MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION INITIATIVE
Multicultural Teaching Competence for Glocal Education: A Professional Development Model

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Introducing multicultural and global teaching and learning involves more than adding content about cultural groups. It requires more than willingness to respect diversities. It involves a change process-both institutionally and personally. In this essay, the author shares insights gained from experience integrating Indigenous education into the mainstream curriculum through a place-based multicultural education program in an urban elementary school in Montana, a state in northwest United States. Through the planning, implementation, and evaluation processes of the program, the author found that genuine multicultural education reform entails steep learning on the part of teachers. Multicultural teaching competence is the outcome of a demanding process of personal transformation that builds upon meaningful working relationships with intercultural partners, reflective and innovative collaboration among teachers themselves, unwavering support from the administration, and an organizational culture that embraces diversities.

Keywords: multicultural education, place-based education, Indigenous education, global education, intercultural learning, teacher preparation

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"Its all about relationships…. The stuff we learned from books-the data-are good, but I really think this [multicultural education] is about relationships because it's about breaking down barriers and building up communication…" Bobby, 3rd -Grade Teacher

"When our intercultural [Salish] partner was packing up and getting ready to go and, in her just beautiful fantastic way, she said, 'Now, everything that we do has a purpose and a meaning, and so the way we fold the buffalo hide has a meaning.' The children's eyes were huge, and they were watching her with such reverence. They picked up the buffalo hide and they folded it the way she showed them. And then she explained about her braids. She talked about one representing her mother and the one side her father…. That's the part I mean about communication… It was on her way out of the door, and it was nothing she had planned…." Mandy, 1st/2nd -Grade Multi-age Teacher

"We were ready to put in our order like in McDonald's… I like our intercultural partner to come, 30 minutes, do a storytelling on the Bitterroot [a native plant] and have that accomplished. It didn't work that way. Our Salish partner told a story in a very different way than when we tell a story. Ours is very linear; hers is circular in pattern."
Sally, 1st/2nd -Grade Multi-age Teacher.

Diversity, multicultural learning, global citizenship: How can education leaders enable teachers to translate these terms into best practices? The above teachers' voices capture a journey of discovery. We have come to realize that introducing multicultural and global teaching and learning involves more than adding content about cultural groups. It requires more than willingness to respect diversity. It involves a change process-both institutionally and personally (Kumar & Hamer, 2012; Larkin, 2012; Yang & Montgomery, 2012).

In response to the undeniable impacts of globalization on our lives and the diversifying demographics in our local communities, educational leaders, policy makers, and scholars have called for urgent responses from teachers (see Apple, 2011; Banks 2008; Gardner, 2004; Koehn & Rosenau, 2010; Stewart, 2007). The common calls for action include (1) helping students develop skills that allow them to relate to and work with people from different racial, linguistic, religious, and cultural backgrounds, (2) nurturing hybrid, fluid identities and transcultural sensitivities in the young, and (3) introducing multi-perspective thinking into learning. While most teachers in the United States are trained to master specific disciplines that are based on the mainstream perspective, implementing global/local multicultural education (thus the use of the *glocal* in the title) requires that teachers reexamine nearly everything they are doing (Howard, 2007). Genuine multicultural education reform requires steep learning on the part of teachers.

Multicultural education is seldom the focus of teacher-training programs in the United States (Ngai, 2004). Many teachers in this country have little experience with diverse cultures and minimal exposure to different worldviews. How do teachers help their students develop intercultural/transnational competence if they themselves have yet to acquire it? Specifically, how can educational leaders support teachers to develop multicultural teaching competence (MTC)? In this essay, the author shares insights

gained from two years of experience implementing a place-based multicultural education program in an urban elementary school in Montana. The guiding framework for the program provided that teachers and students would develop intercultural competence through interaction with local Indigenous communities. Connecting teachers to tribal educators, who played the role of intercultural partners, constituted a core component of the professional-development process. Face-to-face interactions with close but distant "neighbors" of different cultural backgrounds proved to be vital for developing MTC. The analyses and recommendations presented here are based on findings derived from action research that involved observations, interviews with over 20 teachers, and input collected at staff meetings.

Montana's Multicultural Education Initiative: Challenge and Opportunity for Teachers

Montana, characterized by a population of mostly European Americans and 12 percent American Indians, offers an inspiring framework for multicultural education that calls for transformative learning among teachers as well as students. Montana is one of the few states in the United States where all teachers and education-related personnel in government-funded public schools are required by law to help students develop accurate knowledge about the cultures and histories of local Indigenous[2] people. To fulfill the inclusive Indigenous-education intent found in the 1972 Montana Constitution, in 1999 the state legislature passed the *Indian Education for All* (IEFA) *Act*, which stipulates that the state is "to recognize the distinct and unique cultural heritage of the American Indians and to be committed in its educational goals to the preservation of their cultural heritage" (Montana Legislative Services, 1999). Enacting a state legislative requirement as such is groundbreaking in U.S. educational history (see *Phi Delta Kappan* special issue, November 2006). The IEFA law is unique in the sense that the majority of legislators in the state of Montana marshaled the will to mandate efforts aimed at eradicating deep-rooted social injustice through constructive educational means.

Montana is a place where Captain Lewis and Captain Clark, the first European American explorers, arrived at 11:28 p.m. if the last 9000 years of Indigenous people's history is captured in a 24-hour metaphorical timeline (see Salish-Pend d'Oreille Culture Committee and Elders Cultural Advisory Council, 2005, pp. 8-9). This is a place, like many others in the United States, where the current geographical isolation of American Indian communities (in orange on Map 1) and the threats to preservation of their cultures and languages are a consequence of the imposition of European American settlements starting about 100 years ago. Malignant stereotypes about Indigenous people held by non-Native residents have been responsible, in part, for the history of poisoned interracial relationships (see Pewewardy, 1998; Pewewardy, 2009). Of course, Montana is not unique in its history of relations between the government and Indigenous people and in its current levels of awareness of and appreciation for diversities. Similar needs for transformative multicultural education exist around the country and in many parts of the world.

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[2] In this article, the terms Indigenous, Native, and Indian are used interchangeably to refer to the First peoples of the United States.
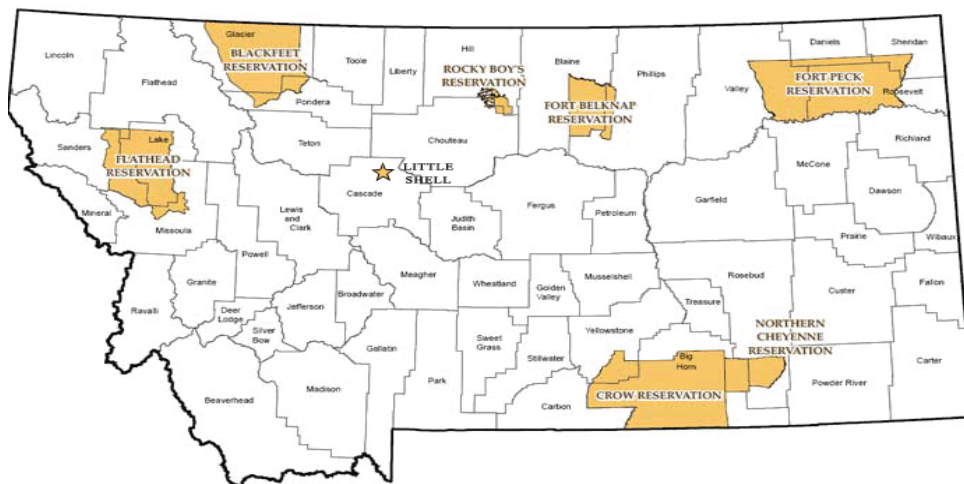
Source: Montana Office of Public Instruction. Retrieved 21 October, 2013, from http://opi.mt.gov/programs/indianed/reservationmap.html

Improved attitudes toward Indigenous people among the next generation of students are likely to enhance interracial relations among Natives and non-Natives and contribute to ending prejudice and discrimination. Built upon the foresight of tribal education leaders in Montana, the IEFA Act emphasizes correcting misunderstanding, removing malignant stereotypes, instilling respect, in addition to reinforcing sovereignty. Toward these ends, the legislature annually appropriates funding to the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) to facilitate IEFA implementation. In 2005-2007 the author of this contribution, along with the principal and a few lead teachers of an urban primary school in Montana (which will be referred to as *the program site* hereafter), received a US$50,000 grant from OPI to develop a K-5 program for integrating Indigenous education as a form of multicultural education into a school of mostly European American students and an all-White staff (see Ngai & Allen, 2007 for a complete description).

The overriding educational objective of our multicultural education program involves turning IEFA into a foundation for critical democracy through public education. Critical democracy involves more than respect for "a benignly neutral diversity that 'celebrates' cultural differences…" (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2002, p. 281). It requires minds that are able to discern and manage complexity (Noguera and Cohen, 2006, pp. 574-575), perceive connections among inequities across place and time, grow from the strengths uncovered in the unique components of the diversity in one's midst, imagine different ways of being (Quin 2009, p. 118), seriously entertain perspectives that differ from "'the powers that be'" (Merryfield 2001, p. 254), and become conscious and accepting of individual and social responsibility for actions that can bring about justice in our communities and the larger society (see also Freire, 1978). I believe that a critical first step toward bringing about critical democracy is to nurture constructive interracial relationships among people of diverse backgrounds. In the case of Montana, American Indians and European Americans have lived side-by-side for decades. Given the history of long-time conflicts over land, water, and other natural resources and deep-rooted

mistrust between the homesteaders and the colonized,[3] efforts in building positive Native/non-Native relationships is a vital part of the educational process.

The multicultural education program discussed here incorporated a place-based approach (see Gruenewald, 2008) through which students reached beyond the classroom to encounter the place where diversities reside. They connected face-to-face with their close but distant neighbors who are of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. By learning about local Indigenous tribes and the places where they resided for thousands of years, students experienced different worldviews. In a unique aspect of the program, students learned from local Native community leaders and elders who came to their K-5 classrooms regularly to share stories that embodied lasting wisdom, to teach about what they learned from their ancestors, the First people of the place, and to speak with teachers and students in their heritage languages that are threatened to become extinct (Ngai, 2012). Whereas the standard "U.S. American public school educational paradigm relies heavily on the assimilation of its students into the dominant culture" (Sanchez, 2003, p. 42), involving local Indigenous community partners as educators constituted a path-breaking collaborative instructional effort. The arising question is: How do teachers acquire the skills for facilitating cultural inclusion in teaching and learning? Without steadfast support from principals for such a change, teachers could find the learning process overwhelming.

How Teachers Develop Multicultural Teaching Competence

Influential writers have advocated that schools in complex, knowledge-based societies should become "learning organizations" (Senge, 1990). This idea is especially relevant when implementing multicultural/global education that involves the integration of unfamiliar cultural perspectives. As learning organizations, according Giles (2006), "schools… operate as genuine communities that draw on the collective power of a

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[3] According to the oral history of the Salish and Pend d'Oreille tribes, for example, the American Indian leaders at the meeting where the treaty was signed, while expecting to establish peace, ceded to the U.S. government their entitlement to almost all of the land in Western Montana, except for the present Flathead Reservation. Historians attribute the tribal representatives' willingness to sign the treaty to poor interpretation of the wording of the agreement and intercultural miscommunication about the concepts of land and economy (Bigart and Woodcok, 1996). One band of the Salish tribe resisted to leave their home in the Bitterroot Valley for the reservation. After about 40 years of resistance, U.S. army from Fort Missoula forced the remaining Salish people out of the Bitterroot Valley in 1891. Oral history tells that the troops "roughly marched our people some sixty miles to the Flathead Reservation…. On the reservation, the U.S. government again failed to honor its guarantees": In April 1910, the Flathead Reservation was thrown open to white homesteaders. Almost overnight, non-Indians outnumbered tribal people within the reservation and assumed a dominating social and economic position. From then until the cancellation of the General Allotment Act in 1934, over 540,000 acres within the Flathead Reservation were transferred from Indian to white ownership. The elders today say that when their elders used to talk about this part of our history, they would use an expression in the Salish language… which means, roughly, to steal openly and brazenly, to rob someone in broad daylight" Salish-Pend d'Oreille Culture Committee, 2005, pp. 116-117).

vision and the collective intelligence of their human resources in pursuit of continuous improvement" (p. 126).

At the program site, teachers identified "teamwork" and "partnership" as key elements of essential preparation for implementing multicultural/global education. The program's school-wide steps leading toward multicultural teaching competence involved, first, developing interpersonal connections and experiencing local diversities and, then, creating opportunities to share vision and mission and to collaborate with colleagues and intercultural partners. Lastly, we encouraged teachers to take the time to grow.

Step 1: *Lay the Groundwork*
In our program, the first step involved laying the groundwork by setting in place library resources and intercultural partnerships. Many teachers rely heavily on print materials, especially during the initial stage of knowledge building and curriculum integration. A school library stocked with materials about diverse cultures, in particular local minority communities, is a safe place to start. However, teachers need more than just information from books. Interpersonal connections and friendships with people holding different worldviews bring words on pages to life.

Intercultural partners can include parents and grandparents of minority students enrolled at the school, members from local and nearby ethnic communities, and students of different cultural backgrounds studying at the local and nearby college/university. Through conversations and interactions with intercultural partners, teachers (and their students) gain first-hand experience with diverse perspectives, unique communication styles, and alternative ways of relating to one another and to the earth. Intercultural partners also can help teachers integrate perspectives that are shaped by multiple cultures into the curriculum in ways that are appropriate and respectful:

> *"Teachers are good at planning the curriculum and creating the lessons, but I just worried that anything I did might not be culturally appropriate. I wanted to make sure it was respectful…. [My intercultural partner] provided the heart, and I could provide the lesson… I don't think that we could have done this [multicultural education] project without that friendship."*
> *Martha, 1st/2nd-Grade Multiage Teacher*

Building partnerships across cultures is a process that does not happen instantly. It takes time, experience, and practice to develop intercultural understanding, mutual acceptance and trust, and skills for adapting to new interaction patterns. In our program, although English was the first language of both the teachers and their intercultural partners (who were Salish tribal educators), the encounter presented a challenge because of pragmatics variations in using a common language for the intercultural encounter. An intercultural-communication workshop that informs teachers of the range of verbal and nonverbal communication patterns across cultures, such as differences in perception of time, meaning of schedules, (in)directness in expressing "no" and "don't know," the organizational pattern of verbal codes, presentational style, and interpretation of the relational terms, prevents frustrations in the partnership.

Step 2: *Start with Immersion*
Experiential learning is an effective vehicle for developing MTC. We recommend beginning multicultural/global education with opportunities for teachers to experience local cultures and diverse cultural perspectives.

We started our professional development process with a visit to the Flathead Indian Reservation, which is about 60 miles away. The immersion experience focused on interactions with local educational and cultural leaders rather than learning about "how" to teach and "what" to teach. The warm reception received from tribal representatives translated into the reassurance and encouragement that the teachers needed to take their first step. Teachers who participated in the trip felt more confident than those who did not about integrating the Salish cultural perspectives into their teaching:

> *"Knowing faces [helped me]. Now I felt very comfortable introducing myself and having a conversation [with members from the local Indian communities], which I wouldn't have done before. It's nice to know and recognize faces that are important in the nearby tribal community. It increased my ability to go up to an Native American and say 'What tribe are you from?… Tell me a little bit about it.' I wouldn't have done it before."*
> *Jean, 5th-Grade Teacher*

Step 3: *Share Vision and Mission*
Reflecting on the immersion experience is the next important phase in the professional development process. Time set aside for this purpose offers an opportunity for teachers to share concerns about integrating non-mainstream perspectives into their teaching with the whole staff and to receive suggestions and encouragement from colleagues and administrators. This is also an appropriate time for the principal to talk about goals and expectations and for teacher leaders (see Lambert, 2005) to set the tone for school-wide implementation of multicultural/global education. Conversations aimed at building shared vision, goals, and expectations among all staff are essential because effective multicultural/global education is not merely an add-on in isolated classrooms, but must become part of a school culture.

Step 4: *Brainstorm, Connect, and Collaborate*
Teachers need to work with grade-level teams to brainstorm ideas, discuss possibilities of integrating resources and opportunities into current curricula, and plan for multicultural-education professional development and curriculum integration for the school year. This collaboration time is invaluable in terms of increasing success and reducing stress over the months and years to come:

> *"Two things that are most helpful--one is the partnership with [our intercultural partners] and the other thing is to have time to dialogue with other teachers and to just hear what they are doing, how they are beginning."*
> *Sam, 1st/2nd – Grade Multiage Teacher*

Meeting with their intercultural partners in person before school starts is a preparation step that proves worthwhile in the long run. It is important for teachers' peace of mind to have the opportunity to test out their ideas in conversations with their partners and to explore with their partners ways to integrate non-mainstream cultural perspectives into selected lessons and units.

Step 5: *Prepare and Grow*
Collaborating with intercultural partners and colleagues pushes teachers out of their often tightly scheduled comfort zone. The process of developing MTC takes time and takes conversation. When asked what their needs were, the unanimous answer of teachers participating in our pilot program was "time," "time," and "time." Some needed half a year and others needed a whole year to become ready, depending on the individual's initial level of preparedness for implementing multicultural/global education. Teachers need time to learn, to create, and to grow in the process. *To learn*, they need time to read, examine materials, conduct research, observe how other teachers integrate non-mainstream cultural perspectives, and attend workshops. *To create* new teaching materials, they need time to digest new knowledge, design curriculum, and work with grade-level teams. *To grow*, they need time to meet with intercultural partners regularly, dialogue with one another about challenges, share success stories, and celebrate accomplishments as members of a learning organization.

> *"Sharing with colleagues is one of the hugest things that I learned from. If people can share with each other, we are not all reinventing the wheel."*
> *Christina, 1st/2nd-Grade Multiage Teacher*

Many of the participating teachers initially perceived implementation of multicultural/global education as no more than adjusting some lesson plans by adding a read-aloud here and modifying a classroom activity there. Through the two-year program, the whole staff came to realize that integrating diverse cultural perspectives into the mainstream curriculum involved significant institutional and personal change. Program experience shows that the mission of preparing youth for the increasingly interconnected world is about accepting, adapting to, facilitating change in values, perspective, and self (see also Gardner, 2004). Such a change process often comes with psychological and emotional stress that teachers must learn to overcome:

> *"Change does not happen without struggle. If you are not having any struggle and you are not changing. It is not going to happen without stress."*
> *Karen, Principal*

What Helps Teachers Reach the Tipping Point

Lack of knowledge, lack of experience, and lack of textbook-like materials are undeniable sources of insecurity and resistance. While these practical difficulties are real and tangible, we should not overlook the less visible psychological and emotional stumbling blocks for teachers. Teachers in our program expressed immerse fear about making mistakes, teaching inappropriate information, and offending members of

minority communities. Until teachers cross over the tipping point (Gladwell, 2000), they will not be ready to tackle the dimensions of multicultural /global education.

Based on the reflections of the participating teachers, I have identified three elements that would help teachers reach the tipping point: (1) perceived adequacy of background knowledge; (2) a belief that one needs to take control of one's own learning and teaching about local and global cultures; and (3) positive interactions with intercultural partners.

(1) "I have no background knowledge" is a frequently encountered source of frustration when attempting to implement multicultural/global education. To overcome this mental block, principals need to encourage teachers to start somewhere and start small.

> *"One way to deepen your own understanding is to just begin, begin somewhere…. You don't know what your questions are until you begin. You just need to begin somewhere and realize that this is how I used to teach. I take myself back into what I already knew. It was like a jigsaw puzzle. You begin with a piece and you start to put the pieces together…some fit and some you had to rework. You just have to trust that if you begin somewhere, it will come together."*
> *Marilyn, 3rd-Grade Teacher*

(2) "I am waiting for someone to tell me how to do it" is a common excuse for procrastinating with multicultural/global education. While a long-term, unwavering commitment from the school leadership serves as the impetus, teachers need to be willing to jump in and be responsible for their own learning:

> *"It's uncomfortable. It's new. You have to have that willingness to learn right along with the kids. If a couple of teacher leaders are excited about the process, their enthusiasm translates throughout the organization."*
> *Patricia, 5th-Grade Teacher*

(3) "I don't want to step on someone toes" is a fear that paralyzes many teachers at the onset of implementing multicultural/global education. Teachers need to prepare for mistakes and accept constructive criticism from intercultural partners. Principals can help by providing opportunities and incentives for teachers to take time and make time to develop MTC:

> *"You almost need one year to just get your feet wet.... It is okay to make mistakes. You can't let that stop you from exploring to the best of your ability….Making mistakes is part of the process. You should not let that stop you. Just know that it's important enough to keep working through those mistakes, to keep climbing over them. This is a new territory after all."*
> *Michelle, 1st/2nd-Grade Multi-age Teacher*

During the process of implementing school-wide multicultural education at the program site, we could see the *tipping* happening. Teachers who initially felt uncomfortable, inadequate, or just plain resistant suddenly were articulating a plan of action and enjoying their new experiences. Although developing multicultural teaching competence, in many ways, parallels how teachers learn in other areas, two elements are particularly important in helping teachers reach the tipping point-positive, meaningful relationships with people from different cultures and time to converse, collaborate, correct, and change.

Partnering with Indigenous Communities

"*Indian Education for All* is about improving interracial relationships," Julie Cajune, Salish educator, reminded us. In other words, IEFA is about teaching inclusion, recognition, and appreciation for all people. It is about ending marginalization and treating all people equitably. It is also about learning to live and work together in harmony. We often "meet" Indigenous people through books and the mass media; however, until we develop genuine relationships with our distant but close "neighbors," they remain "the others." Then, American Indians retain the stereotypical feathered images one sees on TV or in movies. IEFA is about crossing the intercultural, interracial, and interpersonal divide separating Natives and non-Natives in our society. It is about filling the knowledge gap with an Indigenous perspective that is based on experiences accumulated over thousands of years. Yes, it is about gaining accurate information. But, more importantly, it is about providing opportunities for Indigenous people to speak for themselves and for all to hear their stories.

What teachers need is more than just information about Native cultures and histories. Many of them desire to understand the vision of Indigenous people. They need affirmation from their neighbors of different ethnic backgrounds that what they teach is culturally appropriate. The intercultural partners are teachers' lighthouses and they are teachers' sounding boards:

> "*Teachers are good at planning the design and creating the lessons, but I'm just worried that anything I did might not be appropriate. I wanted to make sure it was respectful…. [My Salish learning partner] provided the heart, and I could provide the lesson. The very most helpful thing has been…the partnership with our Salish friends. That's been huge. I don't think that we could have done this project without that friendship.*"
> Nancy, 1st/2nd-Grade Multiage Teacher

> "*I can teach the curriculum while [our Salish partner] tells her personal history…. The kids make a connection to her and to her culture… with what I am teaching them. I can't create that connection. I can't make them care about the Salish people. I can't make them care about Salish people's language revitalization. I can't make my students understand losing the land and seeing the areas where bitterroot grew disappear. So our Salish partner makes that relationship and that cultural connection.*"
> Maggie, 1st/2nd-Grade Multi-age Teacher

Building intercultural partnership is meaningful, but demanding. It takes time to develop relationships and it can be costly to bring partners to the school regularly. It may be simpler to invite guest speakers to come once or twice. Are partnerships worth the investment? All but one of the participating teachers at the program site agreed that building partnership was a vital dimension of multicultural education. Ideally, teachers would like to be able to work with partners *and* invite guest speakers (see Table 1). However, if participating teachers had to choose, they indicated that they would choose partners:

Table 1 Partners vs. Guest Speakers

Partners	Guest Speakers
Possibly costly (mileage plus honoraria)	Less frequent and hence less costly
Time consuming	Efficient
Integrated into the school community	On the margin of the school community
Meaningful	Informational
Interpersonal	Professional
Lasting relationships	Brief encounters

"I feel the partnership is worth it. I think the communication and understanding of where we are all at… really helps kids to understand Native American cultures… through the Salish people. And they are part of this family, part of us. And I think the respect that our children have for the Native American cultures is wonderful, and I think that it is because of that partnership."
Danny, Special Education Teacher

Partnerships linking Native and non-Native communities should aim to achieve social justice and social change through mutually beneficial outcomes. Below are suggested guidelines derived from the "contact hypothesis" for creating meaningful intercultural encounters. The contact hypothesis is based on the widely cited work by Gordon W. Allport (1954). It alerts us to the fact that not all interracial contacts serve to improve intergroup or interracial relations. Allport maintains that contact among different groups without deliberate interventions to advance equal status and positive interactions among them increases rather than reduces intergroup tensions. In order to produce positive effects, groups of differentiated backgrounds should share equal status and common goals. The interaction should involve inter-group cooperation. The contact should be encouraged by authorities and supported by law and custom. Otherwise, in the case of place-based multicultural education in Montana, the marginalized status of Indigenous people will be reinforced, and the stereotypes that American Indians are less educated and less powerful than Whites will be perpetuated among non-Native students and teachers. Activities promoting partnership between Natives and non-Natives should aim to change these misperceptions.

Equal Status. When bringing tribal members into the classroom, they should be treated as special guest teachers or expert speakers so that the visitors at least share

the same status as the host teachers. Teachers should explain to students the value of the occasion and prepare students to behave in ways that are culturally appropriate and respectful to the guests:

> *"Come up with questions they can answer from their knowledge with their history. Start more with the persons, and design the questions around their lives and their knowledge…. You don't want to ask them a question they don't know anything about…. And then we can later connect their sharing to ourselves…. [For example], it's better having [our Salish partner] come in to share rather than teach about buffalo…because her stories are the things that are going to get lost, not facts about buffalo. I would rather hear a personal story than try to fill our curriculum."*
> *Kira, 2nd-grade Teacher*

Shared Goals. Intercultural partners need to take time to discuss and identify common goals. Mutual understanding should be the precursor of contacts, as recommended by Allport (1954). Reciprocity should be a guiding principle in developing a partnership or relationship. For instance, when Native educators come to the school to share their knowledge, teachers should find out how they can help their intercultural partners in return. Exchanging expertise is one way to build a reciprocal relationship.

Cooperative Learning. When partnering with a tribal school or an American Indian youth group, teachers should design a collaborative project for their students and the visiting students to work on together. The priority is to have students from marginalized communities take the lead to teach mainstream students a lesson or a skill, such as some Native language words or a form of cultural expression (e.g., drumming). Long-time unequal status can start to be equalized only if minority children are purposefully provided with opportunities to take on leadership roles.

Authorities' Support, Law, and Customs. When intercultural partners are visiting, the principal of the school should make an effort to introduce the visitors formally. In Montana, the introduction by the principal or the teacher should remind students of the *Indian Education For All Act* so as to set the visit in a state-wide educational context. Collectively, the principal and teaching staff can establish a school-wide ritual for welcoming visitors from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. For example, students can learn at least a few words in the visitor's language for greetings and to say "thank you."

One of the challenges (and an initial disappointment among participating teachers) of collaborating with intercultural partners is that information shared by our guests may not always fit perfectly in the blanks we leave for them in meticulously planned lesson or unit. Thus, teachers need to remember that relationship building and curriculum development do not always converge. It is the teacher's responsibility to make the connections; it is not the partner's job to fit himsef/herself into the curriculum. The mainstream way of teaching tends to be compartmentalized and linear. In contrast, Indigenous worldview tends to be holistic. It might not be easy for the Native partners to take bits and pieces out of "a long story" to fit into a lesson on a specific topic. Teachers need to listen to their partner's stories carefully. The connection between the partner's sharing and the lesson planned might not be direct, but subtle:

> *"Our mindset was incorrect…we were sitting in with these 'experts' who are going to come in and impart their knowledge…we would watch and they would teach and they would have everything ready, the materials, and that…it is not going to work that way. Then, there was a re-adjustment on all our part…. This wasn't a guest lecturer coming in. This was someone who was going to come in and we needed to interact in a partnership."*
> *Miranda, 1st/2nd -Grade Multi-age Teacher*

Intercultural partnerships involving elders and educators from local Native communities are vital for meaningful, relevant, and effective multicultural education for both teachers and students. Although the recommendations reported above are based on understandings gained from genuine exchanges with Indigenous people, the insights represent only the non-Native perspective. Therefore, future research aiming at documenting Native partners' voices that directly convey their perspectives on forms and formats of implementing mutually beneficial intercultural partnership would be most helpful.

Conclusion

Genuine multicultural education is more than a new curriculum or an additional set of materials to be integrated into existing lesson plans. The place-based multicultural education program described above aims to lay the foundation for intercultural learning and global citizenship among all participating teachers along with their students. Practicing critical democracy within the school and the local community would influence teachers' and their students' commitment to respecting diversities as global citizens (Ngai & Koehn, 2010; Ngai & Koehn, 2011). At the same time, such educational endeavors constitute an important step toward social justice through helping to eradicate the marginalization of minority perspectives, including those of Indigenous peoples. We need to know more about what it takes for such multicultural education to materialize. This essay aims to raise awareness that multicultural teaching competence (MTC) is one essential element.

MTC is the outcome of a demanding process of personal transformation that builds upon constructive working relationships with intercultural partners, reflective and innovative collaborations among teachers themselves, unwavering support from the administration, and an organizational culture that embraces diversities. Developing MTC is similar to nurturing intercultural competence and global citizenship in students. Teachers, along with students, benefit from opportunities to investigate local cultures in depth, to compare and contrast cultural perspectives when analyzing current issues and local/global problems, and to experience diversities in person. Indigenous cultures are especially rich learning grounds for teachers as well as students. The rationale of focusing multicultural study on local Indigenous communities is to reap the immeasurable benefits of proximity. Cultures that are indigenous to our communities serve as meaningful starting places to understand one's self and one's heritage in relation to others' and to explore "the dynamics and dialectics of the multilevel relationships between the global, national, and local" (Pang, 2005, p. 171). These

insights are derived from experience in one part of the United States. Future research could contribute additional insights into approaches for supporting teachers to develop MTC in various education contexts within culturally plural societies around the world.
Notes on contributor:

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