



# LESSONS LEARNED FROM A CRITICAL, SOCIAL JUSTICE- BASED APPROACH TO AN INTERCULTURAL PROGRAM

Internationalizing Higher Education 2016

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# WELCOME & OVERVIEW

- Context
- Intercultural Development Program (IDP) framework
- IDP structure
- Assessment methods
- Outcomes met
- Lessons learned and ways to improve



# INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (IDP) CONTEXT



## CONTEXT – THE BIG PICTURE

- Risks of internationalization
  - International students seen as “assets” to university community
- Expectation that intercultural fluency will “just happen” through proximity
- Assimilative intercultural strategies
  - Intercultural workshops target international students, who are expected to “fit in” (i.e. Canadian soft skills)

Association of Canadian Deans of Education (ACDE), 2014



# INCOMING STUDENTS REFLECT SIMILAR EXPECTATIONS TO THE SOCIETAL/INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

*Q: Why did you register for the Intercultural Development Program?*

Intercultural knowledge *will be **beneficial for me in future study and jobs.***

*With the advent of globalization... **it's a social asset.***

*To further **develop skills** that are **necessary** in our multicultural world.*

When I am travelling to Africa, *this development program would surely **set me up for success.***



# IDP FRAMEWORK



# TWO-FOLD FRAMEWORK

- Intercultural education

- Dearsdorff, 2006; LeBaron, 2003; Shah, 2004

- Critical approaches to global citizenship education (GCE)

- encourage students to engage with multiple perspectives in order to learn and transform their own views, identities, and relationships
- expose and address assumptions, biases, contexts, imbalances, injustices, relationships and structures that maintain the privilege of some at the expense of others
- promote experimentation with other ways of thinking and relating to others, rather than prescribing behaviors

- Andreotti, 2006; Pike, 2008; Richardson, 2008; Schultz, 2007; Taylor, 2013



## INCOMING STUDENT, RE. *WHY IDP?*

*Coming from any culture, or any place, we carry with us our own set of judgments and values. These become our magnifying glasses to see the world, our reading glasses to read the people around us, and maybe even shades that block certain understandings of things. I would like to take part in this program to better understand how these values interact, how to begin in terms of setting prejudgments aside, how to value and celebrate diversity, as well as to get perspective in a world where boundaries concerning ethnicity, culture, and values interact dynamically.*



# IDP OUTCOMES, STRUCTURE, AND ASSESSMENT



# STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

- identify and explore their own identities and relative power and privilege in relation to others
- see themselves as part of a world community, where their actions have impacts beyond themselves and beyond the now
- suspend judgment and notice personal bias when encountering others
- become active agents for social change; develop effective strategies and increase willingness and confidence to intervene during every scenarios of injustice or discrimination
- develop intercultural fluency as a means to create more meaningful and sustainable social relationships
- participate in and facilitate high-risk, sensitive, or courageous conversation
- identify the value of learning with/from/alongside others rather than about others



# IDP STRUCTURE

- Workshops (select 6)
  - Fostering an intercultural campus community
  - Intercultural communication
  - Rethinking yourself in a new cultural context
  - Thinking interculturally: designing programs, building communities
  - Difficult conversations and the danger of silence
  - Beyond a single story: media representations and culture
  - Power, privilege and culture
  - Cultural appropriation
  - Questioning development
- Practical experience (student-selected)
- Community of practice



## IDP ASSESSMENT METHODS

- informal **observations** and interactions with students
- formal **surveys** conducted at the outset, mid-point, and end of the program
- written **reflections** on experiential learning
- a **portfolio** of student projects and contributions to the IDP Facebook page



# IDP STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (MET)



## STUDENTS WILL:

- identify and explore their own identities and relative power and privilege in relation to others

*Before taking this workshop, I sometimes thought about why someone might think or behave a certain way. But I have never thought about why I thought they'd think that way.*



## STUDENTS WILL:

- see themselves as part of a world community, where their actions have impacts beyond themselves and beyond the now

*Don't assume too much. Accept that you make mistakes, and you need to hold yourself accountable for these things.*

*The workshop gets me to think about how media representations affect what everyone thinks and hopefully to do something about it.*



## STUDENTS WILL:

- develop intercultural fluency as a means to create more meaningful and sustainable social relationships

*I found it really important to be curious about different students' backgrounds and their personal experiences.*

*I really loved hearing other people's stories and learning through them. Everyone comes from such distinct backgrounds, yet we are all here together learning.*



## STUDENTS WILL:

- become active agents for social change; develop effective strategies and increase willingness and confidence to intervene during every scenarios of injustice or discrimination

*I absorb the information/lectures differently in my [academic] classes now. I strive to get more involved in different areas to spread my IDP knowledge.*



## STUDENTS WILL:

- participate in and facilitate high-risk, sensitive, or courageous conversation

*Learning how to distinguish and stand up for uncomfortable situations, in regards to racism and creating inclusive environment.*



## STUDENTS WILL:

- suspend judgment and notice personal bias when encountering others

*I am certainly much more mindful of my personal biases/cultural contexts within my nursing practice and personal experiences.*



## STUDENTS WILL:

- identify the value of learning with/from/alongside others rather than about others

*You never fully understand anyone, and that's okay. The effort put into learning, questioning, and keeping an open mind to gaining new knowledge is important.*



# LESSONS LEARNED AND WAYS TO IMPROVE



## 1 – FACILITATING LEARNING FOR A DIVERSE COHORT

*The lesson:* challenge of facilitating learning for a diverse cohort (negotiating between ranging and conflicting epistemologies)

*The way:* implementing diverse pedagogies; developing interactive, relevant, and student-generated curricula

*Have a sharing session where participants bring personal (art, work, etc.) of their own, corresponding to a theme.*



## 2 – COHORT-BASED MODEL

*The lesson:* need for a cohort-based model to create a safe, consistent space to discuss controversial topics, make friends, share ideas outside of workshops, and work on collaborative projects

*The way:* offer more collaborative learning opportunities such as group field trips, designated time for information sharing in every workshop, workshops centred on student projects, and on a collective experiential opportunity

*Maybe some more activities that include the entire group to foster more of a community.*



### 3 – MAINTAIN A CRITICAL APPROACH

*The lesson:* difficulty of maintaining critical approaches rather than inadvertently reverting to a safe, politically correct environment where the real, material repercussions of our own and our students' assumptions remained unchallenged

*The way:* continue to research and implement more critical pedagogies and engage in ongoing reflection as we explore a counter-culture educational practice

*I always left feeling kind of fulfilled.*



# CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION

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