

MADC Thesis:

**“Harnessing cultural and emotional intelligence to promote workplace diversity,
equity and inclusion: Development of a communicator training tool”**

Submitted by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis study was to explore the role of emotional and cultural intelligence in enhancing diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) within the workplace, and to develop a training tool that communicators could use to generate conversations about DEI, emotional and cultural intelligence within their organizations. During this study, a pilot training presentation was shared with research participants prior to conducting interviews with each participant. In-depth interviews were conducted with six communications, human resources, and DEI professionals to refine the training slide deck that could be utilized, ideally by communicators, to increase awareness about emotional and cultural intelligence, and ultimately improve organizational culture. Interviews with professionals highlighted the need for and usefulness of a training deck that discusses emotional and cultural intelligence. Each interviewee emphasized the importance of discussing emotional and cultural intelligence within an organization, but also recognized there is room to have more in-depth, organization-wide conversations to increase diversity, equity and inclusion within organizations. Overall, this study determined that an educational training deck on emotional and cultural awareness was valued by all interviewees and each participant said they were likely to utilize the deck. Feedback from research participants was used to refine the piloted PowerPoint presentation that could be used by communicators within their organizations to promote diversity, equity and inclusion.

INTRODUCTION

For my MADC thesis, I have developed a training tool (PowerPoint presentation) for use by communicators to present to their organization's employees to harness cultural and emotional intelligence to promote workplace diversity, equity and inclusion. I pilot-tested the developed training tool presentation with six interviewees who were involved in communications and diversity/inclusion efforts within their organizations. I utilized feedback to refine the piloted presentation for my final deliverable (see appendix).

Emotional intelligence refers to how we handle ourselves and in turn, how we harness our emotions to understand others (Big Think, 2018). Findings in both industry and higher education show that those who possess higher emotional intelligence are more likely to understand their own emotions, respect their co-workers and peers, and feel comfortable communicating with others.

Cultural intelligence (CQ) refers to one's ability to interpret someone or something unfamiliar (HBR, 2004). P. Christopher Earley and Elaine Mosakowski break down cultural intelligence as it relates to an organization's culture, saying cultural intelligence "picks up where emotional intelligence leaves off," (Earley & Mosakowski, 2004). Meaning, someone with high emotional intelligence can distinguish differences between people and groups within an organization, but someone with high cultural intelligence can identify those differences and then utilize those identified differences to find human commonalities.

The purpose of this research was to equip communicators with a presentation tool they could use to train their organization's workforce on enhancing cultural and emotional intelligence to promote workplace diversity, equity, and inclusion. Improved DEI is critical to

leverage the uniqueness of ideas and backgrounds of employees to strengthen organizations from within. Developing the cultural and emotional intelligence of a workforce is a big concern for industries everywhere (Alon & Higgins, 2005). It's important to equip an organization's communication staff because they craft messages on behalf of leaders, train leaders, and often help shape the culture of an organization.

Researchers have found that emotional and cultural intelligence play a key role in an organization's success in supporting a diverse work environment. Knowing that, this thesis describes and synthesizes literature from the areas of: understanding emotional and cultural intelligence; developing empathy in communications; connecting emotional intelligence to diversity outcomes; and heightening emotional intelligence through training.

My background research on this topic stems from my previous employer, the UNC Eshelman School of Pharmacy. The UNC Eshelman School of Pharmacy is focused on building an inclusive community of faculty, staff, and students who work together to advance medicine for life through innovations in research, education, and pharmacy practice. For more than two years, the School of Pharmacy worked to bolster its Office of Organizational Diversity and Inclusion to create a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace, but internal surveys show there are still gaps to be filled in creating a more inclusive work environment. A 2020 school-wide survey showed that overall, 75% of faculty, staff, and students said they felt a favorable sense of belonging at the school. Of underrepresented minority respondents surveyed, 70% said they felt a sense of belonging. Demographically, 14% of the 2020 incoming class of Pharm.D. students, and 12% of the 2020 incoming class of Ph.D. students were underrepresented minorities; and 20% of staff and 6% of faculty were underrepresented

minorities. The survey and demographic snapshot highlighted the opportunity to create a more inclusive environment. Although I have changed employers, the findings and presentation deliverable of this thesis could be a resource for any organization, including the UNC Eshelman School of Pharmacy.

The end goal of this thesis was to create a presentation that is designed to be given by a marketing/communication team member within an organization, to organization members. This lecture would inform participants about the power of effective communication (via digital channels and in-person) and teach strategies to harness emotional and cultural intelligence to promote diversity, equity and inclusion within an organization. I had already developed a training presentation I utilized for a guest lecture at the UNC Eshelman School of Pharmacy. Through my thesis research, I test piloted the developed presentation with interview participants and then utilized research findings to enhance the already developed presentation.

Purpose: Promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Workplace

Leveraging cultural and emotional intelligence to promote workplace diversity, equity, and inclusion are vital to each member of an organization feeling their voice is heard and valued. As employees feel valued, connected, and engaged, they work together to elevate each other's ideas and contribute to their organizations. In turn, organizations have accepting, valued employees who embrace new ways of thinking and who are working to elevate their company's mission, vision, and values, creating a healthier, happier organizational culture.

The purpose of this thesis project was to equip communicators – key stakeholders in improving organizational culture – with a teaching tool they can utilize to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion within their organizations through the building of effective communication

skills. As mentioned above, this teaching tool presentation has been developed and was pilot tested via interviews through the thesis research process. Interview responses allowed me to enhance the presentation as a final thesis deliverable.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review will first examine the relevant research on understanding emotional and cultural intelligence, then will discuss literature from developing empathy in communications; connecting emotional intelligence to diversity outcomes; and heightening emotional intelligence through training. The closing section of this review will summarize key findings used to create the initial PowerPoint presentation that was concept-tested with interviewees. Findings from the pilot test with interviewees enhanced the training presentation.

Understanding Emotional and Cultural Intelligence

The first step to harnessing emotional and cultural intelligence to promote workplace diversity, equity, and inclusion, is understanding emotional and cultural intelligence.

John D. Mayer and Peter Salovey first coined the term “emotional intelligence” in literature in 1990 (Clark & Polesello, 2017). Mayer defines emotional intelligence as one's ability to appropriately respond to others' feelings; the ability to self-recognize one's mood and shift, if need be, to a more positive tone; and the ability to leverage empathy to help solve conflicts (Mayer, 2004).

While Mayer and Salovey introduced the term, journalist and psychologist Daniel Goleman popularized “emotional intelligence” in 1995. Goleman states that emotional

intelligence refers to how we handle ourselves and in turn, how we harness our emotions to understand others (Big Think, 2018). According to Goleman and Richard Boyatzis, emotional intelligence consists of four domains and 12 core emotional intelligence competencies as is depicted in their Emotional Intelligence Domains and Competencies chart below (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2017):

Emotional Intelligence Domains and Competencies

SELF-AWARENESS	SELF-MANAGEMENT	SOCIAL AWARENESS	RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT
Emotional self-awareness	Emotional self-control	Empathy	Influence
	Adaptability		Coach and mentor
	Achievement orientation	Organizational awareness	Conflict management
	Positive outlook		Teamwork
			Inspirational leadership

SOURCE MORE THAN SOUND, LLC, 2017

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In addition to understanding the broad definitions of emotional intelligence, it is equally important to analyze the definition of emotional intelligence as it relates to higher education communications and the workplace. Dominique Parrish, of Medicine and Health at the University of Wollongong in Australia, conducted semi-structured interviews with 11 university academics from three Australian universities to determine the relevance of emotional intelligence for leadership within higher education (Parrish, 2015). Parrish discovered all participants recognized emotional intelligence as highly relevant and a key requirement for members of university leadership. Two additional components of emotional intelligence as it relates to higher education leadership – not acknowledged by Mayer or Salovey, but similar to

Goleman – included inspiring and guiding others, and responsible management of self (Parrish, 2015).

There are three elements of cultural intelligence to be aware of: emotional and motivational; cognitive; and physical (Earley & Mosakowski, 2004). As it relates to the workplace, through a survey of 2,000 managers across 60 countries, Earley and Mosakowski discovered most managers do not possess each of the three elements of cultural intelligence, but state that a manager who is “alert, motivated, and poised can attain an acceptable CQ,” (Earley & Mosakowski, 2004).

Several models break down the components of emotional intelligence. These include the three more popular models created by Salovey and Mayer in 1990, Goleman in 1995, and Reuven Bar-On in 1997 (Parrish, 2015). But in 2004, the Emotional Intelligence and Diversity Institute developed its own model to understand people’s emotional responses and how people accept or reject one another. The institute’s model consists of affirmative introspection, self-governance, intercultural literacy, and social architecting (Emotional Intelligence and Diversity Institute, 2004).

Affirmative introspection is defined by the institute as what makes a person “tick.” It involves understanding and being comfortable with one’s own identity to find value and compassion toward others. Once a person better understands their world views and identity, the model shifts to self-governance, which involves internally managing feelings brought on by differences (Emotional Intelligence and Diversity Institute, 2004).

The third step, intercultural literacy, involves understanding the meaning behind others’ behaviors. This includes the ability to be aware of the “why” of cultural behaviors and allows a

person to start developing empathy. The final step, social architecting, is the ability to be conscious of cultural differences and to serve as a cultural interpreter who helps to positively resolve issues (Emotional Intelligence and Diversity Institute, 2004).

While this new model is directly relatable to industry, components of the model are effective in other areas of the workplace, including in education. Researchers Lisa Fall, Stephanie Kelly, Patrick MacDonald, Charles Primm, and Whitney Holmes analyzed how business educators prepared students for an expanding and globalized workforce (Fall et al., 2013). To do so, they surveyed 425 undergraduate students who were enrolled in public speaking courses. Responses showed those with higher emotional intelligence were able to better adapt to communication apprehension, further enforcing the Emotional Intelligence and Diversity Institute's model steps as necessary. The researchers also recommended integrating emotional intelligence into curriculums (Fall et al., 2013).

Developing Empathy in Communications

A key component of emotional intelligence and cultural intelligence is one's capacity to empathize with others (Young et al., 2017). Parrish's study on the importance of emotional intelligence within higher education institutions revealed that empathy – a person's ability to be aware of and understand the emotions of others – is the most significant trait of emotional intelligence. It is also a crucial element for higher education leadership (Parrish, 2015).

Similarly, Leonardo Badea and Nicolae Alexandru Pană find empathy to be at the core of social consciousness and social efficiency. Badea and Pană summarize that 90% of the ways people express emotions are nonverbal, a strong statistic to keep in mind for communicators

(Badea & Pană, 2010). Both Parrish, as well as Badea and Pană, discovered those who lead with empathy perform at higher levels and are able to create more sound organizations.

Building on peer-reviewed work from Parrish, Badea, and Pană, as well as the understandings of emotional intelligence by Mayer, Salovey, and Goleman, Mark Davis reiterates that one must first be aware of their own emotions before they can empathize and effectively communicate with others. Davis proposes four tips to heighten emotional intelligence: Recognize interpersonal skills you'd like to improve and think about how you can adjust; examine your own reactions to situations; pause and think before reacting; and journal feelings and behaviors (Davis, 2019).

Connecting Emotional Intelligence to Diversity Outcomes

Casey Mulqueen, Amy Kahn, and J. Stephen Kirkpatrick dig into leveraging diversity by first defining "diversity" and "inclusion" from the perspectives of businesses and organizations (Mulqueen et al., 2012). They define diversity as one's uniqueness and how differences affect the behaviors of an individual, team, or organization. Inclusion is defined as an organization's set of policies or procedures that allow individuals to succeed. In their peer-reviewed research, they find open-mindedness and genuine acceptance within a workplace are worth more than politically correct communications and diversity and inclusion education programs (Mulqueen et al., 2012).

Mulqueen, Kahn, and Kirkpatrick analyzed the resonance of diversity and inclusion in the workplace by reviewing a 2011 survey involving 143 managers from a multinational defense contractor, along with 842 direct reports. Overall, they discovered managers with higher

versatility were seen as more supportive of diversity and inclusion and were more likely to foster a welcoming team environment (Mulqueen et al., 2012).

A crucial first step in building inclusive environments is creating a team of successful managers who possess emotional intelligence, as well as multicultural competence.

Researchers Donna Chrobot-Mason and Jean Leslie reviewed collected survey data from managers who participated in The Center for Creative Leadership's Leadership Development Program and discovered that multicultural competency can predict the effectiveness of a manager (Chrobot-Mason & Leslie, 2012). Multicultural competency is the ability to be able to work with people from various cultural backgrounds by demonstrating respect, understanding, and effectively communicating. Equally important they say, is cultural intelligence, which is the ability to function in an environment where individuals' values, traditions, and assumptions differ (Chrobot-Mason & Leslie, 2012). In their work, the researchers state leaders develop multicultural competency by being aware of cultural differences and increasing self-awareness.

Four skills to help develop multicultural competency through increased self-awareness and acknowledgement of cultural differences include conflict management, communication, feedback, and striving to be a role model. Managers willing to embrace a multicultural environment can leverage the rewards of a diverse team, which include increased creativity and innovative ideas (Chrobot-Mason & Leslie, 2012). Chrobot-Mason and Leslie also state that emotional intelligence allows people to adapt to new situations and people and enhances multicultural skills like those seen in the emotional intelligence model created by the Emotional Intelligence and Diversity Institute (Chrobot-Mason & Leslie, 2012). Parallel to Parrish, Badea, and Pană, the researchers argue that managers who possess higher emotional intelligence may

be able to self-identify their strengths and weaknesses, and better understand their own biases (Chrobot-Mason & Leslie, 2012).

In their sample, Chrobot-Mason and Leslie asked 299 participants to complete an assessment before attending the Center for Creative Leadership program and a self-report of emotional intelligence once enrolled. After reviewing survey data, they concluded that to be a successful manager in today's workplace, one must be able to effectively manage employee diversity and in turn, build an inclusive environment (Chrobot-Mason & Leslie, 2012).

While Chrobot-Mason and Leslie highlight the importance of emotional intelligence in industry, Debra Vandervoort, of the University of Hawaii at Hilo, underscores the importance of integrating emotional intelligence into higher education (Vandervoort, 2006, p.6). Much like Chrobot-Mason and Leslie, Vandervoort's peer-reviewed work suggests higher education employees who possess higher emotional intelligence have the ability to create healthier work environments and more open lines of communication between groups. She finds that to build inclusive environments, emotional intelligence must be implemented within an academic curriculum for students, echoing the findings of Fall et al. Vandervoort continues by saying universities should consider emotional intelligence as a job qualification for faculty members. She says, "Increasing emotional intelligence may not only facilitate the learning process, improve career choice and likelihood of success, but could also enhance the probability of better personal and social adaptation in general," (Vandervoort, 2006, p.6).

Terry Schmitz, owner of The Conover Company, aligns with Vandervoort and Fall et al. in that emotional intelligence is a soft skill rarely taught, but highly beneficial to success (Schmitz, 2016). Schmitz provides several tips to heighten one's emotional awareness when

communicating: “1. Consider other people’s feelings. 2. Consider your own feelings. 3. Have empathy. 4. Operate on trust. 5. Recognize misunderstandings.” (Schmitz, 2016). Another way communicators can build inclusive environments is by asking themselves internal questions. Like Schmitz, Goleman and Michele Nevarez add the thought of asking: “1. What are the differences between how you see yourself and how others see you? 2. What matters to you? and 3. What changes will you make to achieve these goals?” (Goleman & Nevarez, 2018).

Heightening Emotional Intelligence Through Training

Studies show that emotional intelligence can be developed or increased through training programs provided to employees. In 2019, researchers Raquel Gilar-Corbi, Teresa Pozo-Rico, Bárbara Sánchez, and Juan-Luís Castejón provided a comprehensive 30-hour training course about emotional intelligence to 54 senior managers within the private sector (Gilar-Corbi et al., 2019). Trainings, utilizing both a control and experimental group, spanned seven weeks and consisted of topics including: an explanation of emotional intelligence; self-perception; adaptability and decision making; self-expression; stress management; and emotional understanding and management (Gilar-Corbi et al., 2019). Utilizing two methods of measuring emotional intelligence called the Situational Test of Emotional Understanding and the Situational Test of Emotional Management, the team determined emotional intelligence can be improved within an organization through professional development training. It is also of note that the team mentions emotional intelligence has a direct correlation to job satisfaction, and that company leaders play an important role in their employees’ emotional journey (Gilar-Corbi et al., 2019).

Similarly, researchers Kevin Groves, Mary Pat McEnrue and Winny Shen of California State University conducted a study to evaluate if emotional intelligence based on the Mayer and Salovey model can be developed (Groves et al., 2008). The team studied 135 business students who went through an 11-week emotional intelligence training program. Trainings consisted of similar topics to Gilar-Corbi et al, and included self-assessments to determine self-awareness and willingness to embrace emotional intelligence; a self-development plan to identify areas of emotional intelligence to enhance; as well as exercises to engage and practice emotional intelligence (problem-solving as a team). Ultimately, the team found emotional intelligence can be developed through intentional training (Groves et al., 2008).

Researcher Fabio Sala, Ph.D., a member of the Emotional Intelligence Consortium, sought to also understand if emotional intelligence could be improved after Goleman popularized the concept (Sala, 2002). He analyzed managers who were attending a “Mastering Emotional Intelligence” workshop. Following completion of the program, the two identified sample populations were assessed on competency levels of self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, and social skills. Sala found in both circumstances, emotional intelligence improved following training (Sala, 2002).

[Summary of Literature and Applications to Training Presentation](#)

Based on the research reviewed above, I have drawn the following conclusions that have been pilot tested with interviewees. Findings from the pilot test have been used to finalize a training presentation for communicators to use in their own organizations to help enhance DEI in the workplace (see link to presentation in Appendix). The PowerPoint defines and underscores the importance of emotional and cultural intelligence to promote workplace

diversity, equity, and inclusion, and advise on the necessary components of emotional intelligence to incorporate into communications.

There are four components for communicators to understand to be able to utilize emotional and cultural intelligence to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace: understanding emotional and cultural intelligence; developing empathy in communications; connecting emotional intelligence to diversity outcomes; and heightening emotional intelligence through training. Below, I demonstrate how literature review findings have been incorporated into the already-developed PowerPoint deck for communicators that was pilot tested with interviewees and then refined for my final thesis deliverable.

The presentation begins with an overview of these components, followed by slides outlining key elements of understanding emotional and cultural intelligence.

Key elements of understanding emotional and cultural intelligence include understanding one's own emotions, acknowledging the emotions of others, recognizing one's own beliefs/reactions, and developing empathy. In higher education, researchers conclude it is important also to include components of inspiring and guiding others, and responsible management of self. As an engaging component of the PowerPoint presentation, I've included the Big Five Personality Test, which is commonly used as a tool in academic psychology as a way to understand oneself (Goldberg & Lewis, 1992). Understanding one's own self is a crucial first building block to being able to understand and empathize with others.

To break down emotional intelligence models, communicators must acknowledge the early models of emotional intelligence created by Salovey, Mayer, Goleman, and Bar-On. But to be successful in an increasingly globalized workplace, they must also acknowledge and lean into

more recent interpretations of the model, as seen by the Emotional Intelligence and Diversity Institute, which is highlighted on slide 12 of the PowerPoint deck. This model encompasses affirmative introspection, self-governance, intercultural literacy, and social architecting. I've placed definitions of each of these attributes on slide 13 of the deck for deeper analysis. Those who possess qualities within emotional intelligence models are found to be more successful, trusted, and respected communicators. Findings in both industry and higher education show that those who possess higher emotional and cultural intelligence are more likely to understand their own emotions, respect their co-workers and classmates, and feel comfortable communicating with others – a key component for communicators. Slides 15-17 of the PowerPoint emphasize the importance of possessing higher emotional intelligence to be able to better adapt to surroundings and colleagues; and dig into traits of effective communicators.

Through this review, empathy surfaced as the most significant trait one could possess to improve their emotional intelligence, especially in a leadership role. To successfully develop empathy, communicators should be able to examine their own emotions and reactions to situations before communicating, examine their own biases, and be understanding of their audience's perspectives, each of which are highlighted on slide 19 of the PowerPoint. They may also consider following Davis's four tips to heighten emotional intelligence, which is illustrated on slide 20 of the deck. Communicators must also be aware that most of the time, empathy is delivered nonverbally. This is key for communicators to keep in mind while delivering in-person messages (or virtually in person across digital platforms). It would be imperative to remember to read body language, gestures, and voice tones of audience members to be able to honestly develop empathy in messaging to bolster inclusion in the workplace, displayed on slide 21 of

the PowerPoint. Slides 23-28 expand on the idea of empathy by examining effective listening and the use of open-ended questions as tools to develop empathy and improve teamwork. This section of the training also incorporates an interview exercise where participants break into groups of two to practice effective listening and are encouraged to use open-ended questions when engaging with others.

To connect emotional intelligence to diversity outcomes, communicators must also understand the definitions of diversity and inclusion, which I purposefully define in the PowerPoint deck on slide 30. It is seen that those who lead and communicate with open-mindedness and acceptance are trusted and gain the respect of their co-workers, which builds upon the benefits of a diverse workforce. This holds greater weight than politically correct messages and implementing diversity and inclusion programs. And to ultimately build inclusive environments, communicators should consider starting at the top of their organizations to help educate leadership teams on the importance of emotional intelligence to build inclusive environments. Heightening emotional intelligence through training programs serves as the final slide of the PowerPoint deck. Through this review, it is also understood that emotional intelligence can be developed through professional development training. As seen in this review, managers who are more understanding of individuals' uniqueness can provide conflict resolution, interpersonal communication, productive feedback, and proper role modeling that leads to inclusivity. In higher education, leadership teams have the ability to build connections across faculty, staff, and students by implementing and communicating emotional intelligence as a core job responsibility. This implementation will allow leadership, and ultimately their

communicators, to harness emotional and cultural intelligence to promote workplace diversity, equity, and inclusion at organizations in a positive way.

Research Questions

This paper addresses the following research questions:

1. Are organization leaders, such as communicators, likely to utilize a prepared presentation to generate awareness of emotional and/or cultural intelligence at their institutions?
2. How can concepts of emotional and or cultural intelligence be conveyed effectively in a presentation geared toward an organization's employees?

The questions are addressed through qualitative interviews conducted with participants involved in bettering their places of employment through heightened diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives or communications.

RESEARCH METHOD AND PROCEDURES

Design and Participants

As part of my research methodology, I conducted qualitative interviews with six employee engagement, communications and DEI professionals to identify gaps that need to be addressed in the proposed PowerPoint presentation (see appendix) and to better understand what elements are working well/not so well.

To begin the research process, each of the interview participants received an email from me (see appendix) that contained the PowerPoint presentation for review, as well as an invitation to participate in a brief Zoom interview after reviewing the deck. I fine-tuned my presentation based on interview comments.

Participants' names and organizations were eliminated from findings below to protect their privacy and promote honesty in answering questions, but participants' job roles were left intact to provide a better understanding of their functions within their organizations.

Participants 1,3 and 5 have more than a decade of experience in their respective fields, while Participant 4 has three years of experience in human resources. Participant 2 has more than 27 years of experience in the marketing/communications field leading teams, and Participant 6 has more than 25 years of experience in higher education. Participants' roles are defined below:

Participant	Role
Participant 1:	Digital content manager
Participant 2:	President of nonprofit
Participant 3:	Web developer and graphic designer
Participant 4:	Human resources consultant
Participant 5:	Manager within DEI office
Participant 6:	DEI director within higher education organization

Interview Questions

I developed a set of interview questions that first aimed to get a better understanding of participants' work roles and their organizations before transitioning to learn more about the DEI climate in their respective institutions. From there, interview questions focused on emotional and cultural intelligence awareness in their organizations, and then transitioned to the training PowerPoint deck for feedback. I utilized open-ended questions to better understand what participants found helpful, confusing, engaging, etc. about the deck. Interview questions wrapped up by inquiring if the training would be helpful in their organizations and allow for any last comments. See the appendix for the complete set of interview questions.

Procedures and Analysis

I identified six participants who were key stakeholders in employee engagement initiatives, communications, and building an inclusive culture within their organizations. I contacted each interview participant separately via email to request their participation in reviewing the slide deck and a ~30-minute Zoom interview. A follow-up reminder email was also crafted and used twice (see appendix). Zoom interviews consisted of me asking participants a set of 10 interview questions (see appendix) to learn more about the DEI environments where they worked before diving into the presentation review. Following the completion of interviews, I transcribed interviews and then analyzed data using thematic analysis to identify patterns and/or themes in data (Boyce et al., 2006). I then incorporated responses into my thesis. Transcripts of interviews were de-identified to maintain the confidentiality of participants. I utilized participants' feedback to refine my thesis deliverable presentation.

RESULTS

Six interviewees participated in ~30-minute interview sessions where they discussed the DEI environment in their respective workplaces and then discussed the piloted PowerPoint presentation that was provided prior to the interview. Results are segmented below into findings related to participants' organizational climates, and findings related to the presentation. Within each of the "findings" sections, subheads denote themes that emerged following the analysis of interview responses, with supporting quotes from participants. Additional example responses to specific interview questions can be found in the appendix.

FINDINGS RELATED TO ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE

Acknowledging Progress While Maintaining Momentum

Overall, all six interview participants viewed their places of employment as diverse and noted how the DEI climate has improved within their organizations in recent years. However, all interviewees admit there is room for growth in the DEI space regarding hiring diverse employee candidates and increasing conversations being had about DEI, emotional and cultural intelligence. Participant 5, who manages within a DEI office, went as far to say there are two types of people within their organization: those who are not ready to acknowledge DEI, and those who want to do better, but are unsure of how to increase their skillset within the DEI space. Knowing this, Participant 5 still acknowledged that their organization has seen rapid improvements within the DEI space in recent years. Participant 6, who is a leader in the DEI space at their organization, echoed Participant 5's sentiments and said DEI is "not a sprint, it's a journey." Participants 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6 said each of their organizations follows a DEI strategic plan, and they attribute growth in the DEI space to those developed roadmaps.

Frequency of DEI Conversations

Frequency of discussions around DEI ranged from multiple times a day by some interviewees to a couple times a month for others. It was found that those participants in DEI and communications roles had more frequent conversations about DEI, as opposed to those in leadership or human resources roles. Participants 1, 3, 5, and 6 each said they engaged in DEI conversations multiple times a day at most, and weekly at least. These participants each brought up the fact that the nature of their work allowed for DEI conversations to happen organically and often, especially as they built communications materials, examined the

inclusiveness of websites, and built/implemented DEI strategies for their organizations, etc. In contrast, Participants 2 and 4 said they engaged in DEI conversations a couple times a month at most. These participants were not involved in similar granular conversations about DEI that their peers in communications and DEI roles were experiencing. All participants agreed that conversations about DEI are equally driven by them as well as others in their organizations.

Similarly, it was found that those in DEI and communications roles were more likely to have frequent conversations about emotional and cultural intelligence, with a greater emphasis on cultural intelligence. Participants 1, 3, 5 and 6 each mentioned that cultural intelligence is more commonly talked about than emotional intelligence. However, Participant 1 acknowledged that while conversations occur regarding cultural intelligence, the frequency to which they occur could improve. Participant 5 further highlighted the need for discussing emotional intelligence more frequently because developing one's emotional intelligence is a key driver of heightening DEI. Participant 5 said, "Emotional intelligence can play into things because [emotional and cultural intelligence] are related. Sometimes there are cultural stressors, and you have to be emotionally intelligent to discuss those things." Those in leadership and human resources roles, Participants 2 and 4, acknowledged they do not discuss emotional and/or cultural intelligence every day. Participant 4 emphasized, "one of the things I'm an advocate for is a culture of accountability. Without emotional and cultural intelligence, a culture of accountability is not possible," highlighting an awareness of and willingness to grow conversations about cultural and emotional intelligence to support DEI.

FINDINGS RELATED TO PRESENTATION

Helpful Elements to Improve DEI Discussions

Each of the interview participants noted a different element within the PowerPoint presentation they found helpful. Participant 1 enjoyed the inclusion of how to develop empathy, while Participant 3 built upon that sentiment and mentioned liking the inclusion of a personality test within the deck to give participants a chance to understand their own selves first before trying to empathize with others. Participant 3 said, “I think a part of helping folks understand the need for diversity, equity and inclusion in any organization is also helping them to understand where they stand...that’s going to help you empathize with others.”

Participants 2 and 4, each made comments regarding the layout and flow of the presentation. Each stated the deck was comprehensive in content, but they enjoyed that heavy text was kept off slides and remained in the “notes” field for the presenter. Participant 4 added, “What’s most helpful is that this PowerPoint doesn’t have a lot of text. It’s very interactive where the facilitator is supposed to interact with the audience and it keeps people’s attention and creates an opportunity for dialogue, which is incredibly important for building DEI. It provides an opportunity for everyone to be heard and for everyone to learn.” Participant 2 saw the deck as a “roadmap” to starting a conversation about emotional and cultural intelligence to improve the DEI climate in their workplace.

Participants 5 and 6, both of which have roles within DEI, pointed to enjoying specific examples used within the deck. Participant 5 liked the introduction of powerful, open-ended questions as a tool to promote empathy, while Participant 6 noted the importance of breaking down the emotional intelligence model to aid communication efforts.

[Making Adjustments to Make Strides in DEI](#)

Participants 1, 2, and 4 said they did not find any content confusing or less impactful that they would eliminate from the presentation. However, Participant 1 said the inclusion of transition slides between topics would help to generate a better flow and alert the audience of a shift in topics.

Participants 3, 5 and 6 had specific content suggestions they would consider adjusting. Participant 5 mentioned they would like to see the inclusion of specific examples where DEI conflicts may exist (similar to what one would find in a human resources training). Participants 3 and 6 both brought up the topic of “teamwork” and how it fits in to the DEI conversation. Participant 3 – in a communications role – suggested rewording the topic of “teamwork” to “community building.” Participant 3 felt the word “teamwork” has been overused and now carries a negative connotation that leaders are forcing employees to work together. They suggested a slight change to using “community building” to promote unity and a positive spirit of collaboration. Participant 6 suggested either editing down the teamwork section or renaming the section to better blend into the rest of the presentation.

Most all participants enjoyed the inclusion of engagement elements within the PowerPoint and said audience engagement is necessary to promote active learning. Participant 6 did bring up that they were unaware of efficacy data of engagement elements within presentations. But that did not sway them to suggest taking out engagement elements like the personality test and interview exercise.

All participants agreed there were no apparent barriers in the presentation. About barriers, Participant 1 said, “I don’t feel like there’s anything in here that’s a barrier. If you feel uncomfortable reading through this: one, you need to examine your biases, and two, you

probably need to examine why that is. There's nothing in here that should make you feel uncomfortable." However, Participants 2 and 5 suggested examining one's audience makeup before presenting to learn about an audience's potential fears, concerns, or barriers so the presentation is more effective in the moment. Participant 2 said, "You may need to tailor the presentation to each audience before you present it. I think there's some fatigue around [DEI] to be honest, so it's walking a tight rope between those who have a thirst to learn more and those who are less engaged."

Likelihood of Using Presentation to Generate Awareness of Emotional, Cultural Intelligence

All participants agreed they would likely use a presentation like this to generate awareness of emotional and/or cultural intelligence to promote DEI. Participant 5 mentioned they may consider presenting the deck as an e-learning module that is self-paced, rather than delivering the presentation in-person (or virtually in-person) as it is presently designed. All participants agreed that this presentation could be used as a tool to help generate awareness about emotional and cultural intelligence. Participant 6 added, "This [presentation] aligns very nicely in terms of equity. This convergence of emotional and cultural intelligence positions people to do their best work. When you are more self-aware, you are inviting others to bring their most real and authentic selves [to the table] and it pushes people to think beyond all possibilities."

DISCUSSION/IMPLICATIONS

I began this thesis project with the aim of exploring the role of emotional and cultural intelligence in enhancing DEI within the workplace, and to develop a training tool that communicators could use to generate conversations about DEI within their organizations. My two research questions included: 1. Are organization leaders, such as communicators, likely to utilize a prepared presentation to generate awareness of emotional and/or cultural intelligence at their institutions? And 2. How can concepts of emotional and or cultural intelligence be conveyed effectively in a presentation geared toward an organization's employees?

After conducting interviews, answers to my research questions were clear. Participants are likely to use a prepared presentation such as the one developed here to generate awareness of emotional and/or cultural intelligence at their respective institutions. As leaders in their fields, each research participant understood the need for more conversations to be had about cultural and emotional intelligence within their organizations to promote DEI. Each also confirmed that there is a need for more frequent conversations to be had specifically about emotional intelligence in the workplace. This acknowledgement of needing to increase conversations about cultural and emotional intelligence is supported by Chrobot-Mason and Leslie who are cited earlier in the literature review, who state that to be an effective manager in today's workplace, one must be able to manage employee diversity and inclusion to build an inclusive work environment for all (Chrobot-Mason & Leslie, 2012). Literature also supports the idea that leaders play an important role in their employee's emotional journey (Gilar-Corbi et al., 2019) and that emotional intelligence can be improved through professional development training (Groves et al., 2008).

Interview participants noted that a challenge in fostering DEI within their organizations is finding the space for organic conversations to happen around the topic, especially for those in leadership and human resources roles who were found to have less frequent conversations about DEI, cultural and emotional intelligence. Much like Vandervoort suggested in the literature review, to build an inclusive environment, conversations about emotional intelligence must be strategically woven into curriculum, or in this case, the workplace (Vandervoort, 2006). The developed PowerPoint training tool simply presents the opportunity to purposefully engage in those conversations with employees in a constructive setting, allowing for the development of emotional and cultural intelligence to occur and ultimately, growth in the DEI space to happen naturally as a result.

Regarding how concepts of emotional and or cultural intelligence can be conveyed effectively in a presentation geared toward an organization's employees, interviewees mentioned several improvements that could be made to the piloted PowerPoint deck. General improvements include the addition of transition slides between conversation topics; rewording the topic of "teamwork" to "community building;" and including further reminders to review personality results to build audience members' sense of self.

One participant in a DEI role suggested the inclusion of specific DEI conflicts and resolutions within the presentation, but I felt that topic could be better addressed by an expert in the human resources field, and trainings on those types of scenarios already exist for employees. As a result, this suggestion was not incorporated into the PowerPoint deck. Another participant within the DEI space suggested the possibility of switching out the personality test for a test about emotional intelligence. I chose to keep the Big Five Personality test in the

presentation because it captures additional personality traits of an individual, such as extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness to experience, that contribute to the overall understanding of oneself that is critical to developing or heightening empathy and ultimately developing or heightening both emotional and cultural intelligence. However, an emotional intelligence test could be included as a supplement in the future should presenters think their audiences would benefit.

Lastly, participants suggested users of the presentation tailor the slides to their specific audiences before use, eliminating slides that may not pertain to their audiences. Knowing this, presenters should gauge their audience's knowledge of DEI and emotional and cultural intelligence prior to presenting to encourage a more productive and useful session. This could be done by sending a simple electronic survey to participants prior to presenting that gauges their knowledge of cultural and/or emotional intelligence to positively promote DEI.

Applications to Presentation

- Divider slides were added in between topics within the PowerPoint to signal to audience members a change in subjects.
- An additional mention of the personality test was incorporated into the notes field of slide 24 at the introduction of "building community" to further emphasize retrospection of oneself before engaging with others. This further highlights the importance of developing and/or heightening empathy to enhance cultural and emotional intelligence.
- I reworded all mentions of "teamwork" to "community building" to promote a positive sense of unity.

- I added a “best practices” slide to the beginning of the presentation to aid presenters with the intended audience of the presentation and ideal timing suggestions. These best practice guidelines can be found below. This slide should be eliminated prior to presenting.

Best Practice Guidelines for Using Presentation

- **Ideal presenter to deliver PowerPoint presentation:** Organization’s communicator.
- **Intended audience:** Designed to be delivered to employees across an organization.
- **Intended space:** This presentation is designed to be delivered virtually or in-person, based on my experiences delivering the presentation in both contexts. For a virtual audience, it is recommended that engagement elements (e.g., personality test, interview exercise, etc.) be kept intact to promote audience participation.
- **Audience size:** Small groups would be encouraged to allow for greater audience participation and engagement activities.
- **Best time to present:** During the employee onboarding process, or throughout the year to small groups of teams within an organization (e.g., employee retreats).
- **Understanding an audience:** Prior to presenting, get to know the audience and their familiarity with emotional and/or cultural intelligence. This could be done through a simple survey questionnaire before they participate in the discussion.
- **After the presentation:** To continue to enhance the presentation for future uses, it is recommended to send an evaluation survey to participants soon after the presentation, and an additional evaluation a month post presentation. The first survey would capture initial thoughts, while the survey issued a month out would capture impacts of

participants' behaviors post presentation. Sample questions on surveys may include: "What did you find most helpful about this presentation?" "What did you find least helpful?" "Are you likely to share what you've learned with your peers?" "Have you used this training in your daily work environment?" "To what extent have your thoughts about DEI, cultural and emotional intelligence changed post presentation?"

As a result of these findings, I have refined the PowerPoint Deck to be used by communicators within their organizations to help define and underscore the importance of emotional and cultural intelligence to promote workplace diversity, equity, and inclusion, and advise on the necessary components of emotional and cultural intelligence to incorporate into communications. Links to the original and revised presentations are included in the appendix.

Limitations

One limitation within this study was time. Ideally, given a lengthier amount of time to study the topic and interview participants, the sample size of interviewees could have been increased to get a larger amount of feedback on the PowerPoint deck for more thorough refinement.

An additional limitation would be the breadth of questions asked during interviews. Had more time been spent with interviewees (e.g. increasing interview length from about 30 minutes to at least an hour), more questions and more in-depth questions could have been asked. An increase in the number of questions and in-depth questions asked may have allowed for a greater understanding of DEI environments, struggles that are or are not happening because of DEI conversations within respective organizations, as well as improvements that could have been made to the piloted presentation to better suit presenters' needs.

Conclusion

As a result of this research, it can be concluded that interviewees are having conversations within their organizations about DEI, emotional and cultural intelligence. However, there is room to enhance the frequency of conversations around these topics and engage more people within organizations, in a meaningful way, on these topics. Interviewees confirmed a training tool for communicators like this thesis deliverable PowerPoint presentation would be useful to harness cultural and emotional intelligence to promote workplace diversity, equity and inclusion.

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APPENDIX

Example quotes in response to interview questions

Question No. 1: Tell me about the DEI climate where you work?	
Participant 1:	[Within my organization], there are people that are motivated because they're actually in that space and they're actively pursuing ways to make DEI better, and then there are people who are motivated because they are more concerned about what it looks like to have a huge DEI presence. I think it's gotten significantly better, but you can tell the ones who are really passionate about it and want to see it improve, and who's doing it because they think that it looks good for [the organization].
Participant 2:	We only have three fulltime employees and work with 34 companies [at my organization]. Over half of our founders are either women or minority founders, so I think we have a diverse group in terms of race and gender. Age wise, we have predominately younger members.
Participant 3:	[At my organization, people are] definitely very cognizant of diversity, equity and inclusion. In fact, they just created a position for a diversity, equity and inclusion [lead] position...It's very diverse not only in the breakdown of ethnicities, but also gender...a lot of women in leadership positions. It's very important around here.
Participant 4:	The DEI climate where I work is a fresh perspective and it's evolving. A lot of DEI work has been done in my organization in the past three years. There's a new DEI strategic plan that was developed that rolls into our overall strategic plan. I think the DEI plan helped shaped the values in our organization's overall plan as well. From an HR side of things, we've been trying to meet that strategic plan. Our director has worked hard to ensure DEI is not an afterthought for human resources. We are the drivers of DEI and include DEI from the very beginning [of onboarding]. Our organization has taken a lot of steps to improve this space.
Participant 5:	[At my organization] I think there are two levels – [first], people who are not ready to understand why DEI exists. They don't feel like there has been historical discrimination and they don't feel they need to acknowledge other aspects of excellence. They value things like being at work consistently. There are also people who want to do better, but don't know how. But overall, we've been rapidly improving.
Participant 6:	I would say currently, DEI is how we live. You'll hear that it's not a sprint, it's a journey. It's not that we are where we need to be in terms of cultural awareness and building community, but as an organization we have an actionable [DEI] plan we are living. It's our accountability piece.

Question No. 2: How often do you speak to members within your organization about diversity, equity and inclusion? If these conversations do occur, talk about the setting and content of these conversations (are you driving the conversation or are others? What types of questions are being asked?)	
Participant 1:	I think I'm not the norm in that I do talk about it more than most of my colleagues. I would say at least once or twice a week. But there are times when it's part of conversations every day, multiple times a day. I do think the nature of our work with communications and marketing, we are brought into these conversations when we wouldn't normally be. It's something for me personally that's important, so I am finding ways to be a part of those conversations.
Participant 2:	Infrequently. Maybe a couple times a month when we are discussing our newsletter and the awareness days, weeks, months to include in that newsletter to make sure we are inclusive of all.
Participant 3:	Usually it's them [driving the conversation about DEI]. I tend to consult on visual communication, but we always are having those conversations. Especially in the publications we put out, wanting to show diversity [at the organization], but also wanting to show an accurate portrayal of things.
Participant 4:	By the nature of my job, I meet with a search committee the first time they start their search [for new employees] and I discuss DEI then. I probably talk about DEI 3-4 times a month. It's not something I have the opportunity to speak about very often. It's not something that organically comes up every day.
Participant 5:	Daily. It's some of both [in regard to who is driving the conversation]. Often times I'm in meetings that are not directly about DEI, like picking out hiring committees or talking about employee engagement, so I bring [DEI] up. But sometimes, people bring it up to me.
Participant 6:	Every day. I think [conversations] go both ways. We are now seeing people from across the organization [viewing their roles] through an equity lens. We are seeing people all over engage in DEI initiatives.

Question No. 3: How often do you speak to members within your organization about emotional and/or cultural intelligence? If these conversations do occur, talk about the setting and content of these conversations (are you driving the conversation or are others? What types of questions are being asked?)	
Participant 1:	I don't feel like there's a lot of conversations about cultural intelligence. I think emotional intelligence is an overused word in academics. 'Oh, you need to have emotional intelligence,' but nobody really knows what that means. It's a buzzword almost.
Participant 2:	Similarly, a couple times a month as we think through our newsletter content. We are trying to be culturally inclusive.
Participant 3:	We do often talk about cultural relevance because we are always talking to different audiences. We want to always speak to folks in the right manner to have the most effective communications.
Participant 4:	There are people I talk to about emotional intelligence all the time. I don't talk about it every day. It does inevitably come up in conversation because I am very driven by our new [organization] values. One of the things I'm an advocate for is a culture of accountability. Without emotional and cultural intelligence, a culture of accountability is not possible.
Participant 5:	Pretty commonly in terms of cultural intelligence. Emotional intelligence can play into things because they are related. Sometimes there are cultural stressors, and you have to be emotionally intelligent to discuss those things.
Participant 6:	I would say with cultural intelligence, every week because it is a big part of our curriculum and educator development.

Question No. 4: What did you find most helpful in this PowerPoint presentation? Why were those elements most helpful to you?	
Participant 1:	[The slide about] developing empathy in communications was super helpful, and I like that you pointed out that even in Zoom meetings, this is something you need to be practicing.
Participant 2:	I thought it was incredibly comprehensive. I like the roadmap you laid out to guide the presentation along.
Participant 3:	The [elements] that were really helpful were the emotional and cultural intelligence [slides]. Personally, I think a part of helping folks understand the need for diversity, equity and inclusion in any organization is also helping them to understand where they stand...That's going to help you empathize with others... More and more we see that being introspective and [understanding] why you make the choices you do...can really help you understand others and I think that's the core of diversity.
Participant 4:	What's most helpful is that this PowerPoint doesn't have a lot of text. It's very interactive where the facilitator is supposed to interact with the audience and it keeps people's attention and creates an opportunity for dialogue, which is incredibly important for building DEI. It provides an opportunity for everyone to be heard and for everyone to learn.
Participant 5:	When there were specific examples, I found that useful., such as when to use an open-ended question or powerful question, and promoting active listening. The new Socratic method isn't something I've heard, but the example is useful.
Participant 6:	Breaking down emotional intelligence model slide. These present as interventions that help with communication.

Question No. 5: What did you find confusing or least impactful in this PowerPoint presentation? Why did you find those elements confusing or less meaningful?	
Participant 1:	I don't think there was anything [I would take out.]
Participant 2:	I didn't find anything confusing, but I found that I needed something to transition between the topics. I would suggest adding a transition slide, even a slide of the initial agenda with the next topic highlighted, between each topic.
Participant 3:	The teamwork section. It's always hard to tell people how to work in a team. Teams have their own dynamics that they're used to. When I hit the team work and effective listening section, my own personal biases kicked in to when I've read or heard people trying to motivate you to be a team...Maybe it's in the wording "team work," I feel like it's an antiquated term. Maybe it's "community building." That's more engaging.
Participant 4:	It's only 26 slides, I don't think it's too long or there's anything I would take out.
Participant 5:	In the same way people need really clear examples, it might be helpful to include an example of something that's really complex going on. Some sort of conflict happening where race is involved and there's a power conflict and the need to intervene. I think that could be good.
Participant 6:	I wondered if there was an opportunity to reduce the team building section?

Question No.6: How did you feel about the inclusion of audience engagement elements within the PowerPoint (e.g. personality test; partner interview session)? Are there any engagement elements you would leave out, if so, which ones? Are there types of engagement elements you would like to see added in, if so, what would those be?	
Participant 1:	I like them. You call this out in the presentation, you were talking about the Socratic Method and how it has evolved. [It's about] teaching in a way that makes sense. When you are offering those open-ended questions, that's how you get engagement. Keeping those methods in there allow you to [create engagement].
Participant 2:	Loved it. Loved the link over to the personality test. I liked the fact that you make it engaging to reinforce your point and make the reader develop empathy.
Participant 3:	I really liked the engaging individual parts of [the presentation] because I think that's how you can really hammer home a subject and how people are affected by it. Taking the personality test shows how people how they fit in. It's always good to get people to participate.
Participant 4:	I love these elements, they are a great opportunity. You're always going to have people attending who are told to be there and aren't engaged, but most of the time, when people attend, most of the time people are going to want to be engaged.
Participant 5:	I think that is necessary. Especially for adult learners. The more they are connecting the dots, you are building on something they already know.
Participant 6:	I don't know enough about them in terms of efficacy. Some people believe they are very useful. Some believe they can contribute to bias.

Question No. 7: How might this presentation help you generate conversation about emotional and/or cultural intelligence among your organization's members?	
Participant 1:	Cultural intelligence is a big piece of something I feel is left out of conversations [at my organization]. We haven't had any conversations about that that I can think of. I don't think we've had specific conversations geared toward emotional intelligence either, but I feel like it's a buzzword that's thrown around. [We need to talk about] how and why [to develop emotional intelligence].
Participant 2:	It's a framework or an audit for me. It gives me a roadmap and something I could use within [my organization].
Participant 3:	Everybody I work with is receptive to ideas. Even if I were to bring this up, people here are really receptive to new ideas and really receptive to making people feel included... People are very willing to be introspective around here...It's a natural conversation we would have.
Participant 4:	I think this would be an incredible tool. I could see this being part of our [onboarding process]. One of the things I would love for the HR department is to start having quarterly or bi-monthly lunch and learn opportunities and this would be a great tool.
Participant 5:	It probably could [generate conversation]. There are a lot of people who have difficulty in communication. [At my organization], we don't currently like to give or receive feedback because we view receiving feedback as someone making a mistake...We need to be less perfectionists because we are making a toxic cultural.
Participant 6:	The slides on emotional and cultural intelligence are really helpful in being self-aware and understanding how you see the world. [That in turn helps you] learn how that perception triggers certain attitudes and viewpoints.

Question No. 8: Is there anything in this presentation that might present a barrier to your organization's members? If so, what would that be?	
Participant 1:	I don't feel like there's anything in here that's a barrier. If you feel uncomfortable reading through this, one, you need to examine your biases and two, you probably need to examine why that is. There's nothing in here that should make you feel uncomfortable.
Participant 2:	I've got one board member who is worn out about [DEI topics]. You may need to tailor the presentation to each audience before you present it. I think there's some fatigue around this topic to be honest, so it's walking a tight rope between those who have a thirst to learn more and those who less engaged.
Participant 3:	I don't think so. There's the rare person that doesn't like to be introspective, but I think this is very open and welcoming. It's not intimidating. Even visually, it's organized very well, it's broken down into steps and lists, I think it's great.
Participant 4:	I don't think so. Even if something did make someone uncomfortable, it could be warranted and for their own good. It might take a little bit of uncomfortableness for you to overcome what's been hindering you from becoming a better person.
Participant 5:	I don't think that it would make anyone uncomfortable. Occasionally when we talk about the way we listen, we tend to prioritize white norms. I pause, you start, I pause you start. Cooperative overlap is not that. It promotes active listening. You might have to look out for things like that [when engaging with audience members].
Participant 6:	No.

Question No. 9: How likely would you be to utilize a presentation like this at your organization as a tool to generate awareness of emotional and/or cultural intelligence to enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion? Why is that so?	
Participant 1:	Definitely, especially for cultural intelligence.
Participant 2:	100 percent.
Participant 3:	Something like this is totally useful. People think they don't need to be told any more about something they already know about...but anything like this would help reinforce how necessary diversity, equity and inclusion is.
Participant 4:	Very likely.
Participant 5:	I think that it's possible, but I might go with an e-learning style module that utilizes voiceover with scenarios embedded. [And allow it to be] self-paced.
Participant 6:	Highly likely. This aligns very nicely in terms of equity. This convergence of emotional and cultural intelligence positions people to do their best work. When you are more self-aware, you are inviting others to bring their most real and authentic selves [to the table] and it pushes people to think beyond all possibilities.

Question No. 10: Is there anything you would add to this presentation to make it more useful to you? If so, what would that be?	
Participant 1:	On the part about the Big 5 test – go into a little more detail, that might be helpful. Encourage someone after they get their results to go back through them.
Participant 2:	Just those dividers.
Participant 3:	I don't think so. I love how you have the resources on the end. That might even be the only place to keep refining or narrow them down if it's going to a more broad audience. Other than that, I think it's great.
Participant 4:	I don't think so. There could be an accompanying handout, but it's not necessary. Maybe even a one-pager with the highlights.
Participant 5:	I think it depends on the audience, especially when we are looking at things like framing questions.
Participant 6:	I'm not sure at this point, I think it's absolutely terrific. Is there a test out there that gauges just emotional intelligence? That could be interesting.

Email Outreach to Participants

First Email:

Subject Line: Participation in thesis research

Hi _____,

I hope you are doing well! I am in the final stages of completing my Master's in Digital Communications at UNC and I'm now working on my thesis project. The purpose of my thesis project is to equip communicators – key stakeholders in improving organizational culture – with a teaching tool (PowerPoint presentation) they can utilize to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion within their organizations through the building of effective communication skills.

Participants in my research study will review the deck and provide their feedback so I can refine and better the PowerPoint deck communicators could use to train their organization's employees. Their feedback is critical to being able to build an effective tool for communicators to use. This deck is based on a pharmacy leadership I've guest lectured at the UNC Eshelman School of Pharmacy in the past.

As an expert in the field of [choose: communication, DEI, or employee engagement], I am hoping you be may be willing to participate in my thesis research by reviewing the attached slide deck and then scheduling a brief time to chat with me via Zoom. The Zoom session would take about 30 minutes. I've also attached a participation consent form for your review if you choose to participate. Your thoughts will help me to refine the presentation for my thesis.

Thank you so much for your consideration!

Brittany Jennings

IRB: 22-2230

Research contact: brittany_jennings@unc.edu

Follow-up Email if Needed:

Subject Line: Follow-up on thesis research participation

Hi _____,

Just wanted to follow up on my previous email to see if you've had time to consider participating in my thesis research? I would greatly appreciate your support as I work to complete my thesis.

Thank you so much for your help!

Brittany Jennings

IRB: 22-2230

Research contact: brittany_jennings@unc.edu

Interview Questions

Interview questions to be asked of participants following their review of the PowerPoint slide deck:

1. Tell me about the role you have at your organization.
2. Tell me about the DEI climate where you work?
3. How often do you speak to members within your organization about diversity, equity and inclusion? If these conversations do occur, talk about the setting and content of these conversations (are you driving the conversation or are others? What types of questions are being asked?)
4. How often do you speak to members within your organization about emotional and/or cultural intelligence? If these conversations do occur, talk about the setting and content of these conversations (are you driving the conversation or are others? What types of questions are being asked?)
5. Let's dive into the PowerPoint presentation you reviewed before our meeting today. What did you find most helpful in this PowerPoint presentation? Why were those elements most helpful to you?
6. What did you find confusing or least impactful in this PowerPoint presentation? Why did you find those elements confusing or less meaningful?
7. How did you feel about the inclusion of audience engagement elements within the PowerPoint (e.g. personality test; partner interview session)? Are there any engagement elements you would leave out, if so, which ones? Are there types of engagement elements you would like to see added in, if so, what would those be?

8. How might this presentation help you generate conversation about emotional and/or cultural intelligence among your organization's members?
9. Is there anything in this presentation that might present a barrier to your organization's members? If so, what would that be?
10. How likely would you be to utilize a presentation like this at your organization as a tool to generate awareness of emotional and/or cultural intelligence to enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion? Why is that so?
11. Is there anything you would add to this presentation to make it more useful to you? If so, what would that be?

Thank You Email to Participants Following Interview

Subject Line: Thank you for your participation

Hi _____,

Thank you again for participating in my MADC thesis research. I am thankful for your time reviewing the PowerPoint presentation on enhancing emotional and cultural intelligence, as well as your thoughtful responses as to how this presentation can be improved to further diversity, equity, and inclusion within organizations.

All the best,

Brittany Jennings

IRB: 22-2230

Research contact: brittany_jennings@unc.edu

PowerPoint Presentations

[Original/Piloted PowerPoint](#)

[Revised PowerPoint based on feedback](#)