



Intercultural
Development
Inventory®

Intercultural Learning for Teachers

A WHITE PAPER SYNTHESIZING RESEARCH WITH THE
INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT INVENTORY®

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Executive Summary

This white paper provides a snapshot of the strategies used by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to develop intercultural competence to in-service teachers and student teachers. Some important points to note here are:

- The studies discussed in this paper used the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) to evaluate students' intercultural learning gains.
- The paper is organized under the following three themes: 1) study abroad and intercultural learning in teachers; 2) role of professional development for training teachers on intercultural competence; and 3) embedding intercultural learning into the regular curriculum for student teachers.
- The studies highlight the importance of structured interventions and programs to impart intercultural competence.
- Important definition: 1) student teachers: are undergraduate or graduate students enrolled in teacher education programs, 2) in-service teachers: are the full-time teachers teaching in schools or early day care centers.

Background

Imparting intercultural learning and helping students develop intercultural competent are becoming essential objectives of higher education institutions. HEIs focus on and explore multiple ways to improve intercultural competence and create a global workforce. Studying abroad is one of the most common initiatives to help students experience a different culture and gain intercultural exposure. Students from most disciplines can easily enroll in a study abroad initiative. Still, research has revealed that student teachers and in-service teachers are limited in their ability to

participate in study abroad programs that align with their academic requirements due to several restrictions such as license mandates, cost implications, and rigid curriculum [1]. However, more recently, reputed organizations such as The Consortium for Overseas Student Teaching (COST) have started promoting the importance of global mindsets for teachers [1].

According to the National Council of Educational Statistics, 48% of students in U.S. public institutions are students of color, and 52 percent are white [2]. [3]. Moreover, 79.3% of teachers in U.S. public schools are white [4]. Since there is an increasing population of students from various races and backgrounds and the majority of teachers in schools are white, there is a need to train the teachers on intercultural competence and increase their awareness of their own and other cultures for the purpose of developing more inclusive and equitable classrooms where all students feel that they belong. The role of HEIs is crucial in training the student teachers and organizing workshops to train in-service teachers to develop intercultural competence [1], [5]. Based on the literature review, three main methods were identified that HEIs use to help student teachers and in-service teachers develop intercultural competence: 1) study abroad, 2) curriculum integration, and 3) professional development. It is also important to note that there is a need for a mechanism to measure the impact of the programs or initiatives on students' intercultural competence. Self-reported scores or reflection reports are not the most effective measure of intercultural competence [5]. Therefore, multiple institutions across the U.S. use the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) to measure the intercultural learning gains of student teachers. The IDI assessment is a robust 50-question instrument and has been demonstrated to be an adequate measure of intercultural competence. The IDI assessment has been extensively used to measure

intercultural competence across various disciplines. The IDI assessment measures the intercultural competence of an individual or a group and places them within one of five orientations of the Intercultural Development Continuum (IDC): Denial, Polarization, Minimization, Acceptance, and Adaptation [6].

The IDI assessment also assesses participants' Developmental Orientation and Perceived Orientation. Developmental Orientation (DO) refers to a participant's ability to bridge cultural similarities and differences. The IDI measures DO and reports a DO score for the participant. At the same time, Perceived Orientation (PO) is a participant's self-perception of where they fall within the IDC. The IDI also calculates the PO score for the participant. The DO and PO scores help participants understand their perceived level of intercultural competence as well as where the IDI places them along the IDC. Therefore, this paper will explore the impact of three main methods, study abroad, curriculum integration, and professional development on helping teachers develop intercultural competence. Throughout the paper, we will also discuss how the IDI was used as an instrument to measure intercultural learning gains.

Study Abroad and Intercultural Learning for Teachers

Study abroad programs are being used as a medium to develop intercultural competence in the domain of teacher education and for training in-service teachers. Through these programs, student teachers and in-service teachers gain an opportunity to teach students from other nations helping teachers to interact with students, engage with a foreign curriculum, understand the available local resources, and become more culturally aware. For example, He and colleagues [5] conducted a

study to understand the impact of a study abroad program on twelve K-12 teachers. The in-service teachers were recruited for the study. The study abroad program had three components: 1) pre-departure course; 2) study abroad for four weeks in China; and 3) curriculum design and delivery component. Teachers took an online course before their departure, exposing them to Chinese culture and developing basic language skills. During the study abroad program, teachers attended Chinese cultural seminars and language classes and participated in field experiences in elementary, middle, and high schools. They also observed Chinese teachers in the classroom and were given an opportunity to teach one class to Chinese students.

Upon their return to the U.S., teachers were expected to develop a new curriculum based on their study abroad experience and share their findings with the community. Teachers took a pre-IDI assessment before studying abroad and post-IDI assessment upon their return to the U.S. to assess the impact their study abroad experience had on their intercultural competence. The results demonstrated that the DO score increased from 96.27 to 104.89 after the trip. The study also conducted a pre/post-program survey other than the IDI assessment to understand the teachers' cultural knowledge, intercultural attitudes, and intercultural skills. Teachers rated themselves low in the pre-program survey on cultural knowledge, such as understanding of the Chinese language, culture, costumes, etc. However, the post-program survey results indicated more significant gains in these aspects as teachers acquired considerable knowledge about language, culture, and costume, by engaging and interacting with Chinese students and teachers.

It is also important to note that participants do not consistently demonstrate intercultural learning gains when participating in study abroad programs. The study abroad experience must be immersive and structured, such as involving students in

reflective practices or allowing them to interact with people different from them [7]. For instance, the study by Cushner and Chang [1] investigated the impact of studying abroad on student teachers. The study consisted of two treatment groups, T1 (n=34) and T2 (n=18), and one control group, C1 (n=8). Students from T1 and T2 studied abroad for 8 to 15 weeks. Moreover, student teachers in the T2 group were also required to write guided reflections about their study abroad trip. C1 student teachers did not study abroad but taught at a school in the U.S. Midwest region for 12 weeks.

All the student teachers in the three groups completed pre- and post-IDI assessments. The results of the IDI indicated that there was no significant gain in PO or DO scores for any of the groups. For T1 and T2, there was an increase in DO, but it was not significant. It is also important to note that T1 grew by 1.98 points on their DO scores, whereas T2 demonstrated a growth of 3.13 points in their DO scores. For C1, there was a decrease in DO score by 0.9 points. The study concluded that participating in the study abroad program is not enough for student teachers to develop intercultural competence. Designing an engaging curriculum that allows student teachers to develop intercultural skills is essential.

Similar results were observed in the study by Lash and colleagues [8] assessing the intercultural competence of early childhood student teachers enrolled in a U.S. Midwestern university. The study focused on two groups of teachers, Group 1 and Group 2. Group 1 consisted of 43 student teachers. The student teachers in this group participated in a five-semester-long early childhood education program. The program allowed the student teachers to work with a diverse population, engage in various intercultural learning activities and reflect on their experiences. All the student teachers took the pre-IDI assessment in the program's first year and the

post-IDI assessment in their program's final year. Student teachers in Group 1 demonstrated a statistically significant increase in their DO scores from their pre- to post-IDI assessment. Group 2 consisted of 9 participants, and all of the students were enrolled in an eight-month-long teacher training program. As a part of the program, student teachers participated in a four-week-long study abroad trip to Nepal, and also they completed the pre and post-IDI assessments. The pre-and post-IDI assessment results were analyzed to determine gains in intercultural learning. The results of the study revealed that Group 2 student teachers did not demonstrate any significant increase in their DO scores. There was a marginal increase in the DO scores, but the scores were not significant. The study concluded that bringing about intercultural change in an individual is a long-term process. Also, it requires commitment from the participant and the instructor. Therefore, extended programs with interculturally competent instructors are required to help student teachers develop intercultural competence.

Based on the prior studies conducted to assess the impact of intercultural competence on students, it is clear that imparting intercultural learning takes both time and effort. For instance, IDI results have indicated that a less structured study abroad program does not help students to develop intercultural competence [7], [9]. Immersing the students in a culturally different environment does not make students interculturally competent ; for example the study by Lash et al., [8], in the context of teacher education argued that it is assumed that allowing teachers to teach students from a different culture will allow them to develop intercultural competence, but this is not always the case. According to Cushner and Chang [1], many teachers have never taught a student from a different culture. They may be entirely unaware of the cultural differences, resulting in teachers falling prey to the cultural immersion

process. Therefore, to help student teachers and in-service teachers teach students from other cultures, course instructors and HEIs must develop robust and comprehensive programs that train teachers in how to teach students from different cultures in their home country before going to study abroad. Also, constant mentoring from the instructors and opportunities to reflect on the experience is crucial before sending teachers to the study abroad program.

Role of professional development for training teachers on intercultural competence

Professional development is also a commonly used method in teacher education programs. Professional development programs related to intercultural learning allow teachers to learn about various cultures through teaching and training. Conducting professional development programs is crucial for the teachers as it helps them to improve their teaching quality [10]. Professional development has also been viewed as a method that allows in-service teachers to stay updated with the latest instructional approaches [11]. With the increasing number of students of color and emphasis on helping teachers to develop a global mindset, professional development programs are a cost-effective and efficient way to impart intercultural training.

In a study by Fanous and colleagues [12], professional development was used to educate early childhood educators to help develop intercultural competence. Fanous and colleagues [12] emphasized that training early childhood educators on intercultural competence is essential. Moreover, according to Derman-Sparks [13], “Children begin to notice differences and evaluate others at a very early age. Children begin to show signs of being influenced by societal norms and biases by age three.

They may exhibit 'pre-prejudice' toward others based on gender or race or being differently abled" [13]. Additionally, the number of students of color is increasing in the school classroom and has surpassed the number of white students, which requires teachers to understand and be mindful of the various cultural differences in the classroom [14]. Therefore, educating early childhood educators on intercultural competence is crucial. Awareness of other cultures and their own cultures will help them develop a welcoming classroom environment for all students.

The intent of Fanous and colleagues' study was to investigate the intercultural competence of 24 early childhood in-service teachers and staff in a childcare center. The childcare center chosen for the study included children aged 18 weeks to 5 years. The study intended to assess the intercultural competence level of childcare in-service teachers and staff and then engage them in a professional development workshop to develop intercultural skills. The IDI assessment was used as an instrument to assess the intercultural competence of the in-service teachers and staff. All the participants took a pre- and post-IDI assessment. The participants took the pre-IDI assessment in December of 2019. In January 2020, all 24 participants participated in a 3-hour-long intercultural training workshop. During the workshop, the facilitators explained theories of intercultural competence to the participants and discussed studies related to intercultural competence. Group debriefing was conducted, and the IDI assessment results were discussed. After the professional development session, participants were asked to identify toys and books promoting diversity and cultural representation.

Further, participants were asked to list the items they wished to see in their class. The requested toys and books were bought for the classrooms and implemented in the classroom. In March 2020, the post - IDI assessment was

conducted, and the results demonstrated a statistically significant increase in the DO score from pre- to post-IDI assessment. Also, in the pre-IDI assessment 8 participants were in polarization, 13 in minimization, 1 in acceptance, and 2 in adaptation. In the post-IDI assessment, 4 were in polarization, 11 in minimization, and 6 in acceptance. The study results concluded that the intervention helped the educators change their curriculum and environment, that helped them to increase their intercultural awareness and competent.

The study by DeJaeghere and Cao [15] is another good example that demonstrates the effectiveness of professional development programs in helping in-service teachers to develop intercultural competence. The study was conducted in a large midwestern urban district. Over 50% of the students in the district schools were students of color, and 94% of the teachers were white. For the purposes of the study, a district-wide professional development program for in-service teachers was conducted to assess the impact of professional development on intercultural competence. The study used the IDI v2 assessment to assess the pre-and post-intercultural competence level of the in-service teachers. 86 in-service teachers participated in the study. First, the pre-IDI assessment was conducted, and then in-service teachers were required to participate in the professional development workshop. The workshop helped in-service teachers to understand the underlying theories of intercultural competence and the DMIS model. The group debriefing was conducted for the participants, and an optional thirty-minute meeting was offered to participants if they wanted to know their individual IDI scores and discuss the results with the facilitators. In the next phase, site-based professional development was planned for in-service teachers. All the site development programs were developed on the principles of the DMIS. All in-service teachers participated in various training

over the course of four years. They were also encouraged to take courses on diversity, equity, and inclusion; read books; and engage in community service. 2.5 to 3.5 years after the administration of the pre-IDI assessment, the post-IDI assessment was administered. The study's results demonstrated a significant increase in DO and PO scores from pre- to post-IDI assessment. However, it is also important to note that out of 86 teachers, 70 were female. All the female in-service teachers demonstrated a significant increase in their DO scores, male in-service teachers did demonstrate an increase in DO, but it was not significant. Also, the in-service teachers with graduate degrees demonstrated a significant increase in their DO scores.

Fanous et al. [12] and DeJaeghere and Cao [15] demonstrated that well-structured guided professional development initiatives could lead to intercultural learning gains in in-service teachers. Guided professional development has significantly improved, especially in teacher education programs. The guided professional development helps the participants to follow the guidelines laid out by the facilitator and encourages the participants to ask questions when necessary. Similarly, the study by Alvarez Valdivia and Gonzalez Montoto [16] in Spain discusses the effectiveness of structured professional development programs on in-service teachers. The study used the IDI assessment to assess the teachers' intercultural competence at the start of the programs, and based on the results, professional development initiatives were conducted. The professional development helped the in-service teachers to understand their IDI orientations and design strategies to make improvements in their classrooms. Therefore, based on the previous studies, it can be concluded that engaging in-service teachers in intercultural professional

development programs could serve as an effective mechanism in helping in-service teachers and student teachers to develop a global mindset.

Embedding intercultural learning into the regular curriculum for student teachers

Integrating intercultural learning into the curriculum is a simple and economical approach to impart intercultural education. Higher education institutions are actively promoting courses that help student teachers and in-service teachers to develop intercultural competence. It is also important to note that many countries worldwide are taking initiatives to integrate intercultural learning into the teacher education curriculum to promote a global mindset. For example, the study by Jalali [17] was conducted in Iran, showcasing how integrating intercultural concepts and experiential learning helped student teachers develop intercultural competence. The study used pre- and post-IDI assessments to assess the intercultural competence of the student teachers. As a part of the course, student teachers were required to conduct an ethnographic interview of someone from a different culture. It had eight phases: 1) write up one's own cultural story, 2) select a target group from a different culture from yours, 3) conduct research or reading to understand the identified other culture, 4) build a rapport by sharing pictures, stories from your own culture, 5) make the participant comfortable by engaging in some friendly conversation, 6) write a reflection based on the interaction experiences, 7) conduct an informal in-depth interview with the participant from other culture, 8) write a final reflection report. A total of 62 students participated in the study. The pre-IDI assessment was conducted before the ethnographic interview project and the post-IDI assessment was conducted after students completed the project. The results

of the IDI assessment revealed that students demonstrated a significant increase in their DO and PO scores in their post-IDI assessment.

Further thematic analysis of the final reflections was conducted. Some of the critical elements that were highlighted were 1) students found it motivating and valuable to interact with people from diverse backgrounds such as English, German, Turkish, and Chinese, and the interaction helped them to learn about other cultures, 2) students developed a good understanding of their own culture, 3) students were able to identify cultural differences, 4) students developed good communication skills. The study demonstrated that the IDI assessment is an effective instrument for measuring intercultural competence even in non-English speaking countries. It also confirmed that a well-structured curriculum integration could lead to intercultural learning.

Similarly, universities are creating courses in the US and embedding intercultural concepts in the curriculum to help student teachers develop intercultural competence. A recent study by Xu et al. [18] highlights the impact of a graduate-level course on multicultural education to help student teachers develop intercultural competence. The course enrolled 25 student teachers and focused on race, ethnicity, gender, linguistics, etc. The course was taught in an active learning format, allowing student teachers to discuss and work on group projects. The course assignment included presentations about cultural heritage, book reviews, literature reviews, and creating a lesson plan. As a part of the final evaluation, students were required to present a poster based on their intercultural learning research. Participants for this study were 21 student teachers who participated in the pre-IDI assessment and 14 who took the post-IDI assessment. The analysis of the IDI results revealed that student teachers demonstrated a gain of 7.02 points in DO scores and

a gain of 3.54 points for the PO scores. But it is important to note that the gain in the DO scores were meaningful (an increase of 7 or more points on the IDI) but not significant, whereas the gain in the PO score was significant but not meaningful. The study concluded that more programs and initiatives are required to train student teachers on intercultural competence.

Integrating intercultural learning concepts is a simple and commonly practiced method of facilitating intercultural learning. But it is important to note that the curriculum integration must be well-structured. Studies have demonstrated that curriculum integration does not always result in significant gains for intercultural learning; for example, Wiersma-Mosley [19] conducted a study in agriculture and human sciences. The study intended to increase intercultural competence among students through curriculum integration. The study required students to take a pre- and post-IDI assessment. After the pre-IDI assessment, all the students met an IDI Qualified Administrator for debriefing and working on the Intercultural Development Plan (IDP). The course required students to select one activity described in the IDP that would help them develop their intercultural competence. Some examples of the activities include reading a multicultural book, analyzing media content (films, documentaries, etc.), visiting museums, and interacting with diverse groups.

Students were also required to write a reflection that allowed them to reflect on their biases, stereotypes, and experience over the semester. The students also took a post-IDI assessment at the end of the semester. The results of the study demonstrated that there was an increase in the DO scores by 1.42 points but it is important to note that increase was not significant. One of the key reasons that the increase in DO was not significant could be that the students were not involved in guided reflections. Also, they were allowed to choose an activity that suited them. For

many students, this could have been their first intercultural learning experience, and they were not able to identify the best activity for their personal intercultural learning growth. Perhaps it would have been more effective if the instructor guided students through various activities and provided them with prompts for guided reflection exercises.

Integrating intercultural learning in the curriculum may not seem complicated on the part of instructors but it does require the instructors to develop a well-thought-out plan that could help students immerse themselves in an intercultural learning experience.

Importance of Mentoring and Guided Reflection to increase intercultural competence

Mentoring and guided reflections have been identified as essential mechanisms to impart intercultural learning to students. Intercultural mentors play an integral role as they help students develop attitudes, beliefs, skills, and culturally appropriate behaviors to understand and appreciate their own and other cultures [21]. The mentors act as facilitators and help mentees engage in suitable activities to develop a global mindset [22]. Moreover, guided reflections are one of the critical methods used by mentors and instructors to help students critically think and reflect on their thoughts. A study by Jones and colleagues [23] demonstrates the impact of mentoring and guided reflections on students enrolled in semester-long study abroad programs. The students in the two treatment groups either received group

mentorship or individual mentorship, and all the students participated in pre and post IDI, guided reflections before and during their study abroad trip. The results of the post-IDI assessment revealed that there was a significant increase in the DO scores of the students in both treatment groups.

Further study also revealed that more than 50% of students in both the treatment groups demonstrated meaningful intercultural gains (more than seven points on the IDI). 57.8% of students in the individually mentored category demonstrated an increase of 11.86 points on their DO from pre to post-test and 52.6% of students in the group mentored category demonstrated an increase of 8.46 points on their DO from pre to post-test. Similarly in the context of teacher education, the studies by Lash and colleagues [8] and Cushner and Chang [1] emphasize the importance of mentoring and reflection in helping teachers to develop intercultural competence. It is also important to note that HEIs and instructors play a crucial role in making this happen; therefore, they need to provide students with constant support through mentoring, creating a theoretically grounded structured curriculum, and involving them in guided reflections.

Conclusion and Future Work

Creating a welcoming, inclusive, and equitable environment is the goal of HEIs, but the first step towards that initiative starts in the classroom. Teachers play a vital role in shaping students' identities. Therefore, helping teachers to inculcate a global mindset is crucial. It is also important to note that using a robust tool like the IDI will help teachers to learn about their current level of intercultural competence and develop strategies to move forward on the IDC. Research has also revealed that organizing study abroad programs, professional development workshops, and

curriculum integration can help in-service and student teachers to develop an awareness of their own and other cultures. Developing an interculturally trained teaching workforce will foster inclusivity in the classroom and help students develop a sense of belonging. Therefore, future work should focus on how creating an intercultural environment helps to promote inclusivity and a sense of belonging among the students. Also, it is essential to note that study abroad studies in the context of teacher education generally have a small sample; therefore, longitudinal studies with a larger sample size must be conducted to understand the long-term impact of study abroad initiatives. Moreover, limited studies have focused on the effectiveness of mentoring on student teachers, and more research is required to demonstrate the role of mentoring in helping student teachers enact their intercultural competence in classrooms.

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