

What Does Cultural Intelligence Have to Do With Performance and Retention?

Roundtable discussion by Leila Valoura – [leilavaloura@gmail.com](mailto:leilavaloura@gmail.com)

PART 1: CONTEXT

- Colleges and universities are more diverse.
- Positive outcomes from diversity range from increased self-esteem to greater academic achievement.
- Cultural intelligence: The ability to adapt and successfully interact across and within cultures both locally and internationally. The understanding of one's own culture and respect for others are key in this concept (Earley & Ang, 2003).

Earley, P. C., & Ang, S. (2003). *Cultural intelligence: An analysis of individual interactions across cultures*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.

Question: Do you think that on today's diverse campuses, helping students to develop an identity and sense of purpose boosts academic achievement, career motivation, and resilience? Why?

PART 2: IDENTITY

- Quote from a participant in Anna Ortiz and Silvia Santos' qualitative study about ethnic identity with 120 students at two highly diverse universities in Southern California. The research was published in the book *Ethnicity in College: Advancing Theory and Improving Diversity Practices on Campus*:

*Before I started taking black history classes and learning about my true heritage, I was not very proud of being African American. But now that I've read a lot of history and do all this studying, I'm very proud to be African.... As I learned more about being black and [about] black history, I really changed. It's really made me proud of being who I am. (African American student)*

Question: How do you feel about this quote? Does this remind you of anything you've learned or experienced?

PART 3: ACTIONS

Question: What types of culturally intelligent actions colleges and instructors can take to increase students' feelings of validation and sense of belonging, as they relate to students' intent to persist?

[Instructor Level]

- Show interest and learn about students' background (Where do they come from? What are their goals?)
- Connect class content to students' experiences.
- Show interest in students' progress.
- Identify and acknowledge hidden biases (The Harvard Implicit Bias test).
- Describe-Interpret-Evaluate Strategy (D-I-E): Description: What I See; Interpretation: What I Think (About What I See); and Evaluation: What I Feel (About What I Think).

[College Level]

- Invest on: Ethnic Student Organizations & Ethnic Studies and Language Courses.
- Deans and directors could offer cultural intelligence workshops for faculty and staff and provide the opportunity to take the self-assessment as well as the observer cultural intelligence questionnaire.
- Deans and directors could recognize faculty and staff who were successful in enhancing student persistence.