From Research to Action
BALL STATE UNIVERSITY

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THE MORE THE OBSTACLES FALL BETWEEN US: AN INTERACTIVE, MULTI-MEDIA PERFORMANCE TO DEVELOP EMPATHY AND PROMPT ACTION
The Diversity Research Symposium (DRS) is an outgrowth of the concept of multicultural education (MCE). The efforts that have led to the continued development of MCE has been long and arduous, and space in this introduction does not allow for a full retracing of those difficulties. However, presented in this introduction is a sketch of those sequences that have led to this important symposium and research recaptured in this e-Book. In short, MCE is a natural out-growth of the philosophy of the founding principles of the United States of America, individual freedom and equality.

Although the pathway to equality and equity in the United States of America has a plethora of stories describing human injustices towards the descendants of men and women of color and others, the country was founded on the principles of equality and equity. Education was believed then, as it is today, to be the building blocks needed by its citizens to take full advantage of American culture, which is symbolized in the description of America as “The Country of Dreams.” While there are many defining moments in the development of the United States with regard to equality, perhaps, the two most important defining moments in education are the U.S. Supreme Court decisions of Plessy vs. Ferguson in 1892, and the Brown decision of 1952. For well over a half-century, the foundation of American education was built on the principle of Separate-But-Equal, which emanated from the Plessy decision. The practice of segregation in all aspects of the American culture was followed, to varying degrees, in all of the U.S. states. The most glaring practice was in education, the bedrock for obtaining the knowledge and skills necessary for full participation in American society. The impact of this decision on the development of all Americans lasted for well over two generations. In 1958, the first school district to try to desegregate its schools was in Little Rock Arkansas. For the next decade, the country was in constant turmoil over the desegregation of schools in particularly and the entire society in general.

During this tumultuous time, the begrudging process of desegregation continued. Forced bussing placed minority students into many classrooms of previously all white schools. Before school desegregation there was a mistaken belief on the part of many white educators, as well as those of color, that in order for minority students to achieve, all that was needed was to put them in the same classrooms with white students. However, once students were together it became obvious that the school atmosphere including instruction and curriculum would have to change. As a consequence of this realization, in the 1970's, schools were introduced to the concept of MCE. While the concept sounded good, educators were grappling with defining and explaining MCE because at that time, there was no model to follow. There was only the conceptualization of a very few educators who were trying to define the field. Since
education symbolizes the American culture, the broad goal of MCE was to create a type of education that would assist all youngsters in getting the knowledge and skills necessary for full participation in American society. However, early multicultural education consisted of historical stories of practices of prejudices and racism by whites towards minorities. Sexism and classism were introduced later while sexual orientation and gender identity are relatively recent inclusions. In the early days of MCE African-Americans were most often presented in these stories. Many of the stories were presented with much emotion, and did cause many schools to make changes in some school practices. As valuable as these historical stories were, it soon became obvious that by simply putting minority students in classrooms with white students was not enough. Educators became acutely aware that in order for minority students to achieve at the same level as whites, teachers would have to be trained in working with students of different cultures. With this realization, educators began to turn to research to find the best practices for diverse schools.

Before attempts of desegregating schools were begun in the 1960s, our existing schools were teaching citizens how to live in a segregated society. They were not being taught to love and to care for one another. Through the school curriculum and the disparity of school facilities, white students were taught, even if unintentionally, to devalue and disrespect the contributions of minorities and women in the development of the U.S. The curriculum was strictly Eurocentric and white male dominated whereby minorities learned nothing about themselves or the contributions of their ancestors. The goal of MCE was to teach students how to live together in a desegregated society where all students would learn to have respect for one another and develop self-dignity.

Even when teaching students from the same culture, the act of teaching is difficult, complex, and frequently punctuated by many layers of complications. The simple differences of age and social class can be critical factors in successfully teaching someone else. When classrooms consist of students from two or three difference cultures, different social classes, and different dialects and languages, it becomes much more of a challenge for any teacher. When racism and prejudice become entangled with these factors, the difficulties in the teaching and learning process are magnified.

The test of time for any educational philosophy such MCE is the academic achievement of all students. While our society is beginning to reap many positive gains as a result of MCE, the academic achievement of some groups has not been realized. For example, positive gains have been made in the areas of athletics, business leadership, entertainment and politics; however, the ultimate test of high achievement for a significant number of minorities – African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Native Americans, and poor whites – is falling short of the promise of MCE. Once again educators have turned to research in the areas of cross-cultural teaching in search of empirical evidence to support best practices for schools in a multicultural society.
As will be seen in the chapters of this book, MCE has developed considerably from the lessons of ethnic stories, and the focus primarily on African-Americans. As the chapters in this book will show, MCE has become an interdisciplinary field and has a focus on many different sub-groups. Taken together the chapters in this book offers a glimpse into the complicated and interwoven nature of ideas in MCE.
LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

We are very excited to share with you our Diversity Research Symposium (DRS) eBook. The DRS is unique in that it provides an opportunity for people from all academic disciplines to discuss their work on cultural diversity. While the eBook includes work presented at the symposium, it represents the culmination of six years of exchanges about cultural diversity issues among faculty, staff, students, and community members from over 30 universities and organizations and more than 10 U.S. states, representing over 30 academic sub-disciplines.

These eBook chapters have gone through a rigorous peer-review process. A committee of 13 members from diverse disciplines conducted a blind review of 100 submitted proposals. The committee invited only 39 of these proposals to be presented at the 2015DRS. The editors invited the authors of 29 of the presented projects to submit a chapter for publication consideration. At least four scholars from different disciplines reviewed each of the submitted chapter manuscripts. Inclusion of the chapters in the eBook occurs only if the majority or all of the reviewers recommended acceptance and if the authors sufficiently revised and/or addressed concerns shared by the reviewers.

We were impressed by the commitment and contributions made by these authors and hope that these chapters will inspire your work with cultural diversity issues.

Sincerely,

Linh Nguyen Littleford, Ph.D.

Charlene Alexander, Ph.D.
HISTORY OF THE DIVERSITY RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

The Diversity Research Symposium was co-founded in 2009 by Linh Nguyen Littleford (Associate Professor in the Department of Psychological Science) and Charles R. Payne (Assistant Provost for Diversity, Emeritus; Director of the Office of Institutional Diversity, Emeritus; and Professor of Secondary Education, Emeritus), both at Ball State University. The DRS aims to 1) provide an educational environment in which faculty, staff, community members, and students from all disciplines who are interested in cultural diversity issues can learn, interact, share ideas, and network with one another; and 2) encourage members of academic institutions to infuse cultural diversity issues into their research, curricula, and professional development.

Organizing and hosting responsibilities are rotated every year among three universities (Ball State University, Indiana State University, and Indiana University Southeast). In selecting the symposium’s theme, keynote speakers, and activities, the organizers highlight the diversity-related values and objectives at their respective institutions while achieving the goals of the DRS.

Themes of past symposia are as follows:

2015 Diversity Research Symposium: Community: Embracing All Identities. Hosted by Indiana State University.


2013 Teaching & Research Symposium: Diversity & Inclusivity. Hosted by Indiana University Southeast.


2010 DRS: Diversity Research and Teaching Symposium. Hosted by Indiana State University.

2009 DRS: Diversity Research and Writing Across Disciplines. Hosted by Ball State University.
Acknowledgments

The editors acknowledge and thank the contributing authors who worked diligently to produce the chapters included in this eBook that we believe capture the essence of the Diversity Research Symposium. These authors are to be commended for their patience and dedication to the production of this eBook, with our varied hectic schedules and responsibilities patience was key and we appreciate their commitment to the work of Diversity. We look forward to expanding these contributions in the months ahead. We also would like to acknowledge the hard work and constructive feedback of the following reviewers: Dr. Terri Teal Bucci (Ohio State University), Dr. Sharon Fraser-Burgess (Ball State University); Dr. Theodore Chao (Ohio State University), Dr. Holly Davis (Ohio State University), Dr. Ling He (Miami University), Dr. Jungrnam Kim (Ball State University), Dr. Katherine H. Lee (Indiana State University), Dr. Sylvia Martinez (Indiana University), Dr. Renae Mayes (Ball State University), Dr. Charles Payne (Ball State University); Dr. Connie Titone (Villanova University), and Dr. Robert Willey (Ball State University).

We would especially like to thank Dr. Charles Payne for his many years of service and dedication to diversity efforts at Ball State University. This symposium is a result of his willingness to entertain one faculty member’s (Littleford’s) musing, “Wouldn’t it be great if we organized something where people from different disciplines who do diversity work could get together to learn, interact, network, and support each other?” Without Charles’ unwavering support and commitment, the symposium would not exist, and for this we are especially grateful. We are also especially pleased to have partners like Indiana University South East and Indiana State University.

Thanks go the Ball State Digital Corps for their creativity and expertise in designing and layout of this eBook and to the many faculty and administrators who have supported us financially and emotionally throughout this process. Thanks to Elizabeth Palmer for designing our logo and Amer Khubrani for providing us with the photographs. Thanks also go to the unsung heroes who champion diversity initiatives in Higher Education, our students who demonstrate every day by their caring of others, and advance the work we hope to see come to fruition. Finally, we would like to thank each of you, who in reading this eBook, demonstrate your commitment to improving the lives of those less fortunate and those who have suffered oppression in one way or another, in this multicultural society we live in.

Thank you.

Linh Nguyen Littleford, Ph.D.

Charlene Alexander, Ph.D.
Sponsors

WE THANK THE FOLLOWING SPONSORS FOR THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT

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College of Communication, Information, & Media

College of Sciences and Humanities

Department of Computer Science
Conference Highlights
YOUR LIFE. YOUR STORY.
LATINO YOUTH SUMMIT:

BUILDING LATINO ADOLESCENT RESILIENCE THROUGH A SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY-ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIP

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By expressing who we are, we define ourselves, call ourselves into being

(Cambridge, 2010)

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Abstract

Developing successful relationships between academia and community can be difficult. Investigators who want to work with community organizations often do not know where to start, or how to carry them out well. However, successful collaborations can speed up the transition from research to practice, and bring interventions to communities more effectively. We present the development of a successful partnership and the consequent intervention program, Your Life. Your Story., a yearlong resiliency-building intervention for Latino youth at risk for depression. We present the exploratory study where our relationship began, as well as the preliminary findings that led to the design of our intervention. We then present the detailed components of the resiliency-building, emotional expression, coping and social support intervention. We also present preliminary qualitative and quantitative results and show the yearlong intervention plan. Throughout, we show, in sections in italics, how the partnership guaranteed that the study and intervention would succeed.

Chapter Keywords: Latino, acculturation, resilience, self-mastery, acculturative stress, depression, immigrants, adolescents, youth
PHASE 1 – PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND EXPLORATORY STUDY

INTRODUCTION

Community based participatory research (CBPR) “equitably involves all partners . . . with a research topic of importance to the community with the aim of combining knowledge and action for social change to improve community health and eliminate health disparities” (Wallerstein & Duran, 2010). The first step for a successful CBPR collaboration therefore is a problem that is amenable to research and of interest to both parties. In our case, the problem was Latino adolescent depression and suicide.

A 2010 report prepared for the Indiana Minority Health Coalition, based on Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) data, identified a number of mental health indicators for which there are clear disparities in the Latino population of the state (Weathers, Zollinger & Kochhar, 2010). Of particular concern were the disparities noted among Indiana’s Latino youth: a 65% higher rate of suicide attempts and a 24% higher rate of depression (sadness or hopelessness that impeded usual activities) was reported among Indiana’s Latino high-school students in comparison to their non-Hispanic White peers (2005-2009). These disparities appeared to be sustained in the 2011 Indiana Youth Risk Behavior Survey, with a higher percentage of Latino youth reporting a suicide attempt and depressive symptoms than their non-Hispanic white peers (11.6% vs. 9.8% and 31.5 vs. 28.4% respectively).

This disparity was of grave concern to both the community and the academic partner. Mental health impacts the daily life of adolescents in regards to school performance, behavior, and overall personal functioning (Thapar, Collishaw, Phine, & Thapar, 2012). In addition to immediate effects and concerns, depression can have long-term effects over the life-course of adolescents by affecting school success, social development, and life opportunities (Wilson, Hicks, Foster, McGue, & Iacono, 2015). Given the rapid growth of the Latino population in Indiana, it was particularly important that we gain a greater understanding of the root causes of these mental health disparities among Latino youth so that we could identify effective ways to intervene and promote life-long health and wellbeing.

One factor contributing uniquely to the mental health of Latino youth is their immigrant heritage. Prior research has shown that there is a type of stress experienced by immigrants as they adjust between their native cultural values and customs and the new culture that surrounds them (Born, 1970). This is called acculturative stress. We theorized that acculturative stress is contributing to poor mental health outcomes, such as the higher rate of depression and suicide. By assessing acculturative stress in Latino adolescents who live in the Indianapolis area and correlating it to their mental health, we sought a better understanding of this relationship.
The Social, Attitudinal, Familial, and Environmental (SAFE) Acculturative Stress Scale is the most frequently used measure to investigate acculturation and stress levels in young immigrants. Findings with this measure suggested that “late immigrant students” (immigrating post age 12) suffered from acculturative stress more than “early immigrants” (pre age 12), and second- or third-generation students (Mena, Padilla & Maldonado, 1987), a finding corroborated by others (Thoman & Suris, 2004). Acculturative stress is a significant predictor of quality of life (Thoman & Suris, 2004). Most work examining acculturative stress has focused on its relation to deviant behavior (Epstein et al., 2003; Neieri et al., 2005; Segura et al., 2005; and McQueen et al., 2003) rather than mental health outcomes; thus, leaving the topic at hand open for more exploration by our team.

At this point, the academic partner approached the Indiana Minority Health Coalition, a potential funding source that required a Community partner for funding. The Coalition recommended a Latino-serving community organization we had not worked with in the past. We set up a meeting and explained our concerns and thoughts about acculturative stress. Our Community Partner shared our concerns, and agreed that the stress of acculturation could be a potential factor. From that day forward, all discussions of what to do and how to do it were in meetings with the Community Partner, the Latino Health Organization (LHO). It was in these meetings that we mutually developed our research questions about acculturative stress and depression in Latino adolescents. LHO shared their practical and interpersonal experiences with the community. Our own search of the literature found support for what LHO was stating and identified the term (acculturative stress) for the phenomenon that LHO was describing. As a result, our final theoretical model was constructed (see Figure 1).

Specifically, we theorized that there are other factors mediating the relationship between acculturative stress and mental health outcomes - in other words, factors that make it more or less likely for Latino youth who are experiencing acculturative stress to develop depression or attempt suicide. Potential protective factors against acculturative stress, or its impact, include intrapersonal and interpersonal factors (Hovey & King, 1996; Mena, Padilla & Maldonado, 1987). These potential mediators included Peer Support, Family Support, Self-Mastery, and Perceived Discrimination.

Therefore, in the exploratory study we examined a sense of self-mastery, as well as social support and family functioning. Adolescents who experience self-mastery are more likely to see stressors as temporary events that they will be able to overcome. Peer social support, especially in the adolescent years, is instrumental to mental health (Colarossi & Eccles, 2003). A well-functioning family will not only protect against stress, but may be less likely to contribute to stress, especially acculturative stress which often requires the individual to ‘let go’ of cultural behaviors or beliefs in order to fit into the new culture (Hovey & King, 1996). Importantly, all of these potential mediators are amenable to change through intervention programs.
Perceived discrimination, on the other hand, may compound the acculturative stress. A recent systematic review found that mental health outcomes were the most commonly associated with discrimination (Priest, Paradies, Trenerry, Truong, Karlsen, & Kelly, 2013). We expected that acculturative stress could be associated with higher perceptions of discrimination leading to worse mental health outcomes.

As is common when examining stress and resources, the relationships among variables are often reciprocal, even transactional. For example, perceived discrimination or poor peer support may cause an individual to experience acculturative stress. However, we focus on the model as presented below because it fits with what our Community Partner observes on a daily basis, and with our goals to identify potential interventions to decrease negative mental health outcomes.

Figure 1 below provides a graphic representation of the hypothesized relationships among these variables.

Figure 1. Conceptual model of hypothesized relationships among variables
OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the exploratory study was to develop a better understanding of the relationship between acculturative stress and mental health outcomes of Hispanic adolescents living in the Indianapolis area, as well as potential mediators of this relationship. This greater understanding would inform the design of interventions aimed at improving outcomes in this group and thereby reducing the disparities observed. The specific aims of this study were: 1) to identify levels of acculturative stress, 2) to identify sources of acculturative stress, 3) to assess whether acculturative stress is a predictor of mental health, 4) to assess whether peer support, family cohesion, perceived discrimination, and self-mastery mediate the relationship between acculturative stress and mental health outcomes among Latino adolescents in the Indianapolis area.

METHOD

The Indiana Minority Health Coalition's State Master Research Plan funded the study from November 2012 to June 2013. Completion of the study was made possible by drawing on the strengths and resources of each partner. The Community Partner facilitated recruitment, data collection, and understanding of the data; the academic partner led the decisions regarding design, obtained IRB approval, and conducted the quantitative data analyses. Both partners were present and active during data collection.

Design

The study employed a mixed-methods research design. Quantitative data were obtained from adolescent participants via several survey instruments (see Table 1 for instruments utilized), and complementary qualitative data were collected from parents during focus group sessions. These adolescent and parent data collection sessions were held simultaneously for ease and efficiency, given the need for parents to transport their children and consent to their participation. While our primary interest was in the adolescent assessments, we believed the qualitative data from parents would enrich our overall findings.

Participant Recruitment

Following IRB approval obtained by the academic partner, LHO initiated recruitment from among the community it serves. Latino adolescents and their parent(s) living in the Indianapolis metropolitan area were eligible to participate. Phone calls were made and/or letters were sent to LHO client families with adolescent children to see if they would have interest in participating. The Community Partner also sent flyers and letters to community centers or churches where they have pre-existing ties and approval. Based upon responses of interested families, eight study sessions were planned and held in community locations. Each session lasted 60-90 minutes.
Study Procedures

Adolescents
No identifying information was collected from any participant, primarily to encourage adolescents to answer honestly without worry that their parents may discover how they answered. The researchers offered to each adolescent participant 1) written surveys in English or Spanish, whichever they preferred, or 2) the option to have the survey questions read aloud (privately) in the case that there were any participants who had trouble reading or writing.

Parents
At the same time the adolescents were completing their questionnaires, parents participated in a focus group session with the leaders from LHO (VD) and the academic partner (SB). No identifying information or demographics were collected from parents. Members of the group were asked a variety of questions to explore their perspectives on the overall study theme of stress and sadness among Latino adolescents. Parents were asked to think of adolescents in general, including their own children and their children’s friends. See the Appendix for a listing of the questions.

The sessions lasted about 45-60 minutes. Parents were also told that they could stop participation at any time if they felt uncomfortable. With participants' consent, the discussions were audio-recorded for subsequent transcription by LHO. Upon conclusion of each focus group, each parent received a $10 gift card as token for participation.

Table 1. Instruments Completed by Adolescents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acculturative Stress</td>
<td>SAFE Scale (Mena, Padilla &amp; Maldonado, 1987)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24-item, Likert-scale responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Example: “Loosening the ties with my country is difficult”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Support</td>
<td>CASSS (Malecki, Demaray, Elliot &amp; Nolten, 1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50-item, Likert-scale responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Example: “My close friend helps me when I need it”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mastery</td>
<td>Self-Mastery Scale (Pearlin &amp; Schooler, 1978)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>7-item, Likert-scale responses</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Example: “I have little control over the things that happen to me”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Cohesion</th>
<th>Family APGAR (Smilkstein, 1978)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>5-item, Likert-scale responses</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Example: “I am satisfied with the way my family and I share time together”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived Discrimination</th>
<th>Perceived Discrimination Measure (Whitbeck et al, 2010)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>10-item, Likert-scale responses</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Example: “How often has the police hassled you because you are Hispanic?”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Depression | PHQ-9 (Kroenke & Spitzer, 2001). Has cutoffs for levels of depression as categorized in results section. |

**DATA MANAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS**

After each collection session, surveys were taken back to the academic team’s office where the results were securely entered into statistical software (*IBM® SPSS®* Statistics 20.0). Audiotaped focus group discussions were transcribed by the Community Partner, then analyzed by both academic and community study staff for key themes. Cross-comparisons of focus group results for consistency with findings from adolescent surveys were completed as well.

**RESULTS**

**Enrollment**

Our target enrollment for the study was 60 adolescents and 60 parents. In the four months between January and April 2013, 86 adolescents and 103 parents participated in the study.

**Demographics**

Demographics were not collected from parents who participated in focus groups, though we estimate that nearly two-thirds of participants were mothers. Among the adolescents, there was nearly an even representation of males and females, as well as younger (age 12-15) vs. older (16-19) adolescents. The majority of adolescents chose to complete the survey in English (90.7%) and reported that they spoke English with their friends (86.0%). In contrast, the majority (95.3%) reported speaking Spanish with
family. About two-thirds of these adolescents (62.8%) were immigrants themselves, having been born outside the United States. About one-third (33.7%) were born in the U.S., but their parents were born outside the United States. Only 3 participants (3.5%) were second-generation immigrants, with their parents and themselves both born in the United States. About two-thirds of the adolescent participants (62.8%) reported having all or mostly Hispanic/Latino friends, with about one-third (37.2%) reporting having all or mostly non-Hispanic/Latino friends.

**Main Findings**

Table 2 below shows descriptive statistics for all our study variables.

Our first study objective was to identify levels of acculturative stress in our study sample of Latino adolescents. Scores had a median score of 26.5 and a mode of 26. Mean SAFE scores when categorized into quartiles were: Q1 (n = 22): Mean = 14 (SD = 4.74); Q2 (n = 21): Mean = 23.9 (SD = 1.90); Q3 (n = 21): Mean = 33.43 (SD = 4.85); Q4 (n = 22): Mean = 58.91 (SD = 11.18)

**Table 2. Descriptives for Study Variables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
<th>Min-Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>6.6 (5.79)</td>
<td>0-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acculturative Stress</td>
<td>32.65 (18.18)</td>
<td>2-80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Mastery</td>
<td>25.6 (5.17)</td>
<td>14-35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Support</td>
<td>125.94 (24.93)</td>
<td>60-183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Cohesion</td>
<td>7.44 (2.73)</td>
<td>0-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Discrimination</td>
<td>14.48 (4.55)</td>
<td>10-34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second objective of the study was to identify sources of acculturative stress (intrapersonal and interpersonal). Both parent focus groups and various survey data were taken into account to identify these sources. We found a number of possible sources including social support, family cohesion, self-mastery, and perceived discrimination, that we investigate further below. Thematic analysis of the qualitative focus group data suggests that parents might perpetuate acculturation issues because of the cultural divide that exists between themselves and their children. They worry that if they encourage their children to fully accept and assimilate with American customs and values that they will lose their previous heritage and identity. The statement below exemplified a recurrent theme expressed by parents:
“...But she has our culture. So I have always told her that she has to embrace her culture. That she has Hispanic parents, that she looks Hispanic, that she does not look American, so she has to know that it is her culture, it is her roots and that she should not forget that.”

The third objective of the study was to investigate whether acculturative stress was related to depression as measured by the PHQ-9. The PHQ-9 is a brief and reliable depression screener that allows for estimation of means (6.6 in our sample) and standard deviation (5.8 in our sample) as well as categorization into none, mild, moderate or severe depression. Figure 2 below shows 58.2% of these adolescents experiencing minor (47.7%) or major (10.5%) depression.

Correlations between acculturative stress and depression were strong ($r = .61$, $p < .001$), showing that higher depression scores were related to higher acculturative stress scores.

The final aim of the study was to investigate possible mediators of the relationship between acculturative stress and depression, such as social support, family cohesion, self-mastery, and perceived discrimination. Correlation analyses showed that all these variables correlated significantly with acculturative stress and depression.
Table 3. Correlations of Acculturative Stress and Depression with Possible Mediators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Social Support</th>
<th>Family Cohesion</th>
<th>Self-Mastery</th>
<th>Discrimination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acculturative Stress</td>
<td>-.238*</td>
<td>-.300**</td>
<td>-.57**</td>
<td>.38**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>-.381**</td>
<td>-.38**</td>
<td>-.51**</td>
<td>.24*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mediation analyses using Hayes’ INDIRECT Macro showed that only self-mastery mediated the relationship between acculturative stress and depression (p < .001; see figure below).

Figure 3. Mediation Analyses

Focus Group Results

Within each parental focus group, several key themes were consistently noted: 1) worrying about their adolescents in regards to depression and stress (“They do not want to talk, so no one can tell that something is going on, whether it be in school, with friends, at home.”); 2) feeling unprepared and unsure of how to address these issues with their adolescents (“...I do not have any other family here to help me take care of them or to give me advice on how to help them. This is difficult for me.”); 3) expressing concern that if their adolescent assimilated within American culture that they will lose their heritage and identity (....“she has Hispanic parents, that she looks Hispanic, that she does not look American, so she has to know that it is her culture, it is her roots and that she should not forget that.”); and 4) expressing a lack of access to necessary mental health care (“There are support centers but those are not accessible.... sometimes our income is not enough to send our teens to a good psychologist or support group.”).


**Discussion**

Very low to moderate levels of acculturative stress were reported by adolescent participants based upon the SAFE scale; none reported high levels despite the fact that more than half are immigrants themselves, born outside the United States. However, acculturative stress was significantly associated with depression in our adolescent participants.

While the levels of acculturative stress were lower than anticipated, the prevalence of depression reported by these Latino adolescents was higher than expected at nearly 60% (10.5% classified as major depression). This is concerning, and clearly exceeds national averages for all adolescents. According to the National Institutes of Mental Health (2013), approximately 11% of adolescents (across all ethnicity/race) have depression. The most recent YRBS data from 2011 suggests that 32.6% of Indiana Latino adolescents reported feeling sadness or hopelessness that impeded their usual activities. While our study data are not completely comparable to these general national averages and YRBS data, our findings suggest that depression (quite possibly related to acculturative stress) is a significant problem that Latino adolescents around the Indianapolis area are facing. Depression may, in fact, be more prevalent among Indiana's Latino adolescents than previously thought. Given both the serious immediate impact of depression and the long-term effects on an adolescent's future quality of life, we determined that culturally sensitive interventions were needed. Parent focus groups substantiated the need for clearer guidance on how they may help their children manage stress and sadness, both by way of family support and access to mental health services.

**Phase 1 Limitations**

While we view this study as a success overall, there were some limitations. In terms of recruitment, we recruited Latinos who were either attending a church or seeking services at a community organization and thus were somewhat integrated into a community and interested in the topic of the study. Therefore, our sample may not have been representative of the general population, like the YRBS. On the other hand, it likely represented the population that would be interested in interventions offered through the Community Partner. Additionally, the survey packet we created was quite extensive. Given the length of time it took to complete, it is possible that some participants may have lost interest or focus while completing the packet. In anticipation of this concern, the measures most relevant to the main research question, and the ones reported here, were included early in the packet. Therefore, the findings reported here are not likely affected by participant burden.
Conclusions and Next Steps

Through this funding opportunity, we had a successful experience and created a strong community-academic partnership. Together we brought our strengths to one synergistic and collaborative project and investigated a shared concern. Our success in this exploratory project demonstrated our ability to work together on a common goal and motivated us to build on this exploratory study and design an intervention that targets the issues these Latino adolescents are facing in regards to acculturation and dealing with that stress, as an attempt to prevent depression.

PHASE 2: INTERVENTION DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING

YOUR LIFE. YOUR STORY. LATINO YOUTH SUMMIT

The conceptualization, development, and planning of the intervention was also a joint project that built on the strengths and resources of each partner. Each ‘we’ statement listed below reflects a true and
whole collaboration among the team, all the academic partner members and the Community Partner. It was important that the intervention reflect the larger Latino culture but also the smaller subculture of Latinos in Metropolitan Indianapolis, where the Community Partner served.

We planned a multicomponent intervention, consisting of an initial weeklong summer camp, followed by monthly booster sessions aimed at increasing resilience as a protective factor against depression. Resilience, or the ability to bounce back and even thrive when faced with adversity (Richardson, 2002), is a result of certain “qualities of individuals and support systems that predict social and personal success” (Richardson, 2002, p. 308). These qualities are identified in the Positive Youth Development Framework (PYD), which guided our work. We developed an intervention to provide adolescent Latinos the opportunity to increase resilience by increasing competence, confidence, connection, character, caring, community, and citizenship with the aim to decrease the rates of suicide and depression.

**RATIONALE FOR INTERVENTION CHARACTERISTICS**

A meta-analysis of interventions to prevent depression in adolescents found that in general these are effective, with 41% of the 32 programs evaluated producing effects (Stice et al., 2009). The most successful interventions were identified by design and participant characteristics. In terms of design, shorter interventions, with homework, and administered by professionals fared best. In terms of participants, those that recruited high-risk, female, and older adolescents fared best. Our planned intervention would consist of a short, intensive weeklong summer day program with monthly follow up booster sessions for one year. The program would be administered by professionals and target 14 to 17 year old adolescents.
Resilience protects against depression and promotes positive youth development in general (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005); in our preliminary work, self-mastery, a component of resilience (similar to Competence + Confidence) was found to predict acculturative stress and through acculturative stress, depression, and therefore is a good focus for our intervention. Resilience has been found to moderate depression in at-risk groups, such as individuals exposed to childhood abuse (Campbell-Sills et al., 2005; Wingo et al. 2010). Resilience is not a one-dimensional construct; instead, it consists of a number of protective factors and qualities. Different researchers and theorist identify different factors related to resilience, although they all fit within the PYD framework. For example, Herrman et al. (2011) identify intrapersonal factors (such as locus of control, self-mastery, cognitive appraisals), interpersonal factors (such as relationships with family and friends) and system factors (such as good schools and community services), and Reivich et al. (2013) identified emotion regulation, impulse control, causal analysis, realistic optimism, self-efficacy, empathy, and reaching out. The Positive Youth Development Framework (see figure above) includes these interpersonal factors under the 7Cs and is the framework that guides the present study. Our program would focus on developing these intrapersonal factors or qualities through WhyTry and the Choice Activities, and interpersonal factors or qualities through the development of peer and mentor relations.

Our program was designed with a focus on children of immigrants, who may or may not have been born in the U.S., and may be those most likely to experience acculturative stress. The Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study, which began in 1992 and has followed their large sample to young adulthood (Portes & Rumbaut, 2007) shows that children of low SES immigrant parents struggle with prejudice and discrimination and adjusting to the new culture while maintaining their own language and values (Portes & Rivas, 2011), what we refer to as acculturative stress. These findings match our own from our exploratory study described above. Importantly, these struggles may limit their opportunities for upward mobility (Portes & Rivas, 2011). Using the same Longitudinal Study data, Haller et al. (2011) found problematic advancement among Mexican American second-generation individuals who, like our own target youth, come from low socioeconomic status and parents who struggle with acculturation. Haller et al. (2011) conclude that if the second generation does not succeed in upward mobility, it is not likely to happen to subsequent generations either. Alba et al. (2011) present a more optimistic view. They conclude that the English fluency, higher educational attainment than their parents, and better jobs of second generation Mexican Americans are all indicators of success, especially when compared to the general white population, albeit not compared to other immigrant groups, such as Asians. Both Haller et al. (2013) and Portes and Rivas (2011) recommend programs specifically for children of low SES non-white immigrants to increase their potential for success. Areas of focus include self-identity and self-esteem to improve school completion (and in our estimation reduce acculturative stress). Our Choice Activities, explained below, would help participants develop, or further develop their self-identity
(competence/confidence) through telling the story of who they are. According to Zimmerman et al. (2013), racial/ethnic identity can be an asset if individuals are able to assign positive significance and meaning to their self. This identity protects them against stereotyping and prejudice, and helps them succeed in straddling two cultures.

Our rationale for creating a summer immersive experience for resilience building was based on evidence of the success of these programs in increasing resilience (Allen, Cox, & Cooper, 2006), and the interest in such a program by our Community Partner. Ewert and Yoshino (2011) report that resilience can be increased within a camp experience through activities that are challenging and social. Although our program does not fit all the characteristics of a camp as defined in camp research (outdoor living, away from home; Bialeschki et al, 2007), it does fit others (include trained leaders to accomplish intentional goals, have enjoyable activities, teamwork), and therefore research findings on camp outcomes may be relevant to our program, especially findings from outcome-based camps. In general, camps, especially outcome-based camps such as ours, have a number of positive benefits for participants, and may be ideally suited for positive youth development (Thurber et al., 2007). For example, in a one-week immersive science camp, campers reported improved peer relationships and increased confidence among the beneficial outcomes (Fields, 2014). A review of camp research found that as a result of camp, children improved in confidence, self-esteem, social skills, independence and leadership (Bialeschki et al., 2007).

We chose to integrate the WhyTry program into the camp curriculum because it is an active learning, experiential, resilience training program designed specifically for youth. The program uses analogies to teach children resilience-building skills. Research on WhyTry consists mostly of program evaluation research; however, it is consistently positive. In dissertation studies, WhyTry was found to increase self-efficacy and improve outcomes on the Achenbach Scale (Baker, 2008), reduce expulsions among conduct-disordered children (Minor, 2009), as well as improve school behavior and locus of control, and reduced social stress and anxiety (Wilhite, 2010). In program evaluations, WhyTry shows improvements in pro-social behavior and emotional health (Mortenson & Rush, 2007), self-esteem, hope, agency, and motivation (Bird, 2010), and school achievement (Bushnell & Card, 2003; Williams, 2009).

The Choice Activities, which involve artistic and creative work, support a growing body of evidence on the therapeutic effects of the arts. Among the value added by such programs is the opportunity that is given to youth to express themselves through non-verbal means and reduce tension while doing so (Coholic et al., 2012). In a recent qualitative study, Davies et al.’s (2014) participants reported increased resilience, self-efficacy, and improved mental health, among many other positive outcomes. For each of our Choice Activities, there are published reviews of research that support it as an evidence-based approach to improving mental health outcomes (see Robb et al., 2014 for music therapy; Slayton et al., 2010
for art therapy; Cramer et al., 2013 for yoga/dance). These activities as a whole focus on storytelling. Storytelling, narrative discourse, journaling, and other forms of oral or written reporting, of true and or imagined stories, also has a growing body of evidence supporting its value for mental health, including among Latino youth (Malgady, 2011).

Unique to this program is the student-centered approach to the curriculum. One of our academic partners, Youngbok Hong, MFA, developed the framework for the Choice Activities based on focus groups with Latino youth conducted earlier in the spring. This curriculum framework was shared with all Choice Activity leaders so that they would design their week integrating five concepts that emerged from the focus groups that complemented the WhyTry activities. These concepts were built around the following questions: 1) Who am I now? 2) Who do I want to be? 3) What may get in my way? 4) How will I overcome this? and 5) How will I maintain this? This approach created continuity and reflected the vision of Your Life. Your Story. as a setting where adolescents could tell their story, and in doing so, define who they are. We instructed our Choice Activity Leaders to be aware of, and if necessary, to focus on identification of acculturative stress and its resolution and management through the self-expression and coping that can be developed through the activities.

The assignment of a mentor to each participant is based on Social Cognitive Theory and modeling. There is much research on natural mentors and their value for resilience building and PYD (Schwartz et al., 2013). Our mentors would be young, bachelor’s level college students. Our mentors would not serve as surrogate parents as natural mentors tend to be; we planned for mentors that reflected where our participants could be in a few years’ time, similar to a peer-to-peer mentoring program. We intended our mentors to model academic achievement and the 7Cs of PYD. Birman and Morland’s review of formal mentoring programs for immigrant youth suggest the need for cultural competency training for mentors, which we conducted.

We believe the most significant aspect of the study is that it addresses an important problem for youth with an easy to implement and easily translatable intervention that is made culturally responsive by including mentors and staff that are of the same cultural group and/or received cultural competency training. According to Boustani et al. (2014), “significant challenges in transporting evidence-based programs to community settings have been documented extensively.....these challenges are even more pronounced in communities of poverty, where the potential for impact is greatest and most urgent.” (page 1). In spite of these difficulties, “collaborative community-based helping approaches that are sustainable and strengths based and target multiple issues and outcomes” are being called for by a number of researchers (Coholic et al., 2012, page 347).

It was important that the Community Partner ‘own’ the intervention in order to increase the odds of
sustainability into the future. With this in mind, it became evident that a lengthy, involved program would not be feasible for this community, or necessary for the goals of the program. The program we developed could be adopted more easily and implemented by our Community Partner and other agencies that serve Latinos.

Furthermore, in terms of the general scientific literature, we found few studies, if any, that focused on interventions to increase resilience, address acculturative stress, or decrease/prevent depression in low SES second generation Latinos, even though there is a significant body of work that suggests that this group is in dire need of supportive interventions that may improve mental health and help break the cycle of poverty and low educational attainment. The challenges faced by these youth and identified in our exploratory study suggest the need for resilience building interventions.

Our Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) approach to creating and implementing the intervention addresses the challenges of translational research by a) increasing external validity, b) reducing the ‘academic knowledge’ and increasing ‘hybrid knowledge’ to create more culturally supported interventions, c) improving discourse between academia and community, d) shifting power away from universities through collective decision making and outcomes that are beneficial to the community, and finally e) improving trust through formal agreements and sustained long-term relationships (Wallerstein & Duran, 2010).

**PHASE 3: PILOT TESTING YOUR LIFE. YOUR STORY. LATINO YOUTH SUMMIT**

Although there are many summer programs aimed at improving quality of life for children of all ages, there are few that systematically attempt to increase resilience within a research framework with Latino youth in the general population. If this intervention succeeded, it would be a first step toward becoming an evidence-based intervention for a growing problem in a vulnerable population.

We began testing the intervention with a pilot study that would provide the rationale for the intervention for a larger randomized controlled trial, solidify new and established relationships with additional partners, and refine the intervention so that the one proposed in the larger study has a higher likelihood of success.

The pilot study had the following aims:
Feasibility:

Determine a) rates of recruitment, b) rates of attendance, and c) rates of completion

Appropriateness of Choice Activities and Community Partners leading them

Determine whether the Choice Activities and the Community Partners that lead them are appropriate for the larger study

Youth and Parent Satisfaction with Intervention:

Determine levels of satisfaction with the various components of the intervention, including the mentoring relationship

Preliminary determination of efficacy:

Obtain an estimate of effect size for intervention efficacy that can be used to determine the program participant sample size and for the future study evaluation design.

METHODS

Participants

Latino adolescents (n = 30) between the ages of 13 and 17 were recruited by LHO from among the families they serve, as well as families served by other Latino-serving organizations.

Sample size determination: The sample size for this pilot study was an estimate of what would be appropriate for a week-long summer camp, given our goals and resources.

Comparison Group: Another Latino-serving Community Partner that runs youth camps every summer served as a comparison group. Their camps are 8 weeks long and provide a number of activities, but they are not geared toward resilience building or mental health. We recruited a sample of their camp participants matched in gender and age to our selected participants. This group was assessed before their first week of camp and immediately after their first week. This allowed them to serve as an attention comparison group. It must be noted that their camp dates did not coincide with our camp dates; however, we were able to assess them just before and right after their first week, which provided a somewhat comparable experience without the key components of our planned intervention. Table 2 below shows demographics of participants by group. Unlike the Comparison Group, the Study Group had more participants in the older teen years, which might bias the Study Group toward higher depression rates. In contrast, the Comparison Group had a higher percentage of immigrant participants, which might bias the Comparison Group toward worse outcomes.
Table 4. Demographics of Comparison and Study Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DEMOGRAPHICS</th>
<th>COMPARISON GROUP (N=29)</th>
<th>STUDY GROUP (N=29)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Younger (12-14 years)</td>
<td>58.6%</td>
<td>48.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Older (15-18 years)</td>
<td>41.4%</td>
<td>51.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>65.5%</td>
<td>57.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>34.5%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Immigrant Status</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Immigrant</td>
<td>44.8%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Generation</td>
<td>51.7%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Generation</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Procedures

Teens attended the camp from June 23rd through June 27th, 2014. There was a bilingual Camp Orientation on June 22 and a Camp Completion Celebration on June 28 that included parents, where each teen was able to showcase projects from the YLYS week. Parents provided transportation for their children to and from the camp, which took place at Herron School of Art in Downtown Indianapolis, as well as to booster sessions, which are currently taking place at either LHO or other community venues.

Summer Camp: 30 Latino teens (ages 12-17) attended the camp, which took place from 8:00am until 5:00pm each day. The camp was held at IUPUI so that students could experience and explore a college campus. Students were recruited through various community connections and represented multiple Latino communities from Indianapolis.

Each participant was assigned a mentor, an undergraduate student at IUPUI. Each mentor had four to six teens under his/her charge. These mentor-teen partnerships began at the summer camp and continue throughout the year of the study.

Each day of camp started with breakfast and ice-breakers with the mentors. After breakfast, the group was split into three separate groups for WhyTry activities and stayed in the same groups through the entire week. After WhyTry, the teens spent an hour and a half participating in physical activity outside. The exercise-based activities varied throughout the week, and on Wednesday of camp week, the teens walked to the Indy Eleven (local professional soccer team) field to meet players and practice on the field. After physical activity, the teens were served lunch and had a break. The rest of the afternoon was filled with the ‘Choice Activities’ which were the emotional expression activities designed around a common
framework to help each teen share his or her story. Each teen selected three out of the five activities from: storytelling, yogadance, art, music, and technology, and stayed in these activities all week. The teens were also provided an afternoon snack between the second and third ‘Choice Activity’ sessions.

**Booster Sessions:** Follow-up sessions with the participants will continue until June 2015. There will be a total of 10 booster sessions August through May, which include components from WhyTry and Choice Activities, in addition to any additional needs reported by the youth, the parents, or the Community Partner. Some sessions will include special activities for parents who have asked for programming tailored to them.

Participating youth receive a $10 incentive for each booster session they attend as a token of appreciation for completing the surveys given during the session. In addition, each participant has monthly contact with his/her mentor in an unstructured fashion, but still aimed toward the goals of the program.

**Preliminary Findings**
To investigate the impact of the YLYS camp from a research standpoint, we collected multiple questionnaires at multiple points in time from the teenagers. In order to examine how resilience and depression changed over the week, the teens completed questionnaires on those variables at baseline (pre-test) and after the camp ended (post-test). We also collected data on other variables of interest such as acculturative stress, positive youth development, self-mastery, mentor relationship, and satisfaction with camp and each camp activity.

After one week of camp, within group analyses suggest that the YLYS camp had a statistically significant impact on participants with increase in resilience and decrease in depressive symptoms (p < .05). The satisfaction of study participants with the YLYS camp was measured as well. All participants agreed or strongly agreed with items such as, “I had an excellent time,” “I felt welcomed,” “I found new ways to deal with stress and problems,” and “YLYS helped me feel more confident in my life choices.”

**Next Steps and Future Direction**
As the YLYS booster sessions continue to progress over the next year, the team will continue to monitor the program’s effectiveness. Once data has been fully analyzed, the team will collaboratively tailor the program and make any necessary adjustments as suggested by the data. As previously mentioned, this initial pilot will hopefully be the first step towards the creation of an evidence-based intervention for a growing problem in this vulnerable population.

As the program continues to be implemented, there is more and more momentum and excitement from the Latino community at large and local organizations that serve the Latino community, and the
team is dedicated to continue moving forward. As we collaboratively plan for next steps, we envision several groups joining the program each year and creating a plan for long-term follow-up of participants. Additionally, if feasible and with sufficient funding, we hope to allow each group to participate in a second year of camp, with the second year taking youth to a higher level of mastery and resilience including sessions on future-oriented goal development and career and college preparation.

Starting with a synergistic CBPR partnership between the Latino Health Organization and the Indiana University Richard M. Fairbanks School of Public Health to investigate an alarming health disparity in Indiana Latino youth, we have not only gained knowledge on possible reasons for why this mental health disparity exists, but more importantly, we have translated those findings into action that meets the needs of the community through the help of additional partners and support from the community we serve.

**Practical Applications**

In reflecting back on the last several years of truly synergistic collaboration, we feel compelled to share strategic approaches that have worked for our partnership, in hopes that it encourages others to utilize community-based research strategies.

*Community partners bring expertise to the partnership that is just as important as the Academic Partner's.* However, when there are differences in educational level and training in research, the community partners may not realize their value and may be reluctant to approach researchers for collaboration. It is important that researchers demonstrate respect and value for the contributions of the community partner, while at the same time not expect what the partner cannot offer in terms of expertise. As we demonstrated above, we would communicate with the community partner in lay language and then use the literature to find the academic language that explains what the partner states, a language that is needed for effective literature searches and reviews.

*Both partners must benefit from the relationships.* Otherwise, it will be short lived. When both partners make sure there is mutual benefit, further studies and service activities can occur and result in more publications, more benefit to the community, and stronger relationships among partners. Even when we do not have active, ongoing research, we are mindful of each other’s needs. For example, researchers have access to students who want to get experience in community settings. Community partners have constant need for manpower and free help. These facts lead to opportunities to benefit the community partners and the university students in a mutually beneficial way. Another way in which we stay involved with our partner is by sharing university events (talks, workshops) and our own expertise as advice when needed. In one instance, our community partner asked us to accompany them to a meeting with another faculty on campus to help them better understand the requests from the faculty and whether they could ‘trust’ this person.
Being present in these ways even when not actively collaborating on a project will increase the odds that the partners will chose each other for the next project. Working with someone whom you are already familiar with facilitates progress, decreases time to completion, and increases the odds of success. A framework of respect, shared goals, and true belief in a partnership and all that the term entails makes for strong and long lasting collaborative relationships.
REFERENCES


lished evaluation for the Alpine School District, Provo, UT.


FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS – PARENTS

1. How much stress do you think adolescents are under, and why?

2. What does this stress look like in adolescents? (eg.: he/she cries frequently, sleep too much, is not hungry, do not socialize)

3. What do you think is causing stress in adolescents?

4. What might parents do that causes more stress to their adolescent child?

5. What can parents do to help their adolescent child deal with stress?

6. How sad do you think adolescents are in general, and why?

7. How worried are you about the behavior of adolescents in their daily life environment, and why?

8. What specifically are adolescent children doing that worries you, and why?

9. How much do you think the new culture is related to the stress in Latino adolescent children, and why?
Katrina K. Conrad, MPH

*Community Research and Outreach Coordinator at the Indiana University Richard M. Fairbanks School of Public Health*

Ms. Katrina Conrad is the Community Research and Outreach Coordinator at the Indiana University Richard M. Fairbanks School of Public Health. She received her MPH degree from the same school, with a concentration in Social and Behavioral Sciences. In her role at the Fairbanks School of Public Health, she serves as the liaison between the community and the academic team throughout Community Based Participatory Research collaborations. Katrina has served as the overall research manager since beginning the project as a graduate student, and now serves as the YLYS Program Director.

Silvia M. Bigatti, PhD

*Associate Professor at the Indiana University Richard M. Fairbanks School of Public Health*

Dr. Silvia Bigatti is an Associate Professor at the Indiana University Richard M. Fairbanks School of Public Health. She graduated from the Joint Program in Clinical Psychology between University of California San Diego and San Diego State University with a degree in Clinical Psychology and a Behavioral Medicine specialization. Silvia completed her clinical internship at Yale University School of Medicine and has since been an academic and researcher primarily interested in the behavior, coping, and outcomes associated with chronic stress, such as that related to immigration and acculturation. She partners with various community organizations to conduct CBPR research focused on family health. Silvia serves as the Academic Team Principal Investigator.
Virna Diaz

*Executive Director for the Latino Health Organization*

Ms. Virna Diaz is the Executive Director for the Latino Health Organization, which is an Indianapolis-based nonprofit that exists to reduce health disparities faced by the Latino community, through education, advocacy, and leadership. She has been in this role for 6 years. Virna serves as the Community Team Principal Investigator.

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Monica A. Medina, PhD

*Clinical Associate Professor and Interim Director of the Center for Urban and Multicultural Education (CUME) at the IUPUI School of Education*

Dr. Medina is a Clinical Associate Professor and Interim Director of the Center for Urban and Multicultural Education (CUME) at the IUPUI School of Education. As the former Executive Director of a multiservice community center, The Hispanic Center, Monica brings an interdisciplinary understanding of urban issues and continues to preserve a vast network of Community Partners. Monica joined the research team when the intervention was in the early stages of development. In her role, Monica brings a multitude of experience in working with youth, running youth programs and camps. Monica assists with the logistics of the program, including leading the mentor training and supervision components.
Magdy Mirabal, MHA

*Consultant with the Latino Health Organization*

Ms. Magdy Mirabal has been a consultant with the Latino Health Organization for several years. Magdy co-leads participant recruitment for the academic-community collaborative research projects and assists with community outreach. She has been on the research team since the pilot study began in 2012.

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*Research Associate at the Indiana University Richard M. Fairbanks School of Public Health*

Ms. Tess Weathers is a Research Associate at the Indiana University Richard M. Fairbanks School of Public Health. She graduated *magna cum laude* from East Tennessee State University in 1985 with a B.S. in Biology and received her MPH in Epidemiology from the Indiana University School of Medicine in 2003. She has over twenty years of experience in health research, having served several years as the Clinical Research Program Director for the IU Cancer Center prior to joining the Fairbanks School of Public Health. Tess serves as the team's data management and analyses expert.
Including LGBTQ Voice: A Narrative of Two Gay Music Teachers

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ABSTRACT
While the past few decades have shown promising societal trends for LGBTQ individuals, the workplace is still a space of discrimination for many LGBTQ music teachers. Our narrative tells the story of two gay music teachers (Kevin, nearing the end of his career; and James, in the first few years of teaching) meeting for the first time and dialoguing with one another about their lived experience, sexuality-specific challenges in the field of music education, and issues of resilience and support. This research reveals the transformative power of telling and retelling stories, specifically as James shared and re-shared details regarding past discrimination in the workplace and – with Kevin’s mentorship – reframed his old narrative into one of advice for other LGBTQ music teachers. This story of experience-sharing between James and Kevin highlights the importance of mentoring relationships as a means of support for LGBTQ music teachers in fostering a sense of resilience and optimism in their careers and personal lives.

Keywords: Education, Gay Teachers, LGBTQ, Mentorship, Music, Narrative, Story Retelling, Workplace Discrimination
4:02 p.m. Would they show? Our participants Kevin and James arrived at the restaurant almost at the same moment. After a few brief introductions, exchanges of signed consent forms, and polite inquiry into Kevin’s day at work, we began the interview with these two music teachers. Kevin and James selected this particular location for the interview because of its private and relatively quiet dining area within a location they felt comfortable enough to talk openly about themselves. Even though we were in the center of a major Midwestern city, these gentlemen nevertheless lived in a part of the United States where one could be harassed or discriminated against for being gay.

LGBTQ DISCRIMINATION AND MUSIC EDUCATION

Music education scholars have been relatively slow in embracing the charge by Gould (1994) to study “marginalized personalities” (p. 96), including people of color; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) individuals; and differently-abled persons. According to Freer (2013), it is the responsibility of academic journals to represent the diversity inherent within the organizations they serve. Freer’s (2013) analysis suggests, however, that music journals associated with the National Association for Music Education in the United States have been the least LGBTQ-inclusive of major arts education journals.

A groundbreaking article by Bergonzi (2009) has invited meaningful discourse regarding the erasure and discriminatory challenges faced by LGBTQ students and teachers. In his article and in subsequent symposia and writings on LGBTQ studies and music education, Bergonzi has appealed to music educators to consider the discrimination that is inherent in heterosexual privilege. Since the publication of Bergonzi’s seminal article, other music education scholars have stepped forward to address such issues as harassment (Carter, 2011), bullying (Taylor, 2011b), and hazing (Carter, 2012; Freer, 2012).

For music teachers, LGBTQ discrimination runs the spectrum from an inability to speak freely about personal life, to more serious concerns such as job and life security (Bergonzi, 2009). Bergonzi (2015) also points to the stress for LGBTQ teachers as they continually re-negotiate their identities and relationship to the “closet” throughout their careers, including as preservice teachers, student teachers, job applicants, novice teachers, and even as experienced teachers moving to new jobs (see also Cavicchia, 2011; Fitzpatrick & Hansen, 2010; Furman, 2011; Natale-Abramo, 2011; Taylor, 2011a).
Presently, over half of music education programs reportedly include LGBTQ-related discussions in undergraduate coursework (Spano, 2011). However, music education scholars express the need for further awareness of issues of sexual orientation as part of teacher education curricula because of the particular and often critical nature of concerns related to LGBTQ discrimination in the workplace (Haywood, 2011; Sweet & Paparo, 2011; Bergonzi, 2015).

Music education scholars have attempted to explain the undesirable “othering” and discriminatory treatment experienced by gay men. For instance, Koza (1994) suggests that a social system of “compulsory heterosexuality” in tandem with a norm of maleness as the standard for superiority paint the male homosexual as an “undesirable other” (p. 50). Further, Gould (2012) attributes overt and covert “disappearing” of gays within music education as a result of “homosexual panic” (p. 46) stemming from an attempt to masculinize and emphasize rationality in a profession that is often perceived as “feminine” and/or “soft.”

As LGBTQ scholarship in music and education is yet in its infancy, there is a need for the sharing of individual narratives to illustrate the range of the challenges and experiences of teachers who identify somewhere within this spectrum. The traditional practice of educational research to generalize populations does not align with a queer theory stance, in which the point is to “disrupt normalizing discourses . . . such as those that have been used historically to police teachers, students, and administrators at all levels of education” (Renn, 2010, p. 132; see also Blount, 2005; Dilley, 2002; Tierney & Dilley, 1998; Quinn & Meiners, 2009). In this vein, Nichols (2013) asserts:

One of the unfortunate consequences of LGBT[Q] education scholarship is that it often subsumes the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons into one category, essentializing or obscuring the particular concerns of each group . . . One purpose of emancipatory story sharing is to bring forward the voices of those who are typically unheard in mainstream discourse. (pp. 263-4)

The sharing of unique narratives can, therefore, bring to light issues that may help music teacher educators more effectively approach the diversity of experiences they may encounter.
METHOD

The need for better awareness in music education courses regarding issues of marginalization prompted us to arrange an afternoon interview with Kevin and James (each a friend and colleague of one of the authors), where they would meet for the first time and engage in dialogue with one another about the social, cultural, and political challenges they face as gay music teachers in the United States. Our intention for this meeting was to highlight support mechanisms for current and future music teachers so that we, as university professors, might be able to offer our own students a collection of practical insights.

We invited Kevin and James to share their own stories and advice, from which others could select ideas that they found to be helpful and/or relevant in their own lives. The topics we asked them to reflect on included their (a) lived experience (e.g., chosen profession, student teaching, classroom, and beyond); (b) sexuality-specific challenges in the field of music education (e.g., discrimination, differential treatment, and silence about personal life); and (c) issues of resilience and support (e.g., administrators, colleagues, students, alumni, student families, and support networks).

APPROACHES AND PROCEDURES

Using a qualitative approach, our procedures included (a) simultaneous data collection and analysis; (b) construction of codes and themes from emergent data rather than preconceived hypotheses; (c) continual analysis and advancement of theories during each stage of data collection and analysis; and (d) memo-writing and/or dialogue between researchers and participants to elaborate, clarify, and define relationships between themes (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser, 1978, 1992; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987).

We used the following research questions to guide our inquiry:

1. How has the social, cultural, and political climate changed over time for gay music teachers working in the United States?

2. What social, cultural, and political challenges do gay music teachers face today? What barriers existed and/or still exist?

3. What mechanisms of support were and/or are in place? What supports can LGBTQ teachers utilize to foster a sense of resilience in their teaching?
We developed interview questions in response to the call for proposals on these specific topics from the 2nd Symposium on LGBTQ Studies and Music Education held in 2012 at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The interview questions focused on lived experiences, sexuality specific challenges in the field of music education, and issues of resilience and support (see Interview Protocol in Appendix). We used our interview questions as a starting point for conversation; however, it was important to us that the questions be flexible enough to allow the interview to take on a life of its own and thereby allow principal issues – those that appeared to be most important to our interviewees – to emerge.

Immediately following the interview, we engaged in a reflective dialogue to determine our initial impressions of the most relevant issues and potential themes that would guide our later analysis. Within 24 hours after the interview, we created independent mind maps (see Mandolini, 2012; Wills, 2008) to highlight possible relationships between major ideas. Although we initially discussed emergent themes together, we chose to create independent mind maps in order to allow for complementary perspectives that were not obscured by the other researcher’s influence. We then shared our maps with one another in order to discuss convergent themes and relationships, and synthesized individual ideas that we agreed were essential to telling this narrative.

Following our mind mapping exercise, we listened to the entire interview together, taking notes of important quotes and occasionally stopping the audio to discuss additional critical themes. During the listening, we noted the increasing familiarity and trust that the four of us experienced over this short time, including the expanding detail with which James and Kevin shared their personal stories. Of particular note was the telling, retelling, and third telling of a story of James's discrimination that became the focal point of our narrative, which invited a deeper level of intimacy and disclosure between us as the afternoon progressed. This increasing level of disclosure became fundamental to our conversation, as it provided a safe space for experiences of mentorship, empathy, understanding, and genuineness to emerge.

During our listening session, we wrote initial transcriptions of pertinent quotes and attached labels to segments of these transcriptions to depict what each segment was about. We also wrote memos regarding how these segments related to one another. As Charmaz (2006) describes:

Memo-writing is the pivotal intermediate step between data collection and writing drafts of papers... Memos catch your thoughts, capture the comparisons and connections you make, and crystallize questions and directions for you to pursue. (p. 72)
Following our listening session, we returned to our mind maps and began to separate, sort, and synthesize these data through qualitative coding and memo writing. This process helped us to extract, refine, and group our data into segments that could be compared and contrasted with other data groupings (see Charmaz, 2006).

Finally, in order to ensure an accurate representation of their opinions and experiences, we engaged in a process of member checks (Creswell & Miller, 2000) by providing our participants with copies of our manuscript and requesting feedback and subsequent approval for publication. Neither Kevin nor James offered any revisions.

**Narrative.** We used a narrative form of representation (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Barrett & Stauffer, 2009; 2012) to describe the interview that took place, in order to allow the reader a more aesthetic and intimate lens from which to view the stories of these men, as well as our interaction and experiences with them. A narrative approach was especially relevant when considering the evolution of disclosure that we witnessed as the interview progressed—something we wanted our audience to witness as well.

Narrative has been cited as a promising approach for developing knowledge regarding LGBTQ issues in music education, in part due to the difficulty in “obtaining random, representative samples” of “a hidden, oppressed population” (Phillips, Ingram, Smith, & Mindes, 2003, p. 52; as cited in Freer, 2013). Perhaps more importantly, narrative provides a scholarly space for the revealing of unique and distinctive stories that challenge us to reconsider the various shapes and shades of queer experience.

Narratives are stories of who we are and who we want to be. At the core they are the discourse surrounding our lives, surrounding our identities, and they are powerfully shaped by the contexts, relationships, and activities in which we are most deeply invested. The telling and retelling of stories that we witnessed during the interview with Kevin and James was reminiscent of Blair’s (2009) description of the living, organic nature of narrative:

> Never static and never finished, or better – always changing and ever evolving, the telling and retelling, living and reliving of one’s story enables growth and the realization of growth as one lives, shares and reflects upon both happenings and the meanings of happenings (p. 22; see also Clandinin, 2007; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).
This narrative highlights the telling and retelling of stories, and the subsequent personal growth and deepened understandings that emerged during our interview with Kevin and James. During our afternoon together, these men shared increasingly more intimate details of their professional and personal lives with us and with each other, which provided a forum in which the men offered advice to current and future gay teachers. Unexpectedly, we witnessed the two men gradually develop a shared sense of professional and emotional trust and mentorship that also became a story of its own.

**TRANSFORMATION THROUGH THE TELLING AND RETELLING OF STORIES**

Once the food was served and initial small talk reached a stopping point, we asked Kevin and James to share their professional teaching histories with us. They did so, but with the kind of professional distance that one might share with an administrator or prospective employer. Kevin, who was in his mid-fifties, began teaching school choir in the early 1980s and in his free time had been the director of the gay men’s choir in a nearby city. Kevin told us of his successful career that spanned over three decades, complete with stories of competition success. James, in his mid-twenties, had recently begun teaching in 2008. He expended more words in telling us about his first two years of teaching at Newtown, serving as an assistant orchestra director in a large, prestigious program. According to his account, he was hand-picked right out of college for this position by his mentor, Janice. James reported that he moved to Smithfield School after his second year because he felt ready to establish his own identity as a music education professional:

> After two years I went to Smithfield, because I wanted to do it myself. I knew that staying in Newtown would keep me in the shadow of Janice. I didn’t want to stay in the shadow of Janice forever, because she conducted the flagship ensemble—and I knew that I would never get to do that as long as she was there. So I decided it was time for me to go out and do it on my own. I learned so much from her that I thought I was ready to do it, and I think it was a good move.

When James first told us the above story, the other three of us did not think much of it except perhaps to consider that James was a young and budding star who was able to move quickly up the career ladder thanks to the respect, support, and mentorship of his older colleagues. With no further interest in this topic, we simply continued our conversation.
Keeping with our semi-structured interview prompt, we asked James and Kevin what social, cultural, and political challenges they had experienced as gay music teachers. This question welcomed a more intimate retelling of James’s initial story about his move away from Newtown. In this second telling it became evident that James's sexual orientation had played an unwelcome role in the unfolding of events:

James: At Newtown, that was a pretty dark time in my life—professionally, not because of my teaching, but because of the way I was treated in that town. . . . The second year, there was a—I’ll never forget it—there was a high school boy, and he, he came to me and wanted to talk to me about coming out. So I listened to him and talked to him, and actually the conversation was very short. It happened in a hallway with a bunch of other kids going by. But somehow the administration got wind of it, and, and they called, and I was actually put on administrative leave for a couple weeks.

Kevin: For that?

James: Yep, uh huh, yep.

Author 2: Wait, did I miss something? For a conversation?

James: Yep, a conversation that happened. They put me on administrative leave because they were absolutely positive that I was sleeping with this kid. The parents were saying, “Well, we think that, you know, this boy is sleeping with Mr. Davison, he’s had this conversation with him; clearly there is much more than that. . . .” And of course I said, “NO, that’s not it at all. This kid came and approached me and asked ME to talk to him.” The kid said, “I need to talk to someone.” I was told by the administration that I should have sent him to guidance. . . . So, I called the union rep right away, and what basically ended up happening was that they of course cleared me of anything because there was nothing to find. But I was informed that I would not be renewed at the end of my contract and that if I left, they would give me a glowing recommendation of my teaching, which was fine. It was one of those things, you know, “You’re a great teacher, but we can’t have you here, so go on and go somewhere else.” It was an extremely painful situation for me, because I just didn’t understand it. You hear about things like that happening to other people, but when it happens to YOU, it’s very painful. And Janice, it devastated her, it broke her heart . . . and I don’t think she really knew how to respond to it. She told me, “I went into the principal’s office, I went into the superintendent’s office . . . every day and begged them to keep you, but,” she said, “there was a small group of parents that was not going to have it, and you had to go.”
This time, the other three of us were so taken by this retelling of James's story of discriminatory treatment that it altered the direction of the rest of our interview. The authors caught each other’s eyes across the table, as we recognized the potential for James’s story to inspire a conversation about our third research question, particularly what supports gay teachers could utilize to foster a sense of resilience in their teaching. We mentioned to both gentlemen how useful their wisdom might be to preservice teachers at the universities where each of us taught. With this invitation, Kevin and James began to offer advice for present and future LGBTQ teachers based on the lessons James had learned from his experience, combined with insights that Kevin shared as an older and more experienced teacher.

KEVIN AND JAMES OFFER ADVICE TO LGBTQ MUSIC TEACHERS

"Knowing Your Music Stuff"

Kevin and James both stated that a music teacher’s primary focus in the classroom should not be on the teacher’s personal life, but on the students, their musicianship, and character development. According to Kevin and James, “knowing your music stuff” and preparing students to have good musicianship skills should be paramount, while also finding ways to allow students to be comfortable with themselves as people.

By focusing first on the music, both teachers felt they had earned the trust of students, parents, and administrators who could then come to love and accept who these teachers were. For example, Kevin had taught many students from conservative religious backgrounds who, he said, made their trust in him clear by making such comments as: “I may not necessarily agree with your lifestyle, but I want to learn from you.” This demonstrates Kevin’s ability to respond to individuals who may not have necessarily agreed with his sexual identity.

"YOU CAN'T TEACH CHARACTER. YOU HAVE TO MODEL IT."

Once trust was developed, Kevin and James found that they were able to influence their students in ways beyond mere playing or singing of notes, and that expanded to the development of prosocial behaviors such as demonstrating kindness and respect for others. For example, Kevin was able to help his students understand the negative impact of hurtful words by speaking up when students used “bigoted slurs.” He mentioned that it was taking time to address the “little things” that made a difference:
For a long time kids would say in the classroom, “Oh that’s so gay.” And I would always say, “Is it pink? Does it wear a boa? Does it have sequins?” you know; and they would just look at me and say, “Well you know what I mean.” And they would then say, “I mean that’s stupid.” And I would say [sarcastically], “Well I’m really glad that you equate the two,” and they were like, “Well, I didn’t think about it that way.” And I said, “Start.” So it’s those little things. I’m not going to be out there lead[ing] the gay parade down the center aisle of my school, but I think it’s more [leading] by example.

James’s impact on the social development of his students—without regard for his sexual orientation or theirs—was evident in a story he shared with us about an 8th grade student publicly recognizing him at an end-of-year concert. The student gave James a framed piece of prose she had written about him. He reported:

She said, you know, “class has been great, you’ve taught me so much about music and I really appreciate that, but I also appreciate how you have taught me about respecting other people, accepting other people, and just being a good person.” I always tell the kids that my classroom operates on a system of shared respect, of teamwork, of treating people the way you want to be treated. These are things I say every single day. And for me, even as a music teacher, hearing her say that, just brought tears to my eyes. I want to create good musicians, but more than that I want to help create good people, to shape good people. And for her to say, “I’m a better person because I was in your class” was just monumental to me, and that—maybe even more than the recruiting numbers—that may have been my crowning achievement thus far. I think we as teachers have the ability to inspire kids to be good people, and I think it’s a disservice to them if we don’t do that.

James finished by emphasizing that good musicianship and citizenship could create a more inclusive community:

Obviously we want to create good musicians, but we also want to create very good people who can go out into the world. And where these lines that have been drawn . . . for sexuality, for skin color, for religion, for all that stuff, just sort of start to blur and disappear.

Kevin recapped the crux of this conversation by stating succinctly, “You can't teach character. You have to model it.”

"I'M NOT A GAY MUSIC TEACHER. I AM A MUSIC TEACHER WHO HAPPENS TO BE GAY."

We told our interviewees that, as college professors, we often had LGBTQ students approach us and ask if they would be able to make it as teachers. James and Kevin shared their responses through a friendly dialogue:
James: I would say absolutely you can. I mean, that has little to no bearing on your ability to do your job. You don't hear straight people coming up to you and saying, I'm straight, can I be ...

Kevin: Can I be a hairdresser? (laughs)

James: Right, and to that we say, absolutely NOT, take a different job (laughs). No, but seriously I think I would counter and say to that person, “Why not? What would stop you from doing that? Do you have a heart for kids? Do you want to teach music? Are you passionate about this?” And if that's the case, then your sexuality can take a back seat. I think kids who say that are not really concerned about their ability to be a teacher. They are insecure with themselves; they're not secure in who they are. I say it again: Being gay or being straight, or being whatever you happen to be, is a small piece of a larger puzzle. It's not the most important thing in your life! And I think especially when you want to become a teacher, you just have to put that aside and say, “Am I a person who has the ability and the passion and the drive to teach?” If you have that, then your sexuality probably doesn't matter.

While they recognized the impact of their sexuality on their personal and even professional lives, both men emphasized that being a good teacher was much more important than one's sexual orientation. James, paraphrasing earlier comments from Kevin and expanding them to include his own opinions, stated:

I think our sexuality, while still important, is only a small piece of a much larger puzzle. Because even with my issue at Newtown, I still found that my primary concern is my kids and how I am going to give them the best musical experience I can. Like Kevin said, “How do I select literature for different ensembles, with different levels of playing or singing, how do I conduct these if I have to do it from the keyboard or if I have to be out playing with the kids, how can I lead them, how can I develop student leaders so that I don’t have to do everything myself, how can I...” you know, those kinds of things are more important.

Kevin succinctly added: “I’m not a gay music teacher. I am a music teacher who happens to be gay.” In other words, being gay or straight was not a factor in a person’s ability to effectively instruct children.

Several times throughout the afternoon, Kevin stated the words, “I am who I am.” As we came to know Kevin better, the meaning behind his words became clearer to us: If you are comfortable with who you are, others will be comfortable with you as well. When we asked the men if this perception was correct, they agreed, while James offered clarification:
I grew up in a time when things were really starting to change; the tide was really starting to shift. I knew who I was, I knew what I wanted, and I was ok with that. But I think the most important thing for [teachers] is feeling comfortable in their classes. Everyone likes to be comfortable, you know.

**“YOU MIGHT AS WELL BE WHO YOU ARE AND OWN IT.”**

Kevin emphasized the importance of being honest and genuine, recognizing the intelligence and intuitive nature of students who would “see through you anyway.”

And really, there’s not a lot you are going to hide from the kids anyway. I mean, they are very good at seeing through [you] . . . I mean they’re like, “Come on, really?” “Is that really . . . ?” So why bother? I mean, you might as well be who you are and own it, because they’re going to see false pretense in a heartbeat.

Kevin further shared how his reputation for being a genuine person, focused on teaching musicianship and character, helped to bring a change of heart from initially prejudiced individuals. He offered the following anecdote as an example:

Several years ago, [a colleague] was very uncomfortable around me for a long time. We ended up at lunch together alone, and I could tell he was squirming a little bit. He said, “Now Kevin, I really need to tell you something.” And I was like, “Oh God, here it comes.” He said, “I used to be the most discriminating man on the face of the earth until I had to put a face with the discrimination.” And he said, “You really turned me around.” So it wasn’t a big thing, I wasn’t out there waving the flag, I was just having lunch. And you know, I’m not perfect and I have my faults, and I am who I am—take me or leave me—but over the course of time I think you just do your job and move forward.
"IF THERE'S EVER A PROBLEM, I'M IN YOUR CORNER."

Both James and Kevin recommended finding and encouraging support among straight allies (both students and colleagues). When James met with difficulty at Newtown, his union representative (incidentally, a lesbian) advised him, “We can either [fight this] or we can keep you employed the rest of your life.” James chose to simply move on so that he could continue doing what he loves, in a new district where he would thrive and be accepted. He is now very supported in a larger city environment where people are more accepting of all kinds of difference. In fact, upon his hiring one of his colleagues reportedly boasted to a friend, “I've just hired this fabulous gay man!”

Kevin also found support in certain administrators in his school:

When I first started teaching here, I think the principal just didn't care about my sexuality. It wasn't an issue. The assistant principal at the time said, “If there's ever a problem, I'm in your corner.” And he has. In fact, through a recent process of me splitting up with my partner, he has emailed a couple of times and said, “You're my hero, you always have been.” . . .

Kevin suggested that students can be the biggest advocates for gay teachers:

The kids, believe it or not, the high school kids, are really in my corner. In fact, if I've been called a name, they're like, “Tell me who it is and I'll take them out.” And I say, “You know, violence is never the answer,” but they're always like, “Tell me who it is,” and I'm like, “No, we've got it handled, don't worry.”

Kevin described an experience where he was asked to be an advisor to a newly formed Gay-Straight Alliance at his school. His response to the student was, “Yes, as long as you find a straight advisor too.” Three straight teachers were very excited about volunteering, so Kevin never needed to serve.

"WHEN SOMETHING HAPPENS . . . SHARE IT WITH SOMEONE ELSE."

Both teachers mentioned multiple times throughout our interview that they considered it critical for teachers to document their experiences, especially any interaction with a student that could be perceived as questionable. They recommended going to colleagues, the principal, or a guidance person following any conversation with a student or parent that is sensitive in nature. This enables administrators, supervisors, and colleagues to be supportive and informed rather than blind-sided by discovering this information from a third-party source. The following conversation illustrates these ideas:

James: Appearances are everything. Because from the outside my incident appeared to be a
private conversation, that nobody else heard. Even though it happened in a crowded hallway, nobody else heard what was being said. I didn't tell anybody else about it, because I didn't think I had to at the time. But I really think it is better to be safe than sorry. Because there is nothing wrong with going to another teacher or guidance counselor and saying, “Hey, I just had this conversation with this kid. I just want you to know about it. What do you think we need to do about this? How should we respond to this so we can get this kid the resources that they need?” Regardless of what it is about. You know? . . . I think that if I had done that, then guidance could have said, “Hey James came to me and said... Here’s what happened; here’s this conversation, here’s how I followed up on it,” and there wouldn’t have been a problem. I really think that that would have done it.

Karin: And that’s one of those things you can tell pre-service teachers.

James: Yep, and I do. I'm always like, “Share these things, when something like that happens, share it with someone else.”

Kevin: And it can be done in confidence. You're not ruining the trust of the student. The fact that this kid came to you and said this, shows that obviously they trust you. It’s not like you are broadcasting it to the world. I go to the guidance person I trust the most or the dean I trust the most and say, “This is the conversation I just had.” But it's an instinctual thing, and it's always been that way with me.

James: I'm so glad we brought this up, because if you have a conversation like that you have to share it with someone else. And 90% of the time nothing will come of it, but if you have shared it with someone else then it doesn't appear to be a private thing.
RETELLING AND MENTORSHIP

Whether by accident or by providence, after about an hour of interviewing we looked down to discover that our recorder was paused. This device had recorded only one minute and seventeen seconds of the interview. Fortunately, we had a backup recording device running on our laptop. Afraid we may have lost part of these teacher’s stories, James offered twice to retell his experience at Newtown, “just in case.” We began to wonder if he had not just gone through a kind of therapeutic experience by being able to share his story among trusted, supportive, and empathetic listeners—especially in the presence of Kevin, a more experienced professional, whose words of support and advice provided a forum of mentorship for this novice teacher. With this in mind, we invited James to share his story for a third time. The third telling revealed yet another shift in language, as James’s story became even more detailed and intimate. This telling was also interspersed with dialogue between James and Kevin, which allowed Kevin to support James in a mentoring capacity:

James: It’s been several years and we’re fine now and we have our old friendship back, and I can still call her and ask her for whatever I need. But there was a period I think where neither of us really knew; because I felt like I had let her down. By allowing this to happen, I had let her down, because I knew— you know— I knew why I was hired. I knew why I was there and why she was imparting so much on me, because she was trying to get me ready to take her job. And then for this to happen, I really felt like I had let her down. I really did. And I think that was the part that really hurt the most. I can go to another school. I can teach at another place. I can, whatever. But I have a real problem with letting people down in my life. I don’t like to do it. I really, really don’t.

Kevin: You didn’t let her down.

James: Right, but I didn’t realize that at the time. And it didn’t feel like that at the time. And I kept thinking, like, well if I had only not talked to him. If I had only done something different...

Kevin: Yes, but how do you do that? When a kid—

James: Exactly.

Kevin: —Because I’ve had kids come to me several times, “Mr. Montello, I think I’m gay.” Well, what makes you think that?

James: Yeah, right.

Kevin: And, you know, and it’s always the first question. And, you know, if the kid comes to you,
he is... he or she is pretty desperate—

James: Yeah.

Kevin: —or somebody to talk to who understands, because there are people who will say, let’s pray about this.

James: Yeah. Yeah.

Kevin: You know?—

James: OK, but...

Kevin: —You know, get the Bible out, and say, here are the verses you need to read young man...

Karin: Here are the rules you need to keep...

Kevin: Yeah. And my responses to that usually are, well, what makes you think it? And, uh, then I usually do say, you need to speak with someone who knows more about therapy than I do. I’m happy to listen to you...

James: Right, right.

Kevin: But, you know, and then I usually, immediately - and it’s just my instinct—I go to my administrator or I go to guidance or one of the deans and say, this kid is having some issues. You need to call him in or call her in—

James: And discuss this. Yeah.

Kevin: —and discuss it.

James: And maybe that would be something that I would recommend that undergrads understand, and it doesn't even need to be about sexuality. It can be about anything. If the kid comes to you and says something like that, you need to cover your butt, and talk to somebody else about it. Because, looking back on that now, if I had e-mailed guidance and said, “this student came to me and said this; you may want to follow up with them”—that may have been enough to save me. Because then it wouldn’t have looked, because as you said, appearances are everything. Because it appeared to be a private conversation that nobody else heard. Even though it happened in a crowded
hallway. I didn't tell anybody else about it because I didn't think I had to at the time. But I really think it's better to be safe than sorry. And there's nothing wrong with going to another teacher, going to guidance, and saying, hey, I just had this conversation with this kid. I just want you to know about it. Or, what do you think we need to do about this? How should we respond to this to get this kid the resources that they need, regardless of what it's about?

As James retold us about his relationship with Janice, Kevin helped him reframe this experience in a more positive light. Furthermore, we believe it allowed for a shift in James's perception of control from one of victim (as in the second telling) to one of empowerment and multi-generational mentoring, as James (with Kevin's encouragement) began to tell his story as one from which other younger teachers might be able to learn from his experience.

The difference in life experience between Kevin and James had become evident to us throughout the course of the afternoon. While Kevin referred several times to the “instinctual” nature of the professional decisions he had made, such as to document everything and be open about who he was, we also noted a kind of experience-based refining that was evident in his succinct answers, self-wit, candor, and generally positive sense of efficacy about teaching.

James appeared to have a strong self-esteem, while as a young teacher his sense of teacher efficacy appeared to be still developing. We witnessed the malleability of James's professional vision throughout the afternoon, as it became clear to us that James had listened and learned from the ideas his older mentor shared. This is perhaps made clearest by the third telling of James's professional story. While James expressed the impact of his sexual orientation in the second telling (setting himself up in this version of the story as a victim of a discriminatory system), the third version contained additional commentary based on conversations that we had shared earlier in the afternoon. For example, the story now emphasized the importance of documenting everything, as James told us how helpful it might have been if he had simply talked to someone about his conversation, or simply written down details of his brief conversation in the hallway.
We noted that James's third telling, as supported by Kevin's listening and support, morphed from one of victimhood to one of wisdom, in which James's newly gleaned ideas helped him to reframe his experience. James now took on the persona of an older, wiser teacher who could share with others the wisdom he had learned from his earlier years. We witnessed a kind of healing in progress as we listened to James find new and empowering ways in which to view his past experience. In this third telling, James appeared to perceive his past (as well as his present and future) professional life with a greater perception of control.

**CONCLUSION AND PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS**

After two and a half hours of conversation, we hugged James and Kevin and said good-bye. We enjoyed our time together so much that we could have stayed for several more hours, yet James (to the surprise of none of us) had to rush off to another social event. We packed up our recording devices, got back in the car, and drove away—reflecting for days afterward about the unfolding of a narrative in which James, as supported by Kevin, turned a traumatic story of his discriminatory treatment as a gay music teacher into a story of empowerment: James, now older and wiser than he was at Newtown, had learned to transform the misfortune of his past into support for his current students and advice for future teachers.

As previously mentioned, one possible problem in writing narratives on marginalized populations is avoiding presenting their stories in a way that essentializes their individualities. Another possible problem, as Nichols (2013) suggests, “is that despite authorial intentions to preserve complexity, the textual framing can exclude significant events or impart an illusion of resolution” (p. 275). Therefore, although the direction of our interview and subsequent follow-up with the interviewees was shaped by our already-established working relationships with these men, the data we collected cannot possibly encompass the depth and complexity of their lives, challenges, and supports as gay music teachers.

An implication from this research that is based on support from extant literature is a critical need for mentorship and support for LGBTQ teachers, especially those who, similar to James, may face discrimination in the workplace. Recent research demonstrates the psychosocial effectiveness of both formal and naturally-emergent mentoring relationships for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and questioning youth (Gastic & Johnson, 2009; Sheran & Arnold, 2012; Torres, Harper, Sánchez, & Fernández, 2012). After observing the natural emergence of a mentoring relationship between Kevin and James, and further how James was afforded a space to transform his past trauma into support material for other future teachers, we propose that mentoring relationships may be an effective means of support for other LGBTQ teachers as well.

Similarly, LGBTQ teachers may be served by having a place to share their stories in order to reframe
them in ways that provide them with a sense of empowerment. Psychologists point to the importance of perception of control in overcoming traumatic events (Benight & Bandura, 2004; Foa, 1997; Hobfoll et al., 2007), including among victims of bullying (Dombeck, 2012; Hunter & Boyle, 2002). As Dombeck (2012) states, “Rather than try to control the past (which is impossible), it might make more sense for hurting victims to . . . focus on what they can control in the present, for the benefit of their future happiness and fulfillment” (¶ 24).

Another implication suggests the importance of implementing educational and administrative supports for LGBTQ teachers at all levels, starting with preservice teacher curricula that include diversity education and the pedagogy of social skills. The gay men in this narrative, perhaps as a result of their membership in a marginalized population, spoke to us about the high priority they placed on teaching their students about kindness and respect for all individuals, without regard to aspects of “difference” such as sexual orientation, race, religion, etc. Some scholars have similarly suggested that music classrooms may be a particularly effective place for the teaching of prosocial skills and behaviors such as self-confidence, teamwork and leadership skills, tolerance, and self-discipline (Elliott, 1995; Gates, 2006; Hallam, 2006; Hendricks, 2015; Leonhard, 1985; Madsen, 2006).

The present study contributes to the scholarly literature regarding gay music teachers. The two teachers in this study offer practical advice for other music teachers, both regarding insights for preservice teachers as well as the importance of sharing of stories and communicating one's experiences with colleagues at any level of experience. However, these are only two voices of many gay teachers in our field, and their sound advice—although helpful—only paints a small part of a much larger picture. Future research could include more voices from different backgrounds and experiences, including lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer music teachers, as well as from those who have worked in supportive environments where they have thrived and felt accepted. Based on our findings regarding the importance of and need for mentorship and support mechanisms among LGBTQ faculty, future research could also explore the perspectives of administrators, teachers, and support staff with whom gay faculty associate.

While openly sharing their experiences, Kevin and James offered advice for other LGBTQ teachers, which included the importance of focusing on musicianship and character; exuding a sense of self-confidence; finding a place where you can thrive and be accepted; as well as documenting and sharing experiences to enable the support of others. As is common in qualitative research, these ideas are not intended to be generalized to all gay music teachers; the full impact of a personal story can, as Saldaña (2008) suggests, “be experienced by no one but [one’s] self” (p. 189). As researchers who are situated in music teacher education contexts, we intend to share these ideas with our preservice teachers and other music educators and invite them to draw their own conclusions as well as tell their own stories.
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The two music teachers will participate together in a semi-structured interview with the researchers, to discuss their experiences as gay men, as they relate to music education.

The interview will focus on the following themes/issues:

- **Lived experience**: How long have you been in the field? When and how did you become interested in becoming music teacher? Student Teaching, Classroom, Beyond the classroom, Booster Organizations, Profession at large. What do you consider to be some of your greatest accomplishments as a music teacher?

- **Sexuality-specific challenges in the field of music education**: Discrimination, Differential treatment, Silence about personal life

- **Issues of resilience and support**: What has helped you to be able to function and thrive in the music education profession as a gay man?, What specific supports? Administrative support, Colleague support, Student support, Past student support, [Students’] parent, family support

We may also ask the participants to follow up with a Skype chat or email to verify our account of the interview.
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Cross-Cultural Education: An Auto-Ethnographic Reflection on Teaching in an Intensive English Camp in Thailand

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ABSTRACT

Many Americans are interested in teaching English internationally. While much curiosity regarding global English instruction exists, especially among college students and graduates, many of these prospective international teachers may be unsure of what such an experience will truly entail, or have uncertainty regarding best cross-cultural teaching practices. This chapter, through an auto-ethnographic reflection, will further explore the involvements of the authors, who each taught within an intensive English camp in Thailand. Journaling from each author was used to identify particularly important themes from this experience, including the role of emotions such as adventure and excitement, frustration and anxiety; the development of cross-cultural instructional skills; and the building of deep and meaningful cross-cultural relationships. Implications drawn from the authors’ experiences that may be useful to prospective or current international and domestic teachers are further explored.

Chapter Keywords: Cross-Cultural Education, Comparative Education, TESOL, Auto-Ethnography, Thailand
An increasingly popular post-college occupation for American graduates is to teach English within various international settings (Swazo & Celinska, 2014). This trend is especially prevalent among new college graduates interested in developing familiarity and practice within education, diversity, or multiculturalism (Cwick & Benton, 2009). As the demand for native English instruction in many parts of the world is great, international English teaching positions are often fairly flexible, allowing those with diverse backgrounds (e.g. native English speakers with nearly any undergraduate degree) to meet typical requirements to enter these positions. The interest in international English education among Americans and other native English speakers is understandable, as not only does such an experience offer a unique and exciting career opportunity, but the compensation for beginning English teachers in some parts of the world, particularly in Asia and the Middle East, can be substantial (Liu, 2012). International English teachers can often work in their home schools or institutions, collecting full-time salaries, while also performing private teaching or tutoring outside of their institutions, thus earning even more than their full-time positions alone can offer (Egan & Farley, 2004). In addition, the cost of living in many areas in which English instruction is in demand is significantly less than in the United States. These various economic factors can combine to create an appealing arrangement for a potentially highly profitable vocational prospect. Of course, financial benefit is only part, and often a small part, of what may entice Americans into international teaching positions. Most international teachers will indicate the real value of such an experience typically has nothing to do with financial earnings, but rather with the development of a globalized outlook on education, communication, and life in general. This is something invaluable from both a professional and personal standpoint in the 21st century which can best be gathered from seeing and experiencing the world first-hand (Mastroianni & Kelly, 2013).

While it is certain that interest in international teaching opportunities exists among many American college and university students and graduates, many prospective international teachers may be unsure of what such an experience will truly entail in a practical sense. The majority of prospective international English teachers have little or no experience with cross-cultural education, which may often lead to unrealistic expectations about the process and its many implications (Patterson, 2014). Such expectations may become especially problematic as these positions are usually fairly long-term (e.g. a minimum of one contract-year) and expensive to initiate because of the initial costs of training, housing, and travel. A better understanding of the experiences of individuals who have previously taught internationally may be useful to those interested in teaching abroad in the future. This chapter will reflect upon the experiences of the authors, each of whom taught in an intensive English camp in Thailand during the summer of 2013. An exploration of important themes drawn from the overseas journalings of each author will be discussed as they may relate or be useful to prospective English teachers.
THE EXPERIENCE

Before exploring the themes drawn from the authors' writings, it is important to first understand the context in which their teaching experience was based. This experience, as well as the backgrounds and understandings of the authors, were distinct for many reasons. At the time of the teaching experience, both authors had completed an undergraduate degree and were admitted to graduate programs. Tobin, age twenty-six, was amidst a doctoral program in higher education and had completed his bachelor's degree in psychology and master's degree in counseling. Lindsey, age twenty-two, had recently completed her undergraduate degree in speech-language pathology and was slated to begin a graduate program in speech-language pathology the following fall. Tobin had some significant previous international experiences as he studied abroad as an undergraduate participating in a HIV awareness program in which he taught health practices to Liberian soldiers in Ghana, Africa, and had briefly backpacked through the Central American countries of El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua. Both authors, as part of their previous training, had briefly worked in professional positions related to education and teaching. Tobin had been employed as an educational consultant for the state of Indiana, and more recently as an academic advisor in an institution of higher education. Lindsey had completed practicum experiences in speech-language pathology in which she worked directly with clients in need of speech therapy. Both participated in the program partially because of the professional benefit it would provide, but more because of the opportunity to travel to another country, become immersed in a new culture, and meet people from another part of the world.

Many aspects of this teaching experience were highly unique. Unlike a long-term English teaching position, this English camp was brief in nature, as within its various sites it lasted only approximately three weeks. This vastly differs from more permanent English-teaching positions, which, as mentioned previously, usually require a minimum year-long commitment. While the involvement did not closely mimic the time-span of a typical post-graduation teaching experience, it did represent many field studies or shorter study abroad programs that take place during collegiate study. Short-term field studies that range from one to five weeks are common among preparatory study abroad programs: The Institute for International Education (2009) reported that they comprise over 50% of global education programs in the United States. These brief overseas experiences can be a useful exploration strategy, particularly to those who are considering a more permanent international teaching experience, but are not yet willing to commit to a long-term position. Short-term teaching programs can also be especially convenient to those who currently have careers or other obligations in the United States and are unable or unwilling to relocate permanently (Chieffo & Griffiths, 2009). While this experience did, in some ways, reflect the structure of field studies and brief international teaching opportunities, even among these short-term opportunities, it may have had many unique components within its structure and mission.
The camp in which the authors participated was independent from any American governmental organization; however, it was loosely affiliated with a mid-sized Midwestern public university. It was developed and supervised by a person with ties to this specific university, and this coordinator recruited primarily students from this single institution to participate. This camp leader, who was of Thai descent, had been living and working in American higher education for several decades. He oversaw the placement of teachers and worked closely with administrators from the host institutions. The camp teachers were divided within three sites in Thailand, including locations in northern, central, and southern Thailand. Approximately ten English teachers were assigned to each site and each was affiliated with a different Thai university. A slightly different organizational structure was present between sites, although all teachers had similar training, responsibilities, and expectations. At all locations teachers and students resided in a resort or dormitory together for the entirety of the camp. Although evening interaction was not typically coordinated formally, students and teachers often spent time socializing outside of the formal teaching environment because all participants were staying near each other.

Because of the brief timespan of the camp, teachers were only able to receive short and concentrated training. This consisted of a few seminar meetings in the United States before departure, and a few training sessions on-site in Thailand. In addition, teachers received a teaching manual which outlined lessons and materials to implement throughout the camp. The manual was extensive, including daily objectives and activities. In addition, as the camp structure valued collaboration, many teachers worked together to develop specific plans and daily educational activities. Some teachers even regularly combined classrooms to facilitate a co-teaching experience. Class sizes between camps typically ranged from five to ten students per teacher, which allowed rapport to be built quickly. This element of the camp was highly strategic as an important aspect of cross-cultural teaching experiences includes learning that takes place through informal interaction between teachers and their students, which may happen both in and outside of the classroom (Zhang, 2014). Student background and ability with the English language varied significantly among the sites and specific classrooms. Some students spoke English very well, understanding and participating in conversational English easily, while others knew few English words and rarely, if ever, attempted to speak English conversationally.
COMMON EXPERIENCES OF INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH TEACHERS

Though the experience of teaching in a particular English-teaching setting is always unique, many may also characterize broad elements that may be important or useful to other prospective or current international teachers. International teaching experiences may elicit common thoughts, feelings, practices, and reactions. Themes relevant to this international teaching experience were drawn from the journaling of the two authors of this piece. Each author kept a semi-structured journal that reflected upon the daily activities of the camp, as well as the thoughts and feelings that were elicited throughout the experience. Common themes between the two teachers (the authors of this piece) were established upon a later reflection on the journalings, which was conducted approximately one year after the experience concluded. Within this examination, themes were established based on the amount of attention (e.g. amount of writing) they were given within the journalings. The primary mutual themes included an overall feeling of adventure and excitement early within the experience, a development of cross-cultural instructional skills, feelings of frustration and anxiety, and the building of deep and meaningful cross-cultural relationships.

ADVENTURE & EXCITEMENT

Likely one of the most significant factors influencing prospective educators to consider international teaching is the feeling of adventure such as experience can incite. A feeling of exploration and excitement is typical, especially during the early parts of the teaching experience, as the opportunity is fresh and exhilarating, and allows the teacher him or herself to feel a personal broadening of knowledge regarding the world. Coryell's article (2011) about adult learners and globalization programs eloquently notes that these teachers will be “interacting and learning (from) the sights, sounds, smells, physical sensations, cultural practices, and foreign people and languages when a foreign city is the classroom” (p. 10). This characterization indicates that international teachers, while providing education, are also participating in an active and unique learning experience themselves. Although international teachers are often interested in the education they will be delivering, they are likely also interested in the personal benefit of experiencing a new part of the world.

There is no doubt that global immersion experiences offer both individual development and adventure. While this is likely characteristic, in some way, of the entirety of a teaching program, it is more likely to be identified especially early within the experience (Mumford, 2000). This early stage of travel is often referred to as the “honeymoon phase”: during this phase the new location often seems magnificent, and the newcomer teacher may anticipate this new location will be perfect in every way, or at the very least,
better than his or her homeland (Winn, 2009). While the excitement associated with the honeymoon phase does not last forever and may not even last beyond a month or so, it is undeniably an influential factor in the decision of many to teach abroad, especially among those who have traveled internationally for only short periods of time and may have never moved out of the honeymoon phase. Within the journalings examined for this chapter, anticipation and enthusiasm, particularly early within the camp, were prevalent, and each participant characterized the beginning of their ventures as adrenaline-charged. Lindsey wrote:

> On Monday, we traveled in busses to meet our students. The 15-minute ride seemed to last an hour. My nerves were calmed as soon as I read the slogan below the ‘Prince of Songkla University’ sign which read, ‘Our soul is for the benefit of mankind’.

Lindsey’s response went on to indicate what may be common among international teachers, in that she was initially unsure of what to expect from the program, university, and students she would be working with, which caused some anxiety but mostly anticipation. Tobin similarly wrote within his journal:

> Today it begins. I will be going from Louisville to Chicago to Seoul, South Korea, then finally, about 24 hours later, to Bangkok, Thailand. I’m as excited as ever, just ready for this day to end and to arrive in Thailand. I know when I do; my lack of sleep will be worth it.

Tobin wrote about many of the early phases of the experience the way he did about his pre-departure, and he was clearly excited to see what was ahead. While these experiences are undoubtedly thrilling at some points, this may not be the case throughout the entire experience, as the situation and location will likely soon become much more familiar and predictable. Even in the brief span of this particular teaching program, it was apparent that excitement declined to some degree after arrival for both participants.

This decline in excitement would likely become more significant in English teachers participating in entire year or longer positions. As with any new venture, the unknown aspect of international experiences—the same part that makes them so exciting beforehand—often quickly decreases as the actual experience begins. Some students may find this comforting, especially those who were less interested in exploring the unknown and more attracted to the actual teaching opportunity. Those who are thrill-seekers and mostly attracted to the idea of a new experience, may find this abatement of excitement disappointing. While it is important to note that there may be many exciting parts of an international teaching involvement, and teachers can often continue to travel and explore on vacation or breaks, the anticipation of the beginning parts of the experience are often difficult to duplicate thereafter.
CROSS-CULTURAL INSTRUCTIONAL SKILLS

The experience teaching in an intensive English camp inevitably builds multicultural instructional skills related to cross-cultural communication, perseverance, and persistence within the educational process. A specific skill built through the practice of the authors as it relates to cross-cultural communication was that of patience. In the camp where the authors taught, many students were self-conscious about their ability to speak English and initially took much prompting to do so. Even those students who spoke English well often struggled with reading and writing the English language. This trend is common among those learning English as a second language. Research by Phakiti and Li (2011) found that even among non-native English speakers who were graduate students in an English-speaking university, difficulties existed particularly in reading and synthesizing information and academic writing. This consideration is important for new English teachers, as many may think of an international teaching experience as only focusing on development of language and speech, although usually they also include a focus on English reading and writing.

An important part of an effective educational experience in relation to this particular English camp was the ability of the teacher to consistently encourage students to attempt to speak, read, and write in English, even when they felt self-conscious doing so. This often required a high level of patience from the instructor, as well as a conveyance of warmth and understanding. This theme is conveyed repeatedly in the literature as an important aspect among those teaching English to speakers of other languages (Moore, 2013; Sowa, 2009). Both teachers within this account indicated a struggle with some of the cross-cultural communication that took place both in and outside of the classroom setting; however, they also indicated that their ability to be persistent and calm throughout the experience improved significantly, in spite of the short duration of the camp. Tobin described his initial difficulty within this cross-cultural communication as follows:

I don’t think I’ve ever appreciated how important and satisfying communication is as much as I do now. My students are so smart and interesting, and I want so badly to be able to hear what they are saying, but especially with (some students) it is so hard. They sometimes will finally speak, and although I can tell they are speaking in English, I can’t tell what they’re saying. I’ll usually say ‘what’ a time or two before, if I’m lucky, (another student) repeats more clearly, and I understand. Then, of course, they won’t try again for a while.

Tobin’s depiction demonstrates how, especially early on within an international teaching experience, cross-cultural communication can be challenging, and can be made more frustrating because of a strong desire to be able to understand.
While Tobin initially found cross-cultural communication challenging, he went on to explain how the expansion of his cross-cultural skills helped to alleviate this problem.

Within the last few days of class, I have really prioritized the exercises in which we read together or the students read a sentence after me. These seem to be less frustrating for everyone because, unlike the more conversational exercises, we all know what is being said. Beyond just helping us to feel productive, I honestly think this is helping me to decipher some of the different accents and pronunciations the students have. Before, I couldn’t help correct them because I didn’t know what they were saying. Now, not only can I help through guiding these adjustments, but I think I am also able to understand their speech better in general. It’s so much better.

Tobin’s journaling went on to convey how he made many other strategic decisions within the classroom that helped him become a better teacher and gain a deeper understanding of the inherent cross-cultural communication present within the experience. It was obvious at many points throughout his writing that he wanted to be able to understand the students’ speech and their culture more fully than he felt was possible at the time. While this theme never completely diminished throughout his journaling, it was apparent that this concern was lessened even through the brief three-week period in which he wrote. This rapidly developing ability to better understand cross-cultural communication is common among international teachers, as early within the experience this is often highly challenging, but later may often come with much more ease (Kratzke & Bertolo, 2013).

FRUSTRATION & ANXIETY

Related to difficulties with cross-cultural communication are feelings of frustration and anxiety. As the anticipation of international teaching is often great, an unanticipated aspect of the experience—particularly by novice teachers—is the difficulty of teaching learners whose cultural and linguistic background may be unlike those encountered through any previous teaching (Getty, 2011). This occurrence can understandably provoke feelings of apprehension. Making this challenge even more difficult can be the fact that, as mentioned previously, within these English-teaching positions, the skills of foreign students’ English abilities are often very diverse, with some barely speaking English while others speak very well. Even among those with similar language skills, significant differences may exist regarding abilities in English reading and writing. This range creates an additional challenge within the classroom, as teachers must learn to simultaneously present to those at very different stages of English aptitude. While the capability of the teacher to meet each student on his or her level may be built over time, this experience can initially feel overwhelming or impossible, especially for those without adequate training in educational techniques and methodologies. Although both participants within this study had previous training within teaching and learning, neither had formal credentials in the field of teacher
education, thus creating some unique challenges. Tobin had been highly involved with international initiatives as a college student, such as previously teaching abroad and participation in various multicultural experiences; however, he had never taught English specifically. He reflected through his journaling on how this was more difficult than he anticipated:

Teaching English is hard. I thought because I'm teaching the language I speak and because I enjoy teaching that is would be easy, but most of the time it isn't. It's hard to explain English logically and sometimes I think I made it more complicated than it needs to be. My strategy for teaching is usually just to talk—but that's probably not the most effective way to teach, especially because (some of the students) don't understand what I'm saying.

Tobin's feeling of uncertainty regarding his teaching methods, which later conveyed a high level of anxiety, is likely common among new English teachers, and was also expressed in some ways by Lindsey. Both wrote about feeling inadequate about their teaching abilities, yet later wrote about their pride in their students' development.

Anxiety and frustration commonly accompany any new professional endeavor, but may be made more prevalent when entering a position in which the professional has very little training. Although the broad nature of necessary training required to enter international teaching positions (e.g. the typical requirement of only a Bachelor's degree in any field of study) in advantageous to those without a teaching credential, it may also make the learning curve for those without adequate experience in education or multiculturalism especially sharp, leading to especially early frustration and anxiety.

**CROSS-CULTURAL RELATIONSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

Undoubtedly, the most memorable and personally valuable aspect of the experience teaching abroad for many, and certainly for the authors of this piece, was the personal relationships that were quickly built between teachers and those within the community and university in which they worked. In their journaling, the authors of this piece focused particularly on the connection they felt with their students. Although the English-teaching camp itself only lasted approximately two weeks, even in this short amount of time, very close friendships were cultivated. This may have been the case for a variety of reasons, such as the immersive nature of the teaching experience itself, which allows teachers and students to work together for an extended period of time each day. Furthermore, teachers within this camp, like many other international teachers who have left their homes, may have felt a sense of vulnerability in this new environment that was eased by connecting with others. It is also possible that the cross-cultural nature of the relationship itself allows for teachers and students to be more willing to make an effort to connect, because of a desire to learn or because of a lack of judgment or assumptions that sometimes accompany inter-cultural relationships. In addition, the residential nature of the camp
which allowed students and teachers to be housed within a single resort or camp space likely allowed a connection to be established more quickly. While these dynamics certainly may have been present and impactful within this experience, a certain unidentifiable factor appeared to be at play as well. Although the journalings mentioned very little that could give insight as to why such strong relationships developed so quickly, they certainly indicated that this happened in an undeniable and powerful way. Tobin wrote:

This morning we had the camp’s closing ceremony. Each group’s students presented a PowerPoint presentation on what they learned through the camp. It was difficult to know it was the last time seeing everyone, but they made the presentations entertaining and funny, so it wasn’t as bad as I expected . . . I’ll miss being here, and mostly the people here . . . they are open, giving, and hilarious—people I wish I could be more like.

Lindsey echoed a similar sentiment about connections she built in the short span of her trip, indicating simply that, for her, the cross-cultural relationships were the most meaningful and memorable part of the experience. Lindsey wrote: “My roommate in Thailand and I decided that the camp had a hidden agenda. We thought we were just going to teach English, but what we learned was that even halfway around the world—people are just people.”

**IMPLICATIONS IN PRACTICE**

The various themes drawn from the journaling of the authors may have practical implications for those interested in similar endeavors, whether short or long-term, in Asia or in other parts of the world, or even for those teaching English to speakers of other languages domestically. While themes such as cross-cultural communication and relationship development have been readily explored in the literature, examining these themes from a first-person prospective can provide additional insight, allowing for a more humanistic understanding of how an occurrence was truly experienced by those who were immersed within it. This research can be incorporated in the action of effective program coordination and practice by administrators, scholars, teachers, or even new-language learners themselves.

Although not generalizable towards the population at large, the experiences of the authors can give understanding to how some may experience international teaching, allowing for a better understanding of the process itself, as well as how to be successful within it. For example, as with the authors of this chapter, adventure and excitement are typically among the most powerful factors pushing a person towards an international teaching experience, but these feelings may not last forever. Those interested in international teaching should honestly assess and adequately explore, prior to making a commitment within international education, how these factors may be influential to their personal fulfillment and
ability to successfully perform job duties in both the short and long-term. While it is of course the prerogative of the prospective teacher to choose how to prioritize aspects of an international teaching experience, it is recommended that one consider the sometimes short-lived span of the feeling of excitement. International teaching may continuously be thrilling for some, but many others may quickly grow accustomed to the routine that often accompanies a teaching position. Even in the best-case scenario, the feeling of excitement typically should be expected to wane after some time in the new setting. Should excitement be a primarily motivator, prospective teachers ought to consider how this feeling may or may not be consistent throughout their international teaching experience, and how this may affect their teaching.

Cross-cultural communication, another theme drawn from the journaling of the authors, is highly important to the practice of various teachers both within and outside of traditional classrooms. Patience appeared to be central to the development of this communication, especially in those cases in which a high level of anxiety was felt by students. Cunningham (2014) found that, likely because of the nervousness experienced by many new English speakers (e.g. students), another strategy to alleviate apprehension and build comfort within the classroom is to use a low-level background music. This method could be used by conversational English teachers as a strategy to make the environment seem less intimidating and more conversational. Teachers may consider beginning their teaching experience by incorporating music that is native to the students into the classroom, as this may help students feel more at ease. Later, however, incorporating American music may continue to alleviate anxiety while simultaneously allowing for teachable activities such as asking students to identify lyrics and convey their meaning. While using music is an example of strategy that may be useful in developing cross-cultural communication, prospective teachers should make informed decisions about how to incorporate music, or any other pedagogical choices, based on a socio-cultural awareness of the particular community of students, to help build cross-cultural communication (Dogancay-Aktuna, 2005).

In summarizing this chapter it is important to note that common characteristics may accompany many international teaching experiences, and some international teachers may closely relate to the experiences of the authors; however, each experience is unique based on its administration, organization, purpose, and location of the program. It is imperative that potential English teachers consider the individual characteristics of differing types of teaching opportunities in which they may hold interest. Prospective teachers can often explore information regarding specific teaching sites in depth, especially with the convenience of websites, digital journals, and message boards that are usually easy to locate on-line. While not every international teaching site has an in-depth critical review that is easy to access digitally, many will, at minimum, give prospective teachers information regarding their mission, values, standard teacher compensation, and various other pieces of information that may be important in a preliminary evaluation. In addition, prospective English teachers should know that nearly
all long-term English teaching positions require a telephone or digital (e.g. FaceTime or Skype) interview process prior to an offer being extended or accepted. While Americans may often think of interviews as an opportunity solely for the employer's evaluation of the job candidate, prospective English teachers should also use this opportunity to evaluate the employer and the opportunity at large. Prospective teachers may consider examining how the educational establishment fits his or her specific wants and needs. In general, it is strongly suggested that prospective English teachers thoroughly investigate the site upon which they ultimately agree to teach. Generalizing all international schools and other educational establishments into a single category is naive. Just like within American education, much variety exists within differing types of opportunities. In addition, those who wish to teach abroad should consider how their cultural background, educational training and experience, and capacity to adapt to a new and altered environment may affect their satisfaction within an international teaching experience.

International teaching can be an exhilarating, insightful, and highly valuable experience. For those who enjoy teaching and traveling, it is certainly an option to be considered. While in general the experience provides many magnificent opportunities, there are aspects that must be considered beforehand. Before committing to international teaching at any length, prospective teachers should gather as much knowledge as possible about what is to be expected from their site. While many factors can be impactful within the experience, and there is much information to consider, the authors of this piece would like to conclude with a final recommendation about international teaching: if you are interested in a unique opportunity which will build cross-cultural competency in a variety of contexts, you should do it.
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“Rethinking the Stories We Publish, Shelve, and Read: Rethinking Children’s Literature”

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INTRODUCTION:

What children's books were your favorites? Why?

What books held a special place on the bookshelves of your home, at your school, or in your local library? Why?

Who helped you discover those books? Which gatekeepers shared those books with you? (Parents, family members like grandparents or siblings, teachers, librarians, peers, or self-discovery?)

We are wired, some might even argue, hard-wired by the stories we are told and the stories we read. The messages in children's picture books are delivered simply and illustrated beautifully. Those early stories shape us and become our maxims in life.

Caterpillars become beautiful butterflies; It's good to rebel and have “fun that is funny”; to try something different like green eggs and ham; to say goodnight to the moon and everything else in your room before you go to sleep; to go outside and play on a snowy day; to know that your mother loves you more than you will ever know; that being sent to your room isn't the worst thing because imagined wild things come to life beyond your bedroom door; that your beloved teddy bear lives a secret life when you sleep; that your teacher is always right; and that if you have a terrible, horrible no good day, you can always try again tomorrow to make it better.

Why are these classic stories “treasured” and “timeless”? Is it because the stories poignantly speak to everyone? Is it because they are handed down from generation to generation? And, are they truly timeless? Or, are they considered timeless because they are the children's books that are accepted by editors at publishing houses, and then purchased and shelved by bookstores and libraries, and finally read to us by librarians, parents, and teachers? Do these stories really speak to all students? Can every student identify with a character or an event in these classic and treasured tales? Are the cultural messages we are delivering positive, or do they reinforce the hegemony of the white, middle class?
These are questions that have nagged at me for years. I have been using children’s picture books as supportive texts in my own English classroom teaching for twenty-four years and in the teaching of an exclusive course in children’s literature at the university for eight years. And, while I bring multicultural titles to the table with the classics, was I really creating an opportunity for new thinking about these titles and about social and educational justice? We know that salting our curriculum with a few multicultural books is NOT truly multicultural education, but instead what Miller (1997) refers to as a “multicultural moment” (p.88). Fish (2015) reminds us that “Teachers who own literature by authors form different backgrounds is great but it is not enough. True multicultural activities must be ongoing and integrated daily in both informal and formal activities” (para.7). I wanted to do more than have my students think about a book, I wanted them to rethink and react differently to the inequities and injustices in the world.

And besides, students already know the classics, so why bring them to the table at all? By only using the classics or a few multicultural texts, was I really impacting the messages my students would deliver to their future classrooms? Was I revealing the truth of how a book is published, marketed, sold, shelved, and then told? No. The truth is that I too found comfort in the classics, and I wasn't the risk taker I encouraged my own students to be.

Paul Gorski’s work with Equity Literacy was critical in my redesign thinking. Gorski is upfront in explaining that the only way we can eradicate the achievement gap we have in American public schools is by eliminating poverty. But, since that isn’t possible, Gorski (2014) has developed a model to ensure that literacy is equally accessible to all students.

Gorski (2014) defines equity literacy as the “cultivation of the skills and consciousness that enable us to recognize, respond to, and redress conditions that deny some students access to educational and other opportunities enjoyed by their peers”. (Defining Equity Literacy, para. 1). Gorski (2014) constructed the Equity Literacy Framework “with an acknowledgement of both the strengths and limitations of existing frameworks for engaging the full diversity of youth in schools” (Defining Equity Literacy, para. 1).

Gorski and his colleagues who write, publish, and present on Equity Literary are committed to combatting many of the school’s cultural competence programs that focus on culture and not equity. Gorski and Swalwell (2015) explain, “when it comes to education, the trouble is not a lack of multicultural programs or diversity initiatives in schools,” but that the initiatives in place “avoid or whitewash serious equity issues” (pp.34-35).
There is a gap between how students feel marginalized and what adults are “comfortable” implementing in the “name of multiculturalism” (p. 35). As the authors point out, a discussion about Civil Rights might turn into a “sanitized” discussion of King’s speech “I have a Dream.” This “culture fetish,” clarifies the authors, doesn’t provide space to offer more critical and “serious curricular (and institutional) attention to issues like racism and homophobia because they present the illusion of multicultural learning” (p. 36).

Equity Literacy abilities, outlined by Gorski’s (2014) framework, require that educators are able to:

• Recognize biases and inequities including subtle biases and inequities

• Respond to biases and inequities in the immediate term

• Redress biases and inequities in the long term; and create and sustain a bias-free and equitable learning environment (Equity literacy abilities, para. 1-4).

The associated skills and dispositions to meet those abilities include using the course content to advocate for just or unjust actions, rejecting deficit views, intervening when biases occur, engaging students in dialogue about equity and inequity, advocating against inequity practices in the school, responding with cultural celebrations, teaching about topics of inequity like homophobia and poverty, including families in the dialogue and content, and using critical and creative thinking pedagogical strategies allowing students to be authentic in their responses (Gorski, 2014, para. 1-4).

Gorski is recommending that after we first have established the ability to recognize our own bias and responses that we then teach our students to question, to reflect, and to engage with the community and then to respond with ideas for change.

Linda Christensen (2000), celebrated English/language arts activist and author has written curricular programs such as *Reading, Writing, and Rising Up*, and *Teaching for Joy and Justice*. She reminds us that all “reading and writing are ultimately political acts” (p. vii). Every teacher who chooses what text students will read to learn the content, and what kinds of prompts students write to or speak to, has created an agenda—and agendas are political. When teachers design curriculum and activities, they are accessing, sorting, and prioritizing what must be understood as true.

Examples of teachers using this model include teacher Jessica Singer. In her article with researcher, Ruth Shagoury (2006), they reveal how Singer is “stirring up justice” by having her students write to change the world. Her year-long curriculum was focused on one central theme: social activism. (p.320). Singer clearly explained the year-long journey to students and set ground expectations for participating and positive encouragement.
Her class represented a diverse ethnic and socioeconomic class of students. Her goal was to meet students where they were and help them develop their understanding and inquiries. Singer employed Harste’s (2003) model of inquiry. Harste, who was one of the author’s major professors in her graduate program was always reminded by Harste to allow students to ask the questions about what they are curious about, about what they really want to know and about what makes them “itch” and then build the curriculum and activities around those questions (p.11).

To learn more, students read a variety of genres and used a variety of media to support this theme. (p. 319). In terms of her writing instruction, Singer taught traditional writing strategies like use of figurative language, setting, dialogue, and imagery, but she posited those within write for change papers and projects. After reading, reflecting, and writing, students chose a topic of personal interest that would “stir up justice.” All were local issues. Some focused on environmental issues, some on gang violence, and some on labor practices. Singer even took on her own project, modeling her own writing with students.

Students used different mediums for a final gallery and presentation of their year-long work. Because students want to be inspired, want to engaged, want to have agency and choice in what they read and write, the classroom became a rigorous and project-based “safe space” for students to discuss these topics and discuss them critically (p.333). This curricular design “created a foundation and the tools necessary for students to step into the world of activism” (p.338).

In the remainder of this chapter, join me as I share my own year-long journey of rethinking children’s literature and then teach my university students to rethink what they will read and shelve with their future students. At the university, we have a series of questions that must be answered in the redesign proposal of an established course. So, each section below highlights a question from the proposal, along with my metacognitive thinking and the answers I arrived at.
WHY DO YOU AS A TEACHER INSPIRE STUDENTS TO LEARN?

On my one-hour long commute home from work, I was mulling over that question in the design proposal. As I often do, I started talking out loud into the voice recorder of my smart phone. After a fifteen-minute long rambling reflection, I arrived at a summation.

“I am a teacher, an activist, a spacemaker...someone who creates space for transformation.”
<long pause>
“I am a catalyst.”

Those two quotes led me in the direction I needed to go to complete the redesign of my course in Children's Literature. At my university, Children's Literature is a required course for elementary education teacher education students, and it is understandably a favorite course. We all have warm and fond memories of picture books and our favorite beloved characters from those books. The majority of our elementary education majors at Ball State University mirror the national statistics, which relate that 76% of elementary school teachers are white women from the middle class (Teacher Trends, 2014, para. 3). I knew that my Ball State students would not welcome the idea that their typical and beloved classics would not be taught in the course. So, I had to convince not only a committee at the university to allow this course, but if approved, I would have to convince my students as well.

HOW DO YOU AS A TEACHER INSPIRE STUDENTS TO LEARN?

University teacher education students want to be inspired and engaged. So, as their professor, I am first and foremost, honest. In my teaching, I tell my own stories and in doing so, I create a community where students can tell theirs. As a class, we bring our background experiences into the course and then we blend in what we are reading, studying, learning and then we uncover, discover—reciprocally teaching one another.

This level of engagement requires that I practice what I preach. Each course session I teach uses Wiggins and McTighe's (1998) backward design curriculum model which requires the instructor to ask “what is worthy of enduring understanding?”. I pose that question first to myself in terms of selecting readings, media, and activities, and then to my students because at the end of that course period, they, too, should be able to answer that question based upon what was delivered. Good teaching is all about design and delivery.
In this new course, I proposed bringing in children’s literature that inspired, first, curiosity. I wanted to reveal secrets about classic or popular children’s literature. I wanted that curiosity and telling secrets to then build and turn into inquiry. Inquiry would then transform my students into consumers and critical researchers and readers of children’s literature.

A discovery I have uncovered about university teacher education students is that they really do want to make a difference. It’s not just lip service. They can tell you about a children’s story that has changed their life, a character they have identified with, that has made them feel safe or happy or allowed them to escape. They will tell you that they want to be elementary teachers because they want to tell and teach these stories. But, they want to teach the stories they love and that they identify with. Helping students recognize this as a good intent, but as flawed practice is critical.

**EXPLAIN HOW YOU WOULD LIKE TO ENHANCE AN EXISTING COURSE TO PROVIDE AN INNOVATIVE AND UNIQUE LEARNING EXPERIENCE.**

Children’s literature represents one of the largest publishing markets, yet children are not always hearing their stories. Children don’t know or can’t always access works that relate to their individual identities.

Think about the spaces and places where literature lives. Bookstores (which are dwindling and becoming larger and less independent), libraries (whose funding is being slashed all over the country), department stores (who stock only what sells and what sells is what is popular or “classic”), and classrooms (where the choices are contingent on the curriculum and the stories the individual teacher knows and since 76% of teachers are white and from middle class backgrounds, these stories may not be inclusive). (Teacher Trends, 2014, para. 3).

Diversity in children’s literature is critical in constructing culture and community identity. We grow up and are conditioned and ultimately wired and re-wired by the stories we read, hear, and retell as children. This gatekeeping that happens at home, in schools, and in communities often prevents new stories, different stories, rewritten stories from being consumed, read, and valued as quality literature.

I was awarded the student nominated university-wide Excellence in Teaching award at Ball State University and with that award comes the opportunity to redesign or design a dream course at the university. As a teacher, writer, and activist, the choice for me was clear. Transform the “required for every elementary teaching major Children’s Literature course” into a course titled “Rethinking Children’s Literature.”
The course redesign was driven by my 24 years of teaching experience, research, and work. My discovery has been that children are not hearing their stories: stories about children like them, about families like theirs, about experiences they have, about lives they actually live. Children, teachers, parents, even librarians don’t always know or can’t find or don’t have access to children’s works that relate to these diverse identities; therefore, the opportunity to construct, reconstruct, or create a better community is not there.

The majority of my undergraduate students at Ball State University are white and are female and do come from working middle class families, many first time university attendees and from rural communities in the Midwest. My goal was to open the gate to them, to get them to rethink children’s literature and then invite them to read and write for change (Jones, 2015, p. 34)

In my proposal, I made it clear that I wanted to read, rethink, and write with my students. To make that possible, I would need to expand the reading list, reconstruct the method of teaching with assignments that allow for contextual, pedagogical, and culturally relevancy, and create the opportunity for reflexivity and reconstruction of meaning.

I wanted my students to experience tough talk over tough text. (O’Donnell-Allen, 2011).

Together, I suggested we would research, read, and review books that addressed not just the literary and literacy needs of our students, but the diverse social, and cultural needs of students as well. Topics would include Families (families with single mothers, two mothers, single fathers, working mothers, grandparents, two fathers, a parent in prison, etc...), Religious and cultural practices, Differently abled characters, Characters that identify as LGBTQ, Topics of Race, Poverty, and Bullying. Together we would rethink children's literature.

And, finally, together we would create a web media composition based project where we would inspire other students and educators to also rethink the children’s literature they use in their classrooms and to join us in reading for change. This media composition would not only educate, but also become a platform of strategies for:

• Using children’s literature as a way to raise social consciousness

• Situating children’s literature in the social justice literature

• Reading not only the word, but the world (Friere, 1979)
This project would allow our learning community and our work to become live, visible, archived, and interactive. In a typical semester course, it ends. With this media platform, we could create momentum by passing the torch to future students in the course, making this project both organic and sustainable.

**SO, WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?**

The course redesign was approved. The committee was supportive of my vision. I had convinced one audience. But, what about the most important audience, the students? The redesign vision had to be turned into a teaching reality.

I spent countless hours doing academic research on the role of children's literature with these specialized topics, compiling, reading, and analyzing hundreds of new children's literature titles. A question I am often asked about my course is, “Can you really find children's picture and chapter books that talk about those topics?” The use of the demonstrative “those” almost always infers a tone of judgment. A distancing. As though a children's book about being gay or about being disabled is wrong. My answer is always, “Yes.” There are publishers, large and independent, actively addressing topics of social and educational justice, committed to publishing marginalized voices, but those books may not be popular sellers or known. You may not see them in the libraries and stores where you browse and buy.

Next, I had to build a syllabus and tasks from the ground up. And, finally, I had to discover and access the best media tool to launch the end product, a format that would make our rethinking of children's literature both visible and sustainable.

I am fortunate to work at a university that has a strong technology and unified media team and who supports creative and immersive projects. As is often the case in academia, I wasn't aware of the amazing media work and projects happening outside of my own department. With this redesign, I had to seek out those individuals and departments using different media publishing tools so I could decide if those tools would work for my project.

Below is a sample of the twenty pages of notes, my thinking on paper, that I took while meeting with my colleagues:

In the classroom and on this media composition, I want to implement “raw” and “real.”
I need to push my students past their childhood-constructed identity to a new one and get them to illustrate that construction as a media composition.

Digital Literacy is a goal of mine; I want my preservice teachers to also embrace digital literacy and multimodal thinking because they will have to use these tools in their own classrooms someday.

There are so many new forms of digital publishing. Each of them is a silo. Which silo will I choose: ebooks? Print on demand? A website? A digi book? We will be discussing the gatekeeping of publishers, so I want my format to be independent so we can open our own gates.

Copyright will be an issue. Children's books are a double whammy because there are copyrights on the images and the words. And the art culture is much more litigious than word culture. For example, you can quote a book, but you can't quote images or use images. We will have to be careful with this process.

I need for the format to be device agnostic, to build something that the material can be accessible and available anywhere and with anything so the material can be used with anywhere.

I am an editor for an independent press, INwords Publications. I have experience creating and editing anthology collections. I should consider creating a literary magazine dedicated to children's literature that embodies the vision of the course. BSU has access to DPS Adobe Digital Publishing, which is only used for digital magazines. A free app can be downloaded publically via iTunes or the Android Market.

Eureka! A literary digital magazine it is! After edition 1, each issue could be themed to feature children's picture books that address topics of culture and religion, disability, or LGBTQ. My students would create all the content including book trailers, book reviews and information about the authors, teaching ideas for the books, share their own rethinking journeys, and even write their own original works.
The result? Teaching students to rethink children’s literature was a success.

Explain and give an example of some of your best classroom practices.

In my teaching, I never allow for passivity. I take action immediately. I started day one with a read aloud, *The Three Questions* by Jon J. Muth (2002). An allegory by Leo Tolstoy put to picture book format, the main character poses three questions: *When is the best time to do things? Who is the most important one? And, What is the right thing to do?* I have students introduce themselves to each other and to me by answering those three questions philosophically and logistically and explaining why. I make it clear that students should answer loud and proud, and that there is no judgment.

Answers were simple and vary, but spoke volumes about that individual. We learned far more than a name, a major, and a hometown. We heard that God, Allah, their mother, their child, or they themselves are the most important one. We heard that the best time to do things is right now or at the last minute and we heard why that student thinks and operates that way. We heard that the right thing to do is to serve others or to serve our own best interests. It gave me a sense of not only how students will do their work for the class, but also the philosophical underpinnings they brought to the course.

As the course progressed, we kept up the momentum from day one. We didn't dip our toe in and slowly immerse ourselves in the shallow end of the pool, but rather dove right into the deep end. Every day a new text was presented, and I taught students to first ask questions, then to analyze the work, to critique, to make meaning, and to generate answers to their own questions. They learned that we are not just a course, but a community of learners and teachers and their voice is critical to that community. Without their voice, we were deprived of a perspective we wouldn't have considered. Their voice, their participation, their questions matter.

For example, we read aloud a classic text, *Snowy Day* by Ezra Jack Keats. Most students know the book. I asked students what they know about the book before I read it aloud. I asked them if the author is black or white, what they think the story is about, and why the book is considered a classic. The answers were always the same: the author is black, the story is about enjoying a snowy day, and because it is appealing theme of playing in the snow. After I read it aloud, I shared that in fact the book was written by a white Jewish man, and it is considered a classic because it was the very first children's picture book depicting African American characters and published by a known publisher. We move to the author’s, Ezra Jack Keats, foundation website to learn more.
Then, I placed the text on a document camera where we analyzed both the text and the images. I teach them very early on that to read a children's picture book, the reader must marry the text and imagery. The text only tells part of the story; the images complete the story. We read the words, and then read the image. We analyzed the literary and artistic elements of characterization, setting, characterization, point of view, voice, tone, mood, figurative language, conflict, climax, and style. Students first analyzed the text and then visited the art to see if the art sends a different interpretation to the textual analysis.

As we moved through each page in textual and visual analysis, we discussed what is happening in *Snowy Day* and why it is happening. I often heard statements like, “the character lives in an apartment building and must be poor”. I ask how they know this and they show me the image of the building with many windows, and the fact that the boy is unsupervised while outside, and that the mother is giving the child a bath alone so she must be single and poor. They make stereotypes that I then had to unpack. Because so many of my university students come from rural areas, they don't understand that just because you live in an apartment doesn't mean you are poor, that the author is from New York City and himself lived in an apartment building. This is a setting that he know and his characters were based upon children in the neighborhood where he lived, that mothers giving children a bath alone in a bathroom isn't unusual for even children who come from their definition of a “traditional family,” and finally that the text is set in the 60's when people did still feel safe enough to allow their children outside alone to play.

We took note of the dark scenes where the boys are throwing snowballs and notice the different shades of brown and white faces. We asked what kinds of statements Keats was making by showing us this neighborhood bullying. We talked too about the simple wonder of trying to hold onto that last snowball in the pocket as a memory of that snowy day. For homework, they read several essays both praising and critiquing Keat’s quiet Civil Rights work and the African American and literary communities reactions to *Snowy Day*. We spent two days on one small, classic children's book. Students quickly learn how complex children's picture books are. It's not “kiddie” lit; it's literature.

The course continued with this daily analysis of text, and included journals where students dialogue with me about aha moments, about what they are learning, and about what they still don't understand. Students researched and wrote. They went out to the spaces and places where pictures books are sold or borrowed and they examined and reported on the titles and the content. They completed a thematic analysis and close readings of a group of texts that fell under a single topic related to social or educational justice such as disability, racism, poverty, religion, or LGBTQ. They completed an author analysis over one of their authors from their close reading, and then finally they created book trailers, book reviews, and create teacher tasks that could be used to teach their collection of books.
I gave students choices of the picture books they work with for major assignments as long as they are books that ask us to rethink social or educational justice. My goal in the course was to nurture their gifts and their weaknesses. Because if they failed, I failed. Their future elementary age classroom students would be failed if I couldn’t get my university students to understand how important stories are in shaping a cultural and classroom narrative. It was and is my responsibility to model what I wanted them to do with their future students so they knew that this is more than just a class, it was an opportunity to rethink the stories we choose to read and teach our students in the classroom. I believe in the much larger context and role children’s literature can play not only in their teaching lives, but in the actual lived lives of people and their actions in society.

I taught five total sections of the course between the Spring and Fall semesters of 2014. I was very honest with students about the new syllabus and curriculum.

We began the course by exploring and answering those questions in the introduction among others about own literary memoirs, physically going out to those spaces and places where children’s books reside and questioning what titles were on those shelves, participating in cultural exchanges, swapping children’s stories with someone “different” from us, sharing our own culturally relevant stories that we read and re-read as children, and analyzed and discussed over fifty titles of fiction and nonfiction picture and chapter books that talked about race, religion, violence, disability, different families, and gender issues.

And then, we talked about how we could teach these books in a classroom and reach ALL of our students. We ended the semester by designing material for the digital literary magazine that reflected we could both feature and create text for our students to identify with, but also encourage other teachers and students to be inclusive of students whose lives are uniquely different from theirs.

Was there some resistance? Yes, of course. But I knew that, and I welcomed it. All dialogue is good. I like to challenge, and I like to be challenged. It makes my students and me better teachers.

In the words of an at first resistant student in the course, “It’s not about me. It’s not about my personal values, but about the social values of my students who live and study in this world and the responsibility I have as a teacher to my students.”
AND THEN WHAT HAPPENED? OUR RETHINKING, OUR LEARNING WAS PUBLISHED!

During the course, I was fortunate to partner with George and Frances Ball Distinguished Professor of Multimedia, Jennifer Palilonis at the university. Ball State is an Adobe case study school, which means we have access to the same sophisticated software packages used to publish your favorite Conde Nast publications such as *The New Yorker*, *Vogue*, and *Architectural Digest*.

Students on Jennifer’s media team partnered with my education students to build a digital magazine that will now be published once a year through a free app, Rethinking Children’s Literature. Each edition includes text, video, and imagery. It reads left to right and up and down. For example, in the second edition, hear from celebrated children’s book writer and featured Ted speaker, Jarrett J. Krosoczka, view featured book trailers from a variety of authors including Leslea Newman, Patricia Polacco’s, and Queen Rania Al Abdullah of Jordan, check out teacher resources and ideas, and read rewritten and original stories such as Goodnight Hospital Room, a piece that parodies Brown and Hurd’s classic book and is meant to provide comfort to children who are in need of chronic care, Syd the Fella about a prince looking for his partner, and The Shot Heard Around the Town: The Story About How One Boy Can Change the World, an original tale that advocates for nonviolence in our communities. (Jones, 2015, p. 35)
READ THE MAGAZINE!

My students and I hope you will now join us in this journey of opening the gates to rethink and rewrite children's literature.

Check out our webpage and information about future submissions at:

www.rethinkingkidlit.com

Download the free app, BSU NOW, to your tablet or phone through the App Store or the Android Market.

And, join the conversation!

Twitter: https://twitter.com/rethinkkidlit

Or Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/rethinkingkidlit
TAKE AWAY IDEAS FOR HOW YOU CAN RETHINK AND REDesign YOUR COURSE AND CONTENT WITH YOUR STUDENTS TO ALLOW FOR DIVERSITY

• STOP telling students to go out and make a difference. STOP telling students your stories of how you made a difference. START making a difference together.

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Implementing A Psychodynamic Approach With South Asian Women

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South Asians are a diverse group and South Asian women are a cultural group that has received minimal attention in the psychological literature. The current chapter explores the benefits of using and conceptualizing psychological concerns that might be presented by South Asian women from a psychodynamic perspective. It has been argued that more structured psychotherapies are preferred by such clients. Scholars have argued that psychodynamic psychotherapy is highly applicable to ethnic minorities, particularly immigrants and immigrant, women given their ability to explore the multi-layered meaning of cultural identity (Tummala-Nara 2011). South Asian culture emphasizes interpersonal relationships and embracing familial and cultural history, both of which are core aspects of psychodynamic psychotherapy. Furthermore, psychodynamic psychotherapy addresses the complexity of balancing cultural expectations that are often the source of profound emotional conflicts and are integral to understanding the individual (Roland, 1996). Finally, clinical implications with this population will be discussed.

**Keywords:** South Asian, Women, Psychodynamic Psychotherapy, Conceptualization, Acculturation, Gender Roles, Resistance, Cultural Identity, Multicultural Counseling
Consider the following vignette:

Supreet is a 29-year-old Sikh, Indian American woman that self-identifies exclusively as being “Indian,” despite being born and raised in the United States. She is seeking therapy because of recent distress navigating work and familial obligations. Supreet’s parents decided to leave India after the 1984 Delhi riots, where Sikhs were brutally attacked and targeted by members of the Hindu majority group. Fearing for their safety, they sought political asylum and immigrated to the US in 1985. Throughout her life, Supreet spent the majority of her time outside of school interacting predominantly with individuals from her religious group, i.e. her family and/or Sikh community members at the local Gurdwara (Sikh place of worship). While Supreet is fluent in English, she still feels most comfortable expressing herself in Punjabi, her native tongue. Despite feeling a strong connection to her family and her cultural group, and believing that she does not demonstrate “Americanized” mannerisms or beliefs, Supreet’s parents maintain that she is an “American,” not an “Indian.” Supreet finds such statements to be distressing, as the only time she identifies herself as “American” is for official purposes, such as legal documents inquiring about her nationality. Since graduating from law school 4 years earlier, Supreet has been working at a law firm that specializes in immigration and international law. Given the obstacles her parents faced when trying to flee a hostile and unsafe environment, Supreet found herself drawn to working with individuals seeking asylum in the US. She is motivated by the meaning she finds in her work, gladly contending with the long hours needed to be an effective advocate for her clients. Supreet has learned that it is imperative for her to be assertive in this role, something she felt uncomfortable about initially. Though her discomfort about being a driven and determined attorney has abated, she still struggles to reconcile her role at work to her role as a deferential and agreeable daughter, finding that they are seemingly disparate identities. This conflict has been fueled by intermittent comments from her co-workers, who have repeatedly expressed confusion about why a successful, ambitious woman would allow her parents to arrange her marriage. She has felt this conflict even more keenly since she was offered a promotion to be lead attorney for asylum cases. Though Supreet has considered that the promotion would entail a salary increase and allow her to focus entirely on the cases she is most passionate about, it would also require her to work longer hours. When discussing the offer of promotion with her parents, they decided it was best that she turn it down, given the need to focus on her upcoming marriage, firmly prioritizing her roles as a future wife and mother. Though Supreet knows she should ask her parents to reconsider, she feels she cannot given the strict hierarchical and patriarchal nature of her family experiencing an emerging ambivalence towards deferring to their decisions. Consequently, Supreet is contending with high levels of anxiety, as she is more aware of her desire to operate in autonomously by accepting the promotion and focusing on her career, similar to the “American” women colleagues. Choosing her career over the wishes of her family feels inconsistent with her identity as an “Indian” woman.
Supreet presents with familial and occupational stressors that are leading her to seek therapy. This case will be used to highlight the clinical themes and personality structure that pertain to the use of Psychodynamic psychotherapy with South Asian women.
Clinicians have argued that clients from Asian cultural backgrounds such as China, Korea, and India, prefer a more structured form of psychotherapy where therapists are more directive (Li, & Kim, 2004; Sue, 1983; Sue et al., 1996). However, while there is some benefit to having structure in the treatment this assumption inaccurately implies that ethnic minorities might lack the insight and ability to critically explore their experiences on a deeper level (Foster, 1998). Moreover, other scholars have argued that psychodynamic psychotherapy is highly applicable to ethnic minorities, in particular immigrants and immigrant women, given the theory's ability to explore cultural meaning and identity on a deeper level (Tummala-Nara, 2013). Psychodynamic psychotherapy addresses the complexity of South Asian women’s identities as a result of balancing various cultural expectations of being a woman. South Asian culture emphasizes interpersonal relationships and embracing the past, both of which are core aspects of psychodynamic psychotherapy. Roland (1996), states that cultural and social factors are important in understanding the individual because they are often the source of profound emotional conflicts. Thus, for South Asian women the sociocultural expectations can be a source of strain that needs to be explored at a deeper level. Additionally, these cultural expectations must be understood by the therapist in order to fully appreciate the identity of South Asian women. This chapter addresses how to conceptualize South Asian women from a psychodynamic perspective given the themes that emerge for this specific population in psychotherapy. Specifically, we will discuss themes such as, bi-cultural identity, gender roles, and resistance that might emerge when working with South Asian women.
South Asians have been immigrating to the United States (U.S.) in increasing numbers since the mid-1960s based on changes in immigration policy (Almeida, 1996; Jayakar, 1994). This diverse group has included individuals originating from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka (Diller, 2014). Kurien (2001), states that while there are no national or regional statistics that highlight the exact number of South Asian groups belonging to the diverse religions represented in South Asia, there is much religious diversity within this group. For example, Asian Indians as a group by themselves vary in their cultural and religious practices. Approximately eighty-three percent of Indians living in India are Hindu, 11% are Muslim, 3% Christian and 2% Sikh. South Asians constitute the second largest group of Asian Americans in the U.S. following the Chinese (Diller, 2014). Uba (1994) and Jayakar (1994) note that, despite their increased presence in the U.S., South Asians rarely seek out psychological services and are seldom studied by Western psychologists. There is an underrepresentation of South Asian women’s experience in the literature (Badruddoja, 2006). Though relatively few South Asian women immigrate to the U.S. on their own, typically as students or to seek employment, there is an expectation to start a family or bring family members to join them (Lessinger, 1995).

However, regardless of whether the South Asian woman is a first generation immigrant, who came to the U.S. first, or a second generation woman, who was born to immigrant parents, there are some common features that are associated with South Asian culture in general. Family, collectivism, and ethnic identity concerns are three common aspects of the South Asian culture. The following sections will discuss each of these distinct aspects of South Asian culture in detail.

**FAMILY AND CULTURAL IDENTITY**

A salient influence on a South Asian woman’s identity is her family. She learns from a young age that parents are to be honored and revered and that there are clearly defined roles for parents and children. Fathers are to be the primary providers and decision makers whilst children are tasked with bringing honor to their families through their achievements (Durvasula & Mylvaganam, 1994). Furthermore, though the nuclear family unit takes precedence over the extended family, (Ramisetty-Mikler, 1993), they are jointly the main source of emotional support (Pedersen, 1981) and play a significant role in major decisions. As such, South Asians tend to de-emphasize developing a sense of self that is separate from the family (Inman et al., 2001) with the understanding that an individual’s actions affect not only themselves but also their family and those in their community.

This importance placed on family and community has led researchers to understand Asians as a whole as embracing collectivism versus individualism (Farver, Narang, & Bhadha, 2002; Triandis

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& Gelfand, 1998). Triandis (1989) defines collectivism, as the enduring perception that an individual is an integrated part of a group while individualism is the perception that a person is an autonomous entity. Individualistic cultures encourage independence and self-sufficiency, a contrast to collectivistic cultures where there is overlap between the goals for self and the group (Sandhu, 1997). Individualism is associated with Western cultures (e.g. American) while collectivism is associated with Asian cultures, accounting in this case, for a major difference between South Asian and American cultural beliefs (Farver et al., 2002). Typically collectivists, South Asians tend to value family such that they strive to bring pride and honor to the family regardless of the personal sacrifice and costs to individual freedom (Sandhu, 1997). This is in complete contrast with the American value of independence, the focus in American culture on the differentiation of self and minimal family involvement (Inman et al., 2001). For a South Asian living in the United States, this may mean having to choose between individual and family expectations, possibly leading to conflict within the family depending on where the individual is in the acculturation process (Inman et al., 2001). As such, the family can be a source of strength and distress (Das & Kemp, 1997).

South Asians living in the U.S. have tried to maintain a sense of ethnic self-identity despite the assimilatory forces of the U.S. (Dasgupta, 1998). A significant issue for South Asian women living in the U.S. is acculturation, a psychological distress experienced by immigrants and ethnic minorities (Berry, 1990; Uba, 1994; Ying 1998). South Asian females face the challenge of successful psychosocial adjustment to the new social environment. They are expected to value and maintain their heritage and, at the same time, to adapt to the host society. However, bicultural identity is not easily attained, and many individuals will not seek out psychotherapy because of the stigma associated with it and the discomfort in disclosing personal information about the family (Das & Kemp, 1997; Sodhi, 2008). However, therapy from a psychodynamic perspective emphasizing multicultural and sociocultural factors can help address the cultural norms and nuances, while also stressing relational patterns and defense mechanisms that are used as one navigates two competing identities (Tummala-Narra, 2014). American and South Asian values often conflict in areas of sexuality, deference to authority, view of self, and appropriate levels of displaying emotions. For example, in Asian culture an individual's interdependence is celebrated, which differs from American culture where independence is valued. Therefore, therapy helps address these differences and helps the individual explore how these two opposing values can co-exist. However, during the initial stages of developing a bicultural identity an individual might be ambivalent toward one or both cultures. Furthermore, individuals developing a bicultural identity might appropriately engage in splitting as a way to keep both cultures separate depending on the situation and context. South Asian clients might also introject negative societal messages about the minority culture thus making the integration process more complicated. Each of these defense styles will be explained further in the clinical conceptualization section.
The following section will explore themes that emerge as a result of the variance between the two cultures.

**OVERVIEW OF SOUTH ASIAN GENDER ROLES**

South Asian culture is traditionally hierarchical, as well as patriarchal. Due to the gendered nature of the hierarchy, men are granted a higher status than women (Das & Kemp, 1997). Thus, the oldest male within the family is positioned at the top of the hierarchy and the youngest female is placed at the bottom of the hierarchy (Tummala-Narra 2013; Jayakar, 1994). Consequently, men often hold the decision-making power in significant family decisions, such as finances, education and immigration (Singh, 2009). As it stands, younger South Asian women often have no voice in the hierarchy, with the female that typically holds the least amount of power in the family being the daughter-in-law (Tummala-Narra 2013). Unlike Western cultures where older women are often devalued, it is through seniority of age that a South Asian woman earns the status of an “elder,” which accords her significantly more influence and power within the family (Jayakar, 1994).

The collectivistic orientation of South Asian culture, in addition to its patriarchal nature, generates the development of an interdependent identity for females (Das & Kemp, 1997; Singh, 2009). Her identity becomes defined through her relationships with the men in her life, and she may not fathom the existence of an identity separate from these individuals (Jayakar, 1994). Thus, a young woman may be known within her cultural community as being Bikram’s daughter, or Kaljot’s wife, or Gurlal’s granddaughter, but not by her own name. Females internalize the notion of a “we-self” rather than an “I-self,” (Roland, 1996), as her identity is never separate from other individuals and her family unit as a whole.

By reason of their lower position within the hierarchy, South Asian women are expected to defer to the men in her life and not question their authority. The virtues most esteemed in women are for them to be: obedient, agreeable and submissive (Jayakar, 1994). Additionally, within the collectivistic framework, South Asian women are socialized to value aspirations to be selfless and self-sacrificing, learning that a focus on “one’s own personal needs, wishes, or desires are considered selfish, Western and essentially unacceptable” (Jayakar, 1994, p. 171). A woman is expected to be attentive to both the physical and emotional needs of her family, particularly those of her husband (Tummala-Narra 2013). She is to do whatever is necessary to maintain family harmony and cohesion, even if that requires remaining silent about any distress she is experiencing within the family (Singh, 2009; Abraham, 2000; Shankar, Das, & Atwal, 2013). As a result, this “socialization emphasizes the development of a capacity to adapt to a changed environment without much resistance, and to do what the external environment or authority figure expects her to do” (Jayakar, 1994, p. 171).
A South Asian woman's status within her family and community is primarily linked to her ability to marry and have children – specifically, to be able to provide the family with male children (Ibrahim, Ohnishi, & Sandhu, 1997). A woman remaining unmarried is considered disgraceful, since motherhood is considered a South Asian woman's ultimate aspiration; it is assumed that something must be undesirable about her if she remains unwed. Those women that are unable to bear children face great shame and possibly being ostracized by their in-laws. As a South Asian woman, her inability to fulfill her fundamental duty as a woman may bring about divorce, bringing further shame to her family of origin. When a daughter-in-law gives birth to a son, it often affords her an elevated status within the family, as sons will carry on the legacy of the family and are not considered to be the “economic and moral liability” daughters are (Shankar et al., 2013; Jayakar, 1994). While she may have minimal influence within the family, her behavior holds a lot of power in that maintaining her integrity determines the family's honor (Shankar et al., 2013). Her “misbehaving” may be seen as the family of origin's inability to raise her to be an obedient daughter, creating a potential obstacle for marriage. Consequently, parents place stricter restrictions upon females and closely monitor their behavior, often prohibiting interactions with males outside of the family (Dasgupta, 1998; Akhtar, 2011). Due to the practice of dowry, daughters are considered a financial encumbrance, as her family is obligated to provide the groom's family with money, gold and gifts as compensation for bringing her into their family (Jayakar, 1994).

From a young age, females are cognizant that their acceptance within the family is dependent on displaying the necessary characteristics of deference, selflessness and unremitting resilience, as well as upholding their integrity. South Asian women are placed in a dilemma when residing in the U.S., as they face the paradox of cultural loyalty versus gender empowerment. Due to the gendered racism that South Asian women face in the U.S., their womanhood is considered to be in “diametric opposition to White womanhood” (Patel, 2007, p. 54). Whereas White women are interpreted as being normal and poised, South Asian women are seen as subservient, passive and timid (Pyke & Johnson, 2003; Patel, 2007). Under those circumstances, they must choose to either comply with this restricting and homogenous view of South Asian women, or actively resist this stereotype. As a result, a dichotomy between “traditional” South Asian women and “Americanized” South Asian women is created and internalized, giving rise to tension between the two groups (Patel, 2007; Dasgupta, 1998; Tummala-Narra 2013).

Those South Asian women that try to uphold this unrealistic ideal of being both “traditional” and “Americanized” will experience feelings of guilt and shame when they are unable to meet it (Tummala-Narra 2011). The individualistic culture may pressure a South Asian woman to be more assertive when she is at work in order to avoid being treated in a condescending manner by the majority population and be taken seriously. However, behaving in this manner may contradict her superego ideal self. The resulting anxiety may lead to the utilization of a defense mechanism in order to contain these painful
emotions. Rather than being angry about the racist cultural practices of this country that maintain the restrictive notions of South Asian womanhood, she may displace her resentment onto “Americanized” South Asians. Thus, she attributes the other group, and not herself, as being the problem.

Since South Asian women will be viewed as perpetual foreigners and not “true Americans,” those that refuse to conform to the oppressive stereotype will have to actively combat it by proving they are different from the other South Asian women. Others within their family or ethnic community may perceive this “Americanized” behavior as a rejection of their cultural heritage (Dasgupta, 1998; Patel, 2007). The disconnection from their cultural identity may cause internal distress. In order to allay the ensuing anxiety, these “Americanized” women may (consciously or unconsciously) project any unacceptable feelings they are experiencing towards themselves onto the “traditional” South Asian women in order to demonstrate they are better. The guilt she may be feeling for not helping her mother or tending to a chronically ill grandparent may be taken and projected as a judgment that those women who sacrifice their career for their family are oppressed or submissive.

**PSYCHOTHERAPY AND SOUTH ASIANS**

As already mentioned, there is a stigma associated with mental health concerns and its related treatment in the South Asian community (Gupta, Syzmanski, & Leong, 2011). Though this perspective is not particular to this population, the specific ways in which this stigma is expressed might be unique to them. There is not only a shying away from needing “outside” help but also an ambivalence in general about the psychotherapy process given the lack of a similar process in South Asian culture until recently (Tummala-Nara, 2013; McGoldrick, Giordano, & Garcia-Preto, 2005). As such, therapy is a last resort, when all other ways to intervene have failed (Kim, Brenner, Liang, & Asay, 2003).

Though there may be unfamiliarity with psychotherapy, those entering the consulting room for help are bound to have their own, perhaps unarticulated expectations, of their movement through this process. It is also anticipated that these expectations would be informed by their own cultural tenets and values. In the context of South Asian culture, it is not surprising then that the therapist is viewed more as a guru or benefactor, i.e. someone with expertise to solve the problem or give advice. Also, given the traditionally conservative nature of their community, South Asian women may have concerns about anonymity and privacy (Seegobin, 1999), an item to be gone over in thorough detail in the informed consent prior to embarking on therapy. Their concerns about these issues should be considered in context of the almost certain damage the mere mention of potential mental health issues can have to the reputation of the South Asian woman in her community.

1 “Once a belief system is rendered illegitimate, the “artifacts” and concepts associated with the religion no longer hold any religious value (in the eyes of the majority) and can be appropriated for a variety of users” (Joshi, 2006).
As a result, denial might be a common defensive mechanism employed even within the therapy room. A match between the client and therapist in the domain of ethnicity does not necessarily mean less utilization of this particular defense. In fact, client-therapist match with regards to ethnicity might accentuate this expression given the concern that the therapist is a physical reminder (literally) of the potential judgment this woman might experience should her private struggles become known (Tummala-Nara, 2013). Alternatively, in the event the client and therapist do not share the same ethnicity, the client may view the therapist as the “other” and use denial to avoid sharing concerns from which she or her culture may be pathologized.

This fear is not limited to those women who might identify primarily with traditional South Asian values. A client of South Asian descent may approach psychotherapy with a coexisting set of traditional and modern attitudes and feel the same way. Contrary to assumptions that a South Asian woman would be easily identifiable as belonging to one camp or the other, caution should be used in defaulting to the proverbial judging of a book by its cover (Tummala-Narra, 2011). In addition, given that South Asian women have to learn to skillfully navigate their dual racial identities in the United States (as discussed earlier in this chapter), this method of ascertaining to whom one speaks, is flawed and will be ineffective. The reason for this lies in the South Asian woman having to constantly navigate contradicting expectations (those of the ethnic community she’s a part of and the mainstream culture that she may work and/or go to school in) resulting in a potentially fluid identity.

During her therapy session, the South Asian woman might focus on external factors to avoid from speaking about what unsettles her. This may come across as staying superficial and avoiding any trajectory in the dialogue that offers the opportunity to dive into the depths of the presenting issue. In conversation, this may be expressed as lengthy descriptions of events that do not seem to get to the heart of the matter. In the same vein, the South Asian woman might also report a seeking out of religious objects or symbols to diminish the problem in spite of having discussed skills to solve the problem herself. This reliance on religious/spiritual traditions is less about avoiding what the therapist has to offer and should not be taken personally. Clinically, it would be important to join with the client in her genuine belief that only a deity can rid her of the source of the problem that she is experiencing (Jayakar, 1994) and expand upon this belief. It bears repetition that there is a cultural context for these beliefs, which needs to be respected, and every effort made to work with these traditions.
Other cultural mores that may be evident in a therapeutic conversation when the client is South Asian might be the focus on physical illness (Tummala-Narra, 2013). Regardless of etiology, physical illness in South Asian culture is one of very few allowed acknowledgements that all is not well in one's world. This may have the effect of creating distance between the therapist and client if the intent of why it is being communicated is not understood. Sharing such private details is an acceptance that the professional can possibly make sense of their struggle and/or that these disclosures are a subtle invitation to attach or bond with the client. It would be important not only to empathize with the concerns but also to avoid offering solutions that seem consistent with the cultural norms, e.g. getting a second medical opinion. This will not only allow the client to forge an alliance with the therapist but open a door for deeper, i.e. more intimate concerns to be brought up and discussed.

Another cultural more that one may find in working with South Asian women is the lack of discussion about sexual issues (Tummala-Narra, 2013). It would be unlikely for a woman of this descent to bring up particulars about her own sexuality or that of others. Given that this is traditionally not addressed in public settings or with those outside of the family (if it is addressed at all), the South Asian woman may have had little practice articulating her thoughts on this topic, let alone her concerns in relation to this subject. At least initially, the therapist would need to set aside concerns about colluding with the client's silence on this subject in favor of sensitivity to the client's cultural context. It is likely that patience in building a strong enough alliance to enable the client to ask questions or share concerns on this topic in her time will reduce the possibility of the client prematurely terminating her psychotherapy because she felt uncomfortable. Therapeutic alliance is the essence of culturally informed dynamic therapy.

**SOUTH ASIAN WOMEN AND PSYCHODYNAMIC PSYCHOTHERAPY**

Psychodynamic therapy is characterized by its specific attention to what is made conscious and what is held in the unconscious. It is a therapy in which affect and the expression of emotion (or its lack) is noted and explored in session dialogues between therapist and client. In this particular counseling modality, past experience is related to current distress to identify recurrent themes and patterns, which give needed data about the etiology and/or maintenance of the chief complaints that bring a person into therapy. Interpersonal relationships are examined while the relationship between therapist and client is sifted through for occasions of transference (where the client unconsciously shifts feelings and fantasies that are reactions to significant others on to the therapist) and countertransference (therapist's conflicts are triggered by the patient). This therapy also allows for the potential to examine a client's unconscious fantasy life (e.g. dreams) and identify common defenses that are used to stave off distress (Tummala-Narra, 2014)
Psychodynamic therapy may be particularly useful for the South Asian population with its insight-oriented approach and flexibility to explore roots of concerns underlying presenting problems and the complexities of identity (Messent, 1992; Seegobin, 1999). Dynamic therapy with South Asian women may look different with regards to the specific transference and countertransference that may be expressed. In terms of transference, the client may be frustrated that the therapist is not giving advice (not acting as the benefactor). This therapeutic modality, unlike some others, offers the potential or space to explore this frustration with the client and note why this is so important to them. This allows the client to engage in a metaprocess by which they gain insight into their own workings.

Particular countertransference reactions when working with South Asian women might include frustration that the client is not progressing in therapy as quickly as the therapist would like or anger toward the client for not revealing as much as the therapist deems necessary. Since psychodynamic treatment allows for the analysis of therapist's feelings and behaviors, this may be useful to understanding therapist behaviors that may include infantilizing the client or experiencing anxiety about the global nature of concerns this client is presenting in the consulting room.

Given the challenges South Asian women may face with regards to their bicultural identity and gender roles, it is understandable that they may be guarded as they approach the psychotherapy process. Traditionally, it has not been sought out as an avenue toward healing, which compounded by the stigma that surrounds mental health issues in general, allows very little information to be disseminated about this process (Tummala-Narra, 2013). As a result, South Asian women coming in to psychologists' offices may have very little information about how the therapeutic process works, including what they can expect of the therapist in question, and what is expected of them. The defensiveness they might emit as a result of their cautiousness around this process may come across as what the founder of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud, would have termed as resistance.

Resistance, according to Freud, was what patients/clients unwittingly, i.e. unconsciously, did to keep unwanted memories out of their consciousness. Traditionally, in the psychoanalytic literature, it has implied a negative perspective of the client's presentation even though it has been understood to be both a point of frustration for the treating clinician and his or her most valued tool to aid a patient to psychological health (Samberg, 2004). More recently, there has been a move towards interpreting this construct in a broader, less pathologizing manner within the psychodynamic (née psychoanalytic) literature.
In addition to resistance being viewed as the client’s way to protect their sense of self by avoiding (while at the same time expressing) unacceptable drives, fantasies, feelings, and behaviors, it is also viewed as the way in which a client asserts their autonomy. In fact, Messer (2002) suggests that from this broader perspective, resistance denotes the routine ways in which clients express and keep hidden parts of themselves as they relate to the world and in particular to the therapist. This viewpoint offers insight into how resistance is the way in which clients communicate their distress and their coping with it, making it exactly what therapists need to work with and not against (Messer, 2002).

**CLINICAL THEMES**

Given the various differences in cultural values and expectations, South Asian women might present themselves differently in therapy. Psychodynamic psychotherapists will often look for themes and explanations to conceptualize the client. The case mentioned at the beginning of this chapter will be integrated into the following discussion of how factors such as defense styles, personality structure, and presentation in therapy may help to understand the South Asian woman in therapy.

According to Merriam Webster's dictionary (2004), ambivalence is the “simultaneous and contradictory attitudes or feelings toward an object or a person.” Freud looked at ambivalence in regards to social relationships and to explain transference (Freud, 1914). An individual navigating two cultures might hold conflicting feelings for one or both cultures, potentially having a desire to engage in the host culture, while also being cautious about fully immersing into the culture. Additionally, there might be fear related to losing one’s culture if aspects and traditions of the new culture are integrated into daily life. In the case of Supreet, her ambivalence is clear in the topic of accepting the promotion or not. While her parents have decided that she should turn down the promotion, she is distressed by the thought of deferring to her parents. There is a part of her that might believe that she should come to her own conclusion about this opportunity. South Asian women might feel excited about American culture, given the emphasis on autonomy and independence (Tummala-Narra, 2013), but also afraid of what it means to be independent in a South Asian context. For example, a South Asian woman might devalue and idealize American traditions and beliefs, longing for autonomy while also desiring interdependence. Supreet’s case shows that she desires the autonomy even though interdependence is a salient part of her cultural identity. At this juncture, it would be important for a clinician to help the client process her mixed feelings toward both cultures and sit with the competing views, an awareness of which would indicate how the client navigates tension (Luscher, 2004). It will also allow the clinician to assess whether the individual can successfully integrate both perspectives, or if one feeling and culture needs to be rejected in order to maintain a sense of identity.
Krause (2010) explains that introjection is the reproduction of and thought about the self, based on interaction with the environment. A South Asian female might introject many messages about what it means to be a South Asian as well as what it means to be American. Therefore, it is important for the therapist to be aware of biases and implicit attitudes that are not within one's conscious awareness (Liang, Tummala-Narra, & West, 2011). She might introject negative messages about one or both cultures, based on societal expectations. For example, she might expect to see herself as a reserved “model minority” since those are the messages of Asians in the media. At the same time, she might expect herself to be assertive and vocal, echoing the expectations of the host American culture. Thus, introjections (messages) that might not match how a female views her true self might be distressing and confusing. For example, Supreet’s dilemma is that American society at large and her parents expect her to behave as a traditional Indian woman, even though her parents want her to label herself as American. As a result, she has introjected messages from both of who she should be and how she should behave. Therapy becomes beneficial when the female has a way to express and discuss messages she has about each culture (Tummala-Narra, 2013). Moreover, therapy can challenge the client to think about ways in which she truly views self as opposed to messages that might have been introjected unfiltered from society. Prior to processing through cultural messages, a therapist might start with engaging a South Asian female client around what messages have been internalized about seeking out therapy. For example, she might feel as though she should not be in therapy to discuss concerns because she is expected to be self-sacrificing and value others’ perceptions over her own (Reddy & Hanna, 1998), which can often be a good place to start exploring internalized messages.

Finally, splitting is another way a South Asian female might express or manage differing cultural values in therapy. Splitting is often seen as a primitive defense in the psychotherapy literature, however, Chin (1994) states that splitting is an important means to navigate two cultures. A South Asian woman might split as she tries to integrate two different identities, her views of each culture, and separate parts of her identity. However, once integration has occurred splitting might also be necessary for survival in two distinct cultures. For example, a South Asian woman might need to take on more child-rearing responsibilities to maintain family peace and stability, but at the same time assertively delegate responsibilities at work because there is more flexibility to do so. This is evident in Supreet’s case because she is able to assert herself at work while being submissive at home. This split is made out of necessity to manage the contrasting expectations of her job and family. Depending on context, psychotherapy can help the individual understand who they are and the complexities of a female identity. Furthermore, therapy can address the emotional stress a South Asian woman might experience in navigating the complexities of a bicultural identity, i.e. she does not have to see herself as adhering to only one set of norms or values, but as one who can seamlessly navigate between two cultures because that is her choice.
PERSONALITY STRUCTURE

To understand the impact that traditional South Asian gender roles have on the identity development of South Asian women, their personality structure needs to be examined. Psychodynamic theory postulates that personality is composed of three elements that emerge at different developmental stages: the id, the ego, and the superego. South Asian women’s personality structure can be conceptualized as being predominantly controlled and influenced by the superego. A South Asian woman’s superego consists of the strict gender roles, values and morals she learned from her cultural group and family of origin. In order to quell the feelings of guilt she experiences for not being a son – not being good enough – she works tirelessly towards fulfilling her obligations as a South Asian female in her family. Supreet works hard to excel at her job and at the same time please her family. She might have an underlying expectation to meet the obligations for all systems and individuals she is connected to in her life. Due to her socialization, she received precise guidelines on how an honorable female should behave in order to cause her family less burden than her existence within the family already has. This represents her superego ideal self – the idealized view of how she should conduct herself in the world and what she should prioritize. When she fails to meet this standard, her superego conscience may punish the ego by eliciting feelings of shame or guilt. However, when she acts in accordance to this ideal, the superego rewards her with feelings of pride (Akhtar & Varma, 2012).

This stronger superego works to control and inhibit the impulses of the id (immediate satisfaction), and persuades the ego to prioritize moralistic goals (determining what is right or wrong) over logical goals (assessing how to realistically satisfy a need). Since a South Asian woman’s identity is interdependent, she possesses a strong ideal self that is oriented toward obtaining approval from others, as this brings her “feelings of inner esteem” (Jayakar, 1994, p. 172; Roland, 1998). Any of her immediate needs or desires are prioritized lower if the family requires something of her in order to avoid experiencing feelings of guilt brought on by her superego. Accordingly, South Asian women become adept at recognizing what is expected from them in different situations and willingly change their attitudes and behaviors in order to meet the needs of their families (Jayakar, 1994).

THE "MORAL MASOCHIST"

South Asian woman can best be understood through the psychodynamic personality style of the moral masochist, which is defined as “people who have organized their self-esteem around their capacity to tolerate pain and sacrifice” (McWilliams, 2011, p. 270). This is not to be confused with the notion that they enjoy experiencing pain. Rather, it is about the moral victory that is achieved through this process – these women sacrifice personal concerns for the sake of their family’s wellbeing, and the greater good. A South Asian woman’s ultimate purpose is to devote her life to her husband, her
children and to her family. For Supreet, her current responsibility is to prepare to be a wife and mother in spite of her wishes to pursue this promotion. It is her duty to be selfless and to endure whatever suffering and hardship is necessary in order to keep her family together and thriving. Her sense of self becomes dependent on fulfilling this role of the familial martyr, as she has been “powerfully rewarded for enduring tribulation gallantly” (McWilliams, 2011, p. 276), both externally from others, as well as by the feelings of pride generated by her superego for being compliant with the ideal self. This validation assuages their deep unconscious feelings of guilt, resulting from the internal conviction that they are “bad” and an obstacle for their family.

**SOUTH ASIAN WOMEN'S EXPRESSIONS OF RESISTANCE**

There are a few expressions of resistance that may be particular to South Asian women. As discussed previously, the martyr role may be solidified by taking on the role of the passive “good girl” to avoid acting independently and work through the reasons she came to therapy. In addition, there may be behaviors or verbalizations that undo previous commitments or actions. South Asian women may also experience increased discomfort or heightened anxiety when moving towards alternative expressions of self, e.g. self as independent vs. interdependent. As a clinician working with Supreet, it is important to work at a pace she is comfortable with and not push her to choose between the individual and collective aspects of her identity, but explore the fluidity of these identities. For example, she may move quite fluidly between being deferential to her parents, while at the same time being autonomous without guilt at work.

Other expressions of resistance may include controlled avoidance of issues of relevance to the chief complaint, being overly deferential to the therapist and placidly acceding to all that the therapist says or does, e.g. smiling, nodding, minimizing. In addition, South Asian women may be against terminating ties with their community even if they are experiencing real and present pain because of these relationships. However, given the high value placed on family and community, this is a place for the clinician to join with the client so that they can experience the empathy and support potentially not being received anywhere else.

Another area that could illicit resistance is if the South Asian client perceives that the therapist does not truly understand her, i.e. see her in the context of her community and culture. An expression of this might be refusal to be assertive. It would be important for the therapist to understand that to have a voice is a luxury that many South Asian women do not have in their families or communities. To force this issue in therapy may increase resistance and further marginalize the client, essentially making her feel, “I am less than ... again and again.” This could lead to the client engaging the therapist less frequently, which may also result in the client’s premature termination of her own psychotherapy.
Given the motivation for these behaviors in therapy, it may be prudent to reconsider if resistance is truly being met when a client shares only what she feels safe to share or if she is communicating in a style that is unfamiliar or different from you as the therapist? Is it resistance if a client is attempting to integrate the autonomous and interdependent parts of herself? It may be salient to consider that the label of resistance may allow a clinician to foreclose on the motivations of this client without fully grasping the intent driving these expressions.

**CLINICAL IMPLICATIONS**

Be aware of the sociocultural and political context of the client in order to avoid overly pathologizing them.

When working with South Asian women, the usage of the term “feminist” may be culturally irrelevant, as it represents the western ideals of womanhood. As an alternative, utilize more culturally meaningful words, such as: strong woman and brave woman (Patel, 2007).

Recognize that South Asian women’s conception of “strength” differs from the western model of a “strong woman.” They may deem “strength in a more collectivistic framework in which interdependence is seen as requiring more strength than independence” (Patel, 2007, p. 59). Being “selfish” and only doing what is best for the individual may be viewed as an easier task than maintaining a strong emotional bond with the family and being willing to make sacrifices for the sake of the greater good of the family.

Develop self-awareness of one’s own sociocultural history and context (e.g. impact of group membership) to develop and hone culturally appropriate intervention skills.

Be aware that the client’s language concerning distress may be different from Euro-Americans and that emotional distress and painful affect may be expressed more broadly as a component of physical distress.

Facilitate a safe transitional space to process ambivalence about South Asian and mainstream US cultures.

Support clients emotionally as they integrate various aspects of identity but also think about connecting clients to resources in the community that may be of support to them e.g. cultural associations, bibliotherapy.

Inquire about how the client identifies culturally and what it means to them by asking specifics about values, traditions, and beliefs.
Explore the positive and negative messages that have been internalized about dual cultures. This will also help the therapist to be aware of biases and stereotypes of a particular culture (Liang et al., 2011).

Address and understand ways the client might switch norms or expectations depending on the cultural context. Inquire and explore client's feelings around these shifts.
Psychodynamic psychotherapy addresses the complexity of South Asian women's identities by attending to the multiple cultural expectations of being a woman. Its framework lends itself to a more holistic and comprehensive view of what South Asian women have to navigate outside their countries of origin and specifically, what they have to negotiate or wrestle with in psychotherapy. That said, this chapter is only the beginning of the consideration that this population requires to receive culturally competent psychological care. It is the authors’ hope that its perusal will inspire psychology professionals to move past their own worldviews and make space for the sometimes conflicting, and perhaps confusing, worldviews of South Asian clients.
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Recruiting and Retaining LGBT Athletes Lessons from the Population

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the experiences of gay and lesbian college student athletes. Participants of the study played at National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I or National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) institutions. All contributors were engaged in an hour to 90 minute interview. They were asked a range of questions regarding their family environments and attitudes, institutional climates, and the process of disclosing their sexuality.

The primary research question explored was, What are the experiences of gay and lesbian college student athletes on college campuses? Intentions for the study were to bring awareness to the treatment of gay and lesbian athletes on college campuses, and how they navigated their college surroundings. The submitted chapter provides an outline of implications for athletics and for higher education, overall. Information was collected through resources provide by the NCAA on inclusivity of LGBT student athletes (Morrison, 2012).

Chapter Keywords: Gay Athletes, Lesbian Athletes, NCAA, NAIA, LGBT, homonegativity
The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of gay and lesbian college student athletes. Studies by Anderson (2005, 2011a, 2011b) explored gay, male athletes during the time of his coming out in the 1990s, this was compared with gay, male athletes of early 2000’s. This research on the experiences of gay and lesbian college student athletes offered insight and added to the literature which included studying both male and female athletes in same gender relationships. Utilizing the framework of identity development, this study deconstructed the stages in which students begin to identify and embrace their individuality. Evans et al. (2010) outlined various student development theories that supported the enhancement of this study, and aided in the understanding of how college students connect with their identities. The research also encompassed and applied gender and gender identity development models and the various models of homosexual identity development. Equally, the coming out process was examined demonstrating how gays and lesbians experience the process throughout their daily lives. The study also assessed both the campus climates of private and public four-year institutions; as well as, gauged the background of the families of the ten participants.

Case studies and narrative analysis was the approach used in this research. This study examined the lives of ten gay or lesbian former college student-athletes. Participant protocol included semi-structured interviews that lasted one to two hours at length. Participants were interviewed one-on-one in a setting chosen by the interviewer. While given the opportunity to meet in an environment comfortable to their surrounds, such as their homes, all but one of the participants declined and wanted to meet in a private location chosen by the interviewer. Most interviews were scheduled in a secluded conference room in various libraries. Majority of the participants were African American and female, however two males and two Caucasian females were interviewed. They also represented both NAIA and NCAA-DI institutions, as well as they played sports in women’s basketball; men’s basketball; softball; cheerleading; track and cross country.
This chapter will focus on the discoveries realized regarding the experiences of gay and lesbian college athletes. The importance, as well as limitations of this study will also be presented and discussed. As the chapter concludes, recommendations will be offered that reflect some of the views from the participants, as well as from the various authors examined in this research. Recommendations will include suggestions for academia, athletic directors, and students. This will include gay and lesbian athletes; heterosexual athletes, and student allies. Moreover, recommendations for future research will be considered.

Importance of Study

Conducting research on the experiences of gay and lesbian college student athletes was important to the study because their voices lend scholarly insight to colleges and universities treatment towards this marginalized population. Hearing the experiences of gay and lesbian college student athletes exposed certain universities attitudes, demonstrating that some campuses do not foster inclusive environments, and selected students do not foster supportive attitudes toward gay and lesbian college athletes (Worthen, 2014). Authors (Ensign et al., 2011; Herek, 1988; Hinrichs & Rosenberg, 2002; Kimmel & Messner, 2001; Roper & Halloran, 2007) have studied heternormativity and homonegativity in either athletics or the classrooms. Worthen (2014) found in her study where she measured the attitudes of athletes and members of Greek organizations toward lesbian, gay, bisexual men and women, and transgendered individuals, that male athletes and men in fraternities have negative attitudes towards the LGBT population, especially towards gay males and transgendered individuals. Worthen (2014) suggested that the reason for this attitude is because both athletes and fraternities exude "traditional heteromasculine norms" that construct their identities in “homophobic masculinity” (p. 185). In other words, these groups “feel the need to prove that they are heterosexual” (Worthen, 2014, p. 185). Moreover, they exert hypermasculinity to demonstrate that they are heterosexual. This behavior is described as cultivating a culture of homophobic masculinity (Worthen, 2014). On the other hand, females in a sorority and female athletes are more supportive of the LGBT community than their male counterparts. Both Roper and Halloran (2007), and Worthen (2014) concluded that individuals knowing gay men and lesbians possess more accepting attitudes towards them.

Additionally, this topic is of importance to the study, because while universities say they are inclusive, some athletic teams and institutions are heavily influenced by Christian values. Christian values and the people who hold them, in many cases, tend to be in direct opposition to same sex relationships, lifestyles and activities. In turn, the athlete begins to internalize and have self-conflicting views about who they are. Even though Anderson (2005, 2011a) demonstrated that over fifteen years, student athletes felt more comfortable coming out, many are still closeted. Former student-athletes such as Rebecca Windover and Anna Aagenes discussed being a closeted athlete and the social problems they
experienced by not coming out. Additionally, Kate Fagan shared the same occurrences with praying as a team as Regular, even though both attended public, non-religious affiliated universities. Just as Regular accepted praying before every game, Fagan accepted the atmosphere; she even “uttered homophobic statements in an attempt to convince my audience, and especially myself, that I was heterosexual” (Fagan, 2014, para. 4). She even participated in praying for a coach whose “lifestyle was keeping her from Jesus” (Fagan, 2014, para. 3). While attending the Fellowship of Christian Athletes meetings she began to question her sexuality (Garcia, 2014). Attending a university that was heavily influenced by the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, she felt compelled to continue attending and participating in meetings (Garcia, 2014). While feeling uncomfortable, she stayed at the university and graduated in 2004 (Garcia 2014). In comparison, Emily Nkosi used to play for the Baylor’s women’s basketball team in 2005 (Nkosi, 2014). She recalls her Fellowship of Christian Athletes mentor having an “intervention” meeting with her to discuss her close relationship with another female student (Nkosi, 2014, para. 26). Conversations included being chastised for her sexuality, and that same-sex relationships would not supported. Even the athletic department got involved and questioned her relationship and cautioned her about her sexuality (Nkosi, 2014). Eventually, Nkosi left Baylor because being gay, it is clear that gay people struggle in that school environment. I hope that by sharing some of my story as a gay Baylor athlete, I can help Baylor understand how damaging that climate can be on young people struggling to accept their sexual orientation. (Nkosi, 2014, para. 33)

Another reason for the importance of this study was to give those who have been forced to remain quiet about their true identities, a voice. While some athletic directors and some college administrators discourage college athletes discussing their sexual orientation, this study shows that gay and lesbians do exist on college athletic teams.

The simplest and most compelling reason for intercollegiate athletic programs to take proactive steps to create and maintain an inclusive and respectful climate for student-athletes and coaches of all sexual orientations and gender identities/expressions is that it is the right thing to do. (Morrison, 2012, p. 9)

Anderson (2002, 2005, 2011a, 2011b) demonstrated this element through his studies on masculinities and sexualities in sports; conducting a comparison between the time he came out to teammates in the 1990s to general attitudes of society and athletics fifteen years later in the 21st century. Several authors (Anderson, 2002, 2005; Bickford, 2012; Elfman, 2007; Jacobson, 2002; Katz, 2010; Kauer & Krane, 2006; Kimmel & Messner, 2001; Krane, 2001; Krane et al., 2004; Mauer-Starks et al., 2008; Pronger, 1990; Roper & Halloran, 2007; Wolf-Wendel et al., 2001) were used to shape this research study. Many of their works focused on the experiences of gay and lesbian athletes in college, which include attitudes towards the population and the harassment or hostile environments endured. The importance of this study was
to hear the voices of gay and lesbian college athletes. As a result, the voices gave understanding and meaning to their lives. While Anderson's (2005, 2011a) research demonstrated that gay athletes who show potential on the field or court are accepted, this research shows that the same is true. However, the students do not realize that the environment they played in still proves hostile to gay and lesbian athletes. Both the NCAA and NAIA are working hard to demonstrate that athletics is an accepting environment towards gay and lesbian athletes. The numerous anti-bullying and emergence of inclusivity campaigns alone, demonstrate that, “some traditions accepted in athletics do not promote or reflect a culture of inclusion, diversity, or respect.” Therefore, athletics must act to ensure that the health and well-being of the student athlete is being protected (Morrison, 2012, p. 4). Additionally, Karen Morrison admits that while NCAA guidelines for inclusivity are made available to the 1,281 athletic programs; however, staff, “[are] not mandated to follow or even read the guidelines” (Frankel, 2013, para. 9).

Overall the reason this topic was important to study is because

every student-athlete and coach should have the opportunity to reach their athletic and academic goals in a climate of respect. No student-athlete or coach/administrator should fear discrimination or harassment in athletics because of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression. (Morrison, 2012, p. 9)

**LIMITATIONS**

Many factors contributed to the limitations of this study. For starters, time was a factor. While one or two hours were spent with the participants, interviews were conducted in a conference room setting that I chose. Majority of the participants did not want me to come to their home environments. As a result, I was not able to see the participants in their own environment and how they truly interact. Merriam (2009) raised the question if it is necessary for an interviewer to be “a member of the group?” (p. 108). Through network sampling, or snowball sampling, participants were more comfortable having me interview them outside of their homes. Whether being a member of the group or not, “both parties bring biases, predispositions, attitudes, and physical characteristics that affect the interaction and the data elicited” (Merriam, 2009, p. 109). Spending more time with participants in a more relaxed, or intimate setting, would allow more observation of their support systems, interacting with their peers and families, and would give a more telling account of their lives.

Likewise, the use of yes or no questions caused some limitations in the study. Conducting a narrative research study, “the researcher needs to collect extensive information about the participant, and needs to have a clear understanding of the context of the individual’s life (Creswell, 2007, p. 57). When conducting qualitative research, interviewers should use open-ended questions that foster more in-depth information. Qualitative researchers should limit, or refrain from asking yes-no questions, as they
yield little information (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2009). “Qualitative research questions are open-ended, evolving, and non-directional (Creswell, 2009, p. 107). Using yes or no questions should be followed up by rephrasing the question to elicit a more detailed account (Merriam, 2009).

Another limitation to the study includes the demographics of the participants. Whereas participants represented African American women, African American men, and White women, the study excluded some demographics. For example, White men were not interviewed. The group was not intentionally left out, as I was scheduled to interview a gay, White male, former college tennis player representing NCAA Division I; but the closer the interview date, he withdrew as he encountered some personal issues. Another demographic population not represented is African American men playing football in either NAIA or NCAA Division I. Also, White women playing either in NAIA or NCAA women's basketball were excluded. Although the study was general in the description of participants interviewed, the perspectives of the excluded would allow insight, capturing the individual's experiences and the impact their sexual orientation had when playing those respective sports in the two divisions.

Last, while the study included NAIA and NCAA institutions, only participants who attended public institutions were included in the study; as well as only participants who attended a religious, NAIA school were interviewed. Gathering information from those groups could provide more insight into different policies regarding sexual orientation. Brittney Griner attended Baylor, a private, religious-based university. She played in an NCAA generating revenue sport, in comparison with her counterpart, such as AMBB or Regular who played at a public institution. However, the data saturation, demonstrates a commonality between the various stories of those attending a public NCAA Division I school, as well as a participant attending an NAIA religious school. For example, Regular, attending an NCAA school and the other participants attending a religious campus share similar stories of Brittney Griner and Kate Fagan, who attended religious and public schools, respectively. In other words, both types of schools held Christian values, where some rituals of religion were established into the institutional philosophies about same sex relationships in college athletes. Most of the participants discussed praying before games, thus the institution assumed that all people adhere to some sort of Christian, religious ideology. On the other hand, limitations still exist as majority of participants attending religious schools may be considered to be within the Bible Belt, region. Furthermore, even the majority of the participants attending the public colleges and universities may be influenced by their location within the vicinity of the Bible Belt.
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

All students attending colleges and universities wish to experience a campus friendly and inclusive environment. As colleges and universities are recruiting students, especially student-athletes, they need to provide welcoming and respectful environments for them to thrive. This chapter will suggest recommendations for academia, athletic directors, and students; including gay and lesbian athletes; heterosexual athletes, and student allies. The recommendations offered are to inform and inspire changes to improve campus culture at our colleges and universities, as well as provide best practices for continued improvements and support. Some of the recommendations offered will reflect the views from the participants interviewed in this study.

Even though colleges and universities whose missions align with religious principles, can offer support to gay and lesbian students. Keisha, Brianna Michelle, RJ, Rae, and Lindsey all attended a private, religious affiliated school who did not offer any services for the LGBT population. Implementing Safe Zones trainings for faculty, staff, and students to participate can educate the campus on fostering inclusiveness. Safe Zones provide trainings on using inclusive language, provide knowledge about students and their coming out process; and participants are given stickers for their doors to show gay and lesbian students, as well as student questioning their sexuality that the office is an ally.

In addition, even allowing graduating gay and lesbian students the opportunity to wear rainbow tassels on their mortar boards, as well as participate in a Lavender Graduation. The tassels symbolize gay pride. In addition, many colleges are having Lavender graduations. First performed in 1995 at the University of Michigan, the ceremony was created by Dr. Ronni Sanlo (“Lavender Graduation,” 2011). “Lavender Graduation is an annual ceremony conducted on numerous campuses to honor lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and ally students and to acknowledge their achievement and contributions to the University” (“Lavender Graduation,” 2011, para. 1). Many colleges and universities are beginning to implement these specialized ceremonies in addition to the traditional pomp and circumstance, as the ceremony “recognizes LGBT students of all races and ethnicities,” and to provide a celebratory event for LGBT students and their allies (“Lavender Graduation,” 2011, para. 3).
Ally programs furnish resources that include activities about using inclusive language, addressing homophobic masculinity, and offering some students and administrators opportunities to sign pledges of their commitment to “fairness, respect, and inclusion . . .” (Worthen, 2014, p. 189). Some ally programs have trainers on their campuses that facilitate speaker panels and programs to raise awareness about same-sex relationships, and how to engage members on college campuses to become advocates. When developing ally training programs, campuses want to create sessions that address heterosexism; incorporate skills trainings that empower allies to interrupt biased behavior; and develop realistic goals for the allotted time of program (Woodford, Kolb, Durocher-Radeka, & Javier, 2014). Also, build gradual programs with identifiable learning outcomes that allow participants to choose and complete trainings based on interest and competency (Woodford et al., 2014). In other words, have varying levels of training programs to encompass all skill levels.

Additionally, many colleges and universities are starting to promote gender and inclusive centers, while others are increasing their course offerings that endorse LGBT majors. Carleton College, Northfield, Minnesota, is a liberal arts institution that constructed a Gender and Sexuality Center on their campus. In November 2014, the center started listing colleges and universities that promote LGBT and Queer study programs (“LGBT Studies Programs”, 2014). In Barbour’s (2014) dissertation, she acknowledged several institutions who promoted gay, lesbian and queer studies. “Since the 1970s, the University of Maryland has been one of the leading college campuses to offer LGBT courses” (Barbour, 2014, p. 58). San Diego State University publicized the school as, “only the second college or university in North America to have a major in LGBT Studies, beginning January 2012” (“Lesbian, Gay. Bisexual, Transgender Studies, What Can I do with this Major,” n.d.). With the emergence of these centers and course offerings, students are afforded an opportunity to gain an understanding of the LGBT culture, as well as this movement can begin to foster a different pedagogy of learning.

The NCAA offers several best practices for creating inclusive environments (Morrison, 2012). Most importantly, inform staff of expectations as it relates to creating an inclusive environment. “Make it clear to student-athletes and coaches that anti-LGBT actions or language will not be tolerated” (Morrison, 2012, p. 12). Additionally, regardless of sexual orientation, hold everyone accountable for creating a non-hostile and non-discriminatory environment (Morrison, 2012). While some campuses do not have resources supporting the gay and lesbian athletes, partner with local or state social justice programs who provide free resources (Woodford et al., 2014, p. 320).
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ATHLETICS

Institutions, and especially athletic departments who take assessments of the campus climate for LGBT students, can help identify potential problems and create policy that will “manifest a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment” for everyone (Morrison, 2012, p. 2). This does not insinuate that gay and lesbian athletes should be treated in a special manner, but that the policies should be inclusive to all members of the athletic team. In addition, procedures should be clearly outlined and communicated to staff and athletes, and reviewed annually (Morrison, 20012). If institutions do not have LGBT Centers, resources may also be housed in the universities counseling center, or diversity and equity offices within human resources. Administrator’s working in these offices can provide training in areas of fairness and inclusivity (Morrison, 2012). Overall, some factors to consider when creating an inclusive environment include:

• Assume there are gay athletes as well as gay coaching staff even if no one has identified.

• Know what resources are available at respective institution, or where to obtain training and other resources.

• Monitor beliefs about same-sex relationships.

• Use inclusive language.

• Communicate expectations to all staff and student athletes regarding inclusivity and non-discrimination and anti-harassment.

• Educate staff on polices regarding nondiscrimination and anti-harassment.

• Intervene and stop bullying, harassment, and biased language.

• Coordinate sensitivity training for staff and athletes regarding bullying, harassment, and the use of offensive language.

• Place Safe Zone stickers on offices that are safe places for gay athletes. (Morrison, 2012, pp.12-13)
**LANGUAGE**

When communicating to athletes and staff, do not use demeaning language. Using derogatory terms such as verbiage towards one’s sexuality, ethnicity, or religion is often seen as “part of the game” where athletes taunt other athletes; or is used by coaches and athletes to even motivate players (Morrison, 2012, p. 24). Even though some athletes claim that when using derogatory language, they are not trying to offend. However, coaches allowing this behavior create a negative climate of where this behavior is acceptable (Morrison, 2012). Students who are wanting to disclose to their teammates or coach may feel they will be further harassed. In order to combat this behavior, at team meetings, at the start of academic school years, and throughout the athletic sports season, college coaching administrators should communicate and specify that this type of language will not be tolerated (Morrison, 2012). This action sets the tone and expectation of staff and athletes.

**COMING OUT**

Sean Smith admits that he did not have a positive experience during his days as a gay, male college student-athlete. The college he attended did not have services for gay or lesbian students, and the athletic staff was not supportive (Morrison, 2012). Sadly, some colleges and universities still are not supportive of gay and lesbian student-athletes. Some athletes are asked to keep their sexual orientation a secret, “conditionally tolerant,” as noted by most of the participants of this study (Morrison, 2012, p. 25). The NCAA, however, has started to “include sexual orientation in their non-discrimination policies and to provide diversity workshops on sexual orientation to member institutions” (Morrison, 2012, p. 35). Developing an environment of acceptance does not mean that coaches are accepting of same gender relationships, but it means being respectful and making a comfortable environment for the athlete (Morrison, 2012). “Reinforce . . . that being respectful does not necessarily mean approving of homosexuality... All team members have a right to their personal beliefs, but each member is responsible for treating everyone on the team with respect” (Morrison, 2012, p. 27). Additionally, when an athlete discloses to one individual, that individual should not disclose the athlete's sexuality (Morrison, 2012). In other words, allow the athlete to always disclose their own sexuality.
LOCKER ROOM BEHAVIOR

Some heterosexual athletes fear that gay or lesbian athletes “pose a sexual threat in the locker room,” or hotel rooms where athletes share when travelling to games. In other words, some heterosexual athletes believe that gay and lesbian athletes are looking at them sexually (Morrison, 2012, p. 30). However, gay and lesbian athletes know that these stereotypes exist, and they may feel uncomfortable looking at their teammates or engaging in any positive conversation as they do not want their teammates to think they are gay; especially if they have not disclosed (Morrison, 2012). In order to reduce the anxiety, administrators may schedule counselors to give talks to the team as well as individuals to help address the uncomfortable feelings that are persisting “about the presence of LGBTQ people in the locker room” (Morrison, 2012, p. 31). However, staff should also be aware to make sure that sexual harassment is not present (Morrison, 2012). Proactively, administrators should educate and make all athletes and staff aware of their sexual harassment policies (Morrison, 2012). Additionally, institutions should have areas where any athlete wanting privacy should be afforded the space; because not all student athletes are comfortable in open settings such as open showers or changing rooms (Morrison, 2012).

RECRUITMENT

“The NCAA has rules and guidelines to regulate the recruitment process for the purpose of protecting the recruit and ensuring fairness” (Morrison, 2012, p. 35). One guideline is that websites should not refer to coaching staff by using prefixes that denote gender or married status (Morrison, 2012). Photos should not exude sexuality, they should be action shots and where athletes are in their uniforms or athletic gear (Morrison, 2012). When hosting recruits and their families, hosts should refrain from using identifiers used to describe religion or sexual orientation. Such as “Christian” values, or speaking negatively about gay or lesbians athletes (Morrison, 2012, p. 36) Allow gay and lesbian college student-athletes to host recruits, as well as do not require them to not be themselves, such as asking them not to be seen with their partner while recruits are in town (Morrison, 2012). Embrace diversity and do not pretend that gay athletes do not play on a sports team (Morrison, 2012). Last, work to eliminate prejudice from parents who are concerned with their student-athletes playing on a team with, or being coached by a gay or lesbian by communicating respect and inclusivity (Morrison, 2012).
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

When interviewing the participants, several prominent themes and sub-themes were explored. Still, many sub-themes emerged. As a result, these sub-themes lend leeway to future research to enhance this study. Such topics include the influence of religion upon the coming-out process. Almost all of the participants were either raised in the church, and/or had close family members as preachers or youth pastors. In the participant profiles, many discussed that they were told that same-sex relationships were wrong, or “a sin.” Even though this was a sub-theme, more research can be conducted on both the influence of the church in the lives of African Americans, as well as research on gay and lesbians who were raised Southern Baptist, and how they navigated their lives, as well as what experiences did they sustain. In addition, does religion play a part in their lives? Blue Eyes was raised in the church and still attends regularly, however she is not an out lesbian. The church she attends teaches that “homosexuality is a sin,” and she fears that her coming out would lead to losing her position as the scholarship director. Similarly, look at the topic of depression and see if depression and religion play a part in the coming out process of gay and lesbian athletes. If so did they try to commit suicide, and what coping mechanisms were in place to help them out of the depression?

Another area to further study is the world of clothing in the life of gay and lesbian athletes. The females self-stereotyped by describing their clothes, however, the topic of clothing were a shared culture within the lesbian population. Morris (2013) described meticulously what Brittney Griner and other lesbians drafted in the 2013 WNBA wore to the draft. Describing that they mostly wore men’s clothing, such as men suits, ties, and sweaters (Morris, 2013). While Flash and RJ did not engage in much detail about clothing, RJ did allude to perceptions that are associated with gay male athletes and the characteristics of their behavior. Studying the style of dress for both gay and lesbian athletes can help offer more awareness of their expression and self-awareness about the clothes they wear.

In conducting this study, several demographics were not represented. While an African American male NCAA Division I men’s basketball player was interviewed, research could focus on a Caucasian counterpart. Research could compare or contrast difficulties regarding the coming out process, and if the role of the church plays a part in this population’s life. Additionally, this study focused on gay and lesbian athletes, since the start of the research, transgendered students have entered athletics. Such athletes include Kye Allums, Fallon Fox, and Keelin Godsey; capturing their experiences in college athletics is worth researching, as well as researching to determine if the coming-out process of gay and lesbian college student athletes aided in more transgendered athletes gaining courage to disclose.
With more transgendered athletes coming out, an area that was not discussed, but is trending is gender inclusive housing and gender neutral bathrooms. Since this study specifically focused on gay and lesbian college athletes, the mention of gender inclusive housing, or even restroom usage was not examined. However, these are increasing topics of interest as states, such as South Dakota, Tennessee and Georgia deliberate a law similar to what South Carolina passed requiring people to use public restrooms matching their birth gender (Peck, 2016). Additionally, resources such as Campus Pride has provided a clearing house to inform of colleges and universities with gender inclusive housing policies (“College and Universities,” 2016). Carleton College, not only has an LGBT Housing statement, but also offers a learning community where upper-class students can live in LGBT housing with their allies (“LGBT Housing Statement,” 2016). Overall, these issues are topics for expansion that can lead researches into future discussions expanding upon the literature of experiences for more than the gay and lesbian college student athlete population.

**CONCLUSION**

What are the experiences of gay and lesbian college student-athletes? They are students who want to be accepted by society. They want to be loved and not discriminated against by their families; and they want enjoy life. Interviewing these ten participates gave insight to how they navigated their lives at their respective college campuses. While all were happy to lend their voices to research, some of their stories told of accounts of harassment, discrimination, and bullying. Other accounts told of acceptance, but cautionary tales of being their true selves. Many informed of attending colleges or universities where their coaches and even the universities they attended were “accepting,” however they were advised that they should not publicly show their sexual orientation. Others were clearly advised either by the student code of conduct, brutally attacked, or limited playing time that their sexual orientation was not acceptable. However, many stayed in their environments. While Regular was told by her coach not to display her sexual orientation, and though before every game the team prayed, she felt that the environment was healthy and that she should not be a distraction to the team by being an openly gay college student-athlete. Even those attending the religious affiliated college stayed knowing the consequences of being expelled from the university if charged with being in a same-sex relationship. Clear signs of discrimination and harassment, yet these students endured hostile treatments in order to earn their degrees, as well as play or participate in the sport they so loved.
Additionally, this research showed the importance of family. Surprisingly, majority of the participants had a gay or lesbian family member, but they still withstood scrutiny about how and why. RJ and Regular seemed to have the most supportive parents or family members. However, Flash and Ashley seemed to suffer what may be seen as the most extreme, with either violence or family members disowning them. Regardless, all remarked about not wanting to disappoint their relatives, and just wanting to be loved by their families. As evident by Blue Eyes, who did not want to disappoint her adopted dad.

In conclusion, this research is a reminder that homonegativity is prevalent in college sports, even though many efforts are being touted to demonstrate acceptance. Also, this research is a reminder that heterosexist behavior guides both athletics and society. However, this research shows that times are changing as evident of Michael Sam’s case. Nevertheless, this research is a reminder that “any anxieties players might have about a gay teammate are their problem, not the teammates. Your insecurities aren’t enough reason to maintain an environment where gay athletes don’t feel comfortable. That’s a [expletive] burden to put on anyone” (Wilson, 2013, para. 12). Overall, I have enjoyed being a vessel to bring these stories to light. I thank the participants for having the faith and courage in me to share with society their intimate feelings and breathe life into existence. My wish is that regardless of religious affiliation, heterosexist thoughts, or even fears of same-sex relationships, that we as, college and university employees and society as a whole, contribute at least one nice improvement in the lives of our gay or lesbian college student athletes to make them feel welcomed and accepted.
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The More the Obstacles Fall Between Us: An Interactive, Multi-Media Performance to Develop Empathy and Prompt Action

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The Welcome Project at Valparaiso University began as a response to demographic shifts on campus and to the tension and conflict that attend the increasing diversity of a previously homogenous culture. Since its inception, we have believed that collecting the stories of those experiencing that tension help us better navigate the conflict. Research in neuroscience, intergroup dialogue, and interactive theater demonstrates the power of empathy and disequilibrium to move people from identification or dis-identification to potential action. In this chapter, we use that research to frame how an interactive, multi-media performance engages participants in empathy and disequilibrium by presenting excerpts from Welcome Project facilitated conversations and audio stories. In watching actors take on a range of reactions to the stories and to each other, participants can test out their own responses against these to make decisions about how best to act in their communities. First performed at the Porter County Museum in Valparaiso, Indiana, the performance has been adapted for conference and classroom settings. Future research includes developing a pre- and post-survey to assess the way our project’s various practices impact participant interest in diversity and willingness to work for inclusion.
THE MORE THE OBSTACLES FALL BETWEEN US: AN INTERACTIVE, MULTI-MEDIA PERFORMANCE TO DEVELOP EMPATHY AND PROMPT ACTION

Many of us work hard at building a culture of equity and inclusion; many of us also work hard at listening, at paying attention to the stories people tell about themselves and their communities in order to do this work. Marshall Ganz (2013), social activist and senior lecturer in public policy at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, writes, “Narrative is how we learn to make choices, how we learn to access the moral resources (hope, empathy, self worth) to respond mindfully and courageously to urgent challenges” (n. pag.). For Ganz (2011), telling stories communicates moral lessons: “Stories teach us how to act in the ‘right’ way. They are not simply examples and illustrations. When stories are well told, we experience the point, and we feel hope. It is that experience, not the words as such, that can move us to action, because sometimes that is the point—we have to act” (p. 282). He suggests, therefore, an intimate link between story and action, between naming culture and changing it. We at the Welcome Project at Valparaiso University <http://welcomeproject.valpo.edu> believe that facilitating civic reflection around first-person stories strengthens that link and can help move people into action.

How does facilitated conversation rooted in first-person stories give potential to new ways of acting and living together? Although disparate fields of study, research on empathy, intergroup dialogue, and interactive theatre offer compelling responses.

Neuroimaging research over the past two decades offers a growing body of evidence that humans are able to reenact the actions and intentions of other people, including experiencing emotions, through mirror neurons, or “empathy neurons” (Gallese et al. 2004; Iacoboni et al. 2009). While only one component of empathy, mirror neurons seem to allow us to identify the self in the other. Gallese (2005) writes, “The sharp distinction, classically drawn between the first- and third-person experience of actions, emotions, and sensations, appears to be much more blurred...” (p. 43). Pavlovich and Krahnke (2012) weave together research from neuroscience with organizational research and quantum theory to argue that empathy allows shared experience through dissolving of barriers between self and other, transcending self-interest and individual ego, and moving toward universal coherence.
Such coherence is of great value to organizations and communities that are becoming increasingly heterogeneous. We are in need of practices that call upon our empathy and aid us in maintaining engagement with each other and our community at large even as we change and become more diverse. Gurin et al. (2002) describe students’ experience of ‘disequilibrium’—being stretched by unfamiliar and sometimes uncomfortable ideas—while simultaneously developing active thinking and democratic beliefs. Higher education institutions “should provide a supportive environment in which disequilibrium and experimentation can occur by increasing interaction among diverse peers and help faculty and students manage conflict when individuals share different points of view” (pp. 362-363). In the end, by traversing the unfamiliar and the uncomfortable, we are better able to see the potential coherence at the root of our different experiences.

Stories offer us a portal. “When we tell a story, we enable the listener to enter its time and place with us, see what we see, hear what we hear, feel what we feel” (Ganz, 2011, p. 284). If stories enable us to empathize, facilitated conversation like that of intergroup dialogue provides further engagement with the story and ways in which we hear and process the stories differently from each other.

Intergroup dialogue practices typically involve bringing together participants from two or more social identity groups with approximately equal representation from each group to have face-to-face, sustained, facilitated conversation on issues of potential conflict. Dessel and Rogge (2008) offer an extensive empirical literature review of intergroup dialogue research: “Primary theories that explain how intergroup dialogue ameliorates conflict center on concepts of social identity, attitudes, social constructionism, self-reflection and perspective taking, anxiety reduction, learning, friendship potential, power balance, and cooperation” (p. 212). While such findings give reason to be optimistic, the formula for intergroup dialogue may be too manufactured; life is not so demographically proportionate. So while we may be able to construct well-balanced spaces or programs, much of campus and community life defies such proportional representation, especially when we take into account intersectionality and the way it complicates our responses to conflict. In addition, many intergroup dialogue practices are under-assessed in part due to the need for intensive, mixed method assessment strategies and analyses; nevertheless, the existing research on intergroup dialogue shows promising evidence of conflict resolution, improved relationship, and reducing prejudice.
Theater, another medium for sharing stories, can also benefit from the outcomes of intergroup dialogue if we look at the impact of methods derived from Boal’s “Theatre of the Oppressed,” wherein the fourth wall is broken and interactive techniques are used to directly engage the audience. Kumagai et al. (2007) assessed an interactive theater workshop aimed to train faculty to facilitate small-group discussions about multicultural issues in order to foster critical consciousness in medical education. Kumagai et al. found an increase in awareness of classroom experiences of minorities and women, with faculty reporting changes in facilitation behavior due to the workshop. Interactive theater and intergroup dialogue both, then, not only cultivate empathy through stories and conversations, but also actively engage participants in the process and encourage action and behavioral change.

In order to live well together, we need practices that use storytelling and dialogue to activate our empathy, encourage active listening and perspective taking, and motivate action and/or changed behavior. Ganz (2009) writes, “After developing our stories of self, then we work on building relationships, which forms the story of us. From there we turn to strategizing and action, working together to achieve a common purpose, learning to experience hope—that’s the story of now” (n. pag.). Individual stories alone won’t promote good community; we need to discover collective stories as well.

For the last six years, the Welcome Project has been working in Valparaiso, Indiana, and more recently, in both Lake and Porter counties, collecting stories of how and when people experience belonging—or not. In that time, we have interviewed over 250 people, posted more than 180 edited stories to our website and worked with over 175 students and 80 faculty and staff. We have actively used and taught others how to use these stories in facilitated conversations to discuss what it takes to live well together amidst increasing diversity and difference. Since 2009, we have reached over 3,700 people through facilitated conversations on campus, in the city, and nationally at conferences or workshops. Typically, we do this using a facilitation model adapted from the Center on Civic Reflection <http://civicreflection.org>, which fosters the practice of reflective discussion through the use of readings, images, and video, in order to help people consider the beliefs and values that underlie their commitments. Currently, we are working with Associate Professor of Psychology Jennifer Winquist, a colleague at Valparaiso University, and her undergraduate research students to develop a pre- and post-survey to assess the way our project’s various practices increase interest in diversity and inclusion. Future research, then, will incorporate findings from these surveys to better test our claims about empathy and how it encourages behavioral change and prompts action.
More recently, we wanted to engage participants in storytelling and dialogue through performance to see how disequilibrium might be collectively experienced and held within the shape of a script that weaves together responses we've received from facilitated conversations and stories across our archive. The ultimate aim was to introduce participants to the central questions animating the Welcome Project in a way that encouraged them to make those questions their own, both individually and civically. In doing so, we hoped to prompt an appreciation for the complexity of living well together in increasingly diverse communities and to inspire inclusive behaviors that participants would enact in their own attempts to “live well together.”

To meet these goals, we created “The More the Obstacles Fall Between Us,” an interactive, multi-media performance in four acts (reproduced in its entirety as an appendix to this article). Initially performed as part of a Welcome Project exhibition at the Porter County Museum in Valparaiso, Indiana, the play was then adapted for conference and classroom settings. Each act focuses on a central question that is subsequently illustrated through the spoken word play of four actors and excerpted audio stories from the Welcome Project’s archive. These questions move participants through a structure (its own kind of narrative) that we adopted from the Center on Civic Reflection: clarification, interpretation, and implication. Act I, therefore, asks participants to clarify what diversity stands for. Act II asks them to interpret what makes living together in diverse communities challenging. Act III asks them to consider which resources we can bring to the work of creating more inclusive communities. And Act IV asks them to consider what the performance implies for their own life with the simple and direct question, “What can I do?”

Because each act explores its question both through excerpts from Welcome Project audio stories and the actors’ interactions with those stories and each other, empathy and disequilibrium are experienced on two levels throughout the performance. First, participants have their own opportunity to identify or dis-identify with the Welcome Project storytellers. In drawing from the archive, we selected stories from a variety of positions (traditional to progressive, conservative to liberal, inexperienced to experienced) and a variety of social categories (race, religion, socio-economic status, etc.) to ensure that participants would encounter beliefs and/or experiences different from their own. In Act I, for example, the storyteller in “Marketing Tactics” critiques institutions and organizations for inauthentically laying claim to diversity in order to promote a “politically correct” brand in which they don’t invest real resources. Another storyteller in “I Get Food from the Food Bank” portrays the pain that can come with diversity when one aspect of your identity places you at odds with the dominant culture; comfort is then found when the storyteller finds people “like her” in an unexpected space. The final Act I storyteller in “On My Own Terms” asks participants to stop seeking common ground at the expense of our differences. He suggests that we should begin instead with the premise that we are “fundamentally different” with an “unbelievable amount in common.” The performance doesn’t make clear that one storyteller is
correct at the expense of others, or even that the storytellers need to be seen as at odds; however, the stories themselves indicate that there is no single narrative that allows us to define diversity, that we must rather listen to a chorus of voices. In this way, participants practice empathy and disequilibrium in ways similar to participants encountering the stories on their own or in a more typical facilitated conversation—they inhabit the stories and take note of their own identifications and dis-identifications.

But theater allows us to offer a second, collective practice in empathy and disequilibrium as participants watch the actors react to the stories and take on different stances that sometimes place the actors in conflict with one another. For example, in Act I, actor “Two” often puts forward a multicultural view while “Three” puts forward a colorblind view and “Four” a critical race theory view. In other words, the actor’s reactions demonstrate that an individual’s own set of experiences and interpretive lenses may place them in conflict with a storyteller and/or the community. This leads to debates in Act I (which actor “One” often tries to negotiate) about the legitimacy of labels, the distinction between labels and names, the value of belonging and the need for recognition. Participants, by sitting one step removed from someone else’s identification or dis-identification, can evaluate the outcomes of those reactions without implicating themselves directly. This provides room for discernment and reflection, the kind of “supportive environment” discussed by Gurin et al. (2002) that develops active thinking and democratic beliefs and that allows participants to “manage conflict when individuals share different points of view” (p. 363). It is also the kind of supportive environment humans require to make decisions about changing our behaviors or taking action.

The title of the show, “The More the Obstacles Fall Between Us,” is taken from the final Welcome Project story included in the performance. As part of our practice, we have always used the words of the storytellers themselves to name the stories we edit from their interviews before placing them on our website. We do this to acknowledge the risk storytellers take in speaking from their experience and to honor the way in which they desire to frame that experience. When possible, we also use the names of Welcome Project stories to title our conference presentations, exhibitions, and articles. Our work is collaborative at its heart, and we seek to recognize that whenever possible. Though this practice doesn't necessarily indicate we agree with that storyteller's particular point of view, it does indicate our faith in what Pavlovich and Krahnke (2002) suggest is a “universal coherence” that exists outside or perhaps underlies the experience of the individual ego. By choosing one storyteller’s formulation to capture or stand in for the whole variety of experience we are attempting to share, we assert that our differences do not have to be ultimate barriers to our shared desire to remain engaged with each other and our community at large. Perhaps obstacles will persist, but the more they fall between us, the more practice we receive in engaging our conflicts and moving, if not to a place of complete accord, at least to Ganz's (2009) “story of us” right now.
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THE MORE THE OBSTACLES FALL BETWEEN US
A Welcome Project performance

We dedicate this script to our friends and colleagues Jane Bello-Brunson, Alan Bloom, and Gus Sponberg-fighters for justice, each one.

Cast of Characters

ONE
TWO
THREE
FOUR

ACT I

ACTORS NEED PROGRAMS.

Audio recorder should be within reach but out of way for Scene IV. One actor should be in charge of audio/video. Test speaker level before performance. ONE, TWO, THREE and FOUR are stationed around the room, so audience gets “surround sound” experience. THREE and FOUR should be “in front.”

ONE

Write down a word or phrase that comes to mind when you hear the term,

TWO, THREE, FOUR

Diversity.
ONE

Different, Different, Unique Difference, Different, Different...

ONE AND TWO

Different

TWO

...opinions, ability to learn about each other, Everyone is different

THREE

Different Individuality/Different Cultures

FOUR

Different, Different types of people, Different Races, People from...

FOUR AND ONE

Different backgrounds

ONE

...that can be joined together, People from different lifestyles, culture and geography.

TWO

Culture, Cultured, Cultures, Enriched Culture.

Culture, Culture, Culture, Culture, Culture.

THREE

Multi-cultures, Multi-Ethnic, Multiple Ethnicities, Race, Ethnicity, Ethnicity, race.

Lots of races.

FOUR

Change.
ONE

People are People, Wonderful People, Community, Family, home...

TWO

New York City, Milwaukee.

THREE

Different, Different, differences, all sorts of different people, different than me...

THREE AND FOUR

Differences differences Different

FOUR

Many groups of different people, different cultures, religions and ethnicities, Differences of ideals.

ONE

Different but the same.

TWO


THREE

Variety, Variety, Uniqueness, Variety, variety, variety, variety, oversimplification...

THREE AND FOUR

variety

FOUR

...of Cultures, Variety; a wide variety of people who come from a different cultural background, as well as people with different sexual presentations.
ONE

Mix, variety, Wide variety, a wide range of options, New normals.

TWO

Equality, A Learning Experience, not my high school, Minority, Title 9, College, College.

THREE

Unique, homogeneous uniqueness, Interesting, Acceptance, Independence–

ONE, TWO, THREE, AND FOUR

Be yourself, everyone else is already taken–

THREE

Synergy, Character Builder, Potatoes...

FOUR

Potatoes?

THREE

(shrugging)

Potatoes.

FOUR

Mixture, a mix of people from different cultures and experiences in a group.

ONE

Mixture, Mixed ideas, perceptions, melting pot.

TWO

Cultures, culture, Culture, Cultures.
THREE

More opportunities, experience different things.

FOUR

Racist,

ONE

Religion, All have fallen short of the glory of God and all are redeemed by his Son

TWO

That's...

THREE

...Different, Different way of thinking.

FOUR

Common Difference, Differences, Different people interacting...

FOUR AND ONE

Different cultures...

ONE

places,

TWO

backgrounds.

THREE

Differences

FOUR

Difference
ONE

Different

TWO

different

THREE

An old wooden ship

FOUR pauses to look at THREE in wonder. THREE makes gesture like, “What do you expect me to do about it--I'm just reading my lines!”

FOUR

(begrudgingly starting again)

our differences

ONE

differences

TWO

Differences

THREE

different

ONE, TWO, THREE, AND FOUR

Cool different people!
THREE

(aside)

A sampling of responses from randomly selected incoming college students.

FOUR

Whew!

ONE

(turning to an audience member—casual, friendly)

So what comes to mind when you hear the term, diversity?

(Give that person a chance to answer.)

TWO

(turning to someone else)

What about you?

THREE

(turning to someone else)

And you?

FOUR

Uh, can we all just do this? Then we can add our word or phrase to the exhibit.

THREE and FOUR take the lead: Actors open their programs and write their word or phrase on the post-it or index card that’s been provided. Stick it to a designated space on a wall or board. HELP AUDIENCE MEMBERS WHO LOOK LOST.

As audience finishes sticking the notes, actors take the “stage” to indicate moving on. Chairs in semi-circle at this point.
WHEN AUDIO PLAYS LISTEN AND SHOW INTEREST WHERE WE FEEL IT. Try not to forget that audience may be watching us.

PLAY MARKETING TACTICS: http://welcomeproject.valpo.edu/2012/10/18/marketing-tactics/

AUDIO–MARKETING TACTICS:

I guess I just have a problem with the whole diversity campaign in general...I do...I think it's a little strange when you're selecting people and you're like 'Hey, we need you to hold this sign. And the sign is going to say “Mexican.” So, if you come to our school, we're going to give you this sign and ask you to stand over there. And hey, you, you look black, stand over there. And hey, you, you look gay, stand over there...’ And then you get all of these people together and there's like a white majority that just stands around them in a semicircle while they just hold their signs. And it's just complete segregation. And then...so let's have activities where we all get together and then you tell us about your sign. And then it's like 'Oh, here, cover up your sign,' and then you don't really get to even see their face because their sign is so damn big and so in your face that it's just like there's just a sign that's being held up by somebody behind it.

And then... I don't feel like it does anything. And I think it just forces people to be like ‘Ahh! There's diversity out there! Did you know that?’ It's like, ‘Yes, I did. Thank you. But I don't know this person, I don't know anything about them other than the ethnicity of their background that might not really have anything to do with their person at all.’

That's the kind of thing that I really do feel like, it's looking for 'the right kind of diversity.' We're looking for faces to fill these spots on our campaign ads. And if you're saying things like “the right kind of diversity," I don't think you have a pure desire to just diversify campus, but you're looking for marketing tactics.

TWO

Whoa, that's a little cynical.

FOUR

Wow. You understood her? Way too fast for me...

THREE

I think I get it. It's about labeling people, right? And how labels force us to see a category rather than a person.
ONE

And how some people aren't given a label. They're put in the role of spectators instead.

TWO, THREE, FOUR

...a white majority that just stands around...

FOUR

What does it mean to be white anyway?

African-American, Asian-American, Native American, Latin American, Muslim American, white American...?
That doesn't add up. If some people have to use hyphens, we should all have to use them.

THREE

No way. I just want to be American. Let's drop the hyphen altogether!

TWO

But I like my culture. I want to celebrate it, acknowledge it, show others I'm proud of it.

ONE

And sometimes, when I'm the only one like me, I miss my culture, and I need to find familiar faces.

PLAY AUDIO: http://welcomeproject.valpo.edu/2013/03/08/i-get-food-from-the-food-pantry/

AUDIO—I GET FOOD FROM THE FOOD BANK:

If you ride the V-line, not just the places that go from campus exactly, but just around the city, you'll see, kind of, people that you didn't realize were living in the city. I heard some guy talking on the phone and asking somebody if they needed their laundry done cause he had 20 bucks left, and he was going to buy tobacco, but if the other guy needed his laundry done, he was only going to buy a little thing of tobacco instead of a big thing so that they could both do their laundry. And I was like, you know, that was the kind of thing I grew up with, and it kinda felt that's nice to hear in Valpo, you know? Not that it's good that people don't have enough money, but like, to know that there's people like that around.
You know, the bus that I was riding was the one that went by Housing Opportunities so there would be a lot people when we would drive by. And on Tuesday mornings, people would be waiting in line because that’s when they would do their food pantry thing. And it’s like hey, I get food from the food bank at home, you know, my grandpa brings it by once a month or so. So that was kind of the moment where I realized wow, I feel like I belong around these people sometimes, you know? And my roommate felt that was really weird when I told her. She was like, “So...you liked being on the bus...with all the people...who don't have money?” And I was like yeah, you know, they wear kinda crappy clothes, and I don't feel like I have to look good when I get on the bus. And it's kinda cool.

THREE

Um, I'm kinda with the roommate on this one. What's cool about riding the bus? I've always hated it.

FOUR

That's not exactly what the roommate said.

ONE AND TWO

“So... you liked being on the bus... with all the people... who don't have money?”

THREE

Yeah. That's what I said: what's so cool about riding the bus?

FOUR

It's not about the bus; it's about the people.

ONE

Yeah, you're missing the point. She likes riding the bus because she gets to be around people that remind her of herself and her family. She doesn't feel like she stands out for a change.

TWO

But doesn't that lead to the problem we're talking about? If we all hang out with people like us, up go those signs with their labels.
FOUR

Well, you’re assuming we only identify with one kind of group.

THREE

But more identities just means more labels...

ONE

What if we make a distinction between labels and names? I mean, labels are pasted on you, but names we use to introduce ourselves.

TWO

I get it. Like labels put you in a category, but names make you an individual.

THREE

C’mon. Try Googling John Smith...

TWO

Alright...

(pulls out phone and pretends to do search)

1,010,000,000 results. Oh, wait... if I just put those quotes around his name...

(back to searching)

we narrow it down to... only 3,460,000!
ONE

Okay, okay. Point taken. Names can be shared like labels can be shared. But I do think there's an important difference. If a white man walks into a room of African-American men named John Smith and calls out, “Hey, boy,” no one in that room is going to feel like an individual. They're going to feel diminished and reduced, seen as less than. But if that same white man walks into the room and calls out, “Hey, John,” then the black men will turn around to see who's asking for them. Each person in that room is going to feel recognized.

THREE

Alright, but the term African-American or working class--those aren't names. They're labels.

FOUR

Only sometimes.

THREE

Um, what?

FOUR

I mean, this is what makes the whole thing really complicated. It depends on who's using the term and in which context, right? If I'm a lesbian hanging out with my friends, and we start talking about the queer community, I feel recognized. Queer's a name I can be proud of--with a history to reclaim. But if I'm walking down the street with my girlfriend, and someone yells, “Queer,” from their car window, then I've just been labeled and the name is suddenly alienating.

TWO

Okay, now my head is starting to hurt...

PLAY EXCERPT OF AUDIO:

http://welcomeproject.valpo.edu/2013/07/22/on-my-own-terms/
The system of multiculturalism Valparaiso has embraced, it garners attitudes that we're all fundamentally the same and our differences are trivial. And I disagree with that wholeheartedly. We're fundamentally different, and we have an unbelievable amount in common. I know it seems like a play on words there, but, really, it affects your attitude in how you see and how you embrace things.

TWO

Difference.

ONE

When I step outside my comfort zone...

TWO

I feel uncomfortable and defensive.

FOUR

I feel curious.

THREE

I'm feeling bored. C'mon, haven't we been over this ground before? (receives a look from FOUR)

TWO

Commonality.

ONE

Living in community.

TWO

Wanting to belong.

THREE

Wanting to feel safe.
FOUR

Wanting to grow and change.

ONE

What does it take to live well together...

TWO

...when you have different backgrounds?

THREE

...when your expectations don't line up?

FOUR

...when circumstances impact you differently?

Scene II

ONE and THREE should take two center seats; pull them forward a bit and situate them side by side. It's as if you will be speaking from video clip. Your “characters” will not interact. When you are not “on,” sit very still, eyes down on your scripts, so you'll know when to come “up.”

TWO and FOUR take places elsewhere in the room.

PLAY AUDIO (OR VIDEO) EXCERPT:

http://welcomeproject.valpo.edu/2014/01/21/a-turbulent-time/
AUDIO (OR VIDEO) EXCERPT–A TURBULENT TIME:

You know, ‘67... it’s hard to understand it as a kid when you’re 10; you really don't understand what's going on in the world, but it was a very turbulent time. And it seemed there was a lot of pent up angst and the civil rights movement was in its nascent stages and beginning to take traction. And Gary was sort of the epicenter of that because it elected the first African-American mayor, I think, of any major city, certainly one of the very first. And he was very young, and I can only imagine that a lot of expectations were thrust upon him to make a statement. And he did. What followed was really a lot of concern about if Gary would continue on the way it has, and unfortunately there was a “white flight” that began in ‘67. And many people who had the ability moved because it became very quickly a fairly dangerous place.

ONE

I grew up in the Miller Beach neighborhood of Gary. I was the only white kid in my elementary school. It was not a big deal to be different. Much later, when I visited Butler University and was having a great conversation with one of the student guides there, he asked where everybody was from, and I said, “Gary, Indiana,” and he said, “Unhh,” and turned away. When I came here to Valpo, I didn't experience that. (from People Get Scared)

Audio--A Turbulent Time:

It’s easy to pinpoint the reasons for the fall of Gary on a race or a person. The fact of the matter is there were many factors, and it was the perfect storm, and it was 1967. I mean, it was the perfect storm. But I’m sure it created fear for people saying, Hey, we got a good thing going here and we don’t want it to go the way of Gary, and, unfortunately, they were not thinking that through, and trying to define it in terms of color.

THREE

My first day at VU was a huge shock. Like it wasn't culture shock because I was the only black person--I had been at events like that. But just the comments people made like, you know, when I said, “Oh, I'm from Gary,” and the first comment someone made was, “Oh, have you ever been shot?” Then someone had the nerve to ask me if I had children. It just was like, “Really??...okay...” Made me wonder what I had gotten myself into. (from You've Never Lived in Those Shoes)

CONTINUE AUDIO (OR VIDEO) EXCERPT:
http://welcomeproject.valpo.edu/2014/01/21/a-turbulent-time/

AUDIO (OR VIDEO) EXCERPT–A TURBULENT TIME:

So that is clearly an undercurrent in the area and it has been for many years. And I think it's dissipating, particularly as another generation takes over. And as more generations... I think, you know, it is dissipating. Do we have people who do stupid things, you know, in terms of... yes, we do. And, frankly, I'm not so sure we can stop the few people from doing stupid things and making people feel unwelcome. What I think we need to do is focus on the vast majority of others and encourage them to maybe go a little bit out of there way every time they have an interaction.

THREE

People so many times try to discount what I learned in Gary and just the education I received because when you look at statistics, our schools aren't doing as well as other schools. But the fact that I'm able to do well here I feel like should prove against that. But it's pretty constant--I have to prove to you that I'm worth your time and worth me being here. It's just the looks that people give you and even in classes. I feel like people constantly ask, Do you get it? Like just because of my color, and it might be me being sensitive about it, but sometimes I feel like people don't realize that I'm just as capable as everyone else just because I come from Gary and because I'm black. (from You've Never Lived in Those Shoes)

ONE

I have no idea how to change that because it's been going on for a very, very, very long time--that people in a place feel they are privileged to it and they have ownership over it and they are more comfortable if everyone looks like them and thinks like them and speaks the same language they do. And when you have a group of different people come in--and the bigger the group, the worse the effect--people get scared and they want to protect themselves and they assume it's their right to protect themselves and their culture and their tradition. It feels like a very human nature thing, and I think its wrong, and I don't know how we'd best go about changing it except in the very subtle way of inviting people to widen their perception. (from People Get Scared)

TWO

(walking onto stage)

All of us, in the course of telling our stories, try to make sense of our experience.
FOUR

(walking onto stage)

These reflections can become starting points for important conversations.

TWO

(addressing audience)

What did you think about the idea that we can't stop a few people from doing stupid and unwelcoming things, so we should focus on encouraging others to go out of their way every time they have an interaction?

Go ahead and take a few minutes to talk with your neighbor.

ONE and THREE be prepared to go join someone for the conversation; otherwise, dialogue with each other.

TWO and FOUR will observe and watch the time.

FOUR

(interrupt the conversations, then when you have silence...)

Okay, let's do one more. This one's a bit complicated. I want you to imagine you've been living in a place for a good while; you've contributed to the well being of that place; you feel like you fit in. (pause briefly) A new and different group of people move in; things will need to change to make room for their needs and ways of doing things. How do you feel? Do you wish you could feel differently? If so, how?

Go ahead and take a few minutes to talk with your neighbor again.

TWO and FOUR be prepared to go join someone for the conversation; otherwise, dialogue with each other.

ONE and THREE will observe and watch the time.

ONE

(interrupt the conversations, then when you have silence...)

We hope we're interrupting some rich conversations.
THREE

We hope that everyone will continue to think about these things and talk with each other after the performance.

TWO AND FOUR

Difference...

ONE

Division.

TWO AND FOUR

Difference...

THREE

Opportunity.

Scene III

All “actors” take the stage, sitting in a kind of semi-circle. ONE should be next to THREE, close enough for the “nudge.” MAKE SURE EACH HAS A PROGRAM AND A WRITING UTENSIL. Once settled...

PLAY AUDIO:

http://welcomeproject.valpo.edu/2013/08/17/enamored-with-these-beautiful-young-faces/

AUDIO–ENAMORED WITH THESE BEAUTIFUL, YOUNG FACES:

So my husband and I, we’ve adopted two girls who were born in China. When we were going through the application process early on for our first adoption, I spent many, many hours looking at what are called referral photos. And a referral photo is the photo that an adoptive family receives when they have been matched with a specific child abroad. So at least in the China program, the way it works is, you don’t know who you are going to be adopting ahead of time. At some point late in the process, the Chinese agency matches a specific child with your specific family and you receive the photo. And so when you receive the photo it’s, it’s a big event.
To help pass the time and as a way of encouraging myself, I would go online, and I would look at referral photos that other families had posted. And I was fascinated with these photographs. Curious about where they were from, learning the different regions of China, and was just enamored with these beautiful, young faces.

So eventually we receive our referral photo and six weeks later we go and we meet our daughter for the first time and come home and finalize the adoption process.

So fast forward maybe five years, I was watching a film--it’s a story of a married couple, the wife ends up working in an orphanage--and I recall so clearly watching a particular scene in this movie where there’s a very slow pan over this room of children in this orphanage. It would linger on individual faces, and as I was watching this scene, I remember thinking, ‘Oh, look at her fine features, she really reminds me of Raina,’ and, ‘Wow, look, that girl, she kinda has wavy hair, and that’s like Sophia’s, and, boy, you don’t really expect that. Oh, that person has a toothy grin just like Maylin does.’ And I realized I was visually processing this group as a group of individuals. They jumped out at me as individual faces. And I was just startled because I thought to myself if this had been an orphanage in India, I could almost guarantee that I would have not visually processed this scene in the same way because I don’t have a bank of hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of images of the vast variety of faces like I do for China.

I really think it was looking at all of those photos for all of those months that helped me finally see this group as just a bunch of individuals together. And it took a lot. It took a lot to get there. I didn’t even know it was happening. It was completely unconscious.

It just, I think, takes a lot for our hearts and our minds and our eyes to get there, where we start viewing groups that look different from us not as groups, but as individuals.

THREE

(to ONE, TWO, and FOUR)

Alright, don’t hate me, because that was a cool story, but all I can think about now is the tag line: “all black people look alike" or “all white people look alike..."

FOUR

Well, that does make sense. I mean, she is talking about that kind of experience, and how when you have a “bank of faces,” suddenly that experience changes.

ONE
(to other actors)

What about you all? Is there a group of people that all “look alike” because you don’t have a “bank of faces?”

**TWO**

Whoa. That feels risky. Maybe we just write down our answers?

**THREE**

Agreed. I’m not sure I even feel comfortable sharing my answer.

**ONE**

Okay. Let’s write our answers in our programs but just for ourselves.

Each actor opens their program, obviously enough for the audience to understand that they should join in. Pause briefly while everyone writes.

THREE pulls out phone and appears to be texting.

**TWO**

Hey, are you texting?

**ONE**

OMG, we’ve got company. (indicating audience)

**THREE**

Relax. I’m just looking up the word enamored. Listen to this.

(reads)

“To fill or enflame with love; to charm or captivate.”
FOUR

Wow, what would it take for each of us to become enamored with those we usually see as so different? (hold up slip of program to indicate connection)

ONE

(beat--give people a chance to look at their paper)

Is that a fair question? I mean the storyteller wasn't trying. She even said it was unconscious.

FOUR

Maybe. But she also made the decision at some point to adopt from China.

TWO

But kids... everyone loves kids.

THREE

(a kind of aside)

Uh, I don't know about that...

ONE nudges THREE, a kind of “knock it off” gesture. Then ONE turns to FOUR.

ONE

So are you asking: how do we let people win us over, especially those we perceive as different than ourselves?

FOUR

Something like that.

THREE

But she was internally motivated. You can't ask people to manufacture that kind of investment.
TWO

But shouldn't it already be there? This is our community we're talking about. We should all be invested in our community.

THREE

Community. Community. Are you sure there's only one? I mean, we keep saying how people are attracted to others like them, how much we enjoy feeling comfortable. Maybe we don't have a community; maybe we have several communities.

ONE


TWO AND FOUR

Please choose all that apply.

ONE

Rural, Suburban, Urban.

FOUR

Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, California, New Hampshire, Texas, Oregon, Chicago...

THREE

–that's not a state!–

TWO

–to some people it is–

FOUR

...Arizona, New York, Nebraska, Kentucky, Nevada, Aurora
THREE

–oh, come on...–

TWO

–hey, if we’re letting Chicago slide...–

FOUR

Idaho, Rockford...

TWO looks at THREE with a “don’t go there” look.

FOUR

...USA, Guam, Ohio, Arkansas, Minnesota, Colorado, Alaska, D.C., Puerto Rico, Tennessee, Elkhart...

TWO

(looking at THREE)

–you are definitely letting Hoosiers claim a city, too!–

FOUR

...New Jersey, Valpo...

THREE

–my hometown!–

FOUR

...South Korea, Portland, Missouri, Hammond...

THREE makes the gesture of “my lips are sealed” to TWO.

FOUR

...Indonesia, India, and Pennsylvania.
ONE

Male, Female.

FOUR

Gay, Les...

TWO

(interrupting)

Hey, wait. Back up.

(leaning over to ONE)

You didn’t say transgender or gender nonconforming.

ONE

Well, no one marked that on their survey.

TWO

Still... sometimes people don’t feel safe identifying themselves even on anonymous surveys. I mean, their peers are right there. Some might worry about people looking over their shoulders.

ONE

Fine, fine.

Male, Female, Transgender, Gender Nonconforming.

FOUR

Can I go now? (TWO nods.) Gay, Lesbian, Bi, Straight, Queer, Questioning, Asexual—and (looking at TWO) even though we didn’t put them on the survey—Intersex, Pansexual.

TWO

Alright, alright. So we have lots of ways to identify and therefore lots of communities we belong to. But, jeez, we still all have to live together.
THREE

Easier said than done.

ONE

And maybe not so easily said either. We’ve really wrestled with the challenges of language. Like “Welcome Project.”

TWO

To welcome someone implies a host and a guest.

THREE

That’s great for a dinner party, but for a community?

FOUR

Yeah, when “we” who have been here and feel like we belong try to make “you” feel comfortable, it ends up being this us/them thing instead of “ours.”

THREE

Yeah, we don’t think about how are we going to be stretched and changed–

TWO

or how the community is going to be stretched and changed

THREE

–we only think about how do they need to change to fit in.

ONE

So, what would it take to think, “Okay, the community is ours, not just mine? What would it take to be curious and excited about change?
Scene IV

ONE and THREE leave the stage. TWO and FOUR turn their chairs facing each other into an interview setting.

FOUR

So don’t worry about the mike. Once our conversation gets going, you’ll forget it’s even there.

Okay, I always like to start with having people tell me a little about where they’re from.

TWO

Yeah, sure. I grew up in Jeddah, a large city in the western province of Saudi Arabia. It’s very diverse with many cultures, immigrants coming who have kept their roots. This makes Jeddah unique.

FOUR

And your family?

TWO

I come from a small family, two younger brothers. My mother’s family is from Jeddah, but my father’s family is from Mecca, so I didn’t have the chance really to meet my cousins.

Actually, I am kind of diverse because my grandmother is Egyptian, and I have cousins from a Turkish mother. (from I Don’t Believe in Borders)

FOUR

But you identify as Saudi?

TWO

Actually, I do not believe in nationalities. Saudi Arabia is only 83 years old. It was once just part of Arabia. And Arabia is more than a nationality, it’s a race. Everyone who speaks Arabic, everyone who lived in an Arabic country, can be called Arabian, so, actually, I don’t believe in borders.
FOUR

Well, have you ever felt people trying to put borders up?

TWO

Oh, sure.

FOUR

Tell me about a time when that happened.

TWO

So it was hard for me when I went to Utah, when I first arrived to United States. Their culture I'd never encountered with, cause they have a different religion, different social life. I was walking down the street and there were missionaries chasing me, talking about religion. It was the first time I've been exposed to missionaries. I didn't even know what missionary mean. So she kept talking about Mormonism and Jesus Christ, God, and she asked me questions about my beliefs and my origins. When I said I'm from Saudi Arabia, I'm Muslim, she said, “You gonna kill us all.”

FOUR

Whoa. What happened? What'd you do?

TWO

I just kept walking, but since then I had fear to encounter with people, especially from Mormon society. And I isolated myself, I did not talk much to people; I was hanging out with people from my background.

But I want to say that people in Utah are used to their religious habits. I understand how difficult for them to see someone acting differently in their society. They have been living together for decades, and it's kind of difficult to see an outsider walking in their society, changing the way they think or the way they believe. Cause these beliefs and thoughts shapes your identity, shapes your perspectives, and changing these thoughts would change you as a person, so it would take long time to accept outside thoughts and beliefs.

FOUR

That seems incredibly generous of you. I don't know that I'd be able to empathize like that.
TWO

Well, the more I learn about other people, the more the obstacles fall between us. We all belong to Adam and Eve; we all started as one. I think that human beings can live with each other in peace if they believe they came from one seed and their destiny is the same.

As I said, I don't believe in borders, cause if you went up to the sky and looked down, you won't see these black lines.

ONE and THREE should join TWO and FOUR who should now turn to face the audience. Everyone stands.

ONE

What happens when we look at the name of the group we wrote down earlier and consider,

ONE, TWO, and FOUR should all look in their programs as THREE delivers next line.

THREE

“we all started as one;” my destiny is the same as yours?

Brief pause for contemplation.

TWO

I feel a sense of possibility.

FOUR

(needs to be read by white actor)

I suddenly see how celebrating diversity could include me.

ONE

I have a hard time wrapping my mind around it. Adam and Eve trip me up. I mean, what if I'm gay? What if I'm Buddhist?

THREE

I can't help but hear cheesy '80s music.
ONE starts singing “Nothing’s Going to Stop Us Now.” THREE joins in.

TWO and FOUR cross their arms and stare down ONE and THREE.

**ONE AND THREE**

Sorry...

**FOUR**

(to THREE)

Try again?

**THREE**

Okay, okay. When I think...

(talking to self, looking at slip of paper)

“we all started as one; my destiny is the same as yours...”

Looking up from slip of paper, shrugging--just can't do it.

**TWO**

(coming to the rescue)

...it makes me feel like I can risk trusting people cause we're all in this together.

**ONE**

Even though we're still

**TWO**

Different

**THREE**

Multi-ethnic
FOUR
Varied

ONE, TWO, THREE, AND FOUR
Cultures.

ONE
Because if we went up to the sky...

TWO
and looked down,

THREE AND FOUR
we wouldn't see these black and white lines.

ONE
But we're not up there; we're down here.

THREE
So what's our job now?

TWO
What can we do from down here?

FOUR
What can I do?