



**School for New Learning
DePaul University
Applied Inquiry Project Final Report
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Forward - A Dedication

In July 2012 as I was narrowing my project's focus and beginning to outline the framework for my research, the following story flashed across my computer screen:

Mass Shooting at Sikh Temple in Oak Creek, Wisconsin

Seven Killed, Four Critically Wounded

At a candlelight vigil held the following day for the victims of the shooting, Dr. Raj Kumar, Founder and President of the Gandhi International Institute for Peace shared,

The shooting in the house of worship in Wisconsin was not only a hate crime against the Sikh community but it was a crime against all religions and humanity. To prevent such future incidents, we need to understand more about different religions and cultures coexisting in America, and learn to respect them (Kuman, 2012).

As the weeks and months have passed since I embarked on this project, I have kept this tragedy close in my mind and heart. I dedicate this paper to the people who lost their lives that day and to people everywhere marginalized and persecuted as a result of religious ignorance and intolerance.

I feel a deep sense of responsibility to undertake this project both professionally and personally. We must find ways to heighten awareness of the civic urgency of religious literacy and interreligious understanding and help our educational institutions develop strategies to scaffold the integration of comprehensive religious studies curriculum and programming into our nation's schools. I have been inspired and guided by the creative and tireless work of the current educators, researchers, and activists in this field. I would like to extend special recognition to Diana Eck, Diane Moore, Charles Haynes, Stephen Prothero, Robert Nash, and Eboo Patel. I am also deeply indebted to the

wisdom and sacrifices of the extraordinary leaders who ignited and have guided my passion and upon whose shoulders I stand -- Mahatma Gandhi, Eleanor Roosevelt, Martin Luther King, Jr., Robert F. and John F. Kennedy, Desmond Tutu, Nelson Mandela, Mother Teresa and the Dalai Lama. Alongside these giants and the strides they made in social justice and the human condition, it is my hope that my research will offer a foothold to carry on their work toward the 'beloved community' that Dr. King dreamed about.

Our goal is to create a beloved community and this will require a qualitative change in our souls as well as a quantitative change in our lives (King, 1966).

Abstract

Religious ignorance breeds bigotry and antagonism (Moore, 2006). The virtual absence of religious studies curriculum and programming in our nation's secular schools is one of the most pressing civic issues of our time (Haynes, 1994, Prothero. 2008, Patel 2012, Nash & Bishop, 2007). The broader goal and context of my research is to comprehensively explore and shed light on the perspectives of our nation's teachers and administrators on educating for religious literacy and interreligious understanding. Our nation's schools are the primary institutions charged with preparing citizens to live in a civil society. An understanding of religions is not only necessary to live, engage and thrive in a world of diversity but also to protect the freedoms guaranteed in our Constitution and to capably pursue the fundamental goal set out for us at the founding of our country: *e pluribus unum* (Haynes, 1994).

This paper introduces a process to give voice to our teachers' and administrators' perspectives on religious literacy and understanding as well as their perspectives on the climate around integrating religious studies curriculum and programming within their institutions. My research gives particular focus to their concerns, the roadblocks they face, the initiatives they are engaged in, the resources they are currently using, and the opportunities they believe exist. The goal of my project was to pilot a framework to highlight opportunities that can shape solutions.

Key words: Religious Diversity, Religious Literacy, Interreligious Understanding, Religious Studies, Religious Pluralism, Multiculturalism, Interculturalism, Cultural Competency

My Personal Education Philosophy

My personal educational philosophy has guided and informed every stage of my Applied Inquiry Project. I believe passionately that the work of an educator is about “movement” – movement from a place of inequality to one of equality, empowerment and access. I believe education is an essential tool to evaluate and reconstruct both the human experience and society and I believe in the power of education to change systems.

Creating opportunities to promote richer more interculturally connected communities lie at the center of my work as a diversity educator. As educators, we plant seeds to expand perspectives, to expand our “knowing”. The following story described by Nord and Haynes in their book, Taking Religion Seriously Across the Curriculum beautifully illustrates this dynamic,

The astronomer Arthur Eddington once told a parable about a fisherman who used a net with a three-inch mesh. After a lifetime of fishing he concluded there were no fish shorter than three inches. Eddington’s moral is that just as one’s fishing net determines what one catches, so it is with conceptual nets; what we find in the ocean of reality depends on the conceptual net we bring to our investigation (Nord & Haynes, 1998, Chapter 2).

As an educator it is my responsibility to help students weave a ‘conceptual net’ that is nimble and flexible and will allow them to navigate in our increasingly interconnected, interdependent, and complex world. Educators Nord and Haynes contend,

Education is the initiation of students into a discussion in which they are taught to understand, to take seriously, and to think critically about the contending voices in our world (Nord & Haynes, 1998, Chapter 2).

The social reform perspective described by Pratt, reflects both my focus and responsibility as an educator:

Teachers from the Social Reform Perspective are most interested in creating a better society and view their teaching as contributing toward this end. Their perspective is unique in that it is based upon 'explicitly stated ideal or set of principles linked to a vision of a better social order (p 173).

Introduction

The Urgency

Why is religious literacy - the ability to understand the languages, meanings, and beliefs of the world's major and minor religions - an urgent issue in our global society (Bishop & Nash, 2007, p 20)?

Charles Haynes, the director of the Religious Freedom Education Project at the Newseum in Washington, DC, and a senior scholar at the First Amendment Center clearly and unequivocally answers the question and calls our nation's schools to action.

Nowhere is the need to address this question greater than in public education. Not only are schools the storm center of controversy involving religious differences, but they are also the principal institution charged with transmitting the identity and mission of the United States from one generation to the next. If we fail in our school policies and classrooms to model and to teach how to live with differences, we endanger our experiment in religious liberty and our unity as a nation (Haynes, 1994).

Current Trends and Statistics

The Pew Forum on Religion Public Life released a U.S. Religious Knowledge report based on the findings from a Pew Forum Survey conducted in the spring of 2010. The report highlights the current state of religious illiteracy in the United States. The study captured the responses of over 3,000 Americans aged 18 and older, revealing that while 6 in 10 respondents of the religious knowledge survey indicated religion is very important in their lives, on average, only half of the thirty-two multiple choice questions were answered correctly. The report emphasized that the low scores originated largely from a lack of knowledge of other faiths (Pew Research Center, 2010).

Educators Bishop and Nash who are on the forefront of the movement to integrate religious literacy and interreligious curriculum in our nation's middle schools, offer these striking statistics:

By year 2050:

- *India will be populated by 1.2 billion Hindus.*
- *Muslims will outnumber Jews by more than 100 to one and also outnumber Christians*
- *Muslims worldwide will outnumber Jews by more than 100 to one and will also outnumber Christians.*
- *Buddhism will be the main religion of East and Southeast Asia in such populous nations as China, Vietnam, and Thailand.*
- *In China and parts of Japan, Taoism and Confucianism will total 1.2 billion adherents. (Bishop & Nash, 2007, p. 21)*

Interfaith Youth Corps founder, Eboo Patel shared these words during a recent interview about the risk of not addressing religious intolerance,

People like Wade Michael Page (the murderer of Sikhs in Wisconsin) and Anders Brevik (who murdered over 75 people in Norway last summer in the name of opposing Muslims and multiculturalism) might act alone, but they are nurtured by movements and grow emboldened in cultures of hate. In the case of Page, it was the white supremacist music scene. In the case of Brevik, it was the rhetoric of the industry of Islamophobia. The great Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel wrote, "Speech has power. Words do not fade. What starts out as a sound, ends in a deed." That's why the kind of ugly speech we hear about Muslims, Mormons, gays, atheists—you name it—is so dangerous. It undoubtedly threatens the groups in question and weakens the bonds of a diverse society (Martin, 2012).

Based on the views of the leading educators and advocates for religious literacy and interreligious understanding, it is not a matter *if* the nation's schools should address this pressing educational issue, but a matter of *when* and *how*. The signposts are clear, interreligious competencies are no longer an education luxury, but are basic survival skills.

Defining Key Terms

Religion

With the word ‘religion’ the focal point of my project and with all discussions emanating from it, it is critical to explain what I mean by the word and for the purposes of this paper outline what the term encompasses.

To begin, fundamental to my inquiry is the pivotal distinction between *teaching religion*, which is unconstitutional, and *teaching about religion*, which is constitutional (Prothero, 2007). *Teaching about religion* is a civic agenda, academic in nature that is descriptive, balanced, non-confessional and non-devotional and offered in an environment free of advocacy. In this paper, whenever I refer to religion, religious curriculum, programming or initiatives, I am speaking in reference to *teaching about religion*.

By studying a people’s religion and philosophy as well as their folkways and traditions, we gain an understanding of their ethical and moral commitments. By reading texts that people revere, we gain important insights into their thinking. The study of religious beliefs and other ideological commitments helps explain cultural continuity and cultural conflict (Grelle, 2001).

Second, my project embraces *religion* in an expansive, inclusive way and from a socio-cultural context. Nord and Haynes, whose holistic approach to religious education guided every stage of my project, capture the nature of religion in this way,

We often assume that religion must be defined in terms of God. But, of course, what counts as God (Nirvana, Brahman, the Tao, the Transcendent) differs considerably from religion to religion. Indeed, some religions—the oldest forms of Buddhism, for example—make no claims about any god, and much religion places rather more emphasis on tradition, community, and how we live, than on belief in God (Nord & Haynes, 1998).

Additionally, I use the term *religion* in the pluralistic way Justice Clark approached *religion* in the 1967 Supreme Court case, *United States vs. Seeger* - a case that addressed the definition of religion as it related to a conscientious objector during the Viet Nam War. Justice Clark wrote:

Over 250 sects inhabit our land. Some believe in a purely personal God, some in a supernatural deity; others think of religion as a way of life envisioning, as its ultimate goal, the day when all men can live together in perfect understanding and peace. There are those who think of God as the depth of our being; others, such as the Buddhists, strive for a state of lasting rest through self-denial and inner purification (Nord & Haynes, 1998).

In short, for the purposes of my paper, I use the word *religion* in the pluralistic and holistic way expressed by Nord and Haynes and Justice Clark.

Religious Literacy and Interreligious Understanding

Throughout this final report I will refer to the core terms: 'religious literacy' and 'interreligious understanding.' By *religious literacy* I mean knowledge of the beliefs, values, practices, symbols, and traditions of the world's religions and the ability to recognize and consider the complex role - economically, politically and culturally - religion plays in our local communities, in our nation and around the world. While *religious literacy* is academically based, 'interreligious understanding' is emotionally and interpersonally focused. *Interreligious understanding* moves the academic understanding from the head to the heart. It is an understanding that develops empathy to enter the minds and hearts of others and, thereby, illuminate the lens through which they see and experience the world (Gross, 1991). It is an appreciative knowledge that fosters respect and builds meaningful cross-religious relationships (Patel, 2012).

Religious Pluralism

Religious literacy and interreligious understanding provides the foundation for religious pluralism. Diana Eck, Harvard Pluralism Project, Founder and Director offers a powerful and dynamic explanation of religious pluralism by outlining what it embodies alongside what it does not,

The challenge of pluralism is not to obliterate or erase difference, nor to smooth out differences under a universalizing canopy, but rather to discover ways of living, connecting, relating, arguing, and disagreeing in society of differences (Eck, 2007, p. 758).

Religious Diversity

Existence of religious differences - differences in beliefs, values, practices, symbols and traditions (Northouse, 2010).

Diversity vs. Pluralism

Where diversity is a fact. Pluralism is an achievement (Patel, 2012, p. 70).

Culture

Culture is dynamic and transmitted (Northouse, 2010, p. 336).

The learned - socially constructed - beliefs, values, norms, symbols and traditions - that a group of people shares in common. (Northouse, 2010).

Multicultural

Multicultural refers to *a system or approach that takes more than one culture into account* (Northouse, 2010, p. 336).

Multicultural broadly refers to regional cultures but it also *refers to a set of subcultures defined by gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and age* (Northouse, 2010, p. 336).

Essentially the center of the multicultural movement was about renewing the idea that America is about people from different backgrounds coming together to build a nation. To do that, people need open attitudes, appreciative knowledge, and meaningful multicultural relationships (Patel, p. 111).

Intercultural

Intercultural refers to the engagement of people from different cultures.

Interculturalism is an active interest and motivation to learn more about individuals from cultures different from one's own. (Northouse, 2010).

Intercultural Competency

Intercultural competency refers to the skills, attitudes and abilities to engage with people from different cultures *from a position of equality rather than cultural superiority* (Adler & Bartholomew, 1992, p 53).

AIP Literature Review

Primary Literature Sources

AAR Religion in the Schools Task Force. (2010). *Guidelines for teaching about religion in K-12 public schools in the United States*. American Academy of Religion Publication: http://www.aarweb.org/Publications/Online_Publications/Curriculum_Guidelines/AA RK-12CurriculumGuidelines.pdf

The basis of the guidelines stand on the assumption that public schools are ‘governed by secular laws and values that support the inclusion of non-devotional study of religion from an academic perspective across the curriculum’ (AAR Guidelines, p. 8). Part I of the guidelines, *Why Teach About Religion?*, begins by outlining key definitions and emphasizing that religion is a social-cultural phenomenon informing every aspect of the human experience - culturally, politically, socially and economically. Part I succinctly presents the three premises on which the guidelines are based: Illiteracy that leads to prejudice and antagonism requiring immediate educational intervention in our nation’s schools to teach about religion from a non-devotional perspective in primary, middle and secondary schools.

The guidelines clearly acknowledge the complex undertaking of teaching about religion in our public schools and offers recommendations on how to teach it in a constitutionally based and pedagogically responsible way.

Part II, *Religion, Education and the Constitution*, outlines principles first developed by religious studies scholar, James Panoch, which provide a foundation for teachers and expand their sensitivity around teaching about religion in public schools. Part II concludes by emphasizing the organization’s belief that religion is a valid field of study and acknowledges the legitimacy of multiple religious perspectives.

Eck, D. (2006). Prospects for pluralism: Voice and vision in the study of religion. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol. 75, No. 4, pp. 743-776. (Presidential Address to American Academy of Religion)

Diane Eck, a preeminent religious studies scholar, Director of Harvard University Pluralism Project and professor of Comparative Religion and Indian Studies at Harvard, believes religious pluralism is the way forward. In this Presidential Address to the American Academy of Religion, Eck reminds the audience that pluralism is about 'engagement'. Eck emphasizes that religious pluralism is not about eliminating the different cultures or religions of the world but to connect them. She vividly explains that the dynamic of pluralism reflects a 'world of bridge-builders' (Eck, p. 772).

Eck's address calls for the serious study of the context and implications of our current religious life. Alongside the theoretically thinking about diversity and pluralism, she urges us to study our own stories and 'multiple-situated selves' (Eck, p. 744). The address is as much a personal reflection, as an historical and contemporary reflection on religious life, discord and connection. Eck reflects on her own journey - sharing her experience in India during the 70's and 80's, highlights challenges in the field, and poses many thought-provoking questions. Eck's address challenges the audience and provides a broad multi-dimensional framework on how to become bridge-builders. One of the most powerful questions she poses for educators is: *And what of America? Is there a pervasive religious and public consciousness that provides nourishing ground for pluralism* (Eck, p. 750)?

Grelle, B. (2001). Learning to live with differences: Teaching about religion in public schools in the United States. Retrieved from *International Association for Religious Freedom, Belief With Integrity*: <http://www.iarf.net/REBooklet/USA.htm>

In this article, Grelle explains the connection between learning about the world's religions in public elementary and secondary schools and successfully educating

students to engage responsibly and respectfully in religiously diverse societies. Specifically, Grelle, currently a Professor of Religious Studies and the Director of the Religion and Public Education Resource Center at Chico State, California, addresses California's 3 R's Project (Rights, Responsibility, Respect) and how it has assisted schools and communities in navigating the challenging terrain of increasingly pluralistic populations. The 3-R's project encompasses discussion and case studies, focusing on finding common ground to build consensus among distinct and divergent interest groups.

Grelle concludes his paper by emphasizing the importance of developing cultural awareness and competencies that will allow students to become actively and sympathetically aware of diverse worldviews. He believes these skills will be absolutely necessary to imaginatively and effectively face the global challenges of the 21st century.

Lester, E., & Roberts, P.S. (2009). How teaching world religions brought a truce to the culture wars in Modesto, California. *British Journal of Religious Education*, Vol. 31, No. 3, pp. 187-199.

This journal article reflects the results of the first large-scale research on the impact of teaching about religion in public schools in the United States. It chronicles the inspiring story of the first public school district in the United States to take the bold move to require all its high school students to take an independent and comprehensive course on world religions. The research found alongside significant increases in students' knowledge of religion, students' engagement in 'active tolerance - willingness to act to counter discrimination' (Lester & Roberts, p. 187) - increased. Also noteworthy is that this course has not resulted in any lawsuits or complaints by parents and has received support among all of Modesto's religious groups.

Lester and Robert's paper outlines the cultural context of Modesto, California and its current climate, the origins and development of the course and its content and the

extensive teacher preparation. The authors point out that critical to the success of integrating the course was bringing all the stakeholders - administrators, teachers, religious leaders and parents - to the table and giving them a voice. The manner in which Modesto tackled this daunting issue - an keen awareness of context and current climate, thoughtful deliberation and planning, active coalition building and open communication, relevant, targeted content and teacher preparation offer powerful lessons to school districts around the country and will likely trigger dialogue and support to follow Modesto's lead.

Moore, D. L. (2007). *Overcoming religious illiteracy: A cultural studies approach to teaching Religion in secondary schools*. Palgrave Macmillian: New York, NY.

In a seminal book focused on surmounting religious illiteracy, ordained minister and Harvard professor, Diane Moore, explains the importance of equipping our future generation with the tools to understand the critical role religion plays in our social, political and cultural lives so that they can deepen religious discourse and the appreciation and respect for the religious 'other'. While she admits that learning about religion does not guarantee that religious intolerance will stop, she believes it will make it more difficult for it to be promoted and perpetuated. Dr. Moore recognizes the challenges of teaching about religion in school but points out that religion is already being taught in the classroom and so it is imperative to give teachers the training they need to do it more responsibly.

In the book, Moore outlines a cultural studies methodology offering educators a multicultural and inter-disciplinary approach to 'teach for understanding' about religion and guidance in addressing and responding to the many challenges educators will likely face. This is a significant and groundbreaking resource in the field of religious literacy and methodology.

In 2011, Dr. Moore started a new initiative called the Religious Literacy Project. It is a teacher-education program offering virtual resources and research center to support

and promote a greater understanding of the prevailing multicultural dimension of religion in public life.

Nash, R. J. & Bishop, P. A. (2007). Teaching for religious literacy in public middle schools. *Middle School Journal*, 5, 20-31.

Authors Robert Nash, a professor at the University of Vermont's School of Education for the past 38 years and Penny Bishop, former middle school English and Social Studies teacher and current professor at UoV's Department of Middle Level Education, consider religion inextricably tied to multiculturalism. They believe educators have a professional responsibility to promote religious literacy and foster religious pluralism in their school settings and that it is imperative that they look critically at their current curricula and ask the following question, "How can I help students become more globally aware, religiously literate citizens?"

While first explaining why religious literacy is an urgent issue in our global world, the authors then offer several practical, tangible pedagogical approaches to teach about religion to middle schoolers. While their primary audience is public school middle school educators, this article is relevant to any primary and secondary educator, administrator or policy maker.

Nord, W.A. & Haynes, C.C. (1998). Taking religion seriously across the curriculum. *Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Alexandria, VA. Chapter 1,* Retrieved from: <http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/198190.aspx>

In their book, *Taking Religion Seriously Across the Curriculum*, Warren Nord, a respected author in the philosophy of religion and education, and Charles Haynes, a Senior Scholar and Director of the Religious Freedom Project at the Newseum at Freedom Forum First Amendment Center, explain the critical importance of the study of religion. They argue that 'One can't be an educated human being without understanding a good deal about religion' (Nord & Haynes, 1998). They find it striking that aside from History courses and

some of the literature studied in English courses, religion is all but absent from secondary curriculum.

Three central themes discussed in Chapter 1 are -

- Why religion is ignored in the curriculum
- Why we need to take religion seriously
- The emergence of a consensus, which they call the 'New Consensus', over the past decade developing on a national level among a broad representation of leading religious and educational organizations.

Nord and Haynes explain that while our differences run deep around religion's role in the curriculum, they contend that by establishing a set of civic and educational principles to navigate our differences, the topic does not need to be as contentious as it has historically been.

The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, (2010). *U.S. religious knowledge survey*. Pew Research Center: Washington, D.C.

The recent survey conducted by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life (2010) highlights the current state of religious literacy in the United States. The study reveals that on average, Americans could answer only 16 of 32 questions on religious knowledge correctly. Two important findings from the survey are that educational achievement (the level of schooling that has been attained) is the best predictor of religious knowledge and those who have frequent dialogue about religion with their family and friends, score higher than those who said they rarely engage in this dialogue.

The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life is a project of the Pew Research Center. The Pew Research Center is an independent opinion research group that studies the public's attitudes on a wide range of public policy issues, providing information on trends that shape American life. The survey results are exceedingly important to all Americans, with special significance to all the stakeholders of the U.S. education system - administrators,

teachers, school boards, parent communities, religious leaders, policy planners, curriculum developers and many more.

Prothero, S. (2007). *What every American needs to know - and doesn't*. HarperCollins: New York, NY

With a sense of urgency, Boston University Religious Professor, Stephen Prothero, states that our religious illiteracy is so profound that it 'imperils our public life.' He believes that the costs of continuing down the road of religious ignorance are too high in our post 9/11 world and urges every university to require a religious studies course for all its undergraduates. He argues that teaching *about* religion, as compared to *teaching* religion, is both constitutional and necessary to promote greater cultural and religious understanding and tolerance. Prothero outlines the path leading up to our religious ignorance and how we can address the knowledge gap. Additionally, he offers a brief dictionary of religious terms and concepts that he believes are essential for literacy and civic life.

The author's approach is a 'call to arms' to tackle the ever increasing dangerous state of religious ignorance in the United States. While provocative in tone, it is an essential piece to shake us out of our complacency and a must read for all Americans, particularly our educators and religious leaders.

Secondary Literature Sources

AAR-Teagle White Paper. (2008). The religious studies major in a post-9/11 world: New challenges, new opportunities. *Religious Studies News*, October 2008, pp.21-24.

Retrieved from:

http://www.teaglefoundation.org/teagle/media/library/documents/learning/2008_ar_whitepaper.pdf?ext=.pdf

This paper reflected the findings of an eighteen-month study on ‘The Religion Major and Liberal Education’ sponsored by the Teagle Foundation and the American Academy of Religion. Alongside emphasizing the important opportunities for the academic study of religion, the paper outlines a series of challenges. The paper also points out that the wake of 9/11 and other religious hotspots such as Bosnia and Kashmir and the continued heated, complex debate over such ethical, critical policy issues such as abortion and stem-cell research, Americas are increasingly more receptive to and interested in understanding a wide-range of religious issues. For example, the paper reveals that in a recent study, “over 80 percent of Americans responded affirmatively to the question, ‘Do you think people should learn more about religions other than their own’” (AAR-Teagle White Paper, p. 21). The paper affirms the need and highlights the desire for more frequent and structured conversations and educational forums to navigate the many challenges facing educators on a daily basis around the teaching of religion.

Beverluis, J. (Ed.). (2000). *Sourcebook of the world’s religions: An interfaith guide to religion and spirituality*. Novato, CA: New World Library.

This sourcebook contains more than 300 articles and essays addressing world religions and traditions, interfaith dialogue and achieving and sustaining peace. The book is divided into five parts: a) Who Are We? (portraits and texts of religions); b) Becoming Community (means toward understanding and respect); c) Beyond Borders (religions and spiritual traditions; United Nations at 50; culture, pluralism and peace); d) Choosing Our Future (the choices we face us as we listen to the voices of the world) and; e) Resource Guides. This book is an extensive and valuable resource on religions and spirituality and a comprehensive sourcebook that can enlighten, guide and inspire educators and students toward religious literacy and understanding.

The complexity of our interconnected and interdependent global environment, understanding worldviews and the abounding religious beliefs and practices, have become a matter of human survival. While the last edition of this book was published

pre-9/11, it contains relevant and timely information and tools to build bridges of understanding and connection. Editor, Joel Beversluis, who died in 2003, focused his life work on global issues and ethics with a special interest in interfaith movements. He was the former editor of NAINews & Interfaith Digest and newsletter editor for the Interfaith Dialogue Association.

Flickstein, M., & Flickstein, C. (Producers). (2009). *With one voice: Awaken to the reality that unites us all* [DVD]. Available from <http://www.withonevoicedocumentary.org/>

This recently released documentary includes interviews with mystics and religious leaders from across the globe. They are asked to share the essence of their 'higher power' (God, the Divine, Allah, Adonai, Gaia, etc.) and the challenges surrounding religious-spiritual understanding and plurality and the path to it. The documentary is broken down into seven chapters beginning with Religious Intolerance and concluding with The Many Paths to Truth and Messages to the World. Given the disturbing evidence of increased religious intolerance locally, nationally, and globally, the film's message urging our religious leaders, educators, nations and each of us individually to embrace religious pluralism is especially relevant. The film highlights the 'danger of a single story'... how critical misunderstanding and missed opportunities to build community occur when we do not respect other spiritual truths and paths. The film speaks directly to the possibilities of the evolution of a humanity that can live in peace. The documentary comes at a critical time in our current fragile global environment offering us both hope and tools to approach peace through dialogue, respect, tolerance, and compassion. This is an valuable resource for educators, policy makers and religious and spiritual leaders and social justice advocates. The writers, Matthew Flickstein and Carol Flickstein are highly respected educators and visionaries in the field of spiritual unity and peace and contributing writers, Judith Anne Nielson and Nathan Antila, are both acclaimed scriptwriters.

Gross, R. M. (1991). Religious diversity: Some implications for monotheism. *Wisconsin Dialogue: A Faculty Journal for the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire*, 11, 35-48.

In this scholarly article, Gross delivers an enlightened and cautionary message prior to prior to 9/11, urging us to approach the philosophy of religious pluralism in a more active and bold way. This philosophy must go far beyond including the 'other' and mere tolerance. What is needed in our schools and communities is a deeper, comprehensive approach to different value and belief systems. Doing so, she believes will interrupt misunderstanding and discord and engender enrichment, trust and community building. She outlines the elements of monotheism that are ethically problematic and a danger to our increasingly connected global world. While highlighting the problem and challenges, the author adeptly maps out in stages what a more aggressive, daring approach to religious pluralism and education looks like.

Rita Gross has been acknowledged as one of the founders of the field of feminist theology. She was previously Professor Emerita of Comparative Studies in Religious at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. While this article was written over 20 years ago, its message is even more relevant and urgent today and has direct relevance to my topic area. It remains a valuable resource for religious leaders, educators and institutions, and school communities - including administrators, teachers, parents, school boards, curriculum planners.

Hirschfield, B. (2007). *You don't have to be wrong for me to be right. Finding faith without fanaticism*. New York, NY: Harmony Books.

Rabbi Brad Hirschfield knows first hand where fanaticism can lead ... as a young man he followed a religiously rigid path in Israel and experienced the division and antagonism that can follow. This book intertwines his personal story and transformation with biblical scholarship and offers an enlightened and realistic path to living with and nurturing the local, national and global religious plurality. The book addresses: the ways faith has many faces; how justice can coexist with forgiveness; how unity does not necessitate uniformity; and, the ways we can learn to disagree without disconnecting.

This is an important resource for our religious and secular educators and a must-read for our high school students. Hirschfield pragmatically and systematically appeals to our tightly held hope that we can achieve the goals of religious understanding, respect, peaceful coexistence and reconciliation. Rabbi Hirschfield created and co-hosts the television series *Building Bridges: Abrahamic Perspectives on the World Today*. *Newsweek* magazine named him one of the top 50 Rabbis in America. He is currently the president of the National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership.

King, M.L. (1956). *The beloved community*. Speech presented at a victory rally following the U.S. Supreme Court decision to desegregate Montgomery's public transportation. Washington D.C.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. first used the term 'the beloved community' in a speech given at a victory rally in Washington, D.C. following a favorable decision by the U.S. Supreme Court that desegregated public transportation in Montgomery, Alabama. When Dr. King spoke about the 'beloved community' he was speaking about reconciliation. He believed that the only path to human progress was through human connectedness, which ultimately would lead to harmony and love among people. Dr. King's 'beloved community' was a global vision. He believed international conflicts could be resolved through peaceful, civil disobedience. He believed that love triumphs over fear and hatred and that peace with justice prevail over war and military intervention. Dr. King was the youngest person to receive the Nobel Peace Prize for his work to end racial inequality and discrimination through nonviolent means. He was a beloved clergyman and civil and human rights activists who transformed America's civil landscape.

UNESCO. (1994). *Declaration of the role of religion in the promotion of a culture of peace*. Culture of Peace Declaration. Paris, France: UNESCO.

In this sweeping, unprecedented declaration of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization in 1994, the organization recognized religion's central and pivotal role in addressing aggression, social injustice, poverty and oppression around the world. It is a statement of clarity and intention that cultural and

religious pluralism is a necessity if world peace is to be achieved. It is 'call to action' and roadmap to freedom. In our post-9/11 world, the relevance of this declaration is more importance today than ever before. It strives to build a culture of peace among peoples and nations through dialogue, human rights, nonviolence, understanding and tolerance. This declaration is of particular importance to NGOs and INGOs; the world media; transnational corporations; peace and social justice advocates; and, religious and spiritual leaders. UNESCO – The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization - was established by the United Nations in 1946 to foster collaboration among the participating nations in the areas of education, science, culture, and communication. Headquartered in Paris, France, among its main objectives are international cooperation and the preservation of human rights.

Valk, J. (2007). Plural public schooling: Religion, worldviews and moral education. *British Journal of Religious Education*, Vol. 29, No. 3, pp. 273-285.

As an Associate Professor of Worldview Studies at the University of New Brunswick, Valk offers a Canadian lens on religion and plurality. Valk contends that we cannot afford for our future generations to be ignorant of worldviews or belief systems and practices different than our own. He stresses that religion is no longer a private matter, but an urgent public concern. Valk suggests that plural societies require a new educational model.

Valk outlines a plan for 'plural public schooling' that focuses on the study of worldviews - both religious and secular. The essence of the pedagogy stresses engagement of multiple perspectives and disciplines. He emphasizes the importance of an integrative, interdisciplinary approach that support and foster "a genuine forum for dialogue between students and faculty from different religious and non-religious backgrounds and for learning the skills to interpret, reflect upon and gain insight from different worldviews (p. 282)."

Assumptions

Research abounds and urgent statements grow louder each day on the need to integrate religious literacy and interreligious curriculum and programming into our nation's schools. However, while many scholars and researchers have illuminated the challenges and offered thoughtful, comprehensive roadmaps to move us forward, what appears to be missing in the research are the actual voices of our K-12 school administrators and teachers currently wrestling with this topic and, specifically, their perspectives on their individual school cultures and the challenges and opportunities that exist in their school environments. It is critical to assess a school's current climate and also have an understanding of where it has come from to successfully shift culture and begin to scale the challenge of integrating pluralistic educational norms. I believe our K-12 educators are one of the most critical resources to explore the opportunities and shape the solutions within our nation's schools. The following research introduces a framework to begin to hear their voices and help these educators think about where they currently are, where they want to go and how they can get there.

Selecting and Framing My Research Methodology

Why a Qualitative Case Study?

I approached my inquiry through basic qualitative research using a case study. Framing my project as a qualitative case study offered a deeply contextual and concrete exploration into a complex phenomenon within the bounds of a finite system (Merriam, 2009). I was especially drawn to case study research because of its rich holistic potential and the information - the perspectives - that are accessible through targeted purposeful sampling.

Specifically, a case study offered me the unique ability to explore the many layers impacting the educational infrastructure and decision-making process heuristically and particularistically (Merriam, 2009) providing me an opportunity to capture what Merriam describes as

... a rich, 'thick' description of the phenomenon under study (Merriam, 2009, p. 43).

The phenomenon or 'unit of analysis' in this bounded system is individual perspectives on integrating religious literacy and interreligious curriculum and programming in a secular school environment. The bounded system is a single secular school involving its lead administrators and faculty who are involved in the school's Global Citizenship Teacher Education Program and/or Faculty Diversity Council.

Learning what meaning integrating religious literacy and interreligious curriculum and programming has for educators lay at the heart of my research. The case study methodology gave me the opportunity to dig deeply into the dynamics of the phenomenon by going to the source - to the administrators and teachers who are wrestling with the complexity and controversy of scaling this educational agenda - within a bounded system.

Data Collection Methods

Phase I

Phase I of my research involved an *online survey* administered through Survey Monkey (See Addendum A). I chose this data gathering method to both streamline and maximize my ability to collect basic demographic, baseline information that would inform and guide Phase II of my project: the one-on-one interviews.

Phase II

I chose to gather information for the second phase of my research through *phenomenological interviews*. In Phase II, my goal was to uncover perceptions and understand on a deeper level the experiences of the teachers and administrators. I was especially interested in using a data collection tool that would shed light on personal perspective and offer new insight. Patton highlights this particular strength, emphasizing,

The main purpose of interviewing is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective (Patton, 2001, p. 340).

I approached the interviews in a semi-structured way to ensure that the discover process was not constricted in any way and would encourage the free flow of participants' thoughts and understandings. I designed the interviews with several main lead questions (see Addendum B) and followed-up on specific questions with probes to explore a response more thoroughly and, if needed, gain greater clarification. This approach offered me a rich and descriptive narrative.

Complementing the Data Collection

To supplement and frame the data collected through the surveys and interviews, I engaged in an *in-depth document review* throughout the inquiry process. This tool helped me validate and interpret what I uncovered and provided an important balance

to my research. It also allowed me to take a deeper dive into the field of religious literacy and into the challenges and opportunities surrounding integrating religious studies and interreligious curriculum in our schools. Merriam outlines the unique strengths of using documentary data in this way,

The data can furnish descriptive information, verify emerging hypotheses, advance new categories and hypotheses, offer historical understanding, track change and development and so on One of the greatest advantages of document material is its stability. Unlike interviewing and observation, the presence of the investigator does not alter what is being studied. Documentary data are 'objective' sources of data compared to other forms (Merriam, 2009, p. 155).

The Case Study School

Selection of the Case Study School

I selected this particular school because of my access to and relationship with the educational organization and among the educators and because I was confident the institution and the individual participants would be thoughtful about the issues and responsibly engage in the process.

About the Case Study School

The case study school is a junior kindergarten through 12th grade, college-preparatory school [rest of description deleted to protect privacy].

The school's mission states the following:

[Deleted to protect privacy.]

In describing the school, the head of the school expressed,

Here, students are part of a community where each has a voice, is known and is valued. Teachers use global connections to tie learning to real life applications. In a world that is more complex than ever, it's important for students to be known and know that they can do whatever they chose, with hard work, knowledge and perseverance.

Among the case study school's six core values are: [Deleted to protect privacy.]

The Case Study Participants

Selection of the Participants

For my purposes, it was critical that I select participants for this study who could provide descriptive information, specifically those who were familiar with and engaged in the issues under investigation. Highlighting the benefits of selective sampling, Patton explains,

The logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research ... (Patton, 1990, p. 169).

Twelve participants completed the online survey and four of these survey responders participated in the comprehensive one-on-one interviews. As with the survey phase, I was very deliberate in the selection of the participants for the interview phase. Roulston emphasizes the importance of this dynamic explaining,

To use phenomenological interviews effectively, it is essential that the interviewer has identified participants who have both experienced, and are able to talk about the particular lived experience under examination (Roulston, 2010, p. 17).

The four educators I selected have a depth of commitment to and a breadth of experience with developing multicultural competencies in middle school and high school students, which offered my research a richly informed perspective.

Demographics of Participants

The participants in the web survey represented six administrators, five faculty members and one 'mixed role' - administrator/faculty member with primary responsibilities as an

administrator. The administrators included the Head of the School, the Assistant Head of School, the Heads of the Lower, Middle and Upper Schools as well as the Dean of Students and the five faculty members and one mixed role administrator/faculty member represented all three divisions - Lower (JK-4), Middle (6-8) and Upper (9-12). All the participants are veteran educators constituting an average tenure at the case study school of 12 years and an average of 24 years in the field of education. Eight females participated in the survey and four males with ages ranging from 30 to 60+ years of age. Among the participants, one racially identified as African American, one as European and ten as White. None of the participants identified their ethnic origin as Hispanic.

The interview participants included: (1) a faculty member from the Upper School teaching 9th and 12th grade English who also co-teaches the sole religion course at the case study school (Comparative World Religion), which is a senior elective; (2) a diversity advocate and administrator from the Upper School serving in the role of Assistance Upper School Head who led the recent initiative to develop the school's Global Citizenship Teacher Education (GCTE) program; (3) a 7th Grade Humanities teacher with a rich academic background in race, class and gender who currently leads the GCTE initiative; and, (4) a passionate administrator currently serving as the Head of the Middle School and leading the school's Diversity Faculty Council. Among this group there were three females and one male; three identifying as White and one as Black/African American; all fell within a 30-45 age range and have been working at the case study school for no less than five years.

Survey Development and Design

Developing the Online Survey

As indicated earlier, I created an online survey to streamline and maximize my ability to gather basic demographic information and baseline perspectives to guide the interview phase of my research. The process of developing a relevant survey that would meet my research goals was a more challenging endeavor than I anticipated. Creating a well-designed survey is truly an art. I am thankful for the assistance I received along the way from my academic and professional project advisors and from an outside survey consultant from the University of Wisconsin Survey Center whose guidance was instrumental in the language I used to frame my questions and how I lay out the survey.

I used the web-based resource Survey Monkey to implement my survey. This tool provided an easy, confidential method to execute the survey. The case study participants were given a web link to access the survey in mid-October and were provided a two-week time period to complete. The survey included 40 closed-answer, multiple-choice questions. Among these questions, six included space for open-ended responses for participants to provide additional detail. The survey took approximately 30 minutes to complete and I had 100% response rate from the administrators and faculty members who had originally committed to the project.

Survey Design (Appendix A)

To help survey respondents move through the survey easily and reduce cognitive burden, I broke the survey down into the following sections: 1) Perspectives about the students at the case study school; 2) Perspectives on school culture and the school's focus on religious literacy and understanding; 3) Participant's perspectives; 4) Participant's experience and preparation; 5) Participant's role at the case study school; and, 5) Demographic information.

In designing the survey, I focused on keeping the language simple and straightforward, avoiding any technical, academic-specific language whose meaning might be lost on those not involved in this field of study. For example, using key terms such as religious literacy and understanding and avoiding language such as religious pluralism or intercultural competencies.

One of the biggest questions I struggled with in the survey design was whether to ask questions in a statement form, for example, “Students at ABC school spend time with students from ethnic or racial groups different than their own?” or ask the questions in a question format, “How often do students at ABC school spend time with students from ethnic or racial groups different than their own?” After a great deal of deliberation, I decided to design the survey in a question format. I believe this format offered greater efficacy in my research and stayed true to the overall purpose of my project: “Giving Voice to Teacher and Administrator Perspectives”. The question format offered direct language to get at the information I was asking for. By putting my questions in a statement form, I ran the risk of bias with a statement potentially representing one side of a spectrum, positive or negative. Additionally, survey questions should be explicitly and directly telling the respondent what information you are asking for (Dillman, 2007). By explicitly framing the response dimension ‘how often’, ‘how many times’, etc., the respondents didn’t have to guess at what information I was asking for, which in turn helped avoid different respondents potentially interpreting the questions differently.

For measurement clarification, depending on how the question was worded, the questions reflect the following five-point response scale:

- Not at all or Never
- Slightly or Rarely
- Somewhat or Sometimes
- Very or Often
- Extremely or Always

Survey Findings

Themes That Emerged

The following five categories emerged from my analysis of the survey data: 1) Participants' Perspectives on the Students at the Case Study School; 2) Participants' Perspectives on School Culture and the School's Focus on Religious Literacy and Understanding; 3) Participants' Personal Perspectives on Interreligious Education; 4) Participants' Personal Perspective of Their Experience and Preparation; and, 5) Participants' Role at the Case Study School and General Demographic Information.

Outlined below are the responses (by category) that I found significant and that I believe shed light on potential opportunities for the case study school.

Participants' Perspectives on the Students at the Case Study School

Question:	Survey Finding:
<i>How often do students at the case study school openly share their religious beliefs and practices in the school environment?</i>	Two-thirds (8 of 12) indicated <i>Rarely</i>
<i>How prepared are students who graduate from the case study school to problem solve with people from religious backgrounds and faith practices different than their own?</i>	Two-thirds (8 of 12) answered that students are <i>Slightly Prepared</i> .
<i>How motivated are students at the case study school to learn about and understand the religious backgrounds and faith practices of others?</i>	Five-sixths (10 of 12) responded <i>Slightly</i> or <i>Somewhat</i> .

**Participants' Perspectives on School Culture and
The School's Focus on Religious Literacy and Understanding**

This category offered a snapshot of the respondent's views on the educational climate at the case study school.

Question:	Survey Finding:
<i>How important is it to teach for religious literacy and understanding at the case study school?</i>	Three-quarters (9 of 12) indicated <i>Very</i> or <i>Extremely Important</i> .
<i>How often does the case study school offer curriculum and programming that teaches for religious literacy and understanding?</i>	Nearly half (5 of 12) answered <i>Never</i> or <i>Rarely</i> and five <i>Sometimes</i> .
<i>How prepared are faculty and administrators at the case study school to educate for religious literacy and understanding?</i>	Half (6 of 12) responded <i>Slightly</i> prepared and four <i>Somewhat</i> .
<i>How often are there divisional or school-wide opportunities for staff to develop cultural competences that include development around interreligious understanding?</i>	Nearly half (5 of 12) indicated <i>Never</i> or <i>Rarely</i> .
<i>How often is there an ongoing discussion at the case study school on how to teach for religious literacy and understanding?</i>	Almost all (11 of 12) answered <i>Never</i> or <i>Rarely</i> .

Participants' Personal Perspectives on Interreligious Education

Question:	Survey Finding:
<i>Does the U.S. Constitution prohibit public and non-parochial schools from teaching for religious literacy or understanding?</i>	All 12 indicated that the U.S. Constitution never prohibits public or private non-parochial schools from teaching for religious literacy and understanding.
<i>How important is it to educate for religious literacy and understanding?</i>	All 12 responded <i>Extremely Important</i> (9) or <i>Very Important</i> (3).
<i>How important is it to learn to solve problems with people from different religious backgrounds and faith practices?</i>	Nearly all (11 of 12) answered <i>Extremely Important</i> .

Participants' Personal Perspective of Their Experience and Preparation

Question:	Survey Finding:
<i>How prepared do you feel to support students from all religious backgrounds, belief systems and faith practices?</i>	Half (6 of 12) indicated they feel <i>Somewhat Prepared</i> .

Participant's Role at the Case Study School and General Demographic Information

Two highlights -

1. The respondents have been at the case study school an average of twelve years and been in the field of education for an average of 24 years.

2. Five-sixth (10 of 12) were raised in the Christian faith, however, today, only one-third (4 of 12) are practicing Christians. Four now identify as *Spiritual* and two indicated *Other*, specifying: Society of Friends (Quaker) and Quaker/Buddhist.

Applying Filters to the Findings

For deeper analysis, I applied the following filters to the response report:

- Gender - Male/Female
- Role - Administrator/Faculty

These filters revealed a handful of interesting distinctions. That said, given the size of participant pool, I don't know how statistically significant these differences are, however, I felt they were worth noting.

Gender Filter

Question:	Survey Finding:
<i>How important is it to teach for religious literacy and understanding at the case study school?</i>	Nearly all (7 out of 8) females indicated <i>Very Important or Extremely Important</i> where as half (2 of 4) of the males indicated <i>Somewhat Important</i> .
<i>How much should religion, for the purpose of understanding not devotion, be discussed in public and private non-parochial schools?</i>	Almost all (7 of 8) of the females responded <i>A lot</i> and three quarters (3 of 4) of the males responded <i>Some</i> .
<i>Do you feel prepared to support students from all religious backgrounds, belief systems and faith practices?</i>	Three-quarters (6 of 8) of the females responded <i>Very or Extremely Prepared</i> and all (4 of 4) of the males indicated <i>Somewhat Prepared</i> .

Role Filter

For the purposes of this filter the mixed-role participant with primary responsibilities as an administrator was reflected as an administrator.

Question:	Survey Finding:
<i>How often do students at the case study school openly share their religious beliefs and practices in the school environment?</i>	Most (4 of 5) of the faculty indicated <i>Rarely</i> whereas, nearly half (3 of 7) of the administrators responded <i>Often</i> or <i>Sometimes</i> .
<i>How important is it to teach for religious literacy and understanding at case study school?</i>	More than half (4 of 7) of the administrators answered <i>Extremely Important</i> , while only one-fifth (1 of 5) of the faculty responded <i>Extremely Important</i> .
<i>How prepared are the faculty and administrators at the case study school to educate for religious literacy and understanding?</i>	All (5 of 5) five of the faculty indicated <i>Slightly</i> or <i>Somewhat Prepared</i> while two of the seven administrators answered <i>Very</i> or <i>Extremely Prepared</i> .
<i>How often does the case study school offer curriculum and programming that teaches for religious literacy and understanding?</i>	All (5 of 5) of the faculty responded either <i>Rarely</i> or <i>Sometimes</i> and two the seven administrators answered <i>Often</i> .

“Don’t Know” Responses

For a few of the questions in the survey, respondents were given an option to respond ‘Don’t Know’. The findings from two particular questions stood out to me as opportunities for the case study school.

Question 1:	Survey Finding:
<i>How receptive would the case study school board of directors be to the idea of curriculum and programming that teaches for religious literacy and understanding?</i>	One-third (4 of 12) answered <i>Don’t Know</i> .

I found this number especially significant because of the unique pool of participants responding to the survey - representing the top administrators and leading multicultural advocates at the school. Knowing where key decision makers stand on new educational initiatives particularly those as potentially controversial as religious studies - is essential and the beginning point to shifting and scaling any new educational initiative.

Question 2:	Survey Finding:
<i>How supportive would parents at the case study school be to curriculum and programming that teaches for religious literacy and understanding?</i>	Again, one-third (four out of the twelve) answered “ <i>Don’t Know</i> .”

Alongside the board of directors, in a private school environment, the second most influential stakeholder is the parent community. To successfully introduce and integrate any new educational agenda - again, particularly if the agenda is controversial - it is essential to understand the parent community’s understanding of the initiative and their level of support.

These findings reveal an opportunity for the case study school to do a climate survey to determine how these stakeholders would feel about educational initiatives focused on religious literacy and interreligious understanding. A climate survey could also be designed to assess the level of understanding and the opportunities to educate these stakeholders around the urgency of these educational themes.

Closing Reflection

The survey design and implementation process was recursive and generative and, while challenging, this element of the project inquiry ended up being one of the most gratifying and one that offered me the most significant learning experience. The data gathered from the survey exceeded all my expectations. The findings reveal significant trends and strategic gaps in the case study school, which I believe will trigger questions within the school such as:

“If all of the survey participants feel 1) educating for religious literacy and interreligious understanding and 2) teaching students to solve problems with people from different religious back grounds and faith practices are extremely or very important, how does this institution explain or address the data that reflects only half (6 of 12) of these educations feel slightly or somewhat prepared to do this or that half (6 of 12) responded that the school never or rarely offers curriculum or programming that teaches for religious literacy and understanding?”

Alongside the actionable opportunities that emerged from the data, which the case study school could explore, the findings offered me rich demographic and baseline information providing a launching off point to conduct the interview phase of my research.

Interview Findings

Overview

The interview phase of the inquiry project offered an opportunity to take a deeper dive into the texture and layers of the case study participants' perspectives, concerns and ideas. The data gathered from the survey responses helped inform and shape my approach to the interviews. I conducted four interviews over a two-week period in early November, which included two administrators (one from the upper school and one from the middle school) and two faculty members (also one each from the upper and middle school). The interviews took place in the participants' work place (classrooms and administrative offices) and were each approximately 60 minutes in length. Addendum B outlines my interview script and while I stayed true to this basic framework throughout the four interviews, with each interview, I gained greater perspective and settled into the interviewing process. As with the development of the survey design, approaching and developing the interviews was fluid and emergent particularly in the manner in which I framed the questions and followed-up with probes.

The following categories emerged from my analysis of the interview data. The categories reflect the perspectives of at least two or more of the participants. I will explore each of these themes through the voices of the interview participants themselves. Their voices will guide the discovery of the perspectives and ideas that surfaced in this phase and reveal the depth of emotion, creativity and commitment around this topic and as well as the many opportunities that exist.

- Passionate, Committed Educators
- Importance of Preparing Students for Interreligious Understanding
- Particular Importance of Interreligious Understanding Among this Case Study Student Population
- Current Challenge: Existing School Culture
- Current Initiatives
- Ideas to Scaffold Interreligious Education

“We have passionate, committed people in place.” (Respondent A)

The interviews revealed that within the case study community there is a fiercely passionate group of faculty and administrators tirelessly driving intercultural curriculum and programming and who feel a deep sense of responsibility to prepare students to be informed, open-minded, flexible and responsible citizens. Each of the participants interviewed are actively and creatively engaged in some way with scaffolding interreligious education in the school community.

Importance of Preparing Students for Interreligious Understanding

The interview participants unanimously stressed the importance of religious literacy and interreligious understanding and also emphasized its particular significance for this school community’s student population. Highlighted below are the themes that emerged during the interviews, which also reflect the reasons why these educators feel this topic is so vital.

Global Citizenship...

Religious literacy and understanding is part of global citizenship and developing global leaders. Given what’s going on in the world today, it should be a given that it’s taught. We shouldn’t have a fear of it. It is absolutely important.

(Respondent A)

Cultural Competency ...

I think it is important for two reasons. First, cultural competency is inherent to being fully educated and second, in terms of the relationships that we have in life and where students are going to find themselves and that idea that in addition to cultural competency of knowledge, there’s a cultural competency of practice in terms of who we are as human beings and how we relate to one

another. So the first is content and intellectual and the other is how we live together. (Respondent B)

Prepared Student Leaders ...

To be able to hold your own if you had to come across the person that was not seeing the difference, was not understanding it, was not valuing it ... and to be prepared to help others and inform them. And when our students go off to college, we want them to be able to take a class and be articulate and be informed so they don't struggle with the words or understanding. (Respondent A)

Questioning Assumptions ...

Religious understanding underlies so much of our lives in this very subtle way - in a way we don't all recognize and I think recognizing this is really important. Its importance for me goes back to understanding how all of our assumptions in some way are socially constructed and the importance of questioning all assumptions. We think that we do things and understand things as normal ... it's how we do it, it's natural ... doesn't everybody think this way? (Respondent C)

Interrupting Ignorance and Building Respect ...

In the Middle School we do ongoing work around bullying with its foundation focus on awareness, choices and roles: the victim, the bystander and the upstander. One segment presents a Muslim woman going into a café and the person behind the counter wouldn't serve her, saying to her, "You are not American. You don't look American." So we asked the students, "What is it about being Muslim that means you are not American?" And one of the students said, "Well, she's not dressed like an American." And we (the educators) just stopped in our tracks and thought to ourselves, "Oh, we have so much work to do." (Respondent A)

Social Justice ...

Valuing different cultures makes you a better person, makes you able to make informed decisions. It makes you help when you are in the position to do so and effect change, whatever needs to change. It's about social justice.

(Respondent A)

Particular Importance to this Case Study Student Population

Developing Leaders ...

At (this school) although we don't really ever say it, I have always presumed what we are attempting to accomplish is to develop young people who are going to be leaders. So the idea that they would leave this place and have limitations on their ability to function as leaders in the communities they will be a part of, is a great concern. I hope our students will have the capacity to be leaders in whatever environments they're going to be in because of who they are and because of what we've been able to accomplish with them.

(Respondent B)

Our students have resources and access ...

We have kids here who are going to be powerful. We have a lot of power at this school because so many of the students come from family environments with many resources and connections and I think at this school, in particular, it is our obligation to put kids out in the world who truly understand other people and who are willing to try and don't just give it lip service. I think it is the most important thing we need to do here and at any school like this that is so wealthy in terms of resources and connections and potential for where the kids are going to go. (Respondent C)

Where are our students getting information about the religious ‘other’? ...

We don't have a very diverse student body in terms of religion and faith practice that the students have ongoing access to. So if we don't teach them about religion, where are they getting the information? The news? That's a bit scary. The information is pretty much absent on TV or in books unless it's a negative portrayal. With what's happening around the world, not being able to understand religion historically and geographically or the impact religion has on so many areas of our lives, is concerning.” (Respondent D)

Current Challenge: Existing School Culture

A vivid picture emerged during the interviews of the case study school's current culture and the challenges this climate presents for the educators interested in moving the agenda forward on interreligious education. Currently there is not a strategic directive at the school for religious literacy and/or interreligious curriculum or programming. The initiatives taking place at the school are driven by individual faculty members who have a deep sense of commitment and responsibility to teaching this topic and who also have a personal knowledge of and comfort with the subject area. One of the participants referred to themselves as an ‘outlier’ and another as a ‘maverick’ in their commitment to do this work within the current school environment.

Outliers ...

In the places we are doing it, it is because there are individuals who have developed that skill and feel very confident but also are very passionate about including it in their curriculum. These people have bravely jumped into this and not necessarily been fully certain how this was going to play out with the administration, board or parent community. (Respondent B)

In my class - I talk about the concept of religion and how it impacts literature but I still do have that slight tinge of nervousness ... "Am I going to get a phone call?" It's that sense of whose button am I going to push by bringing this up. It's the same feeling I have when I bring up LGBT issues in the classroom, which I also think is important. (Respondent C)

All four participants expressed that this work, for the most part, was being done 'under the radar.' They shared that they did not want to be operating this way, but they clearly understood, given the school's history, its established school traditions and the financial realities surrounding the institution, what they are up against and the risks they need to take to make things happen. Two participants, however, voiced that they felt they had pushed the boundaries as far as they could and any further movement would come only when the school's stakeholders - top administrators, board leadership and parent community - fully understood and embraced the reasons religious literacy and interreligious understanding are so important to a 21st century education.

Empowering The Process ...

To engage in religious education at a level beyond what we're currently doing requires people who believe the importance of the topic and who have confidence and comfort with it. We need adults that can model that for the students and a willingness to empower this. (Respondent B)

A strategic plan is essential to this process of change and influencing the direction of that change. (Respondent B)

To empower the process to strategically integrate religious literacy and interreligious understanding in a school's educational plan, the participants expressed that this would require shifting the current school culture. Specifically, this would require demystifying and interrupting false perceptions of the purpose of bringing religious literacy and interreligious understanding into curriculum and programming, raising awareness of its

urgency and laying the groundwork for these stakeholders to strategically consider how, to what extent, and to what end interreligious curriculum and programming could be integrated into the school's overall education plan.

The Dynamic of the Bell Curve of Change

As the layers of the interview participants' experiences and roadblocks they face at the case study school came to light, I was reminded of Marilyn Loden's work in her book, Implementing Diversity, Loden, a renowned diversity consultant, emphasizes that shifting cultural paradigms and valuing diversity are *innovations that challenge the old order.*' She goes on to explain that *understanding how this change is likely to be adopted and resisted in an organization is crucial* (Loden, 1996, p. 39).

Loden contends that there is always going to be a group ahead of the curve. These individuals, which she refers to as 'innovators' and 'change agents' lie at the start of the bell curve of change and are the sparks that build the momentum for changing organizational culture. I especially like the diagram and imagery of change embodied in her 'Diversity Adoption Curve.' The curve dynamically outlines the flow of change and the behaviors that drive it. Loden describes the movement in this way,

Like a wave forming and rolling toward the shore, valuing diversity is initially embraced by a small, select group of innovators in an organization. As this new paradigm gains momentum, it is then embraced by the change agents who speed up the wave and accelerate its movement through the organization. Slowly, after a period of successful testing and refinement, the wave gathers the strength required to become a change that the majority of people in an organization begin to accept. Ultimately, it will dash itself powerfully upon the rocks of the last resistant segment of the population and begin wearing away hostility and gaining acceptance among the most opposed from the start (Loden, 1996, p. 41).

The innovators and change agents at the case study school - or 'mavericks' and 'outliers' as described themselves - are in the stage of 'testing and refinement' that Loden speaks about, working to coordinate and consolidate efforts in order to build the momentum necessary to educate the majority of the stakeholders and decision makers within the institution.

Current Initiatives

Solid progress has been made to introduce and offer interreligious educational experiences for the students at the case study school and lay the foundation for more significant, integrated efforts. The two interview participants who are faculty members expressed excitement and pride in what they have achieved so far in developing and focusing their curriculum. These educators pointed out that religious themes pervade current and classical literature offering English and Humanities courses natural launching off points to these topics. By capturing the rich themes threading through literature and history books and facilitating targeted discussions, exercises and writing assignments around these topics, they are able to engage in meaningful learning around religious diversity in their classrooms. Additionally, the case study school has a senior elective Comparative World Religion course. This course is taught from a social science perspective and the course continues to gain interest among the student body.

The most recent and promising initiative to shift culture at the case study school is its Global Citizenship Teacher Education program. This program, created and driven internally, is in its second year. It is a cross-divisional initiative that engages 12-15 faculty and administrators in a year-long comprehensive program focused on global and multicultural education and environment sustainability. Religious pluralism is an integral theme within this initiative and one that the two interview participants serving in leadership roles in this program believe will result in tangible, curricular and programmatic changes at the school.

The school also engages students in ongoing experiential learning, which has in the past offered opportunities to explore religious diversity. The case study school's experiential learning is wide ranging and includes service learning projects, outdoor orientation programs, weekly community gatherings, speaker presentations, Upper School Interim Week and a senior service graduation requirement.

Additionally there are ongoing multicultural professional development opportunities for faculty and administrators. Three pivotal resources actively being used by the school are Facing History and Ourselves, the People of Color annual conference and Global Youth Leadership Institute summer programs. These resources offer transformational experiential learning opportunities that have had direct impact on curriculum, programming and school climate.

Ideas to Scaffold Interreligious Education

The interviews were rich with ideas on how to build momentum and lay the groundwork to crest the next wave: Strategically building interreligious curriculum and programming within the school. Highlighted below are the five distinct categories that emerged: (1) Diversity Leadership; (2) Administrative Support, Advocacy and Professional Development; (3) Stakeholder Education; (4) Interfaith Discussion Group; and, (5) High-Impact Religious Pluralism Leader and Speaker. Following this are a few of the secondary ideas that the respondents shared.

Diversity Leadership ...

Two of the interview participants emphasized the importance of hiring a person to oversee the school's diversity initiatives and to be a resource to the school community. One of the participants shared,

I would love for a director of diversity or someone in a similar position to be responsible for raising awareness and making sure we don't miss the quality learning experiences. Having someone as the 'go to' person like we have for technology who can provide assistance - resources and support - and who can connect the dots and ask the next questions would be great. We don't have anyone here that coordinates this. We have a technology resource, which is incredibly valuable but we don't have anyone in a position of authority connecting us, encouraging us, supporting us, and assisting us with multicultural development. (Respondent D)

Administrative Support, Advocacy and Professional Development ...

1. *Administrative support for religious literacy and understanding*
2. *Advocacy for active curriculum development. We need to help guide faculty to find the places and spaces where this education can be included in the curriculum*
1. *Professional development and faculty hiring - focusing on individuals who have the background and confidence to pull this off. (Respondent B - who notably is an upper school administrator)*

Stakeholder Education ...

As discussed in detail above, stakeholder education is critical in this process. Until the decision makers and the majority of the stakeholders at the school get behind and empower this process, the educators expressed that they did not believe any further significant development would be possible.

Interfaith Discussion Group ...

I wish there was some clear student initiative to be talking about issues of religion and spirituality and that there could be an interfaith discussion group that is seen as truly, truly inclusive of everyone. It would be a safe place for anyone from any religious background to talk. I'm not sure what form it would

take but it would be great to have a place for students to go to talk about these issues at the school. (Respondent C)

Dynamic, High-Impact Religious Pluralism Speaker ... All of the participants expressed the benefit of bringing a religious pluralism scholar and activist into the school community to educate and inspire students, faculty, administrators, board members and parents.

We have all these great speakers who come to the school. It would be great to have someone come in and talk, say the words. Sometimes it's just saying the words out loud in the community and somebody who is interesting and dynamic who lets those words be alive in the community. It would add great value to have someone name what we don't normally name. It's a way in, it's not the end of the solution but I think it's a good starting point. (Respondent C)

Additional suggestions included ...

- Creating book circles with teachers which would provide an opportunity to dig more deeply into these issues
- Exploring the International Baccalaureate requirements around global citizenship and religious literacy and understanding
- Eliminating Black History month. One of the participants expressed,

Celebrating black history in this way is a step down -it moves it away from cultural understanding and respect. It's like the heroes and villains perspectives instead exploring and celebrating a deeper understanding of the history. (Respondent D)

Survey Feedback - Suggested Revisions

My final interview question asked participants to share feedback on their experience with the online survey. Specifically, I asked if they had any difficulty answering the questions because of unclear wording or intention; if they had questions about the relevancy of a particular question; or if there were any questions they wished had been

included. I received thoughtful, tangible feedback from all four of the respondents that will impact the efficacy of my survey in significant ways.

One of the respondents suggested,

1. *Include a question that would determine the level of the faculty's interest by division in offering interreligious curriculum and programming at the school.*
2. *Include a question that would assess whether a faculty member knows what other faculty members are feeling about interreligious curriculum and programming.*
3. *Include a question that would reveal whether faculty members are interested in knowing more - being more religiously literate and interreligiously competent. (Respondent A)*

Two other participants shared that they struggled with the questions that asked them to assign a 'level of importance' to a particular statement. For example, "How important is it to teach for religious literacy and understanding at X school?"

Even in areas where I think something is philosophically, educationally valuable and of the highest importance, in our role as educators, there's so much that we have to cover. I went back and forth on some of my responses because it wasn't clear whether the survey was asking me to assess relative importance - in terms of absolutely at the top tier of all the competing curricular priorities - or level of importance independent of other educational priorities. (Respondent B)

To address this, I would revise and present the question in two ways, first asking participants to assess value independently and second asking them to assess its relative value based on competing priorities. To go even deeper, I would include a question asking participants to list and rank the relative importance of the specific educational priorities they are juggling.

Another recommended change was to separate the questions about curriculum and programming into two separate instead of grouping them together. One of the participants shared,

For me, curriculum and programming are very different educational approaches and so grouping them together made it difficult to answer these questions ... I wasn't sure whether to answer with a curriculum or programming focus.

(Respondent D)

Asking questions about curriculum and programming separately may offer a deeper understanding of these educational approaches and individual perspectives of their dynamic in the education process.

Closing Reflection

By going directly to the source - to the administrators and faculty currently wrestling with the complexity and challenges of integrating interreligious curriculum and programming within a secular school environment - the one-on-one interviews offered an opportunity to explore the nature of the institution's internal infrastructure and its impact on this phenomenon. Alongside this, the interviews offered rich and dynamic descriptions of the educators' experiences and perspectives and the many opportunities available to accelerate change in the institution. This phase of the discovery process provided actionable information to the case study school and valuable information to me on ways to strengthen the framework of my inquiry and efficacy of my process.

The interviews revealed the depth of the passion and commitment of these educators to multicultural education and the breadth of their creativity to broaden the school community's understanding of the essential role religious literacy and interreligious education plays in the lives our students and to their ultimate success in a global world.

Project's Audience

Self

The framework of this project offered me a reflective and recursive process to build a foundation for further exploration. It was a generative process that strengthened the efficacy of my research methods.

Educational Communities and Intercultural Facilitators and Advocates

My research outlines a process for diversity advocates and individual school communities to explore teacher and administrator perspectives, school culture and climate and opportunities around interreligious education for the purpose of laying a foundation to teach students to understand and respect the religious 'other'.

Case Study School

The research offered me interesting data to report back to the case study school - shedding light on where they are, where they want to go and how they can get there. The data highlights strengths and opportunities and could inform the school's future decision making and capacity building around religious literacy and interreligious curriculum and programming.

Future Research

Focus Group

As I was conducting my interviews, I kept thinking, “Wouldn’t it be interesting to get these thoughtful educators in one room to hear and interact with each other’s reflections on religious literacy and interreligious and see what connections and ideas might emerge?” Midway through the second interview, it became clear that combining focus group interviewing with the one-on-one interviews would offer an important and dynamic dimension to my research going forward.

As a method of qualitative research data collection, a focus group is an interview on a topic with a group of people who have knowledge of the topic The object is to get high-quality data in a social context where people can consider their own views in the context of the views of others (Merriam, 2009, p. 94).

Three of the four interview participants expressed that they were not sure how other educators at the school feel about interreligious curriculum and programming. They also shared feeling disconnected and at the margins on this particular educational issue within the greater school community. The immediate benefit of conducting a focus group would provide a forum for these educators to share and interact on perspectives, concerns and opportunities. Each would come to the group with their unique thoughts and experiences and while they may not be in agreement on all aspects of interreligious education, they would recognize the kinship of their passion and commitment to teaching for religious understanding. As the participants interacted with each other around this topic, I would have been especially interested in the emergent socially constructed data triggered through this connection.

More broadly, conducting a focus group in the context of my research would provide another layer of data that would dynamically reflect individual perspectives and group

culture within the case study community. One particular area I would explore in the focus groups is the opportunities that emerged during the interviews to scaffold religious literacy and interreligious understanding in their educational environment. Potentially, the interactive process in and of itself could generate new ideas or create momentum for existing ones.

Expanding the Scope of My Research

This pilot project helped me improve the efficacy of my methodology. I am now eager to expand the scope of my research and roll out the project for a wider audience and for greater impact. As a next step, I would like to undertake this project among the network of K-12 Independent Schools across the United States.

Conclusion

One of the most troubling and urgent consequences of (illiteracy) is that it often fuels prejudice and antagonism, thereby hindering efforts aimed at promoting respect for pluralism, peaceful coexistence and cooperative endeavors in local, national and global arenas (Moore, 2011).

We are at an inflection point in history. No longer is it a choice to equip students to handle the cultural complexities of the 21st century. Students need a framework to make sense of the ongoing cultural tensions and conflicts that surround us locally, nationally and globally (Bishop & Nash, 2007). Developing competencies to navigate these complexities should be an educational priority alongside math, science, reading and writing. Without a basic understanding of the beliefs, traditions and values of the world's major religions and the social-emotional capacity to interact with those differences, we will fail to raise a generation of open-minded, informed, curious thinkers (Patel, 2012) capable of building a culture of peace. To ensure thriving, vibrant communities and to protect the freedoms guaranteed in our Constitution, religious literacy and interreligious understanding must become an integral part of our nation's educational agenda.

Capturing the essence of this responsibility, Chilean sociologist Eugenio Tironi, suggests,

The kind of society we seek is intimately connected to the type of education we offer (Patel, 2012, p. 102).

Additionally, Diana Eck, the founder and director of Harvard's Pluralism Project and at the forefront of the movement to explore the United States' emergent religious diversity and its impact on the core pluralistic values America was built upon, offers this warning,

Without a religious framework to critically, compassionately and confidently engage in these issues, we will not be able to address the pressing issues of our times (Eck, p. 758).

The purpose of my research was not only to add to the growing literature of the urgency of religious literacy and interreligious understanding, but also to introduce a framework to explore ways to navigate the immediate challenge of effectively integrating interreligious curriculum and programming in our nation's schools. My research footholds this challenge by introducing a process to hear the voices of our teacher and administrators, giving particular focus to the school cultures they are operating in, the initiatives they are currently engaged in and the opportunities they believe exist. Fundamental to successfully introducing potentially controversial educational agendas into schools requires an understanding of the school's climate and decision-making infrastructure as well as the strength and perspectives of the faculty and administration. My research scaffolds a process to explore this.

Broadly, my project has been a catalyst for a more rigorous conversation in the case study school around integrating religious literacy and interreligious curriculum. The findings offer the school rich and meaningful opportunities they can explore including conducting a climate survey among the stakeholders; hiring a Diversity Director; providing greater administrative support and guidance; offering professional development to develop competencies; and, establishing an Interfaith Youth Discussion Group to provide a safe space for students to talk about religion and the challenges of the pluralistic society they live in. Specifically, the project offered me an opportunity to develop my range and capacity as a researcher. It helped me develop valuable survey design skills and offered a first-hand experience of the challenge of setting aside one's own perspectives and biases (Merriam, 2009) ... a particularly difficult endeavor when the researcher has deeply held beliefs about the phenomenon being explored.

In closing, in 2003, Peter Cobb, a former educator and school administrator and the former executive director of the Council for Spiritual and Ethical Education, put forth the following challenge to our nation's schools,

We are, after all, in schools. Ignorance is not something we extol. Misinformation, especially that leading to prejudice and bigotry, ought to be anathema. Education is not indoctrination. Misinformation is not acceptable in math. It is not in history. It need not be in the study of religion. Religious illiteracy of our students is not going to be remedied by a senior elective in world religions. There needs to be sustained and substantive engagement with both Western and Eastern faith traditions (Cobb, 2003).

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Addendum B

Interview Script Framework

1. I'd like to begin by asking you to share your personal perspectives on the value of religious literacy and preparing students for religious understanding?
2. How would increasing religious literacy and teaching for religious understanding help prepare the student body specifically at this school?
3. With the current school climate (board, parents, students, faculty and administrators) in mind, what do you see as the challenges in teaching for religious understanding at this school?
4. What curriculum and/or programming are currently in place to increase religious literacy and teach for religious understanding?
 - a. Who and/or what drove these initiatives?
5. What ideas do you have that could scaffold a framework around future interreligious program development at this school?
 - a. What resources do you think could support this process?
6. In closing, I wanted to ask about your experience with the online survey. Did you have any difficulty answering the questions because wording that was unclear? Do you have any questions about the relevancy of a particular question? Were there any questions you had wished you'd been asked?

Addendum C

October 5, 2012

To: Case Study Participants
From: Trish Tullman, DePaul University Graduate Student
Re: Overview of Case Study

Project Title

**Teaching for Religious Literacy and Understanding:
Giving Voice to Teacher and Administrator Perspectives**

Purpose of Case Study

The broader goal and context of this case study is to fine-tune a process to comprehensively explore and shed light on the perspectives of our nation's teachers and administrators on the topic of educating for religious literacy and understanding. I am grateful for your participation in this study and honored to have an opportunity to engage you in this initiative. Your participation offers me an opportunity to take a deep dive into process to construct an expansive and efficient platform to uncover opportunities and barriers.

Starting Premise of Study

I believe integrating comprehensive interreligious education in our schools is one of the most urgent curriculum and programming priorities of our time. I also believe our educators are THE pivotal resource to address the challenges and explore the opportunities. Amidst the growing cultural and religious diversity in our schools and the ever-increasing interconnectivity and interdependency of our global world coupled with the alarming state of the nation's religious literacy, I am interested in developing a process that will effectively uncover:

- The questions our teachers and administrators have
- Their concerns
- Their ideas
- Where they see opportunities
- What assistance or resources they need

Confidentiality

The data collected in the questionnaire will be for private use only. It will be used to scaffold the efficacy of my research methods. Additionally, it is my hope that the data will be a source of insight to [school name] shedding light on areas of opportunity and strength. DePaul University's Graduate Student Program Review Committee will review the final project report. All names will be kept confidential.

Time Commitment

I anticipate the survey questionnaire, which will be posted on Survey Monkey the week of October 15th, will take 30 minutes. I will send out a link to the questionnaire the week of October 15th. You will have until Sunday, October 28th to complete.

Once again, thank you for your participation. I am excited about conducting this study and appreciate your taking part in it. If you have any questions at any point during the process, please don't hesitate to call or email me.

Trish Tullman

Addendum D

October 5, 2012

To: Case Study Participants
From: Trish Tullman, DePaul University Graduate Student
Re: Overview of Case Study

Project Title

**Teaching for Religious Literacy and Understanding:
Giving Voice to Teacher and Administrator Perspectives**

Purpose of Case Study

The broader goal and context of this case study is to fine-tune a process to comprehensively explore and shed light on the perspectives of our nation's teachers and administrators on the topic of educating for religious literacy and understanding. I am grateful for your participation in this study and honored to have an opportunity to engage you in this initiative. Your participation offers me an opportunity to take a deep dive into process to construct an expansive and efficient platform to uncover opportunities and barriers.

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- The questions our teachers and administrators have
- Their concerns
- Their ideas
- Where they see opportunities
- What assistance or resources they need

Feedback/Confidentiality

Your feedback is critical throughout the study. I will offer both formal and informal opportunities for you to share your thoughts during the course of the study. I plan to use two data collection methods: a survey questionnaire and one-on-one interviews. The data collected in this process will be for private use only. It will be used to scaffold the efficacy of my research methods and strengthen the project's potential. It is also my hope that the data will be a source of insight to [school name] shedding light on areas of opportunity and strength. Additionally, DePaul University's Graduate Student Program

Review Committee will review the final project report. All names will be kept confidential.

Time Commitment

I anticipate the survey questionnaire, which will be posted on Survey Monkey the week of October 15th, will take 30 minutes. The in-person interviews will be scheduled for sixty minutes. I would like to conduct these interviews between November 1st-16th. If you are willing, after I have had a chance to review the initial interview transcripts, a second meeting, requiring no more than 15 minutes of your time (which could be conducted over the phone), may be beneficial for clarification on a specific response. Finally, I will ask you to complete a brief evaluation of the research process. In all, the total time commitment would not exceed 2 hours.

Survey and Interview

I will send out a link to the questionnaire the week of October 15th. You will have until Sunday, October 28th to complete. Additionally, I will be in touch with you next week to find a time at your convenience that we can set up the interview.

Once again, thank you for your participation. I am excited about conducting this study and appreciate your taking part in it. If you have any questions at any point during the process, please don't hesitate to call or email me.

Trish Tullman

Addendum E

AIP Project Timeline

Survey Development/Implementation - September/Early October

- Create and fine-tune survey - September-thru October 14th
- Complete survey design - October 14th
- Post Survey on Survey Monkey - Week of October 15th
- Analyze Survey Results/Findings - by October 31st

Outreach to Research Participants - September/ October

- Initial outreach to Assistant Head of School - September
 - i. Meet
 - ii. Overview of project, process and timeline
- Reach out to - September
 - i. Head of School Approval
- Outreach to Case Study Participants - October
 - i. Initial Communication/Details of study - by October 5th

Case Study Interviews - October/November

- Develop and test interview questions - September/ October
- Set-up interviews - week of October 8th
- Begin Interviews - Early November
- Complete Interviews - by Thanksgiving

Data Analysis- Ongoing

Completion of Data Analysis - January 1st

Writing Narrative - Final Report - Ongoing

- Breakdown into sections and assign date for completion

Draft of Final Project to Professional and Academic Advisors Written Report - [January 31st](#)

Feedback from Advisors - [February 15th](#)

Final Applied Inquiry Project to Committee by [March 1st](#)

Addendum F

Additional documents I gained insight from and that guided my research

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