Fostering Multicultural and Social Justice Competence Through Counsellor Education Pedagogy
Favoriser la compétence multiculturelle et de justice sociale par la pédagogie dans la formation des conseillers

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ABSTRACT

The critical incident technique was used to investigate perceptions of graduate students in two counselling psychology programs about how well the curriculum on multicultural counselling and social justice prepared them for professional practice. A thematic analysis was employed to determine themes and subthemes, which led to two important pedagogical principles. First, students gained multicultural counselling and social justice competencies through active learning principles. Second, supportive environments facilitate student development of multicultural competence and adoption of social justice values. Additional pedagogical recommendations are provided to bridge the gap between attitudes and knowledge regarding multicultural competency and social justice skills attainment.

RÉSUMÉ

La technique de l'incident critique était utilisée pour analyser les perceptions d'étudiants titulaires d'un grade universitaire inscrits à 2 programmes de psychologie du counseling, en leur demandant dans quelle mesure les programmes d'études en counseling multiculturel et de justice sociale les préparaient à l'exercice de la profession. On a employé une analyse thématique pour déterminer les thèmes et les sous-thèmes, ce qui a permis de dégager 2 importants principes pédagogiques. Premièrement, les étudiants ont acquis des compétences en counseling multiculturel et en justice sociale grâce à des principes d'apprentissage actif. Deuxièmement, les environnements de soutien favorisent le développement de la compétence multiculturelle et l'adoption des valeurs de justice sociale chez les étudiants. L'article propose d'autres recommandations pédagogiques en vue de combler l'écart entre les attitudes et la connaissance eu égard à l'acquisition de la compétence multiculturelle et des habiletés en justice sociale.

The growing cultural diversity of North American society has prompted calls for a systematic infusion of both multicultural counselling (MC) and social justice (SJ) objectives in counsellor education programs (Durham & Glosoff, 2010; Pieterse, Evans, Risner-Butner, Collins, & Mason, 2009). Counsellors and counselling psychologists, who work within an increasingly pluralistic society, are challenged to enhance their MC competence (Arredondo et al., 1996; Sue & Sue, 1990). The

linkage between one's social position and access to resources has been identified in MC competency frameworks (Arredondo et al., 1996; Sue et al., 1998). Dimensions of culture such as age, social class, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, race, religion, language, national origin, ability, and their intersections have a profound effect on clients' worldview, how they are viewed by other people, and their general sense of health and well-being (Graham, Carney, & Kluck, 2012; Green, Callands, Radcliffe, Luebbe, & Klonoff, 2009; Sinacore et al., 2011).

We take the position that it is not group membership or any one dimension of culture that inherently defines a person's identity. Rather, through their social interactions, individuals incorporate information about their identity and who they are relative to other people, as well as through their social standing in society (Fouad, Gerstein, & Toporek, 2006). In essence, people's personal and cultural identities are constructed through the social interactions and messages that they receive, often positioned around salient aspects of cultural dimensions. Attention to culture matters in the therapeutic process because it bears on the client's identity and influences the client's behaviour (Sinacore et al., 2011). In turn, the Culture-Infused Counselling competency model (Collins & Arthur, 2010a, 2010b) focuses on the ways that culture also influences the counsellor's identity and the ways that counsellors perceive and respond to client concerns. What is constructed between counsellors and clients is a unique culture, albeit there are many influences from their prior relationships and experiences in society (Pedersen, Crethar, & Carlson, 2008). We concur that it is critical to consider clients' multiple identities and social contexts in framing client concerns and designing culturally responsive interventions (Brubaker, Puig, Reese, & Young, 2010; Collins, 2010; Sinacore et al., 2011), and to work collaboratively with clients in designing and implementing culturally responsive professional services.

In our previous writing, we took, and continue to take, the position that MC is inextricably connected to SJ, and professional counsellors need to develop competencies for actively demonstrating their skills (Arthur & Collins, 2010). Therefore, it is important to consider how we prepare professionals, such as counsellors and counselling psychologists, for their future roles. Professional helpers inevitably work with clients whose life experiences and contextual influences are diverse, and practitioners need to be adequately prepared for working directly with clients, for working on their behalf, and for changing the systems and social structures that adversely impact their mental health. There is more written about the need for multicultural and SJ competencies in counsellor education than research that inform ways of effectively preparing counsellors (Arthur & Collins, in press).

The purpose of our present research was to investigate how students evaluated counsellor education curriculum designed to address MC and SJ competency development. Specifically, we were interested in students' perspectives about how well the curriculum prepared them for professional practice. We explored students' perspectives about the content of the curriculum, the learning processes that were helpful, and the barriers and gaps in curriculum that they identified. Our central research question was as follows: What are students' perceptions about the content

and processes of curriculum on MC and SJ in terms of preparation for professional practice? In this article we draw on literature from the education field to highlight the instructional strategies that may have contributed to the MC and SJ competencies that students gained. Additionally, we introduce suggestions for developing student active engagement that our research suggests is a necessary component in the teaching of MC and SJ competencies.

In our analysis of pedagogy, we present an argument for an infusion of active learning throughout the students' graduate programs. *Active learning* encompasses instructional processes that shift the locus of control and responsibility for learning to the learners (Halx, 2010). We position our discussion with an overview of developments in the field of counsellor education for MC and SJ advocacy. Following the methodology section and a summary of the primary results, the main body of this article focuses on pedagogical recommendations for enhancing student MC and SJ competence that emerged from the analysis of student data. Each key point is supported with excerpts from the data or, where applicable, a discussion of what was absent from the data. Finally, we argue for treating students as coproducers of knowledge and for employing teaching principles that foster MC and SJ competencies; hence, we contend that there needs to be congruence between the content and pedagogy of counsellor education.

COUNSELLOR EDUCATION FOR MULTICULTURAL COUNSELLING AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

In a response to the demand to address culture in counsellor education programs, guidelines and models emerged to guide curriculum (Mio, 2005; Stadler, Suh, Cobia, Middleton, & Carney, 2006). Many counsellor education programs were revised to include MC curriculum, most often delivered in a single-course format (Lopez-Baez & Paylo, 2009; Sammons & Speight, 2008; Stadler et al., 2006). However, there are also debates in the field regarding whether MC curriculum that focuses on dimensions of culture goes far enough in addressing SJ issues, specifically the contextual forces that impact the health and well-being of many individuals in our society (Ratts & Wood, 2011; Roysircar, 2009; Singh et al., 2010). Many people from nondominant populations experience oppression and inequitable treatment in our society; therefore, it is important for counsellor education to centralize SJ responsibilities in preparing competent counsellors (Fouad et al., 2006; Ratts & Wood, 2011). It is not cultural diversity that is problematic; rather, it is the ways that social identities are constructed and the inequitable distribution of resources that underpins SJ concerns.

We believe that counsellors should actively work as social advocates, not only to provide clients with basic necessities in their lives, but also to support their growth and potential as human beings (Arthur, 2014). Multicultural counselling requires counsellors to consider the power differentials that are embedded in social interactions, in organizational structures, and in the political and social

construction of people's identities, that lead many people to suffer with adverse impacts on their health and well-being (Arthur & Collins, 2010). Additionally, we argue that counsellors need to be educated in order to examine their personal biases and engage in reflexive self-awareness. Without such attention to the invisibility and impact of privilege, biases, and prejudice, counsellors could unintentionally exacerbate clients' problems through perpetuating oppressive practices. As a result, counsellors and other helping professionals may be responsible for the covert oppression of people from nondominant groups in our society (Smith & Shin, 2008).

Curriculum focused exclusively on theoretical or conceptual knowledge fails to produce the level of competence needed to work with diverse populations (Berenbaum & Shoham, 2011; Dickson, Argus-Calvo, & Garcia Tafoya, 2010) and, in particular, fails to address social injustices (Burnes & Singh, 2010; Lewis, 2010). The traditional approach to MC/SJ education includes a lecture format and scholarly readings with the intention to increase MC cognitions (e.g., focusing on knowledge and awareness competencies); there is less attention paid to the enhancement of applied practice skills (Cates & Schaefle, 2009; Pieterse, 2009). Presenting both MC and SJ curriculum in a traditional instructional format may create a disconnection between process and content. We speculate that a traditional instructional format may not go far enough in supporting students to transfer knowledge about MC and SJ to the active roles and responsibilities needed in practice. Consequently, the profession needs to turn its attention to the pedagogy of counsellor education and, specifically, what components will achieve optimum learning by students (Pieterse et al., 2009).

The traditional format is considered to be inferior to *active learning* models because it puts the student in a passive role with little accountability for absorption of the information, except for memorization and recall, and the potential to disengage from the material (Halx, 2010; Richmond & Kindelberger Hagan, 2011). Learning models, founded in classics like Chickering and Gamson's (1987) seven principles of good practice, Knowles' (1980) andragogical (or adult learners) model and Mezirow's (2000) transformation theory guide educators to provide interactive learning experiences that connect to the students' experiences or real life in some way. Students involved in active, transformative, and collaborative learning synthesize, evaluate, and generally engage in deeper learning (Halx, 2010; Paulson & Faust, 2010; Shulman, 2005).

In active learning, students are engaged in the learning process rather than being passive recipients of knowledge (Revell & Wainwright, 2009). This type of learning fosters student engagement; it promotes higher-level critical thinking; it encourages accountability for learning; and it uses the students' life experience and personal interest to connect more deeply with material (Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Halx, 2010; Mezirow, 2000; Richmond & Kindelberger Hagan, 2011). In the counselling field, discussion groups, case study reviews, presentations, role-plays, reflection papers, experiential learning activities, and immersion experiences are examples of instructional strategies that are associated with active learning (Keats,

2009; Pieterse et al., 2009; Todd & Abrams, 2011). Our investigation sought to better understand how students perceived their counsellor education on MC and SJ as a foundation for professional practice.

METHODOLOGY

This study draws from a larger project that examined the educational experiences of students and practicum supervisors affiliated with two counsellor education programs in Alberta, Canada, and counsellors who were located in a variety of geographical locations across the country. Participants responded to an online survey soliciting both quantitative and qualitative data about the development of MC and SJ competence through their graduate education. In part of the survey, participants provided the critical incidents (CIs) that form the basis of this study. Critical incidents are real-life events that stood out for them; participants find them memorable because they are significant to them in some meaningful way (Butterfield, Borgen, Amundson, & Maglio, 2005). The data collected from counsellors and practicum supervisors are reported elsewhere (Collins, Arthur, Brown, & Kennedy, 2013a). This study focuses exclusively on the student population. The student participants were from both a distributed learning program, in which the MC course was offered online (72%), and a campus-based program (28%). Eighty-five percent of the 59 student participants were female. The majority (81%) were Caucasian, while the rest identified as South Asian (5%), Black/African/Caribbean (4%), Jewish (3%), Chinese (3%), Hispanic/Latin American (2%), Aboriginal (1%), and Arab (1%). Thirty-two of these students submitted CIs, and a portion of them agreed to follow-up clarification through e-mail (28%) and/or semistructured interviews (25%).

The critical incident technique (CIT; Flanagan, 1954) is a research approach to investigate significant experiences or meaningful events that resonate personally with individuals, related to the topic of study (Arthur, 2001; Butterfield et al., 2005). In this project, we adapted the Enhanced CIT (ECIT; Butterfield, Borgen, Maglio, & Amundson, 2009) to ascertain the helpful and hindering MC and SJ learning experiences that students identified in their counsellor education program, which followed the format of the original CIT (Flanagan, 1954). However, this modified version also allowed us to invite participants to provide a *wish list* of potential enhancements to their education.

Participants provided descriptions of both a positive and a less positive CI and then responded to open-ended questions designed to encourage reflection about the nature of those experiences, specifically: the aspects that contributed to their perceived competence, the areas that presented obstacles, and the components that they believed would improve their graduate program. The CI questions relating positive or negative valence were (a) Reflect on your professional education and describe a meaningful event that supported the development of your competence for MC and SJ, (b) Reflect on how you might have been better prepared to address multicultural and SJ issues in counselling roles, and (c) Describe a meaningful

event that hindered or created a barrier in the development of your competence for MC and SJ action.

A critical psychology lens (Fox, Prilleltensky, & Austin, 2009) was employed in the data analysis phase to elucidate cultural contexts and differences, power structures (including the politics of knowledge), and the researchers' worldviews (see also Briodo & Manning, 2002; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005). We used a critical theory lens when reviewing the student transcripts to examine the social and organizational structures that surround counsellor education and practice by noting themes that were absent, their relationship to structural influences on the reported roles and responsibilities of counsellors, and the implications for professional education. We identified overt and covert meaning in participants' statements, for example, by identifying examples of lack of buy-in to the principles of MC and SJ reflected in student statements. We also distinguished learning experiences that, for example, were expressed as negative accounts, but contained positive elements or outcomes. Moreover, we attended to statements that may reflect discrimination, power imbalances, or other concepts that the participant may not have realized was present. Finally, the critical psychology lens assisted us to examine our own relative privileged or disprivileged cultural positioning and the implications on our interpretations of the data.

The research team included two senior researchers and two research assistants (RAs). QSR International's NVivo 9 qualitative data analysis software was used to code the content of the participants' CIs and to identify and cluster emergent themes. The participant statements were first uploaded in their entirety into NVivo, and then specific text segments and phrases that reflected specific learning processes were coded by two RAs into NVivo nodes. Data analysis followed the ECIT (Butterfield et al., 2009) three-stage inductive process for analyzing thematic content. First, we chose a frame of reference: The categories were formed from the data, but also shaped by the purpose of the study. Second, we created categories: Both RAs and a senior researcher established definitions for coding categories, which served to identify the boundaries for text segments. Third, we evolved levels of specificity-generality: As coding of segmented text occurred, a four-level taxonomy of categories and subcategories, varying in specificity, was created in NVivo. Additional categories were added, as needed, during the coding process. Coding continued until data exhaustiveness/redundancy was reached and no further categories were warranted.

Interpreting the data involved a series of credibility checks (Butterfield et al., 2009). Independent extraction of CIs was done by the two RAs by randomly selecting CIs to determine if these CIs fit Flanagan's (1954) definition of a CI. Independent coding of the CIs was done on two occasions to determine match rate (i.e., interrater reliability). The first involved coding comparison between two RAs, with a senior researcher reviewing the process, and the second involved coding comparison between the senior researcher and the first author. A senior researcher reviewed the coding and the categories within the hierarchy to ascertain the categories' usefulness, identified missing components, and noted any unexpected or

misplaced categories. To determine the strength of the categories, participation rates (e.g., the total number of sources/participants contributing to a category divided by the total number of sources/participants) were calculated using a 25% cut-off to identify the higher-level themes. Lastly, theoretical agreement was reached by addressing the four researchers' assumptions and the emergent categories with the literature.

Recontextualization of the data occurred manually (comparing segmented data back to the original transcripts) as well as with the use of the search, sort, and compile functions of NVivo. Various NVivo reports were used to acquire frequency counts, which were generated for each of the themes and subthemes to assist in creating a comprehensive picture of the data. A detailed review of the CI learning experiences is reported in Collins, Arthur, and Brown (2013), and a comprehensive analysis of resultant competencies, barriers, and gaps in educational content and process is provided in Collins, Arthur, Brown, and Kennedy (2013b). Drawing on the outcomes of these analyses, this article delves deeper into students' experiences and perspectives on the process of "how to" develop MC and SJ competencies through counselor education.

RESULTS AND PEDAGOGICAL THEMES

The results focus on the themes that highlighted the need for a more in-depth exploration of how to best teach MC and SJ. These pedagogical themes are as follows:

1. The majority of students indicated that their exposure to MC and SJ resulted from a single course, and they identified specific influential components of that course.
2. In many cases, the practicum experience provided students with a transformative learning opportunity through direct engagement with diverse clients.
3. Although students noted positive interactions with instructors and supervisors, there were examples of a lack of supportive environment conducive to learning.

The context of their learning posed a barrier, in particular, when it was incongruous with MC or SJ objectives or they experienced negative encounters with instructors or practicum supervisors. In the next section, the themes above are discussed in detail, along with illustrative student statements. We have intentionally embedded these themes within the context of the educative principles to illustrate the students' transformative processes of MC and SJ competency development. In the following sections, we compare our results with principles of learning, informed by the seminal works of Chickering and Gamson (1987), Knowles (1980), and Mezirow (2000), as well as recent literature in the education field (Cranton, 2011; Hodge et al., 2011).

Our results illustrate how the teaching of MC and, in particular, SJ competencies was enhanced by acknowledging adult learners' needs, as well as promoting active learning and student engagement by recognizing the elements that encourage student motivation. For instance, adult learners are responsible for their education and want to be engaged in creating or coproducing it, and they come to the learning environment with life experience (Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Knowles, 1980). When we reviewed the CIs that students reported were beneficial in developing MC competencies, we discovered that these educational processes contained elements of active learning and andragogy, the most influential facets of their program being the MC course and practicum experiences. In the next section, we relate these findings to the educational processes found in the multicultural course.

Multicultural Course

The MC courses in both programs drawn upon in this study covered basic concepts that were designed to increase students' awareness of their personal culture, the client's worldview, and culturally sensitive counselling practices. The MC course contained one explicit lesson on SJ, but some professors infused SJ throughout the course. One participant summarized her experience with the MC course, which was common to other responses:

> The MC counselling class provided a strong foundation for my understanding of MC competencies. [This] class opened my eyes to many of the injustices that various cultures experienced, particularly the Aboriginal population … We were asked to specifically look at our own cultural make-up and to think about how we were privileged, which opened my eyes to the fact that because I am a white middle class woman, I am afforded many positives that women from other cultures or socioeconomic status do not have.

Meaningful MC course activities. Within the MC course, students frequently referred to a cultural interview assignment as being influential in their MC and SJ competency development. The cultural interview assignment required students to select an individual from a cultural background different from their own and conduct an interview to explore the person's cultural identity(ies), experiences, and worldviews and then build a paper based on this interaction in light of relevant professional literature. This exercise raised students' awareness and increased positive attitudes toward MC/SJ, as reflected by this statement:

> I learned to understand and appreciate other people's culture. I became more aware of the fact that most of our beliefs are culturally conditioned, and that helps me be more open and unprejudiced in my interactions with others.

Participants also reported gaining heightened awareness and increased knowledge of their interviewee's culture and worldview as well as learning about this individual's potential struggles, oppression, or discrimination. Moreover, students reported learning about themselves and the assumptions, privilege, and biases that they held.

Students also considered the MC class discussions as an effective tool to generate understanding, experience empathy for others, and create a sense of community. In both the classroom and online course formats, the instructors posed multifaceted, provocative questions to the students regarding readings or learning activities for that lesson. Students reported that the sense of community and engagement with peers was a meaningful experience for them, because it allowed them to interact with their peers about different life and cultural experiences. One participant related, "Reading, discussing, and reflecting on the experiences of others expanded my understanding of how individuals and groups are marginalized, and also deepened my understanding of unearned privilege, and how unconscious racism can be maintained and perpetuated without intent."

Active learning components in MC course. According to Cavanagh (2011), students who are immersed in active learning receive many benefits, for example: (a) they retain information better than when exposed to passive learning, (b) they have increased motivation to learn, (c) their critical thinking skills improve, and (d) they develop deeper understanding of concepts. This deepened insight was expressed by many students. Referring to the cultural interview, one participant summarized his/her learning in this way:

> I researched refugee experiences and interviewed a client who had come from Ethiopia to Canada as a political refugee … his experience almost exactly paralleled the research. I learned about honeymoon phase, culture shock phase, [and] acculturation. His story was identical to the research. It made it very real.

Adamson and Bailie (2012) contrasted students passively receiving an education and those actively engaging in knowledge production. The educators' assumptions about and expectations of the learner influence the teaching approach used. These authors claimed that active learning "is best accomplished through more flexible, collaborative, and transformative processes" (Adamson & Bailie, 2012, p. 152).

Empowerment and controls. Mullen, Fish, and Hutinger (2010) demonstrated ways that faculty can make adjustments in their teaching to accommodate adult learning principles. The doctoral students they worked with appreciated the opportunity to be self-directing, but welcomed the role of faculty who provided guided reciprocal learning and facilitated group activities with the goal of "shifting the power base of learning from student-professor to student-student" (Mullen et al., 2010, p. 193). They proposed instructional strategies focused on empowering students to be responsible for their learning, promoting collaboration, and encouraging students to meet their professional goals. In student-led discussions, for example, faculty monitor topics, pose questions, guide insight, provide feedback, and summarize ideas.

The participants in this study noted aspects of their programs in which they had latitude to select topics for essays, engage in professor-facilitated MC and SJ discussions with peers, and create a focus for their professional development. Enabling coproduction of knowledge enhanced personal agency for students in this study (Adamson & Bailie, 2012; Burnes, Wood, Inman, & Welikson, 2013),

as related by this participant: "Setting goals towards better multicultural practice was very helpful. Brought to light the numerous ways I could become competent, some were easy, some more difficult." Students also reported that many instructors guided and supported student learning:

> Our instructor was very good at picking out language … without giving you the answer, to question you, to bring you around to understand what choice of language would be better. And she was very knowledgeable and able to do that with a number of different counselling skills and techniques and theories.

These instructors empowered participants by encouraging self-direction and by embracing the students' ideas (Ladany, Mori, & Mehr, 2013). For instance, one participant claimed:

> The instructors that we had were really good at probing in the right ways at the right times to further our understanding and the meaning behind what we were saying. And if you don't know, you go and you research. So the whole system is set up for us to dig deeper, both externally and internally.

Building knowledge from students' existing foundations. Burnes and Manese (2008) emphasized the importance of meeting students where they are at in their own development. Although most students in this study embraced the principles of MC and SJ, there was evidence of a lack of buy-in for some students. The following two contrasting student statements illustrate this point: "I make efforts to reflect on how my client's experience fits within the dominant society, as well as how the dominant society has limited or negatively impacted the experience of my client" versus "With some clients, they have learned helplessness and expect you to 'do it all' and then blame you if things don't work out … there is not a lot of onus/responsibility on the people … to be proactive themselves." Both of these students completed at least one MC course and the practicum, yet they differ dramatically in their consciousness of SJ factors in particular. This difference in student experience reinforces the importance of a developmental perspective that enables student to enter at different points along a spectrum of competency mastery (Miville et al., 2009). Most often, the students who expressed a lack of buy-in struggled with their own privilege(s) and the implications of their social locations to the social injustices experienced by others, demonstrated by statements such as, "Stop shaming White people. I am more than my skin colour." Todd and Abrams (2011) argue for a refocusing on engagement as the goal, contending that authentic engagement will lead to personal change. Faculty who embrace MC and SJ tenets and collaborative learning principles serve an important role in the transformation of the students' worldviews.

Building knowledge from instructors' existing foundations. Prieto (2012) noted a lack of research relating to the culturally sensitive teaching abilities of higher education faculty as they interact with their culturally diverse student body. As indicated above, in MC classrooms the intensity of dialogue that can occur between instructor and student and among peers, when discussing topics such as culture, privilege,

and biases, can be difficult to handle (Reynolds, 2011; Sue, Torino, Capodilupo, Rivera, & Lin, 2009). Instructor skill level (or lack thereof) may contribute to students becoming stuck along the path of MC and SJ consciousness-raising, as indicated by this participant: "The way it was presented as I am to blame and should feel bad for the cultural group I was born into: Very disempowering." This may result in some students moving away from rather than toward SJ principles and action, for example: "I started to avoid working with Aboriginals because of my skin colour."

Ratts and Wood (2011) claimed that SJ, in particular, is unfortunately not embraced by all members of the profession, nor is it embedded in the mandates of higher education institutions. These authors attributed this "lack of buy-in" (p. 208) to a reluctance to disrupt the status quo. Educators who do not fully embrace SJ might produce students who do not accept it. Singh et al. (2010) suggested that ambivalence toward SJ teaching might develop without a guiding training structure within the profession that would ensure accountability. Elicker, Thompson, Snell, and O'Malley (2009) stated, "An effective multicultural transformation hinges upon the intersection of instructors' conveyance of information and students' responses to this information" (p. 64). Thus, faculty need training specifically to teach MC and SJ competencies and to interact with students who bring different worldviews and life experiences to the classroom (Dickson et al., 2010; Peters et al., 2011; Roysircar, 2009). They also require teaching strategies specific to social justice (Pieterse et al., 2009). Given the challenge of raising consciousness related to issues such as privilege and oppression, instructor training in developmental or mastery learning models that is designed to engage students at different levels of competency may be essential (Burnes & Manese, 2008; Fouad et al., 2009).

Summary of pedagogical principles. The results of this study show that students gained both MC and, to a lesser degree, SJ competencies through active learning processes. Empowering students to shape their learning experiences, meeting students where they are at in their developmental process, and preparing instructors to effectively support students' commitment to MC and SJ principles and processes emerged as foundational pedagogical principles. In the next section, we continue to examine active learning principles in the context of students' applied practice experiences.

Practicum Experience

The practicum placement was another area where Chickering and Gamson's (1987) principles of good practice and Knowles' (1980) adult learning theory were evident. Both institutions in this study required students to locate a practicum setting and engage in 500 on-site hours, with 250 hours of direct client contact, over a 26-week period. Participants reported increased competencies in four areas: (a) self-awareness of culture, (b) awareness of the client's worldview, (c) broadened perspectives regarding their counsellor responsibilities, and (d) understanding the importance of building a counselling sensitive relationship with the client.

Active learning in direct practice. Active learning, in the form of direct contact with clients, serves an important role in student competency development, because it helps them transform knowledge into practice (Hodge et al., 2011; Sangganjanavanich & Lenz, 2012). Moreover, exposure to "the professional atmosphere" provides the student with other benefits beyond working with clients, such as experiencing the multiple roles of a counsellor (Sangganjanavanich & Lenz, 2012, p. 296). Students may also internalize MC values because they see others placing value on it (Dickson et al., 2010). A parallel can be drawn for SJ experience wherein students paired with supervisors or faculty role models who embrace SJ advocacy might be encouraged in SJ action through vicarious learning (Beer, Spanierman, Green, & Todd, 2012; Miller & Sendrowitz, 2011). A participant who was inspired by a supervisor's modelling of MC and SJ in a case conceptualization understood "how easily a different diagnosis could [have been] made if culture was not taken into consideration. We discussed the case and ways to identify inaccurate results and look at all factors and multiple tests to arrive at [a] diagnosis."

Contextualized learning experiences. Learning in the context of supervised applied practice with diverse clientele is central to MC and SJ competency development (Lee & Khawaja, 2013; Lewis, 2010). In their comparison of learning theories relating to "practice-based learning exchanges" (p. 167), Hodge and colleagues (2011) provided a theoretical discussion of two common models, experiential and situational, highlighting the benefits and critiques of each and noting how each model captures learning that occurs in different ways. Hodge et al. delineated the difference between these theories in the following way: "while experiential learning models primarily focus on an *individual's* developmental change, situated learning theories emphasise the contextual or 'situated' nature of learning as a result of co-participation among others within communities of practice" (p. 171). Experiential learning concentrates on the individuals' cognitive processing, reflections on experience, and applications of concepts to new situations. In contrast, situational learning immerses students into the "sociocultural practices of the community" wherein they develop an identity through the language of the profession and the culture of counselling (Hodge et al., 2011, p. 171). These authors argued that neither model, independently or together, captured the full essence of learning; thus, they turned to transformative theory to explain the emotional component of active learning.

Transformative learning processes. Learning that elicits an emotional reaction can lead to transformation in assumptions, biases, and expectations (Stevens-Long, Schapiro, & McClintock, 2011). Developing MC and SJ competencies often requires a substantive shift in internal perspectives (Collins & Arthur, 2010b). According to Mezirow's (2000) transformative learning theory, challenging the individual's worldview can elicit the emotional component. When learning creates cognitive dissonance, students have the choice to ignore it or critically examine their values and biases (Cranton, 2011), as in this example:

When I realized I wasn't culturally sensitive. It took me some time to come to terms with my past behaviours, in that I didn't see individuals as different from me. Had I recognized their differences, could have I treated them better? It bothered me that maybe I didn't treat people the best.

According to Cranton (2011), if reflection leads to a shift in perspective wherein actions manifest a change in attitude, transformation has occurred; for example, one participant related: "I realized that it was not enough to hold a multicultural accepting belief, one must also show it to create the best conditions for clients to discuss–share with you." The practicum was described as "a growth experience" for students that facilitated personal insight, such as in the following participant's comment:

> I became more aware about my own diversity … I found out that admitting one's lack of knowledge and being willing to learn from one's clients can be a strength, and that I can maintain an open-minded attitude even when I do not necessarily share the same beliefs or values with my clients.

McCusker (2013) claimed that "unless we are aware of our frames of reference and seek to change them, we are consigned to sustaining habits of mind and making assumptions, which will also limit our ability to question knowledge claims" (p. 6). Educators, therefore, need to cultivate the learner's awareness by creating cognitive dissonance through learning activities that foster attitudinal change (Hodge et al., 2011; McCusker, 2013). One participant noted: "I came to understand 'me' more. It was a very emotional time for me to see how flawed I was in how I treated people. It still makes me emotional when I think about it." These comments reflect Mezirow's (2000) transformative learning theory; by questioning and revising their previously held beliefs, students gained the ability to identify multiple perspectives and cultural sensitivity. For many students, this transformation arose through heightened awareness and understanding of injustice and oppression, for example: "I am much more empathic to the struggles others have to go through."

Summary of pedagogical principles. Active learning immerses students in the culture of the counselling profession to provide an opportunity for the student to transfer theory into practice. This active engagement promotes deeper learning because it accommodates the students' preference to learn through contextualized and problem-focused activities versus content-oriented tasks. Additionally, learning that creates distortions in an individual's personal schemas provides the opportunity for transformative learning and behaviour change.

The Learning Context

Although adult students have intrinsic motivation to learn, instructors can enhance student engagement when they provide high expectations, while creating meaningful and relevant activities that are challenging (Stefanou, Stolk, Prince, Chen, & Lord, 2013). Most students in this study highlighted the positive impact

of their relationships with instructors and practicum supervisors on learning, such as: "And certainly the input from the instructors. You know some are more interactive than others, but like I just found that a great way to learn," or "There was encouragement; there was probing; there was questions. It was like—it was modelling excellent counselling, even in the processes." When instructors and supervisors embrace multicultural and social justice values and model them (Beer et al., 2012), there is congruence between the subject material and the way it is taught, which creates an environment conducive to learning.

Supportive environment conducive to active learning. Some participants in this study noted how a lack of modelling and incongruence with MC/SJ principles affected their learning environment (Mintz et al., 2009; Singh et al., 2010), for instance:

> Good, strong role models and mentors are key. My cultural competence class felt like we were re-establishing and perpetuating stereotypes of the various diverse groups … I did not feel as though I was in a safe environment to critique the content—made me resentful and less interested in the topic … and therefore … less willing to engage in social justice activities or even entertain this possibility.

Negative experiences with instructors or supervisors can shut learners down, whereas a supportive environment is linked to student engagement (Guenther & Miller, 2011). The student who posted the following example claimed to have stopped asking her supervisor questions:

> I think she [supervisor] is not used to someone questioning or challenging her cognitive perspective … I felt that she would never treat her clients the way she treated me … I failed to understand why I was being treated with less than the respect I felt I deserved.

In a supportive atmosphere, students specifically look for mentors who encourage questions and facilitate discussions that respect alternative positions (Ladany et al., 2013). Students perceive support when interactions with peers and faculty are empathetic and cooperative (Burnes et al., 2013), for example: "Support from my professor and cohorts. Others shared that they were not multiculturally competent, like myself … brought it to light. So many other people may be thinking like me." Moreover, in a supportive environment, students take responsibility for their learning and build intrinsic motivation (Guenther & Miller, 2011), two important aspects of adult learning that are addressed in the next section.

Reciprocal environment. No one is an "empty vessel to be filled" (Wright, Suchet-Pearson, & Lloyd, 2007, p. 155). From an active learning perspective, both responsibility for and contributions to learning must be shared with learners (Adamson & Bailie, 2012). Wright et al. (2007) asserted that revisioning power and reconceptualizing knowledge need to occur. However, power relations are often difficult to disrupt (Cranton, 2011). Some participants in this study reflected on power dynamics within their educational institution: "The

politics and power relations became very apparent … I have become more aware of the power relations and politics involved in the academy and within the health and mental health system." Others described observations of their practicum settings:

> I began to see how subtle oppression and silencing can occur in systems. Working in a system with particular expectations makes it difficult to speak up and question the status quo. As a young, beginning counsellor or academic, one's ability to have open conversations and be critical of the system is entirely dependent on your company, and who you are working with.

Creating reciprocal learning environments and disrupting traditional power-over dynamics are particularly critical for the development of SJ competencies (Talleyrand, Chung, & Bemak, 2006; Vera & Speight, 2003). Some students felt constrained from challenging the status quo:

> A strong focus on ethics in psychology creates an unfortunate environment of hesitancy to engage in advocacy for clients. I feel less comfortable and safe to advocate on behalf of my clients because of boundary issues and my increased sense of being a "part of the health system" and all of its politics, rather than fighting against the system.

Paulson and Faust (2010) claimed that many institutions function as unidirectional, usually passing knowledge down from professor to student. A shift in institution policy, mandates, and procedures from regarding the student as a passive recipient to considering the student an active producer of knowledge is important (Hodge et al., 2011; Wright et al., 2007). One participant in this study was looking for "faculty/department involvement in social justice activities, and honest discussions about the problems in the current system." This type of supportive environment recognizes that learning is multileveled and multidirectional, involving the university, student, and the real-world setting (e.g., practicum) (Hodge et al., 2011). A supportive environment, consistent with SJ objectives, predicted student commitment to SJ principles and action (Beer et al., 2012; Miller & Sendrowitz, 2011). Reciprocal relationships support transformation by ensuring that students and teachers both "reflect on their own positionality in the exchange … teach and learn, give and take" (Wright et al., 2007, p. 155).

Summary of pedagogical principles. Instructional strategies that produce reciprocal learning, create active learning opportunities, and respect the learner as a source of knowledge reflect good practice. Faculty attitudes toward diversity, student worldviews, and the classroom environment all play key roles in teaching and learning MC and SJ concepts (Beer et al., 2012; Dickson et al., 2010; Elicker et al., 2009). Educators who use adult learning theories and active learning models to create an environment conducive to MC and SJ have a means to bring congruence to the content and process components of the graduate curriculum.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Our goal in this article was to address the call in the counselling and counselling psychology professions to link conceptual knowledge about MC and SJ counselling to the development of curriculum and pedagogy (Baluch, Pieterse, & Bolden, 2004; Fouad et al., 2009; Miller & Sendrowitz, 2011). Critical analysis of participant responses provided insight into student perceptions about the learning processes of their MC and SJ graduate education and their perceived competence to engage in MC and SJ counselling. The findings showed that participants appreciated active learning activities because this focus brought deeper meaning to their learning experiences. These results highlight the need for educational processes to move away from didactic academic learning, and move closer to active learning, using multiple frameworks that allow students opportunities to develop personal interpretations of events by engaging with academic and real-world experiences. Providing opportunities for students to apply their knowledge to real-life contexts are necessary elements for the education of competent counsellors in both MC and SJ (Dickson & Jepsen, 2007; Peters et al., 2011). The effectiveness of MC and SJ education can be enhanced by incorporating adult learning and active learning instructional strategies in classrooms—these multifaceted approaches address the diversity in learners and, by their nature, may extend learning opportunities to students who are struggling with the concepts (Adamson & Bailie, 2012). Further research is needed to investigate if and how implementing learning theories and practices from the education field into counsellor education may address the emergent needs of the counselling student.

In addition to emphasizing the advantages of introducing educative principles to the pedagogy of MC and SJ, we have underscored the importance of a supportive environment for the learning of these concepts (Beer et al., 2012). Counselling students may be more sensitive to incongruence between content and pedagogy, because they themselves are expected to model cultural sensitivity, respect for differences, and minimizing power imbalances with their clients (Vera & Speight, 2003). The examples from student perspectives were used to illustrate points about pedagogical approaches and are not meant to be representative of all counsellor education programs. Including more institutions in different regions of Canada would allow a greater picture of the student perspectives of preparedness, resulting from their multicultural and social justice education. Our goal was to respond to the paucity of writing that links the nature of learning and teaching with multicultural and SJ education by introducing the reader to the wealth of valuable material available in the education field regarding instructional pedagogy. Implementing adult learning theories and applying the pedagogical principles available in the education field into counsellor education may reduce learning barriers and enhance MC and SJ competency development. Moreover, attention to both content and process are necessary for enhancement of curriculum designed for the teaching and learning of MC and SJ concepts.

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