

Appendix F

Illustration: Chat on Multiple Identities

This chat was initiated by Rosa as one of her optional assignments. It took place over an hour during the last week of the course. The nine people who joined the chat did so voluntarily. All names have been changed except for the instructor's. Two cultural consultants, Ileana (Latin America) and Vladimir (Slavic & East European) joined the chat.

The first two pages are conversations as we waited for people to log on. I've bolded the section below where I ask Rosa to begin the substance of the chat. You may want to scroll down to that point.

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*+**** ROSA-- entered edutl727d_28su2002 _Room1. Wednesday, July 24,  
2002 7:56pm
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ROSA >>Hi Ramon:)
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Ramon >>so where are you
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Ramon >>?
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Ramon >>so where are you?
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ROSA >>I live in xxx Florida. I was born and raised in Miami, though.
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ROSA >>you?
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*+**** Merry-- entered edutl727d_28su2002 _Room1. Wednesday, July 24,  
2002 8:00pm
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Ramon >>I know the place -- been there once to visit a friend who is  
teaching at NOva
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Ramon >>hi merry
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ROSA >>Hi Merry:)
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Merry >>Hi everyone!
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Ramon >>so far just 3 of us
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Ramon >>used to lived in ft. myers area for a couple of years
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*+**** BEN-- entered edutl727d_28su2002 _Room1. Wednesday, July 24,  
2002 8:01pm
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Ramon >>hi Ben, how was SA?
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*+**** Ileana entered edutl727d_28su2002 _Room1. Wednesday, July 24, 2002 8:01pm

*+**** Sarah entered edutl727d_28su2002 _Room1. Wednesday, July 24, 2002 8:02pm

BEN >>South Africa was great. i'm glad to be back with my family though.

ROSA >>Hi Sarah

Sarah >>Hi Rosa, Merry, Ben and Ramon!

Merry >>Don't you think it feels weird to know we are in Fl, Ohio Washington, etc and "talking" online?

ROSA >>I think it's amazing, and I just love it.

Sarah >>It's incredible!

Ileana >> Ben, what did you miss the most in South Africa?

*+**** Brian entered edutl727d_28su2002 _Room1. Wednesday, July 24, 2002 8:03pm

Merry >>So Rosa, since you initiated this chat, why don't you explain what you wanted talk about?

BEN >>hello Brian. are you writing from canada or the us?

Sarah >>Hi Brian

Sarah >>and Ileana

Brian >>In the US still

ROSA >>Okay, I thought I'd start us off with a little story of something I wanted to share, and then I hope everyone will jump in with thoughts

Brian >>Welcome back Ben

BEN >>thanks

ROSA >>As part of a qualitative study I was doing, I had to interview a young woman

ROSA >>who identified herself as being born in the US and Dominican

ROSA >>She was telling the story of how she worked as a counselor and a young white woman came to her for counseling, wanting to date more white men

ROSA >>she said she actually wanted American men

ROSA >>when the young woman I was interviewing asked her what she meant by American

ROSA >>the girl responded White

ROSA >>When the woman I was interviewing asked her what she would identify her as

ROSA >>the girl replied Hispanic

ROSA >>The woman I interviewed said, "But I was born in the U.S....doesn't that make me American?"

ROSA >>And the girl said, "No, I would classify you as Hispanic."

ROSA >>The woman I interviewed said, "Let me explain something. I am 100% American, and I'm 100% Hispanic. I am both."

ROSA >>When the woman I interviewed informed her supervisor of the conversation,

ROSA >>the supervisor asked why it had been necessary to get into that discussion.

ROSA >>The woman I interviewed said she needed to educate the young girl that she shared both cultures and identified herself as both.

ROSA >>responses?

Ramon >>what does 100% American mean to her?

Sarah >>Do you know the cultural identity of the supervisor?

Ramon >>the same way with 100% hispanic

ROSA >>She felt that being born in the United States, she shared the identity of being an 'American'

ROSA >>The supervisor was White American

ROSA >Ramon, her Hispanic identity meant being a part of the Hispanic culture

ROSA >>being raised in the norms and values that her family followed who were originally from the Dominican Republic

Brian >>so was American a citizenship and Hispanic a culture identity?

Ramon >> Rosa, I guess that from my end I see her as neither 100% in both counts -- yes she shares both heritage

ROSA >>Tim, I think she feels she has part of the 'American' culture as well

ROSA >>Ramon, that's what I found interesting

Ramon >>how does she feel at home? does she feel American?

Ileana >>I think it's really hard to describe identity in terms of race

ROSA >>Because since I am Latina, borne in the United States, I feel I have multiple identities

BEN >>well clearly if she has lived her whole life in this country, how could she be anything less than 100% american?

Ramon >>or she feels hispanic at home? or neither?

Ileana >>I definitively think so.

ROSA >>Hispanic is not a race, though, it's an ethnicity...this young woman and I are of different races

ROSA >>but we are both Latina

Ileana >>I ma Latina too

ROSA >>Ramon, I think she feels she is both at all times

Brian >>this is much deeper than skin color

Merry >>Don't some whites see anyone who is not white as not really American

BEN >>there are 2 different issues here. one is how American one feels. the other is how others view one's cultural identity.

Ramon >>I remember my work with refugee children - who when they come to the US they feel very different walking in and out of their homes

Brian >> Rosa ...can't she feel ok with that?

ROSA >>My skin is fair and my eyes are light, and I'm often confused as White American, but I know that I'm not

ROSA >>I am American, but not White...

Ileana >>But I find myself struggling between who I am here and who I am at home

Merry >>because they want to think white people founded the country and therefore are the only real Americans?

ROSA >>Brian, I think she does, but I think it offended her that the girl she was counseling did not see her as an American

ROSA >>Ileana, can you explain further what you mean by that

ROSA >>Ramon, I can understand that feeling.

Brian >>I have felt that way in other countries too, Ileana

Ileana >>Sometimes I find myself switching identities depending if I am in Venezuela or here

Ileana >>It's really complex to explain that

ROSA >>I understand, Ileana...I find it hard to put into words sometimes myself.

BEN >>Ileana, what is the reason for your identity switch? is it based on assumptions you make about how you will be perceived by those around you?

Ramon >>I guess it goes back to the question -- what does it mean to be an American or should I say raised as an American?

*+**** Vladimir-- entered edutl1727d_28su2002_Room1. Wednesday, July 24, 2002 8:18pm

Ileana >>Yes those around me particularly at home count and here too

Ramon >>I believe that there are assumptions and expectations that goes with that label

Vladimir >>Hello everybody, I am sorry I am a little late!

Ramon >>hi Vladimir

ROSA >>What I find most interesting is that this happens not only those who come to the United States, but also those raised here from birth, but with different cultural values than the majority

Ileana >>That's really interesting Rosa

Vladimir >>Hello, hello everyone!

BEN >>hi Vladimir

Vladimir >>Hi Ben!

Ileana >>When I talk to people who have lived here they share the same concerns/feelings

Ramon >>Literature in the fil-am community talks about young people seeking to understand and "feel" their cultural roots

Ileana >>Hi Vladimir

Brian >>for me it all becomes a part of me... my values and 'culture' come from important experiences with others here or in other countries

Sarah >> Rosa, and the reverse is true. My grandparents were able to become American though they didn't found the country because they were white and made great efforts to hide the fact that they were immigrants

ROSA >> Ileana, not only have I experienced myself, but in some of the research I've done with young Latinas, it's a recurrent theme

Merry >> Rosa, do you see this as an issue for Latinas in the schools you work in?

Ramon >>Is this happening also in hispanic cultures, Rosa?

ROSA >> Sarah, exactly...and I think younger generations resisted that

BEN >>what i find fascinating about this is the degree to which our sense of identity is based on how others perceive and respond to us.

ROSA >>and are resisting

Vladimir >>Hi Ileana!

ROSA >>Yes, Merry, it is an issue, I think. Navigating both identities is affecting their academic decisions.

Merry >>Is there anyone else in here who feels they have a dual identity by choice or by chance?

Brian >> Rosa ...say some more about that.

BEN >>if people treated non-whites as fully american, they would be less likely to experience this identity crisis.

Ramon >>me

Ileana >>I understand that for those girls is tough because they want to fit in!

ROSA >>Tim, when young Latinas are in school, they have an identity that they must fulfill at school that is of the mainstream

ROSA >>but at home, there are different cultural values, one being the importance of the family and their role in the home

BEN >> Merry, i feel a dual identity as an american and a jew

Sarah >> Ben, what would it look like to treat everyone as "fully American"?

Vladimir >>Dr. , I tend to find myself into different pairs of shoes when I am in the US and when I am back in the former USSR

ROSA >>sometimes the priorities of the family can conflict with the expected priorities in school

Ileana >>The struggle Rosa is describing pictures my son had I conflicts

BEN >> Sarah, i suppose the example of the counselor is what it would look like to not!

Ramon >>most of the time colleagues assume that I know things American because I've been here for awhile -- never see the issues I have to deal with without my community, family, etc.

Sarah >> Ben, I agree, thanks!

ROSA >> Ben, explain what you mean further

ROSA >>I'd like to hear more

BEN >>well, obviously the woman didn't see the counselor as a "real" american. clearly people perceive when they are not fully accepted by others.

Brian >> Rosa ...so how do many of these young women deal with the conflicting expectations?

ROSA >>So what would be the treatment of fully American, Ben

ROSA >>Tim, almost all of the ones I've encountered, to tell you the truth...the differences are the ways in which they handle it

BEN >>if non-whites constantly receive the message that they are not accepted by whites, they are more likely to have this dual identity issue.

Ramon >>however, Ben-- from a counseling perspective, being from the same culture allows for the client to be more open to talk about these things

Brian >> Rosa do you think the counselor came to terms with her own identity and the young girl was still struggling with this?

Merry >>Can having multiple identities help a teacher?

ROSA >> Ben, I'm not so sure it's about acceptance. Recognition as a different individual who shares some ideals, perhaps

Ileana >>I would say that this issue has not end even for people who has lived here their whole lives

Sarah >>I'm glad that this young woman was talking with a counsellor who asked that question.

Ramon >>totally agree Ileana

ROSA >>The counselor was an adult woman of 35 years, while the young girl was 17...but this counselor had sought out understanding of what she encountered

BEN >> Rosa, explain what you mean. why not about acceptance?

Merry >>I've often thought that all of us need to experience outsider status in order to understand what immigrants and refugees go through everyday.

Ileana >>DR. Merrifield When teachers are aware they are more sensitive to understand and help students survive

ROSA >>I think Ileana is right in that some people can struggle with this issue, mainly because there's not enough discussion of it...ability to verbalize it

Brian >>but can you get to a place where you are comfortable with your own identity and others may have their own problem with it?

ROSA >> Benn, I guess I say that because I'm not sure that a non-white seeks acceptance by the majority as much as recognition

Ramon >> Brian- I believe you can -- but you got to be strong because others will always challenge it

Ileana >> Brian, I would say that I would stay in the borders of the conflict

ROSA >>Brian, I do think so, but I think young girls don't often have the words to verbalize their struggle

BEN >>Ramon, but the point is, that white americans don't have their american-ness challenged!

ROSA >>Gloria Anzaldua wrote a book called Borderlands which talks about navigating identities; she is Chicana

Brian >>OH I agree Ramon...others will challenge it daily... and yes IleanaI think it creates conflict because "they" don't know how to deal with"you"

Ileana >>Yes Ben, that' right!

ROSA >>You're right, Ben...that's a good point

Vladimir >>Dr.M, I think It could. A good example of that would be teaching foreign languages here at OSU. A native GTA would generally perform poorer in teaching their own language than a person who is a native to the culture within which the foreign language is taught. I beleive the non-native speaker benefits more from developing the second identity. The combination of the native and the second identity allows the teacher to better present the material to students.

Merry >>the message is powerful -- even to young children. One of my students from Nepal told me his 4 year old came home wanting to get blue eyes and blond hair.

Brian >> Ben...unless they go overseas and are willing to go outside the boundaries of Americanized places...

ROSA >>that's similar to me telling my Cuban grandmother at 5 that I was an American and would only speak English

ROSA >>I had just started Kindergarten

ROSA >>And although my primary language was Spanish at that time

ROSA >>I came home singing a different tune

ROSA >>I was told that I was an American and I should be speaking English

ROSA >>My abuela didn't speak to me for a week!

ROSA >>:)

Ileana >>Accent is another powerful issue in the identity struggle

Vladimir >>Ileana, yes I agree

Ramon >> Ileana-- you're opening a can of worms ;-)

ROSA >>Go for it, Ileana...say more

Ileana >>Your gradnma thought you needed to get rid of you L1 to be accepted?

Ramon >>I remember trying to change the way I talk while in grad school as an instructor so that my students will not laugh at my accent

Ramon >>even went to the speech clinic

ROSA >>No, my grandmother was so mad, Ileana, that I had said I would only speak English...she felt I was betraying my culture

Ileana >>Now I don't feel as bad as I used to,

Vladimir >>What's interesting is developing an accent in your L1 after using L2 for a while

Ileana >>when I opened my mouth and people looked at me strange or said

Merry >>I tried to get rid of my southern accent in Peace Corps so the other PCVs wouldn't tease me about outhouses and being ignorant.

Ileana >>Your accent is "Funny/nice"

Ileana >>At first I didn't want to have an accent!

ROSA >>Merry, that lends itself to issues of language and identity within the U.S... it doesn't have to be from outside to have this feeling

Merry >>Why do we let others affect how we see ourselves?

Brian >>good question!

Ramon >>human nature?

Vladimir >>Everytime I go back home it takes me about a week to get rid of "americanized" russian. its a long week with people making fun of me and calling me "american". I have to admit I felt less comfortable when first in the US when people always inquired about my accent...

Ileana >>I believe the environment Dr.

Sarah >>Because we don't want to be outsiders but know we can easily be?

Ramon >>a sense of belonging -- nobody really wants to be alone

BEN >>aren't we ultimately social creatures. what would we be if we lived in the wild and had no exposure to others?

ROSA >> Vladimir, that's an excellent point. When I return to Miami, after leaving it three years ago, I stand out as 'too Americanized' in the old neighborhoods now

Ileana >>Yes Ramon, I agree.

Brian >>or perceived as inadequate...

Brian >>you know you are not inadequate...but it bothers us when others perceive us this way?

BEN >>do they assume you are rich now?

Vladimir >> Ben, no. They just want to get to know me more. There are quiet a few "foreigners" nowadays where I come from

Merry >> Rosa, finish your story, How did the counselor deal with or make sense of this experience?

Brian >>Vladimir ...what do you mean?

Vladimir >>Brian, regardinggn what?

Sarah >>Vladimir, and do you want to get rid of your American accent because you don't want to stand out?

Brian >>the foreigners...in relation to your return

Vladimir >> Sarah, not anymore. I used to want to...

ROSA >>Well, Merry, the counselor decided to explain that she identified herself with both cultures, but that perhaps they should explore what the girl's definitions of those cultures are in order to understand her perceptions

Vladimir >>Brian, the "foreigners" are the russians who study or live in the US and go back home to visit flashing their "americanized" russian accents

Brian >>A...so a form of showing off in some cases? or status?

Ileana >>Vladimir my issue when I go home is more with behavior than accent

ROSA >>I think I understood the counselor's approach...I find that I have had struggles with identifying with both cultures, but I enjoy being of both

Sarah >> Rosa, sounds like a wise counselor.

BEN >>i find it interesting that this woman went to a counselor with this "problem". it seems to me that she has a broader race issue beyond simply who she is dating.

Ramon >> Rosa -- I believe that the counselor framed the direction of future conversation well.

Ileana >>Yes, it does.

Vladimir >>Tim, I wouldn't say that. I was just being sarcastic. I was just saying earlier that I develop an american accents speaking russian if i don't use russian much. it takes some time to get rid of it when i visit at home

Ramon >> Ben-- I believe that part of the reason is developmental -- she's 17

ROSA >> Ben, you're right in that the woman had other issues, lol, but it was an interesting aspect of the conversation.

Vladimir >>Ileana, I always have an issue with behavior!

Ileana >>Vladimir I undersatnd now I did not get it first

Vladimir >>Ileana, but really, I know what you mean. Its a culture shock all over each time I go back. For many reasons, back home things are changing very rapidly...

ROSA >>What I often wonder if how often teachers are aware of students in their classrooms struggling with bicultural identity

Brian >>ok Vladimir...I understand that... even Canada does that for me...It took me years to not say certain reaction phrases in Spanish after being in Paraguay

ROSA >>whether with regard to language or norms or values or even things as simple as personal space or topic of conversation

Merry >>Given this conversation, I highly recommend you take a look at Laurie Olsen's Made in America.

Ileana >>Thats the problem, Rosa , not being aware

Vladimir >>Tim, I find myself doing the same with english and russian

BEN >> Rosa, i think we tend to notice language, but i bet we often miss cultural distinctions that our bi-cultural students have.

ROSA >>Ileana, in my experiences, I've seen more than unaware...I've seen unaffected

Ileana >>Unfortunately

BEN >>particularly value and communication issues.

Brian >> Benas far as that goes, religion, sexual orientation...etc...etc

ROSA >>I think there is still the perception that students not of the mainstream need to learn to adapt..period..which requires a sacrifice many are not aware of

Ileana >>Dr. thanks for the recommenadtion . It sounds interesting

Vladimir >>Dr.M, I am concerned with people like that, but sometimes I feel like its a waste of time

Merry >>Why a waste of time?

Sarah >>There is a lot of work to do Vladimir, but I don't think it is a waste of time.

Vladimir >>Dr.M, its difficult dealing with pre Jerryice, especially if its very powerful and spread out. I get frustrated

ROSA >>It's hard sometimes...and very frustrating

Ileana >>Vladimir, but educators can contribute

Sarah >>It is frustrating. I think those of us who may look more like the mainstream have a responsibility to be bridges in this.

Brian >>yes Vladimir...but if we didn't think we could do anything about it...we wouldn't have become teachers ;-)

ROSA >>I agree, Sarah

Vladimir >>Dr. m, I am an optimist and I do believe in humanity. I just need to be more patient

Vladimir >>Tim, absolutely. Thats why I am here...

ROSA >>Some days, Vladimir, it does feel overwhelming...it's a whole system

Ramon >>so how do we deal with this issue in our practice?

ROSA >>that has a long history

Vladimir >>Brian, you'll know this one: Study! Study! And again, Study! Who said that?

Brian >>who?

Merry >> Rosa if you were doing a course with teachers on these issues, where would you start?

Vladimir >>Lenin

Brian >>ah yes

ROSA >>I have approached these issues in a teacher education course I taught... I started with some basic intercultural communication

Sarah >>I think courses and conversations like this are really important. I also think we need to be open to and celebrate when we see people changing.

ROSA >>something that was perceived as non-threatening because it was not perceived as anti-white, which unfortunately is some of the resistance I've met

Vladimir >> Rosa, it is a whole system, but it is the challenge that keeps many of us going. Isn't it. Would we be here otherwise?

Merry >> Sarah what gives me hope is my own experience in seeing how I have grown and watching others do the same.

Sarah >>Good point Merry.

BEN >>merry, what has been the greatest tool in fostering that growth?

Vladimir >>Dr.M, you make a great point. Looking back, I used to be a Dinosaur!

Brian >>I see my opportunity as a white American male to continue to question my own actions and those of others ;-)

Merry >>Interacting with people different from myself and spending a lot of time in schools (like the year with you).

ROSA >>Merry, Dodd (1998) has some good basic work on Intercultural Communication

ROSA >>you're right, Vladimir..that's why I keep working on it. :)

Sarah >>I believe it is possible to help everyone tap into times when they have felt like outsiders and build on that too.

BEN >>merry, me too. the crosscultural contact and meaningful conversation seems essential.

ROSA >>That's a really important role, Tim

BEN >>if one is constantly in nearly entirely homogeneous settings....

Vladimir >>As teachers, we can never stop inquiring about things. I try to keep on my toes and learn, and learn.

Brian >> Sarah I remember when some of my Japanese students were having a difficult time...

Merry >>I use Milton Bennett (intercultural communication) and Janet Bennett's work (on marginalization), also some from Richard Brislin and Ken Cushner

Brian >>had one of my former students write the entire quiz in Japanese...

ROSA >> Benn...the answer seems to be technology these days...

Vladimir >> Rosa, technology i great!

Brian >>gave it out...the American kids complained... used it for perception of others...it helped

Merry >>Is there really a homogeneous setting these days?

ROSA >>I'd love a list, Merry...I have many works from authors that focus on specific groups and bicultural struggles, but more intercultural communication work would be great

Ramon >>what do you mean?

Sarah >>Great activity Brian! I am part of a listserve that prints announcements in three languages and the

Ileana >>Are these books for teachers only?

Merry >> Rosa, let's find time to talk after the class.

ROSA >>yes, thanks, Merry

Sarah >>...first language is not always English

Ileana >>The reason I ask is because students should read about these issues to empower themselves

ROSA >>Tim, Gloria Anzaldua writes in both English and Spanish...even if it's just a few lines, it always prompts interesting discussion in class

Merry >>The intercultural communication or education lit is for anyone doing crosscultural training or for people working in cultures other than their own.

Brian >> Rosa ...this is why I love web sites that have more than one language on parallel sites

Ileana >>I found from my own experience that reading helps me overcome frustration

Merry >>It's about 9pm. Thanks, Rosa for asking to hold this chat. It was great!

ROSA >>I do cheat a bit, though, Brian and give them websites with translating software (after they've struggled a bit) :)

Vladimir >> Ileana, reading and studying in general is a great way to channel ones emotions.

BEN >>it's been nice talking with you all. This was my first ever live chat and I found it very interesting.

Brian >> Rosa ...I like it!

Ileana >>I agree Vladimir

Sarah >>Yes, Rosa thanks!

Vladimir >> Ben, have a good one.

Ileana >>Thanks to all and good night

Ramon >>thanks Rosa -- good conversation

ROSA >>Thanks to everyone for participating...it was great hearing your ideas

Vladimir >>good night

BEN >> Rosa, thanks for throwing this party!

Brian >>Thanks for setting up this chat, Rosa...Take Care and good night

Merry >>Thanks for joining us Sarah.

Vladimir >>Thanks all! I will catch you in WebCT tonight, tomorrow, later this week...

Sarah >>I've enjoyed this a lot. it's encouraging.

Merry >>Bye everyone

*-**** Merry--left edutl727d_28su2002 _Room1. Wednesday, July 24, 2002 9:01pm

*-**** Tim--left edutl727d_28su2002 _Room1. Wednesday, July 24, 2002 9:01pm

*-**** Ileana-- left edutl727d_28su2002 _Room1. Wednesday, July 24, 2002 9:01pm

ROSA >>Good night, all, and thanks again. Good luck with projects.

*-**** BEN-- left edutl727d_28su2002 _Room1. Wednesday, July 24, 2002 9:01pm

*-**** Sarah--left edutl727d_28su2002 _Room1. Wednesday, July 24, 2002 9:01pm

*-**** ROSA--left edutl727d_28su2002 _Room1. Wednesday, July 24, 2002 9:01pm

Vladimir >>Bye everyone!

*-**** Vladimir--left edut1727d_28su2002 _Room1. Wednesday, July 24,
2002 9:01pm