

SPECIAL SECTION: FIELD EDUCATION IN SOCIAL WORK AN EVALUATION STUDY OF DIVERSITY TRAINING FOR FIELD INSTRUCTORS: A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO ENHANCING CULTURAL COMPETENCE

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An earlier end-of-year survey of 52 field instructors revealed gaps in the ability of instructors to directly address cultural concerns with student supervisees (Bain & Garcia, 1999). For this study, a transferrable model of diversity training was piloted with 11 field instructors that targeted their behavior in 3 domains—relationship with self, the supervisee, and the agency. Results from a questionnaire administered at 3 different points—pre-training, post-training, and 6-month follow-up—revealed fewer avoidant behaviors with students over time.

SINCE 1968, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) has required schools of social work to achieve cultural diversity in enrollment of students, hiring of faculty, and development of curricula (McMahon & Allen-Meares, 1992). The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) has recently published standards in cultural competence that oblige social workers to strive to deliver culturally competent services to increasingly diverse client populations (NASW, 2001). Through its curriculum policy statement, CSWE provides a broad mandate for the infusion of multicultural content into academic courses (Carrillo, Holzhalb, & Thyer, 1993; Julia, 2000). It is, however, in the application of knowledge about cultural differences through a supervised internship or work environment that the training in multicultural competencies is integrated (Van

Soest, in press). Although the role of field instructor is considered pivotal to student learning in social work (Bogo, 1993; Kadushin, 1991), little practical information exists to guide field instructors on approaches to infuse cultural diversity issues into the supervision process (Arkin, 1999; Cashwell, Looby, & Housley, 1997; Leong & Wagner, 1994).

This article describes a model for diversity training of field instructors. It may be used to address social and cultural diversity inclusive of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, political belief, religion, family structure, or mental or physical disability. The training was developed in response to an annual end-of-year survey of field instructors ($n=52$) that showed gaps in the ability of both students and field instructors to discuss cul-

tural issues directly with each other despite exposure to clients and staff who were different from them (Bain & Garcia, 1999). Although field instructors endeavor to provide culturally competent practice in their own work, the survey responses indicated a need for assistance in helping them meaningfully teach the application of their knowledge to their students.

Under the current CSWE (2001) Education Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS), students are expected to demonstrate mastery of culturally competent practice concepts prior to entering field placements. These concepts include cultural awareness, knowledge acquisition, skill development, and continuous inductive learning (Lum, 2003) within the context of strengths extracted from each culture's value system (Fong & Furuto, 2001). The field placement provides the context for students to apply their theoretical understanding of diversity to practice. The model used in this training, therefore, sought to strengthen the linkages between educational outcomes and field practicum outcomes by increasing the ability of field instructors to be more open and candid in addressing diversity issues with students. It was assumed, therefore, that cultural competence of both field instructors and students would likely be enhanced.

Obstacles to directly approaching subjects dealing with diversity indicated that the priority in the training needed to be on understanding and addressing factors that might promote staying away from a subject. These factors were referred to as avoidant behaviors. Instead of being a deliberate act of evasion or indicator of psychopathology, avoidance was seen as a natural reaction to

situations that create discomfort, self-doubt, and the potential for negative judgments of a person's attitudes and behavior.

Literature Review

Recent literature on infusing cultural diversity into field supervision has emphasized the need for active learning to increase self-awareness and the capacity for self-examination, the use of the supervisory relationship to address differences, and training programs for field instructors and students in placement to help advance cultural competence.

Active learning techniques have been evaluated by field instructors ($N=30$) as helpful to their sustained involvement, sense of safety, and positive emotional state (McChesney & Euster, 2000). Suggested exercises that use active learning to enhance self-awareness include (1) the Intercultural Sensitizer exercise (Leong & Kim, 1991) which asks students to select and expand their explanations for each of several critical incidents reflective of cultural differences, and (2) the Interpersonal Process Recall exercise (Kagan, 1980) which challenges students to explore their internal reactions to culturally diverse clients. Students respond to taped segments of their client interviews by recalling the thoughts or feelings that were occurring for them at that time in the session. A modified version of Pederson's Triad Model (1994) increases awareness of internal dialogues by having supervisors-in-training ($N=4$) assume a variety of roles (counselor, ethnically diverse client, pro-counselor and anti-counselor) while they interact in a group supervision exercise (Magnuson, Norem, Jones, McCrary, & Gentry, 2000). Cashwell et

al. (1997) recommend having students give each other feedback from the perspective of ethnically diverse clients. Helms and Cook (1999) prescribe a 'here-and-now' focus on racial issues that incorporates feelings and events as they occur in the supervisory relationship with a cognitive framework that permits the supervisee to generalize from present circumstances to subsequent interactions. Although this list is not exhaustive, it shows some of the more prominent techniques used to access student and supervisor reactions to cultural differences that might otherwise remain covert.

Differences between supervisor and supervisee can either hinder (Cook & Helms, 1988; Helms & Cook, 1999; McRoy, Freeman, Logan, & Blackmon, 1986; Vander Kolk, 1974) or facilitate (Helms & Cook, 1999; Porter, 1994) multicultural competence in students. McRoy et al. (1986) found that even though 42 cross-cultural supervisory dyads listed numerous obstacles to effective communication, supervisors did not address the problems with the supervisees. Arkin (1999) and Daniels, D'Andrea, and Kim (1999) used case examples to demonstrate that minimizing or magnifying cultural differences between supervisor and supervisee can lead to estrangement and arrogance toward the supervisee. Daniels et al. (1999) and Haj-Yahia (1997) suggested that differences in cultural values, biases, and world views will create differences in expectations of the student-supervisor relationship, perceptions of the organizations in which students do their field work, and the processes necessary for helping clients. Cook (1994) noted that developmental differences can be regressive when the supervisor, who

holds the most power in the relationship, is less advanced in racial identity attitudes than the supervisee. Differences between supervisor and supervisee are inherent to the supervisory relationship. How supervisors handle those differences, however, may be crucial to a student's ability to manage differences with their clients (Kaiser, 1992, 1997; Raichelson, Herron, Primavera, & Ramirez, 1997; Shulman, 1982, 1993).

Programs to enhance cultural competence in field instructors or students in placement appear to be limited. Porter (1994) has implemented a four-stage developmental model of culturally responsive supervision for students in the psychology internship program in the Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at the University of New Mexico. The model moves from (a) an increased awareness of culture to (b) an integrated analysis of oppression in client's lives to (c) an examination of the supervisee's internalized biases and assumptions to (d) involvement in collective and social action groups and political activities. Walters, Strom-Gottfried, and Sullivan (1998) describe a seven-session, monthly training just for community field instructors and faculty who are paired, based on their social and cultural differences, to co-facilitate field seminars for students. Content varies but it has included exercises on the experience of difference and oppression, presentation and discussion on Native American populations and stereotypical beliefs in regard to native peoples, videos on age discrimination and racism, and discussions on addressing challenging situations on diversity in field seminars. Walters et al. (1998) maintain that the training is meant to parallel the process used

in the field seminars. Consequently, the challenge is to push risk and self-examination, while maintaining the group as a safe place within which to do so. Evaluation responses from facilitators ($N=16$) indicated that the seminars have a positive impact on their self-awareness (50.0%, $n=8$) though a significant portion (37.5%, $n=6$) reacted neutrally and 12.5% ($n=2$) feel that the seminars had little or no effect.

The model described here draws on the literature about active learning, development of self-awareness and self-scrutinization, and examination of blockages to addressing differences between people in the supervisory relationship. Although implied in the concerns raised by authors, the dynamic of avoidance has not been specifically recognized and integrated as significant in helping field instructors to effectively address diversity issues with students.

Philosophy and Structure of the Training

The goal of the training was to provide field instructors with tools to help them recognize and intervene on the feelings and cognitions that contribute to avoidant behavior. The training was conveyed as a learning partnership between facilitators and participants. Facilitators presented themselves as "works in progress"—human beings who confront the never-ending struggle to become more culturally competent. Participants were viewed as collaborators whose responses informed the training by helping to establish a 'goodness of fit' with the realities of practice. Responses included participants' sharing of their own life and work experiences related to diversity.

The diversity training was conducted in six, 3-hour sessions, spaced a month apart. Sessions were linked through the use of reflection questions given at the end of each session for homework. Planning meetings were held between sessions to develop interventions aimed at reducing participants' propensities to stay away from important but potentially volatile subjects.

Sessions 1 and 2 were held at the University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work. Participants volunteered their agencies for the remaining sessions in order to expose each other to diverse locations, services, and client populations. There was no training fee, and telephone reminders, travel directions, the offering of continuing education units, and a casual atmosphere with occasional treats, including *pan dulces*, *empanadas*, and *galletas* (Mexican style cookies and sweets) were used to encourage attendance. Sessions were led by a culturally and religiously diverse team of three female faculty.

Group Composition

The team of facilitators choose 11 field instructors from the school of social work's current list of 140 persons and invited them to participate in the training. This was 7.9% of the field instructor population. Selection criteria included availability and contribution to the group's diversity relative to supervisory experience, age, gender, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, and agency client population. Group members included eight women and three men; eight were White, three were Hispanic/Latina, and two were gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender (GLBT). The dearth of African American and Asian

field instructors reflected the racial and ethnic composition of the field instructor population; although no records are kept on race/ethnicity of field instructors, estimates are that non-White field instructors are limited to 4 persons of African descent, 10 persons of Hispanic descent, and 2 persons of Asian descent. Despite special efforts to encourage attendance of three of the four African American field instructors, they indicated they could not participate due to their agency time constraints. The facilitators were not aware that the school had any Asian field instructors when this training occurred and therefore none were invited to participate.

The mean age of participants was 41 with a range of 33 to 56 years. The mean length of supervisory experience was 7.2 years; six (55%) had supervised students for 6 years or less and five (45%) had supervised students for over 8 years. The mean number of students participants had ever supervised was 18. Six (55%) of the participants had each supervised over 13 students, and five (45%) had each supervised 10 or less students. Mean years since graduation (MSW) was 8.9 years with a range from 4 to 23 years. Client populations served by participants' agencies were culturally and socially diverse and included, among others, homeless people, domestic abuse victims, at-risk youth, and people with physical and mental disabilities.

Content of the Training

The diversity training targeted three domains: relationship with self, relationship with the supervisee, and relationship with the agency. Since the manifestation of avoidance differed in each of the domains; the

training served as a laboratory for the materialization of relevant behaviors as well as a forum for the education of field instructors.

Relationship With Self: Normalizing Discomfort. Sessions 1 and 2 focused on enhancing awareness about diversity and articulating concerns about teaching cultural competence in field. In their personal objectives and statements of caution, field instructors revealed that the goal of feeling no discomfort kept them away from addressing issues of difference with others, including students. A series of graduated exercises from National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI), a prejudice awareness workshop, helped participants access otherwise socially taboo emotions and attitudes (Brown, 1984). In one activity, for example, a group leader who is also a certified NCBI instructor asked field instructors to identify their membership in various groups and "pool" the stereotypes that oppress them. When asked to incorporate these stereotypes into demands for respect, Hispanic field instructors said, "Don't assume all Hispanic people speak Spanish and never assume we just 'pick it up'." GLBT field instructors asserted, "It's not funny when people pretend, joke, or act like they're gay or effeminate." Field instructors who identified as fat declared, "People think we don't care about ourselves. Don't ask 'Why don't you eat less or better? Why don't you exercise?'" After each exercise, participants shared personal reactions and life experiences related to the topic.

Facilitators also used group processing discussions to deconstruct and rework cognitions about discomfort. Discomfort in dealing with differences was presented as normal and not something to avoid. It was suggested

that participant's willingness to tolerate it might indicate progress. The true challenge was not the search for a definitive answer to managing differentness but the willingness to enter potentially anxiety-laden territory.

Discomfort with initiating was also manifest in answers to reflecting questions about teaching cultural competence in field: "We wait until issues arise before we address them." "It takes time to build safe relationships." "I will make huge and unaware racist blunders. I will have to point out attitudes that are prejudiced or ignorant and it will be very uncomfortable." "I don't want to offend anyone, be patronizing, or worry that my curiosity will be disrespectful." Facilitators responded to these concerns by reminding participants of the significance of parallel process: students may imitate the field instructor and avoid with clients the material that is avoided in supervision. Suggestions were made to join with students as learners and allies in the diversity struggle, admit mistakes, notify students of the commitment by field instructors to pursue taboo topics with them, and clarify feelings generated by issues of social injustice such as shame, hurt, and anger in order to stop the student's suppression of unacceptable emotions.

Relationship With the Supervisee: Being Direct and Engaging Personally. Sessions 3 and 4 focused on effectively addressing social and cultural differences in the supervisory or client-worker relationship. Facilitators identified field instructors' reluctance to be direct and personal with supervisees as the target for intervention after reviewing participants' responses to reflecting questions that asked them to identify which differences were more

difficult between themselves and their students. Field instructors replied, "I haven't had particular difficulties yet but am not sure how *directly* to address differences and when" (italics added). "I felt I sometimes did not push [students] to explore differences enough because I thought they would feel that they were somehow 'wrong.' I am sure some of this comes from my guilt at being a White person assisting a minority population."

Individualized role plays that focused on interpersonal differences were developed to help participants experience the directness, honesty, and quality of connection necessary for exploring diversity in supervision. Participants were assigned to pairs as field instructor and student. Each person was given a brief fact situation to help them structure the interaction. Specifically, those who played students presented their field instructors with client dilemmas that had made the students feel uncomfortable and hesitant. The dilemmas also purposefully highlighted field instructors' personal issues or targeted real disparities in the role-play dyads. The role plays required field instructors to directly address differences "here and now" in the client-worker relationship as well as the supervisory relationship in order to move students past their tentativeness with the hypothetical clients.

Everyone participated in role plays simultaneously. After 15 minutes, the supervision role plays were interrupted. 'Field instructors' and 'students' met in separate groups to review their individual experiences with each other. 'Field instructors' were offered guidance on how to address the 'student' more directly and personally relative to

the supervisory relationship and the 'student's' interaction with the client(s). 'Students' were asked to identify manifestations of their own avoidance and the impact of the field instructor on their ability to be forthcoming. After 30 minutes, the supervisory dyads reconvened and role playing continued for another 15 minutes. During this time, 'field instructors' tested their new knowledge with their 'students.'

Afterward, the full group discussed their individual experiences as role participants and applied the exercise to diversity issues they encounter with clients. 'Students' said, "I just kept being vague." "It was too scary to insist we talk about my ethnicity issues in the supervision." "If I wasn't validated by the field instructor, I didn't bring it up." 'Field instructors' said, "I felt uncomfortable talking about the supervisory relationship but also relieved to address it." "It was the personalizing of issues of diversity and racism that made me look at avoidance." "I saw a flash of the key issue and avoided it. When redirected, it was very powerful." After this discussion, participants reviewed a handout that identified common fears that prohibit candidness and authenticity in supervision, enumerated the steps in the process that they had just experienced, and detailed how to transfer the experiential learning from the supervision to students' work with clients.

Relationship With the Agency: Challenging Disempowerment. Sessions 5 and 6 focused on social and cultural diversity in the participants' work environments. Participants formed pairs to evaluate each other's agency using the Cultural Competence Continuum (Cross, Bazron, Dennis, & Issacs, 1989) and

the Cultural Competence Framework (Orlandi, 1992), which distinguish different stages in an agency's endeavor to become a more culturally competent organization. Responses to the exercise gave participants the opportunity to discuss the diversity issues found in the clientele they serve. Responses also indicated a propensity to drop out from actively challenging and helping the agency address relevant issues. "It's too big. I can't do it all." "I'm not sure where to begin." "I'm afraid we will end up in a major war or I'll lose my job." "There's no administrative support."

To confront their feelings of disempowerment, participants were asked to reflect on and identify the source of negative messages they give themselves about being effective agents of change. Facilitators suggested that self-defeating cognitions may have become automatic responses when diversity issues arose at their agencies. A group ritual was employed for the purpose of helping to separate the past from the present and contradict the disempowering messages: participants were told, "Here we are *today*, and *today* you are a powerful person."

In addition, participants were given a different perception of the agency to assist in challenging disempowering beliefs. Specifically, participants were advised to treat the agency as another 'client' struggling to change rather than a powerful authority figure. Participants were invited to apply principles from clinical practice to help their agencies such as setting realistic goals, developing strategies to reduce resistance, formulating diagnoses, and establishing trust-based relationships. Although the analogy to practice

was imperfect, the rationale behind presenting the agency as 'client' was to free participants to consider a different kind of relationship with their work setting.

At the end of the last session, participants were asked to complete an "Agreement With Self" in which they listed their goals for working on diversity issues in relationship to themselves, their supervision with students, and their agencies. The agreements were turned into the facilitators and sent back to the participants 6 months later as a personal reminder of the goals and commitments they had made.

Training Evaluation

The diversity training was evaluated by a 13-item self-administered questionnaire that employed a single-group, repeated-measures design and anonymously written answers to five reflecting questions (provided in the Appendix). The questionnaire designed for this study was administered three times—pre-training, post-training, and 6-month follow-up—and used a 5-point Likert scale (1=very low, never, extreme discomfort to 5=very high, regularly, no discomfort). It addressed three dimensions of decreased avoidance: comfort with diversity; attention to issues of power and control and interpersonal conflict; and knowledge about 'oppressed' groups. The study hypothesized that field instructors would report fewer avoidant behaviors from Time 1 to Time 3. All participants gave consent to participate in the research. Reflecting questions were administered after Session 5. Participants were asked to identify (1) highlights in the diversity training; (2) peak enjoyable or dis-

turbing experiences, or both; (3) the idea or skill that they would use to enhance supervision with students; (4) how the "discoveries" (participants' answers to the previous questions) would contribute to their effectiveness as a supervisor; and (5) actions participants could realistically take to increase the cultural competence of their agency.

Results

Within-subjects, repeated-measures ANOVA was used to evaluate change in scores on the self-administered questionnaire. The multivariate test indicated a significant time effect, Wilks's $\Lambda=0.45$, $F(2, 9)=5.4$, $p<.02$, multivariate $\eta^2=.55$. Follow-up pairwise contrasts showed significant change from post-group (Time 2, $M=40.3$, $SD=3.0$) to follow-up (Time 3, $M=47.0$, $SD=2.6$), $t(10)=-3.165$, $p<.01$. Wilks Λ revealed a power of .70 for this study.

Although participants were inconsistent in the reflecting questions they chose to answer, they found sessions on the supervisory relationship to be particularly helpful. Disturbing experiences included acknowledging unacceptable biases and beliefs and discussion of ethnicities that were not represented in the training group, e.g. African American and Southeast Asian field instructors. Selected skills to enhance supervision included normalization of discomfort, awareness of retreating from exploring diversity, and permission to talk about socially taboo topics. Participants expressed that 'discoveries' from the training increased self-knowledge and empowered them to take the initiative to address diversity issues with the agency, student, or client system. Participants listed facing issues, bringing up cultural differences,

reading and continued training, and bringing problems to supervisors/program managers as actions they could realistically take to increase the cultural competence of their agencies.

Discussion

This exploratory pilot study is just a first attempt to develop and test a diversity training model that focuses on enhancing field instructors' cultural competence. It has a number of limitations that need to be considered in evaluating the preliminary findings. Since the study used a small, convenience sample chosen by the researchers it is impossible to conclusively attribute the change in participants' total scores between Time 2 and Time 3 to the training itself. Random sampling and random assignment into experimental and control groups would have been optimal. Moreover, it is possible that participants' self-reports reflect a social desirability bias and may not be a true reflection of changes in attitude or behavior. Since responses were measured at three different times, it is also possible that familiarity with the instrument enhanced performance at later times. The follow-up questionnaire was sent to participants along with the participants' "Agreement With Self." Although the "Agreement With Self" was part of the diversity training, it is not known how strong an influence this one aspect had on the participants in comparison to the rest of the training. Finally, the questionnaire that was used to evaluate the training is a self-report measure and, therefore, may not provide an accurate account of attitudinal or behavioral change. Since the questionnaire has not been psychometrically

tested, its reliability and validity are also unknown.

Follow-up pairwise contrasts show that the significant change in participants' total scores occurred between the end of the training in June and 6 months later. The increase at this time may reflect the fact that participants put the diversity training into practice when they received new students at the beginning of the next academic year.

This model of diversity training needs to be replicated at other schools of social work using larger and more diverse samples. The use of a control group would strengthen understanding of the causal effects of the model. The questionnaire shows promise as a tool for measuring attitudes and behavior. With further development, psychometric testing could then establish its initial reliability and validity. The impact of the training on students' work with clients could be better assessed if the questionnaire were administered to both field instructors and their students.

Although development of self-awareness, knowledge, and skills for effective practice with diverse populations is considered a high priority for students in social work education programs, the cultural competence of field instructors seems to have been assumed. The model described here is unique because it is derived from field instructors' stated lack of readiness and desire to address diversity issues, and it specifically targeted manifestations of avoidance relative to diversity issues. The results from this study suggest that drawing attention to avoidance behaviors in relationship to diversity issues may be an effective way to train field instructors. Field instructors bear the responsibility for integrating

theory and practice and, therefore, the investment of time in their training can have a major return if their students are the recipients and are better equipped to help diverse client populations.

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APPENDIX. Pre- and Post-Questionnaire to Field Instructors

Circle the answer that best describes you at the present time.

1. What is your level of comfort with teaching about client diversity issues with students?

No Discomfort	Some Discomfort	Moderate Discomfort
High Discomfort	Extreme Discomfort	
2. Rate your level of knowledge about "oppressed" groups other than your own.

a. African American	Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Very Low
b. Hispanic/Latino	Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Very Low
c. Southeast Asian	Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Very Low
d. Native American	Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Very Low
e. Gay and Lesbian	Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Very Low
f. With Disabilities	Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Very Low
g. Women	Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Very Low
3. How often do you address issues of power and authority between you and your student(s)?

Regularly	Often	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
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4. What is your level of comfort with addressing issues of power and authority between you and your student(s)?

No Discomfort	Some Discomfort	Moderate Discomfort
High Discomfort	Extreme Discomfort	
5. How often do you address with students the differences between you, e.g. age, religion, SES, race/ethnicity?

Regularly	Often	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
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6. How often do you address with students the differences between them and their clients, e.g. age, religion, SES, race/ethnicity?

Regularly	Often	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
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7. How often do you directly address conflict between you and the student(s) you supervise?

Regularly	Often	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
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