Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Journal of Intercultural Communication Research

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rjic20

Narrating Intercultural Capital: Constructing Political Correctness, Negotiating Identity Capital, and Expanding Terrains of Possibility for Student Engagement

Terra Gargano

To cite this article: Terra Gargano (2021): Narrating Intercultural Capital: Constructing Political Correctness, Negotiating Identity Capital, and Expanding Terrains of Possibility for Student Engagement, Journal of Intercultural Communication Research, DOI: 10.1080/17475759.2021.1950811

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/17475759.2021.1950811

Published online: 07 Jul 2021.

Submit your article to this journal

Article views: 29

View related articles

View Crossmark data

Full Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at
https://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?journalCode=rjic20

JOURNAL OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION RESEARCH
https://doi.org/10.1080/17475759.2021.1950811

Narrating Intercultural Capital: Constructing Political Correctness, Negotiating Identity Capital, and Expanding Terrains of Possibility for Student Engagement

Terra Gargano

School of International Service, American University, Washington, US

ABSTRACT

How does identity capital influence student engagement in the classroom? This article examines the narratives of sixty-three first year undergraduate students enrolled in a cross-cultural communication course to provide a portrait of the ways students envision identity capital influences their ability and willingness to engage in meaningful dialogues. Through semi-structured interviews, students demonstrate the importance of real and perceived intercultural capital as a condition for engaging in intercultural dialogues. Through a lens grounded in political correctness and identity capital, student voices illuminate ways faculty can expand the terrains of possibilities for authentic intercultural communication, increase opportunities for the development of realistic cultural empathy, and enable the negotiation of intercultural capital that transcends cultural boundaries and allows for the continued exchange and accumulation of identity capital.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received 21 September 2020
Accepted 28 June 2021

KEYWORDS
Identity capital; intercultural capital; political correctness; cross-cultural communication; dialogue; higher education

Introduction

Research demonstrates that our mediated lives make it more and more difficult for us to develop empathy through human connection and dialogue. In recent years, commentaries about the decline of social structures found their way into publications and civic rhetoric. In *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, Robert Putnam writes about the collapse of communities, social networks, and the decline of social capital in society (2001). In *Elsewhere, U.S.A: How We Got from the Company Man, Family Dinners, and the Affluent Society to the Home Office, BlackBerry Moms, and Economic Anxiety*, Dalton Conley argues that we are constantly "elsewhere," never present in the moment, multi-tasking, and missing the opportunities to make meaningful connections in our lives (Conley, 2009). According to Sherry Turkle in *Reclaiming Conversation*, our reliance on technology and our need to stay connected is inhibiting individuals from developing empathy, a principle at the core of cross-cultural communication (Turkle, 2015).

Yet, in light of these dismal portraits of alienation, students and faculty must still engage in meaningful dialogues about timely issues, develop realistic cultural empathy,

CONTACT Terra Gargano Email gargano@american.edu
© 2021 World Communication Association

and negotiate identities. How does identity capital influence student engagement in the classroom? How does the identity capital of students influence what and how they communicate in class, and how their remarks are interpreted by other students? How do students acknowledge, accumulate, and deploy varying degrees of intercultural capital when engaging in classroom dialogues? Does political correctness keep us from having meaningful dialogues in the classroom? Answers to these questions can inform pedagogy and faculty understanding of the cultural frames, perspectives, and identities student bring to the classroom.

Against a backdrop of student-derived understandings of political correctness, this article explores connections between identity capital and classroom engagement in an undergraduate cross-cultural communication class. Specifically, this article seeks to address the question, how does identity capital influence student engagement in the classroom? First, this article introduces and examines the current trends and literature surrounding political correctness and identity capital in higher education. Then, student voices describe and elaborate on the campus climate at a private institution of higher education in Washington, DC. Grounded in student interviews, this article then delves into the ways students perceive political correctness informs classroom contexts and how identity capital influences engagement and dialogue in the classroom. Finally, student understandings are used to craft questions for faculty that illuminate best practices for facilitating dialogues and developing a classroom climate that propels students down a path of recognizing, developing, and negotiating identity capital.

Students come to campus with varying degrees of identity capital and exposure to politically correct forms of expression, where a multitude of interpretations and understandings of behaviour and language exist. Ultimately, by understanding student perspectives, faculty can expand student learning by challenging and engaging them in intercultural pedagogy that includes a wider trajectory of voices, terrains of possibilities, and lived narratives in the hope of propelling students down a path towards realistic cultural empathy and understanding.

Political correctness

The political correctness firestorm erupted in U.S. higher education and spread into a national debate in the fall of 1990 when an innocuous article by Richard Bernstein appeared in the *New York Times*. Historically political correctness was a term used to challenge academic freedoms, faculty diversity, multiculturalism, the canon, and speech codes (Berman, 1992; Cope & Kalantzis, 1997; Schultz, 1993). Books like Allan Bloom's (1987) *The Closing of the American Mind* and Dinesh D'Souza's (1998) *Illiberal Education: The Politics of Race and Sex on Campus* raged against the ideals and beliefs around political correctness at the time. Covers of *Newsweek, The Atlantic*, and *The Village Voice* were intently focused on political correctness. A multitude of rhetoric swirling around difference and deconstruction were embedded in the debates over political correctness and the impact on higher education. Anchored in a battle between left and right versions of cultural perspectives on the purpose of higher education, language use, and ideology, the debate left little room for alternative perspectives. Scholars questioned if political correctness even existed, to what extent political correctness was an attempt to exert control over institutions, or if the concept was relegated only

to the idea of identity politics (Zimmerman, 2016). Yet, the debate about political correctness still exists, evidenced by Lukianoff's (2014) *Freedom from Speech* and Kim Holmes's (2016) book, *The Closing of the Liberal Mind*.

With a renewed flurry, the conversation about political correctness on college campuses shifted from institutions and departments to individuals, and now centres around emerging speech codes, trigger warnings, student sensitivity, and microaggressions. In the fall of 2015, *The Atlantic* published "The Coddling of the American Mind," a controversial article that addressed the increasing demands for faculty to adopt trigger warnings and to exclude ideas from classrooms that might spark discomfort.

At the same time, scholars and practitioners were advocating not for safe spaces but brave spaces, "a strategy developed specifically to encourage taking risks in dialogues" and to create the discomfort or cognitive dissonance that provides opportunities for students to learn from each other and the voices of those different from themselves (Arao & Clemens, 2013, p. 141). Student perceptions of political correctness are influencing more and more faculty trainings and campus classrooms. Political correctness is viewed by some as linguistic etiquette, when in fact there is much more to understand about context, situations, identities, and experience to reduce political correctness to simply a matter of words. Over the years, "definitions of 'political correctness' focus on language, emphasizing efforts to replace unkind or offensive terms with more neutral ones" (Zimmerman, 2016, p. 24). Yet, political correctness encompasses more than the labels or words we use, by acknowledging the "words we choose affect the thoughts we communicate" (Zimmerman, 2016, p. 25). Taking this line of thinking further, it is also evident that and understanding of political correctness is compounded by not only what is being communicated, but also by who is doing the talking. Political correctness describes language, policies, decisions, and actions intended not to offend.

Yet, what constitutes politically correct behaviour or discourse varies from context to context – within nations, across regional boundaries, throughout communities, and schools, and from student to student. Scholars around the globe are looking at the ways political correctness infiltrates the classroom and finding that political correctness, as both a concept and as a linguistic filter, can both hinder and enhance learning in classrooms. As illustrated in Table 1 , Scholars in Poland, Australia, Japan, South Africa, Canada, Sweden, and Thailand conducted studies examining the ways political correctness influences educational spaces.

Political correctness, the understanding of the term and in practice, is contextually and culturally dependent. In each of these cases, and many others from around the world, political correctness is examined within a specific context, at the intersection of a national cultural frame, academic higher education culture, and institutional culture. The findings of these studies illuminate the negative ways political correctness jeopardizes authentic learning, threatens scholarly and intellectual discourses, and creates spirals of silence (Noelle-Neumann, 1974). While at the same time, the findings of these studies also illuminate how directly addressing political correctness in a classroom can foster authentic learning, a deeper understanding of values and languages, and conversations that acknowledge power dynamics and histories.

In considering political correctness, the contexts that students come from and the local contexts they encounter at the university all create varying levels of intimacy and expectations that students are required to seamlessly navigate. Home contexts include

Table 1. Research focusing on the influence of political correctness in educational contexts.

Country	Topic	Authors
Poland	In Poland, scholars examine how political correctness manifests through educational policies and language conditions	Rojek
Australia	Australians debate what constitutes political correctness in higher education against a backdrop of national events.	Allport
Japan	Scholars question "Political Correctness in the Land of Conformity" through an examination of Japanese higher education.	Davidson
South Africa	In "It Is Not What Is Said, But Who Says It: Implications for Classroom Dialogic Education," South African scholars explore how context influences transformative learning that moves beyond who is talking to examine larger social issues.	Serekoane
Canada	Academics debate "The Backlash Against Political Correctness" in Canadian composition courses.	Drain
Sweden	Swedish educators explore whether the teacher education programs are spaces governed by political correctness or free speech.	Edling & Liljestrand
Thailand	At a university in Thailand, the use of politically correct language combined with the attitudes, assumptions, and opinions of students reveal that while politically correct English can be helpful, it is often overused.	Phumsiri & Tangkiengsirisin

national cultural frames, neighbourhoods, schools, and families, while higher education contexts include the campus climate, academic disciplines, and the atmosphere of the neighbouring community. The situations students encounter in both home and higher education contexts further compounds the ability of faculty to make predictions about how students will communicate, react, co-construct knowledge, and negotiate identities (Sommers, 2011). Since political correctness is interpreted differently based on context and individual perspectives, a more nuanced understanding of student conceptualization of politically correct behaviour and dialogues in the classroom is needed to situate student voices. This article will illuminate how students view political correctness and identities in shaping meaningful dialogues in their classrooms, which ultimately provides a forum for asking questions, often difficult questions in the classroom.

While there are a host of resources available to facilitate cross-cultural dialogues, training activities designed to increase intercultural competency skills, and research to support the value of living and learning communities and studying abroad, political correctness is not a topic included in these pedagogical approaches (Maxwell et al., 2011; Sue, 2015; Banaji & Greenwald, 2016; Gurin et al., 2013; Berardo & Deardorff, 2012). A review of intercultural communication textbooks published throughout the last decade, see Table 2 , does not find political correctness included in the content or listed in the glossary or index.

Even the SAGE Handbook of Intercultural Competence (Deardorff, 2009) neglects to directly address political correctness and the important effects on communication across borders or in specific cultural contexts. There is an apparent gaping hole in the literature.

One textbook, the 10th edition of *An Introduction to Intercultural Communication: Identities in a Global Community*, only scantly explores the way political correctness can influence intercultural communication (Jandt, 2020). According to the textbook, political correctness is "the avoidance of language and practices that can be perceived to offend particular groups of people" and "has become used as a pejorative implying that these actions are excessive" (Jandt, 2020, p. 448). The Pew Research Center finds that 59% of Americans believe "too many people are easily offended these days over the language that others use" while only 39% of Americans believe "people need to be more careful about

Table 2. Textbooks that do not include political correctness.

Year	Textbooks	Authors	Publishers
2020	Intercultural Communication: A Contextual Approach, 8th edition	Neulipe	SAGE Publications, Inc
2019	Introducing Intercultural Communication: Global Cultures and Contexts, 3rd edition	Liu, Volčič, & Gallois	SAGE Publications Ltd
2018	Intercultural Communication in Contexts, 7th edition	Martin & Nakayama	McGraw-Hill Education
2018	Communicating Across Cultures, 2nd edition	Ting-Toomey & Dorjee	The Guilford Press
2016	Communication Between Cultures, 9th edition	Samovar, Porter, McDaniel, & Roy	Cengage Learning
2015	Intercultural Communication: Globalization and Social Justice, 2nd edition	Sorrells	SAGE Publications, Inc
2015	Globalizing Intercultural Communication: A Reader, 1st edition	Sorrells & Sekimoto	SAGE Publications, Inc
2011	Understanding Intercultural Communication, 2nd edition	Ting-Toomey & Chung	Oxford University Press

the language they use to avoid offending people with different backgrounds" (Fingerhut, 2016). While the study highlights American perceptions of politically correct language, a clear understanding of how faculty and students conceptualize political correctness across cultures and among groups is vital for understanding the intent and meaning of intercultural exchanges within diverse classrooms.

Identity capital

Identity capital is comprised of "investments people make in 'who they are'" (Côté & Levine, 2002, p. 123) and the "stock of resources, or "set of strengths" individuals have when constructing, framing and presenting their identity in social circumstances (Côté & Levine, 2002, p. 164). In social situations, identity capital can benefit individuals through life transitions from one social or cultural group to another or in collaboration across groups. Individuals use identity capital to strategically represent their experiences and put forth opinions or ideas that are viewed as more credible based on the identity capital an individual may possess. Through "identity exchanges … during contextually specific interactions … that involve mutual acceptance with another individual, an informal group, a community, or an institution," students "gain identity capital – there has been an increase in some aspect of 'who they are'" (Côté & Levine, 2002, p. 143). Identity capital, just like political correctness, is contextually and culturally dependent.

Identity capital can be tangible and intangible. More "tangible resources tend to be manifest in the behaviours and possessions of individuals, whereas more intangible resources tend to constitute personality attributes" (Côté & Schwartz, 2002, p. 575). Tangible examples of identity capital related to this study include student resources to study abroad or travel, education from foreign institutions of higher education, coursework focused on diversity, memberships in internationally focused groups or organizations, children of diplomats with overseas and cultural experiences, international social networks, status as an international student, race or ethnicity, or speaking another

language. Intangible identity capital examples include cultural empathy, dialectical perspective taking, global-mindedness, self-awareness, adaptability, intercultural competency, resiliency, critical consciousness, and open-minded.

Identity capital is highly context specific and serves as a passport to belonging among peers or to other social institutions. A form of identity capital can be more or less salient in different contexts and "can be exchanged symbolically, emotionally, or pragmatically ... a more privileged upbringing would be related to greater identity capital acquisition" (Côté, 2016, p. 578). The identity capital model assumes a great deal of human agency and specifically illuminates the individual and structural aspects of transitions during emerging adulthood, a process university students are immersed in as they transition from high school to an independent college life. Students use identity capital to make broad social comparisons in the classroom and throughout their social interactions as they emerge into adulthood.

Internationally focused research that incorporates and utilizes the construct of identity capital to analyse the social circumstances and identity negotiations of individuals crossing borders or living in geographically dispersed areas is prolific, validating identity capital a cross-cultural construct. Identity capital proves to be applicable across societies and is a relevant construct for understanding identity negotiations in individualist orientated societies, like the United States, and collectivist societies like Portugal, Turkey, China, Japan, Hong Kong, Finland, and Italy (Gao, 2018; Morsünbül, 2013; Oliveira et al., 2014; Sica et al., 2014; Sugimura & Mizokami, 2012; Tikkanen, 2016; Yuan & Ngai, 2016). The identity capital model proves effective in articulating how individuals in more collectivist societies negotiate identity capital exchanges and the importance placed on the accumulation of identity capital in achieving acceptance and a sense of belonging throughout a variety of social contexts, circumstances, and networks of association.

Identity capital "helps us to understand: the mental wherewithal that people can possess as part of an agentic personality; the ability to move, both concretely and abstractly, among groups and networks with diverse interests; and the adaptive ability to combine diverse resources as the situation dictates" (Côté, 2002, p. 227). As college students seek out places of belonging and opportunities for self-expression, identity capital is a conceptual tool for understanding student sense making and co-construction of meaning. Yet, for the students in this study, enrolled in a cross-cultural communication course, the concept of *intercultural identity* played an integral role in understanding their willingness to engage others in dialogue.

Intercultural capital is the knowledge that "students can cultivate through diversity of experiences" (Nuñez, 2009, p. 27) and serves as a "marker of sociocultural distinction" (Pöllmann, 2013, p. 1). Intercultural capital comes in the form of a "personal reservoir of intercultural experiences and skills (e.g. experience of living abroad, intercultural friendships, and language skills) that enable the respective individual to competently engage in intercultural encounters" (Pöllmann, 2009, p. 539) and is "realized in terms of (a combination of) awareness, acquisition, and application" (Pöllmann, 2013, p. 2). This article attempts to situate student views on the impact of intercultural capital on classroom dialogues, while also highlighting for faculty alternative actions to transcend the perceived limitations imposed by possessing various degrees of intercultural capital. Student voices illuminate the boundaries that serve as an impetus for reimagining and

reframing how a sense of cultural expertise and representation serves as a crucial factor in intercultural dialogues, recognizing intercultural capital establishes credibility and provides legitimacy for students in the cross-cultural communication classroom.

Political correctness and identity capital link synergistically to provide a lens for examining how students view both what is said and who is doing the talking. Together an understanding of political correctness and identity capital expand an understanding of how students engage in a cross-cultural communication course. In an academic course designed to examine, compare, and contrast cultures through various cultural frames and communication constructs, identity capital influences participation in the classroom, ability to create intercultural capital, and terrains of possibilities for personal, professional, and intercultural growth.

Research methodology

Cross-cultural communication is an undergraduate course at a private four-year degree granting institution of higher education in Washington, DC. During the spring 2015 semester, the university offered 30 sections of cross-cultural communication. Faculty in each section informed students of this research, who presented and discussed with their respective classes the opportunity to participate. The author followed up these class announcements with emails that included additional information describing the study and logistical details about singing up for interview times.

Cross-cultural communication is a general education elective and open to students in disciplines across campus. Therefore, student majors included a large spectrum of programs offered at six of the colleges that comprise the undergraduate curriculum. The 63 voices privileged in this research are 12% of the 526 students enrolled across the 30 sections of cross-cultural communication offered in the spring of 2015. Additional student demographics are shared below in Table 3

Students volunteered to participate in 30-minute interviews. The author and a graduate student conducted semi-structured interviews during the final weeks of the Spring 2015 semester. Interview questions served two purposes. First, the questions sought to illuminate student impressions about the campus climate, diversity through a lens of ideas and geography, and classroom context. Students were asked questions derived from faculty input with the intent of providing context for student sense making. By understanding the classroom and political correctness through the eyes of students, it is possible to further understand how students characterized interactions, decided to engage others in dialogue or not, and selected salient identities through impression management. Specifically students were asked the following. *Do you feel your identities*

Table 3. Participant demographics.

Study Participants	
63 students	
63 freshman	
18 years old and 19 years old	
41 identified as female	22 identified as male
56 claimed US citizenship and spoke English as their native language	7 were international students who spoke a native language other than English

are affirmed at the university? Is your cross-cultural communication class diverse? How do you decide which identities or experiences to share in class?

The second set of questions were designed to uncover and further an understanding of how the communication of identities and negotiation of identity capital manifested in the dialogues, learning, belonging, and context of the cross-cultural communication course. In an attempt to understand student perceptions and negotiation of identity capital, students were asked the following. *Do you engage in meaningful dialogue in your cross-cultural communication class? Is your academic identity as a student influenced by your cultural identity? Have you discovered anything about your cultural identity or the ways in which you express your cultural identity as a result of participating in your cross-cultural communication course? Did this course change your perspectives, beliefs, or views in any way? Does political correctness keep us from having meaningful conversations?*

Interviews were recorded and transcribed. All transcripts were read in their entirety and a series of initial codes were developed. Based on a thorough reading of all transcripts and the grouping of codes, themes were developed, with the main research question and concept of identity capital as a guiding framework. Themes included examples of identity capital, communication patterns, and categories of engagement, and were identified based on prevalence, relevance to identity capital, and ability to provide a rich, thick description of the ways students perceive and experience ascribed and avowed identities influencing classroom interactions.

A theoretical thematic analysis is a flexible methodological approach used to identify, analyse, and convey patterns and relies upon a series of decisions during the coding process (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A thorough theoretical thematic analysis of student voices allows for the identification of identity-related themes across shared student experiences and provides an in-depth understanding of the ways in which students viewed their own identity capital and the identity capital of faculty and students as well. Themes and patterns were identified within student narratives, which provided descriptions of classrooms and characterized dialogues. Then "broader assumptions, structures and/or meanings" were generated, extending an understanding of identity capital to inform the development of critical and constructivist pedagogical approaches and to inform a detailed and complex analysis of student perspectives (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 85). Through thematic analysis, an elevated contextualization of student voices "acknowledge(s) the ways individuals make meaning of their experience, and, in turn, the ways the broader social context impinges on those meanings" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 81).

Interviews produced a nuanced insight into student thinking about when, why, and how they did or did not share ideas, divulge certain salient identities, or acknowledge identity capital. Interviews unpacked student assumptions about what constitutes political correctness and ascertained how politically correct ideas and language influence classroom dialogues, community, and a sense of belonging. Student voices create a portrait of contradictions, insights, and realities that further illustrate the challenges faculty experience when attempting to reach students where they are and create a learning community. Students come to campus in possession of an array of lived realities that frame terrains of possibilities and how they see the world, and most importantly their place in it.

Findings

Student voices provide meaning in three specific ways. One, through an understanding of how students perceive the diversity in the classroom, the campus climate, and the willingness of peers to engage in dialogues, student voices provide context to situate the negotiation of identity capital. Two, student voices provide a portrait of political correctness and identity capital, what life experiences and circumstances lead to those understandings, and the ways in which identity capital and political correctness impact classroom dialogues. Three, student voices specifically address the identities, identity capital, and identity negotiations that influence communication and interaction in the classroom and provide a foundation for addressing how faculty can expand an understanding of intercultural capital to create inclusive learning spaces.

In order to make sense of student voices, it is important to be able to contextualize and ground their narratives in the way they see the campus and classroom climate. Ideally, the ways in which students describe their classrooms helps to situate their voices and understandings of identity capital.

According to the Spring 2015 Campus Climate Survey conducted by the University's Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 81% of undergraduate students "agree that their views and perspective are treated respectfully by other students" and 79% "agree that their courses present diverse views and perspectives." How do class dialogues inform these statistics? What role do student perceptions of political correctness and identity capital play in describing their classrooms?

While manifestations of political correctness in any given classroom are dependent on a variety of factors, the diversity or lack of student perceived diversity, certainly set a precedence for how students expressed themselves and constructed meaning. While there is no denying some evidence of diversity in every class, students communicated various perceptions about the presence of diversity in their cross-cultural communication courses, both based on *identities* and *ideas*. Students characterized their classes on a spectrum from very diverse, "diverse in a way that if you want to meet people who are different you can," to non-existent, "ethnically, racially, check the box kind of diversity, my particular class is not at all." Students who perceived diversity to be non-existent further described class as "a lot of diverse white kids. Not much global diversity, but a bunch of American kids who are interested in international relations." Yet, most students were cognizant of the intersectionality of identities that could not be relegated to nationality of ethnicity alone. "In my cross-cultural class, it's not really diverse, but still it is very diverse. I guess ethnicity wise and racial wise it is not very diverse, but identity wise it is." The salient identities students described were not singular, but resided at the intersection of several important selves. Regardless of how students perceived the diversity in their cross-cultural communication class, it was always in comparison to where they came from, the diversity in their high schools, neighbourhoods, and among their close friends.

Some students were thrust into a community that did not resemble the ones they came from and provided identity challenges not experienced at home. Students who came from a predominately white middle class community perceived greater diversity because they were now immersed in an academic environment shared with students from international backgrounds, the LGBT community, domestic students of colour, and students of

differing political and religious persuasions. Many students just simply did not come from contexts that provided the opportunities to engage difference.

> "I've never had a class with a black person or an Asian person or literally anyone who is not white. Most other people say that it (campus) isn't very diverse. But where I come from, such a small town, this is really diverse. Things that are said in the classrooms at home, that if it were said here, it would be awful and ridiculous. But at home it flew because we were all the same."

On the contrary, students who came from overwhelmingly diverse communities found themselves in what they considered a very homogeneous cross-cultural communication class. "I think the demographics of our class really matter. I don't think you can teach cross-cultural to a class that's all white kids. I just don't think it's going to work." Students from particularly diverse communities felt the diversity in their classes did not exist to the extent it was "sold" to them. "We do have a lot of white people here, which I was kind of disappointed by. It was sold to us that college was going to be this really diverse place, and it is to a certain extent, especially in terms of ideas, but definitely not to the extent that they sold it."

Student voices alluded to how class composition can impact what and how things are shared, and the need of students to understand how to interact in unfamiliar contexts or to be comfortable with ambiguity. Either because of their self-perceived lack of cultural knowledge, historical lack of diverse interactions, or the idea that there were so many more knowledgeable students on class topics, some students remained quiet, while others spoke openly and freely.

Regardless of how representative students felt their cross-cultural communication class was of the demographic diversity on campus, students overwhelming recognized a diversity of ideas, and not just politically, in their classes.

> "Ideas are explored with the predisposition that they all have equal merit. And then you can look at things from a lens of logic. Diversity, if you want to quantify it as the percent of people who are not white, that is the easy number that people like to cite when they talk about diversity. But I also think that mindset of embracing diversity has sometimes led to discounting beliefs that limit. And what I mean by that is if you look at very conservative ideologies, religious ideologues, like Muslim ideologies or some of the Orthodox Christian or Jewish ideologies, they believe that certain things are inherently wrong and that things should be prohibited. And I don't see anywhere in any of my classes, outside of cross cultural, that anyone even entertains the idea that such beliefs are valid."

While the inclusion of a diversity of ideas is certainly the goal, some students did and others did not always see the classroom as a brave space for sharing unpopular ideas that might challenge preconceived notions of political correctness. Some students characterized classmates as "super judgmental" and "not empathetic" and felt that the need to disagree was ever-present.

> "I feel like if you are not disagreeing you are not doing something right. A really close friend of mine the other day while we were on his campus illuminated something for me. He said people on his campus seem more charitable. While people on your campus are always just looking for something to be mad at. I really think that is a problem on our campus. I really feel like political correctness needs to be used in moderation. I feel like when you are overly politically correct with something for no good reason, what is the sake of that? I feel it is like

> an artist who is trying to be edgy just for the sake of being edgy, and then it's not art. It's just rebellion."

Others, due to faculty encouragement to speak their minds, class atmosphere, personal conviction, self-confidence, or a desire to "shake things up," didn't hold back. The differences in the perceptions of fellow students and the class atmosphere, certainly present challenges for faculty. As one student put it, "I'm not in my suburb and I like this better. I want to stay in this world of diversity. Your thoughts aren't universal. It's like being taught how to spy. It's like slipping into the culture, observing, and getting out." Ideally, students welcomed an opportunity to engage with and learn from a myriad of diverse perspectives.

How do students define and describe political correctness and how do they envision it affecting classroom dialogues? For some students, political correctness was initially another way to think about intercultural competence. Yet when questioned further, students described political correctness as a "necessary restraint," "neutral language," and "blissful ignorance," exhibited by students through carefully considered language, actions, topics or "zones of controversy," and intentions (Hughes, 2010). Ultimately students felt there was a fine line between being politically correct and not being politically correct, a line that resided at different places in the discourse for various students. "It's a fine line because we are in a cross-cultural class so we can talk about cultural differences. Sometimes in a humorous way, but the whole class is about communicating effectively, so I think PC falls right into that."

What did students know or not know about political correctness before coming to campus? Their answers create a spectrum, bracketed by extreme opposites. Some admit to never even hearing the term political correctness.

> "I didn't really understand political correctness when I first came. Everyone here refers to everyone by a certain group . . . that was my main source of culture shock. I offended a lot of people when I first got here, but I learned. If you're not educated in PC it can kind of impede conversation. But if you come from a PC kind of area, maybe people can read between the lines and know what you are trying to say."

While other students arrive on campus from contexts steeped in political conversations and debates about current events.

> "I went to a pretty crazy high school. Open campus, super liberal, private school. Everyone was so politically correct, but that was the nature of the school. Everyone knew everyone was politically correct. The biggest events on campus would be for us to talk about being politically correct or why it is not okay to say certain things. We would have a lot of panels with teachers talking about certain super progressive topics and subjects."

Yet, danger resides in the assumptions about what students think others know about political correctness. "Everyone knows the difference between what is right and wrong. Everyone knows what the difference is between what to say and what not to say. You have some sense of cultural capital." Students span a large spectrum of conceptualizations of political correctness. The assumptions about their peers understanding of political correct behaviour and language sometimes led to misunderstandings, which were according to students, sometimes used as teachable moments in class and sometimes left unexplored.

Conceptually students saw political correctness as multifaceted. Political correctness was described as a collective "societal norm." In the minds of students there was a chasm that separates politics from cultural empathy, describing what some tout as "emotional correctness" (Kohn, 2013). Students also described political correctness as possessing value from both inward focused (self-reflective) and outward focused (judgemental) lenses. Inwardly, students did not want to "realize I am biased in some way." Outwardly, students were concerned about offending others, being "perceived as wrong," shaping negative perceptions of themselves in the eyes of their classmates, or even being labelled racist.

Repeatedly, students juxtaposed their concerns about being careful not to offend and fearful of engaging in dialogues about difficult topics, with the ways political correctness can actually detract from meaningful dialogue. Students were "cautious not to use the wrong term when referring to cultural others implying a certain level of familiarity with the dominant discourse of politically correct terminology" (Oikonomidoy, 2015, p. 115). As one student expressed, "We shy away from things so we don't offend anyone with our opinions." Students found it very difficult to "draw the line" between what is appropriate and not appropriate in class discussions, but also recognized "there needs to be a conversation and you do need to consider what you are saying, but it shouldn't be a fear of the conversation." Yet, a fear of conversation was recognized and described by many students.

> "I think in this class we do a good job of breaking barriers that we normally wouldn't break, but we have a professor monitoring us. You need to have conversations but people don't know how necessarily … or some people who just don't genuinely have the words for it. They don't know how to say what they mean. What's the right way to say it and I don't want to offend you and all that. Some people are just too scared. People try very hard, especially at this school to be so politically correct. And sometimes it would almost be better if someone said something very ignorant, then we could all take a lesson from it, instead if everyone in the class is biting their tongue and trying to be the most educated. Because I am sure if one person said it, they are not the only person thinking it."

Student notions of what is politically correct "depends on the person and their view of what it is to be politically correct." While some students thought "college in general breaks down the wall of having to be politically correct," most recognized the tension between the importance of political correctness in creating respect and the detrimental effect it can have in openly and honestly discussing the very controversial topics of the time. Yet, as student voices demonstrate, the ability to develop intercultural capital is greatly influenced by perceived political correctness in two distinct ways. One, students understand how their salient identities influence what they say and how it is perceived by their classmates. Two, students acknowledge the importance of situational context and the unpredictability of human nature. Conflict and dialogue in brave spaces foster learning, but also present certain challenges as students and faculty negotiate and co-construct meaning.

Students identified a dazzling array of salient identities that situated themselves in the context of the university and their cross-cultural communication classes, including veteran; commuter; banana; international relations student; lesbian; Asian, not real Asian, and token Asian kid; embassy kid; third culture kid; stereotypical white person;, American kid who never met someone from outside of US until I got here; active US

Marine; Hispanic-Jew; Mexican-Polish; transfer student; biracial; sojourner; multicultural person; Midwesterner; basic white girl; very American; immigrant; first generation college student; farmer; NARP (non-athletic regular person); military brat; privileged minority; frustrated oddball; multicultural Salvadorian; and transnational adoptee. While each of these identities shares a vision of how students saw themselves, students also realized that each label carried with it a different level of identity capital in the cross-cultural communication classroom.

Students shared ascribed identities, while others were self-authored choices that illustrated the importance of how they envisioned identity capital influencing classroom dialogues. In the case of students enrolled in a cross-cultural communication course, an abundance of international experiences, including studying abroad in high school, speaking another or several languages, being part of a mobile family who has lived abroad, obtaining an international baccalaureate degree, taking a gap year aboard, or growing up in a diverse community, served as intercultural capital students were able to use in identity exchanges, ultimately elevating them to what some perceived as "experts" in a cross-cultural realm. In an a cross-cultural communication course, where so much emphasis is placed on the knowledge of the global arena and the ability to navigate it, students who came to campus without a preconceived notion of an intercultural self, often felt comparatively silenced or disadvantaged. "People who don't leave the US are viewed as ignorant in class."

For students the issue was often not what was being said, but who was saying it and did they have the authority to speak or represent a particular perspective. How did the identity capital of certain students allow them to be perceived as experts?

> "A lot of people make it known that they've done all these things, but there is always going to be the person here who was not able to experience it. For example, there are people here who have never been able to travel outside of the country and feel very marginalized because they haven't been able to experience these things. But in reality a lot of these things don't have to be on the international scale. By giving students the theoretical background and theories, they reflect and think, I've actually been able to experience all of these things domestically and it doesn't make me feel less than a person who is well travelled."

Although some students perceived those with more international experiences as having more identity capital, others saw the geography of the mind provided opportunities to cross borders when the physical crossing of borders was not an option.

Yet, at the same time those students with international backgrounds, also found it troublesome to have classmates address a topic without what they perceived as the intercultural capital to do so.

> "It is personally frustrating to hear a kid who has lived in the same place their whole life start talking about the struggles of immigration or the struggles of crossing cultures, or of adaptation or assimilation. You've never gone through it. You can try to conceptualize it from what you read or what you see in movies, or hear from people's stories. But you don't know what it is personally."

Understanding something through personal experience verses being able to learn from others also illustrates a tension inherent in how identity capital impacts classrooms. Through a lens grounded in social justice and a desire to not lead the conversation but to be a part of a dialogue about larger societal issues, other students were cognizant of the

difference between claiming an air of authority verses learning and contributing to a cause.

> "People look at me like, what do I have to say. I'm from New England. I come from a middle class family. I'm white. I'm Catholic. From the outside, I have no world perspective whatsoever. But I need to have a conversation otherwise how am I going to enhance my knowledge and understand my bias. I feel like sometimes, there is a sense that you are a white female and you don't have a place in this conversation. I think you should definitely know this isn't my fight. I'm obviously not going to take charge, but I can contribute. And I think that is an important thing to get across in cross-cultural. That just because it's not my culture we are talking about, doesn't mean that I don't have ideas. I want to learn what your ideas are. I feel like so many students feel like I haven't struggled with this myself, so I don't have a place in this conversation. And I think that is very dangerous because you kind of live in ignorance."

To compound matters, there is a sentiment among the students interviewed that unless you experienced something first-hand or your ascribed identity is reflected in the conversation, your opinion or ideas are not always welcome. "I was once told; you are a white man. You've never experience oppression. You can't talk about those things."

Conclusion

Engaging students in dialogues about political correctness and identities continues to shed light on the ways intercultural capital, context, and experiences merge to coalesce into what is perceived as politically correct in any given context (Altbach & Reisberg, 2015; Strauss, 2015; Timpf, 2015). The impact of political correctness for students in classrooms is a topic that requires an elevated platform of consideration. It is imperative to understand the cultural frames that students use to view what is or is not politically correct are varied and solidly grounded through the process of socialization, the intercultural capital students exert, and the way they see student engagement in classroom dialogues. As faculty, it is imperative to help students build a foundational understanding of political correctness and the ways it can be employed and challenged. Students were overwhelming interested in fostering and negotiating intercultural capital, providing terrains of possibilities for personal, professional, and intercultural growth.

For most students interviewed, cross-cultural communication was one of their favourite classes. Overwhelmingly, the class exceeded their expectations, the faculty related course content to current events, and the students felt they delved deeper into topics that challenged many of the stereotypes and biases they held coming to college. Yet, student narratives illuminate there is more faculty must do to acknowledge political correctness and identity capital, and the ways both impact student engagement in the classroom. Students recognize that "culture is an element of every world issue we are having right now" and their voices illuminate instructional pedagogical questions faculty must consider.

Faculty are constantly reminded to ask critical, engaging, thought-provoking questions; value a diversity of voices, perspectives, and worldviews; and engage in mentoring. How can student voices inform the critical pedagogical decisions faculty make every day?

Institutions of higher education in the United States are dedicated to creating inclusive spaces, training intercultrally competent faculty, and designing transcultural curricula.

Colleges and universities have the potential to foster inclusive spaces for intercultural dialogues and the power to demand authentic and genuine opportunities for students to transverse boundaries and increase exposure to diverse worldviews. Yet, a disconnect remains between the conceptual understanding of diversity work and faculty's ability to respond in practice to challenging intercultural encounters or dialogues in the classroom.

The ten questions that follow resonate with what students shared about their ability to engage in meaningful classroom dialogues that expand their understanding of identity capital, specifically intercultural capital. Each of the following questions are closely tied to the themes and central ideas put forth in this paper.

(1) How can faculty better understand where students come from civically, culturally, and intellectually? Students come to higher education in possession of a dazzling array of lived experiences that do not fit neatly into any one box. Placing the self at the centre of knowledge construction, deploying culturally responsive pedagogy, and meeting students where they are provides the space for students to critically question and challenge their ideas, views, and beliefs and foster a learning environment that expands student realistic cultural empathy for all students.
(2) How can faculty create brave not safe spaces? Student voices demonstrate the willingness and desire to engage with each other in brave spaces, if faculty can effectively facilitate dialogues around boundaries, expectations, and acceptance. Faculty, who are willing to challenge not only their students but also themselves, can help students find comfort in discomfort.
(3) How can faculty help students realize the identity capital they are already in possession of when they walk into the classroom? Students do not come to classes as blank slates, but as individuals already in possession of identity capital from previous life experiences. Faculty who reflect on the crossing of borders as not solely an experience grounded in geographical borders, can help students be self-reflexive in the negotiation and communication of their intercultural capital to create a more even playing field among students, encouraging more students to find meaning in their life experiences.
(4) How can faculty address the fear of conversation? Students shared at times a fear of saying the wrong thing or of being seen as racist, and often remaining silent. Faculty who share their stories, model effective communication behaviour, and mediate engagement exercises that create inclusive learning spaces that recognize implicit bias and power dynamics, can help students initiate meaningful dialogues about difference and decrease the fear of conversation in the classroom.
(5) How can faculty reimagine political correctness and its contours in the classroom? Students acknowledge a spectrum of understanding of political correctness as both a concept and as a factor in dialogues. Faculty who include activities that directly address political correctness can use it as a framework for exploring cultural concepts or power differentials embedded in what makes something politically correct in one context but not another.
(6) How can faculty bring in the stories and voices that are not present or shared in a less diverse classroom? Students experience and perceive diversity to varying degrees in their classes and throughout their academic programs. Faculty who

leverage resources, partnerships, and technology on campus, within the community, and across the globe, can help students engage with unpopular or absent voices to promote critical consciousness and self-reflexive learning.

(7) How can faculty address historical contexts? Students have various understandings of history, based on how history is taught, who is teaching history, and whose history is privileged that inform understandings of political correctness. Faculty who acknowledge and speak to the large social structures that shape society and the historical events embedded in the way students make sense of the world, can empower students to critically challenge the status quo through an understanding of history and the role of power in the telling of history.

(8) How can faculty frame a conversation on language to challenge prevailing attitudes and help students develop intercultural capital? Students hail from different sociocultural backgrounds and language traditions, which colour language, the labels used to describe, and what is politically correct. Faculty who recognize the importance of language use and deconstruct the ideas embedded in labels, help students analyse ideals and values, power structures, or hegemonic bias.

(9) How can faculty shift the dialogue away from identity labels and singular authentic experiences to one grounded in identity contingencies? Students did not used just one word to describe themselves, but rather recognized their existence was multifaceted and intersectional. Faculty who acknowledge that shifting away from a reliance of identity labels and assumptions about others or human nature, and instead framing critical inquiry within situational contexts present students with opportunities to examine power structures, the intersectionality of identities, and those factors that reside outside an individual, relinquishing students of the need to present an authentic or representative identity perspective.

(10) How can faculty shock and challenge students? Student voices illustrate that memorable moments in class or instances where meaning was forged took place when ideas were challenged. Faculty who create memorable moments that "kind of shock the students can be helpful" and ensure students see challenging prevailing attitudes and beliefs or reframing common lens of analysis as a welcomed endeavour.

Students struggle with the idea of political correctness and navigating how their identity capital influences their ability to engage in dialogues. "I think it is important to be PC. Yet, we are getting to the point where this desire to appease everyone, if we get down to it, no one is going to be able to have an honest conversation with anyone." Only by engaging with views other than their own in brave spaces can students develop critical consciousness and accumulate intercultural capital. When students spend so much time trying to "word things right" and not offend anyone that the "points they are making get diluted" there is an inherent challenge. When students recognize "unpopular points are still points and they have value to them," there is evidence of student engagement and the development of critical consciousness. When students acknowledge and challenge assumptions, there is meaningful dialogue. When students recognize and understand "their world is not THE world," there are the beginnings of an authentic intercultural self.

Notes on Contributor

Dr. Gargano teaches courses in intercultural communication and international education courses in the School of International Service. Throughout her twenty year career in international education, she taught English in Japan, served as the Assistant Dean for Semester at Sea, and managed dozens of study abroad programs and institutional collaborations worldwide.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

References

Allport, C. (2006). Fight for your right to say it?: Beyond ‘political correctness’. *Australian Universities’ Review*, *48*(2), 9–10.

Altbach, P., & Reisberg, L. (2015, December 6). Has political correctness run amok? *InsideHigher Ed*. https://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/world-view/has-political-correctness-run-amok

Arao, B., & Clemens, K. (2013). From safe spaces to brave spaces: A new way to frame dialogue around diversity and social justice. In L. M. Landerman (Ed.), *The art of effective facilitation: Reflections from social justice educators* (pp. 135–150). Stylus Publishing.

Banaji, M., & Greenwald, A. (2016). *Blindspot: Hidden biases of good people*. Random House Publishing Group.

Berardo, K., & Deardorff, D. (2012). *Building intercultural competence: Innovative activities and models*. Stylus Publishing.

Berman, P. (1992). *Debating P.C.: The controversy over political correctness on college campuses*. Dell.

Bernstein, R. (1990, October 20). The rising hegemony of the politically correct. *New York Times*. http://www.nytimes.com/1990/10/28/weekinreview/ideas-trends-the-rising-hegemony-of-the-politically-correct.html?pagewanted=all

Bloom, A. (1987). *The closing of the American mind*. Simon & Schuster.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Conley, D. (2009). *Elsewhere, U.S.A*. Pantheon Books.

Cope, B., & Kalantzis, M. (1997). White noise: The attack on political correctness and the struggle for the western canon. *Interchange*, *28*(4), 283–329. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1007483416121

Côté, J. E. (2016). *The identity capital model: A handbook of theory, methods, and findings* [Unpublished manuscript]. Department of Sociology, The University of Western Ontario. https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.1.4202.9046

Côté, J. E., & Levine, C. (2002). *Identity formation, agency, and culture: A social psychological synthesis*. L. Erlbaum Associates. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781410612199

Côté, J. E., & Schwartz, S. J. (2002). Comparing psychological and sociological approaches to identity: Identity status, identity capital, and the individualization process. *Journal of Adolescence*, *25*(6), 571–586. https://doi.org/10.1006/jado.2002.0511

D’Souza, D. (19988). *Illiberal education: The politics of race and sex on campus*. Free Press.

Davidson, B. W. (2013). Political correctness in the land of conformity. *Academic Questions*, *26*(2), 182–191. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12129-013-9360-9

Deardorff, D. K. (2009). *The Sage handbook of intercultural competence*. Sage Publications.

Drain, S. (1992). The backlash against political correctness-A perspective from a Canadian composition classroom. *Speech presented at Annual Meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication*, Cincinnati, Ohio. http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED344217.pdf

Edling, S., & Liljestrand, J. (2020). Democracy for me is saying what I want: The teaching profession on free speech, democratic mission and the notion of political correctness in

a Swedish context. In A. Raiker, M. Rautiainen, & B. Saquip (Eds.). *Teacher education and the development of democratic citizenship in Europe* (pp. 144–157). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429030550-10

Fingerhut, H. (2016, July 20). In 'political correctness' debate, most Americans think too many people are easily offended. *Pew Research Center*. https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/07/20/in-political-correctness-debate-most-americans-think-too-many-people-are-easily-offended

Gao, F. (2018). Being 'religious and cultural rebels' or being 'cultural hybrids'? The role of identity capital in Muslim female university students' self-construction. *Gender and Education*, *30*(8), 1032–1047. https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2017.1296112

Gurin, P., Nagda, B. A., & Zúñiga, X. (2013). *Dialogue across difference: Practice, theory and research on intergroup dialogue*. Russell Sage Foundation.

Holmes, K. R. (2016). *The closing of the liberal mind: How groupthink and intolerance define the left*. Encounter Books.

Hughes, G. (2010). *Political correctness: A history of semantics and culture*. Wiley-Blackwell.

Jandt, F. E. (2020). *An introduction to intercultural communication: Identities in a global community.*SAGE Publications.

Kohn, S. (2013). *Let's try emotional correctness* [Video]. Ted. http://www.ted.com/talks/sally_kohn_let_s_try_emotional_correctness

Liu, S., Gallois, C., & Volčič, Z. (2019). *Introducing intercultural communication: Global cultures and contexts* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications Ltd.

Lukianoff, G. (2014). *The freedom from speech*. Encounter Books.

Lukianoff, G., & Haidt, J. (2015). The coddling of the American mind. *The Atlantic*. http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/09/the-coddling-of-the-american-mind/399356/

Martin, J. N., & Nakayama, T. K. (2018). *Intercultural communication in contexts* (7th ed.). McGraw-Hill.

Maxwell, K. E., Nagda, B. A., Thompson, M. C., & Gurin, P. (2011). *Facilitating intergroup dialogues: Bridging differences, catalyzing change*. Stylus Pub., LLC.

Morsünbül, U. (2013). An investigation of the relationships between agency, identity formation and life satisfaction in adolescence period. *The Journal of Psychiatry and Neurological Sciences*, *26*, 164–170. https://doi.org/10.5350/DAJPN2013260206

Neulipe, J. W. (2020). *Intercultural communication: A contextual approach* (8th ed.). SAGE Publications, Inc.

Noelle-Neumann, E. (1974). The spiral of silence A theory of public opinion. *Journal of Communication*, *24*(2), 43–51. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1974.tb00367.x

Nuñez, A. (2009). Latino students' transitions to college: A social and intercultural capital perspective. *Harvard Educational Review*, *79*(1), 22–48. https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.79.1.wh7164658k33w477

Oikonomidoy, E. (2015). Sociocultural boundary formations in college life and intercultural capital development. *Education and Urban Society*, *47*(1), 109–127. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013124513494778

Oliveira, J. E., Mendonça, M., Coimbra, S., & Fontaine, A. M. (2014). Family support in the transition to adulthood in Portugal: Its effects on identity capital development, uncertainty management and psychological well-being. *Journal of Adolescence*, *37*(8), 1449–1462. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2014.07.004

Phumsiri, N., & Tangkiengsirisin, S. (2018). An analysis of the use of English with political correctness: A case study of graduate students in Thailand. *Arab World English Journal*, *9*(4), 447–463. https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol9no4.33

Pöllmann, A. (2009). Formal education and intercultural capital: Towards attachment beyond narrow ethno-national boundaries? *Educational Studies*, *35*(5), 537–545. https://doi.org/10.1080/03055690902880240

Pöllmann, A. (2013). *Intercultural capital: Toward the conceptualization, operationalization, and empirical investigation of a rising marker of sociocultural distinction*. SAGE Open. https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244013486117

Putnam, R. (2001). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*. Simon & Schuster.

Rojek, M. (2012). Political correctness and the system of education: Selected examples and consequences. *Forum Oswiatowe*, *2*(47), 33–47.

Samovar, L. A., Porter, R. E., McDaniel, E. R., & Roy, C. S. (2016). *Communication between cultures* (9th ed.). Cengage Learning.

Schultz, D. (1993). *To reclaim a legacy of diversity: Analyzing the 'political correctness' debates in higher education* (pp. 1–76, Rep.). National Council for Research on Women. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service). https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED364170

Serekoane, M. (2016). It is not what is said, but who says it: Implications for classroom dialogic education. *Athens Journal of Education*, *3*(2), 173–187. https://doi.org/10.30958/aje.3-2-5

Sica, L. S., Aleni Sestito, L., & Ragozini, G. (2014). Identity coping in the first years of university: Identity diffusion, adjustment and identity distress. *Journal of Adult Development*, *21*(3), 159–172. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10804-014-9188-8

Sommers, S. (2011). *Situations matter: Understanding how context transforms your world*. Riverhead Books.

Sorrells, K. (2015). *Intercultural communication: Globalization and social justice* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.

Sorrells, K., & Sekimoto, S. (2015). *Globalizing intercultural communication: A reader*. SAGE Publications, Inc.

Strauss, V. (2015, December 3). Has political correctness really 'run amok' on college campuses? *Washington Post*. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2015/12/03/has-political-correctness-really-run-amok-on-college-campuses/?utm_term=.a4844bf5b84e

Sue, D. W. (2015). *Race talk and the conspiracy of silence: Understanding and facilitating difficult dialogues on race*. John Wiley & Sons.

Sugimura, K., & Mizokami, S. (2012). Personal identity in Japan. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, *2012*(138), 123–143. https://doi.org/10.1002/cad.20025

Tikkanen, J. (2016). Concern or confidence? Adolescents' identity capital and future worry in different school contexts. *Journal of Adolescence*, *46*, 14–24. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2015.10.011

Timpf, K. (2015, December 29). The 13 most ridiculously pc moments on college campuses in 2015. *National Review*. http://www.nationalreview.com/article/429102/most-pc-moments-college-campuses-2015

Ting-Toomey, S., & Chung, L. C. (2011). *Understanding intercultural communication*. Oxford University Press.

Ting-Toomey, S., & Dorjee, T. (2018). *Communicating across cultures* (2nd ed.). The Guilford Press.

Turkle, S. (2015). *Reclaiming conversation: The power of talk in a digital age*. Penguin Press.

Yuan, R., & Ngai, S. S.-Y. (2016). Agentic personality as mediator of social capital on the developmental outcomes in the transition to adulthood: Evidence from Shanghai, China. *Journal of Adolescence*, *46*, 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2015.10.013

Zimmerman, J. (2016). *Campus politics: What everyone needs to know*. Oxford University Press.