

Measuring the Impact of Self-Paced Cultural Awareness Training Modules on Educators' Instructional Practices

Project Description

The goals of this grant request are to secure funding for the creation of self-paced cultural awareness training modules and to research their impact on educators' instructional practices. The requested \$8,400 will support the following objectives:

- **Develop** self-paced cultural awareness training modules aligned with state standards.
- **Provide** educators with streamlined access to these modules via a dedicated platform.
- **Analyze** pre- and post-intervention data to measure shifts in instructional practices.
- **Disseminate** findings to the educational community through professional presentations and publications.

Content creation will occur between May and July 2026, while the primary research and data collection will take place between August and December 2026.

Background

While the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) now mandates that school districts and teacher preparation programs integrate the Cultural Awareness Competencies embedded in the **Common Ground Framework**, many institutions lack the scalable, high-quality tools necessary for effective implementation. This initiative provides a direct solution to this resource gap, transforming a regulatory "check-box" into an accessible, enduring professional development asset. This approach is particularly vital for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), as it reinforces a mission-driven commitment to social justice while ensuring teacher candidates are fully prepared to meet state certification standards in a diverse educational landscape.

Measuring Expected Project Outcomes

1. **Module Development:** The researcher will create at least one interactive, self-paced module for each of the nine cultural awareness competencies defined by PDE. These modules serve as the central instrument of the study.
2. **Access and Participation:** Modules will be hosted on an independent eLearning platform to ensure accessibility for volunteer participants from Lincoln University and external institutions. This platform will allow the researcher to monitor participant progress and manage data outside of internal university systems.

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3. **Data Analysis and Impact:** Built-in evaluations will measure shifts in lesson planning, instructional expectations, and classroom environment. Through reflective surveys and artifact analysis, the study will quantify how a shift in an educator's "cultural lens" translates into tangible changes, such as the removal of bias in teaching materials. This transition from "seat time" to measurable outcomes will provide empirical evidence on the efficacy of digital learning in shifting pedagogical mindsets.
4. **Dissemination:** By sharing these findings, the project will establish a scalable "proof of concept" that informs the broader educational community on how to improve cultural competency and student equity across the Commonwealth.

Enhancing Teaching and Research at Lincoln University

As a professor of education at Lincoln University, the researcher will apply these outcomes to directly enhance graduate-level instruction. Collected data will inform the design of future assignments and assessments for educators in the researcher's courses. Furthermore, these modules will serve as a foundation for longitudinal research aimed at creating training formats that maximize institutional resources and foster a deeper sense of belonging for all students.

Project Timeframe

Upon receipt of the award, the procurement of supplies and materials will begin in May 2026. The summer months will be dedicated to the planning and creation of the training modules. Between late summer and the conclusion of the fall 2026 semester, the researcher will conduct the formal study to measure the pre- and post-participation impact on instructional practices.

Sharing Project Outcomes

In January 2027, the researcher will submit formal reports to the FRDC, Faculty Affairs, and CETL. Findings will be shared with the university community at the Spring 2027 Faculty Symposium. Throughout the remainder of the 2026-2027 academic year, the researcher will seek additional opportunities to present findings to K-12 administrators, professors at fellow HBCUs, and organizations such as the Pennsylvania Educator Diversity Consortium (PEDC).