



## Cultivating Diverse Classrooms: Cultural Competency

**Number of Credits:** 2\*

**Course Instructors:** Mark Busch and Jordan Mix

**Course Description:** With the increase of social justice issues being highlighted in the media across the country, the practice of cultural competency has become a crucial skill educators are encouraged to practice. Classrooms have become more diverse, creating a need for educators to be cognizant of different practices, beliefs, and needs of each individual student. A number of practices adopted by school districts across the country have been shown to contribute to creating inclusive environments for students from different cultural backgrounds.

This course will cover the subject of cultural competency, and why understanding this subject is crucial to better serve students. Participants will be guided through terminology, the policies and practices that contribute to cultural competency, and be given ideas on how to support student success and positive change in policies and practices of school districts.

**Learning Objectives:** Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify the terms and concepts associated with cultural competency
- Demonstrate an awareness of the role cultural competency plays in the life of a student, and their relationship with the educational system as a whole.
- Create a plan to encourage positive student interaction in the classroom
- Develop strategies to practice cultural competency in their classroom and ensure minority-identified students have the opportunity to voice needs and ideas related to their education and learning.

**Resources:** No texts are required to purchase in order to complete this course

- The mission of Iowa Safe Schools is to provide safe, supportive and nurturing learning environments for all students. Staff of the Iowa Safe Schools are experts in the fields of bullying prevention and intervention, developing positive school climate, and advocating for underrepresented and marginalized populations. GSAs are shown to be a best practice for increasing awareness of discriminatory school policies, reducing bullying, reducing deaths by suicide, and ensuring students feel safe and supported in their schools and communities.
- Burnell, B. A., & Schnackenberg, H. (Eds.). (2015). *The ethics of cultural competence in higher education*. CRC Press.

*This new book presents both research and conceptual chapters about the ethical factors to be considered in teaching, administration, and professional practice in higher education settings. Topics include cultural competencies for higher education faculty, professionals, and administrators, such as use of language in communicating concepts to students for whom English is not a first language, avoiding imposition of bias, encouraging exposition of perspective, and ethical practices for working with the diverse environments and populations in higher education settings.*

- Blumenfeld, W. J., Castaneda, R., Hackman, H. W., Peters, M. L., & Zuniga, X. (2000). *Readings for diversity and social justice. An anthology on racism, antisemitism.*  
*With full sections dedicated to racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, and ableism, as well as transgender oppression, religious oppression, and adult and ageism, this text includes timely and*

*readings accessible and engaging for students. The interactions among these topics are highlighted throughout to stress the interconnections among oppressions in everyday life.*

- Greytak, E.A., Kosciw, J.G., Villenas, C. & Giga, N.M. (2016). *From Teasing to Torment: School Climate Revisited, A Survey of U.S. Secondary School Students and Teachers*. New York: GLSEN.

*This report provides an in-depth look at the current landscape of bias and peer victimization as reported by students and teachers from across the nation. In addition to examining various types of bias, including those based on race/ethnicity, religion, body size, and ability, and LGBTQ issues. Comparing findings to a similar survey we conducted in 2005, the report discusses the progress that has been made over the past ten years, as well as highlights the challenges that remain. It also offers recommendations and strategies to improve school climate for all students.*

**\*Course Requirements:** To receive full credit for the course, participants must complete ALL assignments and respond to specific questions outlined in each assignment. Failure to complete all assignments will result in a disqualification in the course and a failing grade.

#### **Other Course Information:**

#### **Getting Started**

- After registering for the course, you will be sent an email with the website address, password and course key you need to access your online course, along with login instructions.
- Access each assignment through the course home page. All assignments will be submitted through the Moodle platform on each respective assignment page.
- Please save a backup copy of all course assignments and completed work.

#### **Participation**

- You are not required to be present (i.e. online) specific days or times. You will work at your own pace. The course is structured in 3 Weekly Units, however all assignments will not be due until the final day of the course.
- All responses will be posted online. Large documents, files, photographs or PowerPoint presentations may be attached as part of your response by using the "Submit A File" option.
- You may work collaboratively and submit similar responses on all assignments except for quizzes which must be done individually.

#### **INTASC Standards that are addressed in this course:**

- 2. The teacher understands how children learn and develop, and can provide learning opportunities that support their intellectual, social and personal development.
- 3. The teacher understands how students differ in their approaches to learning and creates instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners.
- 4. The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage students' development of critical thinking, problem solving and performance skills.
- 5. The teacher uses an understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.
- 6. The teacher uses knowledge of effective verbal, nonverbal, and media communication techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.
- 7. The teacher plans instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, the community, and curriculum goals.
- 9. The teacher is a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (students, parents, and other professional in the learning community) and who actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally.
- 10. The teacher fosters relationships with school colleagues, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support students' learning and well-being.

**Check the Iowa Teaching Standards that are addressed in this course:**

X	1. Enhance Student Achievement		5. Monitoring Student Learning
	2. Content Knowledge	X	6. Classroom Management
X	3. Planning and Preparation	X	7. Professional Growth
X	4. Instructional Strategies	X	8. Professional Responsibilities

**Assignment Checklist**

<b>Topic/Activity</b>	<b>In Class</b>	<b>Out of Class</b>
<b>Getting to Know the Class; Additional Readings:</b> Take the time to get to know the class layout, read over the Help section, and review any other materials present in the class to get started. Take your time!		3 hrs
<b><u>Week 1 - Getting Started</u></b>		
<b>Discussion: Introductions</b> – In this activity, participants will have the opportunity to introduce themselves to their cohort, and state why they are interested in learning more about cultural competency. In addition, they are encouraged to build their user profile, so fellow participants can get to know them better.	1.5 hrs	3 hrs
<b>Discussion: What is Cultural Competency?</b> – In this activity, participants will read articles explaining what cultural competency is, along with other important terms and concepts. They will also watch a webinar by the instructor, that overviews the concept of cultural competency, and write responses to questions about the articles assigned	1.5 hrs	3 hrs
<b>Discussion: Diversity 101</b> – In this activity, participants will examine basic concepts of diversity and how diversity can contribute to and impact classroom interactions. They are then assigned critical thinking questions on views of diversity, and their own interactions with diversity in the classroom.	1.5 hrs	3 hrs
<b><u>Week 2</u></b>		
<b>Discussion: Intersectionality</b> – Participants will explore the overarching topic of intersectionality and review Ted Talks featuring various speakers on the subject.	1.5 hrs	3 hrs
<b>Discussion: Competency vs. Humility</b> – In this activity, participants will read articles and explore the differences between competency and humility. They are then assigned critical thinking questions, sparking discussion between other participants on their experiences with both feeling competent and humble in their own identities.	1.5 hrs	3 hrs
<b>Discussion: Micro-Aggressions</b> – In this activity, participants will read articles on the concept of micro-aggression, and how it links to cultural competency in the classroom. They will then discuss with each other examples of micro-aggressions that they see in their school or community, and how they can address micro-aggressions as an educator.	1.5 hrs	3 hrs
<b>Discussion: White Privilege</b> – In this activity, participants will explore articles and webinars on the subject of white privilege. In critical thinking questions, they will be asked to look at their own school for evidence of white privilege, and connect how white privilege impacts cultural competency in the classroom.	1.5 hrs	3 hrs
<b><u>Week 3</u></b>		
<b>Discussion: Discrimination</b> – In this activity, participants are given reading and activity assignments on different examples of discrimination in the education setting, and the effects that discrimination has on students. In addition, they will watch a brief webinar by the instructor, outlining the importance of understanding how these practices target students of with diverse identities. Participants are then assigned discussion questions that require critical thinking of concepts covered in readings and the video.	1.5 hrs	3 hrs
<b>Discussion: Race and Ethnicity</b> – In this activity, participants will watch a webinar by the instructor on some of the differences between the experiences of students of color and white students. They will then read articles explaining more about the importance of being aware of different policies and practices that contribute to racial disparities in schools.	2.5 hrs	3 hrs

Additionally, participants will be asked to respond to critical thinking questions on policies, and discuss with fellow participants.		
<b>Discussion: Faith Practices</b> – In this activity, participants will read articles and watch videos explaining how different faith traditions and practices can impact the life of a student. They will examine how educators can be cognizant of these practices, and respond with respect and understanding. They will then answer critical thinking questions, exploring their experiences of interacting with different faith practices.	1.5 hrs	3 hrs
<b><u>Week 4</u></b>		
<b>Discussion: Socioeconomic Status</b> – In this activity, participants will read articles and watch seminars about what impact socioeconomic status has on students in schools. Concepts covered will also include poverty, middle class status, and wealth, and how educators can be supportive to students, regardless of where they fall on socioeconomic scales. After assigned materials are reviewed, participants will discuss ideas around socioeconomic status, and what educators can do to be supportive of students.	1.5 hrs	3 hrs
<b>Discussion: Geographic Status</b> – In this activity, participants will explore different areas and key points of how geographic status can influence students. Rural, suburban, and urban area will be explored, and how it shapes the identity of a student and their values. They will then discuss their own experiences in the discussion forum.	1.5 hrs	3 hrs
<b>Discussion: Refugee Status</b> – In this activity, participants will read about some of the different areas of the world that refugees are coming from. They will also read and watch webinars on how the experiences of refugees shapes how they learn and interact with others. After reviewing materials, participants are tasked with answering critical thinking questions related to the subject, and discussing themes with fellow participants.	1.5 hrs	3 hrs
<b><u>Week 5</u></b>		
<b>Discussion: Family Relationships</b> – In this activity, participants will read on some of the different family structures that exist across cultures. They will also watch a webinar by the instructor on why it is important for teachers to be aware of how these family relationships can affect how students engage in education, as well as how educators interact with the family. Participants are then assigned the task of discussing themes, and how they plan to adapt to changing student needs.	1.5 hrs	3 hrs
<b>Discussion: Cultural Proficiency</b> – In this activity, participants will read articles and watch seminars on cultural proficiency, and how it relates to education. After reviewing class materials, participants are tasked with examining their school’s cultural proficiency.	1.5 hrs	3 hrs
<b>Reflection: Safe Spaces</b> – In this activity, participants will read articles about the importance of creating safe spaces in the classroom, so students feel heard. In addition, they will watch a webinar by the instructor on basics that should be covered in classrooms so everyone feels safe and included. After assigned materials are reviewed, participants will discuss why safe space is so important, and what steps they will take to ensure all students feel that they can express themselves.	1.5 hrs	3 hrs
<b><u>Week 6</u></b>		
<b>Discussion: The Value of the Student Perspective</b> – In this activity, participants will watch a webinar by the instructor on the intersectional views that students have, and the value of including those perspectives in the classroom. They will then read an article explaining why the lived experiences of students can enrich the classroom. Additionally, participants will be asked to respond to critical thinking questions on student views and perspectives, and how they would integrate that in their classroom.	1.5 hrs	3 hrs

<b>Discussion:</b> Starting the Conversation – In this activity, participants will read articles and watch webinars on how to implement cultural competency practices in their classroom, and how to include students in the process of learning and appreciating diversity in the classroom. After reviewing materials, participants will discuss themes and their thoughts on implementing practices that encourage cultural competency in the classroom.	1.5 hrs	3 hrs
<b>Final Assignment:</b> Implementation and Review – In the final assignment, participants will submit a reflection on the themes of the course, and identify areas that their school can improve on. They will also discuss how they plan to be supportive of students who represent the diversity in Iowa communities.	2 hrs	3 hrs
Total Class Time	30 hours	60 hours

**Coursework:** Participants can earn up to 140 points total for the course. The following table depicts the breakdown of points possible for the required coursework

Activity	Points
18 Discussion Posts (5 Points Each)	90
Final Implementation Plan/Paper	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>

**Grading Scale – Graduate Credit**

100-90% (140-126 points)	A
89-80% (125-112 points)	B
79-70% (111-98 points)	C
69-60% (97-84 points)	D
59%-Below (<83 points)	F

**Grading Scale - License Renewal Credit**

100-80% (140-112 points)	P
79%-Below (<112 points)	NP

**Student Requirements** Students are required to:

- Participate in **ALL** discussion forums and quizzes
- Complete a final implementation plan

**Americans with Disabilities Act:** If you are a student with a disability and require any auxiliary aids, services, or other accommodations for this class, please see the instructor to discuss your accommodation needs.

**Statement of Plagiarism:** Academic dishonesty results in failure of this course. Give credit where credit is due. Use the APA Publication Manual to cite references when needed. Not crediting ideas or words of others is unacceptable scholarship as is submitting work that was done for a previous course or that is not your own origin in design or completion. Submit original assignments. Do not submit work for this course that you have done for other courses.

**Grading Rubrics for Individual Activities**

**18 Discussions (5 points possible)** Discussion Forums are asynchronous ways to engage in class discussions. They require you to submit an answer to a question and respond to the posts of other peers. Because they are an integral part of sharing strategies, analyzing research, and sharing ideas, discussion forums in this course comprise a significant percentage of your final grade. It's highly recommended that you read and respond to more than the required two peer postings because greater participation will facilitate a greater depth of understanding. Additionally, it's important to make posts in a timely manner to benefit from peer responses.

<b>Grading Rubric for Discussion Forums</b>		
		<b>Points</b>
<b>Critical Thinking</b>	Makes connections to the other content and real-life that are supported by reference(s) and example(s)	1
	Offers new ideas, connections, or applications	1
	Expresses and justifies personal opinion	1
<b>Assignment Specific Criteria</b>	Addresses all parts of the assignment, cites sources	1
<b>Participation (Responses to at least 2 peer posts)</b>	Responds to other posts (when available)	1
<b>Total Points Possible</b>		5

**Final Assignment (50 points possible)**

The final assignment is a critical part of this course. Participants must complete a two-page final assignment. The paper is meant to be a reflection as well as a chance to state what you will use going forward. The rubric below will be used to grade the final assignment, but additional details will be provided within the course.

<b>Grading Rubric for Implementation Plan</b>		
		<b>Points</b>
<b>Critical Thinking</b>	Highlights any new knowledge gained as a result of course.	10
	Offers new ideas, connections, or applications	10
	Expresses and justifies personal opinion	6
	Discusses Overall Implications	4
<b>Assignment Specific Criteria</b>	Addresses all parts of the assignment, cites sources	4
<b>Mechanics</b>	Writing is clear, well developed, and organized, No or few grammar and spelling errors	4
<b>Implementation</b>	Clearly states ideas to use in the future	4
	States resources to be used	4
	Is realistic in their approach – understands limitations may exist	4
<b>Total Points Possible</b>		50