

Intercultural Education

Alex, Bre, Carlie, and Donri “Charlie and his Angels”

Presentation Summary

The article is a summary and comparison of research on intercultural competence and intercultural education. Perry and Southwell (2011) discussed the importance of intercultural competence because intercultural interactions are becoming a part of daily life (p. 453). As an educator this is important as we will need to develop intercultural competence to work with diverse students and teach intercultural skills.

How do we address ethnocentrism with students?

When addressing the issue of ethnocentrism with students it is crucial to face the initial fact that teachers are the ones who often unintentionally pass on their own beliefs. Once action has been taken to address our own biases the next step is to understand the other origins of students’ preconceptions. At early development stages students pick-up ideologies and perspectives from their immediate families and people in their lives. With limited experience and external cultural knowledge, young children’s views of others are often formed within a limiting environment. Ethnocentrism is classified as viewing one’s culture as “central to reality” and positioned on the other end of the spectrum is Ethnorelativism. Ethnorelativism describes viewing one’s culture as “relative to context”. Giving context to views of different cultures is how teachers can pull students away from a limited scope of understanding.

How can we increase intercultural competence with students?

This question stems from the statement that there is limited availability of structured training programs and opportunities for travel to build cultural competence with students. By stating this it can be inferred that these are the only avenues to enrich cultural competence in the classroom. As mentioned in the article, we simply cannot rely on fact-based knowledge to create a well-rounded level of intercultural competence in our students. The authors mention the exploration of other approaches to develop the affective and behavioural skills that are required to change or influence a cultural mindset but they fail to mention any specifics. If a full sense of intercultural competence is attributed to the exposure of targeted training and experience, why can’t we as educators try to bring that aspect *into* our classrooms through local experience opportunities?

How can we expand cultural experiences and a global mindset in our classrooms?

- Have a calendar with all cultural holidays.
- Celebrate multiple cultural festivals in the classroom and community.
- Study cultural histories, flags of all countries, listen to their national anthems and play games/sports from multiple countries.
- Discuss different forms of communications, types of body language and customs.
- Read historical fiction novels about different cultures.
- Watch foreign films with subtitles.

Definition of Terms:

- 1) **Intercultural Competence** (Behaviour/Communication): Achieved through different cultural experiences. It encompasses intercultural understanding, intercultural sensitivity and intercultural communication. Intercultural competence includes the person’s ability to adapt and integrate into a different culture, as well as understand multiple worldviews and perspectives. The development of intercultural competence is intricate and involves various

layers of understanding, connection and context. It includes knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours. *Ex: Working as a teacher at a private First Nations elementary school and immersing yourself in extra-curricular activities.*

- 2) **Intercultural Understanding** (Knowledge/Awareness): Experiences that are not shaped by biases and stereotypes. A person with intercultural understanding can recognize similarities and differences in reference to their own culture, see their own culture as one example of a culture, and recognize that there are multiple perspectives and worldviews. In this way of thinking, the person's understanding of other cultures is in a positive framework. *Ex: Having issues connecting with a student's parents.*
- 3) **Intercultural Sensitivity** (Empathy/Affective Response): "A person's 'active desire to motivate themselves to understand, appreciate and accept differences among cultures' (Chen and Starosta 1998, 231)" (Perry & Southwell, 2011, p.454). An Intercultural Sensitivity scale developed by Chen and Starosta (2000) includes these factors: interaction enjoyment, respect for cultural differences, confidence in interactions, and attentiveness of the interactions (Perry & Southwell, 2011, p.454). *Ex: Actively creating opportunities for engagement, inside and outside the classroom.*

Article Passages:

1. "In school settings, education for intercultural competence, if it is taught at all, is typically embedded in an academic subject such as foreign languages or social studies. However, the degree to which subjects such as foreign languages and social studies are intercultural depends on the orientation of the curriculum (Davies and Read 2005)" (Perry & Southwell, 2011, p.458).
2. "Inquiry-based learning is used to help students understand that people can hold different worldviews, to examine those views and respect them, although not to necessarily accept them (Stathers 2008). An important aspect of this curriculum is the encouragement of critical inquiry and interaction with local communities and cultures" (Perry & Southwell, 2011, p.458).

Activity: "Walk in their Shoes" <https://www.mobt3ath.com/uplode/book/book-56008.pdf>

References

- Bennett, M. J. (2014). *The Development Model of Intercultural Sensitivity*. Retrieved from Intercultural Development Research Institute: <https://www.idrinstitute.org/dmis/>
- Cassidy, Patricia A., Stringer, Donna M. 52 Activities for Improving Cross-Cultural Communication. Pages 21 – 23. Retrieved from: <https://www.mobt3ath.com/uplode/book/book-56008.pdf>
- Chen, G.-M., and W.J. Starosta. 1998. *Foundations of intercultural communication*. Boston,
- Clavel, T. (2019). *World Class: One Mother's Journey Halfway around the globe in Search of the Best Education for Her Children*. New York, NY: Astria Books.
- Perry, L. B., & Southwell, L. (2011). Developing intercultural understanding and skills: models and approaches. *Intercultural Education*, 22(6), 453-466