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## Counselor Development in the Process of Mastering Cultural Competence: A Study of Professional Growth Experiences

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COUNSELOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE PROCESS OF MASTERING CULTURAL  
COMPETENCE: A STUDY OF PROFESSIONAL GROWTH EXPERIENCES

By

Marie A. Wakefield

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the

Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Psychology

Department of Educational Research, Cognition and Development  
College of Education  
Graduate College

University of Nevada, Las Vegas  
May 2012



THE GRADUATE COLLEGE

We recommend the dissertation prepared under our supervision by

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## ABSTRACT

### **COUNSELOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE PROCESS OF MASTERING CULTURAL COMPETENCE: A STUDY OF PROFESSIONAL GROWTH EXPERIENCES**

Grounded theory methodology was employed to explore the experiences of counseling professionals as they work to develop a higher level of cultural competence. Three key findings support the core theme, navigating change toward cultural competent practices: 1) environmental awareness; 2) dispositions toward the development in cultural competency knowledge, and skill; and 3) systemic factors that influence cultural competency and growth. This study provided perspectives from those who work in the trenches, who are struggling to ensure that practices, instructional experiences, policies and procedures, and current research promote culturally competent practices. The results offer greater insight into the teaching practices, learning experiences, and system barriers for students, neophyte practitioners, and counselor educators.

Key words: qualitative research, constructivist grounded theory, sociocultural theory

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I started this journey to earn a doctorate degree six years ago having no idea how challenging and rewarding it would be. This “bucket list” item has humbled me to recognize the need to ensure balance of spirituality, intellectual pursuits, rewarding social connections/emotional growth, and healthy habits. This was truly a journey that added great dimension to what a person can achieve with an attitude of gratitude, a supportive family, personal inner strength, a core of phenomenal colleagues, and the persistent encouragement from personal colleagues and friends. Although the journey seemed endless, these were the threads that were woven into my life’s tapestry of accomplishment and success.

I have much to be grateful for being raised in a family where education was stressed as the key to success. We were taught to have high spiritual, moral, and work ethics in all our endeavors. My mother was the voice of reason to ensure that decisions made resulted in a positive outcome in the future. I learned very early in life that what one hopes to achieve comes from being focused, goal-oriented, and resourceful. Although my mom struggled to complete high school, I believe she is looking down from heaven at her youngest child and saying, “Well done. I am so proud of you.”

Having four children and ten grandchildren, I have always wanted to ensure that my message to them was “go further and do better. Never settle for less when you can go beyond the limits.” I appreciate my husband’s understanding and patience to support this desire and allowed me every opportunity to do what was necessary to reach this pinnacle in my career field.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Study Overview**

Increased globalization and diversity dynamics create new challenges for counselors who work with people who are culturally different from themselves. Numerous factors have provided the impetus for the counseling profession to move towards more cultural competency in professional practice, training, and research. These include increased diversity in the US including the increase in the number of individuals with biracial and multiracial heritages (Diller, 2007); demographic changes that impact economic, social, legal, political, educational, and cultural systems (Sue, 1991); aging trends (Hays, 2008); higher birth rates in minority groups (Sue, 1991; Hays, 2008); increase in the number of hate crimes since 9-11-01 (Arredondo & Toporek, 2004; Atkinson, 2004c); persistence of racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression (Crethar, Rivera, & Nash, 2008; Hays, 2008); and traditional principles that have been influenced by the framework of predominately Eurocentric constructs perceived as best practices (Atkinson, 2004a; Baruth & Manning, 2007a; Ivey, Andrea, Ivey, & Simek-Morgan, 2007a; Pedersen, 2002; Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992; Vera & Speight, 2003).

Further, underrepresented individuals have been seeking voice and recognition. Hays (2008) posits that counselor education program faculty direct attention to the relational impact of culture, sociopolitical issues, and counseling. Recognizing that cultural factors are an integral part of the therapeutic process and can influence the form of intervention, it has become clear that professionals must embrace a paradigm that cultivates greater culturally competent practices in the counseling profession.

Thus, multiculturalism has been an objective of practically every major psychological and counseling organization. Progress seems to have been made in isolating the factors that define multicultural competence. Needed are new studies that discuss the acquisition of competence. The current author has coauthored a model that attempts to capture cultural competence from a process perspective.

This study involved interviews with seven practitioners defined as counselor educators at universities and colleges, who are teaching multicultural related courses. Using grounded theory, this study explored how these seven counselor educators from varied locations across the United States narrate their experiences with learning, teaching, and practicing in counseling.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Since the original publication of the Multicultural Counseling Competencies (1982), counselors have been urged to increase their knowledge in several areas. This includes understanding multilayered identities (Hogan, 2007; Weaver, 2005); evolving demographics that impact the well-being of societal systems (D' Andrea et al., 2001; Lee, & Ramsey, 2006; Sue, 1991); the role of stress related to acculturation (Lee, Blando, Mizelle, & Orozco, 2007c), and the insensitivity individuals have to disabilities (Atkinson & Hackett, 2004; Baruth & Manning, 2007a). Cognitive beliefs and behavioral features for cultural competency have been provided (Arredondo & Arciniega, 2001; Sue, 2003; Sue, Zane, Hall, & Berger, 2009), but, detailed processes for professionals to master culturally competent practices are absent.

In 2001, the US Surgeon General's report argued for examination of cultural competence of professionals who work in human services (Ivey et al., 2007a; Sue, 2006;

Sue et al., 2009). The final report of the President's New Freedom Commission for Mental Health 2003 documented that mental health systems have not kept pace with the diverse needs of racial and ethnic minorities, often under serving or providing inappropriate service. Specifically, these systems have neglected to incorporate respect or understanding of the histories, traditions, beliefs, language, and value systems of culturally diverse groups (Atkinson, 2004a; Ivey et al., 2007a; D'Andrea et al., 2007a; Ida, 2007; Sue, 2006)

The goals, processes, styles, and techniques of traditional therapeutic helping have been identified as inappropriate for the needs of culturally diverse populations. These results have driven counseling professionals to create a multidimensional way of thinking and delivering services (Diller, 2007; Guindon & Sobhany, 2001; Lee & Ramsey, 2006; Sue, 2001; Sue & Sue, 2008b).

There are barriers to effective culturally competent practices. Those include: lack of communication, misunderstandings of the effect of culture on the counseling process and outcome; challenges to values and orientation related to social class; stereotyping, assumed racism or cultural bias from the client or counselor; lack of understanding of the client's worldview; and differing language and dialect (Baruth & Manning, 2007b).

### **Purpose of the Study**

Many counselor educators have limited, mixed, or no training in cultural competency, but they are professionals who are committed and invested in the pursuit of cultural competency in their university settings. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore how counselor educators perceive and describe their experiences of mastering culturally competent practices at their respective university settings. The primary

research question was: how do counselor educators narrate their journey of mastering culturally competent practices at their university settings?

University settings are rich with many confluences; these interact in a myriad of ways. These include patterns of socialization, values, biases, world views of students and faculty members. The intersectionality of cultural experiences all come to life on the pedagogical platform (Pieterse, 2009). This study attempted to gain in-depth understanding of counselor educators' perception of their own journey towards cultural competent practices, influential experiences, and their future goals.

Each participant revealed information that supported the needs of students of diverse populations. The dialogue revealed experiences that influenced the learning environment, the framework of cultural communication, roles that sanction change, and opportunities that enhance personal and professional growth.

### **Cultural Competency and Professional Standards of Practice in Counseling**

Cultural competency is no longer a choice. It is an ethical mandate. The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) and the Code of Ethics of the American Counseling Association (ACA, 2005) has included content related to cultural diversity (Lee et al., 2007a, p.8). Accreditation standards have been amended to increase commitment to cultural competent practices in the profession. The American Psychological Association (APA) established the Guidelines on Multicultural Education, Training, and Research, Guidelines for Psychological Practice for Older Adults, Guidelines for Psychotherapy with Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual clients, and the Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (APA, 2003).

The Multicultural Counseling Competencies (MCC) articulated specific guidelines for the counseling profession relative to the practice of culturally appropriate interventions and strategies. In response to the potential impact of increased diversity on the counseling profession, 31 Multicultural Counseling Competencies (MCCs) in the areas of awareness of biases and assumptions, client's worldviews, and culturally appropriate interventions were constructed to introduce counselors to more effective ways to serve clients of color (Arredondo & Arciniega, 2001; Cartwright, Daniels, & Zhang, 2008; Day-Vines et al., 2007; Hays, 2008). Although models describing the measurement of multicultural counseling competencies exist, the scope of counseling psychology broadened as Division 17 of APA and six divisions of ACA endorsed the competencies (Neville, Worthington, & Spanierman, 2001). The dimensions of competency included three areas: beliefs and attitudes, knowledge, and skill (Arredondo, 1999; Atkinson et al., 2001; Corey, 2001; Sue, 2001; Day-Vines et al., 2007).

In 1993, a number of multicultural scholars and advocates established an independent group called the National Multicultural Ad Hoc Committee (renamed the National Institute of Multicultural Counseling, NIMC). Through their collaborative efforts, the development of the *Operationalization of the Multicultural Counseling Competencies* was created in 1996. This document introduced the three Dimensions of the Personal Identity Model to address excluded groups (Arredondo et al., 1996). The model conceptualized the multicultural aspect of all individuals; personal, political and historical cultures are impacted by sociocultural, political, environmental, and historical events in our lives. Individuals can be identified by the facets of intersectionality. Dimension A identified such characteristics as age, gender, culture, race and language,

visible qualities. Dimension C described people in their historical, political, sociocultural, and economic lens, conditions that affect socialization. Dimension B discussed factors that occurred as a result of the other two dimensions. The model provided an understanding of access and equality related to education, affirmative action, socioeconomic conditions, or the dynamics of political power (Arredondo et al., 1996).

In 2000, the MCC literature was examined and a limitation of empirical data was noted (Worthington, Soth-McNett, & Moreno, 2007). It was suggested that counselor educators acknowledge their cultural being as a use for celebrating diversity (Salazar, Herring, Cameron, & Nihlen, 2004). Expanding research to include narrating individuals' experiences has the potential for increasing meaningful dialogue.

In response to classroom experiences with students engage in a course, Multiculturalism, Advocacy, and Social Justice, the researcher worked with a team (Wakefield, Garner, Pehrsson, & Tyler, 2010) who designed a model with domains to interpret the personal growth and developmental experiences in cultural competency (see Appendix A). This model, the Cultural Competency Domains Model (CCDM) included four categorical levels and drew from counseling literature's sentiment of the multicultural competencies of awareness, knowledge, and skills. These levels included novice, apprentice, proficient, and distinguished. One purpose of the model was to provide self-awareness, self-development, and self-knowledge to students since this is vital to learning culturally competent skills.

The novice level represents the beginner; these individuals often demonstrate self-focused and narrow-minded behaviors, skills, emotions, and thoughts. This limited development often manifests with patterns of resistance and results in



restricted growth and learning. Lack of awareness and skill at this level might imply conscious and unconscious cultural insensitivity.

Counselors who are at the apprentice level display some movement toward competent behavior. At this level, counselors may still be gathering information and grappling with functional requirements as they are challenged.

As counselors become more proficient, they demonstrate a greater level of involvement and comfort. They see the bigger picture. As a more proficient professional, their dialogue expresses support to the relationship and an understanding of the impact of societal and historical forces. This knowledge enhances counseling. Intervention strategies are client-centered, intentionally aligned with the values of culturally different individuals. Counselors utilize current research and community resources as well.

At the distinguished level, professionals immerse themselves using holistic approaches and accept new roles that impact system change. There is intention in their work. They make effort to ensure the client successfully develops self-advocacy skills. The level of mastering is rich for the distinguished culturally competent counselor. They excel in awareness, knowledge, and skill.

For this study, the Multicultural Counseling Competencies, the *Operationalization of the Multicultural Counseling Competencies*, and the Cultural Competency Domains Model were documents providing an interpretative lens to view culturally competent practices and individuals who are committed to advancing these initiatives on university campus settings.

## **Research Questions**

The literature consistently documented cognitive and behavioral features of culturally competent practices (Arredondo & Arciniega, 2001; Sue et al., 2009; Vereen, Hill, & McNeal, 2008). However, these features and how these features can be developed into real practices are not examined in the literature, therefore there is a gap. There are limited studies that examine how students become skilled. The features of cultural competence are outlined but how individuals actually become competent (the processes of development) have not been thoroughly examined. Since professors model this learning of cultural competence, it follows that understanding faculty members' world views is essential. Interestingly, the most widely examined area with regards to cultural competency falls within the realm of faculty influence of student learning. The literature indicates that students should be aware of faculty attitudes and behaviors regarding cultural views as well as those within their institutional learning environments. This is crucial information since it impacts student views and learning with regards to cultural competency (Miller, Miller, & Stull, 2007). Further, multicultural scholars advocate for research that examines student-faculty interactions, research that goes beyond self-reports and produces deeper and richer examinations of this topic (Dickson & Jepson, 2007). Therefore, the use of a grounded theory design fulfills this need.

Furthermore, universities facilitate several cultural initiatives to address cultural competency; however, there has been no evidence in the literature that the level of culturally competent practices has improved. The following research questions provided guidance for this research study. First, are counselor educators working from a culturally competent skill set that will allow them to meet students, clients, and community needs in

the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Second, what do counselor educators perceive as their comfortable level of competence? Third, what steps have professionals taken to achieve a higher level?

### **Terminology of Key Terms**

Terms such as multiculturalism (Bochner, 1999; Mills, 2007; Sue et al., 1992); multicultural counseling (Atkinson, & Hackett, 2004; Baruth & Manning, 2007a; Corey, 2001; Fuentes & Gretchen, 2001; Lee & Ramsey, 2006); multicultural competence (Brammer, 2004; Butler, 2003; Dunn, Smith, & Montoya, 2006;); cultural competence (Boyle & Springer, 2001; Diller & Moule, 2005; Guindon & Sobhany, 2001; Kwong, 2009; Lum, 2005; Petrovich & Lowe, 2005; Weaver, 2005); cultural diversity (Diller, 2007) use common language when referring to counseling culturally different people. Other descriptors include “cross-cultural competency, ethnic sensitive practice, and cultural sensitivity” (Kwong, p. 148).

### **Multiculturalism**

Multiculturalism, as a concept, has been viewed as the fourth force in counseling (Bochner, 1999; Fassinger & Richie, 1997; Midgette & Meggert, 1991; Smith, Ng, Brinson, & Mityagin, 2008; Sue et al., 1992) as society has become more diverse. Multiculturalism and diversity, sometimes used interchangeably are constructs that have influenced perspectives of “affirmative action, civil rights, discrimination, racism, sexism, and political correctness” (Pedersen, 2002, p.21).

### **Diversity**

Research has acknowledged diversity as a concept reflecting the many ways that people are different (Bucher, 2004; Diller, 2007). Diversity has been referenced in respect to “age, class, ethnicity, gender, health, physical and mental ability, race, sexual

orientation, religion, stature, educational level, job level and function, personality traits, and other human differences” (Plummer, 2003, p.9). Plummer (2003) also found that cultural diversity was a term designated to include the inclusion and acceptance of the unique world views, customs, patterns of behavior, and traditions of many groups of people.

## **Culture**

“Culture, in mental health, was described as a dynamic process that links the past to the present and it is shaped in part by the social, historical, and political context” (Waite, 2009, p. 232). Lee and Ramsey’s (2006) operational definition of culture, referred to a group’s commonality of purpose, need, and background. This included “historical contexts, immigration issues, language, religious practices, interpersonal space, gender and power, social class, levels and value of education, habits, lifestyles, appearance, attitudes toward marginalization, and disaster/climate experiences” (p.198). Culture was viewed as a valuable for assessment, interpretation, and methodologies in the counseling process (Baruth & Manning, 2007a). Additionally, social and interpersonal relationships (Baruth & Manning, 2007b), works of artistic artifacts and family rituals have been included (Lee et al., 2007a). Atkinson (2004a) recognized the context of culture as implicit or explicit, learned and communicated within communities.

## **Cultural Competence**

Cultural competence, as a developmental process involves continued acquisition of knowledge, the development of more advanced skills, and an ongoing self- evaluation (Diller, 2007). Within the process, knowledge about standards and practice facilitate effective results (Cary & Marques, 2007; Boyle & Springer, 2001; Diller & Moule, 2005;

National Association of Social Workers (NASW), 2000). For the purpose of this study, the term, cultural competency, will refer to the mastery of a skill set to effectively work with a culturally different population (Boyle & Springer, 2001; Bucher, 2004; Diller, 2007; Diller & Moule, 2005; Duke, Conner, & McEldowney, 2009; Guindon & Sobhany, 2001; Lum, 2005; Sue, 2001).

### **Summary of the Research Study**

This grounded theory investigation explored the culturally competent practices through the interview process of counselor educators, who are committed and invested in the pursuit of cultural competency in their university settings. Chapter one provides a study overview, a statement of the problem, purpose of the study, cultural competency and professional standards of practice in counseling, the research questions, terminology of key terms, and the limitations of the study. Chapter two includes a review of the literature on cultural competency. Special attention was given to the historical movement of cultural competency, a summary of the multicultural competencies, findings from empirical studies, and training issues for cultural competence. Chapter three details the specific qualitative methodology utilized for this research. This information included the selection of the participants, the research design, data collection, and analysis procedures. Additionally, the interview protocol, and trustworthiness of the study were provided. In chapter four, the finding of the research study were presented. Chapter five shares the researcher's discussion of implications and interpretations of the findings. Concluding remarks suggest further research and specific application.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Review of the Literature**

Cultural competent counseling has emerged as a dynamic initiative and critical need which has shaped education, the work of practitioners, and research in the field of professional counseling. The shift in the multicultural paradigm towards diversity and cultural pluralism has also influenced the direction of counseling, pushing our profession to move beyond the confines of race and ethnicity. The preparation and training to be culturally competent established significant implications for counseling professionals.

This chapter examined the historical movement toward the development of cultural competency, findings from empirical studies in multicultural competency, training issues for the development of culturally competent practices, and the implications for further research.

#### **The Historical Movement for Cultural Competency**

The involvement in the multicultural competency movement initiated an agenda of principles that impacted cultural and contextual paradigms in the counseling profession (Arredondo, Tovar-Blank, & Parham, 2008; Sue, 1991; Sue et al., 1992). Arredondo (2008) noted the progress of multicultural counseling competency in the United States from a historical perspective. The inclusive and exclusive nature of multiculturalism and a framework to organize the multifaceted dimensions have been challenging to the implementation of cultural competence.

Issues of diversity in the 1950s maintained Western forms of counseling and therapy. Approaches to counseling were monocultural with a lack of attention to the minority group experience (Brammer, 2004; Diller, 2007; McLeod, 2003; Sue, 2001;

Vera & Speight, 2003). It was noted that counseling and psychotherapy assumed a set of universal applications of concepts and goals that excluded cultural views. Practitioners believed that minorities were pathological and change would occur through the modification of traditional White models (Sommers-Flanagan & Sommers-Flanagan, 2004).

Psychologists were responsible for the initial leadership in the multicultural movement (Arredondo et al., 2008). Culturally sensitive practices were evident in such cases as *Murray v. Maryland* in 1936 (Terry, 2004), *Sweatt v. Painter* in 1950 (Brown, 2004; Jordan, 1991; Telgen, 2005a), and *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954 (Brown, 2004; Carson, 2004; Telgen, 2005b), which challenged racial discrimination in educational institutions.

With the creation of the Association of Black Psychologists in 1968, advocacy in the mental health professions became a reality. As a result, professional boundaries of psychology and counseling crossed to systemically make changes in counseling, education, research, and practices.

The events of the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s and 1970s had an impact on counseling and psychotherapy (Arredondo et al., 2008; Atkinson & Hackett, 2004; Baruth & Manning, 2007a; Lee, & Ramsey, 2006). The term “social-cultural revolution” was used to describe the collaborative efforts of counseling and psychology professionals working to initiate cultural competent skills at greater levels (Ivey et al., 2007b, p. 31). The growth in the cultural perspective demanded inclusion, sensitivity, shared power, and social change.

The landscape of cultural competence was further challenged by the women's movements that drew attention to the practices that marginalized all women (hooks, 1984).

The initiatives of the Feminists' movements defended political, power, and cultural structures. Feminists' voices denounced situations in which children and women were victims of domestic violence and physical, sexual, and psychological abuse (Herlihy & Corey, 2001; Merlis & Linville, 2006; Ross, 2006, Wagner & Magnusson, 2005).

During the 1970s, professional organizations representing mental health practitioners such as the American Personnel and Guidance, currently known as the American Counseling Association (ACA), and psychologists of the American Psychological Association (APA) began to address the issues that were related to ethnic minorities (Atkinson, 2004a). Affronting the effectiveness of standards in the counseling profession led to the formation of culture-specific mental health associations and the need to address counselor preparation, training research processes, monocultural/monolingual assessment, evaluation, and clinical practices. From this, two prominent divisional organizations were established: the Association for Non-white Concerns (renamed the Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development) under ACA in 1972 and the Society of Psychological Study of Ethnic Minority Issues (Division 45) by APA in 1987.

A value shared by counselors and psychologists was to endorse initiatives that identified, developed, and implemented professional competencies that ensured more effective work with people who were culturally different (Arredondo et al., 2008). In 1981, Division 17 of the American Psychological Association provided support for the



definition of multicultural counseling by crafting a set of multicultural counseling competencies (Atkinson et al., 2001).

In response to the potential impact of increased attention to diversity in the counseling profession, 31 Multicultural Counseling Competencies (MCCs) in the areas of counselors' awareness of biases and assumptions, client's worldviews were crafted by the Association of Multicultural Counseling and Development, a division of the American Counseling Association (Arredondo & Toporek, 2004; Cartwright et al., 2008; Vera & Speight, 2003).

Further, the competencies included culturally appropriate interventions to introduce counselors to more effective ways to serve clients of color (Arredondo & Arciniega, 2001; Cartwright et al., 2008; Day-Vines et al., 2007; Hays, 2008). Division 17 of APA and six divisions of ACA endorsed the competencies, yet, the document lacked descriptions of the process of developing mastery of culturally competent counseling practices (Neville, Worthington, & Spanierman, 2001).

Arredondo and Toporek (2004) provided the following components that supported the development of the Multicultural Competencies:

The 1992 competencies were established from the following operating premises: 1) all counseling is cross-cultural, 2) all counseling occurs in a context influenced by institutional and societal biases and norms, 3), the relationships described were primarily between the White counselor and clients of ethnic racial minority status, 4) constituencies most often marginalized about which counselors have been prepared to serve are from Asian, Black/African American, Latino, and

Native American heritage, and 5) counseling is a culture-bound profession (p. 103).

The framework of the MCCs, built upon the foundational qualities associated with beliefs, knowledge, and skills, provided guidelines/standards believed necessary for the development and effective practices in the profession of counseling. These three qualities operationalized the Multicultural Counseling Competencies at the cognitive and behavioral levels. This means that the counselor is cognizant of personal attitudes and beliefs that can influence perceptions and interactions with people who are culturally different. Specific knowledge of a cultural group such as differences in worldviews, racial identity, and acculturation are understood. Lastly, the third quality is related to counselors utilizing culturally based interventions and strategies. These elements noted above support competent attitudes, standards, training, and practice outcomes especially as these are present throughout delivery service systems.

In 1993, a number of multicultural scholars and advocates established an independent group called the National Multicultural Ad Hoc Committee (renamed the National Institute of Multicultural Counseling, NIMC). A hallmark of their collaborative efforts was the development of the *Operationalization of the Multicultural Counseling Competencies*, a document created in 1996, which introduced an identity model to address excluded groups. This document, along with the MCCs, stressed issues related to racism and other forms of oppression that are under the purview of multicultural competency.

In 2002, dire concerns inspired the APA Council of Representatives to adopt as policy the “Guidelines on Multicultural Education, Training, Research, Practice, and

Organizational Change for Psychologists” (Atkinson, 2004b, p.57). The guidelines cited were specific to developing cultural competence. The goals of the guidelines included helping professionals acknowledge the needs of culturally different/diverse people, recognizing the value of documenting updated data, and encouraging the engagement in any and all venues that promote professional growth and advancement.

Issues of diversity such as those in the Gay Lesbian Bi-sexual Transgender and Questioning Community are also similar but unique in nature to those of any diverse community. The Society for Human Rights in Chicago was one of the earliest known gay rights organizations (Katz, 1992). The state of Illinois, in 1962, became the first state to decriminalize homosexual acts between consenting adults (Singer & Deschamps, 1994).

The event that transformed the gay rights movement from a small group of activists into a widespread protest for equal rights acceptance occurred after a police raid in 1969 on a gay bar in Greenwich Village. This event, known as the Stonewall riots, signaled the birth of the modern gay liberation movement (Lee et al., 2007d). The Greenwich Inn gained worldwide attention as the confrontation with police lasted three days. This led to The American Psychiatric Association removing homosexuality from its official list of mental disorders (Lee et al., 2007d). In 1982, Wisconsin became the first state to outlaw discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation (Turner, 2007).

Incorporating multiculturalism into school counseling has been demonstrated through several key initiatives: adoption of a position statement in 1996 by ASCA; emphasizing cultural diversity and cultural competence at workshops and seminars at the state, regional, and national level; providing professional literature on oppression and

social justice for classroom guidance lessons; increasing awareness of the concept of social justice in counseling literature and professional organizations; including cultural diversity requirements in school counselor preparation programs; and documenting the standards for equity, fairness, and diversity in school counseling (Portman, 2009).

Other initiatives to promote cultural competency included the development of organizations such as the Association for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Identity Concerns (AGLB TIC) and Counselors for Social Justice (CSJ) in ACA; and Divisions 17, 35, 44, and 45 in APA designed to address issues related to diversity (D'Andrea et al., 2001). Additionally, the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV-TR)* (American Psychiatric Association, 2000) included culture, age, and gender in the clinical presentations of different disorders (Guindon & Sobhany, 2001).

### **Findings from Empirical Studies of Multicultural Competence**

Empirical studies that articulate the development of awareness, knowledge, skill, and practical experiences for counselor educators and counselor trainees are areas needing diligent attention (Vereen et al., 2008). Further, empirically supported actions add greater validity to the measurement of the MCCs as more examples of application demonstrate culturally competent practices are found in the literature.

The multicultural counseling movement was fueled by several instruments created to measure multicultural competence. Those instruments include the Cross-Cultural Counseling Inventory Revised (CCC I-R), Multicultural Counseling Inventory (MCI), Multicultural Counseling Knowledge and Awareness Scale (MCKAS), and the Multicultural Environment Inventory (MEI) (Dunn, Smith, &

Montoya, 2006; Hays, 2008). These instruments provide invaluable information that supports the level of knowledge, awareness, and skills attained as counselors engage in practices appropriate for diverse populations (Hays, 2008). Hayes (2008) acknowledged use of the CCCI-R as follows:

The CCCI-R addresses cultural diversity as the focus measures an individual's counseling effectiveness; the MCI provides a venue for counselors to self-report multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skill; the MAKSS identifies student's perceptions of the effects of instructional strategies; the MCKAS evaluates multicultural knowledge, awareness and skill; and the MEI evaluates the diversity and accreditation issues in relation to a program or department (p.97).

### **Training Issues for Cultural Competence**

Counselor educators have an opportunity to enrich growth and development in cultural competency through the selection of effective instructional materials and meaningful dialogue that occurs naturally as a part of the personal and professional socialization process. The presence of culturally competent practices demonstrated in a training program include integrating multicultural issues in curricular and supervisory experiences, promoting multicultural research among faculty, and creating an instructional environment that respects, supports, and values students and faculty from diverse populations (Dickson & Jepsen, 2007; Lassiter, Napolitano, & Culbreth, 2008). However, a single course format for training in multicultural studies has existed in counselor education programs for many years (Malott, 2010). This format has contributed to the difficulty in determining which strategies have the greatest impact on the affect of

the MCCs. Additionally; multiculturalism was viewed as an additional course requirement rather than a necessary philosophical component of the counseling program (Hill, 2003). Hill (2003) annotated evidence that a number of trainings have focused on awareness and knowledge but lack components that support behavioral understanding and applications. Further, it was noted that a format of one or two courses provided limited opportunities to understand the application of cultural competent practices across diverse populations (Vereen et al., 2008).

The literature cited relevant issues of concern that occur in university or organizational settings where reference to cultural competency has been given a priority or commitment. These issues include the lack of support for cultural competency among counselor educators, faculty members, and students who are unwilling to address controversial challenges, fear of consequences from those who do not support the cultural competency movement, and denial of career opportunities as a result of supporting controversial issues in the counselor education programs (Zalaquette, Foley, Tillotson, Dinsmore, & Hof, 2008).

A variety of instructional methods have been utilized to focus on knowledge, awareness, and skills. Such methodologies address cognitive and affective learning through didactic instruction. In a study by Coleman, Morris, and Norton (2006), it was noted that training programs provided many opportunities to gain knowledge and sensitivity to cultural differences. Despite efforts to include multicultural issues in research, a significant component missing in training programs is creating and evaluating action steps that establish greater self-awareness of personal identity, biases, and stereotypes. There are a limited number of evaluative tools to assess prejudice prevention

in the counseling profession (Hays, 2008). Additionally, Hays, Chung, and Dean (2004) determined that training in the area of counselors' conceptualization of privilege and oppression was lacking in research studies.

Experiential learning was touted as a solid technique to engage students in a learning process that examines the cultural context of behavior, attitudes, and beliefs (Arthur & Achenbach, 2002). This method allows students to develop action steps that address thoughts and feelings which influence the counseling role. However, few studies have provided resources to promote its implementation in counselor education programs.

It is imperative for counselor educators who serve in supervisory roles to teach a skill set that communicates strategies and interventions that are culturally relevant (Butler, 2003). Ober, Granello, and Hensfield (2009) acknowledged that models that emphasize supervisees' developmental levels in supervision have progressed slowly. Models have varied in their areas of focus. Some models addressed only race and ethnicity while others have examined the supervisee's developmental level without any knowledge of the supervisor's level of cultural competence. If these issues of the cultural identities of each individual are ignored, meaningful interactions may impact the supervisory relationship.

### **Framework for the Study**

Although the MCCs provide a framework and instruments that assess the cognitive and behavioral levels of cultural competence, research studies to validate steps to achieving multicultural counseling competent practices is lacking in the literature. The measurement gap is significant in providing evidence-based experiences about the process of mastering cultural competency.

Further, research identified the presence of diversity among counseling faculty as a relevant factor in meeting the needs of students of color (Salazar et al., 2004). However, the literature confirmed that there is a small amount of systematic qualitative research that discusses experiences of counselor educators of color. Dickson and Jepsen (2007) suggested that researchers probe the processes that effectively promote recruitment and retention among diverse students and faculty in counselor education programs. An analysis of their worldviews, perspectives, and experiences may contribute valuable insight to the education, application, and evaluation of cultural competency.

The researcher has experienced teaching multicultural competence to graduate level students. In the spring semester at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) in 2008, she utilized student guided discussions, journal writings, and daily reflections in my class entitled, Multiculturalism, Social Justice, and Advocacy. The students offered a wide array of responses, which are often critical related to their perceived value and necessity of the material presented. What became apparent from students was their understanding regarding the utility of cultural knowledge and the relevance of the historical contexts. Most of the students were in the second semester of the first year of their masters program. Some of the students participating in this class wrote the following comments:

“My people weren’t here during slavery. What does that have to do with me?”

“ I grew up in poverty. How can I be privileged?”

“ I don’t care how someone lives his or her life. I don’t judge.”

“ Civil rights and affirmative action changed all the problems.”

“Why are we beating this to death, why do we have to have a history lesson?”

“When I see you, I don’t see your color.”



Remarks during discussion and comments such as these piqued the researcher's interest regarding how people come to learn, define, and practice culturally competent behavior as a result of the environmental factors and interactions with counselor educators.

The current author collaborated with her colleagues, Drs. Doug Garner, Tiffany Tyler, and Dale-Elizabeth Pehrsson and constructed a model, the Cultural Competence Domains Model (CCDM). This model can also be used as a framework for the discourse of an exploratory study. A schematic of the model is provided in Appendix A. The model was designed with domains to assess the personal growth and developmental experiences in cultural competency (Wakefield, Garner, Pehrsson, & Tyler, 2010). The CCDM informed the researcher's frame of reference to conduct this study. This model adds to the literature greater self-awareness, self-development, and self-knowledge, elements that are vital to achieving a culturally competent counselor skill set.

The CCDM utilizes a four by four matrix, which offers a personal/individual, culture-specific approach that can recognize the interrelationship and interaction in multiple dimensions. The four domains of the CCDM, disposition, cognitive understanding, therapeutic skills, and affective behaviors, reflect the literature's sentiment of cultural competency skills of awareness, knowledge, and skills. The categorical levels of novice, apprentice, proficient, and distinguished provide criteria for assessment.

The novice is described as having little or no knowledge of diverse cultures and may deny the importance of cultural variables in counseling. Culture is viewed according to a universal, monocultural perspective. This group lacks experiences of exploration and discussion of cultural differences and, therefore, demonstrates

inadequacy in working with a diverse population. The novice exhibits a lack of understanding cultural stereotypes and biases and holds preconceived notions about others who are different. Therapeutic skills present an unawareness of ethical practices and the acceptance of unreasonable assumptions.

Counselors, at the apprentice level, demonstrate an emerging awareness of cultural biases and assumptions. Counselors actively engage in a continuous process of challenging personal attitudes and beliefs that do not support respecting and valuing differences. The apprentice counselor explores the community for appropriate services. There exists a limited awareness of assessment models and knowledge of the affect of oppression, racism, discrimination, and stereotyping. At this level, there is an awareness of the need for cultural competence and, therefore, the apprentice counselor works to develop an understanding of how culture influences interventions with clients. The counselor possesses a general awareness of ethical standards for cultural competency, yet, still needs to work to gain a greater level of comfort with differences of race, culture, and beliefs.

As counselors become more proficient, they demonstrate a greater level of involvement and comfort. There is evidence that a counselor at this level exhibits an awareness and sensitivity to personal cultural heritage. This counselor interacts from a level of comfort toward those of different racial, ethnic, and cultural beliefs. Proficient level counselors understand how the Eurocentric tradition in counseling conflicts with the cultural values of other traditions. Recognizing limitations, there is an effort to enrich understanding through educational, consultative, and training experiences. The therapeutic skills of a proficient counselor include a knowledge of

how race, gender, or disability affect personality formation, vocational choices, the manifestation of mental health disorders, and the appropriateness of counseling approaches. Proficiency in counseling is demonstrated through a variety of helping approaches and by promoting client self advocacy.

At the distinguished level, professionals immerse themselves using holistic approaches and accept new roles that impact system change. There is intention in their work as it is evident that cultural competency is ongoing and long-term. Distinguished level counselors establish a working relationship with providers of various cultures within the community. There is an awareness of discriminatory practices at the social and community level and knowledge of appropriate culturally relevant assessments are utilized. Counselors serve as an advocate for culturally appropriate services, client self advocacy is promoted and ethical practices of cultural competency are practiced at an exemplary level.

This model could be explored with psychometric scales, but the intent of the current study is more process focused. From a process perspective, interviews were conducted to better understand behavior and actions. The language during the interview allows the researcher to recount the context of meaning as personal experiences unfold through the rich narrative of the interviewees' stories.

### **Rationale of Quantitative Methodology for Process-Focused Interviews**

There are various models and philosophies on how to that to code and analyze interviews. For the counseling profession, there is a strong justification for utilizing qualitative methods when exploring cultural competency. Historically, research methods, diagnosis, and strategies used in counseling were defined by a scope of practice within the dominant

European American (White), male middle-class models of human development and behavior (Guindon & Sobhany 2001; Morrow, Rakhsha, & Castaneda, 2001; Sue & Sue, 2008c)

The use of qualitative methodology provides a venue for the voices of people who are and have been marginalized, oppressed, or silenced (Hays, 2008; Merchant & Dupuy, 1996; Morrow et al., 2001). Multicultural researchers embrace qualitative research to gain greater understanding of the world views of marginalized populations, recognize the significant role of culture in personal identity, and explore individual meanings in a social context (Morrow et al., 2001).

Qualitative inquiry operates from a discovery perspective, which adds to the feasibility of methods giving focus to culturally relevant issues grounded in a plethora of personal events (Strickland, 1999). The researcher gains invaluable insight through interactions with the participants rather than speculations. As a valued perspective of qualitative research, participants are viewed through the lens of their interpretations during the dialogue as it occurred within a natural setting rather than a laboratory. The social rules, ideologies, and meaningful events within the actual settings present an invaluable resource for examining the behavior and context of the interviewees' everyday social interactions (Cheritz & Swanson, 1986).

The review of the literature affirmed the researcher's decision to employ an epistemological framework of applying qualitative methodology to study the cultural competent practices of counselor educators. Areas of study explored by qualitative researchers and counseling professionals share many basic points of view (Berrios & Lucca, 2006). The methodology utilized to collect data in a natural language format

captures the richness of details of events and people (Polkinghorne, 2005). Natural language refers to the researchers' access to the firsthand knowledge of participants' attitudes, beliefs, and thoughts without imposing presumptions, structures, or prior designated categories (Payne, 2007; Patton, 1990). Qualitative researchers acknowledge and embrace the dynamics that effect the study as participants reveal how they feel, think, know, and do (Patton, 1990).

Although there are many definitions (Merchant & Dupuy, 1996), for the purpose of this study, the qualitative research approach was defined as a venue to explore and investigate an issue for the purpose of a deep understanding and interpretation of the context within the socio-cultural environment (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Glesne, 2006; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). The term qualitative, with regards to research introduces a process where meaning can emerge without the rigor of an exact terminology of measurement, such as quantity, intensity, or amount (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). A key element in unmasking information via a qualitative approach is the experience of probing untapped territory. The qualitative epistemology recognizes the world as ever changing; resultantly, new questions may follow unexpected leads that uncover the unique individual and social characteristics that may not be identified by statistical designs.

### **Grounded Theory**

Grounded theory, which emerged from sociology, is a qualitative research strategy of inquiry (Creswell, 2009; Hays & Singh, 2012a). This research methodology provides a research format that systematically guides the researcher from the question of interest to an in-depth data analysis. The literature has documented various forms of grounded theory determined by the values and beliefs of one's research paradigm. For

this study, the researcher embraced a constructivist paradigm, which was developed by Strauss and Corbin and expanded by Charmaz (Buckley, 2010; Charmaz, 2006b; Dey, 1999).

During the interview process, the constructivist grounded theory approach engages as a co-creator in the multiple realities expressed by the participant. Charmaz (2006b) emphasizes that knowledge is socially constructed as both the participant and interviewee examine an experience, deconstruct it, and find implied meanings. Valuable knowledge can be extrapolated as the language of the participant recreates the experience. The interviewer listens intently to seek understanding of the participants' world, making no assumptions of any key terms articulated in the dialogue.

When applying grounded theory, the researcher engages in simultaneously collecting and analyzing the data, immediately identifying emerging themes, establishing the social processes within the data, constructing abstract categories to explain the phenomena, and creating a theoretical framework that documents specific causes, conditions, and consequences of the social process (Hays & Singh, 2012a). This requires the researcher to listen to the audio tapes at least three times and reread the narratives five or six times. Although creating a theory is significantly valuable, comparing, verifying, or expanding existing theories may be the end results.

Grounded theory, designed to provide an ontological and epistemological framework, was appropriate for this study to better explore the growth experiences regarding cultural competency of counselor educators. The researcher was interested in describing the views of counselor educators and to develop theoretical explanations about why these views influenced their behaviors. Although variables are unknown, the context

is dependent upon the behavior patterns that shape social processes as people interact.

The results of employing the grounded theory approach create unfamiliar perspectives for familiar problems.

This flexible inductive method proposes an empirical study into the interpersonal and intrapersonal social worlds of the participants (Buckley, 2010; Charmaz & Henwood, 2008; Clark, A., 2003). Participants have an opportunity to tell their own stories without restrictions of preconceived ideas or strict and defined analytical steps. There is no need for a priori theory (Hawker & Kerr, 2007).

A major strategy of the grounded theory approach is to become immersed in the world of the participant in the study. As the details unfold, biases in the views of the participants become evident (Hawker & Kerr, 2007). As categories of meaning become salient, the grounded theorist identifies patterns of actions and interactions of the various participants and gains greater knowledge of ideas and processes in the data (Charmaz, 2008; Strauss & Corbin, 1994). All of this may develop as data is examined line by line or incident by incident (Charmaz & Henwood, 2008).

Grounded theory application emphasizes the use of a coding system that requires comparison, sorting, and synthesizing data. Codes are succinct and enable the researcher to scrutinize the nature of the event and the relationship to a theoretical category (Charmaz & Henwood, 2008; Clark, 2003). Systematic comparative strategies in grounded theory occur between “data to data, data to concept, and concept to concept” (Charmaz, 2008, p. 82). The abundance of perspectives shapes the researchers interpretative analysis and provides a greater understanding of the tenor of impressions

and intentions (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Mills, Bonner, & Francis, 2006; Scott & Howell, 2008).

The concept of theoretical sensitivity positions the researcher to exercise greater insight into the complexity of participants' experiences. From the constructivists' perspective, the interviewees' information replicates data that has been established in the literature through their stories. Course syllabi, assignments, and assessments are examples of nontechnical literature utilized to identify the context from which participants for this study provide a view of their world of work. The practices of successful grounded theorists include skill in critically analyzing situations by recognizing potential biases, thinking abstractly, accepting criticism, and demonstrating sensitivity to the words and actions of the participants (Buckley, 2010; Smith et al., 2008). As a constructivist using grounded theory, multiple meanings develop from the researcher's "gut sense" (Mills et al., 2006).

Another important phase during the grounded theory approach is to engage in memo writing. As part of the analytic process, memos assist with identifying the elements within the categories of the data and mobilize the researcher to solicit relevant illustrations. The bigger picture evolves as gaps in the analysis and accuracy in making comparisons become apparent.

The process in grounded theory provides opportunities for the researcher to explore any unexpected or undiscovered findings and target important findings until no new categories emerge. The constructivist grounded theorist knows that the thoughts and feelings toward the data influence any preconceived ideas. Therefore, self-reflections that include impressions, interpretations, and strategic plans for data collection will assist in



developing a greater understanding of concepts that are grounded in the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

The purpose of this grounded theory investigation was to discover how counselor educators perceive and describe their experiences of culturally competent practices at their respective university settings.

### **Implications for Research in Cultural Competency**

Acquiring cultural competency is a complex process with a tremendous number of components that challenge the counseling profession. The literature has documented several areas that need attention. An area, which resonates with urgency, is utilizing research methods to address the recruitment and retention of minority students and faculty (Henriksen, 2006). Outcomes may offer greater understanding into fundamental changes that impact multicultural pedagogy, policies, procedures, and barriers within the systemic process.

The preparation and training of counselors to be culturally competent has significant implication for the profession. Unfortunately, little empirical information was provided regarding the preparation and training of those who serve in supervisory roles, the perceptions of the supervisors' competence from the supervisees' perspective, and client's understanding of the meaning of cultural competency (Dunn et al., 2006; Kwong, 2009; Ober et al., 2009). Dunn and colleagues (2006) noted that among the 137 studies measuring cultural competence, less than 10% investigated cultural influences on treatment whereas 70% focused on evaluating multicultural training. Evidence-based practices that verify the impact of culturally competent counseling interventions are needed (Lassiter, Napolitano et al., 2008; Smith et al., 2008). There are publications that

provide information on differences between ethnic groups but not enough comparative material to learn about the differences within the ethnic groups (Lee et al., 2007b).

The research has cited high rates of minority individuals who underutilize or prematurely terminate counseling services (Day-Vines et al., 2007; Fouad & Arredondo, 2007; Hays, 2008; Henriksen & Trusty, 2005; Kim & Lyons, 2003; Sue, D., 2001). Specifically, Baruth and Manning (2007a) noted statistics for non-returning clients after the first session was 50% and higher for African Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans and 42% for both Latino Americans and European Americans. Barriers that may have deterred culturally different clients from seeking therapeutic treatment include: an uncomfortable or unwelcoming environment, negative past experiences with the system, unfamiliarity of available services, and a lack of belief in a structure designed to meet the needs of someone culturally different (Diller, 2007).

The responsibility of counseling professionals to meet the needs of their diverse population continues to be very challenging. Although there is a checklist of multicultural competencies, the counselor's role in promoting cultural competence has received little attention. The literature has not provided studies of cultural audits or studies that demonstrate school counselors' usage of models that would promote racial and ethnic identity. This data can be utilized to collaborate with the school administration as well as an opportunity to improve policies, programs, publications, and practices for diverse groups and prepare students to interact globally (Nelson, Bustamante, Wilson, & Onwuegbuzie, 2008). Further, training topics lacking adequate attention in the MCCs include power, privilege, and prejudice (Dickson & Jepsen, 2007).

As the counseling profession moves forward, a continued assessment of principles and practices that support the intentional effort to increase cultural competency is undeniably a necessity. Counselor educators have expressed a need for rigorous research studies to provide specific training components that are essential in developing culturally competent practitioners (Malott, 2010).

Through the continued acquisition of knowledge, skill, and self-evaluation, experts have enumerated several benefits from those who advocate and practice cultural competency: respect for the unique needs of various populations; the recognition of behaviors, values, and institutions that have been shaped by culture; the acknowledgement of variations in cultural concepts such as family and community and their natural systems that serve underrepresented folks; an understanding of specific social attributes that may empower individuals as portrayed in the group's history (McLeod, 2003) and an increase in satisfaction of clients as the understanding of the interplay between privilege and oppression increases (Hays, 2008).

Cultural competency requires a skill set that cannot be defined by a single indicator. Mental health professionals have an ethical responsibility to update their knowledge base; create and implement practices, intervention strategies, and structures that consider historical, cultural, and environmental experiences/influences, and work to change policies, practices, and programs within our institutions that oppress the culturally different.

### **Summary of the Literature Review**

In summary, the literature review was used to establish the purpose, background, and significance of the primary research question: how do counselor educators narrate

their journey of mastering culturally competent practices at their university settings? This study explores how the front line instructors narrate their experiences. Seven participants were interviewed. In addition, it was requested that each participant provide a current vita, syllabi/core course outlines including assignments and tests for the past three years, publications from the last three years, and any other artifact related to the development of cultural competencies related to this research topic.

The historical roots of multicultural competence have been a compelling force in the scope of increasing effective cultural counseling practices. The literature has defined culturally competent characteristics, introduced organizations that defend its value, and presented documents that contribute to its application and evaluation (Roysircar, 2006). Nevertheless, a major problem with knowledge in cultural competency or descriptions of its components is the absence of a link that articulates the steps in the process of mastering cultural competent practices. This link to the mastering of cultural competency is critical to developing skill in meeting the challenges of society in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The Multicultural Competencies (MCCs) and a Cultural Competence Domains Model (CCDM) provided support to the framework of understanding behavioral levels of cultural competence. Grounded theory and the interviewing process were utilized to systematically guide the researcher from the question of interest to an in-depth data analysis. Valuable knowledge can be extrapolated as the language of the participant recreated experiences through rich narratives.

Two theories addressing the individual from the social context were reviewed in this chapter because they offer understanding of and the sensitivity to cultural diversity as globalization continues to increase. From this perspective, the literature

remains static in providing the process in the acquisition of cultural competence. The factors that challenge the effectiveness of counseling practices and a description of the characteristics of culturally competent practitioners are well documented. As a result, this study will capture that gap of how counselor educators narrate a personal process of developing the mastering of cultural competence.

Further, evidence of the relevance for culturally competence has been established in various documents that augment the standards of practice for counseling professionals. Additionally, several assessment instruments are available that have been designed to provide information that supports the level of knowledge, awareness, and skills attained as counselors work with diverse populations. While this body of literature is significant, there is a critical gap in the research that documents the steps counselor educators have taken to develop mastering culturally competent practices.

The intent of this study is to close this critical gap between the lists of descriptive characteristics for culturally competent practices by expanding the literature of knowledge to include examples of the process of developing mastering cultural competency.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology**

#### **Participants**

Seven participants were chosen to participate in this grounded theory research study. The participants came from various areas of the United States including East, West, Northeast, Northwest, and Southern regions, thus encompassing seven states. The criterion for selecting participants for this study included appropriateness related to the experience of the participants and adequacy in the number of participants (Hayes & Singh, 2012b). Additionally, the selection of participants for this grounded theory research was aligned with the research question. Specifically, the important factors relevant to the participation in this study were the demographics, the institutional roles of the participants, and representation from diverse identity groups.

All participants were required to have a masters degree or higher in counseling or a related field, a minimum of five years of teaching experience in counselor education from an accredited track/program, and are currently employed fulltime in an instructor capacity. Each participant was requested to provide such artifacts as a current vita, syllabi/core course outlines including assignments and tests for the past three years, publications from the last three years. The summary of the participants 'demographics is listed below in Table 1.

**Table 1.**

<b>PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS</b>				
<b>Participants</b>	<b>African American</b>	<b>Euro American</b>	<b>Native American</b>	<b>Biracial Multiracial</b>
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	1	1		
Female		2	1	2
<b>Age Range</b>				
41-69	1	3	1	2
<b>Teaching Experience</b>				
8 years		1		
10 years	1			1
12 years			1	
18 years		1		
23 years		1		1
27 years				
<b>Counseling Track/Program</b>				
School Counseling		1	1	1
Clinical Mental Health	1		1	1
Rehabilitation Counseling			1	1
Others		2		1
<b>Membership in Professional Organizations</b>				
ACA	1	3	1	2
APA		2		1
AMCD		2	1	1
ACES	1	2	1	1
ASCA			1	
CSJ	1	1	1	1
AGLBTIC				
Others	1	2	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>

### **Research Protocol**

A funnel approach was utilized to evoke a comfortable start to the interview process. In the funnel approach, the interview protocol preceded more specific fact finding information. These questions evolved from the literature review, the researcher's involvement with many professionals in the field of counseling, and the researcher's four years of instructional experiences working with graduate students. The questions were not given to the participants prior to the interview process due to the fact that the first two

interviewees indicated that the interview could proceed without prior notification. To maintain a consistent process, the other five interviewees were facilitated in the same manner. The following pre-established interview protocol guided the discussion of this study:

1. How would you describe the cultural representation of your setting?
2. How do you define cultural competence and what is its significance from history?
3. What experiences influenced your values, beliefs, and goals in relation to culturally competent practices? What changes have you had to make along the way?
4. How would you narrate steps you have taken to experience growth in cultural competency?
5. What has it been like to train others to be culturally competent?
6. What is next for you in your journey?

### **Data Collection Procedures**

The selection criteria of participants for this research study included a diverse group of seasoned professional males and females who have invested in and struggled with cultural competency issues in their work with students, clients, and/or supervisees. Upon approval by the Institutional Review Board (IRB), an announcement was sent to counselor educators via the CESNET website inviting them to participate (see Appendix B). CESNET is the established listserv for counselor educators all over the world;



however, its use is predominately members of the counseling profession in the United States.

Due to the delayed response of participants, announcements were sent through CESNET four times. From the first attempt four counselor educators responded. Only one of these counselor educators decided to continue in this study. On the third attempt, four counselor educators responded and two remained as potential participants. No inquiries occurred on the second and fourth announcements of this study.

To increase participation in this study, recruitment occurred at the 2010 American Counseling Association Conference. During the conference, two counselor educators familiar with the researcher's call for participation in this study approached other counselor educators at the conference to promote recruitment for this study. In response, twelve potential participants provided the researcher with business cards; two participants sent the required Participant Demographics Form (Appendix C) with other materials indicating a commitment to participate in this study. Three other counselor educators expressed an interest and follow up resulted in their participation.

The final list of recruited volunteers for this study included one African American male, one Euro American male, two Euro American females, one African American female, one Native American female, and three Biracial/Multiracial females. One Biracial/Multiracial female was dropped from the study due to the participant's expressed concern regarding the sensitivity of sharing personal materials. To ensure confidentiality, each participant was given a number, P1 through P 7. Participants were required to be currently teaching in a counselor education track/program with at least five years of experience. Another criterion to ensure the

success of this research study was a willingness to engage in a lengthy and time consuming audio-taped interview process and additional follow up, if necessary.

Important documents were created primarily by the research to support the data collection process. Those documents included a Demographics Form (Appendix C) and the Informed Consent Form (Appendix D), and semi-structured interview protocol. The first contact after the announcement was a request for the Demographics form, which was an indication of interest to participate in the study. Upon the return of this form, participants were asked to send The Informed Consent Form, clearly documenting participants' rights and requirements. To ensure that all counselor educators participating in this study were given the same opportunities to address specific areas relevant to the study, a set of protocol questions were pre-established to guide this experience.

Along with the signed form, potential participants were asked to submit a current vita, syllabi/core course outlines including assignments and tests for the past three years, publications from the last three years, and any other artifact related to the development of cultural competent practices. When the Informed Consent Form was received, those expressing an interest in this study moved to a participant status. They were sent a letter of confirmation (see Appendix E) and a request for times of availability for contact to set up an interview. Emails were the primary source of establishing an interview schedule and contact with the participant as necessary.

Four types of data were collected: an audio--taped interview; syllabi with course assignments, assessments, and relevant curricular activities; publications over the past three years; and school site demographics reports.

The data collection commenced with the first interview on February 21, 2011 and the last interview was held July 1, 2011. Interviews lasted approximately 90 minutes to two hours long. Participants were contacted by email and all of them responded back to the researcher with a time to be called for the interview. Since the first participant wanted to move forward with the interview without prior review of the protocol questions, the other participants' interviews were handled in the same manner for consistency. The interviews ranged from 90 minutes to two and a half hours. All interviews were transcribed by the researcher to capture fresh ideas and the voice cues from the participants' natural speech.

### **Settings of the Research Participants**

Participants identified an appropriate location for an interview to take place. School data of the diverse population on each university site was discussed by interviews and it was available on each university website.

All of the university settings made reference to a commitment to diversity in a mission statement or academic plan. Mission statements emphasized issues related to the environment such as recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty, staff, and student population; promote greater awareness and success of underrepresented groups; and demonstrating sensitivity to ethnicity, race, gender, abilities, sexual orientation, age, and spiritual values. It was noted that one of the universities stated that faculty is expected to fully comply with Affirmative Action. Increasing diversity is among the goals of their performance evaluation.

In addition to statements addressing diversity in mission statements, six of the seven universities had cultural centers or minority affairs offices designed to provide a

systemic approach to improve the services and recognition of the contributions of diverse groups. Two of the participants expressed a sense of pride to be on a campus where the centers are nationally recognized.

The majority of the universities had a high European American student population with 82% being the greatest and 36% being their lowest student rate. Native Americans held 0% at four of the seven locations and international students represented 1% and 4% respectively in two of the university settings. African Americans were not represented at one university and only an 11% attendance rate at another institution of learning. One of the participants expressed frustration in not being able to retain more African faculty. Asian Americans and Latino Americans averaged 21% at one of the seven schools, which was greater than all of the other ethnic groups.

The intent of the interview process was to discover the steps counselor educators take as they experience developing mastering cultural competent practices that work effectively with diverse populations. Consistent with grounded theory, the questions were open-ended. This generated as many topics, codes, and categories as possible. This strategy continued to ensure that the data saturated the categories and no new information emerged (Creswell, 1998a; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Buckley, 2010).

At the beginning of each interview, the researcher described how her interest evolved in researching the topic of cultural competency. The participants were told that the literature noted the characteristics of cultural competent practices but there appeared to be a gap in introducing steps, movement toward the development of mastering cultural competence. A key component in establishing a rapport to enhance the process was to move beyond just being a recorder and become fully immersed as a participant. In effect,

this highly interactive approach of performance as an insider resembled a constrained case study.

The first question established an on-site presence of each university setting by describing the students, staff, and the physical cultural representation. On a few occasions, the question needed prompts or rephrasing using such words as the diversity of students and faculty, campus events, and physical structures that promote celebration and value of diversity. When interviewees were asked to narrate their journey, it was often necessary to ask if a story came to mind or any experiences happened along that line of thinking. The word “steps” was used in conjunction with the word “journey” to add further clarification for interviewees to expand their thoughts.

A question on the Participant Demographics Form was to describe their level of cultural competency. Although most interviewees chose to view it as an on-going process, the dialogue of the participants addressed continued growth of cultural competency as a journey rather than a destination. Participants projected their thoughts through metaphors such as the train keeps running, until the heart is healthy, the head cannot learn, and there are always things in life that need to be revisited and refined to name a few.

### **Data Interpretation Procedures**

A critical component to the process of organizing and interpreting data in grounded theory is not the final product itself, but the method used by the researcher to discover the final product (Dirks & Mills, 2011b; Charmaz, 2006b). In order to capture the full essence within the data, this researcher recognized grounded theory as a circuitous process rather than a linear one. The labor intensive nature of the grounded

theory approach required the researcher to visit and revisit the data and the literature frequently. The consistency of this action allowed this researcher to be as close to the experiences of the rich narratives shared during the interviews as possible.

The most essential task undertaken by the researcher utilizing grounded theory is coding the data. The active process of coding is the researcher's tool for grasping concepts that relate to the incidents in the data (Birks & Mills, 2011b). Coding served as a link between the data collecting process and an emerging theoretical explanation of the data (Charmaz, 2010). As the researcher examines and interprets the information, new insights may be gained by the participant and the researcher. During this process the data becomes fragmented, reconnected, labeled, categorized, and summarized as relationships emerged.

The researcher discussed with each participant the following: 1) the definition of cultural competence and its significance from a historical perspective, 2) the cultural representation at the respective university settings, 3) experiences that influenced values, beliefs, and goals in relation to cultural competent practices, 4) the narration of experiential growth in cultural competency, 5) training others to be culturally competent, and 6) next steps in the journey of mastering cultural competent practices.

There was some variation within research participants regarding the definition of cultural competence and, yet all viewed the principles of cultural competency from a perspective of a journey and not a destination. Self awareness was the common thread that influenced the way experiences and events were viewed and interpreted. As a life-long process, staying on the continuum of learning about self and others was, without reservation, a unanimous commitment.

The collection of data and analysis coexisted as emerging themes evolve and were recorded and analyzed (Smith et al., 2008). Immersion in the data, contrasting and comparing participants' views line by line, experiences to experiences, actions, and incidents were major steps in the grounded theory process (Charmaz, 2008; Buckley, 2010).

Although grounded theory was presented as a series of stages, the analysis becomes an iterative process as each stage informed the next stage. It was necessary to reread the transcripts one at a time and each time adding margin notes and highlighting codes, concepts, and themes that emerged. The notes included words frequently used or unique to the setting and thoughts or questions that occurred suggesting a need for further inquiry. Brief descriptive impressions served to increase visualization of what was actually happening.

Charmaz (2008) noted that grounded theorists examine the documentation from interview transcripts and notes to identify the verbiage that meaningfully related to the research question. The attention to detail was pertinent to this process to ensure that implicit meanings were not overlooked. Further, self-reflective journaling allowed the researcher to stay abreast of personal biases and examine emergent ideas.

As the data was reviewed, the accuracy in capturing the experiences was driven by the focus on gathering any further information through the development of follow-up, probing questions. As an investigator using grounded theory, simultaneous involvement with the data guided data collection decisions and assisted with disposing information that was unimportant to the study. Hawker and Kerr (2007) noted the importance of ensuring that the theoretical insights align with the data.

## **Theoretical Lens**

The researcher interpreted the data through the lens of sociocultural and Adlerian theories. As discussed in Chapter 2, the sociocultural perspective, generated the idea of interpersonal relationships and, as social beings, established a link to the cultural and historical artifacts that are internalized and reconceptualized during mental processing (Wink & Putney, 2002). Sociocultural theory, conceptualized by Vygotsky, has been utilized to interpret behaviors within the context of social interaction (Matthews & Cobb, 2009; Torres-Velasquez, 2000). Vygotsky, often labeled as the voice of sociohistorical or sociocultural theory, advocated that there is a sense of responsibility for and control over one's own behavior.

The sociocultural approach embraces the value placed on the impact of culture as a developmental process to solve problems. The components of sociocultural theory have been identified as influential in a time of our changing global conditions (Lim & Renshaw, 2001).

Oyserman and Markus (1993) contended that the social identity literature supported the notions that people relate to their worlds and define themselves in terms of their sociocultural contexts such as, ethnicity, gender, class, and other group membership. The sociocultural approach impacts both the developmental process as well as being a developmental process itself.

Adlerian theory proposed a social structure of connectedness and has recognized belonging as a basic need. These theorists have consistently emphasized an intentional focus on cultural heritage as essential to the dynamics of respecting differing values. The strong emphasis on social interest and its significance to a



productive role in society, support for the family values, accepting the diverse range of worldviews, and constructing a holistic image within the cultural context has contributed to the processes of shaping self.

The researcher perceived sociocultural and Adlerian theories as valuable constructs that promote an understanding of cultural diversity and its complexities. Sociocultural and Adlerian theories resonate with the three themes that emerged during the interview process. The view of socioculturalists is that individuals cannot be separated from their social context (Lim & Renshaw, 2001; Sawyer, 2002). Furthermore, from the Adlerian approach, human behavior is socially embedded (Carlson, Watts, & Maniaci, 2005), people are understood through a social context, individuals are rooted in their relationships, and humans co-construct their schema that impacts actions, personalities, and life scripts (Watts, 2003).

### **Coding the Data**

#### **Open coding.**

The three phases of coding utilized by this researcher were open, axial, and selective. The following synopsis provides an overview of the coding for this research project.

During open coding, the researcher listened and read the interview transcriptions to identify key words that would describe what was happening. The researcher examined the participants' interviews line-by-line to find as many words that might eventually be used as codes regardless of their relevance. This process was valuable to the researcher for building on ideas and what data should be collected next. Memos that expressed

further questions, common ideas between interviews and after thoughts were recorded simultaneously.

Each of the personal participants' story line added insight to understanding their identities and cultural background. Questions that contributed to helping the researcher identify significant action included finding the answers to when, where, why, who, how, and what were the consequences. What is happening and how can the researcher define it (Charmaz, 2008; Dey, 1999; Mertens, 1998)? Eventually, common themes began to emerge.

The researcher separated the data to identify component parts that define actions and expose implicit concerns. Utilizing the basic model of Corbin and Strauss and incorporating the constructivist view from Charmaz, the data gathered by the grounded theory method was analyzed using open, axial, and selective coding procedures (Birks & Mills, 2011b; Buckley, 2010; Hays & Singh, 2012d). The researcher examined the data for any assumptions or hidden messages and each idea, incident, or event was labeled with a code word that related to the research topic.

As dialogue was continuously compared for meaning generated by the stories of participants, categories begin to take shape. The researcher focused on examining the data in various ways by questioning the meaning and pursuing clues within each interview transcription. This process, known as theoretical sampling, was essential to determine if ideas represented realities and provided direction for the next step. However, the researcher was alert to the possibility that important issues may be evasive or masked. In that case, the information can impact the process in a significant way and a cause the redirection of inquiry.

### **Axial coding.**

The next step moved the research toward axial coding. During axial coding, the researcher studied the large open codes that emerged during the open coding phase more thoroughly to discover the relevance of the relationships, the causal conditions, the context in which the phenomena occurred or did not occur, and the consequences (Charmaz, 2006b; Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Dey, 1999). A framework for application of the experiences the categories represented became more visible as the researcher often returned to the coding in the interviews, curriculum syllabi, and literature.

Constant comparison allowed the researcher to reach a saturation point in which no new ideas were shared within the selected categories. Another valuable step that occurred during this phase was theoretical sampling. Through theoretical sampling categories were examined to elaborate meaning, explore variations, and find additional information to fill any gaps. Categories that did not have sufficient evidence were set aside for another research study.

After rereading the interviews, a data coding sheet was prepared in columns that included the interview, code or concept, and a theoretical note. For example, large land mass, small population was coded as limited resources, and theoretical notes revealed my thoughts about the socialization and homogeneous characteristics of this group. The gathered data lead to the relating of categories to concepts, conditions, actions, and consequences until there was a saturation level of no new information. During this phase, the researcher identified central categories and themes and their relationships to the participants' reality of cultural competency, the influences on the participants' growth of cultural competency, and the consequences and results of the participants' actions. The

codes from the axial coding phase were further refined and allowed the researcher to move to the next phase, selective coding.

### **Selective coding.**

Selective coding followed axial coding. During selective coding, all the categories were unified. The central category was determined by the idea that appeared most frequently, identified a need to be further researched, provided a significant amount of information to explain the phenomenon, and allowed for variation within the phenomenon (Hays & Singh, 2012e). Discussions with colleagues knowledgeable of the cultural competency and multiculturalism literature and personal experiences in this area of the research were a great resource for the trustworthiness of this research study.

The sensitivity to culturally competent practices emerged because participants' lives had been touched deeply in personal ways. These included a bizarre protest against an interracial marriage, the disqualification from a job based on an assumed lack of experience, student apathy and cultural blindness, and challenge to prioritize multicultural coursework as integral to the learning process. Other words or phrases used to define this concept included involvement, actively engaging, seeking to learn, understanding racial identity, understanding the structure of power, access to resources, social and political history, open and honest dialogue outside of one's comfort zone, and recognizing strengths of those from diverse cultures. One participant described cultural competence as respecting the rooms in which others have lived. Participants agreed that history was an influential factor that defined how people view others and themselves.

During this final phase, concepts from the data were integrated into categories. A strategy used by the researcher to create categories resulted from linking the phenomena

from the data to the research question, how educators perceive and describe their experiences of mastering culturally competent practices at their respective university settings. This was accomplished by using another strategy of reviewing the data line by line and paragraph by paragraph aligning incidences and facts to concepts. For example, 15% of the students were of various minority classifications, worked diligently to recruit as many minority students as possible into the graduate program, limited resources, and mostly a European American population was coded as the concept environmental impact.

A procedure known as memo writing was helpful to further examine the codes and adjusting the structure. Additionally, memo writing assisted in organizing the analytical interpretations and making comparisons of any patterns with the raw data. Memos included direct quotes, new questions that may impact the research design, and notes about the participants’ reactions with the researcher. From memo writing, the researcher found diagramming as very helpful to refine and compare categories relationally. Further, as a visual tool, diagramming provided a structure for the sequence of events that may lead to an emerging theory.

The category referred to most frequently and was connected to other categories became the core category. From this core category can be integrated to form an emerging theory. To test the utility of a developing or expanding a theory, the process of theoretical sampling allows the researcher to return to the data with new participants.

Table 2. Summary of Stages of Grounded Theory

<b>Stage 1.Preparation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop Research Question</li> <li>● Clarify any biases and assumptions that might impact the study</li> </ul>
<b>Stage 2. Data Collection and Analysis</b>	<b>Coding</b> Open Coding:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Field notes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpret data analytically</li> <li>• Label and compare events, actions, and interactions to identify categories/themes and subcategories</li> <li>• Demonstrate theoretical sensitivity</li> </ul> <p>Axial Coding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify central themes and search for the relationships of categories</li> <li>• Investigate influences</li> <li>• Define the consequences/results of actions</li> <li>• Utilize theoretical sampling</li> </ul> <p>Selective Coding (begins)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrate all the categories into a core category (the central phenomenon of the study)</li> <li>• Adjust coding structure if necessary</li> <li>• Elaborate codes through memo writing</li> <li>• Utilize theoretical sampling</li> </ul>
<p><b>Stage 3. Final Data Analysis (Interpretation)</b></p>	<p>Selective Coding (continues)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and validate with the data an emerging theory</li> <li>• Prepare of a narrative</li> </ul>

### Researcher-Interviewer Lens

For this qualitative study the researcher was the sole source collecting and interpreting the data. As a “human instrument,” it was important for the researcher to note that the data collected could potentially be influenced by experiences, perspectives, social background characteristics, social positions such as child, mother, employee, one who identifies as a middle-class Christian, or anything of a personal nature (Warren,

2002). These considerations impact the flow and the meaning making during this interactive process.

The researcher was an African American female with a master's degree in Educational Foundations and Counseling. The qualifications included school counselor certification, an Administrative Specialist for Guidance Services, and numerous counseling leadership roles in her local community, state, and national organizations.

The researcher was the youngest of four female siblings, who resided in an anti-establishment, Midwestern, free-spirited college town. This small town was remembered as a hotbed of abolitionism and a key stop along the Underground Railroad. Some members of the community were deeply involved in the Civil Rights Movement and various peace and justice campaigns; experiences that opened the researcher's eyes to the atrocities of discrimination and its challenges. Culturally, the researcher is a heterosexual, African American female with a Creole/ Biracial heritage. As such, the researcher's biography was integral to understanding the essence of cultural competency.

Reflecting back on my 30 years in education, a number of thoughts have come to mind. For example, a multicultural education class was a requirement for the renewal of a teaching certification. The classroom instructor provided stimulating discussions in an attempt to recognize diversity. In the public school setting, instructional lessons and learning décor for such celebrations as Black History Month, Native American Week, Cinco de Mayo, and the birthday of Dr. Martin L. King Jr. were added curricular activities. These examples represent typical routines for cultural exposure however, little personal growth could be determined

During a two-day workshop entitled, ‘Effective Communication Skills,’ at the Johns Hopkins University in 2006, the researcher’s incorporated a Cultural Genogram with the discussion of addressing cultural differences. Participants, who were enrolled in various counseling and educational programs, responded to ways that bias, stereotypes, and prejudices have impacted the socialization process.

The level of cultural competence may be regarded as a personal experience based on several influential factors ranging from one’s heritage to present day interactions. Conversations with students and skilled professionals, reading masterful publications, and attending trainings regarding cultural competency all encouraged this researcher to further explore cultural competency.

During the researcher’s term as president of the American Counseling Association (ACA) in 2006, she devoted a column in *Counseling Today* (April 2007) to cultural competency (Rollins, 2007). With two doctoral student colleagues, the researcher discussed their concerns regarding a need to increase opportunities for cultural experiences in academia. In this article, “Cultural Competency: A Mosaic of Challenge,” written by the researcher, colleagues shared their experiences, which contributed to the pursuit to explore ways counseling professionals describe experiences of mastering culturally competent practices.

Doctoral Student One:

There is much discussion about the development of the culturally competent practitioner. Cross (1988) described cultural competence as a developmental process predicated on knowledge, skills, and self evaluation. While I support this articulation of the process, as an African American woman, I am challenged to



reconcile the development of the discourse on cultural competency and my experience as a ‘minority’ practitioner. I use the word “minority” as a way of conveying the innumerable occasions I’ve found myself in the minority on the validity of culturally competent practice. As exemplars of my frustration, I offer the following experiences. There have been an inordinate number of times I’ve heard a counseling student say, ‘Why do we have to take a cultural competency class? Counseling is counseling!’ At times I’ve thought why are ‘cross-cultural communication’ and ‘cultural competency’ considered a recent development? As far back as I can remember my family has engaged in cross-cultural communication to ensure our livelihood. Moreover, if I were not culturally competent, I could not navigate mainstream cultural America each day. Exactly to whom are these concepts new? The belief that one or two multicultural classes, attending a religious ceremony, or eating at an ethnic restaurant as required by a course syllabi can successfully prepare any individual to effectively provide counseling to diverse populations in ways that enable the individual to shift between cultural lenses, build rapport across cultural divides, and ‘empathize’ with client experiences sets the stage for misguidance (T.Tyler, personal communication, July 30, 2007)

Doctoral Student Two:

Cultural diversity has always been a fact of life in our world. Das (1995) points out that culture influences every aspect of our lives, and it influences our view of social and psychological reality. I believe that all counseling should be regarded as multicultural counseling if culture is defined broadly to include such variables

as race, ethnicity, nationality as well as gender, age, social class, sexual orientation, and disability. I argue that individuals seek counseling largely because of problems that emerge out of socio-cultural conditions. I have discovered that some counseling students view culture through a narrow lens, more like tunnel vision. This limited experience and perspective may unknowingly cause them to impose their values on clients by assuming that everyone shares the same values they do. I have observed counselors express the attitude, explicitly or implicitly, that they believe that minorities are unresponsive to professional intervention because of their lack of motivation to change. These students may not have the experiences to understand and they may assume that a client is being resistant. For example, Native American, African American and Asian cultures may not be very receptive to talk therapy due to values and experiences. Cultural factors are an integral part of the therapeutic process and can influence the form of intervention. I believe that all cultures represent meaningful ways of coping with the problems that a particular group faces (D. Garner, personal communication, July 30, 2007).

Other incidents occurred during the researcher's tenure as the ACA president, which influenced the researcher's trajectory of the dissimilarities within cultures that require professional counselors to examine their practices. During a governing council meeting of ACA, a mock counseling session with an Asian American family was demonstrated. The researcher's inquisitiveness initiated an analysis to learn more about the impact of this culture's values on the counseling process and the necessary steps to ensure culturally competent practices.

The researcher's opportunity to travel throughout the United States and to other countries was very enlightening. For example, traveling to China, Mongolia, Canada, and the Virgin Islands were places that the researcher was immersed in the cultural life and observed the rich histories, traditions, and artifacts that represent their cultural identity. These experiences could not be duplicated through textbook materials. As a counseling professional, looking beyond self, observing what other cultural beings value, the socioeconomic, educational, and social systems that generate another set of rules to live by provided a minute realization of the complexity of moving toward being culturally competent.

### **Researcher's Role**

The researcher transcribed all of the audio taped interviews. Essential to the process of grounded theory methodology was demonstrating reflexivity, that is to say active self-reflection. Reflexivity served as a benchmark to address the trustworthiness of the study. This was an essential step that assisted in developing a greater understanding of concepts that were grounded in the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

The personal learning experiences, influences, values, biases, and culture of the researcher were poignant issues relevant to the thoughts, feelings, reactions, and interpretations as theory is constructed. As a researcher, it was a wise decision to give consideration to personal and professional issues that affect interaction with the study, acknowledge areas of neutrality in one's value system and areas of possible role conflict, and ensure that analytic blindness would not hinder addressing any aspect of the data collection.

### **Trustworthiness of the Study**

The literature addresses the importance of finding ways to ensure that the research findings are as sound as possible. Trustworthiness provides an assurance that the qualitative research was credible, transferable, dependable, and confirmable (Creswell, 1998b; Given & Saumure, 2008; Hays & Singh, 2012e; Mertens, 1998). Consideration must be given to whether conclusions make sense, the degrees to which the research findings are applicable beyond people in the study, the consistency of the research results, and that the data reflects the participants views free of the researcher's biases (Egan, 2002; Hays & Singh, 2012e). Recordings of the exact language and participants' view of the researcher's understanding of the data were used as validity measures to ensure accurate meanings and facts of the research participants' data. Strategies chosen to promote trustworthiness included following up surprises, verbalizing negative evidence, memoing, and checking for outliers. Additionally, peer review, including persons outside of this study provided supportive verification for transferring this information (Creswell, 1998b). An audit trail as described by Bowen (2009) served the purpose of documenting a detailed explanation of how the researcher moved from the analysis of the raw data to a final interpretation of the data.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Ethical issues considered during this research include possible risks, such as avoiding any possible biases that may appear to be a part of the language or process within the dialogue in the interviews. During the data collection process, all audio-taped material, transcribed documents, and other requested material were kept in a secure

location as mandated by the IRB. The ACA 2005 Code of Ethics was utilized as the model for this research.

### **Summary of Methodology**

Seven counselor educators with diverse backgrounds currently teaching in university settings of varied diverse student/faculty populations participated in this study. This research study was designed utilizing a grounded theory approach to explore how counselor educators perceive and describe their experiences of mastering culturally competent practices. The data was coded from rich narratives provided during the interview process. Chapter 4 will provide a detailed analysis of this research study and the key findings.

## Chapter 4

### Data Findings and Interpretation

Counselor educators play a critical role in advancing the profession regarding education and preparation of competent counselors. There were basic assumptions drawn from the counselor education and professional literature. First, counselor educators need to be competent and work from a culturally competent skill set that allows them to meet students, clients, and community needs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Diller & Moule, 2005; Lee, & Ramsey, 2006; Schwarzbaum & Thomas, 2008). Second, counselor educators must study, learn, be aware of, and understand their own comfort level regarding cultural competence (Dickson & Jepsen, 2007; Henrikson & Trusty, 2005; Vereen et al., 2008). And third, steps and actions must be taken by professionals in order to achieve a higher level of cultural competency in the profession of counseling (Atkinson, 2004; Lee, & Ramsey, 2006; Schwarzbaum & Thomas, 2008). The primary research question was: how do counselor educators narrate their journey of mastering culturally competent practices at their university settings?

The purpose of this study was to explore how counselor educators perceive and describe their experiences of mastering culturally competent practices at their respective university settings. Each interview for grounded theory required that the audio tapes be reviewed at least three times and the written transcripts reread at least five times to ensure accurate annotations of information supporting each category and the core theme. The findings and data interpretation of this grounded theory study are presented in this chapter.

## **Themes from the Data**

There were three major themes that emerged during the interview. These themes included:

- 1) Environmental awareness
- 2) Dispositions toward the development in cultural competency knowledge and skill
- 3) Systemic factors that influence cultural competency growth

All three themes identified significant components that became subcategories necessary to establish culturally competent practices. The subcategories evident within the environmental awareness theme included the physical structures and events representing cultural diversity, the accessibility of academic/community resources, and challenges that require cultural survival skills. The subcategories for the dispositions toward the development in cultural competency knowledge and skill included institutionalized teaching and learning strategies, and the scope of cultural knowledge among faculty and students. Significant subcategories for the systemic factors that influence cultural competency growth were collaborating with faculty, the commitment to recruit and maintain diverse faculty and students, equitable policies and procedures for all students and faculty, contributions that promote culturally competent practices in the profession of counseling, and roles that empower social change,

### **Environmental awareness**

There was a unanimous consensus among the participants that the most valuable attribute that addresses the research question of how counselor educators narrate their journey of mastering culturally competent practices at their university settings was

environmental awareness. An awareness of the environment included the following aspects: structures that invite a sense of cultural awareness, events of diverse groups, culturally-defined behaviors, and the community involvement.

**Structures that invite a sense of cultural awareness.**

Each of the participants provided lengthy, detailed descriptions of the environmental settings. Four of seven participants were exceptionally knowledgeable of the historical background of their locations and two participants noted the strong presence of religious influences. The impact of these specific factors were not examined at this time, however, several of the universities' provided a microcosm of the region's population. Therefore, the environment represented the same environment, which was influential regarding the process of developing culturally competency. An example of grounded theory coding transcribed from a participant in this study is demonstrated in Figure 1,2, and 3. The participant was responding to the researcher's question to describe how the environment has an inviting presence for students and staff of diverse cultures.



**Figure 1. A Grounded Theory Open Coding**

**Seeing the efforts of undergraduate students to create a cultural presence**

**Presenting an exclusive celebration of self**

**Giving the flower another name does not change the flower**

**Changing the homogenous perception**

**Expanding cultural horizon to create a diverse atmosphere that could attract others outside of the microcosm of this regional area**

**We have a few...and I say we have a cultural presence because we have a few undergraduate student organizations that are very active promoting awareness of themselves, their culture, their history, through social events that they put on annually. We are a...I think the university is attempting to have a larger presence that is reconstructed, reconfigured. They're trying to be seen as more inclusive to students from this nation and also international students who are of color, who would be considered an ethnic minority, who have a culture and history and a set of traditions that is different from folks who are native to this region.**

**Figure 2. A Grounded Theory Axial Coding**

**Designing events to represent a cultural presence on the university campus**

**Increasing the visibility of cultural environment**

**Figure 3. A Grounded Theory Selective Coding**

**Environmental Awareness**

### **Events representing cultural diversity.**

From the comparison of interviews, all participants reiterated that many of the cultural experiences and events were well attended by the community. The campuses of the research participants all had ethnic centers of some sort honoring very prominent members of various ethnic groups. The annual celebrations, some of which have occurred for several years, were sometimes offered collaboratively to ensure that all groups had an opportunity to be recognized. The events, which accentuated the “cultural self of the group,” gave each cultural group an opportunity to share their heritage in the way of food and interactive fun; however, there was no evidence that the success of these events resulted in relational or systemic changes within the respective universities. The events showcased struggles and contributions of each individualized cultural group, but they were not considered venues of support for students and staff of underrepresented groups.

### **Accessibility of academic and community support.**

One of the university settings that was quite diverse was faced with eliminating some academic programs. The community’s involvement in supporting a specific program that had a large attendance of diverse students was not eliminated. In contrast, an example was cited in which the university’s administration was forced to make an intentional selection of faculty based on an increase in students of diversity. This was a significant step toward removing barriers for a specific diverse population.

As counselor educators have worked to meet the needs of diverse students, communication, whether it related to the spoken word or respectful dialogue, was essential in the process of culturally competent practices. The campuses that had international students needed language support. A lesson that resonated during instruction

was how meaning was interpreted through spoken word. In the US, competition has been an acceptable behavior, but, in Asian countries saving “face” was a valued cultural personal quality, a lesson learned by trial and error.

In an area where the Hispanic American population was increasing, participants counseled with administration to address language barriers. An important language issue was addressed by participants who learned through cultural experience that understanding messages through body language enhanced the learning process. Further, language impacted the need to consider information processing and explore learning strengths when working with students of diversity. A participant became aware of how vulnerable students of diversity become when miscommunication occurs. It was also evident for counselor educators that biases may perpetuate barriers in situations where English was the second language.

To the research participants on these campuses with few diverse students and staff, there was a feeling of community unpreparedness. There seemed to be a subtle message that if “they” and when “they” come, we will figure out what to do. Issues common to addressing unpreparedness related to housing, academic services, and jobs for students. It was not uncommon for the office staff to be selected from within the community. Therefore, diversity was limited within this group as well as experiences with diverse populations. It was observed that many of the clerical staff members had longevity in these positions.

Participants commented on the importance of staff members demonstrating cultural competency as they are often the front line when students transact university business. Participants called attention to those responsible for the record keeping and

those who provide information for financial aid. Assumptions about students were often made, yet, not justifiable. For example, campus workers in a fraternity house were overheard talking about the “rich boys.” Much to their amazement, these “rich boys” were sons of blue collar workers.

### **Challenges that require cultural survival skills.**

Systems of support for student and faculty were another area of focus during the interview process. When navigating through an environment where there was limited diversity, ways to survive as faculty or a student of diversity and establish strategies that work to exceed expectations of the mainstream were reflected. Other areas impacting the environment that required consistent attention were the sensitivity to language barriers and disability access for the handicapped population. Due to a large population of students with disabilities, one campus identified a need to design programs that addressed the large number of handicap students. The university acquired a grant to provide adequate support for this population.

For a Latino counselor educator, feelings of vulnerability and job risk were perplexing issues to address. Even though the participant’s level of expertise was an asset to the university, challenges occurred for this participant from students of the dominant White religious community.

As an example related to a faculty member, it was not an uncommon situation for an American Indian to be treated with less respect or assumed to have mystical skills. The American Indian participant in this study was not expecting to be told by a European American male colleague that tenure would be granted as an act of tokenism and not on the basis of merit. As a first generation college graduate and a person of color, the

message internalized from the mainstream was that it will always be necessary to work harder to change the perception of others. The need to be alert to surroundings was considered a never ending, tiresome process that has discouraged the retention of diverse staff. This was identified as “racial battle fatigue” to one participant and labeled as “multicultural recovery” to another participant. Attention was directed toward being on high level alert and guarding against implicit biases.

For American Indians, adjusting to the environment was known as being a shape shifter, an attitude of change and adjusting to the environment but not a term accepted as assimilation. In comparison, African American students were taught to code switch, a term describing a way to behave according to the cultural norms determined by the dominant culture. Code switching activities were integrated into the curriculum of one of the participant and included topics such as etiquette, appropriate dress, and language used as a class marker.

### **Dispositions toward the Development in Cultural Competency Knowledge and Skill**

The second theme common among the research participants to reflect navigating change toward cultural competent practices was the disposition toward new experiences designed to impact professional growth. Learning was viewed as a life-long reciprocal process to all of the research participants.

#### **Institutionalized teaching and learning.**

Research participants discussed several issues that specifically impacted the cultural diverse population of students and staff. Research participants shared stories that related to ethnic biases that demonstrated cultural insensitivity and the dialogue that has

disclosed the presence of cultural blindness despite a semester's work of interacting with another cultural group.

Comparisons were examined to determine a common occurrence in the commitment to promote culturally competent practices through coursework, consideration of learning strategies, understanding the complexity of culture, and student-faculty relationships.

The issue of including coursework related to cultural competency was controversial and inconsistent in its place in curricular programs. On one university campus, it was a part of orientation, compared to other participants reporting that it occurred at different intervals during students' academic programs; however, no other academic program provided multicultural training early in a students' program. Participating in cultural activities and receiving instruction in a 10 week class was not enough to create neither curiosity nor experiential tasks to motivate students to move beyond self.

Integration of cultural discussions appeared as a textbook's chapter, an assignment to engage in dialogue with some other culture with the instructor's feedback, or a teaching survey to increase self awareness in cultural competency. During one interview, a participant was very concerned about faculty members not embracing the inclusivity of multiculturalism into the counselor education program. The rationale of colleagues was that it had not been required in academia for them, yet, in comparison on another campus, a course such as Western Civilization, having no specific reference to cultural diversity, was a graduation requirement.

### **Scope of cultural diversity knowledge.**

Challenging students to stretch outside their comfort zones was a daunting task. There was an assumption by many students that Affirmative Action has solved many of the race problems and, therefore, racism does not exist, especially from the perspective of the students from the millennial generation.

There was an apparent realization that students had a marginal understanding of culture and white privilege, especially students from middle or upper class backgrounds. Further, their perspective on diversity was that people are all very open-minded and people are very accepting. Consequently, being able to teach students to operationalize cultural competent practices effectively was a challenge. The following statements were made by students from different university campuses: “I don’t see color.” “We don’t have culture.” “If I don’t see it, it must not be there.” The conclusion drawn from these statements was that students’ cultural blindness prevented them from taking risks and moving beyond self.

To create meaningful experiences learning meant balancing expectations with students’ limitations. Counselor educators were challenged to help students see themselves as cultural beings. Discussing history, traditions, and rituals was a step along the journey of cultural competency and an opportunity to learn from each other.

The student-faculty relationships were predicated on communication that created a sense of connectedness. The discussions with participants did not indicate there was any proactive systematic plan of connecting with students of diversity. Since prior coursework in multiculturalism was not part of the academic programs for the majority of the research participants, there was no indication that acknowledging and understanding

the needs of diverse students' was a priority. A participant who highly valued collectivism initiated several discussions with staff to work as a team to address the needs of the students of diversity.

It was suggested that reciprocal learning could happen and students can teach each other, but not from an oppressed identity. Participants spoke of the importance of being an advocate to empower students, but only one had a specific plan and spoke of stepping forth to perform this role.

### **Systemic Factors that Influence Cultural Competency Growth**

In order to envision a higher level of cultural competent practices, a third theme highlighted other areas adopted along the journey. Counselor educators perceived this journey as personal and sometimes situations presented themselves as being risky. The participants in this study saw themselves as more than instructors teaching counseling. Teaching was not just about the information in the texts. Teaching for each of these participants meant making a difference in the educational and urban communities where they worked. Subcategories that supported this theme included collaborating with faculty to stay knowledgeable of significant issues that create cultural barriers, advocating for policies and procedures that meet the needs of diverse students and faculty, and being involved in promoting the professional agenda of cultural competent practices through workshops and contributions to the literature.

#### **Collaborating with faculty.**

Collaborating with faculty was ranked high as a venue to promote growth in culturally competent practices. The comparison of university settings indicated that the interaction among the culture groups were centered around activities; but discussions



related to pedagogy, mentorship programs, policies and procedures, communication systems, and other venues that support diverse populations were not communicated as the “to do list” for navigating the growth of cultural competency as a faculty commitment to cultural competent practices.

### **Advocacy.**

Research participants worked in some way to create this opportunity to see the depth of needs from other perspectives. One participant directed attention toward helping faculty recognize the role of advocacy for students whose level of vulnerability, risk, and understanding what it means to be a stranger as a cultural need. Advocating for total staff involvement and posting a sign that read “diversity advocate” were two significant actions to promote culturally competent practices by another participant. The conundrum was that it cannot be assumed that students or faculty of diversity will seek assistance when there is low key interaction and feelings of connection do not exist.

Advocacy was not only applied to student-faculty relationships, but there were strong implications expressed by research participants to ensure that cultural competent practices were included policies and procedures. Specific policies and procedures were not cited; however, the researcher understood from participants that “business as usual” was the standard mode of practice recognized despite the demographic changes. These specific situations were mentioned by participants to make a difference in their respective settings: communication with students of diversity, course assessments, governance of faculty, issues that impact recruitment for student programs, trainings for clerical and support staff, resources for financial aid, and student record keeping.

A participant from the European American culture established a mentoring relationship to find solutions that would result in the retention of diverse faculty members. The difficulty with pursuing this idea was the need for administrative attention and support. Further, it was noted that clerical staff and other workers at the university settings have limited exposure to multicultural trainings. There was no indication that instructors who teach multiculturalism have had an opportunity to provide assistance in this area.

**Involvement in promoting the professional agenda of cultural competency.**

Participants were continuously involved in studying the materials of others in the field of counseling who were presenting new ideas and venues to strengthen their cultural competency perspectives. It was worthy to note that one of the seven participants expressed a sense of pride to be working in a department where everyone had some aspect of multicultural counseling as a primary research interest. The other participants expressed their personal commitment to researching, presenting at workshops at local, state, and national conferences, and sharing profession knowledge as a high priority.

**Summary of Research Participants**

The final sample size for this study was seven counselor educators representing a variation in experiences, credentials, and other demographic variables. The literature noted that the sample size was less critical than the rigour involved in the analysis of the data (Hays & Singh, 2012b). For the purpose of conducting this type of study, reaching saturation with the data, was the primary goal. The saturation was achieved when no new coding occurred in later rounds of collection analysis and categories were well defined.

Dirks and Mills (2011a) argued that the relevance, substance, scope, and depth of the data were valuable in measuring the credibility the study. Although participant interviews were the most common data source, other means of information were also explored. The participants were asked to send their current vitas, syllabi/core course outlines including assignments and student assessments as well as publications from the last three years, and any other artifacts related to the development of cultural competency. As this material was reviewed, it became apparent that a wide range in the level of involvement in the profession of counseling, written material expanding knowledge in this area of research, variations in pedagogy, and professional experiences relevant to culturally competent practices existed.

All seven participants earned doctorate degrees: two held degrees in counselor education, two in counselor education and psychology, one in counseling psychology, one in education, and one in philosophy. Five of the counselor educators were faculty from the Council for Accreditation and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) accredited programs, one participant represented The Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) accreditation and one participant worked in a counselor education program accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). During the interview, three counselor educators noted that they were housed in the College of Education, two in the College of Student Affairs, one within the College of Health and Human Services, and one was located within the College of Health Services. The rank held by the participants included two full professors, four associate professors, and one visiting professor.

The credentials among the seven participants included Licensed Professional Counsel (LPC), National Certified Counselor (NCC), Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LMHC), and Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) certification. Specializations and leadership roles were identified such as multicultural counseling competency trainings, graduate ethnic studies, career counseling, community counseling programs, and international, national, and state organizations. Three of the counselor educators have traveled outside of the United States to present counseling material. One participant toured 14 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and lectured at a few. Additionally, participation in membership and functioning in academic roles in university organizations that represented students of diversity were noted.

Information from the curriculum vitas also identified five of the participants as having served in leadership roles in professional counseling associations. The participants' knowledge, skill, and resourcefulness was evidenced by their contributions to textbooks; peer reviewed national and state journals; national, regional, and state professional presentations; and ongoing research projects. Participants identified literature and presentation topics with which they were knowledgeable included teaching multicultural counseling, professional identity development, counseling indigenous people, historical events in research, ethics and multiculturalism, identity development for African American Male Athletes, ethical issues in rehabilitation counseling, counseling with underrepresented populations, counseling the Biracial populations, multicultural career counseling, and life identities and relationships.

A review of the syllabi and teaching material of participants revealed an alignment with CACREP and CORE standards. Selected course texts, course objectives,

assignments, and experiential activities provided students with opportunities to expand their knowledge and understanding of cultural diversity. These provided for understanding of cultural contexts regarding relationship issues, trends, concepts that influence mental health wellness, and a greater awareness of individuals within a multicultural and pluralistic society.

Common to all seven research participants' curriculum was that each provided an experiential learning activity to explore diversity within the community. Students were given an assignment to attend an event, in which members of a group represented a different culture. To evaluate this event, counselor educators focused on students' self awareness of when, where, and why the event was chosen, the level of participation and reactions to this event, an understanding of the needs of the selected culturally diverse group, and how this new knowledge can be applied within the counseling context.

### **Participant Profiles**

Brief profiles for each of the seven participants follow. Each participant was given a number and all identifiable information shared during the course of the interview has been omitted to protect privacy and retain anonymity. All seven of the research participants have had unique struggles that motivated them to cultivate purposeful experiences to broaden their own understanding and enhance professional growth in culturally competent practices.

During the interview, participants were asked to share their estimation of their level of cultural competency. The words novice, apprentice, proficient, and distinguished were chosen as descriptors for the purpose of ranking from a very limited perspective to a high functioning professional level. Four of the seven participants identified as being on

the border between apprentice and proficient claiming they were always looking for an opportunity to learn more. Two participants selected proficient. The seventh participant believed that others would see the participant at the distinguished level. The researcher noted a passionate tone from these participants as roles such as advocate, giving back to one's ethnic group, bringing history to life, or a commitment to improve the teaching environment were discussed as significant struggles within their professional and personal lives.

**Participant one.**

Participant One (P1) identified as a late bloomer. With 18 years of experience in counselor education, teaching roles included school counseling, community counseling, and coursework in doctoral programs. This participant discussed how an early recollection of experiencing feelings of being unsafe, uncomfortable, and vulnerable while living in a foreign country sent a clear message for advocacy, a message that became important to address as an instructor. P1 advocated for the early exposure of student coursework in multicultural counseling practices and greater involvement of faculty to recognize and explore resolutions for atrocities that occur for students of diversity. This participant called for faculty to make a definitive action plan that impacts a system that has barriers that preserves the "status quo."

P1 has recognized cultural competency from the perspective of being a 'journeyer' from the dominant culture, creating venues to foster multicultural passion, dialogue, and exploration. Living as a diversity advocate and promoting campus survival skills has become a mission. To P1, diversity advocacy translates into greater faculty visibility, proactively making connections with students, and transforming new

knowledge about cultural diversity into concrete operations and strategies that will enhance student and client success.

P1 has been working with many students who demonstrate marginal awareness of issues related to ethnic diversity. Enhancing knowledge that generates exposure to the internal messages of society that perpetuate the “isms” has been very beneficial to promoting the development of cultural competent practices. As a European American, who has embraced an attitude of “teach me,” this participant’s students have been provided opportunities to engage in a reciprocal model of learning, one that creates powerful learning experiences for both the instructor and the students.

**Participant two.**

Participant Two (P2) has recognized the challenges of being first generation college graduate and American Indian adjusting to the culture of higher education. To protect the identity of this participant, the Indian nation was not identified because of the low numbers of indigenous professionals working in counselor education. With 12 years of experience in counselor education, P2’s coursework and syllabi addressed several aspects of multiculturalism. Fortunately, cultural competence was included for this participant’s counseling training. Multicultural training was part of P2’s personal graduate program as well as discussion of social justice issues.

Teaching multiculturalism has been a meaningful experience to give back to the American Indian culture. P2 noted with great pride the collectivist, group-oriented character, and traditional family practices of the participant’s culture. P2 noted that this was an influential force in P2’s faculty and teaching practices. However, the participant discussed how dispelling ideas of possessing mystical skills, experiencing subordinate

treatment, or responding to actions demonstrating institutionalized racism were challenging issues that occasionally needed attention. Incorporating shape shifting, a cultural attitude related to change to adjusting to an environment provided P2 with a valuable survival skill.

P2 has advocated for increasing knowledge related to internal conflicts mostly ignored within cultural groups. P2 promotes the mediation of issues that exist between cultures. From the American Indian heritage, P2 was concerned with issues that have impacted intragroup cultural competence, including the high expectation for peer collectivist behavior with faculty from an underrepresented background. To achieve a greater level of culturally competency practices requires being completely aware, involved, and immersed in the interaction in order to question and reflect on what is happening. “Cultural alertness” was a metaphoric term embraced by P2 to describe appropriate actions and survival skills for interacting in culturally diverse intergroup settings.

P2 has subscribed to an understanding that people are constructed by life experiences and this construction is based on an awareness of these experiences and the values learned from the family of origin or cultural group. When teaching multiculturalism, P2 purposefully helped students move beyond colorism to recognize the differences in social treatment based on skin color. P2 assisted students in making applications beyond the textbooks and look beyond self to discover when cultural blindness existed in this cultural setting, unconsciously, was a real epiphany. Participant two aligned thoughts with participant one: we borrow values from our family of origin and the community and society, which has lead to the impact of the “isms.”



### **Participant three.**

Participant Three (P3), a European American, has contributed 23 years of service in counselor education. P3 identified experiences that promoted P3's drive towards cultural competency in the university setting. These included recruiting at HBCUs, adapting teaching techniques for work in a cultural environment outside of the United States, mentoring students and faculty of diversity, gaining greater cultural sensitivity from family members with culturally different heritages, and the cultural impact of racial /cultural identities. P3 labored earnestly to support and maintain culturally diverse staff members, especially from the African Americans culture.

Beyond attaining academic success, students were taught skills to survive outside of their social system. P3 incorporated into the curriculum the notion that people are products of the "rooms" in which they live. Strategies, such as code switching, appropriate personal appearance, and etiquette were integrated into coursework; thus providing useful life skills for adapting to different "rooms" or situations as needed.

The experiences of living and teaching in other countries resulted in P3 having to address and compare Western values to those of the East or, specifically, with Asian populations. Ways to behave within this new culture resulted in a "screaming immersion experience." P3 directly experienced how individualism and the nature of competition happen when met with "saving face" in other cultures.

P3 embraced a teaching style that advocated for stronger support of culturally diverse students. For example, as international students were struggling to understand the instructional material, P3 became more cognizant of the differences in cultural linguistics. P3 took dramatic steps to craft sentence structures that carefully selected

words that imparted meaningful and understandable messages. Other instructional adaptations included use of “wait time” and the development of an effective lecture format. Further, P3 learned that individuals from some cultures esteemed the use of titles of respect as an integral part of the learning process and always acknowledged the ultimate figure of authority.

As an advocate for students’ scholarly efforts, P3 described a high and confident level of cultural competency. P3 sought students as advocates, gave voice to those who were victimized by unfair practices, and provided scholarly resources to those researching sensitive subject areas. P3 reported these as rewarding experiences. As an advocate, who made significant changes to the cultural well-being at this university, P3 lived the mantra “until the heart is healthy, the head cannot learn.” The life line of any system must have high functioning parts.

**Participant four.**

As a person of diversity, Participant Four (P4) reported several eye-opening experiences that occurred in educational situations. P4 was the first student of diversity to graduate in the university’s doctoral program and P4 expressed a great sense of pride in surviving those uncharted waters. As the only person of color in many lecture situations, discussions of race and ethnicity often resulted in a moment’s notice that students would turn to P4 for comment regarding persons of color. However, P4 resisted the challenge to take on the role of the ultimate voice for African Americans and redirected the discussion. As pervasive as culture is, P4 noticed how people often ignored the impact of culture as unstated assumptions and, consequently, shared values were

often unnoticed. This realization prompted a personal transformation; P4 began to explore social identities of self and that of others.

As an associate professor, P4's work experiences have taken place in university settings that were predominately European American. An area of passion integrated in teaching, supervising, training, and researching was to ensure that students saw themselves as cultural beings. Self dialogue included, who am I in this world? How do I see myself? How do others see me? Examples included a deliberate initiative to be immersed in the community, to build rapport, and open the gateway of understanding the essential qualities of students' culture. P4 embraced the discovery, elated by the moment of triumph; P4 observed that those students who make a paradigm shift were truly able to relate to the world of others.

P4's journey has followed the path of a lifelong student. P4's curiosity led to discoveries outside the box and P4 navigated through history, family traditions, and meaningful events. As a result, P4 has been empowered. P4 compared the lessons learned to that of a roller coaster ride. P4 believed that the degree to which someone is grounded in the learning process and the distance of growth is reflected on a willingness to be transformed by the experience.

As a leader, P4 served in several professional counseling organizations, demonstrated commitment to personal and professional improvement in cultural competency. P4 envisioned career roles that would increase self awareness of personal biases and incongruent behaviors. P4 postulated that admitting mistakes and learning from them and seeing the depth of needs from others' perspectives were valuable prerequisites for achieving growth in cultural competency.

### **Participant five.**

Participant Five (P5) was a child whose parent was in the military, and as a result had many opportunities to travel and meet people from various cultures. P5 currently lives and teaches in an area where segregation still exists, where issues are judged through the lens of black or white, and where blatant incidences of white privilege still hold power. Those issues have been a challenging. P5 stated that it is imperative to adapt to the changes in this environment and learn different local norms. For example, students at P5's university exhibited very strong, legalistic religious opinions. Some students expressed that individuals who identify as LGBTQ were considered deviant. P5 found this view very disturbing. P5 stated that this has been a hard transition to accept the frank and aggressive behaviors of this population of people.

P5 grew up with strong parental principles of looking for the good in others, refraining from the derogatory labeling of people, being open minded, and taking a step back to examine the view points of others. The Latino heritage of P5 became an obvious challenge on two occasions. First, racial awareness was a topic of discussion as P5 was entering college. Students made comments about P5's skin tone, which was a surprise and unexpected because race was never a topic of P5's family discussions. On another occasion, P5 felt very unsafe in a store where workers were targeting every movement, which seemed to be an obvious assumption that people with darker skin shop lift. These incidences seem unbelievable to the students P5 was teaching. The results for classroom discussions indicated a clear message that problems of race do not exist since they were solved by Affirmative Action.

P5 discussed working in an area where students often do not demonstrate a respectful attitude toward instructors who are not European American, which added an additional reason to be cautious and alert. Even in a society that is rapidly embracing globalization, students who attended the university were primarily from a homogenous culture and have had few opportunities to experience interactions with other people from diverse cultures. As the other four research participants have done, P5 developed a teaching style that pushed students out of their comfort zones.

P5 has experienced tremendous growth as there have been opportunities to work with in a number of specialized areas in mental health. P5 has much to offer and has realized the breadth of experiences personally attained but continues to seek greater depth. Personal and professional growth has been an on-going pursuit and P5 continues to reflect on events, develop greater self-awareness, explore perceptions, and seeking answers to the unknown. A significant step in this process was knowing where to go for help. Further, being vigilant of the system's fair and healthy operations as a professional from a diverse population is also critical.

**Participant six.**

As a skilled practitioner, instructor, leader, and administrator, Participant Six (P6) has longevity in a university system and has observed the shift in student demographics, which, over the years, has resulted in strained relationships between the educational and urban communities. Although the demographics have warranted an increase in a more diverse faculty, this has not occurred. Therefore, many responsibilities have fallen on P6, who is the only faculty of color in this department.

P6, recognized as having a multiracial heritage, has focused on a commitment to teaching, training, researching, and consulting couples and families of color, particularly the biracial population. This is a challenge. It proved to be difficult to recruit and work with a number of people in this specialty area, but ultimately, P6 persevered. P6 found that listening to and experiencing the context around this topic with other who has the same vested interest has been empowering. P6 has a belief that this work is “a calling.” Moving along a path of total enjoyment, family discussions related to multicultural issues have been as common place as talking about the weather. The research and dialogue were an integral part of the growth and learning process for both P6 and a life partner.

Witnessing a racially motivated action and misuse of power resulted in a serious family atrocity. Consequently, participant six has been driven to explore family history. After having children, immersing the family in new experiences, teaching children and learning from them, significantly shaped the development and understanding around the value of culture. P6 participated in the student foreign exchange program and has attended a variety of cultural events. P6 realized how diversity was so much a part of the social milieu for the family. P6 embraced the differences in people and life changing events became routine.

P6 provided opportunities to help students gain a greater sense of their intersectionality as they examined generational differences. P6 knew this was critical for student learning. P6 employed teaching strategies that were deliberate in order to bring about shifts and changes in thinking, belief systems, and attitudes for P6 as well as for the students.

P6 offered rich narratives that included a multiracial heritage, a biracial marriage, working in an environment with few faculty of color, raising multiracial children, and consulting/training the biracial population. P6 has continued to grow in cultural competent practices; “the train keeps running” has been the tag line to remain committed.

### **Participant seven.**

Participant Seven (P7), the daughter of immigrant parents, selected multicultural issues as a primary research interest. Thinking and experiencing life from a multicultural perspective has been a priority on a daily basis for P7. Excellent mentorship, trainings, and collaborating with other professionals to implement the Multicultural Competencies has proved rewarding. The work setting provided P7 an environment that enhanced this research. P7 had access to documented historical events, programs that address a wide range of diversity issues, opportunities to participate in several ethnic events, and an ambiance of various structures that displayed that valued culture.

P7’s early recollections were foundational to the development of a multicultural lens. P7 grew up in situations that perpetuated questioning circumstances surrounding events. Hearing certain people referred to as chocolate drops, stereotyping an ethnic family, and racial issues in school provided examples of cultural injustices that disturbed P7. P7 grew up learning about fairness and justice, and participated in peace marches. There were many opportunities to interact with international faculty and students who visited the home during holidays.

Significant cultural related classes were not available during P7’s undergraduate work and there were no requirements for multicultural classes in the graduate program. Exposure to drug trafficking, homelessness, working with White middle aged women

transitioning back to work and pregnant unwed teenagers of color were early work experiences for P7. P7 came to understand privilege, the disparity of resources, and difficulties on both ends of the spectrum, which gave way to another perspective of cultural diversity. Another job opportunity included working in a welfare program in which a greater understanding of the complexities of poverty, power, and structures that can create barriers became a life lesson.

A pivotal point in P7's life was a realization of the importance of developing self awareness. Equality versus effectiveness, expertise versus general knowledge, and reading to gain a perspective versus studying for in-depth insight were areas P7 felt a need to self evaluate.

As a European American, it was painful but powerful to be pushed to acknowledge and grow from personal talk that could be perceived as oppressive or a micro aggression. P7 has felt very adamant about recognizing that people from the dominant oppressive group have gifts to offer. An important lesson learned was to "accept the gifts as they are given and do not expect more." A significant step was to initiate dialogue about organizational culture. P7 stressed that things in life need to be revisited and refined. P7 suggested that supporting a community level of interventions such that working, understanding, and building partnerships make an empowering footprint.

The greatest attribute consistently sought after by all seven research participants was that of patience. This included patience in the process of change, learning from students, identifying and accepting where students are on the cultural competency



continuum, and the patience to invest in learning experiences that inspire a meaningful “ah ha” moment.

### **Summary of Research Participant Settings**

All research participants identified an appropriate location for the interviews to take place. Data regarding the diverse populations on each university site was discussed by interviewees and it was available on each university website. Each of the interviewees expressed that the university setting represented a microcosm of its regional community. The majority of the students were residents living within the state system.

The universities’ addressed cultural diversity in various ways. Some have made reference to a commitment to diversity with an Affirmative Action policy posted on the university website. One of the university’s website stated that faculty members were expected to fully comply with Affirmative Action. Increasing diversity is among the goals listed on faculty members’ performance evaluation.

Most of the universities referred to diversity by providing information and links to specific cultural studies departments or centers. Departments related to diversity emphasized issues related to the environment such as recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty, staff, and student population; promote greater awareness and success of underrepresented groups; and demonstrating sensitivity to ethnicity, race, gender, abilities, sexual orientation, age, and spiritual values. However, no participant made reference to their university or departments’ mission statement addressing culturally competency.

In addition to statements addressing diversity, six of the seven universities had cultural centers or minority affairs offices designed to provide a systemic approach to

improving the services and recognition of the contributions of diverse groups. Two of the participants expressed a sense of pride to be on a campus where the centers are nationally recognized. Common points of interest in the campus locations of the research participants were descriptive features relevant to cultural tensions in American history. Those features included the Civil Rights Movement, the Feminist Movement, specific dominations of religious practices, and activities by extremists groups determined to restrict the constitutional rights of others.

The majority of the universities had a high European American student population with 82 % being the greatest and 36% being their lowest student rate. Native Americans held 0% at four of the seven locations and international students represented a 1% and 4% respectively in two of the university settings. African Americans were not present at one university and only reached an 11% attendance rate at another institution of higher education. Both Asian Americans and Latinos students a 21% average at one of the seven schools, which was the largest percentage rate of attendance of all the other ethnic groups. Participants noted the serious lack of training in multicultural sensitivity issues provided for university staff and service work members. One participant referred to the process as thinking of “othering students,” putting them at a distance. Participants discussed the lack of exposure to diverse cultures and how maintaining the status quo that can prevent the educational community from embracing change as the shift in culture diversity continues to occur. Maintaining the status quo seemed apparent on four of the university settings. Four of the seven participants expressed frustration in not being able to recruit and retain more diverse faculty. Faculty members on one university campus referred to the dilemma of retaining faculty of color as “racial battle fatigue.”

Although participants reported a number of cultural events that occurred throughout the academic year, the positive use of this information to impact student services, pedagogy, policies and procedures, and the training of staff, students, and faculty was not evident. These factors have the potential for creating a strong systematic base to promote culturally competent practices.

### **Summary of Data Findings and Interpretation**

Chapter four described how the data was interpreted in order to consider the research question of how counselor educators narrate their journey of mastering culturally competent practices at their university settings. Three themes comprised the major findings: 1) environmental awareness, 2) dispositions toward the development in cultural competency knowledge and skill, and 3) the systemic factors that influence cultural competency growth. The environmental awareness documented the physical structures, the events that were inviting for students and faculty of diversity, and community influences. Theme two, disposition toward the development of cognitive knowledge and skill focused on the comparisons of a common occurrence in the commitment to promote culturally competent practices through coursework, consideration of learning strategies, understanding the complexity of culture, and student-faculty relationships. Theme three underscored the factors that influence cultural competency growth by raising the awareness of collaborating with faculty to stay knowledgeable of significant issues that create cultural barriers, advocacy roles, and being involved in promoting the professional agenda of cultural competent practices through workshops and contributions to the literature. A summary of the participants and the university settings was provided. Chapter five will present concluding thoughts about

all of the data, theoretical and practical implications, discuss limitations, and identify further research as needed.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

This chapter will review the themes that emerged from this study, with additional information reviewed from the literature, and the empirical bases for the findings presented earlier. The researcher will present the limitations of the study, the theoretical implications for the findings, and identify research needed for the future.

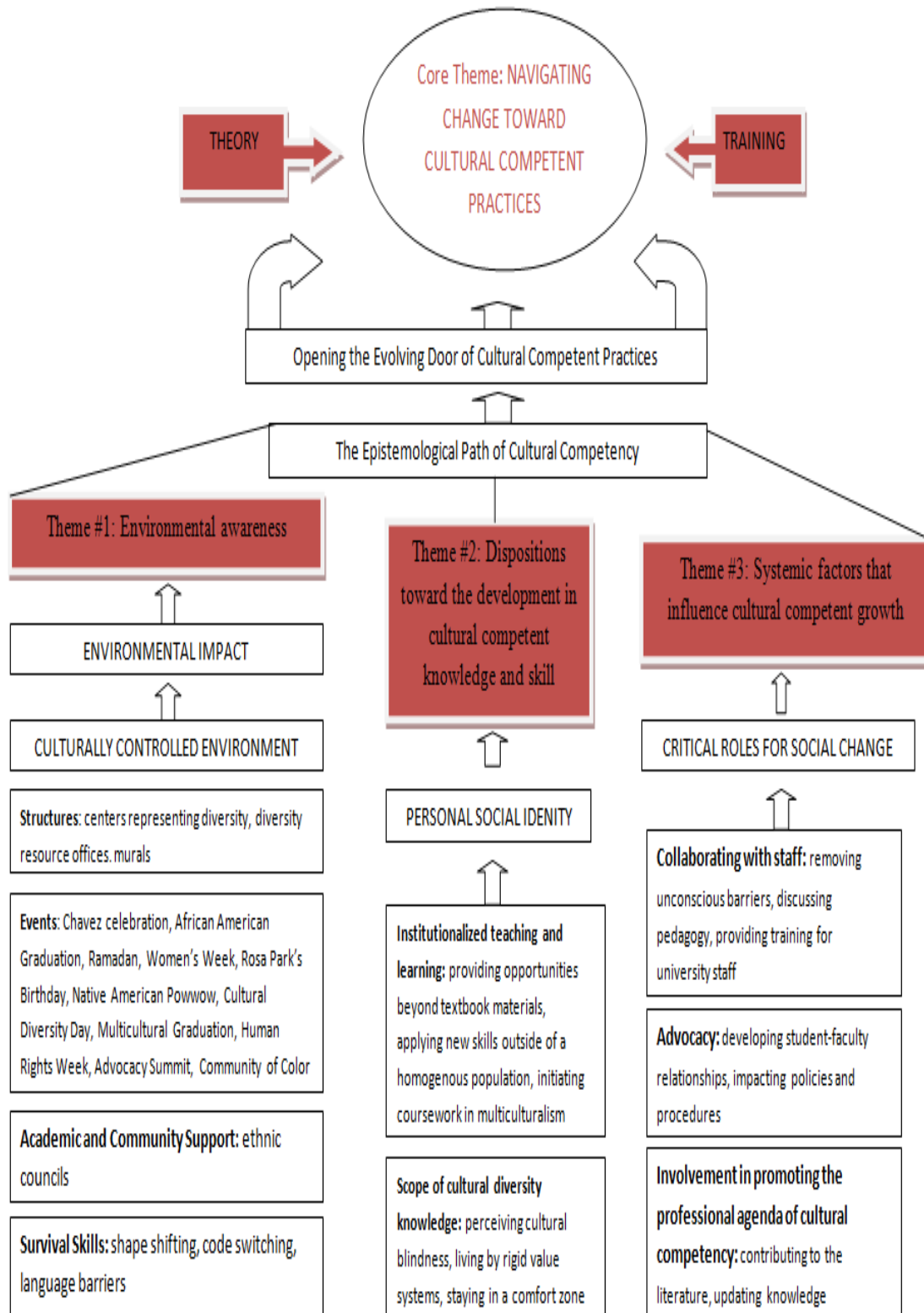
This grounded theory research project was guided by certain concerns. This included the question that surrounds increased globalization and diversity dynamics and the new challenges that are created for counselors. Therefore, it has become clear that counseling professionals must embrace a paradigm that cultivates better culturally competent practices within the practices of those in the profession. There were basic assumptions drawn from the literature for those who prepare counselor educators and related professionals. A basic premise is that counselor educators need to be competent and work from a culturally competent skill set that allows them to meet students, clients, and community needs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Secondly, counselor educators must study, learn, be aware of, and understand their own comfort level regarding cultural competence in order that they are well prepared to assist others on this journey. And, finally, steps and actions must be taken by professionals in order to achieve a higher level of cultural competency in the profession of counseling.

### **Summary of Data Interpretation**

The interpretation of this study identified three emergent themes from the data. The themes were 1) educational awareness, 2) dispositions toward the development in cultural competency knowledge and skill, and 3) systemic factors that influence cultural

competency and growth. Through constant comparison, these assigned themes supported elements of the main story line. This researcher's identified the core theme/category as, "navigating change toward cultural competent practices." The researcher looked for information that would provide the answers to what was happening, under what conditions, how, where, and why, and which category best fits for the data, and what were the consequences. Figure 4. provides a chart of moving from the data to subcategories, temporary themes, the final themes, and then to the core or central category.

Figure 4. The Grounded Theory Process of Creating Categories, Subcategories, and the Final Themes



### **Environmental awareness.**

With the countless changes and challenges occurring within the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it has become essential for counseling professionals to continuously embrace experiences that will increase culturally competent practices. Visiting cultural centers participating in festive events are not enough. These do not transform into sustainable systems of support for diverse faculty and staff. Services provided must be impartial to the demographic variables, congruent with the values and needs of diversity wherever it exists, and initiate high quality action plans to create active, productive community partnerships.

As the researcher returned to the literature, the research was clear in its suggestion that an individual must have a sense that the environment felt comfortable and safe in order that an individual could address multicultural issues through training and research. This was a significant dimension (Lui, Sheu, & Williams, 2004). Dickson and Jepsen (2007) noted in their research that when programs are viewed as inviting, the recruitment of diverse faculty, students, and staff increases.

### **Dispositions toward the development in cultural competency knowledge and skill.**

Counselor educators need to provide instructional experiences that connect multiculturalism with real life events (Vereen et al., 2008). The researcher has concluded from the literature that examples of color blindness, resistance to cultural competence, and understanding self as a cultural being among the students speaks volumes about the selection and implementation of curricula, training, and practice (Dickson, Jepsen, & Barbee, 2008; Diller, 2007; Sue, D., 2001).



All individuals are cultural beings and, therefore, cultural self-knowledge is instrumental in building effectiveness and competency is essential; otherwise cultural competence is controlled by the status quo or the dominant discourse (Arredondo, 1994). Status quo was defined by the researcher as any action that seeks to preserve the present state of affairs and perpetuates the mainstream policies that offer recognition and privilege to some and leave others without the same recourse. The researcher argues that maintaining the status quo immobilizes fear of change.

Further, review of the literature related to attitudes and behaviors proposed that counselor educators' views about multicultural issues and behaviors influence students' cultural perspectives (Dickson & Jepsen, 2007; Miller et al., 2007).

The research gleaned from the participants' narratives that consideration of learning strategies, understanding the complexity of culture, addressing language barriers, and student-faculty relationships were other features relevant the core theme of this study "navigating change toward culturally competent practices." These features were particularly critical for those universities, which draw international students.

#### **Systemic Factors that Influence Cultural Competency and Growth.**

This research agenda contributes to the growth of cultural competent practices and advocacy for changes in policies and procedures. A component that was discussed and Chapter 4 and was supported by the literature as very valuable to training in cultural competent practices was faculty members participation grew in multicultural research (Dickson & Jepsen, 2007). The counselor educator participants grew in their cultural competent practices through participation in workshops, seminars, and reading written

material. However, collaborative preparation and planning to integrate cultural competency through program curriculum was not evident.

Another issue discussed related to systemic factors that influenced cultural competency and professional growth was advocacy. Advocacy, particularly within the academic system was defined by participants involved as a demonstrated commitment by the university that usually resulted in a specific plan. This plan is designed to rid structural discrimination and ensure that policies and procedures are put into place that safeguards the rights for diverse faculty and students. These plans also provide on-going training for staff to expand cultural knowledge and resources.

### **Theoretical Implications**

In a study employing grounded theory methodology, a theory can emerge from the data collected through interviews documents, and observations. Of critical significance is that the theory defines the interaction in relation to the phenomenon under examination. Based on the participants' responses in narratives, syllabi, and vitas for this study, the common conceptualization of cultural competent practices was described in terms an active process of commitment, a willingness to be involved, engaged, actively seeking, and learning about self and other.

From the narratives, the researcher learned that students from Generations X, Y, and Millennial demonstrated very limited knowledge about cultural identity, history, traditions, and values; therefore, they portrayed a cultural blindness. From the syllabi and instructional materials, the researcher became aware of the gaps where such topics as the Civil Rights Movement, Holocaust, and the Women's Rights Movement, the Mexican

American War or other social struggles did not rank as in depth discussions of each culture's identity.

The researcher embraced the following theory: the journey to mastering cultural competent practices continues to be shaped by compartmentalized pedagogy and paradigms that maintain the status quo in university settings. Dialogue with participants indicated the processes in place such as the events or an elective course occurs in isolation and is not woven into the fabric that generates the deliberate application of knowledge, awareness, and skill that promotes higher levels of cultural competent practices. Acting in isolation impacts efforts to create change in the pedagogical structure and the control of resources and power. Further, as previously defined, the status quo involves action that seeks to preserve the present state of affairs and perpetuates current systems to recognize and offer privilege to some and not others. The researcher argues that maintaining the status quo generates a high level of predictability and decreases the risk of moving outside of the systems' comfort zone.

In the case of faculty, there are systems of privilege and power that have been recognized in academe based on social constructs such as race, gender, and social class (Salazar et al., 2004). Privilege and power was suggested in the comment made to participant two by a European American male colleague when he stated, "Don't worry about tenure. As an American Indian; they'll just give it to you." If this were a true statement, the researcher believes that the European American male was suggesting that this was an act of tokenism to the participant.

Participant six was reminded of privilege and power at the university when contact was made by a strong political group addressing issues related to interracial

marriages. Participant five, who is biracial, became aware of the system of privilege and power as negative reactions were encountered from within the counseling department based on race and ethnicity and not the level of expertise.

The university settings were not universally described as having a collectivist approach to expand multicultural pedagogy, preparation and training, or examine policies and procedures that create barriers. Two of the participants had concerns about the apathy of their counselor educators to collaborate so that relevant topics and the needs of diverse faculty and students were addressed at their respective campuses. The researcher viewed these conditions as relevant areas where cultural competent practices impact the university's climate and the profession of counseling. Whether it is in the university's conscious or unconscious way of maintaining the status quo, these are major areas of investment to meet the needs of diverse students and staff.

Participants spoke of concerns with their adjustment to the environment. They discussed making cultural adaptations such as code switching and shape shifting and how these were important survival skills. Participant number one detailed a story about a student who felt a need to disguise identity as a means of survival. Communicating value and acceptance to this student was a meaningful moment for both the student and the counselor educator.

After the games are played, food consumed, the dances have ended, and the isolated events are calendared for the next year, faculty and students return to their regular curriculum where discussion of issues related to the "isms," oppressive acts, victimization, or the hopes and fears of all groups have been avoided. Sue (1991) identified discrimination, stereotyping, and prejudice as actions linked to painful racial

memories and race, gender, sexual orientation, and disability as issues that often generate strong emotional feelings. Nevertheless, Sue noted that these are major factors that affect how people think, problem solve, interpret events, and behave.

The researcher recommends more research that provides an in depth look at pedagogy to determine what works and what is simply providing knowledge that is vague and general. Answering the question is the material inclusive of the difficult day-to-day issues faced by those from diverse populations can add to the environmental awareness.

Examining the training programs beyond students needs and strengthening the cultural competency skills of the university administration and clerical staff, which make decisions that impact the future of both students and faculty can generate the change to how business takes place (Sue, 2001). A study of the university's' climate may provide insight of areas that need attention. Further, exploring structures to ensure inclusionary practices has immense implications for promoting cultural competent practices. Examples include exploring positions, held underrepresented groups, the language and format of all university documents, and discriminatory issues in law enforcement practices (Clark, 2003).

Further, since there is no research on the limitation of diversity using the cohort model, maintaining the status quo may occur as limits are determined for the faculty and student population. As the researcher reviewed syllabi, the diversity deficient environments provided a repeat of coursework that touched the surface level of multicultural issues. Assessments uphold the status quo for academia. For example, the researcher noted that the assessments from the cultural exploration assignments included what students saw and what they did but the exchange of dialogue that was attentive to

differences among and between groups of people, generalized cultural stereotypes, a comparison of personal value systems, the needs of the non-dominant cultures within the community, or those factors that contribute to narrating culturally competent practices was missing. The researcher recommends that a comparative study determine if utilizing the cohort model impacts the numbers of students and staff related to diversity, and how the practices of the model support the needs of both faculty and students of diversity.

The participants' academic settings were predominately European American and six of the seven participants had no prior training or exposure to multicultural education. Without a more aggressive approach to recruiting and retaining diversity among faculty and staff, policies and procedures continue to meet the needs of the dominant culture; thus preserving the status quo. Communicating insensitivity to cultural values or culturally blind statements could happen unconsciously, out of ignorance, acquired through social conditioning, or learned through media venues (Sue, 1991). Five of the seven participants identified the lack of increase in diversity among faculty with no apparent explanation. The journey of incompetent practices can continue as access and equal opportunity for diverse populations is rendered without cause.

The level of expertise and experience among those teaching coursework in cultural competency varies. Given the importance of cultural competent practices, the researcher recommends that faculty engage in a formal assessment that identifies weaknesses and strengths in their cultural competent practices. The researcher believes that the information adds a useful supplement to the knowledge of their curricular presentation. Further, greater awareness of the counselor educators' cultural background

and the level of knowledge, awareness, and skill identify personal influences that would not be found in textbook materials.

### **Concluding Thoughts from the Literature**

As the researcher reviewed the literature again, there were some points of interest worth annotating. Evidence of the relevance for culturally competence has been established in various documents that augment the standards of practice for counseling professionals. Additionally, several assessment instruments were available designed to provide information that supports the level of knowledge, awareness, and skills attained as counselors work with diverse populations. While this body of literature is significant, there is a critical gap in the research that documents the steps counselor educators have taken to develop mastering culturally competent practices.

Counselors face an overabundance of challenges as society becomes more diverse. Undeniably, the literature argued for information and a need to examine areas that provide support for cultural competent practices; however, there was limited research related addressing training in cultural competency, specifically, over the past two years. As the American Counseling Association Code of Ethics has become more inclusive of diverse populations, counselor preparation and staff training that incorporates proficient skills that are effective is essential. The researcher recommends that training programs are explored to identify those that include issues that engage the learner and instructor in collaborative problem solving of the issues those from diverse and underrepresented populations face. For example, design an instructional resolution model that addresses racism, sexism, or stereotyped thinking that promotes negative interactions among those from the dominant culture and those from diverse cultures.

The Multicultural Competencies provided a framework for responsive practices. Vereen et al. (2008) proposed that the training to developing cultural competent practices needs to increase opportunities that promote greater awareness, knowledge, and skill. Several scholars have subscribed to culture being a significant component in understanding human behavior (Kwong, 2009; however, specific definition has yet to be determined. Further, cultural competency lacks a definitive and simplistic theoretical framework (Boyle & Springer, 2001; Sue, 2001; Sue, et al., 2008). Boyle & Springer (2001) penned an article that referred to cultural competence as an “abstract ideal with an unmistakable gap between concepts and application. The researcher suggests that mental health professionals develop a definition for cultural competency that is theoretically based and supported by empirical research to provide greater conceptual clarity. This definition offers guidance and direction for teaching methods and even greater consistency in the measurement or progress of cultural competent practices.

The counseling literature identified areas of concern such as students’ defensive and resistant behaviors toward embracing cultural competency, specific content models to increase cultural competency, and intervention prevention strategies for some cultural groups. There were no rich narratives with specific detailed personal or professional experiences that promote cultural competent practices nor was there any mention of the challenges or barriers created by those protecting the status quo.

With the use of the Cultural Competency Domains Model (CCDM), the researcher advocates for more intentional interaction among faculty to discuss evidence of steps taken to increase cultural competent practices, share resources that will add more cultural content to instruction, and address those difficult areas of behaviors exhibited by



students as well as staff that are resistant to being part of the solution for change that promotes culturally competent practices. Further, the researcher supports the work of a school cultural audit team that assesses the school wide cultural competent practices by examining policies, procedures, programs, and the perspectives of students and staff.

### **Possible Limitations**

Although this theory method offered flexibility and openness with data, some limitations occurred as part of the process. Those limitations included sample size, limited diversity at the university settings, participant's role, the interviewer's role, and the intrusive nature of the questions.

#### **Sample Size**

One possible limitation of the study is the sample size; however, this was one of the first studies to provide a detailed mapping of how counselor educators navigate the journey of mastering cultural competency in a university setting. Hays and Singh (2012b) documented 20 to 30 people and Mertens (1998) suggested approximately 30 to 50 as a sample size for grounded theory. Four attempts were made to generate participation. A random selection resulted based on referrals from colleagues who belong to a national counseling association. Further, six of the seven participants work with a predominantly European American population. Representation on these university campuses lacked a high level of diversity.

#### **Limitation of Diversity**

Counselor educators play an important role in providing opportunities for the development of critical thinking skills that are necessary in making ethical decisions (Vera & Speight, 2003). "Those opportunities include: identifying personal culturally

biased assumptions, assessing strengths and challenges from a multicultural/social justice perspective, offering meaningful interpretations of clients' behaviors in culturally competent ways, and using helping interventions that are consistent with the cultural worldview and values of persons from diverse groups and backgrounds" (Pack-Brown et al., p.298).

The sample of interviewees who participated in this research was from university settings with limited diversity, which may not be representative of the practices and experiences occurring among professionals in the counseling profession. The researcher's concern was that the greater the diversity among participants, the greater the applicability of the results. Further, on these campuses, where there was a prevalence of homogeneity, seeing self as a "cultural being," interacting outside of one's comfort zone, acknowledging and accepting the world views of others, and creating resources for underrepresented populations were significant struggles for the students of research participants.

### **Participants' Role**

The research protocol was designed to discover how counselor educators narrate the journey of cultural competency through shared stories. As participants responded to questions, the dialogue was subjected to their honest and meaningful interpretation. The intent was for a significant amount of interaction and participation to occur, however, situations or timing prevented extended conversations and follow-up. With any limitation of time or interaction, the level of acquaintance may have evoked partial rather than in-depth responses. However, the lack of face to face interaction between the participants and the researcher precluded use of cues from nonverbal behavior or more consistent

probing during data collection. In the words of P1, a European American, who stated that the “information provided would be reflected differently from [Sinc] what would be perceived by the ethnic diversity students on that campus.” The findings suggested that the experiences shared represented significance in the participants’ personal and professional life. Further, the participants gave robust descriptions of past experiences that influenced their culturally competent practices.

### **Interviewer’s Role**

An issue of concern during the interview process pertained to the researcher’s lack of control over participants’ distractions. For example, participants were aware of the researcher’s leadership role in counseling and information was shared about her instructor’s role at a university. Participants may have felt pressured to please or impress the researcher with certain responses. Occasionally participants would say, “Is that what you are looking for or I’m not sure if that is the answer you are looking for.” The researcher worked to reassure participants that there was no right or wrong answer and that each participant’s personal perceptions were appreciated and valued.

### **Question Intrusiveness**

Consideration of the intrusive nature that questions unintentionally provoked was important. Although it was a component of the research design to capture the richness of experiences, one participant expressed a level of discomfort demonstrated a guarded reaction to providing syllabi or other pieces identified for data collection. The goal was to generate greater understanding of the steps that enrich the journey to developing cultural competency. Additionally, it was important to be aware of maintaining continuous anonymity and guard against obscure boundaries (Choudhuri, 2003).

Although the participants shared experiences at their respective locations, missing was more information on their family and professional backgrounds. Therefore, the impact of different variables or scenarios was unclear because it was not a focus of the interview and was not addressed by all participants.

### **The Integration of Cultural Competency in Counselor Education Programs**

Lastly, Arredondo and Arciniega (2001) suggested, “training programs are learning environments in which students gain an appreciation for, commitment to, and skill base to become culturally competent” as cited in (Fouad & Arredondo, 2007, p. 68). The philosophy, academic curriculum, and faculty with multicultural expertise are invaluable assets demonstrating cultural competence (Fouad & Arredondo, 2007). During the interview, participants noted the accessibility of cultural events, with others and the interaction with other cultures that occurred as a result of students’ coursework. The extent of competent practices in other instructional situations were not provided. The work to promote cultural competent practices was predicated on the level of expertise, the willingness of counselor educators to provide great resources, and an educational system that communicated the expectation of culturally competent behavior.

### **Implications for Further Research in Cultural Competency**

This investigation extends the research regarding culturally competent practices. It has provided a research –based view of the components that are effecting how counselor educators narrate their journey of mastering culturally competent practices. While the current study advanced the knowledge of the productive and challenging growth experiences of counselor educators, several areas need to be addressed to further forward a stronger agenda that promotes culturally competent practices in pedagogy,

recruiting and maintaining a diverse representation of a diverse students and staff, policies and procedures, and the availability of community resources.

Researchers may consider using grounded theory to explore the experiences of a larger sample of counselor educators. The sample should include other cultural variables to increase the representation of participants and additionally expand the interview process to consider those working on university campuses with greater diversity in the faculty and student populations. The researcher argued that examining culturally competent practices from the voices of those who are challenged in areas such as sexual orientation, religion, language, and physical disabilities would add depth to this study.

Another component is that the preparation and training of counselors to be culturally competent has significant implications for the profession and the communities they serve. Culturally proficient supervisors play an important role in ensuring that students' experiences go beyond cultural sensitivity, and include purposeful experiences that transform attitudes, beliefs, and behavior about multicultural issues. Toporek, Ortega-Villalobos, and Pope-Davis (2004) noted a study that addressed specific recommendations to include having discussions about culture early in the supervisory process and offer opportunities for supervisors to increase skill by exchanging dialogue with other diverse supervisors. Although there was limited research available related to supervisory relationships that address multicultural issues, the results from this study documented positive developmental influences in the multicultural supervisory relationships for both the supervisors and supervisees.

Unfortunately, little empirical information was provided regarding the preparation and training of those who serve in supervisory roles, the perceptions of the supervisors'

competence from the supervisees' perspective, and client's understanding of the meaning of cultural competency (Dunn et al., 2006; Kwong, 2009; Ober et al., 2009). Dunn and colleagues (2006) noted that among the 137 studies measuring cultural competence, less than 10% investigated cultural influences on treatment whereas 70% focused on evaluating multicultural training. Evidence-based practices that verify the impact of culturally competent counseling interventions are needed (Lassiter et al., 2008; Smith et al., 2008).

In current literature, self awareness in pedagogy was identified as a precursor to cultural competence (Buckley, 2010). Nevertheless, as globalization continues, new constructs that will expand critical thinking and culturally competent practices remains on the problem solving list. As pedagogy is examined, is there too much time spent on self awareness and not enough time looking at specific course content and skill development that will embrace areas that need to be addressed for specific populations. For example, infusing alternative healing methods into counselor education may create a venue to connect in a culturally competent manner with those who relate to this practice.

This study was conducted by means of an established online confidential format and taped interviews. As the researcher engaged in memoing during and after interviews several questions came to mind: Does the cohort model impact the cultural diversity of students? This model may have an impact on the status quo. Should counselor educators have a self assessment for their level of cultural competency? The assumption that people of color are culturally competent because of racialized experiences ignores needs and effects the process by which they become culturally competent. Further, are students seeing the training experiences as meaningful or just another checkmark for meeting a

requirement? What is the impact on training millennials to be culturally competent as technology has become a vital means of communication? Is there a direct correlation to culturally competent practices and geographical areas? Strong religious groups such as Latter Day Saints or political factions such as the Klu Klux Klan, or a populated LGBTQ community may have created some impenetrable barriers. Lastly, did Affirmative Action create a bridge for tokenism?

Consideration of life-span issues and effective interventions with various cultural groups would serve as invaluable information for ultimate growth and empowerment not to mention competent practice (Barth & Manning, 2007a; 2007b). Additionally, there is limited literature available that informs practitioners regarding specific needs and differences among and between ethnic groups (Lee et al., 2007a). Training programs that have a time limit imposed by program requirements provide generic textbook topics or specific theoretical discussions.

Alexander, Kruczek, and Ponterotto (2005) cited Parham's view (2001) that skill in multicultural competence will not be achieved within the allotted time provided in short textbook passages. Research is needed to examine the presence of information that will bring greater exposure to such areas as racial identity, oppression, and racism that may establish a baseline for more growth and culturally relevant interventions that promote change.

The university settings in this study reported an underrepresentation of diversity in both students and faculty. Although the rate of recruitment and retention was not part of the study, the researcher questions whether there is any correlation to graduation rates for diverse populations or are there other reasons that need to be explored.

The responsibility of all counselors and more specifically school counselors to meet the needs of their diverse population is challenging. Although there is a checklist of multicultural competencies, the counselor's role in promoting cultural competence has received little attention in schools. Research using cultural audits or studies that examine school counselors' usage of models promoting development of racial and ethnic identity would provide valuable information. Data can assist in collaborative efforts with school administrators as well as an opportunity to improve policies, programs, publications, and practices for diverse groups and better prepare students to interact globally (Nelson et al., 2008).

### **Conclusion**

This investigation provided a framework for understanding the work of counselor educators who are immersed in the study of and have struggled with cultural competency issues with students, faculty, and/university systems. The relationships between the environment, dispositions toward the development in cultural competency knowledge and skill, and systemic factors that influence cultural competency and growth were examined. The emergent theory proposes that the journey for mastering cultural competent practices on university settings continuously meets obstacles that protect the status quo.

Perceptions of the campus climate and how diversity is valued can be observed through the allocation of resources, a persistent tolerance of activities that reflect racial bigotry, affirmative action policies, and events initiated to address multiculturalism. Through day –to-day practices that overtly demonstrate stationary movement toward greater culturally competent practices, counselor educators can model and reinforce a value for diversity, advocate for those whose voice has not been heard, and continue to



make contributions that navigate the journey to be empowered personally and professionally. The researcher is anchored in the belief that there is plenty of room at the table for all professionals in counseling to collaboratively engage in action steps that will broaden the scope of cultural competent practices in practice, training and researching.

In this study, the primary research question was: how do counselor educators narrate their journey of mastering culturally competent practices at their university settings?

The following protocol guided the discussion: 1) How would you describe the cultural representation of your setting? 2) How do you define cultural competence and what is its significance from history? 3) What experiences influenced your values, beliefs, and goals in relation to culturally competent practices? What changes have you had to make along the way? 4) How would you narrate steps you have taken to experience growth in cultural competency? 5) What has it been like to train others to be culturally competent? 6) What is next for you in your journey?

The study was conducted using grounded theory because this research methodology provided a format that systematically guided the researcher from the question of interest to an in-depth data analysis. This method was touted as being a flexible and inductive as the researcher explored the interpersonal and intrapersonal social worlds of the participants. The researcher had no imposed restrictions or analytical steps to follow as participants were encouraged to tell their own stories. The participant analysis and major themes that arose were 1) environmental awareness, 2) dispositions toward the development in cultural competency knowledge and skill, and 3) systemic

factors that influence cultural competency and growth. From these themes, the researcher identified the core theme as “navigating change toward cultural competent practices.”

The limitations were reviewed and primarily the lack of diversity among students and faculty on the respective campuses was of concern. The researcher’s rationale for this concern was due to the limited amount of evidence that demonstrated a commitment to increase cultural competency on the university campuses. The timing of the introduction to multicultural issues in the student’s graduate programs, and the limitation of topics related to the struggles of cultural competency in the course work, the absence of active recruiting, hiring, and maintaining of diverse faculty were evident to the researcher.

Recommendations that emerged from this study were suggested; most important are more research that provides an in depth look at pedagogy to determine what works, examining the training programs beyond students needs and strengthen the cultural competency skills for the university administration and clerical staff, provide a comparative study to determine if utilizing the cohort model impacts the numbers of students and staff related to diversity, engage faculty in a formal assessment that identifies weaknesses and strengths in their cultural competent practices, develop a definition for cultural competency that is theoretically based and supported by empirical research to provide greater conceptual clarity, and utilize a school cultural audit team that assesses the cultural competent practices by examining policies, programs, and the perspectives of students and staff.

This study is valuable to the counseling profession because it provided perspectives from those who work in the trenches, who are struggling to ensure that practices, instructional experiences, and current research promote culturally competent

practices. Further, the study added to the knowledge base of counselor educators a greater awareness of the need to continue to improve strategies that will increase recruiting and maintaining students and faculty from diverse populations; utilize instructional methodology that initiate intentional discussions and experiences that can enhance cultural competent practices; provide opportunities to increase the ranks of advocates who effectively mentor and guide students and staff of diversity, and remain vigilant to address cultural resource support through the curriculum, training, faculty, procedures, and policies.

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## Appendix A

The Cultural Competency Domains Model (CCDM).

	<u>Novice</u>	<u>Apprentice</u>	<u>Proficient</u>	<u>Distinguished</u>
<b>Disposition</b>	<p>Little or no development or implementation</p> <p>Has little or no knowledge of diverse cultures and may deny the importance of cultural variables in counseling</p> <p>May overemphasize the importance of difference</p> <p>Lacks experiences of exploration and discussion of cultural differences</p>	<p>Limited development or partial implementation</p> <p>Demonstrating an emerging awareness of his/her own cultural biases and assumptions (Pedersen, 2002)</p> <p>Actively engaging in a continuous process of challenging personal attitudes and beliefs that do not support respecting and valuing of differences (Sue, Arredondo, &amp; McDavis, 1992)</p> <p>Exploring the community for knowledge of the accessibility of the variety of culturally appropriate services</p>	<p>Fully functioning and operational level of development and implementation</p> <p>Demonstrates an awareness and sensitivity to one's cultural heritage having an ability to identify specific features of culture of origin and the effect of the relationship with culturally different clients</p> <p>Demonstrates a level of comfort with differences in race, ethnicity, culture, and beliefs</p> <p>Demonstrates a working knowledge of available services to meet the cultural needs of clients</p>	<p>Exemplary level of development and implementation</p> <p>Knowledgeable of institutional barriers that prevent minorities from using mental health services</p> <p>Recognizes that the process of developing cultural competency is ongoing and long-term</p> <p>Knowledgeable of relevant discriminatory practices at the social and community level</p>

<p><b>Cognitive Understanding</b></p>	<p>Demonstrates inadequate experience working with a diverse population</p>	<p>Limited experiences in cultural discussions, working with diverse populations, and available community services</p>	<p>Understands how Eurocentric tradition in counseling may conflict with cultural values of other traditions</p>	<p>Establishes a working relationship with providers of various cultures within the community to expedite services for those at risk</p>
	<p>Has no knowledge of available community</p>	<p>Limited knowledge of the effect of oppression, racism, discrimination, and stereotyping</p>	<p>Possesses knowledge and understanding about how oppression, racism, discrimination, and stereotyping affect them personally in their work (Lago, 2006a)</p>	
	<p>Comes to training only having knowledge of their own culture - "Tunnel Vision"</p>	<p>Working to provide a climate and context for recognizing and understanding how diverse cultures share common ground and uniqueness (Pedersen, 2002)</p>	<p>Demonstrates knowledge about personal racial and cultural heritage and how it personally and professionally affects definitions of normality-abnormality and the process of counseling (Lago, 2006b)</p>	<p>Demonstrates a clear and explicit knowledge and understanding of the generic characteristics of counseling and therapy (culture bound, class bound, and monolingual) and how they may clash with cultural values of various minority groups</p>
<p>Lacks understanding of cultural stereotypes and bias and holds preconceived notions about others who are culturally different</p>	<p>Identifying areas to grow in a capacity to provide competent services</p>	<p>Recognizes the limits of their competencies and expertise and, therefore, seeks educational, consultative, and training experiences to enrich understanding and effectiveness</p>	<p>Utilizes expertise in identifying and administering appropriate culturally relevant assessments</p>	

<p><b>Therapeutic Skills</b></p>	<p>Lacks knowledge of assessment models</p> <p>Exhibits one way of thinking</p> <p>Often places imposition of values onto others</p> <p>Unaware of the ethical practices established to ensure cultural competency</p> <p>Accepts unreasonable assumptions without proof or ignores the proof that might disconfirm one's assumptions</p>	<p>Limited awareness of assessment models</p> <p>Recognizing a need for cultural competence and its affect on service</p> <p>Developing an understanding of how culture influences interventions with client</p> <p>Exploring specific knowledge and information about a particular group or individual</p> <p>Actively participates in reading and activities designed to develop cultural awareness and works toward eliminating racism and prejudice (Sue et al., 1992)</p>	<p>Limited skill in the use of assessment models</p> <p>Understands how race, culture, ethnicity, gender, or disability may affect personality formation, vocational choices, manifestation of psychological disorders, help-seeking behavior and the appropriateness or inappropriateness of counseling approaches</p> <p>Familiar with relevant research findings regarding mental health and mental health disorders that affect various racial and ethnic groups</p> <p>Demonstrates skill and knowledge in the ethical practices of cultural competency</p> <p>Knowledgeable and demonstrates efficiency in the practice of culturally competent ethical standards</p>	<p>Understands how race, culture, ethnicity, gender, or disability may affect personality formation, vocational choices, manifestation of psychological disorders, help-seeking behavior and the appropriateness or inappropriateness of counseling approaches</p> <p>Familiar with relevant research findings regarding mental health and mental health disorders that affect various racial and ethnic groups</p> <p>Reflects diversity in one's scholastic endeavors</p> <p>Consistently practices cultural sensitivity and the ethical practices of cultural competency at an exemplary level</p>
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<b>Affective Behaviors</b>	Becomes culturally encapsulated (Pedersen, 2002)	Possesses a general awareness of the ethical standards for cultural competency Assisted by a supervisor in learning to engage in a variety of verbal and non-verbal helping responses	Able to implement more than one method or approach to helping but recognizes that helping styles and approaches may be culture bound	Demonstrates knowledge of the potential bias in assessment instruments, use of procedures, and interprets findings keeping in mind the cultural and linguistic characteristics of clients
	Defines reality according to a universal, monocultural perspective	Able to send and receive both verbal and non-verbal messages accurately and appropriately	Refers to good sources when linguistic skills are insufficient	Serves as an advocate for culturally appropriate services and utilizes professional skills and leadership to affect change
	Insensitive to cultural variations	Working to gain a proficient level of comfort with the differences of race, ethnicity, culture, and beliefs		Educates clients of service alternatives available and their personal and legal rights for effective cultural intervention
	Fails to evaluate others' viewpoints			

## **Appendix B**

### **Letter of Invitation**

Dear Fellow Advocates for Cultural Competence,

I need your help. I am seeking participants who will help me find answers for how we develop and advance in cultural competence within counseling. I am requesting your assistance on my research project. For this study, I am looking for seasoned professionals who have struggled with cultural competency issues in their work with students, clients, and/or supervisees.

I am earning my PhD from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV). My research interest is exploring the steps toward mastering cultural competency and its development. The research literature underscores the many new challenges to the professional practices in counseling, training, and research. However, a critical gap in the extant of research literature is the absence of studies that provide rich narratives and stories that explicate the process of personal growth in cultural competency.

A grounded theory approach will be utilized to uncover themes, cluster developmental milestones, and capture the personal journey of participants. All interviews will be interactive and engaging as I view it as a learning process for both of us. To show my appreciation, with the understanding that I am on a doctoral budget, two names will be selected from a raffle drawing. The selected participants will receive a \$25.00 gift card to Barnes and Noble Bookstore.

I hope that you will consider becoming a participant in my study. I hope to make contributions to our profession as a result. If you are teaching in a counselor education track/program with at least five years of experience and would like to be considered for



participation in this study, please complete the Demographics Form. This form is available by clicking on the following URL address:

<http://faculty.unlv.edu/pjones/wakefield/> . Please send this completed form to [Wakefi22@unlv.nevada.edu](mailto:Wakefi22@unlv.nevada.edu). I would appreciate the return of this document within a week of this announcement. If you have any questions, please contact me directly at the email above. I look forward to your positive response.

With Much Appreciation,

*Marie A. Wakefield*

Doctoral Student, Educational Psychology/Counselor Education Depts.  
University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV)  
IRB Approval # 1007-3527

Appendix C

Participant Demographics Form

Please fill out this form and send it as an attachment to Wakefi22@unlv.nevada.edu if you wish to be considered to be selected as participant in this research study. When your email is received, this attachment will be downloaded to a password protected computer to which only the researcher has access, and your email will be deleted. When the selection process is completed and before the study begins, the attached files will be deleted from the computer. If you are selected for the study, you will receive an informed consent form to complete before the study begins. If you are not selected, you will receive an email with explanation of the selection process, and the information you submitted will be permanently erased.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred postal address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name of University/College/Institution and State where you are currently employed: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_ Male Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Identify your Cultural Status (Please check all categories that best describe you):

- \_\_\_\_\_ Black/African American
- \_\_\_\_\_ European American
- \_\_\_\_\_ Hispanic/Latino American
- \_\_\_\_\_ Native American/Indian
- \_\_\_\_\_ Asian/Pacific Islander
- \_\_\_\_\_ Biracial/Multiracial/Multiheritage
- \_\_\_\_\_ Immigrant/Immigrant Heritage
- \_\_\_\_\_ OTHER

(Explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Please select the category that best describes your sexual orientation:

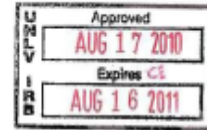
\_\_\_\_\_ Heterosexual \_\_\_\_\_ Gay \_\_\_\_\_ Lesbian \_\_\_\_\_ Bisexual \_\_\_\_\_ Transgendered  
Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Identify the category that best represents your current religious/spiritual practices:

- Please select all that apply to you: \_\_\_\_\_ Atheist \_\_\_\_\_ Agnostic  
\_\_\_\_\_ Baptist \_\_\_\_\_ Buddhist \_\_\_\_\_ Catholic \_\_\_\_\_ Christian  
\_\_\_\_\_ Episcopalian \_\_\_\_\_ Hindu \_\_\_\_\_ Jewish \_\_\_\_\_ Latter Day Saint



## APPENDIX D



### INFORMED CONSENT

Department of Educational Psychology

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**TITLE OF STUDY: Counselor Development and the Acquisition of Cultural Competence: A Study of Professional Growth Experiences**

**INVESTIGATOR(S): Dr. W. Paul Jones**

**Marie A. Wakefield**

**CONTACT PHONE NUMBER: 702-895-3937**

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#### Purpose of the Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of counselor educators that explicate the acquisition process of cultural competency.

#### Participants

You are being asked to participate in the study because the rich narratives and stories from your personal experiences will fill a critical gap in the research literature for the purpose of preparing and training counselors in the acquisition process of cultural competency. Additionally, your qualifications indicate that you meet the requirements working in counselor education track/program, have a minimum of five years of teaching experience, and you are currently employed as an instructor.

#### Procedures

If your agreement to participate in this study is evidenced by electronic submission of this Informed Consent Form, you will be asked to participate in an interactive interviewing process via video conferencing, phone calls, and emails. With your permission the interviews will be recorded. You will also be asked to provide a current vita, syllabi/core course outlines, assessments, and assignments utilized over the past three years, copies of your professional publications during the past three years, and artifacts of relevance to the research topic of cultural competency. It is anticipated that this study will occur during a four week period of time. An initial interview will have a set of open-ended questions that focus on your developmental growth in the acquisition of cultural competency. The initial interview is expected to be approximately two hours. In an effort to gain an in-depth understanding of your journey, it may be necessary to schedule additional interviews and/or revisit conversations in emails. The total time is anticipated to be no more than two hours in any interview and your involvement would not exceed four hours during any week during the four week period.

#### Benefits of Participation

There may not be direct benefits to you as a participant in this study. However, we hope to learn the unique experiences of counselor educators that have contributed to the process of developing cultural competence. These rich narratives add a process perspective to the plethora of literature that has provided a broad spectrum of the behavioral traits of cultural competency.

Participant Initials \_\_\_\_\_

1 of 3





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COUNSELOR DEVELOPMENT AND THE ACQUISITION OF CULTURAL COMPETENCE: A STUDY OF PROFESSIONAL GROWTH EXPERIENCES

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**Participant Consent for Recording:**

I agree to recordings, audio and/or video, of the interviews.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature [electronic] of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant Name (Please Print)

*Instructions for Return: After you have signed this form, please scan the document as a pdf file and send the pdf file as an attachment in an email to Investigator Marie Wakefield at this address: [Wakefi22@unlv.nevada.edu](mailto:Wakefi22@unlv.nevada.edu).*

*Participant Note: Please do not submit this document if the Approval Stamp is missing or is expired.*

Participant Initials \_\_\_\_\_

3 of 3

## **Appendix E**

### **Letter of Confirmation**

Re: Dissertation Research for Cultural Competency

Dear XXXX,

I was delighted to receive your Demographics Form, which was an indication of your interest in my research. The purpose of this communication is to inform you of the process for this study. It is anticipated that this study will occur during a four week period of time. An initial interview will have a set of open-ended questions that focus on your developmental growth in the steps toward mastering cultural competency. It is anticipated that the first interview will take two hours and not beyond three hours. Recordings of the exact language and participants' view of my understanding of the data will be used as validity measures to ensure accurate meanings and data facts.

In an effort to gain an in-depth understanding of your journey, it may be necessary to schedule an additional interview and revisit conversations in emails. Flexibility is very much appreciated; however, the busyness of all participants' schedules is a critical component of this research study. The result of this study will provide invaluable information on the attitudes, knowledge, and skill that leads to the steps of mastering cultural competency.

In order to move to the next level of this study, I am requesting the following: a signed Informed Consent Form, which you will find as an attachment, a current vita, syllabi/core course outlines including assignments and tests for the past three years,

publications from the last three years, and any other artifact related to the development of cultural competencies related to this research topic.

Three days will be devoted to examining the requested materials. You will be contacted by email to confirm a scheduled time for the first interview and ensure that there is a location that will accommodate taping the session without interruption. Three days prior to this interview I will send a set of questions for our discussion regarding the research topic of cultural competency.

If you have any questions or concerns, please notify me by email, [Wakefi22@unlv.nevada.edu](mailto:Wakefi22@unlv.nevada.edu). Thank you for so graciously agreeing to work with me on this research project.

With great appreciation,

*Marie A. Wakefield*

Marie A. Wakefield, Doctoral Candidate  
UNLV

## Vita

### MARIE A. WAKEFIELD

8091 Petunia Flower Way  
Las Vegas, Nevada 89147  
Wakefi22@unlv.nevada.edu

#### **ACADEMIC BACKGROUND:**

Graduate – 2012  
University of Nevada, Las Vegas  
Degree: Doctor of Philosophy  
Major: Educational Psychology - School Counseling

Graduate- 1979  
University of Nevada; Las Vegas, Nevada  
Degree: Master of Science  
Educational Foundations and Counseling  
Additional hours in Educational Administration

Graduate – 1969  
Central State University; Wilberforce, Ohio  
Degree: Bachelor of Science  
Major: Elementary Education

#### **PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE/CERTIFICATION:**

Elementary K-8 Teaching and Substitution  
Secondary 7-12 Substitution  
K-12 School Counselor  
Nevada State Administrative Endorsement  
K-A Vocational Career Guidance

#### **ACADEMIC/TEACHING EXPERIENCE:**

2008 - Present Graduate Assistant – Introduction to Group Work  
2008 Graduate Assistant – Counseling Practicum  
2008 Graduate Assistant – Counseling Internship  
2008 Graduate Assistant – Multiculturalism, Diversity, Social Justice,  
and Advocacy



## **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:**

1996-2005 Principal of Myrtle Tate Elementary  
1992-1996 Assistant Principal Marion Earl/Madison Elementary Schools  
1990 -1992 Administrative Specialist, Guidance Services  
1987-1990 Counselor for Fay Herron ES

## **NATIONAL ACTIVITIES:**

2007-08 American Counseling Association Past President  
2007 People to People Delegation to China and Mongolia Co-Leader  
2006-07 American Counseling Association President  
2005-06 American Counseling Association President-elect  
2004-05 *Adultspan* Editor for the Association for Adult  
Development and Aging (AADA)  
2003-05 Governing Council Representative for the Western Region (ACA)  
2002-03 President of the Association for Adult Development and Aging  
(AADA)  
1997-08 American Counseling Association First Timers' Conference  
Orientation Program Facilitator  
1995-96 Chairperson of the Western Regional Branch Assembly of the  
American Counseling Association

## **STATE ACTIVITIES:**

2007-09 President of the Nevada Counselors Association  
1993-94 President of the Nevada Counselors Association  
1992-93 President of the Southern Nevada School Counselors' Association

## **KEYNOTE ADDRESSES:**

November 2009 "Hattitudes for the Long Haul"  
Presented at the Arkansas Counseling Association Conference  
  
April 2009 Chi Sigma Induction Ceremony, Las Vegas, NV  
  
May 2008 "Who Are We?"  
Presented at the San Francisco State University Graduation  
  
February 2008 "Counselor Navigating the Highway of Success"  
Presented at the Virginia Counseling Association Conference  
  
February 2008 "In the Spirit of Renewal"  
Presented at the California Counseling Association Annual Cruise

- October 2007      “Organizational Leadership”  
Presented at the Emerging Leadership Training for Southern  
Region of the American Counseling Association Conference
- September 2007      “Building for the Future: Serving, Inspiring, Empowering”  
Presented at the Western Region of the American Counseling  
Association Conference
- July 2007      “Organizational Leadership”  
Presented at the annual conference for the National Career  
Development Association
- February 2007      “California Dreamin’”  
Presented at the California Counseling Association Conference
- February 2007      “Modeling Your Hat-titudes”  
Presented at the North Dakota Counseling Association Conference
- November 2006      “Children of Promise: Investing in Our Legacy”  
Presented at the Alabama Counseling Association Conference
- November 2006      “The Be Hat-titudes: It’s in Your Strut”  
Presented at the New Mexico Counseling Association Conference
- November 2006      “The Be Hat-titudes: It’s in Your Strut”  
Presented at the Kentucky Counseling Association Conference
- July 2006      “Succession Planning”  
Presented at the annual conference for the National Career  
Development Association
- April 2006      “The Be Hat-titudes: It’s in Your Strut”  
Presented at the South Dakota Counseling Association 47<sup>th</sup>  
Conference
- March 2006      “Children of Promise: Investing in Our Legacy”  
Presented at University of North Texas Conference
- January 2006      “The Be Hat-titudes: It’s in Your Strut”  
Presented at the California Association for Counseling and  
Development Conference

- November 2005      “Children of Promise: Investing in Our Legacy”  
Presented at Tennessee Counseling Association Conference
- May 2004            “The Be Hat-titudes”  
Presented at the Maryland Counseling and Development  
Conference
- October 2004        “Empowerment for Creating Change”  
Presented at the Maryland School Counseling Association  
Conference
- March 1997          “Minding Our Image”  
Presented at the national conference for the American Counseling  
Association

**WORKSHOPS:**

- March 2012          “Critical Cultural Competency Domains for Counselor  
Development: A Study of Professional Growth Experiences”  
Presented at the American Counseling Association Conference
- March 2012          “Using Media to Deconstruct Historical Patterns and Assess  
Cultural Competency Practices”  
Presented at the American Counseling Association Conference
- October 2011        “Mentoring of Our Underrepresented Leaders: What We Know,  
What We Do, What We Need to Do”  
Presented at the Association for Counselor Education and  
Supervision Conference
- March 2011          “Using the Critical Cultural Competency Domains Model and  
Teaching with Media to Demonstrate Why History Matters”  
Presented at the American Counseling Association Conference
- March 2011          “Children of Promise: Investing in Our Legacy”  
Presented at the Elder Wisdom Circle Retreat and Workshop
- November 2010      “Research Mentorship: What Matters from a Multicultural  
Perspective”  
Presented at the Western Association for Counselor Education and  
Supervision Conference
- February 2010        “A Model for Analyzing Critical Cultural Domains for  
Professional Growth in a Global Society”  
Presented at the American Association of Behavioral Social  
Sciences

- October 2009      “A Model for Analyzing Critical Cultural Domains in Counselor Development: Assessing Learning Across the Curriculum”  
Presented at the Association of Counselor Education and Supervision Conference
- November 2008    “A Model for Analyzing Critical Cultural Domains in Counselor Development: Assessing Learning Across the Curriculum”  
Presented at the Western Association of Counselor Education and Supervision Conference
- February 2008    “Hat Therapy: An Exploration of Communication Styles”  
Presented at the South Carolina Counseling Association Conference
- January 2007      “Modeling Your Leadership Hat-titudes”  
Presented at the Idaho Counseling Association Conference
- November 2006    “Modeling My Hat-titudes”  
Presented at the Ohio Counseling Association Conference
- November 2006    “Styling Your Hat-titudes”  
Presented at the American Counseling Association Southern Region Conference
- July 2006         “Leadership Development”  
Presented at the Nebraska Counseling Association Summer Conference
- June 2006         “The Be Hat-titudes: Tools to Enhance Communication Skills.”  
Presented at the summer series for Johns Hopkins University
- March 2006        “Modeling My Hat-titudes”  
Presented at the University of North Texas

#### **RESEARCH INTERESTS & SCHOLARLY INQUIRY**

- Cultural Competency in a global society
- Research mentorship
- Generational roles in organizational management, career development, and decision-making
- The impact of sociocultural factors on the development of adolescents

## **PROFESSIONAL/ACADEMIC HONORS AND AWARDS**

- Thomas Wilson Community Service Award
- Association for Adult Development and Aging Distinguished Service Award
- Dr. Kay P. Carl Outstanding Counseling Education Award
- Who's Who Among American Educators
- John A. Bailey Distinguished Professional Award
- Professional Development Award – Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development

## **SCHOLARLY PUBLICATIONS**

Bill, J, Golden, L., & Wakefield, M. A. (2007). Stan is driving me crazy! In S. M. Dugger, & L. A. Carlson (Eds.), *Critical incidents in counseling children*. Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.

Wakefield, M. A., Garner, D. L., Pehrsson, D. E., & Tyler, T. (2009). A model for analyzing critical cultural domains in counselor development: Assessing learning across the curriculum. In G. R. Walz, J. C. Bleur, & R. K. Yep (Eds.), *VISTAS: Ideas you can use*. Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.

Wakefield, M. A., & Rice, C. J. (2008). The impact of cyber-communication on today's youth. (ACAPDC-14). Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.

Wakefield, M. A. (2006). Children of promise. In G. R. Walz, J. C. Bleur, & R. K. Yep (Eds.), *VISTAS: Compelling perspectives on counseling 2006*, (1 – 4). Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.

Wakefield, M.A., & Rice, C. J. (2008). The impact of cyber-communication on the personal, social, and emotional growth of today's youth. In Jackie M. Allen (Ed.), *Empowering the 21<sup>st</sup> century professional school counselor* (pp. 223 – 231). Ann Arbor, MI: Counseling Outfitters, LLC.

## **PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS:**

- American Counseling Association (ACA)
- Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES)
- Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development
- Association for Specialists in Group Work
- Chi Sigma Iota
- Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.
- Western Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (WACES)

## **COMMUNITY SERVICE**

2011-present	Education Committee for the NAACP
2004-present	Le Femme Douze (High school mentorship program)
2003-06	Director of Dr. Betty Shabazz Academy (Middle school mentorship program)
1992-98	Lead Counselor/Trainer for Teen Substance Abuse Prevention Camp

***References available upon request.***