

# StirFry Seminars & Consulting

July 2009

## An Amazing Conversation

by Ayse Taskiran

I had been teaching Cultural Anthropology for the last 10 years, but this time it was a little different. In my fast track summer class at Butte College, both my students and I had a very powerful experience. I decided to show *The Color of Fear* and practice the new facilitating tools I had learned during the recent workshops I participated in, taught by Lee Mun Wah. I was amazed how students began to open up and were willing to share very personal matters as the discussion continued. Some students identified with the individuals in the movie and started having a very similar conversation using their own experiences with oppression and privilege. They felt comfortable enough to speak their minds and express their emotions while carefully avoided offending each other. Some were more talkative while others listened to them quietly yet benefited from the conversation as much.

I believe some of the exercises we did prior and on the day of the discussion helped students to have this great conversation. These include partnering up and listening to each other for two minutes with no interruptions, and repeating what the others said using their original words. We used the Racial Assessment exercise by Lee Mun Wah in which students stood up if the questions applied to their experience. During the discussion, when a conflict arose, I asked them to face each other and address each other directly. I also observed the entire group very carefully and gave individuals a chance to speak their body language. We also practiced the art of staying in the moment, without responding immediately or without thinking about what we were going to say next.

I had originally allocated about one hour for the entire unit, however, students seemed so passionate about the subject, I gave them a choice to stay and continue if they wanted to do so. The majority of the class stayed for another 45 minutes and finished the discussion. This had never happened in my 10 years of teaching.



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I believe this experience brought students closer. There is a very positive energy in the classroom since. Students feel understood and respected. They care a great deal about each other. They now know that the solution to every problem starts with good communication. They know that if someone is sad or angry, they need to be heard. They know that conflict is an opportunity for a change.

We can hardly wait for student presentations where each student will present his/her personal story (based on Greg Tanaka's Storytelling exercise). Students know the importance of personal stories in determining our ideas and actions.

I can't wait to do the same workshop in my upcoming classes in the fall where I will show other movies such as *Last Chance in Eden* (Parts 1-3) in addition to *The Color of Fear* (Parts 1-3). The impact is unprecedented.

Read Ayse's students' thoughtful responses to this workshop on the StirFry website at:  
[www.stirfryseminars.com/ayse](http://www.stirfryseminars.com/ayse)

# Today's Multicultural Classroom: Cultural Competency for Educators and Administrators

August 14-16, 2009 • Facilitated by Lee Mun Wah  
Quan Yin Training Center • 2311 8th Street, Berkeley, CA

For details call 510-204-8840 or visit [www.stirfryseminars.com/BTC](http://www.stirfryseminars.com/BTC)

As schools continue to change, what are some of the new skills and new perspectives that will be needed to meet the challenges of a more diverse population? What are some of the fears about having to change? What will be required to adapt to these new cultures?

In this unique workshop and training, participants will learn that cultural competency requires not only an awareness of cultural differences, but also many other cultural competencies, including cross-cultural communications skills, community development and an awareness of social issues and contexts.

## StirFry Calendar

July 15-19, 2009 ** Berkeley, CA	Cross-Cultural Facilitation Techniques for Diversity Trainers, Therapists & Social Workers Open to the Public
July 21, 2009 Boston, MA	Cultural Competency for Leaders National Staff Development Council Conference / Open to the Public
August 5, 2009 Atlanta, GA	Cultural Competency for Leaders Foster Family Treatment Association Conference / Open to the Public
August 14-16, 2009 ** Berkeley, CA	Today's Multicultural Classroom: Cultural Competency for Educators & Administrators Open to the Public
August 24, 2009 Anaheim, CA	Cultural Competency for Leaders American Probation and Parole Conference / Open to the Public
August 26, 2009 Minneapolis, MN	Cultural Competency for Educational Leaders Not Open to the Public
September 11-13, 2009 ** Berkeley, CA	Unlearning Racism Open to the Public
October 1, 2009 Sacramento, CA	Only a World Away Keynote / Workshop CA Association of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselors Conference/Open to the Public
October 2, 2009 Sacramento, CA	Cultural Competency for Leaders American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists Conference / Open to the Public

\*\* Held at the Quan Yin Training Center, 2311 8th Street, Berkeley, CA

For more information, registration and links to conference workshops, visit <http://www.stirfryseminars.com/events>

**Contact Us: 510.204.8840 Trainings, Films & Diversity Products, ext. 101 [www.stirfryseminars.com](http://www.stirfryseminars.com)**