DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-AWARENESS AND CULTURAL COMPETENCY IN SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

by

Leyla Feize

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STATEMENT OF DISSERTATION APPROVAL

The dissertation of **Leyla Feize**

has been approved by the following supervisory committee members:

David Derezotes	, Chair	**04/29/2015** Date Approved
Caren J Frost	, Member	**04/29/2015** Date Approved
Rosemarie Hunter	, Member	**04/29/2015** Date Approved
Larry Smith	, Member	**04/29/2015** Date Approved
Jane Dyer	, Member	**04/29/2015** Date Approved

and by **Lawrence Henry Liese** , Chair/Dean of

the Department/College/School of **Social Work**

and by David B. Kieda, Dean of The Graduate School.

ABSTRACT

Both self-awareness and cultural competency are well-known concepts in the social work profession. There is a myriad of research on both subjects; however, empirical research on each concept is limited. In addition, the relationship between self-awareness and cultural competency has rarely been explored. The goal of this research was to explore social work educators' views on the concepts of self-awareness and cultural competency as well as the relationship between the two concepts. Three different but interrelated studies were conducted. In the first study, the identification, development, and teaching of self-awareness were investigated. Thirty-five social work educators representing 27 colleges and universities across the United States participated in this study. The phenomenological approach of qualitative research was used to address research questions. The method of collecting data was phone interview. The main result indicated that resiliency and self-awareness are associated. In the second study, the relationship between self-awareness and cultural competency were explored along with generalist educators' methods for teaching cultural competency. Sixteen social work generalist educators were selected by convenience sampling from 15 colleges and universities across the country. The main data-collection method was conceptual interview. The core result showed that in teaching cultural competency, educators rarely evaluated Whiteness and White culture. In the third study, clinical social workers' views on the relationship between self-awareness and cultural competency and their methods

for teaching cultural competency were evaluated. Nineteen clinical social work educators from 17 colleges and universities were selected by convenience sampling. The method of inquiry was the phenomenological approach of qualitative research. The key results determined that emotion has a significant role in teaching cultural competency and that teaching about racism was seldom a chief concern of clinical educators. When looking at these three studies together, the research suggests that exploring self-awareness should precede exploring the relationship between self-awareness and cultural competency. The research also suggests that studying cultural competency through self-awareness is a new perspective that needs more attention from social work researchers.

I dedicate this dissertation to my mother, who taught me to be strong and survive in a male-dominant society; she was one special reason behind all my efforts and endeavors in life, although she passed away recently and is not able to celebrate my success.

I have lived on the lip of insanity,
Wanting to know reasons,
Knocking on a door.
It opens.
I've been knocking from the inside!

—Rumi

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PREFACE

Personal Motivation

I am interested in exploring cultural competency in relation to self-awareness due to my personal experience as a minority mental health professional. During my work in the field, I heard stories from colleagues and minority clients about the obstacles marginalized populations face when using mental health services. Almost all mental health organizations have diversity and cultural competency education programs; however, they are often limited to taped or live lectures. Such programs do not always contribute to employees' understanding of the unique problems encountered by minorities. When seeking help from mental health organizations, minorities continue to suffer from a lack of understanding at both the individual level and the organizational level, which is likely related to the lack of proper education of mental health employees concerning cultural competency. Based on my own observations and experiences as both a social worker and psychologist, I came to realize that mental health professionals are not adequately trained in cultural competency. I decided to explore educators' views on this issue. Later in my career, I will examine the relationship between self-awareness and cultural competency from the perspectives of both social workers and minorities.

Motivational Story

A client from Bosnia was evaluated by a mental health professional in a clinic. The client suffered from severe mental health problems. She told the interviewer that Serbs had cut off two of her toes; the interviewer recorded that the client was hallucinating and thought that she did not have two of her toes. Later, a social work intern from Bosnia read the notes and decided to examine the client's situation. She realized that the client really did lose two of her toes during the Bosnian War of Independence (1992–1995). This is an example of how cultural incompetence may manifest in mental health institutions.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Overview of Self-Awareness and Cultural Competency

History and the Importance of the Subject

American history is closely tied to immigration. America was conquered and settled by Europeans who continued to reoccupy and resettle in the so-called American lands (Jennings, 1976 as cited in McDonald, 2007, p. 27). Immigration to the United States was both voluntary—Europeans, Asians, Mexicans, Jews—and involuntary—African slaves and Chinese contract laborers were forced (McDonald, 2007).

Immigration to the U.S. has had various motives, and exploring these motives is far from the aims of this study. However, the subject cannot be ignored entirely; the social work field is rooted in immigration problems. As a matter of fact, modern social work started after the European immigration to New York and other East Coast cities in the 19th century. Immigration, along with poverty, became a chief social work matter (Gehlert, 2006). Social workers have assisted immigrants with housing, education, health care, and employment. Meanwhile, social work education was under the influence of different perspectives towards and theories about immigrants, such as assimilation, inclusion, acceptance, and celebrating differences. These perspectives and theories were generally introduced by White thinkers and workers and interpreted by White workers.

The population of minorities is growing fast in the United States. According to the United States Census Bureau Projections, the country will be a "majority-minority" society in 2043 (United States Census Bureau, 2012). In 2013, minorities presented 37% of the total population of the United States (United States Census Bureau, 2013). Currently, many organizations, such as hospitals and schools, employ professionals who have more familiarity with and tolerance for diverse populations. Recently, the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) (2008) and the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) added cultural competency to the other social work competency codes (Davis, 2011). The various models of cultural competency have been discussed in social work education for many years at the majority of schools.

Social Work Education and Research on Self-Awareness and Cultural Competency

One goal of social work education and training should be to equip social work students with the knowledge, skills, and values to assist them to work cross culturally. Lum (1999) claims that cultural competency can be taught and measured. He does not, however, explain how to develop mastery in cultural competence. The concept of cultural competency is mostly abstract, rather than applied in ways that are useful to students and practitioners. Cultural competency starts with exploring one's own culture. The question is how therapists/workers can explore their own cultures without exploring the self/selves. In the process of the literature review, I found a myriad of research on the concepts of self-awareness and cultural competence. However, researchers have not thoroughly explored the relationship between those concepts in education and practice. If these concepts are related, they should be explored and taught in a similar context.

Social Work Educators' Perceptions of Self-Awareness and Cultural Competency

The goal of this research was to explore scholars' perceptions of self-awareness and cultural competency and their methods for teaching these concepts.

Neither the definition of self-awareness nor how self-awareness should be used in practice are clear (Yan & Wong, 2005). Social work scholars have different views on the significance of the role of self-awareness in social work education. Some educators focus more on self-awareness and its role in building relationships with clients, whereas others prefer to focus on teaching a variety of therapeutic techniques.

Educators have different views on cultural competency as well (Abrams & Gibson, 2007; Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 1997; Lee & Greene, 2003). Not all social work educators believe in the importance of cultural competency in social work education (Diggs, 1992; Lum, 2007). In 2008, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) declared mandatory cultural competency courses in social work programs. However, this declaration cannot result in multicultural perspectives being taught (Fellin, 2007) if educators do not have positive multicultural attitudes (Hyde & Ruth, 2002).

Some of the educators who are aware of the significant role of cultural competency in social work education avoid teaching about racism and oppression in cultural competency education (Lum, 2007; McMahan & Allen-Meares, 1992). I was motivated to explore these concepts because of this controversy and ambiguity.

Teaching Self-Awareness and Cultural Competency

Some social work literature, such as Donald Schon's work, focuses on how to increase self-awareness. Other authors encourage practicing reflection and teaching social

work trainees a professional use of the self (Ward, 2008). These studies are generally theoretically based; very few studies address how to use reflection in practice (Ruch, 2005). These studies are not relatively new (Ward, 2008) and do not reveal a deep understanding of the concept of self-awareness (Clare, 2007).

Educators use different methods to teach cultural competency (Abrams & Gibson, 2007; Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 1997; Lee & Greene, 2003). Some methods focus on the client-therapist relationship (Plotocky, 1997; Schlesinger, 2004; Snyder, Peeler, & May, 2008), whereas others focus on social justice (Lopez-Humphreys, 2011).

In general, social work educators divide the goal of cultural competency education into three approaches to obtaining knowledge about other cultures: 1) Increasing self-awareness through analyzing one's own culture; addressing power, inequality, and oppression; and processing the accompanying emotions. 2) Interacting with individuals from other cultures. 3) Obtaining practical experience (Devore & Schlesinger, 1987; Green, 1999; Greene, 1994; Hendricks, 2003; Lum, 2000; Schmitz, Stakeman, & Sisneros, 2001).

Goals of This Study

In this study, social work educators' perspectives on self-awareness and cultural competency in relation to self-awareness have been investigated. The goals of the study were:

1. Exploring self-awareness from social work educators' perspectives
2. Exploring the relationship between self-awareness and cultural competency
3. Exploring social work educators' methods for teaching cultural competency

Methodology

The Qualitative Research Approach

Qualitative research is suitable for topics that need to be explored in depth, such as "self, identity and meaning" (Wertz et al., 2011). Qualitative research is interested in the meaning of individuals' experiences. It explains the "what" and "how" of human experience (Wertz et al., 2011).

Qualitative research embraces a variety of approaches, one of which is phenomenology. In this approach, phenomena are explored from the subjective views of individuals who experience and live within the phenomena. Philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859–1938) asserted that human beings have consciousness, which differentiates them from the material world. Therefore, methods for studying natural science are not suitable for studying human experience. Amedeo Giorgi brought this idea to psychology and from there gradually built phenomenological research methods (Wertz et al., 2011).

According to the phenomenological approach, a person's experience of a phenomenon is unique and differs from another's experience. A person's experience of a phenomenon is both subjective and objective. Subjectivity makes the experience unique to an individual, whereas objectivity means the experience can be shared with others (Creswell, 2013). The goal of this research was to explore scholars' understanding of the phenomena of self-awareness and cultural competence. Therefore, the qualitative approach in this research was phenomenological.

Types of Phenomenological Research

Phenomenological research can be conducted via two methods: hermeneutical phenomenology and transcendental phenomenology. In the first method, a researcher selects a phenomenon and describes an individual's "lived experience" with that phenomenon. The researcher then interprets this experience. In the second method, after collecting data, the researcher identifies important statements in the form of themes. Other related information is added to these themes, and together they make "meaning units." Other steps in the process are "textual description," "structural description," and "essence," which explain the phenomena from the participant's point of view. In both methods, a researcher tries to use epoché or bracketing to separate his or her own experience from the research participant's experience of the phenomena, while acknowledging that is not entirely doable (Creswell, 2013).

Purpose of the Study

The literature review on both self-awareness and cultural competency revealed that researchers rarely address self-awareness and cultural competency together. The only study that addresses educators' views on both is Kwong's (2009) qualitative study. Only four of the educators studied by Kwong were social workers; the rest had degrees in different fields, such as mathematics and sociology. Kwong primarily focused on cultural competence, whereas I examined self-awareness, cultural competence, and the relationship between and the two. According to the literature review, self-awareness is a key component of understanding cultural competence, but it is not clear how social work students should be trained to use these interrelated concepts in practice. Training students

on these two concepts and assisting students to understand the process of self-awareness and cultural competence is a significant role of educators. In recognition of social work educators' knowledge and ability to do this training, I explored these educators' points of view on self-awareness and cultural competence. The purpose of this research was to explore the underlying meaning of scholars' experiences of self-awareness and cultural competence. I did not assume that the experience of any single scholar was self-evident or was similar to the experiences of others. Thus, qualitative research was an appropriate method for this study.

Multiple Article Path (MAP)

This research was conducted with the permission of the University of Utah Institutional Review Board (IRB). In this dissertation, the Multiple Article Path (MAP) format was followed as described by the University of Utah College of Social Work guidelines. It includes three different but interrelated articles. Each article will be submitted to an academic journal. The three articles are:

1. Self-Awareness: Social Work Educators' Perspectives and Experiences
2. A Model of Cultural Competency in Macrolevel Social Work Seen through the Lens of Self-Awareness
3. A Theoretical Model of Cultural Competency Seen through the Lens of Self-Awareness in Clinical Social Work

Study One (Chapter 2): Self-Awareness: Social Work Educators' Perspectives and Experiences

The research questions for this study were as follows:

1. How do social work educators describe self-awareness?
2. What are educators' personal experiences of self-awareness?
3. How do educators teach self-awareness?

Background

Self-awareness as a core concept of professional self-development was explored in this study. In social work literature, self-awareness is intertwined with several other concepts, such as self-reflection, critical reflection, use of the self, and reflexivity. These concepts are slightly different, but the core of all of them is self and awareness. These concepts are significant factors in building professional relationships, positive outcomes of therapy, and professional self-development. However, it is not clear how the process of self-awareness and related concepts are manifested in education. The literature does not adequately address how these concepts are used in practice (Ruch, 2005; Ward, 2008; Yan & Wong, 2005). Therefore, there is a need for exploration in this area. Self-awareness is a key concept in addressing cultural competency (Boyle & Springer, 2001; Dewees, 2001; Herlihy & Watson, 2003; Hoopes, 1979; Kwong, 2009; Lum, 2003; Petrovich & Lowe, 2005; Van Soest, 1994). If there is a relationship between self-awareness and cultural competence, this relationship needs to be explored.

Proposed Journal

This study is a qualitative research study. Therefore, *Qualitative Social Work* is a suitable journal for publishing this article.

Study Two (Chapter 3): A Model of Cultural Competency in Macrolevel Social Work Seen through the Lens of Self-Awareness

The research questions for this study were as follows:

1. What are generalist social work educators' views on the relationship between self-awareness and cultural competency?
2. What methods do they use to teach cultural competency?

Background

Self-awareness and cultural competency are themes that have individually occupied the attention of researchers, practitioners, and educators in the mental health professions, including social work. However, relatively little attention has been given to the interrelationship between self-awareness and cultural competency. Myriad researchers believe that social workers should evaluate and understand their own cultural characteristics and values before attempting to understand others' cultures (Green, 1999; Hendricks, 2003; Manoleas, 1994; Torres & Jones, 1997). Some social workers focus on oppression and racism when teaching cultural competency due to the roles oppression and racism have played in U.S. history and culture (Allen-Meares, 2007; Garcia & Van Soest, 2000; Schmitz et al., 2001). The goal of this research was to

explore macrolevel social work educators' views on cultural competency and their methods of teaching this concept.

Proposed Journal

This study explores educators' views. Therefore, this article will be submitted to the *Social Work Education Journal*.

Study Three (Chapter 4): A Theoretical Model of Cultural Competency Seen through the Lens of Self-Awareness in Clinical Social Work

The research questions for this study were as follows:

1. How do clinical social work educators define the relationship between self-awareness and cultural competency?
2. How do these scholars teach the concept of cultural competence in their classes?

Background

The micro level of social work emphasizes the relationship between therapists and clients. Social work research and literature show that culture has a special effect on the ways people behave and cope with their problems (Yan & Wong, 2005). One's culture cannot be separated from one's self. To ignore connectivity of culture and self in psychotherapy, whether on purpose or otherwise, is risky (Allen-Meares, 2007).

This ignorance has been common in all mental health professions, including social work. Today, the significant role of cultural competency in educating mental health

professionals is emphasized by educators (Utsey, Fisher, & Belvet, 2010). The goal of this research was to explore clinical social work educators' views on teaching cultural competency.

Proposed Journal

This study is on cultural competency, which is related to cultural diversity. Thus, the *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Diversity* is a suitable option for publishing this article.

CHAPTER 2

SELF-AWARENESS: SOCIAL WORK EDUCATORS' PERSPECTIVES AND EXPERIENCES

Abstract

Self-awareness has a long history in the social work profession; however, its meaning and its applications in teaching and practice remain unclear. This study focused on educators' views on self-awareness. Research questions concentrated on defining, developing, and teaching self-awareness and were addressed through the phenomenological approach of qualitative research. Selected based on convenience and snowball sampling, participants included 35 social work educators from various colleges and universities across the United States. The results indicated that resiliency and self-awareness are associated, and teaching self-awareness is mostly done through identifying, analyzing, and managing emotions. Future research could explore in depth the quality of the relationship between resiliency and self-awareness.

Literature Review

Importance of Self-Awareness in Social Work Education

The goal of this research was to explore how social work educators understand, experience, and teach self-awareness. Self-awareness is not a new concept. It has a long-

standing history in the social work field (Ward, 2008). Self-awareness is a professional skill that practitioners are encouraged to learn. Knowing one's self is an essential factor in a social worker's relationship with clients (Hamilton, 1951). Self-knowledge assists workers to address their prejudices and biases (Furman, Coyne, & Negi, 2008; Towle, 1987). Self-knowledge leads to self-reflection (Imre, 1982), and self-reflection leads to self-awareness. Self-awareness is part of self-development, which is a comprehensive and broad goal of practitioners. Because of this goal, a key step towards self-awareness is self-reflection.

Gaps in Literature

In social work literature, self-awareness is interrelated with concepts like self-reflection, critical reflection, use of the self, and reflexivity. These concepts are significant factors in professional relationships, positive therapy outcomes, and professional self-development. However, it is not clear how social work educators conceptualize and teach the process of self-awareness and related concepts. More exploration in this area is needed, because questions remain about how these concepts are used in practice (Ruch, 2005; Ward, 2008; Yan & Wong, 2005).

Definition of Self-Awareness

Kondrat (1999) divided self-awareness into four categories:

- Simple conscious awareness: Simple perception of self in relation to environment.

- Reflective awareness: Simple conscious awareness related to present, "here and now" experience.
- Reflexive awareness: Constant self-awareness and a process in which subject-self (I) evaluates object-self (me).
- Critical reflectivity: Exploring the process of self-awareness in relation to others and social construction of self.

A slightly different categorization of self-awareness from Kondrat's is self-reflection, critical reflection, and reflexive awareness.

Self-Reflection

Self-reflection means observing, exploring, evaluating, and processing one's self and experience. Seide and Blythe (1996), defined self-reflection as: "looking backward, looking inward, looking outward, and looking forward."

Self-reflection is a significant skill in cross-cultural social work (Fox, 1983; Lee & Greene, 1999; Schwartz, Fluckiger, & Weisman, 1977). According to Collin (1998), the first step towards self-reflection is "scaffolding": evaluating what students know about themselves, then evaluating their values and beliefs, moving toward what they do not know about themselves and others. Wosket (1999) introduced a model of self-case study instead of client case study. In this model, therapists/workers evaluate themselves over time, developing a professional sense of self and continuing to nurture the self in professional life. Self-reflection drives action towards self-growth, and the action creates self-reflection again. Therefore, self-reflection creates a circle of growth and development in therapists/workers (Furman, Coyne, & Negi, 2008).

Critical Reflection

Self-reflection in practice could lead to critical reflection, in which therapists reflect on their interpretations and behaviors in therapy, searching for a pattern and theory in their own behaviors in relation to their clients' and in relation to practical experience and wisdom (D'Cruz, Gillingham, & Melendez, 2007; Fook, 1996, 1999; Kondrat, 1999).

Reflexive Awareness

The literature does not distinguish between critical reflection and reflexivity, instead using the terms "critical reflection/reflexivity" or "critical reflexivity" (D'Cruz, Gillingham, & Melendez, 2007; Jessup & Rogerson, 1999; Leonard, 1999; Pease & Fook, 1999). However, some differences have been identified.

One difference is in timing. Critical reflection occurs after a past incident, as well as before future lessons, while reflexivity is a form of self-monitoring; present knowledge is evaluated without generalizing it to the future (D'Cruz, Gillingham, & Melendez, 2007).

Auerbach and Blatt (1996) define reflexivity as the ability to move from subjective-self to objective-self. Reflexivity is, therefore, not a situation but a process towards self-development that entails constant critical evaluation and creating a cohesive self. The word reflexivity is currently used more than self-awareness; in reflexivity, there is no fixed "self" to be aware of (Kondrat, 1999). Reflexivity has multiple dimensions. First, reflexivity is related to practitioners' emotions, empathy, nonjudgmental attitude, and anxiety. Practitioners are encouraged to notice how their feelings and experiences affect therapy.

Second, reflexivity is an ability to shape self and reflect critically on the actions of the self in the world (Beck, 1992; D'Cruz, Gillingham, & Melendez, 2007; Giddens, 1990). According to this definition, one can choose between right and wrong, and individuals—not society—are responsible for their own decisions. The role of the "social structure" in individuals' choices is ignored in this definition (D'Cruz, Gillingham, & Melendez, 2007; Kemshall, 2002).

Third, reflexivity is the source of practitioners' knowledge in relation to society and power (D'Cruz, Gillingham, & Melendez, 2007; Taylor &White, 2000). Society constructs an individual's knowledge of world and self, but if individuals reflect on self-knowledge, they can increase in self-awareness (Kondrat, 1999).

Self-Disclosure of Self-Reflection

Self-disclosure is part of professional use of self, which endorses open dialogue and leads to more cultural understanding (Vaughn, 2005). Self-disclosure of personal self-reflection helps therapists to reinforce this action and can help students to understand the concept and the purpose of using it in therapy/service.

Summary

Self-awareness is a popular concept in social work, but it is still not clear how it should be defined, taught, and used in practice. Nowadays, reflexivity is becoming a more common term than self-awareness; however, reflexivity is part of self-awareness and has multiple dimensions: consideration of therapists' emotions in therapy, considering self in the world (worldview), and considering self as a societal construction

and power. Reflexivity is distinguished from critical reflection by factors such as timing and generalization. Self-disclosure of self-reflection reinforces self-reflection and could be used as a training tool.

Theory

Psychologists' theories related to self and self-awareness, such as psychoanalysis, client-centered theory, and functional analytic psychotherapy, are explained briefly.

Self and Psychoanalysis

Psychoanalysts focus on self-observation more than on self-awareness. Self-observation helps clients reach their unconscious, as Axelrod (2012) explained Freud's idea on self-observation. Axelrod indicated that self-observation loses superego commands, freeing clients' thoughts and feelings, helping them to access their unconscious. Self-observation leads to self-reflection and increases self-awareness (Axelrod, 2012). Busch (2007) argues that self-observation has a significant role in both the therapist's intervention and the client's changing process.

Psychoanalysts use the concept of self-analysis to enable them and their clients to study the self. Freud was aware of problems with self-analysis such as the "unconscious nature of resistance." Freud also emphasizes "counter-transference," which is defined as therapists' unconscious feelings toward their clients. He knew that therapists' unconscious feelings, thoughts, fantasies, and memories affect their treatment of clients. During therapy, two egos meet. In this allying process, the therapist's ego should be

normal; Freud calls this process an "analytic pact," which we now call the "therapeutic alliance" (Erwin, 2002).

Neo-Freudians paid more attention to the concept of self than Freudians. Kohut (1971, 1985) believes that therapists should put themselves "in the skin" of their clients to touch their unconscious thoughts and desires (DeWitt & Baldwin, 2013). Many contemporary psychoanalysts believe that the client-therapist experience should avoid "transference" and "counter-transference," because they are not natural processes. Rather the client-therapist relationship creates a joint experience called "intersubjective analytic" or "intersubjective analytic third." Some psychoanalysts, such as Ogden (1994), believe that this joint experience is unconscious (Baranger, 2012) and others, such as Benjamin (1995), believe it is conscious.

Self in Client-Centered Theory

Humanistic psychologist Carl Rogers emphasizes the conscious use of self and considers self a key concept in therapy (Baldwin, 2013). He emphasizes the role of the therapist's self in dealing with client transference and believes that the "maturity of therapist[s]" creates recognition of their own potential, opening them to unexpected information and preparing them to change themselves (Baldwin, 2013). He explains that if therapists are not mature and are not connected to the inner self, they spend therapy time defending self (Baldwin, 2013).

Behaviorism defines self as a collection of united responses shaped by environmental conditions. Kohlenberg and Tsai (1991) explain that the concepts of *I* and *me* associate first with environmental stimuli and then with private stimuli. Deikman

(1982) discusses that behaviorism cannot explain self-observing and subjective-objective (I-me) awareness. It can explain only objective-self; "intuitive perception" is needed to go behind objective-self.

Functional Analytic Psychotherapy (FAP)

FAP is a behavioral therapy that recognizes self-awareness as a key concept. According to FAP, individuals learn about self and become aware of their thoughts and feelings at early ages. Therapists' knowledge of their emotions is essential in therapy, and their awareness of their own feelings during therapy could help them integrate these emotions to effect change in clients; the therapist's self affects the therapist-client relationship and affects therapy outcomes.

Research Questions

In this article, these theories are a strong foundation for emphasizing the importance of self-awareness in social work education.

In the literature, self-awareness is a significant concept affecting both therapy outcomes and therapists' self-development. However, the process of self-awareness and individuals' experiences of self-awareness were rarely explored. In this qualitative study, self-awareness was investigated from the perspective of social work educators. These research questions were used:

1. How do social work educators describe self-awareness?
2. What are educators' personal experiences with self-awareness?
3. How do educators teach self-awareness?

Methodology and Method

Research Design

Qualitative research is an inquiry into the *what* and *how* of a specific experience, asking about the meaning of something and how it functions as a collection of parts in a whole (Wertz et al., 2011). Qualitative research embraces a variety of approaches. In the phenomenological approach, a researcher selects a phenomenon and describes an individual's "lived experience" (Creswell, 2013). I chose this approach because the goal of this study was to understand the phenomenon of self-awareness through social work educators' lived experiences.

Sampling and Data Collection

The University of Utah Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved this research. Using the directory programs accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), I selected universities with master's programs to invite faculty to participate. Qualified scholars were found through the online lists of educators from those selected universities' and colleges' websites.

Recruiting was done through emails and phone calls. The emails included explanations of educators' area of interests, a brief explanation of the research, and an invitation to join the study. Thirty-five social work educators from 27 colleges and universities across the U.S. participated. The participants each taught in a social work master's program for at least 3 years. The sampling methods were convenience and snowball. Conceptual interviews were conducted via phone and audio recorder. Three open-ended questions were asked using a semistructured interview schedule. The

interviews averaged 30 minutes**.** Table 1 features a breakdown of participants' demographics.

Data Analysis

The goal of the interviews was to understand the participants' experiences and views on self-awareness. After recording the interviews, I transcribed the information and read the transcriptions three times. I sent all transcriptions to the participants for member checking.

Each participant's experience of self-awareness was unique. For example, if a participant was unaware of self and felt lost and confused, it was his/her distinct experience; however, the experience was also similar to other participants' experiences' of being lost and unaware of self. I categorized each unique experience but identified these similarities as well. I also interpreted the data by making meaning units from all 35 participants' experiences. A meaning unit refers to searching for the meaning of a participant's experience, and it helps to categorize information. I compared all categories of uniqueness and similarities to understand the *what* of participants' experiences. Then I compared meaning units to understand the *how* of these experiences. In the process of comparing and combining experiences, themes emerged. After finding each theme, I returned to the raw data to further develop understanding of the participants' experiences.

Research Question Themes

In response to the first question (How do social work educators describe self-awareness?), four themes were identified: 1) Observing and understanding the self,

Table 1: Demographic Information for Participants from 27 U.S. Colleges and Universities

Gender	**Age**	**Race & ethnicity**	**Degree**	**Teaching experience**	**Practice experience**	**State**	**Region (C&U)**
Female: 28 Male: 7	Majority: 50–65 Youngest: 33 Oldest: 78	Caucasian: 26 *Middle Eastern: 1* *Arab: 1* *Jewish-American: 4* *Hispanic: 2* African-American: 5 Mixed race: 3 Asian: 1	PhD: 25 DSW: 1 MSW: 9	Range: 3–33 Majority: 18-28	Range: 4–45 Majority: 20–35	California Florida Kansas Massachusetts Minnesota New York Pennsylvania Texas Virginia West Virginia	East: 15 West: 6 Midwestern: 3 North: 2 South: 1

2) The facilitative role of mindfulness and spirituality, 3) Defining self-awareness in clinical practice, and 4) The effect of self-awareness. In response to the second question (What are educators' personal experiences with self-awareness?), the data were interpreted across the lifespan: childhood, adolescence, early adulthood, and adulthood. In response to the third question (How do educators teach self-awareness?), six themes were identified: 1) Focusing on the significant role of self-awareness, 2) Using cultural awareness, 3) Self-disclosure, 4) Replacing cognitive learning with emotional learning, 5) Emotional protection, and 6) Using humor. For triangulation purposes, these identified themes were sent to the participants and 5 professors for their feedback.

Results

Research Question 1: How Do Social Work Educators Define Self-Awareness?

Participants in this study believe that self-awareness is a difficult concept. It must be maintained daily and also must evolve. Self-awareness is a lifelong process, and nobody can ever be completely self-aware. Participants also indicated that self-awareness is more difficult for those who did not grow up with a culture of awareness. From the processing data, four themes are categorized: 1) Observing and understanding the self, 2) The facilitative role of mindfulness and spirituality, 3) Defining self-awareness in clinical practice, and 4) The effect of self-awareness.

Theme 1: Observing and Understanding the Self

Participants believe that the first step towards self-awareness is distinguishing between self as object and self as subject and also observing self as object. Observing reveals the roots of emotions and thoughts, helps one to assess one's relation to culture and the external world, and aids in assessing how one is seen by others. As 2 participants explained:

> Ability to separate objects and subject-self and acknowledging there is [an] internal process of [the] external world, and there is also [an] internal process of [the] internal world. (Mary)

> The ability to reflect, introspection, being cognizant of one's self, being cognizant of others, being cognizant of behaviors and other types of behaviors that communicate….It can be nonverbal or verbal. (Sue)

Theme 2: The Facilitative Role of Mindfulness and Spirituality

Participants define self-awareness in terms of mindfulness and spirituality as well. They describe mindfulness as existing in the present time and being aware of their own reactions and bodily conditions. Educators believe that spirituality can also increase self-awareness through a sense of connection to a higher power or a unique relationship with the world and universe.

> My self-awareness extends to my knowledge that I…really am not separated from the trees, from the air, from the rocks, from the earth I live on. (David)

> Moment-to-moment awareness of what I am experiencing right now in my body, in my mind, in response to another person. (Alexa)

Theme 3: Defining Self-Awareness in Clinical Practice

According to participants, the role of self-awareness in clinical practice is important and helps clinicians see their biases and differences. Participants use different methods to increase self-awareness in clinical practice, such as continuous self-reflection and certain processes with coworkers and supervisors.

> [Self-awareness in practice is] understanding interaction between multiple dimensions of the worker's identity with multiple dimensions of the client's identity. (Linda)

> It is a constant self-reflection. (Cher)

Theme 4: The Effect of Self-Awareness

Participants explained the state of being self-aware as one of feeling at ease with both strengths and weaknesses. A person can live in harmony, holding many roles and flowing from one role to another without clinging to a rigid self.

> …I'm a unique individual even though I'm just one man or one person in [X]…community….I am aware that I have separate… and unique feelings about…people and places and me and events and processes. …[A]t the same time I am aware that I am part of a community of nations, a community in the United States.…I'm also part of a family, and yet I'm not enmeshed in any of that. I can move freely with my self-awareness. (David)

Research Question 2: What Are Educators' Personal Experiences with Self-Awareness?

The question was intentionally designed broadly, and participants explained their journey openly, honestly, and with details. The data were then organized around four

periods: childhood, adolescence, early adulthood, and adulthood. This journey was different for each educator.

Childhood

Almost half of the participants (18 of 35) reported that they became self-aware during childhood, typically between ages 6 and 11. From factors that awakened self-awareness, three subthemes were identified: 1) Personal quality: Some believed that they were introspective since childhood. They also indicated qualities such as being introverted, quiet, and highly inquisitive. 2) Impact of immediate environment (family): Educators stated that their parents encouraged self-reflection; educators also identified religious education by their parents as significant. 3) Impact of social environment: Participants mentioned as factors that awakened self-awareness situations such as living in both poor and rich neighborhoods; being extremely poor and living in project houses; immigrating to the U.S.; living in another country; and growing up multiracial, multireligious, and/or multicultural.

> … up to the time I was about 9 or 10 years old, I lived in a neighborhood that used to be considered a pretty middle-class neighborhood…but due to whatever circumstances, it kind of slid into…a lower-middle-class neighborhood. And there were…gangs and thefts.... And so I came from that environment, trying to understand why people would…break into the store down the street from us.…[W]e lived in that neighborhood…where the Watts riots occurred. So I got to see people…very angry about the situation that African Americans were facing…and how they took [the anger] out on store owners…[A]t a very young age, I was… about 6 or 7, I wondered why people were so angry....So, I got to experience and learn a little bit about oppression, discrimination…. And I also became more aware of…my own experience…with that too. Going into the grocery store and say[ing] hello to a…White man

> when I was about 6 or 7 years old and him calling me a Jap in return. And so I asked my mother, why would someone, when I say hello to them, respond with calling me a Jap? I'm not Japanese. So she had to explain about what racism was. So I became aware of my differences. (Matt)

Adolescence

One-fifth of participants (7 of 35) reported experiencing self-awareness in their adolescent years. Of these 7, 4 started to become self-aware in their adolescence years and the rest (3) experienced self-awareness as a continuing process from childhood. Among the elements that affected the participants' self-awareness, three subthemes were identified: 1) Exposure to other people and cultures: Growing up in all-White communities and contacting minority adolescents for the first time in high school affected participants' perceptions of themselves. Moving from the U.S. to other countries and seeing teenagers from other cultures was a shocking experience. Opportunities to move from poor neighborhood high schools to private high schools and being exposed to rich teenagers changed their understanding of self. 2) Sexual identity: When participants went to high school and then became aware of their sexual identity, possibly different from the norm, their sense of self was shaken. 3) Losing parents: Losing a parent as a teenager affected the participants' self-awareness.

> When I was 15, we moved to England, and for the first time I became aware of myself and also noticed…how people…have different world views. That is why [they] act different and are strange to me. It was the first time I really had an experience of…understanding who I was and being very self-aware rather than just self-conscious. And I think that certainly continued when I got back and I experienced…reverse culture shock. (Locus)

Early Adulthood

Twenty-one out of 35 participants talked about experiencing self-awareness in early adulthood. Thirteen participants started to become self-aware in this period. From processing data and effective elements of self-awareness, five subthemes were found: 1) Becoming familiar with the concept of self-awareness in a social work program: In classes and practicum, participants were encouraged to evaluate self, their experiences, culture, class, and advantages and disadvantages. 2) Struggling to fit into society: Participants who struggled with obtaining societal acceptance became self-aware. Factors such as not being Black enough in a Black society, not being straight among all straights, being mixed race in a group of all Whites, and being both very intelligent and extremely poor awakened the participants' self-awareness. 3) Personal attempts to search for the self: Participants who felt empty, lost, and confused about their "self" found support such as therapy, mindfulness workshops, and Carl Rogers's workshop. 4) Exposure to social problems: Participants who were exposed to movements in human rights, civil rights, women's rights, and/or to the Vietnam War and 9/11 reevaluated both their personal and cultural self. 5) Family members' and/or personal health and mental health problems: While facing personal problems and dealing with suffering, and loss, participants developed self-awareness.

> But [studying at the historically Black college] was another evolution in my awareness, because it was the first time that I had really been around as many African Americans, particularly southern African Americans….And so what I saw was…how different I was and that even as an African American…I was not accepted, in part because I was from the North….I didn't talk Black, I didn't act Black….[M]y first year there was a real struggle to… find myself…. I can remember trying to grow an Afro….Well, I couldn't grow an Afro, I couldn't grow a mustache, I couldn't grow a

> beard. I couldn't grow any of the things that I thought would [make] other Blacks in my school…respect me. But that was my growth. That was my beginning of my identity of who I am and beginning to accept that. (David)

Adulthood

Fifteen out of 35 participants talked about their experiences of self-awareness in adulthood. All participants continued to increase the self-awareness they had from previous time periods. From processing data of effective factors on self-awareness in adulthood, four subthemes were identified: 1) Traveling and interacting with other people: Job opportunities, traveling around the world, relating to other nations and cultures, or writing a Ph.D. dissertation in another country helped participants become more self-aware. 2) Personal attempts to increase self-awareness: Through attending workshops, writing journals, supervising students, and returning to school, participants increased their self-awareness. 3) Losing family members: Reaching old age and losing friends and family members escalated participants' self-awareness; they felt wiser and understood that there is not much time left. 4) Exposure to social problems: Participants gained deeper understanding of systematic oppression and its effects on individual lives, and they started to reevaluate self and personal feelings after 9/11.

> …I was an only child….[M]y father died about 15 years ago. My mother died about 6 years ago….I feel…the responsibility to do what I can in the world to make the world better for people. (Liz)

Research Question 3: How Do Educators Teach Self-Awareness?

According to the participants, students come to social work programs with different levels of self-awareness. The participants hesitated that this course should be taught in lower or only higher levels of social work programs. Those who taught this concept at the bachelor level stated that they focused only on personal and cultural differences.

> I tell everybody to go to a grocery store… and pick a food that they've never had that they…think they'd be open to trying. And then everybody brings whatever they bought to class. And we talk about…what [it was] like…to go to a different aisle.…Why have you never gone before?...What is it about you that you've never seen these or noticed them…?…[W]here is that coming from? And what was it like for you to find a new food? (Abi)

Through analyzing the data about participants' teaching methods, six themes were identified: 1) Focusing on the significant role of self-awareness, 2) Teaching self-awareness through cultural awareness, 3) Self-disclosure, 4) Replacing cognitive learning with emotional learning, 5) Emotional protection, and 6) Using humor to achieve self-awareness.

Theme 1: Focusing on the Significant Role of Self-Awareness

According to participants, students come to social work programs with a range of self-awareness from total lack to just a fair amount. Social work educators motivate their students to practice self-awareness, explaining that it is necessary for personal and professional development. They also focus on the role of self-awareness in therapeutic

relationships, especially in building alliances with clients. In general, educators believe that self-awareness cannot be taught; it can only be cultivated.

Educators explained the significance of self-awareness by focusing on the role it plays for social workers in clinical situations. Two subthemes were identified: 1) How self-awareness affects social workers and 2) How self-awareness affects the worker-client relationship.

Subtheme 1: How self-awareness affects social workers. Self-awareness helps social workers see their strengths and weaknesses. If students ignore their weaknesses, that doesn't make the weaknesses go away; they will still be there and affect students' personal and professional lives. Participants believe that self-awareness is a hard process. However, it is also rewarding and makes students healthier social workers.

> … self-awareness does not benefit only the client, but it benefits social workers and protect[s] them from burn out, helps them with being healthy, helps them to see their issues when they have problem[s]. (Ida)

Subtheme 2: How self-awareness affects the worker-client relationship. Self-awareness helps social workers to have empathy with their clients, to separate their own experiences from clients' experiences but to be aware that their life experiences affect clients. Self-awareness cannot happen suddenly and needs constant reflection. Participants believe that without self-awareness, being an effective social worker is not possible.

> Being self-aware means that [you know that] your own experience is not the truth of a client's experience. Because if you don't see your own experience as…separate…then you get [clients] confused. (Rita)

Theme 2: Teaching Self-Awareness through Cultural Awareness

Some educators address self-awareness by teaching cultural awareness, believing the two cannot be separated. They also focus on racism and power. Some participants mentioned that students need to explore racism and be aware of how they use power in relationships with clients and coworkers and how others use power when interacting with them.

> But I will basically have [students] try to identify the different powers that people use in trying to influence others. And I try to make them become aware of how they're feeling, what people are using against them, and then they will…have a higher awareness of when people are trying to influence them and to do something, right? Diversity and oppression class, it's an opportunity to teach about history and about subtleties of social culture in a different way, but I think that's self-awareness. (Lou)

Theme 3: Self-Disclosure

Educators share with students their struggles, unexpected experiences, self-reflection, critical reflection, use of professional self, and how their self-awareness evolved both professionally and personally. They help students understand how personal and professional "self" are interrelated.

> So I share a lot of my practice experience to make the material come alive, and the students really like that because…they get to hear about the concepts [and] see how they're applied. I'll talk about when I've had surprises that I'm not tuning into and then how it's resulted in not so good practice. (Irma)

Theme 4: Replacing Cognitive Learning with Emotional Learning

Participants indicate that they focus on emotions more than cognition. Self-awareness is about knowing the self cognitively but also touches on emotions, which are hard to reach. Students learn to be cognitively oriented throughout their education. Their attitudes about knowledge are shaped by cognitive abilities, and they are introduced to different ways of learning. However, social work students also need to be in touch with their emotions. When they recognize their emotions, it is up to them to accept or change them. Participants mentioned that we often are afraid of our feelings. From analyzing the data, four stages of emotional learning were categorized: 1) Creating a protective environment and building relationships, 2) Exposing students to situation reaction, 3) Assisting students to observe physical changes when they feel uncomfortable, and 4) Helping students explore the roots of their reactions and feelings.

Emotional learning stage 1: Creating a protective environment and building relationships. Providing a safe place for students is the first step, followed by making relationship with students. If this relationship is not made, both educator and student will waste time defending and protecting themselves, and these behaviors will be barriers towards self-awareness.

> … [creating a protective environment and building relationships means] locating myself and trying to create an atmosphere in the classroom where [students] feel like they can be safe enough to offer dissent, to step outside their comfort zone and know that it's going to be okay and know that's part of the process for our journey here as far as self-awareness goes. (Irma)

Emotional learning stage 2: Exposing students to situation reaction. When students get uncomfortable, their journey to self-awareness starts. Reflecting on reading

materials is a beginning step of analyzing self and learning to pay attention to the roots of feelings and to process them, so educators usually use reflection on reading to teach the concept of self-awareness to bachelor-level students. Another method that provokes different feelings and reactions is inviting individuals to talk in the class and then asking them to talk about their feelings before and after the presentation. Asking students to talk about their spirituality also provokes feelings and leads to elementary self-evaluation. Educators believe that advanced self-evaluation is done in a context and in relation with others. After stage 2, students learn to observe and connect to their emotions.

Emotional learning stage 3: Assisting students to observe their physical changes when they are uncomfortable. First, students need to see themselves and observe their own behaviors in order to be able to see clients' behaviors, body language, tone of speaking, words, anxiety, and so on. Students show different physical reactions to uncomfortable situations in the class; observing these feelings helps students to recognize them.

> …a student who is gay or lesbian [may hear] someone…[talk] about scripture being against that. [This] gives them a chance to recognize their own reactions. (Sandy)

Emotional learning stage 4: Assisting students to explore roots of their reactions and feelings. Understanding transference and countertransference helps students reach the roots of their emotions. Students need to look within to see why they do certain behaviors and actions.

> Are they looking at all aspects of their lives? Are they aware of physical reactions? Are they aware of internal thoughts? Are they aware of…externally what impacts them? Are they aware internally…maybe based on their history, maybe based on current events?…[C]an they

> describe it at an intellectual… level and a physical level? That would be a high awareness." (Marci)

Theme 5: Emotional Protection

Educators teach students to manage their impulses and stresses and to focus on emotional management, self-care, and setting professional boundaries. Violating therapist-worker boundaries and lacking emotional management are closely related. Educators explain to students that social work can be a very stressful job. Social workers deal with people's problems every day, and sometimes there is no solution to clients' problems. If, in general, students learn to recognize their emotions, they will know how to manage their emotions in practice and when they need to exercise self-care to prevent burn-out. Self-care techniques are most effective before burn-out happens; reaching the point of exhaustion could put an end to a career.

> I give them activities to get in touch with their feelings. [I ask questions like] How can you regulate your emotions to handle stress? Or even how do they think they should have handled the stress in [a] particular situation? What are your control impulses? …[H]ow do you [overcome] obstacles? [H]ow do you…monitor progress toward your…goals and express emotions? (Shea)

Theme 6: Using Humor as a Way to Self-Awareness

Humor is a way to connect to others, because with humor, one can detach from self, make fun of self, softly criticize self, and allow self to see other perspectives. This method could be used in relationships with clients as well. It can convey a message of humanity and connect people together.

> I use a lot of humor in my teaching. And I allow [students] to use [theirs]. (Suzy)

Discussion

Research Question 1: How Do Social Work Educators Define Self-Awareness?

In response to the first research question, social work educators defined self-awareness based on 1) Its nature, 2) Its application in clinical practice, and 3) Its effects on individuals.

The participants mentioned mindfulness as a way to reach self-awareness; this is consistent with the first stage of self-awareness, "simple conscious awareness," from Kondrat's (1999) definition of self-awareness. The educators also defined self-awareness as an ability to separate self as *I* and as *me* and observing self as an object; this supports Kondrat's third stage, reflective awareness.

Participants believed that self-awareness in practice is achieved by constant self-reflection, which is consistent with the literature (Axelrod, 2012).

Educators also explained qualities of a self-aware person such as being content and flowing between different roles. This status of a self-aware person is similar to Auerbach and Blatt's (1996) definition of reflexivity, which is an ability to move interchangeably from subjective self to objective self. Qualities of a self-aware person have rarely been addressed by researchers and need to be explored further.

Research Question 2: What Are Educators' Personal Experiences with Self-Awareness?

In response to the second question, the participants' journeys toward self-awareness were explored through their own lifespans. From a developmental perspective, the question of "who am I?" starts in adolescence, so it was expected that participants had started this journey then; however, only 4 participants reported starting the journey in this period.

Eighteen participants said that their self-awareness began to be awakened in childhood, often because of personal qualities, immediate environment, and social environment. Participants reported that they were quiet, introverted, and inquisitive. Is there a relationship between these traits and becoming self-aware? This topic needs to be researched in the future.

The participants also mentioned that their parents encouraged them to be inquisitive. It is not clear whether as children they were inquisitive by nature and then their parents encouraged them, or they become inquisitive as a result of their parents' encouragement.

Thirteen participants started their self-awareness journey in early adulthood. Some of them became familiar with the concept of self-awareness in their social work program, which shows that these programs play a positive role in leading social work students toward self-awareness. In this period, environmental factors had more variety than in other periods, and some participants felt lost and confused, leading them to search for the self; this is expected, developmentally, to happen in adolescence years.

Fifteen participants reported that their self-awareness increased in adulthood. In adulthood, loss had significant effects on increasing the participants' self-awareness. Loss and its relationship with self-awareness could be explored in depth.

In general, it appears that childhood and early adulthood are two major periods for becoming self-aware. Environmental factors had important roles during all lifespan periods. Factors such as extreme poverty, the human rights movement, and the Vietnam War influenced thousands of lives. It appears that these environmental factors affected the participants unlike any others. The majority of participants had very harsh life experiences. These experiences could have driven their lives in negative, even criminal, directions. However, the participants used the difficulties to catalyze self-development. Their resilience helped them to become self-aware, and, in turn, their self-awareness added to their resiliency.

In teaching self-awareness, according to the participants, students come to social work programs with a range of self-awareness from total lack to fair self-awareness. Therefore, it might be more effective for self-awareness to be taught one on one. Some universities offer an elective self-awareness course, but the participants of this study hesitated whether this course should be taught in lower levels or only at higher levels. This could be a topic for future research.

Research Question 3: How Do Educators Teach Self-Awareness?

In response to the third question, participants revealed their use of various methods to teach self-awareness. According to Carl Rogers, if therapists are not connected to the inner self, they spend therapy time to defend self (Baldwin, 2013). The

participants in this research expanded Rogers's idea, making relationships with students and creating a safe place for them to explore self. They believed that if they did not connect to both their own self and students' self, they wasted time defending themselves instead of leading students toward self-awareness.

Knowing that the process of self-awareness is voluntary, participants focused on encouraging students to explore self-awareness. The participants disclosed their own self-awareness journey to encourage students to explore; this use of self-disclosure was addressed in the literature.

The social work educators encouraged students to observe their behaviors, and they were aware that self-observation comes prior to self-reflection and self-awareness. This supports the literature (Axelrod, 2012). Participant also directed students to self-awareness by teaching cultural awareness and about the role of power, which was mentioned in the literature as part of reflexivity (D'Cruz, Gillingham, & Melendez, 2007; Taylor &White, 2000).

Social work educators, in teaching self-awareness, emphasized students' feelings and encouraged exploring the roots of their emotions. In literature, FAP theory addressed emotional awareness. Educators also focused on transference and countertransference. These concepts are part of psychoanalysis, which was explained in the literature (Erwin, 2002).

Limitations

Limitations in this research are related to collecting data. Participants were selected from across the U.S., so face-to-face interviews were not cost effective. The

sampling methods were convenience and snowball; unintentionally, most samples were collected from the Eastern U.S.

The researcher interviewed participants only once but obtained more information by email.

Conclusion

The results indicate that the participants view self-awareness from three perspectives: definitions, practice, and outcome. The self-awareness journey was different for each participant, but most identified childhood or early adulthood as the period when self-awareness began.

The participants were resilient in spite of extreme difficulties, suggesting that self-awareness and resiliency are related. The participants used different techniques to teach self-awareness. However, their main focus was on recognizing, evaluating, and managing emotions.

Future Research

Self-awareness is a complex concept to research. Although the concept is well known in social work, there is not much empirical research on self-awareness. Future research could focus on exploring self-awareness from the standpoint of human development, the relationship between personality traits and developing self-awareness, the connection between resiliency and self-awareness, and the role of emotions in teaching self-awareness.

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CHAPTER 3

A MODEL OF CULTURAL COMPETENCY IN MACROLEVEL SOCIAL WORK SEEN THROUGH THE LENS OF SELF-AWARENESS

Abstract

- Objective: Investigating the relationship between self-awareness and cultural competency and generalist social work scholars' teaching methods of cultural competency
- Method: Qualitative research, phenomenological approach
- Sample: A convenience sample of 16 generalist social work educators from United States academies
- Results: Educators had two different perspectives on teaching cultural competency: multiculturalism and critical multiculturalism. White educators were more interested in multiculturalist theory, and minority educators had strong attitudes on critical multiculturalist theory, although none of scholars fully and profoundly addressed critical multiculturalist theory in their teaching.
- Future research: Effectiveness of each perspective in social work education could be explored in depth.

Introduction

Both self-awareness and cultural competency occupy the attention of researchers, practitioners, and educators in mental health professions, including social work. However, relatively little attention has been given to the interrelationship between the two concepts.

Devore and Schlessinger (1996) indicate that the first step of cultural competence is awareness of personal biases and prejudices, and Gladwell (2005) explains that most of our prejudices are unconscious; we do not select them, or we are even unaware of their existence. According to Yan and Wong (2005), it is not possible to control cultural factors in cross-cultural interactions. Social worker cultures are part of social workers' "self," which affects worker-client relationships. Thus, self-awareness is a building block of cultural competency.

Self-awareness is a process of observing, reflecting, and evaluating one's feelings and thoughts to reduce personal biases. Self-awareness in therapy/service is a professional skill that facilitates understanding clients and connecting to them in order to assist them to solve their problems. One goal of this research is exploring the relationship between the self-awareness and cultural competency of generalist social work educators.

Many researchers believe that before we can become culturally competent, our own culture should be evaluated (Boyle & Springer, 2001; Dewees, 2001; Hendricks, 2003; Herlihy & Watson, 2003; Kwong, 2009; Lum, 2003; Petrovich & Lowe, 2005). Social workers' history and culture in the United States include racism, sexism, privilege, and discrimination; thus, increasing knowledge in these areas could lead to cultural competency (Allen-Meares, 2007; Garcia & Soest, 2000; Schmitz et al., 2001). A second

goal of this research is to explore racism and social work educators' teaching methods.

This article first defines culture and cultural competence and addresses the history of cultural competence. Then cultural competency theory, research, education, and critique are explained.

Defining Culture, Cultural Competence, and the History of Cultural Competence

Definition of Culture

Defining culture must come before a definition of cultural competence. Various disciplines characterize culture differently (McAuliffe et al., 2008); however, some definitions of culture are more comprehensive. Culture is "thoughts, communications, actions, beliefs, values, customs, and institutions of racial, ethnic, religious, or social groups" (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001, p. 4).

Definition of Cultural Competency

There are many definitions for cultural competency, and some are common in the social work field. According to the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) (2001), cultural competency is a process of respecting individuals, groups, and communities of all races and ethnicities. Some definitions of cultural competency emphasize knowledge of other cultures (Betancourt, Green, & Carrillo, 2002; United States Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health, 2001). Cultural competency is not only about obtaining knowledge from other cultures but is more about value and respect for other cultures (Walker & Staton, 2000). Cultural competency means understanding how minorities integrate their unique experiences into

a dissimilar environment (Simmons, Diaz, Jackson, & Takahashi, 2008). Other definitions explain cultural competency based on unique perspectives, actions, and policies that lead to an effective cross-cultural service delivery (Cross, Bazron, Dennis, & Isaacs, 1989).

Many texts in social work discuss cultural competency (Healy, 2001) in all areas of policy, research, and practice.

Researchers have explored cultural competency for at least 25 years. The dynamics of competency are agreed upon, so the question is not whether to use cultural competency in service, but rather how to equip students with the knowledge and ability to provide effective service.

History of Cultural Competency

In 1909, Helen Tucker recommended that Black experiences be included in social work education so students would be able to assist African Americans to deal with racism (Fox, 1983).

Before World War I, the course "Racial Traits in Population" was given by The New York School of Philanthropy (Gallegos, 1983). In 1919, the Saint Louis School of Economics introduced minorities' issues in its social work curriculum. From 1920 to1960 was a silent era. In 1960, Maruyama developed a course to help students learn skills to confront racism (Fox, 1983).

Green (1982) in social work and Sue (1982) in counseling psychology presented the term cultural competence for the first time to refer to the perspectives, knowledge, and skills necessary to work with minorities. This term became more common in the

1990s (Lopez-Humphreys, 2011; Miley et al., 2001; Switzer, Scholle, Johnson, & Kelleher, 1998; Weaver, 1998). Today, social work programs across the country design curricula that include cultural competency to teach social work students to appreciate and respect other cultures; these programs are typically broad and include a variety of cultures (Carter-Black, 2007).

Cultural Competency Theory and Research, Cultural Competency in Education, and Critique of Cultural Competency

Cultural Competency Theory

Cultural competency could be defined as recognizing and valuing cultures according to a multiculturalist view. Multiculturalism is concerned with how a society can treat immigrants equally—in politics, the economy, and education—and at the same time appreciates their differences. *Ideal* and *real* multiculturalism are different. Ideally, everyone supports equality among all races and ethnicities, but in real life, focusing on differences, as multiculturalism does, promotes the dominant culture (Abu-Laban, 2002).

In multiculturalist education, White culture is used as a universal norm to which other cultures are compared. Perry (2002) argues that we cannot talk about differences between cultures without considering that a dominant culture has constructed these differences. A newer theory to address cultural competency is critical multiculturalism, developed by David Nylund (2006). According to this model, the political, social, and historical dimensions of White power should be analyzed. Nylund argues that multiculturalism and diversity cannot be addressed without including racism, which in turn cannot be addressed without considering the history of racism in a global context and

in relation to capitalism.

Critical multiculturalism has four main premises: 1) To understand the role of society and history in relation to both race and capitalism, 2) To assist social work students to understand these relationships and the concept of "otherness," 3) To emphasize that social work is related to a history of power struggles and cannot be apolitical, and 4) To analyze White power in relation to history and power. Nylund (2006) elaborates that it is necessary for social work students to understand the history of White power's struggle with other cultures and the influence of capitalism on other cultures. He argues that in social work education, even when racism is addressed, the historical context of racism is ignored. White social workers may discuss the cultural norms and customs of others as if they have the authority to undertake such an analysis without first analyzing themselves or allowing others to analyze them and their culture. Nylund explains that the goal of analyzing Whiteness is to make it clear and understandable that White values are constructed and reinforced by historical and political forces and are not necessarily the "normal" way of living.

Research on Cultural Competence

Numerous studies on cultural competence have been undertaken in recent decades (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Gambrill, 2001; Lum, 2011; Ponterotto et al., 2001), but empirical research on this topic is scarce.

Petrovich and Lowe (2005) evaluated 23 social work graduate students and alumni on cultural competency. The results showed that alumni had more understanding of cultural competency than students, and alumni viewed it as an ongoing process.

Petrovich and Lowe mentioned that field practicum instructors did not have the knowledge or confidence to address minorities' issues. They suggested addressing cultural competency through active learning, deep respect for minorities, and creating a safe place for students.

Perry and Tate-Manning (2006) trained 42 students on cultural competency using myths, legends, and fairytales. First, the students identified the origin of a certain story from their culture and history and also identified the story's cultural messages. Students then reflected on cultural internalization of the story and how this internalization affected their own family relationship behaviors and their social work practice with families. The results of this research showed how cultural myths influence workers' social identity, and, as a result, impact their practice as an unrecognized bias.

Kwong (2009) studied 10 educators using a qualitative method. All participants emphasized the importance of self-understanding as a first step toward cultural competency. They focused on respecting minorities' cultures, using clinical skills, using elements of the minorities' cultures to assist minorities, and evaluating cultural competency based on client feedback.

Cultural Competency in Education

In this section, social work students' feelings and views on cultural competency are explained, and then educators' perspectives on the concept are addressed.

Cultural Competency and Students

Most social work students and clinicians (86% of licensed social workers) are White, whereas most social work customers are individuals and families from minority

populations **(**Armour & Hammond, 2009; Family Violence Prevention Fund, 2005).

Hepworth, Rooney, and Larsen (2002) indicate that students are not aware of their personal biases; they need to evaluate their mind sets and perspectives before learning about other cultures. Students need to understand the "dynamics of difference" between cultures. Considering that behaviors have different meanings in different cultures (Ronnau, 1994), a culture could embrace some subcultures as well (Gay, 1977); and even within one culture, people have different experience and understanding (Lee, 2010; Ronnau, 1994).

Social work students need to learn that all cultures are of equal worth (Hoopes & Pusch, 1979). They also need to be committed and willing to increase their knowledge about other cultures (Ronnau, 1994). Social work students often do not have a deep understanding of oppression and their clients' encounters with societal, organizational, and systematic oppression (Bronstein & Gibson, 1998). Students from mainstream culture may become annoyed with the realization that society is not fair, whereas minorities may be more comfortable and ready for self- and cultural exploration (Soest, 1994).

Students also could be angered by the concept of power and by the discrimination that results from both their own and societal ignorance. Moreover, they may fear being criticized by other members of society. These emotions and thoughts should be normalized in the classroom (Deal & Hyde, 2004). Cultural competency training may elicit feelings of misapprehension, frustration, and anger, which could be harmful to students (Garcia & Soest, 2000; Poole, 1998; Srivistava, 1993; William, 2005). Therefore, educators should strive to manage their own emotions and allow students to

express their opinions and emotions. The first step in discussing cultural competence is creating a safe environment for students (Kantambu-Latting, 1990).

Cultural Competency and Educators

According to the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), all social work programs have to include courses related to cultural competence (Garcia & Soest, 1997; Lum, 2007). This requirement, however, has not necessarily resulted in the introduction of multicultural perspectives to students (Fellin, 2000), because instructors first need to believe in multicultural perspectives themselves and then decide how to present them to students (Hyde & Ruth, 2002).

Educators use different methods to teach cultural competency (Abrams & Gibson, 2007; Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 1997; Lee & Greene, 2003). Some methods focus on the client-therapist relationship (Plotocky, 1997; Schlesinger, 2004; Snyder, Peeler, & May, 2008), whereas others focus on social justice (Lopez-Humphreys, 2011). Both methods are interrelated.

Not all social work educators are aware of the significant role of cultural competency in social work education (Diggs, 1992; Lum, 2007), but educators who are more aware have introduced new models for teaching this concept. One way to address cultural competency education is through transformative learning. According to Feistein (2004) and Mezirow (2000), transformative learning means reconstructing one's way of thinking and perceiving information. The first step toward transformative learning is self-awareness: awareness of one's own thoughts and biases, reflective discourse (evaluating personal thoughts and biases), and critical reflection (evaluating one's own thoughts

about others and becoming more open to others' thoughts and perceptions). According to Adam (2004), critical reflection should be a continuous process for students and teachers—both individually and also between students and teachers.

Other scholars have advocated that gaining knowledge, awareness, and skills about specific ethnic groups is the best way to increase cultural competency. This point of view is known as the culture-specific perspective (McAuliffe et al., 2008). However, it is not possible to be familiar with all cultures and have competence in all individuals' subcultures. Curiosity, genuine appreciation for others' perspectives, and considering the role of power and privilege assist both teachers and students to explore different perspectives (Anastas, 2010).

Most diversity-related education in social work embraces cross-cultural perspectives but does not include education about oppression, privilege, and racism (Cordero & Rodriguez, 2009; Dessel et al., 2006; Garran & Rozas, 2013; Sisneros et al., 2008). This ignorance could be due to implicit racism which, according to Roysircar and Gill's (2010), is hard to identify and address. Oppression and prejudice are part of our history, so these issues should be addressed in social work education (Manoleas, 1994). Plotocky (1997) advises that considering multiculturalism in social work education is essential, but it should not turn away educators' attention from social justice, racism, and discrimination. Sue (2001) adds a social justice component to cultural competence and believes students need to learn how to promote social justice in society.

A different approach to cultural competency is recognition of systematic oppression, which explains how individuals in power determine and shape organizational oppression by enabling policies against marginalized populations. This model of

recognizing systematic oppression has been used in social work education from time to time and from school to school; however, there is no clear evidence that this model has decreased discriminatory attitudes in policy makers and institutions.

Social work instructors often prefer to discuss safe subjects rather than racism, discrimination, and oppression (Lum, 2007; McMahan & Allen-Meares, 1992). The results of Singleton's (1994) study on teaching about "racial oppression" show that some instructors do not discuss racism and discrimination at all, some do not discuss them in depth, while others address only some aspects of oppression. Guy-Walls (2007) indicates that the results of the Singleton study are significant, because if instructors do not disclose discrimination, the subject will gradually be removed from social work education. She suggests that oppression should be discussed in cultural competency education.

Some educators teach cultural competency based on experiment and process. They use practical methods such as watching movies; role playing; games (Kim & Lyons, 2003; Manese et al., 2001); cross-cultural experiences (Diaz-Lazaro & Cohen, 2001); learning fairytales, myths, and legends (Perry & Tate-Manning, 2006); the Self and Other Awareness Project (SOAP); and the intergroup dialogue model (Lopez-Humphreys, 2011).

Critique of Cultural Competency

According to NASW, culture is a way of life that transfers from one generation to another. Therefore, culture is a "source of social control" (Angell, Kurz, & Gottfried, 1997); it shapes people's behaviors and limits their functions, but at the same time it is a

"source of strength" (Compton & Galaway, 1999) and assists people to cope with their problems.

Ruth Dean (2001) argues that cultural competency is about obtaining knowledge in order to control minorities more effectively. The cultural competency model is related to American "know-how." Charmaine Williams (2006) contends that cultural competency is a way of reaching clients, but it mostly is seen as an "objective technique" that needs to be learned. Park (2005) asserts that the main problem with cultural competency is that it could promote a static understanding of a culture. Cultures change, and individuals within a culture have different views of their culture. According to Gross (2000), there is not a single culture influenced by a universal environment, and some people have different roles and ideas and do not fit into certain groups or cultures. In a therapeutic relationship, honest interest helps social workers to understand others' cultures through open discourse (Yan & Wong, 2005).

According to Manoleas (1994) cultural competency cannot be achieved or measured. We cannot seek objectivity out of subjectivity. As Armour et al. (2006) state, there is no expert in cultural competency, and there is no "end stage" of cultural competency. Bourjolly et al. (2006) question whether cultural competency is linear or is a process of "not knowing to knowing." Williams (2006) defines cultural competency as a "developmental process."

Tervalon and Murray-Garcia (1998) use the term "cultural humility" in place of cultural competency. They define it as an attempt to accept "not knowing" and to admit that every client's situation is unique and needs to be explored. Cultural humility needs a lifetime of self-reflection. Social workers such as Dyche and Zayas (2001) also argue that

instead of trying to measure cultural competency, we need to replace it with cultural humility and empathy.

The color-blindness view respects universal views of humans; according to Gutmann (1994), problems arise when one culture is considered superior to others. However, the goal of cultural competency is not denying or ignoring individuals' self-determination or preferring one culture to another. According to Gutmann, self-determination should be respected based on the U.S. Declaration of Independence and the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Social work ethics emphasizes individual dignity and worth; respecting and considering cultures contradicts the primary value of social work. In addition, some cultures are oppressive toward some groups such as women; respecting these cultures in social work practice violates the social work ethic of self-worth. However, accepting cultural norms and values does not mean approving of a culture; even respect does not mean approval. Furthermore, exploring a client's culture in practice/service does not mean ignoring individual rights. The social work profession should focus on universal human rights, cultural components, and the no-harm approach. For instance, arranged marriage is common among some minority populations; if it does not harm couples and is not in conflict with human rights, should social workers intervene because it is not consistent with Western values? In many clinical cases, "cultural dialogue" among social workers, clients, and individuals who are familiar with a culture ("cultural allies") can create a "third culture," which includes the values of both cultures in a conflict situation (Parrott, 2009). Minorities have different values from the majority; however, viewing such differences in a positive way as a source of strength and empowerment can result in "constructive marginality."

Method

This study aims to use critical multicultarist theory to explore generalist social work scholars' views on the relationships among self-awareness, cultural competency, and teaching methods. Sixteen social work generalist educators with at least 3 years of teaching experience were selected by convenience sampling from 15 colleges and universities across the United States. In this research, the main method was conceptual interview, asking semistructured questions by phone. However, participants also sent articles, chapter books, and videos to explain their points of view on the research topic. This research was directed with the approval of the University of Utah Institutional Review Board (IRB).

In Table 2 is presented participants' demographic information such as gender, age, race and ethnicity, degree, teaching and practice experience, state, and region.

Research Questions

What are generalist social work educators' views on the relationship between self-awareness and cultural competency, and what methods do they use to teach cultural competency?

Text Materials Analysis

Slightly more than 1/3 of the participants provided 24 articles, one chapter book, one TED talk, three videos, and one image. I employed both content and relational analyses. I searched for concepts in each paragraph in the articles and the chapter book,

Table 2: Demographic Information for Participants from 15 U.S. Colleges and Universities

Gender	Age	Race & ethnicity	Degree	Teaching experience	Practice experience	State	Region (C& U)
Female:13 Male: 3	Range: 35–78 Majority: 48–68	Caucasian: 12 *Jewish-American: 2* *Arab: 1* *Middle Eastern: 1* African-American: 3 Mixed-race: 1	PhD: 10 DSW: 1 MSW 5	Range: 3–33 Majority: 18–27	Range: 4–45 Majority: 19–30	Kansas California Florida Massachusetts Minnesota West Virginia Texas	East: 8 West: 3 Midwest: 2 South: 1

considering the concepts' relationships with each other and with the research questions. I listened to the videos several times to identify concepts, all of which were related to discrimination and racism. From connecting and organizing all concepts, I identified five themes, which were integrated with the themes from the interviews: 1) How racism and discrimination affect others, 2) Marginalized people and nations are recognized by only a "single story," 3) Identifying aversive racism and inter-group contact (IGC) theories, 4) Current teaching methods support the status quo, and 5) Both the oppressors and the oppressed are responsible for making change.

Data Analysis

First, I read all 16 transcriptions. Second, I sent them to the participants for verification. Third, I carefully read each interview again several times. Fourth, I coded each sentence and categorized them based on the research questions and on their similarities. Fifth, by combining similar categories, I came up with some main subthemes. At this stage, I returned to the raw data again to see if I missed any data and to verify that my subthemes represented the raw data. From the subthemes, some main themes emerged. I sent the results to the participants for feedback.

It is important to note that the processes of collecting data and analyzing it were interrelated. When I was analyzing the data, I was still receiving notes and emails from the participants. Sometimes I asked them to clarify some of their ideas.

Results

Research Question 1: What Are Generalist Social Work Educators' Views on the Relationship between Self-Awareness and Cultural Competency?

In response to question one, all participants agreed that there is a relationship between self-awareness and cultural competence. However, participants had different views on the nature and direction of these relationships. Three themes were found: 1) The relationship is positive, and self-awareness leads to cultural competency. When there is an increase in self-awareness, cultural competency increases as well. 2) The relationship is positive, and cultural competency leads to self-awareness. 3) The relationship is negative, but it can change to a positive relationship if White culture and privilege are evaluated. An increase in self-awareness does not necessarily increase cultural competence, but it could if a deliberate decision were made to examine the majority culture and its privileges.

In the section below, each theme is elaborated upon and then supported by quotations from participants.

Theme 1: Positive Relationship in which Self-Awareness Leads to Cultural Competency

The relationship between self-awareness and cultural competency is positive. Self-awareness is a key concept in understanding cultural competence. When social work students try to be aware of their own feelings, thoughts, biases, and personal and cultural identities, they will be able to understand people from other backgrounds and cultures.

> Well, you cannot really be culturally competent if you don't have a level of self-awareness. (Sue)

> I think if someone doesn't know how to recognize things in themselves, it's going to limit their ability to be able to be competent, aware, whatever you want to call it, about another culture. (Cher)

Theme 2: Positive Relationship in which Cultural Competence Leads to Self-Awareness

The relationship between self-awareness and cultural competence is positive. Exploring diverse populations' cultures increases our self-awareness. We fear others only because we do not know them and are not curious enough to connect with them.

> [I teach self-awareness] by taking students to immigrant communities in Europe to look at new arrivals and the challenges that they are facing and to U.S. immigrant communities [and by] taking students to the U.S. border with Mexico to again look at the life experiences of those who are…in migration. And in the very experience of working with a diverse cohort, there is often the beginning of a very substantial change of attitude toward oneself. (Cher)

Theme 3: Negative Relationship between Self-Awareness and Cultural Competence as Long as White Culture and Privilege Are Not Evaluated

If cultural competence means learning and understanding other nations' cultures, the relationship between self-awareness and cultural competence is negative if it does not also include an evaluation of White cultures. White social workers claim the right to evaluate other nations and cultures, but they may not allow others to evaluate them. Within this view, White culture is seen as superior, and self-awareness and self-reflection will be based on this attitude. However, if White social workers and students evaluate their privilege, and if unprivileged populations are empowered, the relationship between

self-awareness and cultural competence could turn into a positive relationship.

> So I would say that, yeah, there is a relationship, it's just not a good one. (Lioyd)

> So there's not a discussion in cultural competencies, there's a lack of a discussion on Whiteness—what it means to be White—and lack of discussion on colonialism and cultural competency. And so how do you develop self-awareness in a country that is founded on colonialism? (Alan)

Research Question 2: What Methods do Generalist Social Work Scholars Use to Teach Cultural Competence?

Macrolevel social work educators (generalists) use various methods to teach cultural competency. Their teaching methods were organized under eight themes: 1) Presenting personal views on the concept of cultural competence, 2) Evaluating students and providing information, 3) Evaluating knowledge about cultural competence, 4) Exercising cultural competency in different environments, 5) Modeling, 6) Adding a "cultural eye" to social work practice, 7) Considering personal emotions in cultural practice, and 8) Awareness of culture-related ethics and policy.

Theme 1: Presenting Personal Views on the Concept of Cultural Competence

All participants criticized the concept of cultural competence. They believe that it is a limited concept and impossible to reach because there are many dissimilar cultures and individuals have different views within their own cultures. Cultural competence refers to people from different cultures; however, individuals with mixed cultures may be ignored. Cultural competence often is taught by incompetent social work educators. Also, when White scholars define cultural competence, minorities' feelings and opinions may

be neglected. Participants recommended new terms such as "cultural awareness" or "cultural humility." Cultural humility means respecting others and accepting "not knowing." It has different characteristics such as constant self-reflection, considering the role of power, and questioning institutional reliability. Another method is to ignore the term cultural competence and pay attention to students' strengths and growth.

> In…the U.S., unfortunately, you'll have people just because they have PhDs… go and teach cultural competence to other culture[s]. [For example], they teach cultural competency about Arabs. And when we ask them how much really you have been in relationship[s] with these people, they say almost nothing. They based their ideas…on…literature written by others. (Barbara)

Theme 2: Evaluating Students and Providing Information

Educators start teaching cultural competency by evaluating students' understanding of cultural competency, looking at not only students' responses but also noting what students do not address. Educators also present various materials on different views of cultural competency.

> I always do pretests. But when you look at how [students] handle an assessment [on diversity], they will avoid certain areas of discussion because it makes them uncomfortable. And so…we look at not just what they do but what they don't do. It's not just what open-ended statements, open-ended kinds of questions they use, but where they distract, where they pull away from a topic…cultural incompetence and insensitivity really come[ ] out. You see it." (Liz)

Theme 3: Evaluating Knowledge on Cultural Competence

Educators teach students about different cultures and discuss whether students like or dislike some cultural elements. Students also learn to evaluate their knowledge in

practice with multiple individuals from the same culture.

> It's good to know what the practices of a Catholic or a Muslim…might be because that would influence them….[W]e have to ask clients, so cultural competence has a lot to do with listening rather than labeling, listening to the individual talk about their own experience, what it means to them. So class and money and education can influence a person's filtering of their culture in practices and beliefs. So that's all part of assessment. So that's how we use it in practice. For example, a rich Muslim does not practice Islam the way a poor Muslim practices Islam. (Ida)

Theme 4: Exercising Cultural Competency in Different Environments

After learning and evaluating different cultures, students practice cultural competency in class through scenarios or role play. They also practice in real situations by interviewing culturally diverse individuals and working with minorities in practicum.

> Part of the assignment is to go to community agencies and to do interviews, field interviews, write papers. It could be as simple as the challenges of housing for newcomer communities where all the issues of prejudice, the language, children, the cuisine, and the smells in the house….[I]t is incredible how many issues can be raised just in dealing with something as basic as housing. (Alan)

Theme 5: Modeling

Educators believe that students learn more from a variety of methods and sources, and they model for students by talking about their own experiences and challenges. This way, educators normalize imperfection and struggles. They also invite knowledgeable minorities, as minority models, to talk about their cultures and personal life experience. Students learn from the direct source in this model

and also observe the power of minorities by seeing them in the role of expert.

> And the stranger becomes quickly an expert and a recognized authority by then as she talks about things that they do not know. Because she opens for them the life of the mosque, sharia law, helps the students to think about a patriarchal culture and a family-kinship culture that has very different values than those that they are taught in American education. And so by introducing them to a positive model, the diversity of expertise they meet in the classroom, I believe they become much more ready to deal with the diversity of the workplace as they experience it. I also think it's a profound opportunity for students to go and to explore the issues in [a] cross-cultural context. (Irma)

Theme 6: Adding a "Cultural Eye" to Social Work Practice

Educators help students to understand clients and their cultures by seeing the concepts of problem and help from clients' perspectives, respecting their cultures, asking pertinent questions, and empowering them by taking a nonexpert attitude.

> I have told students over and over again that clients are rich in life wisdom. It's not about how smart you are or having an answer. They have experience that is in life wisdom that the rest of us don't have. And a lot of time clients will share that, and they will honor you with that. And they will know when you are honoring them. So I think that really comes down to who you are as a human being. (Lou)

Theme 7: Considering Personal Emotions in Cultural Practice

The participants believe that it is necessary for students to look at their emotions when they work with diverse populations. If students feel irritated, they need to explore their feelings.

> I encourage students when they face a new situation that makes them uncomfortable…or challenges these feelings [to] stop, become self-reflective, and start asking

> themselves…"What is this feeling? Where is it coming from, and why is it there?" And [try] to get to the root of it so that they can understand whether it's a valid and worthy feeling…or whether it's something they feel uncomfortable enough to make a change in their worldview. And do they want to? A lot of times it's hard to challenge these negative thoughts and check and see if they're valid. If they're valid, then [students] may want to maintain them. If they're not valid, then [students] want to replace them with thoughts… or beliefs or feelings that are valid." (Amy)

Theme 8: Awareness of Culture-Related Ethics and Policy

Educators teach students social work ethics regarding culture and also invite them to be aware of their organizations' policies related to culture. They need to know if ethics and policy are in unison.

> Know about ethics and also how you have to operate professionally within the context of the law, in the policies in your agency. If you decide you might want to break a law because of a matter of conscience or go against a policy…you should really know what you're doing.…[I]n the practice setting you have to have a lot of ability to judge and understand what you hope to do and have…self-awareness about your behavior and what is your intention, what is your goal? (Leo)

General Themes

In general, the results indicate that there are two different perspectives in teaching cultural competency. One is based on multiculturalism and another on critical multiculturalism. From analyzing the data, two themes were recognized: 1) Understanding cultural competence through inclusion and 2) Understanding cultural competence through understanding racism.

Theme 1: Understanding Cultural Competence through Inclusion

Minorities are included in society. They need help to navigate their lives in a new environment and to blend into the mainstream culture. In this perspective, minorities' differences are embraced and respected. And with the process of inclusion, change occurs accordingly both in minorities' lives and in the majority's perspectives toward minorities.

> The best and most formative experiences that can be created to allow people to discover their common humanity and to work through their own personal prejudices are the ones that move people the most quickly to a more profoundly inclusive understanding and an appreciation of genuine difference. (Hana)

Theme 2: Understanding Cultural Competence through Understanding Racism

Educators teach about racism by explaining how it is rooted in U.S. history. They explain that racism is a common approach in society that also affects social work education. Power and privilege impact all aspects of individuals' lives, including those of minorities. Some educators are aware that current methods for teaching cultural competency support the status quo and that minorities have limited participation in the class, often trying to act White to gain acceptance. These educators teach about racism through intersectionality with feminist theory and help students understand how people have different identities that affect their lives. To explain intersectionality, one educator made a simple image, which is presented in Figure 1.

In this society, it is assumed that White men are powerful, successful, and reliable and White women are erotic and attractive. The rest are "others" and invisible. White

Figure 1: Explanation of Intersectionality

people's power allows them to have many characteristics, while the rest are recognized based on just one characteristic. For instance, if some whites are serial killers, all Whites are not labeled as serial killers, but this is not true for "others": Mexicans are illegal immigrants; Africans are poor. They have only a "single story." The single-story attitude creates discrimination. The participants are also aware that both the oppressor and the oppressed are responsible for changing racist attitudes.

> So that is how to create a single story: show a people as one thing, as only one thing, over and over again, and that is what they become. It is impossible to talk about the single story without talking about power. The consequence of the single story is this: It robs people's dignity. It makes our recognition of our equal humanity difficult. It emphasizes how we are different rather than how we are similar. When we reject the single story, when we realize that there is never a single story about any place, we regain a kind of paradise. (Sandy)

In order to address racism, teachers create a safe place for students, role play with them, and explain what factors in the U.S maintain racism. Educators also present minorities' voices and how humanity can be united despite our differences. Participants believe that people in the U.S. do not know each other and that if they connect, racism will be reduced. Racist attitudes are unconscious, normal, and socially constructed. According to the theories of aversive racism and IGC, if people from different races with the same status start to work on a common goal, they develop friendship, reducing racist attitudes. One of the participants has conducted a longitudinal study based on this theory and reported that it was successful. Successful means reducing racist views, not necessarily increasing social justice.

> Self-consciousness and self-awareness [are] key to being able to confront the oppressions that people in America have been raised to see as normal. That it's normal to be hostile to other groups of individuals and to see them as being beneath us.…[B]ecause our society is so enmeshed in these oppressions…it's very difficult…to be free of them and to really be culturally competent. I'm telling you! Those that really, really are, I commend them because it's very difficult in our society to get away from the prejudices and the biases that come up. (Ana)

Discussion

The first question was about the relationship between self-awareness and cultural competency. All participants emphasized this relationship, and the result was consistent with the literature review (Allen-Meares, 2007; Garcia & Soest, 2000; Schmitz et al., 2001). However, the participants added more details to this connection. They indicated that this relationship had two directions; one from self-awareness to cultural competence and another from cultural competence to self-awareness. They also mentioned that the relationship is negative if the White self is not evaluated. The approach of evaluating the White self is consistent with critical multiculturalist theory and will be elaborated upon later as well.

In response to question number two, regarding the methods used to teach cultural competency, all participants were concerned with the concept of cultural competence. Some became distressed at the researcher for using the concept of cultural competence in the interviews. They strongly believed that this term was inaccurate and limited. The participants introduced other terms such as cultural awareness, cultural safety, cultural humility, and so on, which is consistent with the literature review (Dyche & Zayas, 2001; Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998). The researcher recommends the term "cultural

attitude" as a replacement for the term "cultural competence." The justification for this choice is expanded later, in the discussion of educators' attitudes toward racism and discrimination.

According to the literature, all social workers are not aware of the significant role of cultural competency in social work education (Diggs, 1992; Lum, 2007). However, the results of the present research showed that all participants were aware of the important role of cultural competency, and most taught this concept in their classes (those who did not teach cultural competency taught about racism instead).

In general, macrolevel social work educators use various methods to address cultural competency. They pretest students, provide information from different views, and evaluate knowledge about different cultures. They evaluate cultures to see if some cultural elements bring harm to individuals or are consistent with human rights. They use experimental methods, and they also process related feelings. These findings comply with the literature findings (Kim & Lyons, 2003; Manese et al., 2001).

Feistein (2004) and Mezirow (2000) addressed cultural competency education through transformative learning. Participants in this research teach using transformative learning.

Participants had two different perspectives on cultural competency: *multiculturalism* and *critical multiculturalism.* Multiculturalism is concerned with how a society can treat immigrants equally—in politics, the economy, and education—and at the same time appreciate their differences (Abu-Laban, 2002). According to critical multiculturalism, White people need to look at themselves and their historical relationships with other nations and cultures (David Nylund, 2006). They need to start to

see themselves from others' viewpoints.

According to the Singleton (1994) study, some instructors do not discuss racism and discrimination at all, some do not discuss them in depth, and others address only some degrees of oppression. In this study, all participants were aware of racism in society, and they taught the concept. This study supports part of the Singleton study: that some educators do not discuss racism in depth, while others address only some degrees of oppression. According to the participants, racism is blended in our culture, in all layers of society and everyday life, which makes divesting from racism hard. This view supports Gladwell's (2005) ideas of the unconscious role of prejudices, meaning we do not select the attitudes that shape and predict our behaviors; we may even be unaware of their existence. This perspective also justifies Roysircar and Gill's (2010) ideas on racism. According to them, racism can be both explicit and implicit. The hidden racist perspective (implicit racism) is hard to recognize and evaluate. As outlined in the results section, the participant who conducted longitudinal research on IGC theory was aware of implicit racism and, before studying any group, normalized and depathologized the concept. Addressing implicit racism could be an improvement in studying racism; however, the researcher's concern is exploring racism by White people or by minorities who adopt a White mindset. The question is whether designing methods to reduce racism without including minorities is effective.

The main difference between participants was their level of interest and attitude toward racism and discrimination. Minority macrolevel social work educators had deeper interest in teaching about racism and discrimination. Only one White educator among the participants had similar interest in teaching these concepts. It appears that attitude has a

significant role in teaching about racism and discrimination. Some educators discussed racism in depth, and 1 educator addressed the history of racism and capitalism in relation to Indian-Americans, African-Americans, Chinese, and people of other races who were brought to this country, but none of participants discussed White and capitalist relationships with other nations and cultures. However, all 30 additional text materials provided by six educators were related to discrimination and racism. All generalist social workers were not concerned with discrimination and racism to the same degree, but some were deeply interested in this subject.

As mentioned in the literature review, the majority of social work clients are minorities, but the majority (86%) of social workers are White (Armour & Hammond, 2009; Family Violence Prevention Fund, 2005). It appears that minorities who come to the U.S. are aware of the relationship between their cultures and capitalism. However, those who provide services are not always aware of their own history in relation to other nations and cultures.

Limitations

The interviews were conducted by phone, and there was no face-to-face contact. Therefore, the researcher was not able to grasp participants' facial and behavioral reactions.

The study was conducted based on convenience and snowball sampling. The original plan was to select the same number of participants from different geographical locations in the U.S. (North, South, East, and West), but most of the participants came from universities and colleges in the Eastern U.S.

The main research method was interviewing, but participants were also encouraged to send materials that showed their views on the relationship between self-awareness and cultural competency. Some sent articles, chapter books, and videos. The richness of the information participants provided varied.

This study was voluntarily. Thus it does not include views of all educators who teach self-awareness and cultural competency.

Conclusion

All macrolevel social work educators (generalists) in this study were aware of or thought there was a significant relationship between self-awareness and cultural competency. However, they had different opinions on the nature of this relationship. All educators also believed that the term cultural competency is a misnomer.

Participants used various methods to teach cultural competency. They also helped students to evaluate their knowledge and feelings related to cross-cultural practice. They did not limit students' education to the classroom and allowed students to practice in real-life situations. The educators had concerns about students' effective practice of cultural competency in practicum.

In general, the scholars had two distinct opinions on teaching cultural competency. The first group believed that if White society accepts and celebrates differences, includes minorities in society, and increases interactions between minorities and Whites, we can conquer racism. In contrast, the second group believed that inclusion is a naïve solution. White society needs to see itself from others' eyes and analyze its past and present in relation to other nations and races.

Future Research

The results of this research indicate that there are two main views in cultural competency education: one based on multiculturalism (inclusion) and the other formed on critical multiculturalism (evaluating Whiteness). Future research could explore the effectiveness of the teaching methods built on these theories, the role of attitude in social work education, and methods that are effective in changing attitudes.

A result of this research showed that minority educators had more interest in critical multiculturalism than White scholars. The future research could explore this result more in depth.

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CHAPTER 4

A THEORETICAL MODEL OF CULTURAL COMPETENCY SEEN THROUGH THE LENS OF SELF-AWARENESS IN CLINICAL SOCIAL WORK

Abstract

There are a myriad of research studies on both self-awareness and cultural competency; however, the relationship between these two concepts has been less explored. The goals of this study were to explore this relationship and also clinical social work scholars' teaching methods on cultural competency. A total of 19 educators from various universities and colleges across the United States participated in this study, which used a phenomenological approach. The results indicated that all 19 educators recognized the significant role of self-awareness on cultural competency. Almost half of the participants did not connect with the concept of cultural competency and recommended a new concept. Clinical social work educators emphasized culture and emotion to teach cultural competency. Only 4 of them briefly addressed critical multiculturalism and the role of the oppressor-oppressed relationship in a clinical setting. Future research could explore reasons behind clinical social worker educators' avoidance of teaching about racism and cultural oppressor-oppressed relationships in clinical settings.

Introduction

One goal of this research was to explore cultural competency through the lens of self-awareness. Self-awareness is a professional skill that includes observing and reflecting on personal feelings, thoughts, and biases. Some researchers were aware of role of personal biases on cultural competency (Devore & Schlessinger, 1996). Others argued that the first step towards cultural competency is cultural awareness (Boyle & Springer, 2001; Dewees, 2001; Hendricks, 2003; Herlihy & Watson, 2003; Kwong, 2009; Lum, 2003; Petrovich & Lowe, 2005). Culture is part of self; therefore, cultural awareness cannot be separated from self-awareness. Self-awareness and cultural awareness are interrelated. Yan and Wong (2005) also indicated that a therapist's culture cannot be controlled; it can only be considered in the process of therapy. In the United States, especially, racism and discrimination are part of the mainstream culture (Allen-Meares, 2007; Garcia & Van Soest, 2000; Schmitz et al., 2001). Thus, exploring and evaluating culture should include these concepts. Gladwell (2005) discussed the role of unconscious discrimination in controlling thoughts and behaviors. This study attempted to investigate cultural competency by considering self-awareness and racism in relation to how clinical social work educators view and teach cultural competency.

Literature Review

The following literature review first explores culture, the role of culture in social work education, and social identity and social work education. Then it explores the definition of cultural competency, critical multiculturalist theory, the history of cultural

competency, research on cultural competency training, critiques of cultural competency, and ends with a review of cultural competency from a clinical perspective.

Culture

There is no single definition of culture. It has different definitions in different disciplines such as psychology, sociology, and anthropology (McAuliffe et al., 2008). Culture is a framework for understanding reality and establishing values, beliefs, and behaviors that shape the lives of individuals who share a common reality (Chung & Bemak, 2002; Nobles, 1990; Perry & Tate-Manning, 2006) and worldview. It is also a set of interrelated beliefs and assumptions about human, nature, the universe, and one's existence in the world (Koltok-Rivera, 2004).

Role of Culture in Social Work Education

Social work research and literature show that culture has a special effect on the ways people behave and cope with their problems (Yan & Wong, 2005). Culture is part of a person's self. Ignoring one's culture, consciously or unconsciously, could be harmful (Allen-Meares, 2007). If understanding and using the self is ignored in training programs, therapists will be unable to enter into the "client's system," which affects the whole process of therapy and may drive therapy to be a dominancy of therapeutic models or, in the worst scenario, just lecturing the client.

Therapists need to set their egos aside and acknowledge that they are experts in employing therapy techniques, not experts in a client's culture. During this process, it is normal for therapists to feel out of place and anxious.

Green (1999) suggests that social workers need to pay attention to how clients present their needs and limitations, be open to learning about cultural differences from clients, use cultural resources, and accept culture's role in human behavior. One part of clinical skill is building rapport. However, building trust could be different in a cross-cultural practice. For instance, exhibiting warm, outgoing behavior toward another person without knowing that person could be considered rude in another culture (Sheafor, Horejsi, & Horejsi, 1988). Gaining culturally specific knowledge about clients is necessary to meet clients where they are instead of making them fit within the therapist's culturally specific worldview. "Worldview" is an interconnected set of beliefs about the role and meaning of human existence in the world. An example of making clients fit within a therapist's worldview is judging minorities' mental health problems based on the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), which is based on a White worldview of mental health. Individuals see "reality" through their cultural lens because, as mentioned before, culture creates a "common reality" through shared values, beliefs, and behaviors (Chung & Bemak, 2002; Nobles, 1990).

Most mental health profession educators are "encapsulated" in "Eurocentric" points of views (Sue et al., 1996; Utsey, Bolden, & Brown, 2001). Individuals grow up and live with their own cultures. If they live within the boundaries of their own cultures and do not question their cultures' values, they live in a cultural capsule. Wrenn (1962) believes that therapists can "consciously" remove their cultural capsules. Individuals acculturate based on their race, religion, socioeconomic status, and so on. This process is not conscious, and individuals do not have any control over their "socialization." However, if therapists become more aware of their roles in the process of socialization,

they can open their cultural capsules (as cited in Roysircar & Gill, 2010, p. 159). "Decapsulation" means evaluating and changing or at least being aware of biases and racist beliefs.

Some researchers have indicated that recognizing cultural and ethnic similarities and then matching up therapists and clients based on these similarities is the best approach to reaching diverse populations (Chin, 1983; Gallegos, 1982; Lynch & Stein, 1987). However, other researchers have shown that due to the diversity within diverse groups—meaning diverse groups themselves are not uniform—knowledge about minorities' cultures and having a positive attitude toward them are more effective than focusing on cultural similarities (Atkinson, Furlong, Poston, 1986; Atkinson, Furlong, Poston, & Mercado, 1989; Tsang, Bogo, & George, 2003).

Social Identity and Social Work Education

Social identity is related to individuals' relationships with the social environment. Social identity includes a person's biases and discriminatory attitudes (Bender, Negi, & Fowler, 2010). Personal and social identities are interrelated; one's personal identity is shaped and shared by one's social identity. Part of social identity, such as religion, can be selected, and part can be enforced, such as being White in a White-dominant society.

Social identity determines a person's social location; however, awareness of social location does not necessarily lead a person to analyze power structures (Heron, 2005). By promoting certain social and cultural values, power has an implicit effect on individuals' gender, race, socioeconomic status, and identity (Davis, 2008; Dill &

Zambrana, 2009). For instance, individualism and competition are two essential cultural values that affect Euro-Americans' personal identities (Garran & Rozas, 2013).

Both personal and social identities have important roles in social work education, as exposure to various personal and social identities during practice is inevitable. Educators' and students' identities could be similar or opposite. Differences can serve as either advantages or disadvantages in the process of learning, depending on social work educators' and students' perspectives. Differences are advantages in education if there is no fear of conflict and if differences are celebrated. Differences can be disadvantages if diversity is not appreciated or if cultural dominancy is encouraged.

Definition of Cultural Competency

There is no single definition for either cultural competency or multicultural competency, and the terms are used interchangeably. Cultural competency has been defined as therapists' ability to incorporate cultural diversity within therapy sessions (Vera & Speight, 2003). Cultural competency refers also to therapists gaining the necessary knowledge, awareness, and skills to work effectively cross-culturally (Arredondo, 1998).

In the field of psychology, there is debate about cultural competency not having a clear definition (Betancourt & Lopez, 1993; Yee, Fairchild, Weizmann, & Wyatt, 1993). Psychologists claim that cultural competency includes cognitive terms such as race, gender, disability, and so forth (Lipson, 2007). It is difficult to describe the concept of cultural competency (Hansen, Arreloa-Rockwell, & Greene, 2000; Pope-Davis, Liu,

Toporek, & Brittan-Powell, 2001; Sue, 1998). Since the concept is abstract, it is hard to operationalize (Boyle & Springer, 2001; Kwong, 2009).

Critical Multiculturalist Theory

Critical multiculturalist theory was introduced by David Nylund (2006). This theory has four dimensions: 1) Understanding history through race and capitalism, 2) Understanding social work's relationship with the power struggle between White and other nations, 3) Understanding the relationship between the concepts of "White" and "other," and 4) Evaluating White power in both past and present. According to Nylund, social work cannot be apolitical, and students should understand that White power forced other nations into the White lifestyle as a common and normal way of living.

History of Cultural Competency

The term cultural competence was used by both Green (1982) in social work and Sue et al. (1982) in counseling psychology. They believed that therapists need to have special knowledge and abilities to assist minorities. Gradually, therapists used the term cultural competence more often, and it became common during the 1990s (Lopez-Humphreys, 2011; Miley et al., 2001; Switzer, Scholle, Johnson, & Kelleher, 1998; Weaver, 1998). Lum (1999) indicated that cultural competency should be evaluated by "outcomes that are observable and measurable and demonstrate effective multicultural practice."

Nowadays, cultural competency is included in the curricula of almost all mental health professional programs. However, it mostly includes studying other cultures, so it is

not clear whether this concept is being taught effectively (Carter-Black, 2007). Asamoah (1996) explained that importance of cultural competency is no longer debated, but effective teaching of cultural competency is the concern.

Research on Cultural Competency Training

Cultural competency has been an interesting research topic for myriad researchers recently (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Gambrill, 2001; Lum, 2011; Ponterotto et al., 2001); however, the majority of research has not been empirical.

Singleton's (1994) study of teaching about racism indicated that some educators do not teach about racism at all, some only touch on the concept, and none of them teach about racism in depth. Guy-Walls (2007) argued that racism could possibly be eliminated from social work programs.

In another study, Perry and Tate-Manning (2006) trained 42 students on cultural competency using myths, legends, and fairytales. First, the students identified the origin of a chosen cultural and historical story from their own culture and identified the cultural messages that they took from the story. Students then reflected on cultural internalization of the story and the ways this internalization affected their family relationship behaviors and social work practice with families. The results of this research showed how cultural myths influence workers' social identity and, as a result, impact their practice as an unrecognized bias.

Williams (2005) implemented a mixed-methods study of cultural competency training. The study participants were 100 social workers from a mental health services organization. Williams measured cultural competency with the Multicultural Counseling

Inventory (MCI). The results of the quantitative section of the research showed no difference between the control and experimental groups. However, the qualitative section of the research, which was conducted through semistructured interviews, indicated that social workers learned from the training and used their learned knowledge in practice. The minority social workers' scores on multicultural perspectives were higher than those of the rest of the group in both the experimental and control groups, which indicated that individuals' starting points in cultural competency training were different.

Critiques of Cultural Competency

Yan and Wong (2005) asked how social workers can control the influence of their culture if they are in their own cultural prisons. They pointed out that according to the cultural competency model, workers learn to be aware of their own and other cultures and use their professional selves to assist their clients. However, the authors asked what clients' roles are. Are clients passive individuals who are not able to adjust their cultures within the dominant culture?

Social workers are always under the influence of their own cultures (Mattison, 2000; Pilsecker, 1994) no matter how much they increase their self-awareness (Yan & Wong, 2005). McCarthy (1984) criticized the role of cultural awareness in cultural competency. He stated that it is assumed that workers can control their cultural influence in the process of service, but that their clients cannot; this idea of controlling cultural influence has created a "subject-object dichotomy" between worker and client**.** The cultural competency model fosters dominancy over clients with knowledge, skills, and awareness. According to McCarthy, this model does not consider social workers and

clients as equal human beings. Armour et al. (2006) argued that cultural competency is a lifelong process and that full cultural competency is impossible. Furlong and Wight (2011) discussed that cultural competency requires "curiosity of informed not knowing," a journey from "not knowing to knowing (Bourjolly et al., 2006), and using "the other" to reflect on our own behaviors, actions, ideals, and culture.

A newer term for cultural competency is cultural humility, which was introduced by Tervalon and Murray-Garcia (1998). They stated that there is no end point for cultural humility, and social workers need to constantly self-reflect. Cultural humility cannot be measured; it is about understanding others (Dyche & Zayas, 2001).

Multiculturalism defines cultural competency as understanding and respecting cultural differences. According to Abu-Laban (2002), this definition is idealistic; in reality, celebrating differences ends up maintaining the status quo in favor of mainstream culture.

Cultural Competency from Clinical Perspectives

Therapy cannot be value free, because therapists are under the influence of both personal and cultural experiences (Katz, 1985). In order to provide effective therapy for clients, therapists need to address clients' personal and social identities. Personal identity includes life experiences and unique personality traits. Social identity is how individuals connect to family, community, religion, and even history. Social identity is related to cultural competency (Eriksen, 2001; Hardiman & Jackson, 2007; Moffat & Miehls, 1999; Sensory & DiAngelo, 2012). Therapists need to consider both their own and clients'

social identities to determine their own and clients' advantages and disadvantages (Miller & Garran, 2008).

The role of culture in therapy has been ignored for decades at least in part due to the Eurocentric nature of psychotherapy. Eurocentrism is related to specific racist scientific views; for example, "philosophical research positions"—such as the ontology, epistemology, and axiology of Western mental health—may be rooted in racism (Utsey, Fisher, & Belvet, 2010). White researchers conceptualize knowledge, study knowledge, and judge and value knowledge based on a White understanding of knowledge; consequently, they could generalize this knowledge as a universal way of understanding. For instance, Burton et al. (2009) explain that Maslow's motivation theory is well known and accepted as universal but is just a prestigious White male psychologist's theory. Maslow knew how to play around with capitalism's individualism-dominant ideology. There is no empirical evidence that "self-actualization" is the highest level of human development.

Kelly and Sewell (1991) introduced a trialectic reasoning of "I-You-We" to approach cultural competency and criticize capitalism's individualistic values. "I" is related to personal identity. "I-You" is a relationship between one person and the other. "I-You-We" implies relationships among a group of people. In Western culture, the third section—"We"—is almost ignored. Due to the individualistic nature of Western culture, there are not many "We"-type relationships; social relationships are limited and not encouraged. Lacking a sense of community impacts individuals in a society; they become separated and lonely. Cushman (1995) described this loneliness as "empty self" (as cited in Muran, 2001, p. 6).

This ignorance of culture in therapy is not limited to psychotherapy; it is characteristic of all areas within human services, including social work. Nowadays, more educators believe that cultural competency theories and techniques should be added to the curricula of mental health professional programs (Utsey, Fisher, & Belvet, 2010). According to Marsella and Pedersen (2004), even when mental health professionals recognize that old rules no longer apply, it is not easy to replace those rules. Many practitioners still do not know when, where, and how to address cultural issues in the therapeutic relationship (Cardemil & Battle, 2003; Hargrove & Sedlacek, 1997; Hays, 2001; Isaacs, Huang, Hernandez, & Echo-Hawk, 2005). Society shapes and constructs a person's knowledge of "self" and others. We normalize, marginalize, and pathologize behaviors based on our constructed values and attitudes.

Foster (1998, 1999) emphasized the effects of cultural differences on the client-therapist relationship, a concept called "cultural counter-transference" (Bula, 1999; Garcia & Bregoli, 2000; Greene, Jensen, & Jones, 1996; Mishne, 2002; Shonfeld-Ringel, 2001, as cited in Mandell, 2007, p. 10). In cultural competence conceptualization, it is assumed that cultural competence is related only to the therapist, whereas it is the therapist-client system that creates cultural competence (M. Bogo, personal communication, April 14, 2008, as cited in Lee, 2010).

In her narrative about confronting a client, Kumsa (2007) stated that the therapist-client relationship is not just a meeting of two different individual selves, but also a meeting of two "historical and collective" selves. When, for instance, two historically oppressed and oppressor selves (client and therapist) meet, empathy, courage, and empowerment do not build an alliance until both therapist and client are aware of the

historical context in which their alliance is constructed. Both power and systematic oppression affect clients, therapists, and the relationship between them. It is expected that social workers obtain knowledge and respect diversity, and this requires that social workers understand the systems and power that affect social identity (Garran & Rozas, 2013). Lum (1999) emphasized the role of historical oppression and racism on workers' cultural identity; this role should be recognized before a therapist begins developing multiculturalist skills. Sensory and DiAngelo (2012) discussed that we can have both oppressor and oppressed positions at once in cross-cultural situations. Whatever the configuration, this client-therapist history affects the therapy process.

We see and hear others through our own mental filters, meaning we do not see others the way they are; we see them the way we are (Quote Investigator, 2014). Therefore, awareness helps a therapist to be sensitive to this blindness. Only with practice do sensitivity and understanding of others grow and flourish.

Effective therapists consider all aspects of clients' social identities (Miller & Garran, 2008).This understanding and consideration can assist therapists to promote social justice in practice (Garran & Rozas, 2013). A culturally competent therapist understands and utilizes a client's cultural values in the treatment plan or service delivery (Fong & Furuto, 2001).

Literature Review Conclusion and Research Questions

As this literature review has shown, researchers have explored the concepts of self-awareness and cultural competency to some degree; however, they have not contemplated this relationship in depth. This study aimed to explore this gap. Recently,

researchers have considered the role of culture in therapy; but the roles of racism, cultural countertransference, and cultural oppressor-oppressive relationships in therapy have seldom been examined. This study explored these concepts under the umbrella of cultural competency. The research questions addressed in this study include:

1. How do clinical social work educators explain the relationship between self-awareness and cultural competency?
2. How do these scholars teach the concept of cultural competency?

Methodology and Method

Research Design

Qualitative research explores reality through people's experiences and their interpretations of reality. It focuses on the meaning of human experience. Qualitative investigation has many forms, one of which is the phenomenological approach. This approach is concerned with interpreting individuals' experiences in the ways they live those experiences (Creswell, 2013). The aim of this research was to investigate clinical social workers' experiences of cultural competency in relation to self-awareness.

Collecting Data and Sampling

All social work masters' programs were identified using the online Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) directory. A list of academics was created, and qualified educators were contacted by email and phone. Nineteen clinical social work scholars were selected by convenience sampling from 17 social work colleges and universities in the United States. The participants had a minimum of 3 years of teaching experience in

practice courses. The data were collected by conducting 30-minute semistructured conceptual interviews. Three open-ended questions were asked. For practical and feasibility reasons, interviews were not conducted face to face, but by phone. The sessions were audio recorded. Table 3 outlines participants' demographic information in several categories.

This research was granted an exemption from the University of Utah's Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Data Analysis

The process of qualitative research is not linear, and all steps are interwoven. The 19 interviews were recorded and transcribed. The transcriptions were submitted to the educators for verification. The data were coded line by line. Similar codes were organized into categories. In order to understand participants' experiences, meaning units were formed. A meaning unit is the interpretation of a participant's "lived experience."

These meaning units were compared with each other, and, from these comparisons, new categories were formed. The categories from both the coding data and meaning units were combined to form subthemes. From these subthemes, distinct themes later emerged. After the researcher identified overarching categories, the raw data were read again to see if the findings were closely related to the raw data. The results were sent to the participants and research committee members for review and feedback.

Table 3: Demographic Information on Participants from 17 Colleges and Universities in the U.S.

Gender	**Age**	**Race & ethnicity**	**Degree**	**Teaching experience**	**Practice experience**	**State**	**Region (C& U)**
Female: 15 Male: 4	Range: 33–71 Majority: 56–63	Caucasian: 14 *Jewish- American: 2* *Hispanic: 2* African-American: 2 Mixed-race: 2 Asian: 1	PhD: 15 MSW: 4	Range: 4–27 Majority: 15–25	Range: 7–45 Majority: 23–33	Kansas California Florida Massachusetts Minnesota New York Pennsylvania Virginia West Virginia	East:12 West: 3 Midwest: 1 North:1

Results

Research Question 1: How Do Clinical Social Work Educators Explain the Relationship between Self-Awareness and Cultural Competency?

Participants suggested that there is a relationship between self-awareness and cultural competency and an increase in self-awareness increases cultural competency. From processing the data, two themes were identified: 1) Personal motivation and 2) Breaking resistance to self-awareness through exposure to other cultures.

Theme 1: Personal Motivation

Participants believed that self-awareness is necessary for cultural competency. Self-awareness helps students to understand that they are under the influence of their own personal and cultural biases. However, students need to have motivation to evaluate their biases. Students from the dominant culture may not necessarily see the need to evaluate the own culture. Biases are rooted in emotions. Therefore, students need to evaluate their own personal emotions toward other peoples and cultures. Accepting one's discriminatory emotions helps one to evaluate those emotions genuinely. Exploring both personal and social identities can promote cultural competency. Two participants illustrated these ideas:

> Well, if I am not self-aware, I'm not going to be other-aware. (Mary)

> I think that if you're in the majority, you don't have to know about the minority. There's no incentive for you to have to learn about someone that is different from you, because all the resources and support you need is there. (Alexa)

Theme 2: Breaking Resistance to Self-Awareness through Exposure to Other Cultures

Participants mentioned that usually people do not want to see the true "self," but exposure to other cultures drives students to increase their self-awareness. Without exposure to people from other cultures, we are not able to see "self"; observing these differences leads students to reevaluate their own "self."

> I think presenting…self-awareness with cultural differences is almost an easier process for me than just getting someone to really think about their own self-awareness, because nobody wants to be real truthful about themselves, me included. (Linda)

> You learn a lot about yourself when you put yourself in a situation that is culturally different. (Lisa)

Research Question 2: How Do Clinical Social Work Scholars Teach the Concept of Cultural Competency?

In response to question two, clinical social workers presented different views and methods of teaching the concept of cultural competency. Five themes were identified from the responses: 1) Inadequacy of the concept of cultural competency, 2) Exposure to different theories and practicing cultural competency, 3) Exploring culture, 4) Teaching about racism and discrimination, and 5) Exploring their own and others' emotions.

Theme 1: Inadequacy of the Concept of Cultural Competency

Almost half of the participants (9 out of 19) believed that cultural competency is a weak term. Participants preferred terms such as cultural intelligence, cultural responsiveness, cultural sensitivity, and cultural humility. They explained that culture is changing and is not fixed; therefore, competency is not possible. Information about

cultures increases knowledge, but it does not necessarily make us self-aware. Cultural humility was mentioned as an appropriate term, because it questions therapists, not clients. Educators also mentioned that cultural competency is a lifelong process, not linear; it does not happen suddenly, and it is different for each person.

> Cultural competence is a poor term. I don't use that term in the classroom. (Celia)
>
> I like cultural awareness or cultural intelligence. (Matt)
>
> Cultural humility has everything to do with self-awareness.…[C]ultural humility is when you actually, instead of assessing them…assess[] yourself as you're with them. What is coming up for me? What am I thinking as I am speaking to this person of a different race, religion, culture because of what's been told to me? What's going on inside of me that's making me respond the way I am right now? And that's cultural humility, where you're sort of taking the moment of how this person is expressing all of who they are, their whole personhood in front of us. (Locus)

Theme 2: Exposure to Different Theories and Practicing Cultural Competency

All clinical social work scholars teach cultural competency by presenting different theories and perspectives. For instance, they present the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) perspective. They use cultural competency theories and related stages. They explain theories such as Norton's dual perspective. According to this theory, there are two main system types: sustaining and nurturing systems. These systems are different for minorities.

Educators also explain that minorities might have a different understanding of time, nature, family life, and so on.

Clinical social worker educators use different methods to assist students in practicing cultural competency, such as sharing vignettes, presenting case examples, facilitating role-play, and encouraging journal writing. They also try to expose students to other cultures through study abroad. The present study found that diversity manifests itself in the classrooms at universities in the eastern U.S., but students in the Midwest have less exposure to minority populations. Practicum is another opportunity for students to practice their learned skills; however, according to educators, it depends on the field practicum instructors' capabilities and attitudes. Sometimes, students are placed in agencies that do not work with minority populations.

> I use [Florence Rockwood] Kluckhohn's values orientations, and so…we would talk about…relationships with time. It's not that I'm lazy because I'm late. It's because I have a different relationship with time, because there are things that I value more than time. In other words…if I bump into a friend who is in need, I'll try to value that more than just getting to my appointment…at 10:30. (Lydia)

> I like to get this circle that has a bunch of triangles in it, so slices of the pie. And they're titled…sexual orientation, race, gender, physical ability, socioeconomic, geography, religion, all those things. You know, there are a bunch of pieces of the pie. I ask [students] about their gender, race, and…how is it that [they] think those characteristics shaped [their] experience of life? (Zoe)

> In [practicum] it is depend[ent] on the field practicum [instructor's] interest and ability. (Jena)

Theme 3: Exploring Culture

From looking into data about the participants' views on teaching culture, four stages were identified: 1) Exploring the concept of culture: Teaching culture through

exploring cultural narratives and people's mindsets and worldviews. Culture changes, therefore cultural competency is not possible. Culture is flexible and is shaped by history, economics, and social backgrounds. 2) Exploring the mainstream culture: Recognizing the dominant culture (even if it is one's own culture) and the way it affects individuals; specifically in the U.S., considering that White culture is not the only culture. 3) Exploring the relationships between the mainstream culture and other cultures: Considering the historical relationship between White culture and others, such as Native American culture. 4) Exploring other cultures: Paying attention to both positive and negative elements of cultures and comparing them with human rights and the social work code of ethics.

> Cultural narratives are important to every culture. As the book *Among Cultures: The Challenge of Communication* explains: Narratives teach us the way the world works, our place in the world, how to act in the world, how to evaluate what goes on in the world. (Abi)

> Assuming that America is a White country—I see my family is White, my neighbors are White—then I see people from another country, and it is frightening. (David)

> If I'm [an] American Indian social worker, it's really important for me to understand the historic relationship the Native community had with social workers…so that I don't just assume that because I'm Native I'm acceptable [to] the community. (Lou)

Theme 4: Teaching about Racism and Discrimination

Four out of 19 participants taught racism and discrimination concepts in their classes. They addressed the history of racism in the United States and helped students to understand microaggression and why some groups are better off than others. They also

discussed current racial and discrimination problems in country. Participants were also aware that some students and professors view oppression as an abstract concept, not as an everyday lived experience.

Two of this group of 4 educators emphasized the effect of oppression on clients in therapeutic settings or at an organizational level:

> We take people through a step-by-step process of understanding historical oppression and marginalization and nuances like microaggressions so that we are helping people become attuned to the historical nature of oppression and privilege. So that they start to understand the bigger picture of why…a particular group might be doing better in society and why other groups might be doing worse in society, and then you help them to understand what microaggressions are. (Ida)

> I talk about power differences in therapy and White privilege in my advanced classes, not elementary classes. (Matt)

Theme 5: Exploring Own and Others' Emotions

The majority of participants addressed the importance of emotions in cultural competency to some degree. From the data, six stages toward cultural competency or other awareness were categorized, as presented in Figure 2.

Follow are 3 participants' explanations of their methods of teaching cultural competency:

> First of all, helping them understand what [emotion is]. (David)

> I take students to Italy. And I found the students, not all of them, but certainly some if not half of them, can be really impatient with people from a different cultural background. (Rita)

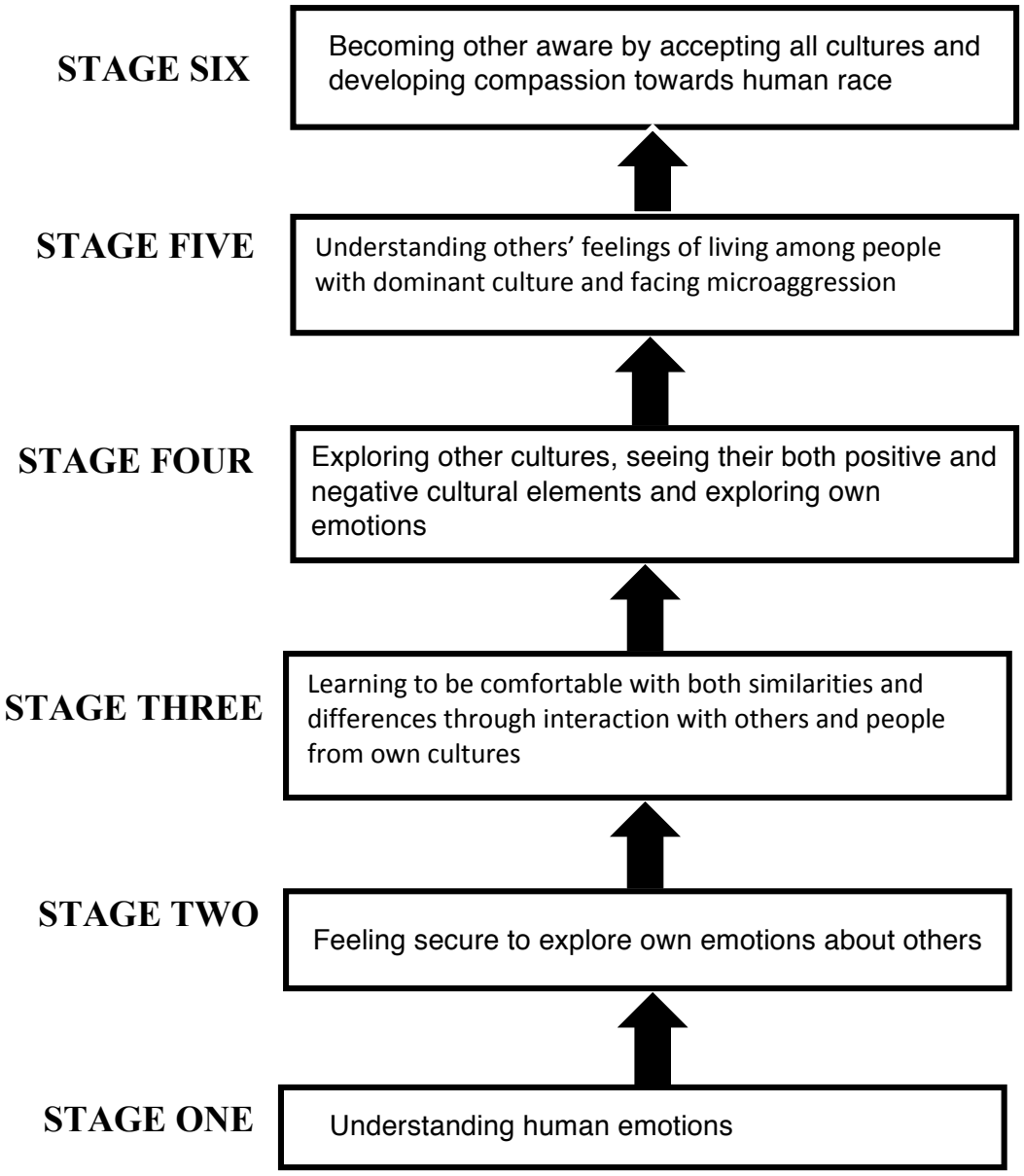

Figure 2: Stages toward Cultural Competency

> We are teaching about the dominant culture and…looking at what it is like to be different in the context of the dominant culture. (Rita)

Discussion

In response the first research question, all participants indicated that self-awareness is a key concept in cultural competency. However, they mentioned that students need to have motivation for self-awareness and that interacting with people from other cultures could increase motivation.

Almost half of the participants, 9 out of 19, were concerned with the term cultural competency. They believed that this term is limiting. The participants introduced other terms such as cultural awareness, cultural intelligence, cultural humility, and so on, which supports the literature (Dyche & Zayas, 2001; Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998). However, not all participants were uncomfortable with the term cultural competency. In response to the second research question, almost all educators in this study were responsive to cultural competency and taught their students about this concept. This result supports the literature, which revealed that today more educators believe that cultural competency should be added to social work education (Utsey, Fisher, & Belvet, 2010).

All 19 participants were aware of the role of culture in therapy. They taught the concept of culture and helped students understand their own personal and social identities prior to exploring clients' identities. This result is consistent with the literature findings that therapists need to consider both their own and their clients' personal and social identities (Miller & Garran, 2008). The participants also believed that culture changes;

therefore, cultural competency is not possible. Participants also mentioned that cultural competency is a lifelong process, not linear; it does not happen suddenly, and it evolves. This result is consistent with the literature. Armour et al. (2006) argued that cultural competency is a lifelong process and that absolute cultural competency is impossible. Bourjolly et al. (2006) discussed that cultural competency is a journey from "not knowing to knowing."

The Singleton study (1944) revealed that some educators do not teach about racism and some just address racism on the surface. In the present study, only 4 out of 19 participating clinical social work educators considered racism and discrimination in their classes. This result supports Singleton's study. Teaching about racism and discrimination is not a concern of the majority (15 out of 19) of clinical social work educators in this research. These 15 educators discussed culture in terms of gender, religion, ethnicity, and so on. The 4 educators who addressed racism and oppression merely touched on the critical multiculturalist approach. According to this approach, Whites need to look at themselves and their historical relationships with other nations and cultures (David Nylund, 2006). They also need to start to see themselves from others' views. None of those 4 educators discussed racism in depth. They just addressed the history of racism and capitalism in relation to Native Americans. None of the participants discussed White power and capitalism and White society's relationships with other peoples and cultures.

According to the literature, culture affects the therapist-client relationship in terms of "cultural counter-transference" (Bula, 1999; Garcia & Bregoli, 2000; Greene, Jensen, & Jones, 1996; Mishne, 2002; Shonfeld-Ringel, 2001, as cited in Mandell, 2007, p. 10). According to Lum (1999) and Kumsa (2007), the historically oppressed and oppressor

selves of the therapists and clients should be addressed in therapy. Only 2 of 19 clinical social work educators discussed the necessity of addressing therapist-client cultures in an oppressed-oppressor context. It is not clear if educators are unaware of the importance of this relationship or if they avoid teaching the concept. As Guy-Walls (2007) mentioned, if scholars do not disclose discrimination, the subject of racism could be eliminated from social work programs.

The clinical social work educators in the present research strongly focused on using human emotions in teaching cultural competency. If educators are aware of the role that emotions play in connecting to others, perhaps emotion could be used to address racism in clinical social work.

Limitations

In this study, interaction between the researcher and participants was through phone and email; thus, the benefits of direct and face-to-face contact were missing. Interviews were conducted once, due to the participants' time scarcity. This lack of participant engagement could have limited the results. The researcher tried to address this limitation through several email contacts with the participants to access more information.

The majority of social work colleges across the country were invited to participate in this research; however, most colleges that responded to this invitation are located in the eastern U.S. This unintentional regional imbalance could have limited the results of this research.

Conclusion

All participants in this study emphasized the role of self-awareness in cultural competency. They were also aware that students' levels of motivation for self-evaluation vary and often students from the mainstream culture do not feel a need to be self-aware. Participants believed that interacting with other cultures could affect students' motivations to evaluate self.

Only half of the participants believed that cultural competency is an inadequate term. Some educators, however, recommended other terms such as cultural intelligence, cultural humility, and cultural responsiveness. They believed that culture is not static; therefore, cultural competency is not possible. They also mentioned that just obtaining information about other cultures cannot increase cultural understanding. They emphasized the role of students' willingness to evaluate their own cultures. They believed that accepting their own emotions helped students to explore their biases.

Participants used various methods to teach cultural competency. They provided students with different perspectives and theories. They also assisted them in practicing cultural competency both in the class and in society. In the classroom setting, they used vignettes, case examples, role-play, and writing journals. For practicing in society, they tried to expose students to minorities through study abroad and encouraged students to use their cultural knowledge in practicum. However, participants had concerns about field practicum instructors' interest and abilities in promoting cultural competency.

All participants focused on culture and emotions to teach cultural competency. They believed that emotions are the center of cultural competency education. Participants also helped students to understand emotions and provided a safe place for them to talk

about their feelings about others and to explore their own cultures, other cultures, and the relationship between mainstream culture and other cultures.

In general, the results of this research indicated that all participants were aware of the role of culture in social work education. However, considering that only 4 out of 19 participants taught about racism and discrimination and that just two of those 4 considered oppressor-oppressed clinical relationships, it appears we are only at the beginning of including discussions about racism and discrimination in teaching and therapy.

Future Research

The results of this study showed that the role of emotions is significant in teaching cultural competency. Future research could be focused on how important emotion is and how it should be taught in social work education.

The results of this study also indicated that the majority of clinical social work educators are concerned neither with teaching about racism and discrimination to address cultural competency nor with exploring oppressor-oppressed dynamics in therapeutic relationships. Future research could explore these results in depth.

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CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Introduction

In this research project, I explored social work educators' views on the interrelationship between self-awareness and cultural competency. I conducted a qualitative study to explore social work faculties' experiences of two phenomena: self-awareness and cultural competency. From several methods of qualitative research, a phenomenological approach was selected as a suitable research method for this study. In this approach, both the similarities among and the uniqueness of individuals' lived experiences are validated and considered. I interviewed 35 social work educators from 27 colleges of social work.

Methods

Participants were social work educators who had at least 3 years' experience teaching practice courses or diversity-related courses. The original goal was to invite an equal number of male and female educators and an equal number of White and minority educators. However, due to the convenience method of sampling and educators' skewed demographical distribution (with a disproportionate number of White females in the social work profession), the gender and racial groups were not equally represented. The

process of recruiting the participants was 7 months long, and the loss of participants necessitated repeating the recruiting process three times. Some respondents simply withdrew from the study without explanation, and others were unable to participate for personal reasons. The participants themselves assisted me in developing alternative recruitment strategies. For example, when I sent one general email to 10 educators at one university, 1 educator replied: "I am not qualified for participating in this research, but I have a suggestion for you. If you personalize the email and use first names, you will be more likely to catch educators' attention." Another educator suggested mentioning to educators that their research interests drove me to contact them. This dynamic process made this tiring endeavor interesting and increased my motivation and enthusiasm.

The primary method of data-collection was the use of conceptual interview with six open-ended questions. The length of each interview was between 60 and 90 minutes. Six of the participants also provided a total of 24 additional materials that made the data richer. These data were analyzed using both content and relational methods. The abundance of data led to a gradual and intensive data-analysis process.

Results

This study evaluated generalist and clinical social work educators' perspectives on self-awareness, cultural competency, and the relationships between these two concepts. The results were organized into three articles. In this chapter, the aim is to discuss these three studies at a high level, considering how the studies' results affect the social work profession.

Through data analysis, some strong trends and themes emerged. All participants believed that self-awareness is a complex term and hard to define and teach, and many complimented me for being brave enough to explore this concept. In defining self-awareness, the participants focused on the relationships between the internal and external worlds, spirituality, and the state of self-awareness. The results indicated that the outset of self-awareness takes place in childhood or early adulthood, and there is a relationship between resilience and self-awareness. In teaching self-awareness, participants focus on human emotions.

Both generalist and clinical social work educators—also called macrolevel and microlevel social work scholars, respectively—believed that there is a significant relationship between self-awareness and cultural competency. The majority of educators recognized cultural competency as an inadequate term and believed competency in culture to be impossible. In teaching cultural competency, generalist educators focused more on teaching about racism than clinical educators did. Nonetheless, none of the educators taught about racism in depth, and they often preferred teaching about diversity rather than discrimination. Both generalist and clinical educators used different methods to teach cultural competence, but clinical educators focused more on human emotions rather than on diversity or racism.

This study explored cultural competency through self-awareness using a qualitative framework. Although some researchers emphasized the significant role of self-awareness in understanding cultural competence, no empirical research had been done on this topic.

In the interviews for article one, participants had difficulties defining self-awareness. The immediate response of the majority of participants was "Oh my gosh." Although impromptu response was an intentional part of the study, some criticized me for not sending the questions in advance! The educators also had difficultly explaining the qualities of a self-aware individual. It appears that they not only had difficulty with experiencing self-awareness but also with expressing their experiences. However, all believed that starting the self-awareness journey is hard. But when it is started, it continues—there is no endpoint for this journey.

Implications for Social Work Teaching and Practice

In this study, macrolevel and microlevel social work educators' perspectives were evaluated separately. Social workers often practice at both the micro level and the macro level; therefore, dividing them into two categories was hard. Ultimately, the division was based on participants' primary research and teaching interests. Generalist social work scholars generally had more interest in social justice and were more aware of racism in society than clinical social work scholars were.

This difference raises the question of what the reasons behind this dichotomy might be. Social justice is a key social work ethic. Why is it not thus a clinical social work educators' concern? It appears that generalist social work educators pay attention to social problems at a micro level. That is why generalists are comfortable with using micro skills. My hypothesis is that clinical social workers tend to think about individual problems from a micro perspective without being concerned with the macro lens. I believe that social work educators need to think more about this division between macro

and micro perspectives toward psychosocial problems and perhaps find ways to bridge the divide.

In general, White social work educators support the status quo more; this means that these educators may focus on including minorities in society and helping them to join the mainstream culture. In contrast, minority social work scholars are more concerned with evaluating Whiteness than with evaluating minorities. The result of this research shows that White educators are so used to evaluating and making decisions for minorities that even though they do not support the status quo and racism, they still aim to bring change and decrease racism without including minorities' perspectives.

If we as social scientists are truly interested in reducing racism in society, we need to include minorities in the entire process. If we continue to come up with new theories, interpret them, apply the theories, and then praise ourselves for our amazing thoughts and projects, we may be primarily satisfying our own egos and privileges.

Areas of Future Social Work Research

According to the participants, research on self-awareness is difficult. It appears that the research road towards self-awareness is not paved. Therefore, there are plenty of opportunities for motivated social work researchers to explore this area.

Regarding the results of the first article, future research could focus on a few different themes, such as, the relationship between personality traits and developing self-awareness, exploring self-awareness from a human development standpoint, the correlation between resilience and self-awareness, and the role of emotions in teaching self-awareness.

The results of the second study indicate that there are two main views in cultural competency education, one based on multiculturalism and the other on critical multiculturalism. Future research could explore the effectiveness of teaching methods built on these theories, the role of attitude in social work education, and effective methods for changing attitudes.

The results of the third study indicate that the majority of clinical social work educators are not interested in addressing racism and discrimination in cultural competency education in general or addressing oppressor-oppressed therapeutic relationships in particular. Future research could explore these results in depth.

The results of both the first and third articles show that the role of emotions is significant in teaching both self-awareness and cultural competency. Future research could be focused on how important emotions are and the ways in which the concept of emotion should be taught in social work education.

The focus of this research was on social work educators. Self-awareness and cultural competency could also be explored from the perspective of professional social work practitioners or social work clients.

APPENDIX

INTERVIEW SCRIPT

Hello! Is this …….? How are you doing today?

This is ……. We emailed/spoke last week about having me interview you. Is now a good time for that interview?

Wonderful! I really appreciate your time to complete this interview with me. It should take us about 60–90 minutes to complete.

Did you receive the consent cover letter I emailed you? Do you have any questions for me?

I have six questions to ask you today. There is no right or wrong answer to these questions. I'm interested in your own personal experience and methods of teaching.

1-How do you define self-awareness?

2-Tell me about your personal experience. How was your journey toward self-awareness?

3- How do you teach about self-awareness to help students understand the concept?

3.1 Would you provide me a step-by-step description of your process?

4- Is there a relationship between self-awareness and culture competence?

4.1 How do you describe this relationship?

5- How do you teach cultural competence to help students understand the concept?

5.1 Would you provide me a step-by-step description of your process?

6- How do you teach your students to use the cultural competency concept in practice?

Thank you so much for your time! The information you have provided is very helpful. If I have questions in the future, may I contact you again?