

A STUDY OF UNDERGRADUATE EXPERIENCES IN A DIVERSITY COURSE

by

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(Under the Direction of Rosemary E. Phelps)

ABSTRACT

Our society is becoming increasingly diverse in terms of many demographic factors including ethnicity, language, and race (Murdock & Hoque, 1999; Swail, 2002). Undergraduate students must also acquire knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to interact effectively with people from diverse groups and be active members of their community, nation, and the world (Banks et al., 2001). With increased emphasis on the importance of diversity coursework in the undergraduate curriculum to prepare students to work appropriately and competently with diverse individuals, little information is available on the experiences of undergraduate students who enroll in these courses.

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to examine, from a student perspective, the experience of participating in an undergraduate diversity course at a large, public Predominantly White Institution (PWI) in the southeastern United States. Phenomenology seeks to understand our experiences and the meaning that we make from them (Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2002).

Written feedback was collected at the end of class eight times throughout the course of the semester. Writing assignments focused on students' understanding and responses to course

material were analyzed. Participants completed a pre- and posttest battery that was used to describe the class as a unit.

Three main themes emerged from the data. One theme reflected student engagement with the process and showed signs of potential growth. A second theme demonstrated student disengagement from the process and resistance. The last theme was identified as the learning edge, and it is somewhere between the first two themes. Results indicated that students' engagement with the process ranges from openly struggling with the material throughout the semester, to passive engagement with the course, to total resistance. Students identified "open-mindedness" and willingness to put their thoughts and feelings out on the table as important student factors. Data revealed significant concern with impression management as an obstacle to students participating fully in class discussions and debates.

INDEX WORDS: Diversity, Multicultural education, Undergraduates, Teaching, Resistance, Dissonance, Impression management

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Society is becoming increasingly diverse in terms of many demographic factors including ethnicity, language, and race (Murdock & Hoque, 1999; Swail, 2002). Today's students and young professionals will increasingly conduct business in a global economy, interacting with people from different backgrounds and cultures. Thus, there is a real need in higher education as well as in the workplace for individuals to receive multicultural training. Academic knowledge and skills are fundamental in today's global society, yet they are not sufficient to guarantee full and active participation in society. Students must also acquire knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to interact effectively with people from diverse groups and be active members of their community, nation, and the world (Banks et al., 2001). Within Counseling Psychology, issues of diversity, multiculturalism, and social justice are receiving more and more attention. There is a strong sense of social justice and advocacy work occurring within the profession (e.g., Constantine, Hage, & Kindaich, 2007; Goodman, et al., 2004; Watts, 2004); and this dissertation research attempts to tie into this aspect of Counseling Psychology.

Without these skills and knowledge prejudice and injustice can result. Discrimination affects every aspect of mental health and clinical services. Part of the need for education is due to a general lack of cultural awareness; and denial of racism, sexism, and heterosexism that is prevalent (Kors, 1998). Cultural sensitivity involves not only awareness of cultural difference, but also an appreciation and affirmation of difference (May, 1998). Issues such as White privilege and male privilege are ones that holders of privilege are most often oblivious to

(McIntosh, 1989; Wildman, 1996). It is due to this lack of awareness on the part of the groups of people in power that racism and sexism are allowed to continue in our society. Rothenberg (2000) argues for the type of multicultural training that focuses on identifying and deconstructing privilege and hierarchy. Higher education institutions need to address multicultural issues such as privilege and oppression in curricula.

In response to these needs, diversity and multiculturalism have become an important part of education and curriculum development. Many institutions of higher education have required students to take a class or classes that fulfill a cultural diversity requirement. The following is an example of a statement put forth by a university in explanation of its cultural diversity requirement:

In order to further enrich the educational experience of the University of Georgia and to ensure that our graduates acquire the understanding and respect for cultural differences necessary for an enlightened citizenry, all undergraduate students will be required to study cultural diversity within a domestic or global context before graduation. . . The curricular requirement option may include study abroad, supported learning experiences, infusion of content across courses, or one course or a series of courses, so long as the particular approach meets the approval of the student's college or school. . . The cultural diversity requirement should enable students to develop their understanding of issues of race, religion, ethnicity, gender, and class, not only within the cultures they are studying, but also as applied to their own cultures. Thus faculty teaching courses or supervising extra-curricular experiences should help students process their experiences and insights

by application to the contemporary culture(s) in which they live (University of Georgia Council, 1997).

In 2000, The Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) conducted a study entitled the National Survey on Diversity in the Undergraduate Curriculum. The purpose of this study was to ascertain the extent to which colleges and universities in the United States were requiring diversity coursework. They found that 54% (N = 543) had a diversity requirement in place, and an additional 8% were in the process of developing a requirement (AAC&U, 2000; Flowers, 2003; Humphreys, 2000). The results indicated that many students involved in higher education are receiving some type of exposure to diversity in their curricula.

One survey of student perceptions of diversity on campus at a small liberal arts college in upstate New York found that students generally acknowledged that the ongoing diversification of the school's curriculum was having a positive effect. However, they also voiced reservations about other areas of college life that they saw in need of diversification. Students alluded to the fact that a diversity requirement should not be needed because diversity should be a part of the entire curriculum and overall campus climate (Gold, 2001).

Within a given institution or between institutions there may be little consistency among the classes developed to fulfill this requirement. The question that follows is whether or not these classes actually accomplish their purpose as stated in university policy. In particular, do these classes "enable students to develop their understanding of issues of race, religion, ethnicity, gender, and class, not only within the cultures they are studying, but also as applied to their own cultures" (University of Georgia Council, 1997)?

Confounding the issue of developing diversity coursework is the fact that many of these "diversity issues" are things that many people generally do not talk about and are often

uncomfortable addressing in any setting. Students on one campus talked about the discomfort that many of their professors seem to have when talking about diversity. They reported that these professors would often target one or two students of color and expect them to speak on behalf of “the entire non-dominant point of view” (Gold, 2001). This type of behavior on the part of faculty represents a mismanagement of a diverse classroom environment and demonstrates the need for training in diversity sensitivity for all people. It also speaks to the idea that implementation of a diversity requirement and subsequent curriculum can bring about an entire set of challenges and obstacles that are not present when dealing with other more “safe” issues.

Statement of the Problem

The voice of undergraduate students in a course dealing with diversity and social justice at a Predominantly White Institution (PWI) is virtually absent from the literature. This is significant because many of these undergraduate students are moving into the workforce, and some will be holding positions of power in a variety of fields. It is important to assess their experiences and what, if anything, they are taking from diversity coursework. This information can inform educators on how to more effectively bring about change through their classroom interactions with students. Counseling psychologists have a responsibility to advance the ideals of our profession, which include a strong social justice agenda, in our work as teachers, therapists, consultants, and researchers.

There is limited research on the outcomes related to required diversity courses in colleges and universities. One qualitative study (Dortch McCarthy, 1992) found that White students attained a more accepting racial attitude by the end of a required course on diversity. Students with more positive racial attitudes at the start of the course did not change their perceptions by the end of the course, and those that began the course in a place of ambivalence ended with a

more positive attitude that they were better able to articulate than at the start of the course. The race of the professor was also suggested as a factor that possibly impacted the students' attitudes in the course. Overall, the course was found to be valuable for students both educationally and personally (Dortch McCarthy, 1992). In another study of a required social diversity course (Adams & Zhou-McGovern, 1993), students' cognitive development did not significantly contribute to more sophisticated moral reasoning. In addition, student attitudes towards homosexuality became more positive, although the change was not statistically significant (Adams & Zhou-McGovern, 1993). Another study with college students found that participation in a cross-cultural sensitivity group helped to increase awareness and sensitivity of cultural issues (Hull, 1972).

How institutions and instructors approach diversity coursework is quite varied. Although many colleges and universities around the country are developing and requiring coursework that addresses issues of diversity, only 44% of those schools that have this requirement specifically address issues of diversity within the United States (Humphreys, 2000). The 2000 AAC&U survey found a number of different models for diversity requirements. The most common model required students to take one course among a list of approved classes. A smaller number of schools required students to take one course with a common syllabus (Humphreys, 2000). This speaks to the vast differences in the way that institutions and departments within those institutions are addressing the issue of diversity. The need for a better understanding of outcome related to diversity courses is paramount. If increased sensitivity and appreciation demonstrated through knowledge, awareness, and skill around diversity can be shown, then perhaps an approach that is most effective can be instituted within and among institutions. In addition, negative outcomes such as retraumatization or increased intolerance may be avoided.

Overall, there is little information available on outcomes of diversity requirements or stand-alone diversity courses. There is a consensus that today's students need to be prepared to function in a diverse world, and therefore need the type of skill and education that will enable them to do this (Banks et al., 2001; Bucher, 2004; Rothenberg, 2000). Although a diversity requirement is in place at many institutions, it is unclear what sort of effect the required class has on students. It is unclear what students are taking from the courses and what the differences are among courses that fill the same requirement.

Most studies that relate to student reactions and perceptions of dealing with diversity coursework are found in the teacher education literature (e.g., Allen, 1993; Brown, 2004b; Martin & Koppelman, 1991). In preparing teachers for an ever-changing society, teacher educators agree that students need to be ready to work in diverse classrooms with a wide range of students in terms of ethnicity, race, language, and socioeconomic status. Current classroom teachers and aspiring teachers are overwhelmingly White and female, and the teacher education literature reflects this. The vast majority of studies deal with preparing White female students to enter classrooms that have a more diverse student population than the ones in which they were educated (Murdock & Hoque, 1999; Swail, 2002).

Studies that portray student teacher growth and development in their perceptions of others and own self-awareness are typically limited to superficial accounts of the strides that these students have made. Missing is the struggle that these students go through, how they get from point A to point B and how lasting the change actually is. Also absent is literature on the struggle of the non-student teacher in a diversity class; the undergraduates going into business, journalism, or theology for example. The research that does report student reactions to diversity-related coursework is frustrating in its lack of depth, and it leaves the reader wondering what is

really going on beneath the surface. Rarely is the struggle and turmoil that both student and the professor go through told in these accounts of the positive change and attitude of acceptance that students achieve. No accounts speak of the students who never ‘get it’ and what that means about them and their experience. Overall, some of the reality and depth of experience is missing from the literature on student experiences with diversity coursework.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to examine, from a student perspective, the experience of participating in an undergraduate diversity course at a large, public PWI in the southeastern United States. Another aim of the study was to highlight students’ experiences emotionally and cognitively as they progressed through the course, along with their reactions and perceptions once they completed the course. Phenomenology aims to understand our experiences and the meaning that we make from them (Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2002).

Significance of the Study

Social justice work is increasingly prevalent in the work of counseling psychologists (Goodman et al., 2004). It is also understood that multicultural competence is intertwined with social justice work (Goodman et al., 2004). Furthermore, issues of diversity are deemed important in higher education generally and within Counseling Psychology in particular; therefore, the impact of a diversity requirement on students is a significant issue. One aspect of social justice work involves consciousness raising (Goodman et al., 2004), and an opportune time and place for this to occur is within the context of the college classroom. The importance of diversity skills cannot be understated, nor can the importance of social justice, which helps to combat the impact of institutional, societal, and personal isms on mental and physical health and well-being.

Limitations

There were several limitations associated with this study. They include: (a) The researcher was also the instructor for the course; therefore, there is an inherent power differential between researcher/instructor and participants/students. Participants may have been reluctant to share their true feelings and thoughts due to concern about grading and their success in the course; (b) The sample consisted of students enrolled in the course taught by the researcher; (c) The students voluntarily enrolled in the course; thus, they may already be interested in issues of diversity and/or possess a more advanced level of cultural competence than their peers; (d) Students who participated in the interviews and assessments received extra credit. It raises an issue of students' levels of genuine interest in the topic and project; (e) Given the nature of the research, the sensitivity of the issues, and the fact that the instructor of the course was also the researcher, it is possible that the participants may have responded in a socially desirable manner.

Assumptions

There were several assumptions held by the researcher that influenced the conceptualization and implementation of the study. They include: (a) It is important for all educated people to be culturally competent; (b) It is possible for students' knowledge, awareness, and skills related to issues of diversity to be influenced in one semester; and (c) Students at this age are developmentally able to process and understand the concepts presented in class.

Summary

This chapter offered an introduction to the study, its purpose, rationale, and relevant literature. The next chapter will review literature relevant to the study in more detail.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Why Diversity Coursework is Important

The need for diversity training in higher education originally arose from the changing demographics on college and university campuses. Since the period following World War II there has been a large increase in the number of ethnic and racial minorities on college campuses (Kaufman, 1986; Murdock & Hoque, 1999; Swail, 2002). At the same time, the typical college student today comes to campus with limited understanding of issues of diversity and little experience in this area. Largely, students come from areas that are racially and ethnically segregated and from schools that tend to be homogeneous (majority White) (Ehrlich, 1994). Thus, students have had little direct experience with diversity and the experience they do have is through exposure via the media, which often reinforces stereotypes and prejudices. Students then arrive on campus and come in contact with students in their same age group, who are also coming from mainly homogeneous communities. It may be their first time encountering different types of people; and this contact comes in a controlled environment, away from the eyes of family and community (Ehrlich, 1994).

Opponents of multicultural education argue that it goes against western traditions, that it is divisive in nature, and that it is only relevant to those people who have been oppressed and marginalized through the education system (Banks, 1993). On the other hand, the need for multicultural education is evident given that undergraduate students tend to hold racist, sexist and heterosexist attitudes (Kors, 1998). In addition to being propagated by White students, these

types of attitudes can be internalized by women and students of color (Kors, 1998). Further evidence can be found in an opinion poll conducted in 1991 that found that White people tended to view Blacks and Latinos as violent, lazy, and less intelligent (Tran, Young, & DiLella, 1994).

The perception of campus climate of minority students and faculty vary considerably from the perceptions of majority faculty and students, as has been shown through campus climate studies (Brown, 2004c; Brown, 2004d). Brown highlighted the finding that White male faculty and students have a much more positive view of campus climate and are unaware of the discrimination reported by minority faculty and students. Both minority and majority groups generally agreed that diversity is a good thing that should be promoted but disagreed on how that would look in action (Brown, 2004c).

Significant differences were also found when looking at campus climate in terms of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender (GLBT) issues. In one study (Brown, 2004d), 80 GLBT students, 253 non-GLBT students, 126 faculty, 41 student affairs staff, and 105 residence hall assistants were sampled using a snowball strategy to ensure that GLBT student responses were collected. All residence hall assistants were surveyed, and a stratified random sampling process was used for faculty, student affairs staff, and non-GLBT students. The focus of the questions was on knowledge, interest, and involvement in GLBT topics; attitudes toward GLBT persons and issues; and perceptions of the campus climate. Similar to the study mentioned previously, this study found differences both across and within (sex and year in school for students, sex and academic discipline for faculty) groups on campus. The author suggested that when assessing campus climate it may be necessary to use a multiple perspectives approach; since different members of the community, based on their subjective experience, had different perspectives on campus climate (Brown, 2004d).

Various members of the campus community not only have different perceptions of campus climate but also have different experiences on campus. “Across all campuses, forms of verbal aggression – name calling, insults, and harassing behavior – are the most common expressions of campus ethnoviolence, accounting for approximately three out of five incidents. Threats and actual physical assaults constituted 16 percent of all incidents. Harassment occurred in 12 percent of the cases and property damage in another 7 percent” (Ehrlich, 1994, pp. 280-281). White male heterosexual students are typically not victims of violence or prejudice based on their demographic characteristics, so in their world campus is a safe and open place to exist. However, it is estimated that in any given year 25% of ethnic minority students on campus will be a victim of violence due to prejudice against their ethnic/racial group (Ehrlich, 1994). The perpetrators of this violence are usually White, with high numbers being members of fraternities (Ehrlich, 1994).

How Diversity Training Came About in Higher Education

In the 1960s, the Civil Rights movement was influential on college campuses with student activists originally voicing the need for Black studies and later Chicano or Latino studies, Asian American studies, American Indian studies, and Women’s studies programs and departments on their campuses. For example, in 1966 students at San Francisco State University demanded a Black Studies department and were met with a great deal of resistance on the part of the institution. With the help of other student activists from various groups around campus, students were eventually able to facilitate the creation of the first Black Studies department in the country in 1968. This trend spread to other campuses around the country; and within a year, most large institutions had Black Studies departments (Karenga, 1993).

Other departments and programs focused on underrepresented and marginalized groups came about in the years following this monumental movement. The first Women's Studies department was established at San Diego State University in 1970 (Antler, 1995), and 112 campuses across the country offered women's studies programs by the year 1974 (Howe, 1979). By the year 1980, 500 campuses were offering Women's Studies programs (Antler, 1995). At the same time, institutions of higher education realized that they needed to hire more faculty of color and women (which they began to do) as well as put in place systems of support and resource centers on campus for these faculty (Hu-DeHart, 1993; Karenga, 1993; Zita, 1988). Budget cuts in the 1970s and 1980s resulted in the weakening of these newly established departments, along with the reduction of faculty lines. Even with these obstacles, there were over 700 campuses across the country with ethnic studies programs or departments by the early 1990s (Hu-DeHart, 1993).

With the diversification of programs of study on campuses across the nation, other areas of scholarship began to open up that had not existed in previous years. All of this laid the groundwork for appeals for multicultural education across the curriculum that came about in the 1980s. A rationale for multicultural education included the need for appreciation and awareness of those whose contributions had been previously excluded. These newly created departments served to incorporate material into the overall curriculum in ways that did not continue to marginalize and separate marginalized groups from the majority (Mattai, 1992). Once all of this groundwork had been laid, instituting a diversity requirement in which all students are required to take some coursework or engage in experiences deemed relevant to the goal of raising awareness and appreciation for diversity was the next likely step. In 2000, approximately 62% of

colleges and universities across the United States either had a diversity requirement in place or were in the process of developing one (AAC&U, 2000; Flowers, 2003; Humphreys, 2000).

In addition to higher education, diversity training is becoming increasingly common in other venues, including business. Thirty-two percent of businesses surveyed had some type of diversity training in place (Rynes & Rosen, 1994). The purpose of diversity training is typically to encourage appreciation and understanding between cultures (Kors, 1998) and to help businesses understand that in order to be competitive in a global market they must appreciate diversity. Businesses are realizing that it is in their best interest, financially, to diversify their employee base and reach out to consumers from various backgrounds.

What is Multicultural Education / Diversity Training?

There are many aspects of multicultural education. The term has evolved into one that encompasses various aspects of diversity including but not limited to race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, and age (Sleeter & Grant, 1988). By incorporating numerous perspectives in education, multicultural education has expanded in an attempt to make changes in the overall education system that was not providing quality education to racially and ethnically diverse student populations, people with disabilities, and women (Kaltsounis, 1997). Most recently, the goals of multicultural education have expanded to include improving academic achievement for marginalized groups of people, encouraging cultural sensitivity, and reducing prejudice and discrimination (Dunn, 1997). Other goals of multicultural education include the creation of equity within education, the development of a democratic society that welcomes different views (Hu-DeHart, 1993), and the addition of multicultural content to curricula in a way that infuses respect and appreciation for differences and similarities into all aspects of education (Hill, 1991).

Banks (1995) suggested five dimensions that form the foundation of multicultural education: first is the incorporation of multicultural content into the curriculum. This has to do with the extent to which educators draw on examples and content from various cultural sources in their teaching. Second is the process of constructing knowledge. This is related to the extent to which educators inform students of the cultural biases and assumptions that are imbedded in much of the information that is taught. Third is the concept of equitable pedagogy. This refers to the techniques that educators use to work with students from diverse backgrounds in order to help them achieve their full potential. This may include a variety of teaching methods and styles. The fourth dimension is related to empowerment. All areas of the school culture should be examined to ensure that all students are empowered to pursue various academic and extracurricular pursuits, and that certain groups of students are not over or underrepresented in particular areas. The fifth dimension is the reduction of prejudice. This deals with the attitudes and perceptions of students, faculty, and staff, and modifying these attitudes through education (Banks, 1995).

Within higher education, multicultural education can vary widely both within and among institutions. Goodstein (1994) proposed two multicultural education strategies in higher education. These strategies include changes in curriculum and changes in general education requirements. The curriculum transformation approach is an attempt to integrate coursework pertaining to underrepresented groups across the curriculum and throughout the institution. In this approach faculty are encouraged to critically examine their courses to see if they can add material related to these groups. They may be given incentives in order to do so. With the general education requirement approach, certain courses are revamped or developed that deal

with diversity issues and present material related to marginalized groups. Students are then required to take one or more courses that meet this requirement (Goodstein, 1994).

In addition to the structure of multicultural education, the philosophical underpinnings are important to consider. Institutions may look at diversity from different perspectives such as incorporating more variety into the coursework or taking a critical look at diversity issues. The first perspective would involve a celebration of different cultures and a look at the history and perspectives offered by various cultures. This approach would not include a look at the reasons and implications behind marginalized groups being left out of the curriculum and history. The latter critical perspective aims to make changes in society through multicultural education. It examines the power structures and hierarchies that are in place throughout society and academia and relates the creation of knowledge to these power structures (Goodstein, 1994).

The type of institution also affects multicultural higher education. For example, public institutions may be more influenced by local, state, and federal politics due to their dependence on funding; whereas, large private institutions may have more freedom and resources to implement larger scale policies and curriculum change. Smaller institutions may not have the financial or human resources to be able to make large scale changes in order to accommodate multicultural education, perhaps due to the absence of departments such as Women's studies or African American studies (Piland & Silva, 1996). The politics within larger institutions between and within departments may also affect the nature of the diversity requirement (Goodstein, 1994). Debates over what, how, and why to include certain material into the curriculum can become heated, sometimes halting progress in the area of multicultural education (Zita, 1988).

With all this said, it makes sense that different institutions even within the same state go about making changes in their curriculum in different ways. The Curriculum Committee of the

Task Force on Intergroup Relations in the state of Pennsylvania conducted a survey of higher education institutions in the state and found that 29 out of 97 had some form of a diversity requirement as part of their general education requirements. Among these 29 institutions the implementation of the requirement varied greatly. Two institutions had a requirement that specifically looked at issues of diversity within the United States. Fourteen of these institutions had an expansive type of diversity requirement, looking at international as well as national diversity issues. Another seven institutions had allowances for coursework like foreign languages to fulfill the requirement. In addition, it was found that smaller institutions required one or more courses while larger institutions had more options for students to choose from in fulfilling the diversity requirement (Curriculum Committee, 1993).

Models and Methods of Diversity Education

There are many ways of teaching, learning, and exploring diversity issues in the context of education and training. The Diversity Identity Development (DID) training model highlights the dynamic nature of this type of education and the importance of understanding where the student is in his/her own development. It is composed of four stages that require different interventions and attention on the part of the trainer/educator (Ramsey, 1996). In this model, moving through the stages of Fascination, Differentiation, Confrontation, and Application involves increasing awareness about cultural differences and raising the level of appreciation for other cultures. During the first stage of training, the focus is on reducing the anxiety that many students feel upon embarking on diversity training and education. In this model it is also important that this first stage be nonjudgmental in nature. During the next stage, Differentiation, it is essential for a supportive environment to be in place to allow people to explore and share their thoughts and feelings as they increase their awareness. During the third stage, students/trainees are expected to

discuss their experiences of fear and anger around diversity issues. This process needs to be monitored so that individuals are able to fully work through these feelings and not be left with residual ill feelings. In the final stage, Application, the trainee is prepared to acquire knowledge about other cultures and develop skills for successful interpersonal communication and interaction (Ramsey, 1996).

Armour, Bain, and Rubio (2004) suggest that one of the main objectives in diversity training should involve getting at factors that might encourage an avoidance of discussing the topic. It is common for people to avoid discussions involving race, sexual orientation, and other topics because they may feel uncomfortable and vulnerable to the harsh judgments of other students/trainees. From this perspective, the emphasis should be on active engagement in the process of self-reflection with the aim of increasing self-awareness. A balance of challenge and risk within a safe environment seems to be most effective in helping students/trainees to engage and learn from this process (Armour et al., 2004).

An example of diversity training in the corporate world is the National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI) which is a not-for-profit leadership training group based in Washington, D.C. It has been in operation since 1984, working to put an end to prejudice and cross-cultural conflict around the world. It also has affiliate groups on 65 college campuses in the United States and Canada. The NCBI approach to diversity training and leadership is based upon certain standards (e.g., treating each individual with respect rather than using confrontation). They have found that when people feel they are being blamed they become defensive. Their philosophical statement notes, "When people feel bad about themselves they do not have the courage to make constructive changes" (online). At NCBI, they also feel that sharing personal stories of discrimination is important since these are powerful tools in changing attitudes and giving

listeners a new perspective. They also stress the importance of leaders or instructors doing their own work in taking care of themselves and confronting the same issues that participants are expected to deal with (NCBI, 2005).

Much of the literature involving diversity training and education can be found within the counseling or education literature. More and more, as previously noted, the business world is taking heed of the benefits and necessity of diversity. In terms of training students to be counselors and psychologists, the research focuses on helping White students progress in their racial identity development, offering reports that students who have completed diversity training state that they are less culturally biased than before their training (Kiselica & Maben, 1999).

Cultural awareness and understanding are vital in the training of counselors and psychologists. For a therapist, diversity competence is the knowledge and skill to integrate significant human diversity factors that are important to the process and outcome of therapy into one's theoretical and technical approach to intervention and assessment. These diversity factors can be important to the therapist, the client, and/or the therapeutic relationship (Roysircar, 2004). One technique aimed at increasing cultural understanding that is advocated in the literature involves the use of film, literature, and music in better understanding African American culture. Martin (2005) discussed increasing the cultural competence of child and adolescent psychiatrists through these methods. The author explained that using these creative venues can improve therapists' ability to understand some of what African Americans may experience and also the impact these experiences may have on their mental health and overall functioning. He goes on to say that these tools might go a step further in helping clinicians to recognize their own underlying assumptions and biases. The overarching goals would be to effectively treat the issues that are significant in the African American community and help put an end to the well-

documented disparities found in the health care and status in minority communities. Another technique for teaching cross-cultural skill and increasing awareness is called the Intercultural Sensitizer (IS). It was developed at the University of Illinois and demonstrated by Leong and Kim (1991). It involves a series of vignettes used as examples of critical incidents in cross-cultural interactions. Students read and discuss the interactions and can come up with alternative explanations for the behavior demonstrated in the example. This is intended to help them to understand the different values and ways of doing things that people from various cultures display.

The field of education is responsible for much of the multicultural education literature since teaching is another profession where cultural competence is especially important. A particularly interesting study of pre-service teachers discusses the relationship between self-concept and overall diversity awareness. Brown (2004a) found a direct relationship between self-concept and cultural diversity awareness and sensitivity. As self-concepts change so do some factors of cultural diversity awareness; and as students' total diversity awareness increases so can their total self-concept. This study was conducted with mostly European American future teachers in a single diversity course. In addition, Brown states that students come in with some characteristics of cultural diversity awareness and some elements of sensitivity, and these are directly related to some components of their self-concepts.

In a separate study by the same author (Brown, 2004b), a relationship was found between the techniques and methods of instruction used in stand-alone cultural diversity courses and changes in the cultural diversity awareness of students. Two separate groups received different interventions and course format. The group that focused initial classes on reducing student resistance and providing students with opportunities for self-examination was more effective

than the group that began with what students perceived as threatening or hostile to their cultural frame of reference. This type of instruction in the initial phase of the course encouraged some students to resist and disengage from the process. The group that worked best used small group collaboration, interactive field research, instructor feedback, in-depth interviews, and students' personal examples. All of this was meant to minimize student resistance and keep them engaged and making appropriate inferences. Through these activities they were able to put themselves in the shoes of others where they could begin to understand and react to the effects of minority status. Similar to the previous study this one showed that one stand alone cultural diversity course does have the capacity to increase some factors of cultural diversity awareness while not influencing others. Brown (2004b) explained that students' past experiences, their initial levels of resistance, and their extrinsic motivation to change might account for this.

Overall, Brown concluded that one stand alone multicultural course does in fact have the capacity to substantially influence cultural diversity awareness among these European American teacher education students. Differences were found, however, based on demographics such as gender and age. Females became more patient of individuals whose verbal and nonverbal communication styles, skills, and speech patterns were different from their own. Females also increased their total cultural diversity awareness significantly more than their male counterparts. Participants over 27 years of age showed the most improvement over this particular 10-week course, and those with the least educational attainment (i.e., juniors vs. seniors) experienced the greatest increase in cultural diversity awareness.

Other research on teacher education programs has produced mixed findings. For example, two studies found a small positive change in students' racial attitudes (Martin & Koppelman, 1991) and cognitive complexity in terms of racism (Bidell, Lee, Bouchie, Ward, &

Brass, 1994), while another similar study found that pre-service teachers were not significantly affected by the required multicultural course. It had little effect on their attitudes and beliefs about race (Chavez, 1994). Other studies corroborate this lack of effect of multicultural training. Tran, Young, and DiLella (1994) found that it has minimal effects on students' attitudes towards various ethnic groups. With the considerable lack of outcome studies and the mixed results that studies have provided, it is evident that more research needs to be done to decipher what types of diversity training may lead to increased cultural sensitivity.

Three Components of Diversity Training: Knowledge, Awareness and Skill

Kiselica (1998) reviewed a number of training models and found some consistency in the elements of these various models. All of them included the three components of self-awareness, knowledge of others, and skill development. In addition, these training programs included a component where the student/trainee would have the opportunity to interact with people from a different cultural background. Sue (1991) also endorses the three aspects of diversity training having to do with self-exploration of one's own perceptions and biases; knowledge of one's own culture and other cultures, values and worldviews; and skills for interaction and communication across cultures.

The key aspect of the three-part approach is self-awareness (Houser, 1996). It is the foundation for all other training. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to gain the knowledge and respect for others, or the skills to interact with others, without the awareness of self and one's biases and prejudices. If these aspects are not brought into awareness, a person will not be able to interact skillfully or learn with an open mind about other cultures. Students' own biases will get in the way of this learning whether they realize it or not. Houser (1996) suggests that cultural sensitivity starts with critical self-analysis and the assessment of attitudes and behaviors

that result in less opportunity for particular groups of people. In addition, the importance of increasing awareness of various perspectives, the influence of interacting with others, and the impact that understanding others has in attitude adjustment, are all stressed as important factors when it comes to increasing cultural sensitivity.

From the counseling literature, training is moving beyond models of cultural sensitivity aimed at increasing awareness about beliefs and attitudes towards other cultures. Increasingly training involves a knowledge component, knowledge having to do with specific cultures, in particular racial and ethnic minorities. A number of models of training have come out of the field of counseling, mainly aimed at increasing awareness and sensitivity, and incorporating knowledge about specific groups of people (Leong & Kim, 1991).

Despite the fact that this approach is based in counseling and originally applied to counselor training, many aspects of it are relevant for a more general approach to diversity training. The three components of training include the following: Awareness, which has to do with a person being in touch with his/her own biases about other cultures, his/her level of comfort with differences, and the sensitivity to interact with people from other cultures. The knowledge area is related to an understanding of the sociopolitical effect of US society on minority groups as well as culture-specific knowledge about other groups. The skill area includes verbal and nonverbal communication across cultures and the ability to accurately send messages and be understood (Leong & Kim, 1991).

Within the awareness component of training there are a number of specific exercises that are intended to increase cultural awareness. For example, Beale (1986; as cited in Leong & Kim, 1991) introduces the Cross-Cultural Dyadic Encounter (CCDE), which is intended to create an open dialogue between students from different ethnic groups. It involves a series of open-ended

questions that elicit self-disclosure from students. Other techniques involve simulation or real life experience with other cultures combined with didactic material about other cultures (Leong & Kim, 1991).

In the realm of knowledge development, activities can include interaction across cultures intended to bring out the positive and unique qualities of various cultures, student presentations about different cultures, or discussions around the issues that may be unique or different based on culture (e.g., parenting styles, language, acculturation, religious beliefs and practices). It is noted that although acquiring knowledge about various cultures is seen as important, it is less clear what specific techniques and methods are useful (Leong & Kim, 1991).

The skill component as described in the counseling literature is not applicable to working with undergraduate students, most of whom will not be going into counseling, psychology, or any mental health related field. What is interesting; however, is the debate between a focus on differences between cultures and one that focuses on similarities. It is important to make the distinction between individual differences and cultural differences and instill an understanding in students that they need to understand the individual within her/his cultural context. The other aspect that must be included is the understanding of minority cultures within the context of the dominant culture (Locke, 1990).

Locke (1998) presented a model of diversity training intended to increase awareness and perceptions of cultural diversity. He also contends that this training must begin with a better understanding of oneself in terms of assumptions and prejudices, and an understanding of one's own culture. Understanding oneself is thought to increase appreciation of others as well as increase awareness of one's own worldview and how that influences day-to-day interactions and thoughts. The other component of Locke's model has to do with knowledge of other cultures.

This should include gaining a better understanding of majority and minority groups within the United States, as well as global cultures and the various influences that all of these have on one another. This might include the struggles and triumphs, tragedies and atrocities that groups around the globe have experienced. It should also include the impact that the dominant worldview and culture has on other worldviews and cultures, which oftentimes can be negative and oppressive. Cultural sensitivity training should also include a historical account of the interactions of various groups of people and the positive and negative results. Lastly, Locke talks about a more in-depth understanding of various cultures including family structure, beliefs, and values related to religion and culture (Locke, 1998).

Factors Influencing Student Attitudes towards Diversity

Students on college campuses are affected by many other factors in addition to the coursework that they complete. The length of time that a student stays in college may correspond to a more tolerant attitude in general. Various studies have shown that students who are more advanced in their studies have more liberal racial attitudes than their peers (Muir & McGlamery, 1984; Pope-Davis & Ottavi, 1994; Sidanius, Pratto, Martin, & Stallworth, 1991). Another study, however, did not show any difference between attitudes of students based on their year of schooling (McClelland & Auster, 1990). The types of activities and groups that students participate in have also been shown to predict attitudes towards diversity. Students who lived in fraternity or sorority houses tended to have less tolerant racial attitudes than those students that lived on or off campus (Morris, 1991). Greek organizations are purposely homogenous, which may be why less importance seems to be placed on appreciation of diversity within these organizations.

Program of study has also been found to relate to students' level of acceptance of diversity issues. Studies conducted within a university found that students in fields such as law, business, engineering and the natural sciences tended to have less favorable attitudes towards people who were different than them, than did students in fields such as education, humanities, social sciences, and the arts (Guimond, Begin, & Palmer, 1989; Guimond & Palmer, 1989; Guimond & Palmer, 1990; Sidanius et al., 1991). Similar findings were discovered in studies covering colleges and universities around the country (Astin, 1993; Springer, Palmer, Terenzini, & Nora, 1995). A longitudinal study found that differences in attitudes towards diversity across the fields of study were still prevalent over a twenty- year period (Muir & McGlamery, 1984). Lastly, students' majoring in engineering, regardless of other demographic factors, were found to have less positive attitudes towards feminism (Astin, 1993).

Student Reactions to Diversity Coursework – Is it just Fluff?

White students can show typical responses ranging from resistance, to naïveté to openness. One paper (Allen, 1993) described White teacher education students who were doing fieldwork in a local elementary school that was predominantly African American. These students were working with the children as tutors, mentors and doing some teaching. Their responses showed resistance, naïveté, and openness. The White student teachers kept journals about this experience; and the themes that arose from these journals showed the fear, anxiety, resentment, and frustration that many of them experienced. The anger and fear were typically related to feeling unprepared to deal with the students, sometimes thinking that the students were “difficult and uncontrollable” (online) and the feeling that they did not know how to interact with the students in an “appropriate manner” (online). The resentment expressed by the student teachers was related to the inconvenience of having to leave the college campus to go to the elementary

school. The frustration expressed was similarly related to their reported lack of experience with diversity and the realization of their own prejudices about the children's behavior and characteristics (Allen, 1993).

By the end of the experience some of these same students had seemingly made a transition from statements such as, "Things aren't the way they used to be" (online), indicating a sense of resignation to a less than perfect status quo, to statements expressing concern about what can be done to make improvements. For example, "Circumstances do not appear to be improving, but they won't get better until we understand" (online) these children and how to best work with them. Themes that emerged at the culmination of the experience were related to newfound appreciation for the mainly African American children these White student teachers worked with; an understanding about not judging the children based on appearance or stereotyping based on initial interactions; and the realization that not all students in our school systems have equal opportunities (Allen, 1993).

Similar positive yet perplexing responses were found with students in a study with 32 White female teacher education students attending a relatively small, private university (Anderson, 1998). They were presented with a section designed to address culture, stereotypes, prejudice, and racism. Reportedly by the end of the semester, students felt that ethnic diversity was more important for their future classrooms than they did in the beginning of the semester. In addition, many students reported that the multicultural unit augmented their understanding of cultural differences and that they appreciated the need to learn to manage cultural diversity in their classrooms effectively (Anderson, 1998).

Some of the student comments about the multicultural unit included phrases like "it opened my eyes," commenting on their lack of exposure to cultural diversity until that point.

Others relayed similar sentiments, “I always went to an all-White school basically and I know it may not be like that when I begin to teach,” “I have not been aware of the many different cultures around,” “I was insensitive to the fact that all students have various backgrounds,” and “I’ve been sheltered and I appreciate and welcome diversity now.” Related to their future careers students commented, “I saw that diversity is going to be in all of our classrooms and we must learn how to deal with it,” “I learned that it is OK to acknowledge differences, but that the differences need to be viewed as strengths,” “It taught me. . . not to discriminate and how it is important to treat everyone as an individual. . . and that it's important to keep them motivated,” and “All students. . .need the language and material presented to them in the way they understand” (Anderson, 1998).

Conversely, both before and after the multicultural section, these same students indicated preference for teaching in suburban or private schools with children in middle and high socioeconomic communities (those most like the schools they themselves attended) as opposed to working with predominantly African American or Hispanic students in poorer communities. In what appears to be a contradiction, the only significant change from pre to posttest occurred when students, asked to rank the importance of 14 school characteristics in their choice of a future work setting, was the item stating, “it is important to have an ethnically diverse mix in my classroom” (Anderson, 1998).

Other studies also reported positive feedback from mainly White students when encountering the topic of diversity in different contexts. The details are limited however and do not include specific student responses, only the interpretations of the researchers, leaving the reader to wonder what it really means. At James Madison University, the Psychology Department distributed a multicultural newsletter that included reviews of plays and books;

political information on multicultural issues; summaries of multicultural activities in the psychology classes; and student research on race, sexual orientation, gender, class or dis/ability to all psychology students and sought student feedback. Gibson and Rey (1999) reported that student feedback was positive to the newsletter, with 72% (N = 76) reporting that a multicultural perspective is *very* important in psychology and 81% responding that the newsletter was either *very* or *somewhat* effective.

One teacher educator knew from experience that students come into courses and topics on diversity with specific types of resistance and that White students in particular have a general lack of concern about the topic. She chose to put these up front at the beginning of the semester (Wade, 1998). She used comments that she had heard in the past such as, “I don’t have any prejudices,” “Well I guess I have some prejudices, but I certainly wouldn’t let them influence how I teach,” and “I’m going to get a teaching job in my hometown in Iowa; I don’t need to know about multicultural education” to facilitate discussion and draw student feedback. In reading over student reaction papers she found that many students thought these were on target with their own feelings and perceptions and admitted to thinking these things. They were pleased with the discussion and opportunity to challenge themselves in thinking about their own attitudes, at least at this beginning stage (Wade, 1998).

Other studies go into the student experience in more depth. Adams and Zhou-McGovern (1993) talked about the “difficult dialogues” that occurred during their social diversity and social justice course, preventing the open discussion of opinions. Students were often reluctant to express themselves when it came to diversity for fear of offending others or being perceived in a way that they are not comfortable with. They came in with dualistic thinking looking for the clear right and wrong of issues, zealously defending one side of an issue and attacking the other

side, all the while feeling guilty if they thought they might be perceived as being on the wrong side. Students, thus, become resistant to information that contradicts popular stereotypes and exhibit difficulty in making the leap from specific facts and observations to larger systemic issues. All of this results in heated disputes and uncomfortable silence instead of productive dialogue (Adams & Zhou-McGovern, 1993).

Some literature focuses specifically on the issue of sexual orientation, which is arguably one of the most difficult to discuss and confront in the classroom. Students bring prejudices and ideas, often times deeply rooted in family and religion. In the work of Adams and Zhou-McGovern (1993) in a core undergraduate course on social diversity and social justice, changes in student attitudes related to LGBT issues are reported by students to be the most difficult, the most personally disturbing, and the area in which they were most aware of learning by the end of the course. Battle (2004) conducted an interesting experiential activity with an undergraduate class on gender and sexuality at a large northeastern university. Students were given the opportunity to wear pins indicating support of the LGBT community for three days, not to be taken off at any time and recorded their feelings and reactions throughout the experience. Almost all of the 32 students chose to do the assignment, but few were able to wear the pins for the three days. The students described feelings of fear, anxiety, insecurity, embarrassment, and not wanting to be rejected by friends and family. They also reported both positive and negative reactions from people they came in contact with. In the end many reported that the experience helped them better understand what it would be like to go through the coming out process in a way that was more impactful than reading about the topic or hearing others talk about it (Battle, 2004).

McQuarrie (1998) found similar discomfort and judgment in a study where students in a management class were given a case study of a worker with AIDS whose co-workers were calling for him to be fired. Some students read a case in which the employee was heterosexual and others in which he was homosexual. The common reaction to the case involving the gay man was that students became uneasy and identified the man's presence in the workplace as the problem, rather than the co-workers reactions, which is what was identified as the problem involving the heterosexual man. The possible solutions that students developed centered on isolating him from his coworkers. In addition, students in the groups dealing with the heterosexual man made comments suggesting that he probably really got the virus from a homosexual relationship. Another group had to persuade their spokesperson that it was okay to say homosexual and homophobia in front of the rest of the class (McQuarrie, 1998).

An example of the difficulty and resistance involved in discussing and teaching students about diversity was shown on the campus of a community college in Virginia where the administration initiated a weeklong dialogue on the racial climate at the college. The groups formed were diverse and representative of the campus community. Student dialogues were reported to be "glossed with racial politeness and political correctness. . . In some instances students praised the college highly and indicated that the mixed student population was sign enough that the college had no racial problems to address." (Woolford-Singh, 2000; p. 52). Underneath was the fear of being too honest, self-disclosing, or offending others. Some students expressed that they were pleased with the college's "quietness" on issues of race. For others the silence was more about the fear of dredging up old wounds and tiredness with discussing race, which they thought served no useful purpose. One student commented, "Diversity can also be a

bad thing if the college starts to have racial disputes or something of that nature” (p. 53).

Students seemed to agree that these topics were better when avoided (Woolford-Singh, 2000).

Perhaps a glimpse into the systemic nature of the problem on this community college campus was the poor attendance at brown-bag lunches and poor involvement by faculty. Faculty were, for the most part, disengaged even though the task force at the college felt that faculty were the ones with the most power in transforming students’ hearts and minds through curricula. Faculty, on the other hand, felt that discussions of race were best left outside the classroom (Woolford-Singh, 2000).

Students of color (African American and Asian in this study) expressed interest in further discussions on racial relations, which they thought might lead to better understanding. These students had more complaints about perceived harassment and the need to change the curricula and climate, and discussed “natural separation” between races on campus as the result of the need for self-protection. Overall, a higher percentage of students of color, mostly African American, participated in these dialogues than did their White counterparts. Older African American students (over 29) were more engaged than younger ones (Woolford-Singh, 2000).

One study looking at students of color (as opposed to White students) preparing to be teachers discussed Native American students who were to teach Native American students after their training (Wenzlaff & Thron, 1995). The authors described the reactions of these students to training at PWIs as either: a) students who are easily assimilated; b) students who rebel against assimilation; c) students who assimilate through a state of denial. The first tend to overlook cultural insensitivity and other challenges of assimilation. The second group “play the game” in order to achieve their goals. And the third overlook or abandon their cultural identity to fit into White society, which may lead to inner conflict later (Wenzlaff & Thron, 1995).

Summary

This chapter looked at the literature on diversity and multicultural education and student responses to this type of education and experience. Missing is the struggle of these students and educators and a sense of how they moved from point A to point B. The next chapter will describe the current study related to undergraduate student experiences in a diversity course.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to examine, from a student perspective, the experience of participating in an undergraduate diversity course at a large, public PWI in the southeastern United States. Another aim of the study was to highlight students' experiences emotionally and cognitively as they progressed through the course, along with their reactions and perceptions once they completed the course. Phenomenology seeks to understand our experiences and the meaning that we make from them (Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2002).

Description of the Sample

The sample for this study was fixed based on enrollment in the ECHD 3010 Diversity Issues in Counseling and Human Development class offered spring semester 2006 in the Department of Counseling and Human Development Services. This class was chosen for the study because it is the only undergraduate class of its type offered in the Department, and it was taught by the researcher. Thirty-nine (39) students from a variety of academic disciplines enrolled in the class. The demographics of the students in the class were 7 Asian Indian Americans, 3 African Americans, 2 biracial (Korean/White, African American/Native American) students, 1 Eastern European, and 26 White. This ethnic breakdown is based on student phenotypes and confirmed for those students who filled out demographic questionnaires (see Appendix D). It may not be consistent with how each student self-identified. There were 19 males and 20 females, the majority of whom were seniors.

Procedures

Students provided written feedback on an ongoing basis throughout the course. These written evaluations, Teaching Module Feedback Forms (TMFF), contained four open-ended questions asking students to evaluate the lesson or activity that was conducted during that class period. Student assignments were designed to offer a deeper sense of what students were experiencing throughout the course. Lastly, individual interviews conducted with a subset of students at the end of the semester aided in gaining more personal student insights into their experiences in the course.

The entire class was invited to participate in the study, and those students who did received extra credit for doing so. Students who did not wish to participate were given a non-research extra-credit option. At the start of the study, students selected a four-digit identification code. These individual identification codes were retained by the individual students, and a list of codes was kept in a locked cabinet. A research assistant provided students with their codes if they forgot. All data were stored in a locked file cabinet.

TMFFs were distributed at the start of the class period in order to give students ample opportunity to jot down notes and comments. At the end of the class period students were asked to leave the forms on a desk as they exited the classroom instead of handing the form to the instructor. This was done so that students would not be matched with their TMFF. Once all students left the classroom, I picked up and sorted the pile. Later the TMFFs were typed up and grouped according to the date and content of the class period.

The interviews were conducted after the final class meeting and during finals week. Students were asked to volunteer for the interview and received extra credit for doing so. They were selected on a first-come first-served basis. The interviews were audiotaped and kept in the

possession of the researcher. All information on these recordings were transcribed and used for research purposes only. All tapes will be destroyed.

The TMFF was distributed during 8 separate class periods, between 24 and 32 students completed the form on any given day. Of the students who were interviewed 2 were identified as White males, 5 as White females and 1 as an Indian American male.

Class Structure and Format

The ECHD 3010 class took place over the 16 week semester. The study was introduced to the class during week five of the semester; student evaluation forms were completed the following week. The class met once a week for two and a half hours from January 10th through May 4.

Course Curriculum

The course included didactic content, experiential activities and personal reflection, and large group as well as small group work and discussion. The intended focus of the class corresponded with the three components of diversity training: self awareness, knowledge of others, and skill development. The first six weeks was devoted to self awareness since it is seen as the foundational aspect of training. The remaining eight weeks of the semester were spent on knowledge of others and skill development. Although different phases of the class emphasized one of the three components of diversity training, all three components were infused throughout the semester, with the recurring theme being self-evaluation. A more detailed explanation of the weekly activities and discussions, and the course in its entirety, will be provided in the chapter that follows. The syllabus, including an outline of topics, readings, and assignments can be found in Appendix A.

Subjectivity of the Researcher

I came to this research based upon professional and personal reasons. I am a White female doctoral candidate in Counseling Psychology originally from the northeast, living in the southeast at the time this project began, and currently living on the west coast. My geographic background influences my ideas and values around issues of diversity, especially when it comes to race. I have noticed many differences in race relations in the northeast and the southeast. All of who I am (e.g., ethnicity, class, sexual orientation), my life experiences, assumptions, and biases regarding diversity issues affect this research and how I approach the classes I teach. I have found teaching diversity to be a struggle at times. It can be very emotional for students and for me. It is frustrating when students do not engage with the material or when they openly resist and argue. Through this research I am searching for a better understanding of how this happens, which will hopefully lead to the development of methods to help students get past their resistance.

My epistemological stance is most consistent with constructionism. In my opinion, people are active creators of their own realities and make meaning of the experiences and interactions in their lives. People are social by nature, and it is through relationships with others that they learn about the world. Each individual's reality and experience in the world are unique. Even if two people grow up together in the same environment they are going to become different people and experience things differently.

Meaning emerges from the interaction between the researcher and the people involved in the study. This is a creative process from which a unique body of knowledge emerges (Crotty, 2003). This is the way I approached my research, which in turn impacted my work. I was not searching for one particular truth but looking to understand students and to better serve students

and educators. This epistemological stance certainly influenced my project. All of my students brought into class different experiences and ways of seeing the world, and it was important for me to be aware and respectful of this. The literature demonstrates that experiences in college such as program of study, membership in a fraternity, and prior experiences, influence attitudes towards diversity (Astin, 1993; Brown, 2004b; Morris, 1991; Muir & McGlamery, 1984; Pope-Davis & Ottavi, 1994). With this understanding comes the need to find out more about what students are bringing to the table so that I might better understand their reactions to and interactions with the course material.

The theoretical framework I worked under was critical theory. Many of the ways of being, thinking, and doing that our culture values as normal and right are based on patriarchal, racist, and classist models of thinking. Critical theory aims to advance critical consciousness, and works to break down institutional structures that perpetuate oppression and social inequality. The principle of critical theory that is most in line with this project has to do with “educating for transformational learning” (deMarrais & Roulston, 2005). Through this study I hope to gain insight and understanding into the student experience, and apply these findings in innovative ways of teaching and researching issues of diversity and multiculturalism that can lead more students to examine their own thoughts, feelings, and values, and empower them to join the fight against oppression and discrimination of all kinds. The name “critical” theory is purposeful in that the aim of this type of inquiry goes beyond understanding to assessing and altering aspects of society that are unjust (Patton, 2002), which is the purpose of classes like the diversity course at the heart of this study.

Research Design and Methods

The methodology used for this study is phenomenology. Phenomenology asks the question, “What is the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experience of this phenomenon for this person or group of people” (Patton, 2002, p.104). It takes a closer look at our experiences and the meaning that we make of them. The particular phenomenon being studied may be a variety of things including an emotion, a relationship, or in this case a course. The aim is essentially to gain an understanding of what it means to be human, and this begins at the level of consciousness. This involves looking for descriptions of the essence of the experience being studied (Moustakas, 1994). This study is anchored in the lived experience of the students participating in this particular ECHD 3010 class. The methods utilized for this study include document analysis of the written feedback (TMFF) from students throughout the semester, document analysis of student assignments, analysis of pre and posttest assessments completed by students, observations and reflections of the instructor/researcher, and interviews conducted with a subgroup of students at the end of the semester.

The foundations of this study, epistemology (constructionism), theoretical framework (critical theory), methodology (phenomenology), and the specific methods used, all worked well together in conceptualizing and implementing this project. I began the project with an open mind, knowing that each of my students was a unique individual bringing her/his own perspective and life experience. With this in mind, I hoped to gain a better understanding of what the experience of being in this diversity class was like for these particular students. I hoped to better understand what went on in this diversity class and how students reacted to the class material and interacted in the classroom. In learning more about the experiences of students in this class I hope to make recommendations for the process and content of future diversity classes

for undergraduate students at a PWI so that more students might take up the cause of social justice. A social justice agenda is consistent with critical theory and with the values and aspirations of Counseling Psychology.

Data Collection

Documents

The *Teaching Module Feedback Form* (TMFF, see Appendix B) was used to create documents for analysis. This form, developed by the researcher, was typed and grouped according to date of completion. The purpose of the TMFF was to assess student perceptions of the class period for which each form was completed. The TMFF consists of three questions which the student must agree or disagree with, and it asks for open-ended feedback related to each question. At the end of the form there is space for students to make additional comments. These forms provided data to explain the experience and reactions of students in the course and were analyzed by the researcher.

Interviews

The interviews (see Appendix C for protocol) were conducted in a semi-structured format using a variety of styles of questions. Some questions were direct, "In what ways will you be different as a result of this class?" Others were more open to student interpretation, "Please tell me what you learned about your own culture this semester." The protocol was not rigidly followed, and often student responses prompted a follow-up question or comment by the researcher. At times interviews were more conversational in nature. In semi-structured interviews the goal is to explore the topic openly, allowing participants' voices and opinions to come through (Esterberg, 2002). The purpose of the interview was to gain more knowledge and receive more detailed feedback regarding a student's experience of the diversity course. To this

end, questions sought students' opinions on various aspects of the course, including things they learned about their own culture and other cultures, the most memorable aspect of the class, and what they would have liked from the course that they did not get.

Data Analysis

Alternative Representation

Reading and writing research can be tedious and even boring for both the researcher and the audience. Qualitative research in particular is typically very interesting in terms of topic and usefulness of the research, but often not very exciting to read or write (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005). Qualitative work can be long and drawn out with lengthy quotes and detailed descriptions. There is debate in the academic community about accessibility; some authors defend their dense, complex writing, and others work at making their writing more accessible. One means of making research more understandable and appropriate for a larger audience beyond academia is alternative methods of representing data. Alternative methods of data analysis and representation give the researcher more freedom to use her/his creativity and to incorporate some aesthetic appeal into the written work.

In recent history social scientific writing, in some ways, has become more and more consistent with other forms of literary writing. The clear demarcations between “truth” and “imagined” and “fact” and “fiction” are not so clear anymore (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005). As part of this project, I created a journal written by a fictional composite student. The facts of this piece were taken from two years of experience working with students in diversity courses. The information in this journal is based on formal and informal feedback from students, assignments where students were reacting to course material and talking about their own experiences and background, and conversations with students inside and outside of the

classroom. The fictional aspect of the composite journal is the fact that this is not a real person; and thus, the journal does not fit one particular student but incorporates aspects of many different students.

Richardson discusses the creative analytical processes (CAP) to describe ethnographic work that is outside of “conventional social scientific writing” (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005, p. 962). In this type of writing it is suggested that the process and the person (researcher/writer) are completely intertwined and cannot be separated from one another. This is true in the composite journal that I created. I am the professor, researcher, writer, and interpreter in this work. The collaborative nature of the work is inherent in the structure of the classroom; and thus, the data that emerged are also a collaborative effort. The experience of this particular diversity class for both instructor and students is created by all of us.

Given the multiple roles that the researcher plays and the collaborative nature of the work it is often difficult to separate out the subjectivity of the researcher, thus some would say, making the text less “true.” This is often the case in social science research, according to Anna Banks (1998). In attempting to tell a good story, it may be necessary to look beyond the categories of fact and fiction and incorporate the imagination. Banks and Banks (1998) are clearly proponents of story-telling in academic work. In the composite journal, I am creating a narrative that is fiction but based in fact; and it gives the reader a glimpse into what it is like to be a student in this diversity class. It gives insight into the student perspective in a way that more traditional types of analysis and writing simply cannot. Hopefully, it is entertaining to read as well.

I have been teaching this diversity class for the past four semesters. Spring 2006 was the first time I am looking very closely at student reactions and responses and trying to make some sense out of the whole experience for myself and also get a better understanding of student

experiences in the course. My aim in using an alternative analysis method is to capture the emotion, reactions, and overall class experience of a composite student. This is not one student in particular but is a composite of many students that I have taught over the past two years.

Particularly I am concentrating on this semester; and the account is based on the activities, assignments, and discussions we have had thus far. I consider this a composite student because the thoughts and feelings expressed would not represent the experience of one of my students entirely, nor would every student in my class be able to find him/herself in this account.

I began by looking through the data I collected this semester through written student feedback. Next, I read through some of the student journal excerpts that I saved and examined notes that I have taken on other student journals. In addition, I looked at my own notes (journal) from this semester to remember what we did during each class period and some of the points that came out during our discussions. Then I sat down and started writing. The resulting document brought together bits and pieces of many student experiences and reactions. There is nothing in the reflection that I have not heard directly from a student or read in a student's work. For example, the student's reflection begins with the student talking about not knowing what to expect from the course, having registered because she thought it would be an easy A. I have heard this sentiment over and over again this semester as well as the previous semesters I have taught the course.

Thematic Analysis

In thematic analysis, categories are allowed to emerge from the data (Ezzy, 2002). In this type of analysis the researcher begins without many preconceived notions and looks to find themes within the data. Through this process called coding, theory is created (Ezzy, 2002). This

is in contrast to other types of analysis in which the researcher begins with a theory or theories that she/he is trying to confirm or disconfirm.

My process of thematic analysis began after the interviews were conducted and transcribed. I read through the transcripts while listening to the audio of each interview. I then read through the interview transcripts a second and third time, making notes, underlining, and looking for concepts that stood out to me or that I felt I was hearing multiple times. When I read through the interviews the fourth time I also read my comments and focused more attention on the sections of transcript that I had already identified as significant. After this I pulled out the themes that I had identified and wrote them separately and began to expand on what I meant by each of these by writing notes explaining each of the themes. The next time I went through the interviews I placed numbers corresponding to each of the themes next to the appropriate sections in each interview transcript. Later, I read through the interviews once again and added two additional themes to the five that I had already noted. I used the same procedure for the analysis of the TMFFs.

The next component of the thematic analysis involved pulling out actual quotes from the interviews and placing them into the text of my paper. After I pulled out all the quotes that corresponded to each of my themes, I had about 30 pages of text; and I decided to read through all of this to see if I could make any sense of it. I was hoping to condense the seven themes and develop sub-themes. After reading through the pages, there was a great deal of overlap among the themes; thus, I came up with three main themes and several sub-themes. The three main themes are: (a) student engagement with the process and showing signs of potential growth, (b) student disengagement from the process or resistance and, (c) the learning edge which is somewhere in between engagement and disengagement. Within the student engagement theme

are sub-themes including ‘newly formed insights’ (generally about others, or issues larger than self), ‘understanding oneself’ (more personalized learning), and ‘actions speak louder than words’ (skill development). Within the resistance theme are sub-themes including passive and active resistance, projection/blaming (others for how they are, for not teaching them), and impression management. Within the learning edge theme are sub-themes including contradiction (students’ saying one thing and then the opposite) and dissonance (emotional and/or cognitive conflict).

Quality Assurance

Throughout the semester I worked closely with the colleague who helped me in conducting this research since I could not be privy to which students chose to participate and which did not. She was also very familiar with the content and has taught a similar class at the same university. After many of the class sessions she and I processed what had happened during the class period, and I shared my feelings and reactions. Before many of the class sessions we discussed what I planned to present or discuss in class that day and appropriate strategies to use. She also conducted an observation of the class and gave me feedback based on what she saw and heard. All of this helped me to provide the most meaningful experience that I could for my class. It also allowed me the opportunity to be able to talk about my feelings and reactions to class, especially on days when the conversation was heated or students voiced opinions that were very different from my own.

Once the semester was completed and all data had been collected, I asked all students to read the fictitious journal that I had written from the perspective of a student. I explained via email what it was and how I came up with it and asked for their honest feedback. I wanted to know if they saw anything of themselves or of classmates in the journal that I had written. I also

wanted to know if anything stood out as far-fetched or inaccurate. Five students responded and all expressed that the journal seemed on point. Student comments were, “I think that this journal was definitely a good representation of the student and how she felt. Some parts sound like they can come from me. I can relate to this student. Other parts I can see my friends relating to her.” Another student stated, “Sounds real to me--a very in depth recap of the class.” A third student responded, “It looks good...very believable.” Another student stated, “That sounds like it could have been written by one of your students,” and the last student said, “I think it is a pretty realistic journal entry for a White female. I can see a White female in our class maybe having those thoughts. Overall, I think the entry was good at capturing feelings and thoughts about certain topics discussed in class.”

After completing the collection part of the research I attended a qualitative writing retreat with twelve graduate students from different disciplines. The retreat was led by a professor proficient in qualitative research. I read parts of the composite journal to this group and got their reactions. The professor was impressed by how realistic it sounded, and the students gave me similar feedback. She thought it was a powerful representation of the experiences that some students go through in a class such as this one. Many of the graduate students at this retreat had experience working with undergraduate students, and they felt that the composite journal sounded like the voices of the students they had encountered.

Ethical Concerns

Given the multiple roles I played in this project being both instructor and researcher, issues of confidentiality and fairness are especially important to address. This was something I was concerned about from the beginning of the study and took very seriously throughout the course of the semester and thereafter. I emphasized to students that grading for the course and

participation or lack of participation in the research was not at all related to one another. To this end, I stayed out of all research-related activities until the end of the semester when I had completed the grading for all of the course requirements.

When the time came to introduce the research I prepared the information for my colleague who would be coming into my class to speak with the students. This occurred at the end of the class period so that I could leave the room. I introduced the non-research extra credit opportunity which required students to interview a person (pre-approved by me) from another culture and write a short paper on the experience. Then I explained to the students that there was another extra credit option that would be explained by my colleague who was in the room already, and I exited the classroom.

My colleague explained the study and took the names of those interested in participating and set up the time that they would come in to complete the pretest packets. From this point until the end of the semester when the grading was completed, I did not have access to this list. All correspondence regarding the research was conducted through a WebCT account between the students and my colleague.

About two weeks before the end of the semester I introduced the opportunity for students to participate in an end-of-semester interview. I explained that if they were interested in this or had questions they should contact my colleague through WebCT. She set up the interviews, which were scheduled during finals week. The weekend before finals week I completed grading all papers and had all of the grades in order. At this point, I was given the list of students participating in interviews and was able to correspond directly with them.

Before conducting each interview I again explained to each student that the course and the grading for the course were both complete, and the interview would have no effect on their

grade, besides the extra credit they would receive. I did not have one student express any hesitation or concern at any point during or after the semester.

Summary

This chapter provided information on the description of the sample, procedures, format and curriculum of the diversity course, researcher subjectivity, research design and methods, data collection and analysis, quality assurance, and ethical concerns. The next chapter will provide the context behind the experience of the undergraduate students in the diversity course. It will give a detailed account of the preparation, content, and experience of the course. This information is based upon the syllabus and journal kept throughout the semester documenting each class period. Interspersed throughout the text of the next chapter are data from the TMFFs and student interviews.

CHAPTER 4

THE COURSE

Introduction

This chapter will provide information on the diversity course that is the topic of this dissertation. It will take the reader through the course, from creation through completion, discussing each class period including activities and student reactions, with the intention of providing the framework for understanding the experience of the students in this study. Data from TMFFs and student interviews are also included.

The class is ECHD 3010 Diversity Issues in Counseling and Human Development, taught in the Department of Counseling and Human Development Services. The course has been refined, and I would like to think that some students learn and grow as a result of the course. Students, if willing and able, go through a great deal during the course of the semester and beyond. Some students struggle with issues they had not thought about before; and others struggle to find ways to express themselves and hear what their peers have to say in a diverse classroom.

The Evolving Curriculum

After looking through the literature, talking with colleagues, and reflecting upon my own multicultural coursework, I decided that I wanted to explicitly emphasize the three areas of multicultural competency that is strived for in Counseling Psychology: awareness of self, knowledge of others, and skill development. Self awareness has to do with an understanding of how one functions in the world, including one's biases, prejudices, and stereotypes. It also

encompasses an awareness of how one impacts other people and how one is impacted by other people. In order to become more self aware in terms of issues of diversity one must spend time thinking about his/her own background and experiences and be a critical viewer of his/her own actions and thoughts. The knowledge of others aspect of diversity training begins with a basic understanding that other people, especially those from other cultures, might think and act differently, have different values and beliefs, and function in the world from a different mindset than oneself. These differences not only occur across cultures, but within cultures. At the same time, it is also important to understand that people from various cultures are also human beings; and therefore, there may be many similarities across cultures and within a culture. In addition to these types of basic understanding, the knowledge component deals with learning about different cultures through experience and education. The skill component is largely centered on communication. It involves the ability to talk or interact in other ways with people who are different from oneself in a way that can be understood and in a way that feels comfortable for all parties involved.

Even though my class was made up of undergraduate students from all academic backgrounds and majors, I thought these three areas related to diversity training could be applied to our class with less emphasis on the counseling part. So I decided to organize the semester into these three components: awareness, knowledge, and communication skill, in that order. The literature (e.g., Houser, 1996) supports the idea that self awareness is the foundation of diversity training. It is not until a student can honestly and critically look at herself/himself and his/her own values and behaviors that she/he can begin to listen to and empathize with others who are “different.” In putting together my curriculum, I focused the first six weeks specifically on self-awareness.

It was actually difficult to put all of the readings and topics into their 'proper' place before the semester began. I wanted to use the quality resources that I had already acquired and developed over the past two years, yet I also wanted to structure them according to the components of multicultural competency. The idea was that each week would build upon the next in an orderly fashion. The difficulty with a diversity course is that it can include many different topics that all relate to one another in that they are part of every person's identity, yet the topics do not necessarily flow easily from week to week. So, the first question involved which components do I include, and thus making a statement that these are the most important. The next question centered on which order felt the least disjointed. For example, during week ten we were scheduled to talk about refugees and week eleven about sexual orientation. Of course refugees have a sexual orientation; however, that overlap was not meant to be the focus of either week. So, at times things felt very choppy; and over and over I found myself making the announcement, "Okay folks, we are going to switch gears."

Part 1 - Looking Within

As part of my ongoing self-reflection regarding the curriculum, I decided to include a section on spirituality during the first few weeks. I had included this section in past semesters but not until later in the course. In my own way of thinking (and from what I have heard from students as well), spirituality is very much connected to diversity. I conceptualized spirituality, not necessarily in terms of religion, but in connection with and compassion for others, and thinking beyond our physicality to deeper meanings in life. I thought if I could get students to think about the interconnection of all things and people, and the particular lens that affects the way they see the world, they could feel the connection between themselves and others, while at the same time recognize that others have their own lens and way of seeing the world as well.

In addition to the self awareness focus and the spirituality aspect, for the first three to four weeks of class I put together more general types of readings that I hoped would get students to think about diversity, and hopefully get them excited and interested in what was to come. For example, the very first reading I assigned was a personal account of one woman's journey of self-discovery (Reynolds, 2001) in which she recounted her own trip down the multicultural enlightenment path. I thought by reading about another person who was very excited about the topic and really incorporates the ideals into her professional and personal life, students might start to consider the value for their own lives. Other readings for the first few weeks of class discussed the intersections of various components of identity such as race, class, and gender (Robinson, 1993), and cultural differences in the way that people experience the world (Funder, 2004). I thought that these would provide a solid foundation of what was to come, allowing students to explore their own beliefs and warm up to the possibility that most people in the world, as well as in the class will have different opinions and values than they do. During all of these initial classes I planned to use in-class activities and discussions that would challenge students to think about their own culture and identity. The final type of introductory reading came from our text (Bucher, 2004) and provided definitions and explanations of diversity-related terminology and concepts.

To supplement the readings and class activities and to give students something I knew they would enjoy but would also find thought provoking, I planned video viewings for the first six weeks of class. We began with "Crash," a 2004 film starring Don Cheadle, Terrence Howard, Matt Dillon, and others. Students in my class the previous semester requested watching this movie, and it generated some important discussions; thus, I knew it could be an effective tool in starting conversations about stereotypes and discrimination, while at the same time

demonstrating the interconnectedness of people's lives. I also knew that students always enjoy movies that are up-to-date and keep their attention, both of which "Crash" does very well. Two other videos that I planned during the first part of the semester were "True Colors," a Primetime exposé where a White and Black man attempt to start lives in St. Louis by looking for housing, jobs, and going shopping. Although this one is a bit dated, it clearly demonstrates the inferior treatment that the Black man received and is eye opening and sometimes shocking to many of the non-Black students in class. The final video I planned to use during this section was the classic brown eye/blue eye experiment originally implemented by Jane Elliot in 1968. This video portrays the evils of discrimination as played out by elementary school students suddenly segregated by their teacher based on the color of their eyes. It was shocking to some of the students.

Part 2 – Looking Around

The middle part of the semester was to be devoted to the knowledge of others component of diversity training. This is where I made another change in the structure of the course in terms of the placement and content of student presentations. I have always had students do presentations in my diversity classes; however, they were typically at the end of the semester and the topic had been open ended in the past. This semester I intentionally moved the presentations to the middle of the semester, during the 'knowledge of others' focus of the class. I asked students to present on a particular culture that they had an interest in learning more about. I really made these changes because I wanted to include a component on various cultures but wanted to leave the specific content open so that students might be more invested in topics that they had picked for themselves. I thought it would be more meaningful if students were able to research areas that were interesting to them.

After the two weeks of student presentations I planned on getting into topics related to immigration, refugees, gender and sexual orientation, and social class. I had two very good videos planned, one a GPB special on young men from the Sudan, and another PBS special looking at social class in the United States. I felt a bit uncomfortable putting these topics (see above) in the ‘knowledge of others’ category. I was realizing more and more that there was no clear separation between my three components of diversity training. I knew all along that the self-awareness thread would run throughout the semester but in actuality all three were intertwined. I probably knew this intuitively before I began the whole process; however, in wanting to impose some structure, I felt the need to try to separate them as neatly as possible.

Part 3 – Looking to Practice

When I was planning my course for the semester, I knew that I wanted to devote time to practicing communication skills, yet I was not sure what this would look like in the context of this class. I was very familiar with the skills associated with counseling across cultures but I wanted the practice with my class to be broader in terms of basic communication in a work, school, or social setting. I had a few activities in mind, and I presumed that before the final weeks of the semester I would be able to talk with my supervisor and colleagues and get some ideas for other experiential activities related to cross-cultural communication. I planned readings from the last part of our textbook that were more practical-oriented, discussing workplace diversity and teamwork. Table 1 lists the students who participated in the end of semester interviews.

How It All Came Together

The students came into the room on the first evening of class thinking or sometimes whispering to one another, “What class is this? What do we have to do? This had better be easy!”

These sentiments were reported by one of my interviewees, Jan, at the end of the semester. During this first meeting, I had students interview one another and introduce themselves to the rest of the class in order to get them talking and making connections with one another, and to set the tone for an interactive and discussion-oriented class. At this time I also introduced the course, emphasizing the give and take that would be necessary to make the discussions productive and enjoyable. I also put forth the challenge to students of looking at themselves more closely and thinking about their own development. Although some students were listening and understood my message during these early meetings, some students clearly were not listening. It became necessary for me to repeat some of these foundational aspects of the course periodically throughout the semester. Along those lines, Jan also reported, “I just feel like if I would have like actually taken it seriously right when I got in there...I would have been open to it a lot sooner than I was.”

Table 1

Students Who Participated in the End of Semester Interview

Student	Gender	Ethnicity	Major	Year
Katherine	Female	White		
John	Male	White	Marketing	Senior
Jan	Female	White	Psychology	Junior
Kelly	Female	White		
Kevin	Male	White	Marketing	Senior
Bhadrak	Male	Asian Indian American	Microbiology	Senior
Jennifer	Female	White		
Stacy	Female	White		

During our first meeting and beyond, I also stressed the importance of being respectful to one another and to me, the expectation that we would be sharing a good deal of ourselves with one another, and that we all needed to help in making the classroom a place where we could all feel comfortable expressing our thoughts and opinions. This is included in the syllabus but I

made sure to talk about it with students. They also signed a contract stating the same. Two examples of items on this contract called “Guidelines for Creating a Safe Space in the Classroom” developed by Susan Shaw at Oregon State University, “Acknowledge the impact of sexism, racism, ethnocentrism, classism, heterosexism, ageism, anti-Semitism, and ableism on the lives of class members” and “Be open to be challenged or confronted on your ideas or prejudices.”

The emphasis in the beginning of the course and throughout the semester was not only on getting to know ourselves, but also getting to know others. The literature supports the assertion that students in classes like this one need to feel comfortable enough to be open and challenged if they are going to have room to grow and explore (Armour et al., 2004; NCBI, 2005). A large part of this is feeling like they know the people around them and can feel comfortable being vulnerable with these individuals, most of whom were strangers on that first meeting of class. Students noted later that the class was very small and much more diverse than other classes they were used to. It actually included 7 Asian Indian Americans, 3 African Americans, 2 biracial (Asian/White, African American/Native American) students, 1 Eastern European, and 26 European Americans. There were 19 males and 20 females. Every student interviewed agreed that this was a very diverse classroom ,and verbal feedback on the last day of class also confirmed this view. When asked whether this diversity was particularly positive or negative Katherine responded during her interview, “I guess it was a little bit of both because I feel like . . . (if) it was all the same kind of people. . . I think that people wouldn’t have so much their guard up. Like I didn’t talk at all because I was so worried I was going to offend somebody. (If we were all the same) I wouldn’t be worried about offending anybody.” Another White student

wrote in her final journal, “When I walked in this class for the first time I didn’t like it. Everyone was so different. Everyone wasn’t just like me.”

Students were used to very large lecture classes so this class of close to 40 was intimate to them. In order to personalize and shrink the class I randomly placed the large class of 39 into smaller groups of 5-6 where they would stay for the rest of the semester. Students moaned and groaned the first few weeks when I reminded them to “get into their groups” when they strolled in each week, but at the end of the semester I heard a lot of positive feedback from students regarding the small groups. For example, one White student began the semester not liking the fact that she had to sit with students so different from herself, and later was pleased to report that she had run into two Black classmates on campus and stopped to talk with them. This was something she would not have done if it had not been for their interactions in the classroom.

During one of our first class sessions I asked students to shout out characteristics of an “American,” and they came up with a host of things, including stereotypical ones like greedy, rich, and fat. Kelly remarked about this discussion in her interview “. . . we’re describing Americans and I was like, “Americans are fat” and this guy was like, “I can’t believe that girl said ‘fat’, she should have used the correct term” or something like “overweight”, I guess, and I was like “dude”, you know, sorry!” I then asked students to name some sub-categories of “Americans” or characteristics that make “Americans” different. I was hoping for the major divisions that come to my mind and the things that we would be addressing throughout the semester like race, class, and gender, but the first response was generation, as in X and Y. I went with this and hoped to bring it to more ‘important’ aspects later. In the end we also came up with White, Latino, Asian, gay and lesbian, male and female, and southern. Through our discussion we came to the conclusion that “Americans” experience life very differently depending on which

sub-categories they belong to. So that not every “American” enjoys the same rights and privileges that those under the original supposedly all encompassing “American” category can claim.

Another interesting conversation came about during this particular class period. After the “American” activity I gave students a “Multicultural Education and Equity Awareness Quiz” (Gorski, 2003). Some of the questions include laws around crack vs. cocaine, number of people worldwide with access to the Internet, and wealth distribution around the world. In doing this quiz with the students I expected that they would be surprised or even shocked with some of the correct answers and hopefully they would end up contemplating the actual inequity that exists within the United States and around the world. We ended up in a debate over the crack/cocaine question. Two students in particular could not sit with the assessment that the differences in legislation may be due, at least in part, to issues of race and class. They insisted that the reason for the enormous discrepancy was because of the different effects that the drugs have on the user.

Undergraduates love to watch movies and videos in class. Perhaps it is because they get “off the hook” for at least some of the class period, knowing they will not be called upon to speak or participate in any other intense or mentally taxing activity. It may also be because they have grown up in a multimedia world with DVDs and the Internet and can seemingly respond more appropriately to images on a screen than to interaction with human beings. Either way, I incorporated a number of movies and videos into the course. They loved the movie *Crash* and probably would have been content to watch it over and over. They had discussions in their small groups to get the ball rolling, and we eventually moved it to a large group dialogue. While addressing the key characters in the film and discussing their different developments throughout the story we got into a lengthy discussion about racism and stereotypes. For example, specific

topics in the area included what it means to “act Black” and whether or not this was something that was real and whether there is a phenomenon of “acting White.” Students who entered this conversation visibly did so with caution and some apprehension. They knew that they were treading on possibly dangerous territory.

During this same class period I noticed that some of the groups, especially the all White ones hiding in the back of the classroom, did not appear to be taking the small group exercises and discussions as seriously as some of the other groups. I was pleased with the makeup (which was completely random) of one diverse group, which included a White male (John) whom I had tagged as difficult due to his tone and demeanor. This particular student along with a few other White students maintained that the movie was very unrealistic and people are not that racist today. During his interview John stated, “It [racism] has definitely improved since slavery in the 50’s and segregation and stuff like that. But it is not gone and I just don’t know if it is ever going away.” This shows some of the contradiction that came through in many students’ writings and discussions. As I meandered around the room listening to student conversations, I was impressed with how this group was sharing of themselves and listening to one another as we did a cultural self-assessment, which asks students to describe themselves culturally and talk about how they express their culture in their daily life.

I began the next class session with a topic related to spirituality by reading a story about an African tribe called “They’re Playing Your Song” by Alan Cohen. A main point of this story is that everyone has something inside that tells them who they are supposed to be, which speaks to them even when they are doing wrong, and sometimes it is up to those around us (our village, community, family, or friends) to remind us of who we really are. In class that night the story went over like a ton of bricks. There was utter silence and I could almost make out the sound of

birds chirping in the distance. It caused me to wonder whether these students even have a soul. Later on in the semester though, one of my students privately made a comment to me about how much she loved that story and wanted a copy to use for a workshop she would be doing with high school students. Sometimes we are only planting seeds.

Following the story fiasco I wrote a quote on the board that I had recently read in a meditation/prayer book, “The images in our mind create the reality in which we live.” This succeeded in giving students something to think about in terms of the idea that we see the world through our own lens based on who we are and our experiences in life. Students discussed this concept, and there seemed to be agreement that this sentiment was in fact true and intertwined with the topic of diversity. Towards the end of the class period that evening I introduced the concept of mindfulness with a few questions. I asked them, “Who is the most important person in your life?” After shouts of “Mom!” “My boyfriend!” and “Me!” I told them the correct answer from a mindfulness perspective is whomever you are with right now, meaning, “Look around, these are the most important people in your life.” Two more questions revealed very similar answers. The students were neither pleased nor amused. Some students who spoke up could not imagine actually living mindfully since that would mean you would only be concerned with the present moment and never care about the future or plan ahead. For them it sounded like a frivolous sort of lifestyle. A few others understood the concept on a deeper level and realized that living mindfully would actually enhance existence because even the most mundane tasks would be performed with joy and interest.

The next class I will discuss was particularly memorable for some of the students. It reinforced the lesson that as much thought and effort as instructors put into teaching and have in mind the meaning we hope students will make of our lessons, we really never know what is

going to stick with them or how they will be affected. The following are excerpts from two student interviews discussing this particular class session.

John: We had a discussion on working. How people are treated in the work force.

Treated as being lower. Work in the sandwich shop and what not. There is this big discussion then you know. And all these rich people come in and they treat us like crap and they make a mess and that is not our job and what not. And I can't stand that, because I have been a janitor. I've worked hotels as a janitor for an entire summer. It was disgusting. But the last thing I would ever say is that it is not my job. If someone puked in the floor and flicked me off, I cleaned it up and I didn't say anything about it. . . That was one day that I really felt like I had to say something. I felt like I was the only one in agreement with me.

Jennifer spoke about the same incident, about the comments that student one made in class. She says,

. . . feel like sometimes people, especially at this college, are kind of selfish because a lot of these kids are upper middle class who have a lot of money...they don't have to worry about money until they are out on their own and their parents cut them off...for the most part some people who just have been handed everything and take things for granted...I was like really would you ever have that job? No. Would you ever work really at all? Probably not. I feel like when people would put other people down or judge a situation like this, people would make comments and I would be like now are they serious, do they really mean that? Are they trying to be funny?

Apparent in these two discourses are the assumptions that each one makes about the other without knowing the entire story or the motivation behind the other person's comments. In the

moment and in the classroom, neither was able to get beyond his/her initial reactions and conclusions she/he drew about one another and others in the class. The conversation was heated and people were upset. If they had been able to get beyond the superficial level of their discussion they may have found similarities in their experiences that led them to very different conclusions about what it means to be a working person.

It was now about midpoint through the semester and the fun and games were about to come to a screeching halt. I introduced the first of a series of readings and videos dealing with racism and discrimination. This evening, perhaps due to spring break approaching, students seemed out of control to me. They were rowdy and talkative from the beginning of class, and I could not get them to even listen to announcements. Where typically they talk amongst themselves and quiet down when I ask them to, this night it seemed to be an eternity before they would settle down. All of that changed very quickly when we began going through the first article, which was entitled, "Obscuring the Importance of Race." The class unknowingly did a stellar job of demonstrating the crux of the argument contained within its pages: people do not like to talk about race, especially White people. When the race topic comes up ordinary (White) people will go to extraordinary lengths to avoid it. I pointed this out to my students in the midst of the deadening silence; however, the analogy was lost on them. One or two comments from the TMFF made me recognize that maybe not all was lost on them. One student apparently ". . . learned that I have prejudices and that I need to acknowledge them and that way I will be able to be more compassionate and understanding of others." Another showed even more self awareness stating, "I know I need to work on some things about myself. It helps me to focus on specific things that I sometimes don't realize I do."

Many students responded positively to the “True Colors” video (the Primetime exposé where a Black and a White man attempt to start a life in a new city), which we watched during the same class period, although in class I did not get that impression. The conversation following the film focused on the car salesmen, one White and one Black, and whether the discrimination was justified since their goal was to sell cars even at the expense of treating people differently, or if they were outright racist. One White student commented that there might have been other reasons that the Black man was treated poorly other than race despite the fact that this was the only apparent difference between the two men in the film. One or two Black students, as well as one White student, voiced opposing opinions.

During this class, students were bouncing off the walls except for those moments when the conversation turned to racism and discrimination. The icing on the cake was that the students left the classroom in utter physical disarray that evening. Newspapers, half eaten food, papers and trash were strewn about the room. It was so bad that I felt the need to reprimand them as if they were children the following class, reminding them to be respectful of our space. It turns out, though, that this particular class genuinely impacted some of the students, including this one: “Watching the movie “True Colors” right now I am in shock of the horrible treatment of Glenn.” “. . . the video we watched was good. I have no doubt that stuff like this happens. Because it happened to me and a group of my friends.”

Student group presentations filled up the next two class periods. The topics for these were open ended. Groups were set up randomly according to alphabetical order with three to four students in each group. About a month before students were scheduled to present, I gave them their group assignments and about fifteen minutes of class time to begin discussing ideas. Students were instructed that they could present on any cultural group that they were interested

in learning more about, and I would have to pre-approve their choice. It turned out that placing the presentations in the middle of the semester was much better than having them at the end. Students commented that, “The presentations were a nice change of pace for the class” and “. . . doing the presentations is a good change from the usual discussions and reading.”

The first group was presenting on skinhead culture, a topic that I had approved, but was having second thoughts. From the feedback I received, it turned out that the ones who commented found it very interesting and informative, if not shocking. It is possible that some students did not comment due to being mortified or devastated by the presentation. The next group volunteered to present and this turned out to be a perfect follow-up to the skinheads. This group presented on the Shaolin Monks of China, a group of people who practice meditation and believe in peace but also do Kung Fu. What a profound juxtaposition between the two groups.

As expected, some groups did a better job than others. Some groups were more creative and seemed genuinely interested and excited about the material; while others appeared to be doing it merely because they had to. Student comments included, “I thought that all of the presentations were insightful. I knew very little about the topics; but now I feel somewhat well versed in a sense about the topics. . . No word for “goodbye” in Ojibna!” I learned things about different cultures that I never knew about or I knew very little information about.” “I learned something new about each culture that I wouldn’t have investigated for myself.” “It showed me things that I have never seen.” “There were some subcultures I had never heard of and they were brought to my attention; and then there were those presentations I knew a little about but the presentations brought depth.” Others talked about the implications of learning about new cultures, “I learned a lot and some of my stereotypes about the groups discussed were realized and broken.” Another student showed some interest and initiative in investigating a culture s/he

found engaging. “Always wanted to learn more about this culture [Maori] ever since I saw the film “Whale Rider.”

With the break in the action behind us we were ready to get back into our substantive issues. We had fallen a week behind early in the semester so the two weeks where we were supposed to talk about “Race Matters” and “Systems of power, oppression, and privilege” actually got split up with presentations and spring break. So now we were up to this second topic, which we were supposed to have covered about four weeks prior. I anticipated that this would be a heavy class because of the content and the video I was about to show. “Angry Eye” is a modern version of Jane Elliot’s original brown eye/blue eye experiment that she does with contemporary college students. I felt this would be even better than the original video because my students should be able to relate to these college students much more so than the third graders in the original film or the prison workers in another follow-up film. Stacy stated “. . . she made me so mad because she wasn’t being a bully, she was being and pardon my French, she was being a bitch. She was using anger and she was twisting your words, you know, like when they’d try and answer, she twists their words and for me, that infuriates me when you try to twist my words. And I don’t really think that those kids experienced being what it was like to be Black because I think all that they were was pissed off at her; and I know when I’m pissed off at someone, like a teacher or something, I don’t learn anything. All I can focus on is my hate towards them.”

I had talked over with my colleague the best way to incorporate discussion and decided to stop the video at key moments and engage the class in discussion. I stopped the video when the young woman cries, when another young woman walks out, and when a young man talks about being Native American although he easily passes as White. In the video Ms. Elliot pushes some

of these college students to places that they probably had never been before. She separates the brown-eyed students from the blue-eyed students and treats the two groups very differently from the moment they enter the building. For example the 'blue eyes' are kept in a room with two chairs so that most have to sit on the floor with no food or drink provided; while the 'brown eyes' are seated in a comfortable room with lots of seating and provided with breakfast. In the video, when the two groups are merged the exercise is in listening skills which is taught to the 'blue eyes' with a great deal of disdain and disrespect resulting in one young woman walking out and another brought to tears.

Students appeared to be engaged with the video and did have some comments to make when I paused it and posed questions. For example, I asked the class what they think the effects are of being a target of discrimination: Does the student choose to leave the room or is she forced out? What do people mean when they say, 'I don't see color?' In talking about the woman who walked out, many students, both male and female and of different ethnicities, actually laughed at the fact that she became so emotional, crying and walking out of the room, choosing not to return. Perhaps it was a type of nervous laughter and some of my students could see themselves in this young woman's behavior, as Stacy said. Another student commented, "Sometimes, other times I felt like people would make inappropriate comments that were upsetting then the class would kind of laugh it off. I don't feel this is productive."

Thinking about it in retrospect I believe that many students were shocked and angry, and probably needed time to process what they were seeing; thus making it difficult to engage in discussion in the moment. One student reflected in the TMFF, "I think I would have liked to speak more but didn't know how to put my feelings into words today." Some expressed sympathy for the young woman who cried after a stern lecture from Ms. Elliot. To these

comments I pointed out the fact that the young White woman on the video was having the opportunity to feel what it might be like to be discriminated against. Based on the responses from the students, I got the impression that many of them could not make this leap. Some commented that they did not understand the point and implied that these students on the video probably got nothing out of the experience. Others like Stacy commented that the students on the video were so angry with Ms. Elliot that they could not possibly have gotten anything out of the experience. The opposing perspective was also present, “I have been discriminated against much of my life and I think the facilitator in the film did a great job of showing and revealing the real discrimination non-Whites face.”

I moved the conversation slightly to discuss the potential effects of discrimination on family, community, and self. I attempted to make the connection to how we had learned from watching “Crash” that one seemingly harmless yet thoughtless act towards another person has repercussions that we may never know about. Some of the students appeared to understand and agree, though many others appeared unwilling to go there. This perceived resistance could be related to students’ inability to express verbally what they were thinking and feeling, as the earlier student mentioned, but for others it was clearly a different experience. “I know what racism is and I get sick of it being shoved down my throat through pathetic waste-of-my-time activities such as this one.” This student goes on to explain

In this class my conservative beliefs are not respected by others at all. Anyone who doesn’t agree with the teacher or minorities in here is cut down and argued with till they give up. . . I am attempting to be open minded and I think I’ve gotten better but when those who believe like me attempt to speak up and can’t, I continue to be closed minded.

Another student stated a similar sentiment

Sometimes I am afraid to say how I really feel about issues in this class. I feel like some of the members of this class aren't receptive to different viewpoints. Although I usually share my thoughts on issues, I'm not a confrontational person and therefore I try to avoid confrontation.

Peggy McIntosh's 1989 article "White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences Through Work in Women's Studies" was our point of discussion following the completion of the video and dialogue. Maybe this was just too much after the first half of the class because it was difficult for students to stay focused on the issue at hand. Instead of focusing on "privilege" we ended up talking about White guilt and the proper definition of racism instead. The remainder of the class period was heated. When I offered a possible definition of racism as being dependent upon White power (meaning only White people can be racist), the class twisted and turned like an out of control roller coaster, and roared with resistance.

Luckily, my colleague was observing this particular class; and as an African American woman, she was able to offer some insight. Once again my students were acting out the very points that they were arguing against and becoming agitated at what some of them perceived as accusations. They would not rest until I made them feel better by stating that we could all look up the word and come back next time and create our own definition. They (White students) had succeeded in using their power in the classroom to take over the conversation until the issue was resolved to their liking and they could feel comfortable again, and I had given in to them. An interesting parallel that I did not realize until my conversation with my colleague after class was that some of my students had commented on how students in the video were getting angry at Ms.

Elliot instead of seeing the bigger picture, and my students were actually doing the same. Some were certainly angry and focused on the definition of the word that I had provided instead of taking a step back and seeing that the anger they felt that evening in response to the class and the video parallels what many students of color feel on a daily basis, along with the power and privilege that is at the heart of these dynamics.

With a reddening face and quivering voice, Jennifer spoke about not feeling guilty for being White. Other White students echoed the sentiment. Later, that same student talked about her view of racism on a personal level and gave an example of ‘reverse racism’ talking about a time when she was a child and her little friend was not allowed to sleep over because she was White and her friend was not. I talked about the difference between keeping racism on a personal level and understanding the systemic and historical context that all Whites are accountable for. I also remember saying that the issue was more about recognizing the power and privilege you have and then doing something about it. I realize now that I was feeding into the resistance by trying to alleviate their burden instead of exacerbating and exposing their intense feelings in the moment. Many of my students of color who typically contribute to class discussions did not say anything that night. I wondered what they were thinking. I wondered what all my students were thinking and feeling.

The following class session I had arranged for speakers to come visit our class from the student LGBTQ group. The group of panelists told their personal stories of coming out to family and friends, life on campus, and religion and spirituality. The student ensemble was comprised of one White lesbian, one biracial lesbian, one gay White male, one transsexual woman, and one Asian Indian American gay male. All of them were first year students, their ability to articulate their experience and answer difficult and very personal questions with grace and dignity was

impressive. One of my students put it this way, “They were very cool because I don’t think I would be able to do that. . . like stand in front of strangers and tell my personal business.”

Some students were very polite and asked a good number of questions. Others sat quietly with a look of skepticism on their faces, others had a glazed over look, still others looked as though they could have been watching seals at the aquarium. For many this experience was an anomaly. One student comment from the TMFF reveals some of these hidden feelings and perceptions. “I totally disagree with homosexuality because of my religious beliefs. I didn’t want to start an argument or create tension, so I didn’t say anything.” Another student offered this particular insight

I came away with a lot of awareness and insight into LGBT culture; yet a lot of things I will never be able to understand what it is like, just like any minority- how it is to be discriminated against in such a way since I am not lesbian or transgender, bisexual, etc.

With all that said, this particular class period was among the most memorable for the students that I interviewed and from what I read in student journals.

The Lambda Group was definitely a good addition to this class. Experiencing diversity firsthand is the best way to learn it. Most of us know someone or at least a few people who are gay, but rarely do we get the chance to have a discussion with a group of gay, lesbian, and transgender people. Very interesting to me, they were very helpful.

In one case, perhaps in a simplistic way, the student came to a deeper understanding of himself/herself while also gaining some insight into what other folks experience in their lives, “It helped me confirm that I am heterosexual because I never experienced any of the confusion as a young person over which gender I was attracted to.”

After the speakers left, we talked a bit about their reactions and observations. One particular comment stood out to me when John remarked in class that he could not even begin to understand what they (the LBGT panel) were talking about. We went back and forth a bit, I responded by suggesting he be open to taking someone else's perspective. Another student, Kevin, asked a few questions during this time, and I got the impression that he was skeptical about the "cause" of homosexuality. I was able to follow up with him at the end of semester interview and get some clarification.

In the time remaining after the sexual orientation presentation and discussion we went through what I thought was a very harmless and thought provoking reading called *X: A Fabulous Child's Story*. It is a fictional tale of a child who is raised gender neutral in that X's parents do not reveal the sex of the child to any family members, friends, or school officials. They raise X to play football and with dolls, buy X a kitchen set and toy trucks and in the story X turns out to be very happily well rounded and well adjusted. The students had a strong reaction to this story. In class they were very resistant to the whole idea of the story of X and insisted that something like this could never happen in 'real life.' When they were not totally unresponsive to what they perceived as my taunts, they displayed enormous resistance and even some overt emotion. One young White woman was especially adamant and made the comparison of not seeing someone's race (which we had talked about before as a negative thing) to not seeing someone's gender. Students even took it further to imply that it was not right for children to be raised without gender. This would certainly be harmful they insisted. This class made an impact on some of my students. Kevin stated in his interview

That (Baby X) was a very interesting article to me and I've thought about that since then. . . I think it's a cute story but I think, that kind of thinking, I think it would be detrimental to our children, you know, raising them up without an identity.

We watched "Lost Boys of Sudan" at the beginning of the next class period and followed it with a discussion and our reading for the evening. Students did not have very much to say. I shared that at one point during the film I noticed that people (in the film) felt uncomfortable with the boys and did not really try to understand or hear their stories. I went on to point out that on a few occasions the boys tried to tell their stories but were indirectly discouraged from doing so. Some students defended the actions of the people in the video. They questioned whether they themselves would be able to respond any better, and wondered how one should respond to such horror tales as the Lost Boys shared. There were a few students who agreed with my observations (based on who spoke) but were in the minority that evening.

Student comments on the TMFF helped me to see that at least some students were impacted by the Lost Boys. "This video showed me that most of the things that we take for granted and do everyday are silly." Another student echoed similar sentiments

The movie really grabbed my heart and I felt so sorry for the boys (and) wanted to go help them to succeed. . . I am very blessed to have the life I have. I love seeing the lost boys' motivation to achieve a better life.

Once again I was reminded that even though my impression based on observation and classroom interactions was that students seemed unmoved, this was actually far from the truth.

The conversation that same night soon turned to immigration as we learned about some of the stories told in "Mexican Lives." We read two stories from this compilation book which shares the lives of many different individuals living and working in Mexico. The discussion soon

turned to the controversial and politically relevant topic of immigration and became somewhat heated for some students. Some White students expressed how they did not understand why ‘they’ (Mexicans) come here to the United States when they could stay home and move up “the ladder” more efficiently since it is their home country and they speak the language. Other students of color and White students expressed opposing views and relayed experiences working alongside legal and illegal immigrants. Those against immigration did not seem to comprehend that there might not be a plethora of opportunity for people in their home countries which is why it makes sense that folks would go to such great lengths to come to the US and attempt to earn a living.

At that point the semester was beginning to wind down, the winter hats and fleece pullovers had turned into baseball caps and flip-flops. I could only imagine that most of my students felt a sense of anticipation for the end of the semester. I started the discussion on social class by addressing some key areas in life that are impacted by social class. For example, how people spend their time; whether they need to spend mental and emotional energy worrying about food, shelter, or transportation dilemmas; whether they have leisure time or access to leisure activities; healthcare; steady employment; and position power. Students proceeded to go off on tangents about homeless people who tell lies and rob you, and to complain about seating at baseball games and RV regulations at football games. They felt oppressed because the university’s administration had the nerve to interfere with their sports-related partying. It appeared that most of them did not take the topic seriously or care at all. A heartfelt look into social class and the perils of poverty had turned into a forum for disgruntled and privileged college sports fans. Afterwards, I found that at least a few students had been listening and absorbing some of the information. “I learned I really don’t pay attention to issues of poverty and

stuff and we as a group really look at socioeconomic status”, “I realized that I have my own opinions and biases about SES” and “I don’t think we sympathize enough with the homeless.”

The article for the next class was “The Origins of the Black Upper Class” the title of which explains the point of the article. The students leading the article discussion did a very thorough job summarizing the key points but the few questions that these students posed to the rest of the class did not get much response. Although one student comment on the TMFF stated, “...it seems that we all could relate to being compared or segregated in some sense- whether it be lightness of skin, or gender, etc.” A few comments; however, made me question if the point that hit home for some students was the one that was intended. “I definitely got an idea as how others judge people in their own culture and get to look at a situation through another point of view.” “I learned about how African Americans can look down on their own people.” “Yes, I found the topic very interesting because a lot of people don’t know about the caste system within the African American community.” Although this was not the message I was trying to put forward, it is probably an expected one.

I followed this up by reading the Willie Lynch letter, which I was sure would get the group stirred up. It contains a speech given by a White slaveholder in 1712. None of the students had anything to say. Perhaps it is the same phenomenon I have seen going on for much of the semester. They might have been so taken aback that they were writhing with emotion that they could not utter a sound. Or they may have remained detached from the profundity of the letter. One student made the rather unremarkable statement on the TMFF, “There was a lot of thought-provoking questions, especially with the article and the Willie Lynch letter.” Another student commented, “Today I learned a lot about people in my class. As I was looking around there was a lot of eye rolling around.”

The remaining portion of the section on social class was taken up by the video and follow-up discussion of “People Like Us,” which is a documentary on social class in the US dealing with a spectrum of people from WASPs in New York, to a poor White family living in a trailer in rural Ohio, to an upper class African American family. The discussion following the video went something like this: I asked whether students found any aspects of the film or individuals in the film that they could relate to and one young woman mentioned being from a small town and going back home and feeling uncomfortable, as did a young woman in the video moving from rural Kentucky to Washington, DC. A few other students half-heartedly concurred. I asked the class if, in their experience, students at UGA were similar to the high school students portrayed in the video who were snobby, cliquish, and out of touch with reality beyond their community. They did not see the connection.

Although it was difficult to get the few student comments and responses that I did during class, many mentioned it on the TMFF. For example, “Definitely (learned a lot). It made real the simple fact of social class and its blatant/ stark and at most times harsh differences that it creates in our society. Even the food we eat can determine the way people look at us and how we think of them/ live our lives. . . I was very shocked at how real stereotypes can become – because they are usually bound by classes- which are very hard to break from in your lifetime! I saw this video in my high school sociology class! Now agree much more- have learned about humans and behavior since then. I found this video disturbing- but true to the human race. The behavior/ opinions/ thoughts of the people were real.” “Never thought about food (bread) being related to social class, but it makes sense when analyzed. I realized I am very critical of those who do not sound educated.”

The last half of this same class we went through some of the final chapters in our text. One of the student presenters asked the class whether diversity training should be taught in schools, and if so starting when, and this got the class going. Opinions varied, and students went back and forth responding to one another's comments and questions. They ended up teaching one another, and you could literally see people thinking about the issue and altering their initial thoughts and responses. One young woman who spoke occasionally during the semester, tentatively began, one eye gauging my reaction, that although she has really enjoyed this class, college might be too late for diversity training because people have already formed many of their views. Other students shared a different view revealing that they learned a lot in this class about their own biases and ways that they can improve, and thus felt that it is never too late to learn more about diversity as long as you are open to it. I chimed in that I really appreciated all the comments and could agree somewhat with what everyone said, talked about self-growth and introspection and how by learning about others and broadening your horizons you actually learn a lot about yourself. The student-led reading discussion eventually moved on to the next chapter and the young men presenting talked about why diversity consciousness is important and described that being diversity conscious basically means educating yourself and trying new things and meeting new people. The next chapter was more about communication and some of the dos and don'ts of cross-cultural communication.

Time was quickly running out on the semester, and I really wanted to do something more experiential with the students, something related to communication skills and diversity. I considered an exercise that I am familiar with in which students interact with one another based upon labels placed on each person representing various members of society. For example, one might have a sign on them that says gay Black man and another might say White single mother

on welfare, and students would interact based on these identities. I decided not to do this because I thought at this point in the semester we were beyond this type of activity although it may have worked well in the beginning. I also had a video called, “Last Chance for Eden” which was essentially a weekend encounter group consisting of a diverse mix of about 10 adults. This was our last regular class meeting but we would be meeting during finals week for the last time. I decided to offer the video during our final meeting as an optional activity. I knew it would not be effective this late in the semester for those students who would not be interested in it, yet I wanted to offer it to those who would be genuinely interested in watching it and receiving the powerful message that it had to offer.

So our last class consisted of a brief discussion of the final chapter in our text and the exercises I chose to do. We broke up into groups of three and did active listening practice, after we had discussed the basics of active listening. One student would be the speaker, one the listener, and one the observer; and they would switch for each of the questions or scenarios I posed. The first being to talk about how they are privileged in their life; the second, talk about a time when they were discriminated against; and the third, talk about a time when they discriminated against someone else or judged someone else unfairly. Each ‘talk’ would last one minute followed by the listener repeating what they had heard and the observer noticing whether they were doing a good job with the active listening skills. With close to forty students in the classroom and many of them talking at the same time, it was difficult to tell what was really happening in all of the groups except for the ones closest to me.

The next exercise I chose to do was a “fishbowl” exercise, and I asked for volunteers who would like to participate. I got five volunteers and we moved the chairs into the center of the room in a circle and the six of us sat there and talked while the rest of the students sat around the

perimeter and observed. The students in the middle with me consisted of one White female, three White males, and one Indian American male. The mood had changed as soon as we rearranged the chairs. The six of us were on display, and I could sense their anxiety and anticipation from the observers. As we began to talk the students around the circle seemed to disappear into the distance. We talked as if the six of us were the only people in the room. I first asked for general feedback on how the semester was for them. They all had very positive things to say and would not recant even when I commented that they were all being too nice.

From reading student journals I got the impression that at least some students felt that we had discussed race too much and neglected some other important topics such as religion. I asked for their opinions on this in the fishbowl and they responded that race is an important topic especially given our location in the world (Southeastern US); and it was probably the most highly charged issue and needed to be covered thoroughly. I also asked for honest feedback regarding their peers in the class, without putting anyone on the spot or naming names. Each of the participants shared that at times they were surprised by the comments of their peers, thinking “Are you serious?” when they felt peer comments were “way off base.” They went on to describe some peers as argumentative or ignorant. Twice I halted our inner circle conversation and asked students in the outer circle for questions or comments; and although they remained quiet and attentive for the most part, they had nothing to contribute at that time.

I stopped the exercise completely after an hour when our class time was just about up, and the students in the outer circle were asked to get involved. This became the most profound conversation that we had the entire semester. One young White woman noted that the class was and had always been afraid to say what they really felt. There is a lot more that people will not say she commented, we are afraid to offend one another and that is probably why we didn't say

as much. This opened the door for other comments and a brave young White woman said in an obviously heartfelt manner, aiming her comments directly at her classmates, that being in this class with all of you has shattered many of the misconceptions that I came into the class with. All of you are intelligent people, and I have learned a lot from all of you. I hope that you have learned something from me. After the class had let out, she and another White woman remained and shared with me that they had some fear throughout the semester of identifying themselves as Christian because they felt that everything that came out of their mouth would be judged accordingly and be attributed to their being Christian.

About 15 students attended during our final exam time. We talked for a few minutes about the experiential activities that they had completed. Students were admittedly tired and anxious and not overjoyed to be sitting in the classroom. I did offer the option of watching the video “Last Chance for Eden” and explained what it was about, but not one student remained when I rang the figurative closing bell. Thus, the class had come to an end.

Summary

This chapter offered an account of the planning and execution of the diversity class offered during spring 2006. It is told from the perspective of the researcher/instructor, with interview and TMFF quotations interspersed for clarification and support. The next chapter is the composite journal described in Chapter 3, which gives the reader a sense of the “voice” of a student. The researcher created it by looking through the written student feedback data, reading over student assignments and notes on student writing assignments, and writing in a similar fashion to how students wrote their journals. The composite journal brings together bits and pieces of many student experiences and reactions and fits with the purpose of the study, which

was to tell the student experience, including emotions and cognitions, of participating in an undergraduate diversity course.

CHAPTER 5

MARY KATE'S JOURNAL

The following is the composite journal mentioned in the previous chapters. It is the “voice” of a composite student (Mary Kate Langley a/k/a Noelle Savatta) written by the researcher, based on student writing assignments and feedback. It tells the story of this diversity course from a student perspective as understood by the researcher/instructor.

I didn't know what to expect when I signed up for this diversity course. I heard that it was pretty interesting and an easy A, and I needed an elective to graduate so I decided to give it a try. One of the first assignments we had was a journal about our experiences with diversity up until this point (I am a 21 year old senior, ready to graduate at the end of this semester). The professor said she wanted us to write about our experiences with people who were different than we are. This seemed like it would be an easy paper to write but it actually made me think a lot about my life. I wrote about my high school experience growing up in South Georgia in a mixed neighborhood. My elementary school was about half White and half Black. I really didn't like it there because I was teased a lot and the Black kids were really loud and violent. After a few years my parents put me into private school. I guess this is turning into a bit of a life history but this is all part of the class. Anyway, private school was much better in terms of the teachers and students. Unfortunately, there was not much diversity there, only a few Black students and a few Asian students. Now that I think back on it I realize that these students were not treated as kindly by the teachers as the White students were. They were often labeled as troublemakers and seemed to get into more trouble for doing the same things as White students did. My parents

always taught me to treat everyone equally and that no person is better than another. They taught me not to see color. I am grateful for the values that they instilled in me because I believe I am an open minded and respectful person today. Sometimes my father might say the 'n' word or some other term like that, but he didn't really mean anything bad by it and would never say these types of things in front of others.

I am happy to say that since UGA is so diverse I have been exposed to many different types of people and this has been wonderful. My closest friends and roommates, and the boys I have dated have always been White but that does not mean that I am not open to others. I am in a sorority and most of the girls are from similar backgrounds as I am. I think it is difficult to be friends with people who are different because it is human nature for us to want to be with people who are like us. Hopefully, that will change for me in the future; and I will branch out some.

I like the style of the class. From the very first day it has been interactive and I definitely enjoy hearing the opinions of my classmates and being able to express myself when I want to. Most of my other classes do not involve a lot of discussion so this is a nice change of pace. During one of our first classes we filled out this quiz about multiculturalism and the lack of equality that exists around the world. One of the ones that stuck out to me the most was that only about 5% of people around the world access the Internet. I was shocked to hear that! I thought it was much higher. Another point that was interesting and shocking to me was the difference in the way crack and cocaine offenses are treated. Apparently getting caught with crack, even a much smaller amount than cocaine, comes with a much harsher sentence. The professor seemed to be blaming this on the fact that mostly minorities use crack and Whites use cocaine. I don't think that could be the reason. Some students were saying that the two drugs have very different effects on the person and that makes more sense to me.

That same day we also talked about what it means to be an American; then about the difference between an American who is gay or from a different generation, or Black or Mexican. In the end the point was that the original “American” that we described does not fit for all of these subgroups. For example, gay people do not have the same civil rights that other Americans do. This was interesting to me because I guess I never thought about it before. I get the feeling that we are going to be talking a lot about why minorities have it so rough and maybe what can be done to help.

Another really great activity that we did was watching the movie *Crash*. I had never seen it before although I had heard a little about it and saw the cast on Oprah once. It was a very powerful and emotional movie about the racism and discrimination that exists in the world. It portrayed Whites in kind of a negative light with the main White male character (a police officer) molesting this Black woman on the side of the road. The best character overall was a Hispanic man who looked like a gang-banger but was actually a caring father and husband. This taught me not to judge a book by its cover. Some of the characters and events that took place seemed a little extreme and exaggerated. I don't think people really act that blatantly racist today. We have come a long way in our society to make things more equal for everyone and today all people have equal opportunities. When we talked about the movie in class the next week some of the comments that people made were very interesting. We talked about the characters and how they acted, especially what it means to “act Black” and if that is even possible. Some people seem to think that characters like Ludicrous were just reinforcing the Black stereotype because he was a thief.

The other thing I found interesting was when we were talking about the way some of the characters behaved, being racist and mean towards others, we discussed whether their racist

behavior was actually more like who they really are; kind of the idea that when you get angry or upset that is when your 'true' feelings and actions come out. I am not sure how I feel about this. When I think about it though I am sure that I am guilty of stereotyping people sometimes. For example, if I am walking down a dark alley and I see a group of men coming toward me, whether they are Black or White, I will probably be afraid and protect myself and my belongings. Is this racist or sexist or is it just being safe? It seemed like some people in class, including the professor thought that I was racist because I would do the same thing that Sandra Bullock's character did in the beginning of the movie. To me that is just being smart and safe though. If someone wants to call me racist, then I guess they can do that but I do not agree.

This class is a lot of fun because every week we talk about something different. You never know what to expect and the discussions are usually very interesting and enlightening. The next topic we discussed based on our readings for the week had to do with free will vs. destiny. In the beginning the professor had us think about this cool quote that I cannot remember exactly but had something to do with the idea that who we are really influences how we see things. The class seemed to agree with this and so do I. I think this is totally true. How you are raised as far as your parents, school, even religion, really makes you who you are and impacts your life, the friends you make and how you see the world in general. For me I know that my Christian values and hard work ethic are really part of who I am. I can be judgmental at times especially when it comes to religion and I think that my beliefs are right while others are wrong. I know that this is not right but at this point I really can't help it. I wish I knew what to do about it.

The conversation we had about what it means to be successful was also interesting. I know I keep using that word 'interesting' a lot but that is how I feel. I had never thought about the fact that success is different for everyone and my definition may not be the same as someone

else's. Most of us seemed to agree though that happiness is key to success although there were a few students who thought money was the most important. We also got into talking about class differences and what it is like to work in a situation where you are looked at as lower class. I have worked as a waitress for years, and I definitely know what it is like to be treated badly by customers who think they are better than I am. It is very frustrating to me. I am a student, though, and usually when people realize this they treat me better. I wonder how other workers feel, especially those who are just cooks, or servers, or dishwashers. I'm sure they get looked down upon a lot. It was obvious that some people in our class had never worked and did not know what it was like to be looked at as a worker or working class. They just didn't get it and made off the wall remarks that showed that they had no idea. They are probably rich kids whose mommy and daddy support them and they don't have to worry about anything. I am sort of in the same boat because my parents pay for my education and are really supportive, but at least I have a job so I know a little bit about what the 'real world' is like.

We watched this great video in class. I think it was called 'True Colors.' They took this White guy and Black guy and did an experiment in St. Louis where they sent the two men out to the mall to shop, to buy a car, to rent an apartment and stuff like that. I was shocked at how the Black man was treated so much differently than the White man. I could not believe that the salesman at the shoe store totally ignored him and how the car salesman was trying to rip him off. I thought some of the comments in class were way off base when some people were saying that the car salesman is just out to make a profit and that he was not being racist. To me it was clear that he was discriminating against the Black man. The same thing when he went to rent an apartment and get a job. Most people were not openly racist or hostile towards him but would make comments once he left. I couldn't believe that the one man at the apartment told the Black

man that the apartment was rented and then turned around and showed it to the White man. I know that racism still exists but I did not think it was this bad. Things are definitely better, though, than they were in the past. The video was kind of dated though so I wonder if this was done today what the results would be. Also, what if they did it in another city? The other thing that would be interesting to see is to have the two men look for jobs, etc. in Black neighborhoods and see what happens. They were only in White neighborhoods in the video, and I bet it would be different had they gone to Black neighborhoods. The video was probably a bit extreme and exaggerated.

The next few weeks in class were fun because we had student presentations. I was a bit nervous about mine, and I wish we had been given some more guidelines and structure for the assignment. That would have helped a lot. Overall though I thought the presentations were really great. I learned a lot about different cultures that I did not know. Over the two weeks groups talked about skinheads, monks, Native Americans, Eskimos, deaf people, the Maori of New Zealand, the Ashanti of Africa, and others. It was a nice change of pace from our normal class discussions. I enjoyed listening to all the presentations, and they opened my eyes to all the cultures out there that I know nothing about. I hope to do some further research on some of these in the future.

Class has gotten pretty emotional and heated lately. I am feeling less and less comfortable with our conversations and am not sure that I can speak up because my viewpoints are different than the liberal ones expressed in class. We watched this video called Angry Eye where this older White lady is doing an experiment with college students where she discriminates against the brown-eyed students and treats them really badly, even making a few cry. To me this was a

bit extreme. I don't think she proved her point or taught those students anything but only made them angry at her and leave the experiment pissed off.

I am getting sick of all this talk about race, racism and discrimination. Oh yeah, also White privilege. Am I supposed to feel guilty because I am White? Well I don't, and I don't; think I should have to. Why do I have to feel sorry for minorities because there is racism in the world? I have nothing to do with that. I am a good person, and I treat people fairly and that is what it comes down to for me. If I were out there hurting people and being hateful towards people, then maybe I should feel bad but I have done nothing to any of these people. Why is it always White people who are condemned and blamed for all the bad things in the world? There are Black people and other people who are racist too. I have been in situations where I have been discriminated against because I am White. What about those times? Does that not count? Then the professor has the nerve to say that only Whites can be racist. I am sorry but I have seen reverse discrimination. I guess it is okay for minorities to treat Whites badly but as soon as a White person even looks at someone else the wrong way they are racist. I don't buy it that only White people can be racist. She said it has something to do with power. Well, what if I am in a situation where I am the only White person and there are a whole bunch of Black people, do I have the power? I don't think so! This class is really starting to get on my nerves. It is so liberal, and I don't feel comfortable anymore. I will not feel bad because I am White. I wish things in the world were better but there is nothing that I can do about it. That is the way things are. People will always discriminate and be racist. Things have been slowly changing over the years, and a lot of progress has been made. Why can't we talk about that? Why do we always focus on the negative? On racism and how bad things are for everyone that is not White? Why are they always blaming us for all of their problems? At some point they need to get over it and move on.

I would have liked to say a few things in class when we were talking about racism after we watched the video; but sometimes I find it difficult to express what I am feeling and thinking, especially when it is an emotional topic. I wonder what others might think of me and I don't want to be judged or taken the wrong way. Especially if I say that I am Christian I feel that people will make judgments right away.

For our next journal we were asked to watch the TV series "Black. White." and write about it. I actually really enjoyed the show. I had never even heard of it and probably would not have watched it at all. I am happy that they are doing a show like this that shows some of the realities of race today. In the episode I watched the White mother and father went walking around a predominantly Black area in LA with a Black friend. The father was in his makeup thus they appeared to be an interracial couple. They were received with hostility and were afraid for their safety as they walked through a park as an interracial couple. I was glad to see that the show portrayed this reverse discrimination and didn't back away from showing it. Before watching the show I thought it would only show how hard it was to be Black and not show any of the difficulties that Whites experience.

Probably the best class of the whole semester was our next one where we had speakers come and talk about their experiences being gay, lesbian and transgender. I had never been that close to people like this, especially the transgender. These young people were so brave to come to our class and talk so openly about their lives, even though I'm sure some students in class were not happy to hear or see them. I have a lot of respect for them for being so courageous. The gay lifestyle is not something I have ever heard people talk about before. It is hard for me to understand how they live the way they do and especially how some of them talked about spirituality and God's acceptance of them. I think they are young and maybe don't know how

they really feel yet. They should probably give heterosexuality another chance. Even though I do not agree with them I certainly would not discriminate against them or look down upon them in any way. In class that day we also talked about the reading, which was about the child X who was raised without gender. This story was so unrealistic and hard to understand because something like this could never take place in the real world. Gender is important, just like other things like race, so we cannot just do away with it. A child raised the way X was would experience a lot of abuse, especially in school, and would have a lot of difficulty in life.

The next topic was interesting because we watched this video about these African boys who came to the US as refugees. Their story was amazing. These boys lost their families and ended up coming to the US only to struggle to get an education and get by here. It didn't seem fair that we would bring them over here and not give them more help and support. It was funny, though, the way they did not understand some of the rules and customs over here, like when the one boy was driving around without his license and even after he failed the driver's test, he still got in his car and drove home. We also talked today about immigration and went over this article about women's lives in Mexico. The conversation got a bit argumentative with some people not agreeing with immigration. I have worked with some Mexican immigrants, I'm not sure whether they were legal or not. They were incredibly hard working and would send a lot of money back home to support their families. I respect these individuals because I don't think I would be able to work that hard for so little and send all my money to family back home. Some other students seemed a bit naive about immigrants and thought they should stay back home (in Mexico) because they would have a better opportunity there, where they speak the language and understand the culture. I don't think people would come over here and struggle, suffer, be discriminated against, and work so hard for so little if they didn't have to.

The last real topic we touched on in class was social class. We talked about some of the differences in people's lives because of money. The one thing I remember is that people who do not have a lot of money have to worry about things like transportation and housing; whereas, people like us in the class do not have to worry about things like that. Even free time and recreation are influenced by the amount of money that a person has or doesn't have. We talked about this very interesting article, *The Origins of the Black Upper Class*, which talked about the discrimination that occurs within the African American community based on things like skin color, features, and hair texture. This was so interesting and surprising. I had never thought about these things before, and I never would have imagined that there is so much discrimination within this community. I assumed that they would all band together and be more supportive of one another.

The last few classes we talked a lot about communication and diversity consciousness from the readings in the text. Overall, I didn't really like the text. I enjoyed the other readings much more than the text because it was dry and boring. I think the whole semester has been a lot about communication and has helped me a lot in being able to communicate better. I've talked much more in this class than I have in any other classes I have taken. I also was able to take in what my peers were saying and listen to many other perspectives. I think this class has helped me a lot to understand the racism and problems that still occur in our society today. It has opened my mind to other perspectives; and even though I may not have changed my mind on many things, it has given me some new experiences and information to consider. I would recommend it to anyone and feel that it should be a requirement for every student to take before graduation.

Summary

This chapter contains the composite journal written by the researcher based on written feedback, conversations, assignments, and interviews with students during the research study. The next chapter consists of a description of the class based on pre- and posttests, the results of the thematic analysis conducted on the TMFFs and student interviews.

CHAPTER 6

FINDINGS

Thematic Analysis

The findings of this study occur on a continuum. Students' experiences in the diversity course vary depending on the context and the topic, and are not fixed for one student. Three main themes emerged from the data, one that reflects student engagement with the process and shows signs of potential growth, and one that demonstrates student disengagement from the process or resistance, and the last that is somewhere in between, called the learning edge. Within the student engagement theme are sub-themes, which include 'newly formed insights' (generally about others, or issues larger than self), 'understanding oneself' (more personalized learning), and 'actions speak louder than words' (skill development). Within the resistance theme, the sub-themes include passive and active resistance, projection/blaming others, and impression management. Within the learning edge theme, there are sub-themes including contradictions (students' saying one thing and then the opposite), and dissonance (emotional and/or cognitive conflict). There is not always a clear distinction between themes or sub-themes, which demonstrates the fluidity of undergraduate students' experiences in this diversity course. In this chapter the themes and sub-themes (see Table 2) will be discussed using quotes from student interviews and TMFFs.

Table 2

Themes and Sub-Themes from Thematic Analysis

Themes and Sub-Themes	Brief Description
Theme 1: Student Engagement and Signs of Potential Growth	
Sub-theme 1A: Newly Formed Insights	Learning about others; issues larger than self
Sub-theme 1B: Understanding Oneself	Discoveries about self; not known previously
Sub-theme 1C: Actions Speak Louder than Words	Related to skill development
Theme 2: Resistance	
Sub-theme 2A: Passive Resistance	Not engaged with material
Sub-theme 2B: Projection/Blaming	Judging others; social commentary
Sub-theme 2C: Resignation	Attitude that things will never change
Sub-theme 2D: Active Resistance	Admitted refusal to engage with material
Sub-theme 2E: Impression Management	Fear of what others will think
Theme 3: The Learning Edge	
Sub-theme 3A: Dissonance	Emotional and/or cognitive conflict
Sub-theme 3B: Contradiction	Saying one thing and then the opposite

Theme 1: Student Engagement and Signs of Potential Growth

This theme encompasses different aspects ranging from profound insight about self or others, to wondering out loud about themselves, to things students have learned through the semester that will help them in future multicultural environments and interactions. It is organized based upon the three areas of multicultural training; knowledge, awareness, and skill.

Sub-Theme 1A: Newly Formed Insights

These examples represent the knowledge area of training, students' learning about others or issues larger than themselves. For example, Stacy articulated an understanding about how her racial group is perceived, "So, I guess, I have to say I kind of learned that the stereotypes that a lot of people think about White culture, are true. We're not as forgiving towards some cultures and we don't really understand the plights of other cultures." Kevin had a similar realization, "...I didn't realize the extent to which everyone has prejudices. I think I took for granted being the majority, I didn't realize the trouble that we put on other people, I mean, that are not like us."

Kelly expressed a new understanding and appreciation for different types of people, “I think I am different in that, like that guy said in the last day of class, he was like, “I’ve never been in a classroom that has had so many diverse people” and it wasn’t like I was amazed but I saw what kind of clothes they wore or like, you know, how they interacted with each other and stuff like that and, I mean, to see if they did the normal things that I do and they did, and so I think I learned that we are probably all the same. We all are trying to achieve the same things in a lot of ways which I didn’t think before.”

In the following examples students talk about insights related to racism and class issues. Bhadrak commented during his interview, “I think it just kind of opened my eyes to know how sometimes it [racism] can still go on today. I never really thought about that happening all the time.” An African American woman wrote on her TMFF, “I learned I really don’t pay attention to issues of poverty and stuff, and we as a group really look at socioeconomic status.”

Sub-Theme 1B: Understanding Oneself

This area includes students’ discoveries about themselves. This is more personal learning than the previous sub-theme. Stacy simply stated, “. . .as much as I thought I was trying to be consciously and culturally aware as a person, I’m not.” Katherine revealed the struggle that can accompany self-examination, “That was probably one of the hardest things for me to like sit down. . . because you don’t ever want to notice the negative things about yourself and so for me to sit down and debate the idea of White supremacy within myself, like I was “Do I? Did I? Is that something I need to change? Do I really feel like I’m better than people?” She goes on to say,

That’s been a kind of hard thing to do, too, because in part I’ve always felt like I’m on this pedestal and people have been below me and that’s not the idea, that’s not what’s

true. And that was a hard thing to realize, I guess, that I am not better than anybody else and no better than the next person despite race, despite sexual orientation or class.”

Kelly also talked about observing herself in a new way as a result of the class

What I’ve learned about my culture is that when I see a person of a different race, is that they are different from me. . . I mean. . . when I look at a White person I don’t think, ‘She’s White’, that doesn’t even come into my head. But when I talk to a Black person or someone other than Caucasian, I would immediately think that they were a different culture. And I really never realized that I did that.

The following statement may explain why Kelly hadn’t come to this understanding earlier in life, “. . .I don’t really have any friends that aren’t White. So, I don’t know why it’s that way, I just seem to fall into that comfort zone.”

Through the feedback that John received he was able to reflect on his own biases, On one of the papers...I wrote about how I reinforce these [stereotypes] how I see myself reinforcing these views through all my certain experiences I had almost everyday. And...you had a response something like...are you looking for these or something...And maybe I might be, maybe that is why I notice them so much because I am [not] looking for ways to disconfirm, I am trying to affirm it.

Sub-Theme 1C: Actions Speak Louder than Words

This sub-theme is related to skill development. Sometimes in a subtle way, students demonstrate learning and insight that they can translate into action. Kelly stated, “I think as I walk around the campus I just notice things a lot more, like I notice if I’m sitting down, like who is around me, if I’m like the minority or not.”

Jennifer talked about what she learned affecting her future interactions and relationships, There are a lot more negatives in my own culture than I thought there were...I found that...maybe I should just...teach by example kind of and just not think that my culture is not the one with the problem.

Along the same lines Stacy stated,

. . .[Talking about race issues] has been a really eye opening thing because it's helping me to improve myself as a person and to think about things that I've done or said in the past that were inappropriate or I should have structured better or interactions that I should have done differently and it's helping me to change and grow as a person so anything that does that to me is positive.

Katherine stated, "I guess it just goes back to not being judgmental, being open minded, learning about people for who they are and not what I think they should be. Accepting." And Bhadrak echoed similar sentiments, "I learned not to judge people based on stereotypes. . . another thing I learned in this class is not to be afraid of talking to people. . . people of different races and cultures."

Jennifer made the following recommendation for future class members

You might think that you are open minded or that you are not part of the problem. Sit down and talk about it, makes you kind of evaluate the way you are in situations and the way that you affect people.

John contemplated his impact on his peers when he stated, ". . . I'm thinking about how I make myself look to them [People of Color in class]. I start to wonder. . . I hold views that maybe are opposite to theirs. . . I hope that doesn't reflect badly on me." Jennifer also talked about how others may perceive her

I feel like maybe before this class, I never really thought about the fact that the things that I say I could hurt somebody's feelings and not even know I did it...that conversation could affect the way they not only view me but how they view other people, like my culture. So I need to be...more conscious of the things that I say.

Theme 2: Resistance

This shows itself in active and passive ways. It is evident when students talk about the shortcomings of others, either in the class, or groups of people in general. Revealed is the privilege behind student statements that through their statements shows that they are oblivious to this. Students also make assumptions about other people in the class. This is often coupled with a refusal to look at one's self, or one's own culture.

Sub-Theme 2A: Passive Resistance

A few students when asked the first question about what they learned about their own culture they said that they really didn't learn anything and that we didn't focus much on their culture. John stated, "I mean I don't think much about my culture at all. . . so that does not affect me at all in life. So I didn't look too hard to learn too much about my own culture." Others talked about wanting to sit back and hear what others had to say without contributing anything of their own. Jan said

I like listening a lot so it was kind of fun for me to sit back and watch without getting heated with anybody. . . there were so many different people so it was kind of like every point was heard so I felt like it didn't matter [that I didn't speak].

Kelly expressed disappointment at not hearing more from some students but does not say anything about making an active attempt to engage these students or share her own story

Like they [Asian Indian students] didn't really speak much except for that one girl and she spoke a lot but I kind of wanted to see how they felt because they are kind of in between and they are a real small minority at UGA and so I kind of wanted to see how they felt, if they were persecuted and stuff like that, so I guess I didn't learn anything there.

Sub-Theme 2B: Projection/Blaming

John exposed his classmates when he stated

I think a lot of the kids in the class who I identify with culturally commit to stay on the safe side with answers with us in class. I know personally some weren't quite as politically correct as they were trying to be. . .

Jennifer expressed her discontent with her peers when she stated

I felt like issues like race or sexual issues or things, that some people would make jokes or. . . say kind of smart-aleck things. . . I really wanted to be like listen asshole, you really think that, you are judging someone based on what they look like but really have you ever had experience with those kind of people to judge them.

Jan's language and comments reveal judgment of her peers

I thought that the little Black corner got defensive at times but rightfully so, I felt like the stuff that we talked about when they got defensive, they were defending their beliefs and what they'd been taught; and I remember one day specifically but this is getting way off target where we were talking about racism and how things would be different, and I just remember them saying stuff like, like he was told when he was younger by his parents, 'You are different, you will be treated differently' and I felt like that has a really big

impact on a child and like if parents didn't raise their kids that, if parents didn't say, 'You're different and will be treated differently' then they wouldn't know to think that. . .

Katherine also commented on the same topic

I mean, I was never told as a child, 'People are different from you' because I feel like my parents are pretty well rounded and try the hardest not to be racist, and I'm sure there are instances where they are; but I was never raised thinking that people were different. I was also raised in a small town so there wasn't much difference other than Black and White. So, I guess, that day I was pretty offended by his little comment because of his parents, maybe more so kind of...disrespect his parents a little even though I don't know them, just the idea that they taught him from day one 'You're going to be different.'"

Sub-Theme 2C: Resignation

Sometimes student resistance is demonstrated in a sense of resignation about the way things are (discrimination), and that they are never going to change. Jan stated, ". . . after that [witnessing discrimination] I just kind of picked up on that just happens a lot and that is the way it is here." Jennifer said it this way

Discrimination is always going to exist. We just have to do what we can to make situations better that we are in and try like as individuals. . . I don't think that is something that you are going to get rid of completely ever. . . people just mess up and people discriminate. . . Everybody does it [judge other people].

Sub-Theme 2D: Active Resistance

The following, written by a White female student on her TMFF, is the most straightforward type of active resistance

I know what racism is and I get sick of it being shoved down my throat through pathetic waste-of-my-time activities such as this one. . . in this class my conservative beliefs are not respected by others at all. Anyone who doesn't agree with the teacher or minorities in here is cut down and argued with till they give up. . . I am attempting to be open minded and I think I've gotten better but when those who believe like me attempt to speak up and can't, I continue to be closed minded.

John said it this way during his interview

Well I know I have biases and prejudices. I know exactly what they are. Ah were those prejudices changed? No. Because there are a couple of ones I have that I feel real strongly about that some cultures just have a problem with. How certain members of society act. . .

Another type of active resistance comes through as a sense of self-righteousness.

Students put themselves above others and speak as though they have it all figured out while other students really have a lot to learn. John stated

I think I listen to people. I like to hear what they say sometimes. More often it is usually amusing what they say. Sometimes it is good. Usually, the better it is the less I will listen. Like the dumber the answers the more I listen usually.

He also commented on race and class issues

I think that people who do say things like that are people who aren't going to succeed and they wonder why they are not succeeding in life and what is holding them down. . .

That's what all poor people say. That is not my job and that is why they are poor still.

Later during the interview

I feel like they are doing it as a source of pride and I can't stand that pop culture gangster image. I cannot stand it! I mean I never met one person who considers themselves part of that section of Black culture that I've gotten along with ever. Um, I think it brings their entire culture down. I mean it, they value nothing. No education, they want free money . . . So that stuff makes me sick.

Sub-Theme 2E: Impression Management

Another component of resistance is impression management. This is the fear and anxiety that students express at the thought of sharing their true feelings and thoughts in what they deem to be a very diverse classroom. They talk very specifically about not wanting to offend others, and worrying about what others would think of them if they made certain comments. Kelly stated, "Like even talking in class, it just makes me uncomfortable to talk, like about religion or, especially Black and White things, it just makes me nervous because I don't want to offend anyone. . ." Bhadrak said

. . . I think sometimes being in class like that it is kind of hard to express what you really think without people. . . judging you. . . you can't really say what's on your mind without other people. . . thinking something of you. So in that way it's kind of hard.

Another White female student wrote on her TMFF, "Sometimes I found myself hesitating to speak because of my conservative ideals." Jennifer stated, ". . . I just didn't want to hurt but not so much as hurt somebody's feelings but maybe I was just worried about how people look at me. . . worried about how they would judge things that I would say."

Overall, I see resistance as not wanting to really get involved and engaged with the material. Whether conscious or unconscious it is not wanting to explore the self and not

challenging oneself. It shows up in the classroom sometimes as falling asleep during certain types of discussions and later blaming it on having a long day. It can be when something touches close to home for a student and they rebel against the material and the instructor instead of recognizing and dealing with their feelings. The more subtle resistance occurred where students stayed surface level in their written work and discussions, intellectualized the issues instead of speaking from the heart, or externalized by talking about other people instead of themselves.

Theme 3: The Learning Edge

This is the place where much of the struggle was revealed. Students were grappling with issues both affectively and cognitively. In this middle ground between resistance and potential growth, students were asking questions of themselves and others, desperately trying to make sense of their experience.

Sub-Theme 3A: Dissonance

This sub-theme shows the emotional and/or cognitive conflict that some students encountered. In this example, Jennifer talked about the emotion and conflict sometimes created during class.

There were so many days when [Katherine] and I left and I was like can you believe they said that or we just kind of vent to each other and my roommate I tell her a lot of things and we'd be like, do you really think people think this? Because that's what a lot of people in our class. . .

In a separate interview Katherine talked about similar conflict

I just remember me and [Jennifer] sitting there and being like, 'Should we take up for ourselves? Like what do we do? Do we sit here?' . . . I think I sat there for the longest time just debating within myself, like 'Do I say something or do I even know enough

about this to be debating it? This could be totally true, should I just sit here and be quiet and listen? Should I try and defend myself and my race?’ That was probably one of the weirdest days for me sitting in class because I never felt awkward or I never felt like the stuff we were talking about should be, like I should be offended by anything personally but I guess that was the one day where I was like ‘Wait, now this is kind of hitting close to home.’ But in reality, I felt like it was something that should have been talked about and it didn’t do anything but better me as a person and make me more aware of what I need to change.

Stacy talked at length about the video “Angry Eye,

. . . Her [Jane Elliot] point was to get at and to show you what it was to be them [People of Color] and I don’t think she did a very good job of that. . . But I felt like I should apologize for being White and that really bothered me and I guess a couple of other people because I am not going to apologize for who I am. I am who I am, I can’t change that. . . but I don’t know, that movie, it was a good movie and I think it’s a really good educational experience. She just hit a few nerves with me. . . So, I don’t know, that video, I kind of felt like I needed to apologize to people in the class, like I’m very, very sorry for White (pause). . .

Sub-Theme 3B: Contradiction

This often comes through via contradicting themselves, saying one thing and then saying the opposite. For example John stated

So that is one aspect of diversity I picked up on. How much racism there is, there is still, maybe it is not, it is not as bad. It has definitely improved since slavery in the 50’s and segregation and stuff like that. But it is not gone and I just don’t know, I don’t know if it is ever going away. It may be the smallest it is going to get I don’t know. Because people

like to hate each other. They always have since forever. Every culture likes to hate their neighbor. . .

Stacy expressed similar confusion when she stated, “Because by no means is racism over with. I don’t think it is as prevalent as it was in the 50’s and 60’s. That’s not to say that is not still out there.”

In relation to their experience in the class students would say that their classmates did not speak up as much as they would have liked, but they deny that they held anything back. Kevin said

I honestly would have liked a little more conflict [in class], it seemed like everyone was a little reserved in what they were saying and I’m at fault, too, I mean, nobody wants to step on anybody’s toes. . . I would like to have seen more people say what they really thought. . . I’ll pretty much say what I think most of the time. I can’t think of an instance when I held back except maybe using profanity. . .

Kevin’s contradiction is more personalized in this next example

I was raised in South Georgia and you hear the “N” word a lot, and I actually use it for humor sometimes when I’m talking with my friends; but I’m not going to say that in public in any mixed company because that is offensive to some people, and I think it is just ignorant to use it really except in the context of people who know your true feelings. . .because it can be interpreted incorrectly.

Summary

The core of this chapter discusses the findings of the thematic analysis of student interviews and TMFFs. It is organized into the themes that were identified: (a) Student

engagement and signs of potential growth; (b) Resistance; and (c) The learning edge. The next chapter will summarize the entire project and offer suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

The findings of this dissertation support existing literature that discusses student resistance and reluctance to fully engage in diversity coursework (e.g., Adams & Zhou-McGovern, 1993; Allen, 1993; Armour et al., 2004). The findings go beyond current research, however, to describe in detail student experiences, and the responses that students have. The research gives voice to undergraduate students from a variety of academic backgrounds enrolled in a diversity course who have not been studied in this context or at this level. Much of the literature on multicultural education comes out of the counseling or teaching professions (e.g., Allen, 1993; Brown, 2004b; Kiselica & Maben, 1999; Wade, 1998). In addition, this study offers validation and support to instructors of diversity coursework by sharing the trials and tribulations of the researcher/instructor.

The phenomenological approach of this dissertation offers a special perspective. Although some of the teacher education literature is qualitative, it does not offer the depth that this approach does. Phenomenology looks for the meaning and essence of the lived experience. It offers an understanding of what it means to be human through the exploration of the phenomenon which may be an emotion, a relationship, or in this case an undergraduate diversity course (Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2002). This dissertation shares the experience of the students taking the course as well as some of the experiences of the instructor/researcher. It gives a very personal view into the entire semester, revealing the humanity of everyone involved.

Looking back upon the university diversity requirement, students in this diversity class were challenged to explore other cultures as well as their own culture. They were aided in processing the material both within and outside of the classroom. Based on the results of the study, one class can be a good start but is not enough! It is suggested that more attention be paid to what goes on in the classes that the university accepts as meeting the diversity requirement. Goals and objectives of these classes should be clear and measurable. More than stand alone classes within a particular department, the diversity requirement should be weaved through the entire curriculum and the culture of the university community.

Discussion of Results

In contrast to previous research, this study explains student responses on a continuum that is not fixed for one student but varies depending on the context and the topic. Student engagement with the process involved in a diversity course ranged from openly struggling with the material throughout the semester, to passive engagement with the course, to total resistance. “I am getting sick of all this talk about race, racism and discrimination. Am I supposed to feel guilty because I am White? Well, I don’t, and I don’t think I should have to.” Cognitive and emotional dissonance was evident through the contradictions expressed in many student responses. “This class has opened my mind to other perspectives and even though I may not have changed my mind on many things it has given me some new experiences and information to consider.” Students identified “open-mindedness” and willingness to put their thoughts and feelings out on the table as important student factors. Data revealed significant concern with impression management as an obstacle to students participating fully in class discussions and debates.

Student responses and experiences as witnessed by the researcher throughout the course of the semester, and in past semesters consist of many discrepancies and contradictions. Whether or not students are always aware of how they contradict themselves or would even admit this when pointed out to them is a question yet unanswered. Students expressed a significant amount of emotion and turmoil during the semester; however, these feelings sometimes fade towards the end of the course when they fall back into a place of understanding and appreciation for the content and discussions of the course material. By the end students often express a sense of accomplishment, feeling that they have learned and grown a great deal even though their comments and thoughts can be different than what I had hoped for them. In the end I am still left wondering what the real impact has been if any. Sometimes the message that they receive seems distorted, and I only hope that some progress has been made for some students and that at minimum, no damage has been done.

General student feedback included the perception that although issues of race constituted two weeks of the semester, it was the topic we covered most in class. Most students felt that students in similar classes in the future should be advised to keep an open mind and not be afraid to say what was on their mind. Students felt that instructors in a course such as this should be able to facilitate and mediate discussion and be skilled at getting students to open up or expand upon things that they share, basically have counseling skills. Students also shared that the small group work was helpful in making them feel comfortable and giving them a chance to get to know a few of their peers in a more intimate manner. This also allowed for students who were more uncomfortable in the large group to have a chance to speak and get feedback from others.

The context of this research should be considered along with the results. It took place at a large public research institution in the southeastern United States. Most of the students in the

course were born and raised in the same state and this influences their experience of the course and interactions in class. Many students identified with southern culture and the influence of being from the south on their experiences and feelings about topics such as race and sexual orientation. At the same time they blamed the south for its history of deep-rooted prejudice and discrimination and dismissed the impact of racism and discrimination as part of the way of life in the south.

Implications for Instructors

The three components of multicultural education (knowledge, awareness, and skill) suggested in the literature (Kiselica, 1998; Sue, 1991) and discussed in earlier chapters were a convenient and effective way to organize the course. From the standpoint of the instructor it made sense to address the self awareness aspect in the beginning of the course, as well as infuse it throughout. As suggested by Armour, et al. (2004) the emphasis of diversity education should be on active engagement in the process of self-reflection with the aim of increasing self awareness. Students who engaged with the course material and were reflective about their own values and biases had positive experiences in the course. It is difficult to see outcomes for students who remained disconnected throughout the semester, though their superficial written and verbal feedback suggest that they did not take much from the course. Students identified open-mindedness as a key component to getting the most out of the course. This begins with the individual and their ability to evaluate their own actions and beliefs.

I was reminded throughout this study that students' perceptions evolve over time and are revealed in ways other than directly in the classroom setting. The hope is that students continue to struggle with the material outside the comfort of the classroom. As was discussed in Chapter 4, many times my impressions of student response in the classroom were different from the

written feedback or interview responses of students. Looking back on my own reactions and feelings following each class period there were many times that I felt that the students did not respond well to what was being presented. (I would do some things differently in the future and will address this later in the chapter). Students sometimes seemed uninterested, had nothing to say, or even turned the conversation in an unpleasant direction. However, when I went to their feedback and comments, I found that at least some of the students were thinking about and processing the material and reporting important things that they learned or thought about as a result of our classroom discussions. Some of the conversations that I thought were very uneventful were the most important ones for students. It became apparent that in the heat of the classroom setting the perception of the instructor is often very different from the reality of the student experience.

The other important aspect of this is that students make their own meaning of their experiences and the information they take in. I, as the instructor, may stress one point or concept but what I try to put forth can be different than what the students hear and take home with them. I find it interesting and confusing that some of the students that I was most frustrated with, who seemed in class not to be taking anything in or were goofing off, ended up giving insightful responses during their interview. Students interpret what has happened based on what parts of the lecture they happen to be paying attention to on a certain day. Their state of mind during any particular class period has an effect on what and how they take in information.

I realized that many students are extremely hesitant and reluctant to speak their mind in the classroom setting. Although this is cited in the literature, it is difficult to accept until you hear it from the mouths of your own students. I (and probably many educators) go to great lengths to create an atmosphere of open communication and assume that this will be enough. Students in

this study expressed a real fear of not wanting to offend their peers and not wanting to be perceived negatively by others. Within the classroom this phenomenon played itself out with a good deal of silence when the large group was addressed or asked a question, or with students speaking in a superficial way about the issues. At other times the fear manifested in whispers to one another rather than commenting to the entire class or entire small group, or as eye rolling or sideways glances at friends. The underlying tension, the white elephant, was almost always in the room and both instructor and students noticed it. In our final class meeting during the fishbowl activity students admitted to their fears and their observations that the class as a whole did not always say what was really on its mind. Later in the chapter I offer suggestions on reducing this fear and tension.

Another interesting observation of students is that they became defensive of their own culture, wanting to justify the actions of those that they perceived to be from their same culture. This may be expected but showed itself in different ways. For example, White students justified the actions of White people in the video “Lost Boys” when they were not very empathic towards the young men from the Sudan. Students also became defensive about being White, stating that they did not want to feel guilty about it and did not feel that they should feel guilty. The power structure that dominates our society sometimes showed up in the classroom as well. This came through in both covert and overt ways. Covertly in the contradictions that students often made in their verbal and written remarks, they showed that they were willing to give up some power with a statement like “I never realized how bad things still are” (racism, sexism, homophobia), but they would quickly take it back saying that “things are a lot better than they were even fifty years ago.” An overt example in the classroom was the day we had the discussion about the word

racism. In this case, White students took over the discussion and would not rest until they were appeased.

Implications for the Research Process

One of the first things that I learned as I began thinking about my data and putting the information together was that it was important to keep everything related to the project; all notes, records of conversations, lesson plans, thoughts, everything. Things that may not seem important at the time may become important as the project develops. It is worth taking the extra time to keep a detailed log of experiences throughout the project. In terms of the Institutional Review Board I realized that my Human Subjects application should have been as broad as possible from the beginning, meaning I should have included all student assignments, interviews, and everything else that we did as part of the data for my project, even though I may not have used all of it in the end. It would have been easier to have these accessible than to realize in the end that they could not be used.

Although I ended up with a plethora of data, I feel that it would have added richness to the study to include different sources of data. For example, videotaping actual class sessions and going back and reviewing and analyzing them would have been very beneficial. I kept notes on all class meetings and recorded what we did, how it went and my reactions, but it would have been great to have class meetings on tape. Another interesting idea would be to incorporate technology by having students tape themselves individually speaking about and reacting to the course materials and discussions. I imagine this to look similar to reality TV where students use a private video session as a type of confessional, hopefully revealing their true thoughts and feelings in a confidential manner.

Implications for Self-Growth

While the instructor/researcher was not the focus of this study, I learned a lot about myself as a result of teaching this course and conducting this research. This work really cannot be separated from personal aspects of one's life. Even as I wrote the results and conclusion, I could not help but think and learn about myself. There is certain reciprocity in being a part of a learning experience such as this one. Perhaps the most important lesson I learned is that I still have a lot to learn. When I was first putting my thoughts on paper it was helpful not to think about the impact it may have on others or on myself. However, when re-reading the material, I felt very vulnerable; having put my work and some of my core values down on paper for others to read and critique.

I noticed a similarity in my approach as a researcher and as an instructor; that there were times in the classroom that I was not aware of the impact I was having on my students. My intentions in teaching and researching diversity coursework are altruistic; yet, at the same time, I know that the results are not always positive for all students. I am reminded of the days that we had heated discussions in the classroom, where some students were agitated and other students were silent. I hoped to get as much formal and informal feedback as possible but I realize that even the confidentiality of the TMFFs may have been intimidating for some students; and furthermore, that all students have the right to choose not to share their reactions. This may even give them a sense of control over the situation. All of this reinforces the fact that when it comes down to it, no matter what my intention, training, or expertise, I am still a privileged White woman, and this has an impact.

Another point of learning for me is looking back at the times that I did not push students as much as I could have. I have my own limitations that I bring to the classroom based on my

background, personality, and level of comfort with my own emotion and the emotion of others. I learned that experience is the most important factor in being able to respond effectively and with composure in the midst of a hostile classroom. I noticed that comments and/or questions often caught me off guard the first time I heard them, yet those that I had dealt with and processed during previous semesters were easily addressed this time around. This was especially true in the class that we watched “Angry Eye” and got into the discussion of the definition of race. I found that I handled sentiments I had heard before very well, while others left me uncertain.

Finally, I admit that I brought prejudices and stereotypes into the classroom as well. I learned that I had a tendency to pre-judge some of my students in both positive and negative ways. For example, one student stands out in my mind. When I saw the large White man in the back of the room with the camouflage hat, and heard his southern accent, I pegged him as resistant and probably closed minded on issues of diversity. In fact, as the semester progressed, I learned that this young man was one of the most thoughtful, outspoken, open minded of all of my students.

The National Coalition Building Institute (2005) stresses the importance of the leader or instructor of diversity courses or workshops doing their own work in taking care of themselves and confronting the same issues that participants are expected to deal with. This is absolutely true. For me, participating in this study as instructor and researcher has allowed me the privilege and opportunity to do more of my own work. I have benefited and I hope that the course moved others to do the same while also providing validation for those students who have experienced, clearly understand, or have witnessed the effects of discrimination and privilege.

Ideas for Future Diversity Courses

Students mentioned during interviews that one of the most important things that they would tell future students in a similar class is that they should be open minded and willing to speak their mind because that is how they will learn and get the most out of the class. None were able to offer suggestions on how to make this happen. Some talked about the increased caution they will bring to future cross-cultural interactions. I knew that it was important for students to be able to share their perspectives and did make an effort to engage students from the beginning of the semester and set the tone for a respectful environment in which we could share our thoughts and reactions, but I would do even more of this in retrospect. More interactive activities would be helpful in the very beginning of the class to set the stage for participation and sharing. Setting the class up as pass/fail in terms of grading may also be beneficial.

One way to aid this process would be to show the video “Last Chance for Eden,” which is a documentary with eight men and women discussing racism and sexism, or a similar video in the beginning of the semester and discuss it as an example of the kinds of discussion to have throughout the semester. As part of this discussion I would also talk about the fear that many of us have about offending others when we share our own thoughts on these topics. I would reinforce the point that is demonstrated and talked about in the video that although offense is certainly possible, when people openly admit their prejudices and cultural missteps the result for others is often a sense of validation. I would share more of my own personal development around issues of diversity as a model of what will be expected of them.

Another technique that would be helpful is intentionally and repeatedly pointing out contradictions that the students are making either in a public or private forum. This might help students to actively work through their dissonance, and bring to their awareness the

inconsistencies in their thoughts. This could be accomplished through sharing student journals with other students, using examples from journals in class to analyze and see how the contradictions arise, then exploring them from a psychological standpoint, asking questions like “Why would someone make statements like this? Does it make sense? What might it mean about their experience?” It should be noted that there are drawbacks to sharing student information among peers, and the instructor should carefully monitor this process. It is possible that a student’s experience may be invalidated by another student, or treated in a disrespectful manner, and this would undermine the purpose of the activity.

Ideas and Questions for Future Research

A similar project utilizing a case study approach would be interesting in that it could follow a few students in depth before, during, and after the course. This would include having this small group of students complete all instrumentation, written feedback and interview, as well as analyzing their assignments, and engaging them in other discussions. Some students make statements that are vague and deserve to be probed further and a case study would give the opportunity to do this. For example, one student said on the TMFF, “I learned that I will have to change to be more successful in my future career.” Follow-up questions such as “What does that really mean?” and “How will you have to change?” would help to clarify this vague statement.

In this study, the students who agreed to be interviewed were White with the exception of one, thus it focused on their perspective and experience. A future study can look at students of color, other marginalized students, or White students already engaged in social justice work. It would be interesting to find students from different cultural backgrounds and use them for this case study, perhaps even having them work and discuss in a small group under the guidance of the instructor or another facilitator. It would be great to do follow-ups with some students after

the class to understand the possible residual effects of the class on students. It would be helpful to have an independent researcher to conduct interviews so that students would not feel any pressure to please their instructor, or any concern about their grade in the course.

It is important for instructors in a course like this to find a variety of ways to assess student reactions and understanding of the material. A future study could pay close attention to how change occurs for students during and after the course. It could ask the questions: How real is the change? What aspects of students' lives are affected? It might help determine whether students merely know the right things to say after a diversity course, or whether they are truly transformed? Are they interested in continued self-evaluation and examination? Is there evidence that the growth will continue? What is the difference between the students who seem to learn a lot and the students who are resistant from beginning to end? What goes on with the students who appear to be resistant because they do not pay attention or actively engage, but show insight when asked?

Other future research on this topic might include outcome and competency issues in diversity courses; the importance of setting clear and measurable goals in this type of course, looking at what this means, what it would like, how the goals and objectives can be operationalized; and looking more closely at micro-aggressions that occur in and around a diversity course.

Summary

This chapter discussed results and implications of the study. It explained how this study contributes to the body of knowledge in the area of diversity coursework and education, shared points that were learned by the researcher/instructor, and offered suggestions and questions for diversity instructors and researchers.

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APPENDIX A
SYLLABUS

THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
ECHD 3010: DIVERSITY ISSUES IN COUNSELING AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
SPRING SEMESTER 2006

Time: Tuesday & Thursday 6:30 to 7:45pm
Instructor: Noelle Savatta, M.A.
E-Mail: nsavatta@uga.edu
Office Hours: By appointment

Required Textbook & Readings:

Bucher, R.D. (2004) *Diversity Consciousness: Opening Our Minds to People, Cultures, and Opportunities*, 2nd Edition.

Additional readings will be available on WebCT. *It will be your responsibility to access all course materials.*

Course Description:

This course is designed to enhance students' understanding of cultural-racial factors and to explore the psychological and sociological contexts of diversity. Students will be introduced to theoretical constructs such as worldview and identity development in order to increase awareness of the relevance of multicultural issues in psychological practice and research. Topics will be explored both intellectually and personally in order to develop a comprehensive understanding of diversity issues in counseling and human development.

Course Objectives:

1. To discuss the relevance of diversity from an individual, group, and global perspective.
2. To explain the theoretical and practical models pertaining to diversity issues in counseling and human development.
3. To become familiar with research related to racial-cultural issues.
4. To utilize critical thinking skills.
5. To expand awareness of contemporary racial-cultural issues.
6. To increase self-awareness around diversity issues.

Course Format:

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; *deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary*. The course includes didactic content, experiential elements and personal reflection. It will be facilitated in a manner to provide a safe, open environment for students to participate in class discussions, explore class material, and address issues or concerns in a group setting. Group discussion and active participation are essential to meeting the objectives of the course. Students are expected to be respectful and open to diverse views in this collective learning environment. In addition students are expected to engage in honest self-evaluation.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: 500 points (total)

Weekly Concept Application Cards (on index card, 100 points) DUE: Each Tuesday, @ 6:30pm
Each week, I will ask you to complete a concept application card (on an index card) relating some aspect of the assigned reading to your own life experience. You may choose anything you'd like from the reading and complete the card for homework. There are 11 opportunities to turn in a concept card. Each card is worth 10 points. I will allow you to skip one week without any point penalty. If you do all 11, you'll end up with 110 points, instead of 100. In order to receive full credit for any concept card, you must do 2 things:

1. Describe the aspect of the reading that you chose (5 points)
2. Apply it to your own life experience (5 points)

*The card is due at the beginning of the class period, no exceptions.

Participation/Attendance: 100 points

Class participation is essential in order to fulfill the requirements and objectives of the course. Participation will be assessed by your successful completion of weekly readings and assignments, asking questions, and participating in productive and thoughtful dialogue during class. Attendance is not simply a manner of "being there"; it involves being conscious, awake, capable of critical thought and able to participate. Students are expected to "attend" in the aforementioned state. Falling asleep, reading a book from another class, text messaging, reading the paper etc. will count like an absence. Please note that attendance and punctuality are fundamental aspects of participation. *In addition each student will responsible for leading one class discussion during the course of the semester. To receive credit for leading the discussion you must have read the material and prepared a short summary of the key aspects of the reading, and at least 5 questions/discussion points related to the reading.*

You are allowed **three (3)** unexcused absences. Ten (10) points will be deducted for each additional absence. A student with five or more absences will receive an F for the course. If a student can provide a documented excuse, i.e. doctor's note, official UGA activity, military duty; the absence will be excused and not count against the student. Students who have serious life circumstances arise during the course of the class that prevent regular attendance should consult with the instructor to make arrangements to either continue enrollment in the class under special provisions, or withdraw from the class.

Given the discussion format of this class, attendance is vital. Also, it is difficult to participate if you do not read the topics being presented. If it appears that students are not doing the reading, you will complete a one-page, in class paper about the topics being presented that day. *Please note that leaving class early or coming to class late is disruptive and rude to your fellow students and me and will thus count as an absence.*

Journals: 100 points

DUE: On Thursday of the week indicated, @ 6:30pm

Journals will be used to record your thoughts, questions, ideas, etc. to readings, assignments and class activities. Be sure to integrate your writing with experiences and insight that have furthered your understanding of diversity issues. Your journal should not be a summary of your work in or outside of class. Instead it should be a critical commentary from your active reflection and reaction to your involvement during the semester. Each journal should reflect upon the topics

covered since the last journal. You will be required to hand in five journals (hard copy) during the semester.

NO JOURNALS SENT ELECTRONICALLY WILL BE ACCEPTED

Group Research Presentation: 100 points

Each student will be assigned to a group of 2-3 people. Each group will research a particular culture that is of interest to them. This can relate any area of diversity (e.g. race, sexual orientation, age, etc.) that is of particular interest and prepare a short presentation of the material you researched. The use of PowerPoint or other types of technology is encouraged. In addition you should prepare questions and issues to present to the group for discussion. An outline of your presentation should be turned into the instructor for approval no later than two weeks prior to your presentation date. Presentations need to be 15-20 minutes in length.

Presentations will begin February 28.

Experiential Activity: 100 points

Students will participate in an experiential activity related to an area of diversity and write a reaction paper in response to specific questions that will be posed by the professor. The paper should be at least 4 pages in length. Activity and journal must be completed and handed in by the last day of classes.

Late Assignments: All assignments (including concept cards) will be due at the beginning of the class period for which they are due and they **will not be accepted late for any reason other than a documented medical excuse, jury duty, funeral or a few pre-arranged situations such as a presentation at a professional conference.** If you know you must miss class for some alternate reason (e.g. a friend's wedding), I will allow you to turn in the assignment early. *Make-up exams* will only be given in the case of the emergencies defined above. Make-up exams can be taken only during the week following the scheduled exam and not any later. This means that you only have one week to take the make-up exam from the time that the original exam was given. Otherwise, you will receive an automatic zero for the exam.

Grading:

A = .90 or better

B = .80 - .8999

C = .70 - .7999

D = .60 - .6999

F = less than .60

Academic Honesty:

All academic work must meet the standards contained in "A Culture of Honesty." Students are responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing any academic work.

Special learning needs:

If you require any academic accommodations due to a disability please see me the first week of classes. To receive accommodations, you must be registered with the Disability Services Office on campus.

CLASS CALENDAR

Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments Due
Jan. 10 & 12	Introduction to Course and one another		
Jan. 17 & 19	Exploring our own culture and Multiple Identities	Amy L. <u>Reynolds</u> "Embracing Multiculturalism: A Journey of Self-Discovery" <u>Robinson</u> "The Intersections of Gender, Class, Race, and Culture: On Seeing Clients Whole"	Concept Card
Jan. 24 & 26	A Cultural Self-Assessment Film: Crash	David <u>Funder</u> "Cultural Variation in Experience, Behavior, and Personality"	Concept Card
Jan. 31 & Feb. 2	Reality?	David <u>Funder</u> "Existence, Experience and Free Will: The Phenomenological Approach"	Concept Card Journal #1
Feb 7 & 9	Why diversity?	<u>Text Chapter 1</u> - Diversity: An Overview <u>Text Chapter 2</u> - Diversity Consciousness and Success	Concept Card
Feb. 14 & 16	Race Matters Film: True Colors	<u>Grillo & Wildman</u> "Obscuring the Importance of Race" <u>Text Chapter 3</u> - Personal and Social Barriers to Success	Concept Card Journal #2
Feb. 21 & 23	Systems of power, oppression and privilege Film: The Eye of the Storm	Peggy <u>McIntosh</u> "White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences Through Work in Women's Studies" <u>Wildman & Davis</u> "Making Systems of Privilege Visible"	Concept Card
Feb. 28 & March 2	Student Presentations		Journal #3
March 7 & 9	Student Presentations		

March 7	<i>MIDPOINT WITHDRAWAL DEADLINE</i>		
March 14 & 16	NO CLASS Spring Break		
March 21 & 23	Immigrants and Refugees Film: Lost Boys Hotel Rwanda	Judith Adler Hellman Mexican Lives chapter 3 “Two Women, Two Strategies”	Concept Card
March 28 & 30	Gender and Sexual Orientation	Lois Gould “X: A Fabulous Child’s Story”	Concept Card Journal #4
April 4 & 6	The Implications of Social Class Film: People Like Us	Lawrence Graham “The Origins of the Black Upper Class”	Concept Card
April 11 & 13	Becoming Culturally Competent	Text Chapter 4 – Developing Diversity Consciousness	Concept Card
April 18 & 20	Communication and Teamwork	Text Chapter 5 – Communicating in a Diverse World Text Chapter 6 - Teamwork	Concept Card Journal #5
April 25 & 27	Practicing Cross-Cultural Skills	Text Chapter 7 – Conclusion	Experiential Activity Reaction Paper
May	FINAL EXAM		

APPENDIX B
TEACHING MODULE FEEDBACK FORMS

Participant ID Number

Teaching Module Feedback Form A

**Please circle either AGREE or DISAGREE for the following questions
AND
add comments that expand upon your answer.**

1. The activity was easy to understand and complete. AGREE DISAGREE
Comments:

2. The activity helped me to learn more about myself. AGREE DISAGREE
Comments:

3. I was able to share my thoughts and reactions with my classmates. AGREE DISAGREE
Comments:

4. Additional reactions and feedback:

Participant ID Number

Teaching Module Feedback Form B

**Please circle either AGREE or DISAGREE for the following questions
AND
add comments that expand upon your answer.**

1. The activity was easy to understand and complete. AGREE DISAGREE
Comments:

2. The activity helped me to learn more about other cultures. AGREE DISAGREE
Comments:

3. I was able to share my thoughts and reactions with my classmates. AGREE DISAGREE
Comments:

4. Additional reactions and feedback:

Participant ID Number

Teaching Module Feedback Form C

**Please circle either AGREE or DISAGREE for the following questions
AND
add comments that expand upon your answer.**

1. The activity was easy to understand and complete. AGREE DISAGREE
Comments:

2. The activity helped me to learn skills that will help me to interact with those different than myself. AGREE DISAGREE
Comments:

3. I was able to share my thoughts and reactions with my classmates. AGREE DISAGREE
Comments:

4. Additional reactions and feedback:

APPENDIX C
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview Questions

I would like to get a sense of what you have learned during the course of the semester. Please be as honest and forthright as possible.

Please tell me what you learned about your own culture this semester.

Please tell me some things you learned about other cultures this semester.

Do you feel better prepared to interact with people that are different from yourself as a result of this class? Why or why not?

What aspects of diversity did you learn the most about as a result of this class? (i.e. race, class, gender, sexual orientation, etc)

In what ways will you be different as a result of this class?

What are the most memorable aspects of the class?

What would you have liked to get from the class that you did not?

Were there times during the semester when you became angry? sad? offended? surprised? Or had another emotional reaction to the course content?

Do you have any recommendations for students in future diversity courses?

Do you have any recommendations for instructors of future diversity courses?

APPENDIX D
DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

Participant ID Number

Demographic Questionnaire

Age _____

Sex _____

Race/Ethnicity _____

Year in School _____

Major _____

Region of the US (or other country) where you spent most of your life

Approximate size of your hometown _____

Approximate racial makeup of your high school _____

Approximate income level of the household in which you grew up

___ under \$25,000 ___ \$25,000-\$50,000 ___ \$50,000-\$100,000 ___ \$100,000 +

Past experiences with people of different ethnic/racial backgrounds from your own

___ none ___ very little ___ some ___ a good amount ___ a lot

Past experiences with people of different sexual orientations from your own

___ none ___ very little ___ some ___ a good amount ___ a lot

Past experiences with people with religious beliefs different from your own

___ none ___ very little ___ some ___ a good amount ___ a lot

Past experiences with people of a different socioeconomic class from your own

___ none ___ very little ___ some ___ a good amount ___ a lot

Other past experiences with diversity

Past Diversity Training (if any) _____