ABSTRACT

JOHN WAYNE EDWARDS. Examining the Effectiveness of Multicultural Education in Counselor Education Programs: A Phenomenological Approach. (Under the direction of Dr. S. Raymond Ting).

The significance of multicultural education in counseling education programs cannot be minimized. Multiculturalism within the context of counseling programs is so significant that, in some form, it has been integrated into every class as mandated by CACREP standards. This study examined the effectiveness of multicultural classes within counseling programs though gaining insight on the experiences of the students in those programs. Data was collected from 7 heterogeneous student participants from two different counseling education programs by the means of semi-structured interviews. Additional data was collected concerning the participant's multicultural class as well as experiences outside that particular class. Data were also collected when appropriate to gain a more robust understanding of the phenomenon of their experiences in their respective programs. Data analysis revealed four major themes and four subthemes which revealed not only a system of hierarchy and student fear, but also illustrated a lack of instruction on practical means and methods for conducting meaningful counseling with culturally diverse populations. Implications for counseling and recommendations for future research are discussed.

Examining the Effectiveness of Multicultural Education in Counselor Education Programs: A Phenomenological Approach

by
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DEDICATION

To Mom, the person who has displayed many times that we cannot allow fear to prevent us from doing different tasks and that even though we may experience negative consequences from others, we cannot sacrifice integrity for the praise of others.

BIOGRAPHY

John Edwards has been working as a mental health professional for more than eleven years. John is a Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor (LCMHC), a Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor Supervisor (LCMHCS), a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT), a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist Supervisor (LMFTS) and a National Certified Counselor (NCC). John also has experience with addictions and was at one time licensed as a Licensed Clinical Addictions Specialist Associated (LCASA). John has worked in a variety of settings and has worked with troubled children in the context of intensive in home services, as a community counselor where he worked with children, teens and adults and is currently working in private practice and working with mostly active duty military members and their families. John is committed to being of assistance to military families since they face unique challenges and which gives him the opportunity to work with a diversity of clients.

John was born in North Carolina where he continued to live and work. John grew up in a very modest environment with his mother and brother where he was exposed to people who were not always the best example or character. John received his bachelor's degree from the University of North Carolina at Pembroke in Philosophy and his master's also from the University of North Carolina at Pembroke in clinical mental health counseling.

John has always had a great interest in cultural differences and even participated in a study abroad experience to China. John's interest in cultural similarities and differences has resulted in him focusing on multicultural issues in general and multicultural issues in counseling in particular. To this end, John continues to enhance his understanding culturally diversity by traveling internationally and by immersing himself in the various aspects of the culture. Though

John has other interests and enjoys other activities, traveling and learning about various cultures continues to be his priority.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to first acknowledge Dr. Ting, who has been of great assistance to me and has displayed a significant amount of patience and encouragement which has helped me complete this work. I am grateful for your willingness to continue to be a positive influence while I continued to work on a project that is potentially emotionally charged.

It is also important to acknowledge the seven students who participated in the study and though some of them may not be enthusiastic about the results, they did assist with their open and honest communication and their experiences, which resulted in the foundation of this work.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the patience and dedication that my committee has shown to me in my efforts to produce something that may be unpleasant or uncomfortable for all involved. As many professors do before starting the multicultural class, this work may generate emotions and challenge our perceptions and it is necessary to recognize the commitment the committee has shown me that has allow me to bring forth this work. The committee has shown a level of support that may not have been granted in different circumstances.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The training and education of professional mental health therapists and counselor education professionals has become exceedingly complex. The most significant change has been the inclusion and integration of multicultural training within professional programs. So significant is multicultural education within counselor programs the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP, 2016) has integrated this standard as a requirement for accreditation. Likewise, the American Counselors Association (ACA, 2017) mandates the inclusion of multicultural training and integration in counselor programs and within their own ethical guidelines. Understanding the importance of multicultural education by professional organizations in the profession of mental health counseling, educators are faced with the challenge of what it means to be multiculturally competent and how to teach multiculturalism in order to facilitate that competence.

Multiculturalism in Counseling

It has been determined that multiculturalism must be included within counselor education programs, however it is also necessary to determine what materials are essential to communicate within the educational setting. Books on multiculturalism have mostly focused on issues such as racism, cultural norms, White privilege, equality, oppression and social justice (Korn and Bursztyn, 2002;, 1996; Pedersen et al., 2008; Richardson et al., 1981; Sue et al., 1996; Sue and Sue, 2008). One goal is to expose students to the inequities that minority groups experience and for students to acknowledge the impact oppression has on these groups. Additionally, students gain a better understanding of why these groups must be managed differently within a

therapeutic setting. Though this is often valuable information that could lead to significant personal insight, much of the material does not address how to specifically work with culturally diverse clients. For instance, multicultural literature may communicate that Asian clients may be hesitant to verbalized emotions they are experiencing, which may be helpful to a future professional. However the concept of White Privilege, the notion that all White people have an automatic unearned advantage solely because they are White, is not universally accepted and does not necessarily assist professionals on how they can best work with culturally different clients (Sue, et al., 2008). Additionally, within the classroom setting, literature often highlight incidences of racism, sexism, discrimination and the like, and these examples are often presented in ways that perpetuate the idea that the White person in the scenario is in a position of power and has behaved inappropriately or has taken some action that has specifically wronged the minority representative (Sue et al., 2008). Such scenarios are not only difficult to present but they become a catalyst for emotionally charged discussions within classrooms (Yoon et al., 2014).

The recognition of emotionally charged content and how that content is managed is a vital part of this study as to understand the experiences of students and to determine if multicultural insight is gained. It is observable that uncomfortable situations may influence or limit communication between people in a variety of real life situations. There is an assumption within this context, which is to be examined; that themes within multicultural education will both challenge and offend many participants. White students may object to the idea that they are personally responsible for the lack of progress or success of particular minority groups, minority students within those groups may challenge the assumption they cannot become prosperous due to White participant oppression. Some literature suggests the conflict experienced, particularly

by White males, is due to a loss of power and authority due to civil right and women's liberation (Korn et al., 2002), however conflicts within this context arise on a number of cultural and personal differences.

Since the ultimate goal is to train future professionals on how to successfully work with culturally diverse clients, it is necessary that students are informed on how cultural groups differ and how to be mindful of these differences when conducting therapy. Much of the literature communicates the oppression of all minorities and makes little to no distinction between people groups who have experienced that oppression. What is common in all current literature is that Whites are the oppressors of other groups and have few obstacles that would prevent them from being successful due to their racial advantage (Cross et al., 1989; Sue et al., 2008).

In the context of counselor education, it is notable that even the process of psychological training has been developed from a traditional European perspective which may be of limited applicability to minority groups and may even be oppressive. Sue et al. (2008) question "[if] counseling, psychotherapy, and education can be viewed as sociopolitical acts, and if we accept the fact that our theories of counseling are culture bound, then it is possible that mental health providers training in traditional Euro-American programs may be guilty of cultural oppression in working with client of color" (p. 35). Multiculturalism challenges traditional thinking and traditional training by highlighting the limitations associated with minority students and clients.

Potential Conflict in the Classroom

Additional challenges manifest related to training of professions by educators within the classroom. Discussions about racism, oppression, bigotry and the like are emotionally uncomfortable and some students and educators could be less disposed to adequately explore these topics in details. Abrams and Gibson (2007) state that both educators and students should

expect to feel uncomfortable as challenging multicultural issues are discussed which could result in potential conflict in the classroom. In addition, Reynolds (2011) explains that [t]raining may also be hampered by students' unwillingness to directly address uncomfortable or controversial topics. The clear challenge within the educational process is how to teach controversial or thought-provoking information in a way that allows everyone to have a clear voice in discussions and to ensure every person feels safe and free to engage even when disagreement is present.

Current Study

The study is designed to examine the experiences of students who have engaged in multicultural classroom training and to investigate the negative feelings and experiences by these students. It is a reasonable concern that subject matters that elicit high levels of emotional reactions may be more difficult to teach and to learn. Multicultural education and the specific topics discussed in the class specifically may result in extensive discussion about the validity of the topic and therefore may limit student exposure to the subject as a whole. The researcher intends to gain a better understanding of how students are reacting to this challenging subject and hopes to understand if the high emotional reactions by students and educators impact the quality of the educational process.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of the study is to examine the experiences of counselor education students who felt uncomfortable or experienced hostility in multicultural classes. Current methodologies establish a hierarchical system where those who immediately accept the teachings are rewarded while those who challenge the information experience hostility and criticism. In this system those who challenge accepted dogma are subject to correction which may include a reduction in

academic grades. Current approaches are dependent on what could be considered pressure to conform, shaming and ridicule of those who challenge accepted doctrine.

Research Question

> What are the experiences of counselor education students who participated in the counselor program's multicultural counseling class who were uncomfortable or experienced hostility and other negative interactions?

Definition of Terms

This section provides definitions of commonly used terms within the current study. Since some terms are not limited to a single definition, effort has been made to provide additional definitions for the sake of clarity.

Culture. This definition is important to ensure culture is not confused with race. Schmidt (1997) states that culture "consists of society's institutionalized values, beliefs, and practices that are *learned* through human interactions, not biologically inherited" (p. 15).

Ethnicity. According to disctionary.com, ethnicity is defined as "an ethnic group; a social group that shares a common and distinctive culture, religion, language, or the like" (https://www.dictionary.com/browse/ethnicity). Ethnicity and race are often used interchangeable and there is often little to no distinction made by the speaker.

Multiculturalism. "The view that cultures, races, and ethnicities, particularly those of minority groups, deserve special acknowledgement of their differences within a dominant political culture" (https://www.britannica.com/topic/multiculturalism). Also, "the idea of multiculturalism in contemporary political discourse and in political philosophy is about how to understand and respond to the challenges associated with cultural and religious diversity" (https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/multiculturalism). A third definition is "the presence of, or

support for the presence of, several distinct cultural or ethnic groups within a society" (https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/multiculturalism). Finally, "multiculturalism is a situation in which all the different cultural or racial groups in a society have equal rights and opportunities, and none is ignored or regarded as unimportant" (https://www.collinsdictionary.com/us/dictionary/english/multiculturalism).

Multicultural Counseling. "Multicultural counseling and therapy can be defined as both a helping role and process that uses modalities and defines goals consistent with the life experiences and cultural values of clients, recognizes client identities to include individual, group, and universal dimensions, advocates the use of universal and culture specific strategies and roles in the healing process, and balances the importance of individualism and collectivism in the assessment diagnosis, and treatment of client and client systems" (Sue & Sue, 2008, p. 42).

Multicultural Learning. "Acquiring increased awareness of subjective cultural context (world view), including one's own, and developing greater ability to interact sensitively and competently across cultural contexts as both an immediate and long term effect of exchange" (Hladik, 2016, p. 42).

Multicultural Competence. One definition simply states multicultural competence is "the product of multicultural learning" (Hladik, 2016, p. 42). As relating to counselor education, "multicultural counseling competence has been defined as counselors' attitudes/beliefs, knowledge, and skills related to working with individuals from a variety of cultural (e.g., racial, ethnic, gender, social class, and sexual orientation) groups" (Constantine et al., 2002, p. 334). Finally, "[m]ulticultural competence is a set of skills and knowledge (the cognitive component), attitudes (the affective or emotional component), and skills (the behavioral component) used by

an individual for effective and conflict-free communication with members of diverse cultures, nationalities, ethnicities, and races" (Hladik, 2016, p. 43)

Microaggressions. These are "[b]rief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory or negative racial slights and insults that potentially have harmful or unpleasant psychological impact on the target person or group" (Sue, et al., 2009, p. 88).

Racial Microaggressions. Similarly, racial microaggressions are "[b]rief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicates hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults to the target person or group" (Sue, et al., 2007, p. 273).

White Privilege. This term is defined as "an invisible knapsack of unearned assets that can be used to cash in each day for advantages not given to those who do not fit this mold" (Sue & Sue, 2008, p. 86). The term white privilege also refers to "an expression of power and social dominance of white European-Americans over racial/ethnic minorities through the attainment of unearned immunities and benefits" (Mindrup et al., 2011, p. 20).

Race. This is a term that is often used interchangeably with ethnicity; however, the term race more often refers a group of people who share similar biological characteristics which causes them to look similar in appearance, such as skin color. One of the definitions presented on dictionary.com states that race is "an arbitrary classification of modern humans, sometimes, especially formerly, based on any or a combination of various physical characteristics, as skin color, facial form, or eye shape, and now frequently based on such genetic markers as blood groups" (Dictionary.com). Other definitions of race make the term much more difficult to conceptualize. For instance, the United State census bureau "defines race as a person's self-

identification with one or more social groups. An individual can report as White, Black or African American, Asian, American Indian and Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, or some other race" (https://www.census.gov/mso/www/training/-pdf/race-ethnicity-onepager.pdf).

Social Justice. The term social justice refers to "the belief that every person is deserving of equal opportunity" (Hansford et al., 2017, p. 200). Additionally, "[a] social justice perspective in counseling acknowledges issues of power, privilege, and oppression" and "uses social advocacy and activism as a means to address inequitable social, political, and economic conditions that impede on the academic, career, and personal/social development of individuals, families, and communities" (Ratts, 2009, p. 160).

Summary

The intent of multicultural education may be more obscure than it was originally. In theory, multicultural training is designed to equip future professional on how to most effectively work with culturally diverse clients and to ensure a level of multicultural competency. Nevertheless, methods of teaching multicultural education seem to entail communicating accepted truths to which students are expected to fully embrace and propagate. It is the intention of the author to examine how external pressures impacted student behaviors within the classroom and to determine how this approach of teaching may be altered in the future in order to be more effective.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

There has been a significant paradigm shift in education over recent decades towards the inclusion and integration of multiculturalism. Some educators entirely accept the precepts of this shift while others are resistant and both perspectives can be argued effectively (Korn et al., 2002). Nevertheless, multiculturalism and multicultural education has been adopted in large numbers of educational institutions and has been implemented as a required part of new educational standards. The purpose of this literature review is to attempt to define multiculturalism, examine its importance in counselor education, bringing to light some of the challenges that still interfere with a clear and robust understanding and implementation of multiculturalism while providing suggestions on how multiculturalism education can be improved and effectively implemented.

Defining Multiculturalism

Understanding multiculturalism within education is neither clear nor easy. Pedersen (2001) describes multiculturalism as a force within the helping professions. The literature on multiculturalism and multicultural education does not provide a single definition nor does the literature agree on the vital concepts of the principle. In fact, some literature confirms the definition of multiculturalism in concise terms continues to be problematic and obscure (Rattansi, 2011). Some definitions are more comprehensive than others, and many agree on some key components while others do not. Nevertheless, some authors write extensively about multicultural education and counseling without clearly defining the term itself. A number of authors also fail to make clear distinctions between culturally sensitive counseling and providing methods of person centered counseling to ensure the needs and views of clients are considered. Sue and Sue (2008)

write in great detail about multicultural counseling while never defining the term. The lack of a clear definition continues to make multicultural education more difficult (Daya, 2001). Unfortunately, the authors' unwillingness or inability to clearly define multiculturalism may result in difficulties in the education of new professional counselors.

Other writers have taken greater measure in their attempt to express the meaning of multiculturalism. Pederson (2000) defines a multicultural perspective as "seeking to provide a conceptual framework that recognizes the complex diversity of a pluralistic society while at the same time suggesting bridges of shared concern that bind culturally different persons to one another" (p. 35). Pederson (2000) provides a working definition that expresses the importance of recognizing the differences and similarities of cultures that coexist. Similarly, the **I**nternational **F**ederation of **L**ibrary **A**ssociations and Institutions (IFLA) website provides a similar definition that broadens the differences of peoples in a single society in stating: "multiculturalism is the co-existence of diverse cultures, where culture includes racial, religious, or cultural groups and is manifested in customary behaviors, cultural assumptions and values, patterns of thinking, and communicative styles" (http://www.ifla.org/publications/defining-multiculturalism). The definition presented here expresses the nuances that distinguish various cultural groups. Racial, religious, behavior, values, and thinking processes distinguish one culture from another, and by these differences we can adopt techniques and methods that will be most suitable for different people groups. This definition of multiculturalism provides a base by which we can recognize how counseling must be customized to different cultural groups.

The general concepts of these two definitions agree even though one places more emphases on the unique aspects that form cultural groups. For instance, language has always been a clear method of distinguishing cultural groups, however this aspect of culture is

sometimes overlooked since the educational process for which we are discussing is centered within America where English is nearly exclusively spoken within the general society. Recognizing the differences of these definitions, the definition of multiculturalism will be adopted in order to help facilitate the discussion and to highlight the purpose of the movement. In an effort to express multiculturalism in the briefest possible definition, the researcher's own view is that teaching multiculturalism is the act of respecting and displaying sensitivity towards all groups of people while recognizing and understanding cultural differences and adopting methods and strategies that will facilitate the most effective means to achieve intended goals both educationally and clinically. The researcher's definition is somewhat narrower and is intended to be focused on therapeutic relationships rather than the broadest possible explanation. The vital distinction attempted here is to bring to focus the importance of respecting all cultures and to help communicate the importance of cultural differences in order to facilitate respect between groups.

A clear understanding of multiculturalism is vital to ensuring uniformity in the educational process. Educators emphasize the need to express sensitivity in order that all cultural groups experience inclusion in both academic and therapeutic settings (Sue et al., 2008). In counselor education, embracing and displaying respect for culturally different clients is vital to both the professional relationship and the ability of both professionals and clients to engage in meaningful work. Understanding a client's culture will allow professionals to be more effective in being agents of change along with displaying sensitivity and respect for the client's belief system.

In order to equip new professionals, it is essential that educators utilize the same tools needed in counseling and are sensitive to the differences of their students. Like the emic

perspective, it is necessary that professors teaching multiculturalism interact in ways that will allow everyone to benefit from the experience. This aspect of displaying cultural sensitivity to students when teaching multiculturalism is a challenge that must be implemented.

Counselor Training

Counselor education has changed significantly over the decades and no change has been more significant than the integration of multiculturalism into all parts of counseling training (CACREP, 2016). The importance of multicultural education within counselor programs is communicated within Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP, 2016) standards. CACREP requires that "curricular experiences and demonstrated knowledge" is necessary in all eight of the common core requirements, including social and cultural diversity (American Counseling Association, 2001). This is an important change since previous and current counselor programs that are not CACREP accredited, may not include classes on multiculturalism. Those who graduated without the benefit of these classes may be burdened with working with clients with whom they are ill-equipped based on current educational standards. The lack of a multicultural training may limit the effectiveness of these professionals when working with culturally different people groups which would both limit the effectiveness of a counselor while also violate CACREP standards (CACREP, 2016).

Student's Emotional Reactions

Though the importance of multiculturalism has been established, the effective implementation of multicultural training into counselor programs remains unclear. Discussing an emotionally charged topic like multiculturalism in the classroom is going to be challenging for educators and students alike (Yoon et al., 2014). Training may also be hampered by students' unwillingness to directly address uncomfortable or controversial topics (Reynolds, 2011).

Educators will present information that may be challenging to students' personal views or values and this can result in direct challenges by students (Burton & Furr, 2014). Multiculturalism teaches that White students have been favored by society and that White people in that society have been responsible for the historical oppression of other groups. There is pressure for White students to take ownership of the harm they have indirectly inflicted on others and to recognize the advantages they receive from those oppressive actions (Sue et al., 2008). As a result, some students may experience invalidation when discussing differing perspectives in this area and may even feel attacked for harboring a different perspective.

Sociopolitical Influences

Much multicultural training focuses on specific sociopolitical concepts and constructs including racism, discrimination, equality and social justice (CACREP, 2016). Unfortunately, these terms are not clearly defined within the body of literature and many examples of these concepts within educational texts are ambiguous. For instance, Sue et al., (2008) provide an example which compares how two couples, one a minority couple and one a White couple, are treated differently when dining at a restaurant. Sue et al., (2008) explain that the minority couple is seated first and orders first but is served well after the White couple is served. Sue et al., (2008) use this illustration to show that the White couple is treated with preferential standards and more consideration than the minority couple and the source of this unfair treatment is due to racism. This example of unequal behavior towards the minority couple is designed to show the slights and inconsideration that people from minority cultures experience and how White couples are advantaged within the larger culture. The example is designed to inform students of the unfair treatment minority clients experience consistently with the expectation that new counselors will be mindful of similar situations in the future and make efforts to advocate for

clients or prevent these situations altogether. It is also noteworthy to highlight the point that many of the examples in Multicultural literature are what could be considered surface level judgement, meaning that the context and numerous variables that comprise the situation are often not considered. In other words, examples are used which are assumed to be racially or culturally significant based on a first look or emotional reaction but may actually have nothing to do with race or privilege in that specific situation.

Microaggressions

New concepts within multiculturalism have developed that may result in challenges for both the majority culture and those in positions of authority. One concept that has been recently discussed and debated is that of microaggressions. It has been stated that microaggressions are "brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to people of color because they belong to a racial minority group" (Sue et al., 2009). Microaggressions are commonly considered covert forms of racism and are seen as the means to insult or denigrate a person while leaving the hearer confused about the meaning of the statement. For instance, during a lecture conducted by Dr. Sue on the campus of North Carolina State University, he explained that being praised for his ability to speak the English language well is a microaggression. The microaggression communicates that Dr. Sue is a perpetual foreigner, is not a "true American" and the comment is a racist and aggressive statement and in no way is a compliment. This concept is challenging to some since the source of the microaggression may come from someone who is not outwardly hostile toward the hearer and is often behaving in a way that is complimentary towards that person. However, since the hearer is the person who determines if a microaggression has been enacted, the expectation of educators is that the speaker is to be chastised for his or her unknowingly insensitive remark. In this example, Sue et al., (2008) are correct in their

interpretation of the message since the precepts of multiculturalism make the speaker responsible for the interpretation. This complicated subtle exchange involving motivation of speakers is challenging for those who want to be multiculturally sensitive yet are unsure what would be considered culturally insensitive to others. The circumstances of these interactions is further complicated because people have found it acceptable to allow the hearer to determine the meaning of the statement rather than the speaker. Objectively, it is reasonable to allow the speaker to explain what he or she intended to communicate rather than allowing some other party to do so. In this instance, we have to accept that the speaker is the most informed and has the most clarity on what message was intended to be communicated.

Another example can be seen in modern politics when Joe Biden commented about Barack Obama by saying "you got the first mainstream African-American who is articulate and bright and clean and a nice-looking guy" (http://www.cnn.com/2007/POLITICS/01/31/biden.obama/). In this example a White politician attempted to pay a compliment to an African-American politician. This comment may suggest, however, that Biden thinks African Americans are not articulate, bright, or clean. In short, in an effort to communicate praise for someone else, this person ultimately failed, and what is worse is the comment can be interpreted as anti-minority and racist. The speaker would have done well to be more mindful of the words he used and to express himself in a way that was more culturally considerate. This situation provides a real life example of how our lack of multicultural education can have negative impacts on those around us. In the context of the classroom, the challenges associated with appropriate talk is not limited to the uninformed. Seward and Guiffrida (2012) highlight that some students are hyper-sensitive to what they say for the purpose of being a good example of that racial and cultural group and as to not propagate

negative stereotypes. In addition, Lilienfeld (2017) explains that microaggressions, in general, express strong claims by the victims but are ambiguous at best because of the possibility of misunderstanding, misinterpretation or the assumption that a commented was associated with race by the speaker. Reviewing the microaggression research program and related literature, he concluded with eighteen suggestions for advancing the scientific status of the MRP, recommended abandonment of the term "microaggression," called for a moratorium on microaggression training programs and publicly distributed microaggression lists pending more studies to address the MRP's scientific limitations.

Addressing microaggressions within an educational context is particularly challenging to both educators and students. Some may consider a color-blind approach as ideal in that people are all treated equally. However, Constaintine et al., (2008) challenge this approach among Whites because it communicates that race is currently irrelevant and has no impact on the lives of others. In this instance, equality per se is not the goal but rather the acknowledgment and consideration of individual race and culture.

Us Against Them Thinking

In some ways multicultural training is designed to communicate the wrongs suffered by minority groups in various forms including racism, sexism, homophobia and oppression while showing that those in power are responsible (Sue et al., 2008). The educational process is complicated because White Americans, those in society and those in the classroom, are generally portrayed in the multicultural literature as the perpetrators of the wrongs inflicted on minority groups while those in the majority culture are at times unwilling to accept the mantel of responsibility. This means that much of the time multicultural education focuses on the sociopolitical perspective thereby mainly focusing "power differences, oppression, and

privilege" (Yoon et al., 2014). Whites, both in society and in the classroom, are often hostile and angry at the idea that they are responsible for the hostile acts perpetrated on other cultures and are often confused about how to adjust in order to ensure oppression is eliminated. Training in multiculturalism is not only about communicating facts, it is also about helping students alter their perspective on how the world is viewed from cultures other than one's own.

To complicate the matter further, objections made by White students can become object lessons within the educational environment. For instance, White students may have difficulties acknowledging the disparity between cultures which often results in feelings of anger and frustration. Some may view the disclosure that minority cultures have been abused by the majority culture as a personal attack and therefore may display resistance to that information in the form of arguing their lack of personal actions or that other minority cultures have behaved in a similar manner. This approach may result in less communication within classrooms instead of more communication. Educators must seriously assess if students feel safe and free to examine and discuss their personal beliefs and thoughts or if the current educational approach is preventing that freedom (Hyde & Ruth, 2002). In fact, Burton and Furr (2014) recommend "shutting down the dialogue" as a means of addressing emotionally charged discussions if the educator judges the discussion to be unacceptable (p. 99). These challenges become barriers, which makes students more difficult to educate, and cause the entire educational process to be more difficult. Hyde et al., (2002) state that research findings support the idea that students' self-edit and limited engagement in classroom discussions because of discomfort. Abrams and Gibson (2007) explain that both educators and students should expect to feel uncomfortable as challenging multicultural issues are discussed. Such interactions may establish hostile group

dynamics within the classroom and establish an "us against them" attitude, pairing those who identify as an oppressed group against those who are viewed as oppressors.

Another circumstance that contributes to the "us against them" perspective is the assumption imposed on White students. In the context of multicultural education, White students are seen as those who lack multicultural awareness or understanding. White students are perpetrators of intentional and unintentional wrongs, those who receive unearned benefit from abuses inflicted onto others, and are assumed to evoke an innate racist perspective towards other racial and cultural groups. Sue et al., (2009) suggest Whites respond to other groups from a White Superiority perspective which makes the educational process difficult at times. These assumptions that position groups as perpetrators and victims stifles dialogue and interferes with the larger educational process.

White Privilege

Many students are unaware of the experiences of other cultures because of their own White Privilege (Sue et al., 2008). The term White Privilege refers to the unearned benefits and considerations that Whites receive because of skin color and because of their majority status (Sue et al., 2008; Pedersen et al., 2008). In addition, Korn et al., (2002) explains White privilege can also be observed in that society caters to the majority culture which allows for a better and easier life for those within this group. Others hold a stronger negative view of the meaning of White privilege stating it is a "way of being in the world that is used to maintain White Supremacy" (Rollock, 2012, p. 518). Korn et al., (2002) explain that people in the majority culture encounter less scrutiny and suspicion than those from minority cultures, have easier access to social and educational necessities and are less penalized by the legal system, while also maintaining a status of superiority over other races. Because of the inequity of social advantage gained by those in the

majority culture, it is important this concept is discussed and fully understood in the larger context of society.

Though it may be uncomfortable for White students, it is important that they understand and acknowledge the receipt of unearned privilege and to understand how this advantage negatively affects other cultural groups (Cook et al., 2012). The challenge is also complicated since many White students and counselors experience defensiveness and hostility when privilege is discussed (Estrada, 2013). Nevertheless, history provides numerous examples of larger cultural groups oppressing smaller groups for their own benefit (Korn et al., 2002). Likewise, the United States has a long history of mistreating minority groups for the benefit of White America (Sue et al., 2008). Within multicultural education it is vital that White students understand their culture is responsible for the abuse of minorities over the centuries and the benefits they have gained (Estrada et al., 2013). Students learn that unearned privilege was gained by the subjugation and oppression of other cultures and that those in power were often brutal to those who were not part of that majority culture.

Affirmative Action

What is meaningful in these observations is that significant multicultural educational programming is focused on highlighting the oppression suffered by minority groups while expressing the demand for greater equality among all people groups. The struggle for equality appears to be simple, however, the implementation is challenging because many people who embrace multiculturalism are inconsistent on the meaning of equality or how to obtain it. For instance, many universities now use race preferences in determining who will be admitted into specific programs. At times these racial preferences could be a higher priority than the academic standing of the individual applying to the program and may be used to admit those who are not

academically qualified over those who are. In such incidences, the race of the minority applicant is given higher priority than that of the White applicant even if the White applicant is more qualitied on other measures. In short, the White applicant is considered less desirable in terms of multiculturalism and in the name of diversity is given less consideration. Findings from the case of Grutter v. Bolinger (2003) suggests the process is justified on the grounds that racial and cultural diversity should be given a higher priority than factors that could eliminate minority applicants from consideration and cause classes to be homogeneous. Multicultural education teaches that minority groups are inherently disadvantaged and racial preferences are viewed as a method of balancing the scales in order that more minority students are given opportunities regardless of expected academic requirements (Grutter v. Bollinger, 2003). To that end, there is a concerted effort by many organizations, from universities to employers, to seek out minorities for the purpose of establishing greater diversity.

In the universities, within a multicultural context, the admissions process may be designed to give minority groups an advantage because of a bias against minority applicants in the assumption that they cannot meet the basic requirements set by universities. The challenge in holding this position is that one can say that groups are at a disadvantage without concern, but the position that minority groups cannot meet minimal standards unintentionally communicates that minority groups are not good enough and need an advantage due to some deficiency within themselves. The mixed messages concerning issues like affirmative action or preferential admissions are some of the ongoing challenges in multicultural education. Educators hold to the position that minority groups are not incapable, but rather disadvantaged and therefore it is necessary to evaluate them with this disadvantage in mind.

In addition, African American students are likely to feel additional emotional stress if universities are comprised of White American values which are in conflict with African American culture (Thompson et al., 2010). Therefore, attending university may be viewed within the African American community as a means of seeking acceptance in White society while rejecting African American culture. African American's in such situations often find themselves in social isolation and make a shift from relying on friends and coworkers for support rather immediate and extended family (Thompson et al., 2010). Here again is revealed a circumstance where providing additional consideration for minority applicants may inadvertently result in emotional discuss and isolation in the larger organization.

The position is complicated further since giving an advantage to a group over other groups is by definition discriminatory and therefore contradicts the position of equality held by most multicultural educators. Some educators believe it is justifiable to provide specific advantages to minority groups because of the historic wrongs and the lack of access these groups experienced in the past. Multicultural educators acknowledge that minority groups have been oppressed and seek to correct that history by both eliminating the mechanisms that oppress groups and by providing minority groups with an advantage to speed the process of establishing equality. In this instance, supporters of multiculturalism must consider the behavior justified in providing an advantage to some groups over another groups in order to obtain the desired outcome.

Multicultural Counseling Competence Definitions

Based on the importance placed on multiculturalism by CACREP and the integration of multiculturalism into counselor programs, it is reasonable to expect that multicultural competency is ultimately achieved by students. How to develop competence, however, is neither

universally understood nor is it well defined in the same way that the definition of multiculturalism is not universally accepted. Since multicultural competence is not clearly defined in the literature determining adequate levels of competence continues to remain a challenge for educators. Speaking for the American Association for Health Education, Tremethick and Smith, (2009) state "[c]ultural competence is the ability of an individual to understand and respect values, attitudes, beliefs, and mores that differ across cultures, and to consider and respond appropriately to these differences in planning, implementing, and evaluating health education and promotion programs and interventions" (p. 2). This definition mirrors that of other definitions in the expectation for understanding and respect of other cultures while utilizing that understanding when implementing programs that impact those cultures.

Some definitions of multiculturalism focus on programs and systems and are intended to serve a variety of cultures within a larger society, while other definitions require the integration of organizational standards and policies (Hladik, 2016; Roberts et al., 1990). In juxtaposing these definitions, an organization can have multicultural competent employees but the organization cannot be multiculturally competent if polices and company values do not reflect the unique needs of the various cultures being served. According to Roberts et al. (1990), programs must be customizable, and they explain by stating "[c]ultural competence refers to a program's ability to honor and respect those beliefs, interpersonal styles, attitudes and behaviors both of families who are clients and the multicultural staff who are providing services" (Roberts et al., 1990, p. 1). In this case, there is an emphasis that there must be diversity of employees in addition to programs within the organization.

Other definitions echo the view of embracing the ethos of previous definitions. Cross et al., (1989) state that cultural competence is "a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies

that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals and enable that system, agency, or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations (p.13). The definition by Cross et al. (1989) clarifies that multicultural competence is not only the acquisition of information about other cultures but is also an embracing and affirming of cultures as evidenced by enacting policies that meet the unique needs of these cultures and the implementation of attitudes and methods that provide the most effective means of assistance to a variety of culturally different peoples. The definition by Cross et al. (1989) illustrates how multicultural competence can be misunderstood by students. It may not be unreasonable to consider someone competent once that person has been educated and informed on the issue. However, the aforementioned definition highlights the fact that knowledge is not sufficient and that one must display thoughts and actions that are congruent with educational precepts.

What is consistent throughout these definitions of multicultural competence is the need for professionals to accept certain positions and to embrace certain viewpoints, not just an understanding of them. It is unclear if holding different values or worldviews may be considered multiculturally competent, but if one considers that certain views may interfere with graduating or becoming licensed, it is likely many will not openly disclose this information. If it is the case that only those adhering to a specific set of values are multiculturally competent, then the authors of the literature are communicating that competence is associated more with ideology than the accumulation of information. The mixing of information and ideology in measuring multicultural competence complicates matters in that it is at times unclear what is being measured. Understanding a concept even if there is not agreement generally displays competence.

Nevertheless, the similarities in these definitions expresses the importance of understanding, valuing and respecting views and practices of other cultures and the need for

professionals to interact with different cultures in a way that is compassionate and sensitive to these culture differences. In short, professional counselors are expected to have a proficient understanding of race and culture in order to work effectively with culturally diverse clients.

The Necessity of Multicultural Competence

Mental health professions, in all specialties, will encounter clients who differ from them in meaningful ways (Johnson & Williams, 2014). Many professionals who have been licensed more than 20 years had little or no requirements concerning multicultural education, and some current programs lack this requirement. This lack of understanding on how to work effectively with culturally diverse clients means many current professionals are either ill-equipped to work with minority groups in meaningful ways or they are resigned to learn through trial and error, which may result is significant discomfort for both clients and professionals. Multicultural competence is both an ethical obligation and is necessary so professional are equipped to work effectively with diverse clients (ACA, 2017). The American Counseling Association (ACA) code of ethics mandates to professional counselors that "multicultural counseling competency is required across all counseling specialties…" and it is vital that we understand how to assess multicultural competency of new professional counselors (ACA, C.2.a., 2017). This ethical mandate requires professionals to enhance multicultural education with the expected goal of becoming more multiculturally competent. Neglecting this aspect of counseling is detrimental to the professional's ability to work with clients and is a violation of ethical standards.

This mandate is important partially due to the change in the current social environment in which the demographics of potential clients has changed significantly. The ACA (2017) mandates that professional counselors and counselor educators must be prepared to work with a wide variety of people groups. It is generally understood and accepted that one method of

counseling is not universally effective, even if all clients hail from the same culture. It is equally clear that professionals must adjust to how client issues are addressed within an appropriate cultural context based on the needs of cultural requirements of the client.

Once the importance of multicultural competence is understood, the challenges of determining how multicultural competency is achieved and how it is measured must be addressed. The first goal is more easily addressed in that the CACREP (2016) standard has mandated that multicultural competencies are to be integrated into all classes within counselor training programs. In addition, many programs offer at least one class that is exclusively dedicated to multicultural education or multicultural counseling. The second goal is to incorporate a multicultural perspective into training content. It is necessary to ensure these two goals are achieved to facilitate adequate multicultural competence in counselor education programs. Acknowledging the requirements for multiculturalism in counselor programs, there is also the challenge of what information is vital to be covered in order to facilitate multicultural competence. There must be a clear prioritizing of the subject of multiculturalism as a whole to ensure students can be honestly assessed.

Current Limitations in Multicultural Education in Counseling

There is clear and strong support for the implementation of multicultural education within counselor programs and supporters continue to work to improve professional training. However, there are some strong challenges to multiculturalism which create tension both during and after the educational process. Multiculturalism emphasizes the equality between racial and cultural groups, however, one challenge is that some cultural groups are unrepresented in certain professions. For instance, because of underrepresentation Hispanic-Americans are unable to receive full benefits within the larger society in these areas. This view suggests that equality can

only be achieved when all cultural groups are equal in proportional number and position. Another challenge, that was previously mentioned, is that multiculturalism can lead to an "us against them" mentality which may lead to more conflict and less empathy between cultural groups. Tension between people groups may result in less dialogue between these cultural groups and could make working with diverse clients more difficult. The us and them thinking is often displayed because often people are divided and subdivided into parts that are labeled as privileged or oppressed (Ratts et al., 2015). For example, an African American gay male in a multicultural context is an oppressed person in that he is African American and gay but is also privileged in that he is male. Nevertheless, these views must be examined and discussed in order to provide clarity since ignoring these issues would be antithetical to the precepts of respecting diverse perspectives which is the foundation on which multiculturalism is based

Clustering People Groups

One of the most distinct challenges associated with multicultural education is that educators tend to cluster large people groups into single categories while ignoring the differences among the various cultures within the broad group. For instance, multicultural education generally categorizes cultural groups into one of five large racial groups, European-American, African-American, Hispanic-American, Asian-American and American Indians (Sue, et al., 2008). From a multicultural perspective, these large categories are wholly inadequate to describe the various cultures which fall under their umbrella. The term Hispanic for instance, fails to distinguish differences between various Spanish speaking people groups. People originally from Mexico may share a language and have similar characteristics as those from other Spanish speaking countries however, it is reasonable to consider that people from Puerto-Rico or Cuba may be very different culturally and experientially. To describe these various groups of people

by the same identifier eliminates the uniqueness of each cultural identity. In fact, the Pew research group explains that there are more than 14 different cultural groups that self-identify as Hispanic. (http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/asianamericans-graphics/). This approach suggests all Spanish speaking peoples will share the same worldview, will address problems in similar ways and will be uniform in how they respond to metal health issues. In failing to recognize significant distinctions between cultural groups with similar characteristics, those who are training others in multiculturalism are themselves failing to be inclusive. Failing to acknowledge the distinctions between similar cultural groups by grouping them all together into a single group identity is also failing in multicultural education.

Hispanic people groups are not alone in this kind of inappropriate grouping. For instance, the Pew Research Center website states that 86% of Asians are made up of six racially and culturally distinct groups. (http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/asianamericans-graphics/). Consequently, multicultural educators are potentially describing all six distinctive cultural groups as Asian while failing to acknowledge the cultural differences of these groups.

One group that may be particularly challenging is that of African-Americans since they are often identified by particular physical characteristics. According to the Penn State online journal *The Mentor*,

> While African Americans are the largest racial minority in the United States, there are many other groups of people that have dark-skinned members. These include some people from the Caribbean (Jamaica, Virgin Islands, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Haiti, Martinique, etc.), Pakistan, South America, Europe, Southern India, Mexico, Cuba, and also dark-skinned Creoles, Native Americans, as well as mid-eastern groups from

Sudan and Saudi Arabia, newly immigrated Africans, and a variety of multi-racial people (https://dus.psu.edu/mentor/2013/08/blacks-advisees-culturally-mosaic-context/).

In the same way educators are experiencing difficulties among White students by grouping all White people as one cultural group. We see similar difficulties in failing to distinguish between various subgroups within a larger cultural context.

The issue of inappropriately categorizing different cultures groups does not end with minority groups. There are dozens of unique and distinct countries in Europe, and each is unique in cultural identity and traditions. Authorities of multicultural literature tend to categorize European or White Americans into a single broad category (Sue et al., 2008). Unfortunately, this approach fails to acknowledge the differences between cultures of people groups. Pedersen et al. (2008) further emphasizes this view by discussing the challenge of conducting counseling with Native Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos, Arab and Muslim clients and Black Americans without even mentioning White Americans. Pedersen et al. (2008) suggest White or European culture is the single dominate culture in America. However, this perspective simply ignores the commitment to understand and respect individual cultural groups. If this standard is to be followed, and it must apply to all groups, then it is the responsibility of every educator to distinguish these cultures differences. It is unclear how such a significant issue can occur consistently overlooked in multicultural literature without being addressed directly.

Criticism of Opposing Views

Another issue that has experienced push back is the accusation of discrimination against people who have voiced opposition to the mandates of those in authority concerning multiculturalism in education. Hays and Chang (2003) stated that counselor educators and supervisors have a gatekeeping obligation and ensuring new professionals are multiculturally

competent in that their training and perspectives are consistent with societal norms. There have been examples where colleges and universities dismissed candidates from completing counselor programs because there is a lack of conformity concerning multicultural positions (Case No. 09-CV-11237). For instance, Forrest (2012) described Julea Ward as a student who sued her former university for being dismissed from a counselor program due to anti-gay views and Ward's unwillingness to provide counseling services to certain clients. Ironically, Hays et al., (2003) in discussing White Privilege, explain how it is unreasonable to expect for those with less power to have open and honest discussions with those in power without fear of retaliation. In the case of Ward, her willingness to discuss her discomfort led to removal from the program.

Multicultural education directs that students and professionals do not have the right to opt out of working with any client regardless of personal views and those who do choose to be selective with whom they work are considered by those in authority within the counseling profession to be behaving in a discriminatory manner (Forrest, 2012). The challenge for the multicultural educators is that by removing students such as Ward, they are working against the very idea of multicultural education and reducing the level of diversity within their programs. By its definition the concept of diversity is to embrace different views, not just complexions. This process is working against diversity since the student is being removed for holding views that are unacceptable to those in authority (ACA, 2017). Based on results, it appears those in training programs must not only behave in ways that are considered appropriate but must also endorse the views that are considered appropriate and acceptable by those in authority. Though Ward may have been rightfully dismissed from her program for additional reasons, the issue this situation brings to light is whether it is reasonable to discriminate against the student because she discriminated against a potential client. From a multicultural perspective the position of those

who removed Ward from the program is justified even if it may be oppressive or discriminatory. In this situation, it may have served Ward better to adopt the method of other students who are concerned about similar negative reactions and choose to say nothing (Sue et al., 2009). Such decisions may communicate that correct ideology is most important and one cannot be an effective professional without this shared perspective.

Microaggressions

Another challenge facing the implementation of multiculturalism is that of how to appropriately address microaggressions. Microaggressions are "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory or negative racial slights and insults that potentially have harmful or unpleasant psychological impact on the target person or group" (Sue et al., 2009, p. 88). This definition suggests that microaggressions can be perpetuated by a variety groups, however other definitions suggest otherwise. One of these definitions explains "[r]acial microaggressions are brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color" (Sue et al., 2007, p. 271). This definition makes it clear that microaggressions are targeted towards people of color or minority groups. Sue and Sue (2008) expand the definition by defining microaggressions as "brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to a tart group such as people of color, women, and gays" (p. 106) all of whom are considered by multicultural educators as oppressed people groups.

Definitions in the literature explain that microaggressions are unintentional and often unconscious, which means preventing microaggressions during normal social interactions

becomes a significant challenge. To complicate matters further, multicultural educators explain that the responsibility to avoid engaging in microaggressions is on the part of the speaker rather than the hearer (Sue et al., 2008). When interacting with people of different cultures there is often a potential deficiency of understanding concerning what may or may not be offensive. Continuing with the assumption that people are not inflicting microaggressions on each other intentionally, it appears unreasonable that students and professionals would be able to anticipate offenses and then take actions to avoid them without knowing anything about the hearer. Understanding these interactions and challenges, the most expeditious way to avoid offense is to eliminate one's interactions with those who are culturally different. This response however would violate the very thrust of multiculturalism as a means of broadening one's ability to work with a wider variety of peoples.

It is reasonable to educate others about the potential harm of microaggressions. Likewise, it is equally reasonable that the topic is presented in a meaningful way so that each party holds a level of responsibility for the encounter. For instance, if the counselor says something that her client believes is a microaggression, then it is unreasonable to have the expectation that the counselor should have known the comment was offensive in advance and she should have used better judgement. If the speaker knows in advance what is being said is offensive, then microaggressions would also never be considered unintentional.

The literature provides numerous examples of microaggressions and provides insight on why these behaviors are not appropriate with culturally different clients (Sue et al., 2008; Sue et al., 2009). Some examples of microaggressions used in the literature include "the most qualified person should get the job," that "I don't see color," and "you speak English well, I didn't notice your accent," and "Where are you really from?" (Sue et al., 2008). This assumption of offense

however, is not universal and does not hold true to every person or situation. Dr. Ben Carson (2014) writes in his book that he had an encounter where he was mistaken for the orderly (a hospital attendant) in the hospital where he worked as a neurosurgeon. Dr. Carson explained that he politely and without hostility corrected the misinformed person that he was the surgeon who would perform the procedure and he pointed out that mistake never happened to him again. In this situation Dr. Carson did not consider the encounter a microaggression but rather considered it as a simple misunderstanding. Microaggressions are much of the time viewed as an intentional infliction of harm on another person, and when that is assumed, the people involved in such exchanges may be incline to end communications. This is the Achilles' heel of microaggressions, in that the interactions between members of differing cultural groups are likely to stop interacting and lead to people seeking assistance from only people who share the same culture or race exclusively.

Such encounters are even more concerning in the educational experience particularly in multicultural education classes. Lilienfeld (2017) highlights this challenge when professors are often faced with a no-win scenario, where she is in the wrong if she fails to call on a student of color or if she compliments the student for a correct response. In the first instance a microaggression occurs by ignoring the raised hand of a student of color and if the student of color provides a correct or meaning answer the professor could be viewed as denigrating the student by complimenting her as if the student would not normally be able to provide correct answers.

A more reasonable approach to educating others about microaggressions is to encourage open and honest communication and to give everyone permission to voice concerns while at the same time refraining from taking offense or making moral judgements. Instead of focusing on

who is to blame, the educational process can be more effective by learning how words and actions are negatively affecting others and how to resolve these issues when they happen. For instance, if a White university advisor asks an African-American student if he is the first person in his family to go to college, that student may consider that question a microaggression since the advisor could be implying that African-Americans either do not attend college or they are not intelligent enough to do so. In this scenario, it is more reasonable for the student to voice his concerns about what the advisor said rather than blame the advisor for the inconsiderate and hostile message. However, Lilienfeld (2017) also highlights the challenge that such a situation may be more actually described as a cognitive distortion rather than a genuine insult since the student cannot know if the advisor is making those assumptions about his race, family or culture.

In the same way, as in a traditional counseling session with a client, a professional would encourage open communication between the client and someone else in order to reconcile the relationship. Misunderstanding and miscommunication, including cognitive distortions, are commonplace in counseling sessions. Therefore, it is necessary for there to be open and honest communication between people without blame or hostility when it appears microaggressions are experienced.

Implementation of Multicultural Training

Implementation of learned skills follows this line of thinking. Another significant challenge within multicultural education is the process of educating professionals on how to effectively apply what they have learned. Authors of multicultural literature constantly use phrases that express the importance of being sensitive to various cultural norms, developing strategies that are culturally sensitive and interacting with culturally diverse clients in ways that reflect respect of individual cultures (Sue et al., 2008). The literature provides information about

cultural differences that may be challenged as well. For instance, Sue and Sue (2008) explain that Black families use corporal punishment and "critical comments" more often than White families and though these behaviors have a negative impact on White children there is no such negative impact on Black children.

However, there is little to no literature that provides practical information on how to implement these skills. Experts communicate an expectation and leave it to students to discover how to implement these mandates in real life situations. What does it mean to show cultural sensitivity to a client? What does it look like for counselors to respect the cultural values of clients and what does that look like within a counseling session? Generally speaking, a reasonable answer concerning the implementation of culturally sensitive interventions would be framed in some kind of person centered approach. Counselors can show cultural sensitivity by showing a general respect and consideration for all clients. This approach, however, does not necessarily display a high level of multicultural competency and would be considered insufficient by educators in the field. What is lacking in the teaching of multiculturalism is the practical side of the subject where students can learn from specific examples that will assist them in real life situations. In some ways, it is similar to a student graduating from a counselor education program having never participated in an internship where she actually practiced counseling. Without this higher level of training, students are left with the burden of knowing the importance of cultural issues along with the knowledge that they are unprepared to address those issues after graduation.

Assumptions of White Culture

The teaching and educational process of multicultural training is further complicated by the approach that assumes there is a single unified White culture. Multicultural educators provide

significant information concerning the complexities of minority cultures and how the dominate culture has a continuing history of oppressing other in order to maintain cultural supremacy (Sue et al., 2008). In fact, Sue et al., (1998) explain the components of White culture include "[r]ugged individualism, competition, mastery and control over nature, a unitary and static conception of time, religion based on Christianity, separation of science and religion, and competition" (p. 19). With this understanding in mind, people are categorized based more on appearance than any other cultural context. In the same way someone may assume because one looks like other White people, it is reasonable to assume that person must be White. For instance, it is unreasonable, from a multicultural perspective, to expect a client who is first generation American whose family emigrated from Russia will have the same experiential reality as a first generation American from Israel, yet all the White people are grouped together as one culture.

This issue is a significant barrier since White students are those who most often display the most resistance. The literature may intentionally or unintentionally ignore the significance of various White cultures while simply assuming the shared privilege and benefits received outweighs other cultural considerations. Ratts et al., (2015) discusses multicultural groupings as numerous aspects of individuals are considered in order to ensure no marginalized aspect is overlooked. This may ultimately be helpful for certain groups, however the same consideration is not given to Whites groups which means this is likely to be an ongoing issue.

Ultimately, it is unreasonable to assume cultural and worldview similarities in White people just as it is unreasonable to assume that all those who live in the various countries in Africa speak and think the same way. Until we acknowledge the cultural distinctions between various White people groups, those who should be the most engaged in multicultural education will likely be those who are most resistant to it.

Acculturation

In this context, acculturation means a "merging of cultures as a result of prolonged contact" (https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/acculturation). Educators of multiculturalism suggest that different people groups often live in close proximity and retain all cultural norms without becoming enculturated. Those teaching multiculturalism either fail to discuss the issue of acculturation or are potentially hostile to the idea that those originating from other cultures need to alter views and behaviors to which they are accustomed. For instance, some hold to the position that if a family is relocated to the United States from the Dominican Republic, it is unnecessary for family members to learn English. However, what may not always be discussed is that learning English may be best for the family since it will allow them to interact with a greater number of people more easily and be less dependent on the resources of others. If the goal is to make life and living most agreeable for those in the new country then it seems reasonable that we encourage behaviors that will enhance favorable living conditions for those who have migrated from other cultures.

Additionally, Sue et al., (2008) describe the tension between original culture and a new culture and the challenge associated with navigating between two worlds. Native Americans, for example, may find these issues of great challenge since reservations provide an opportunity for Native Americans to figuratively and literally isolate themselves from the larger American culture. Other challenges and conflicts arise if these tribal members decide to experience life beyond the reservation and find themselves at a disadvantage because of a lack of experience with other cultures.

Though some literature does acknowledge levels of acculturation in various cultural groups, other sources in the literature suggest acculturation should not be implemented for the

sake of preserving cultural identity (Sue et al., 2008). The balance between acculturation within the larger culture or society is unclear but at times suggests integrating into the larger culture, such as learning to speak English, is a rejection of the original culture. Additionally, accepting and integrating two cultures, being bicultural, is sometimes necessary and desirable. Nevertheless, loyalty to one or more cultural identities is particularly meaningful in multicultural education and there is no single solution that is appropriate for all people groups.

Conclusion

Multiculturalism seems to have become the indispensable crown jewel in counselor education. The importance of multiculturalism cannot be underestimated considering the requirement that every class within a CACREP accredited program is expected to promote the value of multiculturalism (CACREP, 2016). Nevertheless, even without the accreditation and ethical requirements, it is vital that professionals are culturally competent and they must be prepared to work with diverse groups of people. In order for professionals to be as prepared as possible, it is necessary for students and new professionals to be trained on working with people of different cultures. Ultimately, one can admit that multicultural education is moving forward, if educators are unable to provide specific real life examples and scenarios on how to be effective with diverse clients, this would constitute a significant gap in the educational process. In order to enhance educating professionals on the important issues in multiculturalism, it is vital that the mentioned limitations are explored and addressed so professionals can be more effective with clients now and in the future.

This literature review provides insight on the necessity for multicultural education, how multicultural education is commonly presented and the limitations of the methods utilized. The educational endeavor is complicated because the topic generates strong feelings in students, and

because the uncomfortableness of the topic may make it more difficult for students to engage in the process. More research is needed in order to have a clearer understanding how current processes are failing and to discover how multicultural education can be enhanced for the benefit of all students.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

In this chapter, the researcher described the research methods which included the participants, the research design, researcher position and subjectivity, and procedure used, including participants, data collection and analysis.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to understand how current approaches had a negative impact the educational process and interfered with student's ability to learn the material of multicultural counseling. It was also seeking to better understand if the material was effective in educating students and prepared them to work in a professional capacity with culturally different individuals and families with the final goal of being affective mental health professionals.

Research Question

The study was designed to answer the following question:

> What are the experiences of counselor education students who participated in the counselor program's multicultural counseling class who were uncomfortable or experienced hostility and other negative interactions?

The question assumes that participants have experienced negative interactions during multicultural classes, and as previously noted, that these classes are challenging for both students and professors. To that end, the research specifically sought out students who described their experience in multicultural classes as negative and the aforementioned questions were designed to determine if students felt free to ask challenging questions or to disagree with the presented materials. The researcher also sought to understand if students felt pressure to suppress their own personal views and/or to embrace the views communicated by an authority within the classroom.

If students felt oppressed, it was the purpose of the research to understand their experiences within the classroom and to communicate how that affected their participation. It was also the intentions of the research to gain a better understanding of the practical multicultural methodologies that enabled students to be multiculturally competent.

Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative approach phenomenological in nature which sought to understand the meaning of the lived experiences of participants (Creswell, 2013). This method has been selected because it involves the researcher "selecting participants who are very knowledgeable about a topic and remaining close to data without major interpretation" (Hays & Singh, 2012, p. 52). Participants were students in a multicultural counseling class within the previous year to ensure the participants retain the information discussed during the class and the experiences in that class required little effort of memory to articulate. The approach was designed to provide clarity on the experiential reality of participants and allowed them to describe details about interactions with other students and the professor, and to detail their personal experiences as well as what was occurring around them. Additionally, since participants completed at least one class on multiculturalism, as it related to professional counseling, they were in good position to express both what could have been more beneficial during the class as well as what was particularly meaningful in the class that assisted them in working with diverse populations.

Researcher Positionality and Subjectivity

It was necessary to begin the process with a clear understand that the goal was to understand the lived experiences of participants. In an effort to understand the experiences of others it was necessary that the researcher understands his own experiences and to be able to

articulate those experiences as a means of reducing bias in the study. In an effort to maximize objectivity in the research the researcher documented previous negative experiences and provided this information to reduce the likelihood of a bias interpretation of the data. This process, known as bracketing, is designed to distinguish experiences of the researcher from those of the participants and to prevent the researcher's experience from having influence in the interpretation of the data collected.

Subjectivity Statement

It was necessary that the subjectivity of the researcher be acknowledged and explained as part of the research process. The researcher has participated in two different multicultural classes at two different universities, and both expressed the purpose of the class was to better equip counselors and counselor education students to better understand cultural/racial/ethnic differences among people groups. During this training the researcher was exposed to many scenarios that depicted every designated minority group as a victim at the hands of White men and was inundated with personal accounts of perceived racism and discrimination based on personal emotional interpretation. The researcher's experience has been that of instructors communicating tribalism where groups were pitted against each other in order to determine who has been victimized the most and demanded that students become advocates in order to alleviate discrimination without clear direction on how that could be accomplished. The researcher's desire was to understand the experience of others who have completed this type of training and to understand if that experience has assisted them in working with culturally diverse populations in a mental health setting. Understanding the researcher's experience and knowing those experiences were both positive and negative, the researcher has endeavored to minimize the influence of personal experiences during the research process.

Procedure

Participants

Participants in the study were collected from current students who have participated in the specific multicultural counseling class within a year from one of the counselor education tracts at North Carolina State University or from the University of North Carolina at Pembroke. From those who responded and provided the necessary screening information, the researcher endeavored to select those who were as different as possible, thereby making the group of participants as demographically diverse as possible.

As previously stated, the researcher sought participants who specifically had negative experiences within the multicultural class. It was presumed that participants had both positive and negative experiences however the researcher was focused on participants who had either an overall negative perspective or had significant negative interactions during the class. Participants were required to provide consent in order to prove they participated voluntarily in the research and to safeguard against any potential or perceived harm (See Appendix E). Participants were informed that they would be asked about their multicultural classroom experiences and were told specifically that the focus of the study would be on their negative or uncomfortable experiences in the multicultural class.

Data Collection

A protocol was developed and submitted to the IRB. After the IRB's approval, a request for research volunteers was communicated through the researcher's counselor education program listserv through which participants were recruited by email (See Appendix C). There were two sources of participants: current students and graduates. First, the current students who completed a multicultural class within the last full year and second, counselor education graduates who

have graduated within the last year that also completed a multicultural class within the last year. Those who responded to the email request were asked to provide demographic information prior to being selected (See Appendix B). Out of those who responded, seven individuals were selected for participation. The total number of respondents was eight, however one became ill and stopped communicating with the researcher and therefore did not participant. This means that all seven of the remaining respondents became participants and the level of diversity of participants was the level of the diversity of the total number of respondents. The original plan was for participants to be selected by the researcher based on a variety of factors including race, sex, religious views, etc. to ensure the group was as heterogeneous as possible. As part of the initial email seeking participants, those who communicated a desire to participate in the study were asked to provide basic demographic information (See Appendix B). Therefore, respondents, in agreeing to participate, provided demographic information including their age range, sex, race, income range, sexual orientation, etc. and that information was intended to ensure a diversity of participants. In addition, the researcher was specifically searching for individuals who would categorize their experience in multicultural classes as negative. The researcher provided a screening questionnaire that ensured the negative experiences of students was related to the subject matter and not to other variables such as personality conflicts or hostility towards a particular professor. Because it was hoped that one of the benefits of the study was to determine what positive changes could be made in order to enhance the educational experience of students, it was reasonable that the researcher recruit participants that have already had negative experiences and focused on how those experiences could have been improved.

Once participants were selected, the researcher conducted a semi-structured interview (Hays & Signh, 2002) virtually through a video conferencing program. Participants were

encouraged to provide details of unpleasant interactions in the multicultural class and the emotional content during those interactions to the extent of their understanding.

During the interview the researcher asked four main questions to every participant along with a general question, tell me about your overall experience in the multicultural class, designed to get an overview of the participant's experience. The five interview questions were:

1. Tell me a little about the overall experience with the Multicultural counseling class.
2. Tell me about your negative experiences in the Multicultural counseling class.
3. As it relates to your own identity, tell me what was learned in the class that would assist people different from you to conduct meaning therapy with people who identify the same way you do.
4. As it relates to your own identify, tell me what was learned in the class that would assist people who identify the way you do to conduct meaningful therapy with people who are different from you or different than the group with whom you identify?
5. How can the Multicultural counseling class be improved?

The first question was intended to assist participants to recall the overall experience of the class and to start the process of moving their thinking from general to more specific. The most significant question was clearly the second question which related to the participants own personal experiences. The researcher asked additional questions during the interview when necessary to better understand the experiences of each participant both as it related to them directly or indirectly. At times participants revealed a story or experience that happened in the class while other times mentioned discussions that happened outside the classroom. During those moments the researcher asked follow up questions to better understand the nuances of the story and gained clarification on why the participant chose to share that specific information. Follow

up questions were determined extemporaneously based on the participants responses for the purpose of additional details and clarity. The interviews were audio-recorded and lasted between 45-60 minutes in a private and secure setting. The interviews were then transcribed by a professional transcription service and the transcriptions were then shared with the participants. The participants reviewed the transcripts and in some cases wrote in additional information for clarity and accuracy (See Appendix D). All participants reviewed their individual transcripts and confirmed they were accurate representations of what was discussed during the interviews.

Data Analysis

The researcher focused on negative experiences of participants during their time in multicultural classes and a table/matrix was created to display similarities and differences in participant experiences. Categories for the matrix include themes from the study and additional categories including bias display, felt dismissed, hostility, etc. Additionally, the researcher included a separate table that displays the demographic information provided by participants before the interviews (See Appendix B).

As Hill and Knox encouraged (2021) the researcher to collect data from participants by audio recording the semi-structured interviews while asking follow-up questions as needed. A summary sheet, as described by Hays and Singh (2012) was utilized to capture initial thoughts and impressions of the researcher related to such categories as “initial themes, discrepancies, points of interests and consistencies” with other data collected (p. 258). The recorded interviews were professionally transcribed verbatim which ensured accuracy and completeness in the data. Additionally, as mentioned earlier participants reviewed the transcripts of their interviews from which they provided clarification and ensured accuracy. Transcript reviewing by participants allowed all participants to confirm their thoughts and experiences were accurately represented

while it also allowed them to provide clarification on specific answers that seemed ambiguous or inaccurate. Participants were encouraged, and some did, to make notes on the transcripts and to add additional written information to ensure they were satisfied their experiences were communicated.

After the data was verified by the participants, the researcher repeatedly reviewed transcripts many times as part of the analysis process (Hays et al., 2012). As mentioned, the data was transcribed, reviewed by the researcher, reviewed by the participants and reviewed by the researcher several more times. In addition, the researcher's advisor has taken on the role of auditor in order to evaluate the research as suggested by this method (Hayes et al., 2012). It was necessary to review transcripts many times to allow the researcher to begin the coding process. The groupings of meaningful comments represent significant information that was consistently communicated by participants and for which were relevant. Next, the researcher examined the data and obtained a broad understanding of participant experiences searched for specific significant statements. Significant statements were placed into clusters of meaning and these clusters form specific themes that were collected in order to gain a better understanding of the flavor of the experience. Afterwards, the data were broken up into textual descriptions in order to communicate what participants experienced, i.e. the meaning or the essence of the participant's experience (Hays et al., 2012). Additionally, since participants potentially could have utilized the same words to describe difference experiences, structural descriptions were then created in order to better understand and interpret how the participants experienced the phenomenon (Hays et al., 2012). Finally, by utilizing a qualitative approach phenomenological in nature process the researcher analyzed the experiences of individual participants and communicated their experiences of that phenomenon

After the researcher examined individual participants' experiences, the researcher then examined the experiences of all participants corporately in order to determine and investigate areas of agreement and areas of divergence. Specific themes were revealed and those four themes were communicated within the results and utilized for future recommendations. The researcher has expressed the experiential reality of participants within the multicultural class with the expectation that strengths and limitations of traditional approaches to teaching the subject may be illuminated.

Data Validation

The qualitative research must also ensure specific criteria are addressed within the study including that of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Hays et al., 2012). Since credibility is concerned with if the study is believable, the researcher has ensured this requirement by collecting information on experiences directly from those who had the experiences (Hays et al., 2012). In addition, it was also important to reassure participants of the confidential nature of the interviews to ensure free and open communication during the interview (Hill et al., 2021). From this point credibility would only be a concern if the participants had some hidden motivation to provide false information that would enhance the positive or negative experiences for their own unknown motives.

Transferability, or generalizability in qualitative studies, which is concerned if the findings "may generalize to an outside population or setting," is well supported though much of the materials are standard among other multicultural classes, participants were questioned about the same specific class but these classes were taught by different professors (Hays et al., 2012, p. 192). However, Hays et al. (2012) explains that transferability per se is not the goal here but

rather to provide enough information within the study so that readers can come to the reasonable conclusion that findings are applicable to their settings.

To ensure dependability, the researcher employed strategies to ensure similar findings can be found in similar studies. Some of the strategies include bracketing, focusing on the participant's experiences, evaluation of the kind of relationship there was between student and the professor leading the class, considering the nature of the relationships between other students during the time of the negative experiences, a commitment to the objectivity of the researcher by not allowing personal experiences to enhance or detract from those of the participants and the use of an auditor as Hill and Knox recommend (2021).

Confirmability is "the degree to which findings of a study are genuine reflections of the participants investigated" (Hays et al., 2012, p. 201). The researcher considered confirmability as particularly vital since understanding the participant's true and accurate experiences is the entire purpose of the study. Confirmability has been strengthened by extensive and multiple readings of transcribed interviews. Further confirmation was established by participants reviewing, adding and correcting parts of the transcribed interview for the purpose of clarity. The researcher requested clarification and has allowed the data to speak for itself.

The researcher used semi-structured interviews (Creswell, 2013) that allowed participants to provide details of the multicultural class that provided insight on what specifically caused them to be uncomfortable while also allowed them to describe interactions they viewed as hostile. Creswell (2013) explains the research will collect the data and analyze it in order to examine and reduce the information into "significant statements or quotes" that will later in the process be combined into broad themes (p. 80). The process continued as the researcher utilized the data to develop textual and structural descriptions, what the participants experienced and the

context in which they experienced it respectively, that were combined and expressed the essence of the experiences of the participants (Hayes et al., 2012). In seeking an understanding of the essence of participant experiences the researcher sought to gain an understanding of how participants were impacted by these experiences both inside and outside the classroom. Additionally, the researcher examined data through the lens of a postmodernism paradigm since this approach aligns most strongly with accepting the views of participants as true without concern for verifiable evidence.

Chapter 4

Findings

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to gain an understanding of the phenomenon experienced by counselor education students during the multicultural counseling class. The specific research question was,

> What are the experiences of counselor education students who were uncomfortable or experienced hostility or negative interactions during multicultural classes?

Because the multicultural counseling class is considered emotionally challenging for all students the study sought to better understand the negative interactions experienced by students personally and how observed negative experiences affected them. This chapter communicates the findings of individual participants in the study, the demographic information of the participants and the results of the cumulative data that were collected. The chapter will provide the interview questions asked to each participant, the demographic information, brief profile information of the participants and finally the detailed findings of the study.

During the interview the researcher asked the same five questions to each participant along with various follow up questions that were based on participant responses. The five questions that were asked to all participants include the following:

1. Tell me a little about the overall experience with the Multicultural counseling class.
2. Tell me about your negative experiences in the Multicultural counseling class.
3. As it relates to your own identity, tell me what was learned in the class that would assist people different from you to conduct meaning therapy with people who identify the same way you do.

4. As it relates to your own identify, tell me what was learned in the class that would assist people who identify the way you do to conduct meaningful therapy with people who are different from you or different than the group with whom you identify?
5. How can the Multicultural counseling class be improved?

Data Analysis

The interviews lasted between 45-60 minutes and were audio recorded with the knowledge and consent of the participant. The interviews were then transcribed by a professional transcription service and subsequently were sent to the participants to review for accuracy and for additions in case there was a need for clarification. One participant made small corrections and additions to the transcript to clarify a point discussed during the interview. Each interview was read over by the researcher many times in order to gain a clearer understanding of the participants experience before coding was conducted.

The researcher will provide a more detailed summary of the individual interviews and to maintain a high level of confidentiality participants will be discussed without using their real name or a pseudonym and will be referred to as P1, P2, P3, etc. where the P stands for participant and the corresponding number is associated with the order in which each participant was interviewed. The final section of this chapter will discuss the themes that emerged from the experience of the participants as a result of analyzing the data.

Participant Profiles

Participants were made up of a diverse group of students and reported a range of views and perspectives that were influenced by factors such as age, gender, marital status, sexual orientation. Of the seven participants in the study, three were White, one was of Middle Eastern decent, one Latino, one African American and Latino and one participant identified as other. In

addition, five described themselves as Heterosexual while the other two identified as Pansexual and Bi-sexual and Pansexual and Lesbian respectively. Only two participants identified as Male while one identified as "Other" and the remaining five being female.

Participants are active students in a counselor education program with a focus on mental health counseling or school counseling, at either North Carolina State University or the University of North Carolina at Pembroke. Several participants originally hailed from areas outside of North Carolina and at times discussed demographic differences in their living experiences.

All participants were enthusiastic about sharing their experiences in their multicultural classes though some communicated a hesitation about sharing some parts of their experiences they fear would result in negative reactions towards them personally. The demographic and participant identifiers are summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 4.1 Participant Demographic Information

Participants	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7
Age	>40	>40	21-30	21-30	21-30	31-40	31-40
Gender	Female	Female	Male	Other	Female	Male	Female
Race	White	White/Middle Eastern	Hispanic	White	Black	White	AA/ Latino
Religion	Other	Christian	Christian	Other	Other	Other	Christian
Marital Status	Married	Divorced	Single	Single	Single	Married	Single
Employment	Self	Employed	Employed	Employed	Employed	Employed	Employed
SES	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Middle
Military	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
Language	English	English	English	English	English	English	English
Sexual Orientation	Hetero	Hetero	Hetero	Pansexual/ Bi	Pansexual/ Lesbian	Hetero	Hetero
Country	USA	USA	USA	USA	Africa	USA	USA
Area of Focus	Private	Private	Private	Government /Private	Private	Private	Government /Private

Participant 1

P1 describes herself as a "White privileged woman" who is nearly 50 years old. P1 lives in North Carolina and expresses that she is eager to continue the fight against racism and discrimination which she has been doing her entire life. P1 has a political science background and is liberal in her thinking. P1 describes herself as pro-choice and is spiritual but also a little agnostic. P1 has a strong sense that most people are oppressed because the current society is based around White men.

Participant 2

P2 is originally from North Carolina but currently resides in a different state. P2 grew up in an area of North Carolina where she was the racial minority and experiences oppression and discrimination due to her minority status. P2 states her family is culturally diverse and she has more insight than other may have concerning multicultural challenges. P2 is over 40 years old and has family connections with Asian and Middle Eastern cultures. P2 has experiences specific challenges concerning her completion and she has experiences both positive and negative that her light skin affords her and she has acknowledged that her color is an advantage when she is in one country and a disadvantage when in other countries.

Participant 3

P3 is a Hispanic male in his 20s who grew up in a middle class family. His parents are divorced but he explained he still benefited from a co-parenting situation due to the cooperation of his parents. P3 explains that he continues to live a middle class life and acknowledges that he benefits from significant privilege. P3 has communicated his significant privilege comes from both his socio-economic status, the investment of both parents and the fact that he is male. P3

has a Latino cultural perspective and is aware of the limitation of his knowledge of other cultural groups.

Participant 4

P4 is described as a White queer person who is non-binary and within the age range between 20-30 years. P4 is also self-described as Pansexual and Bi-sexual and is the only participant who identifies this way. P4 went to University and majored in sociology and is interested in the interactions between people groups. P4 is heavily invested in social justice and is someone who becomes emotional reactive when people lack in their understanding of social justice issues. P4 believes that others should be more interested and concerned with current social issues.

Participant 5

P5 describes herself as a single Black woman who is a strong supporter of social justice advocates. P5 explains she does not accept the label of African American because she was not born in the United States and has spent some of her life outside America. P5 recognizes that her experiences are likely different than people in the United States in general and from African Americans as well. P5 also describes herself as queer and uses the terms pansexual and lesbian as self-descriptors.

Participant 6

P6 is a White heterosexual male in his 30s who is married to a racial minority woman. P6 has multicultural experiences both from his own family and from the family of his wife who are culturally different than his own. P6 explains that he is moderate in his general and political views and there are few things that he would feel compelled to specifically speak up based on the subject matter at hand. P6 has expressed his desire to get done with the program so he can move

on and do other things and is not someone who is interested in making things difficult for himself or others around him.

Participant 7

P7 is someone who is also multicultural in her makeup as she describes herself as African American and Latino. It is unclear which cultural perspective in dominate in her worldview. P7 is a heterosexual woman in her 30s who is of middle class social-economic perspective. P7 expressed interested in working both in private practice and in some kind of government agency.

The Findings

The interview data from the seven participants was collected and analyzed in order to identify the complex facets of their experiences and to understand how these elements interacted to form the structure elements of the phenomenon. Many elements revealed themselves during the interview and these elements affected each participant in similar and dissimilar ways depending on their emotional content, perspective, mindset and established views of the world. The four major themes that emerged from the interviews are hierarchy, oppression, emotional interpretation and promoting left leaning ideology. The findings reveal that every theme mentioned in the findings was revealed in every participant interview. Many of the answers during the interview were initiated by the participant while other answers were prompted by follow up questions by the researcher for the purpose of clarification. Table 4.2 highlights the themes that emerged from the experiences of participants and the findings section of the table highlight the similarities in their experiences.

Table 4.2 Themes and Individual Participant Responses.

Themes	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4	Participant 5	Participant 6	Participant 7
1. Hierarchy of Students of Color and Their Allies	**SOC more valued** My experiences are less valid. I was afraid my contribution would be offensive. AA refused to work with White students and was allowed by professor. More consideration for some, yes. There was more consideration for some. **SOC dominated** The class was dominated by just a few students. Main contributors were POC.	**SOC more valued** It is going to be a "beat up on whitey class" My view has to be through privilege "You learn to say the right things at the right time" "White students were either apologetic for being white or quiet." **SOC dominated** "I have to accept responsibility for a culture and heritage that's not even mine." "Being meritus is a form of racism.'	**SOC more valued** "I still felt like it was an uncomfortable because being a male." White males are the perpetrators. "I've lived such a privileged life." **SOC dominated** White student received hostility when statement was not accurate. "It was, but I would say some students didn't really know where to remain in bounds." (in your place)	**SOC more valued** "Wow, you can't just believe this person's story." "Just some-times people using the wrong terms." You can't question if I'm a victim. "Experiencing people's ignorant questions was negative." **SOC dominated** Don't ask questions if you are not us. "Super committed to social justice, and social issues, and are going to keep bringing it up in every class."	**SOC more valued** (White Students) "I don't know if that was because they didn't feel it was their place to talk" (White student) "Your role is to be an ally and to listen to those marginalized communities " **SOC dominated** "It was mostly minority students sharing experiences of terrible things that happened to them." "I'd say a 1/3 participated"	**SOC more valued** "Everybody wants to keep their opinions to themselves because they're very afraid" "Fear of what might happen." I have to hide who I am so I don't experience negative responses. Supposed to feel bad for being White. **SOC dominated** "We have to push for quality of outcome" "I think we all know we voted the same way."	**SOC more valued** "Didn't really say anything the rest of the class term.", "You (White) didn't take care of that you would never know. "She can't help who she is." **SOC dominated** Older Black woman had to take the lead to correct younger White woman. One person took over the class. Older lady was top of the hierarchy. 4-5 people really engaged.
2. Students of color and allies use hierarchy to oppress opposing views	**Student Fear:** I found myself holding back. I was afraid my contribution would be offensive. I don't bring stuff to the classroom because that divides people. I was worried about alienating people. What I may say may be a punch in the face for others Lack of concern for autistic student. "Majority of folks that did not contribute."	**Student Fear:** I had to defend myself when engaging with my own heritage. Before the class started people had formed sides. No change of minds. "Any excuse that a white person would have to defend themselves is shut down. When I brought up an issue I was told I need enlightened. "Lots of fear of saying the wrong thing."	**Student Fear:** To White student "why would you assume that" Lacking of same assumption of true for interpretation. He cannot carry his point. A question by a White student led to the student just shutting down. "If you start talking about it, you shut down, you just can't carry your case. "Must accepted everything that was discussed	**Student Fear:** "Wow, you can't just believe this person's story." It may be better that some of these challenging question where not brought up in class. "Super committed to social justice, and social issues, and are going to keep bringing it up" "This was not right to say." "I felt like the professor valued similar things" Our values.	**Student Fear:** "White students didn't really talk" "If they disagreed with it, they didn't say that out loud." "A lot of them didn't talk or give opinions." 1/3 of the class participated. It was not a space for open honest discussions. You cannot challenge or question an event that has been determined racist. Can't disagree	**Student Fear:** "Everybody wants to keep their opinions to themselves because they're very afraid" "fear of what might happen." Fear of retaliation. "they were too afraid to say anything" I have accepted your definition of terms even if that is different definition. I have to hide who I am so I don't experience negative responses.	**Student Fear:** Older Black woman had to take the lead to correct White woman. Negative interactions white student got teary-eyed and stopped talking. "didn't really say anything the rest of the class term." "You (White) didn't take care of that you would never know." One person took over the class. 4-5 people really engaged.

3. Students of color and allies determined truth through emotional interpretation	**EI identify racism**. AA students felt excluded because the others are White. AA student decided classmates were racist because of email. Racist because it feels like it. Being White means you have more. "I don't care who you are or what you do, you will never change my opinion."	**EI identify racism** Peo1ple where denied loans only for being Black. If one person says no, just more oppression and we should not try again. We interpret this way, it does not matter what you meant to say. Now I am a lot more cautious. If I have light skin then I am privileged.	**EI identify racism** "I was so privileged and just being a male of my experience that I did not relate." Privilege makes you less credible. Males are dangerous. Stereotypes come from society only. "Okay, well, this works on the wealthier and the white population."	**EI identify racism** "That upset me because the person's ignorance was marginalizing a colleague, " "Wow, you can't just believe this person's story." Asking question is questioning the person's credibility. "Feeling alienated when people do not see injustice in their lives."	**EI identify racism** "It was mostly other minority students either sharing their experiences of the terrible things that had happened to them or to their cultures." Person experiences are personal racial interpretations. "Scarier for people, when they feel like their opinion is going to be judged."	**EI identify racism** If you are not left leaning then we cannot be on the same side. Personal experience and personal racial interpretations. Speaker's represents the norm. "Why my opinion worthless because I'm white?" If you don't think like we do then you need to not be in this program.	**EI identify racism** White student had some "half-baked ideas" ""Okay, younger child who hasn't seen the world, need time to mature or just get a grip on things," You cannot handle it appropriately because you don't have my experience. Keep up with politics and community.
4. Professors prioritized left leaning ideology over counseling techniques	Priority for pro-advocacy, social justice. Highlight racism, privilege, victimhood, and various categories of oppression. talked about a lot of lived experiences Being Black all the time means we are victimized more. My perspective is less valid because I am White.	If you don't agree you must move through stages of enlightenment. Priority for pro-advocacy, social justice. Highlight racism, privilege, victimhood, and various categories of oppression. "You learn to say the right things at the right time" Victim mentality.	I have to acknowledge I live a privileged life. Males get paid more, more opportunity, seen as dominate. Males are dangerous and victimize women. I wear glasses, I have a disability. Nothing on how to do counseling with diverse populations. Society oppresses.	"A lot of negativity in feeling marginalized by people's ignorance" Uninformed people are victimizing others. "Is this program addressing social issues?" Felt the professor shared values. "Truth-telling about America's White supremacist history."	"We're supposed to be advocates in the counseling session." "Use a teaching approach to social justice advocacy. "I was comfortable with the Black professor because he said things I agree with. Experienced whole life, micro-aggressions, oppression, discrimination, etc.	"If anybody's right-leaning in the class, they're going to keep their mouths shut." "Books are very anti-white." "Make you feel bad for being white." "We have to push for quality of outcome. "Repetition has been a key part of this whole process" "Bonus grade for donating to BLM.	"You didn't take care of that you would never know. White lady cannot help Black child. "You cannot handle it appropriately because you don't have my experience. Intersectionality. Keeping up with what's happening in politics and community.

* Statements in quotes are directly from participants while statements that are not in quotes are paraphrased from participants.
* SOC = Students of color. *EI = Emotional Interpretation

Table 4.3 Themes of Participants Interview Responses.

Themes	Findings
1. Hierarchy of Students of Color and Their Allies	1. Students of Color experience was of higher importance. 7/7 2. Students of Color seen as the authority. 7/7 3. Students of Color were valued more. 7/7 4. Students of Color dominated the class. 7/7
2. Students of color and allies use hierarchy to oppress opposing views	1. Shutting down of White students. 7/7 2. Few students participated. 7/7 3. Student fear. 7/7
3. Students of color and allies determined truth through emotional interpretation	1. Emotional Interpretation used to identify racism. 7/7 2. Emotional Interpretation as a way to identify those who are unsupportive. 7/7 3. Emotional Interpretation over logic and reason. 7/7
4. Professors prioritized left leaning ideology over counseling techniques	1. High level of focus on race. 7/7 2. Focus on identifying victims. 7/7 3. Negative White outlook. 7/7
5. Subtheme 1, Students of color and allies are valued more.	1. Students of color were allowed more time than others. 7/7 2. Students of color dismissive of other's experiences. 7/7 3. White students questioned their value in the class. 7/7
6. Subtheme 2, Students of color and allies dominated the class.	1. Students of color were allowed more time than others. 7/7 2. Students of color corrected others in the class. 7/7 3. Lack of participation from White students. 7/7
7. Subtheme 3, Student Fear.	1. Students voiced/showed concern of reactions. 7/7 2. Evidence of student self-censoring. 7/7 3. Student voice/showed concern of having no place. 7/7
8. Subtheme 4, Emotional Interpretation used to identify racism	1. Students declared racism without evidence. 7/7 2. Students refused to discuss alternative interpretations. 7/7 3. Students judged racism immediately without all facts. 7/7

*7/7=Listed description applied to seven out of seven participants.

Theme 1: Hierarchy of Students of Color and Their Allies.

Though the participants in this study have significant diversity, every participant communicating through their interview that hierarchy was observed during their multicultural counseling class. Hierarchy, in this context, is expressed such that students higher number of intersectionality levels or those who are African American, were given more freedom to express themselves during discussions, their points of view were considered more authoritative concerning the topics discussed and their perspectives were considered both correct and accurate

even without the presence of evidence. For instance, if an African American student expressed a personal experience in which she experienced discrimination, based on the information gathered by the participants, that information was assumed to be true and accurate and it was not to be challenged. During the interview, P2 discussed with her class the situation when she mentioned speaking with an attorney before signing a legal document which she did not fully understand. The classmates explained that the comment concerning speaking with an attorney was equivalent to accusing the Black lady to whom P2 was speaking of doing something illegal or a threat to sue her. Regardless of the facts, P2 was seen as being racially insensitive in the situation and was informed that she should have signed the document even though she was not fully clear concerning the legal ramifications. This experience can certainly appear like a reasonable discussion in a class where one group of people has insight on how the other party in the story is reacting and imparts that information to the classmate. However, the proposed solution was not as simple. P2 explained that the expectation from the Black students was that she should have responded like they would and sign the document regardless if she fully understood it.

The rationale for this answer from the Black students is that “"Well, we have to. We have to do it all the time. It's expected." Meaning, in this situation the expectation is for P2 to place herself at a disadvantage because other people have placed themselves at the same kind of disadvantage. This aspect of dominance and hierarchy was pointed by several participants and when the researcher asked P1 about it directly by clarifying that it appears she s saying there was a bit of a hierarchy where some people, there was more consideration for some people than other people, P1 responded with a simple “correct”. P2 followed up with this one word response by explaining that the autistic classmate communicated her frustration with the situation and

explained to P2 how difficult it is for autistic people to work with others and the lack of consideration people have for people like her.

Even more disturbing were the findings that communicated an ongoing thread of anxiety exhibited by some of the students who may be viewed as outliers if they were to make themselves better known. P6 stated that he was informed second hand that one of the members of the administration in the program stated in a meeting that “White people suck”. It is important to note, the researcher is not stating this incident actually happened or attempting to disparage the person or the program, however it is mentioned here because this is a real situation that has resulted in feelings of unease and anxiety by the participant and others in the program. It can be argued that this situation is complexly fictitious however the fact that the incident has been communicated to students is a problem. The idea that a student could be removed from their respective program for ideological reasons or for pushing back against teachings in a multicultural class now seemed more plausible and this was communicated by P6. Knowing the comment came from someone in a position of power within the counselor education program who also may have the ability to remove students from that program, dictates that students would be wise to limit their communication. This also suggests that White students may be seen in a negative light by those in authority. P6 validated this sentiment when explaining the thoughts of other students when stating “they were too afraid to say anything or make any waves for fear of what might happen” and that these students “don't want to talk because they just want their diploma, they want their degree so they can leave”.

Subtheme 1: Students of color and allies are valued more.

Many participants in their respective classes recognized that African American students were the dominate group in the room and were the subject matter experts when discussing

multicultural issues. P7 described a classmate as someone who would take over the discussion and when asked if this student was establishing her position at the top of the hierarchy, as the authority, P7 stated “that’s totally fair. That’s on the head.” Similarly, P1 stated “oh, 100%” when asked if discussions ultimately became expressions of individual experiences by a few number of students. Much of the learning in the class became a recount of individual negative experiences that are deemed to be motivated by racism, oppression or some version of hateful behavior by culturally different people. P1 also expressed discomfort with the apparent lack of value in the class by explaining the negative experience in the class was due to “just being White, upper-middle-class, and privileged.” This view recognizes her privilege, or her lack of experiences in being oppressed, therefore her value as a contributor is less important because she does not possess similar experiences as those who are considered more qualified.

Hierarchy and the value of students at the top of that hierarchy in the classroom were clearly understood by participants. P1 acknowledges that her perspective was less valuable in this class and stated “I held back, I found myself holding back because I'm your token White lady who's in her mid-40s looking to get my twilight career going.” Being the self-described token White lady in the class strongly suggests that she believes her contribution is not important to share in this setting. When asked directly during the interview if P1 stated that her perspective was less valid, P1 responded “Yes. I felt that way” and followed up with “I didn't really feel like I had anything that anyone could really learn from.” In fact, P6 says that it was communicated in the class that "[w]hites don’t have a culture" and P2 said that the class started with the understanding that it is going to be a “beat up on whitey class.” This participant’s experience highlights both the lack of value shown to certain groups and reveals a level of open hostility towards students who appear White even if they are not racially White. It is important to note

that P2 is fair a skinned person and is one of the students who are not racially White. P2 added to the discussion by explaining “The White students were in two camps, they were either very apologetic for being White, or they were quiet or they were very cautious.” It is reasonable to question why some students in the multicultural class would feel the need to be cautious and limit their participation. The behavior by White students suggests they did not have the necessary bona fides to participant in meaningful ways.

There were also times when students appeared to be confused about how they are supposed to behave in the setting of the multicultural class beyond the idea of being cautious. P5 stated that a White male student in the class asked what his role is and what is he supposed to do? The professor answered that question by explaining “your role is to be an ally and to listen to those marginalized communities and help them." The challenge in this answer is that it appears to be applicable only to White students since no part of the answer is there a mandate for anyone to support or listen or be of assistance to the White students. P5 also witnessed the emotional challenges of another White student, and stated the student “started crying and saying it’s not her fault she’s privileged and white and she shouldn’t have people not trust her because of those things.” The student’s statement highlight another concerning message stemming from these interactions, namely that both minority students and White students may be receiving the message that White students cannot be trusted due to certain immutable characteristics.

Establishing one’s level of comfortableness based on individual immutable characteristic also extended to participants. When asked if the class was an environment that established a space for free and open communication, P5 explained it did but “because my teacher was Black, but if my teacher was White, I would say no.” Meaning, regardless of the professor’s behavior in the classroom, it is only because the professor is Black that creates a place for free and open

communication for her. This admission emphasizes the importance of intersectionality and designation as an oppressed person. In addition, P5 did admit that it was probably not an environment for open communication for the White students. Based on this frank admission, it is reasonable to suggest that other student would have similar emotional reactions, both positive and negative, based on the race of the professor teaching the class. P4 also communicated positive feelings for the professor when stating "culturally, it was nice for me to be in a place where I felt like the professor valued similar things that I value." In this context it clear that P4 finds the class more agreeable since the professor shares the same values and therefore communicated information for which this participant agreed. This comment suggests that the class may be more uncomfortable for some because of the ideological position of the professor and perhaps less due to the materials. The comment by P4 also validates the idea that credibility and consideration is given to those with whom they philosophically and ideologically agree.

Consideration for those who we ideologically agree with people of color was not limited to professors. P4 stated a White student in the class, though the race of the student was not explicitly confirmed, who made comments that challenged students in the class to make an effort to be more objective, students of color in the class reacted to him in a more accepting manner. The classmate was encouraging people to refrain from becoming too emotionally angry about oppression and to consider other perspectives. P4 stated "but we also know him and his lived experience, he's survived a lot. It's like, coming from him, it takes on a different tone than a lack of empathy, just knowing him." This interaction highlights that there were times where the message may be more acceptable solely depending on who was communicating the message. In knowing this student in advance, he was able to utilized multicultural creditability with his classmates and therefore his comments were not interpreted negatively.

Interactions like these establish an “us against them” mentality toward people who go against or challenge the teaching of the class or who do not possess this multicultural creditability. In fact, both P2 and P3 specifically stated that people were “shut down” during class and several others mentioned situations where some students stopped engaging directly in the class. In the previous example with the male who challenged the class about oppression, the response from the class shows that those who have multicultural credibility still consider him as part of the team and accepted what was stated without negative reactions which may have may have been generated if it had come from a different student. Those students who do not possess multicultural creditability find themselves in a difficult position where they can risk engaging in a genuine and meaning way that could result in personal hostility or worse. Indeed, other students have communicated fear that they may be removed from their program if they say something that is unacceptable, even in the environment of the multicultural class.

Subtheme 2: Students of color and allies dominated the class.

Several interviewees explained the active participants in the multicultural class were a small percentage of the students. Though it is likely the percentage was not meant to be taken literally, P1 stated “most of the feedback from the class, and the discussion from the class, came from probably 2%.” Likewise, P5 explained “a third of them participated” and that some of the White students “didn’t really talk” though P5 stated it is unclear if it was because “they did not feel it was their place” or if it was due to discomfort with the topic. P7 discussed a student that was overtly hierarchical with her interactions with other students. Commenting on this student, P7 stated the impression was “because it's a multicultural class. She's a minority so this is her platform and Oh, naturally, if we're going to talk about minorities, she's a spokesperson…” The circumstances where that just a few students dominated the discussions also had a negative

impact in that other students were unable to participate which stifled the learning process. P1 stated “for me personally, it's been extraordinarily frustrating because… I feel like [this] is the opposite of what we should be doing” and that “we listened to a lot of considerations of all these other cultures and all these other ethnicities during this class, but the one person that's getting the shaft on this end is my colleague”.

When discussing this situation P1 explained that during her online class many people would have their hand raised to participant in the discussion but the dominant students went on so long without intervention by the professor that students with their hands up stopped trying to be called upon. P1 stated that it was not just about being willing to participate “it was just running out of time. You'd see, the more one person spoke, you'd see all the little hands at the top and then all of a sudden they just started to drop off.” It appears some students took it upon themselves to behave as if these were the other professors in the class and who accepted the responsible for the education of the other students.

Theme 2: Students of color and allies use hierarchy to oppress opposing views.

We have observed situations where some students in multicultural classes view themselves as the authority but, it has also been reported some consider themselves as the authority as the oppressed people. P1 discussed a class discussion about female safety when she stated that in certain areas it is not safe for a woman to go out alone and run for exercise. The response from students in the class was "at least you're white, how do you think we feel?" The same students followed up by adding “we don't feel safe anywhere at any time”. The conversation illustrates how students viewed the hierarchy in action. The conversation originally was about the safety of woman and then turned into a safety issue between White people and

Black people, and then turned to a condemnation on how oppressed African American are since they cannot feel safe anywhere at any time.

This type of communication not only minimizes the life experience of the student talking about safety but also exclaims an irrational generalization that no Black person ever feels safe in any situation. In addition, when P1 was asked if she was worried about alienating people in the class she responded "Yes. My God, in a multicultural class [chuckles] who wants to do that? No one." Likewise, when P6 was asked if the class facilitated open and free communication, P6 responded with a resounding "no" and stated they are asked lots of questions to keep discussions going, but the impression is that "people just come with this mindset you're not going to talk. If you have an opinion that you don't think people want to hear, you're just not going to say it." P5 echoes the idea of caution by explaining "I think it feels scarier for people, when they feel like their opinion is going to be judged." P2 also stated "you know that you, as a white student, you are allowed, but you don't necessarily feel a part of, so while they have the reputation for being very diverse, they're not very inclusive." The aforementioned discussion appears to be a good example of the challenges of having a natural discussion concerning a topic of importance concerning a group that is considered an oppressed (women) and others turned that discussion into "we have it worse" pronouncement. This type of oppression had the impact of limiting communication in the classroom setting rather than promoting it.

The challenges of open communication are highlight as P2 described the interactions between students during a conversation on discrimination. P2 stated during a discussion that discrimination is everywhere and everyone has experienced discrimination. However, discrimination cannot be the cause of everyday interactions that turn out negatively for the individual and label it this way is unreasonable. P2 stated "we face discrimination too, or the

thing that they describe as something that I think is universal, everybody gets denied for a loan. Everybody goes in for a job interview and they're turned down. It's not necessarily because of your skin tone." This statement challenges the assumptions of some students in the class and the situation becomes more complicated in how to address the disagreement. P2 stated "unless you capitulate to whatever the minority's side wants…then you're the racist." P2 is stressing that in her experience people are often placed in no-win scenarios where the White participant has to accept the interpretation of the minority student or the White student is now viewed as part of the system of oppression. It is clear that no student wants to be viewed as part of an oppressive system therefore the reasonable response in situation like this is to concede and communicate your agreement to the class even if you don't agree.

P3 stated "I would say some students didn't really know where to remain in bounds" which suggests there are limitations and boundaries for certain students when participating in discussions. These limitations may include specific students refraining from discussing certain subjects, students refraining from probing for information that could appear to challenge the conclusions of the students of color or allies and voicing agreement in order to avoid conflict. P5 voiced her experience by stating "no one really said anything. If they disagreed with it, they didn't say that out loud. Like I said, a lot of them didn't talk or give opinions" P5 suggests that students may be anxious about responding in class for fear of looking foolish. She stated "if you're giving a comment to something you don't know if what you're saying is right, if you're going to offend someone, if you're going to look stupid." However, P6 stated that "Everybody wants to keep their opinions to themselves because they're very afraid, I think if anybody, especially if anybody's right-leaning in the class, they're going to keep their mouths shut." Here

P6 is making the specific point that not only is some communication verboten but it could be punitive if the person communicating is right leaning.

Subtheme 3: Student fear.

Other students were less concerned about criticism from classmates and more concerned about retaliation from administration. The suggestion is that it is just not worth the risk of exposing oneself which could result in additional scrutiny or potential removal from the program. P6 stated when talking about his classmates, “they don't want to talk because they just want their diploma, they want their degree so they can leave.” The implication is that the professors in charge of the program would find their views unacceptable to the point of possibly causing those students to be removed from the program. This comment speaks volumes about the concerns and potential anxiety associated with the program which forces students to interact with people in authority who are not looking out for their best interests. In fact, the comments of P6 reveals a much more ominous situation where it appears that students who have a certain world view (right leaning) or challenges the information taught in the class are in fact oppressed by students, the professor of the class and by the administration of the program itself. In this context, it must be questioned why students would feel as if they are in danger or potential targets for removal from the program. Is this an irrational emotional circumstance or are they responding reasonably based on the evidence they see through behaviors? It is a challenging situation because it affects everyone involved in the program. Additionally, it would be reasonable to give the same level of acceptance and creditability to the students who voice concerns about being removed from the program that we do to the African American students who say they don’t feel safe anywhere. If students are receiving the message that they are not safe in a certain environment, it seems reasonable to better understand the conditions for which

that fear is being generated. Sadly, the fact that this is a concern and that behaviors are forced onto students because of this fear is evidence that there are students in counselor education programs who are not free to be their genuine selves.

Theme 3: Students of color and allies determined truth through emotional interpretation.

The multicultural class is known to be an emotionally difficult and uncomfortable experience. In fact, most of the participants specifically mentioned that the professor of the class warned them about this phenomenon beforehand. The discomfort that was not discussed beforehand is the expectation that students of color and their ideological allies would use their privileged position in the hierarchy to determine the truthfulness and accuracy of any given situation by the mechanism of emotional interpretation. The uneasiness of the classes is clearly exacerbated by the emotional interpretations of classmates. For instance, P1 discussed a situation that involved a misunderstanding between three White ladies and two Black ladies in a different class. The issue could not be worked out because one of the Black ladies was convinced she was excluded from the group project because the other three are racist. P1 explained the response she received was "My eyes see what my eyes see. I don't care who you are or what you do. You will never change my opinion. You excluded us because we're Black." It was not relevant to this woman that one of the ladies had a disability and another is married to a minority man. In addition, it made no difference that all parties involved were working to be future counselors and are dedicated to the helping profession. That situation bled into the multicultural class with the Black student requesting not to be paired with any of the three women for any current project, and that request was granted.

Subtheme 4: Emotional interpretation used to identify racism.

Emotional interpretation within the class also resulted in some confrontations between students. P2 encountered a situation during her class where she was accused of cultural appropriation of her own culture. P2 explained to the class that "cultural appropriation means if I am profiting from it, me actually wearing the henna tattoos or me engaging in wearing the dress or anything from my heritage or my culture, that doesn't mean that I have appropriated it, it's mine…" People determined it was appropriate to correct a perceived wrong and were offended for the group of people for which the accused was actually a member. The emotional interpretation espoused by members of the class was that P2 was taking ownership of a culture to which she has no connection but without anyone first establishing if P2 had a connection to that culture. P2 voiced frustration with the incident by expressing that others were "projecting your idea of what a White person is onto me." The tendency to interpret situations emotional rather than critically was particularly challenging for P2. In the previous example with the Black woman and P2 where a misunderstanding happened because the word attorney was brought into the conversation, P2 and this woman were able to eventually clear up the misunderstanding and setting the disagreement. With more communication and clarification the two were able to come to an agreeable understanding with each other. However, with the students in the class, P2 experienced significant resistance to her position and were resistant to accept the fact that P2 was part of the cultural for which she is being accused to appropriating for herself. Between these situations it appears the more reasonable was the individually Black woman while the more aggressive and closed minded people were the students in the multicultural class.

Another striking example of the use of emotional interpretation was provided by P6 when it was stated in the class that "Whites don't have a culture." P6 objected and attempted to discuss

family lineage and the culture that P6 learned about when examining personal histories. P6 also explained that the impression is that staff completely accepted this notion and that many of the students also agreed, even if some did not or questioned the assertion. This is particularly noteworthy because it appears the main thrust of the class was to expose students to other cultures and different ways of thinking and living. If White people do not have a culture then this is potentially another way to isolate White students as spectators and as those who have nothing to contribute because they have no cultural reference themselves.

Another situation was discussed by P4 where a White person was asking questions for clarification and hostility was generated because of the reactions to those questions. P4 explained this was a White person trying to better understand cultural differences and how a specific interpretation of events was determined. However the response from P4 was “[w]ow, you can't just believe this person's story?" P5 echoes this idea of emotional interpretation when explaining how CBT as a modality does not and cannot assist someone who has experiences a racist incident. P5 explains “If it was a racist incident, it was a racist incident and you need to acknowledge that and help them work through how they cannot do something about it….when it's systemic.” The expectation communicated by participants and by the class as a whole is that if the person feels likes a racist incident or if the emotional content supports a particular conclusion then that conclusion must be accepted as factually accurate.

This idea of blind acceptance also carried over beyond the multicultural class. P6 explained that a former student of the program sent an email exclaiming that she had experienced racism every day while she was in her respective counselor program. This claim was entirely accepted and it was stated that she was recognized by the administration for communicating this information. It is unclear if any investigation was conducted or if the source of the racism was

discovered but it is clear that behaviors surrounding this situation mandated that an accusation of racism was deemed to be true, even if there was no intervention to prevent further racism from happening in the future.

Theme 4: Professors prioritized left leaning ideology over counseling techniques.

When discussing a counselor program in general and the multicultural class in that program specifically, it is unavoidable to make certain assumptions about the content discussed in that class. One assumption that students may have is that the class will provide information that will enlighten students on how to conduct meaningful counseling with culturally diverse populations and particularly that students will gain insight on groups that are dissimilar than their own. The data shows how erroneous these assumptions are and further shows a commitment to teachings that do not assist in conducting meaningful counseling with diverse populations.

During the interviews, several participants communicated what was taught was left leaning ideology however, they were already aware of how the class would unfold. P2 specifically stated “we already knew it was going to be critical race theory” and that it was going to be a "beat up on whitey class.” This approach resulted in conflict from some students and a much more pleasant experience for others. For example, during the interview P5 stated “[f]or me, it was good but I felt like I didn't learn that much because a lot of it was teaching [were] things that I just experienced my whole life, like teaching people what a microaggression is, or teaching people the history of systemic oppression.” P1 echoed this sentiment when saying

> “Being a White privileged woman who is almost 50, and having lived life experiences and having my own agenda personally about combating racism and oppression. Really my whole life. Because that's just how I operate, it was really great and refreshing to have it all be partitioned out to each and every subculture, ethnicity, even religious type thing.”

Much of the time the classroom becomes an echo chamber for those who ideologically aligned and becomes a space of correction for those who are not in full agreement.

The statement by P1 communicated the importance of combating racism and oppression in the class. Resisting and challenging areas that are discriminatory or oppressive practices appears to be the primary function of the class. However, when P1 was asked what was learned in the class that would assist others to conduct meaningful counseling with people who identify the way P1 identifies, the response was nothing was learned from the class and if anything can be taken away "it would've been just based off my lived experience. Not of the class." P3 echoed a similar sentiment when answering that it would be helpful to get significantly more detail about the client during the intake process so that counselors are better able to make fewer assumptions. P4 highlighted the importance of the counselor sharing the same values and specified when saying "[t]he values of truth-telling about America's White supremacist history, and how that intersects with other identities." P5 piggybacks by describing White students by stating, "I think they learned that there's systemic oppression. If someone is struggling with something, a lot of the times, it may not just be coming from within them." In this example the most important idea being communicated is that therapy and the counselor specifically, is to recognize the system of oppression the client is experiencing and that maladaptive behaviors displayed by the client is not coming from the client but from forces outside of the client and outside the control of the client.

There are also times when members of the class were emphasizing what some would consider a different reality to those who are uninformed. For instance, P5 highlights the message that is consistent with left leaning ideology when explaining

> "I think this is something that Cis White counselors need to hear because they might think Black people or Gay people [for example] are overly negative and complaining and making things up when we say there are systems that are out to get us, but we're not making it up."

P5 is clearly making the assumption that White counselors are being accusatory of their Black or Gay clients if they question the racist or homophobic interpretations of the clients. For P5 part of the process of multicultural counseling is ensuring that White counselors are corrected in their assumptions that Black and Gay clients are not "making up" challenges. The message is that personal accountability and resilience is not appropriate to communicate to Black and Gay clients and it is unclear if this is the message intended to be communicated to the students.

Others communicated the importance of left leaning ideology as it relates to sex and gender issues. P4 explained "the intersectionality piece, and different critical race theory is just really important to queer theory. They're nested into each other, so creating a lot of space for critical race theory was really helpful to explaining gender construction." P4 voiced support for critical race theory in this context because critical race theory helps students better understand queer theory. P4 did not explain how they are connected or what is specifically meaningful to understand in the context of a multicultural counseling class beyond the fact that P4 identifies as queer and therefore considers it an important issue.

Other students point out left leaning ideology in a more broad way with specific terms related to better understanding the topic. For instance, P5 recalls conversations in the class that related to leftist ideology when stating "[o]ne that really sticks out to me…our teacher was talking to us basically about systemic oppression and the history of the different types of oppression there are like racism, sexism, homophobia, those types of things." Others have a more

critical perspective concerning the rational of this approach. P6 states this is the priority in the program and explained “[t]his program has genuinely tainted my mind a bit because they push it all day and all night. Which is color, color, color, race, race, race, race. Race is what matters.” In addition to emphasizing race as a topic other students were disparaged if they challenge this way of thinking. P2 stated “[t]hat unless you capitulate to whatever the minorities side wants, …if you come up and say, ‘No, I don't think this is going to work for me’, then you're the racist.” Indoctrination into left leaning thinking appears to be mandatory to get through the class, as P2 indicated “it feels like you're going in there and you're brainwashed.”

Finally, there were times in which messages were conveyed, directly and indirectly, to students that it is necessary for them to think in a certain way. P6 reported an experience where the professor stated “I think we all know we voted the same way in the last election. Then we all have to sit there and nod like, Oh yes, of course, we did." This message was reinforced when the class of P6 was informed **“…** you could get credit for going to a social justice rally or just donating to Black Lives Matter.” Because “[t]hat was the one they pushed because it was the big one of the day.” Other participants voiced similar experiences except from the point that there was agreement with these students of like mind since they were in agreement ideologically with the professor. As mentioned earlier, P5 stated “we're supposed to be advocates in the counseling session” and to “teach, or use a teaching approach to social justice advocacy.” While P4 stated “it was nice for me to be in a place where I felt like the professor valued similar things that I value.” Furthermore, as it related to ideological leanings, the researched asked would it have been acceptable to discuss topics that were center or right-leaning, P6 stated “I highly doubt it. Again, I don't know because nobody is in this class from what I've seen is ever going to do that. I mean, it's not going to happen.” It is also notable that P6 does not identify as right leaning and

therefore is communicating the uncomfortableness of the forcible pressure to embrace a specific ideological position.

Chapter 5

Discussion

In this chapter, first, I will provide a summary of the findings. Then, I will discuss implications of the findings for theories, professional practice, advocacy, and policy, and future research. Also, I will identify research limitations. Finally, I will provide a brief conclusion.

Summary of the Findings

As expected the research study has provided an accurate and detailed understanding of individual experiences of counselor education students during the multicultural class. The data reveal that the apparent purpose of the multicultural classes experienced by these participants is to promote left leaning ideology that utilizes hierarchy and intimidation to oppress resistance while mandating specific behaviors and thinking onto students. The data revealed four major themes that work in cooperation that impacted the experiences of students. The themes that emerged from the data are hierarchy, oppression, emotional interoperation and promotion of left leaning ideology.

Every participant experienced examples of all four themes discussed in the study. Several participants viewed the outcome of these themes as reasonable and acceptable while others voiced significant objections. The participants who shared a similar worldview as the professor found no issue with designations imposed onto others such as oppressor or racist and expressed a feeling of comfort and safety. Those who shared the values of the professor and ideologically agreed with the teachings considered the class to be sensible and amenable and only found issue with other students who did not appear to be fully committed to the presented materials. Others suggested that both the materials and some professors were bias and committed to a specific agenda that did not specifically focus on multicultural counseling itself. Pederson (2000) helps us

better understand what is necessary when defining a multicultural perspective when stating "seeking to provide a conceptual framework that recognizes the complex diversity of a pluralistic society while at the same time suggesting bridges of shared concern that bind culturally different persons to one another" (p. 35). In this definition there are shared concerns between groups and a willingness to bridge those groups together. The data show in classes with these participants, there are concerns for one ideological perspective with little to no concern for all others. Overall, the approaches and methodologies of the multicultural counseling classes experienced by participants within their counselor education programs fail to provide them with method to bring people together or to enlighten and empower multicultural students with a shared respect for cultural and racial differences. Participant multicultural classes also failed to afford the knowledge or experience needed to conduct meaningful counseling with clients who are racially and culturally different.

Hierarchy was the theme that was most common in the data. As it related to the experiences of the participants, some stated directly and others stated indirectly, that a select group of people with certain lived experiences were more credible and more authoritative than those who were lacking in these experiences. Specifically the African American students were often the students discussing their personal experiences of racism, discrimination or oppression with the apparent purpose of revealing inequities so others can gain insight from their experiences. In the context of multiculturalism this could be considered a microaggression. As we recall, a microaggression is ""[b]rief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory or negative racial slights and insults that potentially have harmful or unpleasant psychological impact on the target person or group" (Sue, et al., 2009, p. 88). The hierarchy

communicates that White students are not “real” victims of racism, discrimination or oppression and therefore are not qualified to challenge or discuss the topics with any level of authority. Lilienfeld (2017) reminds us that microaggressions express claims from victims that are extremely ambiguous, and misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the speaker is likely. However, the data reveals, within the confines of these participants, the accuracy of the hierarchy and the unspoken expectation that White students cannot be victims because they are the oppressors and in positions of power.

Participants revealed the lack of consideration and acceptance was commonly observed in the multicultural class when considering the White students. Several examples of this lack of authority were discussed by participants where White students communicated a concern and that concern was either dismissed by other students or minimized when it was compared to how African Americans or another racial minority are impacted worse, or both. Additionally, it was reported that many White students would either get shut down or would remain disengaged in order to avoid negative experiences in the classroom. Depending on the topic on hand, some students did not consider the issue on hand of sufficient import to risk experiencing a hostile disagreement in class or risk being labeled a racist.

Working hand in hand with hierarchy is the theme that students and their allies utilizing the hierarchy to oppress the views of others. Incidences of students being shut down or refraining from actively participating in the class was commonplace. Because some were viewed as higher within the hierarchy, meaning they were authorities in the classroom, it was not necessary for these students to show the same level of consideration toward people and their individual experiences. Much of what was communicated in the classroom discussions appeared to be something akin to a shock and awe contest where the people who provide the worst possible

example related to that topic wins. The data reveals that those in authority did not show the same consideration to the lived experience of others and did not consider what these other students had to say as valuable. For instance, when one participant discussed a concern about female safety in public, her discussion was hijacked over the larger concern that black people are never safe in any environment. It appears the original topic could not be discussed because other scenarios were raised that are considered a higher priority by those in authority and for which they did not consider this narrow topic worthy of further discussion. In addition to feelings of oppression, students also experienced the anxiety of potential retaliation from within the program itself. One participant expressed this concern specifically when explaining an incident where the participant was informed that one of the administrators in the program stated "White people suck" during a meeting. As stated earlier, it is not particularly important if this incident is entirely true and accurate, but it is significant that this potentially true incident enforces the feelings of anxiety and insecurity of students in the program. This is likely a reasonable example of what Reynolds (2011) meant when speaking of students' unwillingness to address uncomfortable or controversial topics.

The fear associated with this situation could be considered the academic version of cancel culture, where those people who are unwilling to conform to correct thinking or are unwilling to adapt to the newspeak of today are excised from the system. These situations also provide evidence that re-enforces the subtheme of student fear. Thomas Sowell (2023), a well-known African American economist, author and professor explains "[t]he fatal danger of our times today is a growing intolerance and suppression of both opinions and evidence that differ from the prevailing ideologies that dominate institutions, ranging from the academic world to the corporate world, the media and governmental institutions" (p. 100). In these circumstances,

participants recognize the social hierarchy has been turned on its head and the minority majority is in the position of power in academia. Student fear of dismissal from their program over differing personal perspectives that are considered unacceptable to those in authority at universities was confirmed by the apparent, though unconfirmed, hostility towards students of an undesirable racial group.

The tendency to examine a situation and to utilize emotional interpretation is the third theme that was revealed in the data. Participants discussed numerous examples where students would evaluate circumstances from their emotions and allow those emotions to determine the interpretation. In such scenarios, there was no room for logic or objectivity because the conclusion has already been determined as observed in the data. Many instances were communicated by participants where they or other students discussed a perceived wrong where the other person was viewed as the perpetrator who was victimizing the speaker. One participant did mention a misunderstanding like this but was eventually able to resolve the situation with the person who felt wronged, though she now has more anxiety when talking with others. The constant challenge with defining circumstances through emotional impetration is that it allows groups of people to base future interpretations a priori. The nature of the class communicated that minorities are victims of White oppressors, that differences or deviations from norms are due to racism and discrimination and that these structures are the foundation of the White dominate culture in which we currently live, therefore difficult situations are always due to some kind of hateful thinking and behavior.

Participants provided a number of examples where emotional interpretation was the dominate force in understanding situations, including those of determining racism. One participant provided an example that is exactly on point and precisely consistent with the

observation of utilizing emotional interpretation to determine racism. A student accused other students of being racists because of an incident where it was perceived by the Black student that she was being excluded. The truth is that one of the accused is a minority student, disabled and a woman, another is married to a Black man and the other is a woman who was not the one who wrote the email that was the source of the offense. It was also not considered that all of these students, Black and White, are all seeking to become professional counselors and are likely to have a high level of sensitivity and agreeable personality, making them more likely to be motivated to avoid any offense. However, the emotions say racism and therefore it was deemed that these three women in the counselor program are racist. Therefore, knowing minorities are never the perpetrators and are always the victims these narratives allow minority students to always be in a position of oppression by others even when there is no offense.

Finally, the influence of classmates and professors to conform to a left leaning ideology, such as social justice and equity, was apparent from the data. Several examples, such as the professor communicating to the class that, I am sure everyone voted the right way in the last election, thereby indirectly informing everyone that there was only one appropriate way to vote. Another example worth noting is when the professor stated outright that students must push for equity, equality of outcome, and therefore revealing how students are expected to think and behave both as students and as professionals. It may be important to mention that the researcher never received information from participants on how equity can be implemented either as a student or professional, however the notion of equality of outcome was entirely accepted as an indispensable standard by most of the participants. When considering the innumerable variables within a person's life, it is not possible to ensure the same outcome for every individual without eliminating equality in the bargain. One participant expressed this confusion about

implementation when the expectation of equality was communicated in class. Equality of outcome requires the oppression of high achievers in order to equalize the outcome of lower achievers. Ultimately, the constant focus and discussions concerning topics like race, inequality, equity, discrimination and the like, has deprived these students of the learning of meaning theories and techniques that would assist them in being prepared to accommodate diverse clients and help these students grow into more effective professionals.

Implications for Theory

Implications for theory could be particularly challenging in this context as it relates to Multiculturalism specifically. The main challenge is the realization that Multiculturalism is often not clearly defined though it is espoused as the framework on which everything else extends. As mentioned on page 21, the researcher's method of defining Multiculturalism is the act of respecting and displaying sensitivity towards all groups of people while recognizing and understanding cultural differences and adopting methods and strategies that will facilitate the most effective means to achieve intended goals both educationally and clinically. Based on the data collected the challenge the participants attending counselor education programs face is the absence of methods and strategies that will facilitate competent clinical interactions with culturally diverse client and material that will enhance student multicultural competence. This is evidenced by participant responses in that every participant stated they either did not learn anything in the multicultural class that would assist them in conducting meaningful counseling with someone culturally different from them or they described something mildly helpful but that information had already been consumed in a previous class.

This last statement reveals another disturbing concern for future multicultural classes, namely the potential lack of training to meet multicultural competency. We will remember that

Tremethick and Smith, (2009) explain "[c]ultural competence is the ability of an individual to understand and respect values, attitudes, beliefs, and mores that differ across cultures, and to consider and respond appropriately to these differences in planning, implementing, and evaluating health education and promotion programs and interventions" (p. 2). The data show that not only are these students failing to understand other cultures, but there is also a lacking in the area of respecting values, attitudes, beliefs and mores that differ across cultures.

One can also argue that another significant issue is the inability to challenge or critique the data presented which is assumed to be fair and accurate. Invariably students and professors are going to have different perspective and disagree about data at times however it is counter to the nature of the multicultural class to fail to facilitate open communication or to meet students with open hostility. Sowell (2023) highlights this concern when stating,

> "[t]hat different people have different beliefs is hardly unusual in the history of human beings. What is unusual—and dangerous—is (1) the extent to which such beliefs prevail without being subjected to test of either facts or logic, and (2) the extent to which people who present empirical evidence counter to prevailing beliefs are met with ***ad hominem*** denunciations and with efforts to suppress their evidence, by means ranging from censorship to violence, especially on academic campuses" (p. 22).

One participant specifically mentioned that if you do not concede to what the minority student in the class is stating or arguing, then you are the racist. Certainly one implication, which appears to be lacking in this study, is the requirement for an environment where free, open and challenging discussions can be had concerning Multiculturalism and the mechanisms within that system.

Additionally, student emotional reactions were a major factor during multicultural classes according to participants. The emotional reactions of students were not limited to the students who were expected to feel uncomfortable and were warned by the professors at the beginning of the class or those who may disagree with portions of the materials being taught. Emotions played a significant role in that emotional reactions were used as tool to determine truth when

discussing issues of racism, including situations or people who are racist, oppressed or discriminated again. Many of the students were exposed to personal accounts by classmates and guest speakers that involved perceived wrongs experienced by the speaker. However, not only were emotional reactions utilized to justify the accuracy of the interpretation of specific situation, emotional reactions were also utilized to criticize others who may question that interpretation. Students who experiences chastisement in class soon learned to refrain from arguing back, eventually stopped objecting or as previously mentioned, just refrained from participating in such a potentially explosive encounter. For these participants, these situations not only call into challenge the question of open spaces for communication, but for free speech in general. Within the hierarchical system, it has already been established that some students are free to speak on topics while some are not. Levin (2021) mentioned this phenomenon when he writes about

> "[a] large study of student attitudes toward free speech in 2017 by the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education found, in part: 58 percent of college student think it's important to be part of a campus community where they are not exposed to intolerant or offensive ideas…in class, 30 percent of students have self-censored because they thought their words would be offensive to others…a majority of students (54 percent) report self-censoring in the classroom at some point since the beginning of college" (p. 219-220).

These experiences could call into question the prescription that the multicultural class is designed to enlighten through discussions about race, ethnicity, culture and the like. If these interactions are commonplace then one may question if White students are present as subjects to be programed and set to task rather than equal participants. Nevertheless, the consequence of emotional reactions, hostility and censorship is that these barriers stifle communication among students and eliminates opportunities for meaningful and insight discussions, as confirmed by participants. The data reveals that every participant experienced or observed incidences of the stifling of communication. If the White students are expected to conduct self-examination for

bias and assumptions, it would seem reasonable that self-reflection and self-examination of internal bias and oppressive thinking would exist for non-white students.

Sociopolitical influences and what encompasses the term has often been obscure and mostly undefined. There are several terms and assumptions that have been utilized that fall under the umbrella of the sociopolitical aspects of multiculturalism. The data show for students, there is need for these assumptions to be challenged with logic and facts rather than unsubstantiated claims. Sowell (2023) explains "[w]hat they will need then, in order to sort out the new controversial issues, is an education that has equipped them with the intellectual skills, knowledge and experience to confront and analyze opposing views—and subject those views to scrutiny and systematic analysis" (p.111). Data show that methods experienced by these participants, are that students are to accept controversial or unverified information without question and as accurate without any need for critical thinking or systematic examination.

Microaggression is another element of multicultural theory that must be scrutinized and evaluated in the larger context of teaching multicultural counseling. Lilienfeld (2017) explains that microaggressions express strong claims by the victims but are ambiguous at best due to the likelihood of misunderstanding or misinterpretation or that the comment was associated with the victims' race. After reviewing the microaggression research program and related literature, he presented eighteen suggestions for the MRP program. He recommended the abandonment of the term microaggression and called for a "moratorium" on microaggression training (p. 26).

Based on the experiences of participants, the use of microaggressions in practice is more akin to a mechanism that allows for the manipulation of interactions between people to be labeled as racist, oppressive or discriminatory without verification or confirmation and interpreted only from through the lens of emotional reaction. For instance, a college counselor

may have asked both a White student and a Black student if he or she is the first person to attend college. Current multicultural norms dictate that asking the White student is simply a matter of collecting information, however asking the Black student is a microaggression because the assumption, coming from the college counselor, is that no person in this student's family was smart enough to attend college therefore this student is the only one who has managed to make it to college. This interaction reveals the bias and negative stereotypes by the college counselor and is a racially aggressive insult to the student. This accusation is groundless and the assumption from the student that the counselor made a negative judgement lacks evidence and assumes the student automatically knows the intentions of the counselor. This scenario is similar to that which was discussed where one student accused her three classmates of being racist. Interaction of this nature clearly stifles communication between people. One participant provided a specific example of this phenomenon when explaining that a controversial statement by one person, who was given consideration because his lived experience was known, did not receive the negative response it would have if stated by someone else. Participants communicated several examples where the meaning of a situation was dictated by the hearer and was determined to be offensive. This framework perpetuates the victim mentality where every interaction becomes evidence of cultural or racial hostility, oppressors and the oppressed, even in environment where people are being trained in the helping professions.

Another challenge that emerges when working in the realm of multiculturalism is that multicultural education methods establish an "us against them" paradigm which is cannibalistic to counselor education programs. Participants in the current study revealed an excessive number of interactions that resulted in students taking sides against each other and this does not include counseling students who established sides before the class started. The findings demonstrate that

a lack of understanding and commitment to come together in understanding and cooperation. In this context, a number of participants expressed that White students are there to learn how they are oppressing others, take ownership of their part in societal oppression and are to advocate for those they are oppression while never being pardoned for being unwilling oppressors.

One implication of this approach is a concern that counselor programs may product mental health professionals who are wholly unprepared to do real life counseling with culturally different clients. The lack of meaningful training, the tacit agreement to avoid genuine conversations that are real issues in cultural settings and the one-sided perspective on culture is impairing some of the participants in the current study. As mentioned in Chapter 2, CACREP requires students to be able to demonstrate their knowledge related to social and cultural diversity. According to the data, one may question if this standard was met with these students.

The natural next step in this system is that of White privilege. Interestingly, White privilege is not limited to those native born Whites. Though many people emigrate from other countries that have no family history in the United States or they are people who only appear White but are racially non-White, white privilege becomes the tip of the spear that is used to illustrate how White people have a natural advantage in everyday life. Levin (2021) states educations are making the point that"…white privilege and the white dominate culture are responsible for all manner of black and minority grievances and disaffection" (p. 88). One participant objected to the idea that she has to be responsible for the behaviors of a racial group for which she does not belong. Though the literature provides only superficial examples of the implementation of white privilege, such as a White couple being served first at a restaurant though a Black couple ordered their food first, this concept is assumed to be valid, present and inescapable. The concept of white privilege re-enforces the precepts mentioned above as it

encourages the hostility towards other racial groups, maintains the "us against them" thinking and allows some to accuse others of unearned advantage, as we have seen in participant responses. In this context, we find racial groups in a double bind where merit does not erase the unearned privilege of Whites and the minority person is perpetually victimized and in need of assistance no matter how successful that person becomes. As mentioned, working hard and being responsible does not resolve the issue because even "the idea of merit as a just, objective and desirable goal in society is said to be seen and applied though the eyes of white privilege" (Levin, 2021, p. 103). There is also the assumption that because one group has a benefit that also means other groups have been deprived of that benefit thereby leaving one group disadvantaged. The data shows this privilege does not always manifest in the multicultural class according to the participants. However, working in conjunction, this conception of the world allows the fostering of tribalism and lends to the perception of groups being perpetually disadvantaged and victimized by those who are in position of power even though many minorities are also in many positions of power as observed in the comments of participants.

The multicultural corrective mechanism to the system of oppression comes in the form of affirmative action. Though it is nearly never stated outright, affirmative action is itself a form of discrimination in that it oppresses groups in order to give other groups unearned advantage. However, current multicultural education thinking is that preferential treatment is justified because of the need for diversity and equality in various environments. Ibram Kendi (2019), a well-known multicultural educator, emphasizes the correctness of this sentiment when he stated "[t]he only remedy to past discrimination is present discrimination. The only remedy to present discrimination is future discrimination." The data show that participant experiences are that observed multicultural teachings, students are being taught that only certain types of

discrimination is wrong and we must consider the correctness of that discrimination by first considering to whom is receiving the benefit. For instance, if admission requirements at a university results in an overrepresentation of Asian student applicants, admissions may deny admission to a number of qualified Asian students because this would result in an over representation of Asian students which by definition would limit the number of less qualified students of other minority groups. Diversity is often the reason given for such admissions policies, however there are possibly other motivations driving these policies at prestigious universities. Sowell (2023) explains "[t]he hundreds of millions of dollars of federal money that comes into an academic institutions annually can be put at risk if ethnic minorities are seriously 'under-represented' among the students, since that raises the prospect of under-representation being equated with racial discrimination" (p. 125). Accusations of racial discrimination can result in significant losses of both money and reputation. However, the challenge in discussing issues like affirmative action is that those who benefit from the practice feel justified in utilizing this method rather than earning a place at the University. This view of allowing discrimination for the benefit of diversity was praised by several participants during their interviews. Even several participants mentioned a need to show more scrutiny in admissions policies as it related to ensuring a minimum level of multicultural understanding before admissions to counselor

Implications for Professional Practice, Advocacy and Policy

The implications for professional practice and policy seem to be clear if the goal of the multicultural class is to prepare students to work with diverse populations. Based on the experiences of the participants the current method of teaching multicultural counseling is inadequate on many levels. As we have seen from the data, describing White students as perpetrators and oppressors simply for the sin of being "White" alienates these students both in

adequate understanding of the material and of the motivation to embrace and understand other cultures. One participant recounted conversations with several White students who were entirely disinterested in the class for various reasons. Also, depicting Black students as the group of the oppressed or as victims, disempowers this group and indirectly communicate the message that they cannot be successful because of the oppressive White regime. This view was also confirmed by several participants who showed indifference about certain topic suggesting they had no ability to make a positive impact. Further, though women make up the majority of the American population and an absolute majority within counselor education programs, they are also considered a victimized class, suggesting their inability to make their own personal life choices or to be treated fairly within the larger society. It is argued that these oppressed groups are not equal and therefore disadvantaged, however as Sowell (2023) explains "[e]ven in a society with equal opportunity—people from different backgrounds do not necessarily even want to do the same things, much less invest their time and energies into developing the same kinds of skills and talents" (p. 1). In this context, in the various counselor programs available it would be unreasonable to conclude that those minority students are in a program out of charity or because of the beneficence of the people who make decisions on admissions.

Several participants communicated that in their experiences in the multicultural class the current approach to teaching multicultural counseling to future professional counselors involves teaching students that injustice is everywhere and it is their goal to manage clients on how the world should look rather than how the world is. The therapist who evaluates every encounter as another example of oppression may be someone who cannot assist clients in distress because there is no relief within a world that is so unjust. This perspective acknowledges that both the therapist and the client are impotent in the face of reality and only allows them to commiserate

together about the unjustness of any given situation, to wallow in our sorrows. One participant made this clear when explaining that CBT is an inappropriate modality for someone who has experienced a racist event and the therapist is to commiserate with that client. Ultimately, the focus on oppression, which leads to equality, which has now led to the pursuit of equity, sacrifices freedom and shifts oppression from one group to others. In quoting Milton Friedman, Sowell (2023) stated

> "A society that puts equality—in the sense of equality of outcome—ahead of freedom will end up with neither equality nor freedom. The use of force to achieve equality will destroy freedom, and the force, introduced for good purposes, will end up in the hands of people who use it to promote their own interests" (p. 104).

Regardless of the good reasons those in positions of power have to force conformity of their own vision, forced compliance continues to result in oppression as experiences by some participants.

Implications for Future Research

The implication for future research is that clearly more research concerning the effectiveness of multicultural classes within counselor education programs is needed. The data show that certain students are experiencing high levels of anxiety concerning the class but not only because the material is difficult. Anxiety concerning social rejection from peers and retaliation from those in the leadership of the program were both communicated by several participants. Additionally there are concerns that other students will label people who do not agree with them as racist or bigoted which would also be reason for consideration to be removed from the program. The data show that many students are choosing the approach of keeping silent and to ensure they don't make any waves in class with the ultimate goal of getting through all the requirements so they can be released from the confines that the program is imposing on them. In short, those in power positions in counselor education programs, both as students and

administration, are potentially oppressing students and stifling free and open communication. Sowell (2023) expresses these concerns well when stating,

> "[t]he fatal danger of our times today is a growing intolerance and suppression of both opinions and evidence that differ from the prevailing ideologies that dominate institutions, ranging from the academic world to the corporate world, the media and governmental institutions" (p. 100).

The challenge of presenting fair and objective multicultural data that can be subjected to scrutiny and discussed openly was present in the experiences of these participants and progress in other areas of teaching multiculturalism cannot improve meaningfully without resolving this fundamental issue. Therefore, additional research is necessary to better understand how common the results of this study are in order to establish mechanisms that give every student the freedom to be their genuine selves, regardless of ideology or personal worldview, while also permitting the examination of challenging data.

The researcher recommends additional research in the future, including both qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative studies with a significantly larger sample, such as 100 participants from a dozen different counselor education programs, could provide significant insight on the nature of current programs and their effectiveness. Quantitative research could also provide significant amount of data that could be collected in a manner that could help add extra layers of anonymity to participants. It may also be insightful to gain a better understanding of both student and faculty political views which may help interpret the data collected. Finally, it may additional provide insight to utilize a multicultural competency instrument in order to assess the multicultural counseling competence of students. In this case however, the researcher recommends ensuring the focus is on multicultural counseling challenges and not on political or cultural standards.

Research Limitations

There are several important limitations to the study that must be acknowledged. The first is that this is a qualitative study with the expectation to explore and better understand the richer and deeper context and not designed for generalization to the larger populations. Another limitation is the small number of participants. A total of seven participants agreed to participant in the class and though this was a mix of students that were sourced from two different counselor education programs, it is still not a large sample. Another limitation is that five of the seven participants identify as heterosexual, while the other two participants identified as pansexual with the additional appellation of bi-sexual and lesbian respectively. Another limitation is that among the participants there were only two male students. As it relates to the ratio of male to female students typically enrolled in a counselor education program this may be the most consistent aspect and may represent a true reflection of the makeup of any given program. One other noteworthy factor is that that two of the seven are married which may have resulted in significantly different views on topics and life experiences than those who are unmarried, though a diversity in perspective can also be a benefit. Like those who are married, there were also two participants who were over 40 years old which could also impact thoughts and perspectives concerning life experiences and interactions with others.

Conclusion

The study provides preliminary new evidence revealing that the multicultural counseling classes are uncomfortable, challenging and as we have seen, a negative experiences for some students. The data show in the current study the multicultural class was a mechanism for conveying left leaning teachings to counselor education students who are seeking to better understand diverse and challenging multicultural experiences in order to be prepared to conduct

meaningful counseling with culturally different clients. The class discussed utilized hierarchy and intimidation to silence opposing views and created a system of retaliation, and potential retaliation, for those who resisted full acceptance of the established narrative. If it was ever intended to do so, the multicultural classes that were discussed did not teach students about culturally differences and how to cooperate and respect diverse people groups. The unfortunate conclusion is that the data show the multicultural classes within the counselor education programs that were examined within this study are not assisting counselor education students in their pursuit of becoming competent multicultural mental health professionals.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Interview Questions:

1. Tell me a little about the overall experience with the Multicultural counseling class.
2. Tell me about your negative experiences in the Multicultural counseling class.
3. As it relates to your own identity, tell me what was learned in the class that would assist people different from you to conduct meaning therapy with people who identify the same way you do.
4. As it relates to your own identify, tell me what was learned in the class that would assist people who identify the way you do to conduct meaningful therapy with people who are different from you or different than the group with whom you identify?
5. How can the Multicultural counseling class be improved?

Appendix B

Demographic Questions

(Instructions: Please complete this section by circling the following answers)

1. What is Your Age?
☐ 18-20
☐ 21-30
☐ 31-40
☐ Above 40

2. What is Your Gender?
☐ Male
☐ Female
☐ Transgender
☐ Other _____

4. What is Your Ethnicity/Race?
☐ African American
☐ White/Caucasian
☐ Latino
☐ Native American/Alaska Native
☐ Asian American
☐ Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
☐ Other _____

5. What is Your Religion?
☐ Christianity
☐ Muslim
☐ Judaism
☐ Hinduism
☐ Buddhism
☐ Other _____

6. What is Your Marital Status?
☐ Single
☐ Married
☐ Divorced
☐ Widowed

7. What is Your Employment Status?
☐ Employed
☐ Self-Employed
☐ Non-Employed

8. What is Your Economic Status?
☐ High Income (Above $100,000)
☐ Middle Income ($32,001 - $100,000
☐ Low Income (less than $32,000)

9. What is Your Military Experience?
☐ None
☐ Active Duty
☐ Veteran

10. What is Your Native Language?
☐ English
☐ Spanish
☐ Chinese
☐ Japanese
☐ Hindi
☐ Other _____

11. Sexual Orientation?
☐ Heterosexual
☐ Homosexual
☐ Bisexual
☐ Pansexual
☐ Asexual
☐ Lesbian
☐ Gay

12. Country of Origin
☐ United States
☐ Other _____

13. Counseling Interest Area
☐ School Counseling
☐ College Counseling
☐ Government Office
☐ Private Practice

Appendix C

Recruiting Email

Hello,

My name is John Edwards and I am a doctoral student in the Counselor Education program at the North Carolina State University (NCSU). I am conducting a research study to examine the effectiveness of multicultural education classes on counselor education students. My intention is to examine the unpleasant or uncomfortable experiences of counseling students and better understand how those experiences enhance or fail to enhance practical application of multiculturalism when conducting counseling services in the future. The intention is to understand current challenges students may experience and to better understand how multicultural training can be improved.

I am seeking participants who: • Are active students or those who have recently graduated from an accredited counseling education program that qualifies them to obtain a state license as a Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor (LCMHC) by the North Carolina Board of Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselors (NCBLCMHC) • Have completed a mandatory multicultural class as a degree requirement within the last 12 months. • Are willing to discuss their experiences within the multicultural class, which the student would describe as uncomfortable, hostile, negative or the like.

This is a NCSU IRB approved study: IRB-25112. Participation in the study will include signing an informed consent form; responding to a screening email with basic demographic questions; taking part in an individual, online interview; and reviewing follow-up material. The total time commitment is less than 120 minutes. Participation is completely voluntary. Your privacy will be protected and confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible. There is compensation for your participation in this study in the form of a $50 Amazon gift card. Study details and consent information is available via the DocuSign link at the top of this email. If you meet the eligibility criteria above and would like to participate in this research study, please follow the DocuSign link above to review and sign the informed consent form. Thank you for your consideration! If you have any questions, please contact the study team below.

John Edwards, Med, NCC, LCMHCS, LCMHC, LMFT
Doctoral Candidate | Department of Educational Leadership, Policy, and Human Development
North Carolina State University Primary Investigator
jwedwar5@ncsu.edu

Siu-Man "Raymond" Ting, Ph.D. LCMHC GCDFI JTIF MTS Fellow (NASPA)
Professor, Director of Graduate Programs,
Department of Educational

Appendix D

Member checking email

Hello,

I hope this e-mail finds you well. I am contacting you to request that you review your interview transcript. This process is referred to as "member checking" and will involve the following steps:

1. I will share your interview transcript via my private North Carolina State University Google Drive folder.
2. You are asked to gain access to the document(s) using your personal computer and a secure network. Both of us will be the only ones to be able to access this private folder. I suggest completing this activity in a private location, on a private internet connection, and accessing this folder using a web browser that is in private/incognito mode.
3. You will read through the document(s) in the private folder and comment in the document if you agree, disagree, or would like to clarify or change the content in each document and how you would like to do so. I expect this will take about 30 minutes of your time.
4. You will e-mail me to inform me that you have completed reading through your document(s) and commenting in them as appropriate. I am requesting that you do this within two weeks of this email. ***Please do not provide information or feedback in the email you send to us regarding your completion of the task.***
5. Once the verification process by you is completed, I will remove your access to the private NC State University Google Drive folder with your document(s) in it.

I expect that the member-checking activities will take about 30 minutes of your time. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you!

Sincerely,
John Edwards
Jwedwar5@ncsu.edu
910-922-5408

Appendix E

Consent Form

Title of Study: A Phenomenological study to examine the effectiveness of multicultural education in counseling education programs. (eIRB #25112)
Principal Investigator(s): John Edwards, jwedwar5@ncsu.edu, 910-922-5408
Funding Source: None
NC State Faculty Point of Contact: Siu-Man Ting, ting@ncsu.edu, (919) 515-6362

What are some general things you should know about research studies?

You are invited to take part in a research study. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to be a part of this study, to choose not to participate, and to stop participating at any time without penalty. The purpose of this research study is to gain a better understanding of how counselor education students are affected by difficult and unpleasant experiences in multicultural education classes. We will do this through conducting individual interviews and a collective focus group with African American millennial aged mothers.

You are not guaranteed any personal benefits from being in this study. Research studies also may pose risks to those who participate. You may want to participate in this research because it creates a space for the participants to express their lived experiences and connect with others that may have experienced similar challenges. You may not want to participate in this research because it involves disclosing and openly discussing difficult experiences and their impact on how you interact with others in your personal and professional life.

Specific details about the research in which you are invited to participate are contained below. If you do not understand something in this form, please ask the researcher for clarification. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you. If, at any time, you have questions about your participation in this research, do not hesitate to contact the researcher(s) named above or the NC State IRB office. The IRB office's contact information is listed in the *What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?* section of this form.

What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of the study is to examine the effectiveness of multicultural education in preparing students and new counselors to work with culturally diverse populations and to understand how the challenging experiences affect their progress in that goal.

It is important to understand if challenging or negative experiences in multicultural classes inhibit the free exchange of ideas and information concerning multicultural issues. It is also important to understand if multicultural classes are providing foundational and real world education on working with culturally diverse clients.

How many people will be in the study?

There will be approximately seven participants in this study.

Am I eligible to be a participant in this study?

In order to be a participant in this study you must meet all of the following:

1. You must agree to be in the study.
2. You must be an active counselor education student or a recent graduate of the counselor education program (tracks for private practice, school or college counseling are all acceptable).
3. You must have completed the multicultural class required by your program within the last 12 months.
4. You must be willing to discuss your challenging or negative experiences in the multicultural class.
5. You must be willing to discuss what you learned in the class that helped you gain a better understand of how to work with culturally different clients.
6. You must be willing to give your perspective on what can be changed to make multiculturally training more effective if you think it can be improved.

It is important that all participants have completed the specific multicultural class within the last 12 months and culturally diverse participants are highly encouraged to participant.

What will happen if you take part in the study?

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to do all of the following:

1. Review, agree, sign, and return this informed consent form to the investigator.
2. Work with the investigator to schedule your individual interview.
3. Be an active participant in a 45 minute, recorded interview.
4. Work with the investigator to schedule a date and time to review and clarify if necessary the transcript of the interview.
5. Discuss your experiences in your multicultural class in a meaningful and open manner.
6. Work with NC State instructor to review categorizations during the research process. The instructor will be the only other person reviewing data.
7. Data exchange and communication between the investigator and the instructor will be done electronically.
8. Provide a mailing address for the investigator to send a thank you gift following the completion of the study.

The total amount of time that you will be participating in this study is approximately two hours. The time will be used during the interview and by reviewing the transcript to allow participants to check for accuracy and to clarify information in the transcript that the participants thinks needs to be explained in more detail.

Recording and images

If you want to participate in this research, you must agree to be audio recorded and video recorded. If you do not agree to be audio recorded and video recorded, you cannot participate in this research.

Risks and benefits

There are minimal risks associated with participation in this research. The risks to you as a result of this research include the potential of experiencing emotional reactions during the discussion. In order to further minimize risks, I will use pseudonyms to protect your confidentiality.

There are no direct benefits to your participation in the research. Although the researcher is a licensed clinician, the one-on-one interviews and the focus group are not rooted in building a therapeutic relationship and/or providing therapy. As a participant in this study, your understanding of this topic could be broadened by the process.

Right to withdraw your participation

You can stop participating in this study at any time for any reason. To do so, just stop any research activity that you are doing or contact the researcher, John Edwards, at jwedwar5@ncsu.edu and 910-922-5408. You can also contact the faculty advisor for this research, Siu-Man Ting, at ting@ncsu.edu and (919) 515-6362. If you choose to withdraw your consent and to stop participating in this research, you can expect that the researcher(s) will redact your data from their data set, securely destroy your data, and prevent future uses of your data for research purposes wherever possible. This is possible in some, but not all, cases.

Confidentiality, personal privacy, and data management

Trust is the foundation of the participant/researcher relationship. Much of that principle of trust is tied to keeping your information private and in the manner that I have described in this document. The information that you share with me will be held in strict confidence.

Protecting your privacy as related to this research is of utmost importance. There are very rare circumstances related to confidentiality where I may have to share information about you. Your information collected in this research study could be reviewed by representatives of the University, research sponsors, or government agencies in some legal situations. In other cases, I must report instances in which the participant or others could be imminent harm, however it is highly unlikely that any such circumstances will arise within the context of this research. How I manage, protect, and share your data are the principal ways that I protect your personal privacy. Data that will be shared with others about you will be

Re-identifiable. Re-identifiable data is information that I can identify you indirectly because of my access to information, role, skills, combination of information, and/or use of technology. This may also mean that in published reports others could identify you from what is reported, for instance, if a story you tell is very specific and has been previously linked to you as something you have experienced. If your data is re-identifiable, it will be reported it in such a way that you

are not directly identified in reports. Based on how I need to share the data, I cannot remove details from the report that would protect your identity from ever being discovered. This means that others may be able to re-identify from the information reported from this research.

Future use of your research data
It is common to help maximize the benefits of your participation in this project, by further contributing to science and our community by maintaining such data for future use, however, your de-identified information will not be stored for future research.

Compensation
For your participation in this study, you will receive a thank you gift in the form of a $50 gift card to Amazon. The compensation is based on completing an individual 45 minute interview with this researcher as well as participating in examining the transcript of your own interview and making any necessary corrections or additions for further clarity.

What if you have questions about this study?
If you have questions at any time about the study itself or the procedures implemented in this study, you may contact the student researcher, John Edwards, at jwedwar5@ncsu.edu and 910-922-5408. You can also contact the faculty advisor for this research, Siu-Man Ting, at ting@ncsu.edu and (919) 515-6362.

What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?
If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact the NC State IRB (Institutional Review Board) office. An IRB office helps participants if they have any issues regarding research activities. You can contact the NC State University IRB office at IRB-Director@ncsu.edu, 919-515-8754, or fill out a confidential form online at https://research.ncsu.edu/administration/participant-concern-and-complaint-form/

Consent to participate
By signing this consent form, I am affirming that I have read and understand the above information. All of the questions that I had about this research have been answered. I have chosen to participate in this study with the understanding that I may stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. I am aware that I may revoke my consent at any time.

☐ **Yes, I want to be in this research study.**

Name: _____

Today's Date _____

☐ **No, I do not want to be in this research study.**

Thank you for your consideration.