The Intersection of Culture and Behavior in Social Studies Classrooms

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Abstract: Social studies is a school subject that aims to enmesh local and global concerns and ways of understanding the world. It is a complex task to position local concerns and perspectives within an intercultural vantage. In turn, this objective for teaching and learning also presumes that students interact with social studies material from fixed and definable cultures, identities, and family structures, as well as in accordance with normalized behavioral expectations for students in school. Children who have been adopted from foreign countries, and particularly children who have been placed in transnational families and homes, might have multiple and shifting identities and cultural identities. Within this article, we discuss the findings of an investigation into the experiences of families of children with Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD) who are transnational adoptees. We argue for the great need for teachers to gain intercultural competence in order to meet the needs of all students in terms of academics, behaviors, and cultures. Significantly, we consider how the use of intercultural competence might support the practices and perspectives of social studies teachers. We explore the intersection of culture and behavior in deliberating over intercultural competence, transnational adoptees, and social studies classrooms.

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Social studies is a school subject that aims to enmesh local and global concerns and ways of understanding the world. This objective for teaching and learning presumes that students interact with social studies material from fixed and definable cultures, identities and family structures, as well as in accordance with normalized behavioral expectations for students in school. The National Council for the Social Studies (2009) asserted the great need for social studies teachers to account for the increasingly culturally pluralistic and global world. Teachers in this content area are expected to interact with students from diverse backgrounds while helping students to acquire the tools necessary for societal participation in such multicultural settings:

Both America and the world are rapidly changing, creating a far more multiethnic, multiracial, multi-lingual, multi-religious and multicultural context for elementary education. Thus, elementary educators must be prepared to value and to serve a far more diverse group of young learners and families than at any time in the past. Social studies must be a vital part of the

elementary curriculum in order to prepare children to understand and participate effectively in an increasingly complex world. (National Council for the Social Studies, 2009, para. 4)

Schools might represent complex terrains for students from diverse backgrounds (Chan & Schlein 2010), particularly among those who enter U.S. classrooms as newcomers or refugees from other countries (Chan, 2007). While the rates of international adoption have recently begun to reflect a decline in numbers (Voigt & Brown, 2013), many children who have been adopted from other countries are currently reaching school age and entering U.S. schools. Children who have been adopted from foreign countries, and children who have been placed in transnational families and homes, might have multiple and shifting identities and cultural identities (Baden, 2002).

Transcultural and transracial adoptee learners might speak multiple languages at varying levels of fluency, and they might position themselves as members of different cultures depending on the nature of classroom activities and interactions. Although pertinent to all disciplines to some extent, teaching social studies to children who might identify themselves as global and local citizens with memories, experiences and/or attachments to life in different countries and cultures might complicate lessons on civics, history and culture. Social studies teachers, by virtue of their disciplinary focus, may be especially well-positioned to bridge any potential cultural gaps and attend to divergent perspectives on history, culture and civic engagement.

Jackson (1990) highlighted how the hidden curriculum often surrounds behavioral expectations that are rooted in norms and expectations for future societal participation. He claimed that students who do not behave in accordance with such culturally influenced behaviors might face lower academic grades and punishments. Transnational adoptee learners might speak English or have English names, yet their behaviors might have been shaped in other cultures and cultures of schooling. Moreover Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD) is a severe behavior disorder that has been associated with childhood trauma (Cain, 2006). Such traumas include child abuse, life in an institution, and adoption (Taft, Ramsay, & Schlein, 2015). Children who are adopted from foreign countries are usually in institutional settings prior to their final placement as a result of lengthy international adoption processes. Thus, a good proportion of transnational adoptee pupils might interact within classrooms and understand classroom interactions from a range of diverse cultural and behavioral perspectives.

Within this article, we discuss the findings of an investigation into the experiences of families of children with RAD who are transnational adoptees. We argue for the great need for social studies teachers to meet the needs of all students in terms of academics, behaviors and cultures. We further consider how the use of intercultural competence might support the practices and perspectives of social studies teachers. We explore the intersection of culture and behavior in deliberating over intercultural competence, transnational adoptees and social studies classrooms.

Relevant Literature

In this section we highlight a discussion on reactive attachment disorder, Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and literature that acknowledges culture as a foundation for teaching in diverse schools and within a global society. We then review the goals for social studies classes in relation to culture and identity. We also discuss research that links culture; culturally responsive pedagogy; and students with

special academic, behavioral, cultural or language needs. We then address the literature on intercultural competence and teaching for diversity.

Students with Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD)

RAD is an emotional and behavioral disorder that constitutes a child's inability to attach to the primary caregiver. RAD is often connected to cases of child abuse in young children (Chaffin et al., 2006). It is also commonly associated with adopted children, who have experienced different primary caregivers. Significantly, transnational adopted children are more likely to have lived in orphanages or other institutional settings for prolonged periods due to the extended time required for completing petitions for international adoption. Thus, transnational adoptees are more likely to demonstrate attachment issues or to be assessed with RAD (Miller, Chan, Tirella, & Perrin, 2009).

Students with RAD present emotional and behavioral issues that are unpredictable, extreme and challenging (Taft, Ramsay, & Schlein, 2015; Taft, Schlein, & Ramsay, 2016), which affect their capacities for curricular interactions (Schwartz & Davis, 2006). In fact, the literature emphasized that children with this disorder are the most difficult student population with which educators work (Dunlap & Fox, 2007). Cain (2006) noted how difficult it might be to discover triggers for episodes among students with RAD. Students with RAD also do not often respond to interventions that are useful for working with students who have other behavioral or emotional disorders (Thomas, 2005).

When education professionals work with students with behavioral issues, especially students with behavioral needs that are as intense as these involved with children with RAD, it is imperative that all educators consider the whole child (Cain, 2006; Trout & Thomas, 2005). That means that educators must incorporate any number of variables that might impact behavior. One of the most important variables might be for teachers to understand the students' cultures, backgrounds, and any and all family variables (Taft, Ramsay, & Schlein, 2015).

For children who are transnational adoptees, this would include extended families that might be overseas. As discussed above, children with RAD can, and often do, explode for reasons that no one can anticipate, including special education professionals and behavioral specialists. Behavior could very well be triggered by an insensitive instructional delivery that does not take into account the personal history of the child. Given the cultural nature of social studies content, this is more likely to occur due to insensitive instructional delivery by a teacher of social studies as compared to teachers in other content areas.

Differentiation began with special education. Now it is the mantra for all instruction, especially when teachers are interacting with diverse groups of learners. For students with RAD it is even more important, on the part of the teacher, to consciously incorporate cultural knowledge and understanding into any differentiated lessons.

Universal Design for Learning

One method for addressing differentiated instruction and for attending to the diverse needs of all students, is a concept called Universal Design for Learning (UDL). UDL allows teachers to design

instructions that meet the needs of students with diverse learning needs. UDL allows students to access content through adjusted instructional methodologies and materials. Progress can be assessed for these students by using appropriate and multiple assessment practices (National Center on Universal Design for Learning, 2015).

Boon, Fore III, Blankenship, and Chalk (2007) noted that there is a particular need for enhanced universal curricular design in the subject of social studies that meets the needs of all students. The authors argued that social studies textbooks do not engage students with background knowledge of historical events. They further highlighted that contextual information is usually not given in social studies learning materials and the pictures included in social studies textbooks often do not accurately portray the topics of study.

Such issues with social studies instructional materials points to the need to attend more closely to UDL so that all students might be able to grasp social studies material. In turn, the lack of background and contextual information might be especially relevant for students with RAD, as these children might have multiple and layered understandings of home, family and culture. This would be even more of a complex barrier to learning social studies among students with RAD who are transnational adoptees.

Brophy and Alleman (2002) focused on universal cultural understanding as a key element in universal curriculum design in social studies classes. They argued that there are certain themes and concepts of culture that are universal for all students, regardless of their backgrounds. The findings of their investigation highlighted that teaching in social studies needs to be oriented toward such common topics in culture.

Brophy and Alleman's (2002) study indicated that cultural universals to be taught to students in elementary level social studies lessons included the concepts of shelter and clothing. Yet, such concepts might be problematic for students with RAD. This group of students might have a heightened sensitivity toward notions of shelter, given their own possible experiences with multiple primary caregivers and their potential experiences of shifting primary living environments. As well, students with RAD, who have severe attachment issues, might respond negatively to the study of shelter, with its associated imagery of safety and security as situated within family life.

In addition, students who are transnational adoptees might have multiple and complex notions of shelter and clothing that are not accounted for in school-based discussions of such concepts. Langrehr (in press) displayed in the following a lack of curricular and cultural accountability toward transnational adoptee students. "Like many other underrepresented groups in the United States, transnational individuals are rarely included in the discourse on pluralistic education, intercultural learning, and social justice" (Langrehr, In press, p. 1). Transnational notions of shelter and clothing are multiple and shifting, which are not represented in the linear cultural universals that are supported by Brophy and Alleman (2002) in designing the social studies curriculum. This situation would then be compounded among students with RAD who are also transnational adoptees.

By embracing and understanding the influences of a particular culture and how it may impact a student, teachers can be much more effective instructors. Such an environment would recognize the needs of the individual student and the needs of a larger diverse group (Raymond, 2012). Interactions and

engagement in meaningful, non-threatening and culturally aware ways may be especially beneficial for students with RAD.

Culturally Responsive Teaching, Social Studies Classrooms, and Special Education

According to the National Council for the Social Studies (2010), curricular engagement in the area of social studies must include such themes as a focus on culture and diversity, and an exploration of people and contexts. Thus, it is within social studies classes that students come to know about themselves and others. Such a curricular goal assumes that teachers are able to competently guide students around issues of culture and identity while ensuring that social studies classrooms serve as models for embracing multiple cultures and multiple identities.

The National Council for the Social Studies (2003) has emphasized in its position statement that educators in the subject area of social studies must meet basic requirements for ethical teaching and learning. These principles include that it is the ethical responsibility that professionals in the area of social studies education must be concerned with school and community life. They must also "engage in continued study of the changing world scene and remain an active student of and a critical participant in society" (National Council for the Social Studies, 2003, para. 4).

The standards for social studies teachers thus highlight the need for teachers to be culturally competent and to be advocates for diverse students. The U.S. national organization for social studies additionally stated the need for social studies to be a subject area in which teachers explore cultures and beliefs alongside students while further supporting students' capacities for civic engagement and for participation in diverse and global societies (National Council for the Social Studies, 2003). Ukpokodu (2006) further underlined that the social studies classroom is especially significant, since it is the learning site where students are socialized to become critical thinkers as contextualized within local and global settings. Yet, Ukpokodu (2006) argued that there exist inequalities in the social studies classroom.

At the same time, Gay (2002) argued that a disproportionate number of students of color are assigned to special education in large part due to a lack of knowledge and appreciation for diverse cultures. These insensitivities might manifest in poor student outcomes and negatively impact students' learning behaviors. Gay further stated that outcomes for students of color with and without disabilities can be improved by using instructional practices and methodologies that reflect students' cultures, cultural heritage, experiences and perspectives. Teachers need to have a critical cultural awareness, build classroom climates that accept plural and diverse cultures, and apply multicultural curriculum and instruction.

Possible barriers to effective collaboration and the implementation of effective practices might be due to deficit views of the cultures of learning disabled families. Lamorey (2002) indicated that cross-cultural misunderstandings associated with a lack of understanding of the cultural perspectives of families regarding disabilities might result when teachers are not familiar with the ways in which families might view or approach their children with disabilities. Teachers need to be aware of individual and cultural differences as they provide assessments, and design and implement instruction plans for diverse students.

Harry (2008) further cited as problematic the differences in perceptions of disability between families and service providers and other barriers across race, culture, language and social class. For educators working with culturally diverse families, an understanding of the family's culture is crucial in order to form effective partnerships with the family. In turn, Santamaria (2009) discussed the need for individual education plans (IEPs) for students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds Educators with intercultural competence might avoid dissembling families' belief systems while making use of cultural understandings as a basis for academic achievement and culturally meaningful educational and behavioral interventions.

Intercultural Competence and Social Studies Teaching

Theories related to culturally responsive pedagogy are useful for examining ways of improving practices in culturally diverse classrooms. However, it is also significant for educators to attain intercultural competence as a means of working with students from a variety of cultural backgrounds as positioned in global societies (Cushner, 2012; Garii, 2009; Schlein, 2014). Increasingly, teacher education programs have been addressing the need for instilling in teachers intercultural competence through specialized programs, such as via study abroad experiences (Mahon & Cushner, 2002; Marx & Moss, 2011). As well, intercultural experiences might aid teachers in acquiring intercultural competence while further enhancing their capacities for critical reflection about issues of race and culture (Phillion et al., 2008; Sharma, Phillion, & Malewski, 2011).

Thus, teacher professional development activities and experiences that strive to contribute to teachers' levels of intercultural competence might go beyond culturally responsive teaching to merge the local and the global. Heightened intercultural competence might allow teachers to interact with their students from multiple cultural perspectives on knowledge, behavior and social relations. Teachers displaying intercultural competence might thus have a greater understanding of some of the multiple cultural, language and behavior layers of students with RAD who are transnational adoptees. This might be especially salient in social studies classrooms, where such aspects of students' lives might be brought to the forefront as both the content and medium of instruction.

Methodology

We conducted this study following the narrative research tradition of Clandinin and Connelly (2000). Our guiding research question was: What are the experiences of parents and/or caregivers of children with reactive attachment disorder in home and school environments? This overarching question enabled us to collect experiential narratives of families of children with RAD.

Our participants included 10 parents of children with RAD from four states and nine school districts. All participants were recruited through snowball sampling, such as via discussions with potential participants at support groups, academic conferences or via personal recommendations. The names of people and specific places have been replaced with pseudonyms.

The parents who participated in the interviews were a very well-informed and well-educated group of individuals. Together they represented a group who were for the most part working in a field that implemented services to children who were adopted. Collectively these parents had five master's

degrees, three bachelors' degrees, one associate's degree, and one held numerous specialized certificates.

The experiences of two of our parent participants, Georgia and Harvey, are highlighted in this work as a representative example of our group of parent participants. Harvey earned a bachelor's degree in business and was the CEO of a mid-sized company. Georgia had earned her degree in elementary education, but after the adoption of her son, she was required to stay at home in order to address his ever-increasing needs. They adopted Aidan and Maya because they knew of the desperate needs of children in orphanages in Eastern Europe and they had the means to be able to do something about it. Their deep wish was to make a difference in a child's life.

One researcher met with our participants for one semi-structured informal interview. Observations were also conducted at a support group for parents of children with RAD. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. Field notes were compiled following interviews and meetings. Data analysis comprised reviewing all data for common narrative themes. We reviewed interview transcripts and field notes to identify patterns and themes.

Data Analysis and Discussion

We attend here to the storied experiences of a sub-set of our participants—those who formed a family through transnational adoption. We explore here some of the narratives of these participants that indicate the intersection of culture and behavior. In this way, we create a space to consider some of the nuances of social studies teachers and intercultural competence in increasingly diverse and globalized contexts. In the following, we highlight our argument through the discussion of several recent cases of transnational adoption, behavioral issues, and cultural multiplicity and dislocation.

On April 10, 2010, Torry Hansen took Artyom Savelyev, her adopted 7-year-old son, to the airport, put him on a plane, and sent him back to Russia. Ms. Hansen maintained that Russian officials had not been truthful with her about the child's psychological problems and insisted the young Savelyev was mentally unstable and violent and she feared for her family's safety. Further, she contended she had done all she could and that sending him back to his native land was her last resort.

In an interview with ABC's George Stephanopoulos (Goldwert, 2010), Pavel Astokhov, Russia's Children's Rights Commissioner, denied that behaviors described by Ms. Hansen could occur. While no one publicly endorsed Ms. Hansen's actions, there were some people who expressed empathy for her. Carol Skeirik adopted a 5-year-old Chinese orphan, Sier. Soon after the adoption Sier threw a 14-hour temper tantrum. Shortly after her adoption, she became violent and sexually aggressive, threatened to murder the family, attacked her siblings, and even attacked the family pets. Sier abused her younger brother and broke his nose so severely that he required corrective procedures. Later, Sier was diagnosed with a condition known as Reactive Attachment Disorder (Donaldson, 2010).

Some children who have been raised in orphanages in foreign countries demonstrate significant behavior problems after they are adopted. A study by Miller et al. (2009) evaluated 8-10-year-old adoptees from 50 Eastern European/former Soviet Bloc countries. Most of these adopted children lived in government orphanages, where they were exposed to varied forms of neglect for months to years.

When studied at school age, many of the children demonstrated substantial problems: attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), learning disabilities and mental health disorders. Twenty-four per cent had severe behavioral disturbances. Parent stress was high and correlated with externalizing behaviors of the child.

Though no diagnosis was discussed for Artyom, given the parallel of his story to that of Sier's, one might wonder if Artyom suffered behavioral issues attributed to the same disorder that was diagnosed for Sier, RAD. Children diagnosed with RAD demonstrate significant and often dangerous behaviors that present the types of problems and concerns for adoptive parents and their families that were described by Torry Hansen. Children with RAD have been described by Cain (2006) as a different breed of child who defies traditional treatment and behavioral management strategies (Trout & Thomas, 2005) and, as such, demands more than the usual treatment approaches and interventions.

Inattention to cultural and identity adaption might cause difficulties among families, and when behavior disorders are added, family dissolution might occur. Therefore, social studies teachers of transnational adoptees engage in lessons among learners that might be extremely high in stakes. In the following, Harvey explains how when he and his wife adopted their daughter, Maya, they did not know much information about her. They needed to make a selection to form a family based upon limited knowledge provided to them from an adoption agency.

> Harvey: We adopted Maya in 2002 through New Hope Adoption Agency and at that time in Russia you traveled what they called blind, so when we got to Russia they took us to this little office in a small town, which is about 9 hours from Moscow. Anyway and they showed us, this is the picture they showed us and they said, 'What about her?' and I said, 'Okay.' So then they take you to the orphanage, and you meet your little girl. . . . These are just random pictures. This is leaving the orphanage, this is waving goodbye to her friends at the orphanage. This is when we got her back at the hotel, and just some of the paperwork and stuff. Just a keepsake for us and for her. Here we are, we flew into Moscow. . . . So you spend a day or so there and they put us on a night train to go to the small town . . . (Interview Transcription, September 19, 2013)

Harvey's story relates how expanding a family through international adoption requires travel to a foreign country and communicating across a new culture. He described his daughter as a girl, rather than as a baby, who needed to part with her friends and caretakers at an orphanage before going to her new home in the United States. Children in transnational families might also have come to understand the concept of family in new ways, which might be of much significance for social studies curricular interactions. Harvey explained in the following about how he uncovered information regarding his adopted daughter's family.

> Harvey: See when we adopted Maya, they told us that she had a little brother, but. . . . And then Aidan, same story. Only we went back for him, this is the picture they showed us. We were told he was not adoptable. They told us he wasn't adoptable, and we said, 'That's okay,' because we only wanted to adopt one child anyway, so that was fine with us. But then when we got back, after Maya was here for about a year, the lady, Katya, who is in the region, she kind of led us to believe that Maya had sisters, or had siblings that had been adopted. And so we got on a

chatroom in that small town, the region they're from, and we met a guy who—and it sounds a little sketchy—but he's a British guy married to a Russian woman, solid citizen, his name's Mark Lamb. Mark, what he does is he goes back and helps people find birth families. So we thought it would be a tragedy for Maya to grow up and find out she's got a sister in Minneapolis. So we hired him, which sounds exotic. I don't even think we paid him $200, but he went back to the orphanage on 4 or 5 occasions, and he talked to the workers, because their records are sealed so there's no way you can go in and open the books. So he calls it a jungle drum network of the people that worked in the orphanage, because they know the families, they know the circumstances. So he went back, found out about Aidan. The orphanage director remembered us and asked us if we would consider adopting him, so that's how we came to . . . (Interview Transcription, September 19, 2013)

Harvey discussed how Maya might have come to understand that family members can be split up or reunited, living in different cultures and languages, or building new families together. After Maya had begun to acculturate to life and family in her new surroundings, she was reunited with her brother Aidan. The following illustrates how Aidan had been left in the orphanage without the initial possibility for adoption.

Researcher: Why was he unadoptable when you first…?

Harvey: Because the father had not given up his rights. And because it was a boy. But then the father later was put in prison and he lost his rights. But in the time that Aidan was in the orphanage from 6 months until we got him, nobody ever came to see him. The father ended up, he killed the mother. It was alcoholic. Fight. They were both heavy drinkers.

Researcher: How old was he when it happened?

Harvey: Six months or . . . . He was already, the kids were gone, they'd been removed when the mom was killed. They were in the orphanage. And were in touch with, we'd been in touch, they don't stay in touch with us, but we write them letters and send them money. I haven't done it this year, I should. But I send them a little money around this time, and the sisters have told us the whole story.

Researcher: The orphanage?

Harvey: No, I send money to their actual biological siblings. There were nine kids. (Interview Transcription, September 19, 2013)

Aidan and Maya know that they have seven siblings in Russia, who are in an orphanage and who were not adopted. Georgia, Harvey's wife, has regularly attempted to communicate with these siblings through an intermediary. Nevertheless, these communication attempts have not been met with consistent replies. Since Maya and Aidan were the youngest of the siblings, they had been placed in an orphanage for younger children, while the other brothers and sisters had been placed in an orphanage for older children, from which they were presumably not adopted. It is impossible to state exactly how Maya and Aidan have been affected by the fact that their family has experienced a wealth of fracturing

and cultural and language transitions. Both Maya and Aidan are afflicted with RAD. Within our research, we attended to many stories that described the difficulties and obstacles that these children and their parents face in school.

Moreover, Georgia and Harvey learned to envision the native culture of their own adopted children as couched in diplomatic disputes and potential black market dealings. Harvey reflected on the Torry Hansen case with respect to his own experiences of adoption in Russia in the storied experience below.

> Harvey: I absolutely believe they lied to us. I think they knew the history of these kids. I think it's a business in Russia. Actually I just saw, when I was sitting in the airport coming home from our east coast trip, that Parliament in Russia has voted to end American adoptions of Russian children. They're voting to end it because of some diplomatic dispute. It's just happened the last few days that they're doing it but. . . . I think it's a business and I think it was interesting the facilitator would carry a little bag when you'd go in to get paperwork done, because they're not quick with paperwork. There'd be a little bottle of vodka. A fifth of vodka. Just kind of slipped it under the desk. You wouldn't even know she'd done it. A payoff. We didn't even have to take big wads of cash. It was all done through checks. But it's a business, there's no doubt about it. And they would never admit that . . . (Interview Transcription, September 19, 2013)

Such experiences might get translated to children who are transnational adoptees as significant lore about their blood relatives, their countries of origin and their cultural experiences. These stories discussed above emphasize how children growing up in transnational families might need to navigate complex cultural and social structures as they seek out ways of defining and redefining who they are and how to behave in different settings. Such pressures might be compounded when children have behavioral disorders, and especially when such disorders are a result of their family lives and family experiences.

Interconnected and multiple factors can contribute to the development of an individual's behavior, which has been named as correlated constraints (Farmer, Quinn, Hussey, & Holahan, 2001). The stories highlighted above indicate narratives that might set the stage for correlated constraints for two students, Maya and Aidan. Farmer et al. recommended that schools should focus on early intervention that targets several risk factors at once, such as socialization and academic problems, rather than just focusing on one risk factor.

Yet, all of our participants experienced difficulty obtaining cooperation from the schools for receiving services for their children with RAD. Since RAD is not recognized as a disability under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in the United States, schools are not required to provide services for the child until academic and/or problem behaviors became so intense that action has to be taken. Even with a diagnosis of RAD and oppositional defiant disorder (ODD), Harvey and Maya had to result to the threat of legal action to get services for their children. The inability to receive and implement support services in a prompt manner can have serious consequences for not only the child with RAD but the classroom teacher.

Maya and Aidan are children with RAD who have exhibited behavioral issues in class stemming from their behavioral disorder. Teachers who do not have high levels of intercultural competence might not

be adept at working together with children and their families, when such family units represent a variety of cultures and hyphenated identities. It is possible that children with RAD who have been adopted transnationally and their families might also have differing and/or multiple perspectives on special needs and ways of supporting them. Educators with intercultural competence might be positioned well for considering multiple cultural vantages, especially educators in social studies classrooms, where issues of culture and identity are studied. Intercultural teaching in connection with UDL approaches to classroom practices might also prove to be useful to straddle students' special academic, cultural, and behavioral needs while serving as a model for preparing students more generally to live in a globalized world.

It is further requisite for families of children with RAD to build effective partnerships with teachers so that the needs of the children will be heard and met. Kauffman and Landrum (2013) specifically acknowledged the benefit of parental involvement regarding children who have behavioral disorders. Developing relationships between teachers, students, and parents might further contribute to teachers' intercultural competence while acknowledging the cultural, identity, academic, social and behavioral needs of students.

We discussed the experiences surrounding one family's experiences with overseas adoption to consider how transnational adoption might affect students and their families from a variety of vantages. Significantly, we identified how students who are adopted from foreign countries are often adopted into families with limited knowledge of the children's cultural backgrounds. These children are usually older, and they require cultural and language adjustment upon permanent placement with a family. The partitioning of family members and cut off communication with family, language, and culture might occur following adoption, which is usually unintentional and perhaps fueled by a lack of knowledge or information.

Likewise, transnational adoptee students attending schools in the United States might experience a similar disconnect until they have acquired pertinent cultural and language knowledge for school success. Educators might need to become savvy in terms of helping their students to bridge their cultures and cultural identities. Educators with advanced cultural competence might be able to reach this group of students from a fluid and intercultural perspective, through an understanding that students' cultural affiliations and cultural beliefs might shift back and forth across subject areas and lessons.

Lessons in social studies might prove to be exciting opportunities for children to learn about their own cultural backgrounds, to share part of their cultural knowledge and experiences, and to challenge information gleaned from their home experiences in the United States. Social studies classrooms might also prove to be places where identities of transnational adoptees are called into question and where issues of nationality, citizenship and global interaction are raised and teased apart. Social studies teachers with a high level of intercultural competence might be well-positioned to aid students in shifting between cultures and identities and between the local and the global. Moreover, teachers who have acquired intercultural competence might further be able to support the behavioral needs of students with RAD from local and global norms, values and perspectives.

Educational Significance

Curricular engagement in diverse schools is often structured according to principles concerning culturally responsive pedagogy. However, schooling that is aimed at critical thinking and globalization, and social studies classrooms that are focused on culture, identity, history, civics and global connections might move beyond the need for cultural responsiveness. In this article, we highlight the usefulness of intercultural competence for shaping teachers' perspectives and practices toward schooling concentrating on global and local issues. Moreover, we identify the social studies classroom as an area where culture and identity might be contested and identified, as teachers and students share interculturally competent interactions and curricular engagement.

In addition, we discussed how social studies teachers' levels of intercultural competence might be especially relevant for students who are transnational adoptees. Importantly, we highlighted how transnational adoptees might require teachers to have a sophisticated knowledge of culture and identity through the acquisition of intercultural competence as a means of helping this group of students cross back and forth between their multiple, layered, and shifting cultures and identities. We further identified links between culture and behavior that might impact students' school experiences negatively. Students with RAD who are transnational adoptees have an intermingling of cultural and behavioral needs that might be best supported through the application of intercultural practices and perspectives.

Few studies have examined the experiences of families of children with RAD. Even less qualitative research aims to gain insight into some of the cultural and identity implications that might be interconnected with RAD. There is also a paucity of experiential research into the applications of intercultural competence or literature exploring the nuances of social studies classes for diverse students on a variety of cultural landscapes. As such, this study might influence the preparation, professional development and practices of social studies educators. It might further contribute to the existing literature base and act as a springboard for much-needed future research.

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