

# Fostering Intercultural Competence Among Undergraduate Students: Course Design for Growth

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Elizabeth J. Sandell, Ph.D.  
Professor,  
College of Education

Lauren Lindmeier,  
Research Assistant,  
College of Education

Ryuto Hashimoto,  
Research Assistant,  
College of Arts  
and Humanities

[ed.mnsu.edu](http://ed.mnsu.edu)



**MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, MANKATO**  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION



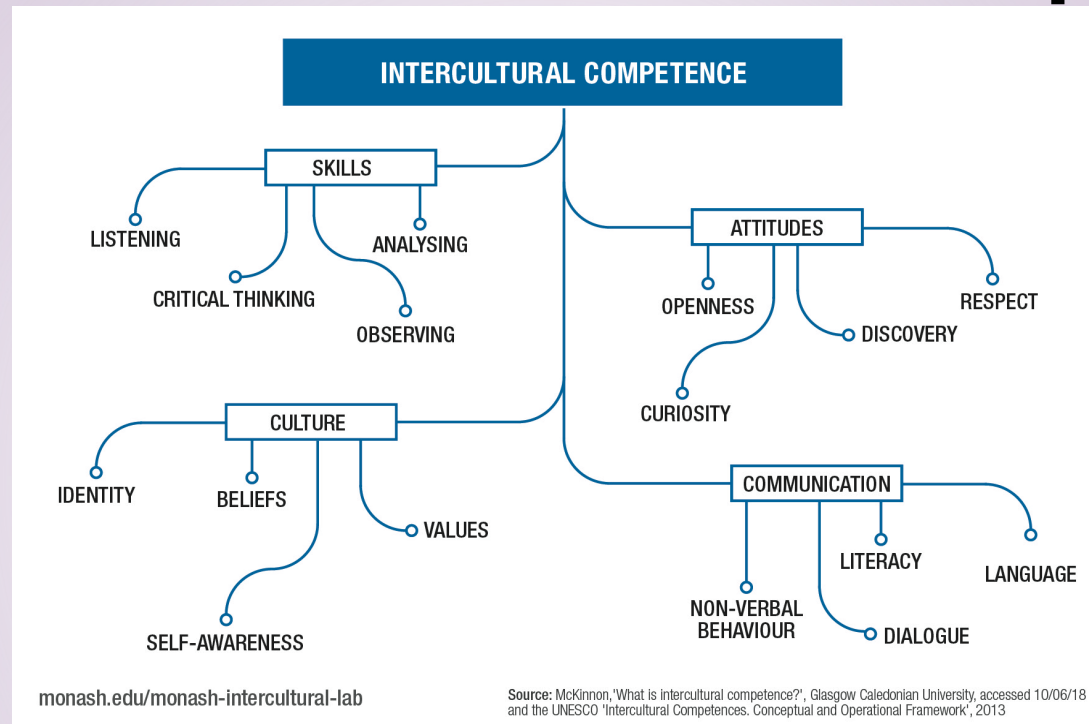
@COEMankato

# Our Working Definition of Culture



[Cabral, Josué. 2014. How to Define Culture? In World Language Classroom. <https://wlclassroom.com/2014/10/25/how-to-define-culture/>]

# Definition of Intercultural Competence



Intercultural competence: the ability to function effectively across cultures, to think and act appropriately, and to communicate and work with people from different cultural backgrounds.

[Adapted from Leung, K., Ang, S. and Tan, M.L. (2014), 'Intercultural Competence', *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behaviour*, 1:4889-519.]

# Intercultural Development Continuum

Denial - Polarization - Minimization - Acceptance - Adaptation

Orientations to Cultural Differences and Similarities

[Hammer, M.R. 2022. The Intercultural Development Continuum. Olney, MD: IDI, LLC. <https://idiinventory.com/generalinformation/the-intercultural-development-continuum-idc/> ]



# Limited Perceptions of Undergraduate Students

"The students seemed to define culture exclusively as race/ethnicity and rarely considered other dimensions, such as religion, sexual orientation, or gender..."

"Having privileged cultural identities including Whiteness may result in a lack of opportunities for perceiving culture based on additional dimensions, such as geographic location, social economic status, sexual orientation, and religion."  
(Lee et al, 2021, p. 109).

# Introduction to Critical Race Theory in Education

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## Human Relations in Multicultural Society



# Research Design

Mid-sized Midwestern  
public university.

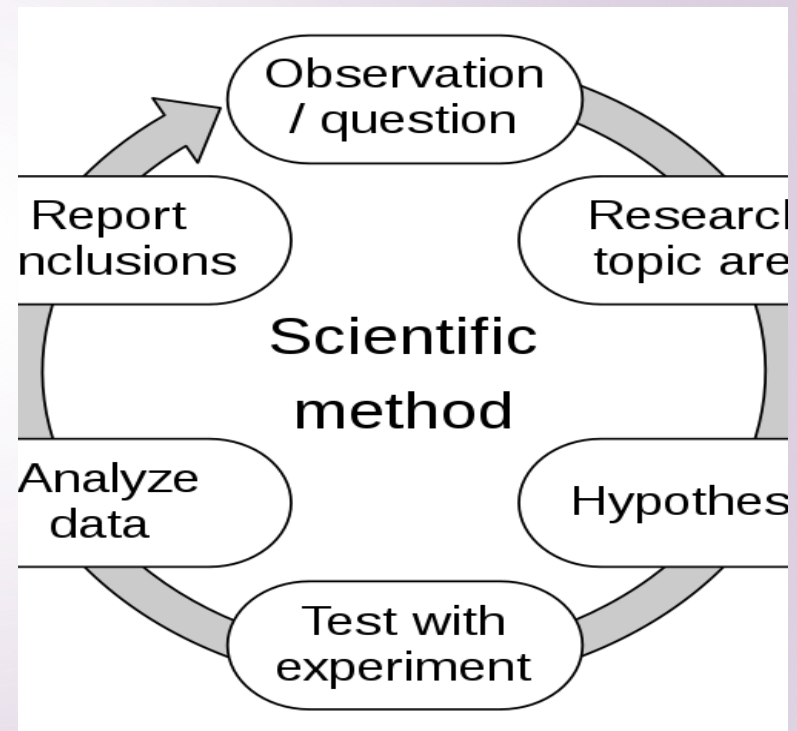
67 undergraduate students

Intercultural Development  
Inventory v. 3

Fall semester 2021

Paired samples t-tests

IRB log #1137599



# Beginning Inter-cultural Competency among Undergraduates (author's studies since 2010)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	sd
Developmental Orientation based on IDI scores	779	49.57	128.98	88.863*	14.667

\* Indicates an orientation that is ethnocentric and minimizes cultural differences, to get along with others.



# Our Hypotheses

## Hypothesis 1:

Individuals who completed CRT would actually begin the HR course at a statistically significant higher developmental orientation to cultural differences relative to students who did not complete CRT.

## Hypothesis 2:

Individuals who completed CRT would make statistically significant larger gains in their developmental orientation to cultural differences during the HR course than students who did not complete the CRT course.

## Hypothesis 1 Analysis: Differences in Cultural Competence at the beginning of the HRMS course

Measure	Mean of CRT (N=19)	Mean of Non-CRT (N=48)	Sig. (one-tailed)
Developmental Orientation	97.61	90.47	0.042*

\* $p < .05$ .

As measured by the pre-HRMS IDI scores of CRT students and non-CRT students.

## Hypothesis 2 Analysis: Changes in Cultural Competence between two groups at the conclusion of the HRMS course

### CRT Paired-Samples t-test results Pre- and Post-HRMS Course (one-tailed)

Measure	Mean of Pre HR (N=19)	Mean of Post HR (N=18)	Mean Dif.	Sig. (one tailed)
Developmental Orientation	97.61	102.73	4.01	0.13

### Non-CRT Paired-Samples t-test results Pre- and Post-HRMS Course (one-tailed)

Measure	Mean of Pre HR (N=48)	Mean of Post HR (N=43)	Mean Dif.	Sig. (one tailed)
Developmental Orientation	90.47	104.13	13.42	<.001*

\* $p < .05$ .

As measured by the IDI scores of CRT students and non-CRT students.

# Impact of Critical Race Theory & Human Relations in Multicultural Society:



# Instructional Strategies

**Cultural autobiographies** lead students to conclude "I do have a culture!"

**Other voices** through guest speakers, films, zoom meetings.

**Cultural partners** to foster cross-cultural interactions.

**Service learning** with people culturally different than the students.



# Discussion and Recommendations



# Questions or Comments?



**Please contact:**

**Elizabeth J. Sandell, Professor  
Elementary & Literacy Education  
Minnesota State University  
Mankato, Minnesota USA**

Orcid ID: 0000-0002-9762-4930

[Elizabeth.sandell@mnsu.edu](mailto:Elizabeth.sandell@mnsu.edu)

# Abstract

Tertiary education can provide students with experience and understanding about other cultures, toward the goal of intercultural competence (ICC). This investigation examines the impact of two undergraduate courses on students' ability to understand and adapt their behavior to cultural differences. The two courses were: (1) Introduction to Critical Race Theory (CRT) and (2) Human Relations in a Multicultural Society (HRMS). Researchers reviewed archived data of students' scores on the Intercultural Development Inventory during the Fall 2021 semester. The hypotheses included: (1) students who completed the CRT course (called CRT group) will begin the HRMS course at a higher developmental stage of ICC compared to students who did not complete the CRT course (called non-CRT group) and (2) students who completed the CRT course will make larger gains in their ICC during the HRMS course compared to the non-CRT group. Data analysis found statistically a significant difference between groups at the beginning of the HRMS course. In other words, the CRT course may have had a statistically significant impact on students. Analysis also found that, while both groups had statistically significant gains in ICC during the HRMS course, there was no statistically significant difference between groups by the conclusion of the HRMS course. The initial difference between groups seems to have dissipated; the non-CRT group caught up with the CRT group and both groups reached the same statistical level at the conclusion of the course. The investigators report on course instructional strategies that may have led to this development. Universities may use this information to consider the effectiveness of course design for growth in ICC among undergraduate students.