

Forum Feature

By Angie W. Chatman



BEYOND DIVERSITY & INCLUSION TOWARDS CULTURAL COMPETENCY AND FLUENCY

Cultural competency is a journey, not an endpoint,
and educators, as usual, must lead the way.

At least two to three times each year, a school somewhere in the United States is in the news for implementing a slavery simulation exercise in one or more of their classrooms. In May, 2018, for example, at the Chapel School in Bronxville, New York, 15 miles north of Manhattan, African American students, ages 10 and 11, were instructed to leave their classroom and stand in the hallway, where their teacher placed imaginary shackles on their necks, wrists, and ankles. After leading these students back to the classroom, the teacher encouraged the white students to bid on their African American classmates in a simulated auction in order to incorporate the economic aspects of the slave trade into the lesson.

After each one of these kinds of incidents parents express horror and outrage, and school leadership offers apologies. In most cases, an investigation by some local government official takes place with the full cooperation of the school. (The Chapel School teacher was placed on leave until the investigation was completed.) Finally, there is the dismissal of the teacher along with plans to hire a diversity consultant to provide sensitivity training. The incident concludes with sincere commitment and assurances to make increasing diversity among the faculty and staff a priority in the school's strategic plan.

That is, until the next incident in the next classroom in the next school in America.

The lens we look through determines what we see

Incidents like the one above are only one example of a deficiency in cross-cultural competence among some educators and administrators.¹ Cross-cultural competence—the ability to operate with sensitivity in other cultural settings—is #4 on a list of the 10 top skills for the 21st century workforce (Connor, 2013). But if educators are ineffective in modeling it, how will students learn it?

According to Karen T. Craddock, Founder and President of KCollaborative Connection and a visiting scholar at Wellesley College, the problem is that cultural competence is not understood or appreciated because dominant education practices, policies, and processes in the United States are derived from a white, able bodied, gender-normative lens. Furthermore, many teachers lead classrooms populated with students with whom they have little in common culturally, racially, or socially. According to the Pew Research Center's review of data from the National Center for Education Statistics, over 50% of students of color attend school where their peers are also of their race or ethnicity, while 80% of all public K-12 teachers are white. Public school teachers in the U.S. look different from their students not only in terms of race or ethnicity but also in gender. Most schools' student body populations are evenly divided according to gender, while three-quarters of teachers are female (Geiger, 2018).

Part of this disparity can be explained by the composition of today's K-12 classrooms; Generation Z is the most diverse racially and ethnically in our nation's history, yet that diversity has been slow to be reflected in our school faculties and administrative staffs. As a result, new approaches to everyday communications are needed.

Virginia Hemby, a professor in the Jones College of Business at Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro, calls out this contrast between her generation and that of her students in her classroom. "I ask them to give me a list of characteristics they would ascribe to Baby Boomers. We go through that list and identify the stereotypes—"afraid of technology" is on most of their lists. Then we generate lists for their generations—Millennials and Gen Z—and the characteristics that my generation ascribes to them. We build a better understanding of one another through this process. [It's a simple exercise] to learn the risk of making assumptions based on what you hear from others."



A focus on diversity is not only liberal pandering, as some critics label it. Data continues to grow to support the economic benefits of a diverse workforce. An article in the January 24, 2018, issue of *Forbes* magazine, for example, referenced the *Delivering Through Diversity* report from the McKinsey consulting firm. The report used available data from more than 1,000 companies in 12 different countries located in North and Latin America, Europe, the Asia-Pacific region, and Sub-Saharan Africa. According to the report, ethnically diverse executive teams were 33% more likely to have above-average profitability compared to peers in their industry. At the Board of Directors level, ethnically and culturally diverse Boards were 43% above average in profitability compared to their industry counterparts (Strauss, 2018). Given the magnitude of these statistics, it is reasonable to conclude that the diversity of cultural perspectives and insights were a major factor in the success of these organizations.

“Our education system must reflect this and instead use a variety of social, racial, and gendered lenses,” says Craddock. “In a global society, learning the so-called ‘soft’ skills, such as flexibility, listening, and teamwork, is more critical than ever before. These skills are now codified under the heading social-emotional learning (SEL).”

Changing the lens: Examining perspectives, power, and privilege

What could a curriculum that attempted to build cultural competence look like?

One example is the coursework at the Cambridge School of Weston (CSW), an independent high school located outside

Boston. There, cultural competency coursework is treated the same as courses in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) fields. Rosanna Salcedo, Dean of Equity and Inclusion, shared that CSW is the first school in the country whose graduation requirements include at least ten credits that fulfill at least one of the following criteria:

- **Examining the historical and contemporary issues from the perspective of nonwestern cultures, and/or historically oppressed groups.** For example, courses that would qualify include *US Native American History*, *Latin America Rebels and Revolutionaries*, *The Harlem Renaissance*, and *Coming to America: The Immigrant Experience*.
- **Examining the structures of power and privilege—their history, causes, and effects.** Options for this category include *From Venus to Guerilla Girls—Redefining Self through Art*, *Dissent in World History*, and *Facing History and Ourselves*, where students engage in thoughtful conversations and debates about human rights issues related to access, equity, power, and responsibility.
- **Examining the models of social change with the goal of advancing human rights and equity.** Possible courses that would address these issues are *Alliance Building Across Cultural Divisions* and *The Ethics of Science*.

While it sounds as if cultural competence is the province of a liberal arts curriculum, a total of 80 approved courses spanning all departments challenges students to explore multiple perspectives, discuss and develop models for change, and learn how to evaluate and engage in meaningful action. This engagement also includes service learning, a longstanding component of business curricula.²

In addition, as part of its strategic plan, CSW will be launching a 4-year developmental co-curriculum in which all students must participate called PACE (Promoting Awareness and Community Engagement). This curriculum is designed to scaffold social emotional life skills by grade level. Topics include general health and wellness, social-emotional learning skills, empathy, mindfulness, cultural competency, equity literacy, digital citizenship, and service leadership. The service component at CSW is unique in that it is rooted in relationship building rather than the current model of logged hours of volunteer service work.

Empathy: A necessary first step

What CSW is achieving began like any journey: with one small but important step. According to Carlos Hoyt, Jr., author of *The Arc of a Bad Idea: Understanding and Transcending Race*, “Cultural competency in the sense of having the capacity to recognize, respect, and respond equitably to diverse social identities requires empathy.”

The Empathy Inquiry Method

- 1. Empathy is defined as understanding** how someone feels and thinks, and why they do the things they do. Empathy doesn't require that you agree with what you understand about another person. That would be SYMPATHY. Empathy doesn't require that you feel bad for someone. That would be PITY. Empathy doesn't require that you do something nice for someone. That would be KINDNESS.
- 2. Empathy works like a physical X-ray.** After a doctor looks at an X-ray, they learn more about what's going on inside someone's body and then they can decide what should be done. The doctor may decide to do nothing else and allow the person to heal on their own. The doctor may decide that they should do something to help.
- 3. Empathy is like a feelings X-ray.** It can show you what is happening with the feelings of another person. After you understand what someone is feeling you might decide that you could do something to help. You might allow the person to take care of what is bothering them by themselves.
- 4. Empathy requires inquiry.** Since there isn't a machine like an X-ray to show us how people are feeling, how can we find out? The very best way to find out what someone is feeling is to ASK THEM.

Having worked in the areas of social identity, social bias, and social justice for decades, Hoyt has derived a method of assessing the underlying dynamics of challenging human behavior, which he refers to as the Empathic Inquiry Method (EIM). "Feelings drive thinking and thinking drives behavior," says Hoyt. A proper empathic inquiry affords a clear view of one's own feelings and those of another person, so that one's responses are based on the fullest understanding possible.

Hoyt is careful when working with the EIM to explain what empathy is not. "[It] is often conflated with sympathy, pity, or compassion," he says. "While these ways of feeling are perfectly natural, none of them are truly empathy. Empathy is simply understanding what another person is feeling without necessarily sharing or endorsing that feeling.

"It takes time and practice to use empathy," Hoyt adds, "but it is well worth it if we truly want to achieve understanding. Building empathy is an essential task for families and communities, in classrooms, in the workplace, and in boardrooms."

Craddock agrees. "Empathetic inquiry is a critical element to personal and relational growth. It is necessary for teachers to analyze their own cultural assumptions before identifying and incorporating culturally relevant pedagogy into their classrooms."

Taking time for self-reflection

To unearth one's cultural assumptions is no easy task. "Culturally competent teaching and learning requires social and emotional understanding of oneself," Craddock says. "Critical self-reflection is a necessary imperative to dislodge cultural misconceptions and stereotypes, and is central to the framework of emotional intelligence for equitable and inclusive education."

Peggy McIntosh, a senior research associate of the Wellesley Centers for Women, is familiar with that process. She published "White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences Through Work in Women's Studies" in 1988. It is a classic and popular recounting of McIntosh's own journey of critical self-reflection: "a list of special circumstances and conditions I experience that I did not earn but that I have been made to feel are mine by birth, by citizenship, and by virtue of being a conscientious law-abiding 'normal' person of goodwill. I have chosen those conditions that I think in my case attach somewhat more to skin-color privilege than to class, religion, ethnic status, or geographical location, though these other privileging factors are intricately intertwined."

The pursuit of cultural competence and sensitivity requires each of us to step outside of our embedded ideals and navigate the world via new paths. Craddock's work with both profit and nonprofit organizations addresses the insights demonstrated in McIntosh's paper.

"I've framed it using what I call the 5 A's: Awareness, Assessment, Approach, Application, and Assistance," she explains.

- **Awareness:** Culturally competent individuals accept and respect differences, engage in continuous self-assessment regarding culture, and pay specific attention to the dynamics of difference.
- **Assessment:** Evaluate the current level of knowledge and practices of cultural competence within the organization.
- **Approach:** Use the mindset of cultural competence to develop curricula, lesson plans, as well as setting benchmarks for achieving learning goals.
- **Application:** Engage parents and community members. Build active collaborative partnership with those stakeholders.



- **Assistance:** Support is key. Seek resources and materials and experts that may be helpful in the ongoing development of cultural competency.

Of course, social emotional learning and cultural competence cannot be developed without steady inroads in self-understanding *and* efforts to dismantle barriers that prevent us from reaching the end goal. There are tools we can use to ensure we are training our students to be as inclusive as possible.

One such tool is emphasizing the importance of maintaining an open mind. “We all have our cultures, influenced by ethnicity, socio-economic status, nationality and regional nuances,” says Beryl McEwen, Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at North Carolina A&T State University in Greensboro. “I encourage my students to see the difference between ignorance and malice. [Making the presumption of] ignorance allows one to engage and inform instead of becoming angry and intolerant.”

Another tool is education fueled by curiosity and caring. “Educating oneself about some of the cultures in the school’s community is an important first step,” says Alex Lamon, business education teacher at Livingston Public Schools in New Jersey. “Going to cultural events hosted by the school is one way to learn and it shows students that you care ... students need to see teachers as their allies—a source of knowledge and safety.”

McEwen adds, “International people are all around us. Smiles, hellos, invitations to our events and our places of worship and even our homes help to make them more comfortable in our communities. And we will all grow and flourish as global citizens by reaching out to our neighbors.”

Case studies: Simple yet powerful classroom exercises

Case studies are a useful tool for business teachers because they offer an opportunity to analyze external influences—such as cultural bias and racism—on the internal actions of an actual company. Students can role play various executive functions such as production, marketing, sales, and finance, then state their case, supported by evidence, for a certain business decision.

For example, consider the widely publicized April 2018 incident involving Starbucks (ABC News, 2018). Two African American men were arrested by police for trespassing in a Starbucks in Rittenhouse Square, an upscale Philadelphia neighborhood. The men were seated at a table waiting for a third man with whom they were meeting for business purposes. These gentlemen were not wearing suit jackets or ties; they were dressed in sweatpants and t-shirts. One had his hair in twists; the other had an afro and beard. The Starbucks manager, noting that the two hadn’t bought anything, called police. The arrest was captured on video by other patrons, who could be heard asking the police what the men were being arrested for, and posted on social media. Calls were made to boycott Starbucks with the hashtag #BoycottStarbucks trending for days, and people protested outside the store.

Starbucks’ CEO Kevin Johnson flew to Philadelphia and apologized in person to Donte Robinson and Roshon Nelson in order to “show compassion and empathy” for what they experienced. He also went on a public relations tour on major media outlets decrying the incident as “reprehensible.”

The two were compensated by Starbucks for an undisclosed amount. The store manager was fired. The City of Philadelphia paid each man \$1 and pledged to contribute \$200,000 to create a program for high school students who wish to become entrepreneurs.

What makes this incident unique is that Starbucks followed up with training centered on unconscious bias and racial profiling for all of its U.S. employees, and revised onboarding materials for new hires. In an interview with Robin Roberts on ABC’s Good Morning America, Johnson said, “... it’s easy for me to point blame at one person. My responsibility is to look not only at that individual but look more broadly at the circumstances that set that up just to insure that never happens again.”

The company closed all 8,000 of its U.S. stores for three hours, incurring a loss of \$12 million dollars, a tiny fraction of its \$22 billion in annual revenues.

Students could discuss the above case using the following questions as a starting point:

- If the black men were dressed differently would the manager have called the police?
- How does fashion reflect culture and behavior? What is appropriate business attire?
- Did Starbucks address this incident properly?
- Though the financial impact of closing all of its U.S. stores was minimal, how did this response affect the Starbucks brand?
- What policies and procedures are required to minimize instances of racial bias and its consequences?
- What further actions should Starbucks take, if any, going forward?

Hemby uses the Starbucks case in one of her Business Communications courses. She concludes the discussion with assignments that include writing sample postings for Starbucks' social media sites and formal recommendation memos for senior management.

An alternative simulation from history

Simulation need not be abandoned, despite the lack of sensitivity and judgment displayed in the slavery simulation exercise noted in the opening of this article. History affords a relevant example.

In 1968, Jane Ellison was a third-grade teacher in a small, all-white Iowa town. Following the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., Ellison wanted to teach her class about the “inhumanity, irrationality, and immorality of racism.” She divided her students into two groups: those with blue eyes and those with brown eyes. The blue-eyed group was allowed special privileges—extra time for recess, for example—and an inordinate amount of praise. The brown-eyed group was ridiculed and humiliated. The following week the groups were switched. The blue-eyed group was ridiculed and humiliated and the brown-eyed group was praised and given additional privileges. Calls for Ellison's dismissal by parents and school board members were swift and vocal, but she had the support of her principal, a World War II veteran, a witness to the Holocaust.

The seminal Blue Eyes, Brown Eyes Experiment is still in use today. Ellison consults with corporations and conducts the experiment with adults because of the undue trauma young children can experience during the simulation. Her experiment was one of the progenitors of nearly all diversity training initiatives. And without a doubt, her experiment demonstrated that cultural bias is learned behavior that can be unlearned.³

Achieving systemic change requires commitment from senior leaders and clearly defined markers

As in Ellison's case, who had the support of her principal, any system-wide, structural change intended to succeed must be championed by senior leadership and include the establishment—and enforcement—of consequences should there be a lack of compliance.

An independent school like CSW has significant more flexibility in this regard. However, inroads can be made in changing the public school model as well. For example, the Education Redesign Lab at Harvard University's Graduate School of Education is currently working on advancing a new model for public schools. Founded by Paul Reveille, former Secretary of Education for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and a professor at the Graduate School of Education, the Lab's team of associates is partnering with school superintendents, mayors, and civic and community leaders to redesign education systems thereby accelerating positive outcomes for all children.

The program, called the *By All Means Initiative (BAM)*, is predicated on the fact that our current industrialized model of learning wasn't designed with the individual in mind. “Knowing kids' needs, interests, and strengths will allow for customization in mainstream public education,” said Bridget Rodriguez, the Lab's managing director.

Rodriguez says preliminary findings validate the difficulty of changing a 20th-century model to a 21st century one. “Progress varied depending upon the strength of city/school relationships. Cities with strong partnerships between the mayor and the school superintendent were able to implement change more quickly. Larger cities struggled more than smaller ones in certain areas because of the complexity of their current school systems. And when representatives from the business community were engaged as cabinet members, there were more opportunities for additional financial investment,” she explained.

“The action items that were most likely to get done were those that were clearly defined and measurable. We will get there; for the sake of our future we have to. It takes time and patience.”

Adjusting the lens: From cultural competence to cultural fluency

The long-term goal, according to Craddock, “is to use [social and emotional learning] as a foundation to develop cultural fluency rather than cultural competency—where cultural competency is understanding differences, and fluency

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is the ability to successfully apply that understanding in interactions.”

Any kind of progress begins with one small step. Cultural competence is a journey, not an endpoint, and educators, per usual, must lead the way. ■

Learn more

ORGANIZATIONS

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TEXTS

The Arc of a Bad Idea: Understanding and Transcending Race
www.carloshoyt.com

Understanding: The First Step for White Women Teaching Black Boys
<https://www.teachingchannel.org/tch/blog/understanding-first-step-white-women-teaching-black-boys>

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Note

¹ There is substantial documentation that black and brown boys are disciplined in school more often and more harshly than their white counterparts. Similarly, black, brown, and poor white girls are often more sexualized. Terms such as "underage minor" are used to describe girls rather than "child," or the girl is blamed for attracting unwanted attention because of wearing "inappropriate" attire.

² NBEA has published a number of articles on service learning, among them "Spotlight on Student Organizations," *keyingIN* Nov. 2014, and "On Community-Based Service Learning," *keyingIN*, Nov. 2011.

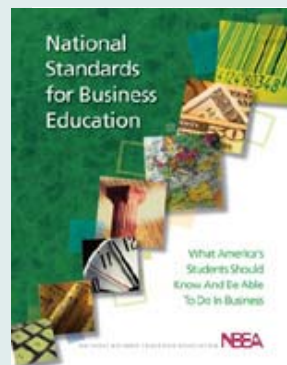
³ For more information on Jane Ellison's Blue Eyes, Brown Eyes experiment watch the film on PBS' Frontline. Cobb, Charlie and Peters, William (1985, March 26) *A Class Divided*. Frontline. Season 3 Episode 9. PBS. Retrieved from: <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/class-divided/>

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National Standards for Business Education

The revised and updated fourth edition of the *National Standards for Business Education* state what all K–14 students should know and be able to do in business. These national standards contain guidelines for a quality education in 10 content areas of business education—accounting, business law, career development, communication, economics and personal finance, entrepreneurship, information technology, international business, management, and marketing. Each content area incorporates achievement standards and accompanying performance expectations. Each achievement standard states the understanding and competency students should attain. Each performance expectation delineates what students need to do to exhibit the knowledge and the skills required to meet the achievement standard.



In classrooms nationwide, business educators play a prominent role in preparing students to become responsible citizens, capable of making the astute economic decisions that will benefit their personal and professional lives. Using the concepts described in these standards, business teachers introduce students to the basics of personal finance, the decision-making techniques needed to be wise consumers, the economic principles of an increasingly international marketplace, and the processes by which businesses operate.

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KCollaborative Connections: Wellness Reimagined Through a Lens of Cultural Competence

The stress and pain engendered by racial exclusion and micro- and macro aggressions has been proven to manifest in the body. Karen T. Craddock, founder and president of KCollaborative Connections, uses her background in psychology and training to address health outcomes borne of a lack of cultural competency to ultimately advance mental health and well-being among people of color in professional settings.

Bringing Cultural Competence to the Doctor-Patient Relationship

Craddock's current projects link her practice and research to social, emotional, and behavioral health strategies by centering equity inclusion lenses on programming that elevates wellness and learning.

"To be in pain itself is difficult," she writes in a blog post from earlier this year for *Embrace Race*. "To be in pain and unseen, neglected and/or misunderstood is even worse."¹

The doctor-patient relationship is one of the most important arenas where cultural competence and social emotional learning are needed. Racial disparities in healthcare have been well described and documented; researchers have linked the issues of implicit bias and unconscious stereotypes to what is known as the "racial empathy gap," Craddock says.

The concept of cultural competency has emerged to address these disparities. When clinicians understand the cultural backgrounds and racialized experiences of their patients, they can better engage

with them and provide better medical care. Craddock's practice links wellness with cultural competence and emotional intelligence. In health care, combining the tenets of patient-centered care with an understanding of the social cultural influences on patients can dramatically affect the quality of medical treatment.

Patient-centered care models that include practices and policies that uphold equity and inclusion are critical to understanding the pain and experiences of marginalized communities.

Stress and Pain Management

As Craddock notes, "... images, messages, and actions, whether they are direct or indirect, that signal or shout that one is left out, not worthy or deemed 'lesser than' cause real hurt to our being. ... These experiences of marginalization and exclusion register pain in the brain, and in our bodies."

Furthermore, the experience of pain differentially activates stress-related physiological responses across various ethnic groups, and members of different ethnic groups appear to use differing coping strategies in managing pain complaints.

Providers' treatment decisions vary as a function of patient ethnicity, and pharmacies in predominantly minority neighborhoods are far less likely to stock potent analgesics. Members of minority groups frequently receive suboptimal pain management. Studies have shown that when the health care provider has a different language and social identity, the provider faces additional challenges when successfully assessing and

managing the patient's pain. (Campbell & Edwards, 2012).

Craddock concludes, "The more we understand about pain, the more is revealed about how the body and mind are connected. The growing field of relational neuroscience not only provides clear evidence backing what we are uncovering about race-related trauma, but also provides information for methods that may help... [us] stay resilient."

Craddock conducted research on race-related resilience, or the psychological resistance to the exclusion and marginalization fostered by such lapses in cultural competence. Her data showed that being purpose-driven, participating in healthy relationships, and being creative were among the most adaptive and optimal attributes of resistance for long-term well-being. Other studies, she says, confirm that being part of an inclusive community and having healthy connections help us live longer and be happier.

Good Health Leads to Good Business

The emotional intelligence (EI) research that has become a growing emphasis in businesses shows that the Emotional Quotient (EQ)—the measure of emotional intelligence—is a proven metric with which to gauge strong and sustained leadership. Leaders with high EQs recognize and value inclusion.

"Understanding the dynamics of the mind-body connection and its impact on employees' health leads to policies that help foster inclusion, increase creativity and productivity, and reduce burnout," says Craddock.

Craddock and her team explored intersections between EI, social-emotional development, and equity and inclusion across multiple business and social contexts when they worked with Tufts University's Tisch School of Civic Life on a series of workshops titled *Fostering Emotional Intelligence for Inclusive Excellence at Tufts*.²

The Wellness Collaborative

Craddock's newest venture, The Wellness Collaborative, Inc., is an independent Boston-based nonprofit organization focused on serving communities of color experiencing health inequities. Using multiple disciplines to provide insight and best practices (see box for staffing model), the Wellness Collaborative will promote sustainable personal and community health, wellness, and resilience to reimagine healthcare and wellness as an asset-based (rather than liability-based) model.³

"We are using an integrative model that draws from and builds on evidence-based research, cutting-edge relational science, cultural traditions, and communal strengths," Craddock says.

She and her co-founders of The Wellness Collaborative, medical doctors Robin Reed and Jeannette Callahan, are hosting a series of public forums and workshops centered on "Re-Imagining Healthcare." Their think-tank and consulting practice offer training, coaching, and program development grounded in this framework to community partners and professional leaders across a range of sectors. ■

FAST FACTS: The Wellness Collaborative, Inc.

Established: 2019

Headquarters: Boston, MA

Tagline: "We've got it to give."

Business model: Nonprofit

Staffing: An interdisciplinary team of health- and wellness-related professionals, including physical and mental health practitioners, urban agriculturalists, business leaders, educators, and artists

Mission: To build a multidisciplinary collective that works together to provide insight and best practices that promote sustainable personal and community health, wellness, and resilience.

Website: thewellnesscollaborative.org (currently under construction)

Contact: Karen T. Craddock, M.Ed., Ph.D., Founder and President, KCollaborative Connections | Co-Founder and Executive, The Wellness Collaborative Inc. karen_craddock@post.harvard.edu

Notes

¹To read Craddock's blog post in its entirety visit embracerace.org (<https://www.embracerace.org/blog/its-not-in-our-head-and-yet-pain-is-in-our-brain-why-racialized-exclusion-hurts-and-how-we-can-remain-resilient>)

²To learn more about the workshops *Fostering Emotional Intelligence for Inclusive Excellence at Tufts*, see <https://tischcollege.tufts.edu/civic-studies/initiative-social-emotional-learning-and-civic-engagement><https://tischcollege.tufts.edu/civic-studies/initiative-social-emotional-learning-and-civic-engagement>

³The parallel analogy is the typical medical model that focuses on what causes disease instead of what contributes to wellness.

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