Abstract: Dialogue is an important communication concept for many fields. Unfortunately, dialogue is only as good as its participants. Many times dialogue occurs in a face-to-face environment where individuals may not feel comfortable sharing their perceptions and beliefs about cultural and social justice issues. Our goal was to introduce a place in a space to engage in educators in dialogues that would enable them to feel comfortable, yet reflective. The purpose of the Intra/Inter-Cultural and Cross-cultural Teaching portal is to engage teachers in reflective and collective dialogue. The dialogue in ICCTP is intended to increase collaboration on issues related to social justice and character education of educators and students. The author wanted to document appropriate and application of technology and social justice.

This exploratory research seeks to investigate the dialogue of in-service and pre-service teachers in a web based environment. This study will observe how dialogue can generate responses that are based on personal and social experiences through computer-mediated communication technology, interactive multimedia vignettes, and threaded discussion forums in a portal environment.

The purpose of the Intra/Inter-Cultural and Cross-cultural Teaching portal is to engage teachers in reflective and collective dialogue using vignettes as a prompt. The dialogue in ICCTP is intended to increase collaboration on issues related to social justice and character education of educators and students. The author seeks to document appropriate and application of technology, social justice, and multicultural education. In figure 1 I attempt to capture ICCTP

What is a vignette? A vignette is a clip “that mimics a typical situation” (Chau et al., 2001). Vignettes are elsewhere described as “short stories that are written to reflect, in a less complex way, real-life problems of education and of equity”, a short story “without an ending”, meant as a "springboard for discussion" (Campbell, 1996).

There are many reasons educators like using vignettes as a teaching tool, ranging from highly subjective to very pragmatic justifications. First, vignettes as a teaching tool tend to be positively received by both students and educators (Chau et al., 2001). They are more entertaining than traditional texts, and thereby produce a more involved and voluntary educational process. Carefully designed vignettes have been shown to have comparable basic relevance across gender, race and age (Peterson & Homer, 1982), although similar information regarding relevance across race, culture and ethnicity is not available. Even so, if the data available is taken as an indication, it might be assumed that the experience of viewing vignettes is relatively stable across viewers.

The effects of using vignettes in education are largely positives. Foremost, vignettes can be used to provoke role-playing types of responses from viewers (Ballering, Hutchens, & Miller, 1995). Role playing is considered by many to be the best way to ensure behavioral change. Several reports serve as endorsements for the use of vignette methods as the inspiration for positive behavioral change in participants. Use of simulation models has been shown
to be an effective means of positive socialization with school youth (Barham, Price, Esham, & Spradlin, 1974). More generally, vignette methods have been proven effective in inspiring positive qualitative change (Jochums & Pershey, 1993). The vignette training method was successful in stimulating empathetic behavior and stronger interpersonal skills in both male, female, and various ages of trainees (Pearson et al., 1978). Even short exposure to vignettes is shown to be an effective technique for increasing knowledge and critical thinking skills (i.e. problem solving/decision making skills) (Chau et al., 2001). A common theme among reports on vignette use includes raised individual self-awareness and increased awareness of others (Barham et al., 1974). It is easier for participants to get a sense of themselves in relation to the bigger picture of what their actions mean to others: "…teachers … found their reflections stimulated by the vignettes; they said the vignette helped them recognize change within themselves" (Jochums & Pershey, 1993). This subjective awareness is enhanced by gaining access to a more thorough understanding of the group dynamic through alternate perspectives.