

“Like Bubbles Floating on the Surface:”
Reflections on Transcultural Doctoral Seminar
Participation

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ABSTRACT: Four doctoral students and two professors from a Canadian university examined their reflections after returning from an international doctoral seminar held in Brisbane, Australia. Their research explored the transcultural experience to determine the students' development as scholars in an international setting. Using a collaborative autoethnographic approach, the authors scrutinized their placement on Slimbach's continuum (2005) where they found themselves “like all others, like some others, and like no others,” at different times during the seminar. The authors identify story, language, place, and time as critical themes in their own transcultural progression and placement on the continuum. Based on their collaborative inquiry and the themes that emerged, the authors provide considerations for future international doctoral seminars.

Keywords: Transcultural journey; international doctoral seminar; collaborative autoethnography; reflective writing; higher education

RESUMÉ: Quatre étudiants de doctorats et deux professeurs d'une université canadienne ont réfléchi sur leurs expériences après leur retour d'un séminaire international tenu à Brisbane, en Australie. Leur recherche a exploré l'expérience transculturelle des étudiants en tant que futur chercheur dans un cadre international. En utilisant une approche collaborative autoethnographique, les auteurs ont examiné leur place sur le continuum de Slimbach (2005) où ils se sont retrouvés «comme tous les autres, comme

d'autres, et comme aucun autre», à différents moments au cours du séminaire. Les auteurs identifient leur histoire personnelle, la langue, le lieu et le temps comme des thèmes cruciaux dans leur propre progression transculturelle et leur place sur ce continuum. Sur la base de leur enquête collaborative et des thèmes qui ont émergés, les auteurs apportent des réflexions sur les futurs séminaires internationaux destinés aux doctorants.

Mots clés : voyage transculturel; séminaire international destiné aux doctorants; autoethnographie collaborative; écriture de réflexion; enseignement supérieur

In recent years, there has been an international drive to extend and transform human knowledge through transcultural graduate student research initiatives such as online seminars, video conferences, synchronous chat, and face to face meetings (McLeod & Bloch, 2010). The goal of such actions is to enhance opportunities for diverse research training and to enable the development of international collaborative research networks (McLeod & Bloch, 2010). In this paper we consider, based on our experiences and reflections, the possibility of achieving such a lofty goal within a short-term transcultural graduate research seminar

‘Transculturation’ is the process of individuals and societies changing themselves by integrating diverse cultural life-ways into dynamic new ones” (Hoerder, Hebert, & Schmitt, 2005, p. 13). “Transcultural” connotes a way of being where the ability to develop linkages between peoples across cultures results in a deeper understanding of others and the self (Slimbach, 2005). However, Slimbach (2005) stated that to develop transculturally is not easy in that, “thinking and acting ‘outside the box’ of our own cultural experience is not natural” (p. 214). Therefore, in short-term transcultural situations where people from different parts of the world gather, an abandonment of the casual tourist role and an embracing of both our own and others’ cultures is required (Slimbach, 2005). A large part of the challenge, particularly in brief experiences, is moving beyond superficial communication into deeper dialogue.

Doctoral students and their accompanying professors from three faculties of education: University of Calgary (UC), Beijing Normal University (BNU), and Queensland

University of Technology (QUT) participated in one such transcultural experience. During the week-long doctoral seminar in Brisbane, Australia, in 2017, the participants engaged in formal and informal activities with the intent of developing transcultural connections with other emerging scholars. The participants engaged in on-campus presentations and guided discussions, exploratory outings and impromptu shared meals, as well as planned trips to cultural locations and restaurants.

Prior to leaving their home country of Canada, the four doctoral students and two professors met several times to cultivate relationships and to prepare for the upcoming experience. They shared personal artifacts, participated in group discussions centred around their particular histories and research interests, read articles and listened to audio and video recordings related to transcultural topics, and conducted written dialogues in response to these activities in a shared online environment. These pre-seminar preparations allowed the doctoral students the opportunity to begin to understand the notion of transculturality and how they might live it in practice.

While reflecting on “place,” one of us described how living and working as an English language (ELL) teacher in Japan was like “floating on top like bubbles within the Japanese culture” because of the understanding that ex-pats would one day return home (M. Kim, personal communication, October 6, 2017). This metaphor came to be synonymous with aspects of the doctoral seminar experience in Australia. Though as Canadians we knew each other through our activities, before, during, and after the seminar, over the course of the seminar work, we all occupied spaces where we felt separate and disconnected from each other.

The purpose of our research was to explore the uneasiness of such spaces and ask the following questions: Can a transcultural experience deepen and extend connections with doctoral colleagues from around the world, or do we remain separate, “like bubbles floating on the surface?” and Realistically, what, if anything, can we take away from a short-term experience in terms of transculturation and broadening the research horizons of doctoral students? Our aim was to reflect on the salient moments of the doctoral seminar (pre, during, and post) in an attempt to answer these questions.

This paper presents an explanation of transcultural competence derived from the use of a transcultural framework for understanding. Next, it describes our methodology—collaborative autoethnography (CAE)—to demonstrate how we moved into transcultural spaces during the seminar. Our method was to use autoethnographic data to introduce each participant. Findings are presented as themes of story, language, place, and time. We conclude with key considerations for the assembly of transcultural doctoral seminars.

The Transcultural Framework

The need for a transcultural approach to education, as opposed to the more traditional intercultural (Portera, 2008) or cross-cultural approach (Fries, 2003; Schiefer, 2018) is advocated in the literature (Aldridge, Kilgo, & Christensen, 2014; Slimbach, 2005). Transcultural literature has been found in the field of nursing to advance transcultural nursing knowledge (Leininger, 2002), to understand individualized client care (Abdullah, 1995), and in the area of psychiatry to prepare translation monitoring forms (Van Ommeren et al., 1999). The transcultural experience has not been explored as extensively in higher education contexts, particularly international doctoral gatherings.

As scholars we must consider how we might maneuver around and learn across cultures, when the traditional notion of cultural belonging through membership in one culture is challenged. Our findings suggest that part of developing transculturally is attending to cultures *within* each person (Aldridge et al., 2014) or cultural “difference within difference” (Luke, 2011, p. 21) in order to “experience our own foreignness” (Wulf, 2010, p. 38). Discovering the cultures we hold within ourselves allows us to see how cultures might live, breathe, and grow in others. Transculturalism then, “emphasizes the transitory nature of culture as well as its power to transform” (Lewis, 2002, p. 24).

Transcultural experience has implications in higher education in that it places a focus on understanding not only oneself, but the other. It locates learning cognitively and socially and in so doing, accentuates the performative, cultural, and aesthetic aspects of interdisciplinary work (Wulf, 2010), thus leading to a more inclusive and expansive understanding of what it means to be human in order to

envision solutions for the global world. For doctoral students, transcultural experiences provide opportunities to ponder unique pedagogical territories and knowledge systems in respectful, creative debate in order to consider what knowledge is and whose knowledge counts (McLeod & Bloch, 2010).

But how to develop transculturally? Slimbach (2005) presents “10 organizing propositions as a cognitive ‘map’” (p. 206), a guide toward establishing transcultural competence. The competencies fall under the topics of perspective taking, ethnographic abilities, global awareness, understanding the ways in which we learn, facility with language and communication, and the capacity for affective qualities. In attending to these propositions while in transcultural contexts, Slimbach (2005) suggests not only will we see the world in new ways, but we will also come to understand ourselves more fully. He proposes that learners “bring their knowledge of relationships within their own culture to the process of cultivating relationships across cultures” (Slimbach, 2005, p. 207). For the purposes of this study, we focused on propositions one, two, and ten. An explanation of the propositions and the ways in which we engaged with them will be explained more fully in the methods section.

Methodology

In this paper, collaborative autoethnography (CAE) was used as our methodology (Chang, Ngunjiri, & Hernandez, 2013). Autoethnographers use “personal stories as a window to the world, through which they *interpret* how their selves are connected to their sociocultural contexts and how the contexts give meanings to their experiences and perspectives” (Chang et al., 2013, pp. 18-19). These stories are told with intention and purpose and can be constructed as “interpretative narration (presented most frequently as provocative stories) or narrative interpretation (presented more often in academic discourse)” (Chang et al., 2013, p. 19). Likewise, Ellis and Bochner (2000) shared that autoethnography (AE) encompasses introspection and reflexivity and the emotional aspect of writing is welcomed and encouraged. Recently, acceptance of this approach has increased as evidenced by scholars who have used autoethnography as methodology to explore power and what it means to be a researcher working with Indigenous Hai//om Namibia peoples (Koot, 2016), on topics of gender diversity

(Merryfeather & Bruce, 2016) and feminist autoethnography in the “drug field” (Ettore, 2017, p. 256).

CAE is a “collaborative, autobiographical, and ethnographic” writing approach (Chang et al., 2013, p. 17). The collaborative aspect of CAE entails “a process in which researchers work in community to collect their autobiographical materials and to analyze and interpret their data collectively to gain a meaningful understanding of sociocultural phenomena reflected in their autobiographical data” (Chang et al., 2013, p. 24). In this paper, the sociocultural phenomena are the experiences of the doctoral seminar and the autobiographical data is our stories situated in this context. AE is to a “solo performance as CAE is to an ensemble” (Chang et al., 2013, p. 24). In summary, in our work together, each participant of the doctoral seminar had personal transcultural as well as shared transcultural experiences with one another and other international doctoral students. These will be explored in the Findings section.

Method

We engaged in CAE using guiding questions to provide a scaffold and direction. Each of us wrote a 500-word reflection based on our doctoral seminar experience. Because journaling was an important aspect of the seminar preparation and participation, we encouraged the use of personal notes and recollections of pertinent face-to-face conversations to assist in this process.

The guiding questions, used as a catalyst for our reflections, were developed out of three of Slimbach’s (2005) organizing propositions. Inherent in the first proposition is through shared experience, we share a common humanity. At the same time, as a result of our life experience, we find ourselves on a continuum in our daily lives. There are times when we are “like all others, like some others, and like no other” (Slimbach, 2005, p. 208). In attending to this proposition, we attempted to explicate the ways in which participants realized their placement on the continuum at different times, and how we made sense of the experience as it related to our common humanity. We selected the second proposition because of the interwoven, yet patchwork nature of our Canadian histories. To begin to understand ourselves transculturally, we needed to understand “the complex interplay between self and community” (Slimbach, 2005, p. 210). This proposition served to inspire us in thinking about

our humanity as it relates to our notions of ourselves as Canadians and Canada as community. The tenth proposition served as a framing statement in order to synthesize our learning. This proposition called for us as individuals to reflect on our own experimentation and criticality in the transcultural experience.

Once submitted, the reflective 500-word writing pieces were analyzed collaboratively to find common themes. We identified four themes that appeared in more than one sample: language, story, time, and place. As we searched each reflection for anecdotes that would provide evidence of the identified themes, we discussed whether the anecdote exemplified "Like all others, like some others, like no others" on Slimbach's (2005) continuum. We also discussed additional face-to-face conversations that supplemented and enriched the evidence found in the written reflection.

Research Participants

To share a sense of who we are, we present a selected segment taken from each of our reflective writing pieces, which reveals participants' contemplations of our placement on Slimbach's (2005) continuum.

Sandra, doctoral student.

My family on both sides emigrated from the UK in the early part of the 20th century. I marveled at the complexity of other doctoral participants' immigrant stories, which included refugees, mixed marriages, and varied language experiences. My story seemed very safe, easy, and boring. I also felt colonial guilt. However, as a woman growing up in a family predominantly of women (five of six were females) and being older, I have experienced some feelings of powerlessness.

Gina, doctoral student.

I came to Canada as a refugee from Vietnam, of Chinese and Vietnamese ancestry. I was raised by a single mother, aunts, and uncles. Throughout my childhood, we needed government support and lived in low-income housing. My family was poor and we barely saved enough gold to leave the country in 1979. I am grateful for the educational opportunities I have had: quality public education and student loans for post-secondary studies. I grew up speaking both Cantonese and English and now realize being bilingual has offered me many advantages. For example, I am able to use

Cantonese when working with Chinese clients; this helps ease their anxiety about counselling.

Janet, professor.

While born in Canada, I am the daughter of parents who immigrated to Canada from the Netherlands during the 1950s. Turning to the dynamics of our group, at the most simplistic level, there was a great deal that we shared. We are all women, situated within a faculty of education, who have either completed our doctorate or are in the midst of doctoral studies. As well, we all come to this seminar with an incredible wealth of professional and personal experience; which is often typical of those who enter the academy via a faculty of education. And yet, as each person explained their research passions and the focus for their PhD research, the varied cultural experiences and personal experiences of each person came into play.

Kori, doctoral student.

As a Canadian with roots in both Indigenous (Cree Métis) and colonial culture (Polish descent), positionality is complex. From the dominant Canadian perspective of “tolerant multiculturalism,” through an Indigenous perspective of coloniality and oppression, there are misperceptions of equality through blanketed distribution, instead of equity through critical dialogue and truth.

Marcia, doctoral student.

My parents were immigrants to Canada in the 1960s. My mother came from the Philippines, and my father from Korea. I grew up in Calgary, where the European settlers began to arrive in the late 1800s. In Australia, I thought about the Aboriginal peoples who have been living there and what it would feel like to be part of a place for so long.

Sylvie, professor.

I was born in Quebec and spoke only French until my twenties. I learned English when I moved to Ontario and later to Alberta. As Canadians, we share some characteristics but there are also differences in being Canadian; language makes us different, bringing in other cultures makes us different. But we still share something that no one in other countries share: winter, large spaces, our health program, and our political system.

The Themes that Emerged from the Reflections

Our ruminations on the cultures within ourselves speaks to the “like no others” space on Slimbach’s (2005) continuum. Yet, our reflections contain fragments of connection, which the professors, who had participated in previous doctoral seminars, identify. The land, Indigenous history, weather, and gender all point to shared cultures. However, our individual viewpoints separate us into the exclusive realm of no other. It was important to look back and acknowledge our origins (Epstein, 2009) as part of our transcultural pilgrimage, so that we could begin to perceive the disparate cultures all of us hold.

The unique expression of idiosyncratic cultures is in contrast to the universal themes of language, story, time, and place which inflect more fully the complex positionality that takes place in transcultural interactions. The four themes we explore below address the connectedness and separateness we felt, often at the same time, as participants in the doctoral seminar. In analyzing the themes in relation to “like all others, like some others, and like no other,” (Slimbach, 2005, p. 208), it became apparent that there were times when we did indeed coalesce and other times when we were like “bubbles floating on the surface.”

Findings

In this section, we will share our findings around the themes of story, language, place, and time. Garnered from the data, these themes emerged as important connections to our understanding of our own transcultural development.

Story

The significance of story allowed us to share commonalities and differences with others, but also advanced our knowing of the cultures within ourselves. Sharing stories placed us on multitudinal points on Slimbach’s (2005) continuum at one time, and helped us to conduct discussions about what it means to be like all others, like some others, like no others. This is evidenced by Sylvie’s reflections:

We are all humans. We share spirituality and we like to live with people like us, which constitutes our community. Over years of traveling, I have discovered that we all share these specific universals of wanting to be with our peers and to be happy.

Story, more than anything, allowed us to inhabit our many lives and the many lives of others. The importance of story in enabling this aspect of transculturalism is affirmed by Janet:

Sometimes as a story unspools, in the telling of mine and in the hearing of others, I see and feel glimmers of affinities and also the uniqueness of my own experience, often at the same time. As an example, in each of the international doctoral research seminars that I have co-coordinated over these past three years, I start the first meeting with our doctoral students with the sharing of carefully selected artifacts we have all been requested to bring. In the revealing of these treasures, each person offers their stories: how they came to their research topic; a key learning or experience as a doctoral student; and something they wish to share about their personal life and family.

In the intentional weaving of story into our activities during our preparation, both Sylvie and Janet introduced the myriad of cultures that existed within and between all of us. Sharing stories with each other before leaving Canada was our awakening to a transcultural way of being. This story work prepared us, if somewhat unconsciously, for being open to cultures within cultures. Sandra discovered in one-on-one conversations with a Chinese QUT doctoral student that sharing personal stories made her attune not only to the differences within difference, but also to the congruity of their stories, which crystallized the essence of what it means to be human.

While waiting for the boat, we had a long conversation about our own schooling and reasons leading to doctoral work, our families and our places in them, our very personal relationships and loves, our ages and how old people are treated in both China and Canada, and how we feel as women. I felt a kinship with my colleague even though we were of vastly different ages, cultures, and backgrounds.

Though Sandra and her doctoral colleague's stories were exceedingly different, all the stories they explored together were given a more generous interpretation (Epstein, 2009) because of their shared human experience. As Slimbach (2005) states, "Transcultural development begins with the realization that, amidst the diversity of cultural expression, we share common human potential and experience" (p. 209). The two doctoral students were able to recognize and appreciate each other's differences because they relished each other's humanity.

Language

A common thread in our participant reflections was the importance of language in seeking transcultural understanding. Though Epstein (2009) says we are prisoners of our cultural language and traditions, experiences with language allowed us to see the cultures within each of us. Gina's transcultural exposure in language began upon arrival Brisbane Airport:

A Chinese woman approached Marcia, maybe because Marcia looks Chinese, and proceeded to speak Mandarin. I am learning Mandarin, saw the situation and stepped in to try to assist, knowing that Marcia does not speak Mandarin. All I could say is "ni hao" (How are you). The Chinese woman looked shocked when Janet, who is of Dutch ancestry was able to answer her question and direct her to the luggage area in Mandarin. This moment stood out for me because it highlighted the assumptions individuals make when looking at another's skin colour and facial features.

In this case, language hastened our transcultural progression. Although assumptions were made about identity based on physical appearance, for the Chinese woman and ourselves, we "moved beyond any specific culture or cultural identity" (Epstein, 2009, p. 332).

From a practical standpoint, the language of the seminar was English, which led to some uncomfortable moments not just at the airport, but throughout the seminar. As a unilingual speaker, Sandra shared:

Once we arrived in Australia, I felt less like an other. I think part of this has to do with language. We all communicated in a common language—English—even though for many it is not their first. The first day of meetings I was at a table group with two young Chinese women. We did not talk about our doctoral work at all, but personal things. We laughed as we chatted about how we loved food and cooking, how we all liked camping and the outdoors. When I attended the Saturday conference where we all presented our work, I had difficulty understanding the deeper connections in my Chinese colleagues' work. This is one time I felt like no other. It seemed to me that the scholars from Beijing and QUT had delved more deeply into ontological and epistemological ideas in their presentations, but because of language and accents, I had difficulty understanding them.

The power structures inherent in language during our transcultural experience were "transitory, unstable, and

dynamic" (Lewis, 2002, p. 16). Sandra's feeling "like no other," on Slimbach's continuum (2005), signalled to her the temporary nature of hegemony and cultural control in language. The transcultural experience allowed her to see language not as fixed and dominant, but as constantly evolving. In contrast, Marcia's experiences of multiculturalism, which she brought to the seminar, enhanced her understanding of the incompleteness of language (Lewis, 2002) in transcultural settings:

I grew up in a household where my parents spoke English as an additional language to each other and in the home. Often, we had family get-togethers where English was not the dominant language. I grew up feeling comfortable not always understanding what my parents were saying. As an ESL teacher, I have always felt comfortable living and working in multicultural environments surrounded by languages I didn't understand.

Marcia's personal history leads her to accept the ubiquitous power, fluidity, and ungovernability in meaning-making (Lewis, 2002), thereby placing her in various places on Slimbach's continuum, whereas Sandra, whose experience is predominantly hegemonic, found herself on extreme ends, either like no other, or like all others. Participation in the seminar propelled us to understanding the essential connectedness of language and culture.

Postulations around "language" were further contemplated when we were invited at an Australian home one evening wherein Kori initiated a mask-making activity:

I began reflecting on this journey through the Halloween-themed activity initiated by the Canadian cohort. Blank masks were distributed with instructions to decorate them in a way that represented their research, their culture, or themselves, with intentions of breaking the ice and sparking cultural/personal connections. I choose to draw a pair of mismatched glasses on my mask. Looking back, this act seemed to align with Marshall's (2004) two-eyed seeing, representing the interconnectivity required to navigate between distinct worldviews. In Archibald's (2008) metaphor, the eyes are different sizes, reflecting the need to critically engage with the smaller Indigenous worldview in order for the eyes to work together in a good way. Within the multiple worlds and perspectives required to navigate this increasingly interconnected world, perhaps some personal or localized worldviews are not as easy to represent on a mask, or a continuum.

The language of Kori's mask speaks to the challenge of representing the universality of human potential. The mask as semiotic device spans Slimbach's continuum. Her mismatched glasses tell us that she is like no other, and yet, when she reveals to us that she is critically engaging with the smaller Indigenous eye "to work together in a good way," she speaks to our primary identity as human beings. We were unsure as to how the mask-making would be received, but it assisted us in beginning to imagine transcultural possibilities through multiple "languages," representations, and approaches to meaning-making (Lewis, 2002).

Place

As Epstein (2009) stated, transculture "does not 'have place' anywhere; it is the force of displacement" (p. 332). And yet, within our transcultural reflections were associations with place, which included explicit connections to our rooted and alien locations. Gina wrote:

I would wake up bright and early and look forward to the day, walking with Sandra, Kori, and Marcia to our coffee shop. Most of us would order the signature "flat white." Often times, Janet and Sylvie would be there, along with QUT and BNU students. We would sit together in the sunshine and share stories and experiences of our lives at home.

Establishing place was an attempt to move beyond the constraints of the culture from which we came (Epstein, 2009), to seek out the transcultural possibilities made known to us by this new environment. Exploring and experimenting with the freedom associated with transcultural movement (Epstein, 2009), helped us to tread into new places. In this way, place for us presented opportunities for transcultural transcendence, "a movement toward building communities based on uniquely individual identities" (Aldridge et al., 2014, p. 111) This notion of community is articulated by Marcia:

While walking with classmates on the QUT campus, a classmate pointed to a tree called the jacaranda and said if a blossom falls on a student during exam week, the student would fail exams. However, if the student was lucky and caught a falling blossom, they would pass. As he was sharing the superstition, I felt connected to the group. Sharing a piece of Brisbane folklore was a way of connecting us to each other; it created a sense of group identity. My identity at that moment shifted slightly.

Marcia's story demonstrates the building of a new culture within her culture. In that moment her position on Slimbach's continuum shifted. By focusing on place, she became "like some others" in a way she had not been before. There is however, a need to see the hybrid nature of culture, "which synthesizes more than one culture with another producing a synergistic effect" (Aldridge et al., 2014, p. 113). In this way, we accept our position across Slimbach's (2005) continuum in relation to place. As Sylvie articulates, we are truly an amalgam of *like no other, like some others, and like all others* all at the same time:

My transcultural journey had begun years before the doctoral seminar but also by living in Brisbane for six weeks in 2016. I always feel like a Canadian in Australia because the notion of weather always comes up in discussions. The minus 25 compared to the plus 25 is always there. However, the fact that I am French Canadian brings additional questions to my colleagues and people I meet. Some of the cultural ways of living, for example, having coffees in little cafés, brings me close to my own childhood in Québec.

Sylvie's reflection demonstrated the connection and disconnection inherent in place. As a French Canadian, Sylvie was like no other, and yet more like Australians in relation to their café culture. Discussions of weather made her like her Canadian colleagues. Within this brief description she placed herself in various spots on the continuum at the same time.

Time

In contrast, the theme of time seemed to locate itself for all of us at one end of the continuum. We all felt the desire and the need for more time to understand ourselves, each other, and the ideas we were grappling with. Janet expressed this in her reflection.

I realize that the oft-packed agendas of doctoral life and, more specifically, of our international doctoral research seminars may not afford us the opportunity to nurture this competency. Indeed, as we moved through the paces of our seminar at Queensland University of Technology, I heard regret often expressed by the fact that there was not enough time to simply be with each other, where stories might be shared with those from other universities and countries. Indeed, working in a fast-paced university, where outcomes need to be clearly articulated and achieved, it feels risky to have a looser agenda where larger blocks of time are spent in deeper conversation.

Security lies in scheduling in the extra visit and the speaker so information might be absorbed.

The Canadian doctoral students agreed. They indicated a longing for more time and space for connection and reconnection, knowing that the transcultural journey (Slimbach, 2005) is a lifelong pursuit.

Conclusion

Our research questions assisted us in acknowledging that transculturation is a continuous journey. However, we ascertain some value in a short-term doctoral exchange. Through the experience, we initiated the process of deepening and extending connections and thinking about what it means to be a transcultural scholar. Given time constraints, expecting significant and deep development of transcultural competencies (Slimbach, 2005) was not viable. In reflecting on the challenges and highlights of our short-term experience, we developed ideas for facilitating the beginnings of transcultural growth.

As part of our critical written reflections, each participant provided a summative statement of their learning (Slimbach, 2005). The statements not only connected to the themes identified in our analysis, they also sparked considerations for making the most of short-term experiences. We offer these considerations for others when implementing a transcultural doctoral experience.

Gina and Janet's emphasis in their summative statements was on story and time. Gina: *The transcultural journey entails being able to be vulnerable and curious about another's life experiences; this is a lifelong and dynamic voyage.* Janet: *I have come to realize that living in a transcultural journey calls on me to slow down and to listen and offer stories; animating our common humanity, whilst also celebrating our uniqueness.*

Consideration One: Know that the transcultural journey is a lifelong one. It is critical to carve out significant time in a short-term transcultural exchange to listen and share stories, including structured and unstructured opportunities for storytelling around each participant's personal histories and doctoral experiences.

Kori, Sandra, and Sylvie's focuses were on language. Kori: *True competency should then be open to the blank mask of the universal, the cultural and personal decorations, and*

the vulnerable truth (potentially hidden) behind it all. Sandra: Communicating our deepest thoughts and ideas requires patience, connection, and convergence in our joint humanity. Sylvie: Cultural understanding for me is then the link to knowing how people communicate with each other.

Consideration Two: Throughout the transcultural seminar, offer opportunities to make explicit the “languages” being spoken, the hegemony implicit in them, and the scaffolding required for understanding. Offer structured and unstructured occasions to discuss personal histories and doctoral work in multiple “languages,” including spoken, written, and visual.

Marcia targeted place in her summative reflection: *When we returned, I was convinced that to understand what it means to be transcultural, I need to know what it means to be from a place, and what sort of concept of identity can capture that.*

Consideration Three: Consider offering explicit opportunities for the sharing of place to assist in understanding how place is manifested within each of us, both in terms of our personal histories and our doctoral work. The acknowledgement of place could be celebrated in a variety of forms including artifacts and stories.

These considerations are offered as part of the ensemble (Chang, et al., 2013) of our unique and common experiences. As participants of the doctoral seminar, we embrace that at times we are bubbles floating on the surface. Each bubble is like no other, unique entities, and sometimes segregated; however, there are moments of interaction between other bubbles, playing, dancing, influencing, imitating, connecting, and gathering together, adventuring between the depths and the surface.

Our individual stories allowed us the opportunity to attend to the cultures within and the cultures without. It is true, though we are all citizens of one nation, one gender, and scholars in educational research; this transcultural experience nudged us to see within ourselves “difference within difference” (Luke, 2011). In coming to know each other, we began to know ourselves. The transcultural journey continues for all participants as each doctoral student is currently collaborating with QUT and/or BNU doctoral student participants in the writing of articles based on our experience. The bubbles continue to be shaped and reshaped by these experiences.

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