

PERCEPTIONS FROM INTERCULTURAL STUDENTS AT TIFFANY PARK  
ELEMENTARY OF AN EFFECTIVE TEACHER

A Research Proposal Submitted  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement  
for EDMA 5683

Avery N. Hopkins  
Northwest University  
Masters in Teaching Program  
June 2013

## **Abstract**

### **Perceptions from Intercultural Students at Tiffany Park Elementary of an Effective Teacher**

Students from around the world are continuing to fill the desk chairs of classrooms in America. These students come in with expectations of how they believe the classroom will operate and how their teacher will teach. Teachers in these schools will know how to better meet the needs of these students when they understand the expectations of that student. A case study was done to see if there was a difference between the types of teachers working in different cultures. Did the student respond better to one teacher opposed to the other? I interviewed two intercultural students at Tiffany Park Elementary, asking them to define what a “good teacher” is. These students were too young to remember much about the school they attended overseas which made it difficult to get a clear picture of where they came from. However, I concluded two things from this research:

1. Each student had things that they expected a good teacher would do or qualities they would possess. Although there were a few differences in their definitions which made that student unique, ultimately what they wanted out of their teacher was similar; a relationship and expectations in the classroom.

2. Although similar expectations surfaced in the interview, every student is different and has different needs. It is so important for teachers to find out the expectations of their cross cultural students, in order to effectively teach. They can do this by spending time with each student to understand what their education experience was like overseas.

## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	1
Literature Review .....	2
Research Question .....	8
Methodology .....	8
Data .....	11
Analysis .....	14
Implications.....	18
Conclusion .....	20
References .....	22

## **Introduction**

Students come from around the world to sit in school desks in public schools here in the Seattle area. Some of them may have previously been at a religious school, others may be comfortable sitting on the floor, and still others may have gone to school with their older brother and sat on his lap while the teacher spoke another language. These students come in to the classroom with expectations, ideas, and assumptions of how the class will run based off of their previous experiences. Teachers may not always know who those students are, where they come from, or what they are comfortable with.

The purpose of this research is to better understand students from cultures other than America, who are actively enrolled at Tiffany Park Elementary. Many students who fill the halls and classroom desks of these schools have grown up in cultures drastically different from what they are now experiencing. These intercultural students are faced with the challenges of living and learning in a new school with different expectations and requirements each day as they interact with students as well as their teachers.

This research will show areas where there is some divide between student and teacher. Because the public schools in the U.S. continue to fill with students of all backgrounds, this research will benefit any teacher who may sense a disconnection between their teaching and the intercultural student. I anticipate that this will show teachers how to relate to, encourage, and understand students of all different cultural backgrounds who will one day, be a part of their classroom.

## **Literature Review**

### *Definitions*

Because the purpose of this research will be to identify effective teaching in the classroom as seen by intercultural students, it is important to first define a few terms. The Oxford Dictionary the term teacher as, “a person who teaches, especially in a school.” The term “effective” is defined as, “successful in producing a desired or intended result,” and lastly the term “intercultural” is defined as, “taking place between cultures” (Oxford English Dictionary, 1989). If these three terms are combined, one would gather that an effective teacher is one who is successful in producing a desired result with their students; including their intercultural students who have spent time in more than one culture. Although these conclusions seem obvious, it is important that the words are clearly defined. The interviews that take place will push students to define these terms on their own, so it is important that both the researcher and subjects have a mutual understanding.

### *Student Perceptions*

Researcher Franco Vaccarino believes that all students assess the quality of a course partly on how “good” the teacher is. So, are teachers possibly “being culturally insensitive, or placing undue stress on (students) by upsetting their existing educational and cultural beliefs?” (Vaccarino, 2009, pg. 105). Vaccarino completed a research study in New Zealand to find out how students and teachers define good teachers and good students. The researcher concluded that many students and teachers had different ideas of what certain terms meant within the classroom context of which defined good teaching and good students. Each culture defines words differently, and what one student may

think as disrespectful, may not even be noticed by the teacher. He concluded that it can be very difficult for students to meet the expectations of teachers and vice versa. This study was rather broad as there was not enough detail in the questionnaire that was given or the cultural background of the students' responses. However, it did suggest that there may be a disconnection between teacher-student interactions.

Researcher B. Fraser looked at the differences between student and teacher perceptions and preferred classroom settings. This study was done by giving questionnaires to 34 teachers and 766 students in New South Wales. The results showed that the teachers' actual environment scores were mostly higher than their students. It also showed that students' and teachers' preferred environment scores were higher than their actual perceptions. The researcher concluded with discussing why having preferred forms of classroom settings is so important in this field of study (Fraser, 1982, pg. 518). Based on the validity in the method and conclusions drawn, I believe the researchers had specific enough topics to see some fascinating and accurate results.

#### *Preparing Teachers and the Classroom*

The authors of "Dialectally Diverse Classrooms" argue that "Teacher education grounded in linguistic research and principles can change teachers' dialect-related attitudes and practices" (Godley, Wheeler, Sweetland, Minnici, & Carpenter, 2006, pg. 35). If teachers are not prepared to work with students who have different dialects then it can not only lower the teachers' perceptions of the students, but lower the academic achievement of students. To help teachers have a thriving and culturally mixed classroom, DDC proposed three themes that could help teachers be effective in their teaching. The first was to anticipate and overcome resistance to dialect diversity, the

second was to address issues of language identity and power within the classroom, and the third was to emphasize practical pedagogical applications of research on language variation. Teachers gave their testimony in this study, verifying that they had a healthier classroom where students and teacher respected dialect differences and intercultural students felt more comfortable in their home room.

The authors of “Authentic Learning” did a qualitative case study that prepared students who were not yet teachers, to work in an environment alongside intercultural students. The authors claim that “Efforts to create learning environments that celebrate value, and authentically portray diversity in a positive manner are becoming increasingly important” (Mbugua, Wadas, Casey, & Finnerty, 2004, pg. 237). These teachers prepared to teach their students about intercultural diversity in 3 different stages. The first phase was content and experience phase where they took surveys about themselves and their background knowledge about multicultural education. The second phase was training where the teachers learned about the different types of students that may be coming into their classroom and the third phase was when they transferred their knowledge to the classroom. The student teachers set up cultural learning groups and taught in the classroom of a low multicultural-populated classroom. The results showed that many parents of these children and the students themselves were enlightened and fascinated about different cultures, students around the world, and the connectedness of it all. Students walked away with a greater appreciation intercultural students.

The authors of “Making Ends Meet” also said that “schools of education are doing little to educate preservice teachers to work effectively with language minority students” (Evans, Arnot-Hopffer, & Jurich, 2005, pg. 75). A qualitative case study was

set up where a bilingual education classroom and a mainstream education classroom were combined to see how the students and teachers of both classrooms would respond. Both teachers took turns teaching the classroom as a whole. The pace of teaching slowed a bit because bilingual students needed extra attention to keep up and more time was spent on meeting individual needs of students. The results that followed were exciting in that the students from both classrooms loved the experience. Mainstream students had gained a deep interest in bilingual education and bilingual students felt like they fit in and were a part of a family even though there was an obvious difference between the two types of students. The teachers also gained from the experience. The teacher from the mainstream classroom grew to appreciate all that the bilingual teacher did to effectively teach their students.

#### *The Role of the Student*

One principal from an elementary school in Iceland was faced with a challenge as more and more immigrant students flooded the halls of his school. These students needed to feel welcomed and valued, but how? He saw the need for change within the school and proposed a new idea. "I could not use traditional teaching strategies. I had to find new ways and approach the task from new angles" (Adalbjarnardottir & Runarsdottir, 2006, pg. 180). Although the teacher role within the life of an intercultural student is vital, it is also important that the student feels safe and accepted in his own classroom. If students cannot feel safe among their peers, they will never feel safe enough to learn. Principal Magnus focused on students learning *from* students instead of students learning *about* students. He encouraged teachers at his school to allow students



in the existing classroom to reach out and get to know the intercultural student on their own.

Therese Knecht Dozier (1997), a current teacher agreed and said that, “We need to instill in students a desire to learn about other cultures and recognition of the importance of this type of learning” (Dozier, 1997, pg. 253). If a new student had come in to the classroom and was immediately labeled based on their language, race, or religion, the teacher asked students in their class to research about the culture before making assumptions about who that student was.

Results of how these two proposals affected the students were not recorded and would have been helpful. However, I agree that the responses from students in the interviews I conduct will largely depend on how these intercultural students are treated by their peers.

### *The Role of the Teacher*

A study from the Israeli Educational System looked at counselors working with intercultural students in public schools. Thirty seven counselors were interviewed and the qualitative study resulted in four different approaches in which counselors took with the students. The first approach was a culturally encapsulated assimilator. This approach did not allow the counselor to spend enough time with the new student; therefore the student did not connect with the counselor. The second approach was a self-facilitator which gave the counselor an overload of work to do with the intercultural student and not enough time with the other students. The third approach was the counselor as a specialist. These counselors were intercultural adults as well, and connected very well with the new students. However they began to stereotype the students coming in because

of their great knowledge about these students' backgrounds. The last approach was the counselor as a cultural translator. These counselors connected students in school with the intercultural student and found this to be very rewarding (Tatar, 1998, pg. 342). For a stronger approach in the validity, the researchers could have gone to more than just they counselors but also talk with the students for more in depth research.

Another study was done in Israel looking at the Eureka Model. "The Eureka Model aimed at identifying hidden potential in the visual arts and sciences through the process of enrichment among children from different socio-economic or cultural backgrounds" (Zorman, 1997, pg. 56). A group of intercultural students were looked at over the course of 7 years. The first phase of the treatment exposed all students to a supportive learning environment that provided them with many hands on experiences. Their work in class was observed and rated based on talent by their teachers. The second phase took the selected students who were identified as talented and allowed them to explore in depth, their talent areas for the next 5 years. What this study aimed to do was give intercultural students an equal chance in the public school system to thrive, succeed, and find their strong talents. Only a small subject group was selected but the researchers did look at grades, confidences progress which enhanced the validity. Students' grades did improve but it is not certain that this model was the reason for it. Students did however, comment on how they thoroughly enjoyed the experience and want to continue on in their special education on into high school.

## **Research Question**

How do a few intercultural students, who have attended school in another country, but now attend Tiffany Park Elementary School, define a “good teacher”?

## **Methodology**

### *Method and Rationale*

I wanted to fill a gap that I believe these studies did not fill. If teachers want to be more effective at reaching intercultural students, it is important that they treat each student as an individual and not a lump sum. It was vital that the cultural backgrounds of the students who were participating in these studies were clearly identified and thoroughly researched. I planned to implement this into my research study. In order for public schools to meet the needs of intercultural students within the classroom, the school must understand what the needs of the students are. This will happen by getting to know the intercultural students in the school. Just like teachers have expectations of their students, intercultural students also come in to class with an expectation of how the class will go based on their previous experiences. The importance of my study is to understand those expectations of the intercultural student. By doing so, teachers, who may sense a disconnection between their teaching style, and the intercultural student will benefit by seeing areas where they as a teacher can improve.

I went about this research question by way of a qualitative case study. A qualitative case study was best for my research because I look at only two students within one school. This type of research helped me to focus on the responses of just a few students with valuable information about this specific school and the teachers within their classroom. A case study helped me discover how intercultural students felt about their

classroom experience. Based off the students' drawings and spoken answers, I was able to draw some conclusions about the teaching methods at this school.

I did not want to look at all intercultural students in the Seattle area. In fact, I did not even want to look at all the students at Tiffany Park Elementary. All I wanted to know about are those two students in two different classes, their experiences, and their opinions. A quantitative study would not suffice for the rich picture that I was trying to paint from the interviews of these students because a quantitative study would only give me numerical data in order to prove a point, which I was not trying to do.

This methodology was also chosen for the research because it is fitting with the subjects' age and maturity level. Young elementary students may not have the ability to sit in a room with a stranger and answer questions completely and clearly. This is why I have chosen to allow more freedom in their responses. I believed that the students' expressions would uncover more to me than question and answer responses.

### *Sample*

For this study, I was only able to interview two students from Tiffany Park Elementary School. Student A was a 10 year old female in fourth grade from Vietnam. Student B was an 11 year old male in fifth grade from Ukraine. After working with the counselor to help me find cross-cultural students, I was able to track down 6 different students that had been to school in another country before coming to Tiffany Park. I decided that I would take any student who would be willing to interview and who would return the permission slip. These are the two students out of the six who did those two things.

### *Instrumentation*

I collected data from these two students by way of a face to face interview. The students responded to a few pre-selected interview questions as well as some follow up questions that were specific to each candidate. A 20 minute interview for each student gave me time to ask some preliminary questions and then hear their personal responses. I was also able to ask more in depth and clarifying questions, as well as give students time to share anything else that they could think of that they wanted to add. During the interviews, I was hoping to have some students draw a picture or act out what an effective teacher looked like to them, but both students decided to just verbally share with me their opinion on the topic.

That being said, as each student was talking with me I was writing down there responses as well as recording our conversation. That way I was able to transcribe the whole conversation word for word, to look for similarities, trends, and differences between the two interviews.

Each student also submitted another artifact that they worked on during the interview. I had crayons and paper sitting out and neither of them seemed interested in them at first. But while they chatted with me, I saw their eyes wander to the paper. One of them ended up drawing a picture of a classroom, and the other wrote what he wanted to be when he grew up in his 1<sup>st</sup> language.

### *Analysis/Validity*

After each interview with the students, I listened to the recordings of each as I typed up word for word what was said in each discussion. Then, having both of the typed interviews in front of me, they were thoroughly read and re-read as I looked for similar

responses, notable pauses after a question was presented, or something that I did not catch while conducting the interview.

Through this research, I hoped that the students would shed light on how well teachers in the U.S. are teaching, or some areas where they need improvement when compared to the teachers they had in the country their first lived in. I was able to find similarities in questions that I asked, as well as their responses. The similarities found within the conversations were not exact, but I was able to pull out some trending ideas that came from each student. I was also able to see some differences in each student's thinking.

Once I found those commonalities and dissimilarities, I categorized them in a way that made sense to me, and in a way that would launch me into further research about this topic. Now I not only wanted to know how cross-cultural student defined a good teacher, but why did they define them that way? Did it have to do with what city they lived in? How long they spend overseas? The list of questions that arose from this analysis calls for even more research and more interviews.

As a researcher, I realized that I began to formulate a bias after the first interview. Once I heard information about Student A, I naturally assumed I would uncover similar answers from Student B. As I listened to the recording I noticed that some of my questions may have been set up in a way that would reach a particular answer. This was unintentional but definitely something that could have been more controlled.

## **Data**

Student A is a 10 year old female and has one sibling. She lives with her parents and is in 4<sup>th</sup> grade at Tiffany Park Elementary. Student A grew up in Vietnam and was

unsure of what city specifically she lived in. She remembers going to school in Vietnam but attending Kindergarten at Tiffany Park Elementary. We concluded together that she went to preschool in Vietnam. Both of her teachers at Tiffany Park and in Vietnam were female.

I asked Student A if she could define or describe to me what a good teacher is. I gave her the option of drawing me a picture, acting out a drama, singing me a song, or just directly explaining to me her answer; whatever she felt most comfortable with. Student A decided that she would explain it to me.

There were five qualities of which made up what she considered a “good teacher”. Student A said, “A good teacher is someone who teaches you and then they review so you can memorize it in your brain. They review things that you partially don’t know and then you review, and then you learn it a second time.” The second thing she said was, “If you need help on something, you just ask them (the teacher) and they could help you when you are at recess. You could come in and they could help you.” Thirdly, “A good teacher always tells you to be friendly to everyone and whoever you work with, at least you get the stuff done.” Student A then addressed discipline from the teacher with this statement, “If kids get in trouble, my teacher puts their name on the board and if you have a check you have to owe five minutes of second recess; a good teacher does this.”

After these four statements by Student A, I wanted to see if I could pull any more helpful information out of our conversation. I asked her if she could tell me what it is that lets her know her teacher cares about her. This was her last statement, “My teacher when I talk, she looks at me and she listens to me, if I have a question she listens to me and answers it.”

I asked Student A if she could remember anything about her teacher in Vietnam and she said no. However she did remember that she enjoyed going to class in Vietnam because she could have snack in class. Lastly, I asked her if she enjoyed going to school in Vietnam or the U.S. better. She said, "I like going to school here better because in Vietnam, if you don't follow a directions, they (the teachers) would take a ruler and hit you. Also in Vietnam we laid on the floor in school. Our chairs are way more comfortable here."

Student B is an 11 year old male who lives with his 5 brothers and sisters and his mom and dad. He was born in the Ukraine, but he does not remember the city that he grew up in, except for that it was a small town in the middle of the Mountains. He does remember that his family was so poor that they were not able to buy a lot of food. His family ended up buying chickens and a milk cow to provide for the needs of the family.

He attended Kindergarten in Ukraine and then moved to the U.S. when he was six years old. When he came to the U.S., he had to retake Kindergarten and learn English all at the same time. I also asked Student B if he could define for me what a "good teacher" is. I gave him the same options as I did Student A, and he also decided to explain to me what his thoughts were. He summed up all that he had to say about teachers with this statement, "In my own opinion a good teacher explains directions well. She talks with students and has a good relationship with the students. She has a good talking way, a good influence, and she would let the students work in groups and share things together or if they found something out which is fun. Oh yeah, and she gives us free time and she is funny."



Student B veered off of the topic a bit and decided to talk a lot about the structure of the classroom. He said that the school in the Ukraine was a little bit harder than the school in the U.S., “There are more projects, and more free-time in the U.S. In Ukraine there is more simple learning, like talking, reading, writing, and drawing; more effective learning.”

I then asked him if he had a favorite teacher between the two and he said, “No because both of the teachers are the same and both are good teachers.” He also said it is hard to compare the teachers because one of them was his Kindergarten teacher, and the other is his 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, so their teaching methods are totally different. Lastly, I asked him if he had a school that he preferred over the other. He said that He would prefer to stay in the U.S. He then went on to explain that a long, long time ago, teachers in the Ukraine would whip you if you got in trouble. He made it very clear that this did not happen to him; it was way before even his grandparents were in school.

### **Analysis**

Although these students are not the same gender, they are not from the same country, and they are not of the same age, I found some common themes within each of these students’ memories and experiences as I spoke with them, interacted with them, and then revisited the conversations that we had.

#### *A Common Misconception*

The way that this interview was set up and conducted, led these two students to think that I was asking them to compare their two teachers, and tell me the differences between the two (one from the country they moved from and the current teacher they had at Tiffany Park Elementary). Although the information they provided was helpful, I did

not necessarily want their comparison to be between two specific teachers. I was hoping that they would have more characteristic features of a “good teacher” instead of focusing on comparing the two

### *Memory of Homeland*

Both students had a vague memory of the life they lived before coming to America. Neither of them remembered the city they lived in, or really much about the teachers in the school. Both of them said that they could recall what their old teacher looked like, but other than that, they did not have much information to offer. Loss of memory from early childhood is not uncommon but this did affect the data I was hoping to find.

One thing that both students did recall was that in their country, if a student in school caused trouble or did something wrong, they were physically abused (Student A said “hit with a ruler” and Student B said “whipped”). There was no further discussion on this matter. It was interesting however, that this was mentioned by both students from two different countries. This activity in their public school obviously was not a positive memory, but was one that they were still willing to share.

Because of this inability to recall what their first teacher was like, they were not able to compare that teacher to the teachers they had here in America very well. Student A did not even try. When I asked her if she remembered her teacher in America, she just said, “No.” However, Student B tried very hard to compare the Kindergarten teacher in Ukraine to the 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher here. He ended up coming to the conclusion multiple times that they were both very similar.

However the responses of these two students, although they were vague, did provide some information for me. All of the characteristics that they gave me in which made up a “good teacher” must have come from the teachers that they had here in the U.S., more specifically, the teachers that they have currently. This makes it easy for me to see what teachers are doing right in the classroom for their intercultural students here in America.

#### *U.S. Teachers Have Expectations*

Both students mentioned that having expectations or discipline is what makes up a good teacher. Student A said, “If kids get in trouble, my teacher puts their name on the board, and if you have a check you have to owe five minutes of second recess; a good teacher does this.” Student B said that the teacher explains directions well. Students need boundaries to feel safe and to function normally in the classroom setting and it is important that teachers are aware of this. “Effective teachers use both rules and procedures” (Marzano, Gaddy, Foseid, Foseid, & Marzano, J.S., 2005, p.5).

While working at Tiffany Park Elementary, I have seen how important it is to the teachers to enforce consequences and establish expectations, and it is apparent that the students have noticed it as well. Although teachers may not know how the intercultural student will initially react to consequences, it is important that they know the teacher is in control. According to Fish and Trumbell (2008), “Every choice a teacher makes about organization or management reflects a cultural perspective, whether it is visible or not. Likewise, the teacher’s choices will affect students in different ways, depending upon how the children have been socialized within their home cultures” (p. 2).

### *Relationship with the Student*

Both students said in one way or another, a good teacher has a connection with the kids in the classroom. Student B said, “The teacher has a good relationship with the students.” And Student A said that she knows her teacher cares because she is looking at her when speaking and listens to her needs. Both of these students value a two way relationship with their teacher. This means that each party is respected, and what they have to say is important to the other.

#### *Student A*

What I concluded from the interview with Student A is that she values time with her teacher. A good teacher takes time to help you learn a concept, a good teacher is available when you need her for anything, she gives you her time and attention when you are talking, and even when you are being disciplined; you are in the classroom spending time with the teacher. Now Student A’s value of time could be for countless reasons. Perhaps it’s because she is a female and her current teacher is a female, therefore she feels a closeness with her and likes the time spent building that relationship. It could also be because this specific student has grown up with parents and a family that puts a high importance on quality time. There is no data that I currently possess that could uncover why Student A had a strong correlation between a good teacher and quality time.

#### *Student B*

What I concluded from the interview with Student B is that he likes to have fun. He said that he would rather stay in schools in the U.S. I suspect this is because he is having fun in his current classroom. Whether he is working in groups with friends, or laughing at his funny teacher, it is a fun place to be. Tiffany Park Elementary may not

have as much “effective learning” as Student B said was more prevalent in Ukraine, but he has more free-time here and enjoys coming to class. This is a compliment to his teacher at Tiffany Park. 5<sup>th</sup> graders like to have fun. They are at a place in their schooling where real friendships form, and a maturity comes, as teachers hand more and more of the responsibility over. Student B is enjoying the freedom that his teacher is giving him. Not to say that students in this classroom are not learning, but they are experiencing the joy of making their own decisions.

### **Implications/Recommendations**

To restate the purpose of this research, “The importance of my study will be to understand the expectations of the intercultural student. By doing so, teachers, who may sense a disconnection between their teaching style and the intercultural student will benefit by seeing areas where they as a teacher can improve.” I cannot conclude from this research any areas where teachers can improve their relationship with the cross-cultural student in their classroom; there was not a negative thing said about either of the teachers at Tiffany Park. However there are some things that I can suggest that teachers can continue to do.

Teachers, continue to give time to your students. This not only goes for the cross-cultural student from Vietnam, but every student. Feeling cared for and listened to by your teacher, even at that young of an age, is invaluable to a child. It means that you, the teacher with all the authority; power to take away recess or allow free time, is willing to care for a student who has needs and is willing to just listen.

Teachers, continue to make expectations and enforce them. We can see that this is an important part of these two students’ lives; to know that their teacher has thought

through and planned the day, the needs of the child, and the best way to keep each student safe.

Teachers, get to know your students. I know that before conducting this research, both of these students were absolutely thrilled to be a part of the process. They asked the counselor (who was the middle-man between the students and I until the interview) almost every day for a two weeks, “When do we get to share about Ukraine/Vietnam with Ms. Hopkins?” I believe that intercultural students have incredible stories to tell and may not be given the means to share their lives with their peers and their teacher. Give these cross-cultural students a set-aside time or day to celebrate the lives they lived overseas, and allow other students in the classroom to hear some of the amazing experiences that they have had.

Teachers are doing an increasingly better job working with cross-cultural students. I know this because I have seen it first-hand. I’ve seen second language students being pulled daily for specialized help and I have seen multiple lessons taught by teachers that celebrate diversity and cultures. These are things that were not as prevalent when I was in grade school. However, there is more that teachers can always be doing. Simply taking time to hear what these students have to say, can open up a whole new side of education that you, as the teacher may have never thought of before.

“The first step in promoting [learning] for culturally and linguistically diverse students is recognizing the possible reasons they may struggle to perform well...The second step is using this knowledge to make appropriate modifications to [instruction]” (Watson, Houtz, 2002, pg. 267). Teachers cannot assume they know what is best for the

intercultural student unless they ask that student for their specific need; and it is clear to us that each student does have very different needs.

This study opens up room for more questions. If I was to do this study again, I would have asked more in depth questions. For example, when Student A says that her teacher listens to her, I would ask what in particular she likes to talk about with her teacher. I would ask more questions about school overseas such as, when you were at school, do you remember the types of things that you did for fun? I realized through this study that the more the student talked about school (which seemed to be easier than specifically targeting the teacher), the more I was able to find out about the student and their individual wants as a student and their expectations coming in to a classroom.

## **Conclusion**

Although I set out to find as much as I could about teachers from overseas compared to teachers in the U.S., I believe I found out most about the individual student. Just like what was stated previously, students are individuals and therefore need to be treated as individuals. There were no tremendous differences between the teachers described from overseas and the teachers described teaching in the U.S. However, by interviewing these students, it has become clearer that in order to better meet the needs of each student, you must take time to know and understand that student and adapt to be a “good teacher” to them. It means that teachers have to modify and adjust their teaching method, their teaching style and perhaps the environment in the classroom for each student. It may mean that teachers take more time to listen, or spend more time going over expectations, or it may mean that the teacher needs to loosen up and give more freedom to the student. If teachers would consider the reality of the students walking in to

their classroom and sitting in their desks, if they would really consider where that child came from, where he grew up, and what school was like before here, then I think not only would the relationship between teacher and intercultural student thrive, but that student would feel respected and empowered in a place that is so very different from home.



## References

- Adalbjarnardottir, S., & Runarsdottir, E. (2006). A leader's experiences of intercultural education in an elementary school: Changes and challenges. *Theory into practice* , 45(2), 177-186. Retrieved from [http://nu.worldcat.org/title/a-leaders-experiences-of-intercultural-education-in-an-elementary-school-changes-and-challenges/oclc/441426497&referer=brief\\_results](http://nu.worldcat.org/title/a-leaders-experiences-of-intercultural-education-in-an-elementary-school-changes-and-challenges/oclc/441426497&referer=brief_results)
- Dozier, K. (1997). Using our national diversity as an educational resource. *Social studies* , 88(6), 252-255. Retrieved from <http://ehis.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?sid=541cdc64-d355-4ae8-bd02-f4ad8a11529c%40sessionmgr14&vid=1&hid=23&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#db=pbh&AN=9712232988>
- "Effective." Oxford English Dictionary. (1989) 2nd. ed. Oxford: Oxford UP. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com>
- Evans, C., Arnot-Hopffer, E., & Jurich, D. (2005). Making ends meet: Bringing bilingual education and mainstream students together in preservice teacher education. *Equity & excellence in education*, 38(1), 75-88. Retrieved from <http://nu.worldcat.org/title/making-ends-meet-bringing-bilingual-education-and-mainstream-students-together-in-preservice-teacher-education>
- Fish, C.R. & Trumbull, E. (2008). *Managing diverse classrooms: how to build a students' cultural strengths*. United States: ASCD
- Fraser, B. (1982). Differences between student and teacher perceptions of actual and preferred classroom learning environment. *Educational evaluation and policy*

*analysis*, 4(4), 511- 519. Retrieved from Article Stable URL:  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1163661>

Godley, A., Sweetland , J., Wheeler, R., Minnici, A., & Carpenter , B. (2006). Preparing teachers for dialectally diverse classrooms. *Research news and comment*, 35(8), 30-37. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/sici/worldcat.org>

"Intercultural." Oxford English Dictionary. (1989) 2nd. ed. Oxford: Oxford UP.  
Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com>

Marzano, R.J., Gaddy, B.B., M.C.,Foseid,M.P.,& Marzano ,J.S.(2005).A handbook for classroom management that works. United States: ASCD.

Mbugua, T., Wadas, J., Casey, M., & Finnerty, J. (2004). Authentic learning: Intercultural, international, and intergenerational experiences in elementary classrooms. *Childhood education*, 80(5), 237-244. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/210391877?accountid=28772>

Tatar, M. (1998). Counselling immigrants: School contexts and emerging strategies. *British journal of guidance & counselling*, 26(3), 337-353. Retrieved from <http://ehis.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?sid=2014e2e5-51a7-4174-a117-0db627e49c6a%40sessionmgr104&vid=1&hid=101&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#db=pbh&AN=1255645>

"Teacher." Oxford English Dictionary. (1989) 2nd. ed. Oxford: Oxford UP. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com>

Vaccarino, F. (2009). Learning and teaching in culturally diverse classrooms: A case study exploring teachers' and students' perceptions. *The international journal of learning*, 16(4), 105-117. Retrieved from <http://ehis.ebscohost.com/ehots/L&T>

Watson, Silvana M R; Houtz, Lynne E. Intervention in School and Clinic 37.5 (May 2002): 267.

Zorman, R. (1997). Eureka: The cross-cultural model for identification of hidden talent through enrichment. *Psychology and behavioral sciences collection*, 20(1), 54-62. Retrieved from <http://ehis.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?sid=b81459a7-5d5a->