Turning Culture Upside Down: The Role of Transcultural Education

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This article explores the adoption of a transcultural education approach, rather than multicultural or intercultural education, and the implications this would have for educational practice. With the multiple issues associated with multicultural and intercultural education, the authors emphasize the need for a definitive definition of the term “transcultural” in the educational literature, as well as a new model of transcultural education. Addressed in the article are: (a) the contribution of transdisciplinary teaming to the definition and practice of transcultural education; (b) the meaning of “trans” in the term, transcultural; (c) a discussion of culture and individuality related to education; and (d) possible conclusions to facilitate dialogue regarding the future of transcultural education. Twelve vignettes are included to provide real world examples of the need for a paradigm of transcultural education.

Keywords: transcultural education, transdisciplinary teaming, culture, individuality, paradigm shifts, postmodernism

Introduction

Approximately 50 years ago, the function of education with regard to culture was assimilation (Aldridge & Goldman, 2007), however, not even assimilation was advocated for all citizens. The integration of African Americans and other minority ethnic groups into public schools was by no means a reality in the United States. The Civil Rights Movement was intensifying as 13 freedom riders traveled from Washington, D.C., to the Deep South, challenging segregation before they were arrested in Jackson, Mississippi allegedly for their own protection. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. advocated for nonviolent protests to right the vast injustices and the wrongs resulting from desegregation (McKinstry, 2011). As multicultural education became more popular, numerous misconceptions developed (Aldridge, Calhoun & Aman, 2000). In Europe, “intercultural education arose from concerns that multicultural education failed to address entrenched deficit assumptions about minority groups” (Miller & Petriwsyj, 2013, p. 253). Intercultural education began to distance itself from multicultural education (Gudykunst & Kim, 1984; Gundara & Portera, 2011). Intercultural educators explained they were different from multicultural educators. Intercultural education eventually became defined as education that promotes “deep engagement with diverse cultures and worldviews to enrich children and society, rather than the celebration of differences and the co-existence of various cultural groups” (Miller & Petriwsyj, 2013, p. 253).

Intercultural education also has been criticized. According to Paul C. Gorski (2008), “Despite unquestionably good intentions on the part of most people who call themselves intercultural educators, most intercultural education practice supports, rather than challenges, dominant hegemony, prevailing social hierarchies, and inequitable distributions of power and
privilege” (p. 515). Attempts to address these concerns and deficits have been made by Gorski. Many of the issues regarding both multicultural and intercultural education remain still.

The purpose of this article is to explore the possibility of transcultural education as an alternative to multicultural and intercultural education and what that would mean to educational practice. The term *transcultural* has been used sparingly in the professional literature with regard to educational practices. Like intercultural education, transcultural education has been used primarily in Europe, and most often with regard to nursing education (Cook, Sheerin, Bancel, & Rodrigues Gomes, 2012). A definitive definition of transcultural education has not been proposed. With multiple issues associated with both multicultural and intercultural education, however, a new paradigm of transcultural education requires exploration.

This article is divided into four broad sections. The first two sections are: (a) can transdisciplinary teaming contribute to the definition and practice of transcultural education? and (b) what does the “trans” in transcultural mean? The third discussion section raises questions regarding culture and individuality and their relationship to the purposes in education. Finally, the fourth section provides tentative conclusions to encourage a dialogue and debate about the future of transcultural education.

**Can Transdisciplinary Teaming Contribute to the Definition of Transcultural Education?**

Parallels in terminology to multicultural and intercultural education include multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary as applied to teams of specialists who work with children with disabilities. Professional collaboration in special education, however, also incorporates a third model that includes transdisciplinary teaming (Gargiulo & Kilgo, 2014; Kilgo, 2006). Multidisciplinary refers to many; interdisciplinary is between, among, reciprocal or combining individual elements; and transdisciplinary refers to across or beyond (Gargiulo & Kilgo, 2014). Transdisciplinary teaming is different from multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary teaming because of role sharing and role release. “Professionals in the various disciplines…relinquish their roles (role release) as service providers by teaching their skills to other team members” (Gargiulo & Kilgo, 2014, p. 133). The question that arises is: What does transdisciplinary teaming have to do with transcultural education? The answer lies in a precise definition of what “trans” means. In other words, the field of special education has distinctly defined the terms multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and finally transdisciplinary. If we are to explore how transcultural education would be different or an improvement to multicultural or intercultural education, then we must take the example from special education and specifically define what the prefix “trans-“ in transcultural means.

**What Does the “Trans-“ in Transcultural Mean?**

The simplest definition of trans is across. Transcultural education would then be across cultures; however, that provides us with limited information. We need more information regarding how we navigate across cultures. In order to delineate more specifically, we will explore five possibilities as to what specifically “trans-“ could mean. In order to do this, we have chosen to use the term, culture, as a verb instead of a noun. Culture as a noun implies a fixed entity; however, culture is fluid. Acculturation is something done to our students and to us. If we refer to culturing, then we are discussing actions within and between individuals and groups of people. There are at least five possibilities related to the meaning of “trans-“ in transcultural education. These include (a) transferential, (b) transactional, (c) transformational, (d) transmutational, and (e) transcendent. Each of these possibilities will be explored.
Transferential Culturing

During the course of teachers’ and students’ interactions with others, cultural differences are encountered. How should we act when confronted with a person or group whose transactional styles and expectations are different from our own? This is not an easy question to answer. One answer is through transferential culturing. That would be defined as operating, interacting, or using the dominant culture’s expectations. Dominant in this case means the dominant for a specific group in which others are a minority. Based on the authors’ collective wisdom and many years of direct experience in education, 12 vignettes were developed to provide real world examples. Although these vignettes represent authentic experiences, the identifying information has been changed to protect confidentiality. The following are two concrete examples; one involves a teacher and another portrays a student.

Vignette One

Mr. Snow is a 21-year-old, new fourth grade teacher at a predominantly African American school in the rural Southern United States. He is one of only three Caucasian teachers in the school, and all but one of his students are Black. Ms. Hughes, age 60, another fourth grade teacher, is Mr. Snow’s mentor. Like most teachers in the school, Ms. Hughes is African American. Ms. Hughes is trying to assist Mr. Snow in what she refers to as “getting control of his class.” She tells him, “You have to be firm. Don’t let these kids run all over you.” While observing Ms. Hughes interact with her own classroom, Mr. Snow is startled by the harsh words Ms. Hughes uses with her students. For example, she says firmly to one girl, “You stop that this instant. You are not the queen bee in this classroom. I am!” With another student she raises her voice and retorts, “You do that again and I will knock you into next week.” Ms. Hughes’ students seem to respect her and realize she cares for them. Still, Ms. Hughes’ discourse with her students is more indicative of the way African American parents in this particular community interact with their own children. Mr. Snow does not feel comfortable using this form of discourse, which is a distinctly local African American style.

What should Mr. Snow do? If transcultural means transferential culturing, then Mr. Snow would follow Ms. Hughes’ suggestions and code switch. Code switching is when a person customizes his style of speech and interaction to the audience or group being addressed. In Mr. Snow’s case, this is explicitly different from his natural style of communication. If Mr. Snow chooses not to code switch, what should he do to build rapport with his students and maintain some sense of order in his classroom?

Vignette Two

Salina is a new kindergarten student from El Salvador. She is currently in an urban classroom in Los Angeles. She is having difficulties understanding what is expected of her. When her teacher calls her name, Salina looks down because she believes she has done something wrong. Her teacher firmly states, “Salina! Look at me when I talk to you. Look at me now!” Salina was looking down out of respect for the teacher; however, the teacher believes Salina is being defiant.

What should Salina do? Should she be taught to code switch? That would mean helping her understand that when her mother or respected adults from El Salvador call her name when she has done something questionable, she should continue to look down. In the kindergarten classroom when the teacher calls her name, however, Salina must look directly at the teacher as the teacher expects her to do.
Everyone must code switch to communicate in different contexts. The issue of code switching is more complex than it seems. A young child learns to talk in disparate ways: she interacts in one way with her friends, another way with her teachers, and a distinct way with her parents or caregivers. As it relates to cultural navigation, choosing a form of discourse can be extremely challenging, particularly for young students and those students new to the educational system. Should children and adults speak in the dialect of others when communicating with them? Most educators would agree this goes too far and is an inauthentic means of speaking with others (Delpit, 2006). Where then, is the line drawn for code switching and how much are we expected to compromise in order to have a respectful dialogue with others? How should this be addressed in Salina’s situation?

**Transactional Culturing**

Transaction is one of the four salient categories of teaching according to Aldridge and Goldman (2007). In transaction teaching “knowledge is seen as constructed and reconstructed by those participating in the teaching-learning act” (Jungck & Marshall, 1992, p. 94). Using this definition of transaction teaching, transactional culturing would be defined as construction of knowledge within and among diverse individuals and groups participating in the teaching-learning process. Based on the transaction model of teaching, transactional culturing would be synonymous with intercultural communication, provided that those participating were of diverse cultures and treated equitably and with respect. In essence, the “trans-” in transcultural education would not translate as transactional culturing because it would be no different than intercultural communication.

**Transformational Culturing**

Another type of teaching is known as transformation. Transformation is defined as “teaching children to care and make a difference in the world while simultaneously trying to make a difference in the world” (Aldridge, Manning, Christensen, & Strevy, 2007, p. 27). Adapting this definition, the “trans-” in transcultural education would suggest transformational culturing, but what would that mean? This team of researchers defines transformational culturing as the process of teaching students to transform their own culture by working to correct injustices while simultaneously working to change the world at large. No matter how sincere and how dedicated a teacher may be, transformational culturing presents numerous problems and issues, many of which are difficult to address. For example, “Whose transformation is it, anyway?” (Christensen & Aldridge, 2013, p. 80). Another example would be, “Who and what are transformed…?” (p. 81). To illustrate the problems with transformation, consider the following scenarios.

**Vignette Three**

_In a third grade classroom in the rural Northwest United States, the teacher who considers herself to be transformational decides to include a unit on “Save the Owls.” The majority of her students’ parents work for the logging industry, and they are already livid because the conservationists and environmentalists have influenced the way they do business. This is a sensitive issue because the local culture’s beliefs and practices are different from the teacher’s beliefs. Even though the teacher has good intentions, a “Save the Owls” unit is more likely to create discord than transform or encourage the children to care for the environment_ (Christensen & Aldridge, 2013).

How should the teacher approach the selection of units in the future? How can she encourage transformation rather than create discord with children and families?
**Vignette Four**

In a fourth grade classroom in the urban Southeastern United States, the teacher decides to collect money for the Somali refugees in Kenya. Her students all come from low-income families. The students and their parents or caregivers are surprised they are asked to give money for children who live on another continent, especially because they are struggling themselves. The transformational project falls flat because the teacher did not consider the context and culture of the school. The project created strained communication exchanges among the teacher, her students, and their families (Aldridge, Christensen, & Kirkland, 2007).

How should the teacher make decisions regarding transformational projects in the future? How can students and families be included in the decision-making process? Because of the problems and issues involved in transformation, the “trans-” in transcultural education should not mean transformation unless transcultural educators can assist teachers and students to clearly determine whose transformation is enacted and who and what are being transformed.

**Transmutational Culturing**

Transmutation is defined as the changing of something into a higher form. “Transmutation is synonymous with transmogrification, which means to transform radically into something completely different” (Aldridge, Christensen, Kilgo, & Dong, 2012, p. 7).

Transmutational culturing appears to be almost the same as transformational culturing with the value added term higher form. If a goal of education is to change teaching and learning into a higher form, the definition of transmutational culturing would be to change the existing culture into a higher form. The issue of what a higher form constitutes requires debate. The term “transmutation” could contribute to a definition of transcultural education if we consider Vygotsky’s notion that we are both products and producers of culture (Vygotsky, 1978). In essence, cultures are never static but continually changing.

**Transcendent Culturing**

We propose that transcendent culturing would be the goal of transcultural education. Transcendent culturing is defined as interacting with others through transcending or overcoming cultural barriers that limit human interaction. We propose a deconstruction of traditional cultural labels and a movement toward building communities based on uniquely individual identities that contribute and benefit from the ever-changing group structures. We will expound on this idea by starting with two vignettes. These examples show the restraints of culture that need to be transcended.

**Vignette Five**

The teacher’s goal, in a fifth grade classroom in the rural Midwestern United States, is to learn about her students through respecting family and cultural variations. In social studies, she has asked her students to bring in artifacts from their families. Students are to write about their families, make family trees, share family pictures and keepsakes, and trace their family’s roots back at least 100 years. In her classroom, there are all types of family configurations. There are two students, for example, who are in foster care. There also are: three children of undocumented immigrants, four children of divorce, five students from blended families, as well as a child of two mothers who do not want this known in the conservative rural community.

Considering that the fifth grade is a particularly sensitive time of social issues and development, is this an appropriate way to show respect for the children in this teacher’s classroom? What should this teacher do in the future? This tradition goes back to the Progressive Era when Lucy Sprague Mitchell developed the curriculum at Bank Street. Students’
learning began with what she called “the here and now (Mitchell, 1916). If students were to learn social studies, they must start with what they know and move outward from there (Mitchell, 1916).

Vignette Six

In urban Texas, Ms. Robinson’s fourth grade class receives a new student, Iqbal, in January. Ms. Robinson wants more than anything to welcome the child to her classroom. To do this, she asks the girl to tell the class anything about herself that she chooses. Iqbal stands before the class and tells that she is originally from Nepal. Her parents immigrated to Michigan shortly after she was born. She goes on to describe how her parents owned a grocery in Detroit and that her family had recently moved to Houston to start a new business. Her teacher asks, “Can you tell us anything else about you?” Iqbal replies, “My family is Hindu and we have our own special place in our home to honor the gods.”

The teacher seems pleased and asks the class, “Do you have any questions for Iqbal?” After a long silence a girl speaks out, “Well! You're going to hell.” In this community many of the families are fundamentalist Christians. The teacher does not know what to say and asks the students to get out their math books. Of course that is not the end of the story. On the playground the boys will not approach Iqbal, and according to Iqbal, many of the girls are worse than the boys. She hears one of them say, “Don’t go near her or you will go to hell, too!”

How should the teacher handle this situation with the students in her classroom? What recommendations should be made to this teacher? In the first vignette, the teacher’s intent was to honor the family; however, most of the children in her classroom were members of families that are either not recognized or marginalized by the dominant culture. As we have long recognized, gone are the days of the “Leave it to Beaver” heteronormative Caucasian family. Most families do not portray the stereotypical traditional western family in which there is one father and mother with two children living in a home in the suburbs. Children in this teacher’s classroom must transcend the dominant culture. We would argue that the teacher’s unit on families further marginalizes children whose families are not of the dominant culture. In order for children in this classroom to feel supported and, thus increase their chances of making a contribution to society, they must transcend the stereotypes of the dominant culture. In the next vignette, the same is true. Iqbal must transcend the prejudices of the dominant culture. Her chances of doing so are not likely in this classroom if the differences between her family and the more traditional families of this school are continuously broadcasted.

What does it mean to transcend culture, specifically the restrictions placed on children, families, and cultures by the dominant society? This is, by no means, a simple question to answer. With multicultural education, the celebration of different cultures did not go far enough. In intercultural education, the goal has been deep interaction and engagement with multiple cultures. That has been happening in classrooms for well over a quarter of a century based on nothing else but the familial and cultural make up of most families. We see the problem as not deep engagement with multiple cultures, but deep engagement with individuals. Contrary to popular belief, students in marginalized families and cultures survive and thrive not because of their cultural heritage, but in spite of the limitations placed on them by their cultural heritage.

Discussion

For the past 40 years, educators have overcompensated for the transgressions of the past, which involved honoring the dominant culture exclusively. During the first three quarters of the 20th century, the goal of education was that of assimilation or the process of making every
immigrant and citizen act like a typical middle class American. Other familial and cultural structures were considered inferior and unworthy when compared to White middle class American citizens. This was an injustice to all who did not fit the typical mold. As multicultural and intercultural educators began to express their voices, the set of injustices enforced by the assimilationists were simply replaced by others proposed by the cultural workers of education. We have just begun to recognize this. Another paradigm shift is currently developing with regard to the individual and culture. We believe the shift should move to incorporate transcendent culturing as the shortcomings of both multiculturalism and interculturalism come to the forefront. Transcendent culturing has the opportunity to confront and challenge injustices inherent in previous or current approaches to culture. Five salient reasons, although by no means comprehensive, are presented here. These include: (a) the hybrid nature of culture, (b) intracultural variability, (c) the questionable aspects of family and culture, (d) gender issues and culture, and (e) the persistent problem of religious attitudes.

The Hybrid Nature of Culture

First, we must answer the question, “What is a hybrid culture?” A hybrid culture is defined as any cultural context, especially within and between families, which synthesizes more than one culture with another producing a synergistic effect. The following are specific examples provided through vignettes.

Vignette Seven

Susan had been married to Bill for over 10 years, and they had a daughter, Christen. This family lived next door to Peggy and Robert who had three children, Lauren, Sara, and Michael. These families lived in suburban Mobile, Alabama and often spent time together. One day Bill came home from work and told Susan he did not love her any more. He wanted a divorce and intended on marrying Peggy, next door, after the divorce. Simultaneously, Peggy told her husband, Robert, their marriage was over and she planned on marrying Bill in the future. After the divorce, Peggy and Bill moved to Dallas taking Peggy’s three children with them. Susan remained in her home with her daughter, Christen, and Robert was left next door by himself. Soon Susan and Robert began to grieve over the loss of their nuclear families and they fell in love and got married. Susan’s job transferred her to Dallas, which is ironic because Bill and Peggy and her three children live there, too. Susan, Robert, and Christen moved to Dallas. Shortly after their move, Susan found out she was pregnant at about the same time that Peggy found she was expecting a baby as well. Today they all live in Dallas. The stepbrother and stepsisters from both families have the same half brother and sister, but from opposite parents.

This, of course, is an unusual and confusing family situation! This is but one example of a hybrid family today. Is this type of hybrid family portrayed in the literature of culture? If so, we believe it is quite rare.

Vignette Eight

Daniela, from Colombia, has lived in Boston most of her life since her family immigrated when she was a child. Daniela and her family are devout Catholics. When Daniela was in her 20s, she sought to marry a good Catholic Latino man. This never happened and in her 30s she fell in love with Aldi, an immigrant from Indonesia. Aldi and his family are devout Muslims. Today, Daniela and Aldi have two children, Maria and Entis, who attend the public schools of Boston. Daniela and Aldi take the children to church on Sundays and Aldi takes them to the Mosque on Fridays. Both children are in after school Arabic classes so they will learn to read the Quran.
Maria and Entis also are being prepared for confirmation in the Catholic Church. Neither Maria nor Entis speak Spanish or Bahasa Indonesian. Is this family’s cultural context viewed as common in classrooms? If culture is addressed at all in classrooms, we find that children and families are described as Latina or South American or Indonesian or Southeast Asian.

Culture is taught in the schools as if it were consistent and pure. One example is the resource, Developing Cross-Cultural Competence: A Guide for Working with Children and Their Families, by Eleanor Lynch and Marci Hanson (2011). Chapters in this source include: “Families with Anglo-European Roots,” “Families with African American Roots,” “Families with Latino Roots,” and “Families with Asian Roots.” We have found this book to be helpful, but only as a starting point from which to explore the hybrid nature of families and cultures. Would Barack Obama find himself in the pages of this book? Few education resources are available that extensively focus on biracial families and those who have lived in multiple countries or settings?

**Intracultural Variability**

When interculturalists found multiculturalism lacking, they began to address these deficiencies and attempt to correct them in educational settings, but the interculturalists have dedicated far more attention to the differences between and among cultures than they have to the intracultural variability within each child in the classroom. This intracultural variability can be seen in the children described above in the vignettes about hybrid families. A child from a Colombian Indonesian American background who participates in two religions has unique cultural variations within, not just between herself and others. If we are to explore transcendent culturing in educational settings, we must acknowledge the cultures within each child as well as between each student and others.

**The Questionable Aspects of Family and Culture**

During the last half of the 20th century, educators realized the devastating effects of the assimilationist paradigm of culture. Then, enantiodromia occurred. “Enantiodromia is a psychological ‘law’ first outlined by Heraclitus and meaning that sooner or later everything turns into its opposite” (Samuels, Shorter, & Plaut, 1986, p. 53). With the assimilationists, all familial and cultural practices that were not part of the dominant culture were considered worthless, inferior, or savage. As multiculturalism and interculturalism developed, the opposite problem transpired. Family and culture were discussed with awe and, in many cases, unconditional respect. What educators failed to notice or acknowledge was that many familial and cultural practices are questionable. After all, Nazi Germany had a culture of its own and female genital mutilation is both a familial and cultural practice in several parts of the world. The following vignettes are examples of practices that are questionable.

**Vignette Nine**

Afrah (female) and As’ad (male) are fraternal toddlers whose family is from the Middle East. Both children have cerebral palsy due to a difficult birth. However, Afrah is more severely involved. They both qualify for early intervention services due to their disabilities. The father, Abdallah, wants services for his son As’ad; however, he refuses services for his daughter, even though she is in greater need than As’ad. He further refuses to talk to female educators or therapists. Unfortunately, the team of professionals who would provide physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech therapy to his children is composed of all women.

What would you do if you were a member of the team of professionals? How would you approach this situation? What additional information would you need?
We have posed questions like this many times in conferences, seminars, and classes for a future or existing team of professionals. What is striking about the students’ and professionals’ responses is that no one ever mentions that this might pose a problem for them ethically or morally. They are quick to suggest ways to find a male therapist or member of the team who would speak with the father. Often, they never mention the marginalization of Afrah, the female child.

**Vignette Ten**

_The United States government has a policy of allowing any Cuban refugee who touches American soil to remain in the United States forever after. There are Haitian nationals who try to make their way to the shores of Florida. If they make it, they often are sent back to Haiti. In Mrs. Gomez’ class, she has several students from Haiti who are undocumented, some of whom are HIV positive. She also has several Cuban students who are documented and living in middle class homes. While she strongly resents the students from Haiti, she is much more accepting of the student from Cuba. The U.S. government policies exacerbate the situation._

Few classroom teachers would discuss the absurdity of the inequities that exist in the policies described in the previous vignette. The United States for many years has been the only country that has continued a boycott on Cuba. Canada is one of Cuba’s largest trading partners and all Latin American and most European countries pose no sanctions on Cuba. In fact, most Americans are unaware the United States stands alone on this issue. Teachers who are brave enough to approach this topic would probably not go so far as to point out that the original Cuban refugees were those of wealth and power when they left Cuba. Haiti, the poorest country in the Western hemisphere, is a different economic story than Cuba.

**Gender Issues and Culture**

Gender was marginalized by the assimilationists, and has continued to be neglected by multiculturalists and interculturalists. Numerous exemplars abound. The following vignettes provide examples.

**Vignette Eleven**

_During the 1980s, many countries and individuals boycotted South Africa because of its policies concerning apartheid. Eventually, under great international pressure, South Africa changed its policies. Even though Saudi women will be allowed to vote in the 2015 elections, they will not be participating citizens in the election process until then. Saudi women are expected to have a male guardian. Women are socially segregated and secluded and are expected to wear a traditional niqab of full body covering. Western restaurants, including McDonald’s in Riyadh, follow the Saudi code of sex segregation. In addition, women are not allowed to drive a car. These are just a few of the restrictions placed on women. Mrs. Jones has a female student in her class who moved from Saudi Arabia to the United States._

How would this affect the teacher’s interactions with both the child and the family? What suggestions do you have for teachers in similar situations? Arguably, race and ethnicity have made greater strides than gender. After all, South Africa relinquished apartheid. Why do the United States and other countries continue to have ties with Saudi Arabia when women’s rights there are comparable to Black people’s rights during apartheid in South Africa? As we have long realized, the answer to this question quite often has to do with economics (McLaren, 1997). Saudi Arabia has the oil and is vital to the American economy.
**Vignette Twelve**

In a course focused on historical foundations of education, the students in Dr. Brown’s class are studying those whom he considers the top 100 contributors to the field of education in the last 100 years. Of the 100 contributors, there are no women who made the list. At the top of the list are G. Stanley Hall, Edward Thorndike, and John Dewey. The facts never mentioned are that Hall thought women should not receive higher education; Thorndike believed women should not be researchers; and numerous women, including Ella Flagg Young mentored John Dewey. Great women contributors to education such as Lucy Sprague Mitchell, Caroline Pratt, Patty Smith Hill, Jane Addams, and Marietta Johnson are not part of this class.

The contributions of many of these marginalized women have been documented in numerous sources, but still are neglected in the historical and psychological foundations of education literature (Aldridge & Christensen, 2013). Even so, many of today’s women face more serious issues than neglect in the educational canon. According to Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn (2009), “Women aged fifteen through forty-four are more likely to be maimed or die from male violence than from cancer, malaria, traffic accidents, and war combined” (p. 61).

**Religious Issues**

If the “trans-” in transcultural means transcendent, then transculturalists cannot fully address culture without considering religious issues (Aldridge, Kilgo, & Christensen, 2011). Religion and culture relative to educational practices have experienced an interesting history together. With assimilationism, the dominant religion was respected and all other religions were considered heresy. With multiculturalism and interculturalism, the predominant goal has been to respect and honor all religions. Transcendent culturalism or transculturalism must also point out the limiting nature of the world religions as well as their ability to connect individuals with a higher source. Specifically, the issue of gender will be difficult to resolve unless transculturalists also promote discourse concerning gender discrimination as it relates to religion. Equal rights and equitable practices for all females will never be achieved unless the dogma of religion and women are brought into the light of collective consciousness (Horney, 1967; Stone, 1976). Culture cannot be transcended until religious issues of intolerance and injustice based on gender and sexual orientation have been exposed (Fulton, Gorsuch, & Maynard, 1999; Herek, 1987; McFarland, 1989). The issue of how transculturalists should approach the delicate and volatile concerns of religious intolerance is another issue.

**Conclusions**

Assimilationists, multiculturalists, and interculturalists have all failed in their quest to solve the salient problems of education through culture. We have experienced decades of cultural education; yet, the problems continue to worsen (Banks, 1993; Banks & Banks, 2009). There are at least three reasons for this. First, the real, though often hidden purpose of education has been to maintain the status quo. According to a speech by Noam Chomsky (2012):

“The educational system is supposed to train people to be obedient, conformists, not think too much, do what you’re told, stay passive, don’t cause any crisis in democracy, don’t raise any questions…The problem is you can’t have progress this way. You can’t get anywhere if you just copy what somebody told you…you have to be challenging things all the time, challenging everything, thinking new thought.”

The second problem centers on Vygotsky’s (1978) belief that we are both products and producers of culture. As transculturalists, our jobs should be the producers of something new.
and not just maintaining the status quo as a product of our own culture. In the past, cultural education has focused more on how we are products of culture and not enough on how we are producers of culture. Transculturalists should take the lead in studying how we, as teachers and students, are the producers of culture.

The third issue is the individual’s need to transcend culture in order to create something new and innovative. Referred to as the “call to adventure” (Campbell, 2008, p. 48), this call to adventure “signifies that destiny has summoned the hero and transferred his spiritual center of gravity from within the pale of his society to a zone unknown” (p. 48). In this adventure, which Campbell believes is universal, the hero must go out into the world to find his or her own way, but also has a moral obligation to bring something back to society and culture as a whole. Creation “springs not, like theology, from the dicta of authority, but from the insights, sentiments, thoughts, and visions of an adequate individual, loyal to his own experience of value” (Campbell, 1968, pp. 6-7). This creative journey is the story of someone who can transcend culture and follow her own destiny. “Not everyone has a destiny; only the hero that has plunged to touch it, and has come up again—with a ring” (Campbell, 2008, p. 196).

Sex, occupation, and age do not define the individual. Nationalities, religions, and the century in which they were born do not define the individual; nor, culture does not define the individual. These “denote only the accidents of geography, birth-date, and income” (Campbell, 2008, p. 332). The culture does not save nor guide the individual who is a hero. It is the hero who saves and guides the culture. “And so every one of us shares the supreme ordeal…not in the bright moments of his tribe’s great victories, but in the silences of his personal despair” (Campbell, 2008, p. 337).

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