

Learning processes at the intersection of ethical and intercultural education

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Abstract

The stated goals of ethical education and multicultural education may seem very different but they share the same underlying goal of helping students understand how they fit into the world they live in. This paper presents theory and empirical data supporting the relation between moral and intercultural development, focusing on processes of learning and flexible thinking. We borrow from cognitive science and contemporary theories of human learning (Derry, 1996) to think of moral and intercultural development in terms of increasing sociocognitive flexibility. Intercultural and moral development share the common element of a critical shift from rigid to flexible thinking. In moral reasoning, this is characterized by the shift from conventional to post-conventional thinking. In intercultural development, a similar movement occurs between the ethnocentric and ethnorelative orientations of intercultural sensitivity. In order to test these hypotheses, college students (n=70) took measures of intercultural development (Intercultural Development Inventory), moral judgment (Defining Issues Test), and multicultural experience (Multicultural Experience Questionnaire). The results indicate that moral judgment and intercultural development are significantly related to one another. Both are related to multicultural experiences, particularly depth of the experiences, as opposed to breadth. Implications for education in both of these areas and samples of integrated moral/intercultural teaching are discussed.

Theoretical frameworks

The development of intercultural sensitivity. Bennett's (1986, 1993) developmental model of intercultural sensitivity (DMIS) attempts to describe development in people's reactions to cultural difference. The basic assumption of the model is that as one's experiences of cultural difference become more complex, one's competence in intercultural relations increases. The DMIS stages reflect increasing sensitivity to cultural difference. The first three stages are within the ethnocentric, or monocultural, level. Stage 1 is "denial of difference," in which the individual benignly neglects cultural difference and gives superficial statements of tolerance toward outsiders. Stage 2, "defense against difference," is characterized by recognition and negative evaluation of cultural difference. Typical at this stage is dualistic "we-they" thinking and overt, negative stereotyping. "Minimization of difference" is the third and final ethnocentric stage. Here, the individual emphasizes similarities among human beings while only recognizing superficial cultural differences.

The last three stages are included in the ethnorelative, or intercultural, level. Stage 4, "acceptance of difference," is the first ethnorelative stage. Here, the individual recognizes, appreciates, and is respectful towards cultural differences. Stage five is "adaptation to difference," in which the person consciously tries to take the other's ("outsider's") perspective. Because the individual can shift his/her frame of reference, she or he is more effective at interacting with people from other cultures. The last and final stage of DMIS is "integration of difference." An individual in this stage has internalized more than one cultural worldview and, thus, has an identity that can move in and out of different cultural value frameworks.

Stage 1	denial of difference
Stage 2	defense against difference
Stage 3	minimization of difference
Stage 4	acceptance of difference
Stage 5	adaptation to difference (cognitive adaptation, IDI)
Stage 6	integration of difference (behavioral adaptation, IDI)

The development of moral reasoning. Based on extensive interviews with children and adults about moral dilemmas, Kohlberg identified six stages of moral reasoning, grouped into three larger levels that represent fundamental shifts in the individual's sociomoral perspective. Throughout the last forty years, Kohlberg's theory has been scrutinized by researchers and theorists from many different standpoints (e.g., human development theorists, cognitive psychology researchers, moral philosophers). Rest, Narvaez, Bebeau, and Thoma (1999a) proposed a theory of moral reasoning development, referred to as the Neo-Kohlbergian approach, that is based on many of Kohlberg's fundamental ideas, yet deviates from it in ways that take into account many of the criticisms of Kohlberg's theory.

Rest and colleagues (1999b) depict the development of moral reasoning as shifting distributions whereby the more primitive ways of thinking are gradually replaced by more complex ways of thinking. These forms of thinking that can be "primitive" or "more complex" are conceptualized as moral schemas (Rest et al., 1999a). Moral schemas, or frameworks, that reside in long-term memory, are formed through a person's recognition of similarities and recurrences in his/her sociomoral experiences, much of which occurs through education.

Rest et al. (1999b) describe three qualitatively different moral schemas that form a developmental hierarchy: the personal interest schema, the maintaining norms schema, and the postconventional schema. The personal interest schema, considered as the most primitive schema, is "presociocentric" in that it lacks any concept of an organized society. This schema relies on an egocentric and interpersonal perspective in which the person focuses on the personal stakes that the actor has in the dilemma and its consequences and also emphasizes concern for others with which the person has a close relationship. The maintaining norms schema, usually developed in adolescence, is characterized by a need for a society-wide system of cooperation; the uniform application of laws and social norms; and a duty, authoritarian orientation. The postconventional schema, which is the most complex of the three schemas, is characterized by the core belief that "moral obligations are to be based on shared ideals, which are reciprocal and are open to debate and tests of logical consistency, and on the experience of the community" (Rest et al., 1999b, p. 307).

Cognitive flexibility in moral and intercultural development. One of the common threads in neo-Kohlbergian moral

development theory and Bennett's intercultural development theory is the critical shift from rigid to flexible thinking. In moral reasoning, this is characterized by the shift from conventional thinking, in which one consults rules and norms for a solution, to post-conventional thinking, in which abstract principles are weighed and considered. In intercultural development, the parallel movement is between ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism, which involves the recognition and appreciation of multiple cultural frameworks.

We can use schema theory and its supporting research to understand what is happening on a microlevel during flexible thinking. According to schema theory, there are networks of organized and interconnected concepts in the long-term memory of experts, and accessing this information is a matter of activating interconnected nodes of information (Collins & Loftus, 1975; Anderson, 1983). A schema includes knowledge, expectations, past experiences, and any other memories that become activated in relation to the task at hand. We acquire schemas through first-hand experience as well as indirectly, through observation or reading. Our ongoing experiences continue to influence existing schemas though this is not always a conscious process. All learning is essentially schema acquisition and/or modification (Derry, 1996).

When applying schema theory to intercultural development, for example, the assumption is that an individual's intercultural schemas provide a repertoire of frameworks regarding social beliefs, cultural values, expectations, and assumptions that the person can use to make sense of the intercultural events and relationships in his or her environment. As people become more expert at intercultural skills, their schemas, or information networks, regarding intercultural problem solving grow in breadth and depth, in addition to becoming interconnected in more and more sophisticated ways. The breadth increase comes with exposure to new cultural frameworks. This allows quantitative schema development, enlarging the repertoire by acquiring and constructing new schemas. In contrast, the depth increase comes with extended familiarity within a given framework. This qualitative change involves enriching the schemas one has, shifting from overly simplistic schemas (i.e., the world is black and white) to more sophisticated schemas that incorporate the complexities of overlapping systems (like multiculturalism in a diverse society).

Moral development is also well-served by experiences with new value frameworks, according to schema theory. In order to acquire new moral schemas and build on existing ones, an individual often has to bump up against a quandary that cannot be adequately explained using his or her existing schemas. This encounter encourages different, more complex ways of thinking about ethical issues.

Integration of these theories of learning and development suggest that encountering multiple frameworks should be an effective way of enhancing both moral and intercultural schemas, thereby facilitating more advanced ethical and intercultural problem-solving and attitudes. To begin to explore this relation, we sought some evidence that people who think flexibly in the moral domain also think flexibly in the intercultural domain. We also wanted to look at how flexible thinking relates to degree of multicultural experiences, which seems like a good indicator of how many frameworks the individual has encountered.

Methods

The following measures were administered to 71 college students:

Multicultural Experiences Questionnaire. The Multicultural Experiences Questionnaire (MEXQ) is a measure of multicultural experiences and openness to diverse groups.

Defining Issues Test-2. The Defining Issues Test-2 (DIT-2; Rest & Narvaez, 1998) measures justice-based moral judgment based on indicated schema preference.

Intercultural Development Inventory. The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) is a measure of intercultural sensitivity development (Paige, Cassuto, Yershova, & DeJaeghere, in press).

Results

Intercultural sensitivity and moral judgment were moderately correlated, $r=.24$, $p<.05$. Intercultural sensitivity was also strongly correlated with multicultural experience, $r=.47$, $p<.001$. The global moral development score was not significantly related to global multicultural experience, but the postconventional subscore was correlated with multicultural activities, $r=.25$, $p<.05$. Correlations among multicultural experience, moral development, and intercultural development subscores followed a similar pattern.

The correlation between the global measures of moral and intercultural development confirms our hypothesis that the two are related. Endorsement of postconventional items in particular is negatively correlated with the ethnocentric intercultural stages of denial and defense ($r=-.25$ and $r=-.30$, $p<.05$ for both) and is positively correlated with acceptance, $r=.37$, $p<.01$, the stage that marks the shift from rigid, ethnocentric thinking to flexible, ethnorelative thinking. This pattern provides support for the idea that postconventional and ethnorelative thinking share some common underpinning, and we propose that the similarity is rooted in cognitive flexibility, or the ability to understand, consider, and weigh multiple frameworks, or schemas. In flexible moral thinking one is considering moral principles and in flexible intercultural thinking one is considering cultural frameworks. Further research including specific measures of cognitive flexibility would be necessary to establish this without a doubt, but the patterns in this data very strongly point to the conclusion that flexible thinking marks the critical developmental shift for both moral and intercultural development.

Discussion

We cannot assume a causal relationship until we design non-correlational studies that prove the impact of multicultural experiences on development of general flexible thinking. However, these results indicate that some element is common to intercultural and moral development, and suggest that multicultural experiences is at least one of the contributing factors. Encountering and working within new frameworks would theoretically stimulate cognitive development via schema acquisition and modification. Educators who are interested in either ethical or intercultural education would likely find that the two work well together naturally and that each can reciprocally reinforce learning for the other. We will share some examples of this type of tandem moral/intercultural education efforts at the middle school level. The unit overviews and lesson plans we share are written by teachers who participated in the statewide project, Community Voices and Character Education.

Future research should include larger samples so that more sophisticated multivariate analyses like structural equation modeling and path analysis can be used to look at causal relationships and mediating variables. We can also use microgenetic methods, working even more closely with teachers in following developmental patterns in students participating in educational programs designed to foster intercultural and moral development.

Table 1. Correlations Among Intercultural Development and Moral Reasoning Subscores

INTERCULTURAL SUBSCORE	MORAL JUDGMENT SUBSCORE		
	Personal Interest	Maintaining Norms	Postconventional
denial	-.03	-.03	-.25*
defense	.13	.04	-.30*
minimization	-.11	.02	-.22
acceptance	.06	.14	.37**
cognitive adaptation	.06	.09	.23
behavioral adaptation	.14	.08	.16

*p<.05. **p<.01

Table 2. Correlations Among Multicultural Scores and Intercultural Development Scores (from IDI)

Multicultural Experience Index	INTERCULTURAL SCORE						
	Denial	Defense	Minimize	Acceptance	Cognitive Adaptation	Behavior Adaptation	IDI-DEV
multicultural activities	-.44***	.00	-.09	.39**	.69***	.51***	.46***
breadth of activities	-.35**	.04	.03	.32**	.62***	.44***	.35**
depth of activities	-.43***	.00	-.16	.37**	.65***	.53***	.49***
multicultural attitudes	-.28*	-.20	.13	.18	.11	.22	.25*
MEX composite	-.46***	-.10	.00	.38***	.56***	.49***	.47***

*p<.05. **p<.01 ***p<.001

Table 3. Correlations Among Multicultural Subscores and Moral Judgment Schemas (from DIT)

Multicultural Experience Index	MORAL JUDGMENT SCORE			
	Personal Interest	Maintaining Norms	Postconventional	N2 (composite score)
multicultural activities	.20	.20	.25*	.14
breadth of activities	.14	.13	.18	.09
depth of activities	.16	.28*	.24*	.07
multicultural attitudes	.00	.19	.09	.00
MEX composite	.15	.25*	.22	.10

*p<.05. **p<.01

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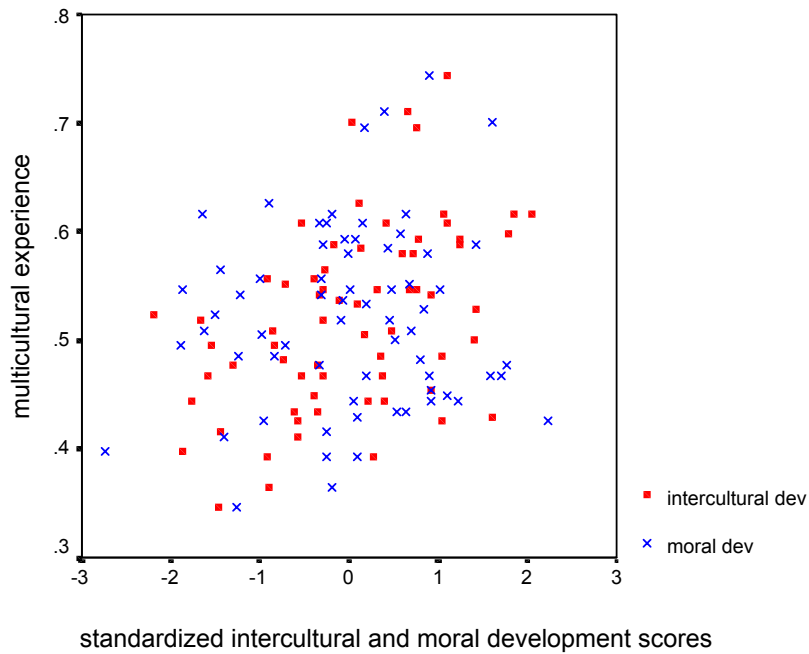


Figure 1. Moral (DIT-N2) and intercultural development (IDI-DEV) as a function of multicultural experience (MEXQ).

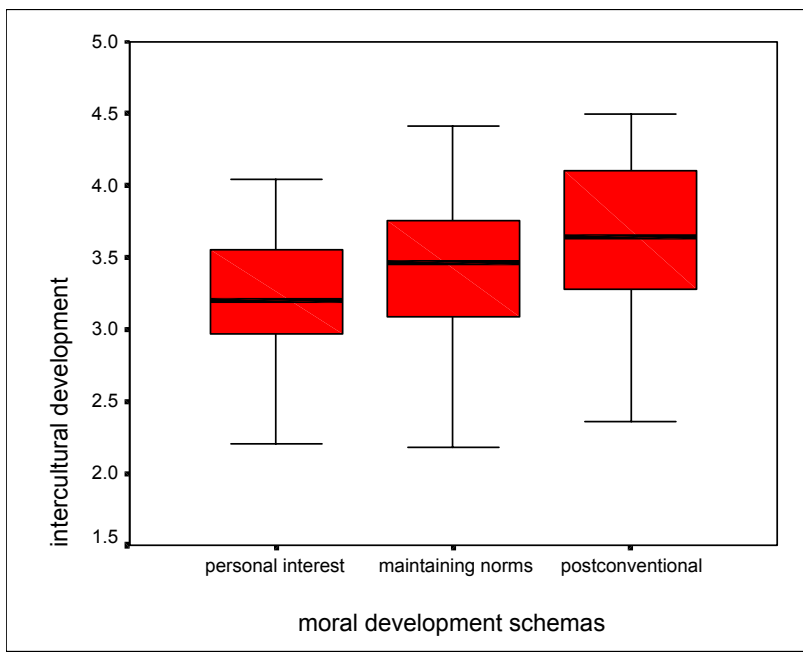


Figure 2. Preference for moral schemas plotted by intercultural development scores (IDI-DEV). Moral schema preferences are collapsed across participants so essentially each boxplot represents the intercultural range of the participants who preferred a given moral schema and the heavy, horizontal lines represent the group mean.

SAMPLE LESSON PLANS INTEGRATING ETHICAL AND INTERCULTURAL OBJECTIVES

SAMPLE LESSON ONE: Caring By Connecting To Others Around The World (Janet Metcalf, South St.Paul High School)

Designed for: Spanish Can also be used in: World Languages, Social Studies, Advisory

Ethical Skill: Caring by Connecting to Others, subskill 2: Showing care

Level 1: Immersion in Examples and Opportunities (Attend to the big picture, Learn to recognize basic patterns)

- a) Discuss meanings of sympathy, empathy and perspective-taking. Discuss helping vs. serving. *Assessment: Participation rubric*
- b) Use role play activity (Resource Center of the Americas): "Family Life in Guatemala." *Assessment: Journal entry on feelings*

Level 2: Attention to Facts and Skills (Focus on detail and prototypical examples, Build knowledge)

- a) Give examples of caring. *Assessment: Participation in discussion/short essay*
- b) What is life like in a small, remote Guatemalan village? (photos, slides, videos, speaker) *Assessment: Journal entry*
- c) What are the basic facts about the violence in Guatemala of the 1970s and '80s? Read I. Rigoberta Menchu. Show video "Daughter of the Puma." *Assessment: Essay*
- d) Share knowledge about village of La Esmeralda, Guatemala. Write a letter in Spanish to community leaders of La Esmeralda. *Assessment: Assess letter for content & grammar*

Level 3: Practice Procedures (Set goals, Plan steps of problem solving, Practice skills)

- a) Class discussion: How can we serve? Brainstorm. Use any feedback received from outside sources. *Assessment: Participation*
- b) Use personal contact in Guatemala to identify opportunities for service project. *Assessment: Writing assignment in Spanish*
- c) Plan project. *Assessment: Group tasks*

Level 4: Integrate Knowledge and Procedures (Execute plans, Solve problems)

- a) Implement plan for service project. *Assessment: Journal entry*
- b) Evaluate experience. *Assessment: Written activity (such as a letter or newspaper article) or student/teacher interview*

SAMPLE LESSON TWO: Developing General Reasoning In Current Event Analysis (Sarah Bonin, Fairmont Middle School)

Designed for: Reading and Language Can also be used in: Advisory, Social Studies, Speech/Communications

Ethical Skills: Develop General Reasoning: Gather information, Categorize problem type, Analyze ethical problems

MN Grad standard addressed: (1) Identifying specific events or situations illustrating the impact of the issue (2) Describing a range of opinions or positions on the issue (3) Selecting and defending a position based on information (4) Describing the responsibility of citizens involved with the issues and (5) Summarizing the findings in a written, oral, or role-play presentation

Level 1: Immersion in Examples and Opportunities (Attend to the big picture, Learn to recognize basic patterns)

Students should watch the news and follow an issue that interests him/her. Gather information from different media sources, television, newspaper, radio, and internet. Consider the cultural, moral, and legal factors that may enter into the current event issue. (Teacher should be sure to discuss these things at length when doing a class example.) As he/she is tracking his/her issue, he/she should construct a timeline of events that have happened and include people that are involved. *Students present Timeline.*

Level 2: Attention to Facts and Skills (Focus on detail and prototypical examples, Build knowledge)

If the issue had two or more distinct sides, the student should create a web for each side involved in the issue, including the emotions of each side and how each side's values and culture affect their position. In his/her web, highlight which ones might be illegal or unethical. *Students present web.*

OR If the issue had one clear side, interview a variety of people who are familiar with the issue and record how they feel about it and what values do they have that affect the way they feel? How do they feel about the laws or ethics that may have been violated? Did they consider any cultural issues in their opinions? *Students present interview record.*

Level 3: Practice Procedures (Set goals, Plan steps of problem solving, Practice skills)

Choose a side. Students should choose what side of the issue they support. Create a case or list the reasons why he/she has supported that side. He/she should be able to defend and support his/her position with facts he/she has discovered. Include what decisions he/she thinks that side should make or which decisions that side have made that he/she believes were incorrect. *Students present: positions*

Level 4: Integrate Knowledge and Procedures (Execute plans, Solve problems)

Using the people involved in the issue, describe the responsibilities and emotions of these people. How have these people's decisions affected their lives? The student should put him/herself into the issue by taking the perspective of one of the people involved. What decisions would he/she make that are different than the ones that were made? Explain how he/she feels being in that situation; include any cultural issues that may affect the situation. This can be done through and illustration, report, role-plays, mock-court, etc. *Students present illustration, report, role-play, mock-court.*

SAMPLE LESSON THREE: Values and Ethical Identity in Music (Debra Linnes, Ellis Middle School)

Designed for: Music Can also be used in: Visual Arts, Language Arts

Ethical skill: Developing Ethical Identity and Integrity

MN Grad Standard---M2 Artistic Interpretation: Music Content Standard #7 students evaluate music, music use and music performance, Music Content Standard #9 students evaluate music in relation to history and culture

Level 1: Immersion in Examples and Opportunities (Attend to the big picture, Learn to recognize basic patterns)

1. Why study music? Bring out statements on how music relates to science, math, foreign language, history, social studies and art. Point out that music affects emotions, helps us become more human and sensitive to others, and more in touch with our emotions.
2. Have students brainstorm a list of virtues or values - list all answers on board. Lead them towards covering many of the virtues

Level 2: Attention to Facts and Skills (Focus on detail and prototypical examples, Build knowledge)

Using the Student/Parent survey (below), have students fill out questions 1-6 on own. Students will then take the survey home to finish it with parents in order to help all students understand their own family backgrounds and family value systems better.

Level 3: Practice Procedures (Set goals, Plan steps of problem solving, Practice skills)

1. Tabulate survey results. Discuss results of surveys paying attention to collected data with no mention of names. Tabulate how many parents had, for instance, honesty as a high family value. Through this combined group survey, students see where their families are similar and also may differ from others in classroom (all material being confidential concerning individual answers).
2. Students examine data and choose 5 values or virtues (listed from previous units) to own or work towards in their own life.
3. Students write down and hand in 5 values, keeping a copy for themselves (students know answers are kept confidential).

Level 4: Integrate Knowledge and Procedures (Execute plans, Solve problems)

Written assignment (Note: **This assignment has been developed during the previous 2 years and classroom tested.*)

1. Choose one of your values to use for the assignment.
2. Write the name of the musical selection you chose to support your value.
3. Write the group, soloist or composer of the musical selection and one paragraph about them or him/her. (Classroom material is available to help you research many artists. Ask teacher.)
4. What cultural setting was this piece of music written in? Does your piece of music relate to what is happening in the culture of the artist at the time? If so, how?
5. Write why you chose the music you did to support the value written on line one. Use lyrics of the song or what sounds you heard to show how the music supports your value.
6. Bring a CD or recording of your selection to share with class (can also be a video clip).

Student / Parent Survey for Values and Ethical Identity in Music lesson

Note to parent: As we have been learning, Music is art and allows us opportunity to develop as human beings with feelings and emotion. As the handout "Why We Make Music" says: We make and study music not because we expect to major in music, but so we can become more human and sensitive to others and their cultures. We also want to have fun, relax and develop skills in a discipline that helps us become more aware of that part of our musical roots and therefore, also ourselves.

With the help of your family, answer the questions below. The answers will help us to develop our projects and aid in our discussions.

1. Name: _____
2. Nicknames: Among my friends: _____ Among my family: _____ When I was little: _____
3. Where were you born? _____
4. What cultures are part of your family heritage? _____
5. List an old favorite family food: _____
6. Where have you traveled or would like to travel as a family? _____
7. Write an old proverb, saying or poem that you were taught as a child: _____
8. Parent: Please do this exercise with your child: Rate these personal attributes in importance to you and your family values:
1- very important 2 - somewhat important 3 - not as important.

_____ Adaptable	_____ Faith	_____ Honesty	_____ Patient	_____ Self control
_____ Citizenship	_____ Fairness	_____ Kindness	_____ Peaceful	_____ Self reliance
_____ Commitment	_____ Friendship	_____ Lifelong Learner	_____ Persistent	_____ Self sacrificing
_____ Compassionate	_____ Happy	_____ Loving	_____ Respectful	_____ Smart
_____ Courageous	_____ Hard working	_____ Loyal	_____ Rich	_____ Spiritual
_____ Creative	_____ Helpful	_____ Optimistic	_____ Responsible	_____ Trustworthy

9. Parent: Which values do you place as the most important to encourage in your child? Please choose only 5 for our survey purposes and list them below. You may use words from the above list or write in your own ideas. Thanks for your help.