

Developing intercultural understanding and skills

The Kool Kats (Jackson, Chris and Isaac)



Land Acknowledgment

We would like to acknowledge that we are uninvited guests studying and living in Kamloops at Thompson Rivers University. We are on the traditional lands of the Tk'emlúps te Secwepemc within Secwepmec'ulucw, the traditional and unceded territory of the Secwepemc peoples.



Key Points

1. Intercultural understanding
 - a. Knowledge about one's own culture as well as other cultures.
 - b. Knowledge about what is similar and different between cultures.
 - c. Progressive attitudes about other cultures.
2. Intercultural competence
 - a. There is no one fixed definition.
 - b. The ability to interact with others from different cultures.
 - c. intercultural competence is generally related to four dimensions: knowledge, attitudes, skills and behaviours (Laura B. Perry & Leonie Southwell 2011, 455)

3. Intercultural communication

- a. ‘Occurs when large and important cultural differences create dissimilar interpretations and expectations about how to communicate competently’ (Lustig and Koester 2006, 52).
- b. intercultural communication competence has been defined as the ability to effectively and appropriately communicate with people from different cultures (Arasaratnam 2009).

4. Developing intercultural competence

- a. Teaching of culture, including alternative viewpoints and being self-aware around culture
- b. Not about just accumulating knowledge/facts but in examining those cultural ideas.

5. Intercultural training

- a. Historically the training of adults in various employments in order to better understand and work with others in their area of work in other cultures.

6. Learning intercultural competence at school

- a. A growing trend of having different cultures taught in primary or secondary schools in subjects such as second languages, social studies etc.
- b. Also, a large part of IB programming that is becoming more widespread in schools here and abroad.

7. Visits abroad

- a. More heavily studied than other areas.
 - i. Increases intercultural understanding in university students.
 - ii. Dependent on length of stay and willingness to interact with the local community.

Two Passages

i. intercultural sensitivity is described as a person's 'active desire to motivate themselves to understand, appreciate and accept differences among cultures' (Chen and Starosta 1998, 231).

1. This is significant because as teachers we will need to find ways to motivate the students to want to learn, understand, and appreciate different cultures to be effective at teaching them about them in our various subjects, this is especially relevant in learning about the first peoples of North America.

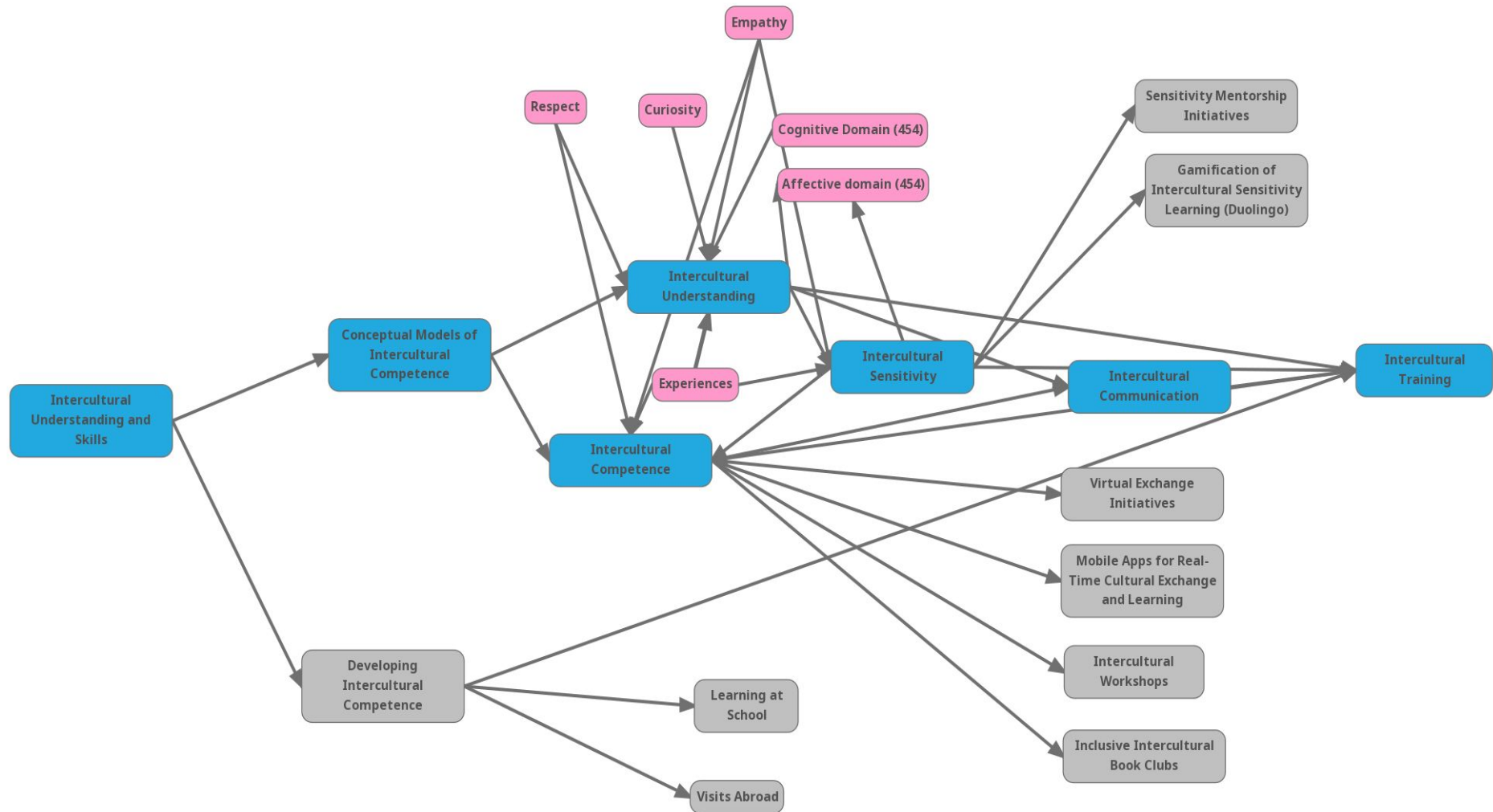
ii. “According to the DMIS, interculturally sensitive individuals have an ethnorelative orientation, while their less sensitive peers are ethnocentric.” (Laura B. Perry & Leonie Southwell 2011, 454).

1. This is significant in that as elementary teachers most students are going to come to us with ethnocentric viewpoints, in the process of teaching intercultural understanding we will have to work on helping them to move to a more ethnorelative view.

As teachers as well and as teacher candidates we need to explore our own levels of ethnocentrism and how we can develop ourselves into more ethnorelative views for our own growth and that of our students.

a. Ethnocentric - evaluating other cultures according to preconceptions originating in the standards and customs of one's own culture.

b. Ethnorelative - An acquired ability to see many values and behaviors as cultural rather than universal.



Two Questions

- 1) Which approaches to developing intercultural competence do you think are most effective?
- 2) How can intercultural competence best be developed among school-aged children and youth?

Question 1

1) Which approaches to developing intercultural competence do you think are most effective?

In my view, the most effective method for increasing intercultural competence is through expanding one's experiences, achieved primarily through experiential learning and social interactions. Experiential learning is studying abroad or participating in cultural exchange programs, providing first hand exposure to different cultures, and promoting intercultural understanding. These experiences are particularly effective when they involve cultural immersion and meaningful interaction with individuals from the target culture. Social Interaction and Networking encourage individuals to engage in meaningful interactions with people from diverse backgrounds, both within and outside their professional environments, which can increase intercultural competence. Building diverse social networks and fostering cross-cultural collaborations can also contribute to developing intercultural skills.

Question 2

2) How can intercultural competence best be developed among school-aged children and youth?

The best way to develop intercultural competence among youth is by increasing their intercultural understanding through inclusive learning. In addition to inclusive learning, fostering intercultural competence among youth can be further enhanced by promoting cultural humility. By encouraging humility, youth can approach diverse cultural interactions with openness, curiosity, and a willingness to learn from others, ultimately deepening their understanding and appreciation of different perspectives and experiences.

3 Words

1. **Intercultural Sensitivity**-refers to one's affective response to cultural difference. The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) describes increasing levels of cultural sensitivity through six stages from denial to complete acceptance of cultural difference. It highlights the importance of being aware of and respectful towards cultural diversity.

2. **International Mindedness**- International mindedness refers to having a broad and open perspective that appreciates and values diverse cultures, embraces global issues, and seeks to foster intercultural understanding and collaboration. It involves being aware of and respectful towards different cultural perspectives and recognizing the interconnectedness of the world.

3. **Critical Culture Awareness**- Critical cultural awareness refers to the ability to critically recognize, analyze, and understand the underlying assumptions, biases, and power dynamics within different cultural contexts. It involves questioning and challenging cultural norms, values, and beliefs to gain a deeper understanding of their origins and impacts.

Activity

