

## **My Cultural Awareness Profile (MyCAP)**

### **A Cultural Awareness Reflection Tool for Pre-Service Teachers**

MyCAP is a self reflection tool designed to support teacher educators' efforts in preparing culturally and globally aware teachers. MyCAP consists of 40 survey and short essay questions which are intended to begin the process of self-reflection and dialog. MyCAP provides an opportunity for pre-service teachers to reflect on their current knowledge, beliefs, and understandings across four dimensions of cultural awareness: **Exploring the Global World** (Global Perspective); **Learning about Different Cultures** (Cultural Understandings); **Knowing Ourselves as Cultural** (Perspective Consciousness); and **Communicating across Cultural Differences** (Intercultural Communication).

MyCAP is designed to be used by teacher educators in a number of ways:

- **To Support Cultural Reflection:**

- MyCAP is flexible and will support each teacher education program's existing approach to reflective practice.
- MyCAP is intended to be a "conversation starter" in teacher educators' work with pre-service teachers; it is the dialog that students' MyCAP reflections generate that will lead to important learning for students.
- MyCAP can be used with pre-service teachers at a number of points in their academic careers: prior to a course of study or school placement, across a program of study, or with individual students at any point in a program.
- MyCAP supports a developmental approach to student growth; students can retake the MyCAP at intervals within a program of study as a means of reflecting on their growth and adapting their cultural learning action plans.

- **As a Formative Assessment Tool:**

- Students' MyCAP will provide instructors with an opportunity to get to know individual students across the four dimensions of cultural awareness. MyCAP reflections will provide teacher educators with a means of understanding their students' current levels of cultural awareness.
- Students' MyCAP reflections can assist educators in the sequencing instructional aims with pre-service teachers.
- Students can retake MyCAP at several points in their program, providing teacher educators with a formative assessment vehicle to review developmental progress.

## Four Dimensions of Cultural and Global Awareness

MyCAP is grounded in the work of many theorists, most significantly Robert Hanvey (1976), Milton Bennett (1986, 1993), and King & Baxter Magolda (2005). MyCAP considers four dimensions of cultural awareness important for pre-service teachers:

### **DIMENSION 1: Exploring the Global World (Global Perspective)**

Pre-service teachers must be prepared to teach students who will be citizens of a rapidly changing global and interconnected world. They will need to help young people learn how to “think globally.” The challenge is to provide pre-service teacher opportunities to learn about global issues and analyze how local and global issues are interrelated and examine how globalization impacts the subject area(s) they will be teaching. They will then need to use this knowledge to design instruction that is infused with a global perspective.

### **DIMENSION 2: Learning about Different Cultures (Cultural Understanding)**

Pre-service teachers must be prepared to teach their students how to interact on a daily basis with people from all around the world (both in person and via technology). To do so, they must have an understanding of the diversity of cultural practices found in the world and the general cultural characteristics used to understand and compare cultures. They will then be able to more responsively teach students who are culturally/ethnically different from themselves and design curriculum and instructional activities that affirm and respect the cultural diversity found in the world.

### **DIMENSION 3: Knowing Ourselves as Cultural (Perspective Consciousness)**

To live within an increasingly global world requires that pre-service teachers and the students they will teach understand themselves as cultural. Pre-service teachers must develop a strong cultural identity, while also appreciating and respecting that other cultures are different from their own. They can then use these understandings to create classrooms that affirm the cultural identity development of students, while also teaching them how to work respectfully with those who are different from themselves.

### **DIMENSION 4: Communicating across Cultural Differences (Intercultural Communication)**

To teach in a culturally pluralistic nation, pre-service teachers must be able to effectively and respectfully communicate across cultural differences. They need to develop cultural empathy, considering how someone who is culturally different might perceive a given situation differently, and develop intercultural communication skills. They will then use these skills to responsively and effectively teach and relate to children and families who are culturally different from themselves, and create a classroom environment and design instruction that allows students to develop intercultural communication skills.

## References

- Bennett, M.J. (1986). A developmental approach to training for intercultural sensitivity. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*. 10 (2), 1979-95.
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- Hanvey, R. (1976). *An attainable global perspective*. New York: Center for Global Perspectives.
- King, P. & Baxter Magolda, B. (2005). A developmental model of intercultural maturity. *Journal of College Student Development*. 45 (6), 571-592.

## My Cultural Awareness Profile (MyCAP)

### A Cultural Awareness Self-Reflection Tool for Pre-Service Teachers

#### Introduction and Sample Questions

#### Your Journey Towards Cultural And Global Awareness

Learning to teach is an exciting and rewarding journey that includes preparing yourself and the young people you will teach to live and work within a multicultural and global world. We can't predict your future teaching career, but we can be sure of two things. First, you will work within classrooms where many of the students are culturally and/or ethnically different from yourself. Second, you will be preparing these students for life, employment, and citizenship within an increasingly interconnected society. Thus, 21st century teaching demands that you must be attentive to issues of culture across the spectrum of your own professional work.

Becoming culturally and globally aware requires that you gain knowledge, understandings, and skills across four dimensions:

- 1) *Exploring the Global World* (Global Perspective)
- 2) *Learning about Different Cultures* (Cultural Awareness)
- 3) *Knowing Ourselves as Cultural* (Perspective Consciousness)
- 4) *Communicating across Cultural Differences* (Intercultural Communication)

Each of us is at a different point in our journey to becoming culturally and globally aware. On our journeys, it is important to reflect on where we are at this point in our development and make plans for how we can move forward as we gain the knowledge, understandings, and skills necessary to become the best teacher you can be for all students. This **Cultural Awareness Profile (MyCAP)** is a self-reflection tool that provides you with the opportunity to consider your current levels of knowledge, skills, and understandings across these dimensions.

#### How MyCAP Works

MyCAP will ask you survey-style questions and give you the opportunity to engage in some written reflections related to each dimension. The questions are designed to help you understand your current knowledge and understandings. *Be as honest and open in answering these as possible. Remember there are no right answers in this self-reflection, only honest ones.*

You will then use your MyCAP with an instructor or mentor to reflect on each of the four dimensions of cultural and global awareness. As you learn about yourself and consider your current knowledge, understandings, and skills, you will work to create an action plan of steps you can take in your life and coursework toward your continued cultural and global learning.

## Sample Questions

### DIMENSION 1: *Exploring the Global World*

*Reflect on your current knowledge about the global world. . .*

1. I read and watch international newspapers, TV programs and movies.

<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Not Often</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Often</i>
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2. It will be easy to find a global connection in most topics I plan to teach.

<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>
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3. I think about how choices I make in my life might have a global impact.

<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Not Often</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Often</i>
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*Self-Reflective Writing:*

4. How do you define a global citizen? Do you consider yourself a global citizen?

### DIMENSION 2: *Learning about Different Cultures*

*Reflect on your current understandings of culture and other cultural groups. . .*

5. Talking about common cultural characteristics is different from stereotyping.

<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>
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6. I have had opportunities to get to know people from other cultures, either internationally or domestically

<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Not Often</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Often</i>
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7. When I meet new people, I try to learn about their cultural backgrounds.

<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Not Often</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Often</i>
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*Self-Reflective Writing:*

8. Describe three characteristics of a culture group other than your own.

### **DIMENSION 3: Knowing Ourselves as Cultural**

**Reflect on your own cultural identity . . .**

9. I think of myself as being part of a particular culture.

<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>
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10. I have been in situations where I felt like a cultural outsider.

<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Not Often</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Often</i>
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11. I understand that my perspectives may not be shared by people of other cultures.

<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>
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**Self-Reflective Writing:**

12. If someone from another country came to visit you, how would you describe your culture to him or her?

### **DIMENSION 4: Communicating across Cultural Differences**

**Reflect on your current intercultural communication skills. . .**

13. It is polite to slow down your speech when talking to someone who is learning English.

<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>
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14. I notice that people from other cultures use different gestures and body language when they talk.

<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Not Often</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Often</i>
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15. I adjust my communication styles depending on whom I am talking to.

<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Not Often</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Often</i>
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**Self-Reflective Writing:**

16. Describe a time when you talked with someone from a culture other than your own. How did you feel during the conversation? What went well in the conversation? What were some challenges you faced in trying to communicate effectively?