, p. 17). The second case study involved a group of primary and secondary school teachers from Papua, Indonesia who took courses in Australia to improve their English skills, resulting in transformative change in their practice upon returning home.

Changes included modification of their initial assumptions regarding the need for teachers to be authoritative figures in the classroom and an increased willingness to demonstrate their own vulnerabilities as learners. The third case study involved a group of doctorate students at a Swedish technological institute engaging in an anonymous values survey which resulted in debates that created disorienting dilemmas leading to transformative learning. The authors conclude that developing independent thinkers capable of critical reflection is essential and that students are likely to become lifelong learners equipped to make a difference in the world if given sufficient support in challenging their own assumptions (Christie et al., 2015, p. 22).

Liu (2015) analyzed the role of teacher trainers in the development of critical reflection skills in prospective teachers in order to produce transformative learning experiences for them. By researching portfolios of 25 teacher trainers over a 1.5 year period, the author presented an approach to critical reflection involving six stages: (1) assumption analyses, (2) contextual awareness, (3) imaginative speculation, (4) reflective skepticism, (5) reflection-based actions, and (6) reflection on the effect of reflection-based actions. By engaging in an intentional process of critical reflection themselves, the author believed that teacher educators can have a significant impact on the transformative learning experiences of prospective teachers, concluding that this critical reflection framework can be used to help individual learners engage in a reflective process that results in transformational learning (Liu, 2015, p. 150).

Each of these studies demonstrates the manner in which participants engaged in the various stages of transformative learning, resulting in new patterns of action following critical reflection resulting from a disorienting dilemma they experienced.

Discussion

The two theoretical frames of the Intercultural Development Continuum and Transformative Learning form a foundation for this research study. Both frameworks reference the impact of prior cultural beliefs and patterns on individual abilities to navigate differences, as well as the importance of engaging in intentional and targeted experiences in order to influence change in existing ways of thinking.

Mezirow's Transformative Learning stages were engaged by taking participants through the four stages of (1) doing or having an experience which challenges an individual's current perspectives, (2) engaging in critical reflection and review of the experience and its effect on personal beliefs, assumptions, and values, (3) learning from the experience, ideally resulting in the adjustment of prior beliefs/assumptions/values or in the development of new beliefs/assumptions/values, and (4) planning and trying out new learning, and integrating new beliefs/assumptions/values through new patterns of action. This process of engaging in the innovation experience was intended to produce changes to existing ways of acting resulting in progress along the Intercultural Development Continuum.

In researching the foundations of intercultural competence among teachers, Gunay (2016) explains that the basis for any interaction among those from different cultures involves an awareness of one's own cultural norms and beliefs, as well as an understanding of those of others, stating that "accepting difference in us and in others is crucial for being able to interact on an eye-to-eye level" (Gunay, 2016, p. 419).

By examining the development of intercultural competence of teacher participants in this study, I specifically explored the following two research questions:

1. **Research Question #1:** How and to what extent does participation in a ten-session professional development training workshop impact the development of intercultural competence in teachers, as measured by the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)?

2. **Research Question #2:** How and to what extent does participation in this professional development training workshop influence teacher capacity for: (a) self-reflection on potential personal biases, (b) awareness of others from different cultural backgrounds, (c) managing emotions while navigating complex conversations regarding cultural and racial differences, and (d) making meaningful and authentic connections with students and families from the different cultures which make up the school community?

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Setting

This research study was conducted in a K-12 open-enrollment public charter

school located in North Texas offering the International Baccalaureate (IB) educational

framework for all grades. The school serves just over 1,400 students and has

approximately 125 staff members in total, 81 of whom are teachers. 745 students attend

Grades K-5, and approximately 650 students attend Grades 6-12. The school recently

completed its eighth year of operation, and has received the highest state rating for its

academic performance each year it has been in existence. Five graduating classes of

students have matriculated from the school to date.

The IB Primary Years Programme is offered for students in grades K-5, the IB

Middle Years Programme for students in grades 6-10, and the IB Diploma Programme

for students in grades 11-12. As part of the IB educational framework, students are

taught a foreign language (Spanish) beginning in Kindergarten, and there is a

comprehensive school-wide commitment to the development of international-

mindedness, critical thinking skills, and character development within the school

curriculum, in support of the International Baccalaureate Organization mission statement

(2020) which states:

> The International Baccalaureate® aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and
> caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through
> intercultural understanding and respect. To this end, the organization works…to
> develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous
> assessment. These programmes encourage students across the world to become
> active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people,
> with their differences, can also be right.

As of the fall of 2019, the racial and ethnic profile of the students at the school was made up of 27.2% White students, 14.3% Hispanic students, 14.5% Black students, 39.0% Asian students, 4.4% students of Two or more races, 0.7% American Indian/Alaska Native students, and 0.1% Pacific Islander students.

Of the 81 teachers present at the school, 37 teachers worked in Lower School (Grades K-5), 38 teachers worked in Upper School (Grades 6-12), and 6 teachers provided support services in the areas of Special Education, ESL, and Dyslexia. As of the fall of 2019, the racial and ethnic profile of the teachers at the school was made up of 85.2% White teachers, 2.5% Black teachers, 8.6% Asian teachers, and 3.7% teachers of Two or more races.

The city within which the school is located has seen tremendous population growth from about 56,000 residents in 2001 to 200,000 residents as of 2019, according the U.S. Census Bureau (2020). The city's estimated population includes 61% White residents, 18% Hispanic residents, 11% Black residents, 6% Asian residents, 2.9% Two or more races residents, 0.5% American Indian/Alaska Native residents, and 0% Pacific Islander residents.   Approximately 6.9% of residents live below the poverty line.

The school draws from eight surrounding school districts for admission purposes, with approximately 65% of admission applications coming from the city within which the school is located, and the remainder from surrounding cities. The county within which the school is located is currently the fastest growing county in the state of Texas with an estimated population as of 2019 of 1,000,000 residents, according to the U.S. Census Bureau (2020).

The county's estimated population includes 55% White residents, 15% Hispanic residents, 11% Black residents, 16% Asian residents, 2.8% Two or more races, 0.7% American Indian/Alaska Native, and 0.1% Pacific Islanders. Approximately 6.4% of residents live below the poverty line.

Participants

The participant group for this study was comprised of 12 full-time teachers within each of the three International Baccalaureate (IB) programmes at the school. Five participants taught in the school's IB Primary Years Programme (grades K-5). Six participants taught in the IB Middle Years Programme (grades 6-10), and one participant taught in the IB Diploma Programme (grades 11-12). The median age of participants was 46 years. 10 of the participants were White, one participant was Black, and one participant was Asian.

Participants were selected through a voluntary response non-probability sampling approach. All full-time teachers at the research location were emailed a recruitment letter and consent form in mid-January 2020, inviting them to consider participation in the study. The letter provided a description of the study and its purpose, explained that participants could voluntarily withdraw at any time from the study, and that there were no anticipated risks to participants for engaging in the research study. 12 participants indicated interest in participating in the study and completed their consent forms for participation.

In order to address any potential risks associated with individual reflection and growth arising from participation in the study, only a minimal amount of personal information was shared in the study findings regarding participants and their

backgrounds. This was intentionally done in order to protect participants and the deeply personal reflections they shared during the course of the research study, given the "fluid and messy nature of qualitative research" (Bhattacharya, 2007).

Role of the Researcher

As the daughter of two college professors from India who taught at various colleges and universities in Africa, I grew up attending international schools in Tanzania, Kenya, and Botswana. My academic and social experiences at these schools engaging with students and teachers from a plethora of different racial, religious, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds has had a significant lifelong impact on me. As a result, I have continued to be deeply interested in how people (both adults and children) interact with one another, especially with those who are different from themselves, whether it be related to race, religion, ethnicity, culture, or sexual orientation.

I majored in Sociocultural Anthropology in college, focusing on the study of societies and cultures, and had the opportunity to work with the University of Capetown researching social norms regarding bridewealth in South Africa. My work there involved interviewing several Black residents from multiple economically-disadvantaged township areas to discern how they felt about changing perceptions of bridewealth and the potential impact on their lives and those of their extended families.

Following completion of my undergraduate degree, I moved to the state of Texas in 1999, where I worked in higher education with international students teaching English as a Second Language at local colleges, providing academic support to both college-age and adult international students. After supporting a local community K-12 school on a volunteer basis with their curricular needs, and observing the growing diversity within

our geographic area, I began fleshing out the idea of developing a K-12 school similar to the ones I attended while growing up in Africa with an emphasis on international-mindedness and cultural awareness. As a resident of a rapidly-growing community in North Texas which was attracting families from all over the world, the need for a school that both welcomed students from diverse backgrounds, as well as emphasized academic skills that prepared them for a global work environment, became increasingly apparent.

I began the process of investigating the steps needed to establish a school in our community along with a small group of founders. Early on, we determined that unlike international schools overseas which usually had high tuition costs, we wanted the school to be public and tuition-free in order to be fully accessible to everyone interested in attending. We also wanted to be able to offer the International Baccalaureate educational framework, with the mission of developing "inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect…..who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right" (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2020).

This led us to learning more about public charter schools which were garnering national interest and had been authorized in Texas since 1996. In 2008, we applied for a highly competitive open-enrollment charter from the state of Texas to open a K-12 public charter school offering the International Baccalaureate continuum in our community, leading to the opening of the school serving students in grades K-9 in the fall of 2012. Since the school's inception, I have served as the main school leader, maintaining the school's original mission to cultivate future leaders passionate about making a positive contribution to their local and global communities.

As the school leader (Head of School) of the educational setting for this action research project, my role as researcher was that of a full participant-observer (Mertler, 2014). This means that I was actively engaged in all activities as a full member of the group being studied. While I served as the Head of School for my research setting, I did not act in a direct supervisory capacity for participants in the study. Participants reported directly to their Lower School Director (for teachers in grades K-5) or their Upper School Director (for teachers in grades 6-12). These two directors were responsible for formal observation and performance evaluation of participants.

By utilizing action research, which is a systematic process of inquiry to address the identified problem of practice within my educational setting, I administered the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) tool prior to and following implementation of the innovation, collected associated data, and carried out analysis of this data. Multiple cycles of action research were conducted, leading to implementation of the planned innovation over a five-month period from January 2020 – May 2020. The same set of participants were utilized for the initial administration of the IDI and the second (final) administration of the IDI. Individual interviews with the same set of participants were also conducted prior to and following implementation of the innovation.

Innovation Overview

The innovation planned for my action research study was based on the theoretical developmental framework of Hammer's Intercultural Development Continuum (Hammer, 2012) and Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory (Mezirow, 1997). By engaging in a series of purposefully-planned professional development experiences focused specifically on providing learning opportunities and strategies related to the four

identified areas of need (bias, awareness, emotion, and connection), participants were provided with opportunities for critical self-reflection and associated shifts in existing assumptions, leading to Transformative Learning, as well as progress along the Intercultural Development Continuum.

The innovation was comprised of 10 professional development workshop sessions held over the course of five months from January 2020 – May 2020 (see Table 6). The first four sessions were held in person on selected early-release Wednesday afternoons at the school, where participants attended the sessions in a group format between 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM as part of their ongoing annual professional development. The final six sessions were held online as a series of weekly modules, due to in-person meetings being restricted as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The initial workshop session provided an introduction to the Intercultural Development Continuum, an overview of the upcoming nine sessions, and the group participant profile results of the initial administration of the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI). The titles of each of the subsequent nine workshop sessions were: (1) Self-Reflection, (2) Awareness of Others, (3) Managing Emotions, and (4) Making Connections, with two sessions spent on each topic. The final workshop session provided participants with the concluding group profile results of the second and final administration of the IDI and an opportunity to reflect on the series of sessions.

The structure of each workshop session followed the format of: (a) introduction/activity, (b) discussion, and (c) reflection. Participants were asked to maintain an online blog reflection journal to provide a written response to guided prompts for reflection purposes following each workshop session.

For the first four in-person sessions, the introduction/activity and discussion portions of each session were held in person. Due to COVID-19, the final six sessions were held online in a weekly module format, with participants asked to read or watch assigned weekly material online, and then respond to discussion prompts in an online discussion board format, responding to each other's posts as appropriate.

Participants were initially also asked to select and engage in two external cultural immersion experiences within the local community and reflect on these experiences. These two external experiences were to take the form of: (1) identifying an individual from a different cultural background and meeting with them at least three different times in order to discuss specific guided questions during the course of the ten-week session, and (2) visiting a site within the local community representative of a different culture and reflecting upon the experience.

Due to restrictions on group interactions as the result of the COVID-19 pandemic beginning in March 2020, these external experiences were subsequently eliminated from the research study, though one participant was able to engage in an external experience prior to COVID-19 restrictions being implemented.

All content for each of the workshop sessions was identified, organized, and curated by the researcher in order to provide the most relevant resources, tools, and strategies aligned with the focus of each workshop session. Session materials included TED talks, open-source research articles, internet resources, multi-cultural publications, and university-based institute resources. All materials were exclusively organized for each workshop session by the researcher.

Innovation Outline
(See Appendix C for activity handouts and worksheets)

Table 6

Innovation Sessions

Session	Session Topic	Content
1/29/2020 Session 1	Pre-Innovation IDI Group Profile Report	The Intercultural Development Continuum Presentation/Discussion of initial IDI group report Overview of upcoming sessions
2/12/2020 Session 2	Self-Reflection I	Understanding Bias (types/research/prevalence) Types of biases (Pygmalion effect, fundamental attribution error, affinity bias, prototype bias) Outsmarting Human Minds Video – First Impressions (5:30) – how do first impressions deceive us and what do we do about it? Pygmalion Effect video (2:00) – the power of expectations Attitude vs. Behavior – Cognitive Dissonance activity Confirmation Bias – Big Think (4:12) Discussion Guiding Question: *Is bias unavoidable?* Reflection Prompt: *Please share one key insight you experienced as a result of today's session. How will this impact you moving forward?*
2/19/2020 Session 3	Self-Reflection II	Unpacking Bias (applicability/perceptions) Cultural Identity worksheet/exercise Diversity Profile worksheet/exercise Secret to Great Opportunities video Tanya Menon (clip – 4:00) Discussion Guiding Question: *How are biases connected to experiences?* Reflection Prompt: *Please share one key insight you experienced as a result of today's session. How will this impact you moving forward?.*

2/26/2020 Session 4	Awareness Of Others I	Culture-General and Culture-Specific Patterns Culture – Iceberg Metaphor (Hispanic, Asian/Indian, African-American, Native American/Pacific Islander, White) Six Dimensions of Culture – Geert Hofstede Culture Mapping worksheet/exercise Discussion Guiding Question: *How are culture general patterns typically manifested?* Reflection Prompt: *Please share one key insight you experienced as a result of today's session. How will this impact you moving forward?*
4/13/2020 - 4/19/2020 Session 5	Awareness Of Others II	Communication and Conflict Styles (Hispanic, Asian/Indian, African-American, Native American/Pacific Islander, White) Intercultural Conflict Style Inventory Score Review Discussion Guiding Question: *How do different communication styles affect us?* Reflection Prompt: *Please share one key insight you experienced as a result of today's session. How will this impact you moving forward?*
4/20/2020 - 4/26/2020 Session 6	Managing Emotions I	Emotional Intelligence: Awareness & Regulation Mindfulness & Self-Regulation Strategies O.S.E.E model: Observe/State/Explore/Evaluate S.O.D.A strategy Discussion Guiding Question: *How can multiple perspectives in a situation be validated?* Reflection Prompt: *Please share one key insight you experienced as a result of today's session. How will this impact you moving forward?*
4/27/2020 - 5/3/2020 Session 7	Managing Emotions II	Emotional Intelligence: Empathy Empathy Types (cognitive, affective, compassionate) Helen Riess – E.M.P.A.T.H.Y research and steps Jamil Zaki – research overview Discussion Guiding Question: *How can empathy be developed within a classroom context?* Reflection Prompt: *Please share one key insight you experienced as a result of today's session. How will this impact you moving forward?*

5/4/2020 - 5/10/2020 Session 8	Making Connections I	The Art Of Conversation Celeste Headlee video – communication (10:00) How to talk with students about difficult topics Discussion Guiding Question: *How do we facilitate difficult conversations?* Reflection Prompt: *Please share one key insight you experienced as a result of today's session. How will this impact you moving forward?*
5/11/2020 - 5/17/2020 Session 9	Making Connections II	Relationships Matter – Strategies & Steps How to create a safe & welcoming classroom environment – suggestions UCLA Culturally Responsive Teaching Checklist Discussion Guiding Question: *What does a culturally safe/welcoming classroom look like?* Reflection Prompt: *Please share one key insight you experienced as a result of today's session. How will this impact you moving forward?*
5/22/2020 Session 10	Post-Innovation IDI Group Profile Report	Presentation/Discussion of final IDI group report Concluding Reflections Schedule individual debriefs with individual IDI reports for next steps

Methodology

This study utilized an action research approach in which individuals who are practitioners in their fields identify a problem of practice within their educational settings and conduct research in order to address these problems of practice. Mertler (2014) identifies five ways in which action research may be used to support educational improvement: (1) to connect theory to practice where action research is conducted by educators in the field, (2) to improve educational practice in the classroom through critical reflection, (3) to foster broad school improvement on a larger scale beyond the classroom setting, (4) to empower educators and engage them intellectually as a means of using their skills and talents to best meet the needs of their students within their specific environment, and (5) to cultivate professional growth by allowing educators to focus on specific areas they identify as needing improvement.

Action research provides opportunities for educators to address problems of practice within their educational settings and contribute in meaningful and authentic ways. Within my educational setting, action research enabled me to address an identified problem of practice related to teachers and their interactions with peers and students, by planning and implementing an intentionally-designed innovation to support the development of intercultural competence in study participants.

A mixed methods approach utilizing concurrent triangulation methodology was utilized to conduct this action research project. Concurrent triangulation involves the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data at the same time, followed by data analysis of both the quantitative and qualitative data, from which conclusions are drawn based on both approaches and their results.

Figure 3

Graphic representation of Concurrent Triangulation methodology
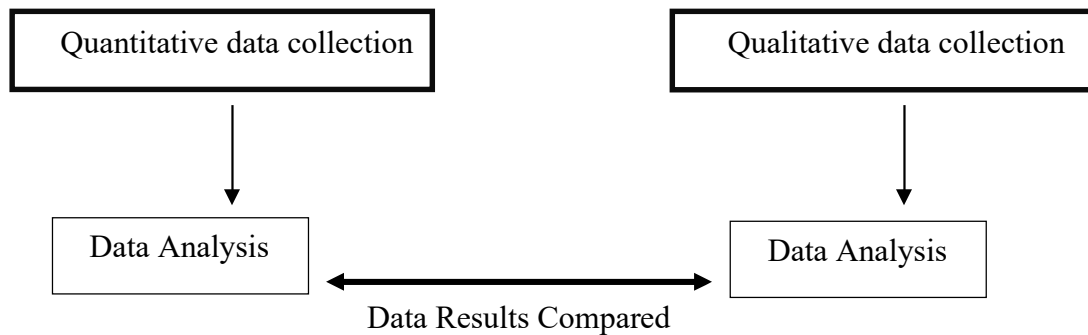
In her research on intercultural competence, Deardorff (2006) found that scholars agreed "the best way to assess intercultural competence is through a mix of qualitative and quantitative measures" (p. 250). Gelo, Braakmann, and Benetka (2008) also state that a mixed methods approach permits a researcher to move beyond traditional perceptions and limitations related to quantitative and qualitative data, allowing for more holistic and

comprehensive analysis of information incorporating the best of both approaches (p. 287). The quantitative aspect of data collection and analysis involved pre-innovation and post-innovation administration and analysis of the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) further discussed below. The qualitative aspect of this study involved semi-structured interviews and participant self-reflection journals, which were transcribed and coded for themes, using a hybrid thematic analysis approach incorporating both inductive and deductive processes.

Instruments

For the quantitative portion of the research study, the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) was utilized. This is a 50-item online questionnaire, currently available in 17 languages, which takes approximately 15-20 minutes to complete (see Appendix A for sample questions). The IDI provides profiles of an individual's intercultural competence, as well as group, sub-group, and organizational intercultural competence profiles. Individual profiles are used to develop customized development plans of support, while group profiles are used to identify areas for growth, establish goals, and develop targeted professional development. The IDI group profile was shared with participants prior to and following implementation of the innovation. The IDI has been found to possess strong validity and reliability across diverse cultural groups, including predictive validity within both the corporate and educational sectors, as well as strong content and construct validity (Hammer, 2011). The IDI can only be administered by a qualified administrator who undergoes training in the IDI assessment tool. I received this training in October 2019 and am qualified to administer the IDI assessment tool.

When individual results of the assessment are shared with individual participants, the qualified administrator (me) who implemented the IDI assessment is required to offer a one-on-one debrief with the participant on the profile report and development plan. While only group profile results were shared with participants at the beginning of the study, individual results and one-on-one debriefing was provided for each participant at the conclusion of the study. For the qualitative portion of the research study, audio recordings of individual pre-innovation semi-structured interviews, audio recordings of individual post-innovation semi-structured interviews, audio recordings of the first four group sessions, as well as participant self-reflection online blog journal entries were transcribed and coded for themes. Online discussion board comments utilized during the weekly online modules were also used as additional document sources for further qualitative analysis.

Data Sources

The data was collected over a period of five months between January 2020 through May 2020 using a variety of strategies, including the IDI questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, group workshop sessions, online modules, online discussion board comments, and individual participant self-reflection online journals (Table 7).

Table 7

Data Sources

	Research Question 1	Research Question 2
Quantitative Pre/Post Innovation surveys	Yes	N/A
Qualitative Pre/Post Innovation interviews	Yes	Yes
Group workshop session meetings	Yes	Yes
Weekly online modules	Yes	Yes
Online discussion board comments	Yes	Yes
Participant self-reflection journals	Yes	Yes

Pre-Innovation and Post-Innovation Quantitative Surveys

Participants were given the 50-question Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) online survey at the beginning and end of the study to determine the impact of participation in the professional development workshop sessions on the development of their intercultural competence. The IDI assesses intercultural competence, defined as the capability to shift cultural perspective and appropriately adapt behavior to cultural differences and commonalities. Group profile reports were provided to all participants following the initial and final administration of the IDI. Individual profile reports, along with an individualized Guided Development Plan, were also provided to all participants following the final administration of the IDI.

Pre-Innovation and Post-Innovation Qualitative Interviews

Participants were asked five semi-structured interview questions at the beginning and the end of the study to determine the impact of participation in the professional development workshop sessions provided (see Interview Guide in Appendix B). The initial and final sets of interviews were audiotaped and transcribed for analysis. Final interviews were held using Zoom video conferencing due to restrictions related to COVID-19.

Group Workshop Session Meetings

The first four out of the ten total sessions were held in person on selected early-release Wednesday afternoons at the school in a group format between 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM during the day. Each of these four sessions were audiotaped and transcribed for analysis. The last group workshop session meeting to review the final IDI group profile report was held using Zoom video conferencing due to restrictions related to COVID-19.

Weekly Online Modules

The final six out of the ten total sessions were held online as a series of weekly modules, due to restrictions the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants were asked to engage in reading or viewing materials as part of each online module, and then asked to respond to a discussion guiding question in an associated online discussion board format, where they could see each other's responses and add their own comments. Participants were also asked to complete written reflections in their personal online blog journal following each online module based on prompts associated with the workshop session topics.

Online Discussion Board Comments

Following engagement with the online materials for each online module, participants were asked to respond in an online discussion board format to the discussion guiding question for that module. Each participants was asked to provide a response and all other participants were invited to respond to each other's comments on the online discussion board.

Participant Self-Reflection Journals

Participants were asked to maintain an online self-reflection journal responding to guided reflection prompts provided following each workshop session topic – see Innovation Table (Table 6) for reflection prompts. These were then reviewed by the researcher and analyzed for trends and themes.

Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1989) established four primary criteria by which to assess the trustworthiness of qualitative research: (1) credibility, (2) transferability, (3) dependability, and (4) confirmability.

Credibility refers to confidence in the truth and believability of the research findings. Credibility for this action research project was addressed through the process of prolonged and varied engagement with the participants and data collected, persistent observation of the data, as well as triangulation of the data in three ways (methods, sources, and theories). The researcher spent 5 months working with participants in two different settings (in-person and online). Participants were observed by the researcher in group discussions and an online discussion forum, while data was analyzed using quantitative and qualitative methods, multiple sources (interviews, blog journal, in-person discussions), and using the two different theories of the Intercultural Development Continuum and Transformative Learning Theory.

Transferability was addressed through the use of thick description describing what was observed in sufficient detail for readers to follow the analytical process and consider its applicability to other contexts and situations. Rich detail and descriptions have been provided using participant responses, and varying perspectives from participants in different grade levels at the school also provide a cross-section of responses from individuals working with children of different ages. Demographic information regarding the research setting and participants are also included to support with applicability to other contexts.

Dependability of the study and the ease with which others may replicate the research was addressed through a careful explanation of procedures utilized for the study, the use of an internal audit trail documenting the dates and sources of all data collected, as well as providing detail regarding decisions made by the researcher and the rationale for those decisions. The data collection process is clearly documented and described, as well as the data analysis process using quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative analysis of the data is provided on an individual and group basis, and qualitative analysis of the data using a hybrid thematic analysis approach is also detailed.

Confirmability was addressed through evidence of both quantitative and qualitative data clearly supporting the findings, as well as explanations originating from the data regarding all conclusions made, with examples of the coding process and rationale for clustered codes provided. Both quantitative and qualitative data are utilized to support the findings, with clear descriptions of the procedures utilized to reach the conclusions made.

An outline of the strategies utilized to maintain trustworthiness of the study in all four of these areas of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability is included below in Table 8.

Table 8

Trustworthiness

Criteria	Purpose	Strategies	Description
Credibility	To establish confidence that results are credible	• Prolonged and varied engagement • Persistent observation • Triangulation of data	• Interviewer spent 5 months working with participants in two different settings (in-person and online) • Interviewer observed participants in group discussions, and participant comments online. • Data was analyzed using quantitative and qualitative methods, multiple sources (interviews, blog journal, in-person discussions), and using two different theories.
Transferability	To establish the degree to which results can be generalized or transferred to other settings	• Thick Description	• Rich detail was provided using participant responses to demonstrate themes identified.
Dependability	To ensure findings are repeatable within similar cohorts of participants, coder, and context	• Data Collection Process • Data Analysis Process	• The data collection process is clearly documented and described. • The data analysis process using quantitative and qualitative methods is described in detail.
Confirmability	To establish confidence that results would be confirmed by other researchers	• Audit Trail • Researcher's Notes • Systematic Coding	• Progression of events and decisions made, as well as data and findings are provided. • Researcher's reflections were recorded in notes. • Examples of the coding process, moving from individual codes to themes, and rationale for clustered codes are provided.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Data Analysis

Both quantitative and qualitative data were utilized for data analysis. Quantitative data was collected on an individual basis prior to implementation of the innovation as well as following implementation of the innovation, using the 50-question Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), which provided a Developmental Orientation score for each participant. Qualitative data was collected through semi-structured interviews conducted both prior to and following implementation of the innovation, audio-recorded group workshop sessions, online discussion board comments following weekly online modules, and online participant reflective blog journals.

Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS software to provide descriptive statistical information regarding the score results of the pre-innovation and post-innovation Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) administrations. Changes in individual scores, information related to the significance of the changes, as well as the mean, sample size, and standard deviation are reported for pre-innovation data and for post-innovation data. A paired samples dependent t-test was also conducted on the pre-innovation and post-innovation data, comparing the means between the two groups. This provided information regarding the mean difference between the two, as well as the statistical significance of the mean difference between the two groups, and whether it was likely or not that participating in the innovation had an impact on changes to participant Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) scores.

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This quantitative data analysis helped to answer the first research question of this study, which is "how and to what extent does participation in a ten-session professional development training workshop impact the development of intercultural competence in teachers as measured by the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)?"

Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative data was analyzed using a hybrid approach to thematic analysis, utilizing a combination of inductive and deductive processes, conducted in six phases according to the thematic analysis process outlined by Braun and Clark (2006). These six phases included: (1) familiarizing oneself with the data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) producing the report. Initial pre-innovation individual interviews were held in person and audio-recorded, as were the initial four group workshop sessions held in person. Post-innovation individual interviews, as well as the final group workshop session, were held via Zoom video conferencing and recorded online due to restrictions related to COVID-19. Additional qualitative data included text documents of weekly online discussion board comments and participant individual online blog self-reflection journals.

For the first phase of familiarizing myself with the data, I sent the audio recordings of the interviews and Zoom sessions to be transcribed by the Rev.com professional transcription service in order to obtain transcripts of the recordings for review. Once the transcripts were received, I read through them at a holistic level to get a sense of the richness of information they contained. Transcripts and text documents were labeled and organized as source documents to be used in the HyperRESEARCH software program for coding purposes.

For the second phase of generating initial codes, I reviewed each data source (interview transcripts, online self-reflection blog journal data, group workshop session transcripts, and online module discussion board comments) within HyperRESEARCH and began the initial coding process, using descriptive coding to identify and generate initial codes while analyzing phrases and sentences within the data. Using the advice provided by Braun and Clark (2006) during this phase, I coded: (1) for as many initial codes as possible that seemed to pertain to the respective phrases or sentences, (2) inclusively, tagging sufficient surrounding information to provide context to the code, and (3) individual extracts of data under one or more codes that seemed relevant, with multiple data extracts being coded to more than one code. This was an inductive data-driven process, with the initial codes being generated directly from the content of the data phrases and sentences. For the third phase of searching for themes, I began analysis of the initial codes, thinking through how the different initial codes were related and could potentially combine with others under more overarching themes. Some codes connected more easily to others, while some were more individualized. The frequency of individual codes was also noted to determine any relationships to potential themes. During the fourth and fifth phases of reviewing, identifying, and naming themes, a more directed deductive approach was utilized by returning to the theoretical framework of Transformative Learning Theory and the study's research questions. While reviewing the codes, I noticed that most if not all of the codes connected specifically to both the second research question (addressing bias, awareness, emotion/conflict, and connection), as well as the four phases of Transformative Learning Theory (disorienting dilemma, critical reflection, development/adjustment of existing meaning, and new patterns of action).

The themes identified as a result of this qualitative data analysis helped to answer the second research question of this study, which is "how and to what extent does participation in this professional development training workshop influence teacher capacity for: (a) self- reflection on potential personal biases, (b) awareness of others from different cultural backgrounds, (c) managing emotions while navigating complex conversations regarding cultural and racial differences, and (d) making meaningful and authentic connections with students and families from the different cultures which make up the school community?"

Procedure

The study was conducted during the spring semester of 2020 from January 2020 through May 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic occurring in March of 2020, certain aspects of the initially-planned research study had to be modified in order to continue the research study.

- Arizona State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was requested and obtained in early January 2020.

- All full-time teachers at the research location were emailed a recruitment letter and consent form in mid-January 2020, inviting them to consider participation in the study. The letter provided a description of the study and its purpose, explained that participants could voluntarily withdraw at any time from the study. 12 participants indicated interest in participating in the study and completed their consent forms for participation.

- Each participant completed the 50-question online version of the Intercultural Development Inventory (Hammer, 2009) at the beginning of the study in late

January 2020. Only group results of this first administration of the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) were provided to participants during the first workshop session in order to allow them to focus on the content of each of the workshop sessions, rather than worry about progress being made from their initial score.

- Each participant responded to six semi-structured interview questions in an individual interview with the researcher at the beginning of the study in late January 2020.

- Participants then engaged in the first four group professional development workshop sessions which were held in person between January 29th, 2020, through February 26th, 2020 on site at the research location.

- As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, all remaining six workshop sessions were provided as virtual weekly online modules between April 13th, 2020, and May 22nd, 2020, using an EduBlogs online discussion board module format.

- At the end of the study, each participant took the IDI assessment again a second time in late May 2020. Group results of this second administration were provided to all participants in the final group workshop session.

- All participants were asked the same six semi-structured interview questions utilized at the beginning of the study in an individual interview with the researcher at the conclusion of the study in late May 2020, during which individual Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) results and an individual Guided Development Plan were also provided to each participant.

Data Collection Timeline

Table 9

Time Frame of Actions and Procedures

Time Frame	Actions	Procedures
January 2020	Finalize timeline Obtain IRB approval Obtain consent	Sent out invitation to participate Sent out consent form Planned professional development content
January 2020	01/27/2020 – 02/10/2020: Individual Interviews 01/29/2020: Introduction	Conducted initial individual interviews Administered initial IDI assessment Provided group profile debriefing Led professional development session
February 2020	02/12/2020: Session 2 02/19/2020: Session 3 02/26/2020: Session 4	Planned professional development content Led professional development sessions Supported ongoing reflection activities
April 2020	04/13/2020 – 04/19/2020: Session 5 04/20/2020 – 04/26/2020: Session 6 04/27/2020 – 05/03/2020: Session 7	Planned professional development content Posted professional development modules Reviewed ongoing reflection activities
May 2020	05/4/2020 - 05/10/2020: Session 8 05/11/2020 - 05/17/2020: Session 9 05/22/2020: Session 10 05/28/2020 – 05/29/2020: Individual Interviews	Planned professional development content Posted professional development modules Reviewed ongoing reflection activities Administered final IDI assessment Provided group profile debriefing Provided individual profile debriefing and guided development plan Conducted final individual interviews

Results from Quantitative Data

All 12 participants in the study were administered the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) assessment prior to implementation of the innovation and again following completion of the innovation. The IDI is a normed referenced assessment that measures an individual's or group's level of intercultural competence along the Intercultural Development Continuum which ranges from Denial, Polarization (Denial/Reversal), Minimization, Acceptance, and Adaptation. The IDI individual and group profile reports calculate a Perceived Orientation (PO) score, which represents where the individual or group perceive themselves to be on the continuum, as well as a Developmental Orientation (DO) score, which represents where the IDI places the individual or group along the continuum on the basis of actual levels of intercultural competence.

According to Appendix C of the IDI Resource Guide (Hammer, 2019), the PO and the DO scores are determined using separate proprietary formulas initially validated with a sample of 766 respondents and again later with samples of more than 4,000 respondents. In order to produce the PO score, an unweighted formula is used based on the mean scale values of Denial, Defense, Reversal, Minimization, Acceptance, and Adaptation. The DO score is calculated using a weighted formula in which scale mean scores of Denial, Defense, Reversal, and Minimization are weighted and calculated compared to scale mean scores of Acceptance and Adaptation. Scores range from a low of 55 points to a high of 145 points on a 90-point scale. The PO and DO profile scores represent standardized (z-score) scores where a score of "100" indicates the mean (50th percentile) with a standard deviation of 15, and can be displayed as:

Table 10

Distribution of general IDI scores

Denial	Polarization	Minimization		Acceptance	Adaptation	
2.4%	13.5%	34%	34%	13.5%	2.4%	
55	70	85	100	115	130	145

Note. Reprinted from Intercultural Development Inventory Resource Guide (Hammer, 2019).

The Standard Error of Measurement (SEM) of a test refers to the standard deviation of test scores that would have been obtained from a single respondent had that respondent been tested multiple times. For the IDI, the test score standard deviation is 8.5 and the test score reliability is 0.831, providing an SEM for the IDI Developmental Orientation score of 3.49. This can be used to develop a confidence interval around the obtained DO scores. The formula for a 95% confidence interval is: 95% CI = X + 1.96*(SEM), where X is the DO score for a participant and the SEM is 3.49. The table below lists participant DO scores and related confidence intervals.

Table 11

Pre-Innovation and Post-Innovation Participant IDI DO Scores

Participant	Pre-Innovation IDI DO Score	Post-Innovation IDI DO Score	Change	Post-Innovation CI-High	Post-Innovation CI-Low
Participant 1	75.76	105.93	30.17	112.77	99.08
Participant 2	99.66	129.69	30.03	136.53	122.84
Participant 3	85.49	107.44	21.95	114.28	100.59
Participant 4	71.94	92.93	20.99	99.77	86.08
Participant 5	83.38	97.90	14.52	104.74	91.05
Participant 6	116.55	128.22	11.67	135.06	121.37
Participant 7	100.15	108.49	8.34	115.33	101.64
Participant 8	103.59	111.55	7.96	118.39	104.70
Participant 9	90.42	91.49	1.07	98.33	84.64
Participant 10	94.70	91.55	-3.15	98.39	84.70
Participant 11	118.87	113.80	-5.07	120.64	106.95
Participant 12	114.51	107.70	-6.81	114.54	100.85

Of the 12 participants, the DO scores of nine participants out of 12 (75%) increased their score from their pre-innovation IDI assessment score to their post-innovation IDI assessment score. The DO scores of three participants out of 12 (25%) decreased between the two assessments, ranging from 3.15 points to 6.81 points. The scores which decreased, however, still fall within the standard error of measurement for the IDI which is approximately +/- 7 points, so essentially these three participants stayed approximately at the same level on the Intercultural Development Continuum.

Participant positions along the Intercultural Development Continuum of the five stages of Denial, Polarization, Minimization, Acceptance, and Adaptation are depicted in the table below. Pre-innovation IDI DO scores indicated three participants out of 12 (25%) were at the Polarization – Reversal stage, seven participants out of 12 (58%) were at the Minimization stage, and two participants out of 12 (17%) were at the Acceptance stage. Their post-innovation IDI DO scores are also included in the table below.

Table 12

Participant Intercultural Development Continuum IDI DO Scores

Participant	Pre-Innovation IDI DO Score	Post-Innovation IDI DO Score
Participant 1	Polarization-Reversal	Minimization
Participant 2	Minimization	Acceptance
Participant 3	Minimization	Minimization
Participant 4	Polarization-Reversal	Minimization
Participant 5	Polarization-Reversal	Minimization
Participant 6	Acceptance	Acceptance
Participant 7	Minimization	Minimization
Participant 8	Minimization	Minimization
Participant 9	Minimization	Minimization
Participant 10	Minimization	Minimization
Participant 11	Acceptance	Minimization
Participant 12	Minimization	Minimization

Following participation in the innovation, post-innovation IDI DO scores indicated all three participants who were previously at the Polarization – Reversal stage had moved to the next stage of Minimization. One participant moved from the stage of Minimization to Acceptance, and one participant moved from the stage of Acceptance to Minimization by a score decrease of 5.07 points, which falls within the standard error of measurement of +/- 7 points for the IDI, essentially indicating that the participant remained at the same level.

Group IDI profile results were also shared with all participants at the beginning and at the end of the research study. Pre-innovation and post-innovation IDI group profile DO scores are listed in the table below. The group as a whole increased their overall IDI group profile score by 12.81 points following implementation of the innovation, which equates to an approximate gain of 14% on the 90-point IDI continuum. Even accounting for the lowest confidence interval, the whole group appears to have made positive gains post-innovation.

Table 13

Pre-Innovation and Post-Innovation Group IDI DO Scores

Participant	Pre-Innovation IDI DO Score	Post-Innovation IDI DO Score	Change	Post-Innovation CI-High	Post-Innovation CI-Low
Whole Group	94.41	107.22	12.81	114.06	100.38

The minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation of pre-innovation and post-innovation IDI DO scores are presented in the table below. Pre-innovation IDI DO scores ranged from a minimum of 71.94 points to a maximum of 118.87 points.

Table 14

Pre-Innovation and Post-Innovation IDI DO Scores Descriptive Statistics

n=12	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Pre-Innovation IDI DO Scores	71.94	118.87	96.25	15.57
Post-Innovation IDI DO Scores	91.49	129.69	107.22	12.78

Post-innovation IDI DO scores ranged from a minimum of 91.49 points to a maximum of 129.69 points. Pre-innovation IDI DO scores had a mean score of 96.25, while post-innovation IDI DO scores had a mean score of 107.22. Pre-innovation IDI DO scores had a higher level of standard deviation of 15.57, indicating a greater degree of variability between participant responses, while post-innovation IDI DO scores had a slightly lower level of standard deviation of 12.78, indicating a lesser degree of variability between participant responses.

A paired samples t-test was also conducted on pre-innovation and post-innovation IDI DO scores to determine how they compared to one another. Results are presented below.

Table 15

Paired Samples T-Test

n=12	Mean	SD	St. Error	Confidence Interval		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)*
				Lower	Upper			
Pair: Pre-Innovation IDI DO Scores minus Post-Innovation IDI DO Scores	-10.97	12.98	3.75	-19.22	-2.73	-2.93	11	0.014

*$p < 0.05$.

Results of the paired-samples t-test show that on average, participants increased their IDI DO scores by 10.97 points from pre-innovation IDI assessment (*M*=96.25, *SD*=15.57) to post-innovation IDI assessment (*M*=107.22, *SD*=12.78). The 95% confidence interval for the difference was -19.22 to -2.73 points. The increase was significant according to a dependent t-test, $t(11) = -2.93$, *p*=0.014, *d*=0.85. The effect size for this analysis (*d*=0.85) was found to exceed Cohen's (1988) convention for a large effect (d=0.80). These results suggest that participation in the innovation did have a positive impact on improving intercultural competence in participants as measured by the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) assessment tool.

Additionally, the Orientation Gap between participants' Perceived Orientation (PO) and their Developmental Orientation (DO) which depicts the difference between where participants believe they are on the Intercultural Development Continuum compared to where they actually are, decreased from 26.49 during the initial administration of the IDI to 19.73 during the final administration of the IDI. This indicates that participants were able to more accurately gauge themselves on the Intercultural Development Continuum following participation in the innovation.

Results from Qualitative Data

Qualitative data was analyzed using a hybrid approach to thematic analysis, utilizing a combination of inductive and deductive processes, conducted in six phases according to the thematic analysis process outlined by Braun and Clark (2006). These six phases included: (1) familiarizing oneself with the data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) producing the report.

After the first phase of familiarizing myself with each source of qualitative data, I

began the second phase of generating initial codes using an inductive approach of

descriptive coding. During this phase, 40 initial codes were generated, listed below in

Table 16, along with their associated descriptions.

Table 16

Initial Codes

Code	Description
Adapting	Changing behavior in response to something
Application	Using what they have learned in some way
Assumption	People making assumptions about participants and vice-versa
Autonomy	Freedom to choose
Awareness	Becoming more aware due to an experience of some kind
Bias	Sub-conscious processing of new information
Change	Modifying behavior in some way
Comfort	What is familiar and non-threatening
Commonalities	Areas of common ground
Communication	Expressing thought or feelings to others
Conflict	Opposing viewpoints or opinions and how participants deal with this
Confusion	Not sure how to react
Connection	Getting to know others or building relationships with others
Cultural Competence	Ability to interact with others of different cultures
Discomfort	Feeling uncomfortable
Dissonance	Incongruency with participant beliefs
Emotion	Feelings
Exhaustion	Mental tiredness in situations
Fitting In	Needing to belong or trying to belong in a larger/broader group
Growth	Positive change that has occurred over time
Identity	Understanding of oneself
Inquiry	Asking questions to learn more
Intentional Action	Purposeful behavior in response to something
Lack of Connection	Inability to fully understand
Learning	Educating oneself
Open-Minded	Attempting to consider different perspectives
Ownership	Desire to do something individually
Perception	How others see participants and vice-versa
Persistence	Desire to continue working on something
Power	Ability to accomplish something specific
Reaction	Response to an experience or situation

Relationship	Making connections with others
Reluctance	Lack of motivation or desire
Respect	Valuing others
Seeking Advice	Talking with colleagues
Self-Reflection	Reviewing personal experiences for growth
Trying to make sense	Figuring how things fit with existing understanding
Uncertainty	Unsure of how to respond
Usefulness of Sessions	Impact of participation
Value	Importance or highly regarded

During phases three through five of searching for themes, reviewing themes, and defining and naming themes, a directed deductive approach was utilized entailing a detailed review of all initial codes and their relationship to either the four stages of Transformative Learning Theory or the four areas being considered by the second research question, with each of the initial codes reviewed for any connection to these areas.

The four stages of Transformative Learning Theory include: (1) a disorienting dilemma, (2) critical reflection, (3) development and adjustment of existing meaning, and (4) new patterns of action. The four areas considered by the second research question of this study are: (1) self-reflection on potential personal biases, (b) awareness of others from different cultural backgrounds, (c) managing emotions while navigating complex conversations regarding cultural and racial differences, and (d) making meaningful and authentic connections with students and families from the different cultures which make up the school community.

The frequency of initial 40 codes that were generated are listed in the table below (Table 17), which were further analyzed to see if they could be grouped into more cohesive themes.

Table 17

Frequency of Initial Codes

Code	Total	Bar Graph
Self-Reflection	152	████████████████████████████
Awareness	120	██████████████████████
Emotion	88	████████████████
Bias	78	██████████████
Usefulness of Sessions	75	█████████████
Intentional Action	73	█████████████
Connection	72	█████████████
Growth	70	████████████
Relationship	55	██████████
Identity	41	███████
Communication	39	███████
Trying to make sense	38	███████
Cultural Competence	31	██████
Discomfort	27	█████
Application	24	████
Conflict	24	████
Assumption	23	████
Reluctance	18	███
Perception	17	███
Reaction	16	███
Commonalities	9	█
Fitting In	9	█
Confusion	8	█
Open-Minded	8	█
Persistence	6	▌
Value	5	▌
Inquiry, Lack of Connection, Ownership, Adapting, Exhaustion, Uncertainty, Comfort, Dissonance, Power, Respect, Autonomy, Change, Learning, and Seeking Advice	< 5	▌

After a thorough process of reviewing and re-analyzing the data, and comparing them in context with the stages of Transformative Learning Theory, as well as the four areas being researched in research question 2, the initial 40 codes were further grouped into the following eight themes, as follows:

Table 18

Themes

Theme	Description
Bias	**Self-reflection on potential personal biases**
Bias (sub-category)	Sub-conscious processing of new information
Awareness	**Awareness of others from different cultural backgrounds**
Awareness (sub-category)	Becoming more aware due to an experience of some kind
Learning	Educating oneself
Emotion	**Managing emotions while navigating complex conversations**
Conflict	Opposing viewpoints/opinions and how participants deal with this
Emotion (sub-category)	Feelings
Connection	**Making meaningful connections with students and families**
Connection (sub-category)	Getting to know others or building relationships with others
Relationship	Making connections with others
Respect	Valuing others
Disorienting Dilemma	**Experience or situation that causes a reaction that participants need to process**
Assumption	People making assumptions about participants and vice-versa
Confusion	Not sure how to react
Discomfort	Feeling uncomfortable

Dissonance	Incongruency with participant beliefs
Fitting In	Needing/trying to belong in a larger/broader group
Lack of Connection	Inability to fully understand
Perception	How others see participants and vice-versa
Reaction	Response to an experience or situation
Trying to make sense	Figuring how things fit with existing understandings
Uncertainty	Unsure of how to respond

Critical Reflection	**Thinking about beliefs, assumptions, or values**
Autonomy	Freedom to choose
Comfort	What is familiar and non-threatening
Commonalities	Areas of common ground
Identity	Understanding of oneself
Open-Minded	Attempting to consider different perspectives
Ownership	Desire to do something individually
Power	Ability to accomplish something specific
Reluctance	Lack of motivation or desire
Self-Reflection	Reviewing personal experiences for growth
Value	Importance or highly regarded

Development/Adjustment	**Changing existing beliefs or creating new beliefs**
Adapting	Changing behavior in response to something
Communication	Expressing thought or feelings to others
Exhaustion	Mental tiredness in situations
Inquiry	Asking questions to learn more
Seeking Advice	Talk with colleagues

New Patterns of Action	**Intentional change in behavior**
Application	Using what they have learned in some way
Change	Modifying behavior in some way
Growth	Positive change that has occurred over time
Intentional Action	Purposeful behavior in response to something
Persistence	Desire to continue working on something
Usefulness of Sessions	Impact of participation

Each of these eight major themes is discussed further below, with supporting statements from participants included as evidence pertaining to the themes.

Bias: self-reflection on potential personal biases

In the first workshop session on bias titled *Understanding Bias*, participants were introduced to a definition of the term "bias" as an inclination or prejudice for or against one person or group that is usually unconscious. The concept of bias was discussed as a means of the human mind to quickly categorize the flow of daily informational input, and that to date, over 150 types of cognitive biases have been identified. Participants also watched three videos regarding bias, engaged in a cognitive dissonance activity (Cressy, 2014), and reviewed an infographic about understanding unconscious bias (UK Coaching, n.d.).

The first video introduced psychologist Alexander Todorov's research (Todorov et al., 2009) regarding the science behind individual perceptions of human faces, and assumptions commonly made as a result of these perceptions. The second video shared the work of social psychologist Heidi Grant Halvorson (Halvorson, 2015) regarding first impressions and confirmation bias, and what one can do to address these. The third video (Kang & Younger, 2019) addressed the idea of the Pygmalion Effect and how expectations in our mind can lead to related performance and self-fulfilling prophecies. Following review of the materials, participants engaged in discussion and reflected on their own potential biases and assumptions made about others, including their own students in the classroom setting. Participants talked about how teachers perceived their students and to what extent their first impressions had an impact on their relationship with their students, while also sharing situations they had experienced related to this.

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After learning about the Pygmalion Effect, one participant shared her own personal

experience, questioning the impact of first impressions:

> I was thinking about first impressions and the Pygmalion Effect….when my kids started school…and we moved into a neighborhood that was pretty white…somewhere in the back of my mind, I knew my kids would be judged immediately because of their last name. And I made sure that my kids had better be washed and presentable all the time, because if they weren't then the whole Pygmalion effect and first impressions were like, "Oh, well, what do you expect? Because they don't come from an all-Caucasian family." But yet the little Caucasian boy that came to school every day with the big holes in his pants and stuff, he was just fine…I wonder to what extent this impacts our students who are minorities as they come in to school, like, what is that first impression, that Pygmalion Effect, and confirmation bias play?

Another teacher shared her anxiety about first impressions and how others perceived her

and her children when out in public, sharing, "I often become the representative for my

own culture/race/gender/religion. It's tiring at times. Sometimes, I have to tell my

kids…that how they conduct themselves in public affects their 'Muslim image.'" She

later also shared the following reflection in her journal regarding how others perceived

her, questioning what was considered acceptable by the majority within the school

community, stating:

> I wonder, when will it end? When will people stop asking me where I'm "really" from? When will people stop the double takes? When will the grocery store cashier address my question instead of ignoring me? How long do I have to purposefully and loudly speak English with my kids in the grocery store line so the cashier can relax by the time it's my turn and not pass judgment on me. I also make small talk with strangers, not to be nice, but to break that discomfort that strangers may feel around me...I have seen teachers be furious when their school would not allow Christmas parties and say that the Christmas spirit is being taken away from them. But I wonder what protests I would have if I imposed my [Muslim] celebrations on the students? Would it be received well by administration? Parents? Students?

The depth of what this minority teacher expressed in her journal reflection with me and

shared in the group discussion was eye-opening for many of the other participants who

had not paused to consider what her reality may have been. The assumptions made at first glance about those around us happen so quickly and subconsciously that participants in the workshop session were struck by the significant impact these assumptions made on others, as shared by this teacher.

Teachers also reflected upon how prior knowledge regarding students in their classes has an impact on their relationships, and how this information can sometimes lead to preconceived notions about students and their performance. One teacher shared how finding about students from previous teachers may color one's relationship with a student, stating "If you believe, or if you've heard rumors, that a kid comes with a reputation and then that's your attitude starting out, you won't even have the chance to build your own relationship with them." Another teacher also described how teachers can unwittingly create bias regarding students by sharing prior information about them, which may not lead to a fair assessment of the new relationship between teacher and student:

> …We talk about kids as teachers and we try to help by giving expectations to the next teacher that they're going to have. Oftentimes it'll actually hurt the situation because then we'll have bias and we'll have perception of them...We haven't even met them, but we already know all this stuff about them…the impression that I get and the connections that I have might be completely different because my personality is different than the personality of the teacher that they had before.

In addition to the recognition from participants that prior information about their students could affect their interactions with them, one participant also provided an example of a situation that occurred in her classroom in which she had made an incorrect assumption about a student based on his level of engagement in her class, thinking that he was not engaged because he was being lazy, only to later discover the student needed help and

was trying to cover up the fact that they did not understand what was happening in class. She explains further:

> There's this one student that for the whole year…he doesn't engage even with prompting, talking and everything, just nothing…And I realized at that point…the one thing I really haven't done is had a pull-aside conversation to say, "Look, what is going on?...and he just starts crying…I totally missed it because his face never said any of that…he's like, "I'm just so stressed. I've been homeschooled most of my life, and I just don't know what to do." But I felt really bad because…here, I've been thinking he just doesn't care. And he's really just like hiding it all….trying to cover it up to just sit back and not have any attention drawn to himself...I felt bad for my thoughts and my bias towards him based on how he acted…how much better could he have been doing if I caught it earlier?

This teacher felt terrible about having assumed the student was not engaging due to a lack of work ethic, only to find out that he was in a completely new environment trying to fit in without drawing unnecessary attention to the fact that he was unable to complete the work required. In that moment, this teacher determined to keep an open mind in the future, when faced with a similar situation, and challenge her own personal first assumptions.

In the second workshop session on bias titled *Unpacking Bias*, participants were asked to complete a diversity profile worksheet (see Appendix C) in which they identified characteristics (such as gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, ability, religion, age, socioeconomic status, education, language, family, and political affiliation) of various individuals in their lives, such as parents, co-workers, close friends, neighbors, K-12 teacher, college teachers, and college friends, among others. Participants were also asked to complete a cultural identity worksheet (see Appendix C) in which they reviewed various aspects of their own identity (such as age, ability/disability, gender, and education) and consider whether how they identified in these areas was valued or not valued in U.S. society.

In this workshop session, participants also viewed a TED talk video presented by organizational psychologist, Tanya Menon (Menon, 2017) about how to be more intentional in expanding one's social universe and the associated benefits of doing so. Participants also reviewed an exercise comparing their attitudes towards certain issues and their corresponding behavior in relation to their attitudes, which highlighted how behavior patterns do not always follow personally-held attitudes or values (Cressy, 2014).

Several participants shared that they had not stopped to consider the influence of their backgrounds on their cultural identities, the comfort they felt being around what was most familiar to them, or considered whether they were purposefully broadening their social circles to include individuals from diverse backgrounds. One teacher explained how going through this session was challenging for her, sharing that "these surveys were actually quite difficult for me to fill out, because I do not typically define myself as a person based on my beliefs or values," and wondered whether looking deeper into her prior experiences would provide greater insight and clarity into her own identity and potential biases. Another participant questioned the incongruency she identified between her beliefs and her actions, surprised by the lack of diversity present in her own life, and shared the following in her journal:

> This makes me wonder, if I love being in a diverse environment and learning about others, why don't I surround myself with a more diverse group of people? Why do I still feel the need to blend in? Why do I keep to myself? The first reason that comes to mind is my life-long struggle with insecurities. Could these insecurities be hindering my progress through the Intercultural Development Continuum?

She proceeded to set goals for herself to add more individuals from different backgrounds into her personal life and seek out new experiences that would expose her to perspectives

different from what was most familiar to her, with the intent of broadening her own worldviews. In another example of how individuals tend to be most comfortable with what is most familiar to them, one teacher reflected following this session that she found it easier to relate to those teachers who taught similar ages to her, and found it difficult to connect with teachers of older students because she could not relate as easily to their teaching experiences. She equated this to potentially unconscious reactions she may have to those different from herself, sharing that "I didn't need to try and relate [to the other teachers], because those were their experiences, not mine" and wondered to what degree this may play a role in other aspects of her life.

Participants also reflected on the purpose of bias in our lives, and if indeed it was the human brain's way of making sense of dizzying amounts of incoming information, then is bias unavoidable, regardless of what an individual did? One participant shared her perspective that everyone held biases of some kind, based on their own personal experiences, and questioned the impact of this in her journal, wondering the following:

> All of our biases work to help us understand the world and in doing so make us feel safe. But if we are all walking around with our little backpacks of biases, are we truly able to make authentic connections with others whose backpacks might look different than our own?

All participants came to the conclusion that bias was unavoidable, but that by questioning first impressions, incorrect assumptions about others could be brought to the forefront and relationships could be improved. These examples above illustrate various ways in which participants engaged with the concept of bias during the sessions, and flexed their capacity to self-reflect on potential personal biases, while developing their understanding and recognition of bias.

Awareness: awareness of others from different cultural backgrounds

In the first session on awareness of others from different cultural backgrounds titled *Culture-General and Culture-Specific Patterns*, participants were introduced to the distinction between these two terms (see Appendix C). Culture-general knowledge refers to frameworks that allow us to compare and contrast cultures, providing general categories that facilitate our exploration of values, beliefs, and behaviors in any culture, while culture-specific knowledge refers to particular characteristics that belong to members of a certain culture, such as how to greet one another.

Participants were introduced to the work of Dutch social psychologist, Geert Hofstede (Hofstede et al., 2010), regarding the six dimensions of culture present in all cultures which attempt to address the following six questions: (1) how much (in)equality should there be among us, (2) how afraid are we of unknown people, ideas, and objects, (3) how dependent are we on our (extended) family, (4) how should a man feel and act compared to a woman, (5) do we focus on the future, the present, or the past, and (6) may we have fun, or is life a serious matter? In response to these six questions, Hofstede et al. (2010) explain how all cultures address the six dimensions of culture, which include the concepts of power distance, individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, long-term orientation, and indulgence.

Participants also viewed world regional maps (see Appendix C) that showed distinctions in how different regions approached these six dimensions of culture, and explored a country comparison tool (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). They also completed a culture mapping worksheet identifying their own cultural preferences along a continuum in each of these six areas.

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After reviewing this information, one participant shared her insight into her high school students and the pressures they faced from what some of them had shared with her regarding the values of their individual families versus their desire to fit into American society more. She stated:

> Given our diverse population, not only do we have to be aware…ourselves, we have to be aware of where our students are. A lot of them are becoming culturally American, but their parents do not want that and they are culturally wherever they originally immigrated from or their traditions. And so, those kids are walking a line, and as teachers, you have to be aware that you have a great ability, given your perspective or bias to either influence in a positive way this whole balancing act they're going through or a negative way.

She was referencing the kind of feedback that teachers may unknowingly provide with their own opinions that could have an impact on students believing their own culture was of value or not, and that at times, this may be in conflict with what their parents want for their children.

In an example of a participant reflecting on the differences between cultures, one teacher described an experience with a fellow teacher who comes from India, explaining that in a discussion about the concept of personal space, she suddenly became aware of different perspectives on this topic and how individuals from different cultural backgrounds can view the same thing very differently:

> What happens when you're in India and everybody is just walking... everybody is going someplace and nobody cares that you're hitting each other or anything. But in Costco, personal space is a real thing. She scolded us and she said…"Here, it's your space. It's my space. In India, it's shared space." I was like, "Oh." And that makes sense. There, it's not like you're in my space or I'm in your space. We are all in this space together.

She shared how this was an enlightening moment for her to realize that in a country where personal space was a luxury, the idea of space suddenly became a non-issue,

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compared to her day-to-day experiences in the United States, where personal space was very important to her and others. In another example of participants becoming aware of culture differences, one teacher reflected on a recent experience that occurred where her students had a substitute teacher from an Asian country who held a very different cultural perspective towards studying and education, compared to some of the students in her class:

> I had a sub the other day that I had twice in a row now. Even my kids that aren't the ones who typically complain about this... Like my very good kids who you know are going to be doing exactly what they're supposed to do were coming and saying, "Even I got yelled at." And you're going, "Wait. What universe did you get yelled at?" Both times, they came back and said, "She yells at us for having fun. We were working on a group project and we were doing it. We weren't loud, and we weren't disrespectful. But she yelled at us because it looked like we were having fun. She told us we're not here to have fun."

What she realized was that, based on her own personal cultural background, she believed that students could learn while also visibly enjoying themselves, whereas the substitute teacher had a cultural perspective in which studying seriously meant not demonstrably "having fun" but rather maintaining a quiet focused learning environment with no laughter occurring between students.

In the second session on awareness of others from different cultural backgrounds titled *Communication and Conflict Styles,* participants watched a brief video from the Harvard Business Review about the work of researcher, Erin Meyer (Meyer, 2015), and the culturally different ways in which individuals handled negotiations. Participants were also introduced to the manner in which different cultural groups handled conflict, and how individuals from different cultures addressed two questions: (1) how directly do I communicate, and (2) how emotionally expressive am I?

The goal of learning about the differences in how various countries approach conflict resolution was to allow teachers to better communicate with parents and families of students, as well as interact with colleagues from different cultural backgrounds. As part of this session, participants completed the 18-item Intercultural Conflict Style Inventory (ICS). The ICS was developed by Mitchell Hammer (Hammer, 2009), an extension of his work on the Intercultural Development continuum, with the goal of addressing the issue of how "communication misunderstandings, conflicts, and problems across cultures are often grounded in very different approaches people take for resolving difficulties with one another" (ICS Inventory, n.d.). The Intercultural Conflict Style model he developed assesses culturally learned ways of communicating information and resolving conflict in terms of Direct or Indirect approaches to responding to significant disagreements, and either Emotionally Restrained or Emotionally Expressive ways of dealing with emotional frustration. Four cross-cultural conflict resolution styles result from combining these approaches: (1) Discussion, (2) Engagement, (3) Accommodation, and (4) Dynamic (Figure 4 below). Upon completion of the assessment, participants received information about specific strategies based on their conflict resolution style for communicating ideas, resolving disagreements, and dealing with emotions.

Figure 4

Intercultural Conflict Style Model

	Emotional Restraint	Emotional Expressiveness
Direct	**Discussion**	**Engagement**
Indirect	**Accommodation**	**Dynamic**

For example, individuals who typically approach conflict resolution in a verbally direct manner, while also maintaining emotional control or restraint, would fall into the upper left quadrant of the Discussion style. On the other hand, individuals who are more comfortable with being emotionally expressive during conflict resolution, while also using indirect strategies such as metaphors or stories, would fall into the lower right quadrant of the Dynamic style of conflict resolution. The ICS is based on the idea that conflict styles are first learned during childhood within individual cultural backgrounds, and that how to understand and respond to conflict is tied to what we initially learn from others within our cultural community. Upon taking the assessment, participants commented on a greater awareness of their own communication styles, and greater insight into how they would approach communication and potential conflict with others. After completing the Intercultural Conflict Style Inventory, one teacher shared:

> As someone who scored in the Accommodation quarter, I think it is important for me to consider the influence on how emotional a person's conflict style appears. I recognize that I am uncomfortable in conflict situations where people express a lot of emotion. But, if I consider the potential cultural influence, it helps me frame the communication in a more productive light. It also helps me understand that others may expect more emotion from me.

This assessment provided her with an understanding of her own response to situations fraught with conflict, as well as insight into how others may perceive her response in such situations and how to potentially respond to them.

Another participant reflected on how understanding the four quadrants had an impact on her ability to respond to others, as follows:

> This session about conflict communication style was an eye opener for me…both in my personal and professional life, I have always been wary of hurting feelings or offending people through expressing my own opinion.

I can trace this back to my family upbringing….I developed a communication style that centered around not causing any problems or negative feelings. So, I was not surprised to score in the 3rd quadrant – Accommodation. Professionally, it is helpful for me to understand that parents, colleagues, or students who approach conflict with a more emotive style are not intending to escalate problems. People with this style are just expressing their emotions as part of their communication style.

She expressed a greater understanding of being able to comprehend the responses of others in a more neutral way than before, knowing that people may simply be more emotionally expressive than she was. In another example of self-reflection on awareness of others from different cultural backgrounds, one teacher wondered about the influence of individual families on conflict resolution style. She shared that in her own culture and family, she did not have much room growing up to engage in conflict, stating, "I am the tell-me-what-to-do-and-I'll-do-it person, as I was never given much choice growing up and it still shapes who I am today."

All of the participants shared a greater awareness of the distinctive ways that other cultures address core values and issues such as conflict, with one teacher sharing that:

Overall, this [session] really made me more aware and more sensitive to a lot of things, culturally…I was able to put the issue of race to the side for a minute and say, Well, wait a minute, I have all these other things that I'm not even really considering and acknowledging about myself and others.

The degree of self-reflection that participants engaged in while discussing the cultural differences between groups of people, as well as the insight they gained into their own ways of addressing conflict with others provided opportunities for individual growth. These examples illustrate some of the different ways in which participants expressed developing a greater awareness of others from different cultural backgrounds.

Emotion: managing emotions while navigating complex conversations regarding cultural and racial differences

In the first workshop session on managing emotion titled *Emotional Intelligence: Awareness & Regulation,* participants were introduced to the concept of emotional intelligence as defined by psychologist, Daniel Goleman (1997). The two main components of his concept of emotional intelligence are: (1) personal competence, and (2) social competence. In this session, we examined the first area of personal competence, which is further categorized into the two associated ideas of self-awareness and self-management. Self-awareness in this context addresses the ability to accurately perceive one's emotions and stay aware of them as they happen, while self-management is the ability to use awareness of one's emotions to positively direct one's behavior.

Participants were provided two articles (Bradberry, 2014; Knight, 2017) to read about emotional intelligence, and also introduced to a Conflict Response Cycle model (Hines, 2015) which outlined the general manner in which we react to things we might find offensive or threatening. This model offered guidance on how to slow down and evaluate assumptions prior to reacting, by going through the steps of: (1) Emotion – how you feel, (2) Assumptions – why you think the event happened, (3) Reaction – what you did, and (4) Outcome. This process allows individuals to engage in both elements of personal competence for emotional intelligence as defined above (self-awareness and self-management).

Since in-person discussions were limited due to COVID-19 restrictions, participants had to complete all work and discussion online. In order to jump start the discussion remotely, I asked all participants to watch a series of short films about identity

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in America titled "A Conversation on Race" produced by the New York Times (n.d.). The series included four films called: (1) A Conversation with Asian-Americans on Race, (2) A Conversation with Latinos on Race, (3) A Conversation with White People on Race, and (4) A Conversation about Growing Up Black. Participants were also separately introduced to two specific strategies through PDF articles they were asked to read called the S. O. D. A (Stop, Observe, Detach, and Awaken) strategy (Hammond, 2015), and the O. S. E. E (Observe, State, Explore, and Evaluate) strategy (Berardo & Deardorff, 2012) to help navigate emotions during difficult conversations.

After watching the short films, participants were asked to describe the emotions they experienced as they watched the videos, how they responded and reacted to their emotions, and how they incorporated use of the Conflict Response Cycle. This was a challenging exercise for most participants, and many of them had strong reactions, as well as difficulty hearing and processing the perspectives of the speakers in the short films. One participant shared the range of emotions she experienced after viewing the films, and said:

> I was confused when watching the interview of the Asian people as I didn't realize they had to deal with racism as much, since the stereotype seems to be a positive one. It is very sad that many feel…they are set as an example for other races to live up to the standards the system has put in place. I also felt angry when watching the interview of the black people, as there were small children who were already aware that some people have a negative perception of them without even knowing them….I also feel guilty because I have the ability to feel that for another race, and that I don't really have to think much about race.

> I think the video that awakened me the most was the one of the white people being interviewed. I did not even think about myself as being privileged, but that in itself is a privilege. Even though I grew up on welfare with little to no food in what was turning into a ghetto as I got older, I still had a privilege I was not even aware of…I had never thought of it that way.

This participant spent quite a bit of time reflecting in her blog journal and with me personally about the impact of these films on her worldview, and felt called to action to make concrete changes in her own life and actively engage herself in becoming anti-racist. She shared that she had never previously considered that she simply did not have to worry about some of the issues that individuals in the films had to think about, and that in itself – not having to worry - was a luxury that was not shared by others from different races. She further explained:

> I am aware that there is a problem, but I myself have never been part of the problem…but I realize after this that, perhaps I have been part of the problem, because I do not take race into consideration enough when dealing with other people or with students in my classroom.

Connecting this to the purpose of the workshop session, she shared that while she had strong emotional reactions to the films, she also felt empowered to evaluate and reflect upon her assumptions, after which she was determined to make changes in how she considered the issue of race when interacting with others. This experience was one of the first times that she had paused to reflect on her own background and the associated opportunities she had experienced as a result of her race and culture. As participants processed their own emotions after viewing the films, and practiced the strategies provided in the session, another participant shared her reaction to the videos in her online journal as follows:

> The strongest emotion I felt was shame. As a white person, I don't want to be considered part of the problem…I think I am driven by the idea that I want to be perceived as open minded and appreciative of cultural differences…I need to recognize that I do have my own bias that comes into play...I think the critical part of my Conflict Response Cycle Chart would be the Assumptions phase. If the conflict involves someone from another culture, I need to consider that my assumptions might be colored by my white privilege, and use caution to determine an action.

The emotions this participant experienced resonated deeply with her and resulted in critical self-reflection on her own role in her interactions with others. With a greater understanding of her own potential biases, she felt that the use of the Conflict Response Cycle (see Appendix C), as well as the individual strategies shared with participants, would be helpful in processing the emotions in navigating difficult conversations with both adults and students in her classroom.

In the second workshop session on managing emotion titled *Emotional Intelligence: Social Awareness & Empathy,* participants explored the second component of emotional intelligence – social competence. This was discussed in terms of the development of social awareness and empathy, described as the ability to understand other people's moods, behavior, and motives in order to improve the quality of relationships. Participants were introduced to the work of Helen Riess (Riess, 2017) of Harvard Medical School and author of "The Empathy Effect" who has been conducting research in the healthcare field on the importance of empathy, as well as to the work of Jamil Zaki (Zaki, 2020) at the Stanford Social Neuroscience Laboratory at Stanford University, who explains that while one of our most natural tendencies is to divide people into "us and them," this can be reversed by consciously relating to the humanity of people on the opposing side of a conflict or argument. Participants viewed a brief video of Dr. Zaki explaining the process of developing empathy, and read an article outlining the seven steps that Dr. Riess details regarding the process of become empathetic with others. Participants were then provided with a teacher-modeled empathy self-reflection guide (Hay, 2016) to assist them with making connections with students in their classroom.

One participant shared her reflections about making a connection between the importance of being aware of one's emotions and being able to develop empathy with her students, stating that:

> One of the best ways to develop empathy in the classroom is to not react solely on emotions. At the end of the day…we may be more emotional and so are our students. After each class, we should reflect on our own emotions and decide what are we going to do, if or how are we going to react if a student does.

She discussed the significance of going through the Conflict Response Cycle chart (see Appendix C) and practicing the strategies discussed, so that teachers were better equipped to handle these types of situations if they arose. Another teacher also discussed the environment of the school being an excellent place to practice development of empathy skills, sharing the following:

> I think that school is the perfect learning ground to practice empathy. Students really watch how we as teachers practice empathy. They take our cues from us. I do think empathy is both a trait and a skill…the great thing about empathy is that it can be obtained and grown if an individual desires it.

The idea that empathy was not a fixed trait but something that could be developed over time was a positive message for all participants and something they all wanted to continue working on. Several teachers found the specific tools and strategies provided to be helpful, particularly the Conflict Response Cycle chart and the teacher-modeled empathy self-reflection guide, with one teachers sharing in her final interview that:

> I feel like now…I have the tools to analyze why am I reacting this way, emotionally, and also having a better control of communicating through those emotions to another person. And being able to also see…why they may be feeling their own things. And there are reasons why they're feeling it. So, I can leave [the situation knowing]…it is not a personal attack or feeling upset about it.

The participants were provided with specific strategies to navigate emotionally challenging conversations with students and others regarding cultural differences, and

how to stay in tune with their own emotions as well as empathize with and diffuse those

emotions of others around them in the role of a teacher. The examples above provide

some insight into their reflections regarding managing their emotions while navigating

complex conversations regarding cultural and racial differences.

Connection: making meaningful and authentic connections with students and

families from the different cultures which make up the school community

The final two sessions in the workshop series addressed the importance of

teachers making meaningful and authentic connections with students and families from

the different cultures which make up the school community. In the first session titled

Navigating Difficult Conversations, participants were asked to view a TED talk video by

public radio host, Celeste Headlee (Headlee, 2015), in which she shared her ten

recommendations for having a meaningful conversation with others. Participants were

also provided with articles on how to facilitate classroom discussions on sensitive topics

(Moore & Deshaies, 2012), how to agree to respectfully disagree (Fasciano, 2015), basics

of respectful communication (Tanenbaum, 2016), and a difficult conversations self-

assessment (Teaching Tolerance, 2015). The articles provided specific strategies to

utilize in classroom settings with students, as well as a self-assessment for teachers to use

in advance of discussing complex topics. After this workshop session, one teacher

reflected on her capacity to engage in meaningful conversations with her students:

> My favorite quote from the TED talk video is "you need to always go into a
> conversation assuming you have something to learn." I really love that, and
> feel…we have an obligation as IB learners to teach something once we are given
> the knowledge, but even more so we have the obligation to listen so that we are
> able to learn from others. Especially with all of the different perspectives, beliefs,
> traditions, values, religions, etc. we have a lot to listen to and a lot to learn.

She expressed the importance of listening to her students in order for teachers to have the opportunity to learn from their students in the classroom setting. Another teacher expanded on the same idea of listening to students and expressing humility in these types of difficult conversations, sharing that teachers do not always have all the answers and should be ready to say so:

> I think also what you have to have…is the ability to say, I'm not the expert. I don't have all the knowledge. I have this base level. And I'd like to dialogue with you to understand more. But the ability to say, just because I'm the one in the classroom leading things, that doesn't mean I have all the answers….I think that goes a long way.

This willingness to let students know that the teacher does not always know all aspects of a specific issue, especially in classroom environments with students from different cultural backgrounds, creates a space for students to be able to share their own expertise and help educate their peers in areas they know well and bring their own unique perspectives, compared to others in the class. Along the same lines, another teacher also shared the advice to always go into a conversation assuming they have something to learn, in this case applicable to teachers being willing to learn from their students, stating:

> In conversing with my students, I never come in assuming anything, or that I already know what they are going to say. I listen excitedly because they will often surprise me or impress me. I think by being an example to my students and listening to all of them and teaching them that communication is not just talking, I can open their minds to listen to others. I tell my students, "the most intelligent people in the world are typically the quietest. Because they are busy listening."

An essential aspect of developing meaningful and authentic connections with students and their families is the ability to listen and learn from others, and this was delineated in the responses of several participants following viewing of the workshop session materials.

In the last workshop session on the development of meaningful connections with students titled *Creating a Culturally Welcoming Classroom,* participants were introduced to Nigerian author, Chimamanda Adichie (Adichie, 2009), who shared a powerful message about the dangers of a single story, which has made this one of the most-viewed TED talks. Participants were also provided with articles on culturally responsive teaching mindsets (Center for Collaborative Education, 2012), how to welcome students from different cultural backgrounds (AICPA, n.d.), key characteristics of a multicultural curriculum (Gorski, n.d.), a culturally responsive teaching checklist from UCLA (Reimagining Migration, 2019), and a tool for teachers to evaluate whether classroom assessments were designed well for students from different cultural backgrounds (Center for Collaborative Education, 2012).

Given the highly diverse student environment of the school, teachers were very receptive to the tools and strategies provided, looking forward to putting them into use, as well as deeply moved by the TED talk they listened to. One teacher shared the following after viewing the video and reflecting on her own personal experience growing up in an environment permeated by Western-oriented textbooks, stating:

> I have often wondered about school textbooks showing inventions and historical events…from the perspective of "westerners". It glorifies these countries as being smarter, more educated, and appealing to children. These textbooks give a single story to students from an early age, when there are many inventions and historical events in other parts of the world worth studying and learning about, but are not discussed in a classroom. As a teen, I remember thinking, "Gosh, these Europeans are super smart! People from my country aren't so. I could never be smart like them!" I never identified with the textbooks I learned from.

Echoing this teacher's experience, several participants discussed the importance for students to feel reflected culturally in the materials they are learning from, in order to

make a connection to the content and to also "see" themselves as capable of doing similar things and accomplishing the same kinds of achievements they read about in their instructional textbooks. In talking about a change in curricular text selections, one teacher shared a powerful story about her own daughter's experience and reaction as a 3rd grade student at the school in response to the grade-level team of teachers choosing to incorporate a culturally relevant novel with which her daughter was able to identify more closely:

> My daughter is in 3rd grade this year and the only Bengali student in her grade level. It meant the world to her that everyone was reading about her family's culture. Even though she never experienced a life like the characters, she was amazed that she recognized the terms used in the book, and the clothing, and just some of the cultural practices. I saw her take pride in herself and become more confident in just being herself. She also realized that not all (s)heroes had to be blonde and blue-eyed.

It was enlightening for all participants to hear from one another about the impact on students of making small decisions to incorporate more culturally relevant material into their classroom curriculum, and how easy it was to do so by starting with adding articles or biographies of people from different cultural backgrounds.

One middle school English teacher shared how she utilized a new book in her literature class which was reflective of the culture of several students in her class and what she observed as a result:

> This year, in 6th grade Language & Literature, our last novel was "The Night Diary" by Veera Hiranandani. The novel is a historical fiction about the partition of India. In students' end of year reflections, I had many students comment that that unit was their favorite because they related to the characters, terms in the novel, and the culture represented. This interest was transferred to the work they were turning in during this unit as well. I saw a high quality of work turned in during this unit, even though it was during our online learning adventure.

As a result, she planned to make changes to the summer reading list (following the workshop sessions) in order to incorporate more books that students would be able to make cultural connections with. Other participants shared the same desire to make modifications to their instructional materials to better reflect the cultural backgrounds of the students in their classrooms. Teachers also discussed inviting parents of students into their classes to speak about their cultural backgrounds and to help other students learn more from "experts" from different countries about their cultures in a more accurate fashion, rather than solely from the teacher. One teacher who had started to try this, shared the following:

> I think having those parents come in and read books…or share foods, it can really help the kids have that wider experience so that when they are growing up, they don't think, oh, that looks weird. Because we want them to be like, it's different, but it's not weird…This perspective is different, but don't look down on it.

All of the participants were very committed to making meaningful and authentic connections with students and families from the different cultures which make up the school community. During the workshop sessions, they shared ideas with one another, demonstrating thoughtfulness in addressing student needs, while also expressing the desire to incorporate new strategies discussed in the sessions in order to make their curriculum and instruction more culturally responsive to their students.

Disorienting Dilemma: Stage One of Transformative Learning

Jack Mezirow outlines the process of Transformative Learning beginning with the first stage of individuals experiencing a "disorienting dilemma" described as being dramatic and profound experiences which cause individuals to reflect on aspects of their lives that they may not have stopped to consider for many years (Mezirow & Dirkx, 2006, p. 132).

In reviewing the qualitative data and coding, several participants described such disorienting dilemmas that caused them to pause and reflect on beliefs and understandings of themselves that they had never questioned previously, which then resulted in significant shifts in their behavior. One teacher described a disorienting dilemma as follows:

> I remember one time in high school, I did a NASA program in Huntsville, Alabama and there were people from all over the United States and there was a girl from southern California who was Muslim. I had never met a Muslim person before. And I remember, and I feel so dumb, I remember asking her, "So, you still believe in Jesus, right? Like it's just you also like this other guy?" And I remember everybody in the group just looking at me like, "Did she just say that?" But I didn't know what was wrong, because I was really trying to understand, but just not eloquently asking the questions. And I remember thinking, "I never want to feel like that again. I never want to know so little about a person or a culture or a group that I ask a question that could be so construed as offensive," because that was not where I was. I remember, I was just after ninth grade and I was mortified. And I was like, "I'm never going to be in that position again."

This experience led this teacher from rural Texas to pursue a degree in International Relations and develop a lifelong interest in cultural understanding, while teaching World Geography and Humanities at the high school level in public schools, and making it a personal goal to develop relationships with families and students from different cultural backgrounds. The impact of this disorienting dilemma led her to make significant changes in her life and also led to new patterns of action.

Another such disorienting dilemma occurred in one of the in-person workshop discussions regarding awareness of different cultural groups which led to a spirited and heated discussion about the LGBTQ community and its similarities and differences to other minority groups seeking a greater voice and desiring to be seen and treated equally. The polarity of viewpoints in this discussion shook up a couple of participants who

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approached this issue from different perspectives. One participant shared the following

with the group during a discussion:

> I have a hard time relating and I'm just going to say it, I'm going to say gender identities. I think the whole gender identity thing doesn't make sense... I understand that some people identify with a different gender, but I think that's relatively a new concept, right? Because when you were born, it was gender, you're male or female, it's your biologic gender. And then there's the gender that you identify with and I have a hard time relating it with someone else who identifies with this opposite gender than myself, because it's hard for me to get that.

This participant continued to share her perspective and opinion that individuals

identifying as LGBTQ were "choosing" to be a certain way and that this did not

necessarily mean that they should be on an equal footing as African American

community members seeking a voice. Following the workshop, another participant

described how the same discussion truly was a disorienting dilemma for her, as she

explained in her own words the difficulty she had in processing the conversation, and

how she had to grapple with what she heard from her colleagues, sharing that:

> Yesterday's session was different. We went down a path that caused some stress. I was not surprised by some comments, but was really upset by others. I took offense to those who expressed disdain for people who don't fit into the traditional gender roles of male and female. I couldn't believe that people actually were troubled by someone asking to be called "they" instead of "him". I couldn't quite articulate this in the meeting as I was taken off guard by the comments and couldn't get my thoughts organized….I am disappointed that we have teachers here who are unable to see this. I pride myself on working for an internationally minded and diverse school - I am angry and sad that students and staff who identify outside of the binary are not respected by some…Our discussion yesterday really shook me up. I decided to wait a day to write my reflection, but I am still struggling to articulate my thoughts and feelings.

Her comments expressed the significant impact that this group discussion had on her and

caused her to pause and think about her reactions and responses. She spent quite a bit of

time reflecting on this discussion, leading to learning more from someone from the

LGBTQ community, and coming up with specific suggestions to help make LGBTQ

students at the school more comfortable in connecting with one another.

Another disorienting dilemma was shared by a participant in her online reflection

journal following the workshop session on managing emotions while navigating complex

conversations regarding cultural differences, in which participants were asked to watch a

series of short films from the New York Times portraying individuals from a variety of

ethnic and racial backgrounds talking about their personal experiences in the United

States. In reflecting on her feelings following observation of the films, she shared the

confusion and uncertainty she was experiencing as follows:

> I feel defensive, like I need to explain how I am not like the villain in their piece
> and why. Yet I also feel like I am receiving conflicting input from each of the
> races represented in the videos regarding whether they want me to acknowledge
> their differences or if they want me to stick to my color blindness and just treat
> them like another American.
>
> I have my own frame of view which lacks any sense of cultural belonging so I
> don't acknowledge any differences until I am able to begin identifying how the
> other person I am interacting with would react. If I do acknowledge differences,
> it comes from a place of celebration, not condemnation, but I have that stress and
> tension internally: does it come off that way or does the mere fact that I am asking
> or acknowledging that difference come off as racist condemnation?
>
> With people I know less, it becomes a very hard line to balance. It all comes back
> to that impotent feeling – I can only act the way I will, which is treading carefully,
> allowing for lots of pauses to gauge others' reactions before reacting, and always
> triple checking everything I say aloud for nuances in language that could be taken
> the wrong way…

She continued to reflect on how to best respond in situations like these in which she did

not feel confident about what to say or do, echoing the fear and uncertainty that some of

the other participants also had in gingerly tip-toeing around some of these difficult

conversations with colleagues, students, and their families.

In general, these instances described above underscore Mezirow's definition of a disorienting dilemma as profound and dramatic experiences that cause individuals to reconsider previously held perceptions or beliefs, leading to critical self-reflection and potentially new ways of interacting with others. In each of these situations, the participants involved modified their behavior as a result of reflecting on their disorienting dilemma and engaged in new patterns of action.

Critical Reflection

The second phase of Transformative Learning occurs when individuals engage in critical reflection of epistemic assumptions which then become the foundation for transforming previous frames of references (Mezirow & Dirkx, 2006, p. 134). Participants in the innovation workshop sessions engaged in ongoing critical reflection both with one another within in-person group discussions, as well as on an individual basis, as indicated in their online reflection journals and comments shared on the online discussion board.

Following the workshop session on culture-general and culture-specific patterns (see section on Awareness), as well as a discussion about Hofstede's six dimensions of culture (Hofstede et al., 2010), one teacher reflected extensively on an earlier discussion about LGBTQ community members in relation to terms of gender and gender roles, and how language can be utilized to underscore gender differences, sharing that:

> I thought it was a little funny that some took offense to the masculine/feminine label this week, but clung to it last week when talking about LGBT issues. I also loved that Mr. Hofstede said the words are weaponized. Really- many words can be weaponized by the intent of the person using them, but words around gender and sexuality are probably used to inflict pain and justify abuse more than any others.

Continuing her thoughts, the same teacher shared more about her personal reflection

following the workshop session about some assumptions she had made herself that led to

her desire to reconsider how she viewed gender roles:

> Thinking about the gender roles, I made a connection to students I have had.
> Typically American families have gender roles of mom is nurturer and dad is
> provider…On occasion, I have families where dad is the main parent. I realize
> looking at myself through the lens of this class that I have noted and questioned
> why mom isn't emailing me about an illness or a lost form or coming to the
> conference…I also realize that a little part of me was judging the moms against
> my own cultural norms. I am going to make sure I am aware of this bias going
> forward, and try to work on letting it go. When my kids were little, I always said I
> wish my husband would help more, but here I was judging moms who were
> sharing parenting roles more equally. I should be happy for them.!

She shared that after the workshop session, she spent time reflecting on the incongruency

between what she believed in and the assumptions that she had made, realizing that she

intentionally wanted to modify her responses to situations like these and acknowledge the

value she placed on equal roles.

In another example of critical reflection on behavior following a workshop

session in which participants had to watch a TED talk regarding the importance of

listening well during communication with individuals from different cultural

backgrounds (Headlee, 2015), one teacher shared her reflections and adjusting her

perceptions as follows:

> I reflected on how guilty I am of the very thing that the speaker was addressing.
> Recently my daughter yelled at me to put down my phone and pay attention to
> her. It caused me to reflect on if I had been distracted ever when a student had
> come to speak to me one on one. Sadly my answer was yes. I need to going
> forward, make it a point both in my personal life, and my teaching, to move away
> from, put away, or simply turn off my phone and make it a priority to really listen
> and not think that something else is more important than the conversation taking
> place right in front of me.   How can I expect my students or others to fully listen
> and engage in a conversation if I am the one setting the example of being
> distracted?

This teacher wanted to make a difference in the manner in which she connected with her students to ensure she was truly paying attention to the conversations she was participating in, and realized the frequency with which she was not fully involved in conversations with her students. This led to a commitment on her part to change, and improve her listening skills. Participants in the workshop sessions all engaged in varying degrees of similar critical self-reflection regarding assumptions they had of others, as well as assumptions others may have of them, in addition to thinking deeply about their own behavior and questioning underlying motivations they may have either consciously or subconsciously that could be driving their actions.

Development and Adjustment

The third phase of Transformative Learning involves the development of new meaning or adjustment to existing perspectives by individuals which "is usually the result of a disorienting dilemma due to a disparate experience in conjunction with a critical reappraisal of previous assumptions and presuppositions" (Taylor, 1998, p. 7). This stage causes individuals to consider new ways of viewing previously-held perceptions and eventually to new patterns of action. One participant shared what she observed to be an adjustment to her own existing perspective and prior understanding in response to what was happening socially during the COVID-19 pandemic, sharing a shift in her mindset:

> If you truly feel marginalized from this in group or out group, how do you then effectively create change? …so I'm trying to be more understanding of those perspectives of okay, well, what does work?...Trying to be more open minded about my responses. Trying to get past some of that old mindset that I like to think I'm not a part of. But at the end of the day, still sometimes I don't necessarily see that other perspective as easily as I should. Because I think the temptation is there to minimize, to say, well, if they hadn't done this, they wouldn't have been in this situation, or these events.

But that's, to an extent, just furthering the problem. If you haven't been in their shoes, you don't know how much harassment there is on a daily basis, and to be dismissive and say, well, that's a just a social construct in your mind, because even if it is, it's still their reality.

This teacher shared further how the workshop session with the short films depicting individual experiences from different cultural backgrounds had an impact on her prior understanding of some of the challenges faced by these groups. Observing what was occurring in the American social landscape at the time regarding the widespread responses to police shootings led her to deeply think about and make adjustments to some of her previously-held thoughts about the realities and challenges that may face other racial groups, as reflected in her statements above.

In another example of participants developing new meaning during this phase of Transformative Learning, one teacher explained why she did not look directly at the eyes of individuals she talked to. This teacher explained that in her culture, looking at people's eyes was viewed as a sign of disrespect, and so she was more comfortable looking down and away when speaking with her colleagues. One of her colleagues who was also participating in the workshop sessions explained later how this caused a shift in her perception and understanding, explaining that:

> When we were in the meeting, and one teacher was talking about how I always knew from working with her that she didn't look at you. A lot of times…she'd be talking and I never took it personal. But when she was in the meeting and explaining that, I kind of had an a-ha moment and went, Wow, that's totally this cultural thing, and I had actually interpreted it as a more of an individual thing that maybe that was just what she did. And I didn't realize that that was really a cultural thing on her part.

She went on to explain how she had mistakenly assumed this was something unique to the specific individual she was interacting with, and had not stopped to consider potential

cultural reasons why this teacher from another country did not make direct eye contact with her when speaking to her. One additional example of adjusting existing perspectives was related by a teacher who had actively adjusted the way she responded to the ethnic backgrounds of students of different cultural backgrounds, sharing that while she previously may have attempted to make assumptions about a student's background, she no longer does so when faced with the reality of the multitude of cultures in the school:

> Everybody just assumes…from the way you look that you know where they're from. And I feel like I go the opposite way, because I don't know if everybody that's their biological kid….A lot of times you don't know who somebody's spouse is, is the spouse Hispanic? Is the wife Hispanic? Is somebody black? Is somebody white? Maybe they adopted the kid from China. So I try to not say, "I think I know where this person is from." And so I feel like I've gone the total opposite to not even try to guess because I have no clue.

She shared that participating in the workshop sessions helped her realize the nuanced nature of the differences between students and that making instant assumptions about students and where they were from often incorrectly categorized the students and led to potential misunderstandings, so she consciously makes an effort to no longer "guess" where a student is from. These examples demonstrate how participants in the workshop sessions engaged with the material and reflected on their experiences in a manner that resulted in adjustments to their existing ways of thinking and the development of new perspectives and understandings.

New Patterns of Action

The fourth and last phase of Transformative Learning addresses the development of new patterns of action that are the outcome of previous stages, leading individuals to behave and act in new ways as the result of their critical reflection and development/adjustment of meaning following the initial disorienting dilemma.

This process results in a perspective transformation described as a "a more fully developed (more functional) frame of reference . . . one that is more (a) inclusive, (b) differentiating, (c) permeable, (d) critically reflective, and (e) integrative of experience" (Mezirow, 1996, p.163).

After participating in one workshop session in which several participants discussed the voices, rights, and perceptions of various minority groups, particularly the LGBTQ community, one participant had a difficult time processing the conversation. After much reflection, she took the step of intentionally meeting with an individual from the LGBTQ community who described her own experience in a public high school. Following this conversation, the participant wanted to engage in making change at the school (a new pattern of action) and proposed that a suggestion be considered for students at the school:

> Could teachers somehow silently identify themselves as a safe adult through a magnet on their door or a pin on their badge that the older students would recognize? …I hope that this is something we can do on campus - I think a young person who is struggling with identity issues or feels marginalized in any way would appreciate seeing a symbol that identifies adults who will listen and offer support. They may not want or need to talk, but just knowing that adults are there and open to their struggles would feel good.

This was an example of an individual undergoing a perspective transformation and engaging intentionally in a new pattern of action, after experiencing a disorienting dilemma during the workshop session that unsettled her enough to take further action. Her personal reflection led her to consciously choose to make a difference with her own behavior and try to have a broader impact on her colleagues and within the school setting.

Demonstrating their intent to engage in new patterns of action, several

participants shared their desire to incorporate more culturally diverse materials into their

instruction. One teacher shared her insights after participating in the workshop sessions,

stating that:

> I had really begun to notice that our novels were all about American white
> people…looking at my class, I saw so much diversity, and I felt like we were
> falling short with the books we were reading. I found a book I thought would
> work and took a chance. It was a great experience- so many of our students had
> personal connections to the characters and story and setting. I am inspired to try to
> make additional changes…

This sentiment was also shared by other participants with one teacher explaining how she

"consciously picked novels from different authors to account for the different cultures the

[school] represents for the summer homework reading list," while another shared that her

"goal is to try to make a change in each unit that broadens our cultural representation for

students," both indicating intentionality in making changes in their curriculum to support

culturally responsive instruction. Participants also shared their interest in having students

engage in actively discussing different viewpoints as a means of integrating more

culturally responsive instruction into their classrooms, with one teacher sharing the

following:

> I think sometimes I get excited to see kids be passionate and very emotional about
> a topic that I forget to remind them to try to look for another perspective. I believe
> that this is something I will implement in my next class discussion. Have students
> move from one point of view and then have them discuss in favor of the opposite
> point of view. That would be a great exercise to help them be more flexible
> towards others.

As in the example above, teachers were excited to put what they had learned in the

workshop sessions into action, both with their students and for themselves personally.

At the personal development level, one teacher shared how she changed her own

behavior to learn more about others different from herself, stating that:

> I think I realized that while I was doing okay in the classroom, I was not doing
> that maybe in the wider public. I was still kind of going to those categories that
> we are comfortable with. And so I have been more purposeful in seeking out
> opportunities where I can actually talk to people who are not of my background,
> and talk to them about real world events, and not be afraid to engage and listen to
> some of their perspectives and stuff, and that has really helped.

In a similar vein, several participants discussed how the workshop sessions had affected

their previous behavior and led them to consider new patterns of action. As part of the

sessions, participants were introduced to various tools and strategies (see figure 5 below).

Figure 5

Teacher Tools and Strategies Introduced (See Appendix C)

Session 1	IDI group profile/IDC continuum	Session 2	• Understanding Unconscious Bias • Cognitive Bias Codex
Session 3	• Cultural Identity Worksheet • Diversity Profile Worksheet	Session 4	• Country Comparison Tool • Culture Mapping Worksheet
Session 5	• Intercultural Conflict Style Inventory	Session 6	• Conflict Response Cycle chart • S. O. D. A strategy • O. S. E. E strategy
Session 7	• Seven Steps for Empathy • Teacher Empathy Guide	Session 8	• 10 tips for facilitating discussions • Difficult conversations self-assessment for teachers
Session 9	• Key characteristics of a multi-cultural curriculum • Culturally responsive teaching list • Culturally responsive teaching mindsets worksheet • Evaluating classroom assessments worksheet	Session 10	• IDI group profile • IDI individual reports • IDI Guided Development Plan

One participant shared the following about her use of one of the tools:

> Over the past week, I have kept the Conflict Response Cycle Chart in the back of
> my mind, and when I have felt myself becoming tense, I pause and think about
> how I should react. Taking time to calm my emotions and speak with my children
> in a calm tone has led to enormously better results, which makes sense.

Another high school teacher shared how she had already started implementing some of

the tools and strategies in her classes and was seeing positive results in her connection

with her students, explaining:

> I have been able to incorporate much of what I learned from the sessions into both
> the literature that I am teaching and my Theory of Knowledge class. ..It has
> allowed me to understand and help empower students to express their differing
> perspectives based on the stages of the Intercultural Development Continuum, and
> for discussions, I have been able to set up better questions and the students have
> responded really well.

Participants also shared their insights into their own personal growth as a result of

engaging in the workshop sessions, and how their approaches to responding to their

students from different backgrounds had changed. One participant shared the following:

> I definitely think my cultural competence has grown since January, just being
> more aware of some of the challenges and different things that people from
> various cultures may face. Previously, I was like, we are all the same…why can't
> we just all get along? And now I have a better realization that that's not true.
> Instead of trying to say that we're all the same, now I feel we should embrace
> people's differences, recognize them, honor them.

This realization that treating everyone the same was not necessarily the best approach to

recognize and capitalize on the cultural diversity present in their classrooms was also

reflected in the statements of another participant who shared:

> This has inspired me to keep studying! I think it's important for children to see
> themselves represented culturally. I made some mistakes in the beginning of this
> year in History and now feel compelled and empowered…to include more than
> the black and white perspective, but also the brown and yellow, the musicians, the
> artists, the dancers, the readers, the non-readers, the intellectuals, the less
> responsive.

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Participants further expressed how their ability to interact with others from different cultures had grown during the workshop sessions, with one teacher stating "I think I'm more open to listening to other people's points of view…My opinions about things have changed. I've been much more aware of my reactions and feelings since the class sessions," and another participant sharing the following:

> I concluded that in my current circle of friends, there is so much cultural wealth that I haven't tapped into yet! I am encouraged to learn as much as I can about other people's culture, and strangely, I feel more empowered to reach a little deeper into my own culture to be able to share the best parts of how we do things.

Several participants also indicated that because they felt more certain of where they stood in their own understanding, completing the Intercultural Developmental Inventory (IDI) was easier the second time they took it at the conclusion of the workshop sessions, in comparison to the first time. They attributed this to growth in personal awareness as the result of participating in the workshop sessions. One participant shared that "it was a lot easier to answer the questions this time, and I was actually way more on the either the left or the right." Another shared, "I found myself almost offended by some of the questions this time...so I think I have become just more aware."
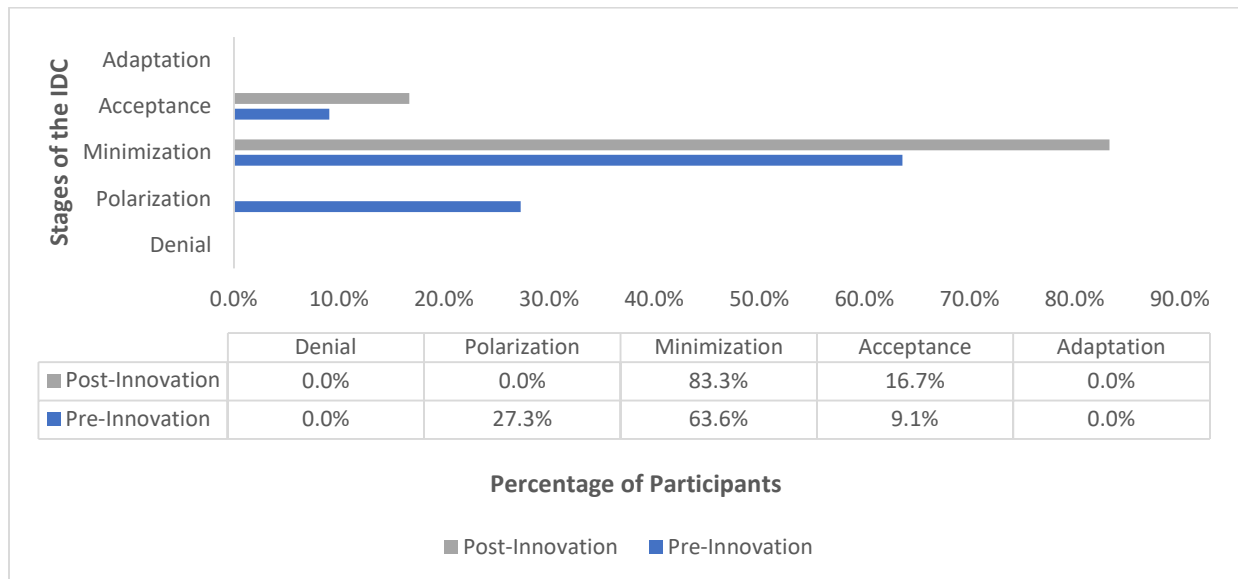
The final stage of choosing to engage in new patterns of action as the result of adjustment of prior understanding is the outcome of Transformative Learning. Jack Mezirow explains that "transformative learning may be epochal or incremental and may involve objective (often task-oriented) or subjective (often self-reflective) reframing" (Mezirow & Dirkx, 2006, p. 125). By engaging in the workshop sessions, participants demonstrated progression through all four stages of the Transformative Learning cycle using both objective and subjective reframing of their previous beliefs and assumptions.

Summary of Results

Quantitative results showed the innovation had a positive impact in raising

Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) Developmental Orientation scores of

participants at the group level, and for most participants on an individual level as well.

Following implementation of the innovation, all participants who were at the Polarization

stage on the Intercultural Development Continuum (IDC) moved into the Minimization

stage along the five-stage continuum.

Figure 6

Pre-Innovation and Post-Innovation Group Profile IDI DO Scores

	Denial	Polarization	Minimization	Acceptance	Adaptation
■Post-Innovation	0.0%	0.0%	83.3%	16.7%	0.0%
■Pre-Innovation	0.0%	27.3%	63.6%	9.1%	0.0%

Percentage of Participants

■ Post-Innovation   ■ Pre-Innovation

Qualitative data demonstrated that eight themes emerged from participant responses

collected. The eight themes were: (1) bias, (2) awareness, (3) emotion, (4) connection,

(5) disorienting dilemma, (6) critical reflection, (7) development and adjustment of

meaning, and (8) new patterns of action. These themes reflected participant engagement

with the sessions and the overall development of their intercultural competence,

demonstrating their progression through the Intercultural Development Continuum.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this action research study was to address the need for targeted

professional development opportunities related to the development of intercultural

competence among K-12 public school teachers. Mitchell's Intercultural Development

Continuum and Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory served as the theoretical

frameworks guiding this study. In this section, complementarity of quantitative and

qualitative data will be examined, along with discussion of the two theoretical

frameworks to the research findings, as well as a review of personal lessons learned,

limitations of this study, implications for practice, implications for future research, and

conclusions from the research.

Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Data

Results from the quantitative and qualitative data obtained during this research

study complement one another in their findings. Quantitative data collected through Post-

Innovation Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) Developmental Orientation (DO)

scores demonstrated progress along the Intercultural Development Continuum as a

whole, with the group profile IDI DO scores increasing by 12.81 points between the two

assessments. This was supported by qualitative data from multiple data sources in which

participants indicated they became more aware of cultural differences and actively

engaged in critical reflection that resulted in increased intercultural competence and a

desire to engage in new patterns of action. The qualitative data provided richer detail and

individual insights into the quantitative data, allowing for greater connections between

the two sets of data, through development of the nine supporting themes.

Explanation of Results

The first research question addressed by this study was: how and to what extent does participation in a ten-session professional development training workshop impact the development of intercultural competence in teachers as measured by the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)? This research question was addressed through the administration of the IDI assessment tool prior to implementation of the innovation in January 2020 and then again following implementation of the innovation in May 2020. The results from both administrations indicated that participants as a group progressed along the five-stage Intercultural Development Continuum (IDC) by 12.81 points on the 90-point scale (a 14.2% increase). Prior to the innovation, three out of twelve (25%) of participants were at the second stage of Polarization on the IDC. Following implementation of the innovation, all three of these participants moved to the third stage of Minimization on the IDC, increasing the number of participants at the Minimization stage or above from seven (75%) to twelve (100%).

The scores of nine out of twelve (75%) participants increased between the Pre-Innovation IDI assessment and the Post-Innovation IDI administration. The scores of three out of twelve (25%) participants decreased between two assessments, ranging from -3.15 points to -6.81 points, but as the standard error of measurement for the IDI is approximately seven points, this indicates that these participants essentially started and ended at the same stage on the IDC. Based on my observations, participants who spent the greatest amount of time consistently engaging with the workshop materials and participating in critical self-reflection (as assessed by the frequency of personal blog posts and discussion board comments) appeared to have made the most progress.

The second research question addressed by this study was: how and to what extent does participation in this professional development training workshop influence teacher capacity for: (a) self-reflection on potential personal biases, (b) awareness of others from different cultural backgrounds, (c) managing emotions while navigating complex conversations regarding cultural and racial differences, and (d) making meaningful and authentic connections with students and families from the different cultures which make up the school community?

This research question was primarily addressed through qualitative data collected during the course of the innovation through pre-innovation and post-innovation interviews, in-person group workshop session meetings, online discussion board comments, and participant self-reflection journals. Analysis of this data revealed a significant positive impact on teacher capacity for self-reflection regarding bias, awareness of those from different cultural backgrounds, managing emotions during difficult conversations, and making meaningful connections with students and their families.

Participants were introduced to various tools and strategies in each of these four areas, which they indicated in their responses that they found very useful and began incorporating into their teaching practice right away. All participants expressed in their qualitative responses that they learned more about themselves and how they interacted with others while participating in the sessions, and several provided evidence of shifting their previous perspectives and engaging in new patterns of action, reflective of the Transformative Learning process.

The eight themes identified in the qualitative analysis stage of this research study aligned closely with the four stages of Transformative Learning (disorienting dilemma, critical reflection, development/adjustment of meaning, and new patterns of action), indicating the progress that most participants made in the four areas addressed by research question 2 and along the Intercultural Development Continuum (IDC) while engaging in the workshop sessions.

Outcomes Related to Previous Research and Theory

The findings of this study support both the five stages of development within the Intercultural Development Continuum and the four main stages of Transformative Learning Theory as it relates to the development of intercultural competence in teachers. The Intercultural Development Continuum (IDC) is based on five progressive stages of development of intercultural competence, which are: (1) Denial, (2) Polarization, (3) Minimization, (4) Acceptance, and (5) Adaptation (Hammer, 2012).

Previous research regarding progress along the IDC has indicated that intentionally-planned professional development for teachers can result in positive outcomes (DeJaeghere & Cao, 2009; Green et al., 2018; Jackson, 2015). This research study produced similar findings with participants as a group increasing their IDI Developmental Orientation scores by 12.81 points on the 90-point IDI scale (a 14.2% increase). As was the case in previous research studies, the majority of participants in this study following implementation of the innovation were at the Minimization stage on the IDC, with ten out of twelve participants (83.3%) at this stage, and two out of twelve participants (16.6%) at the Acceptance stage on the IDC.

The four main stages of Transformative Learning involve: (1) facing a disorienting dilemma, (2) engaging in critical reflection, (3) developing and adjusting existing meaning, and (4) engaging in new patterns of action as a result. Previous research has demonstrated the progression of individuals through these stages as the result of participating in intentionally-designed experiences (Addleman et al., 2014; Christie et al., 2015; Liu, 2015). This research study also determined that as the result of actively engaging in the ten-part workshop sessions, participants demonstrated progressive movement through each of these four stages as described in their qualitative responses.

Personal Lessons Learned

The first lesson learned during this research study had to do with the difference in type of qualitative data obtained from in-person group discussions compared to written online discussion board responses. I discovered that audio recordings of live discussions yielded more candid and raw responses. When participants took time to assemble their thoughts in writing for the online discussion board, the responses seemed more prepared and less vulnerable. In future iterations of these workshop sessions, holding them in person to the greatest extent possible is likely to yield richer qualitative data.

The second lesson learned was that of necessity for additional scaffolding of the content in each session. Providing pre-reading for participants ahead of each session would be one way to reduce the content covered within each session and spend more time on group discussion of the material during class sessions. Potentially extending the time period during which the sessions are offered to a year-long weekly course, as opposed to a semester-long weekly course, may be helpful as well.

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The third lesson learned was the need to debrief following each session. Participants wanted more of an opportunity to discuss what they were experiencing together, to go through the process of making new meaning as the result of their critical reflection. I would consider allowing time at the start of each new session to review the previous session, or possibly add a second group meeting after each session to provide more opportunities to debrief.

Lastly, I learned that facilitating professional development is an opportunity for growth for the facilitator as well, especially given the COVID-19-related limitations faced during the research phase of the study. Being able to consider, modify, and implement necessary changes along the way is an essential aspect of delivering professional development in order to meaningfully meet the needs of participants and this is in itself a process of action research.

Limitations

One limitation of this research study is that I was the single coder of the qualitative data collected and analyzed during this research study. Having multiple coders review the same data for coding calibration would bolster the strength of the research study and its findings, ensuring that any potential coder biases are eliminated and greater trustworthiness in the results.

Another limitation of the study was that the sample size for this research study consisted of only 12 participants from a single setting, which is not necessarily representative of other public schools at a state, regional or national level. A larger sample size including more settings would provide more transferable results to other broader contexts.

The COVID-19 pandemic also resulted in certain aspects of the original research project being eliminated, such as the two planned external cultural experiences which involved in-person interaction with others. These experiences would have provided additional context for participants and further qualitative data for analysis. The switch from in-person group workshop sessions to online sessions was also a limitation resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in the elimination of in-person group discussions, which would have yielded richer qualitative data.

The sampling method utilized for this research study was a voluntary response sampling method, allowing for participants to self-select into the study. As a result, only two minority teachers were participants in the study. A purposeful sampling method of a greater number of participants incorporating more cultural diversity may provide more specific data.

Lastly, the participants in this study were all located within a single geographic setting, and therefore not representative of participants on a broader state, regional, national, or international scale. A larger geographical base of participants would allow for potentially wider applications of the research findings.

Implications for Practice

This area of research is growing increasingly relevant for public school teachers facing greater diversity in their classrooms, and there are several areas in which the findings from this research study have implications for practice. All participants shared that they found great value in the workshop sessions, and each participant expressed their desire to see the innovation implemented more broadly within the school for all faculty members, and outside of the school to provide more teachers exposure to similar content.

The first implication for practice is the expansion of similar opportunities to support the development of intercultural competence in K-12 public school teachers by participating in planned professional development job-embedded training. The initial action cycles of research leading to the implementation of the innovation in this research study indicated a significant need within the faculty and staff at the research setting for more training in this area. With the growing numbers of students from different cultural backgrounds attending public schools in the United States, I am confident this need is likely to be reflected in most public schools, given the typical cultural disparity between teachers and students found in most K-12 public schools.

A second implication for practice is the utilization of the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) more broadly as a tool to gauge the level and development of intercultural competence during professional development training with K-12 public school teachers. Participants highly valued receiving both the IDI group profile and IDI individual profile reports at the beginning and conclusion of the workshop sessions, as well as the information shared during the individual one-on-one guided session in which their personalized Intercultural Development Plan was shared with them for continued personal growth. The IDI provides a structured and validated method of assessing individual development of intercultural competence, which allows participants to determine progress more objectively.

A third implication for practice is a continued focus on the four specific topics that formed the basis for the innovation. These four areas of: (1) self-reflection on potential personal biases, (2) awareness of others from different cultural backgrounds, (3) managing emotions while navigating complex conversations regarding cultural and racial

differences, and (4) making meaningful and authentic connections with students and families from the different cultures which make up the school community, are highly relevant areas to today's teaching practices. All participants were provided with specific strategies to address their practice in each of these areas, and each participant expressed their intent to incorporate these strategies directly into their day-to-day classroom instructional approach. Ensuring that any professional development training on this subject provides teachers with useful and relevant tools that can be implemented immediately is essential for the ongoing development of intercultural competence.

Lastly, the development of intercultural competence in public school teachers is an area that both teachers and students find valuable to furthering academic performance through the development of meaningful relationships. As such, K-12 public school districts should be encouraged to allocate resources within their budgets to support professional development training for teacher development of intercultural competence.

Implications for Research

Based on the findings from this research study, additional implications for research include: (1) developing the content further, (2) widening the scope of participants, and (3) evaluating impact on student academic performance. With the degree of interest expressed by participants in seeing the workshop sessions shared more broadly, I would like to further develop the content of the sessions to create a model that can be shared easily and scaled up for regional and national use to train K-12 public school teachers in the area of intercultural competence. The structured approach of this innovation was well-received by participants, and further work in developing this model to meet the needs of a larger number of in-service teachers is warranted.

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It will also be important to conduct broader research using a larger sample size with greater diversity of participants to determine whether the content of the workshop sessions is useful to all participants, regardless of cultural background. Ten out of the twelve participants in the research study were White, and only two participants were from minority backgrounds. I would like to further determine the impact of the workshop sessions on a broader cross-section of public school teachers in order to assess the value of the sessions.

Lastly, an additional area of further research is the examination of the impact of this type of training on students in K-12 public schools to determine whether professional development training in the area of intercultural competence translates to improved academic performance in the classroom. Prior research (Marchitello & Trinidad, 2019; Young, 2010; Bryan-Gooden & Hester, 2018) indicates that classroom teachers who are culturally responsive to their students are able to engage their students in academic content more readily and forge more meaningful relationships with their students, but it would be valuable to assess to what degree participation in workshop sessions like those implemented in the innovation result in explicit student outcomes on state assessments over the duration of an academic school year.

Conclusion

The genesis of this research study stemmed from the growing gap observed between the ethnic and cultural backgrounds of students in K-12 public schools in the United States, and their K-12 public school teachers. At the onset of my research, approximately 50.8 million students were expected to attend public school during the 2019-2020 school year, taught by about 3.2 million teachers. While minority students

(defined as all racial/ethnic groups except for White) account for more than 53% of students attending public elementary and secondary schools in the United States, approximately 80% of their teachers are White (NCES, 2019a). The demographic divide between public school students and teachers is clearly continuing to widen, given the growing number of minority students entering public school without a matching number of minority teachers entering the profession.

A new report released by the National Center for Education Statistics in September 2020 regarding the race and ethnicity of public school teachers and their students (NCES, 2020) shows that the majority of teachers tended to be White in schools where the majority of students were not White (Figure 7).

Figure 7

Percentage Distribution of Teachers By Race/Ethnicity (NCES, 2020)
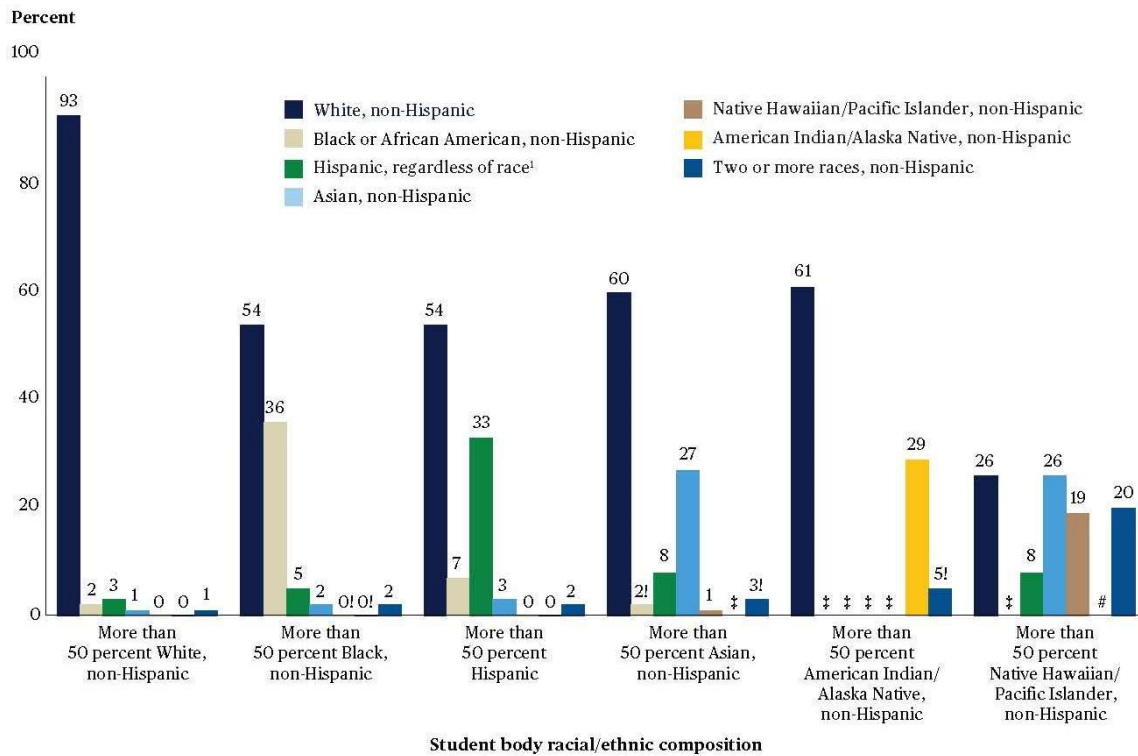
Within my own research setting, a similar pattern was evident with 72.9% of minority students at the school being taught by 85.2% White teachers, largely mirroring national NCES data. During the action cycles of research leading up to implementation of my innovation, teachers within my research setting expressed a clear need for greater support and training in how to appropriately respond to various situations that arose as the result of these differences in cultural backgrounds, particularly in the areas of bias, awareness, managing emotions during difficult conversations, and developing meaningful and authentic relationships with their students.

My innovation was developed to directly address the need for targeted professional development opportunities in these four identified areas related to the development of intercultural competence among teachers through the implementation of a ten-part workshop session series. Utilizing the two theoretical frameworks of the Intercultural Development Continuum and Transformative Learning theory as underpinnings for the research, and a mixed methods approach incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data, findings from the research study indicated a positive impact of the workshop sessions on participants.

Without a clear emphasis within teacher preparation programs on sufficiently preparing new teachers for the diverse classrooms they face upon becoming first-year teachers, the responsibility for providing in-service teachers with the training and support they need to develop intercultural competence rests squarely upon the shoulders of local public school districts. Between 2015 and 2027, the National Center for Education Statistics projects an increase of 16% in Hispanic students, 21% in Asian/Pacific Islander students, and 14% in students of Two or more races (NCES, 2019c).

It is essential that public school teachers be provided with relevant and timely training to support the needs of these incoming students, by focusing on identifying their own personal biases, increasing their awareness of different cultural backgrounds, learning how to mediate and facilitate complex conversations about cultural and racial differences, and understanding how to incorporate culturally responsive tools and strategies into their instructional practice.

This hard but critically important work must be done in these areas by teachers who choose to grow in their understanding of cultural differences and develop new patterns of action. This work must also be facilitated by school district leadership and administration by creating safe spaces for teachers to engage in this crucial self-reflection and providing them with appropriate tools to do so. Without intentional and purposeful action, the growing racial and ethnic divide between teacher and student in most public schools in the United States is likely to generate ongoing challenges within the classroom.

This research study provides one starting point in the development of a structured content-rich professional development training program integrating multiple tools and strategies that teachers can utilize for self-reflection, personal growth, and implementation in their classrooms, with the explicit goal of improving the intercultural competence of teachers. It is my hope to continue to refine and improve upon this foundation to further develop a scalable model of professional development training which can be utilized more broadly by public schools to develop the intercultural competence of teachers and better prepare them for the diverse classrooms they will be working in.

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APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) APPROVAL

ASU Knowledge Enterprise
Development

EXEMPTION GRANTED

Josephine Marsh
Division of Educational Leadership and Innovation - Tempe
480/727-4453
josephine.marsh@asu.edu

Dear Josephine Marsh:

On 1/13/2020 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	Preparing Teachers for Diverse Classrooms: Developing Intercultural Competence
Investigator:	Josephine Marsh
IRB ID:	STUDY00011294
Funding:	None
Grant Title:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	• ASU_Brady_Support_Letter_Signed.pdf, Category: Other; • Blog_Instructions.pdf, Category: Other; • Brady_CITI_Certificate.pdf, Category: Other; • Brady_CITI_RCR_Certificate.pdf, Category: Other; • IDI_Sample_Items.pdf, Category: Other; • Interview_Protocol.pdf, Category: Other; • IRB_Form_Brady_Marsh_1_2_20.docx, Category: IRB Protocol; • Marsh CITI certificate 2018.pdf, Category: Other; • Recruitment_Consent_Form_Brady_Marsh_1_9_20.pdf, Category: Consent Form;

The IRB determined that the protocol is considered exempt pursuant to Federal
Regulations 45CFR46 on 1/13/2020.

APPENDIX B

INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT INVENTORY (IDI) SAMPLE QUESTIONS

IDI® Assessment
Sample Items

This document provides various sample items available to detail the type of questions listed in the IDI Assessment.

Sometimes, you (an IDI Qualified Administrator) may be asked to allow someone who is not a QA to view the questions in the IDI Assessment. Because the IDI Assessment is a proprietary instrument, these items are not viewable by others. However, IDI, LLC has compiled example items for each of the Intercultural Development Orientations measured. This way, you and others can gain a good sense of the type of questions asked in the IDI.

Denial
- It is appropriate that people do not care what happens outside their country.
- People should avoid individuals from other cultures who behave differently.

Polarization - Defense
- Our culture's way of life should be a model for the rest of the world.

Polarization - Reversal
- People from our culture are less tolerant compare to people from other cultures.
- Family values are stronger in other cultures than in our cultures.

Minimization
- Our common humanity deserves more attention than culture difference.
- Human behavior worldwide should be governed by natural and universal ideas of right and wrong.

Acceptance
- I have observed many instances of misunderstanding due to cultural differences in gesturing or eye contact.
- I evaluate situations in my own culture based on my experiences and knowledge of other cultures.

Adaptation
- When I come in contact with people from a different culture, I find I change my behavior to adapt to theirs.

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Research Question #1

1. Describe your level of intercultural competence, as it relates to interacting with individuals from cultures different to your own.

Research Question #2

1. Describe your ability to reflect critically on any potential personal biases you may have.

2. Describe your awareness of others from different cultural backgrounds.

3. Describe your ability to manage emotions while navigating complex conversations regarding cultural and racial differences.

4. Describe your ability to make meaningful and authentic connections with students and families from the different cultures which make up the school community.133

APPENDIX D

SESSION ACTIVITIES

Cressy, E. C. (2014). Understanding cognitive dissonance activity. In M. Kite (Ed.). Breaking the prejudice habit. Ball State University, breakingprejudice.org

Attitude Survey

Please indicate whether or not you agree with the statements below by circling the appropriate answer:

1. Texting while driving is dangerous.
    a. Yes
    b. No

2. It is important to stay informed about proposed legislation that affects my community.
    a. Yes
    b. No

3. Soft drinks/sodas are unhealthy beverages.
    a. Yes
    b. No

4. Poverty is a serious problem that needs to be addressed.
    a. Yes
    b. No

5. Smoking is an unhealthy behavior.
    a. Yes
    b. No

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Cressy, E. C. (2014). Understanding cognitive dissonance activity. In M. Kite (Ed.). Breaking the prejudice habit. Ball State University, breakingprejudice.org

Behavior Survey

Please indicate whether or not you have performed each of the following behaviors by circling the correct response:

1. I text when I am driving.
    a. Yes
    b. No

2. I am able to name at least one bill affecting my community that was passed in the last year by the legislators in my county or my state.
    a. Yes
    b. No

3. I drink soft drinks/sodas.
    a. Yes
    b. No

4. Within the last year I have donated money or engaged in volunteer work to address the problem of poverty.
    a. Yes
    b. No

5. Within the last year I have smoked a cigarette.
    a. Yes
    b. No

Scoring

Answers that will evoke feelings of dissonance (assuming participants answered 'yes' on the attitude questions):

1. Yes
2. No
3. Yes
4. No
5. Yes

COGNITIVE BIAS CODEX, 2016

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cognitive_Bias_Codex_-_180%2B_biases_designed_by_John_Manoogian_III_(jm3).jpg

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Social Group Categories & Cultural Identity

Ability/Disability Status (Physical, Cognitive, etc.):

Age/Generation:

Citizenship:

Gender Identity:

Education:

Ethnicity:

Language (use & proficiency):

Nationality:

Physical Appearance (body size, height, weight, etc.):

Political Beliefs/Ideology:

Race:

Religion:

Sexual Orientation:

Socioeconomic Status (consider your formative years):

Instructions: For each aspect of your identity, indicate how you identify <u>and</u> whether your identity is *valued or not valued* in U.S. society. Consider the current and historical social and political climate that led to your value conclusions.
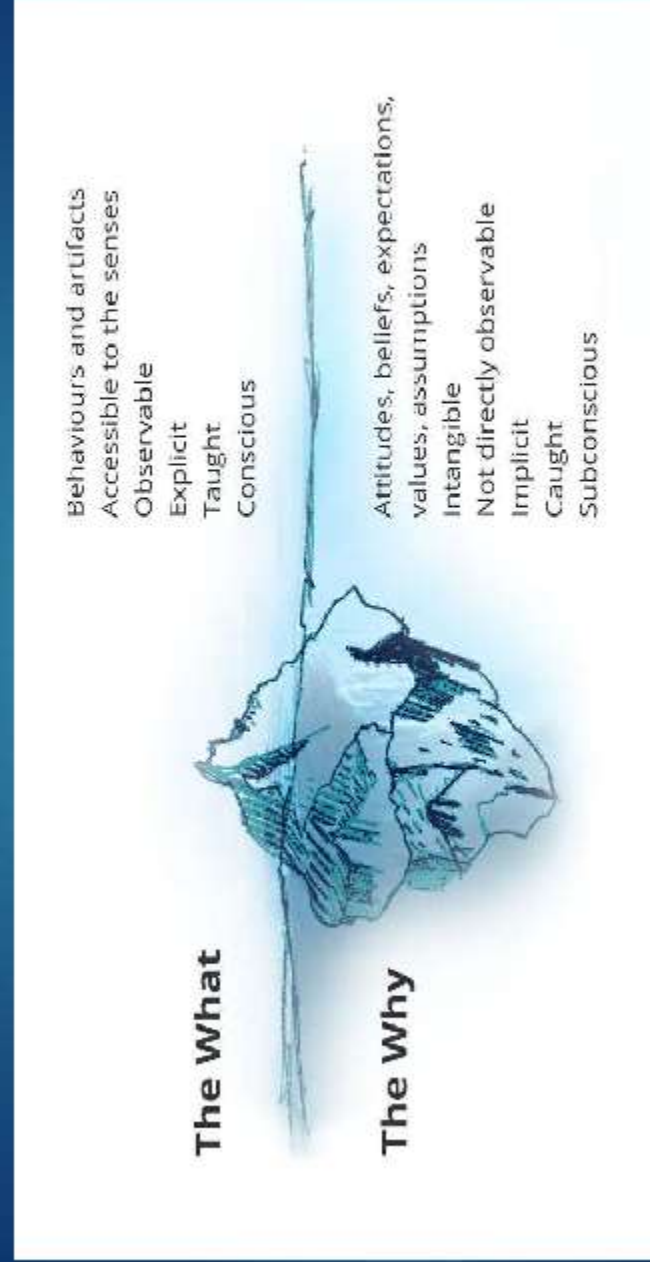
- Identify your top <u>2-3</u> identities that have *most influenced your views of the workplace and how you approach your work*. Describe the influence for each.
- What values and/or beliefs do you hold because of the various aspects of your cultural identity?
- How do aspects of your cultural identity influence your behavior?

DIVERSITY PROFILE

	Gender	Race	Ethnicity	Sexuality	Ability	Religion	Age	SES	Education	Language	Family	Politics
I am												
My parents are												
My co-workers are												
My supervisor is												
My best friend is												
My other closest friends are												
Other people who live with me are												
People who often visit me are												
My neighbors are												
My elementary school was mostly												
My elementary school friends were												
My middle school was mostly												
My middle school friends were												
My high school was mostly												
My high school friends were												
My K-12 teachers were mostly												
My college was mostly												
My college friends were mostly												
My college teachers were mostly												
My doctor is												
My dentist is												
My pediatrician is												

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Culture Specific vs. Culture General

The What

Behaviours and artifacts
Accessible to the senses
Observable
Explicit
Taught
Conscious

The Why

Attitudes, beliefs, expectations, values, assumptions
Intangible
Not directly observable
Implicit
Caught
Subconscious

The Cultural Iceberg, adapted by: Sheri Lazarus (2016) from work by Edward T. Hall (1976). Art by Anna Seeley and Abby Smith.

Culture Specific vs. Culture General

- **Culture Specific:** Culture specific knowledge refers to particular characteristics that belong to members of a certain culture (though not necessarily to every individual within that culture), such as how to greet one another.

- **Culture General:** Culture general knowledge refers to frameworks that allow us to compare and contrast cultures, providing general categories that facilitate our exploration of values, beliefs, and behaviors in any culture.

The Six Dimensions of Culture (Hofstede)

According to Hofstede's research, all countries in the world share the same basic problems, but have developed their own answers to these questions:

1. How much (in)equality should there be among us?
2. How afraid are we of unknown people, ideas, and objects?
3. How dependent are we on our (extended) family?
4. How should a man feel and act compared to a woman?
5. Do we focus on the future, the present, or the past?
6. May we have fun, or is life a serious matter?

These can be seen as six different separate dimensions of cultures.

Hofstede, G., Hofstede G. J., & Minkov, M. (2010). Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind. New York: McGraw-Hill.

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The Six Dimensions of Culture (Hofstede)

1. POWER DISTANCE

Power being defined as the degree to which a person is able to influence other people's ideas and behavior can result in inequality – the degree of power each person exerts or can exert over other persons.

This dimension deals with the fact that all individuals in societies are not equal. Power distance is defined as the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally.

Hofstede, G., Hofstede G. J., & Minkov, M. (2010). Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind. New York: McGraw-Hill.

The Six Dimensions of Culture (Hofstede)

1. POWER DISTANCE

▶ **High Power Distance Index:** indicates a high acceptance of power being distributed unequally within a society; hierarchy is needed rather than just a convenience.

▶ **Low Power Distance Index:** emphasizes the importance of equal rights, as opposed to the importance of privileges of the more powerful.

Hofstede, G., Hofstede G. J., & Minkov, M. (2010). Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind. New York: McGraw-Hill.

The Six Dimensions of Culture (Hofstede)

2. INDIVIDUALISM

The fundamental issue addressed by this dimension is the degree of interdependence that a society maintains among its members. It has to do with whether people´s self-image is defined in terms of "I" or "We" .

Hofstede, G., Hofstede G. J., & Minkov, M. (2010). Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind. New York: McGraw-Hill.

The Six Dimensions of Culture (Hofstede)

2. **INDIVIDUALISM**

▲ **Individualist:** there is a strong sense of "I", meaning that one's personal identity is distinct from others'.

▲ **Collectivist:** there is a strong sense of "we", illustrating a mutual practical and psychological dependency between the person and the in-group.

Hofstede, G., Hofstede G. J., & Minkov, M. (2010). Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind. New York: McGraw-Hill.

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The Six Dimensions of Culture (Hofstede)

3. MASCULINITY

The Masculinity side of this dimension represents a preference in society for achievement, heroism, assertiveness, and material rewards for success. Society at large is more competitive.

Its opposite, Femininity, stands for a preference for cooperation, modesty, caring for the weak, and quality of life. Society at large is more consensus-oriented.

Hofstede, G., Hofstede G. J., & Minkov, M. (2010). Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind. New York: McGraw-Hill.

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The Six Dimensions of Culture (Hofstede)

3. **MASCULINITY**

▶ **Masculine:** people tend to focus on personal achievement, material success and the importance of status.

▶ **Feminine:** people are more concerned with quality of life, taking care of those less fortunate, ensuring leisure time, and finding consensus.

Hofstede, G., Hofstede G. J., & Minkov, M. (2010). Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind. New York: McGraw-Hill.

The Six Dimensions of Culture (Hofstede)

4. UNCERTAINTY AVOIDANCE

The Uncertainty Avoidance dimension expresses the degree to which the members of a society feel uncomfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity. The fundamental issue here is how a society deals with the fact that the future can never be known: should we try to control the future or just let it happen?

Countries exhibiting strong UAI maintain rigid codes of belief and behavior, and are intolerant of unorthodox behavior and ideas. Weak UAI societies maintain a more relaxed attitude in which practice counts more than principles.

Hofstede, G., Hofstede G. J., & Minkov, M. (2010). Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind. New York: McGraw-Hill.

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The Six Dimensions of Culture (Hofstede)

4. **UNCERTAINTY AVOIDANCE**

▲ **High Uncertainty Avoidance:** indicates a need for predictability and structure, often in the form of written and unwritten rules.

▲ **Low Uncertainty Avoidance:** uncertainty is considered normal and each day is taken as it comes.

Hofstede, G., Hofstede G. J., & Minkov, M. (2010). Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind. New York: McGraw-Hill.

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The Six Dimensions of Culture (Hofstede)

5. LONG-TERM ORIENTATION

Every society has to maintain some links with its own past while dealing with the challenges of the present and the future. Societies prioritize these two existential goals differently.

Societies who score low on this dimension prefer to maintain time-honored traditions and norms while viewing societal change with suspicion.

Those with a culture which scores high take a more pragmatic approach: they encourage thrift and efforts in modern education as a way to prepare for the future.

Hofstede, G., Hofstede G. J., & Minkov, M. (2010). Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind. New York McGraw- Hill.

The Six Dimensions of Culture (Hofstede)

5. **LONG-TERM ORIENTATION**

▶ **Long-Term Oriented:** societies focus on perseverance and thrift. The only non-changing rule is that the world is always changing.

▶ **Short-Term Oriented:** emphasizes respect for tradition and the fulfilling of social obligations.

Hofstede, G., Hofstede G. J., & Minkov, M. (2010). Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind. New York: McGraw-Hill.

The Six Dimensions of Culture (Hofstede)

6. INDULGENCE

Indulgence stands for a society that allows relatively free gratification of basic and natural human drives related to enjoying life and having fun.

Restraint stands for a society that suppresses gratification of needs and regulates it by means of strict social norms.

Hofstede, G., Hofstede G. J., & Minkov, M. (2010). Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind. New York: McGraw-Hill.

The Six Dimensions of Culture (Hofstede)

6. **INDULGENCE**

▲ **Indulgence:** These societies reflect a positive attitude and the view that one can act as one pleases.

▲ **Restraint:** gratification of needs are regulated by strict social norms and leisure is of lesser importance.

Hofstede, G., Hofstede G.J., & Minkov, M. (2010). Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind. New York: McGraw-Hill.
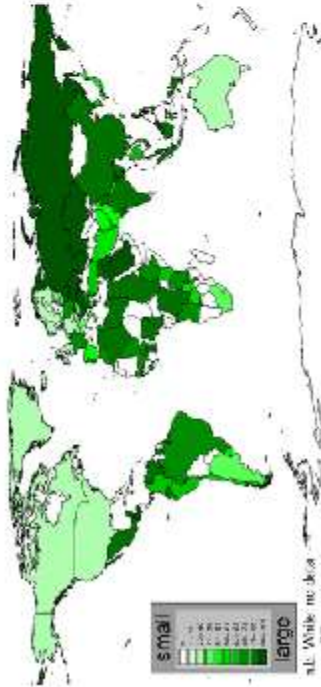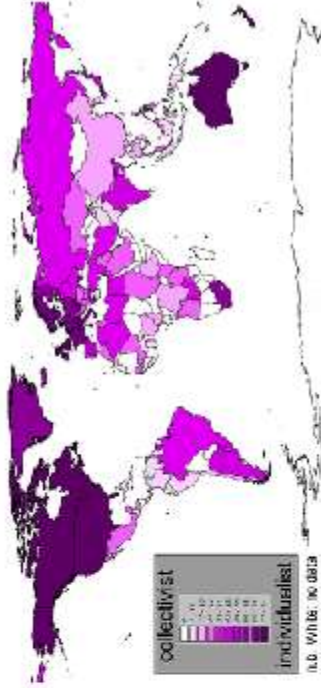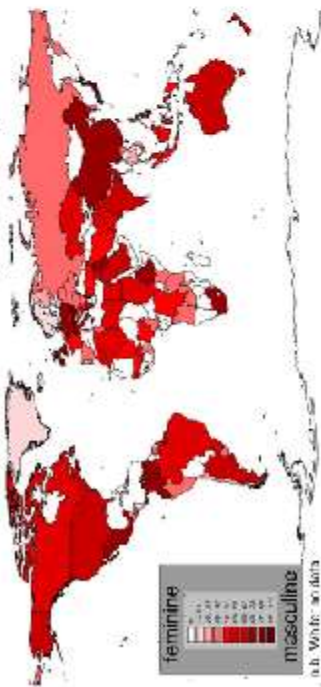
THE SIX DIMENSIONS OF CULTURE

Geert Hofstede

Retrieved from https://geerthofstede.com and https://www.hofstede-insights.com

Hofstede, G., Hofstede G. J., & Minkov, M. (2010). Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind. New York: McGraw-Hill.
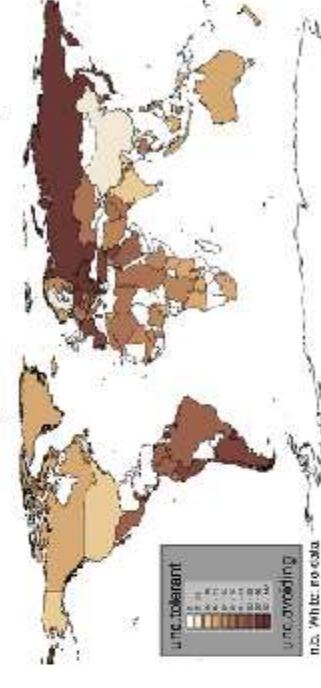
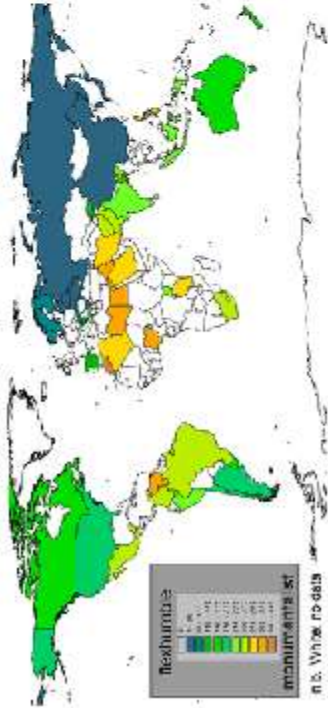Power Distance World map

Collectivism – Individualism World map
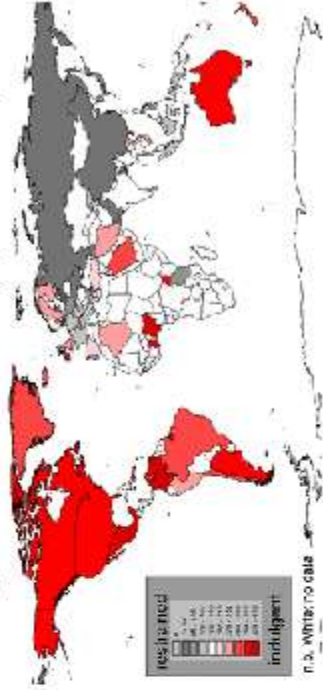
Uncertainty Avoidance World map
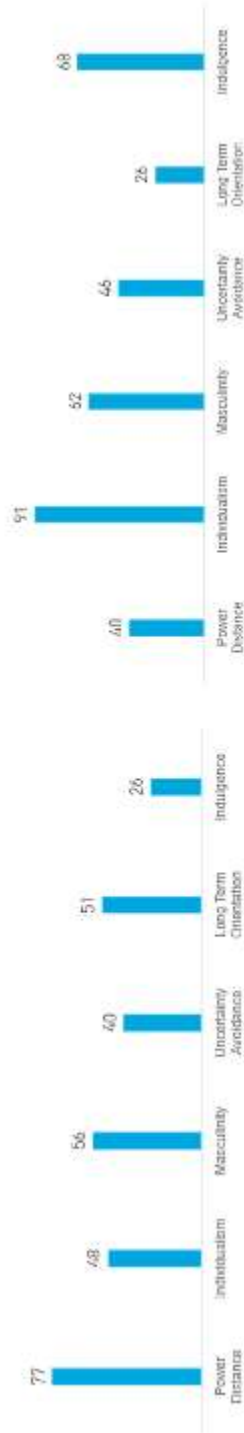
Femininity - Masculinity World map

Short-term orientation (Monumentalism) – Long-term orientation (Flexhumility) World map (based on WVS)

Indulgence – Restraint World map (based on WVS)

COUNTRY COMPARISONS
(Scale of 0 – 100)

INDIA

UNITED STATES

Hofstede, G., Hofstede G. J., & Minkov, M. (2010). Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind. New York McGraw- Hill.

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Cultural Mapping Worksheet

Cultures across the United States and globally utilize a variety of values and behavioral norms in their work. Individuals and groups demonstrate these preferences day-to-day. Take some time to reflect on yours and your department's values and behavioral norms.

Identify your cultural preferences by placing an 'X' at a place along the continuum that reflects your values and behavioral norms. Additionally, mark a 'D' along the continuum that reflects the values and behavioral norms of your group or department.

Universalism "What is good and right can be defined and always applies."	←——————|——————→ *How do we define what is fair?*	**Particularism** Good and right depends on the relationship and unique circumstances.
Individualism Identity comes from the self, and it is more important to contribute to the community as and if I wish.	←——————|——————→ *Where do we get our sense of identity?*	**Collectivism** Identity comes from the group one is a part of, and it is important to consider the community first.
Specific Focus on keeping work and professional lives separate.	←——————|——————→ *How far do we get involved?*	**Diffuse** There is overlap between work and personal lives.
Neutral Focus on restraint in showing emotions.	←——————|——————→ *How do we manage emotions?*	**Affective** Focus on showing emotions.
Achievement Judged on what is accomplished recently and/or over time.	←——————|——————→ *How do we confer status?*	**Ascription** Focus on a title, status is attributed at birth, based on identities, connections, and education (location/specific institution).
Sequential Time is linear; focus on one thing at a time.	←——————|——————→ *How do we define time?*	**Synchronic Time** Time is circular; focus on the big picture.
Internal Control Focus on dominating the environment.	←——————|——————→ *How do we manage our environment?*	**External Control** Focus on accepting whatever comes.
Task Focus Focus on getting the job done and can become impatient with socializing.	←——————|——————→ *How do we get our work done?*	**Relationship Focus** Value building relationships and work better with people when getting to know them.
Egalitarian All people should be treated similarly regardless of their position.	←——————|——————→ *How do we treat people?*	**Hierarchical** People should be treated differently depending on their title, position, rank.

Riding the Waves of Culture: Understanding Diversity in Global Business by Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner, 1993.
Hofstede Insights: https://www.hofstede-insights.com/product/compare-countries/

Be Boulder.

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EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE (EQ)

By Travis Bradberry

As the coauthor of Emotional Intelligence 2.0, I'm often asked to break down what emotional intelligence is and why it's so important. Here goes...

Emotional Intelligence Is the Other Kind of Smart

When emotional intelligence first appeared to the masses in 1995, it served as the missing link in a peculiar finding: people with average IQs outperform those with the highest IQs 70% of the time. This anomaly threw a massive wrench into what many people had always assumed was the sole source of success—IQ. Decades of research now point to emotional intelligence as the critical factor that sets star performers apart from the rest of the pack.

Emotional intelligence is the "something" in each of us that is a bit intangible. It affects how we manage behavior, navigate social complexities, and make personal decisions that achieve positive results. Emotional intelligence is made up of four core skills that pair up under two primary competencies: personal competence and social competence.
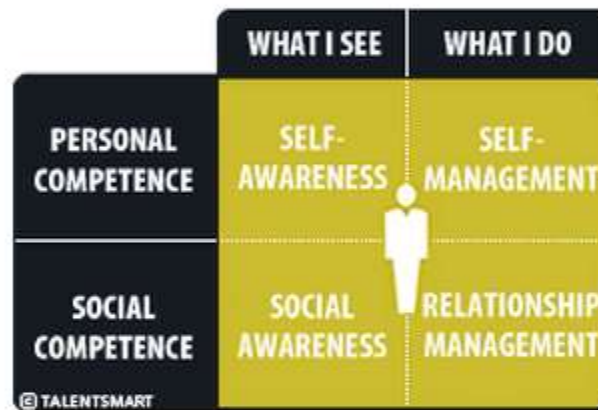
*Emotional intelligence is made up of four core skills.*

Personal competence is made up of your self-awareness and self-management skills, which focus more on you individually than on your interactions with other people. Personal competence is your ability to stay aware of your emotions and manage your behavior and tendencies.

- **Self-Awareness** is your ability to accurately perceive your emotions and stay aware of them as they happen.
- **Self-Management** is your ability to use awareness of your emotions to stay flexible and positively direct your behavior.

Social competence is made up of your social awareness and relationship management skills; social competence is your ability to understand other people's moods, behavior, and motives in order to improve the quality of your relationships.

- **Social Awareness** (empathy) is your ability to accurately pick up on emotions in other people and understand what is really going on.
- **Relationship Management** is your ability to use awareness of your emotions and the others' emotions to manage interactions successfully.

CONFLICT RESPONSE CYCLE
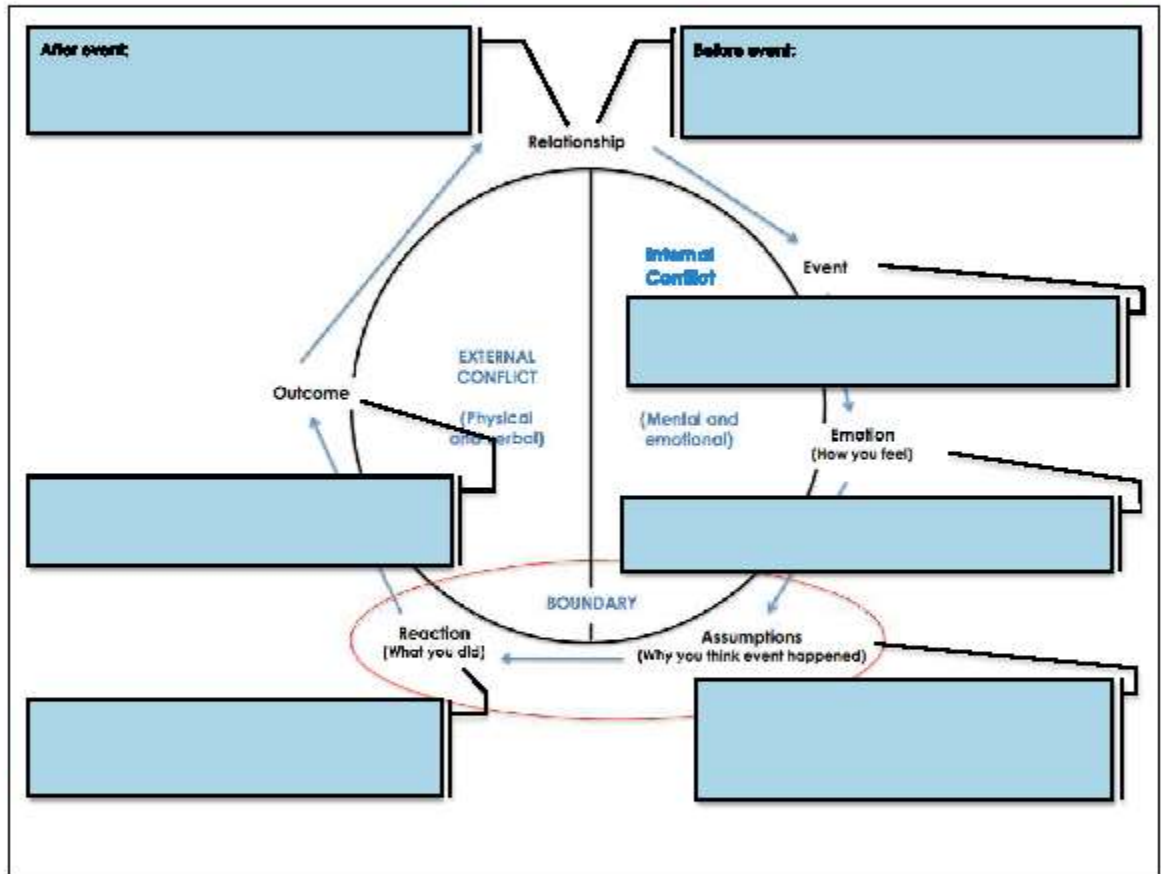
Hines, M. (2015, May). Conflict resolution activities for middle school skill-building. University of Oregon Blogs. https://cpb-us-e1.wpmucdn.com/blogs.uoregon.edu/dist/8/11350/files/2015/05/Compiled-Activities-1-r5x71c.pdf Adapted from Hillsboro Mediation Program's "The Anatomy of Conflict" (2014).

SODA Strategy

From: Hammond, Z. (2015). Culturally responsive teaching and the brain. Corwin Press.

Steps to Gain Control of Your Emotions

Steps	How? Why?
STOP	This first step simply asks you to **stop and pause rather than react in habitual ways.** When you enter an interaction that feels challenging, **work hard to stay open-minded.** Open-mindedness means being open to other points of view. This might mean not allowing a certain cultural display such as students' animated verbal exchange trigger you.
OBSERVE	**In the second step, check yourself. Don't react to what is going on. Instead, take a breath. Use the 10-second rule.** When the brain gets triggered, it takes stress hormones approximately 10 seconds to move through the body to the prefrontal cortex. In the pre-hijack stage, the biochemicals cortisol and adrenaline are just beginning to kick in. There is still some 'wiggle room' to listen to your wiser self and begin using stress management techniques to interrupt the amygdala take over effectively. Try to describe to yourself what is happening in neutral terms. It is during this step that you can recognize that what was originally perceived as a threat isn't reality.
DETACH	Sometimes when we get triggered, we get personally invested in being right or exercising our power over others. **Deliberately shift your consciousness to more pleasant or inspirational images.** If those techniques fail, go get a drink of water, literally take a few steps back to shake yourself up a bit. When we can detach from the goal of being right or defending ourselves, we can direct our energy toward being more responsive than reactive.
AWAKEN	When our amygdala reacts, it's because we are trying to protect ourselves. **Shifting focus from yourself to the other person in front of you, helps you 'wake up' or become present in the moment.** Try to see the other person as someone with his own feelings. He might be scared and reacting out of fear. **Ask yourself a few questions about the other person. What are they thinking? How are they feeling in this moment?** Shifting over to their perspective will get you out of your own reactive mode and will put you in a better position to have a positive interaction.

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MOVING BEYOND ASSUMPTIONS: THE O.S.E.E. TOOL

Observe — Observe and listen to what is happening

State — State objectively what is happening

Explore — Explore different explanations for what is happening

Evaluate — Evaluate which explanation(s) are the most likely one(s)

K. Berardo and D. Deardoff (eds.) (2012) Building Cultural Competence. Innovative Activities and Models, Activity 3 (Stylus Publishing)

E.M.P.A.T.H.Y.: A Tool to Enhance Nonverbal Communication Between Clinicians and Their Patients

Helen Riess, MD, and Gordon Kraft-Todd

Abstract

There is a gap in the medical education literature on teaching nonverbal detection and expression of empathy. Many articles do not address nonverbal interactions, instead focusing on "what to say" rather than "how to be." This focus on verbal communication overlooks the essential role nonverbal signals play in the communication of emotions, which has significant effects on patient satisfaction, health outcomes, and malpractice claims. This gap is addressed with a novel teaching tool for assessing nonverbal behavior using the acronym E.M.P.A.T.H.Y.—E: eye contact; M:

muscles of facial expression; P: posture; A: affect; T: tone of voice; H: hearing the whole patient; Y: your response. This acronym was the cornerstone of a randomized controlled trial of empathy training at Massachusetts General Hospital, 2010–2012. Used as an easy-to-remember checklist, the acronym orients medical professionals to key aspects of perceiving and responding to nonverbal emotional cues. An urgent need exists to teach nonverbal aspects of communication as medical practices must be reoriented to the increasing cultural diversity represented

by patients presenting for care. Where language proficiency may be limited, nonverbal communication becomes more crucial for understanding patients' communications. Furthermore, even in the absence of cultural differences, many patients are reluctant to disagree with their clinicians, and subtle nonverbal cues may be the critical entry point for discussions leading to shared medical decisions. A detailed description of the E.M.P.A.T.H.Y. acronym and a brief summary of the literature that supports each component of the teaching tool are provided.

Nonverbal behavior may be the most important clinical sign that is "hiding in plain sight." The cost of missing nonverbal patient cues has significant implications for patient satisfaction, health outcomes, and malpractice claims. There is a gap in medical education in teaching nonverbal detection and expression of emotions. Although most human interaction and communication is nonverbal,[1,2] nonverbal communication skills are not typically taught in courses where clinicians learn to obtain medical histories, explain medical interventions, or give bad news. The social psychology literature is making significant contributions on the roles that facial expression decoding,[3]

posture,[4] tone of voice,[5] and other nonverbal forms of communication play in human interactions. Additionally, in an increasingly culturally diverse world, language differences between clinician and patient can be an obstacle to providing optimal medical care. In these settings, accurate interpretation of nonverbal signals becomes ever more crucial to understanding patients' communications of confusion, fears, or disagreement, both at the cultural and interpersonal level. Many patients, regardless of cultural differences, are reluctant to disagree verbally with their clinicians, and accurate detection of subtle nonverbal cues may be the critical entry point for discussions leading to shared medical decisions. To address this gap in medical education, the first author (H.R.) developed a new teaching tool grounded in the neurobiology of empathy that may be used as an easy-to-remember teaching tool: the acronym E.M.P.A.T.H.Y.—E: eye contact; M: muscles of facial expression; P: posture; A: affect; T: tone of voice; H: hearing the whole patient; Y: your response.[6] This tool has the advantage of helping clinicians remember the key components of assessing nonverbal behaviors irrespective of culture.

The E.M.P.A.T.H.Y. acronym was the cornerstone of a randomized controlled

trial of empathy training, which emphasized nonverbal communication, at Massachusetts General Hospital, 2010–2012.[7] Developed as a unifying training concept that reoriented clinicians to nonverbal aspects of communication, the E.M.P.A.T.H.Y. checklist continues to be used locally and internationally in empathy training programs for residents and faculty physicians seeking to improve their communication skills. It can also be included in assessment tools for evaluating learners on interpersonal and communication skills.

We contend that if this checklist were incorporated into communication skills courses in undergraduate medical education and reinforced in future clinical training settings, nonverbal behavior detection proficiency would improve in clinical encounters from novice to experienced clinicians. In this Perspective, we define and provide an exposition of the E.M.P.A.T.H.Y. checklist and justify its utility through an evaluation of the literature on nonverbal communication.

Empathy Is Needed in Clinical Settings

Many valuable articles on shared decision making,[8-10] appreciative inquiry,[11,12] and motivational interviewing[13,14] have

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informed medical education, providing excellent models to enhance clinicians' verbal communication in medical encounters. These models have been designed to improve patient engagement, trust, and motivation and to encourage healthy behaviors. These models have focused on "what to say" in clinical encounters, but few address clinician comportment, or "*how to be*" with patients. In addition to effective verbal communication, nonverbal behavior is critically important for achieving patient satisfaction, adherence to treatment, and shared medical decisions. Patients are calling for more compassionate care, and the government and third-party payers are now basing hospital reimbursement on patient satisfaction ratings.[15,16]

To answer this call, more attention must be paid to nonverbal displays to ensure effective patient–clinician communication. Clinicians can better understand and attend to patients' emotions by decoding nonverbal behaviors and facial expressions, which is also a critical diagnostic clinical skill.

Patient-centered care is becoming increasingly important as health professionals work towards providing emotionally accurate, culturally competent care. The ability to understand emotional communication from patients from all walks of life, and to communicate that understanding with empathy, is critical.[17] The United States' increasing diversity and the implementation of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act make cross-cultural competency even more critical in the policies and practices of health services. Cross-cultural misunderstandings can negatively affect patient satisfaction, clinical decision making, and treatment adherence.[18-20]

Eye contact and touch are examples of cultural differences in nonverbal behavior and the expression of empathy. Studies have found that whereas Western cultures prefer maintaining eye contact, Eastern cultures preferred more flexible use of eye contact. There are important cultural differences in greeting others, and the difference between respectful eye contact and staring has significant implications.[21,22] Research on touch demonstrates distinct cultural preference for touch and body distance.[23-27] Therefore, touch is considered to be highly culturally determined and is not included in the E.M.P.A.T.H.Y. acronym.

Clinicians find empathic care challenging in a health care climate focused on technology, increased documentation, and regulation. A primary focus on technology results in overlooking many nonverbal emotional signals. In the worst case it may result in misunderstanding and dismissing patients' concerns, leading to greater patient anxiety, lower treatment adherence, and poorer health outcomes, as well as a greater likelihood of malpractice claims, 82% of which are the result of communication breakdowns.[28,29] For example, surgeons' tone of voice is an important predictor of claims filed by dissatisfied patients.[5] Clinicians value empathic care, but a common perception is that empathic care is too time-consuming. The E.M.P.A.T.H.Y. acronym focuses on empathic nonverbal communication behaviors that do not require additional time. Without engaging in lengthy conversations about patients' emotional experience, clinicians can still provide a caring glance or sit down with patients, which will communicate greater respect and understanding without extending the length of a visit. Our empathy education, developed at Massachusetts General Hospital, is the first evidence-based approach to nonverbal communication that demonstrated improvement in patient perception of clinician empathy.[7]

Empathy Is Necessary for Emotion Detection

Nonverbal communication is no jinn conjured by academics; the most subtle nonverbal approach and avoidance signals are detected in the amygdala more quickly than the prefrontal cortex is able to process verbal content.[30,31] Not only are nonverbal cues processed faster but they also have a greater impact on the perceiver than corresponding verbal statements.[32] Nonverbal signals of trustworthiness have been specified to the degree that even when expressed by robots, they have significant impact on economic exchange behavior.[33] In one experiment, for example, subjects rated the robot as less trustworthy and expected the robot to give fewer tokens in an exchange when the robot crossed its arms and leaned away. Because of the importance of trust in the patient–doctor relationship, clinician nonverbal communication is a powerful predictor of how much trust patients will place in their clinicians.

Just as verbal communication consists of listening and speaking, nonverbal communication consists of perceiving and expressing. In teaching nonverbal skills, educators must be aware not only of patients' signals but also of what is conveyed by the clinician. Teaching clinicians how to transmit nonverbal behavior is especially important because nonverbal cues are usually so subtle that they are perceived without conscious awareness.[34]

Mirror neuron research provided the first neurobiological basis that actions an individual observes in others are translated into internal representation in the observer's brain. Early mirror neuron research attributed internal representations of others' actions, facial expressions, intentions, and emotions specifically to mirror neurons in the prefrontal and inferior parietal cortices.[35] For example, when facial expressions of sadness or disgust are perceived by observers, observers experience similar emotions in attenuated form.[36]

Mirror neurons are now considered to be responsible primarily for action representation. Subsequent research has elucidated shared neural circuits involved in touch, pain, emotion recognition, and other sensations that map the experience of others onto observers' brains. These interconnected and associative cortices enable shared emotional experiences between an observer and the observed person, providing further support for a neural substrate of empathy.[37]

Because of its multimodal and often-subconscious nature, specific training in empathy is required to bring greater awareness to and understanding of nonverbal communication.[38] The E.M.P.A.T.H.Y. acronym serves as a checklist to orient medical professionals to key aspects of perceiving and responding to emotional cues. The acronym was created from a review of the vast nonverbal behavior literature, which we summarize below.

A Guide to *E.M.P.A.T.H.Y.*

E: eye contact

Eye contact, a key component of social cognition, is usually the first signal that one person has been noticed by another.[39] Although there are different cultural

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norms governing eye contact,[21] making meaningful eye contact is an element of patient engagement that is particularly important for clinicians using multiple forms of technology during medical encounters. Converging evidence from neuroimaging and electrophysiological studies of autistic patient populations has pointed to the importance of eye contact in physiological arousal and relating to others.[40] Other studies argue that "social gaze … enables us to … build an indispensable basis for coordinated action and collaborative efforts."[41]

M: muscles of facial expression

Facial expression is a component of nonverbal communication that affects patient health outcomes.[42] There is an extensive literature on seven universal facial expressions,[43,44] and neuroimaging studies reveal that empathy is related to the ability to decode these facial expressions. The ability to decode facial expressions, specifically fear detection, has been shown to be a potent predictor of prosocial behavior in humans.[45] Further, automatic mimicry of facial expressions is correlated with research subjects' empathy scores.[46]

P: posture

Posture is a powerful signal of positive and negative emotions, independent of facial expressions.[47] The embodiment literature has shown that briefly holding dominant postures can affect neuroendocrine levels associated with status and stress,[4] and they can make people exhibiting high status postures appear physically larger.[48] Subtle differences in clinician posture have significant effects on ratings of empathy, and so it is important that clinician posture convey mutual respect and openness.[49] For example, sitting down with patients at eye level conveys both interest in and time for patients.

A: affect

Although most nonverbal communication is subconscious, conscious assessment of patients' affective states is also crucial for improved patient satisfaction, increased adherence, and lower anxiety.[50] Making a mental note of your patient's affect helps to achieve understanding, building on the brain's inherent capacity for emotional understanding. A distinct brain network for affective perception has been recorded in numerous studies.[51] Gaining another's perspective is not simple: It is both cognitively demanding[52] and

moderated by mood.[53] Further, when people engage in perspective taking, they are egocentrically biased, moving from their own mental state to that of the other, which suggests that "perspective getting," or *asking* another about her emotional state, is an effective strategy to combat this systematic error.[54]

T: tone of voice

Clinician history of malpractice litigation is correlated with the clinician's tone of voice; independent raters were able to determine whether or not a clinician had been sued by listening to content-filtered audio tapes of their interactions.[5] Dominant tones were correlated with patients filing lawsuits, whereas tones conveying warmth and anxiety about a patient's condition were correlated with no litigation history, suggesting that modulating voice tone has significant consequences.

H: hearing the whole patient

In addition to appreciating nonverbal signals and naming patients' emotions, these expressions must be contextualized. Clinicians can hear the "whole patient" by placing the nonverbal signals into the context of the patient's narrative and social world, and not focusing exclusively on body parts and physiological functions. An fMRI study recording brain activity during verbal communication found that the speaker's activity was spatially and temporally coupled with the listener's activity, but that this coupling vanishes when participants fail to fully comprehend one another.[55]

Y: your response

Clinicians' curiosity about their own reactions enables them to disengage from negative spirals of anger, frustration, and detachment. This process is made possible by the anterior cingulate cortex, which translates signals from amygdala and insula to the cognitive centers in the prefrontal cortex.[52] This is essential in working within difficult patient encounters where the clinician's physiological response may be the first signal to "proceed with caution." Unreflective responses in emotionally charged situations are often implicated in malpractice claims.[28]

Benefits of Empathy in Clinical Encounters

When clinicians succeed at nonverbal communication, we call them empathic.

Empathy is essential for clinicians to communicate caring and create a positive patient experience. Nonverbal communication has been shown to play a significant role in judgments of clinician empathy,[56] accounting for two-thirds of the variance of coder ratings.[56,57] Clinicians' detection and exploration of their responses to unexpressed patient emotions has also been demonstrated as the truest sign of clinician empathy.[58] Finally, clinicians' ability to receive and exhibit nonverbal communication determines patients' emotional experience of the patient–clinician relationship.[59,60]

Poor communication skills, on the other hand, contribute to dehumanization, which has become a major concern in medical and surgical practices.[61] Poor decoding of nonverbal emotional expressions is intricately linked to many of the causes of dehumanization. These include diminishing the individual identity of patients (deindividuating practices), thinking of patients as body parts and mechanical systems (mechanization), empathy reduction, and moral disengagement.[61]

Improved patient satisfaction and avoiding malpractice claims are not the only benefits of enhanced clinician nonverbal communication. Increased clinician empathy has been reported to improve patient health outcomes[62] in a variety of medical specialties.[63] Practicing nonverbal communication skills in particular correlates with better health outcomes, including improved hemoglobin A1C levels, systolic blood pressure, fewer days lost from work, and fewer functional limitations.[63–67]

Challenges to Empathy

Despite evidence that perceiving the distress of others can lead to helping behaviors that also relieve distress in the observer,[68] empathic clinicians who are confronted with overwhelming degrees of pain and suffering may also experience significant personal distress. High emotional arousal may interfere with one's ability to help effectively.[69] It is well documented that empathy declines in medical trainees,[70] and some have argued that trainees' blunted empathy is an adaptation to highly stressful environments.[71] For these reasons, empathy training should include training in self-awareness and emotion self-management skills, such as diaphragmatic breathing

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exercises or mindfulness training, to manage high emotional arousal.[7]

The risks of empathy can be further mitigated with deeper understanding of the concept and standardization of training. Empathy is a broad capacity, and two aspects must be considered separately: affective and cognitive empathy.[72] Affective empathy refers to the emotional resonance, or "feeling with" aspect of empathy, including sympathy and emotional contagion, which may lead to overwhelming emotions for which untrained clinicians may be unprepared to manage. Cognitive empathy refers to the "perspective taking" aspect of empathy, the process of rationally understanding the contextual aspects of another person's experience and responding with caring behaviors. Cognitive empathy, the ability to gain an understanding for what another is feeling, is dissociable from forms of affective empathy like emotional contagion. Most of the pitfalls of empathy appear to be due to affective empathy looming too large in decision making, while cognitive empathy is underused. For this reason, we advocate distinguishing between affective and cognitive empathy. We hope that the E.M.P.A.T.H.Y. acronym can begin to address consistency in training by becoming a critical tool during education and assessment.

In Conclusion

The E.M.P.A.T.H.Y. acronym can be used to help clinicians remember the essential components of nonverbal communication. This acronym is a feature of an empathy training that improved patient perceptions of clinician empathy in a randomized controlled trial.[7] Clinicians' accurate detection of emotional cues from patients, self-awareness of their own emotional states, and management of their own reactions to patients have important consequences for health care. The vast literature on nonverbal behavior is too cumbersome to expect most clinicians to master, but essential components can be communicated with the E.M.P.A.T.H.Y. acronym.

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Teacher-Modeled Empathy Self-Reflection Guide

Created by: Educators from the Ashoka Changemaker Schools Network

Data Collection

Select a student. Record how many positive interactions and how many negative interactions you have with that student. Positive interactions include observations (I notice you practiced multiplication problems in your free time), and negative interactions include commands (put the toy in your backpack) and corrections (we keep our hands to ourselves at school).

Positive Interactions	Negative Interactions

Student Interaction Questions:

1. What is the most significant positive interaction that you had with this student today? What did you notice about the student's response? What was his/her body language like? What did he/she say?
2. How did this interaction demonstrate that you understand what it is like to be in that student's shoes?
3. What is one negative interaction that you had with the student today that really stands out for you?
4. Why did you interact with the student?
5. What unmet need do you think caused the student to behave in this way?
6. What was your body language during the interaction?
7. What words did you say during the interaction?
8. How would you describe your tone during the interaction?
9. Is there anything you could have done to put yourself in the student's shoes and respond in a way that shows you understand his/her feelings?
10. What will you do differently in a future similar interaction?

General Empathy Questions:

1. How did your tone of voice change throughout the school day?
2. How did you respond to student emotions today? Is there a particular response you are very proud of? That you would like to change? What have you learned from that?
3. When was it easiest to model empathy for students today? When was it hardest?
4. When did you model understanding others' perspectives and acting with kindness today?
5. Are there any times today that you feel you forgot to consider a student's perspective? What happened as a result?
6. What will you do to help yourself remember the student's perspective and act in a way that shows you understand?

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AGREE TO (RESPECTFULLY) DISAGREE

By Marisa Fasciano

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Most educators would agree that it's important for students to respect classmates with different religious or nonreligious beliefs. But what if the doctrine or practices of the belief system in question contradict students' values or marginalize or limit their identity group? Or what if a student has experienced microaggressions or harassment from peers of a different religious tradition? How do you respond when a student asks, "They don't respect me, so why should I respect them?"

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) individuals make up one identity group that has experienced unequal treatment within certain religious traditions. According to a 2013 survey of LGBT Americans by the Pew Research Center, a vast majority describe Islam (84 percent), the Mormon Church (83 percent), the Catholic Church (79 percent) and evangelical churches (73 percent) as unfriendly toward them. This perception is corroborated by another Pew survey of the general American public. Although support for gay marriage continues to increase (just over half of Americans favor it), "opposition to gay marriage—and to societal acceptance of homosexuality more generally—is rooted in religious attitudes, such as the belief that engaging in homosexual behavior is a sin."

If your students feel excluded or offended by faith-based rules and opinions, you can still encourage respectful conversations on religious diversity. Here's how.

Distinguish People From Doctrines and Practices

Rather than asking your students to respect all belief systems, ask them to practice respecting all people, regardless of their belief system. Students don't need to agree with their classmates' religious or nonreligious beliefs, but they should be expected to interact with them in ways that are constructive and civil. In a previous blog post, we highlighted the multiple facets of a person's identity. Pointing out similarities in some facets amidst differences in others can help students engage in these positive interactions.

Avoid Assumptions Based on Religious Identity

Just because an individual belongs to a particular belief system doesn't necessarily mean he or she agrees with all of its tenets and practices. In fact, in some cases, a majority of adherents disagree with decisions of the leadership. For instance, a survey by Univision found that 59 percent of Catholics in the United States think the church should let women become priests, a belief that contradicts the current decision of church leadership.

Within Islam, vocal and active feminist movements aim to counteract misogynistic interpretations of Islamic texts by male imams. Rather than abandoning their faith in the quest for gender equality, many Muslim women combat oppression by appealing to Islamic texts and laws. For example, one of Tanenbaum's Peacemakers in Action, Jamila Afghani, created the first holistic gender-sensitive imam training program in Kabul, Afghanistan.

By exposing your students to diverse perspectives within a particular faith, you help diminish the likelihood that they'll incorrectly attribute specific attitudes and opinions to all individual members of a religion.

Keep in Mind That Emotional Reactions Have a History

Prior to walking into your classroom, students may have experienced bullying or negative comments about themselves and the belief systems to which they belong. In extreme cases, teachers have even made questionable or inappropriate comments to students about their religious traditions. An awareness of this potential history will put students' emotional reactions into context and underscore the importance of creating inclusive, respectful learning environments where students are encouraged to abide by established rules of engagement.

1

Provide Tools for Respectful Disagreement

Educators can give students tools to respectfully disagree with people of different faiths, even if those in marginalized groups are the ones being disrespectful. By sharing these tools ahead of time, before conflicts based on religious identity arise, you will be better prepared to address and resolve such conflicts in the moment. You can refer back to what was already discussed, rather than having to come up with a response on the fly.

One tool that establishes a firm foundation for respectful disagreement is Tanenbaum's Respecting Each Other lesson plan, which asks students to define what respect looks, feels and sounds like, and then to create their own rules of respect. If you spot any behavior that breaks these rules, you can correct it with greater credibility than if you had made up the rules yourself. Students can—and often do—take on the role of enforcer, holding each other accountable for honoring the agreements they've made together.

Krister Stendahl, an accomplished theologian, created another helpful tool that's specific to religious differences. Here are his Three Rules of Religious Understanding:

1. When you are trying to understand another religion, you should ask the adherents of that religion and not its enemies.

2. Don't compare your best to their worst.

3. Leave room for "holy envy." (By this, Stendahl means that you should be willing to recognize elements that you admire in the other religious tradition or faith and that you wish could, in some way, be reflected in your own religious tradition or faith.)

If everyone obeyed these rules, what a more peaceful world it would be!

The unfortunate reality is that, in spite of an individual's best efforts to follow guidelines for respect, the reactions of others may be angry and intolerant. When a student asks, "They don't respect me, so why should I respect them?" remind him/her to distinguish people from tenets and practices, avoid assumptions, consider the emotional history and remember the tools of respectful disagreement.

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Respectful Communication

AVOID ASSUMPTIONS

When thinking about issues of diversity and interacting with others, check in with yourself by asking: Am I missing any part of the picture? What do I *think* I know, and what do I *actually* know?

AVOID SPOKESPERSON SYNDROME

Use "I" language. If asked, speak from personal experience and not as the representative of an entire group. Be careful that you don't ask someone to become a spokesperson.

PLATINUM RULE

Many people know the Golden Rule – treat others as you would like to be treated. It's also important to treat others the way they want to be treated.

BE CURIOUS AND ASK RESPECTFULLY

The fear of inadvertently offending someone can become a barrier to asking the necessary questions. You might say something like, "*If you have a few minutes today, I'd love to learn more about your thoughts on _____.*" This approach communicates respect and that you are open to understanding new perspectives.

LISTEN ACTIVELY

If you are mentally constructing what to say next while someone is still speaking, that signifies that you have stopped listening actively.

DEBUNK STEREOTYPES

Stereotypes can be the worst culprit in creating conflicts and misunderstandings. Avoid words such as "all", "always", "never", "them", and phrases like, "those people".

ADDRESS BEHAVIOR, NOT BELIEF

All individuals are free to *believe* whatever it is that they believe. However, it's critical that all employees *behave* respectfully toward one another in the workplace.

ENCOURAGE LEARNING

Learn from every encounter, and use those insights to expand your knowledge base.

ACKNOWLEDGE AND APOLOGIZE FOR MISTAKES

Mistakes in communication are learning opportunities that deepen our understanding of one another. Mistakes must first be acknowledged and then you take ownership and genuinely apologize for the mistake made.

Ten Tips for Facilitating Classroom Discussions on Sensitive Topics

By Alicia L. Moore and Molly Deshaies

All teachers will inevitably teach about sensitive topics. These topics may range from racism, forced labor or slavery to bullying, sexual orientation, and gender biases — and may be completely unexpected. Any topic of a sensitive nature may make even the best of teachers uncomfortable when exploring the topic with students. Our natural reaction is often to shy away from difficult or controversial topics, or to approach them from a superficial, strained or half-hearted standpoint. But many times these topics are crucially important to students' awareness of the world and its social, moral, political and civic underpinnings. Students deserve to be taught about these topics in authentic, engaging and purposeful ways.

To provide teachers with a framework for tackling sensitive topics, we have compiled a tip sheet to use when facilitating discussions or teaching about sensitive topics in the classroom. These techniques will provide a foundation of confidence for the facilitator and can be used in elementary, secondary or postsecondary settings.

SET THE STAGE

In order for students to express their opinions and participate in classroom discussions about sensitive subjects, they need to feel safe and not fear retaliation for comments they make during the discussion. It is best to establish a supportive classroom atmosphere with ground rules for discussions early in the semester, but be sure to at least do so before beginning a class discussion about a sensitive issue.

The University of Michigan Center for Research on Learning and Teaching offers these six rules to establish in order to foster a more productive discussion:

- Listen respectfully, without interrupting.
- Respect one another's views.
- Criticize ideas, not individuals.
- Commit to learning, not debating.
- Avoid blame and speculation.
- Avoid inflammatory language.

You also need to set the stage in terms of the students' readiness to discuss the issue(s) at hand. Students should be intellectually and emotionally prepared. In "How Parents and Teachers Should Teach Children about Slavery," the author explains, "One aspect to consider involves presenting prerequisite concepts, knowledge, and skills within the Social Studies that prepare students for the information. This entails a careful examination of what is developmentally and age appropriate ... and involves an understanding of how to be responsive to, and sensitive of, all children within the classroom community."

KNOW YOURSELF

Before facilitating a discussion about possibly sensitive topics, it is important that you consider your own biases or confusion surrounding the issue.

- How have you come to know what you know or think what you think?
- Why have you valued some information or sources over others?

When seeking to help students understand others or study historically sensitive topics, it is important to discuss the concepts of empathy and perspective. We are all products of our society and culture, and attitudes and values change. Discussing a moment when your own ideas changed may help model the open-mindedness and conscientious self-reflection that you hope to inspire.

RECOGNIZE THE DIVERSITY OF YOUR STUDENTS

It is important to remember that each of the students in your classroom comes from a unique background and has had different experiences. See this diversity as an asset. Authentic opportunities for learning happen when students are exposed to many different perspectives. Give students the opportunity to express their views and make it your goal to understand, value and respect the backgrounds and experiences that formed them. Teach your students to do the same.

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Moore, A. L., & Deshaies, M. (2012). Ten tips for facilitating classroom discussions on sensitive topics. Twin Cities Public Television. http://pbs.bento.storage.s3.amazonaws.com/hostedbento-prod/filer_public/SBAN/Digital%20Storytelling%20Unit/tentips.pdf

SET A FRAMEWORK AND OBJECTIVE FOR THE DISCUSSION

To get the most out of your discussion, when possible state an objective for the discussion that connects to the curriculum or standards. Also establish a framework for the discussion with a specific focus. This will keep the students on task and ensure that your goals for the discussion are met. Also keep in mind that a static objective for these discussions should be based upon providing students with opportunities to "engage in experiences that develop fair-mindedness, and encourage recognition and serious consideration of opposing points of view, respect for well-supported positions, sensitivity to cultural similarities and differences, and a commitment to individual and social responsibility."

PROVIDE A COMMON BASE FOR UNDERSTANDING

The Center for Research on Learning and Teaching at the University of Michigan suggests assigning readings or showing a video clip about a particular conflict or topic to prompt discussion. Using materials that provide a context for examining diverse perspectives allow students to gain an awareness of others' views, and offer students a framework in which to expand their knowledge about conflicting positions they might otherwise disregard. Like having a set objective and framework, these complementary materials will help focus the discussion.

BE AN ACTIVE FACILITATOR

As the teacher, you should neither dominate the discussion nor passively observe. Your role as the teacher should include intervening in the discussion to:

- Provide reminders about respecting the right of others to have differing opinions,
- re-word questions posed by students,
- correct misinformation,
- ask for clarification,
- review the main points, and
- make reference to relevant reading materials or course content.

FOSTER CIVILITY

There is a good chance that discussions about sensitive topics may become heated. The main goal of fostering civility is to protect your students from feeling personally attacked. Make sure students understand that it is okay to disagree, but keep comments focused on the ideas and not the people who share their ideas.

BE PREPARED TO DEAL WITH TENSE OR EMOTIONAL MOMENTS

When discussing sensitive issues or difficult topics, it is very possible that some students will get angry or upset. If this happens, remain calm and try to turn it into a learning experience. Don't avoid the issue, but do defer it until you make a plan for dealing with it if necessary.

SUMMARIZE

At the end of the discussion, summarize the main points. You can also ask students for quick written feedback about the discussion, which you can discuss during the next class. Allowing students to summarize provides opportunities for student to recall, review and reflect upon the content of the discussion.

REFLECT

Reflecting plays a key role in two ways. First, encourage students to actively reflect on the comments made by other students, especially those they may disagree with. Second, leave time after the discussion for students to record their reflections in writing. This time will allow quieter students an opportunity to respond privately to the instructor, and allow everyone a chance to unwind and think calmly about his or her views on the issue. Ask students to think about whether there are new ideas, opinions, or opportunities for further discussions, awareness, and reflection. Use their responses to develop extension activities that will build community and support differing viewpoints.

Moore, A. L., & Deshaies, M. (2012). Ten tips for facilitating classroom discussions on sensitive topics. Twin Cities Public Television. http://pbs.bento.storage.s3.amazonaws.com/hostedbento-prod/filer_public/SBAN/Digital%20Storytelling%20Unit/tentips.pdf

S. E. N. S. I. T. I. V. E

Every teacher will inevitably face a moment in the classroom when a sensitive topic, situation or event arises. You can never be sure of when these topics will come up, but you can prepare yourself. Use the following tips to guide the way you facilitate discussions surrounding sensitive topics .

Set the stage for difficult conversations by assessing student readiness based on realistic, non-biased expectations. Set the stage by creating a supportive environment based on respect. Provide a framework that sets objectives connected to the curriculum when possible.

Enable and facilitate the discussion of ideas, not people. The teacher must support students and enhance their opportunities to grow in the discussion. The facilitator provides guidelines for safe, productive, and respectful discussions and for interventions such as dispelling myths, helping students make curricular connections, and clarifying students' contributions to the conversation. Taking this role seriously can be the difference between a successful or unsuccessful conversation.

Never allow your personal biases and opinions to influence the facts or get in the way of opportunities for students to examine diverse perspectives. Know your biases and be aware of their impact on your thoughts, attitudes and behaviors related to teaching.

Seek out age- and grade-level appropriate digital media, readings, and other materials that allow students to begin with baseline knowledge and that will be the basis of discussions. Identify materials that allow students to "see both sides," illustrate diverse perspectives, and provide students with opportunities to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate content discussed.

Interpersonal classroom activities that involve discussing sensitive or controversial issues should be complemented with intrapersonal activities like self-reflection and personal awareness. Allowing the students to have time to reflect on their feelings, conscious and unconscious thoughts, and any new learning provides enhanced opportunities for growth. Seek feedback from students to inform your instructional decisions about upcoming lessons.

The act of summarizing conversations, either orally or in writing, provides students with a chance to recall new or interesting information, and review what was said and how it fits or conflicts with personally held thoughts and opinions. Summarization serves as a foundation for possible subsequent actions such as making personal changes, examining new perspectives, or learning to respect and value the diverse perspectives of others.

Invite disagreement. Encourage students to speak up with different opinions — while still maintaining decorum. It is up to you to foster and maintain civility in your classroom and to help students understand the guidelines for discussing difficult ideas. Remind students that we all have the right to agree or disagree with others' perspectives on sensitive topics.

Value the diversity of your students as an asset. Teach your students to do the same. Your actions affect the culture and climate of your classroom. In a classroom that truly values the contributions and differences of all students, authentic opportunities for teaching and learning are nurtured and embraced by all stakeholders.

Emotional and tense moments may arise during discussions about sensitive issues. Be prepared to help students work through them. Acknowledge that there may be times when they feel uncomfortable talking about the issue. Speak to this discomfort and share your personal thoughts and feelings about discomfort you may feel.

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Let's Talk!
Discussing Difficult Topics with Students

Avoiding conversations about challenging topics can arise from our own fears of being vulnerable. As you prepare to engage students in difficult conversations, consider this question:

What will a discussion about this challenging topic potentially expose about me?

Use this graphic organizer to list three vulnerabilities you worry could limit your effectiveness and three strengths you believe will help you to lead open and honest dialogues. Finally, list specific needs that, if met, would improve your ability to facilitate difficult conversations.

VULNERABILITIES	STRENGTHS	NEEDS
EXAMPLE: "My children are multi-racial. Can I be objective?" "I don't know enough about the issues described here. Am I 'allowed' to lead a discussion while I also learn?"	EXAMPLE: "I have good rapport with my students." "I use community resources to support learning."	EXAMPLE: "I need to learn more information about sex, gender and gender expression." "I need clearer ground rules for class discussions."

Culturally-Responsive Teaching Mindsets:
Examples and Non-Examples

Culturally-Responsive Teaching Component	Example (What does this look like in practice?)	Non-Example (What doesn't this look like in practice?)
Positive perspectives on parents and families	"I believe that all students and families have important strengths I can draw on as an educator."	"My students' home lives and backgrounds interfere with their success in school."
Communicating high expectations	"I know you are a very capable student. Together we will work hard to make sure you understand this concept."	"That's okay, it's a hard task and not everyone can do it."
Learning within the context of culture	"My curriculum includes concepts and materials that reflect the racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity of my students, showcasing a variety of people in a variety of roles."	"The curriculum is set and does not offer the opportunity to include racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse representation."
Student-centered instruction	"I am responsive to the needs and interests of my students. My students share in decision-making about what they learn, how they learn it, and how they demonstrate their learning."	"What I need to instruct drives the development of my lesson plans. I choose the topics for my lessons and spend a lot of class time instructing and answering questions."
Culturally-mediated instruction	"I incorporate diverse ways of knowing, understanding, and representing information knowing that learning preferences are influenced by cultural background, country of origin, home culture, and/ or primary language."	"If I'm honest with myself, I present information the way I best understand it."
Reshaping the curriculum	"My curriculum capitalizes on students' cultural backgrounds rather than attempting to override or negate them. The content is malleable but the skills and standards are not." (some language adopted from Ismat Abdal-Haqq, 1994)	"It's important for students of different cultural backgrounds to learn American cultural norms and history so they can be successful. Unlearning certain dispositions and skills better prepares students for the world."
Teacher as Facilitator	"As a teacher, I am not an expert, but rather a guide for my students' learning. My goal is that they take increased agency and ownership of the learning process."	"My students look to me for the right answers as the expert."

Adapted from Gloria Ladson-Billings definition of Culturally-Responsive Teaching

Center for Collaborative Education
Transforming schools for student success

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Center for Collaborative Education. (2012). Quality performance assessment tools.
Retrieved from https://www.cce.org/work/quality-performance-assessment/tools-resources

Use checklists I and II to eliminate any evidence of bias and stereotyping from your assessment.

I. Checklist for Bias

Overarching question: Might any element of the task content or language unfairly disadvantage a subgroup?	
Y/N	**Criteria: Does the task contain....**
	a. Content, situations, or scenarios that may be different or unfamiliar to some subgroups?
	b. Characteristics or features that might lead certain subgroups to complete the task correctly or incorrectly for the wrong reason?
	c. Words that may have different or unfamiliar meaning for different subgroups?
	d. Group-specific language, vocabulary, or reference pronouns? Specialized words that only certain subgroups might know?
	e. A format or structure (including student directions and rubric) that may present greater problems for students from some backgrounds than for others?
	f. Unnecessarily difficult language and vocabulary?
Comments:	

II. Checklist for Stereotyping

Overarching question: Are there any elements of the task that could be considered to reflect a stereotypical view of, or offensive to, a subgroup?	
Y/N	**Criteria: Does the task....**
	a. Contain material that might be considered inflammatory, controversial, demeaning, offensive or emotionally charged for particular subgroups?
	b. Depict members of particular subgroups in stereotypical portrayals, occupations, or situations?
	c. Portray any subgroup as uniformly having certain aptitudes, interests, occupations, or personality traits?
Comments:	

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Center for Collaborative Education. (2012). Quality performance assessment tools.
Retrieved from https://www.cce.org/work/quality-performance-assessment/tools-resources

While not all assessments provide an opportunity to meet all the criteria in checklists III through V, the checklists can be used to expand your thinking. Use these to further integrate culturally-responsive teaching into your assessments and practice.

III. Checklist for Fairness

Overarching question: Is the task fair for all students regardless of subgroup?	
Y/N	**Criteria: Does the task....**
	a. Include material that is equally familiar to all subgroups?
	b. Portray each subgroup in a range of traditional and nontraditional roles?
	c. Represent subgroups in proportion to their incidence in the general population?
	d. Include topics of interest to all subgroups?
	e. Include a balance of gender-specific and ethnic names? Ethnic groups? Roles for each gender and ethnicity?
Comments:	

IV. Checklist for Cultural-Responsiveness

Overarching question: Is adequate attention paid to cultural responsiveness of the performance task?	
Y/N	**Criteria: Does the task....**
	a. Build students' cultural competence through learning about and developing pride in their own culture?
	b. Build students' cultural competence through learning about and developing pride in others' cultures?
	c. Assist students to engage in critique of systems of power?
	d. Develop bridges to connect students' cultural references to academic skills and concepts?
	e. Engage students in critical reflection about their own lives and societies?
Comments:	

Center for Collaborative Education. (2012). Quality performance assessment tools.
Retrieved from https://www.cce.org/work/quality-performance-assessment/tools-resources

V.   Checklist for Controversial Topics

_____ (Y/N) Is the task focused on a potentially controversial topic? *If no, skip this section.*

Overarching question: Is adequate attention paid to ensuring proper scaffolding of controversial topics prior to completing the performance task?	
Y/N	**Criteria: Is the task....**
	a. Embedded within a curriculum that allows for ample exploration of and learning about varying viewpoints prior to having to complete the performance task?
	b. Embedded within a curriculum, as evidenced in teacher task directions, that ensures ample discussion and expression of varying viewpoints, including from atypical viewpoints, prior to completing the performance task?
	c. Designed to enable students to be deemed proficient in completing the task even if expressing an atypical viewpoint?
Comments:	

Overall Recommendation

_____   The task is fair, free of stereotypes and bias, culturally-responsive, and addresses controversial topics appropriately.

_____   The task needs the following revisions in order to be fair, free of stereotypes and bias, culturally-responsive, and address controversial topics appropriately:

Recommended Revisions:

This document was adapted from the following resources:
- Aronson, B. and Laughter, J. (2015). *The theory and practice of culturally relevant education: a synthesis of research across content areas.* Review of Educational Research, Vol. XX, No. X, pp. 1-44. DOI: 10.3102/0034654315582066. Downloaded from http://rer.aera.net.
- Educational Testing Service, (2009). *ETS Guidelines for Fairness Review of Assessments.* New York.
- Hambleton, R.K. & Rodgers, H.J., (1999) Developing an item bias review form. Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation.
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- Measured Progress, (2006). PowerPoint: Grades 3-8 & 11, Bias Sensitivity Review-Part 2, March 26 and 27, 2006. Quechee, VT.
- Orr, M.T., Pecheone, R., Nayfeld, I., Shear, B., Hollingworth, L, Karatoprak, R., Beaudin, B., (2016) *Technical Report of the Massachusetts Performance Assessment for Leaders: Summary of Validity and Reliability Studies for 2014-15 Field Trial, January 2016.* Bank Street College of Education: New York.
- Popham, James, (2012). *Assessment bias: How to banish it.* Pearson.
- Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, (2015). SBAC 20
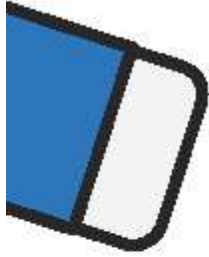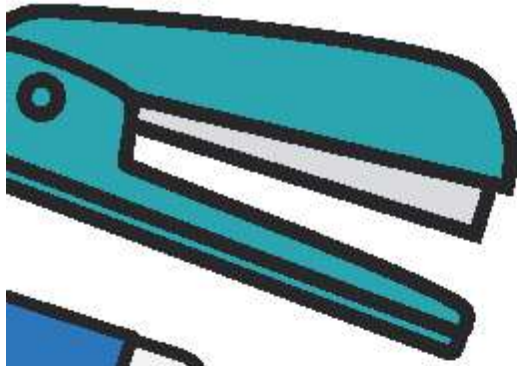
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CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING CHECKLIST
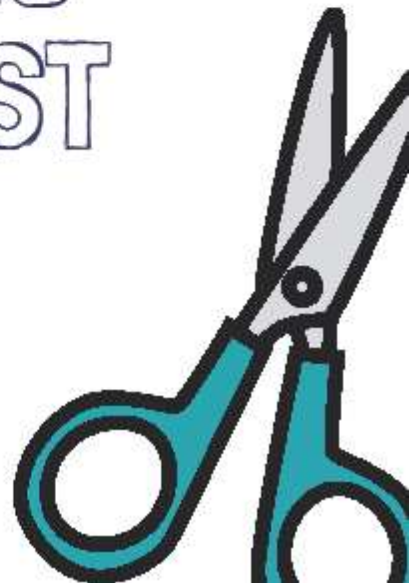
Culturally Responsive Teaching

University of Washington Professor of Education, *Geneva Gay*, defines culturally responsive teaching as: "the behavioral expressions of knowledge, beliefs, and values that recognize the importance of racial and cultural diversity in learning. It is contingent on . . . seeing cultural differences as assets; creating caring learning communities where culturally different individuals and heritages are valued; using cultural knowledge of ethnically diverse cultures, families, and communities to guide curriculum development, classroom climates, instructional strategies, and relationships with students; challenging racial and cultural stereotypes, prejudices, racism, and other forms of intolerance, injustice, and oppression; being change agents for social justice and academic equity; mediating power imbalances in classrooms based on race, culture, ethnicity, and class; and accepting cultural responsiveness as endemic to educational effectiveness in all areas of learning for students from all ethnic groups."

Geneva. Gay. (2010). Culturally responsive teaching: theory, research, and practice. New York: Teachers College, p. 31.

While many educators understand the value of creating a culturally responsive classroom, for many teachers it difficult to imagine what a culturally responsive classroom looks like in practice. This tool, developed by members of the Re-Imagining Migration team and researchers at UCLA, is intended to help make the concept of a culturally responsive classroom concrete and to provide an opportunity for reflection and self-assessment.

Important definitions:

Multi-cultural includes racial, ethnic, linguistic minority, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status (SES), disability, and their various intersections.
Dominant culture a.k.a mainstream, majority and Eurocentric.

IS CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY INCORPORATED INTO MY TEACHING?

LEVEL 0

No culturally or linguistically relevant materials were included in my class.

LEVEL 1: CONTRIBUTIONS APPROACH

Heroes, holidays, historical events, & discrete cultural elements are incorporated into class lessons.

☐ I linguistically code switch to establish rapport.

☐ I linguistically code switch, as needed, to facilitate understanding.

☐ I include major figures, contributors, or historical events from cultures other than the dominant culture into the lesson.

☐ I include cultural or artistic works (literature, music, visual and performing arts/artists) from cultures other than the dominant culture into the lesson.

☐ I include research contributions from cultures other than the dominant cultures into my lessons.

LEVEL 2: ADDITIVE APPROACH

Multicultural content, concepts, themes are incorporated to the lesson from multi-cultural students' perspectives.

☐ I include resources and texts that (e.g., reading, film, etc.) present multicultural perspectives in the lesson.

☐ I include lectures/discussions that present multi-cultural perspectives my lessons.

☐ I teach a unit that presents multi-cultural perspectives into my curricula.

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IS CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY INCORPORATED INTO MY TEACHING?

LEVEL 3: TRANSFORMATION APPROACH

The structure of the curriculum enables students to view concepts, issues, events & themes from the perspectives of diverse ethnic, racial, & cultural groups.

☐ I provide resources and instruction that enables students to view concepts, issues, themes and problems from several multi-cultural perspectives.

☐ I provide resources and instruction that enables students to view class concepts being studied from multiple perspectives, frames of references from various groups and various individuals within those groups.

☐ I infuse multiple perspectives, frames of references, and content from various groups and perspectives to extend students' understandings of the nature, development, and complexity of the society in which they live.

☐ I introduce the "canons" of my discipline and augment them to reflect the complex synthesis and interaction of the diverse racial/ethnic/religious/cultural elements that comprise our society.

LEVEL 4: SOCIAL ACTION APPROACH

Students make decisions on important social issues & take action to help solve them.

☐ My teaching encourages students to identify existing social problems or issues from multi-cultural perspectives.

☐ My lessons and assignments encourage students to gather pertinent data from multi-cultural perspectives on existing social problems or issues.

☐ My teaching encourages students to clarify their values and make decisions about existing social problems using multi-cultural perspectives.

☐ My teaching encourages students to take reflective actions to help resolve social problems.

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As I teach, consider:

Do I view my students through a deficit lens?
Or do I recognize the assets they bring?

- How do I talk about my students' identities?
- How do I speak about the histories and cultures of groups other than my own?
- Are members, histories, and cultures of the non-dominant group characterized/represented through a deficit lens or with demeaning messages by me or through the resources I use?

If so, how?

RACE
Specify:_____

COUNTRY/ETHNICITY
Specify:_____

IMMIGRATION STATUS
Specify:_____

LANGUAGE/ACCENT
Specify:_____

RELIGION
Specify:_____

GENDER
Specify:_____

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS
Specify:_____

DISABILITY
Specify:_____

AGE
Specify: _____

References

This checklist is adapted from "Integrating the Curriculum with Ethnic Content: Approaches and Guidelines", pp 189-207 in J.A. Banks & C. A. McGee Banks (Eds.), Multicultural Education: Issues & Perspectives, Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Desdemona Cardoza, PhD and Margaret Fieweger, PhD developed a version of this checklist for the 4th Annual All Campus Faculty Symposium, (1990). "Communicating, Advising and Teaching in a Multicultural University", California State University, Los Angeles, April 24.

The UCLA Institute for Immigration, Globalization, & Education research team (PI-Carola Suárez-Orozco) further adapted it for the Spencer Foundation funded "Making the Invisible Visible Project" by adding the Cultural Deficit Lens (CRT-1) and No Cultural Relevant Pedagogy Observed (CRT Level 0).

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For more information, visit:

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