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New Kansas Roots for Students: building cultural competency through the Nicodemus Project

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Presenter Information

La Barbara James Wigfall Assoc Prof, Katie Kingery-Page Assoc Prof, Jonathan E. Knight GTA, Lauren Garrott Partnership Coord, and JohnElla Holmes PhD

Title: New Kansas Roots for Students: building cultural competency through the Nicodemus Project [garnered 2013 CECD Engagement Award]

Abstract: 270 words

How do we measure successful learning outcomes associated with diversity-focused student experiences? Does the Bennett Model help us describe the transformation outcome for students? Can faculty measure diversity outcomes based upon what the students' experience during community engagement projects; what the community members' experience; or what the quality of delivery the client-community receives? In assessing diversity outcomes, wouldn't the professor's quality control be a factor to ensure community goals are answered? For instance, crafting the syllabus, problem statement, and matching student ability to tasks for iterative community feedback influence learning outcomes. There *is* a fine line between students achieving community satisfaction and their being transformed in the process. Both outcomes can represent success. And in that space, known as process, there is the potential for "excellence". What ultimately matters is what the students gained from the experience. Did any transformation occur within? Do students recognize themselves also as change agents or transformers of any thought, process, or person during the design process?

We explored the answer to some of these questions through the Parks for the People Student Competition, focusing the K-State team on the sustainability of Nicodemus, Kansas. Bennett's model of intercultural sensitivity theorizes five steps of growth, from denial of differences to integration of and respect for differences (1993). Students' direct engagement with residents and descendants of Nicodemus, as well as secondary source research on the history of this all-black agrarian community in Kansas, allowed each student to confront and reconcile preconceptions about Nicodemus. [Videotape of students' acceptance, adaptation, and integration provided along with comments made by two students and Nicodemus resident engaged in the planning design process]

Topic area of focus: Defining diversity learning outcomes specific to a discipline

Type of session: 50-minute session including video segments

Primary Presenter: La Barbara James Wigfall; Associate Professor with 30 years experience working with Nicodemus, KS residents lbjw@ksu.edu

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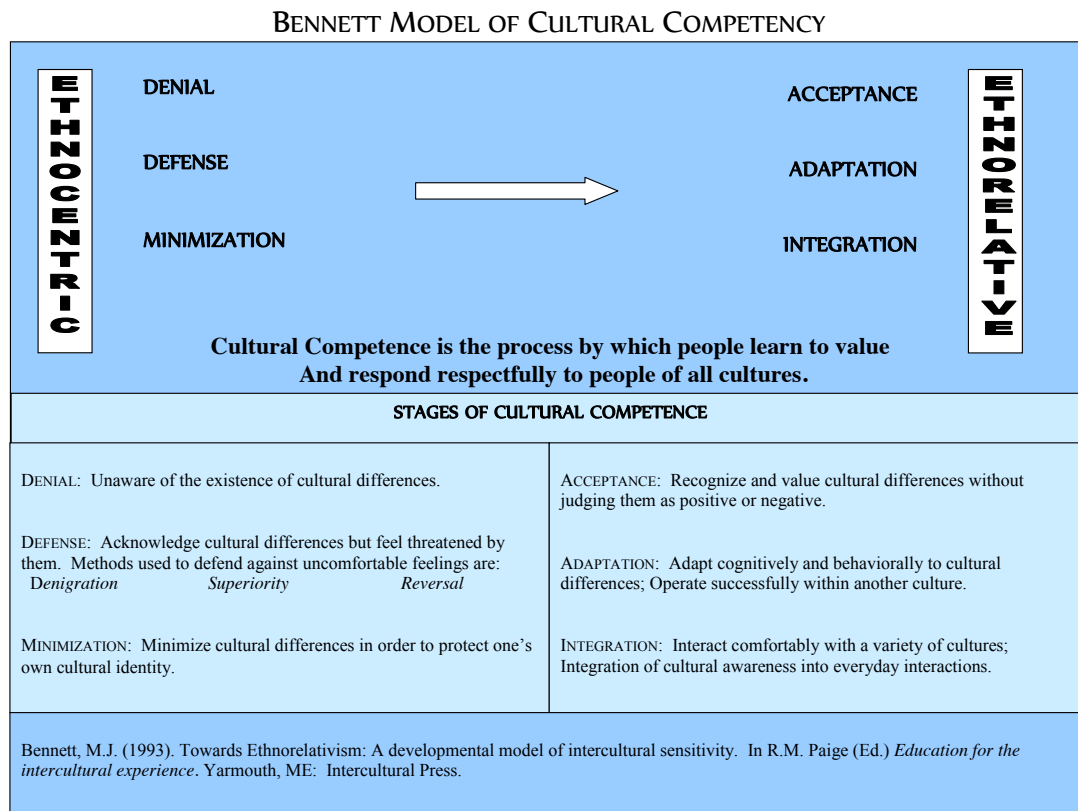
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JohnElla Holmes, PhD Retired instructor; College of Ed & 4th Gen descendant of Nicodemus, KS

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Key words: ethnographic research; stages of cultural competence; transformation; consensus imagination; community engagement; and Parks for the People/Nicodemus

File Upload (can be added later) – handouts; full text of presentation; presentation outline; powerpoint; supplemental materials



Bennett, M. J. (1993). Towards ethnorelativism: A developmental model of intercultural sensitivity (revised). In R. M. Paige (Ed.), *Education for the Intercultural Experience*. Yarmouth, Me: Intercultural Press.