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## Inspiring Cultural Awareness and Developing Cultural Intelligence (CQ)

📅 June 15, 2022 ✍️ Abeni El-Amin, PhD, EdD (<https://www.facultyfocus.com/author/ff-abenielamin/>)



**T**he capacity of instructors to inspire cultural awareness and cultural intelligence (CQ) in the classroom provides instructor effectiveness and engages students in the diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) narrative. Specifically, the objective of this conceptual research highlights institutional DEIB and instructional methods in teaching cultural awareness and intelligence (CQ). Moreover, teaching cultural awareness and intelligence (CQ) is a critical aspect of proficient institutional and civic engagement (Idrus, 2021). As currently applied within instruction, factors for teaching effectiveness include intentional objectives of the institution, the significance of implementing student development networks and support systems, and the factors impeding the six factors of institutional and teaching effectiveness in Higher Education (HE): teacher quality, administrative services, knowledge acquisition services (library and technological), activities, continuous improvement, and leadership quality (Latif et al., 2019; El-Amin, 2021). As a result, performance measurement factors that impact long-term student cultural awareness and intelligence (CQ) management remain mostly unknown within educational institutions (Lin & Shen, 2020). To this end, this study investigates how current modes of teaching effectiveness impact cultural awareness and intelligence (CQ) engagement within institutions. 🧑

The intentional education practice theory (IEPT) or teaching style and ethos of instructors are symbiotic (El-Amin, 2021). Additionally, student development through coaching, assessment, and development is needed to reinforce the embedded institutional assurance of student support. Moreover, in a seminal study, Haberman (1991) posited that cultural awareness is one's sensitivity to problems of cultural diversity, sexism, racism, ability, classism, religious differences, multilingualism, and the commitment to educate in ways that will improve human diversity and provide equal opportunity. In yet another seminal study, Earley and Ang (2003) developed the concept of cultural intelligence (CQ) and assessed its three indispensable components: cognition, (the capacity to develop patterns from cultural cues); motivation, (the desire, and skill to engage others); and behavior, (the capability to act with cognition and motivation). Institutional stakeholders make up a diversity of cultures and identities, bringing innovation, value, and perspective to institutions.

### Fostering holistic well-being of institutional stakeholders

Increasing cultural awareness and intelligence (CQ) support systems for institutional stakeholders (students, faculty, leadership, society) leads to communities of consciousness and provides an example for other institutions to follow. Educational leaders must incorporate DEIB promising practices as a framework to develop, evaluate, and mitigate barriers to DEIB support systems. Diversity and inclusion support systems may include admission processes, counseling, mentoring, career placement, training, and development (Lin & Shen, 2020).

Additionally, institutional stakeholders become more knowledgeable of cultural awareness and intelligence (CQ) support mechanisms and improve well-being. Institutional leaders must hold themselves accountable and be held accountable by institutional boards. Institutional leaders must champion DEIB support systems in both speak, investment, and action (Kuknor, & Bhattacharya, 2020). Thus, increasing cultural awareness and intelligence (CQ) support systems are transformational in reshaping institutional stakeholder (students, faculty, leadership, society) engagement and development.

Most importantly, the six dimensions of well-being are: emotional, environmental, intellectual, physical, social, and spiritual (Trudel-Fitzgerald et al., 2019). The six dimensions of well-being offer a framework to help individuals manage the six dimensions of well-being areas of their lives and connects institutional stakeholders to resources. Notwithstanding, institutions must ask their staff and faculty to do more, dig deeper, and observe their surroundings. If everyone at the leadership, faculty, and staff roundtable is the same character (physically “tone, gender, ability” or ideally “intergroup, religious, politically”), leaders must ask themselves, *Why?* As such, institutional leaders are responsible for increasing cultural awareness and intelligence (CQ) within the institution (Kuknor, & Bhattacharya, 2020).

## **Incorporating DEIB promising practices**

The essential problem is that instructors and staff need training and support beyond annual diversity training to best support students on cultural awareness and intelligence (CQ) (Dobbin & Kalev, 2018). For example, instructors are tasked with creating supportive course environments, institutional effectiveness, productivity, communication, group interactions, leadership, morale, and motivation to achieve instructional performance, yet are not always provided with tools and support to effectively do their jobs (Petersen & O’Reilly, 2020). Incorporating promising practices eliminates negative impacts of performative management. In this way, individuals work more effectively, improve cultural awareness and intelligence (CQ), increase job satisfaction, and improve institutional performance.

### ***Appreciative Inquiry (AI): Utilize the 4-D Cycle to advance evidence-based strategy***

Indeed, incorporating appreciative inquiry expands the application of institutional and individual well-being by focusing on the positive attributes of institutional stakeholders as they meet academic, project, and departmental goals. Appreciative inquiry is an aspect of instruction and training that involves an authentic connection with the objectives and passion of institutional stakeholders. Appreciative inquiry exists as a knowledge-based method for engagement and evaluative practices. Moreover, appreciative inquiry provides the compassionate support needed to help institutional stakeholders achieve their goals, connect to the institution, and feel a sense of belonging.

Indubitably, Calabrese et al. (2013) posited that in all phases of appreciative inquiry (AI), the 4-D Cycle (Discovery, Dream, Design, and Destiny) provides a progressive framework to create an institutional culture that promotes well-being (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2007). Calabrese et al. (2013) found that the AI 4-D Cycle fostered areas of well-being for individuals and, at the aggregate level, made a convincing vision for an institutional culture that promoted well-being and outlined ways to achieve a culture of dignity and respect. When instituted, the AI 4-D Cycle creates significant action steps to achieve a healthy institutional culture. The AI 4-D Cycle gives institutional leaders a tool to improve DEIB management in application and practice.

### ***Develop well-being initiatives to support institutional stakeholders***

Programs or initiatives that engage students include well-being initiatives to support institutional stakeholders. Development programs must highlight awareness and education about cultural awareness and intelligence (CQ) management in improving workplace and student outcomes. These activities occur within a broader societal culture that continues to impact students negatively due to bias, implicit bias, microaggressions, macroaggressions, and discrimination (Drame et al., 2021). Moreover, [utilizing the full potential of human capital](https://magnapubs.pages.faculty-fokus.sigmapr.com/magna/) is an essential driver of institutional innovation and student development.

Eliminating cultural awareness and intelligence (CQ) issues requires an active commitment to student development. Babińska (2021) determined that student development benefits are important and informed by evidence regarding students’ individual needs. Effective student development increases team and institutional performance, innovation, occupational well-being, and institutional governance. A positive relationship between well-being and governance is most applicable. Leaders must imbue grounded student development initiatives that are comprehensive and evidence-based to achieve the benefits of institutions.

Consequently, transformational leadership influences workgroup performance by creating a climate for inclusion and increasing employee affective commitment in higher education institutions (Brown et al., 2019). Transformational leaders help increase support mechanisms, which improves student engagement with the institution and enhances instructor performance. Moreover, student engagement and development are key factors for institutional performance.

## **Conclusion**

Research findings indicate that when education institutions provide DEIB support mechanisms to institutional stakeholders in crises, their performance increases (Kuknor, & Bhattacharya, 2020; Drame et al., 2021; Idrus, 2021). As a result, support initiatives improve employee satisfaction, well-being, and retention. Consequently, educational leaders build capacity for the long-term development of DEIB institutional goals. Additionally, the experiences obtained by surveying those in the educational sector are critical for developing practices that may assist

education institutions in realizing more significant levels of performance towards institutional goals.

Dr. Abeni El-Amin, PhD, EdD, DPC, MPsy – I/O, LSSMBB, has nearly two decades of experience and education in management and economics as an educator and practitioner. Further, as a higher education professor, she has designed and developed curriculum and training programs in business administration, educational leadership, legal studies, political science, psychology, and health sciences. She is a globally recognized thought leader on diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB). She helps organizations develop a culture of belongingness through innovative and thought-provoking trainings. Dr. El-Amin is an author, international university professor, corporate trainer, and speaker. Dr. El-Amin is the editor of *Implementing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Management in Organizational Change Initiatives* and *Implementing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging in Educational Management Practices* – IGI Global. Dr. El-Amin is co-founder of Titan and Mogul, Inc., a global consultancy that provides lean six sigma and HR consultancy focusing on DEIB to improve organizational culture. She is also the author of, *In Search of Servant Leadership*.

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