

The 1st Chapter

The Multicultural Education Facilitator Program and “*Multicultural Me*” : Understanding Culture and Ourselves in a Unique Way

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PHASE ONE TRAINING PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Multicultural Education Facilitator Program aims to improve multicultural relations in the community through education and dialog. The first phase of the program was to train young people with multicultural backgrounds to be able to express their experiences in educational institutions and to community organizations. It is believed that these young role models will have a positive impact in the community by facilitating dialog about multiculturalism and build towards general acceptance and celebration of the diversity found within our community.

The training module was divided into five parts (with orientation) including four workshops; Getting to know yourself 1 & 2 (reflecting on your own experiences), Expressing yourself 1 & 2 (methods and ways to introduce your experiences).

Orientation – To start everyone was introduced to the goals of the program, some basic definitions and meanings of culture, multiculture, values, as well as what it means to be a facilitator. Some of the challenges and benefits of being a multicultural individual or living in a multicultural community were discussed, and participants introduced themselves through a short visual representation activity (see Additional Activities, activity 1). Participants were also asked to keep a journal of feelings, questions, and comments they have during the program. Their first task was to write about what they hoped to gain from the program, and what they would like to say to others.

At the end of the orientation all participants were asked to take the Intercultural Development Inventory online (www.idiinventory.com) prior to the first workshop so that the trainer could gain a basic understanding of the group level of intercultural sensitivity and target some specific lessons to some individuals.

Workshop 1 – Revisiting the self-introductions from the previous meeting, participants delved deeper into their backgrounds and characters through various means. One exercise introduced the concepts of third culture kids (TCK) and edgewalkers as terms used for multicultural people, another explored the topic of fitting in, and yet another gave participants four possible ways a multicultural person can fit into a host culture.

Foreigner (outsider) Look different, think different	Hidden Immigrant (“foolish” insider) Look alike, think different
Adopted (accepted outsider) Look different, think alike	Mirror (insider) Look alike, think alike

Adapted from Third Culture Kids: the experience of growing up among worlds, by David C. Pollock, and Ruth E. Van Reken, 1999, Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.

The topic of values was introduced and participants learned three basic levels of values (universal, cultural, and personal) and how these influence each other and shape human behaviors and beliefs (see Additional Activities, activity 2).

Workshop 2 – Participants were given some time to find a quiet space to read their journals and reflect on their backgrounds and values. This put participants in a frame of mind to begin with the Multicultural Me (condensed version) study unit described in detail following this overview. The participants were presented with a slide show of the instructor finishing the statement “I am...” in various ways to illustrate the rich source of cultural groups that people belong. Participants were then instructed to compile their own lists and complete the first two lessons of Multicultural Me during the time provided during the workshop. Participants were instructed to complete lessons 4 and 5 of Multicultural Me as homework and to be ready to present their creations in the following meeting.

Workshop 3 – The focus of the workshop shifted from looking inwards to being able to express oneself effectively and participants presenting their Multicultural Me posters (lesson 6) was a perfect way to begin. The participants were then asked to think about the audience...to whom were they expressing themselves? Some discussion of learning styles (David Kolb, 1984), motivation, and capturing the audience ensued. After the lunch break it was time to talk about objectives, choice of activities (content), and sequencing (process). Participants were introduced to, and experimented with several activities such as role plays, simulations, frame games, instruments, case studies, lectures, etc. (see Additional Activities, activity 3).

Workshop 4 – Each participant presented their ideas and activities followed by and intense discussion and critique of the activities and suggestions for improvement. In order to have participants search deep into themselves for ideas, they were presented with a questionnaire on burning issues (see Additional Activities, activity 4) and given some quite time to reflect in private. Finally, each participant was given the opportunity for a private one-to-one consultation with the trainer to discuss burning issues, activity design issues, and personal feedback from the Intercultural Development Inventory and other topics.

Multicultural Me : Understanding Culture and Ourselves in a Unique Way

According to leading multicultural educator and author James A. Banks (1997):

“Educators need to develop a sophisticated understanding of the diverse groups to which students belong and to learn how their cultures influence their learning and behavior. Teachers should also help students develop an understanding of their own cultural groups and acquire cultural identifications that are reflective and clarified. Through the process of developing reflective and clarified cultural identifications, students will hopefully acquire more positive attitudes toward their neighborhoods and communities.” (p. 127)

Furthermore, the authors of Third Culture Kids David Pollock and Ruth Van Reken (1999) highlight the important role schools play in imparting cultural norms on future generations and how that role may be problematic for children with mixed heritage:

“School is one of the principal means whereby one generation communicates its culture and its values to the next. As long as everybody comes from the same culture, we hardly notice this process and what’s taught is accepted as ‘right’”. (p. 220)

The premise behind using the *Multicultural Me* unit in an educational context is that teacher and student conceptions of culture and criteria for defining national culture can be broadened to be more inclusive for minorities. This can be achieved by means of demonstrating diversity in subcultures and individuals, sharing and honoring that diversity within the group thereby creating fertile ground for multiculturalism in society to flourish.

Multicultural Me is a six-part study unit that explores aspects of multiculturalism found in everyone. The lessons are easy to use or modify, and can be taught in different content areas and at various levels from junior high school to adults. Each part can be taught comfortably during a 40-60 minute time frame (excluding homework).

Who can use *Multicultural Me* ?

- **HOMEROOM TEACHERS** that are searching for an activity to demonstrate student uniqueness, to build empathy towards others, and minimize bullying incidents among their students. Bullying in Japanese schools is on the rise, and it is increasingly important for all teachers to find ways to combat this problem. The self-reflective exercises promote self-awareness while reducing identity insecurity (a major source of bullying behavior), and the sharing aspects of the activity create an environment of respect and security.

The visual display for the classroom created through this unit is also very eye-catching.

- **SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS** wanting to explore the meaning of culture in a deeper manner. By building from Milton Bennett’s (1998) definition of subjective culture as “the learned and shared patterns of beliefs, behaviors, and values of groups of interacting people” (p. 3) students can gain a broader understanding of culture beyond national borders. This also introduces students to the concepts of multiculturalism, diversity, and group beliefs and behaviors.

- **SCHOOL COUNSELORS** seeking to be more multicultural sensitive, this activity may be useful to help understand the perspective of the student. American psychologist and multicultural counseling specialist Roger Herring (1997) states that “determining a student’s worldview is essential for counseling success” (p.65). It is becoming increasingly important for counselors to possess culturally sensitive empathetic skills as the Japanese student body becomes more diverse.

- **ENGLISH or OTHER SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHERS** using content-based instruction or sustained-content language teaching approaches. This activity allows for students to engage in a meaningful self-exploration activity with communicative, written and verbal components.

- **OTHERS** interested in becoming more culturally sensitive in light of the ever-changing and challenging multicultural dynamics of our communities. The world is becoming smaller, and there is a great need for individuals to possess skills, knowledge, and behaviors necessary for navigating a multicultural environment.

Multicultural Me Lesson 1 - I am... : Defining My Roles

Time: 10-15 minutes (introduction & ending), 15-25 minutes (student writing)

Preparation & Materials: Whiteboard, lined paper for students (lined notebooks would be ideal), pens or pencils.

Procedure:

1. To begin, ask students to think about the different situations they enter into during their day-to-day routines. Prompt them to think about the different roles they have and the different groups they belong to. Demonstrate by listing the various roles you may have in your life. Include major and minor roles (e.g. teacher, mother, skier, musician, photographer, neighborhood leader, bedtime story reader, dish washer, etc.)
2. Next have the students' compile a list of 10 different roles they have by finishing the sentence "I am ..." with a role they may have (e.g. a son, a swim team member, older sister, second grader).
3. Once the list is compiled, students must then place the roles on the list in order of importance from most important to least. It is important that students do this without the advise of the teacher, they should do what they feel is important. We revisit this exercise during the poster arrangement stage so the list should be titled Important roles for me to make it easier to locate later on.
4. Finally, ask students if they speak or communicate the same or differently in all their roles and to give some examples from your list. Ask if they behave the same or differently in each of their roles and to give examples. Ask the students to think about this until the next class meeting.

Variations & Extensions: Locate gaps and overlaps between groups and roles, expand the activity by discussing whether these roles were ascribed, or freely entered upon. If ascribed roles, then by whom and under what criteria? If the role was chosen, what motivated the choice?

Multicultural Me Lessons 2 & 3 - Identifying Group Behavior Traits

Time: allow students 2 full class periods (90 – 180 minutes) and homework time if needed.

Preparation & Materials: White board, Bring roles list (I am...) from the previous lesson and more lined paper, pens or pencils.

Procedure:

1. Review the previous lesson. Next, choose one of the roles you had used in your previous demonstration and write it on the whiteboard. Write a few behaviors or traits common to all people in that role. Try to elicit answers from your students.
2. Set students to task identifying the different behaviors and traits for each of their 10 roles. They should list general behaviors common to all members in that particular role, that is, what the typical person in that role may behave like. For example, if a student identifies herself as a member of school volleyball club, then some of the behaviors might involve the team practice routine, uniform dress, or cheers they use. Try to list about 8-10 behaviors and traits for each role. Do not hurry this step, monitor student progress and assist when necessary.

3. As an added dimension try to identify the language style (formal–informal–mixed) most commonly used in each particular role. For advanced students, once they have listed behaviors the activity can be expanded by examining those behaviors for deeper connections between beliefs and values. This advanced process may require extra class time and teacher support.
4. Once behavior / trait lists have been made for each role, the next step is to identify the roles that are similar to each other, and roles that are very different from one another. Try to also separate out the roles that students feel are closest to heart. Roles that are close to heart will be placed near the centre of the visual, and roles that are similar to each other will be placed close in proximity to one another. Students should also be thinking about their visual presentation at this stage. As a homework assignment, students can experiment with different presentation layouts and map their various roles in different patterns.

Multicultural Me Lessons 4 & 5 - Creating Your Visual

Time: allow students 2 full class periods (90 – 180 minutes) and homework time if needed.

Preparation & Materials: Role list (I am...) and behavior / trait lists from the previous lessons. Art supplies; markers, poster paper, glue, photos, etc.

Procedure:

1. This is the creative stage of the unit in which students create a visual image of themselves as a multicultural person. Even though most students elect to make a poster, do not limit them in materials or ideas (e.g. sculptures, computer generated animations, mobiles). Giving options for creating the visuals can provide good metaphor for diversity in society and multiculturalism. The final creation should not be fully a homework assignment but rather made in the classroom in order to give the instructor opportunity to spend time with each student individually and question each of them on the aspects of their visual. The one-to-one, teacher-student communications often produces deeper insights into student multiculturalism and are reflected in the final visuals. Make sure students have all the necessary supplies in the classroom for work during this stage.
2. Begin the visual at the center. The center image should represent the students' true self, their heart and soul, core values and some thought should go into how they would like to represent this. If students become hung up at this step let them know a simple smiley face, simple word at the centre like me, or the student's name will suffice and move on.
3. Work out from the centre with the close to heart roles first, followed by the peripheral roles at the outer edges of the visual. Use the Important roles for me list for assistance. Also, group together the roles that are similar in the same area of the visual if possible. For example family roles may be placed near each other and friendship roles near each other. Some roles may overlap similarity groups, again if students get hung up on this just place them as best they can and move on.
4. Students should write the role title, followed by descriptions of behaviors, traits, and language style in each area they have chosen (see visuals in figure 1 for placement of roles). The visuals should be decorated as students like. Encourage them to be creative and express themselves.

Multicultural Me Lesson 6- Presentations

Time: allow students 1 full class period (45 – 90 minutes)

Preparation & Materials: *Multicultural Me* visuals

Procedure:

1. Set aside a day that students can make oral presentations of their work. Small group presentations (groups of 4 - 6 students) makes presentations more intimate and puts less pressure on students than presentations in front of the whole class, particularly since identity is a sensitive topic to begin with.
2. Presenters explain their visuals and connections, followed by a question and answer period. If possible, create an area for displaying the work.
3. Students should be encouraged to show good presentation manners by listening carefully to the presenters and asking thoughtful questions. After each presentation applause should be given.

A final word for teachers -

It is highly recommended by the author that teachers work through the entire unit themselves as a participant before presenting it to a class. This will not only give deeper insight into your own multicultural selves, but will also help outline the time and thought required for each stage, and assist in developing class and student specific briefing/debriefing sessions for each lesson.

Figure 1. Examples of Multicultural Me visuals created by junior high school students through to adults. See p.44

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Activity 1 – Visual Representation of Self (warm-up)

Time: 5-10 minutes (drawing), 10-15 minutes (group share)

Preparation & Materials: One A4 sized paper for each participant, colored markers or pencils.

Procedure:

1. Hand out papers and markers to each of the participants. Explain that they are to draw an image or set of images that represents themselves (in this case their multicultural self). The participants are free to use their imagination to create their image(s) or symbol(s). The drawing should be done quickly, so set a time limit.
2. Once the images are complete participants are divided into groups, it is best to work in smaller groups (maximum 8). On by one participants share their work and explain their images to the group. There should be no questions, only speaker explanations. The images can then be put on display for all members to see.

Variations & Extensions: The activity can be expanded by mixing the group members after the first cycle, or by allowing participant questions.

Activity 2 – Action Reasoning Triangle: Values Mapping

Activity based on G. Hofstede, *Three levels of mental programming*

Time: 20 minutes (introduction to concepts), 15 minutes (mapping), 15 minutes (sharing)

Preparation & Materials: Whiteboard, A4 sized or larger paper for each participant, pencils

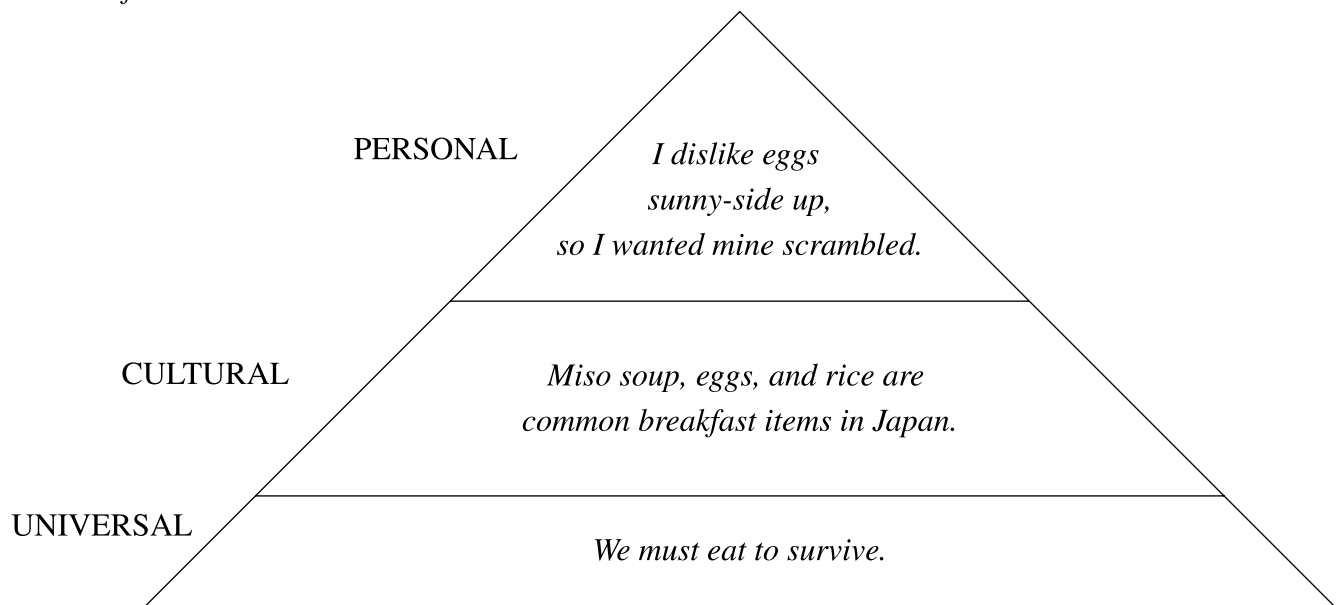
Procedure:

1. Before starting with the activity the instructor/trainer must introduce the concepts of personal values, cultural values, and universal values. Participants should be comfortable enough with the concepts so that examples can be elicited easily.
2. On a whiteboard draw a large triangle and explain that this represents the thought process of any action. The bottom representing the base and the top prior to output (action taking place). Each action we decide to engage in as humans must travel through the triangle from bottom to top before coming to be. In each triangle there are three zones.
3. Above the triangle write the word **ACTION** and give the example of breakfast following it. Write *This morning at 7:30am I ate miso soup, rice, two scrambled eggs, and an orange for breakfast.*
4. Next explain how each zone of the process influenced your action. Begin with the base of the triangle. Draw a horizontal line about 1/3 up the triangle and write the word **UNIVERSAL** beside the zone on the outside of the triangle. This first zone is that of universal values or human nature. This is the zone common to all humans and is inherited. Ask the participants what is the reason that ALL humans must eat?
Write the answer in the zone of the triangle (e.g. *We must eat to survive*).
5. Next draw a horizontal line about 2/3 up the triangle and write the word **CULTURAL** beside the middle zone on the outside of the triangle. This second zone is that of cultural values and is learned through our group interactions. This is the zone common to all members of our group. Ask the participants what the cultural reasons may be for your breakfast choice or fact that you chose to eat at that time.
Write the possible answer in the zone of the triangle (e.g. *Miso soup, eggs, and rice are common breakfast items in Japan. Teachers at my school usually eat breakfast before going to work, and work usually starts from 8:00am. etc.*)
6. Next write the word **PERSONAL** beside the top zone on the outside of the triangle. This last zone is that of personal values. These values are specific to the individual and are both learned and inherited. Tell the participants what personal reasons you had to choose your breakfast.
Write the answer in the zone of the triangle (e.g. *I dislike eggs sunny-side up, so I wanted mine scrambled. The breakfast was easy to make and I was in a hurry because I was late. etc.*).
7. As a final note, explain that our actions are usually influenced unequally by each of the value zones. One zone can have greater influence on an action than another. Erase the lines separating the zones and redraw them according to their influence (the larger the one is vertically, the more influence it had on our decision). See *figure 2* for a completed *Action Reasoning Triangle* based on this example.
8. Now the participants to choose any action they have done, or regularly do, and complete the same process as you demonstrated on a poster paper.

Variations & Extensions: This activity can be completed as a homework assignment and presented the following meeting. You may also wish to encourage participants to be creative and draw or paste visuals along side the triangle to make it more attractive.

Figure 2. An example of the “Action Reasoning Triangle” See p.47

ACTION - *This morning at 7:30am I ate miso soup, toast, two scrambled eggs, and an orange for breakfast.*



Activity 3 – Is There Enough Diversity in your Life?

Time: 20-30 minutes for introduction and activity, the debriefing and end discussion can extend the activity indefinitely.

Preparation & Materials: one copy of the worksheet for each participant, pens or pencils for everyone.

Procedure:

1. Introduce the topic of diversity. Brainstorm what it means to be in a diverse environment, living in a diverse community, or having a diverse workplace.
2. Handout the worksheet “*Is there enough DIVERSITY in your life?*” and have the participants follow the instructions on the sheet.
3. Debrief the activity by asking participants about their results.

Sample questions: In what areas did you have the most similarities?

What about differences?

How can you increase the diversity in your life?

What advantages/disadvantages would there be by having increased diversity?

What other categories would you make?

Does this accurately describe the diversity in your life?

Why or why not?

Variations & Extensions: Have the participants carry out part 2 of the exercise (on the worksheet) first and bring their answers to the meeting to discuss.

Is there enough DIVERSITY in your life?

1. Pair with a classmate and write their name in the space below. For every category mark “S” if you are the same or similar and mark “D” if you are different. Change and find new partners.

Name	Gender	Age	First Language	Education	Work Experience	Religion	Ethnicity	Hobbies	Blood Type	Hairstyle	Fashion
1.											
2.											
3.											
4.											
5.											

Adapted from Joy Hawkins and Anita Rowe, Foundations of Diversity Training. P.19

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2. Now try it with the names of five (5) people who are close to you.

Activity 4 – What is Your Burning Issue? Questionnaire

Questions contained in the self-reflective questionnaire:

1. Think about your life and the experiences you have had crossing cultures in your youth. What were the good memories, what are the positive things?
2. Do any particular experiences stand out in your mind?
3. Were there any experiences that troubled you? How would you have liked to change these?
4. What about now, has your life been enriched by those experiences?
5. If you could say anything you wanted, what would you like to say to young people today? What advice would you like to give them?

REFERENCES See p.42