ABSTRACT
               This paper investigates the ability of portfolios to
stimulate the acquisition of multicultural counseling competence within
counselors-in-training. It also compares the efficacy of portfolios to case
formulation, another method of competence development. Students (N=27)
attending a required course on multicultural counseling at a large Midwestern
university were randomly assigned to one of two groups. One group was trained
to develop a portfolio of their multicultural competence and the other was
trained in the process of developing an ecologically oriented case
formulation. The results offer qualified support for assuming that portfolios
and specific training in ecological case formulation are effective techniques
to stimulate multicultural counseling competence, but contribute differently
to the process. The results also suggest that developing a portfolio better
prepares counselors to effectively engage with clients for whom issues of
culture are an essential aspect of the presenting problem. Limitations of the
study are reviewed and a discussion is provided of the implications of using
portfolios in training for multicultural competence. (Contains 24
references.) (JDM)

Developing Multicultural Counseling Competence

Through the Use of Portfolios

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Abstract

The purpose of this investigation was to test the ability of portfolios to stimulate the

acquisition of multicultural counseling competence within counselors in training and to compare

the efficacy of portfolios to another method of competence development, case formulation. The

results indicate that portfolios benefit the acquisition of multicultural counseling competence.

The implications for training for multicultural counseling competence are discussed.

Clinical supervision is the process through which an accomplished or experienced member of a profession oversees the work of a junior member of that profession as he or she develops competence in the core functions of the profession. Ideally supervisors facilitate the acquisition of the supervisee's competence within a structured relationship. Holloway (1995) suggested that the process of this relationship includes specific tasks and functions. The purpose of this investigation is to evaluate how a teaching and supervisory method, portfolios, can be used to develop the multicultural counseling competence of counselors in training. The authors present some of the core assumptions underlying theories of multicultural counseling competence with particular attention paid to how the different perspectives define the construct of multicultural counseling competence. Then they describe how portfolios can be used to facilitate the development of multicultural counseling competence. Finally, they report on an empirical test of how effective portfolios are at stimulating multicultural counseling competence in counselors in training.

Perspectives in Multicultural Counseling

As Tyler, Brome, and Williams (1991) have suggested, theories of multicultural counseling tend to reflect one of three perspectives. The first perspective, the universalist, assumes that issues of culture are secondary to issues of individual personality. The universalist believes that the process of development is common across all cultures and that the individual's psychological development is the primary focus of counseling. The universalist assumes that the focus of counseling is on an essential human nature that all clients share. Treatment, therefore,

needs to focus on the particular disorder of the client and whether or not the counselor has the requisite skills to implement that treatment (e.g., play therapy or systematic desensitization). From this perspective, cultural factors such as race, gender, or class, are not perceived as relevant concerns. If addressed, they come into counseling as presented and interpreted by the client.

Particularist is the label that Tyler et al. (1991) give to the second perspective. The particularist assumes that the primary predictor of a client's world view and sense of self will be dominated by a particular cultural factor (e.g., ethnicity or gender). In counseling, therefore, a primary focus will be to gain an understanding of how that cultural factor has led to the development of, and how it will factor into, the remediation of the disorder. A significant amount of the counseling that is done from the particularist perspective has a strong psychoeducational component. For example, Bass and Coleman (1997), in a school-based intervention for underachieving African descended adolescents, focused their intervention on teaching the participants about how their cultural history affects both the problems they encounter and the solutions that are available to them. Specifically, the intervention involved teaching the participants certain Afrocentric principles and then helping the participants apply those principles in their daily living. What makes this a particularist approach is that it assumes that both the source and resolution of clients' problems exist primarily within their cultural rather than personal being.

One core assumption of the third perspective, transcendentalist, is that both the client and counselor have vast cultural experiences that deeply influence their world views and behavior. Transcendentalists also assume that it is the individual who has to make sense of and interpret those experiences. The transcendent, or multicultural, perspective suggests there are normative

assumptions that can be made about individuals based on cultural factors such as race, gender, and class, but that it is just as important to understand how these normative assumptions become reality through the idiosyncratic choices made by individual members of a group. For example, from the transcendent perspective it is equally important to understand how cultural expectations concerning body image affect the development of an eating disorder, as it is to understand the eating disordered client's family relations or his or her personal drive for control. These personal, familial, and cultural factors are not perceived as independent contributors to the disorder but represent a complex interaction of factors that facilitate the expression of the disorder. The focus of treatment, therefore, has to include the client's interpretation of these factors as well as psychoeducational work on the role contextual factors have in the etiology and maintenance of the disorder.

Sue, Ivey, and Pedersen (1996) have articulated six assumptions that they believe are core issues in multicultural counseling which reflect the essence of the transcendent perspective. These assumptions are summarized in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 About Here

What is evident from these assumptions is that the cultural context of both the client and counselor are active and important aspects of what happens in counseling and, therefore, must be addressed in the supervisory relationship. It is within the supervisory relationship that the counselor in training can receive guidance and support to integrate what he or she knows about cultural factors into effective counseling practice. To facilitate this integration, the supervisor

needs to have, (a) a theory of how cultural factors affect the counseling process, (b) a willingness to listen for how the supervisee does or does not address cultural factors in counseling, and (c) the ability to provide guidance, feedback, and instruction to the supervisee on how to integrate ideas about cultural factors into counseling practice. This process is different from identifying one's preferred method of counseling (e.g., psychodynamic or interpersonal process). Multicultural counseling involves articulating how and when one addresses issues of culture within the counseling process. Is culture secondary as with the universalist, is it central as with the particularist, or is it part of the warp and weave of the counseling as with the transcendents? Asked that way, the socially appropriate answer may seem obvious. How many of us, however, ask our supervisees about cultural factors when the counseling relationship (or the counseling and supervisory relationship) appears to be homogeneous across obvious cultural factors? Do we encourage our supervisees to help the client explore issues of cultural identity when both the counselor and client are white, or just when the relationship is cross-raced? Do we encourage the exploration of gender issues when both the client and counselor are male and the issues is not obviously gender-identifiable as it would be with workaholism, domestic abuse or violence? As the field of multicultural counseling continues to evolve, there is a need to develop systematic answers to these questions, and to demonstrate how these answers relate to positive outcomes in counseling.

Our experience as teachers and supervisors in universities, schools, and community mental health settings suggests that competence to work with culturally diverse clients is an important focus of supervision. Given the general emphasis towards a universalist perspective in counseling training programs it is not surprising that counselors and supervisors tend to address

issues of culture only when they are problematic. In order to facilitate the development of

multicultural counseling competence in counselors, it is necessary for supervisors to develop an

explicit and structured approach to this aspect of supervision (Leong & Wagner, 1994). The

supervisor needs to be able to articulate, at all levels of supervision, how he or she is helping

supervisees to integrate this competence into their professional identity. In addition, the

supervisor needs to have empirically validated procedures to facilitate this process. A goal of

this investigation is to help validate such a procedure.

There are several ways in which training programs can institutionally demonstrate their

belief that multicultural counseling competence is a core clinical competence. A program can

include it in its admissions criteria, it can integrate these issues into the curriculum, and it can

make having access to culturally diverse clientele a central characteristic of acceptable training

sites. An equally important method for institutionally validating the importance and stimulating

the acquisition of multicultural counseling competence is to make the acquisition of that

competence a criteria for graduation or successful program completion in the same manner in

which individual or group counseling is used within summative evaluation criteria. When such a

criteria is expected of all students within a program, it accomplishes several goals. It highlights

the value of multicultural counseling as a core skill and provides accurate and useful feedback to

trainees and supervisors as to how well this skill has been integrated into the professional identity

of the supervisee. Such an evaluation criteria can also act as a mechanism for stimulating

discussion concerning the supervisee's understanding and skills in multicultural counseling. At

an institutional level, it allows training programs and sites to collect information on how well, or

how poorly, they are preparing counselors to work in a culturally diverse society.

As with all evaluations, there needs to be a way to assess a supervisee's multicultural counseling competence in both a formative and summative manner. The formative approach needs to be integrated into the process of supervision. It can be a part of the weekly dialogue and regular summary of progress that is an essential part of all supervision. The summative evaluation should be designed to capture, at a point in time, the level and quality of competence that a supervisee has acquired. This evaluation can be used as a gateway to increasingly demanding levels of training. The evaluation criteria, therefore, must be able to recognize the interaction between a trainee's experience and expected level of competence. In other words, an experienced counselor should be able to demonstrate higher and more sophisticated levels of competence than a counselor who is just finishing his or her initial course work.

Coleman (1995) has proposed using a system of portfolio evaluation to both stimulate and evaluate the acquisition of multicultural counseling competence. A portfolio has some unique advantages in that it can be used throughout a counselor's career to demonstrate his or her constantly evolving competence (Skovholt, & Ronnestad, 1992). A portfolio is much more than a collection of the clinical work that a counselor performs. In fact, the primary focus of a portfolio is to capture the counselor's reflection about his or her work. It is that reflection that facilitates the integration of a particular skill into the counselor's professional identity (Tuescher, 1997).

Most writings about portfolios have either been theoretical or descriptive. In the theoretical writings, the emphasis has been on why portfolios are useful. In the descriptive work, the focus has been on how portfolios can be created and used. To date, there have been no empirical tests of the efficacy of portfolios to develop particular types counseling competence let alone any that compare the efficacy of portfolios to other methods of competence development.

Based on the comprehensive discussion by Pope-Davis and Coleman (1997) on the current state

of education and training for multicultural competence, the empirical tests of methodology in this

area are severely lacking. There are many descriptions of methods that have been used, but few

empirical tests.

The purpose of this investigation is to test the ability of portfolios to stimulate the

acquisition of multicultural counseling competence within counselors in training and to compare

the efficacy of portfolios with another method of competence development, case formulation.

The core hypothesis of this investigation is that students who complete a portfolio of their

multicultural counseling competence would be recognized as more competent than similar

students who were trained to create ecologically focused formulations of clinical case materials.

Method

Participants

All students (n=27) in a course on multicultural counseling that was required for first-year

counseling students at a large Midwestern university were invited to participate in the study.

Participation in the project was one of several opportunities the students had to receive extra

credit for the course. Volunteers were treated in accordance with the "Ethical Principles of

Psychologists and Code of Conduct" (American Psychological Association, 1992).

Materials

Portfolio Manual. Based on work completed by Coleman (1999, 1996) a manual was

developed that explained the purpose and process of creating a portfolio of multicultural

competence. A copy of this manual is available from the first author upon request.

Ecological Case Formulation. Integrating issues of culture into the process of

assessment and treatment planning is an important component of multicultural counseling competence. Coleman has developed an outline for creating an ecological case formulation (Coleman 1999; Tuescher and Coleman, in press) that was used in this investigation for training purposes. The outline is available from the first author upon request.

Case Conceptualization. A pen and pencil clinical vignette was used as the post-test measure of multicultural counseling competence. The vignette was a brief description of a case involving a college student seeking help for issues related to college development and was developed for this investigation. It was used as the basis for the participants to develop their own case conceptualization.

Mid-Term and Final Examinations. As part of the investigation the course professor shared the participants' scores on their mid-term and final examinations. For the mid-term, the participants were asked to prepare a written response to case material. The instructions for the assignment include explicit instructions as to how to address multicultural issues. The assignment was worth a maximum of 15 points. For the final examination, the participants engaged in an interview with the professor who played the role of a confederate client. The interviewee was rated by the professor using the Cross Cultural Counseling Inventory-Revised (CCCI-R) which is described below.

Cross Cultural Counseling Inventory-Revised (CCCI-R). The CCCI-R is a 20 item scale developed by LaFromboise, Coleman, & Hernandez (1991) to measure the multicultural counseling competence of the ratee. Each item is scored on a 6-point Likert-type format (1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree) with a scale range from 20-120. The CCCI-R has a reported internal consistency of .95. For the purpose of this investigation, a single score based on

the total score was used.

Counselor Self-Reflection Scale (CSRS). The CSRS was developed by Tuescher and

Coleman (1999) to measure the level of self-reflection demonstrated by the participant. Tuescher

and Coleman suggest that one measure of counselor competence is the degree to which a

counselor is actively self-reflective on her or his performance in certain core elements of the

counselor role. This is a 5-item scale that involves 4 core counseling functions: assessment,

intervention, theory, and technique. The items are scored on a 10-point Likert-type format (0 = a

low level of self-reflection, 10 = a high level of self-reflection) with a scale range from 0-50. The

higher the score, the higher the level of self-reflection. Tuescher and Coleman (1999) report an

internal consistency of .88. Since the literature on portfolio assessment suggest that one of the

outcomes of the process is greater levels of self-reflection, it seemed appropriate to use this

construct in this investigation.

Procedures

The participants were approached in class by the investigators to solicit their willingness

to participate in this investigation for extra credit. Those who volunteered were randomly

assigned to the treatment (portfolio) and the control (case formulation) groups. The treatment

group met with one of the investigators two times. In the first meeting, the participants were

given the portfolio manual and were instructed in the development of a portfolio. Later in the

semester, the group met again to discuss their progress and to clarify questions concerning the

construction of their portfolios. These portfolios were handed in prior to the end of the semester.

The control group met for a 45-minute session with the second investigator to learn how

to create an ecologically oriented case formulation. In this session they learned how to determine

the manner in which individual and cultural factors interact to create particular behavior patterns within potential clients. Although they did not meet again, the investigator was available for ongoing clarification of the concept. Three participants took advantage of this opportunity.

The mid-term and final examinations were administered by the course instructor who was blind to the participants' group assignments. The final exam was completed after the portfolios were handed in to the investigators. One of the investigators met with the whole class during the second to last class of the semester to have both groups complete the case conceptualizations. The conceptualizations were then copied and became the unit of analysis for the investigation.

Three second-year masters students were recruited to be the raters in this investigation. They spent three hours working with one of the investigators who trained them in the purpose and function of the CCCI-R and the CSRS. They were given case conceptualizations to score individually and then shared their ratings with the group. This process continued until they reached a .70 level of inter-rater agreement as measured by a kappa. The raters then worked independently to rate all the case conceptualizations using the CCCI-R and the CSRS. The raters were blind to the participants' group assignments.

<div align="center">Results</div>

Plan for Data Analysis

To test the hypothesis that creating a portfolio would enhance a counselor-in-training's multicultural counseling competence the data was subjected to a series of analyses. First, the level of agreement among the raters was tested through a correlation analysis. Second, the raters' and instructor's evaluations of the participants were subjected to a correlation analysis to determine the degree to which the scale scores being used might be measuring similar or

different constructs. In the third step of the analysis, the scores for the experimental and control

groups were tested for equality of variance. Finally, the scores for the experimental and control

groups were subjected to a t-test that assumed the groups could be treated as independent

samples with equal variances.

Inter-rater agreement. To test for inter-rater agreement, the average scores on the

Counselor Self Reflection Scale (CSRS) and the Cross Cultural Counseling Inventory-Revised

(CCCI-R) were correlated and averaged. On the CSRS, the inter-rater agreement was .67. On

the CCCI-R, there was an inter-rater agreement of .79.

Equality of Variance. To make sure the that the random assignment of participants to

treatment groups created statistically independent samples, we used Levene's test for equality of

variance. On each of the measures used in the investigation, there were no significant differences

between the two groups, allowing us to treat them as independent groups for the purposes of this

investigation.

Correlation analysis of scores. To test the degree to which the measures being used in

this investigation were measuring different or similar aspects of multicultural counseling, the

raters' and instructor's ratings were subjected to a bivariate correlation analysis. The results are

represented in Table 2. They indicate a very low level of correlation among the measures, except

for the raters' on the CSRS and CCCI-R. Given the non-significance of most of the correlations,

however, this analysis remains ambiguous.

Insert Table 2 About Here

T-tests. To see if portfolios had an effect on the acquisition of multicultural competence, the data was subjected to t-tests. On the Midterm examination the was no significant difference between the groups, $t = .152$, $df = 25$, $p = .88$. Neither was there a significant difference between the groups on either of the rater evaluations (CSRS, $t = -.71$, $df = 25$, $p = .49$; CCCI-R, $t = -.61$, $df = 25$, $p = .54$). There was a significant difference between the groups on the final teacher evaluations (Final Examination, $t = 2.25$, $df = 25$, $p = .03$; CCCI-R, $t = 2.09$, $df = 25$, $p = .05$). The means and standard deviations for the scores on all the measures are represented in Table 3.

_____

Insert Table 3 About Here

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Conclusion

The purpose of this investigation was to test the effectiveness of portfolios to stimulate multicultural competence in counselors-in-training. To test this hypothesis, students in a class on multicultural competence were randomly assigned to two groups. One group was trained to develop a portfolio of their multicultural counseling competence. The other group was trained in the process of developing an ecologically oriented case formulation. The results of this investigation suggest qualified support for assuming that portfolios and specific training in ecological case formulation are effective techniques to stimulate multicultural counseling competence, but contribute differently to the process.

The support for this conclusion comes from the instructor's ratings of the participants. Based on the instructor's evaluations at the middle of the semester, the groups were perceived as equivalent in their competence. By the end of the semester, the instructor perceived them as

significantly different on two measures of multicultural counseling competence, with those who had completed the portfolio perceived as more competent than those who had completed the training in case formulation. Based on the raters' evaluation of the participants' multicultural competence, however, there does not appear to be a significant difference between the two groups. It is important to note, however, that, according the mean scores on the ratings, the group who received the case formulations were perceived as more competent by the raters than were the portfolio group. These results suggest that specific training in focusing on cultural factors in the assessment and treatment planning process will develop that skill in counselors. The results also suggest, however, that developing a portfolio better prepares counselors to effectively engage with clients for whom issues of culture are an essential aspect of the presenting problem.

There are several limitations to this investigation. The ambiguity in these findings may be a result of the different tests that were used in this investigation to assess multicultural counseling competence. Some of the tests may have required a certain level of academic competence in terms of writing (i.e., the case conceptualizations used by the professor and the investigators), while others required specific clinical competence (i.e., the interview). It is important to note that the control group out-performed the treatment group on the activity for which they received specific training (i.e., creating an ecological case formulation). Another limitation is that the interview was with the professor and rated by the professor. Performance in the interview may have been affected by the positive and/or negative feelings that might exist between a student and a professor. Given the random assignment to groups, and that the professor was blind to the participant's group assignment, this is not a major concern. Future

research in this area, however, should strive to get evaluations of counselors made by real clients in real counseling environments.

This investigation is one of the few to empirically validate the use of a particular technology, portfolios, that was designed to stimulate multicultural counseling competence in counselors. It also provides initial support for providing specific training in culturally relevant assessment processes as a way to get counselors to integrate issues of culture in their treatment planning process. Future research in this area should test the degree to which portfolios can be a useful tool in the developing of competence in practicing clinicians and improve the outcomes of counseling with real clients.

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Table 1

Six underlying assumptions of multicultural counseling

Assumption 1: Theories of counseling are cultural artifacts and, therefore, represent cultural world views. To be applicable, a counseling theory needs to articulate with the world view of the client and counselor.

Assumption 2: The counselor and client's identities reflect the totality of their experiences across multiple relationships and contexts.

Assumption 3: Cultural identity is a major determinant of the counselor and client's attitudes toward self and others.

Assumption 4: Effective counseling needs to be consistent with the life experiences and cultural values of the client.

Assumption 5: Effective interventions must address the context of the client's life and be willing to involve helping relationships beyond the individual therapist (e.g., community leaders or traditional/indigenous healers).

Assumption 6: The liberation of consciousness is a basic goal of multicultural counseling as it emphasizes the importance of expanding the client's understanding of his or her relationship to self, family, community, and multiple cultures.

Sue, Ivey, and Pedersen (1996).

Table 2

Correlation among the measures based on the raters and instructor's evaluations

	Midterm Exam	CCCI-R by Instructor	Final Exam	CSRS by Raters	CCCI-R by Raters
Midterm Exam					
CCCI-R by Instructor	.20				
Final Exam	.17	.27			
CSRS by Raters	.07	.08	.24		
CCCI-R by Raters	.17	.14	.14	.79*	

*p < .01

Table 3

Means and standard deviations for all measures*

Measure	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Midterm Exam			
Experimental	14	12.50	.65
Control	13	12.46	.66
CCCI-R- Instructor Rating			
Experimental	14	101.96	6.07
Control	13	96.85	7.03
CCCI-R - Raters			
Experimental	14	51.10	13.61
Control	13	53.81	8.08
Case Conceptualization Score - Raters			
Experimental	14	26.38	7.23
Control	13	28.12	4.93
Final Examination			
Experimental	14	19.43	.65
Control	13	18.85	.69

*Missing values were replaced with sample means.

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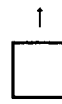| The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents	The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2A documents	The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2B documents
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