

Culturally Responsive Social-Emotional Competence in Higher Education: the vital role of contemplative pedagogy



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Five Minute Lovingkindness Meditation

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The Nondiscriminating Heart: Lovingkindness Meditation Training Decreases Implicit Intergroup Bias

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Although meditation is increasingly accepted as having personal benefits, less is known about the broader impact of meditation on social and intergroup relations. We tested the effect of lovingkindness meditation training on improving implicit attitudes toward members of 2 stigmatized social outgroups: Blacks and homeless people. Healthy non-Black, nonhomeless adults ($N = 101$) were randomly assigned to 1 of 3 conditions: 6-week lovingkindness practice, 6-week lovingkindness discussion (a closely matched active control), or waitlist control. Decreases in implicit bias against stigmatized outgroups (as measured by Implicit Association Test) were observed only in the lovingkindness practice condition. Reduced psychological stress mediated the effect of lovingkindness practice on implicit bias against homeless people, but it did not mediate the reduced bias against Black people. These results suggest that lovingkindness meditation can improve automatically activated, implicit attitudes toward stigmatized social groups and that this effect occurs through distinctive mechanisms for different stigmatized social groups.

Keywords: meditation, lovingkindness, compassion, implicit bias, prejudice

Quotes of Note Activity

- 1) Please review the quote on your sheet.
- 2) Find a partner who has a different quote.
- 3) Each reads aloud their quote to their partner.
- 4) Each shares: What are your initial thoughts and/or questions regarding your respective quotes?
- 5) Upon conclusion of your brief conversation, please exchange quotes with your partner and repeat steps 2-4.

Social-emotional learning involves developing skills needed to recognize and manage emotions, handle conflict constructively, establish positive relationships guided by empathy, engage in perspective-taking, make responsible decisions, and handle challenging situations effectively (Weissberg, Durlak, Domitrovich, & Gullotta, 2015).

Culturally Responsive Teaching:

Developing a knowledge base about cultural diversity, including ethnic and cultural diversity content in the curriculum, demonstrating caring and building learning communities, communicating with ethnically diverse students, and responding to ethnic diversity in the delivery of instruction.

- Geneva Gay, 2000

It's about recognizing the social-emotional impact of living in a racialized society where some people have unearned privilege and others have unearned disadvantage.

- Zaretta Hammond, 2015

What is SEL?

Social and emotional learning involves the development of skills in 5 areas:



Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) and Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) Competencies

Self-Management

- Demonstrates ability to bounce back from challenges
- Able to persevere in face of challenges
- Uses specific strategies to manage stress effectively
- Sets healthy boundaries between self and others
- Identifies and manages personal and professional goals
- Develops strategies to adapt to new situations

Social Awareness

- Able to put self in another's place
- Values diversity
- Able to find and use resources to support all students
- Promotes and encourages multi-cultural viewpoints
- Uses strategies and content to promote social justice
- Involve all students in the learning process



Relationship Skills

- Uses strategies to build/maintain productive relationships
- Listens actively to others
- Able to question others constructively
- Exhibits discretion
- Uses skills/strategies to resolve conflicts productively
- Able to be open-minded when given feedback

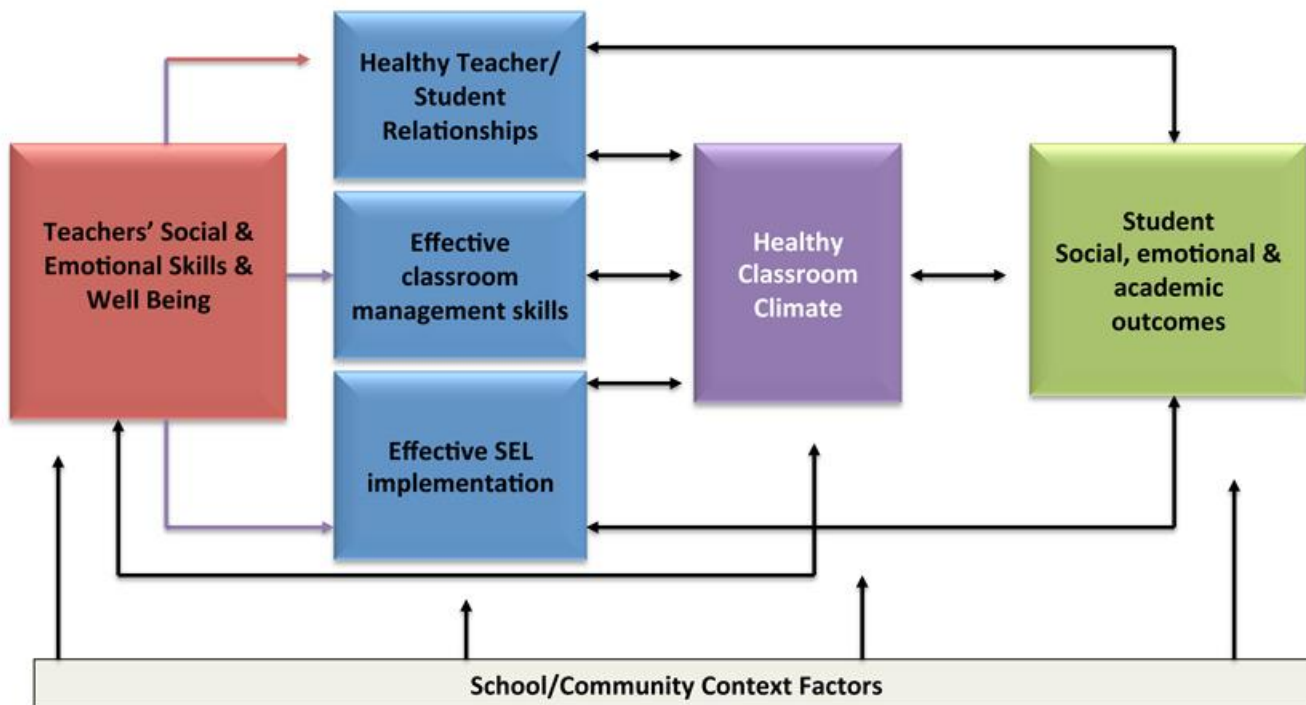
Self-Awareness

- Actions demonstrate awareness of relationship between feelings, thoughts, and behaviors
- Aware of own judgments/biases
- Aware of need for growth mindset
- Aware of cultural components that shape one's world view

Responsible Decision-Making

- Considers well-being of others
- Demonstrates integrity
- Willing to accept responsibility for outcomes
- Considers multiple options before making decision
- Recognized one's ethical responsibility to treat others fairly and with respect
- Maintains high expectations for self and others

The Prosocial Classroom: A Model of Teacher Social and Emotional Competence and Classroom and Child Outcomes



White Fragility

A state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves. These moves include the outward display of emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and behaviors such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress-inducing situation. These behaviors, in turn, function to reinstate white racial equilibrium.

- DiAngelo, 2011

To evolve beyond a White Fragility state of defensiveness within a group, individual members each need to develop awareness and skills in order to tolerate dissonance and constructively engage in difficult dialogues.

In their book, *Talking Diversity with Teachers and Teacher Educators*, Cruz et al.(2014) identify five developmental stages pre-service teachers tend to go through, to varying degrees, during the process of developing “diversity awareness” and a more evolved sense of their own identities:

- 1) naivete/pre-awareness;
- 2) bombardment;
- 3) dissonance and resistance;
- 4) adjustment and redefinition;
- 5) acceptance and internalization (pg. 17).

Proceeding through these stages involves intra- and inter-personal work that inevitably generates strong, difficult emotions. For teacher educators committed to guiding pre-service teachers through these stages, the process demands an expansive conceptual capacity and strong social-emotional skills, particularly because of the inevitable range of backgrounds, developmental levels, and racial/cultural literacy among their pre-service students.

“Teachers [often] don't have the social-emotional stamina to manage their fight or flight response when looking at social inequities.

- Zaretta Hammond, Equity Project Interview

Mindfulness means attending to one's internal assumptions, cognitions, and emotions, and simultaneously attuning to the other's assumptions, cognitions, and emotions. Mindful reflexivity requires us to tune in to our own cultural and personal habitual assumptions in viewing an interaction scene.

-Ting-Toomey, 1999: 267

Social-emotional stamina is experienced when a person develops a balanced, calm autonomic nervous system as a baseline state, to manage fight or flight responses (Seppala, 2016; Yuan & Silberstein, 2016). Neuroscience research confirms that psychophysiological balance can be attained through strengthening one's vagus nerve a neural network that extends from brain to gut, and is viewed as "a key nexus of mind and body - and a biological building block of human compassion" (Keltner, 2012). When a person develops social-emotional stamina they are better able to access and activate social-emotional skills during stressful, contentious situations (Hammond, 2015).



Dacher Keltner, UC Berkeley psychologist and Faculty Director of the Greater Good Science Center “shares his research on the vagus nerve, a key nexus of mind and body, and a biological building block of human compassion.”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5d6e_Un6dv8

Teacher educators need to put their oxygen masks on first...

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Across interview conversations with the six teacher educators, all focused first and foremost on the vital role of mindfulness as an on-ramp to a greater sense of equanimity in their work with pre-service teachers. In terms of the ways in which mindfulness practices support teacher educators in their work with pre-service candidates, the following themes emerged:

- Listening more deeply and non-judgmentally during classes, and when advising students in their respective school sites;
- Responding rather than react to emotional distress that inevitably arises during classes;
- Taming strong emotions;
- Examining own assumptions and possible misinterpretations;
- Relating to their teacher preparation colleagues and students with greater sense of empathy and compassion.

Mindful intercultural communication emphasizes the importance of integrating the necessary intercultural knowledge, motivations, and skills to manage process-based issues satisfactorily and achieve desired interactive goals appropriately and effectively. ... A mindful intercultural communication model is presented in [Figure 1] below.

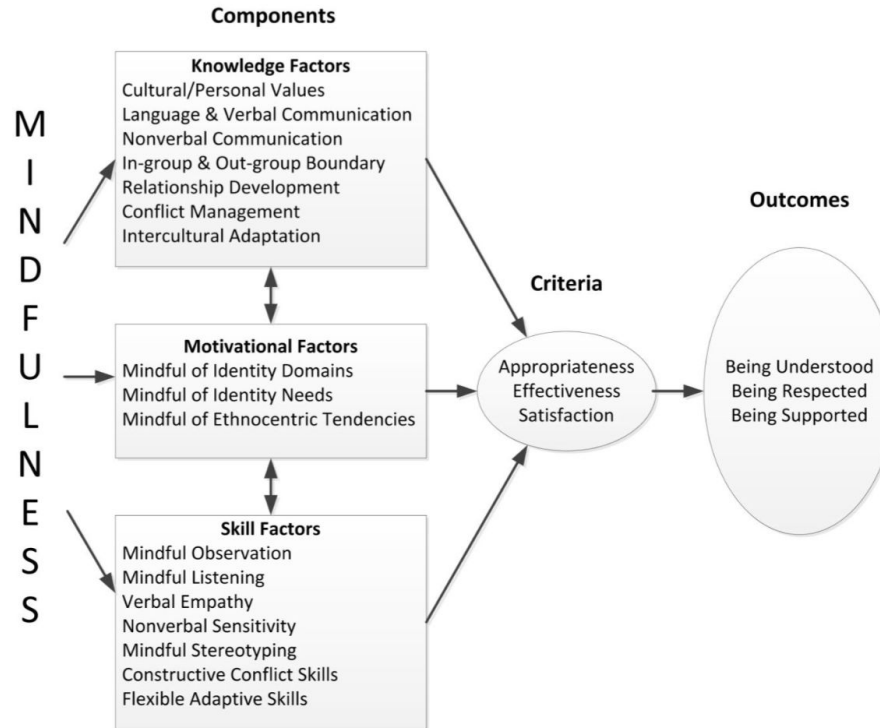


Fig. 1: A mindful intercultural communication model: Components, criteria, and outcomes