

**Department of Educational Studies: Elementary and Early Childhood  
College of Education, Minnesota State University, Mankato**

**Report on Changes in Undergraduate Students' Orientation  
toward Cultural Differences as a Result of a Human Relations Course  
by Elizabeth J. Sandell, Associate Professor**

This report considers the impact of multicultural and diversity education in the curriculum for students in initial teacher licensure programs at Minnesota State Mankato. The report highlights the relationship between purposeful exposure to diverse cultures, guided reflections about the experience, and improved intercultural competency.

The EEC Department is interested in intercultural competency measured before and after undergraduate students participated in “intensive and intentional cross-cultural experiences” in southern Minnesota. In particular, the course, Human Relations in a Multicultural Society (EEC 222w) has been designed as the “intensive and intentional cross-cultural experience.” This is a general education course required of teacher candidates, but available to all students at Minnesota State Mankato. The course, Human Relations, was designed to respond to ten major goals for the program. Goals for this course included:

1. Increase understanding and appreciation of one’s own culture and background.
2. Identify and reflect on personal characteristics, qualities, and experiences with diversity and culture.
3. Reflect on personal pre-judgments about characteristics of other people.
4. Learn to accurately perceive and understand cultures and backgrounds of other persons.
5. Understand the value of multi-cultural and anti-bias education.
6. Know principles of developmentally appropriate cultural and anti-bias education.
7. Understand and reflect on the emotional impact of unfair practices.
8. Practice positive and respectful communications.
9. Create plans to stand up against discrimination.
10. Improve academic writing skills

The American Psychological Association (2003) has acknowledged that “The complexion of the United States is rapidly changing, with the projection that by 2020, one out of every three Americans will be a person of color.” The United States’ population is increasingly diverse racially, ethnically and culturally. According to the 2010 US census, one out of every four Americans is a person of color (United States Census, 2010). By 2020, one out of every three Americans will be a person of color. Since young individuals of American communities will soon make up the workforce in this country, it is incredibly important to educate them on the value of multicultural competency and living in a multicultural society. This is one way to enhance positive social perceptions and increase positive stereotypes among the population.

This review is based on the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) (Bennett, 2003). The DMIS (See Figure 1) describes six predictable stages through which persons move as their cultural competency increases. The first three stages constitute the ethnocentric category (*Denial, Defense, and Minimization*) and the last three stages compose the ethno-relativism category (*Acceptance, Adaptation, and Integration*).



sample items from the IDI. Based on the psychometric properties associated with this instrument, the authors suggest that it is useful for purposes of assessing training needs, identifying interventions aimed at increasing intercultural competence, assisting with the selection of personnel, and program evaluation.

Table 2: Sample items from the Intercultural Development Inventory

Developmental Stage		Sample Item
1	Denial	Society would be better off if culturally different groups kept to themselves.
2	Defense	People from other cultures are not as open-minded as people from my own culture.
3	Minimization	People are the same despite outward differences in appearance.
4	Acceptance	It is appropriate that people from other cultures do not necessarily have the same values and goals as people from my culture.
5	Adaptation	When I come in contact with people from a different culture, I find I change my behavior to adapt to theirs.

For the first in the series of studies, the instructor examined changes in the Developmental Orientation of undergraduate students. To find the IDI scores for each respondent, the IDI software, version 3, was used. This Microsoft Access add-on takes raw survey data and uses it to generate reports detailing individual and/or group results. All results were then exported to Microsoft Excel 2007. Data were analyzed using SPSS software. The instructors examined mean scores in various areas of the IDI to evaluate whether any significant indicators of growth were observed in intercultural competency.

According to the baseline assessments (Sandell, 2011), most of the undergraduates began the semesters in cultural orientations of Denial, Polarization, and Minimization. Students also began the semesters with low levels of Cultural Disengagement, meaning that they felt some lack of involvement in core aspects of being members of a cultural community. Students also reported lack of experience and knowledge about cultures other than their own, specifically the Dakota culture native to southern Minnesota and recent immigrants from Africa.

The instructor compared the mean test scores before (pre-test) and after (post-test) the students completed the course, EEC 222w. First, investigators examined the descriptive statistics for both variables during each semester (See Table 3).

Table 3: Paired Samples Statistics, Fall 2010, Spring 2011, and Fall 2011

Semester	N	Variable	Mean	SD	Std Error Mean
Fall 2010	50	Pre-test DO Scores	86.9034	14.47431	2.04698
		Post-test DO Scores	86.4334	14.45374	2.04407
Spring 2011	20	Pre-test DO Scores	92.8025	17.97906	4.02024
	20	Post-test DO Scores	89.8060	19.62346	4.38794
Fall 2011	68	Pre-test DO Scores	87.2454	15.25018	1.84936
		Post-test DO Scores	97.9431	17.58628	2.13265

According to Table 4, the Fall 2010 post-test mean scores were the same as those of the pre-test mean scores. The Spring 2011 post-test mean scores were the same as those of the pre-test mean scores. The Fall 2011 post-test mean scores were higher than the pre-test mean scores.

Next, instructor examined the results of the Paired Samples T Test. This test, compared the means of two variables. The Paired Samples T Test was used to compute the difference between the two variables for each case (or respondent) and to see if the average difference is statistically significantly different from zero. (See Table 4). Under "Paired Differences" heading, we see the descriptive statistics for the difference between the two variables. To the right of the "Paired Differences" heading, we see the T, degrees of freedom, and significance.

Table 4: Paired Samples Test, Fall 2010, Spring 2011, and Fall 2011

Sem		Paired Differences					t Value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Conf Interval				
					Lower	Upper			
Fall 2010	DO_PRE - DO_POST	.47000	13.82107	1.95459	-3.45791	4.39791	.240	49	.811
Spring 2011	DO_PRE - DO_POST	2.99650	13.32508	2.97958	-3.23958	9.23283	1.006	19	.327
Fall 2011	DO_PRE - DO_POST	-10.69765	17.86206	2.16609	-15.02119	-6.37411	-4.939	67	.000

For Fall 2010, the significance value was greater than .05; therefore, there was no significant difference between the means when comparing the Developmental Orientation of the pre-instruction group and the post-instruction group. For Spring 2011, the significance value was greater than .05; therefore, there was no significant difference between the means when comparing the Developmental Orientation of the pre-instruction group and the post-instruction group. For Fall 2011, the significance value was less than .05; therefore, there was a significant difference between the means when comparing the Developmental Orientation of the pre-instruction group and the post-instruction group.

The research question was: What changes occur in undergraduate students' cultural competency after participating in an intentional, multicultural relations experience (EEC 222w)? Statistical analysis showed no significant difference between the means when comparing the Developmental Orientation of the pre-instruction group and the post-instruction group for students in the course during Fall 2010 and Spring 2011. However, students in the course during Fall 2011 (with curriculum revisions) had statistically significant higher post-instruction mean Developmental Orientation scores than pre-instruction mean scores. The instructional revisions appear to have helped students improve their Developmental Orientation scores.

In future phases of this research, the instructor will analyze pre-instruction and post-instruction results for participants in order to examine:

- (1) Strategies for improving intercultural competency that are specifically tailored to specific student populations.

- (2) Strategies for assessing intercultural competency that are specifically tailored to specific student populations, for example.
- (3) Comparison of results for students with academic majors in Education compared to students with academic majors in other fields.
- (4) Comparison of results for students in various levels of their university studies (first-year, second-year, graduate, etc.).
- (5) Comparison of qualitative data (as interpreted from student reflection papers) with quantitative data.

### Resources

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