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Preparing Practitioners

Preparing Practitioners for Social Advocacy and Systemic Change

Using Dialogic and Democratic Decision-Making Processes

In Multicultural Context

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This article presents preliminary findings from a doctoral study that examined the effects of the first semester of a community-based, experiential multicultural preparation program on the development of multicultural awareness and social change agency in graduate-level learners. The program uses dialogic and democratic decision-making processes in a multicultural education context to promote the development of social justice change agency. Findings indicate increases in learners' awareness of: their racial identity, how they think about themselves in social context, and their beliefs about conflict as a positive component of group interaction. Over 37% of participants' social agency scores increased. Learning styles shifted for 54% of the group. Critical social awareness, dialogic communication, and bridge building scores declined slightly, which may reflect learning and identity disequilibrium and/or the limitations of collecting data on one semester of a year-long program.

Preparing educators, counselors and other practitioners to work effectively with marginalized individuals and communities promotes peace, social justice and societal well-being. Multicultural competence and cultural responsiveness that is truly inclusive includes the racial, cultural, sexual orientation, disability, Deaf and other diverse communities—critical components in the transformation of socially constructed systems. This article presents some preliminary findings from a doctoral study conducted by the author (Butler-Byrd, 2004) that examined the effects of the first semester of a community-based experiential multicultural preparation program on the development of multicultural awareness and social justice change agency. The program under examination uses dialogic and democratic decision-making processes in a multicultural education context to promote the development of social justice change agency.

Current Multicultural Education Models

Despite ongoing debate about the nature, goals and politics of multiculturalism, it has become a well-established discipline in the fields of counseling and education, with a body of knowledge, texts and curricula. It has also taken hold in the hearts and minds of many educators, from elementary school through higher education (Banks, 1996; Giroux, 1997; Nieto, 1999; Obidah, 2000; Sevig & Etzkorn, 2001; Sleeter & McLaren, 1995; Sue et al., 1992). Models of multicultural education include: the melting pot, cultural pluralism, and the multicultural mosaic.

The “melting pot” model is perhaps the oldest model of multicultural education. It is conforming in nature, and expects non-dominant group members to assimilate into an ideal, homogeneous dominant culture where everyone is to be judged on individual merit rather than race, socioeconomic status or gender (Alperin, 1990; Berry, 2001; Frederickson, 1999).

The cultural pluralism model is reforming in nature, by permitting diverse groups to maintain their distinctiveness while living in a multiracial and multiethnic society. Mutual coexistence is developed through learning about other cultures and traditions, and thereby reducing individual prejudice and stereotypes (Alperin, 1990).

The multicultural mosaic model (Torres, 1995) is more transformative in nature. Contrary to the other two models, it explicitly recognizes that oppression exists and is implemented through structural, institutional and social arrangements. This model examines of the role of power in relationships between dominant and non-dominant

groups, which also mandates delving deeper into the entire history of this country (Foucault, 1980). This exploration can be very empowering for people from non-dominant groups, but many people from dominant groups find it painful because it exposes distressing aspects of U.S. history and culture such as conquest, colonialism, and the systematic disenfranchisement of people from non-dominant groups. In learning environments that address these issues, many participants, particularly European Americans, experience guilt, anger, denial and resistance (Chan & Treacy, 2001). This model also emphasizes the interwoven nature of human relationships, in which both cultural distinctiveness and the need to work across differences are matters of survival. Unlike the cultural pluralism model, this model acknowledges that bringing diverse people together into a common setting is not enough to transform unequal relationships. Other types of experiences, such as dialogue, reflection and service learning, are essential to foster intergroup interactions, and enhance participants' intellectual and relational understanding in the context of multicultural communities (Nagda & Zuniga, 2003; Zuniga, Nagda & Sevig, 2002).

Experiential Multicultural Education Strategies

Experiential learning is based on the premise that learning originates in concrete experience. It emphasizes the process of learning instead of the behavioral outcomes espoused by Watson (1930/1977), Hull (1952/1974) and Skinner (1953/1965), used extensively in the U.S. psychological and educational systems. Experiential learning theory has a different philosophical and epistemological base. Unlike the empiricist learning epistemology by Locke (1693/1968) and others, based on the idea that there

are elements of consciousness that are fixed and immutable, experiential learning epistemology conceptualizes ideas as ever changing, being formed and re-formed through experience. Ideas are not fixed. According to Kolb (1984): “No two thoughts are ever the same, since experience always intervenes” (p. 26).

In order to promote the development of multicultural competence, some models use experiential activities in conjunction with transmissive, didactic “banking” methods in which an instructor “transmits” knowledge that students passively “receive.” Students passively read the literature, then listen to instructional seminars, which are followed by an experiential activity. Other models use cooperative learning groups, where a community of learners works together to solve problems, which may cause cognitive and affective disequilibrium, and may produce epistemic curiosity (Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 1991) as learners look for solutions to help resolve their problems and differences. The confluence of different approaches to an issue or problem may cause learners to shift from egocentric, dualistic thinking (Perry, 1970) to more collaborative, relativistic thinking (Cooper, 2000). The following are some examples of how experiential education is being used in counselor preparation, ranging from role-plays in a course to integrated collaborative learning in a three-year post-graduate institute.

Role-plays are probably one of the most popular experiential approaches used in counselor preparation. Rabinowitz (1997) used a semester-long role play activity to teach counseling skills to his students. He role-played a client while students took turns in the counselor role, switching whenever one “counselor” reached an impasse. At the

end of the course, students reported positive responses to the experiential aspects of the process.

Nagda, Zuniga and associates (1999) used intergroup dialogues as a pedagogical method to address cultural diversity and social justice in social work curricula, while developing multicultural competence. Their peer-facilitated weekly meetings of students from diverse backgrounds and ethnicities were designed to examine cultural identities and differences, while fostering deeper understanding about issues of oppression and privilege, and simultaneously building alliances for social change. This pedagogy was incorporated into a required, one-semester course for 50 undergraduates, social work students. The course included large group didactic presentations, guest presenters, game simulations and small group activities. and small peer-facilitated intergroup dialogues, which offered opportunities for more in-depth reflection and discussion.

Sevig and Etzkorn (2001) facilitated a year-long multicultural training seminar for psychology and social work interns in a university counseling center. At the time of their study, the seminar had been in existence for 7 years and met weekly for 1.5 hours. It was a required course in which 8 to 10 students from diverse backgrounds, with a range of clinical experience, participated. Their experiential, cross-disciplinary, peer-based structure incorporated the multicultural competencies, and was influenced by Freire's (1972) critical theory and pedagogy, as well as by teaching strategies developed by women's and ethnic studies (Meyers, 1993; Schoem, Frankel, Zuniga & Lewis, 1993; Sleeter & Grant, 1987). They used multiple perspectives, including non-traditional

means of gathering knowledge, peer learning and a coalitional approach to facilitation, which modeled embracing multiple perspectives and bridging theory to action. This seminar emphasized three aspects of social reality: the complexity of multiple identities; power dynamics in order to understand the impact of the “-isms” on relationships; and a balance between universal or commonalities across identity groups and oppressions, and culture-specific approaches to multicultural counseling. The predominant learning method was described as experiential, process-based, and designed to encourage self-reflection, intergroup dialogue, risk taking and emotional openness.

Another multicultural model is a 20-year old collaborative training program developed by McGoldrick, Almeida, Garcia Preto, Bibb, Sutton, Hadak, and Moore Hines (1999) that began as an in-service training program at a mental health center affiliated with a university. This three-year post-graduate institute integrated multicultural competence into every aspect of training: teaching, supervision, and reading lists. These approaches are intended to challenge prospective counselors and faculty to move toward broader, strength-based and equity-based multicultural perspectives in counseling. The center’s administrators cited the following training challenges: (a) making space for diverse voices that have often not been heard, while not making race, gender or other historical oppression an excuse for incompetence; and (b) addressing White privilege. They found it difficult to incorporate anti-racist consciousness into groups that are exclusively or predominantly European American, because even the discussion of racism is often perceived by European American groups as irrelevant to therapy. In addition to expanding their curriculum to include readings related to feminist

and ethnic critique, this model incorporated a collaborative learning approach inspired by Freire (1972).

Method

The data used in this study were collected during the first semester of the 2003-2004 academic year as part of a doctoral study conducted by the author, who was also a faculty member in the program. Twenty-four learners enrolled in the Community-Based Block (CBB) Program agreed to participate in this study. Participants were assessed prior to matriculation, and at the end of the first semester of the two-semester program. This study addressed the following questions: How did the CBB counselor preparation program affect learners' multicultural awareness and identity? How did the CBB program affect their social justice change agency?

Setting

The setting for this study was the Community-Based Block Program, a 36-year-old multicultural counselor preparation program in the Counseling and School Psychology Department, in the College of Education at San Diego State University (SDSU). Over 800 alumni have matriculated in the program. Forty to fifty percent of each year's graduates go on to earn school counseling and school psychology credentials or Marriage and Family Therapy licensure. Approximately one-fourth of alumni have gone on for doctoral degrees. Longitudinal outcomes studies (Nieto & Senour, 2005; Robinson-Zanartu, Cook-Morales, Terry, & Senour, 2004), demonstrate that CBB graduates often emerge in leadership positions. Results of employer surveys demonstrate high employer satisfaction with graduates' counseling and professional skills, sensitivity to issues of diversity, advocacy for social justice issues, and leadership

(Butler-Byrd, Nieto & Senour, 2006). These results are consistent with outcomes studies used to assess the effectiveness of CBB graduates (Butler-Byrd, Nieto & Senour, in-press); and an External Review Team's Report for the 2006 Department of Counseling and School Psychology (CSP) Academic Review.

The CBB Program was developed in response to the critical need for competent counselor/change agents who can work effectively with marginalized individuals and communities using culturally competent skills, social advocacy, social justice and systems change agency. Inspired by the political and cultural movements of the late '60s and early '70s, programs designed to improve educational opportunities for people of color, and a growing dissatisfaction with traditional education modalities, Dave Malcolm, Ph.D. implemented the program in 1973. The program has been in operation since then, and continues to attract more learners than it can serve.

The program uses a block format, where learners and faculty meet together for all course work in a learning community. The learning community serves clients in the CSP Department's outpatient clinic, and meets in two of San Diego's most ethnically diverse and low-socioeconomic communities. Only the program's research courses meet on the SDSU campus. The learning community spends more than 20 hours per week together. Additionally, each learner spends a minimum of 200 hours of service learning fieldwork at a community-based organization or academic institution during the academic year.

The learning community uses collaborative decision-making and democratic processes to develop and implement syllabi, and to minimize the hierarchy between

learners and faculty. The purpose of this model is to help learners take responsibility for their own learning, while developing social advocacy, social justice and community practice skills. Because the course content is developed collaboratively each year, it varies. In addition to individual and group counseling skills, practica and community-based research methods, program content typically includes: diversity issues; self-awareness/knowledge; values and theory clarification; collaborative decision-making/democratic processes, skills, knowledge; race or ethnicity-specific group issues, including power and privilege; gender-specific group issues; disability and Deaf issues; immigrant issues, sexual abuse and domestic violence; sexuality and intimacy; heterosexism and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer issues; change agency, cultural brokering, social transformation and more.

During the 2003-2004 academic year, the CBB learning community included 10 faculty members. The three full-time faculty members were all females: one Latina, one Asian American and one African American (the researcher). Part-time faculty included four males: one European American, one Filipino American, one Latino and one biracial Filipino/Latino; and three females: one African American and two Latinas. At the time this data was collected, the director of the CBB program had been affiliated with the program for 26 years. One of the part-time faculty members had been affiliated with the program for 15 years. The remaining part-time faculty members had been affiliated with the program for 0-4 years. All were program alumni. As the full-time African American faculty member, the author was also a program alumna and worked as a part-

time faculty member from 2000 to 2003. The other full-time faculty member was new to the program.

Figure 1 illustrates the program's framework. At its core is "transformative social consciousness/multicultural change agency." In the center, two conjoined triangles represent the intersection between the individual CBB learner and the culture/community, as well as the dynamics that provide the strength for developing multicultural counselors/change agents with transformative social consciousness: for the individual—body, mind, and heart; for the culture/community—multicultural, dominant culture, and nondominant culture(s); all infused by spirit/intuition and energy (Butler-Byrd, 2004).

Participants

Learners and faculty from the 2003-2004 CBB learning community were invited to volunteer to participate in the study. All participants were informed about the study and their rights as human subjects prior to signing the consent form. Participants were assured that their participation in the study would in no way affect their grades for the program. They were also provided with an overview of the type of data that would be collected and made available to them for their own reflection and professional development. The 2003-2004 learning community was composed of 24 learners—11 males and 13 females—from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds. Learners ranged in age from their early-twenties to their mid-fifties.

Procedure

The week prior to the beginning of the academic year, learners were invited to participate in the study by meeting with the researcher to complete the entry questionnaires in person at San Diego State University. All 24 learners attended this session and participated. At the end of the first semester, the researcher invited learners to another session outside of class time to complete their exit questionnaires in person. Both questionnaires took learners approximately one hour to complete.

Instruments

In addition to demographic data, three instruments assessed the development of values, awareness and behaviors related to multicultural competence and social advocacy in learners. These instruments included the Racial Engagement Across Differences Scale ([READS], Nagda & Zuniga, 2003), the Learning-Styles Inventory ([LSI], Kolb, 1981, revised 1985), and the Developmental Responses to Oppression/Problem Solving Stages/Conscientizacao Development Behavioral Observation Scale based on Freire's critical conceptual areas ([DRO/PSS/CDBOS] (Smith, 1976 and Alschuler, 1986).

Racial Engagement Across Differences Scale. The READS (Nagda & Zuniga, 2003), assess learners' attitudes and beliefs about the domains of critical social awareness, dialogic communication, and bridge building. Critical social awareness assessed learners' awareness of power, privilege and oppression and the dynamics of social groups in interpersonal, group, and systemic conflicts within a historical and social context. Dialogic communication assessed learners' awareness of their own

values and perspectives, and of others' values and perspectives, as well as their willingness to suspend judgment and listen. Building bridges assessed a learners' ability to develop and maintain relationships or encounters with others that explicitly address conflicts and difficult issues, while encouraging shared responsibility for personal and social change.

This instrument was developed using an action research approach to examine the impact of intergroup dialogues with diverse groups of 10 to 14 of college students. These groups were facilitated by trained peer facilitators over a seven-week time frame for two hours each week, using a critical, developmental, experiential curriculum with assigned readings, weekly journals, and a final reflection paper. Creators of this questionnaire determined content validity of their instrument through implementation of literature reviews and interviews. They also determined construct validity by assessing the relationship of text items to groups and individuals through the use of factor analysis and multidiscriminant analysis. Coefficients of internal consistency were determined using single-test administration and Cronbach's α ranging from .57 to .73 in the areas of active thinking, thinking about self in social context, perspective taking, comfort in communicating across differences, beliefs about conflict, and bridging differences. The instrument is composed of 25 items based on a Likert scales from 1 = Very negative to 5 = very positive (Nagda & Zuniga, 2003).

Learning-Style Inventory (LSI). The LSI (Kolb, 1981, revised 1985) is based on experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984) and assesses four elementary knowledge orientations. Creators of this questionnaire determined content validity of their

instrument through implementation of literature reviews and interviews. They also determined construct validity by assessing the relationship of text items to groups and individuals through the use of factor analysis and multidiscriminant analysis.

Coefficients of internal consistency were determined using single-test administration and Cronbach's $\alpha = .80$. This instrument assesses how learning and knowledge development occurs in individuals, another important component of transformational consciousness development, and reflects the dialectic nature of learning and adaptation as encompassed in Freire's concept of praxis, which he defines as "the reflection and action which truly transform reality" (Freire, 1972, p. 81).

The LSI assesses four elementary knowledge orientations, using a forced-ranking format that precludes integrative responses:

- **Convergent:** relies primarily on abstract conceptualization and active experimentation. The greatest strength of this approach lies in problem solving, decision-making and the practical application of ideas. This style does best in situations where there is a single correct answer or solution to a question or problem. Knowledge is organized using hypothetical-deductive reasoning, focused on specific problems. Individuals with this learning style tend to be controlled in their expression of emotion and prefer dealing with technical tasks and problems rather than social and interpersonal issues.
- **Divergent:** has learning strengths opposite from convergence, emphasizing concrete experience and reflective observation. The greatest strength of this orientation lies in imaginative ability and awareness of meaning and values. The primary adaptive ability of divergence is to view concrete situations from many perspectives and to organize many relationships into a meaningful synergy. This orientation emphasizes adaptation by observation rather than action. Divergers perform better in situations that call for generation of alternative ideas and implications, such as "brainstorming" sessions. Those oriented toward divergence are interested in people and tend to be imaginative and feeling-oriented.
- **Assimilation:** learning abilities of this orientation are abstract conceptualization and reflective observation. The greatest strength of this

orientation lies in inductive reasoning and the ability to create theoretical models, in assimilating disparate observations into an integrated explanation. As in convergence, this orientation is less focused on people and more concerned with ideas and abstract concepts. Ideas are judged less in this orientation by their practical value. Theories must be logically sound and precise.

- Accommodative: This learning style has strengths opposite from the assimilation orientation, emphasizing concrete experience and active experimentation. The greatest strength of this orientation lies in doing things, in carrying out plans and tasks and getting involved in new experiences. The adaptive emphasis of this orientation is on opportunity seeking, risk taking and action. This style is called accommodation because it is best suited for those situations where one must adapt oneself to changing immediate circumstances. Those with an accommodative style will most likely discard the plan or theory, if they do not fit the facts. (Assimilation style would disregard or reexamine the facts). With an accommodative style, people tend to solve problems in an intuitive trial-and-error manner, relying on other people for information rather than on their own analytic ability. Accommodative people are at ease with people, but are sometimes seen as impatient and “pushy” (Kolb, 1984, p. 77-78).

The LSI is designed so there are nine groups of statements, with each group containing four statements and, in every group, one statement corresponds to one of the stages of the learning cycle. Within each group, learners must rank-order their preferences. The LSI assesses the relative emphasis on each of the four modes of the learning process: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation, as well as the relationship between abstract and concrete, and active and reflective.

Developmental Responses to Oppression/Problem Solving

Stages/Conscientizacao Development. Using Freire’s critical conceptual areas: magical conforming, naïve reforming and critical transforming, Smith (1976) and Alschuler (1986) developed a framework to operationalize the development of critical transformative consciousness or *conscientizacao*. These developmental stages of

oppression or problem solving stages include magical conforming, naïve reforming and critical transforming. They also include two major transition stages that combine characteristics of the two levels above and below. The goal of this process is to becoming more fully human and more capable of working with people in a loving way. Ten CBB faculty members provided entry and exit observations of where each learner was in terms of their developmental responses to oppression and social advocacy: conforming, reforming or transforming. Faculty based their assessments of each learners on the conforming, reforming or transforming behaviors they observed in each student based on a Likert scale from 1 = less to 7 = more; then circled which of the three developmental responses they observed overall, along with narrative examples and comments.

Results

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze CBB learners' responses to the READS, the LSI and DSO/PSS and addressed the following questions: How did the CBB counselor preparation program affect learners' multicultural awareness and identity? How did the program affect their social justice change agency?

The READS was used to measure the effect of intergroup dialogue on participants across three domains: critical social awareness, dialogic communication, and building bridges. Paired t-test analyses compared entry and exit test scores, grouped by ethnicity in Table 1. Entry and exit text scores for each outcome measure were computed as mean scores of the items categorized under each measure except for the Importance and Centrality of Race, which was a single item measure.

In two of the eight outcomes, learners demonstrated positive affects: they more strongly considered race or ethnicity as an important social identity in the way they thought about themselves (4.17 vs. 4.43, $t(23) = 1.298$, $p=.026$, one-tailed), and they thought more frequently about being a member of a racial group (3.87 vs. 4.3, $t(23) = 2.102$, $p=.015$, one-tailed). Thinking about self in social context (3.75 vs. 3.91, $t(23) = 1.134$, $p=.06$) and from the Building Bridges dimension—Beliefs About Conflict also increased slightly by .02. Therefore, the CBB counselor preparation program appears to have had a positive effect on learners' multicultural awareness and identity? The CBB program pedagogy and processes regarding racial issues appears to increase learners' awareness of their racial identity and how they think about themselves in social context. These findings indicate that learners' beliefs about conflict as a positive component of group interaction increased, which demonstrates a positive effect on learners' social justice change agency, research question #2.

However, it is important to note that there were declines on several exit measures. These included: Active Thinking (4.65 vs. 4.45 $t(23) = -2.37$, $p=.001$, one-tailed); Dialogic Communication—Perspective Taking (4.13 vs. 4.05, $t(23) = .829$, $p=.005$, one-tailed); and Comfort in Communicating Across Differences (3.86 vs. 3.78, $t(23) = .542$, $p=.017$, one-tailed). While under the area of Building Bridges: Bridging Differences also declined (4.48 vs. 4.39, $t(23) = .826$, $p=.001$, one-tailed). These results appear to show that learners' characteristics related to group process were negatively affected by their experiences in the CBB program, which is related to research question #2: How did the CBB program affect their social justice change agency?

The scores of learners of color were higher than European American Learners in all categories of the READS, except Thinking About Self in Social Context at the entry to the study. This pattern is consistent with many other studies and relates positively to both research questions; however, because of this study's small sample these findings cannot be generalized.

Learners' entry and exit learning styles are presented in Table 2. This table contrasts the entry and exit learning orientations of participants. This is another important component of transformational consciousness development, which is related to both research questions, and reflects the dialectic nature of learning and adaptation encompassed in Freire's (1972) concept of praxis. The majority, 14 (54.17%) of the group shifted their learning styles at the exit of the study. This shift may demonstrate their increased use of their brain functioning as discussed in Zull's (2002) research on the connection between the experiential learning cycle and the structure of the brain. His work has shown that concrete experience comes through the sensory cortex, while reflective observation involves the integrative cortex at the back of the brain, creating new abstract concepts occurs in the frontal integrative cortex, and active testing involves the motor brain. This shift may also reflect disequilibrium triggered by the program.

Table 3 displays entry and exit DSO/PSS, which were assessed by CBB faculty members' through their observations of participants' behaviors. Nine (37.5%) of the participants shifted designations, indicating advancement in their developmental stages of oppression/problem solving. The remainder of the group retained their original

designations. Eight learners entered the program exhibiting more conforming behaviors; 12, as reforming; and four, as transforming. At the exit of the study, only one was conforming; 16 were reforming; and seven, transforming. These findings relate to research question #2: indicating a positive affect on learners' social justice change agency because the majority of learner were observed shifting to more transforming behaviors where promote social justice.

In summary, learners' mean responses to the READS indicate that CBB Program pedagogy and processes increased their awareness of their racial identity at the end of the first semester of their CBB experience. However, all the other READS dimensions showed noticeable disequilibrium through declines in their critical social awareness, dialogic communication and building bridges scores, which demonstrates both positive and negative effects related to both research questions. The majority of the participants shifted learning styles; and over one-third of the group shifted to more advanced categories in their DSO/PSS, indicating a positive effect on the development of their social justice change agency, research question #2.

Discussion

The emergent results of this study appear to demonstrate that the CBB program and processes affect learners' multicultural awareness, identities and social change agency, contributing to identity disequilibrium. Key characteristics of CBB program content and processes that may be attributed to the changes that students experienced in this study include the program's dialogic multicultural education strategies, and democratic decision-making processes, all of which focus on developing critical social

awareness, bridge building and social change agency in students. In cooperative learning communities like the CBB program, where a community of learners work together to solve meaningful problems, such as learning how to become competent community-based practitioner/change agents, this approach may cause cognitive and affective disequilibrium, which may produce epistemic curiosity (Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 1991) as learners look for solutions to help resolve their problems and differences. The coming together of different approaches to an issue or problem may cause learners to shift from egocentric, dualistic thinking (Perry, 1970) to more collaborative, relativistic thinking (Cooper, 2000). Erikson (1987) and Gurin and associates' (1999) theories about disequilibrium as a component of multicultural identity development and competence also support this contention. Well-executed collaborative learning can promote divergent thinking much more than didactic lectures or the "banking form of education" that Freire (1972) described, where students hear an expert lecture on his/her resolutions to complicated issues without experiencing the diversity of ideas that went into the expert's resolution, which often leaves learners disempowered and bankrupt.

These processes, as well as how the program minimizes the hierarchy between faculty and students, and the emphasis placed on learning as a community process, are a liberating challenge for learners who have been trained in traditional, banking forms of education. This model requires that the learner take more ownership and responsibility for their learning than banking forms of education, which can also contribute to a sense of anxiety and disequilibrium. Further, individuals with high levels of multicultural

experience learning in complex, highly diverse learning environments may also realize that they don't know as much as they thought they knew in terms of multicultural awareness, especially when making decisions in a diverse group.

This finding points to the importance of understanding intergroup contact and experiential education theories, processes and dynamics in the development of multicultural competence and social agency. Educators and programs need to help learners develop the skills to negotiate disequilibrium, ambiguity and tension in multicultural group contexts, which can help them develop the agency to operationalize multicultural competencies and social justice agency in real-life, challenging contexts.

Previous studies have reported positive results using experiential dialogic approaches similar to those used in the CBB program. These programs were part of, or linked to, full-term departmental courses (Geranios, 1997; Gurin, Peng, Lopez & Nagda, 1999, as cited in Nagda & Zuniga, 2003). These previous studies on intergroup dialogues produced findings similar to those of this study.

The results of this study are also in alignment with scholars' contentions that students from dominant and non-dominant ethnic groups are likely to have different levels of awareness about racial/ethnic group membership and status from those of dominant groups. Students of color on predominantly European American campuses have been shown to have experienced an accumulation of racial micro-aggressions—stereotyping, victimization and invisibility in the curriculum—that negatively affect their learning experiences. Therefore, dialogic multicultural education may have a different

effect on them, as well as on other participants from underrepresented groups (Tatum, 1997).

These scholars also suggest alternative explanations for the apparent lack of effectiveness of some categories related to multicultural awareness and social change agency. Because learners chose to participate in CBB, they already had well-developed attributes related to the outcomes and they sought out CBB to further their interests in learning about racial issues, and therefore demonstrated results related to self-selection bias. Also, researchers have documented the differential experiences and outcomes for learners of color and European Americans in multicultural education interventions, which sometimes indicate an apparent lack of intervention effectiveness (Gurin et al., 1999, as cited in Nagda & Zuniga, 2003; Solorzano, Ceja & Yosso, 2000; Tatum, 1992 & 1997).

Limitations, Implications for Future Research, and Recommendations

Because of the small sample size of this study, these are preliminary findings that will be investigated further in longitudinal studies of the program. Future longitudinal studies will incorporate multiple cohorts of the learners in this program to determine if the patterns found in these analyses can be generalized. Although these findings are emergent, they are useful in helping researchers develop longitudinal studies that can incorporate other cohorts of the learners in CBB and similar programs. Power analysis and other statistical methods will be used to determine if future samples are large enough to indicate meaningful results.

Another limitation of this study is that the researcher was a faculty member in the program at the time of this study. Therefore, researcher bias may have influenced the study. The researcher sought to minimize these affects by using action research methods, such as sharing the findings with participants for their validation after the data was collected and during the analysis process, and employing the assistance of an outside auditor. However, this limitation could also be a strength because of the participant-observer role that the researcher played as a knowledgeable insider.

Qualitative studies also need to be conducted on programs like CBB to examine the narrative, reflective experiences of students in experiential dialogic groups. This would provide a way to examine learners' internal, reflective processes over time during the program, which could then be analyzed using theme and content analysis, as well as action research methods to enhance program development.

Conclusion

Preparing educators, counselors and other practitioners to work effectively with marginalized individuals and communities is an important social justice issue. The CBB Program provided an example of a mature multicultural education program that promotes social advocacy and systems change by addressing multicultural competence and other issues related to social justice. The goal of this study was to examine the effectiveness of the CBB program on the learners' development of multicultural awareness and social change agency using several assessment strategies, while extending the knowledge base on experiential multicultural education and intergroup contact theory. The author hopes that these findings and methods can help other

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programs examine practitioner development and design more effective training programs.

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Figure 1: CBB Program Framework Schema (Butler-Byrd, 2004).

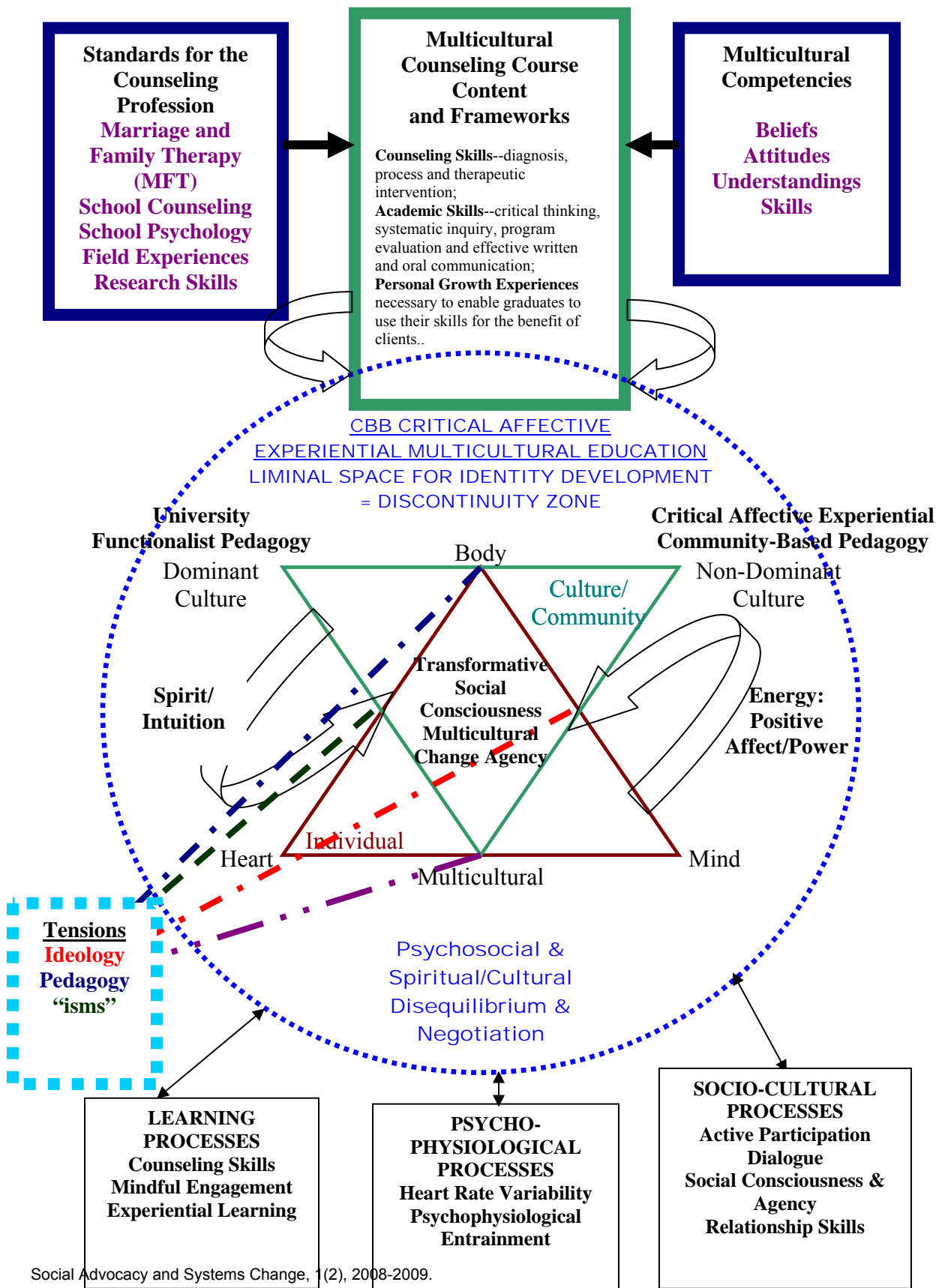


Table 1

Domains of Racial Engagement Across Differences Outcome Measures by Ethnicity (Nagda & Zuniga, 2003) Entry and Exit Test Scores

	<u>All Learners</u>		<u>Learners of Color</u>		<u>EuroAm Learners</u>	
	Entry	Exit	Entry	Exit	Entry	Exit
Mean (Standard Deviation)						
I. Critical Social Awareness						
1. Importance of race	4.17 (1.07)	4.43* (.66)	4.22 (1.06)	4.61** (.50)	4.00 (1.22)	3.80 (.84)
2. Centrality of race	3.87 (1.01)	4.30* (.97)	3.94 (1.06)	4.50 (.71)	3.60 (.89)	3.60 (1.52)
3. Active thinking	4.65*** (.5)	4.45 (.51)	4.67** (.5)	4.46 (.51)	4.60 (.55)	4.4 (.55)
4. Thinking about self in social context	3.75 (.63)	3.91 (.64)	3.71 (.6)	3.97* (.62)	3.90 (.76)	3.70 (.74)
II. Dialogic Communication						
5. Perspective taking	4.13** (.53)	4.05 (.41)	4.20** (.52)	4.06 (.40)	3.88 (.54)	4.04 (.50)
6. Comfort in communicating across differences	3.86* (.73)	3.78 (.74)	3.99* (.75)	3.81 (.77)	3.40 (.38)	3.65 (.65)
III. Building Bridges						
7. Beliefs about conflict	4.22 (.64)	4.24 (.49)	4.29* (.59)	4.24 (.44)	4.0 (.81)	4.25 (.71)
8. Bridging differences	4.48*** (.57)	4.39 (.61)	4.48 (.6)	4.5*** (.57)	4.47 (.51)	4.0 (.62)

Note. (1 = very negative; 5 = very positive). Euro-American Learners: n=5; Learners of Color: n = 18; All Learners N =24.

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, $p < .05$ + $p = .05$ (one-tailed, paired t -test analyses).

Table 2

2003-2004 CBB Group Entry and Exit Learning Styles

Participant Number	Entry Learning Style	Exit Learning Style	Change? Indicated with an X
1	Divergent	Divergent	
2	Assimilative	Assimilative	
3	Divergent	Divergent	
4	Convergent	Convergent	
5	Assimilative	Accommodative	X
6	Assimilative	Divergent	X
7	Assimilative	Accommodative	X
8	Accommodative	Divergent	X
9	Assimilative	Divergent	X
10	Accommodative	Accommodative	
11	Divergent	Assimilative	X
12	Divergent	Divergent	
13	Assimilative	Divergent	X
14	Divergent	Accommodative	X
15	Accommodative	Assimilative	X
16	Accommodative	Accommodative	
17	Assimilative	Assimilative	
18	Accommodative	Accommodative	
19	Accommodative	Assimilative	X
20	Divergent	Divergent	
21	Divergent	Divergent	
22	Accommodative	Assimilative	X
23	Divergent	Assimilative	X
24	Divergent	Assimilative	X
TOTAL			13 (54.17%)

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Table 3: 2003-2004 CBB Group Entry and Exit Developmental Stage of
 Oppression/Problem Solving Stage

Participant Number	Entry Developmental/ Problem Solving Stage	Exit Developmental/ Problem Solving Stage	Change? Indicated with an X
1	Reforming	Reforming	
2	Conforming	Reforming	X
3	Reforming	Reforming	
4	Conforming	Reforming	X
5	Reforming	Reforming	
6	Conforming	Conforming	
7	Reforming	Reforming	
8	Reforming	Reforming	
9	Reforming	Transforming	X
10	Transforming	Transforming	
11	Conforming	Transforming	X
12	Reforming	Reforming	
13	Conforming	Reforming	X
14	Transforming	Transforming	
15	Reforming	Reforming	
16	Transforming	Transforming	
17	Conforming	Reforming	X
18	Reforming	Reforming	
19	Conforming	Reforming	X
20	Transforming	Transforming	
21	Conforming	Reforming	X
22	Reforming	Reforming	
23	Reforming	Reforming	
24	Reforming	Transforming	X
TOTAL			9 (37.5%)