

FINAL REPORT

Critical incidents in intercultural education in the practicum component of an initial teacher education program

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Research Project Description

This study of intercultural teaching considers how it can be “taught” more effectively in the context of the practicum component of pre-service teacher education. The specific objective is to investigate collaborative reflections of critical intercultural incidents experienced during practica through weekly on-line dialogues between teacher candidates, collaborating teachers, and university-based teacher educators. Theories of intercultural teaching are underdeveloped and have yet to establish how intercultural awareness is cultivated effectively in teacher education and professional development and what specific skills are required for teachers to enable them to promote interculturally sensitive classrooms and schools. So, for this reason we have chosen to employ a grounded-theory approach to generate new theory on the topic. To do so, six pre-service teacher candidates at the University of Manitoba were partnered with six collaborating teachers and six university-based teacher educators. Applying a collaborative action research model, the teacher candidates did the actual data collection, which began with observations of critical incidents reported during practica. The teacher candidates were asked to log: a) descriptions of each critical intercultural incident; b) why they consider it “critical”; and c) what it suggests about to them about intercultural teaching. The ensuing series of reflections and analysis generated themes and categories, which were reconsidered on the basis of second-term data in turn. This adheres to the inductive process of theory generation propounded by a grounded-theory approach. The findings are intended to assist policy makers in various education sectors identify criteria associated with intercultural teaching to be applied in pre-service and in-service professional development. Also, it will contribute to: a) the development of a Centre for Inquiry School; and b) why they consider it “critical”; c) what it suggests about to them about intercultural teaching. The findings have the potential to assist policy makers in various education sectors to identify criteria associated with intercultural teaching to be applied in pre-service and in-service professional development. Also, they are intended to contribute to: a) the development of a Centre for Inquiry School; and b) the inclusion of critical incident case studies as pedagogical tools. Finally, the study will enhance the social capital of the region through building social connectedness and trust between participating organizations and institutions (i.e., the university, schools, NGO-sector, and government) and individuals (teachers, professors, pre-service teachers, government and NGO sector representatives).

Research Questions

1. What constitute “intercultural competencies” in K-12 teachers vis-à-vis:
 - Teacher qualities?
 - Classroom cultures?
 - Curriculum & teaching?
2. How can pre-service teacher education programs foster intercultural awareness, skills and competencies in teacher candidates, in-service teachers, and teacher educators through:
 - Web-based dialogues linking teacher-experts, professors, and candidates?
 - Case-study approach drawing on specific intercultural incidents drawn from actual schools and classrooms?
 - Through practicum experiences (on-site, direct cross-cultural classroom encounters)?

Methodology

The study was designed as a collaborative action research study to inform the intercultural teaching practices of pre-service teachers, practicing teachers, and university professors in the field of K-12 education. Although the participating professors were situated outside of their streams to ensure they were not in a position of power vis-à-vis the participating pre-service teachers, the study still offered an opportunity to improve their practice as teacher educators. For the pre- and in-service teachers, the process of reflection on actual incidents transpiring in their classrooms and schools made it an action research study capable of informing and augmenting their teaching practice. It was collaborative in that it offered an opportunity for stakeholders across various institutions (universities and schools in particular) to collaborate directly in the process of reflection on intercultural teaching.

Participant-Researchers. The core Web-based discussion was between three people—a pre-service teacher, and in-service teacher, and a university professor. This grouping was referred to as “a research unit.” There were two units at each of the three participating schools, and these pairs of units were referred to as “a research pod.” Each research pod had a GRA assigned to support them in the weekly dialogues and data analysis. The professors were all co-investigators in the study, and the in-service teacher was identified by the researchers and/or principals of the participating schools as expert intercultural teachers (based on reputation, history, involvement in diversity education associations or organizations, involvement in diversity curriculum development projects). The pre-service teachers were selected on the basis of being pre-assigned to the participating schools for their second (final) year practica. We did this on the premise that it is important to identify mentoring or supportive teachers in the field who have expertise in intercultural teaching based on experience, education, and professional interest and investment. On the other hand, all pre-service teachers need to benefit from intercultural teaching awareness and skill development in their pre-service education. In this respect their selection was near-random (in one case, a pre-service teacher who had been active as an EAL-TA expressed interest and was included, but her placement school was the most diverse in the region and so merited inclusion.) All participants were also researchers and vice-versa, with the exception of two of the research team members who were administrators (Ass. Dean & Field Experiences Coordinator) and not involved in the project directly. The participant-researchers were as follows:

- 6 professors in Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba
- 6 pre-service teacher candidates (2 from Early, Middle, and Senior Year Streams)
- 6 in-service teachers (2 from each of three schools—Early, Middle, Senior)
- 3 Graduate Research Assistants (GRA)

Sites and Site Selection. There were a total of three schools (one Early Years, one Middle Years, and one Senior Years) participating, each from a different School Division in the area of Winnipeg, Manitoba. The schools were identified for having high diverse immigrant or combined immigrant-Aboriginal (Middle Years school) student bodies, as well as being placement schools for the field experiences program of the university. Permission was obtained from each of the respective divisional Superintendents' offices and local school administration (vice-Principal). The Early Years school had a large number of children of Filipino and South Asian (Sikh) origin, and the Senior Years school had a large international student body (paying students from Asia and South America) as well as students from refugee and immigrant families. The Middle Years school was the most diverse (one of the most diverse schools in the region and in Canada as a whole), with large numbers of African immigrants and refugees and Aboriginal students.

Web-based data collection. Weekly dialogues were conducted during the practicum period on a closed, Web-CT discussion board. Access to each unit's discussion board was limited to the unit, one or two GRAs, and the principal investigator. Teacher candidates initiated the dialogues each week by recording critical intercultural incidents they experienced during that week on practicum. The in-service teachers and professors responded to the incident on the discussion board, with the occasional contribution by the GRA-coordinator (who was also a teacher). The initial critical incident entries were descriptive accounts of observations and experiences, but the remaining responses were analytic reflections by the student and other members of the unit.

Grounded Theory. Consistent with a grounded-theory approach, the researchers chose to apply an inductive approach to collecting and analysing data (critical intercultural incidents). The process involved analysing each critical intercultural incident initially through open dialogues among research unit members on the Web-CT discussion board. Later, following the initial practicum period (Term I), the unit members met to go over the data and dialogues to review the incidents and identify key themes and overarching categories. The pods then met to compare the analysis of data and the identification of overlapping themes. Finally, the GRAs and several professor-researchers in turn met to compare and identify overlapping themes and identify some key exemplary incidents to illustrate the findings. In Term II, data was again collected in the form of weekly critical intercultural incidents with accompanying dialogues. All participant-researchers were then invited to compare this subsequent data and analysis with the pre-identified categories and terms. The model and categories identified in Term I were then modified according to the new data. At the end of both terms, in early May, a joint meeting with key stakeholders (MAME, Ministry of Education, Faculty of Education) met to review findings across the three pods over the two terms of the study.

Results

The findings were analysed according to the two research questions, and so the participant-researchers focused their data sorting and interpretation on two topics: a) intercultural teaching, and b) intercultural teacher education. Key critical incidents or overlapping incidents were used to generate the resulting categories presented below, which are organized under those two broad question-headings:

Effective intercultural teaching?

Intercultural Teachers
Intercultural Learners
Intercultural Classrooms
Intercultural Curricula
Intercultural Resources
Implementing Responsive/Responsible Change

Implications for teacher education?

Inquiry approach
Web-CT
Critical incidents / case studies

The categories, themes and sub-themes. The resulting categories, themes and sub-themes taken present a solid theoretical model or ground to begin to introduce more effective intercultural education in teacher education in both pre- and in-service contexts. So, these categories and themes are outlined below, with the actual text of several key critical incidents (select critical incidents from Term I and all incidents from Term II).

Intercultural Teaching

Intercultural Teachers

The qualities of teachers themselves affect intercultural teaching, that is, teachers' qualities, characteristics, habits and perspectives. The critical incidents and analyses indicate three key teacher characteristics affecting their intercultural teaching ability: decision-making, attitudes, and identity/identification.

1. Teacher Decision-Making

a. Teacher as intercultural broker

- facilitating integration
- 2C 162 – help minority students to develop standards of conduct that permit participation in minority and mainstream societies
- (mtg. discussion) – teachers help children to negotiate between cultures, find ways of being in both

i. Autonomy in decision-making

“Awareness”

Incident. [Senior Years.] An incident that I came across this week was from student to student. In my history class we were doing a Chinese Immigration Web Investigation and students were given two days to work on this assignment in the computer lab. When I went up to two boys in the class to ask if they were finished their Chinese web investigation, one boy looked at the other and said "Chinese" and they both chuckled. I wasn't sure what to make of this so my reaction was to look under-impressed and walk away instead of making an issue out of something that may not have been an issue at all. Whether these boys were being offensive or not, I realized that as a teacher, it is important to decide which situations I need to specifically address and deal with directly and which ones I just need to deal with by example. By me walking away and looking under-impressed, I gave these boys the impression that I did not promote this behavior. Also, I spent a lot of time in class talking about Chinese immigration and how historically, many Chinese immigrants experienced discrimination. Hopefully, these boys will have seen that their behavior was not acceptable just by the general class discussion about Chinese immigration as well as not getting a reaction from the teacher. If students are taught awareness and appreciation for the immigration of different cultural groups, maybe it will broaden students' perspective and cultural groups, maybe it will broaden students' perspective and avoid these kinds of potentially offensive comments.

Professor. I think you are right to highlight the key decisions that a teacher has to make - on the spot - related to: (i) do I actually know what is going on here, and then (ii) do I need to try to find out more and/or do I need to act. Again as someone new to a class this becomes particularly challenging. Assuming that this is an incident of inappropriate/racist behavior, then I think that it is useful to think of it against a wider backdrop of a whole school orientation towards inclusion, multiculturalism, respect, rather than only as a single incident. If this is an isolated example of student behavior that goes against the culture of the school and which would be seen as inappropriate by most students and all staff, then I think you have a quite different situation

that if this is common-place and not seen as anything for the staff to pay attention to (not the school situation but not totally absent in Manitoba I would suggest). Building and sustaining the positive school culture is, in my view, the more important agenda.

ii. Flexibility

Bracelets

Incident. Every Thursday we take our class to Seven Oaks Pool for swimming lessons. 2B and I were in the girls' change-room making sure everyone was getting ready and that things were okay. We were helping students put things in lockers and chit chatting along the way. I noticed one student was still wearing her many bracelets. These bracelets have come from her trip to India and she proudly wears them every day. Last week at swimming, she had slipped them off and handed them to me to take care of while she swam. I looked at her today and asked her if she would like for me to hold on to her bracelets. She shook her head no. 2B (sponsoring teacher) was there too, and she told this student that she wouldn't want her to lose them in the water because we both knew how important they were to her. She slipped them off of her wrist and off she went. Afterwards, I spoke with 2B about this moment. I explained to 2B that although I know these bracelets were of cultural significance, I really didn't want her to lose them in the water. 2B told me she understood.

Teacher Candidate's (2A) Reflection. I thought more about this after and some questions came to mind. Was it right of me to ask her to remove these bracelets? Was it really that big of a deal that she wore them in the water? How significant are these bracelets to her? She had fun swimming and after filing onto the bus, reached out her hand for me to return her bracelets.

Sponsoring Teacher's (2B) Reflection. ...I thought you were very sensitive to M and the bracelets. You did not insist that she give them to you and she seemed to think that she wanted to keep them this swimming session. You told me that she did take them off last week, so that would indicate that taking them off was not out of the question or offensive to her. I thought you were so sweet and gentle with her when you approached the subject. If she had said no to me I would have let her take them with her but asked her mom later what the rule was about the bracelets by asking: "Did you want M to wear her bracelets swimming? We do not mind holding them for her." If it was another child who had a favourite watch (or set of 10 bracelets like M's...) on and wanted to wear it in the water we likely would have responded in the same way. You are such an amazing person 2A. Go with your gut feeling and that common sense that you have so much of will tell you what to do. I think that is what happened at the pool today. I wouldn't have done it any differently.

Implications for Best Practices.

- Teacher autonomy & decision-making
- Teachers have to make case- and context-sensitive decisions with insufficient knowledge about Ss cultures & they need to trust those decisions and/or learn from their mistakes
- Teachers' intercultural awareness: Discerning what is cultural
 - Interpersonal vs. intercultural issues
- Teacher as anthropologist (or 'stranger')
 - To teach in an intercultural classroom is to enter another culture, where teachers should think like anthropologists

b. Teacher as arbiter of justice

i. Establishing clear rules & guidelines for conduct

“Camp Rooms”

Incident. The band is planning to take a trip to camp in two weeks and students have been busy signing up for their rooms. One student, who is of an ethnic minority..., realized that her name had been erased from the room that she had signed up for. She immediately let the teacher know and the teacher assured her that she would do something about it. The teacher immediately put her name back on the list and explained to the class that at the school, we do not treat other people like this. She further explained that in the band room we need to be kind to everyone and not exclude anyone from anything. The students took well to the teacher's ideas and immediately looked ashamed by what had happened. Although the student that had crossed her name off the list didn't actually admit to it, I'm sure that it would not happen again. The student who had her name crossed off the list seemed very pleased that it was addressed.

Teacher candidate's reflection. I think that the teacher handled this incident very well and she dealt with it immediately rather than waiting until it was already in the past. She stated the rules of the school and classroom and the standard that students should not treat someone unfairly, regardless of who they are. I think that the teacher dealt with this cross-cultural incident well because she encouraged an environment that would promote acceptance and understanding from one culture to another. I would definitely handle this issue in the same manner as the teacher. I might ask the student first if I could mention it in front of the whole class but because she knew this student very well, she probably assumed that it would be ok.

Professor's reflections. In terms of the specific incident you describe as a teacher there would be a general issue of inappropriate behaviour related to crossing someone's name off of the list - i.e. apparently telling them publicly that they are not welcome - and then a more specific issue of whether this is an aspect of racism/picking on someone because of their ethnic origin. The distinction may not be obvious but I think it is important - our cultural/racial identity and identification is important to who we are, but it isn't everything. And so, we both want to have our racial/ethnic identity recognized and respected and at the same time not be defined solely by that identity (and especially identification - i.e. how other people define us). So, as 'intercultural teachers' I think we need to be able to move sensitively in and out of these ways of seeing our students - to say "I don't see colour, I only see students" doesn't make much sense to me but nor does stereotyping based on race/culture, "You must be good at...." etc. So, in your incident, I wonder how significant is ethnicity and/or racism to the actions of other students, the teacher? What is the 'bigger picture' in the class, in the music program, in the school?

Best Practices.

- Recognize challenge of discerning the interpersonal from the cultural
- Teacher as arbiter of classroom justice (paradox)
 - On the one hand, the need and willingness to speak out / up and name youth-youth cruelty, bullying, unkindness, impoliteness, or lack of respect;
 - on the other hand, by trying to name and shame others, can it backfire by naming and shaming the victim

ii. Correcting stereotyping

Excerpt from “Guest Speaker.”

Teacher. [Senior Years.] As a classroom teacher, I can't help but be struck at times of the great irony of our age that despite our ready access to a world of knowledge with the Internet, we are still burdened with stereotypes and misconceptions of the world. There seems to be no better way to enlighten students than simulations, guest speakers, field trips and other experiential learning activities. These types of activities with their complex, multi-sensory attributes are ideal

for redirecting students' perceptions away from a cerebral, solitary mode of experience to a truer multi-dimensional mode. It's interesting to note that recent brain research shows that changing the environment, movement and interacting with the environment all help to link the motor cortex to the cerebral cortex thus stimulating brain development.

iii. *Resolving conflicts*

“Faggot”

Incident. [Early Years.] This past Wednesday during reading time, a student, Adam came up to me and told me another student Lorne had called him a "faggot." I was completely taken aback. Adam then told me he didn't even know what that word meant, but that he didn't think it was good and that his feelings were hurt. I asked him if this needed to be a conversation and he said yes. I went over to 2B [teacher] and told her what Adam had told me and she offered to have a conversation with the 2 boys. It's never ok to put people down or call names in room 16 and we use a problem solving approach to work out our problems and remind the children that we need to use kind words with one another.

Teacher. I asked Lorne about the tone of voice and said that it sounded like a put down. It would not really matter what the word was when it was intended as a put down. I reminded him that put downs are never OK. Lorne and Adam were able to freely admit that they had both used inappropriate behavior and they were able to articulate why they had escalated to that point. We talked of strategies to prevent the anger and put downs in the future. (ask them to stop, tell the person you do not like it when...)we talked together for some time and established that both boys had been feeling troubled and we talked together until everyone felt better. I can always tell when they are ready to go back to class as their shoulders drop and they are able to talk in normal tones to each other.

“Name calling”

Teacher. I had still not dealt with 'faggot'. When I taught in Winnipeg School Division I was well aware of the policy for Homophobia. It is not tolerated at any age in the schools and I agree 100% with this philosophy. If I had been in that division with these two boys I would have welcomed the opportunity to talk frankly about the facts...what he had said and who this would hurt. I would have told them quite frankly what the word meant and talked about the fact that Lorne would have been putting down a group of people in a very mean and prejudice way. I went straight to the Vice-Principal and told her the story and asked what the policy for the division is. She told me she had no idea. I have been told that this school division is a very conservative division, unlike my last division. I have only been in this division for a year and a half. This was the first of this type of incident.

After speaking to the vice principal we decided I should phone MOM and tell her about the incident. I should then ask her if she would like me to discuss this with Lorne or would she rather I do it. That way I had mom's permission and didn't need to worry about policies I thought this was a great idea. I saw the principal right after and she said that there had been another incident with Lorne that she was dealing with and it was sending inappropriate language over the internet to other students in the school. She was calling anyway and offered to talk about both incidents. I will hear on Monday what Mom wanted me to do and will step in to explain to Lorne the meaning and implications of using the word he used. It will not be too late on Monday. Even if Mom chooses to talk to Lorne I will still ask him about his understanding and have a talk about it. I will tell him that I will not let him put down anyone even if it is a group of people we do not know. Sometimes you just have to tell children ...that is not allowed here!

2. Teacher Attitudes

Teachers' attitudes are a key factor in generating intercultural sensitivity. These are some of the guidelines the Early Years' classroom teachers raised, for example, to describe their thought-process as teachers:

- "is it okay for everyone to do this?" a guideline for decision making. 2B
- (mtg. discussion) – "everyone is equally valuable, rather than everyone is the same." 2B
- (mtg. discussion) – "follow your gut feeling" 2B
- (mtg. discussion) – act with humility, be prepared to be wrong GRA2

a. Respect

i. *Balancing open & respectful classroom expression*

"Tap Dancing – la de da"

Incident. This is my last week of practicum and I have noticed the students have adjusted to my social policy. I have created a hypersensitive environment for discussion. My original intension was to create an open, respective, and safe environment for expressing ideas. What I have observed in the last week is that students are very worried they are going to say something offensive. At least once a day, students would call another student out for being racist, even if the student was only mentioning a racial issue or asking a question. I have attempted to instil the notion that racism and intolerance will not be tolerated in my class. In the name of equality, I have created the ultimate ELA classroom...CENSORED. There are a million teachable moments in a day, but there is also a curriculum and a lesson plan, and a unit plan. Teachable moments happen all the time, as teachers, we attempt to re-create teachable moments in our lesson plans. In reality, this can only go so far.

My question is - how we juggle curriculum and teachable moments without creating ultimate censorship in our classes? When a student wants to talk about racial issues, I will discuss racial issues, but what about the grey areas? What happens when students have not said something discriminatory, and yet other students claim that they should not talk about those issues? It is important to know what is right and wrong, and what is respectful and disrespectful, but who am I to make that decision?

ii. *Valuing diversity*

- 2B-MTG "Everything about us is important"
- 1B-MTG curiosity / gaining understanding
 - young children don't ask questions about culture, don't express curiosity, but teacher do, to make children feel valued and understood
 - teacher's curiosity is evidence of caring about them
 - this curiosity is more important to kids from cultural minorities
 - makes you a more responsive, inclusive teacher
- 1C 119 – teacher modelling curiosity, interest, lack of judgment – e.g. teacher as anthropologist: curious, non-judgmental
 - quiet acceptance or celebration of cultural difference?
- 1B – non-judgmental (teacher models non-judgmental curiosity to children)
- create environment where diversity is valued 1
- B 121 – showing interest subtly, choosing an unobtrusive moment – M-s henna tatoos

b. Empathy & Caring

“Walking in Others’ shoes.”

Professor. 6C:135 (branch from 65) [Senior Years.] “So, what does this have to say about intercultural competency? What comes to mind for me is that we can’t really know Others until we have established genuinely close relationships with them - lived in their worlds and walked in their shoes. Culture is local and contextual. Was the German exchange student you write about really unable to understand or read how Canadians feel? Is this a cultural gap? Or is it a relationship gap - more about not having a close enough relationship with individual Canadians to really develop local and contextual understanding? I don’t know.

6C: 136 (branch from 66) “...What an opportunity this context could provide for students to examine issues of culture and racism. Good theatre takes the given and makes it more complex. In depth character studies could, I would think, lead theatre students into researching the complexity and layers of a character - moving into explorations of subtle nuances, contradictions, etc. Students researching characters could learn what it feels like to walk in Others’ shoes and what it means to create an imagined but authentic ” Students researching characters could learn what it feels like to walk in Others’ shoes and what it means to create an imagined but authentic portrayal of Others.

As a theatre teacher I would want to explore with my students how we identify ourselves and Others. Is the student you describe “playing it safe” - staying within the racial limits of his skin colour? Or being from a racial minority, is he more sensitive to racial stereotyping and therefore only feels comfortable stereotyping his own racial community (an insider is no doubt much less likely to be accused of being racist). I would be curious to know if this student thinks he could be a White character. What about the other students in the class - would they dare to explore being Pakistani or Chinese or Cree characters? Would they feel they had the right to do this? While dramatically taking on the linguistic challenges of characters learning to speak English could lead to mockery and cheap laughs, it could also step into the rich potential for intercultural teaching and learning in the hands of a prepared, sensitive, and skilful teacher. Imagination and empathy are closely related in my mind. I would think that enabling students to freely imagine, based on serious and compassionate research and thoughtful discussion, could open up so many possibilities for not only the theatre students themselves but also for the larger school community for whom the theatre students would perform their portrayals. This story leaves me as a teacher with so much to think about.

c. Making the classroom a safe place

- (Early Years’ unit mtg) Student safety and comfort -- paramount
 - 2B 122 – be open to moments when children feel safe to bring lives into the classroom
 - 2A 125 – new student from India not engaging
 - 2B 126 – appreciate and understand student stress – being in new situation
 - 2C 131- putting student “on the spot” is difficult for new students

“It’s okay. You can’t get in trouble in this class”

Teacher (2B). Accepting all students, everything about them (mtg. discussion): “It’s okay, you can’t get in trouble in this class.” – anything they do, they don’t have to be afraid, we might talk about it, we’ll explore it, but they don’t get in trouble for it.” 2BA student reports that another was calling him a moron at recess. The second student is asked to come and discuss his behaviour. At first he denies any misbehaviour, but then the first student says to him, “It’s okay to talk about it. You know you can’t get in trouble in this class.” The teacher explains how she impresses on her students the need to treat each other with respect: This involves dealing with any infractions regardless of the time it takes to do so. She explains that students know they can’t get

in trouble: “It’s all open for discussion. If they do something hurtful, they know we’re going to talk about it, but they also know they can’t get in trouble.”

Best Practices.

- ❖ Awareness and attention to students’ interpersonal relations
- ❖ Justice in the classroom (e.g. restitution policies)
- ❖ Providing offending Ss the opportunity to learn
 - freedom to make mistakes
 - free of punishment or threat of punishment;
 - opportunity to understand, feel regret, & make amends

3. Teacher Identity/Identification

- Relationships are multidimensional and multilayered
 - multiple identities-ethnicity, class, religion, gender age
 - relationships, trust, caring, respect
 - racism & diversity

a. Self-Awareness

i. *Self-reflection and Identity*

Student. [Senior Years.] 6A (student). Some people believe that by making a fuss over the issues, you are being racist. But, it is important to vocalize racism in order to dispel it. To understand racism, you must address racism. By discovering and admitting racism in ourselves, we can take steps in overcoming our discrimination. Identifying racism through reflection is a helpful process for both students and teachers.

GRA5&6 wrote: Topics to reflect on: our own identity, our own racism, our own practice. Someone said: raising to explicitness what is unconscious. “I was just reading in by I. Alladin, *Racism in Canadian Schools*, about how critical examination can lead to a “language of possibility”, the author was referring to textbooks but I think it can apply to our interactions with people too.”

Professor. 6C: “The first step in becoming racially-inclusive teachers is to recognize that we are all racist in one way or another (as much as we might not want to perceive ourselves in this way) and to then get on with the job of learning not only to be non-racist but also anti-racist.”

ii. *Modelling respectful interactions*

“Practice what you preach”

Incident. [Senior Years.] One of the students yells out, “You’re Jewish right? Be Jewish!” I respond with “Pardon me?” The student immediately senses my unease so he tries to explain himself. “Just complain a lot like a stereotypical Jewish person, you know.” Once the students see my expression, the class goes silent. “I doubt that is appropriate, student. I realize that you didn’t mean it to be offensive” I continue to describe why the request was inappropriate. My response attempts address the issue that stereotyping Judaism is NOT alright. We proceed in the activity in which all the characters are in some way a stereotype. Whoops! We address stereotypes and characters all the time in theatre; this student was just articulating what we had been practicing in class.

What is the difference between a British accent, and a Jewish one? For one thing, I’m Jewish, not British. Another thing, Judaism is a belief not a nationality. And yet, the line between the two is muddled. I don’t think I was wrong in reprimanding the student; it instilled the fact that although we make fun of these issues in theatre class, they are still controversial, and we must be aware that they may offend certain people. Meanwhile, the first thing I will do Monday is

facilitate a discussion on this issue. The bell came between me and a teachable moment on Friday; I believe this might be a valuable issue to debrief.

Teacher.

- a harmless, playful bit of creativity
- a way of bonding with others of your own background against “outsiders” a way of portraying groups that is easy to recognize and amusing
- a seemingly innocent stereotype that by repetition or “cleverness” soaks into the subconscious and affects our habitual thinking about groups
- a form of social control—keeping individuals in “their place”- a tool or a weapon?

We have a long tradition of ethnic humour in North America (not that other places don’t laugh at us). I think that children are particularly vulnerable to having their perceptions of the world shaped by stock stereotypical characters. Kids and adolescents are just developing their critical thinking and may not always detect satire. How many people have perceptions of groups with particular accents as being of lower intelligence or more carefree or even more educated because of the entertainment industry stereotypes, found in everything from Walt Disney cartoons to films? The groups being stereotyped change over the years: “Indians” and Italians were big in my childhood, but today it’s more Arab terrorists. New groups always get the rough end, then seem to settle in and join in jokes about the next group. In these days of “political correctness” and sensitivity to ethnicity and gender issues, it’s become difficult to use any kind of ethnic humour in some circles. And certainly different people within a group may either be offended by outsiders’ jokes about their group, while comfortable to tell insiders’ jokes. I know have several African, Latin, and aboriginal friends who tell jokes about their traditional stereotypes—but as an outsider, I would never feel comfortable doing so myself. If the target doesn’t think it’s funny, it isn’t. But I also believe that the ability to laugh at oneself can be a sign of health and self-esteem.

iii. *Awareness or hypervigilance?*

Incident. [Early Years, unit meeting.] Sharing of intercultural incidents significant in development of teaching practice. 1B –incident 1: Co-teacher’s experience with a student’s parent (being accused of racist behaviour) led to hyper-vigilance – so as to never be accused again. This incident produced awareness that teacher has lots of power and influence in classroom – especially with students from minority cultures.

b. Ascertaining appropriateness

“Jew Fro”

Incident. [Senior Years.] I then attempted to regain the attention of the class when I hear a student yell out that it makes sense that I was Jewish because of my “crazy Jew fro”. A few students sitting near that student reacted in disgust, saying that this comment was racist and inappropriate. In actuality, this comment is a pop culture label and is not considered racist, in fact, “Jew frow”, is the accepted vernacular for a “fro” that is composed of thick ringlet curls. This may have been a missed teachable moment on my account. I was so shocked that our conversation had moved from rubrics to my ethnic looking hair, that my reaction was that of avoidance. We moved on to the next point and I attempted to quiet the students down without much explanation: “Jew fro is not a racist term, and it does not offend me, let’s move on; sorry for the tangent”.

Teacher (5B) Response. You know, sometimes, I think we’ve tried so hard to keep the classroom free of religion that we feel uncomfortable discussing that aspect of identity, even in a purely objective way. In the context of a multicultural, multi-faith/non-faith society, we try conscientiously keep our own political and religious beliefs out of the classroom. Well, some of us do. There are always the teachers who are known for their polemical rants against the

American government or who ridicule fundamentalist beliefs of any faith. The students know them. But most of the rest of us try so hard to not influence anyone that students end up not knowing some basic facts about religion that help them understand other people and many, many references in literature and history. I remember having to explain from beginning to end the story of Moses and the Exodus to a grade 12 class who was reading the Grapes of Wrath—only one person in the class knew anything about the journey that serves as the underlying metaphor in the novel. And where do we teach the important concepts of the major world faiths that are part of our classrooms today? Your students may not know anything about Kosher; they are also unlikely to understand the dietary beliefs of other religions, either. I teach a half-credit elective course on Cultural Awareness—we include religions near the end, just because so many are important components of particular cultures. But we only get fifteen to twenty students taking it—so that still leaves most of the student body unaware or with misconceptions about world religions. I don't have the answer to this, but I think it's something that needs to be discussed carefully. Several times, students who are new to Canada have asked me why teachers never discuss anything about religion. I explain that we are trying not to make anyone feel uncomfortable or to influence students' thinking about so personal a topic. They have found that a strange idea—they say you have to know a person's religion to know who they are. Hmmmmm!

c. Teacher as object of student identification

“Guest speaker”

Incident. [Senior Years.] I recently had an aboriginal guest speaker come into class and talk about the aboriginal world view and belief system and I was surprised to see how many students were affected by her presentation. Something that surprised me was a comment made by one of the students when in a written "thank you" to her, he openly stated that after her presentation a lot of his previous assumptions and stereotypes about aboriginal people surfaced when she made him realize otherwise. It was fascinating to me that a student would openly admit that their views were not based on reality but were in fact, based on stereotype and assumptions. This made me also realize how important it is for students to experience guest speakers who can either clarify, or even re-direct student's personal views. I could have stood up in front of the class and explained that the aboriginal world view is different than the western view for a week straight and I'm not sure that my impact would be nearly as great as someone who has lived in a cultural identity for their whole life.

Certainly, I think that I would have some impact, but just not with the same kind of dimension and conviction that a guest speaker can have. The students were truly enlightened and in some ways surprised to hear about the cultural differences but I believe that they gained a new respect and understanding for the aboriginal culture and that this new understanding will be reflective in their future encounters with people of this ethnic group.

Professor. The main thing that this item triggers for me is the importance of a multicultural teaching profession that includes Aboriginal teachers. If a guest speaker can be this powerful what could several Aboriginal teachers do? I know this open up a whole 'can of worms', and I do not argue that only Aboriginal teachers can teach Aboriginal students nor (usually) that we need a quota system in our hiring practices. I do think however, that cultural awareness /experience is a relevant

Intercultural Learners

There is a tendency to over-estimate the role of teachers and schools in the cultivation of intercultural sensitivity in students, and to underestimate the role of the learners themselves. For this reason, this category emerged unexpectedly to the researchers, whose attention tended to be focused on teacher qualities rather than learners.

1. Developmental Factors

a. Egocentrism of young children?

Intercultural awareness as developmental & age-sensitive?

- [Early Years, #1 unit mtg] Developmental stages – Given the egocentrism of young children, are they receptive to the development of inclusive and tolerant attitudes?
- 1B 157 -- “most children, 7 years of age and younger, do not focus on cultural differences, or have negative views about them”
- 1C 161 – are there optimal ages when children are most receptive to the development of inclusive and tolerant attitudes?

Teacher Reflection. [Middle Years.] At what age do you think children become aware of discrimination - what it is, why it occurs, and when it is occurring? I'm sure there are always individuals a particular child prefers to be around, and others they seldom if ever interact with socially, but this is not discrimination. Like democracy and freedom, discrimination is a complex concept, and the children in your classroom seem to associate it with War and, in the same conversation, race and culture (I suspect this is because of the reference made by the Elder to Rosa Parks and by the children themselves to the Bosnian-Serbian war and WWII). I sense that you were surprised that they didn't think it could or would happen in Canada. To be honest, I felt such tenderness for these children who expressed this sentiment and used their parent's statements to justify their perspective. It's not simply the innocence and trust conveyed. It's also being in a multi-cultural/multi-lingual school community and not experiencing/witnessing unfair treatment - personally or of individuals - that stems from prejudice. (Or are they oblivious?) I think it's important to grow and develop in a society where you aren't immediately made aware of the prejudices some members have about gender, age, religion, culture and heritage. We shouldn't rush to expose early years and middle years students to bigotry and intolerance. In my sciences C & I courses, I suggest that new terminology shouldn't be introduced out of context. Children should have first hand experiences with the concept or phenomenon and they should be saying in several words or phrases what the new scientific term will allow them to say more succinctly. I wonder if it's the same with awareness of discrimination. What meaning will it have if children have no experience with it and have never considered that people are capable of treating others with cruelty and disrespect? I think you handled the situation well. The students must have thought so too as nothing more was said.

Student. I'm quite confused/divided on when to teach children about discrimination. I agree that children shouldn't be rushed into it. Ideally they shouldn't know it, but at the same time they should be able to recognize it, and be prepared to stop it. I know when I first experienced discrimination (that I remember) I was so stunned and upset. I wasn't able to speak up and didn't know what to say. I was just so shocked and hurt. So while it was wonderful growing up not really knowing about it, it was also very difficult for me to deal with when it did happen.

2. Relationships

- Teachers build relationships with students, but also support S-S relations
2C 118 – “feeling accepted is important for minority culture students, because they realize that they are different.”
2B 122 – good teachers are good listeners, and use students' conversations to inform instructional planning.
2A 137 – relationship-building pays off, new student engaged

“Member of community.”

Incident. I read with Maya the other day. She has chosen a book that Preet, her friend had chosen and they were sitting together in chairs in the middle of the room, feet up on the table but reading their own books independently (we have two copies) . What a good idea!! I had called Preet over to read to me and she had talked about the book and was having a little trouble with comprehension but said she was working through it with Maya and really wanted to continue. Normally I would have encouraged her to use this book as a read aloud at home with Mom or Dad and to pick a 'Just right ' book to read independently in the classroom. I agreed that if she really wanted to read this with Maya she should. Later, when I read with Maya I could tell that she clearly had trouble with some of the English words but she was getting the meaning perfectly and was able to talk about what was happening in the story better than her reading buddy, Preet. (The owl was going to the animal hospital because it didn't like to fly...sort of a different reason/not physically injured and that is where Preet was confused. Maya completely understood the idea). That made me think about the way this classroom works and how those two had found each other and could have a lovely reading experience together supporting each other every step of the way and both using their own strengths to help each other, both elevating the learning experience for each other. It was wonderful and as I looked at the two of them go back to their novels I thought about all of the behaviours they were exhibiting that showed they are becoming Readers. Isn't that what we want of all of the children?

3. Identity & identification

a. Identity & entitlement

“Discrimination Conversations”

Incident. I recently taught a [Middle Years] social studies class dealing with the topic of discrimination and prejudice. When dialoguing with the students about the topic they all had the notion that discrimination was specifically making fun of someone else because of the colour of their skin. They all agreed that discrimination happens everyday in their own classroom even though no one intends for it to happen. This particular class is filled with students from many different cultures and races and although they understand the need to respect each other they often jokingly tease each other about accents and skin colours. One student identified that he could make jokes about his own race but as soon as someone else did it became discrimination. Obviously schools need to breed respect in the classrooms and teachers have an important job is doing so. It was good for me to gain a glimpse into the students' understandings of respect and discrimination because I can now build on their preconceptions and ideas. I think its important for teachers to learn what students know about important topics such as respect and discrimination, especially in such a diverse cultural environment. I wonder how teachers can move students from knowing about respect, to acting and living out respect.

GRA: Here I think that positive role-modelling to the students is huge when fostering respect in a classroom. The students need to see you practicing as you preach....otherwise they won't buy into it..

Teacher: This situation is a huge teaching opportunity, perhaps more so for the Canadian students. The 3-month stretch between Christmas and March break is a long and difficult one for many reasons. By this time of the year, the students (and teachers) have become very, perhaps too familiar with one another and do make inappropriate comments disguised as a joke. Too often, the new Canadian students do not even realize that some of the comments are tainted with discrimination because the Canadian students have become more sophisticated (I know that seems hard to believe) and clever in the things they say, and new students may simply not "get it." I see it as my job and responsibility as the teacher to address students' comments regardless of whether they are making a statement about their own culture or not. If I belittle

someone else's culture, I am a bigot, but if an individual says something inappropriate about their own culture, everyone has to understand that it is as unacceptable as if anyone else made the comment. It is important that ALL students recognize that they own their comments and jokes and it takes time and maturity to recognize it in themselves rather than simply identify it in others. The degree to which the new students understand this concept varies with their language and life skills.

b. Identification / dis-identification with ethnicity / home country

“Travel to a Country Assignment”

Incident. [Middle Years]. A few weeks ago I gave the students an assignment in Social Studies where they had to 'travel' to another country, via the internet, and create an electronic travel portfolio on that country. I chose to assign countries to the students because I have students from several different countries. After talking with my collaborating teacher about which countries to assign to which students, I decided to give a few students the countries from which they came from, with the hope that the assignment would be a little bit easier and they would be much more interested in it. I found throughout the course of this assignment that the students who have been in Canada longer wanted to 'travel' to a different country other than their own. One boy in particular complained that he already knows all about his country and would rather learn about another country. On the other hand, a few students who have only been in Canada a short time loved researching their own country. This observation showed me that student preference and input is an important factor to consider when teaching. Asking students for their input in topic selection is especially important for ESL students, who may want to learn about a specific topic.

GRA. My school division is currently using Anne Davies model of assessment based on the provincial mandate with respect to assessment. I might suggest you look her up and read some of her information on assessment. It is a very interesting shift in the thinking of educators from assessment of learning to assessment for learning. Quite interesting reading.

“That's not how you say it”

Incident. [Senior Years.] A little over a week ago when I was learning how to pronounce a student's name, I ran into an interesting situation... I have a propensity for accents and pronunciation; there are a couple of students in my class that have very ethnic sounding names; after checking with the students, I attempted to pronounce their names with the appropriate emphasis; I ran this by my cooperating teacher; she felt that my correct pronunciation was bringing too much attention to their names. I'm still trying to say their names correctly; when people pronounce my name incorrectly, it bugs the hell out of me.

Teacher. Okay, here are some thoughts about names . . . I think you were considerate to try to learn the correct pronunciation of the students' names: I think I can also see where the cooperating teacher might have been coming from. I might recommend that you try a couple of times, then defer the matter till after class or some one-on-one opportunity. We are always balancing the desire to affirm identity and causing self-consciousness about identity. I've seen classes where teachers make no effort to learn the correct pronunciation of non-English names or to learn which name (family or given) the student prefers to be called. Why do students adopt English names? Several reasons here—when you read the literature, sometimes it's seemed as if there was only one possible explanation—they've been “forced” to assimilate, their true ethnicity being suppressed. But, especially with senior high students or adults, could it perhaps be part of trying on a new “English” identity? Or frustration with no one getting it right? Or a generous gesture to aid the English speakers who just don't “get it”? We often feel honoured when speakers of another language give us a name in their language. I don't know about these students

whose names you were wanting to pronounce—were they new to Canada or have they been here a long time?

You referred to being bugged when people don't pronounce your name right. I assume you're referring to native English speakers—we have an expectation that people of our own tongue will get names right. Do you feel the same way when an EAL speaker has trouble with your name? My name has morphed into “Mrs. Tuna-fish” several times when my EAL students couldn't pronounce the “r's” in my name and made a joke in their pronunciation. But I would be annoyed if my native English speaking students had trouble with it. Just conjecture, but my impression of some EAL students is that they don't expect us to get the pronunciation of their names (based on past experience, they think we can't), but they appreciate some effort. They see us struggle and out of politeness just accept our effort or uses an easier name. Currently, most of my students are using their own names, although three or four are using English names. Of course, I frequently demonstrate my ineptitude in their languages by trying to pronounce various daily expressions—it puts us all at ease because they see my struggle. It would be interesting to do some work around the names in the class—have people research their names, and present the meaning, history, family connections—it could be an opportunity for some intercultural learning, and pronunciation could be addressed in the context.

I was teaching a class on the refugee experience and naturally, I tend to approach the topic with care because there may be students in the class that have had similar experiences. I had only known this class for one day and I found myself making the assumption that these two girls in the class could very possibly be refugees or had at least recently immigrated to Canada. I didn't consciously make this assumption but subconsciously, I was sensitive to this possibility. I tried very hard to make everything as comfortable as possible for them just in case this was a possibility. A day later, I had seen one of them in the hallway and to my surprise, they were chatting away with a group of friends as any teenager would but it was now obvious that culturally, she was very much Canadian and not necessarily a recent immigrant. In reflection, I realized that as a teacher, I made an assumption about a student who was of an ethnic minority. I quite quickly assumed that these girls had to be recent immigrants because they seemed quiet, their names seemed very ethnically rooted, and they were ethnic minorities. Although I dealt with my assumption by being more sensitive to their possible experiences, could someone else have made the same assumption and dealt with them in a more negative way. Although Canada is extremely diverse, this incident makes me realize that I still look at ethnic minorities as having possible language barriers etc. Is it dangerous to be too culturally sensitive? Could it be just as dangerous as being not culturally sensitive enough?

4. Minority learner as cultural / intercultural expert

a. Minority learners as “key informants” for teachers

“Sikh Turban (Patka)”

Incident. In the analysis meeting of Term I, an Early Years teacher recounts how a Sikh student became upset in the change room after gym when his patka fell off. He was crying uncontrollably and she didn't know whether or not it was appropriate as a woman to help him to put the patka back on. Hesitant to aggravate his distress by inappropriate actions, she sought the advice of an older Sikh girl student in the school, who told her it was fine. So, she helped the boy put his patka on and he calmed down.

b. Minority learners as intercultural expert

“What is Aboriginal?”

Incident. [Early Years.] The children are preparing to publish books right now. We had a share time on Tuesday to see if some of the children had decided on pieces they would like to have in their special white books. One student, Jimmy, shared that he would like to write a book

about his culture and the Aboriginal people. Some children seemed slightly confused as if they had not heard that word before. Another child politely asked Jimmy "What is Aboriginal?" Tammy asked Jimmy if he would like to answer. He explained that it was his culture and that his people were the first people in Canada. Tammy stepped in and added that the word 'aboriginal' means the people who were first somewhere. She also said that they are sometimes called First Nations, or Native and that the old word that isn't used anymore was Indian. Another Aboriginal boy in the class shared that in Aboriginal culture his family attends pow-wows and has special celebrations. He also shared that he is a member of an Aboriginal hockey team.

The rest of the children all kind of nodded their heads and there were lots of "cool" and "that's neat" comments. Afterwards during writing time, another student, Maya brought a book over to Jimmy that was about tee pees and wigwams and told him he thought it might help him get some ideas for his own published picture book. A smile came to my face because I know that the children in room 16 value and appreciate the diversity of one another. It was a nice conversation.

Teacher. I love it when these kinds of conversations come up. Jimmy is so proud of his heritage and he talks of it often. It was nice to be able to talk to him about the picture book he is creating and to incorporate his interest of his aboriginal heritage with his passion for the new baby @ home. He has finally decided to write a book about his heritage for his new little sister to teach her what he knows. We will hear Jimmy share bits and pieces of his story as it is being composed and the class will learn along with his baby sister what it means to Jimmy to be aboriginal. In honouring Jimmy's heritage we honour all heritages.

I think of how different that might have been if we made the children write about topics that we dictated.(ie write a story about penguins). Teaching is all about creating a classroom community where every child's heritage is honoured and valued. It is a place where everyone has a voice. Then the students have an investment in all that we do in the classroom while participating in and studying all of the academic disciplines. It is a powerful way to teach.

Intercultural Classrooms / Schools

1. Classroom / School as Community

- Classroom as a community / microcosm of the community
- Classroom personnel & on-line communities (classroom community includes more than simple teacher-student binary)

a. Relationship building as community building

“Member of community”

Incident. I agree that Maya has completely joined our classroom community. She is such a wise little girl. I think she knows well that she is in a caring and loving place where her ideas will be valued and she can take risks. There are times that I find myself looking over to her to see how she is doing (for example, when she is working independently without the help of friends) and she will often look up at me and flash that beautiful smile as if to say “I’m fine here.” She is now actively engaged and a part of all that goes on in the classroom. She needed to be an observer and to watch till she understood what it was we were doing in the classroom.

b. Inclusion / exclusion

“US customs”

Incidents. [Senior Years.] I came across an incident last week that involved a Korean student who is unable to participate in a band trip because he can’t cross the US border. This student approached me and the band teacher and let us know that he didn’t think that he could cross the US border to go into Minneapolis for the band trip in two weeks. The band teacher and I were on the phone with US customs for two days straight trying to figure out a way for him to get in. When we found out that his only option was to purchase a \$100 visa in Calgary or pay a \$270 one-time fee. It was obvious that he would not be able (or it didn’t seem reasonable) to do this but when we shared his options with him, he seemed quite offended. He didn’t feel frustrated with us but was certainly frustrated with the US customs considering he has been living in Canada for four years. It made me think that if it was me, I would probably feel offended and discriminated against if I was the only student that had to pay a fee and I had been living here for four years. Also, how do you properly explain it to him as a teacher without sounding discriminatory yourself. I certainly didn’t agree with the decision that the US customs had made, but I was the one who had to share it with this student.

Professor. Very interesting. Definitely “a teachable moment”. If I were principal of the school (sorry principal!) I would probably try to find a way to pay for this. Failing that I would ask the class what we should do? Fundraising to cover his costs would do more perhaps to promote cross-cultural appreciation than anything else. At minimum, I would say everyone going on the trip should get to understand what was at play here, and what, if anything, they could do about it. What does the school, the staff, you, the students know about this student and why s/he is in this class? How much is his/her family paying for him/her to be there? Why? Is School division making a big chunk of money off this and similar students (or are they doing it because they believe in the benefits of international/ cross cultural student interactions - I very much doubt the latter, given what I know of provincial and school divisions on this one).

Students live together and try to get on with one another and make friendships, but often they know little (and are taught less) about the forces that are at play in bringing international students to the school- and thus have no context or understanding to deal with these sorts of “border incidents”. Not much multicultural education going on here

2. Classroom / School as Culture

- Which / whose culture?
- Cultural diversity as an asset NOT a liability or challenge
- Culture & identity are “icebergs” much of which is “invisible”
- Teacher identity: from expert to facilitator or learner

a. Distinguishing what is interpersonal from cultural

Student reflection. 1A [Early Years.] Bullying behaviour may be personally or culturally motivated: i). either way, needs to be addressed; ii). be aware of cultural reasons which may underlie behaviour, but don't jump to conclusions, young children might not consider themselves culturally targeted children may touch, poke, focus on things they notice...this need not imply any negative feelings, e.g. S***, he's a poking, bugging, touching kind of guy...

“Physicality in Play”

Incident. A few of our boys have been doing a lot of playful rough-housing lately. They are from a variety of backgrounds. But it made me think of an incident at a school where I previously worked. A new immigrant boy (about 8 years old) kept getting into fights (not in play). When his parents met with the support team they were quite surprised by the expressed concern. They dismissed it as cultural. According to them, boys of that age were encouraged to be physical, otherwise they would become 'weak.' Now I had lived in the country from which they came. While I did see a lot of rough housing, I had not picked up on that cultural aspect. Now I might have missed it or the parents might have been trying to excuse their child.

GRA. Quite interesting 1A. I'm wondering if you know how those parents were taught about acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in the Canadian school setting....It would be interesting to see how that child has learned what is acceptable and what isn't.

If I had been listening to the parents justifying their son's behaviour, the first questions I would have asked myself would have been, “Did the boy have older or younger brothers?” If yes, “Did the father and mother encourage such behaviour between them?” If no, “How did the father and/or mother help the boy to know that physical prowess was a good attribute for a male and to actively develop this attribute so as not to be considered “weak”? Like Tammy, I wonder what the response of the support team might have been in this situation? Maybe of the cooperative games that most children play in and out of school don't allow prowess to be developed? I wonder if this might be one reason to include sports like wrestling and weight lifting and jujitsu (where sportsmanship is developed) in the Physical Education curriculum or as extracurricular options? It's interesting to recognize how a family's sense of gender is developed in their children, and that this identity is not universal and often not an explicit part of a school curriculum. Or am I making a sweeping generalization about schools.? Perhaps the better question is should it move out of the hidden curriculum and become a more explicit part of what schools are for. If so, who decides the goals for each individual (or each gender) and how each goal will be achieved so that each learner realizes that maleness and that femaleness is not one way of being? And how does one capture in this teaching the need to treat others with respect and with equality of opportunity?

a. Intercultural teacher as anthropologist / “stranger”

“Self portraits and culture”

Incident. [Early Years.] We have been working on ish portraits this week in the classroom. Ish portraits are self portraits. They are called ish, because they are not exact replicas of us. They are face-ish. We started the project by having students paint with black paint 2 eyes, 2 ears, 1 nose, and 1 mouth. We cut these facial features out of the paper. On a separate piece of paper we painted the shape of our head. We then glued our facial features onto the painted head outline.

Yesterday we began to paint our portraits. I was painting beside a student who wears something on his head that is turban like (I forget the exact name). Just before he finished painting he painted his turban on his head. The students were told not to paint their hair or anything like that, just to make the outline of the head and the facial features. I think it was important for this boy to paint the turban on his self-portrait. Clearly this is an important and significant part of his culture if he felt that he should paint it on his portrait.

GRA. Hi 1A. It appears that your WebCT access is working well. I think we're off to a good start in our dialogue about intercultural teacher education. I find the incident you describe interesting for a number of reasons. I think it reveals good insight on your part when you comment that the boy's decision to paint his turban on his portrait indicates that this is an item of cultural significance for him. That seems to me to be a very open and welcoming approach to other cultures. Instead of noting that the student's behaviour disregards instructions (at least that is how I understood it), you try to understand what the student's behaviour is telling you. I'm wondering if you had any conversation with the student about his turban, his portrait or why he chose to paint his turban? It would be interesting to hear from him why he decided to do that. Would you ask him to explain why he did what he did? How did others in the class react? In my experience with young children, they are often very eager to notice and draw attention to each other's mistakes and misdemeanours. Did other children notice? How did they react? It would be interesting to learn more about the turban and its meaning for the boy, and for the boy's culture.

Your reflection brings to mind an approach that a professor (I think she is the practicum supervisor for your school) presents in her course on cross-cultural education: "the teacher as anthropologist". A teacher/anthropologist approaches students with curiosity and in a non-judgemental way, trying to gain an understanding of how the students make sense of their worlds. Such a teacher is working from the assumption that culture is important and that students may be living in cultural realities that are very different from our own. I won't bother to explore all the implications of such an approach here, but I do think it is a valuable concept to keep in mind and it seems to me that your response to the boy's behaviour is in keeping with this notion of teacher as anthropologist.

I'm interested to know what will happen to the portraits. Will they be posted? How will others respond to the portrait? Will you or 1B call attention to the turban, or will it be ignored so as not to single him out, or how will you deal with it?

"That's not how you say it"

...Professor. [Senior Years]. Your entry raises a number of interesting questions. One response would be to say that this highlights the marginal place of teacher candidates (a number of people have written about this...). A permanent/veteran teacher would know their students and would be much less likely to find themselves in this sort of situation - back to the idea of (i) the teacher as "anthropologist"/"stranger", and (ii) the relational nature of teaching. A second point would be to empathise with this feeling/awareness. A number of years ago when I was teaching multicultural education/anti-racist courses more than I am today as well as writing more, there were certainly times when I felt that I was only seeing the world through a 'multicultural/anti-racist' lens and feeling that at time it was necessary to balance that off somehow.

Another thought comes to mind from working at the Faculty of Education in multicultural education - sometimes with classes that seemed to have very little ethno-cultural/racial diversity in them. On occasion I would find that I tended to teach differently when there were 'minority' students present in the class - that I was more attentive to issues of diversity and to my own preparation, language etc. Recognizing this I would try to approach a 'homogeneous' class as if it were 'diverse' (i.e. assume that there were Aboriginal students in the class even if I was not aware of any). It was a way of trying to increase my sensitivity to matters of diversity and not to be 'lazy' about them. Finally, I'm not sure that you can be 'too sensitive' (probably you can), but you certainly can tick people off my making assumptions about who they

are based on physical markers. For example, Canadian-born 'people of colour' tend to get pretty ticked off being asked "where did you come from". Good issues to reflect.

b. Addressing school-wide (not just classroom) culture

Respect assembly

Incident. This past week there was a school-wide assembly. It was based on one of the Aboriginal Seven Teachings: The teaching of respect. Looking around the assembly one would see a vast variety of colour, culture, ethnicity and race. It was an amazing experience to watch the students learn about respecting each other and actually listen to what they were being taught. The students demonstrated respect for each other, which is so important in the context of intercultural teaching. I know that assemblies like this are created to foster respect and community among students and staff but I would be curious to know the steps that have been taken to arrive at this place.

Professor. Respect is a very powerful issue. It seems to be present in just about every culture but can be differently expressed. In Aboriginal cultures (there is great diversity in Aboriginal cultures in North America), there is often open discussion about respect (and the other Sacred Teachings), because it is a part of the cultural reclamation process that has been underway for the last fifty years or so. In a manner of speaking, what the effect is that it is a reminder for other groups to reach into their own historical roots and find that which has existed there in the past. What I find very interesting about this is the positive feelings that people get when they see the Sacred Teachings brought to life. It's as though it reminds them of something good from their own innate understanding of being a human being. One of the big challenges is for people to respect people from other groups outside their own.

Best Practices.

- Drawing on the diverse cultural METHODS (notably Aboriginal) to teach about diversity and respect. Intercultural teaching is about expanding our cultural repertoire of teaching methods not just expanding our curricular contents.
- Identifying connections between and across various cultures

3. Local, Marginalized Culture as Resource

a. Aboriginal culture as resource

Goodbye Circle

Incident. [Middle Years.] One of our students was moving away. He is a relatively recent immigrant (over a year), and he was a good example/leader for the other students. This student was one who usually got along with everyone and was very enthusiastic. He was very good at almost anything he tried which many of the students admired. To say goodbye, 3C had everyone sit in a circle. A bean-bag was passed around, when one had the bean bag, one was to say something nice about the boy who was leaving. This was based upon the sharing circle that was used with the Seven Teachings (Aboriginal). It was very effective. The vast majority of students felt comfortable and said wonderful and personal things. I'm not sure how to comment on this. It sounds stereotypical but too often in many cultures, children learn to keep their feelings inside; boys especially are not encouraged to share their feelings - even more so when sharing feelings towards another male. Girls also tend to not know how to express themselves as a friend to a boy.

GRA. This is something that I am familiar. I have taken several courses with one of the professors who teaches at the university and she uses this to provide closure to her classes, but only when we have been together for a significant period of time and have had great discussion.

Men and women both contribute to the circle but I have noticed that some men and women are not comfortable with this. I appreciate the fact that 3C is trying this with her students because as you stated, boys should be encouraged to share their feelings just as much as girls. Thank you for this comment.

Teacher. Your final sentence reminded me of something my sister once commented upon. Between 1990 and 2004, she was in charge of a student exchange program in the United States. She also hosted one or two students during each school year. What seemed to surprise many of the European and South American students, male and female, living with her was the way girls acted around boys and the way boys acted around girls. They felt that North American students didn't understand what a friendship could be because they were so hung up on flirting, acting macho, dating, and not being the intelligent, sensitive, and caring individuals they really were. Having taught, advised and studied in many Early Years classrooms, I tend to think this is an attitude that begins in Middle Years. Perhaps events like the goodbye circle in 3C's classroom are actions that will help students to look beyond gender and gender stereotypes and recognize what it means to be a friend and the value of friendships whoever the individuals may be.

Intercultural Curricula

1. The importance of the curriculum?

- Do you learn the curriculum or the teacher?
- Extracurricular vs. curricular as key
- Formal vs. informal education
- Curriculum as contested cultural / intercultural text

2. The curriculum & EAL learners

- Access to knowledge about popular culture (& related sense of belonging)
- Access to EAL
- Academic or personal issues may disguise language issue
- Home language (parent's views on L1 retention and L2 acquisition?)

“Math Lingo”

Incident. [Middle Years.] I recently began a unit on integers with the students. We were doing a lesson on terminology associated with integers (i.e. withdraw, deposit, up, down, gain, lose, positive, negative). I asked the students to write an integer to represent each statement. One of the statements was "Harold gained 32 pounds." One of my students from Pakistan did not understand what the word 'gained' meant. She knew how to do all of the problems, but as soon as she ran into a word she didn't know, she wasn't able to do continue the problem. Even in mathematics (which is supposed to be universal) misunderstandings happen when meaning gets lost in translation. I found myself having to define the words in as many different ways as possible to help the students understand the meaning. This experience showed me the importance of language, and word choice in all subject, even math.

GRA. You are so right about math being universal. The numbers are universal but the language we use to do the math is not. In my setting there are three streams of math and the stream that most of our new immigrants have the greatest difficulty with is the consumer mathematics as this is the one that requires the most reading but for Canadian students is the easiest of the three. I find that quite odd.

“Second language assessment”

Incident. I have a student in my class who was born in South America. Although I attempt to mark him at the same level as everyone else, I am more sympathetic in my assessment based on his language handicap. Objective marking is a goal but never a possibility in subjective assessment. Anyway, for the last month I have taken-it-easy on this student because I realize he has come a long way in his abilities. Just recently I discovered that he has been in Canada many years and his development is due to learning difficulties supposedly unrelated to language; in fact, the student has been in Canada long enough that English is his first language and Spanish his second. I have insisted that the student seek help from a peer reviewer. Since then, his work has improved dramatically.

It is possible that his language difficulties stem from early troubles in English. Early on, when students are learning a language, the focus becomes verbal and not written communication. If the student can speak, people assume they can read and write just as well. These students very quickly slip through the cracks. They can communicate ideas and interact with other students, but have a terrible time with language organization and mechanics. Anyway, I enjoy discovering new biases and thought I would share it.

Teacher. 6a, you have made a huge discovery here that many ELA and other subject area teachers haven't realized yet. Among EAL and post-secondary writing teachers, there is a growing awareness of the Generation 1.5 student. If you just Google this term, you'll find several good articles, although I feel bad that I overlooked you in a note I sent out to the rest of the ELA

Dept. earlier this week about our upcoming PD day. At that time, we'll take the morning to discuss Enhancing Academic Vocabulary" (a topic that stems from my work in EAL but has a much broader application), but I've decided to broaden the scope to working with EAL learners in our classes. EAL is a continuum, and you have correctly identified a type of student we see increasingly and who is often labelled as a 'weak' writer or 'unmotivated' student or a lot of other things but not as someone who is still learning to write complex, academic English.

3. The challenge of having adequate (cultural) knowledge

- Is the curriculum a good resource for cultural knowledge?
- The need for teacher strategies for establishing cultural truths (e.g. ...below)

4. Negotiating "Canadian" culture & values in classrooms

a. Who get to define what is 'Canadian'?

"Winnipeg distaste"

Incident. Last week I was speaking with a couple German exchange students. They were extremely friendly and seemed surprised that I was being equally friendly. One student in particular was under the impression that people from Winnipeg weren't all that friendly. This was shocking, considering Canadians in general consider themselves very polite people. As a Manitoban, I have the extreme pleasure of seeing 'Friendly Manitoba' on every license plate that crosses my path to work. When I asked him why he felt Canadian's weren't that friendly he said that he could never understand how people felt. Apparently our emotions are very hard to read, many people who he considered to be friends, ended up having a less attractive side. He also considered Winnipeg an extremely boring place and felt Australia would have been a superior placement. I have seen this student in the halls since our conversation. He is always very friendly and warm.

Teacher. I would say this is not an unusual comment by an international or "newcomer" (the current term for new immigrant) student. There may be several things at work here: first of all, students at a school like the school have often been together with the same group of friends since elementary school. They do tend to be insular and while expressing a general friendliness and approval for people who come here from other countries, very few seem willing to take the consistent time to actually get to know them. We lead busy lives, eh? For example, how many teacher candidates or teachers have come to spend time with the international and newcomer students at lunch--even though most have said they would like to? I came to Winnipeg from a background in Ontario and the southern U.S. --25 years ago --and still don't feel like a local.

Another factor may be that Winnipeg students don't have a wide range of cosmopolitan skills, compared to many of the European and Latin American students who have traveled here on the International Student Program. Most have not traveled much at all--Kenora to Regina are their cultural range. What do they talk about with a peer who has likely already visited several countries? Who plays football (soccer) instead of hockey and listens to different bands? Who can go to bars at home but not here?

Again, our interaction patterns tend to be different here, even in the school. For example, because we have little space for socializing, people tend to hang out with their small group in a certain place in the hallway or a certain table in the cafeteria. Where do you go to socialize outside of school? Again, most are too young for the bar. There are far fewer opportunities for kids to "hang out" and meet other kids, especially when the weather turns cold. Winnipeggers turn inwards. (I always explain that Winnipeggers tend to have two personalities--summer--outgoing, sociable, hangin' out--and winter--inward, reserved, focused on family and close friends.) When I visited Mexico City and Guangzhou, China, I was struck by how much life occurs on the street--eating, meeting, recreation, etc.

What this reminds me always is how central the school is to the integration of newcomer students into Canadian society. They may not have any other place to meet other Canadians. In our ESL program here, I've chosen to use my lunch to keep the ESL room open as a "drop-in" where students can eat, visit, play games, and get help with their homework. The students generally find holidays like Christmas quite boring because this is where their friends are. I've tried to encourage more Canadian students to join us, but it's a tough sell--good intentions seldom materialize. We had a formalized arrangement through a peer support group one year--but the Canadian kids once again seemed to have a problem once they got past the surface greetings. They said they didn't know what to talk about, and the newcomer students didn't feel they had enough English to communicate. Some of them found that the expectations of their families were quite different from the Canadians. Interestingly, we had a former staff member who followed some visibly different cultural practices. She seemed to find it difficult to develop close ties with the rest of the staff. I wonder what was at work?

However, I will say that students often go through a period of adjustment--like the stages of culture shock. Initial enthusiasm, then reality sets in, followed by comparison with home or somewhere else that **MUST** be better, perhaps resentment or anger/depression, then most students start to adjust and begin to enjoy their experiences more. Usually, students who come here for a year or more do well in the end, while students who are only here for one semester may never get past "the wall." I don't know if these observations shed any light on your experience.

Professor. What a great story to begin this conversation about intercultural competence and intercultural teaching! As Canadians, I think most of us think we are friendly and polite. But really there is no such thing as the monolithic "Canadian". Our friends and family members are as varied in their identities and personality traits as any other Nationals. The "friendly and polite Canadian" is a stereotype we tell ourselves, isn't it?

I recently read a newspaper article about a survey of Europeans asking them to differentiate between Canadians and Americans. The majority of them couldn't. This would probably come as a surprise and disappointment to many Canadians, especially those who take great pains to identify themselves as Canadians (sewing the Maple Leaf on their backpacks and jeans) when traveling abroad. We do this because we don't want to be mistaken for Americans, who some of us perceive to be loud, aggressive and ultra-nationalistic. But this too is a stereotype. I lived in the US for 4 years when I was completing my doctoral studies and while I did find that American media tended to concentrate almost exclusively on events within American borders, I certainly could not group the many American friends I made into one identity category or suggest that I saw a pattern to their personalities; they were as diverse as my Canadian friends.

b. Is culture negotiable in classrooms?
"New student"

Incident. [Early Years, 1.] We have a new student going our classroom after spring break. He came to Canada 2 days ago from Vietnam. I am wondering how I will communicate with this boy. I have never had a student that spoke no English. I'm excited and unsure at the same time.

Teacher. Hi all, I feel the same way 1A - excited but unsure at the same time! I feel better now that I have found 2 other Vietnamese speaking children in the school to help us out when needed. I am also happy now that I have arranged for an older Vietnamese child to come along with us on the field trip on Tuesday. I can't imagine what Lahn will be thinking when we get ready to leave on our trip on Tuesday. I am worried that he will be very anxious and scared. I am hoping that Norma's presence will help. I have also spoken to Lahn's younger brother's teacher next door about making time for the 2 brothers to spend some time together in each other's classroom each day. I hope that this helps them to feel more comfortable at school. We'll see how it all goes next week!

Intercultural Resources

1. Recognizing and avoiding stereotyping literature

Many languages.

Incident. Yesterday in class, Jen sat down to read the students a chapter from the class novel *The Cricket in Times Square*. She read a part where a little boy named Mario has a conversation with a Chinese shop owner named Sai Fong. The text is written to articulate the man's Chinese accent. When Jen read this piece, one student in the class raised their hand and asked "Why does he talk so weird?" Jen posed a question back to the class. She asked "Does anyone have any idea why Sai Fong's words sound different?" Conversation was had around accents, and how people from around the world have different accents. Jen also asked the class if there was anyone who spoke more than one language at home. I knew there were a few students who did, but I saw many more hands go up than I expected. One student shared that her family also speaks Ukrainian at home. Another boy said his mom sometimes speaks to him in French. Another student said that at home her mom and dad speak Punjabi but that she doesn't know many words yet. She smiled and said they speak in Punjabi when they don't want her to know what they are talking about. After many students volunteered to talk about their other languages, one boy asked if anyone would be willing to teach him some words in their language.

Sponsoring teacher. Your question about the novel was a great one. I find you are very sensitive and thoughtful in all that you do. In reading this novel you were reading a book that I chose and you did not have any choice over. I have been wondering about the same thing and wanted to talk to you about the very book and parts you are referring to. I am careful about the novels I choose to read aloud to children. I have found that I can run into trouble when I choose older (dated) novels. *Little House On the Prairie*, a series of novels that my sisters and I adored and grew up reading, is dated and I find that I cannot read it to my class any more. A teacher I know said it beautifully when she said, "Ma's views of the 'injuns' would offend anyone!!" I do not remember being offended by those stories when I was young. Back then society accepted that and now I think we are all more aware, inclusive and sensitive these days (hopefully). Many of the novels that my children read (ages 21, 23, 25 now) and that were in their classrooms were a little gender stereotypical (Mom in the kitchen, Dad off to work with the briefcase.) They would not have had a steady diet of that because their dad and I were pretty familiar with what was on the market and choose for them. I grew up with *Dick and Jane*! When I heard someone reading *The Cricket in Times Square* aloud the other day I cringed. I have to say I did not feel that comfortable with the reading of the accent in the way it was written. Interesting that the children should pick up on that. I wonder why the author chose to write the dialogue of the character from China and speaking English with a Chinese accent like that. It was quite extreme! Would the story be any different if the characters words were written differently? I don't think so. Why did the reader have to know that the character was Chinese? Wouldn't we know that the character was Chinese if that was important when we heard about his cricket cage from China. It had been years since I read that book and I had known it was a wonderful story but had forgotten about the part we are referring to. I will put the novel away permanently after this reading. I just don't feel that comfortable with it. One positive thing is that there was some great dialogue around the man's accent with the students and that will only help everyone to be aware and sensitive.

2. Assessing the accuracy and authenticity of cultural resources?

African Song

Incident. In music the students are learning an African song (according to the teacher). One of my students is for Sierra Leone. She is adamant that the song is not African. When I asked how she knew, she just shrugged and said the words were not African. I showed her a map

of Africa and pointed out how big it was with many different cultures, but she still wasn't convinced. I'm going to ask the music teacher what language and where this song is from in Africa. The students are also doing a dance to the song. I wonder if it is actually African or just a dance step? I'm also going to ask the music teacher why she picked the song - to be inclusive? To introduce students to different kinds of music?

GRA. Sometimes our attempts to be culturally inclusive may cause offence. I would hope that that risk wouldn't deter a teacher from making the effort, but an incident like this can teach us humility. It's not unusual to have our best intentions go awry when dealing with cultural issues. I remember using a Thomas King story (an Aboriginal writer) in a classroom with many Aboriginal students. I thought the story did a great job of illustrating cultural pride and Aboriginal attachment to the land in a way that was sympathetic, respectful and gently humorous. The reaction of the students was surprising: Aboriginal and other students alike thought it was dumb to make a "big deal" about the traditional view of the land. They all thought that the person should just give in and do like everybody else. In fact, I got the sense that some of the Aboriginal students were embarrassed by the story and it left me feeling awkward.

Professor. I wonder if the girl from Sierra Leone was upset because the song was referred to as "an African song". Do you know if they had sung and danced to "a Swiss song" (or "a German song", "a Canadian song"...)?) And was the Swiss song in French, German or Italian? Could the teacher have said something to her before the class began or because it was announced as an African song is there a chance that some of the girl's friends or classmates asked if she knew the words and wondered why she didn't. This might explain her indifference when you showed her the map and mentioned the number of cultures represented. I hope she wasn't embarrassed being thought of as African when she might very well be Canadian by birth and prefer this.

Best practices.

- Be tentative about cultural claims if uncertain
- Be willing to appear uncertain about cultures in front of Ss
- Draw on Ss from those cultures as resources, but recognize their limitations as valid sources of cultural knowledge as well
- Careful about stereotyping or over-generalizing (e.g., Sierra Leone vs. "African")

3. Multicultural community reflected in resources

a. Minority learners & their families as intercultural / cultural resources

i. Building closer connections between home & school

“Return to India”

Incident. [Early Years, 2.] On Tuesday a boy who was in India for a month returned to our classroom. I was hoping that he would share some stories from his trip, but he hasn't....or at least I haven't heard them. He also seems more quiet since his return, and I'm wondering what both of your thoughts are on this.

Teacher. I have been hoping to hear his stories too! I think that it takes some time to get back into school life and into the language too. Now that Pal has had a week to settle in, I am going to ask him more about his trip (beyond the conversations about differences in the weather that we had last week). That might get him talking. I wondering if he will talk about India in sharing circle? I hope so.

ii. How “expert” can learners and their families be considered to be?

iii. Families as conduit to ethnic communities (as resource)

4. Popular Culture

“Reading levels.”

Incident. [Middle Years.] One of my Korean ESL students had to do a book report along with the rest of the class. She chose to do one of the Harry Potter books which is significantly harder than the last book she refused to do for a previous book report because the book was too difficult. I forget the name of the other book, but I thought it very interesting that she would not read the easier book for her first book report and then chose a much more difficult book for her second report. She also read her first book in Korean and then read an English version of Harry Potter.

My question is why? Why would this student choose the Harry Potter book? Perhaps she did not realize the book was so difficult or perhaps she is familiar with the Harry Potter movies and is very interested in them. Maybe this was a positive experience for her and she will advance her reading levels, but I wonder how much of it she really understood.

Teacher. Hi. This is a very interesting comment in that it focuses on a seemingly strange paradox. The motivation for this student may come from a number of sources. One possibility is that she wants to become deeply acquainted with the details of the new world she is in. She may also wish to demonstrate her English language skill level by reading a book that is very challenging. She may be overestimating her English language skills, because she is very motivated to achieve a personal goal she wants to achieve. From a multicultural standpoint, she is likely motivated by wanting to become proficient in the language very quickly, misjudging the difficulty of the task because of a lack of knowledge of the language subtleties, wishing to make a positive impression on significant others and/or responding to a normal human trait regarding an increased desire to succeed in the completion of a goal as she gets closer to achieving it. This is a very interesting situation, and I hope we will get a chance to talk about it more. You have picked up on the idiosyncrasy of this very well.

PI (Professor). I wanted to respond to this observation about the Korean student choosing to read Harry Potter. It raises a very interesting issue concerning the power of popular culture and the desire of ESL learners to participate in popular culture. Researchers have identified the lack of popular cultural knowledge as a major obstacle to student learning at the secondary level (e.g. Patricia Duff's study) and for adult learners as well (Norton, 2000). So it is not surprising to find that this student may have been significantly more motivated to read this challenging book because it is an icon of popular Western child and youth culture. Too often, culture is not taught explicitly to newcomer students, and if it is, often formal and/or high culture is emphasized.

Implementing Responsive / Responsible Change

1. Awareness of Power

a. Who gets to mimic whom?

“To stereotype, or not to stereotype?”

Incident. [Senior Years.] I observe an improv class at the end of every school day. Most of the students in this class are very outgoing. Theatre students usually carry a knack for being extraverted, whether or not extraverted students choose theatre, or the other way around, I couldn't say. One student in particular is very quiet. This student happens to be black. The class does a lot of work with character modification in terms of voice and action. In other words, when doing an improv, it assists the character to use an accent or change of voice. All of the students have attempted a variety of accents except for this one student. The only accent or voice alteration I have heard him exercise is that of stereotypical Ebonics or ghetto slang. When the student is using this character he is the MOST outgoing and the most confident.

GRA. Interesting class. I guess it just leaves me with lots of questions, not that you didn't describe the incident well. I guess what comes to mind is the effect of the media on students. I wonder how much acting method actually comes from watching other actors and for most students that might be on T.V. or in movies. Maybe this speaks to the characters this student has seen or characters he might relate to? I wonder how much this has to do with culture and how much this might have to do with teenage culture. I guess what I'm saying here is that "culture and ethnicity is important to our identity but it isn't everything" (Dr. Young said that to me) and I tend to agree. A lot of teen culture seems to be influenced by hip-hop culture and African American culture (it doesn't seem to matter who the teenager is, and it is visible in music, fashion and speech) I actually think that is really exciting in a way-I see hip hop, street fashion and even ebonics as a source of resistance and an "uprising" of sorts. It might be interesting to find out more about this student (in a non-judgemental and non-intrusive way).

Teachers. Very interesting observation . . .Just a few questions--how many white students adopt an Ebonic accent? Would the student feel uncomfortable taking on a white European accent? a Chinese or East Indian persona? Are these accents themselves stereotypical of particular ethnic groups? How would he be received doing, say, an Irish accent or a Cree accent? Is he unconsciously meeting the expectations he thinks other students have of him? You saw the Zimbabwean girl in the public speaking class. . . she would quit before she would act the stereotype in class--she's the only black and female. But I've seen her in the halls with her African friends--a very different personality and somewhat different speech patterns are displayed. Which is the real girl? Do you know the concept of "code-switching?"

Student. I have heard white students use Ebonics when there were no black students present. Accents seem to vary in appropriateness in accordance to English as a first language. British, Scottish, Irish, Australian, and even Indian are acceptable on the account they are English variations. The less appropriate accents include impersonations of nationalities with second language English...with the exception of French (it's a Canadian thing). I don't believe this student is attempting to perpetuate a stereotype. The black student is most likely acting in a fashion that he feels most comfortable. Unfortunately, Ebonics has negative connotations. The use of Ebonics is synonymous with low-class and crime. Maybe this student should try working on his British?

Professor (PI). Thanks for your rich reflections. I felt compelled to interject here (well after the fact) to build on a point GRA5&6 made. You say: "Ebonics has negative connotations. The use of Ebonics is synonymous with low-class and crime." You are of course referring to the conventional, adult middle-class view of Ebonics, and in many instances, the institutionalized

educational view of this and all English dialects. Yet, dialects can have very high dividends for a sense of identity, empowerment through resistance, and in-group confidence and belonging. Black American English is a case in point, especially within (though not limited to) the youth cultures of minority or Indigenous youth. In fact, far from being "synonymous with low-class and crime," it can be really COOL. Its position in Hip Hop and other types of pop music is reflective of this privileged status within youth culture.

Furthermore, as a GRA5&6 mentions, Ebonics has spread to the English of choice for many immigrant and minority cultures in the Americas. I recall being fascinated observing a large group of new Tibetan youth in Minneapolis at a Tibetan community event there. They were outside talking together in this dialect, dancing and listening to Hip Hop. This has been documented in various ethnic and Indigenous youth groups across North America. Even very privileged white youth adopt aspects of Black English or gestures, at least among some more creative or rebellious groups. For example, my friend lives at UBC and her 20 year-old white son, who hangs out with very wealthy youth from the Endowment Lands, uses this same dialect and associated gestures frequently with his peers, though I notice it is dissipating as he enters his 20s. Mind you, his mom is a single mother and they are not wealthy, so this may be in part a sign of his marginalization. Likewise, his "gang" is not typical of their more ambitious peers probably, so the use of the dialect may "brand" them as resisters as well.

Anyway, I conclude from these diverse examples that this dialect in fact has very high identity currency within select youth cultures that run across class and ethnic lines. Indeed, there is a palpable tension between what is "COOL" in popular youth culture and the cultural codes of belonging and legitimacy for upward mobility or acceptance in certain educational and occupational contexts. The difference between my friend's son and some kid in Harlem perhaps is that my friend's son has a choice with respect to which code to participate in (both linguistic and cultural) and can switch one or the other on and off when it is to his advantage. The recognition that the key is code awareness and the ability to code-switch has generated initiatives in San Francisco and elsewhere to make young African-American and other ethnic youth more aware of the two codes (including complex grammatical knowledge to recognize and differentiate them grammatically) so that they too can choose which dialect to turn on or off at will (Ebonics or Standard English). In the first case, the dialect has high identity value and, in the latter, high value for upward mobility (e.g., educational and occupational opportunities).

Walks with a swagger

Incident....Last week I witnessed something that truly shocked me. The class I was observing was composed of grade 10 students. Nationalities in the classroom were mixed. Mid-class, a student who happened to be black walked up to the teacher and waited for their attention. "What can I do for you homey?" exclaimed the teacher. The student didn't respond. The teacher repeated "how can I help you homey?" At this point the student requested a bathroom break. No one else in the class took any notice of this incident. Once the student had left the room the teacher turned to the class. They commented on how the student had a funny walk, and how he "kind of walked like a homey." The teacher then proceeded to imitate the student's walk. At this point I could not understand what I had witnessed. I am not sure if the teacher was making fun of this student because of his demeanor, or if he was making fun of a 'Black' student because of his stereotypical behavior.

Teacher. ...Shortly after I had begun working with ESL students in another school, I conducted a self-study exercise. I had to fill in a survey about my perceptions of the school, and commented (only after being assured that I could say whatever I wanted to--indeed, should say what I saw) that some teachers needed to adjust to the changing neighbourhood and become more sensitive to the ethnic diversity in their classrooms. The principal called me into his office and asked sternly, was I calling the school racist? Not consciously, I replied, but there's lots of work to be done. Your observation tells me that there's also a lot of work to be done in the school.

Professor. If this incident is as it appears, then we certainly know that this classroom (and we would have to believe that it is not an anomaly) is not a safe place for all students. Almost as striking as the teacher's words and actions is the silence from the students in the class. Do these Grade 10s feel as if they don't have the power to "talk back" to a teacher who conducts him or herself inappropriately? Would they "talk back" if a fellow student had engaged in such mockery of a classmate? Or do they simply not see or hear the harmfulness and seriousness of what this teacher has said and done? This last question makes me think of GRA 5&6 response to your previous incident and makes me wonder if the social practices we witness in the media and in pop culture with respect to race and culture are somehow desensitizing us to racist barbs. Have we come to see them as merely "kidding" - not-to-be-taken-seriously humour?"

I wonder if the student in your class felt the same way as I did? What conversations would he have had with his family that evening? What forums are there for students and their families to challenge what happens in high school, especially when families feel as if they are socially positioned lower on the power scale and don't want to "cause trouble"? From a power perspective, it sounds as if you too were not in a position to take action as a teacher candidate. I am guessing that if you had witnessed this kind of interaction between two students in the school hallway that you would have felt much more comfortable stepping in and addressing it.

Best practices.

- Recognize and acknowledge power as a factor in what is able to be said and who is able to speak it
- The need to protect those who speak up and to speak up for those who can't (e.g. talk back for the student and his family)
- Recognize the power dynamics playing out for teacher candidates on practicum
- Professors (universities) & web dialogues can lend a critical voice, space, and perspective to teachers and teacher candidates otherwise silenced in schools

b. Who is invisible? (not seen; not heard)

c. Individual (learner, teacher) vs. institutional agenda

Intercultural Teacher Education

Pre-service education

1. Candidate Selection

a. Experience with diverse cultures (home or abroad)

- intercultural awareness development (through contact)
- lack of familiarity breeds contempt (i.e., if they don't witness diverse classes, Ss deny they exist and hence don't believe they need skills.)
- need for education beyond mere contact

b. Rapidly changing demographics

- relative slow pace of recruitment processes & retirement make it difficult to develop teaching force to better reflect the community
- pre-service teachers from mono-cultural regions placed in non-diverse practicum schools can continue to be in denial

2. Teacher Preparation

a. Naming & framing “inter- / multi-culturalism”

- NOT about “political correctness” or teaching to the “lowest common denominator” (e.g., “Winter festival”)

b. Implications for Practicum

- Can we refer to expertise in intercultural teaching as we might refer to expertise in the teaching of physics?
- The most critical period for diverse classes is the first few weeks of school when the school community and culture are established (e.g., restitution programs); so, practica should include this period.
- Space needed for pre-service and in-service teacher to learn the language to talk about intercultural incidents, racism and to ask question
- Debriefing perceptions through reflections (need to make explicit or to name what is experienced, yet how free are they to make mistakes and learn—e.g., “you can't get into trouble here”)

3. Power & hierarchies

- Need to learn to negotiate power and hierarchies of schools/universities
- Individuals: pre-service candidate, sponsoring teacher, professor
- Institutions: community orgs-schools-universities

In-service education

- 1. Challenge of rapidly changing demographic**
 - Uncertainty (flexibility, tolerance for ambiguity)
 - Lack of knowledge or method (impossibility of method)
- 2. Identity challenge**
 - Shifting from teacher-centred, expert role can be anxiety producing
- 3. Language challenge**
 - Need language to talk about these things
 - Changing codes

Methodological Implications

- 1. Web-based**
 - Self-directed; dialogic
 - Equalizing
 - Semi-public (semi-private)
 - Surveillance or freedom (re: Foucault) in comparison to classroom
- 2. Inquiry-based**
 - Begins with real questions
 - Individual discovery & autonomy in learning
 - Inquiry into culture (teacher as ethnographer)
- 3. Grounded-theory (inductive)**
 - Need to develop theory on intercultural teaching
 - Need for key concepts
 - Need for every teacher to re-invent their own grounded-theory on the basis of their experience in unique classrooms (cultures)