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Emily K. Peters

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**Building Intercultural Competency:
Justifying and Designing a Refugee Educator Self-Training Guide**

Emily K. Peters

University of Portland

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Abstract

This paper examines and distills the necessary competencies a host-culture educator of refugee students should possess to fully address the needs of their nationally diverse classroom. Relying on a comprehensive examination of existing literature, the report frames the understandings, expertise, and strategies found helpful for responding to these particular educators' training needs. The paper culminates in a reflective self-training guide for educators to increase intercultural competency and more effectively teach students experiencing refugee status within the educator's host culture.

Building Intercultural Competency: Justifying and Designing a Refugee Educator Self-Training Guide

“A Place of Transformation”

A teacher who manages a classroom that includes refugee learners will walk into perhaps the toughest classroom in the world.

Among the class will be children who have seen their homes destroyed and their relatives injured or killed. Some may have disabilities, either from birth or as a result of the violence in their home countries. There may be a former child soldier, a survivor of sexual abuse, someone who made the journey to safety when their brother or sister did not. Their education will have been interrupted for weeks, months or even years. On average, UNHCR estimates that refugees miss out on three to four years of schooling because of forced displacement.

The classroom will probably be crowded, even if the school operates a double shift system, with children from the host country rubbing shoulders with refugees. These arrangements enable more children to attend school but the long hours place an extra burden on teachers and other staff. In some countries, lessons may be held in a language that the refugee children are only beginning to understand.

Yet this classroom can transform children. They can learn reading, writing and mathematics, the foundation of lifelong learning, and they can learn how to learn. This underpins further development in language, literature and maths as well as the sciences, geography, history, religious studies and other subjects as children move into secondary school and beyond. Besides academic subjects, they can learn about basic health care and hygiene, citizenship, human rights and where, how and from whom to get help. From the first lessons through to university, education helps refugees stand on their own feet, allowing them to prepare for the future, whether that is in a host country or in their own country upon their return.

Excerpt from “Missing Out” (UNHCR, 2016)

INTRODUCTION

Terms of the 1951 Refugee Convention define a refugee as “someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion.” Along with setting the qualifications for obtaining “refugee” status, the monumental convention set the expectation that, as a basic human right, education must be guaranteed to all. The number of refugees are increasing worldwide, as is the need for school systems to meet demands in providing equitable education to the growing number of students. Based on data gathered in 2012, the United Nation’s Refugee Agency (UNHCR), along with the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, projects that at the growth of the student-age refugee population will cause a demand for 20,000 additional teachers worldwide every year (2015b). These numbers demonstrate the need not only for more teachers, but for teachers that are trained to provide education that a way that guarantees refugee students equal opportunity for success.

In the United States, the high-school dropout rate of refugee and immigrant students is at a high 12% (Child Trends Databank, 2015). This is double the national dropout rate of native students. As the population of school-age refugee students in the United States increases, so does the number of refugee students without comparable education. As asserted by the UN’s sustainably development strategy for 2015-2030, access to education is a vital to the establishment of global equity and the eradication of poverty and hunger. In their 17 step plan, sustainable goal 4 is to “ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning,” (United Nations,

2015). However, refugee students face unique barriers to receiving quality education: discrimination, environmental and psychological stressors, language and cultural barriers. To uphold the rights of refugees defined in the 1951 Refugee Convention and to ensure that refugee students have equitable access to quality education, refugee educators must understand the educational obstacles that refugees face and be able to transcend them. Nonetheless, refugee students' disproportionately low academic success rates (U.S. Child Trends Databank, 2015), in combination with data showing a widespread misunderstanding of culturally responsive teaching amongst U.S. American educators (Young, 2010), suggest that educators are not sufficiently prepared to teach children outside of the dominant U.S. culture. To achieve complete educational equity, U.S. host-culture educators must be specifically trained to meet the needs of refugee students. This report addresses the need for specialized educator training by examining necessary competencies and effective training strategies outlined in existing literature, then transcribing the findings into a guide for increasing intercultural competency.

Project Purpose & Justification

The purpose of this report is to synthesize a comprehensive self-training tool for the use of host-culture educators of sojourning refugee students. Relevant research is used to highlight the necessary competencies an effective training tool would address. Following the research, specific actionables are justified for inclusion in the self-training protocol.

The refugee educator self-training guide for building intercultural competency is constructed to fill a prevalent educational need. An assessment of the work and progress of pre-service teachers in an intercultural setting suggest that mere submersion in ethnically-different classrooms is not sufficient for building educator competency and ability to teach in a way that is responsive to the students' culture (Cushner, 2015). Yet, multiple studies show that explicit intercultural training in addition to relevant interaction can increase educator competency, particularly as it relates to intercultural understanding (Kerssen-Griep & Eifler, 2009; Spitzer, 2015; Meadows, Olsen, Dimitrov & Dawson, 2015; Degens, 2016). The formulated refugee educator self-training guide compiles the key pieces of effective intercultural and institutional training frameworks and adapts them to specifically address refugee educator competency needs. Furthermore, the contemporary training options available to educators primarily follow a class or facilitation framework. The self-training protocol, which guides users in building intercultural competency through independent reflection and self-selected actionables, is a response to the need for more accessible refugee educator training methods. Beginning with an examination of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943), a well-known educational theory which provides perspective on the basis of the report, the following literature contextualizes the training strategies which are employed in the guide.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

The principles of the theory

Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) outlines four primary layers of needs, also referred to as *deficiency needs*, which must be fulfilled before an individual can self-actualize. The first two tiers are basic needs: biological/ physiological needs and safety needs. The following two tiers reflect psychological needs: love/ belongingness and esteem. The subsequent tiers of the hierarchy are known as *growth needs*. These four growth needs are cognitive needs, aesthetic needs, self-actualization, and transcendence; although, in some models of the hierarchy, self-actualization encompasses all four growth layers. The difference between the first and second

groupings is that deficiency needs must be fulfilled as a means of survival, whereas growth needs do not. Maslow's assertion is that a person who is preoccupied with survival would not have the resources or motivation to address secondary needs.

Educational application

Professionals in the field of education have appropriated Maslow's theory to describe the relationship between basic human need fulfilment and educational success. The comparison, which has gained some empirical backing, aims to explain why students who do not have basic or psychological security struggle with academic achievement (Betz, 1984; Noltemeyer, Bush, Patton & Bergen, 2012). Although the theory is considered a staple of instructor education, it is criticized for minimizing the education systems' role in the performance gap between well-off white students and low-income minority students (Hanley & Able, 2002; Pearson & Podeschi, 1999).

Still, the theory provides a helpful lens for examining the barriers to education that refugees in the United States experience. Refugee students who struggle with a sense of belongingness in the host culture, live in unsafe environments, or have limited access to academic or emotional supports could have a harder time cultivating their growth needs in the classroom. It is an educator's responsibility to facilitate the growth and success in each of their students, emotionally as well as academically. Teachers of refugees cannot accomplish this without considering the underlying factors that affect their students, both in and outside of the classroom. Maslow's theory provides a starting point for identifying those factors so that teachers may respond to their student's needs appropriately.

The educator competency necessitated by Maslow's theory (1943) is the ability to identify outside factors impacting a student's performance in the classroom; this competency is addressed in the guide (Appendix 1). In order for this comprehension to be useful, however, educators must first understand the physiological and emotional threats that refugee students may be more vulnerable to. The following section examines the unique risks, primarily relating to safety, physiological, and psychological needs, which may affect the experiences of these sojourning students.

Risk Awareness

Pre-migration risk factors

A refugee's decision to leave a home and move to an unfamiliar country is not voluntary, but necessitated by grave conditions. Atrocities that individuals may have witnessed or experienced in their home countries include starvation, torture, and sexual assault (Bemack & Chung, 2017). Some have witnessed war and death. Many are affected by the loss of loved ones. Events like these are considerable sources of psychological and psychological trauma. Consequently, post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety, sleep problems, and behavioral problems amongst refugee students than American-born students (American Psychological Association, 2010; Athey & Ahearn, 1991; Keyes, 2000; Lustig, Kia-Keating et al., 2004; Rousseau, 1995). In the classroom, trauma experiences often manifest through the following behaviors: aggression, hyperarousal, dissociation and withdrawal, anxiety, and attachment disorder (Statman-Weil, 2015). Prevalent disorders that arise from past trauma may directly impact a student's performance in the classroom, and many undermine their fundamental deficiency needs. Furthermore, Salzer (2012) found that students with mental illness were more likely to be socially isolated. This poses a threat to the belongingness needs of a student, especially if the teacher does not attempt to proactively address behavioral issues by determining their roots or does not make an effort to promote social inclusion within the classroom.

Depending on the age of a refugee child at the time of their migration, the way they are affected by their pre-migrations experiences will differ. A child who fled their home country at the

age of two is not likely to recall their experiences there. Furthermore, disorders such as PTSD manifest differently in children than adults, which makes children's symptoms difficult to categorize and diagnose (Scheeringa, Peebles, Cook & Zeanah, 2001). However, this does not mean a young refugee is unaffected by their experiences. In fact, children under five are the most susceptible to the mental impacts of trauma and stress (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2005/2014). Young refugees especially vulnerable during the developmental stage of attunement— which is the process of emotional mirroring and acquisition (Jensen, 2009). The attunement process is at its peak when a child is 6-24 months old; if, during that time, the child's care givers are overworked, overstressed, or otherwise unavailable, the child's range of learned emotions will not develop to its full potential (Jensen). There are only 6 emotions that humans develop intuitively: joy, sadness, surprise, anger, disgust, and fear; other emotions, such as cooperation and gratitude, are learned (Jensen). The absence of these emotions significantly impact on a child's classroom performance.

A similarly important consideration for young refugee children is their experience of intergenerational trauma— symptoms of trauma that have been passed down to a child through caregivers with trauma experiences (McConnico, Boynton-Jarrett, Bailey & Nandi, 2016). Effective teachers will make an effort to get to the root of behavioral problems, which may have stemmed from deeper issues like these, and from there they may incorporate coping mechanisms within their lessons. Strategies like these facilitate positive classroom environments and strengthen the emotional portfolio of the students who need it most.

Post-migration risk factors

Refugees' susceptibility to risk factors extends beyond their post-migration experiences. Refugees are likely to encounter trauma and stress even after resettlement in the United States. In general, refugees come to the United States with little to no capital. According to data collected from 2009-2011, the median household income for refugee families who have been in the United States for five years or less is only 42% of the median income for U.S. born families, less than any other immigrant group (Capps et al., 2015). The income gap lessens somewhat as the amount of time within the U.S. increases, but refugee families who have been in the country for 10-20 years still only bring in 87% of the average U.S. born family, and as a whole, 44% of the U.S. refugee population is considered low-income. It is important to note that these rates vary dramatically when the refugee population is categorized by national-origin. Based on the same 2009-2011 census, only 32% of Russian refugee families live in low-income housing, compared to 79% of Somali families.

Poor and impoverished children are vulnerable to a number of risk factors that could adversely affect their development and academic abilities. According to Eric Jensen (2009), the primary risk factors are: emotional and social challenges, acute and chronic stressors, cognitive lags, and health and safety issues. These factors manifest themselves in many ways— limited access to medical resources allows for disabilities, learning disorders, and behavioral disorders to go undiagnosed or untreated, affecting progress in school; working parents are less available to support child, resulting in low self-esteem and self-efficacy; transportation issues causes absenteeism and high dropout rates; environmental problems affecting low-income neighborhoods leads to developmental issues and sickness.

Refugee students are more likely to be affected by a number of educational risk factors, so it is important that their teachers have the proper training to for identifying factors at play and tailoring the curriculum in a beneficial way. Additionally, teachers must understand their responsibilities as mandated reporters. If the teacher has reason to believe their student is in immediate danger, or they suspect neglect or abuse, they are legally obligated to report this.

The educator competencies necessitated by this literature are the ability to teach emotional literacy and the ability to identify and respond to risk factors. The risks outlined in the above evaluation primarily relate to the basic need levels, as defined by Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943). However, there are additional factors that pertain more specifically to students' love/belongingness and esteem needs (Maslow). The following section examines the ways in which social and emotional aspects of the U.S. American schooling experience may uniquely impact refugee students.

The Teacher as an Emotional and Psychosocial Resource

Emotional considerations in an educational setting

Refugees carry a greater emotional burden than many other students. As detailed in the previous section, many refugees experience trauma prior to arriving in the United States and are more likely to be exposed to stressors during and after settlement in the United States. In addition to this, refugee students often must grow up faster than the other students, and may be juggling traditional adult responsibilities. There are numerous home factors that could contribute to this: students may be depended upon to support their siblings, to translate for their parents because of their language ability, and to work, among other things (McBrien, 2005). Moreover, a significant number of refugee minors in the United States are "unaccompanied," or living without parents or a care takers; as of 2015, the Office of Refugee Resettlement had 1,300 unaccompanied refugees in its care. Many refugee students feel enormous pressure to succeed academically in order to justify the sacrifices of their family (Sarr & Mosselson, 2010); however, the amount of emotional stress placed on refugee students can impact their ability to realize academic success.

This being said, the ability of a teacher to provide emotional and psychosocial support to refugee students is exceptionally important. A qualitative study of Brooklyn International High School (BIHS) sought the perspectives of refugee students, mentors, and administrators, to determine key factors in refugee students' success (Mendenhall, Bartlett & Ghaffar-Kucher, 2017). The top factors that were identified were educator support, and care and encouragement. On this point, Mendenhall et al. (2017) elaborate, "whether this happens through direct academic support or occasional words of encouragement offered by the teacher to his or her students, these interactions are vital to bolstering student confidence, ensuring students' social-emotional well-being, and engaging students in the learning process," (pg. 21). According to this study, effective teachers connect with their refugee students on an interpersonal level to ensure their psychological needs, love/ belongingness and esteem, were being met.

Teachers as a representation of the host culture

Student- teacher relationships have impacts that reach beyond the classroom, particularly in the case of refugee students. Teachers are meaningful ambassadors of the host culture to refugee students and quite possibly the primary conveyors of cultural attitudes and norms (Sarr & Mosselson, 2010). Therefore, teacher relationships with refugee students profoundly influence the student's relationship to the host culture. In fact, studies indicate that school has one of the greatest effects on a refugee student's sense of belongingness to the host country (Mendenhall et al., 2017; Xu, Connelly, He & Phillion, 2007). The feeling that one belongs to the culture in which they live has significant implications for a student's psychological well-being, and, following Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943), is necessary for a student to be an effective learner. Therefore, teachers must help bridge home and host culture so refugee students can effectively navigate curriculum. An additionally educational need that this literature illuminates is for teachers to establish an inclusive class environment and communicate their support.

The role of the teacher as a social facilitator

In addition to being a mentor and representative of the host country, teachers can also be facilitators for a student's social inclusion in the school. An study of unaccompanied refugee students in Norway showed that extracurricular cultural participation— through activities like work, sports, or inclusion in social circles— had a large impact on a student's sense of belongingness to the host culture, and was more beneficial to the student's language development than class support (Pastoor, 2017b). Teachers can facilitate social interaction by creating an inclusive classroom environment. A comparative study of student experiences within a diverse classroom setting shows how encouraging students to discuss their unique experiences and celebrating their differences contributes to the creating of an inclusive environment (Solbue & Helleve, 2017). The study also highlighted the need for problem-solving skills to be woven into curriculum as a way of helping students to manage intercultural conflict.

The educator competencies highlighted in this section of literature analysis are the ability to connect to their students on an interpersonal basis, to bolster student's confidence by recognizing progress and success, to help students make sense of cultural differences, and to create inclusive classroom communities. These objectives respond to the psychological needs which Maslow (1943) deemed a necessary prerequisite for student's to achieve self-actualization. However, responding to these relation-based objectives in a culturally appropriate way requires an understanding of U.S. American culture, as well as the biases engrained into its dominant society. The following section examines the ways in which these biases appear in the national education system.

Racial Inequity in the U.S. Education System

"Layers of Marginalization"

The USA is a country afflicted with racism. Refugees are among those at the receiving end of discriminatory traditions in the U.S. Unfortunately, refugees may face more microaggressions than other minority groups in the U.S. due to their multiple layers of marginalization. Before analyzing this, one must first understand the three main assimilation patterns afforded to the refugee community. In accordance with Portes and Zhou's segmented assimilation theory (1993), there are three main outcomes for refugee acculturation: (1) assimilation into the white middle class dominant culture, (2) assimilation into the impoverished underclass and minority groups, and (3) continued identification with the culture of the country of origin. The first assimilation methods offers the most economic potential, which is reflective of the Anglo-Western standard in the United States (McBrien, 2005). Although the first method of acculturation would be the most economically beneficial, it is culturally erasing and, moreover, is largely unattainable for refugees who are not white-passing. Relatedly, white passing-refugees enjoy higher economic standing in the U.S. than refugees who are not white-passing (Fruja Amthor & Roxas, 2017; Capps et al., 2015).

The majority of refugees either continue their identification to their country of origin or assimilate with other minority groups (McBrien, 2005). Children, who are less exposed to their home culture and more receptive to the adoption to new culture, are more likely to assimilate American culture or subcultures. The grouping of refugees with other minority groups is called co-cultural association, and it is one of the ways in which members of the dominant culture discriminate against refugees in a two-folded way. First, they may project biases they have against refugees; second, they project upon the refugee biases they hold against the minority group with whom the refugee is associating (Sarr & Mosselson, 2010). Layered discrimination may occur even without co-cultural association, when members of the dominant group perceive the refugee to be related to a minority group (Fruja-Amthor & Roxas, 2017).

Peer discrimination

A potential threat to the inclusion of all students in a diverse classroom is discrimination between peers. Teachers must be alert to any discrimination related to race, gender, ability, etc. and be able to avoid problems through targeted classroom management techniques. This could mean strategic grouping and seating to minimize interaction between students with currently existing tension. In a more proactive approach, teachers should take steps to foster an inclusive class environment. A year-long study of the formation of inclusive culture in a diverse American school highlighted a democratic approach and value-driven leadership as two significant contributors, (Zollers, Ramanathan & Yu, 1999). In this situation, democracy means open-communication has been established so that students feel comfortable voicing their opinions. This environment could be alienating to students with cultural backgrounds that are high-context or establish a greater power distance between students and teachers. Nonetheless, teachers can make all students feel respected with simple gestures like learning their names and initiating conversation with students that is unrelated to class-work. The second factor, value-driven leadership, is based on the assertion that educators have great influence over their student's attitudes. Teachers may use this to promote a welcoming class culture by clearly stating their expectations for inclusion and respect at the start of the year, and enforcing them throughout. A second study, conducted by Lim, Kim, Stallings and Son (2015), affirms that pedagogy that facilitates and rewards divergent thinking teaches students to value diversity. Praising the unique way that each student got to their answer demonstrates a positive view towards difference and creativity. This approach supports Fruja-Amthor's (2017) assertion that teachers must foster inclusivity by portraying difference through an enrichment perspective.

Teacher discrimination

A number of studies have shown that teacher discrimination against students, particularly refugee students, is not an unheard of phenomena (Moinolnolki & Han, 2017; Betancourt et al., 2015; Ellis et al., 2010; Phelps, 2014; Rana, Qin, Bates, Luster, & Saltarelli, 2011). A common stereotype that teachers hold against refugees is that they are "deficit" in some way (Moinolnolki & Han). These prejudices that teachers hold against their students can come in the way of the students' education: a study of Bosnian refugees in an American school setting displayed that teachers were less willing to provide encouragement and support to students who they viewed as more "refugee" than American (Mosselson, 2007). This, in turn, diminished student enthusiasm for their education. As previously stated, discrimination against refugee students is often two-fold because the prejudice against refugees for their "refugeeness" is added onto prejudice that individuals hold about the refugees perceived racial group. For example, teachers may dismiss Asian refugees if they do not initially excel in class, violating the stereotype of Asians as academic prodigies. Additionally, refugees who assimilate into African-American culture due living location, appearance, and teacher minimization of difference (McBrien, 2005). The statistical gap between refugee and U.S.-born student academic achievement (Child Trend Database, 2015) supports assertion that teachers don't support students unless they show academic promise, creating a divide. These findings implicate a need for educators to monitor their own biases so they do not interfere with students' ability to learn.

Racial inequity within the curriculum

The Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) has laid out a set of minimum standards for refugee education (2010). The standards are tailored for administrator use in still-developing and under-resourced school districts around the globe— however, many of the standards are relevant for the learning considerations of refugee students in American educational settings. One of the fundamental standards set forth by INEE is that curriculum must be tailored to students so that it is culturally relevant. The current educational system was historically

constructed by and for members of dominant Anglo-Western culture. Since the foundation of the system, schools have been integrated and there have been many internal adjustments made to ensure the inclusion of every student. Still, traditional pedagogical practices and standard curriculum are rooted in cultural bias. Furthermore, culture informs the values, expectations, and behaviors of each individual, demonstrating the need for educators to approach class relationships with intercultural awareness. As elaborated by Fruja-Amthor and Roxas (2017), “the ways of communicating, conceptions of knowledge, methods of learning, and the overall context of the educative process are situated within a framework that is consistent with the students’ cultural background,” (pg. 162). This assertion is supported by Social Learning Theory, which makes the additional claim that miscommunication primarily happens when culturally-based expectations are violated (Bandura, 1971). This leaves educators with the task of utilizing cultural understanding to reach out to student and structure lessons in ways they will be receptive to, thereby allowing students to learn without the interference of miscommunication.

The educator competencies that arise from this literature analysis are having an awareness of one’s own cultural perspectives and biases, and an awareness of peer discrimination. Furthermore, the literature mandates that effective educators must be aware of exclusionary curriculum, and have the ability to use culturally responsive practices and teach diversity as strength. The specific understandings which educators must have to act in a culturally sensitive way— specifically, providing cultural and linguistic supports in the classroom and distinguishing between cultural difference and academic ability— are explored in the following section.

Academic Considerations

Language support

The first contingency of the UNHCR’s Brief 4 (2015a), in reference to the UN’s commitment to equitable education, is that schools must not determine students’ academic placement based on their language ability; instead, they are required to place students based on academic standing. This ensures that refugee students will not be delayed academically solely because of their displacement in a country which speaks a different language from their own. This method of integration is a crucial step forward in attaining equitable education, but it is only functional when involved teachers understand how to properly provide language supports to their students.

An effective example of the successful implementation of language-transcending curriculum is Brooklyn International High School, whose mantra is “every teacher is a teacher of language and content,” (Mendenhall et al., 2017, pg. 22). The school attributes its success in international education to the ability of its faculty to adapt curriculum in a way that allows students to use their native language as scaffolding in their path to academic success. This method of instruction prioritizes academic comprehension over language acquisition, although the latter skill is expected to grow with activities that support the former. Ways for teachers to help English learners access the curriculum include using visual aids to accompany instruction, providing information in multiple formats, and employing collaborative learning in the classroom (A. Turnbull, H. Turnbull & Wehmeyer, 2007).

It is necessary that the teacher consider the individual needs of their students when deciding how to incorporate language supports into their lesson. The language support needed will change based on a student’s English language ability, which will differ depending on the student’s age, the amount of time they have spent in the United States, if they received English instruction pre-migration, or if their parents speak English. Refugees from English speaking countries may need little English language support. Since support needs vary depending on an individual’s unique language abilities, if educators were to group fluent English speakers with English language learners and teach them in the same way, both groups would suffer. This demonstrates why it is

important for teachers to avoid homogenizing the “refugee experience,” and address the needs of their students on an individual basis. This need is reaffirmed by research showing that intercultural miscommunication impacts English language learners’ ability to succeed academically, suggesting that linguistic and cultural supports are needed for more than just facilitating language acquisition (Huang, Dotterweich & Bowers, 2012).

Pedagogical and cultural differences within the classroom

Language difference are usually easy to identify, however gaps in classroom culture are far more subtle. Pedagogical styles and expected classroom behaviors vary greatly across cultures (Sarr & Mosselson, 2010; Mendenhall, Bartlett & Ghaffar-Kucher 2017). A factor which the Mendenhall et al. study (2017) found significantly aids the success of refugee students is the employment of learner-centered pedagogical approaches. Essentially, educators may provide scaffolding to ease students into typical American classroom expectations. Generally, U.S. American pedagogy values student participation and collaboration between peers. This may be a source of confusion or stress for students from high-context cultures with a greater power distance between teachers and students. Teachers can respond to these dynamics through culturally sensitive classroom management techniques and by scaffolding refugee students for typical American class interactions.

Interrupted formal education

A significant number of refugees are students with interrupted formal education (SIFE). In New York City alone, there are 15,844 enrolled SIFE (New York State Education Department, 2014). There are a number of factors that can contribute to the disruption of a student’s formal education, from war and civil unrest to differences between the country of origin and host country’s educational philosophies (WIDA Consortium, 2015). If a refugee has experienced interrupted schooling, then the first thing their teacher must do is assess the prior knowledge and preparedness of the student for class content. Educators must take precaution when determining how to assess students for content knowledge, because cultural and linguistic barriers could impact the student’s ability to demonstrate their skills. To gain an accurate idea of a student’s academic standing, a teacher or counselor may examine the student’s grades, curriculum and past academic calendars—curriculum requirements and semester durations vary from country to country. Furthermore, teachers and counselors may interview the student and family to gain a more accurate assessment of the student’s ability.

If it is determined that a student is behind academically, they will need cultural and language support to succeed in catching up with their peers. There are a number of resources which teachers can use to guide their instruction in a direction that is more inclusive of SIFE youth. If the student is not truly behind academically, but struggling due to differences in culture and language, the teacher must understand how to bridge differences and allow for academic development—reaffirming the importance of language and cultural supports (WIDA Consortium, 2015).

The educator competencies necessitated by this literature are the ability to differentiate linguistic and academic ability and the preparedness to integrate linguistic and cultural supports into lessons. The literature also illuminates the advantages of involving a student’s community as a resource while tailoring these supports. Considerations for developing intercultural community/parent relationships are expanded upon in the next section.

Community and Parent Relations

Community “stakeholders”

The INEE’s minimum standards for education in emergencies (2010) mandate that the stakeholders in refugee students’ education are taken into account. It begs the question: *who has a*

say in a refugee student's curriculum? The goal of education is to prepare students for success, and the most appropriate preparation depends on the societal and cultural context in which the student will live and work. Since the average stay of a refugee in a host country is 26 years, the educational expectations of both the home and host culture may be equally important for a refugee student's success (U.S. Department of State, 2017b). Subsequently, community opinion must be taken into account while determining lessons.

A teacher's ability to accommodate community opinion is limited in a number of ways. To start with, refugee students living in the host culture for an indefinite period of time must be prepared to succeed within the host society. Consequently, both cultural-educational frameworks are important and deciding which framework to operate from is a contentious and moralized feat. For the most part, that decision is out of the hands of American educators, as the Common Core dictates educational standards and leaves teachers with limited options for adjusting course content. None the less, seeking parent and community input is a beneficial educator practice for a number of reasons. First, if parents can alert educators to culturally intolerable content, educators may then approach the issue proactively, potentially adapting lessons to accommodate cultural needs when possible. Additionally, parents can provide details about their child's previous experiences, alerting educators to potential influencers on class behavior and to subjects that may be traumatic for the student. Furthermore, parents can help educators tailor their lessons by informing them of the child's unique academic needs, strengths, and interests.

Parent/ teacher intercultural relations

Parental involvement can be a great asset for teachers who wish to tailor their teaching to match the needs of a refugee student. However, considering cultural differences between the teacher, the school, and the parents is key for developing mutually beneficial parent-teacher relationships. Cultural perceptions on the role of a teacher and language barriers are possibly the most important factors to consider when selecting effective strategies for parental and community involvement.

Educational practices in the U.S. are a direct result of the low-context, small power distance nature of U.S. American culture. Presently, the vast majority of refugees have come to the U.S. from countries that are comparatively high-context— in other words, less confrontational and more observant of authority. As a result of these cultural differences, parents from outside of the country often have difficulties navigating U.S. ideals for parental involvement.

Two particularly illuminating studies illustrate the ways in which aforementioned differences impact parental involvement and parent-teacher relationships. The first study shows that many Latino parents view teachers as an academic authority and often feel uncomfortable when expected to weigh in on academic decision; the second study found that parents from eastern cultures are similarly apprehensive of the shared-power dynamic in U.S. American schools (Vera et al., 2017; Jung, 2011). This may impact parents' willingness to be involved (attend school meetings, assist with homework, provide opinions on educational strategies, etc.) as well as the parents' willingness to share opinions that may possibly contradict a teacher, even when asked directly (Jung, 2011). Furthermore, parents from high-contexts cultures are less likely to be confrontational and may not be upfront about their child's needs. These perspectives do not support the U.S. American stance that parental insight is necessary for the effective accommodation students, which could result in miscommunication or tension in parent-teacher relationships. However, teachers can avoid this by being culturally sensitive and meeting parents in the middle. The first step would be to understand the cultural background of the parents: Are they more likely to communicate in a low-context (blunt) or high-context (face-saving) way? What type of authority is given to teachers in their primary culture? After addressing these questions, the teacher can respond appropriately. If a parent is a high-context communicator, the teacher may avoid asking for opinions outright and

instead provide non-confrontational means of information sharing— like forms that collect objective, yet useful information. Teachers may also avoid stating their own opinions before giving the parent's a change to weigh in, minimizing the possibility of conflict. Additionally, Vera's study (2017) of Latino parent involvement found that three factors significantly influenced parents' willingness to become involved: feeling that teachers are invested in one's child, feeling encouraged to be involved by teachers, and feeling overwhelmed by other obligations. While educators cannot control the amount of obligations in a parent's life, they may certainly address the first two factors by continuously expressing their commitment to the student's success and offering parents with opportunities to participate. Strategies for accomplishing this include sending home regular progress reports and including a commentary section for parents to send back, and keeping parent's informed about the curriculum. Vera et al. (2017) also suggest that teachers lessen perceived power differences by reaching out to parents in less formal settings— potentially touching-base with parents after preexisting social events like mass, or creating opportunities for casual conversation by hosting events like a school potluck.

An equally important consideration for building relationships with the parents of English language learners is the possibility of language barriers. Potential methods for avoiding miscommunication include asking bilingual staff members to mediate in meetings, hiring translators, or utilizing online translation resources (Amorsen, 2015). Another possibility, if legally permissible given the confidentiality of a situation, is to allow parents to bring community members to the meeting to provide translation support. It is important to note that parents whose native language is not English may be hesitant to speak in meetings, not because they do not wish to voice opinions, but because they are unsure of their English (Jung, 2011). In these cases, involving a community member would be especially helpful because they can provide emotional support for parents and act as a more personal advocate for the student. First and foremost, when working with parents with different linguistic backgrounds, it is imperative that teachers do not interpret reluctance to speak or be otherwise involved as a sign of disinterest in their student's education. This is a false correlation that could be detrimental to both parent-teacher relationships and the student's education if taken too far (Jung, 2011). Even when parents do not take the teacher up on opportunities to actively insert themselves in their child's class experience, the teacher can still involve them in the process by keeping them informed and letting them know that they are welcome to reach out at any time.

The educator competencies resulting from this section are preparedness to utilize parent/ community input to tailor instruction strategy, and the ability accommodate cultural and linguistic differences when building parent-teacher relationships. Actionables for building those competencies are examined in the review of training needs, then incorporated in the training guide. The next section is the last in the literature review, and it illuminates the advantages and disadvantages or using culture as a lens for understanding students and their communities, a theme that is interwoven throughout the report.

The Tricky Nature of Generalization

Recognizing culture

As Turnbull et al. (2007) eloquently state: "culture is a resource for daily life; hence, everything human beings do is influenced by culture," (pg. 58). Students and teachers alike are impacted by this philosophy in an infinite number of ways. Culture is a lens through which students interpret material, a guide for determining classroom behavior, and a tool for assessing peer relationships. By building an understanding of each student's culture, teachers can begin to anticipate their students' educational needs and accommodate accordingly. This is the key to creating culturally inclusive classrooms. Furthermore, cultural understanding is a necessary tool for

building interpersonal relationships and can facilitate the development of meaningful student-teacher/ parent-teacher bonds.

While cultural generalization is a tool that may be wielded to one's advantage, it should be used with caution. Misconceptions, baseless stereotypes, fixed expectations, and the essentialization of culturally-diverse learners are all factors that can set-back a student's success (Sarr & Mosselson, 2010). An example is a teacher who devises a linguistic support strategy for the refugee students in a class without accounting for their vastly different English language abilities. The blanket strategy will not be equally as useful for both the students who speak very little English and the students hailing from English speaking countries. By essentializing the "refugee experience," the teacher failed to provide supports that accommodate each of the students' unique needs. To prevent similar missteps, it is imperative that teachers base their culturally responsive practices on an understanding of each student's specific situation.

Recognizing the individual

In addition to not homogenizing the experiences of students pertaining to different cultural groups, it is imperative that educators do not limit their understanding of a student to their understanding of the student's cultural group. Regardless of the how extensive one's knowledge is about a student's home culture, or the supposed validity of one's generalizations, educators cannot fully understand a student's unique needs unless they recognize the student as an individual. Everyone has the ability of define themselves beyond the reach of cultural confines, and refugee students are no exception. Interestingly, refugee children often adopt some aspects of American culture while continuing to identify with other aspects of their home culture, further blurring the lines between cultural binaries. Fruja-Amthor and Roxas (2017) encourage educators to look at culture as "fluid"— an entity that may change and grow overtime.

The ability to use culture as a tool for garnering understanding, while addressing the student's individual needs to tailor lessons, is a balance that the training protocol guides educators into achieving in each of the training areas (Appendix 1). Specifically, the competencies necessitated by this literature are an educator's ability to develop an understanding of students' cultural backgrounds and let it inform teaching practices, and to recognize students' individual learning needs. In the following section, the competencies highlighted in the literature are organized into training areas, and methods for achieving each training objective are justified.

TRAINING NEEDS BASED ON LITERATURE

The preceding assessment of educational considerations unique to host-culture teachers of sojourning refugee students exposes a number of areas in which teachers would benefit from specialized competency training. Examining the fundamental competencies defined throughout the literature review (see Appendix 2), six training themes are apparent. These training categories, addressed in the self-training guide (Appendix 1), are as follows: training to develop cultural understanding, to enable diverse parental involvement, to facilitate classroom inclusion, to utilize culturally relevant curriculum, to incorporate educational support in lessons (emotional, cultural and linguistic), and to respond to external factors that influence class performance. The following section will explain what specifically is included in the training curriculum based on the literature, starting with the categories that help provide the individual user with context for intercultural practices, then focusing on the categories that allow for direct application of intercultural practice in the classroom.

Training Objectives for Cultural Framing

Developing cultural understanding

Findings from the literature review assert that culture influences learning styles as well as general values, attitudes, and practices (Bandura, 1917; Fruja-Amthor & Roxas, 2017). By understanding one's own culture and how it shapes expectations, a person may see beyond them and increase their ability to connect with others. Furthermore, the literature illuminates educator tendencies to stereotype refugee students or view them as being deficit. People often form one dimensional and negative perceptions of others when they do not have the tools to make sense of these differences. Generalizations and biases limit a teacher's ability to provide equitable education to all of their students, therefore an understanding of culture and its influences must be achieved in training. Consequently, the first objective for developing cultural understanding is: (a) *educators should assess cultural perspectives and biases.*

This objective is heavily reliant on honest self-reflection. Therefore, under the "Building Awareness of Personal Cultural Perspectives" subsection, basic information about American culture is provided as a starting point for noticing cultural influences within one's self (Hofstede Insights, 2017; Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2012). Through prompts in this subsection, users are steered to self-reflect on their culture to make connections between their expectations and their cultural upbringing.

The next area for development, after gaining perspective on one's own culture, is developing an understanding of a culture that is different from one's own. The literature supports the idea that teachers who have some degree of knowledge regarding their students' culture are more culturally responsive and better equipped to form meaningful relationships with both the students and their parents (McBrien, 2005; Moinolnoki & Han, 2017; Mosselson, 2007; Turnbull et al., 2007). In accordance with educators' need for specific cultural knowledge, this part of the training guide specifically centers on the home/ national cultures of their refugee students. The corresponding objective for this aspect of the training is: (b) *educators should have an understanding of student's cultural background and let it inform teaching practices.*

To address this training objective, an adapted version of the Discovering Diversity Profile (DDP) is provided in the proposed guide (Mendez-Russel et al., 2003). The DDP is a training tool which is designed for intercultural growth, and touches on the outlined requirements for learning about one's own culture and a different culture, as well as how culture corresponds with behavior. The DDP outlines actionables and reflection questions that help one to build intercultural competency in four areas: knowledge (stereotypes/ information), understanding (awareness/ empathy), acceptance (tolerance/ respect), and behavior (self-awareness/ interpersonal skills).

The DDP framework has been modified to better support the educational function of this training tool in two significant ways. First, the DDP was made to be accompanied by facilitation and feedback. Reflecting on the questions individually fulfills the competency building objectives as defined by the literature; therefore, the facilitator role has been eliminated. The second modification is a changing of language so actionables and reflection questions operate within a specifically-educational framework. Research suggests that intercultural learning centered on one specific group produces better outcomes in educator training than more generalized programs (McCall & Vang, 2012). Thereby, the modified list of actionables specifically relates to the refugee student's national-cultural background. The adapted tool is administered in the guide under the subsections "Actionables for Developing Intercultural Competency" and "Reflection Questions for Developing Intercultural Competency." The following section relies these cultural understandings as a framework for building intercultural community-teacher relationships.

Enabling parental involvement

Outlined in the literature are a number of situations in which seeking community/ parental feedback is beneficial or necessary (Jung, 2011; Vera et al., 2017). Most notably: to gather cultural perspectives on learning outcomes and course content, to understanding a student's background and potential triggers, and to receive personal insight about a student's academic ability, needs, strengths, and interests (INEE, 2010; WIDA Consortium, 2015; Turnbull et al., 2007). This is relevant to the objective: (a) *educators should utilize parent/ community input to tailor their instruction strategies.*

Awareness of parents as a resource is reinforced throughout the training guide. General reasons for community outreach is included in the key understandings for the training section. Additionally, the "Culturally Relevant Teaching Strategies" training area (Section 4) supports this objective by prompting users to consider how they could enlist parent knowledge to strengthen their lesson plan accommodations.

A prevalent point of discussion throughout the reviewed literature is educator ability to engage with ethnically and linguistically diverse parents in culturally appropriate ways (Amorsen, 2015; Jung, 2011; Vera et al., 2017). The objective that targets this concern is: (b) *educators should accommodate cultural and linguistic differences when building parent-teacher relationships.*

The self-training guide may be used as a reference tool for educators struggling to build these relationships. In support of this, the guide prompts users to consider parent cultural perspectives, under the subsection "Understanding Difference," then it provides a list of actionables for utilizing this knowledge while reaching out, under the subsection "Planning Culturally Responsive Outreach." These include: to keep parents up-to-date with class curriculum and make content adjustments when possible and culturally-necessary, to frequently update parents on their student's progress, to connect with parents in less formal settings when possible and appropriate, to use the available language supports in school meetings, and to offer a variety of ways for parents to voice comments or concerns in both direct and passive ways. The guide also provides users with a framework to practicing effective intercultural communication approaches through comparing self- and other-culture in Section 1, which helps to inform choices in this section and then lets users justify the best community outreach strategies and potential accommodations.

An additional need which the literature analysis addressed is that teachers do not project their own biases or cultural perspectives onto interactions with parents (Jung, 2011). At an advanced level of intercultural competency, an educator would read situations objectively and enable every parent to be involved in their student's experience in the manner and extent that is most comfortable for them. This intercultural/ relational competency need is largely addressed in the developing cultural understanding training section (Section 1). The following section also builds upon cultural knowledge gained in Section 1, to assist the educator in creating an inclusive classroom.

Facilitating class inclusion

Considering the extensive body of research supporting the impact of perceived inclusion on refugee student's school experience and success (Mendenhall, Bartlett & Ghaffar-Kucher, 2017; Pastoor, 2017a), tools for creating inclusive class environments are exceptionally important. As outlined in the literature, educators may minimize discrimination by limiting caustic interactions between peers and establishing an inclusive class culture (Pastoor, 2017b; Solbue & Helleve, 2017). The first objective that is addressed in this section is: (a) *educators should be able to create inclusive classroom communities.*

The training guide draws on Zollers, Ramanathan and Yu's research (1999) to address this objective, under the subsection "Actionables for Creating an Inclusive Class Culture." The guide

outlines the key characteristics of inclusive classroom determined by the research: a democratic approach and value-driven leadership. Users of the training tool will then decide how to incorporate these into their classroom management plans.

The following objective for facilitating an inclusive class environment is (b) *educators should teach students to view diversity as strength*. To address this objective, the training plan promotes Lim et al.'s method (2015) — teaching openness to diversity by rewarding divergent thinking— as a model for incorporating inclusive values into lessons. This skill is interwoven with the actionables adapted from Zollers, Ramanathan and Yu's research (1999), in the subsection "Actionables for Creating an Inclusive Class Culture."

While a practiced teacher would ideally be able to dissipate any tension between peers though the establishment of an inclusive class culture, they still must have a plan for handling problems as they arise. In diverse classrooms, teachers should be particularly aware of racial or ethnic discrimination. This is the foundation of the final objective: (c) *educators should be aware of peer discrimination so they may respond effectively*.

To build this awareness, as well as the ability to appropriately respond, the subsection "Actionables for Minimizing Peer Discrimination" prompts users to envision negative-interaction scenarios and determine how they would enforce their expectations for inclusivity without escalating the situation. The purpose of this reflection is to train educators to consider their responses to tense situations before they occur so they can react quickly, yet thoughtfully if an issue arises. The following training area departs from the context building purpose of this first part of the training, and allows teachers to utilize knowledge gained in Part 1 to inform the strategies they use in the classroom to effectively work with their culturally sojourning students.

Training Objectives for In-Class Application of Strategy

Employing culturally relevant teaching strategies

The literature highlights aspects of the education system that are less accessible to groups outside of the dominant culture (Fruja-Amthor & Roxas, 2017; Mosselson, 2007), and asserts the need for tailoring curriculum so that it is relevant to students and reflects different cultural learning styles (INEE, 2010; Turnbull et al., 2007). However, educator and administrator understanding of cultural barriers to education is often limited (Young, 2010). Before working on the solution, educators must understand the problem, which is the justification for the first objective: (a) *educators should be aware of exclusionary curriculum*. A brief rationale for the use of culturally responsive practices is included in the key understandings of this section of the training guide, to shed light on the issue of educational inequity.

In response to issues of educational inequity, and barriers to education which refugee students specifically experience, the guide advocates for the use of Culturally Responsive Teaching framework. Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) is a highly-involved method of creating and equitable classroom. It mandates that educators build sociocultural consciousness so they do not make assumptions about students based on culture, and provides a framework for appropriately adapting curricula to make it relevant. Unfortunately, studies show that many educators misunderstand or misapply CRT, demonstrating the need for educators to be trained to properly employ the tactic in their classrooms (Young, 2010). That being said, the second training objective is: (b) *educators should be able to properly employ culturally responsive teaching*.

A number of methods for making classes more culturally responsive are demonstrated in the subsection "Applying Culturally Responsive Teaching" of the training protocol. In response to literature mandating a teacher's need to confront their own biases towards their student's cultural group, there are tools for self-assessment. Furthermore, the guide includes tools for assessing the learning strengths of students so that curriculum can be tailored appropriately. Finally, there will

be methods for using inclusive class activities that promote inclusion in the classroom, especially: games, socializing, and storytelling (Hammond, 2015). The next training area helps educators incorporate additional educational supports that would further the cultural responsiveness of their teaching.

Providing emotional, cultural & linguistic supports

The literature demonstrates the need for three types of supports to be considered when teaching refugee students: emotional, cultural, and linguistic. The first to be addressed are emotional supports (Jensen, 2009; Mendenhall et al., 2017; Solbue & Helleve, 2017). There are three objectives that fall beneath the emotional support category: (a) *educators should teach emotional literacy*; (b) *educators should connect to their students on an interpersonal basis*; and (c) *educators should bolster student's confidence by recognizing progress and success*.

The first emotional objective (a) is initially addressed with brief explanation of common emotional tools that students experiencing trauma or other psychological threats may lack, under the “Emotional Literacy” subsection. Following that overview is a list of ways teachers can build emotional literacy training into their lessons, found under “Actionables for Incorporating Emotional Literacy into Lessons”. The following two objectives (b & c) represent the need for providing encouragement and support. These actionables are outlined in the “Building Student-Teacher Relationships” subsection of the training protocol, and their importance is demonstrated in the brief summary of key understandings for the section.

The second kind of supports necessitated by the literature are cultural supports (Mendenhall et al., 2017; UNHCR, 2015b; WIDA Consortium, 2015). Those advocated for in the literature are primarily centered on the accessibility of standard American pedagogical practices and expectations for classroom performance. The relating objectives are: (d) *educators should integrate linguistic and cultural supports into lessons*; and (e) *educators should be prepared to help students make sense of cultural differences*. To meet both objectives, educators are prompted to reflect on their students' learning styles (what are their cultural stances toward education; how might they respond to the “sharing culture” in American classrooms), in the subsection labeled “Cultural Supports.” In the same subsection, users are asked to consider the best ways for incorporating cultural accommodations into lessons, depending on the needs of their students.

Finally, linguistic supports are key in most effective refugee education plans (Huang, Dotterweich & Bowers, 2012; Turnbull et al., 2007; United Nations, 2015). Perhaps most importantly, (f) *educators must be able to differentiate between content understanding and linguistic ability*. Under the subsection “Actionables for Supporting Content Learning,” teachers are provided with tools for developing content understanding without interference from linguistic limitations (providing visual supports, providing definitions upfront, providing instructions in a variety of ways, advocating for native-language tutors); and under the subsection “Actionables for Supporting Linguistic Development, teachers are guided with strategies for developing linguistic skills (outlining language expectations for assignments, providing support when needed). Furthermore, teachers must understand the need to monitor the effectiveness of their teaching strategies and the extent of student comprehension (INEE, 2010); therefore, the “Assessing Supports” subsection prompts users to consider how they can test for prior knowledge and weave formative and summative assessments into their lessons.

Responding to external factors that influence class performance

In order to respond to outside issues that may affect a student's class performance, an educator must first know what they are looking out for. Research supports that simply understanding potential underlying factors causing disruptive behavior would help teachers empathize and respond more appropriately (Jensen, 2009). Consequentially, educators must build an awareness of student's basic needs, put forth by Maslow (1943), as well as variables that

threaten those needs. Additionally, they should know the common impacts of past and on-going trauma, and how those are manifested in class behavior (Jensen, 2009; Statman-Weil, 2015). This supports the first training objective: (a) *educators should be able to identify outside factors impacting their student's performance in the classroom.* This objective is met in the training guide, under the subsection "Psychological Factors that can Impact Academic Performance," through the inclusion of information about student needs, as well as how trauma/ poverty/ other threats may manifest in a child's classroom behavior.

The second objective is: (b) *educators should be able to identify and respond to risk factors.* To accommodate students who have experienced trauma, teachers should employ trauma sensitive teaching strategies. A necessity for employing these strategies is that the educator is be aware of a student's background so that they can avoid retraumatization in the classroom (McCann & Pearlman, 1990). Retraumatization occurs when class content causes students to recall traumatic experiences, causing a negative emotional reaction (McCann & Pearlman). Methods for preventing this include using trigger warnings so students may opt out of lessons that could elicit negative emotional responses. While trigger warnings are still a relatively new practice, research shows that most teachers who only touch on the potential impact of content and student responses at the beginning of a course would benefit from reissuing these warnings throughout the year (Boysen, Wells & Dawson, 2016). Furthermore, teachers can prevent retraumatization be proactively assessing their lessons, considering the emotional weight of the content, and determining how their students might respond to the content, given what they know about each student's background (Cavanaugh, 2016). Teachers may look to the situational knowledge about the student's home country, the student's parents, or the student themselves for an understanding of potentially triggering content. These actionables are found in the subsection "Actionables for Responding with Trauma Sensitive Teaching Strategies."

In addition, the literature affirms that educators should have the appropriate tools for responding to sensitive situations. It is imperative that educators understand the limit of their ability to handle psychological and emotional issues. Educators are not qualified to act as therapists or diagnose a student with any disorder. Moving from there, a strategy that educators can use to discuss emotional content without crossing those lines is by keeping discussion about heavier content strictly at a surface level (Miller, 2001). Teachers may acknowledge difficult topics without causing retraumatization by discussing the issue at a clinical, rather than emotional, level. When class discussion moves to the personal level, educators should be prepared to acknowledge the points and then lead the class back to the surface level discussion. Consistent with understanding their limits in providing emotional guidance to students, educators must also understand their limits in determining what information to share or keep confidential. In most situations, educators must keep student disclosures confidential. Generally, school districts have student-teacher confidentiality laws in place. However, as mandated reporters, teachers must immediately report to law enforcement authorities if they believe a student is in imminent danger. These understandings are also built upon in the subsection "Actionables for Responding with Trauma Sensitive Teaching Strategies."

Also included in this subsection are strategies educators may utilize to ensure the success of at-risk students by way of emotional and peer supports (Cavanaugh, 2016). An educator can support a students' perceived self-efficacy by providing specific encouragements that center on effort-based accomplishments. Educators may also establish the classroom as a setting where the student has control by strategically placing students with minimal control in other areas of their lives in group settings where they are the most knowledgeable on the subject (Cavanaugh, 2016).

APPLICATION

The refugee-educator self-training tool is specifically designed to increase intercultural competency in host-culture teachers when there is a national-cultural different between them and their culturally sojourning students. It specifically addresses the competencies teachers must have while working with refugee students. Since the term refugee is relatively narrow, there are many other students who may not have refugee status but have similar educational needs. This tool may be applicable for that wider group of people.

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

This tool specifically examines the national-cultural gap between educators and refugee students. Other cultural differences— gender, sexuality, ability— may be equally important for educators to consider, but are not explicitly addressed through this research. There is a particular need for more research relating to refugee students with special needs.

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Appendix I

REFUGEE EDUCATOR SELF-TRAINING GUIDE

This function of this guide is to assist host-culture educators in building intercultural competencies and achieving the necessary understandings required to ensure the equitable education of refugee students. This guide prompts users with specific actionables and reflection questions that address six training sections: developing cultural understanding, enabling parent involvement, facilitating class inclusion, employing culturally relevant teaching strategies, providing emotional, cultural and linguistic support, and responding to external factors that influence class performance. A full list of objectives covered by the training guide is provided in Appendix II. The guide is broken into two parts: training for cultural framing, then training for the in-class application of strategy. Each training area builds upon knowledge gained through the completion of previous sections to increase competency, therefore the guide is best completed in chronological order. The guide is made to be completed in an independent, self-led manner.

PART I: TRAINING FOR CULTURAL FRAMING

Section 1: Developing Cultural Understanding

Key Understandings

Culture influences everything we do— how we communicate, how we perceive others, and even how we teach and learn. Therefore, students who belong to national-cultural groups besides the dominant American culture may approach education in a way that differs from the American classroom norms. In order to accommodate these students, teachers must understand how American culture shapes their classroom, and how the student’s culture may influence their performance. Without the tools to understand performance as a product of one’s culture, teachers run the risk of dismissing their students, or inappropriately judging them against American standards. Building intercultural understanding helps teachers to avoid these missteps and effectively support their students. They can achieve that level of competency by assessing their cultural perspectives, any cultural biases they may hold, and the cultural background of their students.

Section Objectives

- (a) Educators should assess their cultural perspectives and biases
- (b) Educators should have an understanding of student’s cultural background and let it inform teaching practices

Building Awareness of Personal Cultural Perspectives

Consider. Below is a list of some defining aspects of American culture that are widely accepted to be true:

- *Low-context*
- *Small power difference*
- *Individualistic*
- *Masculine*
- *Clinical approach to disability*
- *Anglo-Western cultural dominance*

Reflect. Examine the aspects of American culture and consider your relationship with them in general. Then, reflect on your beliefs about education and learning. What aspects of American culture have informed these beliefs?

Actionables for Developing Intercultural Competency

- Read an article or book by an author from the student's host country, centered on cultural experience in home country, or as a refugee from host country OR watch a documentary about student's home culture as it exists in home country or America.
- Make a list of statements you may say which reflect stereotypes of refugees and members of student's home culture. Consider how a member of either group would respond to each statement.
- Participate in a cultural event involving student's host culture. Reflect of how you felt at the event. Observe an actively-participating member at the event who belongs to the student's home cultural group. What do you believe they feel about the event? How might their attitudes differ from your own? Discuss your feelings about the event with a member of a different racial or ethnic cultural group.
- Interact with members of student's home cultural group outside of school setting
- Ask someone who knows you well to provide in-depth feedback and share their perceptions on your interactions with members of other cultural groups. Constructively discuss any differences in your points of view. Then, focus of a couple components of the feedback and identify actions you can take to improve your interpersonal skills.
- Gather information on the cultural norms of your student's home country, especially regarding education. What cultural aspects may inform your student's classroom performance or approach towards learning? How may this affect your teaching strategies?

Reflection Questions for Developing Intercultural Competency

1. Reflect on your beliefs about refugees/ members of the student's home culture. To what extent have your beliefs been informed by teachers, family, peers, or the media? Give examples.
2. Describe any interactions you have had with student/ members of student's cultural group that have led to overgeneralizations about the group.
3. How do these experiences affect your attitudes towards members of the student's cultural group/ the way you interact with the student?
4. What steps might you take to decrease the effect of stereotypes on your interactions with the student?
5. What aspects of the student's life and home culture do you lack information on?
6. Describe any times when a lack of information about the student or their home culture has negatively impacted an interaction with said student or inhibited your ability to teach.
7. What steps could you take to gather the information that you need/ who can you ask for help?
8. Describe an experience when you felt like you were an outsider or misunderstood. How did it make you feel? What effects did it have on how you interacted with others both at the time of the misunderstanding and in other situations?
10. Reflect on a past experience when your feelings/ perceptions of ANY cultural group have prevented you from associating with members of said group. Analyze the validity of your concerns and their likeliness to be realized by associating with members of said group.

11. Describe the extent of your relationships with refugees and members of the student's home cultural group outside of the educational setting. List any factors that limit interactions between members of your student's cultural group and yourself. In what ways do your beliefs about the group affect the way you interact with its members?

12. Based on your reflection, what areas of your relationships with students/ intercultural relationships do you wish to strengthen? What steps can you take to build intercultural competency in these areas and who can you ask for help?

Section 2: Enabling Parent Involvement

Key Understandings

Parents are a useful resource for teachers of refugees. By connecting with them, teachers can: gain a better understanding of a student's background, be aware of material that is culturally unacceptable, learn about the student's potential triggers, and learn about the student's particular learning needs, strengths, and interests.

However, educators must be interculturally competent to effectively communicate with parents from different backgrounds. This section aims to increase the cultural awareness of educators as it relates to their parental outreach strategies.

Section Objectives

- (a) Educators should utilize parent/ community input to tailor their instruction strategies
- (b) Educators should accommodate cultural and linguistic differences when building parent-teacher relationships

Understanding Difference

Research the parent's home culture to determine:

- a. Communication norms
- b. General beliefs about education
- c. General beliefs about respect for authority/ teacher authority

Reflect. What cultural, linguistic, or external factors (i.e. difference in perception of teacher authority, English ability, work obligations) may affect how parents are involved in their child's education?

Planning Culturally Responsive Outreach

Keeping your findings from the previous section in mind, determine how you will approach following parent-involvement actionables:

- Keep parents up-to-date with class curriculum
 - What modes of communication might parents be most receptive to?
 - What ways will you allow for parents to send in feedback?
 - Could any of the course content violate the parent's cultural beliefs?
 - Are you able to adapt curriculum for parents who voice concern?
 - Are there language barriers you need to consider when sending out updates?

- Update parents on their student's progress
 - What modes of communication might parents be most receptive to?
 - What ways will you allow for parents to send in feedback?
 - Are there language barriers you need to consider when sending out updates?
- Orchestrate informal out-reach
 - In what context might parents be most comfortable interacting in?
 - If it is appropriate to reach out to parents in a less formal setting, what spaces are available?
- Use language supports in school meetings
 - Are the parents fluent in English?
 - Would the parents feel empowered by having community support in school-meetings?
 - Is community support legally acceptable in the given situation?
 - What other translation services are available through your school or community?

Section 3: Facilitating Class Inclusion

Key Understandings

A refugee student's perceived acceptance has been shown to play a major role in their overall educational success. For this reason, teachers must consider how they will support students' belongingness needs by establishing an inclusive class culture, teaching diversity as strength, and preparing to respond to any instances of discrimination.

Section Objectives

- (a) Educators should be able to create inclusive classroom communities
- (b) Educators should teach students to view diversity as strength
- (c) Educators should be aware of peer discrimination

Actionables for Creating an Inclusive Class Culture

- Establish expectations
 - What expectations will you establish regarding respect in your classroom?
 - How will you communicate your expectations with students?
 - How will you enforce these expectations?
- Support inclusive culture through pedagogy
 - How can you incorporate divergent thinking skills into your lessons?
- Show your support
 - Greet students each day
 - Make small talk with students and comment on achievements unrelated to your class
 - Be available for students to voice their opinions/ concerns

Actionables for Minimizing Peer Discrimination

- Prevent classroom conflict by looking out for potential issues
 - Are you aware of existing tension between peers?
 - What classroom management strategies will you use to minimize this tension?

PART II: TRAINING FOR IN-CLASS APPLICATION**Section 4: Employing Culturally Relevant Teaching Strategies***Key Understandings*

Every individual is unique, so it follows that the most effective teaching will differ from student to student. Culture (ethnic, gender, ability, etc.) plays a large role on the development of an individual and should be considered when determining a student's learning needs. *Culturally responsive teaching* is a method of creating equitable learning environments through addressing culture. Its assertions are that (a) curriculum is historically accumulated and therefore culturally biased, (b) approaches to education vary greatly depending on culture, and (c) teachers who are not sensitive to cultural differences may allow miscommunication to occur, which could hinder a student's ability to learn.

Section Objectives

- (a) Educators should be aware of exclusionary curriculum
- (b) Educators should be able to properly employ culturally responsive teaching

Applying Culturally Responsive Teaching

- Self-Assess
 - Complete the list of reflection questions for developing intercultural competency, provided in the “developing cultural understanding” training area (Section 1)
- Assess Your Student's Learning Strengths
 - Consider specific cultural impacts on learning styles
 - Assess the student as an individual: What unique preferences or aptitudes have you observed, and how can you include these in your lessons?
 - Reach out to families— they are the experts in their child's unique needs
- Employ Inclusive Classroom Activities
 - Use **games** to help students learn content as well as problem solving skills. Fun interaction can ease students with cultural backgrounds in high-power-difference classrooms into the low-power-difference structure of the typical American class
 - Plan exercises that allow for **socialization**; community-based activities are reflexive of practices in many collectivist cultures and encourage peer supports.
 - Incorporate **storytelling** into lessons to relate the content to students' interests and increase engagement

Research. A copious amount of tools are available to specifically help teachers incorporate culturally responsive practices into each of their lessons, including the *Universal Design Learning* lesson plan and Vescio's *Template for Assessing Student Needs and Strengths* (2016). What are the tools that would benefit you the most, based on how you plan your lessons?

Section 5: Providing Emotional, Cultural & Linguistic Support

Key Understandings

The UNHCR asserts that refugees must be taught at the level of their content knowledge. The fundamental point is that *linguistic ability is not equal to academic ability*— schools that place students based on their linguistic ability, and not their level of content understanding, are put at an academic disadvantage. However, cultural and linguistic differences can hinder a student's ability to succeed in an academically-appropriate classroom if the teacher does not make accommodations. Therefore, the best educators provide their refugee students with supports that foster their academic, linguistic, and social success.

Section Objectives

- (a) Educators should teach emotional literacy
- (b) Educators should connect to their students on an interpersonal basis
- (c) Educators should bolster student's confidence by recognizing progress and success
- (d) Educators should differentiate linguistic and academic ability
- (e) Educators should be prepared to help students make sense of cultural differences
- (f) Educators should integrate linguistic and cultural supports into lessons

Emotional Supports: Emotional Literacy

Children who are exposed to stress and trauma develop emotions differently than their peers. What are the potential emotional roots of motivational and behavioral issues? What emotional skills can your students benefit from learning? Keep this in mind while reviewing the list below:

Core skills to incorporate in lessons:

- *Attention skills*
- *Sequencing and processing skills*
- *Problem-solving skills*
- *Social skills*
- *Perseverance*
- *Hopefulness and self-esteem*

Emotional Supports: Actionables for Incorporating Emotional Literacy into Lessons

- Assign levels of responsibility within a student's zone of proximal development
- Strategically group students with supportive peers who can model appropriate social behavior
- Praise accomplishment as it relates to effort and growth

Reflect. Given the context of your subject what ways can you incorporate emotional skills into your lessons?

Emotional Supports : Building Student-Teacher Relationships

Reflect. In what ways can you, as an educator, be emotionally supportive of your students? How can your actions in or out of the classroom demonstrate that you are invested in your students' well-being?

*Cultural Supports***Review Sections 1 & 4.**

Given what you know about your student's culture and culturally responsive practices, reflect on how you might cater to your student's cultural learning styles:

- How does America's "sharing culture" influence your classroom? Are there ways you can accommodate students who are less comfortable with this dynamic?
- Is your student more comfortable with independent or group work? Are there students that are better at scaffolding and could provide cultural support if placed in a group with the refugee student?
- How might classroom orientation be utilized as a type of support? Would your student be more comfortable sitting farther from the teacher? Would your student be uncomfortable sitting close to students of a different gender? Should the student sit close to the teacher to provide additional support if necessary?
- What other types of cultural supports do you feel you must consider to accommodate you student?

Linguistic Supports: Actionables for supporting content learning

- Provide visual supports
- Make assignment language assessable
- Provide students with extra time to complete assignments
- Advocate for native-language tutors

Linguistic Supports: Actionables for Supporting Linguistic Development

- Outline language expectations for assignments
- Incorporate useful vocabulary and helpful definitions into lessons

Assessing Supports

1. What prior knowledge assessments can you use to determine what supports would benefit students?
2. Where/ how will you incorporate formative assessments into your lessons to check in on a student's understanding?
3. How will you use summative assessments to determine the supports that are working for your students? How will you respond if your supports are not effective?

Section 6: Responding to External Factors that can Impact Class Performance*Key Understandings*

Maslow (1943) famously asserted that student's biological/ physiological, safety, love/ belongingness, and esteem needs all must be met before the student can fully engage in learning.

However, many refugees experience trauma both pre- and post-migration— this is a direct threat to their basic needs, and therefore, their education. Educators must understand the effects of trauma and consider trauma sensitive teaching strategies to make their lessons equally accessible to all students, without threatening their well-being.

Section Objectives

- (a) Educators should be able to identify outside factors impacting their student's performance in the classroom
- (b) Educators should be able to identify and respond to risk factors

Psychological Factors that can Impact Academic Performance

Refugee students are more likely than American-born students to experience:

- *Post-traumatic stress disorder*
- *Depression*
- *Anxiety*
- *Sleep problems*
- *Behavioral problems*

Students who have experienced trauma often display symptoms of the following in school:

- *Aggression*
- *Hyperarousal*
- *Dissociation and withdrawal*
- *Anxiety*
- *Attachment disorder*

Actionables for Responding with Trauma Sensitive Teaching Strategies

- Understand your responsibility as a teacher
 - Teachers must keep student disclosures confidential
 - Teachers are mandated reporters and must report confidential disclosures that they believe are an immediate threat to the student's well-being
 - Teachers are not therapists or psychologists, and therefore cannot diagnose students or attempt to discuss emotional content on a more than academic level
- Be aware of potential triggers
 - Can you respectfully obtain this information from the student or their parents?
 - Can you predict sensitive topics based on what you know of your student's experiences?
- Provide trigger warnings
 - How will you alert students to upcoming content that might be emotionally difficult?
 - How can you do so discretely, and allow students to excuse themselves when necessary without drawing unwanted attention from peers?

- Proactively assess material for provocative content and predict responses
 - Based on what you know about your students' experiences, might any of the material cause a greater than usual emotional response?
 - Based on what you know about your students' behaviors, how might you expect them to react?
 - How will you maintain a safe, controlled classroom environment while teaching these materials?
- Respond to disclosure with an academic perspective
 - Are you making sure to validate students' disclosures?
 - What disclosures can you anticipate, given your students' experiences and the course material, and how can you respond in a way that redshifts the focus to the educational task at hand?
- Provide emotional outlets to students
 - What are some low-stakes emotional outlets that you may provide students to work through their responses to class content (i.e. journaling)?
 - How can you arrange your classroom to be a calming environment? Do students have access to coping tools within the classroom?
- Give student responsibility and control
 - What are your refugee student's strengths? What group work could you assign that would position your refugee student as the team expert?
 - How can you scaffold responsibility into your exercises/assignments in a way that is within your student's zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978)?

Appendix II
REFUGEE EDUCATOR SELF-TRAINING GUIDE: COMPLETE LIST OF OBJECTIVES

<i>Training Section</i>	<i>Objectives</i>
Developing Intercultural Understanding	(a) Educators should assess their cultural perspectives and biases
	(b) Educators should have an understanding of student's cultural background and let it inform teaching practices
Enabling Parent Involvement	(a) Educators should utilize parent/ community input to tailor their instruction strategies
	(b) Educators should accommodate cultural and linguistic differences when building parent-teacher relationships
Facilitating Class Inclusion	(a) Educators should be able to create inclusive classroom communities
	(b) Educators should teach students to view diversity as strength
	(c) Educators should be aware of peer discrimination
Employing Culturally Relevant Teaching Strategies	(a) Educators should be aware of exclusionary curriculum
	(b) Educators should be able to properly employ culturally responsive teaching
Providing Emotional, Cultural & Linguistic Support	(a) Educators should teach emotional literacy
	(b) Educators should connect to their students on an interpersonal basis
	(c) Educators should bolster student's confidence by recognizing progress and success
	(d) Educators should differentiate linguistic and academic ability
	(e) Educators should be prepared to help students make sense of cultural differences
	(f) Educators should integrate linguistic and cultural supports into lessons
Responding to External Factors that can Impact Class Performance	(a) Educators should be able to identify outside factors impacting their student's performance in the classroom
	(b) Educators should be able to identify and respond to risk factors