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Article 69

A Framework of Multifaceted Approaches to Multicultural Training

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The importance of developing multicultural competencies has become widely acknowledged within the counseling profession. Although definitions of multicultural competency have varied, the tripartite model of multicultural knowledge, awareness, and skills is commonly accepted in the literature, research, and training standards (Atkinson, 2004; Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Programs [CACREP], 2009; Pieterse, Evans, Risner-Butner, Collins, & Mason, 2009; Sue & Sue, 2008). Training that promotes the development of students' multicultural knowledge, awareness, and skills is recognized as a core curricular requirement in accredited counselor preparation programs (CACREP, 2009). Moreover, the responsibility of designing training that effectively addresses culture has been referred to as an ethical concern (Parrish & Linder-VanBerschoot, 2010).

Multifaceted training approaches are believed necessary to promote multicultural knowledge, awareness, and skills and to meet the training needs of students representing different populations (Carney & Kahn, 1984; Dickson, Argus-Calvo, & Tafoya, 2010; Ridley, Mendoza, & Kanitz, 1994). In addition, the multicultural learning environment that is conveyed through daily practices within training programs (i.e., integration of multicultural issues throughout the curriculum, faculty participation in multicultural research, safe comfortable climate) may enhance or inhibit multicultural training (Gloria & Pope-Davis, 1997; Pope-Davis, Liu, Nevitt, & Toporek, 2000). One challenge to designing effective multicultural training is the lack of organized resources that detail multiple ways to promote the multicultural competencies of knowledge, awareness, and skills. The literature includes supportive research on the efficacy of multicultural training (D'Andrea, Daniels, & Heck, 1991; Neville et al., 1996; Sodowsky, 1996) and identifies how the multicultural training environment and various teaching strategies contribute to multicultural competencies and prejudicial attitudes (Buckley & Foldy, 2010; Dickson & Jepsen, 2007; Nixon et al., 2010). In addition, a number of authors have provided

information detailing specific training assignments/activities that can be used in multicultural coursework (Burnett, Hamel, & Long, 2004; Ramsey, 1997; Foss, 2002). However, a unified source of empirically supported training strategies along with corresponding activities/assignments is lacking. The purpose of this article is to present a framework of empirically supported training strategies and describe training activities/assignments that correspond to each type of strategy as a resource for designing multicultural training. This is not an attempt to suggest a cookbook approach to multicultural training, and is not intended to serve as an exhaustive resource. The intent is to provide an integrative framework from which programs can select activities designed to achieve specific training objectives and adapt them to the unique training needs of their students.

Empirically Supported Training Strategies

Although a number of studies provide evidence supporting the efficacy of multicultural training, research examining the effectiveness of specific instructional strategies in multicultural training is scarce. Two studies have examined the contributions of students' perceptions of their multicultural training environment and instructional experiences on their multicultural competencies (Dickson & Jepsen, 2007) and prejudicial attitudes (Dickson, Jepsen, & Barbee, 2008). Using hierarchical multiple regression analyses, Dickson and Jepsen (2007) found that students' reported experience with multicultural clinical training experiences (i.e., multicultural practica and supervision) predicted their multicultural awareness. Moreover, students' perceptions of the multicultural program training environment made significant contributions to their competencies of multicultural knowledge, awareness, skills, and relationship. Also using hierarchical multiple regression analyses, Dickson, Jepsen, and Barbee (2008) found that students' self-reported positive affective racial attitudes (increased level of comfort with interracial contact) were predicted by their reported experience of the following instructional strategies: traditional (e.g., lectures, research, reading assignments), participatory (e.g., multicultural counseling simulations, role-plays), and exposure (e.g., guest speakers, visits to culturally diverse communities). Participatory strategies made a unique significant contribution to that prediction. They also found that students' positive cognitive racial attitudes were predicted by their perceptions of the program cultural environment.

Based on these research findings, an integrative framework of effective multicultural training can be proposed. Specifically, components of effective multicultural training include 1) a culturally sensitive program training environment; 2) instructional strategies that are (a) traditional, (b) participatory, and (c) expose students to different cultural experiences; and 3) multicultural clinical experiences (practica and supervision). Research indicates that no one component is sufficient to prepare counselors to work effectively with a diverse client base (Carney & Kahn, 1984; Ridley et al., 1994).

It is therefore proposed that educational units make an effort to incorporate activities from multiple components not only throughout a required program of study but at a systemic level throughout an educational unit. Understandably, it may not be feasible to wholly or immediately implement every concept presented; therefore, the model is

presented as an ideal to guide the enhancement of multicultural training. Nevertheless, an attempt will be made to describe specific training activities/assignments within each component that may be used in part or in their entirety.

Cultural Training Environment

Establishment of an ideal multicultural environment (Buckley & Foldy, 2010; Nixon et al., 2010;) requires that faculty support and work toward a common goal. An initial step in establishing a training goal is to agree upon a working definition of multicultural competence. Counselor educators must determine how multicultural competence will be conceptualized and operationalized within the program. For instance, will training emphasize a broader definition of culture to include gender, sexual orientation, spirituality, SES, physical ability, etc., or a more exclusive definition that focuses solely on ethnicity and race? A mutually agreed upon definition of multicultural competence will provide direction for the development of integrated multicultural training.

The extent to which multicultural issues are infused throughout the curriculum and supervision contributes to a culturally sensitive program training environment (Pope-Davis et al., 2000). Pope-Davis and Coleman (1997) suggest that training programs convey their commitment to multiculturalism through their mission statement, program description, and recruitment and application materials. Pack-Brown, Thomas, and Seymour (2008) emphasized the need for a mission statement to address the ways that multicultural and diversity issues are approached in training. Mission statements should provide clear indicators for potential faculty members and students as to the extent to which multiculturalism is valued and promoted within a training program. Pack-Brown et al. identify the mission statement of the Counselor Education Program at the University of Maryland, College Park, as an exemplar of infusing language regarding multicultural, social justice, and ethical practice into program documents.

Faculty participation in multicultural research also contributes to a culturally sensitive training environment (Ponterotto, Alexander, & Grieger, 1995; Pope-Davis et al., 2000). Faculty members can encourage students who are interested in multicultural research by mentoring and facilitating individual research projects and/or thesis works that address multicultural issues. Moreover, faculty members can organize and coordinate research teams of students and faculty that emphasize multicultural issues. Resulting publications and presentations covering multicultural topics can bring national recognition to training programs and may serve to diversify the student and faculty population by attracting students and faculty members representing different cultural groups to the program. Furthermore, the active involvement of faculty and students in multicultural research conveys the importance of increasing the knowledge base regarding multicultural and diversity issues. Finally, depending on the culture of the school and the interests of students, educators might establish a multicultural taskforce composed of both faculty and students within the educational unit. A taskforce could be utilized to increase student awareness of multicultural issues within academia, promote student involvement in efforts to infuse multiculturalism throughout a program, and to ensure that the unique needs and interests of students from different cultural backgrounds are acknowledged and addressed.

Instructional Strategies

Research indicates that diverse training strategies are most effective in promoting multicultural competencies when implemented in combination (Dickson & Jepsen, 2007). The findings of a content analysis of course syllabi related to current multicultural and diversity training from accredited counseling and counseling psychology programs suggest that most coursework includes the use of one or more different instructional strategies (Pieterse et al., 2009). The authors suggest that multicultural counseling courses include a laboratory portion as an adjunct to standard classroom procedures. Additional laboratory time allows educators to provide participatory and exposure experiences that may be difficult to schedule in normal class meetings. Lab time can be used to facilitate brief stand-alone activities where students are able to engage in participatory activities, in-depth discussion, self-reflection and interpersonal learning. It is also possible to use laboratory time as a progressive and freely interactive psychoeducational group. Psychoeducational groups could address such topics as classism, ableism, heterosexism (Smith, Foley, & Chaney, 2008), privilege (Watt et al., 2009), etc. Young (1998) recognized that education is a treatment because of the perceptions that may be changed as a result. Further, Yalom (2005) stated, “a freely interactive group, with few social restrictions, will, in time, develop into a social microcosm of the participant members” (p. 31), thus approximating real life multicultural counseling settings. When conducted in an environment where students feel safe to explore their biases and social identity, group settings can be ideal arenas for multicultural counselor growth. Little research had been conducted in this area; however, emerging reports (Nixon et al., 2010) and research in progress by the authors suggest promising results and indicate the importance of a group component in multicultural counselor training.

Traditional Strategies

The dissemination of information regarding different cultural values and norms is clearly an essential component of multicultural training. Traditional strategies include lectures, reading, and research assignments that provide information to increase students’ cognitive understanding of multicultural topics such as worldviews, between and within-group differences, and theoretical constructs such as oppression, discrimination, racism, and other socially held “isms” (Reynolds, 1995).

A number of texts are available that focus on various racial, ethnic, and cultural groups. Two commonly adopted texts include *Counseling the Culturally Diverse: Theory and Practice* (Sue & Sue, 2008), and *Counseling American Minorities: A Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Atkinson, 2004). In addition, texts such as *Overcoming Unintentional Racism in Counseling and Therapy* (Ridley, 2005) and *Race, Class, and Gender* (Rothenberg, 2003) devote more attention to issues of systemic inequality, power, and oppression (Pieterse et al., 2009).

Research assignments allow students to focus their learning in a particular area of interest and can include an element of self-reflection. For instance, after reviewing the literature regarding racial identity development, students may be asked to incorporate aspects of particular identity development models to their own developmental process. A compelling and enlightening resource for this assignment is a special edition of the

Journal of Counseling and Development (Ginter & Robinson, 1999). As students read the personal narratives of counselor educators and researchers describing their identity development, students can identify relevant themes in identity development and reflect on socio-political influences on their own development.

Participatory Strategies

Participatory or experiential strategies can provide an affective experience for students and involve active student participation, introspection, and examination of personal attitudes and beliefs. Participatory strategies can include simulations, role-play activities, games, the processing of resulting emotions, and class discussions (Dickson & Jepsen, 2007; Kim & Lyons, 2003; Pedersen, 2000). Open, honest, and respectful dialogue can result in opportunities for student growth beyond naïve ethnocentrism (Baxter Magolda, 1997). It is likely educators may find it challenging to manage students' unpredictable reactions and resistances that arise when discussions include painful realities (King, 2004). However, when used positively, student resistance can be used to measure readiness to engage in constructive learning (Watt et al., 2009). Both students and educators must feel safe in the teaching environment in order for effective participatory learning to occur (Nixon et al., 2010). Discussion about the sensitive nature of topics that will be discussed in class and engendering students' participation in the establishment of communication guidelines is an essential step toward creating a safe environment. It is imperative for educators to enforce these guidelines at all times once they are established and offer additional rules as the necessity arises.

Caveats. The *ACA Code of Ethics* (American Counseling Association, 2005) requires that educators be aware of the possible difficulties when implementing innovative techniques, such as participatory, experiential, and exposure learning activities (Standard F.6.f.). When using a non-traditional learning activity, the educator should ensure the activity has a well-defined purpose and that the guiding rationale behind the activity is to develop specific multicultural competencies (Arthur & Achenbach, 2002). Furthermore, educators utilizing nontraditional methods should inform students of the potential risks (e.g., increased levels of discomfort associated with self-awareness; anger, frustration, sadness, etc.) of the activity prior to their participation (Fier & Ramsey, 2005). Because non-traditional educational methods can compel students to share their self-awareness, preconceived stereotypes, misgivings, or reactions in an open forum, educators must assure that students understand the reasons for the activity and the intended outcomes. Educators should provide alternative assignments to students not wishing to participate, and counselor trainees must always be informed of their right to exit the activity at anytime, free from academic penalties. Additionally, educators should provide ample opportunity for debriefing following activities to ensure student well-being (Fier & Ramsey, 2005).

Watt et al. (2009) stated that multicultural competence is unlikely to develop without in-depth discussion of difficult issues such as race, sexual orientation, and disability. These difficult conversations can be an integral part of a counselor's preparation to work in a diverse world (Hyde & Ruth, 2002). Essential to these dialogues is the concept of power and how it can impact the counseling dynamic (Watt et al., 2009). McIntosh (1990) postulated that individuals with privilege are often taught to not recognize what they have and are often unaware of their unearned advantage.

Examination of one's privilege is believed to be an important aspect of developing multicultural awareness (Ancis & Szymanski, 2001; Hays, Dean, & Chang, 2007).

Power Lab. The Power Lab Exercise (Ramsey, 1997) is an inexpensive, engaging, and powerful exercise that can assist students in understanding the dynamics of power. Students experience, through simulation, a role of power or powerlessness and are later encouraged to examine their behaviors and reactions during the simulation. The exercise can be completed in groups as small as 14 or as large as 80, and it is best arranged in one large room. Participants are organized into three groups based on how much of a particular color (e.g., blue, red, or yellow) they are wearing. Resources (e.g., comfortable chairs, preferred room location, money, and food) are divided unevenly among the three groups, allocating a disproportionately generous amount to the first or empowered group, little to the second, and none to the third. Rules are established, such that only the group with the majority of the resources has power to initiate communication and make new rules during the exercise. Participants are then left to assume their role within the exercise. The facilitator provides no more input or direction during the exercise and remains present only as a process-observer. Video-taping or written notes can be used to record observations for use in the processing stage of the exercise (Ramsey, 1997).

The duration of the Power Lab is flexible and it is suggested that more time provides for more depth and breadth of training. It is also advised that sufficient time for processing be provided after the conclusion of the activity. During the Power Lab, students will experience various manifestations of privilege, oppression, and discrimination. In processing, it is common for the empowered group to disclose feelings of comfort, security, pleasure, confidence, masterfulness, and superiority, but they are reluctant to admit these feelings and often avoid acknowledging their power" (Ramsey, 1997, p. 287). In response, the groups with less power often express feelings of anxiousness, frustration, vulnerability, hopelessness, devaluation, and inferiority. Several stages of processing are provided at the end of the activity, the final stage encourages participants to draw parallels between the exercise and real life. In this stage, participants are asked questions designed to promote action such as, "What can be done to increase the individual, interactive, and societal power of the oppressed or disempowered individuals in these situations" (Ramsey, 1997, p. 289). Students are encouraged to consider actual issues of oppression and inequality and how counselors can use intra/inter-personal and systemic intervention skills to empower clients (Ramsey, 1997).

Privilege Walk. The Privilege Walk (Foss, 2002) is an activity adopted from the work of McIntosh (1990) and is designed to assist participants in understanding how privilege plays a role in their daily lives. The main objective of the activity is to provide a safe space wherein participants are encouraged to discuss several types of privilege and oppression (e.g., race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, ability). Students are arranged in a horizontal line, facing the same direction in a large room where obstructions have been removed. The facilitator reads off a series of statements out loud such as, "I can do well in a challenging situation without being called a credit to my race", or "someone of my race has been president of my country". Students are asked to take one step forward for every statement they feel describes their life experience.

After reading the final statement, students are encouraged to process the activity by looking around to see where they are in relation to their classmates and what bearing

race, gender, sexual orientation, social class, and ability may have on their placement in the group. After acknowledging initial reactions, students can be encouraged to process their emotional experience either in small groups or with the entire group. Follow-up assignments might encourage further reflection through journal entries.

Games. Kim and Lyons (2003) highlight the importance of utilizing games, as a method to increase multicultural competence among counselor trainees. They state that, “using games to teach multicultural competency knowledge allows counselor trainees to gain accurate information and eliminate their stereotypes about other cultures, while the trainees’ biases and prejudices can be more safely challenged” (p. 409). Kim and Lyons offered examples of games such as Bafa Bafa (Shirts, 1977), which is used to foster multicultural awareness. Multicultural Jeopardy (Miller & Knippers, 1992) can be used to teach several dimensions of multicultural competencies. Additionally, How may I help you? (Atkinson, Thompson, & Grant, 1993) is a three dimensional model designed to help counselors clarify what role to take when counseling racial/ethnic minorities.

Barnaga (Thiagarajan, 1994) is a card game that simulates culture shock and “places people in a situation where they actually experience the shock of realizing that in spite of many similarities, people from another culture have differences in the way they do things” (p. 4). The game is played in a safe and time-compressed environment. It can be played with groups of nine or more people and requires about 45 minutes to complete. Players are divided into several small groups and provided written instructions for play. Unbeknownst to the students, each group is provided instructions that differ from other groups. Once students have read the instructions for play, they are instructed to begin playing without speaking. During the game students are systematically moved between groups and encounter misunderstandings and frustration as they encounter others playing from differing sets of rules. Afterward, students are encouraged to process their thoughts and emotional reactions during the game and consider parallels to real life experiences with persons who have different norms and beliefs.

Exposure Strategies

Exposure strategies can provide opportunities for students to engage with people from backgrounds different from their own. Exposure strategies can include presentations by persons representing various cultural backgrounds to increase students’ awareness, sensitivity and empathy toward members of different cultural groups (Ridley et al., 1994). Educators can draw from resources which are readily available. For example, many university campuses host group organizations such as LGBT organizations, African American student organizations, Middle Eastern student organizations, etc., all of which could potentially provide engaging guest speakers or panel members for discussions. The overall concept of exposure strategies is to reduce the social distance between students and cultural groups, with which they may have little contact.

Service learning. Service learning can be used to provide counseling students with direct exposure to diverse groups, and has shown to increase students’ multicultural counseling competence (Burnett et al., 2004). Service learning has been used by counselor educators to expose students to service experiences in a wide range of diverse settings, including neighborhoods affected by poverty (Baggerly, 2006), mentoring students learning English as a second language (Roysircar, Gard, Hubbell, & Ortega, 2005) and diverse public school settings (Nikels, Mims, & Mims, 2007). Burnett et al.

(2004) presented a model where students participated in service learning projects as a requirement of a multicultural counseling course. Students were provided the option of serving at either, a community center in a predominately African American community, a counseling center that served low-income children and families, a nursing home, or a local housing authority that provided housing, economic, and educational assistance to low-income families (Burnett et al., 2004). Students functioned as collaborators with individuals at these sites and not as counselors. Burnett et al. reported that, “student journals reflected that the service-learning experience was powerful, empowering, and meaningful in their multicultural learning process” (p. 186).

Media. In addition to more involved activities, media can be used to create effective learning experiences and expose students to various multicultural and diversity issues (Pinterits & Atkinson, 1998). Use of media in classrooms is likely to have the greatest impact when an experience is created in which students feel the need to process their feelings about the topic (Tyler & Guth, 1999). With the intent of creating meaning around the narrative of the film, instructors should actively encourage students to focus on their own emotional response and personal identification with the characters portrayed (Tyler & Guth, 1999). Several films such as, *Philadelphia* (Saxon & Demme, 1994), *Boyz 'n the Hood* (Nicolaidis, 1991), *The Joy Luck Club* (Wang, Bass, & Markey, 1993) and *The Perez Family* (Nozik & Pilcher, 1995) offer students the opportunity to vicariously experience cultures of other people while simultaneously providing the opportunity for exploration of their own biases and limits to their experience (Tyler & Guth, 1999).

Villalba and Redmond (2008) describe an experiential learning activity using the movie *Crash* (Haggis, 2004), which is a film depicting the intersection of race, ethnicity, religion, and social class in a culturally and politically charged environment. The film places viewers in situations that are void of simple right and wrong solutions. The activity is used to increase students’ self-awareness regarding multicultural and diversity issues and although the situations depicted can cause discomfort, viewing the film can serve as a starting point for contemplating various cultural issues (Villalba & Redmond, 2008). Prior to viewing the film, students are advised of the graphic nature of the material and provided with the rationale for viewing the film in class. At the conclusion of the film, students are asked for their immediate reactions. Lists of questions are distributed to students to consider for discussion during the next class. Students can process their responses in small groups or with the entire class (Villalba & Redmond, 2008). It is expected that this activity will enhance self-awareness, increase knowledge of others, and facilitate the development of culturally appropriate counseling skills (Villalba & Redmond, 2008).

Clinical Experiences

Clinical training experiences can include a multicultural emphasis (Ridley et al., 1994) and those that do so have been found to contribute to increased comfort with inter-racial contact (Dickson et al., 2008).

Multicultural practica

Multicultural practica provide opportunities for students to engage in counseling relationships with clients from backgrounds different from their own (Ridley et al., 1994). Although developing a number of practicum sites that will provide diverse clientele for students may be challenging, counselor educators are encouraged to consider a broad range of diversity that can include the client's socioeconomic status, physical abilities, sexual orientation, age, religion, etc. (Ramsey, 1997).

Public schools, particularly those serving areas of poverty, can provide viable opportunities for students to gain experience with diverse client populations (Nikels, et al., 2007). Educators may enlist schools to provide individual practicum sites for students or they may coordinate with a school to provide program interventions in which a number of students facilitate group and individual guidance lessons. For instance, a practicum class can be organized around counseling students providing social and emotional based learning lessons, such as *Strong Kids* (Merrell, Carrizales, Feuerborn, Gueldner, & Tran, 2007), for each class in an elementary school. Students who have implemented this type of program in a school serving students from low-income families have reported substantial interpersonal and multicultural learning as a result (L. Grayshield, personal communication, September, 23, 2010).

The need for bi-lingual counselors is becoming increasingly urgent (Smith-Adcock, Daniels, Lee, Villalba, & Indelicato, 2006). When possible, opportunities for students with bi-lingual skills to practice counseling in languages other than English should be sought. Additional research of bi-lingual practica experiences will help guide these efforts.

Multicultural supervision

Supervision has been defined as, “the act of modeling, supporting, teaching, coaching, directing, and evaluating a supervisee’s development” (Hird, Cavalieri, Dulko, Felice, & Ho, 2001, p. 118). When conducted with appropriately trained supervisors, supervision can be a primary modality through which counselors can gain multicultural knowledge and skills (Ladany, Inman, Constantine, Hofheinz, 1997). Culturally competent supervisors actively convey acceptance of cultural differences in supervision and assist counseling students in examining the impact of their cultural background on clients and exploring the client’s perspective (Ancis & Marshall, 2010).

The synergistic model of multicultural supervision (Ober, Granello, & Henfield, 2009) provides supervisors with viable examples and guidelines for conducting multicultural supervision. The model presents a developmental process for incorporating multicultural content into supervision. The aim of the model is to provide intentional interventions that will promote self-reflection, cognitive complexity, and multicultural competence for supervisees.

Conclusion

Trainings which promote the development of students’ multicultural knowledge, awareness, and skills are an ethical concern (Parrish & Linder-VanBerschoot, 2010) and core curricular requirement for counselor preparation (CACREP, 2009). Although systemic integration of multiple complementary approaches may be difficult to achieve,

the results can be beneficial to students. Dickson and Jepsen (2007) found that “students who perceived higher levels of integration of multicultural issues across the curriculum and in supervision also reported higher levels of self-perceived multicultural knowledge and awareness” (p. 90). A multifaceted training approach is necessary for the promotion of counselor multicultural competence, both to meet the needs of a diverse counselor trainee population and to ensure adequate preparation for working with a diverse clientele. The authors contend that counselor education programs make efforts to incorporate multiple strategies and approaches not only within multicultural coursework but at a systemic level throughout the educational unit. This article presents a framework of empirically supported training strategies and corresponding activities as a resource to inform these efforts.

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