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Ana D. Harold
Major Professor's Signature

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EVALUATING CULTURAL COMPETENCE IN MSW STUDENTS

By

Judith Ravenhorst Meerman

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ABSTRACT

EVALUATING CULTURAL COMPETENCE IN MSW STUDENTS

By

Judith Ravenhorst-Meerman

Within the field of social work, cultural diversity has primarily been associated with race and ethnicity, but diversity is taking on a broader meaning to include the sociocultural experiences of people of different genders, social classes, religious and spiritual beliefs, sexual orientations, ages, and physical and mental abilities. Formal Standards measuring cultural competence in social work practice and education were adopted by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) in 2001. The NASW Cultural Competence Standards brought definition to cultural competence, yet there was a void in studies measuring student and professional social work cultural competence in the areas of knowledge, attitudes, and skills (NASW, 2001).

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of the level of cultural competence of students entering a Master of Social Work (MSW) program, and to evaluate if there is a change in the reported level of cultural competence after one semester of MSW education. The pre-test and post-test questionnaire administered, allowed each student the opportunity to rate their personal level of cultural competence. Each survey question was crafted to evaluate student cultural competence as it is defined in the NASW Cultural Competence Standards (2001). This study explored change in the level of reported cultural competence after one semester of classroom and field education, and sought to gain an understanding from students on where growth in cultural competence occurred. The results of the study also explored whether traditional

demographic characteristics (age, gender, sexual orientation, race and ethnicity, religion, and geographic location of nuclear family) were related to a higher level of reported cultural competence.

Sixty-five subjects, 58 women and 7 men, between the ages of 21 and 67 participated in both the pre and post tests which consisted of 34 Likert scale questions, an open ended question asking students to define culture, to evaluate self-reported levels of cultural competence and demographic information. Twenty-one students participated in the two focus groups. During the focus groups, participants were asked to explain where in their first semester of education, growth occurred in their level of cultural competence.

Results indicated that students reported a statistically significant level in their growth of cultural competence after their first semester of MSW education than they reported as incoming MSW students. Results indicate that students entering the MSW program after completing a BSW program including field education report a statistically significant level of cultural competence than students who enter the program with an undergraduate degree other than social work, hence not completing undergraduate field education or the required social work baccalaureate courses. The results did not demonstrate a statistically significant higher difference in students enrolled in field education in their first semester of their MSW education in any of the ten NASW Cultural Competence Standards.

The results of this study have implications for social work education, the Council of Social Work Education (CSWE), the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), and social work practice.

To all social workers as we learn from each other in our diverse world.

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INTRODUCTION

Introduction and Problem Statement

For more than 30 years, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) and the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) have issued mandates which require that pre-professional and practicing social workers be able to sensitively and competently serve culturally and racially diverse populations. Pre-professional and practicing social workers are expected to exhibit personal awareness of their background, issues and biases that will enhance their ability to serve others, and skills to provide services within the context of the client's culture (Colvin-Burque, Davis-Maye & Zugazaga, 2007). Having an understanding of how an individual's culture influences assumptions about the world and ways of categorizing "reality" is paramount to cultural competence within social work practice (Greene, Jensen, & Jones, 1996). As social work educators focus on cultural competence within social work curricula, they seek to understand which classroom and field education curricula; will best advance growth in student cultural competence. The questions remain, how culturally competent are incoming social work students and where does growth in cultural competence occur over the course of their education?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of the level of cultural competence of students entering a Master of Social Work (MSW) program, and to evaluate if there is a change in the reported level of cultural competence after one semester of MSW education. The pre-test and post-test questionnaire administered, allowed each student the opportunity to rate his/her personal level of cultural competence. Each questionnaire question was crafted to evaluate student cultural competence as it is defined in the NASW Cultural Competence Standards (2001). This study explores change in the level of reported cultural competence after one semester of classroom and field education, and gained an understanding from students regarding where growth in cultural competence occurred. The results of the study also explored whether traditional demographic characteristics (age, gender, sexual orientation, race and ethnicity, religion, and geographic location of nuclear family) are related to a higher level of reported cultural competence.

Rationale for the Study

Formal Standards measuring cultural competence in social work practice and education were adopted by the NASW in 2001. The NASW Cultural Competence Standards brought definition to cultural competence. Yet in 2005, NASW stated that there was a void in studies measuring student and professional social work cultural competence in the areas of knowledge, attitudes, and skills. To provide understanding of the knowledge, attitudes, and skills of students in the area of cultural competence, this study has crafted questions for each of the 10 Standards within the NASW Cultural

Competence Standards, and provided an opportunity for students to rate themselves prior to entering MSW education and again after one semester of classroom and field education. In addition, this study provided a voice for students to identify where in their first semester of MSW education growth in cultural competence occurred.

The purpose of this study was to contribute to the body of knowledge on cultural competence within social work education and practice, and to assist social work educators and students in better understanding the NASW Cultural Competence Standards. In addition, this study provides a new tool to assist in measuring cultural competence as it is described in the NASW Cultural Competence Standards.

Research Questions

The overarching questions for this study were: How culturally competent are students entering an MSW program? Have students experienced growth in cultural competence during their first semester of MSW education? What areas of MSW education do students identify as areas where cultural competence growth occurred?

Specifically, the following research questions guided the inquiry:

1. How do students entering a MSW program rate their level of cultural competence?
2. Does the student report a higher level of cultural competence after one semester of MSW education?
3. Are there specific areas of social work practice in which students report a higher level of cultural competence over other areas of social work practice (identified in the NASW Cultural Competence Standards)?

4. What areas of MSW education do students identify as areas where cultural competence growth occurred?

5. What is the relationship between student-reported cultural competence and the variables of age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, geographical location of upbringing, previous education, social work volunteerism, social work employment and previous education and training in diversity?

Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Reported level of cultural competence will differ by demographic characteristics.

- 1.1 Reported level of cultural competence will differ by student age.
- 1.2 Reported level of cultural competence will differ by student's social work employment experience.
- 1.3 Reported level of cultural competence will differ by student's volunteer experience.
- 1.4 Reported level of cultural competence will differ if the student has a Bachelor's of Social Work (BSW).
- 1.5 Reported level of cultural competence will differ if students have taken courses and had trainings in diversity/cultural competence.

Hypothesis 2: A higher level of cultural competence will be reported by students who have completed one semester of field education in the MSW program than by students who have just taken classes.

Hypothesis 3: A higher level of cultural competence will be reported by students with diverse demographic variables.

- 3.1 A higher level of cultural competence will be reported by students that identify as coming from a non-White race.
- 3.2 A higher level of cultural competence will be reported by students who self-identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender (LGBT).

3.3 A higher level of cultural competence will be reported by students who self-identify as an individual with a disability.

3.4 A higher level of cultural competence will be reported by students who report having no religion or a religion other than Christian.

3.5 A higher level of cultural competence will be reported by students who report coming from an urban inner city, international, military geographic location or report being an international student.

Summary

Chapter I contains the introduction and problem statement, and the description and rationale for the study. The research questions and hypotheses were introduced. Chapter II provides a review of the historical and current literature pertaining to this study. The research methodology is described in Chapter III, and the findings are presented in Chapter IV. Chapter V contains a summary of the study, major findings, and conclusions drawn from the findings, implications, and recommendations.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Cultural competence within social work

It is important to begin by looking at the context of culturally competent practice within social work. A historical snapshot shows helping professionals working with individuals like themselves and professionals working with individuals different than they (NASW, 2001).

The Settlement House Movement in the late 1800's in large cities such as Boston, New York, and Chicago focused on meeting the needs of immigrants, which included housing, jobs and daycare. Although the primary goal was to provide rapid assimilation into American society for newly arrived white ethnic groups, there were also numerous social action initiatives designed to reduce the hardships and exploitation experienced by immigrants. In Chicago, Jane Addams was a front runner in recognizing the cultural richness of immigrant groups and celebrating their contribution to society (Addams, 1910). In addition to immigrants coming to the United States, there was a move of other individuals from rural areas to the city. Urbanization triggered the departures of many farmers for the cities where industry was growing. Both urbanization and industrialization were generating irreversible changes in the very fabric of the country's life. Whether migrating from Europe, coming from rural to city, or moving North as an African American, the country was changing (Schlesinger, 2005).

As the diverse groups found themselves in the chaotic new changing times,

a host of new social problems emerged. High on the list was the negative treatment of newcomers by long time residents. Conflicts arose over jobs and living arrangements, and a major concern was whether people who were different from one another could adapt to each other. Could people who were different from one another live side by side in comfort, or would there be continuous conflict? Would the United States embrace all people and provide equal opportunities and services to those in need? These questions would drive individual, community, and governmental responses to difference (Schlesinger, 2005).

Although diversity is often promoted as one of the most valued attributes of the United States, history shows that the entry of selected populations and the development of immigration policies, excluded or limited immigration from geographic areas of the world populated by non-Europeans, which raised concerns. One policy that stands out is the Immigration Act of 1917, which, in addition to including a literacy test for entry, barred all immigrants, irrespective of literacy, from virtually all of Asia, with the exception of Japan and parts of China (Gerstle, 2001). The atmosphere that drove policy implementation was a prevailing belief in the superiority of the White American society and influenced education and social life. James Lowen (1995) in *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong* highlights that textbooks often did not think to include Blacks, Hispanics, or Asians in their concept of America. Education about religions did not include much beyond the Christian paradigm, totally ignoring non-Christian European religions, and non-European and Eastern religions. By 1950, the entry of large numbers of refugees from civil wars around the world in the more recent past dramatically changed the demographic composition of the U.S. population. The

demographic compositions within the growing population led to discussions amongst helping professionals (counselors, psychologists, and social workers) in the area of practice principles with diverse population (Austin, 1986).

Although concerted efforts to assist diverse individuals and groups in need occurred throughout history (Addams, 1910; Austin, 1986; Gordan, 1964; Guzzetta, 1997), the helping professions collectively (including counselors, psychologists, and social workers) began to address diversity by addressing competent therapeutic interventions in the late 1960's and early 1970's. A concern arose regarding the level of training being offered to professionals to increase their effectiveness with a growing multicultural client population. Counselors, psychologists, and social workers urged their professional bodies to develop Standards to delineate the characteristics of a culturally skilled counselor in the areas of beliefs and attitudes, knowledge, and skills (Sue, Arrendondo, & McDavis, 1992).

A decade later, counseling and psychology professionals developed standards that evolved into culturally sensitive counseling characteristics focused on the attitudes, knowledge, and skills one would need to develop self-awareness, client understanding, and appropriate interventions (Sue, Arredondo & McDavis, 1992). This model soon included specific actions a practitioner would need to take in order to acquire culturally competent practice skills. Evolution of the cultural competence construct has moved from not only competence with individuals, but also groups and communities. Underlying the attitudes, knowledge, and skills as the foundation to client systems of all sizes, the counseling and psychology professionals began to develop awareness around

personal and organizational dynamics of racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression (Sue & Sue, 1999).

Social workers, on the other hand, first came from a beliefs and attitudes sphere of cultural competence which evaluated self-awareness of one's own cultural roots and biases a practitioner might hold about those who have cultural differences (Van De Bergh & Crisp, 2004). The importance of knowledge was soon added to cultural competence, which included an understanding of the impact of societal structures in the treatment of minorities, as well as recognizing cultural groups, values, beliefs, and norms. In addition, knowledge looked at barriers that specific minority groups might experience in trying to access mental health and other services. Next, skills were examined, looking at therapeutic skills which included developing verbal and nonverbal interactions, and culturally sensitive approaches (Van De Bergh & Crisp, 2004).

Culturally competent practice in social work was soon defined through competency in attitudes, knowledge, and skills. Social work has continued to build on this approach by elaborating on service delivery in a variety of contexts including child welfare, transracial adoptions, juvenile justice, and work with various ethnic communities (Van De Bergh & Crisp, 2004). Ensuring that the constructs of attitudes, knowledge, and skills impacted service delivery became paramount to the social work profession which made infusing diversity and cultural competence into the educational curriculum throughout social work programs essential.

Council on Social Work Education

The first training school for social work was a summer program that opened in 1898 at the New York City Charity Organization Society (Austin, 1986). In 1904, the society established the New York School of Philanthropy, which offered an eight-month instructional program. Mary Richmond, a historical social work practitioner and teacher, advocated that although many learned by doing, theory needed to be at the base of learning. As a result, Richmond sought out permanent instructors to facilitate the work of students in both theory and practice which was the forerunner to field education (Austin, 1986).

The history of field instruction begins with the Charity Organization Societies at the end of the nineteenth century, when educators used the apprenticeship model to teach social work. Through the use of the apprenticeship model, students were exposed to issues such as poverty, employment, and hunger, the conditions in which clients lived. This paradigm began through the networking that emerged from the early organizational efforts of social work education. Although seen as beneficial, by the end of the nineteenth century, social work was moving away from the apprenticeship model (Royse, 1996). A change again occurred around 1940 when a didactic approach dominated social work education. This approach emphasized students' cognitive development where theoretical knowledge directed practice. Professors expected students to deduce practice approaches from the classroom learning and translate theories into functional behaviors in the field (Tolson & Kopp, 1988).

Educational Standards for social work education were refined in the 1940's and 1950's, and fieldwork became known as field instruction. A subcommittee on field work for the American Association of Schools and Social Work (AASSW), the forerunner of

CSWE, took the position in 1940-1941 that the classroom provided the theory for social work practice, but field teaching was just as important as the classroom. AASSW advocated for equally qualified teachers in field practice, outlining definite criteria for the selection of field agencies. The high standards for the student field experience recommended by AASSW were carried into standards established by CSWE, which continue today (Reynolds, 1965).

CSWE, formed in 1952, established and revised standards for institutions granting degrees in social work. The Standards established by CSWE required a clear plan for the organization, implementation, and evaluation of both in-class work and the field practicum. The 1982 Curriculum Policy Statement further emphasized academic control of educational experiences and the assurance that classroom and field instruction were strongly linked (Austin, 1986).

Today, accreditation is a system for recognizing educational institutions and professional programs affiliated with those institutions, as having a level of performance, integrity, and quality that entitles them to the confidence of the educational community and the public it serves. The Commission on Accreditation (Commission) of the Council on Social Work Education has established standards, and is authorized to accredit baccalaureate and master's degree programs in social work education in the United States. The accreditation review process provides professional judgments on the quality of a social work education program. These judgments are based on applying the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) promulgated by the Commission on Educational Policy and the Commission on Accreditation (EPAS, 2003).

In the early 1970's, structural changes began to occur within social work education and the CSWE. In 1970, the Commission on Minority Groups was created with the responsibility to work for the development of specialized curricular materials dealing with ethnic minority populations. In 1972, CSWE expanded its administrative group, the House of Delegates, to provide for three representatives of each of five minority groups. Under this provision, ethnic minority faculty members had a planned voice in the future direction of CSWE and social work education (Austin, 1986).

But, diversifying racially did not address the needs of other people groups. Throughout the 1970's, numerous concerns were expressed about the position of women in social work education. Although the majority of students were women, the majority of tenured faculty and graduate deans were men. There was also a concern about the extent to which traditional assumptions about family structure, and the role of women within the family, dominated curriculum content. In 1975, the Council established a Commission on the Role and Status of Women in Social Work Education that provided a voice for women in social work education and forum for discussions to take place (Austin, 1986).

Another change came in 1982, the Council appointed a Lesbian/Gay Commission to examine the teaching of social work practice as it related to issues of sexual orientation. The 1982 Curriculum Policy Statement (CPS), under the heading "Special Populations," also called for the explicit inclusion of curricular content dealing with issues affecting gay men and lesbians, as well as content dealing with specialized issues affecting minorities of color and women (Austin, 1986). Since this development, CSWE has renamed the L/G Commission, the Council on Sexual Orientation and Gender

Expression (CSOGE), where areas of advocacy, faculty and curriculum development, mentorship, leadership promotion, and activities are evaluated (CSWE, 2007).

Many organizational changes occurred within CSWE to address the diversity of individuals within the social work profession, and educating students to practice social work within diverse populations was at the core of CSWE's policy Standards. These changes continued into the curricula of each program.

Cultural Competence within Social Work Curriculum

Prior to the 1970's, CSWE addressed the issues of racial and ethnic diversity within the educational environment by recruiting diverse students and faculty, providing sensitivity training to social work students and faculty, and by including diversity content within social work curricula. Schools emphasized a dual perspective using the concept that all people are part of two systems: the larger societal system and their immediate environment (Norton, 1978). Solomon (1976) defined empowerment "as facilitating clients' connection with their own power and then being empowered by the very act of reaching across cultural barriers." (p.6) Gallegos (1982) provided the first conceptualizations of ethnic competence as a "set of procedures and activities to be used in acquiring culturally relevant insights into the problems of diverse clients and the means of applying such insights to the development of intervention strategies that are culturally appropriate for these clients." (p.4) Although not clearly defined, attempts to clarify cross cultural interactions within the profession of social work were being discussed within the educational setting. As social work education continued to evolve, culturally competent practice continued to grow.

The current structure of social work curriculum under the EPAS requires all accredited social work programs to provide documentation on eight areas of foundation content including values and ethics, diversity, populations-at-risk, social and economic justice, human behavior and the social environment, social welfare policy and services, social work practice, research, and field education. The EPAS mandate that programs are to present curriculum content as an integrated, coherent whole of relevant knowledge, theories, and skills from a conceptual framework identified and implemented by the individual programs (CSWE, 2001; Educational Policy, Sec. 3, and Accreditation Standards, Sec. 2). Programs must also show compliance with diversity standards during the initial accreditation and reaccreditation process by providing a commitment to diversity in the mission of the program, program objectives, course objectives, assignments, and pedagogy to ensure each program is compliant.

Human Behavior and the Social Environment Content

As articulated in the EPAS, it is important for all accredited social work programs to provide integration of "cultural competence into all aspects of social work education" (EPAS, 2002, p. 31). As central to social work education core curricula, Human Behavior and the Social Environment (HBSE) is fundamental to the education of social workers and is social work education's theory course/sequence. HBSE is where we expect students to attain essential theoretical content for social work practice and to be introduced to the application and evaluation of that theoretical content. Norton (1978) states that HBSE content is critical for both practice and policy: "HBSE courses bear an enormous responsibility to develop and impart valid and comprehensive information"

(p.11). This is especially important in the development of a multicultural knowledge base necessary for culturally competent practice.

In the HBSE curriculum, theoretical frameworks are chosen to help understand and explain human behavior. In many models of the organization and presentation of HBSE texts, human behavior is usually explained through the lifespan development model, which expounds upon theories that are based on an individual's development. The theories typically come from a Western or European perspective. Empowerment theory, strengths perspective, critical theory, and ecological models of person-in-environment are used to broaden the theoretical framework base and ensure students are taught theories that impact practice from a broad context (Fong, 1999).

The realities of rapidly expanding information necessary to deliver HBSE knowledge and theories require faculty and students to engage in a wide variety of processes including knowledge search, discovery, creation, evaluation, and application of the knowledge, values and skills of social work. This foundational course is important in the role of integrating and challenging students to think critically about theory-based culturally competent practice in all areas of social work (Fong, 1999).

Norton, a frontrunner in providing a cultural framework in social work education, conceptualized a dual perspective taking a major step in incorporating substantive content throughout the curriculum on both dominant culture, and the cultural realities of diverse persons. Norton provides a dual perspective as the conscious and systematic process of perceiving, understanding, and comparing simultaneously the values, attitudes, and behavior of the larger societal system with those of the client's immediate family and community system....It requires substantive knowledge and empathic appreciation of both

majority societal system and minority client system, as well as a conscious awareness of the social worker's own attitudes and values. (1978, p.3)

Norton's (1978) and Chestang's (1976) perspectives provide biculturalism and traditional/alternative perspectives on HBSE. Both scholars described the complexities of living in two cultural environments at once, one often experienced as hostile but necessary for attaining many of the material necessities of life - "the world of the larger society"- the sustaining environment; the other, a nurturing community essential for providing emotional support, cultural values, family relationships, and supportive institutions as well as self-realization and dignity to its members - the nurturing environment (Chestang, 1976, pp. 70-71).

Present-day publishing continues to push toward a increasingly dual perspective in HBSE. Logres (1997), in his article *Is it feasible to teach HBSE from a strengths perspective, in contrast to one emphasizing limitations or weaknesses?* suggests "we need a complex view of human behavior, not a rose-colored, simplistic one" (p.23). He states we must chart a new course for the future organization and delivery of HBSE content recognizing both the neglect and guidance from the past. A dual perspective is respectful of the complexity of living and surviving in two worlds and, therefore, a more sophisticated perspective needs to be incorporated into social work curricula to contrast the monoculture approaches from past years.

Policy Content

Also central to social work education core curricula is social policy content. The actual content and degree to which a multicultural diversity framework is included varies from program to program. However, social work policy curricula educators must present

a range of policy models while continuing on to provide examples of how institutional, group, and individual policies impact all clients, highlighting the oppressed and disenfranchised client. Curricular frameworks should include critical attention to multicultural diversity throughout each step of the process. A significant competence area is the ability to critically analyze social policy. Various issues and policies are provided for students to analyze and evaluate from a human diversity perspective (Zuniga, 1999).

In March of 1998, a Social Policy Work Group of CSWE met to discuss diversity content within social work policy courses. CSWE's Summit and Task Force on Multicultural Social Work Education called for "specific examples with respect to how to make operational the best practice methods (which infuse diversity content)". The work group of CSWE indicated the strong need to provide a means for "advocating and expanding multicultural content in social policy areas." (p.55) By March of 1999, during the annual CSWE Summit and Task Force on Multicultural Social Work Education, social policy educators presented specific suggestions to provide support for faculty teaching within the policy curriculum sequence (Takahashi, 2004).

First, according to the Summit, values, beliefs, and assumptions must be studied, analyzed, and applied to all areas of social policy competence areas. A program addressing diversity in its curriculum must show how social policy curriculum includes a thorough study of underlying values, beliefs, and assumptions, and teaches an understanding of their significant force in any policy decision making processes. Throughout the social policy curriculum, values, beliefs, and assumptions must be

studied for students to understand how they influence, frame, and shape social policy and the social policy process. (Zuniga, 1999).

Next, political ideologies, alignments, systems, and structures must be studied and applied to all areas of social policy. Political ideologies are important to study, as Baradat (1997) explains, since "ideologies are among the major tools used by modern governments to mobilize the masses" (p.2). He states that there are at least five properties:

> Ideology is first and foremost a political term.... Second, ideology consists of a view of the present and vision of the future....One of the understanding features of an ideology is its offer of hope. Third, ideology is action-oriented...It gives specific directions about the steps that must be taken to attain this goal. Fourth, ideology is directed toward the masses. Finally, because ideologies are direct at the masses, they are usually couched in fairly simple terms that can be understood by ordinary people. (p.9)

Policy contexts must also be identified, analyzed, and assessed in terms of their significance. The context of practice is important in all areas of social work education. In the area of social policy, educators must fully address historical, political, economic, social, cultural, and legal contexts and how they relate to the policy-making process and policy impacts. Each identified context should address the terms of its applications to significance and impact on multicultural diverse populations (Zuniga, 1999).

Ethics, justice, and equity must be infused throughout all policy content areas. Social work educators are encouraged to infuse applications and analyses of ethics, justice and equity principles throughout all areas of social policy studies. Attention should be given to access to services, equity of process and results, human rights, and civil and

constitutional rights. The ethics, justice, and equity should be explained within the context of the various codes of ethics, including the NASW *Code of Ethics* (1999) (Zuniga, 1999).

As a result, to be culturally competent while analyzing and understanding social policy, one must have knowledge and understanding of power and control. Power and control theories must be addressed and applied to all areas of social policy. According to Wartenberg (1990), "Power is one of the central phenomena of human social life" (p.9). Often power has to do with influence and control at the individual level, group level, organizational level, and institutional level. It is important that within social work education that culture and cultural competence is discussed within the policy arena (Takahashi, 2004).

A range of social policy models must be studied in terms of their implications for and applications to diverse populations. Dye, (2002) states, "a model is a simplified representation of some aspect of the real world" (p.11). He continues

> that conceptual models for policy should simplify and clarify; our thinking about politics and public policy, identify important aspects of policy problems, help us to communicate with each other by focusing on essential features of political life; direct our efforts to understand public policy better by suggesting what is important and what is unimportant; and, suggest explanations for public policy and predict its consequences (p.11).

Policy frameworks must include critical attention to multicultural diversity throughout each step of the process. A significant competence area is the ability to analyze social policy. Various frameworks for analysis are available, but many either do not address human diversity factors or they do so to a limited degree. Providing a

framework and analysis process that includes sensitivity to diverse populations is essential as students within social work programs must be introduced and taught analysis as a social work skill that promotes advocacy (Takahashi, 2004).

Change orientations and approaches must be incorporated into policy so students have the ability to translate knowledge into action. Social work educators should work with students to identify a range of action-oriented strategies that will be effective in promoting change. While putting knowledge into action, social workers should know and understand areas that are stumbling blocks to change, particularly ones that affect movement toward breaking down disparities and inequities. Educators should ensure this is part of the policy curriculum (Takahashi, 2004).

Research Content

Another area within social work curricula is social work research. While the literature on social work education has paid increasing attention to how multiculturalism might impact social work practice (Schlesinger & Devore, 1995) and to HBSE curricula (Green, 1994; Queralt, 1996), much less space has been devoted to contemplating how a commitment to diversity and justice might alter how we teach social work research methods (Ewalt, 1994). Some might argue that, aside from testing the validity and reliability of measures and constructs across cultural groups, scientific inquiry has little to do with the "politics" of multiculturalism and justice. Psychometric and construct validity issues often do come into play in multicultural research, however, what is suggested is that taking seriously the profession's twin commitments to honoring cultural

diversity and addressing social injustice can have more profound implications for how we perform and teach social inquiry (Uehara, 1996).

A valid suggestion is to adopt a critical multicultural framework which suggests five major content themes within social work research curricula. First, are the uses of critical perspectives to better understand culture, within social work research? A crucial task of transformative multicultural research curriculum is to show problem issues that have been overlooked in the area of culture and cultural studies. At times within social work, culture is conceived as a neutral and static analytic category, with little acknowledgement of the political and historical context within which cultural relationships among groups is structured and perpetuated. It is for this reason that social work education provides the framework for culture within the historical and political context (Uehara, Sohng, Nagda, Erera, & Yamashiro, 2004).

Critical multicultural inquiry occurs through a social process that is essentially dialectic and dialogic. The task of research education is not to produce research technicians with good dialogic skills, but rather to educate justice activists, highly skilled in intergroup dialogue, with good technical skills. Thus, in contrast to more traditional social work research curricula, a transformative multicultural curriculum treats the capacity to engage in intergroup dialogues as core research competency (Uehara, Sohng, Nagda, Erera, & Yamashiro, 2004).

Participatory action research is also a suggested practice within multicultural research. Conventionally, relationships within the research enterprise are hierarchically structured, with the research directing the exchange and controlling knowledge production. The power of the researcher in directing and controlling knowledge

production must be looked at. The power relations that exist in the researcher-subject relationship reveals not a simple hierarchy, but a complex power relationship created around expertise, knowledge, and science. In a power sensitive and dialogic process, research reconfigures relations between the researcher and subject through participatory democracy in the research process (Gaventa, 1988; Hall, 1981). If power is about who effectively makes decisions, and if knowledge is linked to power, then who controls the process of inquiry?

Antidiscrimination and anti-oppression inquiries provide an introduction of critical culture theories in social work research curriculum and prepare students to rethink research from a critical multicultural perspective. Specifically, such content can help research students move beyond study questions primarily focused on understanding the culture of others toward questions primarily aimed at addressing oppression in its numerous, tangible forms and manifestations. To refine skills in intergroup dialogue, social work students must be introduced to the range of theories, studies, and methods relevant to formulating and conducting anti-oppression research. In developing this content, social work research educators are fortunate to be able to draw upon helpful case examples and increasingly sophisticated empirical methods while teaching students. Strengthening the link between social inquiry and social action is a critical educational task which shows students the link between critical, participatory action research and social change. Some critical theorists would argue that by challenging existing ways of viewing the world, critical inquiry itself constitutes social change. Others suggest that critical inquiry creates such a forceful picture of current injustices that action is compelled (Uehara, Sohng, Nagda, Erera, & Yamashiro, 2004).

Field Education

Social work field education is the unique opportunity for students to integrate theory learned in the classroom into practice in a social service practice setting. The integration of social work educational requirements and field-based skill acquisition is the result of a close interaction between social work faculty and a qualified field practicum instructor who can facilitate student learning and development (VanSoest, 2004). Field education has the potential to provide unique opportunities for students to integrate theory and practice in the development of practice competencies, including cultural competencies. While integrating cultural competent content within field education curricula, the process of infusion can also represent some of the greatest challenges for professional social work education to attempt to develop an effective multicultural curriculum that reaches into the practicum setting.

An integrated educational framework provides a way to successfully achieve the professional mandates of CSWE and the NASW Code of Ethics in the area of cultural competence within field education. Based on Gil (1998), the two-pronged goal would be to prepare social workers to provide culturally competent and nonoppressive services while addressing oppressive and unjust systems, and working toward nonoppressive and just alternatives. Gil suggests a coherent framework for multicultural field curriculum is one that addresses historical content from all groups that include people of color, women, people who identify as gay/lesbian/bisexual, people with disabilities, and people distinguished by social class, age, nationality, and religion. It is proposed that an educational field framework integrates cultural diversity and social justice curriculum content by addressing 12 principles which fall under four main themes. The four main

themes are racism and oppression, multiple identities and oppression, culturally competent practice, and social change (VanSoest, 2004).

While integrating a multicultural framework within social work field education, it is important for field educators to look at the issues students face within field education. Because students in field are in actual practice situations, multicultural issues can arise in any of the various aspects of the field practicum, including field instruction, supervision of students, placement sites, client systems, and many others (VanSoest, 2004). In addition, it is important to carry the multicultural framework into curriculum assignments within the field seminar such as learning contracts, research and policy assignments, and personal student journaling (VanSoest, 2004).

Students should be prepared to practice within a diverse society because of the multicultural curricula taught within CSWE accredited programs. With a curriculum foundation that rests on the NASW *Code of Ethics,* social work students are prepared to be members of a professional body of social workers and practice as culturally competent social workers.

National Association of Social Workers

The NASW was established in 1955 through the consolidation of the following seven organizations: American Association of Social Workers (AASW), American Association of Psychiatric Social Workers (AAPSW), American Association of Group Workers (AAGW), Association for the Study of Community Organization (ASCO), American Association of Medical Social Workers (AAMSW), National Association of School Social Workers (NASSW), and Social Work Research Group (SWRG). The

NASW is the largest membership organization of professional social workers in the world, with 150,000 members. NASW's primary functions include promoting the professional development of its members, establishing and maintaining professional standards of practice, advancing sound social policies, and providing services that protect its members and enhance their professional status. The Association has also developed and adopted the NASW *Code of Ethics* and other generalized and specialized practice standards (NASW, 2007).

The NASW *Code of Ethics* is intended to serve as a guide to the everyday professional conduct of social workers. This *Code* includes four sections. The first Section, "Preamble," summarizes the social work profession's mission and core values. The second section, "Purpose of the NASW *Code of Ethics*," provides an overview of the *Code*'s main functions and a brief guide for dealing with ethical issues or dilemmas in social work practice. The third section, "Ethical Principles," presents broad ethical principles, based on social work's core values that inform social work practice. The final section, "Ethical Standards," includes specific ethical standards to guide social workers' conduct and to provide a basis for adjudication (NASW, 2007).

Cultural competence and diversity of practice are supported within the *NASW Code of Ethics.* The Preamble to the current NASW *Code of Ethics* begins by stating: "The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty." The Code goes on to say, "Social workers are sensitive to cultural and ethnic diversity, and

strive to end discrimination, oppression, poverty, and other forms of social injustice" (NASW, 2000, p. 1). The following will show the areas within the *Code of Ethics* that address cultural competence. Culture is mentioned in two ethical Standards:

Value: Social Justice

Ethical Principle: Social workers challenge social injustice.

This means social workers' social change efforts seek to promote sensitivity to and knowledge about oppression and cultural and ethnic diversity. Examples of culturally competent practice in the Code can be seen in Values and Ethical principles: (NASW, 2000)

Value: Dignity and Worth of the Person.

Ethical Principle: Social Workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person.

This value states that social workers treat each person in a caring and respectful fashion, mindful of individual difference, and cultural and ethnic diversity (NASW, 2000).

The word competence is used to imply having the capacity to function effectively within the context of culturally integrated patterns of human behavior defined by the group.

In the *Code of Ethics*, competence is discussed in several ways. First as a value of the profession:

Value: Competence

Ethical Principle: Social Workers practice within their areas of competence and development, and embrace their professional expertise.

This value encourages social workers to continually strive to increase their professional knowledge and skills, and to apply them in practice. Social workers should aspire to contribute to the knowledge base of the profession (NASW, 2000).

Second, competence is discussed as an ethical Standard:

1.04 Competence

Social workers should provide services and represent themselves as competent only within the boundaries of their education, training, license, certification, consultation received, supervised experience, or other relevant professional experience. Social workers should provide services in substantive areas, or use intervention techniques or approaches that are new to them only after engaging in appropriate study, training, consultation, and supervision from people who are competent in those interventions or techniques (NASW, 2000).

NASW instructs social work practitioners that when generally recognized overall standards do not exist with respect to an emerging area of practice, social workers should exercise careful judgment and take responsible steps (including appropriate education, research, training, consultation, and supervision) to ensure the cultural competence of their work and to protect clients from harm. Noting that cultural competence is never fully realized, achieved, or completed, it is important that social workers embrace cultural competence as a lifelong process. In addition to client-worker interaction, cultural competence is important within the supervision process. Supervisors and workers should have the expectation that cultural competence is an ongoing learning process integral and central to daily supervision (NASW, 2000).

In support of cultural competence in social work practice, NASW documents five essential elements that contribute to a system's ability to become more culturally competent. The system should 1) value diversity; 2) have the capacity for cultural self-assessment; 3) be conscious of the dynamics inherent when cultures interact; 4) institutionalize cultural knowledge; and, 5) develop programs and services that reflect an understanding of diversity between and within cultures. These five elements must be manifested in every level of the service delivery system. They should be reflected in attitudes, structures, policies, and services. The specific Ethical Standard for culturally competent social work practice is contained under Section 1. Social workers' ethical responsibilities to clients include (NASW, 2000):

1.05 Cultural Competence and Social Diversity

Social work should understand culture and its functions in human behavior and society, recognizing the strengths that exist in all cultures. Social workers should have a knowledge base of their clients' cultures and be able to demonstrate competence in the provision of services that are sensitive to clients' cultures and to differences among people and cultural groups. Social workers should obtain education about and seek to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression with respect to race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, political belief, religion, and mental or physical disability. The Code reemphasizes the importance of cultural competence in the last section of the Code (NASW, 2000).

Section 6. Social Workers Ethical Responsibilities to the Broader Society.

The specific goals of the Standards state social workers are:

- To maintain and improve the quality of culturally competent services provided by social workers and programs delivered by social service agencies.
- To establish professional expectations so that social workers can monitor and evaluate their culturally competent practice.
- To provide a framework for social workers to assess culturally competent practice.
- To inform consumers, governmental regulatory bodies, and others, such as insurance carriers, about the profession's Standards for culturally competent practice.
- To establish specific ethical guidelines for culturally competent social work practice in agency or private practice settings.
- To provide documentation of professional expectations for agencies, peer review committees, state regulatory bodies, insurance carriers, and others (NASW, 2000).

As NASW has provided guidance through the *Code of Ethics* on cultural competence, it also goes on to define cultural competence as the process by which individuals and systems respond respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures, languages, classes, races, ethnic backgrounds, religions, and other diversity factors in a manner that recognizes, affirms, and values the worth of individuals, families, and communities, and protects and preserves the dignity of each. The importance of cultural competence starts with individuals, but carries beyond. "Cultural competence is a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system or agency or among professional and enable the system, agency, or professionals who work effectively in cross-cultural situations" (NASW, 2000b, p. 61).

The EPAS established by the CSWE are parallel to the practice policy and standards passed by the NASW. Both emphasize cultural competencies that must be garnered and honed for competent social work practice with diverse populations. The NASW's Standards for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice (2001) is especially noteworthy because it provides the specifics for application and implementation. Developed by NASW's National Committee on Racial and Ethnic Diversity (NCORED), these Standards were approved and passed by the NASW Board of Directors on June 23, 2001. They include definitions of key words, including culture, competence and cultural competence. Regarding culture, the NASW (2000) states, "the word 'culture' is used because it implies the integrated pattern of human behavior that includes thoughts communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions of a racial, ethnic, religious, or social group" (p.61).

The Standards for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice are defined in 10 Standards. Since the NASW published its Standards for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice, social workers and social work organizations have utilized the multicultural framework to promote respect for and appreciation of diversity. The NCORED members wrote, revised, and finalized the Standards, which were approved by the NASW National Board of Directors in June 2001.

The NASW Cultural Competence Standards are as follows:

Standard 1. Ethics and Values

> Social workers shall function in accordance with the values, ethics, and Standards of the profession, recognizing how personal and professional values may conflict with or accommodate the needs of diverse clients.

Standard 2. Self-Awareness

Social workers shall seek to develop an understanding of their own personal, cultural values and beliefs as one way of appreciating the importance of multicultural identities in the lives of people.

Standard 3. Cross-Cultural Knowledge

Social workers shall have and continue to develop specialized knowledge and understanding about the history, traditions, values, family systems, and artistic expressions of major client groups that they serve.

Standard 4. Cross-Cultural Skills

Social Workers use appropriate methodological approaches, skills, that reflect an understanding of the role of culture in the helping process.

Standard 5. Service Delivery

Social workers shall be knowledgeable about and skillful in the use of services available in the community and broader society and be able to make appropriate referrals for their diverse clients.

Standard 6. Empowerment and Advocacy

Social workers shall be aware of the effect of social policies and programs on diverse client populations, advocating for and with clients whenever appropriate.

Standard 7. Diverse workforce

Social workers shall support and advocate for recruitment, admissions and hiring, and retention efforts in social work programs and agencies that ensure diversity within the profession.

Standard 8. Professional Education

Social workers shall advocate for and participate in educational and training programs that help advance cultural competence within the profession.

Standard 9. Language Diversity

Social workers shall seek to provide or advocate for the provision of information, referrals, and services in the language appropriate to the client, which may include use of interpreters.

Standard 10. Cross-Cultural Leadership

Social Workers shall be able to communicate information about diverse client groups to other professionals.

The NASW Standards on Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice were first presented in draft form to NASW members attending a Town Hall Meeting sponsored by NCORED during Social Work 2000, in Baltimore, Maryland. At this meeting, NASW members requested that NCORED follow up their accomplishments by developing outcome measures that could serve as guideposts for achieving levels of cultural competency by social workers. The discussion centered on the need for self-assessment tools for individual social workers, for supervisors to be able to assess their social work employees' cultural competency levels, and for agency administrators to understand how culturally competent their services are. The same issue was also raised during the public comment period for the Standards. NCORED states "we have anecdotal information that faculty in schools of social work are also striving to teach cultural competency skills and that many are using the NASW Standards in their efforts" (NASW, 2005). Although, the larger body of faculty is teaching cultural competence, little has been done to assess skill level.

After the development of the Standards of cultural competence, a historical accomplishment for the profession, NCORED drafted indicators for each cultural competence Standard. The NASW Board of Directors has provided comments and feedback on the draft document. The indicators for cultural competence in social work practice are grounded on the principles, standards, and values specified in the NASW and social work profession's mission, *NASW Code of Ethics* (1999), and NASW Standards for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice (2001). Consistent with these foundations, the indicators help make practical precisely what NASW's Preamble to the Code of Ethics says: ". . . social workers are sensitive to cultural and ethnic diversity and strive to end discrimination, oppression, poverty, and other forms of social injustice. . . ." (NASW Code of Ethics, 1999, p. 1). The indicators (Appendix B) focus on the achievement of culturally competent practice at all levels and are infused and integrated throughout all areas of practice.

Social Work Licensure

Social work is a licensed profession which ensures that social workers practice competently. One area of competency monitored through licensure and continued education is cultural competence.

The Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) is the body of professionals that regulate social work licensed practice. The ASWB develops and maintains the social work licensing examination used across the country, and is a central resource for information on the legal regulation of social work. Through the association, social work boards can share information and work together. ASWB is also available to help social

workers and social work students with questions they may have about licensing and the social work examinations (Social Work Exam Services, 2005).

The purpose of licensing and certification in social work is to assist the public through identification of standards for the safe professional practice of social work. Each jurisdiction defines by law what is required for each level of social work licensure. Typically, there are four categories of practice that jurisdictions may legally regulate which are developed and maintained by the ASWB social work licensure examinations: Bachelors, Masters, Advanced Generalist, and Clinical. Each examination contains 170 four-option multiple choice questions designed to measure minimum competencies at each of the four categories of practice (Social Work Exam Services, 2005).

The social work licensure examination contains content in Human Development and Behavior in the Environment, Diversity and Social/Economic Justice (Diversity, Assessment, Diagnosis, and Treatment Planning), Direct and Indirect Practice, Professional Relationships, Professional Values and Ethics, Supervision, and Practice Evaluation and the Utilization of Research. The ASWB includes diversity content within national licensure exams, recognizing cultural competent practice as essential to practicing social workers and an element to evaluate through the examination process. Key components that support culturally competent social work practice include history, legal considerations, theoretical approaches, generalizable principles of culturally competent practice, and information about particular social and cultural groups. Each of these components are addressed within the social work licensure exam. Questions within the social work licensing exam specific to cultural competence include content on the

principles of culturally competent social work practice within three distinct arenas: knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Social Work Exam Services, 2005).

When addressing the acquisition of knowledge in culturally competent social work practice, the examination insures practitioners know relevant practice as defined in scientific professional literature as it relates to specific groups. Questions within the exam address social workers as individuals who should familiarize themselves with best practices of cross cultural practice and if need be consult with cultural brokers (Social Work Exam Services, 2005).

Language and communication questions within the social work licensing exam that pertain to cultural competence include knowing the importance of learning the language, using interpreters, learning syntax, and forming relationships across different people groups. Licensing recognizes the importance of identifying major community, religious, and social organizations that assist social workers as they work with the world's various groups. Knowing and having relationships with key members within cross cultural settings are invaluable resources to the practicing social worker (Social Work Exam Services, 2005).

Licensing further identifies the use of culturally competent skills while interviewing, conducting an assessment, constructing a treatment plan, providing interventions, evaluating, and terminating within the context of the personal culture of each client. When addressing social work attitudes, the social work examination asks questions pertaining to personal awareness of the practitioner's heritage, values, beliefs and biases, and also questions addressing a respect and comfort with difference in clients, co-workers, and communities (Social Work Exam Services, 2005).

The CSWE, NASW and ASWB provide structure in defining cultural competence, educating students in cultural competence, providing Standards as a benchmark and licensing social workers to practice culturally competent social work. Cultural competence content within the licensing examination is gleaned from historical publications and from current scholars in social work and social work education. Scholars continue to address cultural competence in research studies from a variety of substantive areas.

Key Studies in Cultural Competence

Within social work literature there is a broad consensus on the need for social workers to prioritize matters of culture while providing services. A number of texts and training materials promoting culturally competent practice have emerged during the past two decades (Cross, Bazron, Dennis, & Isaacs, 1989; Devore & Schlesinger, 1996; Green, 1982; Lum, 1999; Orlandi, 1992; Roberts et al., 1990; Sue, 1990). The effort to achieve culturally competent practice has been declared "a journey whose time has come" (Lum, p. 175).

In addition to training materials and educational texts, various research studies have been published within the last decade in the area of cultural competence and social work education, highlighting cultural issues in field education supervision, agency culture, field seminar, and social work faculty who prepare the student for culturally competent practice (Devore & Schlesigner 1999; Lum, 1992; Ho, 1987; Green; 1982; Garcia & VanSoest, 1999; Weaver, 1999; Messinger, 2004). The following key research studies are in the area of cultural competence within social work education. The populations highlighted in the studies are Native American students, gay and lesbian

students and their experience in field education, and facilitating learning on diversity, a challenge to the social work professor. Each of these studies provides a voice to individuals and/or groups that have historically been oppressed and provide studies with a unique look into current literature on cultural competence.

Betty Garcia and Dorothy Van Soest have published many articles (1997; 1999; 2000a; 2000b; 2003) on culture and diversity within social work practice and education. The article reviewed, *Facilitating Learning on Diversity: Challenges to the Professor* (2000) focuses on faculty responses to critical classroom incidents related to race and the importance of faculty being sensitive to issues of racism in order to effectively handle such situations. Discussion addresses teaching challenges and approaches for addressing issues of diversity, oppression, and difference when they trigger student conflict and strained classroom interaction.

The challenges and dynamics of teaching cultural diversity content within social work education is the center of the work done by Garcia and Van Soest. While all learning acknowledges emotion related to personal adjustments as students absorb new content (Brookfield, 1990), diversity content often arouses unexamined feelings about difference. The effect evoked in students places heightened pressure and responsibility on faculty to be responsive to process issues that include students' emotional as well as learning needs. Critical thinking skills can be valuable in assisting faculty while they facilitate intensive class discussions while maintaining a focus on learning (Garcia & Van Soest, 2000). Traditional pedagogical methods, such as stating a clear conceptual

framework with which to interpret and guide class discussion, can aid faculty in facing the emotional challenges unique to diversity issues (Lowman, 1995).

An exploratory study was conducted to investigate responsiveness to critical events related to racism that occur in the classroom. Critical events were present in the form of vignettes to which participants were asked to respond. A critical event is defined as a significant classroom episode that is characterized by intense or conflictual interaction between students and/or faculty. The vignettes were adapted from events that actually occurred in university classrooms, two of which were identified in a previous study (Garcia & Van Soest, 1999). The event represents a "teachable moment" in which student growth and learning can be facilitated. Since the critical events dealt with racism, a sensitivity to racism scale was developed to measure participants' sensitivity to racism. Sensitivity to racism is defined as an ability to be aware of and to understand various personal, social and institutional manifestations of racism (Garcia & Van Soest, 2000).

The instrument used was a two-part questionnaire that included four vignettes of classroom critical incidents and a 15-item *Assumptions About Racism* scale. One open-ended response item inquired about faculty concerns regarding their responses to the vignettes. Participants were provided with five possible responses to the critical events. The five optional responses were used as measures of the cross-cultural competence model developed by Cross, Bazron, Dennis, and Issacs (1989). Responses represented a harm-to-help continuum with five levels. Level 1, cultural destructiveness, involves colluding and harm-doing through the use of humor, Level 2, cultural incapacity, represents an inability to use the event as learning experience for the class; Level 3, cultural blindness, takes a position of neutrality rather than examining issues of race

directly; Level 4, cultural pre-competence, attempts to address the issue with confrontational tactics; and Level 5, cultural competence, attempts to address the issue in an open way in order to transform it into a teachable moment (Garcia & Van Soest, 2000). In reviewing the scale in this study it is important to state the levels used do not seem to align with the sensitive work the researchers are addressing. Evaluation of cultural competence is a sensitive undertaking and the levels in this study are strong and absolute. Although research in the area of cultural competence is valuable in social work education, the levels described in this study's scale display a lack of sensitivity.

The authors of the study (Garcia & Van Soest, 2000) state they found that the faculty surveyed in their study show similarities of social work faculty in general. The profile is female, seasoned, and tenured or in a tenure track position. The greater number of women is representative of social work faculty, while the large portions who were 50 years of age and older (47%) is in fact larger than one might expect, even with national statistics showing many tenured faculty approaching retirement. It is notable that 81% had more than 5 years experience teaching and 60% had prior experience in teaching diversity content (Garcia & Van Soest, 2000).

Garcia and Van Soest state that while the vignettes of classroom incidents and sensitivity to racism instrument may be useful as one way to assess cultural competence of faculty, two limitations to the study need to be discussed. First, responses to real life classroom critical incidents are undoubtedly more complex than the vignette instrument in this study tests. Second, there was a risk of social desirability bias on both measurements. Thus, limitations of this kind of approach for gauging faculty competencies in addressing diversity content need to be recognized. While the data

resulting from this study are limited, they do reflect some beginning comprehension of faculty differences related to diversity and racism (Garcia & Van Soest, 2000).

The work done in cultural competence and diversity within social work education by Garcia and Van Soest has led social work educators to address sensitive areas not addressed in the past. Garcia and Van Soest's study represents a practical approach in evaluating classroom discussions and activities around diversity and cultural competence. This study provides merit by addressing what are often categorized as problem issues into everyday vignettes and "teachable moments". Garcia and Van Soest challenge all social work educators to address uncomfortable situations with an academic solution and challenge students to discuss differences in thought, action, and philosophy openly and grow from the experience. This study also challenges social work educators to address their personal pedagogy while teaching diversity content, and encourages educators to evaluate how their personal beliefs impact teaching.

A study done by Lori Messinger (2004) provides information in the area of sexual orientation issues in field placement by system levels. Messinger (2004) looks specifically at the gay or lesbian student and each experience in field practicum. Students identified individual issues that include managing disclosure of sexual orientation, identity development concerns, pressures associated with hiding one's sexual orientation, professionalism as a gay or lesbian person, and general feelings of lack of safety or anxiety as part of the field experience. Students identified interpersonal issues which included homophobic attitudes and behaviors, heterosexist attitudes and behaviors, unfriendly climate of placement, conflicts in intimate relationships, conflicts with field instructors, and general feelings of lack of safety or anxiety as interpersonal issues within

the practicum setting. And lastly, student identified institutional issues included homophobic attitudes and behaviors, heterosexist attitudes and behaviors, an absence of gay and lesbian issues, unfriendly climate in placement, and general feel of lack of safety or anxiety as issues from an institutional perspective (p.192). Messinger concludes, "these findings illuminate the specific issues faced by gay and lesbian students in field placement--issues rooted not only in the personal strengths and weaknesses of the gay and lesbian student, but also in the often heterosexist and homophobic perspectives pervading social work professional education and service delivery" (p.202).

The project was conducted in two phases in a pilot study with a convenience sample of current graduate students enrolled at one social work program who were part of a sexual minority support group. The criteria for participation were that the student had self-identified as lesbian or gay and had completed at least one field experience. (Messinger, 2004). The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with the gay and lesbian participants. Interviews lasted anywhere from 1-1.5 hours and were conducted in person or over the telephone. All interviews were tape recorded and transcribed. The researcher took detailed notes during the interviews providing an alternative source of data if sections of the tape recording were unclear (Messinger, 2004).

The findings and direct student quotations illuminate the specific issues faced by gay and lesbian students in field placement. The students interviewed as part of the project were very diverse as to their age, race and ethnicity, length of time that each self-identified as lesbian/gay, comfort level with their sexual orientation, general level of outness, prior experiences with homophobia and heterosexism, and level of disclosure in field. Themes that emerged recognized the older student and the student who had been

out longer were not as surprised and expressed less emotion about their experiences of discrimination. Those who were more newly out were generally more upset by discrimination (Messinger, 2004).

Messinger's (2004) work with gay and lesbian social work students offers the profession a glimpse into the field education experience of a sample of gay/lesbian students. This study provides a voice to the students' personal experiences, their social contexts of family and friends, their social work programs, and the social work agencies at which they were placed. At times these issues can be overlooked or minimized in the context of field education, yet Messinger's work challenges the Directors of Field, Field Instructor's and agencies to ensure gay and lesbian students' experiences are not overlooked and offer areas where social work educators can provide support.

Hilary N. Weaver, in the NASW Journal in 1999, published *Indigenous People and the Social Work Profession: Defining Cultural Competent Services.* In order to provide culturally competent services we must have culturally competent social workers. Weaver writes, "striving for cultural competence is recognition of the profession's ethnocentric foundation" (p. 217). Weaver suggests that social work literature has moved from cultural sensitivity to cultural competence, and the ability to integrate cultural knowledge and sensitivity with skills for a more effective and culturally appropriate helping process. The report highlights the results of a study of culturally competent helping practices with Native Americans. Sixty-two Native American social workers completed a questionnaire on knowledge, skills, and values necessary for culturally competent service provision to Native American clients. Through a questionnaire, the data provided answers to the following questions: What knowledge is necessary? What

skills are needed? and What values are associated with culturally competent services for Native Americans? Weaver's (1999) work builds on theoretical work on cultural competence. "Researchers must find ways to measure cultural competence empirically," (p. 223) states Weaver. Weaver believes that studies that examine the beliefs of indigenous clients and evaluate the actions of social workers will be important steps to building this knowledge base. Studies with other cultural groups will provide and develop an empirically based picture of cultural competence and better serve clients from a variety of backgrounds (Weaver, 1999).

Using data from the CSWE, Weaver identified eight schools of social work that had the highest number of Native American students. Questionnaires were distributed in seven of the eight schools and two schools provided lists of graduates to whom questionnaires were mailed. In addition, questionnaires were sent to the membership of American Indian Social Work Educators' Association, and snowball-sampling techniques were used to identify other Native American social workers. An instructional cover letter introduced the project and batches of questionnaires were sent to schools with a high number of Native Americans (Weaver, 1999). The data was reviewed and categorized according to themes. The themes that emerged from the data were classified into three categories of knowledge, skills, and values. Four important areas of knowledge were identified: diversity, history, culture, and contemporary realities. When looking at skills for culturally competent social work with Native Americans the skills are not radically different from those generally required for practice. The skill of being culturally considerate was stated as important. Four major value themes emerged: 1. helper

wellness and self-awareness, 2. humility and willingness to learn, 3. respect, open-mindedness and a non-judgmental attitude, and 4. social justice. Many respondents called for social justice, which includes decolonization and an active acknowledgment of oppression and the unique status of Native Americans (Weaver, 1999).

The findings confirm and expand the literature on culturally competent social work with Native Americans. Theoretical and conceptual writings in this area generally focus on culturally specific knowledge and skills tailored for this population. With the exception of self-awareness, less has been written about values associated with culturally competent social work with this population. In particular, the emphasis on social justice in this study adds another dimension to the literature (Weaver, 1999). The data have clear implications for practice in this study. The study provides culturally competent suggestions for social work with Native American clients. A social worker must understand and appreciate diversity among and within Native American populations. Social workers must know the history, culture and contemporary realities of specific Native American clients. Social workers have good general social work skills and strong skills in patience, listening, and tolerance of silence. Social workers must be aware of his or her own biases and need for wellness. Social workers must display humility and willingness to learn, be nonjudgmental, demonstrate open mindedness and be respectful. Social Workers must value social justice and decolonize his or her own thought processes (Weaver, 1999).

The strength of Weaver's article is providing a voice to the Native American social worker and in helping non Native American social workers understand the best

practices and clinical approaches to working with Native Americans. The study is powerful and breaks barriers that have often gone unbroken. The questionnaire taps into Native American social work students and provides a forum for them to be heard and challenges social workers to integrate cultural knowledge and sensitivity with social work skills for a more effective and culturally appropriate helping process. Although the study gives many suggestions, the recommendation "to be quiet and listen" provides wisdom to a profession that often receives accolades for its proactive problem solving skills. Weaver's article addresses the practicalities of cultural competence by knowing the Native American cultural traditions and adapting to them (Weaver, 1999).

These key studies provide three varied scholarly works in the area of diversity. All three challenge the social work profession in the level of knowledge, attitudes and skills with diverse populations. Garcia and VanSoest look into social work classrooms and faculty pedagogy, Messinger evaluates the field experience for gay and lesbian social work student, and Weaver (1999) provides a look at service delivery to Native American's. Although varied, all three challenge social work and social work educators to ensure the classroom, field and service delivery all rest on the knowledge, attitudes and skills of the social work profession to bring about culturally competent social workers.

Summary

In Chapter II, the relevant literature was discussed highlighting the historical view of cultural competence within social work, cultural competence expectations by the CSWE, and a look at cultural competence within social work education, specifically course content and field education. In addition, Chapter II highlights the NASW Code of Ethics

and the NASW Cultural Competence Standards and the cultural competence requirements within social work licensing. Finally three key studies in cultural competence were reviewed. The methodology used in the study is presented in Chapter III.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Epistemology

Over the years, many theoretical and conceptual, as well as ideological, formulations were introduced to provide the foundation for social work practice. Since its beginnings, social work has sought a scientific and theoretical base for its actions, while ensuring that values and belief systems are part of the picture. The search for a scientific theoretical base was accelerated when Flexner (1915) criticized the social work profession. He stated in no uncertain terms that social work was not a profession because there was an insufficient theoretical and knowledge base. The effort to respond to Flexner led social work thinkers to explain the complexities of the human problems they encountered within the context of social work practice. Flexner's criticism continues to challenge social work researchers today.

The branch of philosophy that is concerned with the origins of knowledge and its development is epistemology (Hughes, 1999). Epistemology is the study of the nature of knowledge which seeks to answer questions on what should count as knowledge, what should be rejected, and what methods are appropriate for gaining the type of knowledge that is desirable (Williams, 2006). Guba and Lincoln (1998) describe epistemology as paradigms that encapsulate specific beliefs and worldviews which guide us in choosing methods for social research. Similarly, an epistemological understanding of cultural competence defines beliefs and worldviews which guide us in choosing methods for investigating culture and working with it in practice.

Epistemological approaches used to address cultural competence in social work include psychosocial, sociological, and political approaches, the problem-solving frameworks, including task-centered casework, the social provision and structural approaches in working with client groups (Devore & Schlesigner,(1981, 1987, 1991, 1999, Green, 1982; Gutierrez, et. al, 2004; Ho, 1987; Norton's, 1978; Lum,1992) . All approaches have merit, but for the purpose of this study a constructionist framework will be used.

Ensuring cultural competence within social work from the constructivist paradigm requires addressing practice that is congruent with the behaviors and expectations that are normative with the culture of the client (Green, 1995). Looking from an intra- and intercultural perspective within the helping context affects the helping relationship and provides opportunities for connection, estrangement, and distortions in the working relationship. According to Weaver (1999), "Acknowledging these complexities, constructivist cultural competence is implemented most precisely through the strategic application of ethnocentrism to affirm particular cultural identities and create contexts within which clients can seek and receive culturally appropriate services" (p.217).

The constructivist paradigm suggests that reality is constructed through social interaction and dialogue. What we come to understand as knowledge is based on the shared experiences of groups and is inextricably connected to the participants who are involved in knowledge production (Guba & Lincoln, 1998). Deriving from social psychology, the constructivist paradigm provides the context of knowing and interpreting by recognizing that meanings arise in particular settings and traditions, and knowledge is historically and culturally situated. In the process of socially constructing reality, individuals interpret, assign meaning, and create assumptions about themselves, other

people, and the environment that provides the foundation for their knowledge of the world (Greene, Joes, Frappier, Klien, & Culton, 1996). One's cultural background is a critical factor in the reality one co-constructs with others (Greene, Jensen, & Jones, 1996). Constructivist epistemology has been categorized by the schools of constructivism and social constructionism (Held, 1995).

Constructivism is a theory of knowledge (Efran, Lukens, & Lukens, 1988). The various schools of constructivism weave a common thread stating that there is not one objective reality standing outside the individual knower (Carpenter, 1996; Rosen, 1996). According to constructivism, people do not come to know the world in a passive way, but actively formulate their understanding of the world as they interact with it. Individual understanding of the world is determined by current personal beliefs which then determine how individuals interpret, explain, and come to understand what their world means. In addition, constructivism states that there is no such thing as an objective observer of the world, because the act of observing changes the thing under observation; reality is not discovered but created by individuals (Lyddon, 1995).

Constructivism draws heavily from the work of Maturana and Varela (1992), who concluded from the findings of their biological research that all systems are self-creating and self-organizing. Knowledge development and change occurs when the system is challenged by the environment and behavior is determined structurally, not environmentally. A system's structure changes itself to accommodate for changes in the environment while it also maintains itself within a personal environment (Elkaim, 1990). From a constructivist perspective, therefore, knowledge development is unique to every individual (Held, 1995), as systems are organizationally closed and autonomous.

The development of social constructionism came from the social psychology of Gergen (1985), who elaborated the social psychology of Mead (1934). Social constructionism emphasizes that our generation of knowledge and ideas of reality are created by social processes more than individual processes (Gergen, 1994). According to constructionism, "knowledge is not something people possess somewhere in their heads, but rather, something people do together" (Gergen, 1985, p. 270). Individual objective reality is in fact the product of social construction processes under the influence of cultural, historical, political, and economic conditions. Since such knowledge is socially constructed, it can vary historically over time and differ across cultural groups that hold diverse beliefs about human development and nature. Given that values, norms, beliefs, attitudes, traditions, and practices vary from one cultural group to another, so does the social construction of knowledge (Gergen, 1985).

The constructivist theoretical framework can be used to operationalize the therapeutic use of self with diverse clients. A frequent result of living in a diverse society is the development of stereotypes and biases that become a part of one's unexamined assumptions about reality. Such assumptions can interfere with effective cross-cultural clinical social work practice if they continue to be taken for granted. In a constructivist approach, the clinician's job is to keep the conversation going until the presenting problem is known (Anderson & Goolishian, 1988). Continuing the conversation with diverse clients involves skillfully bringing diversity and the issues of discrimination and disempowerment into the therapeutic conversation. The clinician's awareness of the different ways to use self ultimately allows the clients, rather than the clinician, to construct reality or repair the stories and thus increase their sense of empowerment in a

valued ethnic context. Constructivism holds that people do not discover reality but rather use language to construct a conception of reality through social interaction (Goolishian & Winderman, 1988).

By using the constructivist theoretical framework within this study, the importance of individual reality is given a voice. Cultural competence within social work involves obtaining the knowledge and skills that support personal and professional values and attitudes while working with individuals different than ourselves.

Description of the Study

This study was conducted using a mixed method, sequential explanatory strategy to inquire how culturally competent students are entering an MSW program, and where does growth in cultural competence occur. Quantitative data collection and quantitative data analysis were followed by qualitative data collection and qualitative data analysis. An interpretative analysis was done of the whole. Mixed methods were employed to expand an understanding from one method to another and to converge or confirm findings from different data sources (Creswell, 2003).

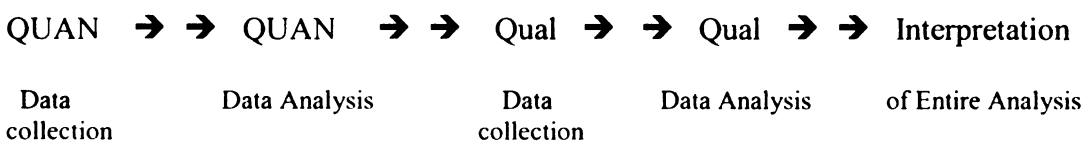

Figure 1. Sequential Explanatory Strategy (Creswell, 2003)

The use of the sequential explanatory strategy, allowed the researcher the opportunity to analyze quantitative data and qualitative data independent from one another. In addition, it provided the use of quantitative and qualitative data in the interpretation of the entire study analysis. This type of interpretive process is of major importance when studying cultural competence as it allows for a variance in addressing individual student response in the area of cultural competence. Providing the quantitative data collection in the pre- and post-test provides two separate data points to assess and compare. Collecting data through focus groups allows for qualitative expression that is analyzed independent from the quantitative data, and is interpreted as part of the whole (Creswell, 2003). In addition, the focus groups provide reflexivity to the researcher on the student educational experience in cultural competence.

Sample

The target population for this study was full and part time social work students entering a traditional MSW program at a large Midwest Research University in the fall of 2007. Full and part time students enrolled in the traditional program come from a variety of geographic locations to attend social work classes in various buildings on the main University campus and at an off campus college setting. Pre-test n=95, Post-test n=65, Focus Group n=21.

Design and Procedures

To assist in formulating and finalizing the questionnaire used in this study, 25 students entering an MSW program the prior summer were asked to participate in

measuring their personal level of cultural competence and give feedback to the researcher on the questionnaire tool. This group of incoming students and their feedback on the cultural competence questionnaire provided a pilot group for this study. In addition to answering the questionnaire questions, the students were asked to give a Likert-type scale rating of between 1 (being low) and 5 (being high) to the following questions:

1. I found the questionnaire questions stated in a way that was understandable.
2. I found the rating scale (No experience, Minimally Competent, Moderately Competent, Mostly Competent, Competent) easy to understand.
3. The rating scale (No experience, Minimally Competent, Moderately Competent, Mostly Competent, Competent) fit the questions.
4. The personal characteristics and background page was easy to complete.
5. I found the length of time to complete the questionnaire acceptable.
6. I found the format of the questionnaire instrument to be user friendly.

The student feedback assisted the researcher in crafting a well-worded and student friendly questionnaire. Changes that were made from student feedback included expanding the geographic section of the demographic page to include the choice of a military family upbringing, and changing question 34 in the questionnaire from an open ended question to using the scale (no experience, minimal competence, moderate competence, mostly competent, and competent) as is used in other areas of the questionnaire.

Following the Human Research Protection program (IRB), subjects were sought during the MSW program orientation; incoming students were invited to participate in research to evaluate cultural competence in MSW social work students. Each student

was given a form explaining the research project and asking for consent to participate. All student participation was voluntary and students were instructed that if at any time they wanted to discontinue the questionnaire or did not want to answer a specific question that it was permissible.

Those volunteering to participate were given the opportunity to complete the questionnaire (pre-test); seeking demographic information and asking that they answer a 34 question questionnaire on cultural competence. As students began the questionnaire process they were asked to create a unique identifier number. To ensure confidentiality for the students and to allow for matching pre- and post-test results, the unique identifier number allowed for student anonymity while gauging their level of cultural competence in each of the questionnaire questions. Each student was asked to answer the four questions listed below to create their unique identifier. Students wrote their unique identifier number at the top of the questionnaire. The four questions asked were:

1. What are the first two letters of your mother's maiden name?
2. What are the last two digits of the year you graduated high school or finished your GED? Example: 1983=83
3. How many siblings do you have? Example: 2= 02
4. What is the day portion of your date of birth? Example: February 1, 1980 = 01

These four questions were again asked during the post-test portion of the study which allowed the pre- and post-test data to be matched by the personal unique identifier. Students were also asked their unique identifier preceding the focus groups to identify demographics of student participants.

A student volunteer was identified prior to students beginning the pre-test and other volunteers were identified in each of the post-test settings. The student volunteers were asked to gather the questionnaires after they were complete and place them in a large manila envelope. Once in the envelope, the student was asked to seal the envelope and place their signature over the seal to ensure questionnaires were original and not altered. Participation indicated informed consent, that is, the pre-test and post-test procedure did not involve collecting signed informed consent statements as collecting the documents would preclude the possibility of guaranteeing anonymity to student participants. The documents were delivered to the researcher upon completion by the student volunteer. The questionnaire took approximately 15 minutes for students to complete.

During the second to the last week of the fall semester, the post-test was administered to students in their Human Behavior and Social Environment (HBSE) classes (a required course during the fall semester). Three sections of HBSE completed the post-test on the main campus, and two sections of HBSE completed the post-test on the off campus site. Prior to participating in the post-test, students were invited to participate further in the research of cultural competence in MSW students by volunteering to be a member of a focus group in the following semester. Interested students were asked to fill out a focus group participation sheet. The focus group participation sheet was a separate sheet from the post-test so that answers on the post-test could not be identified to individual students. Students were provided with a separate sheet of paper to list contact information. Contact information requested included email address, phone number and the best way to contact the student.

In the following semester, two focus groups were organized from students who filled out forms to be a participant in a focus group to further research on evaluating cultural competence in MSW students. Students were selected to the focus group according to their personal availability. The participants in the focus groups were presented with a focus group confidentiality form and were also asked to give their unique identification number as they had done in both the pre- and post-tests.

Students participating in the focus groups were given a summary of collected data from the pre- and post-test. The summary was organized to show student answers to specific questions, and how students evaluated their level of competence as each aligned with the NASW Cultural Competence Standards. Students were asked to respond to pre- and post-test data by answering the following questions:

1. After reviewing the data gathered from the pre- and post-test, are there any content areas that surprise you or on which you would like to comment?
2. Where did your learning about cultural competence occur within your first semester of MSW education?
3. Do you have program suggestions for the School to assist you in cultural competence growth?

Instrumentation

Quantitative instrument

The questionnaire used in this study (see Appendix F) was designed by the researcher to measure cultural competence in social work students as defined by the NASW Cultural Competence Standards. The questionnaire consists of 34 questions on cultural competence

within the social work profession. Each question was created to measure one of the NASW Cultural Competence Standards. Students were asked to circle no experience, minimally competent, moderately competent, mostly competent and competent. The following provides each Standard and the questions created to measure each Standard.

Standard 1

Ethics and Values: Social workers shall function in accordance with the values, ethics, and Standards of the profession, recognizing how personal and professional values may conflict with or accommodate the needs of diverse clients.

Question 1. I am familiar with *the NASW Code of Ethics*, and function in accordance with to the values, ethics and Standards of the profession in my social work practice.

Question 11. I recognize how my personal and professional values may conflict with or accommodate the needs of diverse populations.

Question 21. I am familiar with the *NASW Cultural Competence Standards* and practice social work in accordance with the Standards.

Standard 2

Self-Awareness: Social workers shall seek to develop an understanding of their own personal, cultural values and beliefs as one way of appreciating the importance of multicultural identities in the lives of people.

Question 2. I am aware of my own personal and cultural values and beliefs.

Question12. I recognize cultural values and beliefs that are different from my own.

Question 22. I can recognize when my personal values and beliefs interfere with

providing the best services to clients.

Standard 3

Cross-Cultural Knowledge: Social workers shall have and continue to develop specialized knowledge and understanding about the history, traditions, values, family systems, and artistic expressions of major client groups that they serve.

Question 3. I understand the history of oppression that has occurred within some diverse populations.

Question 13.I understand family systems within a variety of cultural contexts.

Question 23. I am aware of traditions, values, and artistic expressions within diverse populations.

Standard 4

Cross-Cultural Skills: Social Workers use appropriate methodological approaches, skills, that reflect an understanding of the role of culture in the helping process.

Question 4. I am skilled at attending to verbal responses of clients of various cultures.

Question 14. I am skilled at attending to non-verbal responses of clients of various cultures.

Question 24. I am skilled at completing a client assessment by attending to the culturally relevant needs of the client.

Question 31. I am skilled at completing a treatment plan by attending to the culturally relevant needs of the client.

Standard 5

Service Delivery: Social workers shall be knowledgeable about and skillful in the use of services available in the community and broader society and be able to make appropriate referrals for their diverse clients.

Question 5. I am skilled at identifying formal resources tailored to the culturally relevant needs of the client.

Question 15. I am skilled at evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of resources in the community.

Question 32. I am skilled at making appropriate referrals within the community tailored to the culturally relevant needs of the client.

Standard 6

Empowerment and Advocacy: Social workers shall be aware of the effect of social policies and programs on diverse client populations, advocating for and with clients whenever appropriate.

Question 6 I am aware of the effect that social policies have on diverse populations.

Question 16 I am aware of the effect that social programs have on diverse populations.

Question 26. I participate in social advocacy and social action to better empower diverse populations.

Standard 7

Diverse Workforce: Social workers shall support and advocate for recruitment, admissions and hiring, and retention efforts in social work programs and agencies that ensure diversity within the profession.

Question 7. I support the need for a diverse workforce within social service agencies.

Question 17. I am aware of the diversity hiring policies within my agency.

Question 27. I participate in advocacy efforts toward a diverse workforce.

Standard 8

Professional Education: Social workers shall advocate for and participate in educational and training programs that help advance cultural competence within the profession.

Question 8. I actively support professional education that advances cultural competency within the profession.

Question 18. I have taken one or more courses and have gained knowledge and skills in diversity.

Question 28. I have attended one or more diversity trainings and have gained knowledge and skills in diversity.

Standard 9

Language Diversity: Social workers shall seek to provide or advocate for the provision of information, referrals, and services in the language appropriate to the client, which may include use of interpreters.

Question 9. I understand that language is part of the total identity of a client.

Question 19 I provide referrals to agencies that provide bi-lingual services.

Question 29 I advocate for the rights of individuals and groups to receive resources in their own language.

Question 33 I ensure that information provided to clients is in their first language.

Standard 10

Cross-Cultural Leadership: Social Workers shall be able to communicate informational about diverse client groups to other professionals.

Question 10 I model culturally competent behavior in my professional interactions.

Question 20 I take leadership roles within the profession to promote cultural competence.

Question 30 I advocate for fair and equitable treatment for diverse groups in and outside of the profession.

Qualitative Design and Measures

In addition to the 34 closed-ended questions asked on the cultural competence questionnaire, students were prompted to provide open-ended content with the request to, "please give your definition of culture". This item was to facilitate exploratory research about student definitions and understandings of culture.

The second qualitative aspect of this study was a focus group. A focus group is a qualitative research technique in which a group of people are asked about their attitude towards an identified topic. Questions are asked in an interactive group setting in which participants are free to talk with other group members (Morgan, 1997). Within this study the researcher facilitated two focus groups with students that volunteered to participate in

further study about cultural competence. Nine weeks after students completed the post-test portion of the study two focus groups were convened. The two focus groups were facilitated at campus locations where students attended classes.

Validity of Quantitative Measure

The goal of using quantitative methodology within this mixed-method study was to create a valid, reliable scale that allowed for statistical analysis of students' self-reports about their individual level of cultural competence. The Cultural Competence Scale is a new tool crafted for this study. Using the NASW Cultural Competence Standards (2003) as the foundation for the scale, items were created to measure multi-faceted indicators for each of the ten Standards.

Using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) subscales, formed by combining items related to specific Standards, were examined with Cronbach's alpha. Each subscale was tested to determine the internal reliability of the items within it. These analyses were used to determine the alpha coefficient for each cultural competence Standard and examine the relative contribution of individual items to subscale reliability. Subscale alphas ranged from a low of alpha = .64 to a high of alpha = .86. All subscales fell within acceptable values for scale internal reliability (Ott, 2001). Face validity was determined through the pilot study prior to this study. Participant feedback validated scale content and item relevance within the cultural competence questionnaire.

To evaluate the qualitative content area of the questionnaire, the definition of culture, this researcher reviewed each definition given by students and identified themes reflected in the definitions. After major dimensions of the culture definitions were

established by the investigator, a second post-graduate research assistant was trained to distinguish among the identified eight themes. The research assistant was directed to examine each culture definition and code for the presence or absence of each theme.

Upon completion of the rating task by the second rater, a procedure was used to establish the level of inter-rater reliability. Code assignments made by each rater were compared. An observed percentage level of agreement was calculated by comparing the themes assigned to each definition. This extent of agreement was high but fell below the desired inter-rater reliability of 80% or better. After further discussion and evaluation of the differences in assigned themes, a consistent source of disagreement between raters was identified.

To ensure validity and reliability while facilitating focus groups, a two person procedure was used which included this researcher as the facilitator and a second person as a recorder. Whenever a student answer was not clear to either the facilitator or the recorder, a clarifying question was asked. In addition, student responses were recorded on a flip chart and a chalkboard which provided a process to double-check answers given by student participants with answers recorded for the purpose of the study.

Approach to Analysis

Descriptive statistics were calculated for demographic questions. Associations between variables having an ordinal or interval levels of measurement were examined using correlations with the ten Cultural Competence Standards subscales created from the 34-item cultural competence items. Pearson r coefficients were computed to evaluate the nature and strength of relationships among demographic variables of age, social work

experience and social work education and levels of reported cultural competence. Student's t-test for two independent samples and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) statistical tests for demographic variables with three or more subgroup categories were used to examine differences on overall cultural competence score and subscores. A paired t-test was used to examine changes over time between self-reported cultural competence scores measured at pre- and post-test.

For all statistical tests a probability level of .05 was considered statistically significant. Tests of significance were run as two-tailed for hypotheses one and two because these hypotheses did not specify the nature of differences or associations. One-tailed tests of significance were used for hypothesis two because specific groups were identified as potentially having higher levels of cultural competence.

Summary

Chapter III contained a discussion of the study's epistemology and methodology, subjects and sampling, procedures, instrumentation, and data analysis. Analysis results and study findings are presented in Chapter IV. These results include a detailed description of participant characteristics, general findings, and results of inferential statistical tests of the research hypotheses.

Chapter IV

RESULTS

Overview

The primary purpose of this study was to evaluate the level of reported cultural competence of students entering an MSW program and to see if there is a reported level of change in their cultural competence after completing one semester of MSW education. In addition, this study evaluated if demographic variables such as race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, a reported faith other than Christian, and no reported faith impact a student's level of reported cultural competence. Also evaluated is whether students who were raised in the inner city, in an international setting, a military setting, or are an international student's impact reported level of cultural competence.

Ninety-Five students completed a pre-test at MSW orientation to evaluate their own levels of cultural competence. Of these 95, over two-thirds of the pre-test sample (n=65) of students also participated in a post-test after their first semester of MSW education to self-report their Cultural Competence. Twenty-one students participated in a focus group nine weeks after completing the post-test to discuss cultural competence in social work education.

Characteristics of the Study Sample

The study sample included 83 women (87.4%) and 9 men (9.5%) and was composed of participants representing a wide age range, 21 years - 67 years. The mean age was 30.7 years with the largest percentage (14.3%) being 22 years.

Of the 95 students who participated in the pre-test portion of the study, 17 identified as African American (17.9%), 1 Latino (1.1%), 2 Middle Eastern (2.1%), 1 First Nations, (1.1%), three identified as Bi-racial (3.2%), and five identified as other ethnicity (5.5%) which included East Indian, French/Irish, Greek American, and Mexican American. Sixty-six students (69.5%) identified as Caucasian Americans.

Seven students self-identified as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Transgender (LGBT) (7.7%) and 5 students reported having a disability (5.5%). Of the students questioned, 54 identified with the Christian faith (56.8%), 30 identified with no faith (31.5%), and 5 identified with a diverse faith (5.5%) which included Hindu, Muslim, and Jew.

With respect to the geographic locations and communities where students were raised, 15 students (15.8 %) grew up in an Urban, big city, 16 were raised in an Urban, inner city (16.8%), 3 reported living with their family in a military setting (3.2%), 3 reported living as a US citizen in an international setting (3.2%), 2 report being international students (2.1%), 38 reported growing up in a rural setting (40%), and 40 reported being raised in a suburban community/area (42.1%).

To better understand the level of social work experience, both volunteer and employment experience was evaluated. When looking at student volunteer experiences, the number of years ranged from 0-20 years with 11 students reporting no volunteer experience (11.6%), 10 reporting 1 year (10.5%), 12 reporting 2 years (12.6%) and 10

reporting 3 years (10.5%), 6 reporting 4 years (6.3%), 7 reporting 5 years (7.4%) 2 reporting 6 years and 2 reporting 7 years (each 2.1%), 7 reporting 8 years (7.4 %) and five reporting between 8.5-13 years of volunteer experience (5.4%). Three individuals reported 20 years (3.2%) of volunteer experience.

Table 1. Student volunteer experience

Number of years social work volunteer experience	Number of students	Percent of students
0	11	11.6
1	10	10.5
2	12	12.6
3	10	10.5
4	6	6.3
5	7	7.4
6	2	2.1
7	2	2.1
8	7	7.4
8.5-13	5	5.4
20	3	3.2

When asked how many years of social work employment students' responses ranged from 0-20 years, 35 reporting no social work employment (36.8%), 7 reported one year (7.4%) 3 reported 1.5years (3.2%), 8 reported 2 years (8.4%), 3 reported 3 years (3.2%), 6 reported 4 years (6.3%) 4 reported 5 (4.2%), 5 reported 6 years (5.3%), 2 report 7 years (2.1%), 3 reported 8 (3.2%), 4 reported 9 (4.2%), 4 reported 10 (4.2%), 5 reported between 12 and 19 years of employment (5.3%).

Table 2. Student social work employment

Number of years social work employment experience	Number of students	Percent of students
1	7	7.4
1.5	3	3.2
2	8	8.4
3	3	3.2
4	6	6.3
5	4	4.2
6	5	5.3
7	2	2.1
9	4	4.2
10	3	3.2
12-19	5	5.3

To better understand the amount of social work education in diversity and culture, both courses taken and trainings were evaluated. Students reported taking between 0-20 diversity trainings. Thirty two students reported 0 trainings (26.9%), 15 reported 1 training (12.6%), and 15 reported 2 trainings (12.6). Students reported 0-8 courses taken in diversity. Twelve reported 0 courses (10.2%), 11 reported 1 course (9.2%), 25 students reported 2 courses taken in diversity (21.0%), and 15 students reported taken 3 courses (12.6%) taken in diversity.

Table 3. Student trainings and courses in diversity and/or culture

Number trainings in diversity/culture	Number of students	Percent of students
0	32	26.9
1	15	12.6
2	15	12.6
Number courses in diversity/culture		
0	12	10.2
1	11	9.2
2	25	21
3	15	12.6

Cultural Competence Questionnaire

As discussed previously, the questionnaire used in this study (see Appendix F) was designed by the researcher to measure social work students' cultural competence as defined by the NASW Cultural Competence Standards. The questionnaire consists of 34 Likert-type scale items on cultural competence within the social work profession. Each question was created to measure one of the NASW Cultural Competence Standards.

Using SPSS, the subscales were tested for scale reliability with Cronbach's coefficient for internal reliability. Each subscale was used to determine the alpha range for each cultural competence item. The subscale alphas ranged from .64-.86 which falls within the acceptable internal reliability. Subscale with content in Values and Ethics had an alpha of .72, Self Awareness .64, Cross Cultural Knowledge, .76, Cross Cultural Skills, .86, Service Delivery, .81, Empowerment and Advocacy, .79, Diverse Workforce, .65, Professional Education, .72, Diversity Language, .72, and Cross Cultural Leadership, .78. All were deemed to have adequate internal reliability based on social scientific convention (Ott, 2001).

Table 4 describes each Cultural Competence Standard, the content of each Standard, each question within the questionnaire that aligns with each specific Standard, the Cronbach alpha, the scale and item means.

Table 4. Cultural competence standards and corresponding internal reliability statistics at pre-test

Description & Content for NASW Cultural Competence Standards	# items	Cronbach's Alpha	Scale & Item Means
1. Values and Ethics	**3**	**.72**	**9.3**
Familiar with code of ethics			3.0
Personal/professional values			4.0
Familiar with NASW cultural competence			2.4
2. Self Awareness	**3**	**.64**	**12.3**
Aware of personal culture			4.4
Recognize culture, values, and beliefs			4.3
Recognize personal. values, and beliefs			3.6
3. Cross Cultural Knowledge	**3**	**.76**	**10.2**
Understand history			3.6
Understand family systems			3.4
Aware of traditions, values, artistic express			3.2
4. Cross-Cultural Skills	**4**	**.86**	**11.8**
Skilled attending to verbal			3.4
Skilled at non-verbal			3.0
Skilled in assessment			2.8
Skilled at treatment planning			2.7
5. Service Delivery	**3**	**.81**	**8.7**
Skilled identifying formal resources			2.9
Skilled evaluation of strengths/weaknesses			3.1
Community tailored referrals			2.7
6. Empowerment and Advocacy	**3**	**.79**	**9.5**
Aware of social policy			3.3
Aware of effect social programs			3.4
Participate in soc. Advocacy			2.8
7. Diverse Workforce	**3**	**.65**	**9.7**
Advocate for diverse workforce			4.3
Aware of diversity hiring			2.9
Support need for diverse workforce			2.6
8. Professional Education	**3**	**.72**	**10.7**
Actively support professional education			3.97
One or more diversity course			3.64
One or more diversity training			3.10
9. Language Diversity	**4**	**.72**	**11.4**
Understand language			4.2
Provide referrals w/ bilingual services			2.0
Advocate for first language			2.5
Service info in first language			2.6
10. Cross-Cultural Leadership	**3**	**.78**	**9.8**
Model cross cultural behavior			3.9
Leadership to promote cultural competence			2.6
Advocate for fair and equitable treatment			3.3

General Findings

These findings discuss the results of each analysis performed to test each hypothesis of students' reported level of cultural competence. Two-tailed Pearson correlation coefficients, ANOVA, one and two-tailed t-tests and a Paired t-test were used within this study. The following research questions will guide the presentation of the findings of this study.

1. How do students entering an MSW program rate their level of cultural competence?
2. Does the student report a higher level of cultural competence after one semester of MSW education?
3. Are there specific areas of social work practice in which students report a higher level of cultural competence over other areas of social work practice? (As identified in the NASW Cultural Competence Standards)
4. What is the relationship between student reported cultural competence and the variables of age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, geographical location of upbringing, previous education, social work volunteer experience, social work employment and previous education and trainings in diversity?

Paired t-tests were run to examine mean differences of reported cultural competence between entering the MSW program (pre-test) and students who have completed one semester of MSW education. Significant differences were found in all of the Standards and reported in Table 5. Significant differences were such that mean self-reported score for Values and Ethics, pre MSW was 3.1, and after one semester of MSW

education the mean score was 4.0 (t=9.4, one-tailed, p=.00). For Self Awareness, pre MSW was 4.2, and post was 4.4 (t=3.2, one-tailed, p=.00). For Cross-Cultural, pre MSW was 3.4, and post was 3.9 (t= 5.2, one-tailed, p=.00). For Cross-Cultural Skills, pre MSW was 3.0, and post was 3.4 (t= 3.2, one-tailed, p=.00). For Service Delivery, pre MSW was 2.9, and post was 3.3 (t=4.0, one-tailed, p=.00). For Empowerment and Advocacy, pre MSW was 3.1, and post was 3.5 (t= 2.8, one-tailed, p=.00). For Diverse Workforce, pre MSW was 3.8, and post was 4.1 (t=4.0, one-tailed, p=.00). For Professional Education, pre MSW was 3.7, and post was 4.1 (t= 3.6, one-tailed, p=.00). For Language Diversity, pre MSW was 2.9, and post was 3.3 (t= 3.1, one-tailed, p=.00). For Cross-Cultural Leadership, pre MSW was 3.8, and post was 4.0 (t= 1.9, one-tailed, p=.03).

Table 5. Comparison of mean differences in student pre- and post-test ratings for Standards 1-10.

Standards	n	Pre-Post Mean	sd	t	p
1. Values and Ethics					
Pre-test	64	3.1	.88	9.4	.00
Post-test	64	4.0	.59		
2. Self Awareness					
Pre-test	64	4.2	.62	3.2	.00
Post-test	64	4.4	.52		
3. Cross-Cultural Knowledge					
Pre-test	64	3.4	.81	5.2	.00
Post-test	64	3.9	.60		
4. Cross-Cultural Skills					
Pre-test	61	3.0	.95	3.2	.00
Post-test	61	3.4	.90		
5. Service Delivery					
Pre-test	63	2.9	.95	4.0	.00
Post-test	63	3.3	.91		
6. Empowerment/Advocacy					
Pre-test	63	3.1	1.0	2.8	.00
Post-test	63	3.5	.84		
7. Diverse Workforce					
Pre-test	64	3.8	.86	4.0	.00
Post-test	64	4.1	.73		
8. Professional Education					
Pre-test	64	3.7	1.1	3.6	.00
Post-test	64	4.1	.75		
9. Language Diversity					
Pre-test	64	2.9	.90	3.1	.00
Post-test	64	3.3	.96		
10.Cross-Cultural Leadership					
Pre-test	64	3.8	.87	1.9	.03
Post-test	64	4.0	.69		

Hypothesis 1

Reported level of cultural competence will differ by student age, by student's social work employment and volunteer experiences, if the student has a Bachelor's of Social Work (BSW), and according to the number of courses and trainings taken in diversity.

A 2-tailed Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated to analyze the association between self-reported cultural competence and age, social work experience through employment and volunteering, diversity and cultural education during trainings and educational course work to the level of reported cultural competence.

Results 1.1

The nature and strength of relationships between self-reported cultural competences for each Standard at orientation prior to the start of graduate program were analyzed using Pearson correlations. No significant associations were identified between age and Values and Ethics, Self-Awareness, Cross-Cultural Knowledge, Cross-Cultural Skills, Service Delivery, Empowerment and Advocacy, Diverse Workforce, Professional Education, Diversity of Language or Cross-Cultural Leadership.

Results 1.2

The nature and strength of relationships between student social work experience and self-reported cultural competence for each Standard were analyzed using Pearson correlations. No significant relationship was identified for Self Awareness, Cross-Cultural Knowledge, Professional Education, Diverse Workforce, or Empowerment and Advocacy. A significant relationship was identified for a coefficient approaching significance was noted for Values and Ethics such that (r= .22, two-tailed, p=.05, Cross-Cultural Skills (r=.38, two-tailed, p=.00, Service Delivery (r=.31, two-tailed, p=.00),

Diversity of Language (r=.26, two-tailed, p=.02), and Cross-Cultural Leadership (r=.27, two-tailed, p=.01).

Results 1.3

The nature and strength of relationships between extent of [or quantity of] student diversity education and self-reported cultural competencies for each Standard were analyzed using Pearson correlations. No significant relationship was identified for Diversity of Language. Significant positive associations were identified for nine Standards. These correlations include: Values and Ethics (r= .31, two-tailed, p=.00), Self-Awareness (r=.27, two-tailed, p=.02), Cross-Cultural Knowledge (r=.32, two-tailed, p=.00), Cross-Cultural Skills (r=.34, two-tailed, p=.00, Service Delivery (r=.32, two-tailed, p=.01), Empowerment and Advocacy (r=.33, two-tailed, p=.00), Diverse Workforce (r=.33, two-tailed, p=.00), Professional Education (r=.40, two-tailed, p=.00), and Cross-Cultural Leadership (r=.48, two-tailed, p=.00). For each of these nine variables, students with more diversity education, either through courses or trainings, had significantly higher self-reported cultural competencies on all Standards except the subscale for Diversity of Language.

Results 1.4

Independent t-tests, one tailed, were calculated to examine mean differences for self-reported cultural competencies between students who had graduated with a BSW students who did not have a BSW. Table 6 shows a significant difference was found such that the mean self-reported score for Values and Ethics, of a student with no BSW was 2.9, and students with a BSW had a group mean of 3.9 (t=5.3, two-tailed, p=.00). For

Self-Awareness, no BSW was 4.0, and BSW was 4.4 (t= 2.4, two-tailed, p=.01). For Cross-Cultural Knowledge, no BSW was 3.3, and BSW was 3.8 (t= 2.7, two-tailed, p=.01). For Cross-Cultural Skills, no BSW was 2.7, and BSW was 3.7 (t=3.8, two-tailed, p=.00). For Service Delivery, no BSW was 2.7, and BSW was 3.4 (t=2.9, two-tailed, p=.00). For Empowerment and Advocacy, no BSW was 3.0, and BSW was 3.6 (t=2.6, two-tailed, p=.01). For Diverse Workforce, no BSW was 3.6, and BSW was 4.0 (t=1.7, two-tailed, p=.05). For Professional Education, no BSW was 3.5, and BSW was 4.3 (t=2.9, two-tailed, p=.00). For Diversity Language, no BSW was 2.7, and a BSW 3.5 (t=3.2, two-tailed, p=.01). For Cross-Cultural Leadership, no BSW was 3.5, and BSW was 4.4 (t=5.2, two-tailed, p=.00).

Table 6. Comparison of mean differences between BSW graduates (field and classroom education) and No BSW for Standards 1-10, pre-test self-ratings of cultural competence

Standards	n	Pre-test Mean	sd	t	p
1. Values and Ethics					
No BSW	69	2.9	.73	5.3	.00
BSW	19	3.9	.83		
2. Self Awareness					
No BSW	69	4.0	.64	2.4	.01
BSW	19	4.4	.58		
3. Cross-Cultural Knowledge					
No BSW	69	3.3	.78	2.7	.01
BSW	20	3.8	.83		
4. Cross-Cultural Skills					
No BSW	69	2.7	.96	3.8	.00
BSW	19	3.7	.91		
5. Service Delivery					
No BSW	68	2.7	1.0	2.9	.00
BSW	20	3.4	.75		
6. Empowerment/Advocacy					
No BSW	69	3.0	.97	2.6	.01
BSW	20	3.6	1.1		
7. Diverse Workforce					
No BSW	69	3.6	.91	1.7	.05
BSW	19	4.0	.78		
8. Professional Education					
No BSW	69	3.5	1.1	2.9	.00
BSW	20	4.3	.88		
9. Language Diversity					
No BSW	69	2.7	.90	3.2	.00
BSW	18	3.5	.96		
10.Cross-Cultural Leadership					
No BSW	69	3.5	.99	5.2	.00
BSW	20	4.4	.52		

Independent t-tests were used to examine mean differences for pre MSW self-reported cultural competence between students in field education during their first semester of MSW education (n=26) and students who were not in field (n=38) during their first semester of MSW education..

Hypothesis 2

A higher level of cultural competence will be reported by students who have completed one semester of field education in the MSW program.

Results 2.1

Because hypothesis two was directional one-tailed t-tests were used. For pre-MSW self-reported cultural competence, t-tests were run to examine mean differences between students in field education and students not in field education. Table 7 shows no significant group mean differences were identified for any of the ten competency Standards scores - Values and Ethics, Self-Awareness, Cross-Cultural Knowledge, Cross-Cultural Skill, Service Delivery, Empowerment and Advocacy, Professional Education, Diverse Workforce, Diversity Language, and Cross-Cultural Leadership.

Table 7. Comparison of mean differences of students who have completed one semester of MSW of field education and students who have not completed one semester of MSW field education for Standards 1-10, post-test self-ratings of cultural competence

Standards	n	Post-test Mean	sd	t	p
1. Values and Ethics					
MSW field education	26	4.1	.52	.62	.54
No MSW field education	38	4.0	.64		
2. Self Awareness					
MSW field education	26	4.4	.44	.24	.81
No MSW field education	38	4.4	.57		
3. Cross-Cultural Knowledge					
MSW field education	26	3.8	.65	.60	.55
No MSW field education	38	3.9	.58		
4. Cross-Cultural Skills					
MSW field education	26	3.3	.78	.37	.71
No MSW field education	36	3.4	.99		
5. Service Delivery					
MSW field education	26	3.2	.90	.73	.47
No MSW field education	37	3.4	.93		
6. Empowerment/Advocacy					
MSW field education	25	3.5	.77	.17	.86
No MSW field education	38	3.5	.89		
7. Diverse Workforce					
MSW field education	26	4.1	.71	.11	.92
No MSW field education	37	4.1	.76		
8. Professional Education					
MSW field education	26	4.0	.53	.98	.33
No MSW field education	38	4.2	.87		
9. Language Diversity					
MSW field education	26	3.1	.81	.96	.34
No MSW field education	38	3.4	1.1		
10.Cross-Cultural Leadership					
MSW field education	26	4.0	.60	.64	.52
No MSW field education	38	4.1	.75		

Hypothesis 3

A higher level of cultural competence will be reported by students with diverse demographic variables that include non-White race, self identify as LGBT, self identify as an individual with a disability, report no religion or a religion other than Christian, and by students who report coming from an urban inner city, international, military geographic location or report being an international student.

Results 3.1

Hypothesis 3 was directional; therefore one-tailed independent t-tests were used to examine mean differences in self-reported cultural competence pre-test ratings, between students with a diverse race (all non-White students) and those students not from a diverse race, i.e. White/Caucasian.

When diverse and non-diverse race categories were compared on students reported level of cultural competence, no significant differences were found for Values and Ethics, Self-Awareness, Cross-Cultural Skill, Service Delivery, Diverse Work, Professional Education, Language Diversity, and Cross-Cultural Leadership. Table 8 shows significant differences were found in Cross-Cultural Knowledge and Empowerment and Advocacy. Table 8 shows significant differences were identified for two Standards. For pre-test Cross-Cultural Knowledge scores differences were such that the mean self-reported rating for students of a diverse race is 3.3 was lower than the mean for students not from a diverse race was 3.7 ($t=1.9$, one-tailed, $p=.03$). For Empowerment and Advocacy for students of a diverse race was 3.0 and not from a diverse race was 3.4 ($t=1.8$, one-tailed, $p=.04$). These two significant findings do not support the hypothesis because they are opposite to the direction specified in Hypothesis 3.

Table 8. Comparison of mean differences between students from a diverse race subgroup and students who do not come from a diverse race for Standards 1-10, pre-test self-ratings

Standards	n	Pre-test Mean	sd	t	p
1. Values and Ethics					
No diverse race	66	3.1	.87	.34	.37
Diverse race	26	3.2	.88		
2. Self Awareness					
No diverse race	65	4.1	.66	.06	.47
Diverse race	27	4.1	.58		
3. Cross-Cultural Knowledge					
No diverse race	66	3.3	.78	1.9	.03
Diverse race	27	3.7	.81		
4. Cross-Cultural Skills					
No diverse race	66	2.9	.98	.84	.21
Diverse race	26	3.1	1.1		
5. Service Delivery					
No diverse race	65	2.8	.95	1.6	.06
Diverse race	27	3.1	1.0		
6. Empowerment/Advocacy					
No diverse race	66	3.0	1.0	1.8	.04
Diverse race	27	3.4	9.7		
7. Diverse Workforce					
No diverse race	66	3.6	.89	1.3	.10
Diverse race	26	3.9	.87		
8. Professional Education					
No diverse race	66	3.6	1.1	.60	.28
Diverse race	27	3.8	1.2		
9. Language Diversity					
No diverse race	66	2.8	.92	1.2	.12
Diverse race	25	3.1	1.0		
10.Cross-Cultural Leadership					
No diverse race	66	3.7	.95	.92	.18
Diverse race	27	3.9	1.0		

Independent t-tests, one-tailed, were used to examine mean differences between those who identified as an individual coming from a diverse race and those not coming from a diverse race and self-reported cultural competence post-test. No significant differences were found for Self Awareness, Empowerment and Advocacy, Diverse Workforce, and Language Diversity.

Table 9 shows for Values and Ethics scores, a significant differences was found such that mean self-reported score for students of a Diverse race is 4.0 and the mean of students not from a diverse race was 4.3 (t=1.7, one-tailed, p=.05). For Cross-Cultural Knowledge for students of a diverse race is 3.8 and students not from a diverse race was 4.2 (t=2.4, one-tailed, p=.01). For Cross-Cultural Skills for students of a diverse race is 3.2 and students not from a diverse race was 3.8 (t=2.7, one-tailed, p=.00). For Service Delivery for students of a diverse race is 3.2 and from a diverse race was 3.7 (t=2.2, two-tailed, p=.02). For Professional Education for students of a diverse race is 4.0 and students not from a diverse race was 4.5 (t=2.5, one-tailed, p=.01). For Cross-Cultural Leadership for students of a diverse race is 4.3 and not from a diverse race was 3.9 (t=1.8, one-tailed, p=.04).

Table 9. Comparison of mean differences between students from a diverse race subgroup and students who do not come from a diverse race for Standards 1-10, post-test self-ratings

Standards	n	Post-test Mean	sd	t	p
1. Values and Ethics					
No diverse race	47	4.0	.59	1.7	.05
Diverse race	17	4.3	.56		
2. Self Awareness					
No diverse race	47	4.3	.54	1.5	.07
Diverse race	17	4.5	.41		
3. Cross-Cultural Knowledge					
No diverse race	47	3.8	.60	2.4	.01
Diverse race	17	4.2	.53		
4. Cross-Cultural Skills					
No diverse race	46	3.2	.86	2.7	.00
Diverse race	16	3.8	.84		
5. Service Delivery					
No diverse race	46	3.2	.86	2.2	.02
Diverse race	17	3.7	.97		
6. Empowerment/Advocacy					
No diverse race	46	3.4	.79	1.3	.10
Diverse race	17	3.7	.94		
7. Diverse Workforce					
No diverse race	46	4.1	.70	1.4	.09
Diverse race	17	4.3	.79		
8. Professional Education					
No diverse race	47	4.0	.73	2.5	.01
Diverse race	17	4.5	.71		
9. Language Diversity					
No diverse race	47	3.2	.89	1.4	.08
Diverse race	17	3.6	1.1		
10.Cross-Cultural Leadership					
No diverse race	47	3.9	.68	1.8	.04
Diverse race	17	4.3	.68		

Results 3.2

Independent t-tests, one tailed, were used to examine mean differences between those who self identified with LGBT and those who did not identify with LGBT and self-reported cultural competence pre-test. No significant differences were found for Values and Ethics, Self-Awareness, Cross-Cultural Knowledge, Cross-Cultural Skill, Service Delivery, Empowerment and Advocacy, Professional Education, Language Diversity, and Cross-Cultural Leadership. Table 10 shows a significant difference was found for Diverse Workforce where the mean score of those reported as identifying as LGBT was 4.3, and those who do not identify with LGBT had a mean self-report of 3.6 ($t = 1.9$, one-tailed, $p = .03$).

Table 10. Comparison of mean differences between students who identify with LGBT and students who do not identify with LGBT for Standards 1-10, pre- test self-ratings of cultural competence

Standards	n	Pre-test Mean	sd	t	p
1. Values and Ethics					
LGBT	7	3.1	.81	.17	.43
No LGBT	81	3.1	.86		
2. Self Awareness					
LGBT	7	4.5	.42	1.5	.06
No LGBT	82	4.1	.63		
3. Cross-Cultural Knowledge					
LGBT	7	3.8	.66	1.4	.09
No LGBT	82	3.4	.81		
4. Cross-Cultural Skills					
LGBT	6	2.7	1.1	.58	.28
No LGBT	82	3.0	1.0		
5. Service Delivery					
LGBT	7	2.6	1.0	.87	.19
No LGBT	81	3.0	.99		
6. Empowerment/Advocacy					
LGBT	7	3.5	.77	1.0	.16
No LGBT	82	3.1	1.0		
7. Diverse Workforce					
LGBT	7	4.3	.71	1.9	.03
No LGBT	81	3.6	.89		
8. Professional Education					
LGBT	7	3.7	1.5	.04	.49
No LGBT	82	3.7	1.1		
9. Language Diversity					
LGBT	7	3.1	.83	.87	.19
No LGBT	80	2.8	.97		
10.Cross-Cultural Leadership					
LGBT	7	4.0	1.2	.95	.17
No LGBT	82	3.7	.96		

Independent t-tests, one-tailed, were used to examine mean differences between those who self identified with LGBT and those who did not identify with LGBT and self-reported cultural competence post-test. No significant differences were found for Self-Awareness, Cross-Cultural Knowledge, Cross-Cultural Skill, Service Delivery, Empowerment and Advocacy, Diverse Workforce, Professional Education, Language Diversity, and Cross-Cultural Leadership.

Table 11 shows a significant difference was noted for Values and Ethics where the mean score of those reported as identifying as LGBT was 3.6, and those who do not identify with LGBT had a mean self-report of 4.1 ($t = 1.7$, one-tailed, $p = .05$).

Table 11. Comparison of mean differences between students who identify with LGBT and students who do not identify with LGBT for Standards 1-10, post-test self-ratings of cultural competence

Standards	n	Post-test Mean	sd	t	p
1. Values and Ethics					
LGBT	4	3.6	.69	1.7	.05
No LGBT	59	4.1	.58		
2. Self Awareness					
LGBT	4	4.3	.63	.64	.26
No LGBT	59	4.4	.50		
3. Cross-Cultural Knowledge					
LGBT	4	4.0	.54	.31	.38
No LGBT	59	3.9	.61		
4. Cross-Cultural Skills					
LGBT	4	3.1	.85	.65	.26
No LGBT	57	3.4	.91		
5. Service Delivery					
LGBT	3	3.3	.88	.01	.50
No LGBT	59	3.3	.93		
6. Empowerment/Advocacy					
LGBT	4	4.0	1.1	1.2	.11
No LGBT	58	3.5	.83		
7. Diverse Workforce					
LGBT	4	4.4	.42	.79	.22
No LGBT	58	4.1	.75		
8. Professional Education					
LGBT	4	3.9	.57	.63	.27
No LGBT	59	4.2	.77		
9. Language Diversity					
LGBT	4	3.3	1.2	.05	.48
No LGBT	59	3.3	.96		
10.Cross-Cultural Leadership					
LGBT	4	4.0	.54	.09	.46
No LGBT	59	4.0	.71		

Results 3.3

Independent t –tests, one tailed, were used to examine mean differences between students who identified as having a disability and students who did not identify having a disability and self-reported cultural competence pre-test. No significant difference was found in Values and Ethics, Self-Awareness, Cross-Cultural Knowledge, Cross-Cultural Skill, Service Delivery, Empowerment and Advocacy, Diverse Work, Language Diversity, and Cross-Cultural Leadership. Table 12 shows a significant difference was found for Professional Education where the mean score of those reported as having a disability was 4.5, and those who do not have a disability had a mean self-report of 3.6 (t= 1.8 one-tailed, p=.04).

Table 12. Comparison of mean differences between students who identify having a disability and students who do not for Standards 1-10, pre-test self-ratings of cultural competence

Standards	n	Pre-test Mean	sd	t	p
1. Values and Ethics					
Disability	4	3.6	1.3	1.1	.13
No disability	86	3.1	.84		
2. Self Awareness					
Disability	5	4.5	.56	1.5	.07
No disability	85	4.1	.63		
3. Cross-Cultural Knowledge					
Disability	5	3.9	1.0	1.3	.10
No disability	86	3.4	.79		
4. Cross-Cultural Skills					
Disability	4	3.7	1.8	1.5	.07
No disability	86	2.9	.97		
5. Service Delivery					
Disability	5	3.3	1.4	.88	.19
No disability	85	2.9	.97		
6. Empowerment/Advocacy					
Disability	5	3.8	.84	1.6	.06
No disability	86	3.1	1.0		
7. Diverse Workforce					
Disability	4	4.0	1.1	.74	.23
No disability	86	3.7	.89		
8. Professional Education					
Disability	5	4.5	.73	1.8	.04
No disability	86	3.6	1.1		
9. Language Diversity					
Disability	4	3.4	1.2	1.1	.13
No disability	85	2.8	.94		
10.Cross-Cultural Leadership					
Disability	5	3.8	1.7	.18	.43
No disability	86	3.7	.93		

Independent t –tests, one-tailed, were used to examine mean differences between students who identified as having a disability and students who did not identify having a disability and self-reported cultural competence post-test. With only one reporting in the post-test as an individual with a disability, the t-test could not be run.

Results 3.4

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test for significant differences among three levels for faith variables on pre-test self-reported cultural competencies. The three levels for the faith variable are Christian, a report of no specific faith, and a diverse faith (Muslim, Hindu, and Jew). No significant differences were found among a report of no specific faith, diverse faith and Christian faith. The restricted number of cases in the diverse faith subgroup (n=6) likely accounts for non-significant F ratios.

To further examine the faith variable, one-tailed t-tests were run to compare mean cultural competence between a report of no faith and faith. Independent t-tests were used to examine mean differences for self-reported cultural competence pre-test between those who reported having no faith and those who reported a faith. Table 13 shows no significant differences were found for Standards Values and Ethics, Self-Awareness, Cross-Cultural Knowledge, Cross-Cultural Skill, Service Delivery, Empowerment and Advocacy, Diverse Work Force, Professional Education, Language Diversity, and Cross-Cultural Leadership.

Table 13. Comparison of mean differences between students who reported a specific faith and students who reported having no specific faith for Standards 1-10, pre-test self-ratings of cultural competence

Standards	n	Pre-test Mean	sd	t	p
1. Values and Ethics					
Faith	57	3.2	.87	.72	.24
No faith	30	3.0	.88		
2. Self Awareness					
Faith	58	4.1	.66	.59	.28
No faith	29	4.2	.63		
3. Cross-Cultural Knowledge					
Faith	58	3.4	.85	.17	.43
No faith	30	3.4	.77		
4. Cross-Cultural Skills					
Faith	58	3.0	1.0	.08	.47
No faith	29	2.9	1.0		
5. Service Delivery					
Faith	57	2.9	.96	.25	.40
No faith	30	2.8	1.0		
6. Empowerment/Advocacy					
Faith	58	3.1	.98	.34	.37
No faith	30	3.0	1.0		
7. Diverse Workforce					
Faith	57	3.6	.87	50	.31
No faith	30	3.8	.93		
8. Professional Education					
Faith	58	3.6	1.2	.59	.28
No faith	30	3.8	.87		
9. Language Diversity					
Faith	57	2.9	1.0	.89	.19
No faith	29	2.7	.83		
10.Cross-Cultural Leadership					
Faith	58	3.7	.97	.30	.38
No faith	30	3.8	.99		

Independent t-tests, one-tailed, were used to examine mean differences between those who identify with an identified faith and those who reported having no specific faith and self-reported cultural competence post-test. Table 14 shows no significant differences were found for Values and Ethics, Self-Awareness, Cross-Cultural Skill, Service Delivery, Empowerment and Advocacy, Diverse Work Force, Professional Education, and Language Diversity. A significant difference was noted in Cross-Cultural Knowledge where the mean score of those reported as having an identified faith was 4.0, and those who reported having no faith had a mean self-report of 3.7 ($t=1.7$, one-tailed, $p=.05$). For Cross-Cultural Leadership scores, a significant differences was found such that mean self-reported score for students as having an identified faith was 4.1, and those who reported having no faith had a mean self-report of 3.8 ($t=1.7$, one-tailed, $p=.05$).

Table 14. Comparison of mean differences between students who reported a specific faith and students who reported having no specific faith for Standards 1-10, post-test self-ratings of cultural competence

Standards	n	Post-test Mean	sd	t	p
1. Values and Ethics					
Faith	37	4.1	.61	1.4	.08
No faith	24	3.9	.53		
2. Self Awareness					
Faith	37	4.4	.53	.05	.48
No faith	24	4.4	.48		
3. Cross-Cultural Knowledge					
Faith	37	4.0	.60	1.7	.05
No faith	24	3.7	.59		
4. Cross-Cultural Skills					
Faith	36	3.4	.92	.88	.19
No faith	23	3.2	.86		
5. Service Delivery					
Faith	36	3.4	.80	1.3	.09
No faith	24	3.1	1.0		
6. Empowerment/Advocacy					
Faith	37	3.6	.80	1.6	.06
No faith	23	3.3	.89		
7. Diverse Workforce					
Faith	37	4.2	.78	.69	.25
No faith	23	4.0	.68		
8. Professional Education					
Faith	37	4.2	.74	.98	.17
No faith	24	4.0	.77		
9. Language Diversity					
Faith	37	3.4	1.0	1.4	.08
No faith	24	3.1	.92		
10.Cross-Cultural Leadership					
Faith	37	4.1	.65	1.7	.05
No faith	24	3.8	.75		

Results 3.5

Independent t-tests, one-tailed, were used to examine mean differences between those who identify being raised in a diverse geographic location (those being raised in a inner city urban setting, military setting, international setting, or were an international student) and those who were not raised in a diverse geographic location (suburban, large urban setting or rural) and self-reported cultural competence pre-test. No significant differences were found for Cross-Cultural Knowledge, Empowerment and Advocacy, Diverse Work Force, Professional Education, and Cross-Cultural Leadership.

Table 15 shows for Values and Ethics scores, a significant differences was found such that mean self-reported score for students not of a diverse geographic upbringing was 3.0, and those who do have an identified diverse geographic upbringing had a mean self-report of 3.6 (t=2.9, one-tailed, p=.00). For Self Awareness, no diverse geographic upbringing was 4.0, and diverse geographic upbringing was 4.3 (t=1.8, one-tailed, p=.04). For Cross-Cultural Skills, no a diverse geographic upbringing was 2.8, and diverse geographic upbringing was 3.4 (t=2.3, one-tailed, p=.01). For Service Delivery, no diverse geographic upbringing was 2.8, and diverse geographic was 3.2 (t=2.0, one-tailed, p=.02). For Language Diversity, a diverse geographic upbringing was 2.7 and no diverse geographic upbringing was 3.4 (t=3.0 p=.00).

Table 15. Comparison of mean differences between students with a diverse geographic upbringing and students without a diverse geographic upbringing for Standards 1-10, pre-test self-ratings of cultural competence

Standards	n	Pre-test Mean	sd	t	p
1. Values and Ethics					
No diverse geographic	71	3.0	.78	2.9	.00
Diverse geographic	22	3.6	1.0		
2. Self Awareness					
No diverse geographic	70	4.0	.64	1.8	.04
Diverse geographic	23	4.3	.62		
3. Cross-Cultural Knowledge					
No diverse geographic	71	3.4	.79	1.3	.10
Diverse geographic	23	3.6	.81		
4. Cross-Cultural Skills					
No diverse geographic	70	2.8	.99	2.3	.01
Diverse geographic	23	3.4	.92		
5. Service Delivery					
No diverse geographic	70	2.8	.99	2.0	.02
Diverse geographic	23	3.2	.87		
6. Empowerment/Advocacy					
No diverse geographic	71	3.1	1.0	1.0	.16
Diverse geographic	23	3.3	1.0		
7. Diverse Workforce					
No diverse geographic	71	3.7	.90	.62	.27
Diverse geographic	22	3.8	.85		
8. Professional Education					
No diverse geographic	71	3.6	1.1	1.2	.12
Diverse geographic	23	3.9	1.3		
9. Language Diversity					
No diverse geographic	70	2.7	.94	3.0	.00
Diverse geographic	22	3.4	.82		
10.Cross-Cultural Leadership					
No diverse geographic	71	3.6	.96	1.5	.07
Diverse geographic	23	4.0	.98		

Independent t-tests, one-tailed, were used to examine mean differences between those who identify being raised in a diverse geographic location (those being raised in a inner city urban setting, military setting, international setting, or were an international student) and those who were not raised in a diverse geographic location (suburban, large urban setting or rural), and self-reported cultural competence post-test. No significant differences were found for Self-Awareness, Cross-Cultural Knowledge, Empowerment and Advocacy, Diverse Work, Professional Education, and Language Diversity.

Table 16 shows a significant difference was found for Values and Ethics where the mean score of those reported as having an identified no diverse geographic upbringing was 3.9, and those who do have an identified diverse geographic upbringing had a mean self-report of 4.4 (t=3.0, one-tailed, p=.00). For Cross-Cultural Skills no diverse geographic upbringing was 3.1 and diverse geographic upbringing was 3.9 (t=2.9, one-tailed, p=.00). For Service Delivery no diverse geographic upbringing was 3.2 and diverse geographic upbringing was 3.8 (t=2.5, one-tailed, p=.01). For Cross-Cultural Leadership no diverse geographic upbringing was 3.9, and diverse geographic upbringing was 4.4 (t=2.4, one-tailed, p=.01).

Table 16. Comparison of mean differences between students with a diverse geographic upbringing and students without a diverse geographic upbringing for Standards 1-10, post-test self-ratings of cultural competence

Standards	n	Post-test Mean	sd	t	p
1. Values and Ethics					
No diverse geographic	47	3.9	.59	3.0	.00
Diverse geographic	17	4.4	.46		
2. Self Awareness					
No diverse geographic	47	4.3	.51	1.3	.10
Diverse geographic	17	4.5	.51		
3. Cross-Cultural Knowledge					
No diverse geographic	47	3.8	.59	1.4	.08
Diverse geographic	17	4.1	.64		
4. Cross-Cultural Skills					
No diverse geographic	45	3.1	.86	2.9	.00
Diverse geographic	17	3.9	.81		
5. Service Delivery					
No diverse geographic	46	3.2	.88	2.5	.01
Diverse geographic	17	3.8	.87		
6. Empowerment/Advocacy					
No diverse geographic	46	3.5	.82	.26	.40
Diverse geographic	17	3.5	.93		
7. Diverse Workforce					
No diverse geographic	46	4.0	.77	1.5	.07
Diverse geographic	17	4.4	.55		
8. Professional Education					
No diverse geographic	47	4.0	.73	1.4	.09
Diverse geographic	17	4.4	.80		
9. Language Diversity					
No diverse geographic	47	3.2	.93	1.4	.08
Diverse geographic	17	3.6	1.0		
10.Cross-Cultural Leadership					
No diverse geographic	47	3.9	.72	2.4	.01
Diverse geographic	17	4.4	.48		

As the previous results demonstrate, hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 were not dispelled by the statistical findings. The descriptive purpose of the study was addressed, through a systematic exploration of demographic variable categories, with respect to Cultural Competence Standards rated by participants at pre and/or post-test. A mixed method research design, as was used in this project includes both quantitative and qualitative methods. It is important to note that the quantitative portion of this study is dominant, and the qualitative method is to explore student definition and understanding of cultural learning within their first semester of study. The exploratory aspect of this research involved two qualitative design elements. The first was an open-ended question asking participants to define culture on the pre- and post-test questionnaires. The question was asked to better understand students' understanding of culture.

The second research design element was the use of two focus groups. Collecting data through focus groups allows for qualitative expression that is analyzed independent from the quantitative data, and is interpreted as part of the whole (Creswell, 2003). In addition, the focus groups provide feedback for the researcher on the student educational experience in cultural competence. The next chapter section reports the qualitative findings from a content analysis of culture definitions. Analysis of the data collected during the two focus groups follows these findings and concludes the chapter.

Qualitative Analysis & Findings

In addition to the 34 Likert-type scale items, students were asked to "Please write your definition of culture" (see Appendix F). Of the 95 students that completed the pre-test, 77 students (81.1%), provided a definition of culture. Of the 65 students that also completed the post-test, 52 (80.0%) provided a definition for culture.

To evaluate the qualitative content area of the questionnaire, the definition of culture, this researcher reviewed each definition given by students and identified themes reflected in the definitions. Nine themes emerged from the definitions. These themes were comprised of responses falling into the following categories: (1.) beliefs and values, (2.) tradition, and language, (3.) identification with a group, (4.) family, religion, (5.) society, race, ethnicity, nationality, (6.) geographic location, (7.) social location within society, (8.) no discernable answer, and (9.) did not answer. After major dimensions of the culture definitions were established by the investigator, a second post-graduate research assistant was trained to distinguish among the identified eight themes. The research assistant was directed to examine each culture definition and code for the presence or absence of each theme.

Upon completion of the rating task by the second rater, a procedure was used to establish the level of inter-rater reliability. The procedure consisted of each rater making code assignments and comparing. An observed level of agreement of 72.4% was calculated by comparing the themes assigned to each definition. This extent of agreement was high but fell below the desired inter-rater reliability of 80% or better. After further discussion and evaluation of the differences in assigned themes, a consistent source of disagreement between raters was identified. Specifically, in the fourth theme [society, race, ethnicity, nationality] the word *society* often was assigned when a definition identified a *community* or a specific group. The other rater generally assigned such definitions to the second theme [identification with a group] this within theme #2 identified group. This process resulted in recoding of definitions to reflect a change in the wording for themes two and four.

Themes were restated in the following manner:

1. beliefs and values,

2. tradition and language,

3.. identification with a group, social group or community,

4. family, religion,

5. race, ethnicity, nationality,

6. geographic location,

7. social location within society,

8. no discernable answer

9. did not answer

Upon making the theme heading changes raters one and two completed the rating of student definition a second time and resulted in a 97.4% agreement rating. Table 17 provides the pre-and post-test student definitions of culture.

Table 17. Definition of Culture

Themes	**Pre-test**		**Post-test**	
Content of themes given to define culture	**Number of Students**	**Percentage of Students**	**Number of Students**	**Percentage of Students**
1. Beliefs and values	41	44.5%	37	56.9%
2. Traditions and language	40	43.4%	25	38.4%
3. Identification with a group, social group or community	39	41%	25	38.4%
4. Family, religion	31	32.6%	18	27.7%
5. Race, ethnicity, nationality	16	16.8%	8	12.3%
6. Geographic location	10	10.5%	5	7.7%
7. Social location within society	14	14.7%	5	7.7%
8. No discernable answer	3	3.2%	3	4.6%
9. Did not answer	18	18.9%	13	20%

Focus Group

Two focus groups were convened by invitation to students who completed questionnaires at (pre/post)-test collection in (August/November). Volunteers submitted forms on which they indicated their willingness to participate in a focus group early in their second semester. The focus group was described as an additional aspect of the research to evaluate cultural competence in MSW students in greater detail. Students participated in a focus group based on their personal availability. The addition of focus groups was used to gain exploratory information about their first semester from MSW students with respect to cultural competence. One focus group included students who took courses on the main campus of the university and another focus group was facilitated at a secondary campus at which MSW courses also are offered.

Students were asked when completing the post-test to participate in a focus group, of thirty-six students that volunteered to participate, twenty-one students actually did participate. Of the students that participated, 20 were females (95%) and 1 (4.8%) was male. Three students (14%) came from a race other than white and 18 students (86%) were white. The ages of students participating in the focus groups ranged from early 20's to early 50's. Of the focus group sample 1 student was 21 years (4.8%), 6 students were 22 (29%), 2 students were 23 (9.5%), 2 students were 24 (9.5%), 1 student was 25 (4.8%), 1 student was 27 (4.8%), 2 students were 29 (9.5%), 1 student was 30 (4.8%), 2 students were 31 (9.5%), 1 student was 34 (4.8%), 1 student was 46 (4.8%), and 1 student was 53 years (4.8%). The mean age of focus groups participants was 26 years.

Those who self-identified as LGBT, 3 (14.2%) and 18 (85.7%) who did not identify as LGBT were focus group participants. Two individuals, (9.5%) identified as

having a disability and 19, (90.5%) did not report having a disability. Sixteen individuals, (76.1%) stated they had an identified faith, 3 (14.2%) reported they had "no faith", and two (9.5%) did not answer the faith question. Of the students that participated in the focus group, 4, (19%) identified coming from what this study has identified as a diverse geographic location and 17 (80.9%) reported being raised in a geographic location typically not associated as diverse.

Prior to beginning the focus group, participants were presented with a focus group confidentiality form and asked to regenerate their unique identification number as they had done for both the pre- and post-tests.

Students participating in the focus groups were shown a summary of collected data from the pre- and post-tests. The Likert-type scale, used to rate the items in the cultural competence scale, included the following answer choice anchors: no experience, minimally competent, moderately competent, mostly competent and competent. These response categories were coded as 1= no experience, 2=minimally competent, 3=moderately competent, 4= mostly competent and 5=competent. This value assignment was explained to the students. The data summary was organized to show pre- and post-tests mean scores for the level of cultural competence reported by students. The subscores summary was arranged by, the NASW Cultural Competence Standards. In addition, students were shown the sorted list of Standards, from highest to lowest, for mean level of cultural competence as rated in the quantitative study.

Content Analysis of Focus Group Questions

Students were asked to review the displayed pre- and post-test data and discuss the following questions:

1. After reviewing the data gathered from the pre- and post-test, are there any content areas that surprise you or on which you would like to comment?
2. Where did your learning about cultural competence occur within your first semester of MSW education?
3. Do you have program suggestions for the School to assist you in cultural competence growth?

In response to question one, students provided a variety of comments. The following five main themes were distilled from the student contributions.

- Surprise at the overall high ratings in cultural competence given by students
- Statements indicating pre-test self-ratings may reflect what students felt they should answer as incoming social workers
- Observations that post-test self-ratings reflected what students felt they should answer after a semester of course work
- Reports of finding the question difficult to answer at this point in their education and career
- Surprise at reported level of competency in Values and Ethics, Empowerment and Advocacy, Cross-Cultural Knowledge and Skills, Self-Awareness, and Professional Education.

Students in both focus groups shared their surprise at the high level of cultural competence reported by students in both the pre- and post-tests. Comments indicated that

they believed the high self-ratings at pre-test reflected what students thought they should answer as incoming social workers. Students also commented on the post-test self-ratings. They believed the high level of post-test cultural competencies reflected what respondents thought they should answer after a semester of MSW course work.

Comments also reflected the idea that it was difficult to answer at this time in their professional education and career. Various comments by students included reference to specific Standards, in particular, surprise at reported levels of competency for Values and Ethics, Empowerment and Advocacy, Cross-Cultural Knowledge and Skills, Self-Awareness, Professional Education. Student comments included the surprise that Values and Ethics in the post-test (4.0) was lower than other Standards. The students commented that most courses taken within the first level of MSW education included the NASW *Code of Ethics* and emphasized its importance so they thought this rating would be higher. Students also commented on the high rating of Self-Awareness (4.4) as it did not reflect what they experience from fellow students. Focus group participants stated "they think they are self aware, but are not". Students agreed with the self-rating of Cross-Cultural Knowledge (3.9) and Skills (3.4) being rated lower than other Standards as they have not learned the knowledge and skills to be culturally competent. Students commented on the reported level of Professional Education competency (4.1) and wondered if students understood the meaning of Professional Education within cultural competence.

The second focus group question asked participants to discuss "where did your learning about cultural competence occur within your first semester of MSW education?" The following five themes were gleaned from student contributions to the discussion.

- Personal/professional experience from instructors.
- Formal but varied class sessions
- Peers
- Field education
- Particular curriculum

When students were asked 'where did your learning about cultural competence occur within your first semester of MSW education' they responded that they learned cultural competence when their professors shared their own personal and professional experiences. They also said they learned cultural competence from a variety of experiences including panels, guest speakers, class discussion, experiential learning and group presentations. Students related stories of how they learned cultural competence in casual discussions with their peers including discussions with peers in response to controversial statements made by professors. Students named specific courses in which they learned cultural competence including Human Behavior in Social Environment (HBSE), Policy, Practice classes and Field Education. Students reported that knowledge learned in the class room is (or will be) solidified in field education.

The final focus group question asked participants to share their suggestions for the social work graduate program that would assist their growth with respect to cultural competence. Six themes emerged from student comments.

- Address level of ethnocentricity "us and them" [confront student ethnocentricity]
- Safe environment to discuss cultural issues whether right or wrong [foster safer environments for honest discussions]

- Important to discuss history of specific people groups [provide more information about history and experiences of many cultures]
- Apply course content to practical social work settings which would include learning basic inquiry skills to help us within all cultural groups. [Assist with applying class info to practice settings including honing inquiry skills.
- Role-plays, videotaped, group critique, experiential learning, reflective listening that would remove intimidation [Use specific teaching techniques and exercises to remove intimidating environment of classroom.]
- Courses specific to cultural competence should be part of required curriculum [Importance and interest in curriculum changes to include required cultural competence courses.]

Students commented that ethnocentricity should be addressed in student and faculty remarks. Students stated that during discussions about diverse groups, both faculty and students sometimes refer to a diverse group as "them" and that this language fosters an attitude of "us and them" whether spoken or implied. Students explained that professors often didn't allow debates or controversial discussions. Participants believed faculty suppression of such difficult discussions resulted from "the faculty does not know how to handle it." Students also expressed that they want to grow in cultural competence but often there is not a safe environment to discuss cultural issues where students can be vulnerable and ask all types of questions.

Specific curriculum content, identified as helpful for learning cultural competence, was information about the history of specific people and groups and the importance of learning how to apply course content (articles, readings, lectures) to

practical social work settings. This content would include learning basic inquiry skills to use across all cultural groups. Pedagogical suggestions included the need for role-plays, videotaping, group critique of video recordings, experiential learning, and reflective listening exercises. Students requested integrating more information on a wider variety of peoples or groups into course content and felt it would be helpful, in particular groups such as Arabic, gangs, gays and lesbians, and people with disabilities. Students believed these practical classroom experiences would remove some of the intimidation they feel. An additional curriculum suggestion was the addition of a specific course in cultural competence that would be a required part of the MSW curriculum. They believed the course should be mandatory because all students needed to have the information, even those who did not want to learn about or increase their cultural competence.

Summary

The analysis results described above addressed the quantitative and qualitative purposes of the research. The descriptive function of the study was addressed through a systematic exploration of demographic variable categories with respect to the cultural competence subscales.

Chapter 5 provides a discussion of the exploratory findings. Discussion is followed by conclusions, a review of the implications of the study for social work education, NASW, and the social work profession. The limitations of the study are described in detail. Recommendation for additional analyses in the area of cultural competence is offered.

CHAPTERS V

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This final chapter will provide an overview of the study and discussion of the major research findings. Within the discussion, each hypothesis will be reviewed, highlighting major findings for each, and providing discussion of quantitative and qualitative findings as a whole. The chapter will identify implications for social work education, social work curriculum policy, cultural competence Standards for the social work profession, and tools for social work research and evaluation. The chapter concludes with identification of study limitations and recommendations for further research.

Overview

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of the level of cultural competence of students entering a Master of Social Work (MSW) program, and to evaluate whether there is a change in self-reported levels of cultural competence after one semester of MSW education. The pre-test and post-test questionnaires administered, provided students the opportunity to rate their individual level of cultural competence. Each question was crafted to evaluate student cultural competence as it is defined in the NASW Cultural Competence Standards (2001). This study explored change in the level of reported cultural competence after one semester of classroom and field education. The study also sought input from students to enhance understanding about sources of growth in cultural competence during the first semester of MSW education. The study results also explore whether traditional demographic characteristics (age, gender, sexual orientation, race and ethnicity, religion, and geographic location of nuclear family) are

related to a higher level of self-reported cultural competence. The findings reported in the preceding chapter can be understood in a variety of ways. These multiple meanings illuminate the multi-faceted nature of cultural competence.

This study was conducted using a mixed method, sequential explanatory strategy to assess the levels of cultural competence among students who are entering an MSW program, and explore where student growth in cultural competence occurs. Quantitative data collection and data analysis was followed by qualitative data collection and analysis. An interpretative analysis was done of the whole. Mixed methods were employed to inform understanding from one method to another. The methodology also provided an opportunity to confirm findings from different data sources (Creswell, 2003).

The questionnaire used in this study (see Appendix F) was designed by the researcher to measure cultural competence as defined by the NASW Cultural Competence Standards. The questionnaire consisted of 34 questions on cultural competence within the social work profession. Each question was created to measure one of the NASW Cultural Competence Standards. For example, Standard 1 concerns Values and Ethics. Respondents were asked to rate their competence with:

> Question 1. I am familiar with *the NASW Code of Ethics*, and function in accordance with to the values, ethics and Standards of the profession in my social work practice.
>
> Question 11. I recognize how my personal and professional values may conflict with or accommodate the needs of diverse populations.
>
> Question 21. I am familiar with the *NASW Cultural Competence Standards* and practice social work in accordance with the Standards.

In addition to the cultural competence scale, an open ended question was used to identify students' definitions of culture. The questionnaire also gathered demographic information on age, gender, sexual orientation, religious background, education, and a geographic description of the town or area in which the respondent was raised. The target population for this study was full and part-time social work students entering a MSW program at a large Midwest Research University in the Fall of 2007.

Major Findings

Quantitative findings

Research questions guiding this study were "how do students entering an MSW program rate their level of cultural competence and do students report a higher level of cultural competence after one semester of MSW education?" There was a statistically significant increase after one semester of MSW education in students' levels of self-reported cultural competence from pre-test to post-test. This increase suggests that students feel more confident in their level of cultural competence after one semester of MSW education than they did at the beginning of the semester, hence reporting a higher level of cultural competence in the post-test.

Answers to the research question "are there specific areas of social work practice in which students report a higher level of cultural competence over other areas of social work practice?" are displayed in Table 18. Means for students' self-reported levels of cultural competence at pre-test and post-test are ranked in descending magnitude by post-test from highest to lowest mean self-reported ratings of cultural competence. The three Standards for which students report a higher level of competence are Self-Awareness, Diverse Workforce, and Professional Education and reflect beliefs related to cultural

competence. The three Standards on which the sample reported the lowest mean levels of cultural competence are Cross-Cultural Skills, Service Delivery and Diversity of Language and reflect practice or skill related Standards. Many incoming MSW students have had previous education (87.3%), trainings (63.3%), other professional/volunteer experiences (88.4%), or demographic characteristics related to different cultures and are confident in their belief and value system around cultural competence. Many incoming MSW students have not practiced social work (36.8%), and have entered an MSW program to acquire the skills needed to practice social work. These findings seem appropriate for incoming MSW students who enter the social work program with the motivation and perceived confidence in their belief and value system, but desire educational growth in the skills and service delivery of social work.

Table 18. Student Cultural Competence Levels

Are there specific areas of social work practice in which students report a higher level of cultural competence over other areas of social work practice?	
Standard	**Post**
Self Awareness	**4.4**
Diverse Workforce	**4.1**
Professional Education	**4.1**
Cross-Cultural Leadership	4.0
Values and Ethics	4.0
Cross-Cultural Knowledge	3.9
Empowerment and Advocacy	3.5
Cross-Cultural Skills	**3.4**
Service Delivery	**3.3**
Diversity of Language	**3.3**

To explore perceptions about cultural competence among incoming MSW students, this study examined associations between levels of self-reported cultural

competence and age, social work experience, and social work education. No associations were identified between age and reported levels of cultural competence suggesting that general life experience does not relate to perceived cultural competence levels. Findings for extent of prior social work experience through employment or volunteer work suggests that social work related life experiences contribute to perceived cultural competence. Greater amounts of structured education about diversity and cultural competence, either through courses or trainings, related to significantly higher levels of cultural competence for each Standard except for self-reported ratings on the Diversity of Language subscale. This is to say that students are more confident in their level of cultural competence after educational and/or social work experiences where they could better understand cultural competence. This study supports the growing body of research that emphasizes the importance of education in cultural competence (Cross, Bazron, Dennis, & Isaacs, 1989; Devore & Schlesinger, 1996; Green, 1982; Lum, 1999; Orlandi, 1992; Roberts et al., 1990; Sue, 1990) and suggests that students who participate in coursework and training in cultural competence identify as more confident.

A specific educational degree was used in this study as it compared students who entered the graduate program having completed BSW (field and classroom) education with students who entered the MSW program without a BSW for differences in reported levels of cultural competence. Statistically significant differences were found between these two groups of incoming students on pre-test scores for each of the ten Standards. Again, students entering an MSW program with a BSW have had the educational and social work experience that provides confidence in self-reporting their level of cultural competence.

Table 19 summarizes the significant positive associations and differences for these variables and each of the ten subscales used to measure the NASW Cultural Competence Standards.

Table 19. Findings for Hypothesis One

Reported level of cultural competence will differ by student age, by student's social work employment and volunteer experiences, if the student has had a Bachelor's of Social Work (BSW) field education placement, and according to the number of courses and trainings taken in diversity				
Standard	**Age** [no significant correlations]	**Social Work Experience**	**Social Work Education**	**BSW Field Education**
Values and Ethics		*	*	#
Self-Awareness				#
Cross-Cultural Knowledge			*	#
Cross-Cultural Skills		*	*	#
Service Delivery		*		#
Empowerment and Advocacy			*	#
Diverse Workforce			*	#
Professional Education			*	#
Diversity of Language		*		#
Cross-Cultural Leadership		*	*	#

* denotes statistically significant positive correlation, $p < .05$

# denotes statistically significant higher mean subscale score for respondents with BSW, $p < .05$

Table 19, shows that there is an association of incoming MSW students with social work experience, and prior social work education to the level of reported cultural competence and a significant difference in students who have had BSW field and classroom education. As social work educators it is important to acknowledge that students entering an MSW program who have had previous social work education through course work, trainings and/or a BSW undergraduate degree experience, and students who have not had these educational experiences have different learning needs. Most MSW programs allow students with a variety of undergraduate degrees into their social work programs. When cohorts include students with varying educational and social work experiences, professors are challenged in presenting course content that all levels of students will comprehend, and varied pedagogy that assists in building student cultural competence confidence.

Hypothesis Two suggested differences would be found between students who are currently enrolled in MSW field education during their first semester and those who are not, and levels of reported cultural competence. The post-test was used to analyze if students who were enrolled in social work field education during their first semester of MSW education reported a higher level of cultural competence than students who were not enrolled in social work field education. No significant difference was identified between students who had completed one semester of MSW field education with any of the ten Standards. This finding was surprising as it was assumed that students in the practice of social work [field education] within their educational experience would be provided with a variety of opportunities to engage cross-cultural clients. It could be assumed, however, that after one semester of MSW education, which includes field

education for full time students, the students have not experienced a long enough timeframe to feel comfortable and/or report a higher level of cultural competence.

Hypothesis Three states "a higher level of cultural competence will be reported by students with diverse demographic characteristics which include non-White race, self-identify as LGBT, self identify as an individual with a disability, report no religion or a religion other than Christian, and by students who report coming from an urban inner city, international, military geographic location or report being an international student". Within this study the previously mentioned geographic locations are identified as diverse geographic locations. The assumption in hypothesis three is that students who have one or more personal diverse characteristics will report a higher level of cultural competence then those who do not report personal diverse characteristics.

While analyzing the demographic variables measured in hypothesis three and the reported level of cultural competence, there are significant differences in non-White students and White students, and those that have been raised in an inner city urban setting, international setting, a military setting and are an international student compared to students brought up in suburban, rural or a large city setting. When cohorts include students from a variety of geographical locations, come from different races, ethnicities and nationalities, identify as LGBT, identify as having a disability, and either identify with a faith or do not have an identified faith, professors are challenged with the diversity within the classroom and how it affects the learning environment. This is not to say, that any individual student can speak for the specific "group" for which they identify. Yet, it is important to acknowledge that the diversity within the classroom provides a rich learning environment that needs to be tapped. The questions to ask are when diverse students report

a higher level of cultural competence, does that mean their life experiences can offer something toward the learning environment and how do social work educators draw from the life experiences of our students to augment the course content.

Table 20. Statistically Significant Findings for Hypothesis Three

Higher level of cultural competence will be reported by students with diverse demographic variables that include non white race, self identify as LGBT, self identify as an individual with a disability, report no religion or a religion other than Christian, and by students who report coming from an urban inner city, international, military geographic location or report being an international student.										
Standard	**Diverse race/No Diverse race**		**LGBT**		**Disability/ No disability**		**No reported faith/reported faith**		**Diverse/No diverse geographic location**	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Values and Ethics		*		*					*	*
Self-Awareness									*	
Cross-Cultural Knowledge	(*)	*						*		
Cross-Cultural Skills		*							*	*
Service Delivery		*							*	*
Empowerment and Advocacy	(*)									
Diverse Workforce			*							
Professional Education		*			*					
Diversity of Language									*	
Cross-Cultural Leadership		*						*		*

*denotes significant difference in means

Qualitative Findings

Comparison of NASW definition of culture and student definitions of culture

NASW defines culture as a human behavior that includes thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions of a racial ethnic, religious, or social group. Culture often is referred to as the totality of ways being passed from generation to generation (NASW, 2001). The NASW definition of culture matches student definitions in several ways. Most notably, both definitions refer to beliefs, values, racial, ethnic, religious or social group. Listed below are two examples of student definitions when asked to define culture.

> *Culture is defined as a group or population that share similar value systems, beliefs and lifestyles.*
>
> *Culture can be defined as a combination of ethnicity, religion, race, family values, and community.*

Another theme reflected in the NASW definition used the phrase, generation to generation, which matches student definitions that refer to family. Family and religion were given as part of the definition by 32.6% in the pre-test and 27.7% in the post-test. One student defines culture as *A person's culture is a reflection of their background including their family, education, religion, place of living, language, and their relationship to governmental and societal systems.* Another student states *Different beliefs in regards to religion, lifestyles, traditions, etc. based on geographical location and family histories.*

The NASW definition of customs aligns with student definitions of tradition. When students defined culture, 44.2% in the pre-test and 56.9% in the post test included beliefs and values as part or all of their definition. One student identifies *Beliefs, values and traditions supported by families and or individuals whereby identifies their heritage, background and social systems* as the definition of culture while another states *A collection of beliefs and activities/actions commonly practiced within a group of people.*

Finally, the NASW definition includes reference to behavior including communications match student definitions referring to language. Two definitions provided by students include *Language, customs, beliefs, and values that people within a culture* and *A person's belief, tradition, values, language, and family.* When students defined culture, 43.4% in the pre-test and 38.4% in the post test included tradition and language as part of their definition.

Table 21 shows that student definitions included two themes that the NASW's definition did not (1) geographic location and (2) social location within society. In the pre-test, 41% of students' defined culture by including identification with a group, social group or community as part or all of their definitions and 38.4% included group identification in their post-test definitions. Race, ethnicity, and nationality were given as part of the definition by 16.8% in the pre-test and 12.3% in the post-test. Geographic location was given as part of the definition by 10.5% in the pre-test and 7.7% in the post-test. Social location within society was given as part of the definition by 14.7% in the pre-test and 7.7% in the post-test. Although a small percentage of students included in their definitions geographic location (pre-test 10.5% and 7.7 post-test) and social location within society (pre-test 14.7% and 7.7% post-test), it is worth evaluating if these concepts

should be considered and tested as important aspects of definition for culture. The NASW definition for culture does include the beliefs, values, traditions and language of different people groups. Family, religion, race, ethnicity and nationality are also included. However, to understand an individual or a group's culture thoroughly, it is important to understand the geographic location of the individual or group as well as an individual's or group's social location within the bigger society.

Table 21. Themes reflected in definitions of culture

Themes	**Pre-test**	**Post-test**	**NASW**
Content of themes given to define culture	**Percentage of Students**	**Percentage of Students**	**Theme reflected in NASW definition**
1. Beliefs and values	44.2%	56.9%	X
2. Traditions and language	43.4%	38.4%	X
2. Identification with a group, social group or community	41. %	38.4%	X
3. Family, religion	32.6%	27.7%	X
4. Race, ethnicity, nationality	16.8%	12.3%	X
5. Geographic location	10.5%	7.7%	
6. Social location within society	14.7%	7.7%	

Focus Group

Students in both focus groups shared their surprise at the high level of cultural competence reported by students in both the pre- and post-tests. Student commented that fellow student *high self-ratings at pre-test may have reflected what participants thought they should answer as incoming social workers*. Students also commented on the *high means for post-test self-ratings*. They believed *the high levels of post-test cultural competency ratings reflected what respondents thought they should answer after a semester of MSW course work*. Comments also revealed that *it was difficult to rate their level of cultural competence at this time in their professional education, and early social*

work careers. Student comments suggest that there is a threat to the validity of this study related to whether students could accurately assess their personal levels of cultural competence within each Standard and in their answers to each scale item. This researcher found it interesting that no students responded that they themselves felt they should gauge their level of competence higher, but projected that other students probably responded in that manner.

In general, participants expressed *surprise at the average for reported levels of competency*. Various comments by students also included references to specific Standards. Student comments included surprise *that the mean of post-test ratings for Values and Ethics subscale score (M=4.0) was lower than other Standards*. The discussion revealed wide agreement that most courses taken within the first semester of MSW education included the NASW *Code of Ethics* and emphasized its importance. Because of this experience students remarked they *thought the average rating for Values and Ethics would be higher*. Although students commented it was lower than other Standards, a rating of 4.0 indicates respondents were identifying themselves as being [mostly competent] on the specific questions addressing Values and Ethics. Although students might be familiar with the *NASW Code of Ethics* through course work, they could see the need for growth in implementing the *Code* in professional practice. There is a possibility that student familiarity with values and ethics through class and field experience may have sensitized them or acquainted them with the nature of ethical dilemmas in practice or challenges to their values during the first semester of graduate education. A student rating of 4.0 [mostly competent] is still a high level of self-reported cultural competence.

Focus group participants also commented on the *high rating of Self-Awareness (M=4.4) as it did not reflect what they experience from fellow students.* Several participants *stated they think they are self aware, but they are not.* The comments by focus group participants about fellow student's self-awareness, underscores that students interpret self awareness in many ways. It is this researchers suspicion that when students commented "they think they are self aware, but they are not" that they had one or two specific fellow students in mind. In addition, no student commented that *they* themselves thought they were self-aware, but after taking courses they found out they were not as self-aware as they perceived. This interpretation of other students, and the lack of inward disclosure, does not discredit the comment, but brings to question the understanding of being self-aware or the ability to correctly self assess.

Participants concurred with the average self-rating of Cross-Cultural Knowledge (M=3.9) and Skills (M=3.4) being rated lower than other Standards. The group expressed agreement that *they had not acquired the knowledge and skills to be culturally competen*t. Students commented on the reported level of Professional Education competency (M=4.1) and wondered if *students understood the meaning of Professional Education within cultural competence.* Again, this comment is projected onto other students understanding and does not disclose or make comment to their personal response.

When asked "Where did your learning about cultural competence occur within your first semester of MSW education" students reported *learning about cultural competence when professors shared their own personal and professional experiences.* Students related stories of how they learned cultural competence in casual discussions

with their peers including discussions with peers in response to controversial statements made by professors. Comments included:

> *Often our professors did not address conflicts around culture within the class so we talked during break or after class. I learned as much during those informal discussions.*
>
> *It helped to ask my friends in class about things our professor did not talk about. I learned from my classmates.*

Students named specific courses in which they learned cultural competence including Human Behavior in Social Environment (HBSE), Policy, and Practice classes and Field Education. Students reported that knowledge learned in the class room is (or will be) "solidified" in field education. Students commented that *ethnocentricity should be addressed in student and faculty remarks.* Students stated that *during discussions about diverse groups, both faculty and students referred to a diverse group as "them" which lead to an attitude of "us and them" whether spoken or implied.* Students thought that at times, *professors often didn't allow debates or controversial discussions.* Participants believed faculty suppression of such difficult discussions resulted from *the faculty does not know how to handle it.* This quotation refers to faculty not having the knowledge or skill needed to facilitate classroom discussion and mediate conflict or strain that occurred. Students also expressed that *they want to grow in cultural competence* but stated often *there is not a safe environment to discuss cultural issues where students can be vulnerable and ask all types of questions.* All of the above themes and experiences affirm the work of first semester MSW faculty and provide insight into the types of learning experiences that assist students with cultural competence growth. Yet, again it

must be said that student input was on fellow students and no personal disclosure was contributed.

Specific curriculum content, identified as helpful for learning cultural competence, was obtaining *information about the history of specific peoples and groups* and the importance of learning *how to apply course content (articles, readings, lectures) to practical social work settings*. Such content would include learning basic inquiry skills to use across all cultural groups. Pedagogical suggestions included *the need for role-plays, videotaping, group critique of video recordings, experiential learning, and reflective listening exercises.* Students requested instruction or *help in course content with integrating more information on a wider variety of peoples or groups.* The particular groups or people, about whom more information would be helpful, included *Arabic communities, gangs, gays and lesbians, and people with disabilities.* Students believed *practical classroom experiences would remove some of the intimidation they feel.* Student dialogue expanded to say *they often dare not speak in classroom discussions as they do not know how to formulate questions on diverse groups.* An additional curriculum suggestion was the addition of a *course specifically about cultural competence that would be a required part of the MSW curriculum.* They believed *the course should be mandatory because all students needed to have the information, even those who did not want to learn about or increase their cultural competence.*

Within this mixed method study, the qualitative data analyzed assists in interpreting the quantitative data. For example, the student definition to culture provides insight into student interpretation of being culturally competent when answering the questionnaire. Student definitions of culture were summarized by seven themes. Of the

seven themes, five are included within the NASW definition for culture. However, student definitions went beyond the NASW definition of culture to include geography and social location within society. When looking at student definition of culture compared to the NASW definition, a conclusion was drawn that students' displayed an understanding of culture and could accurately answer the questions within the questionnaire.

Although the qualitative analysis of student definition shows students understand culture, focus group respondents state that students reported high levels of competence because they want to be culturally competent and assume they need to be culturally competent to be a good social worker. When completing the pre-test questionnaire, some students felt confident in stating their true level of cultural competence, yet some focus group participants believed the high levels of cultural competent scores reflect the level of competence they want to have or should have as a social worker. Focus group participants stated that students also could have rated post-test questionnaires according to what they were expected to learn during their first semester of MSW education and question if they became more culturally competent.

Both qualitative data sources, i.e. the definitions of culture and the results of focus groups, provide insight into students' responses on the questionnaires. The aggregated definitions of culture demonstrate students' understanding of culture. The focus group respondents state they have a desire to be culturally competent social workers. The mean self-reported level of cultural competence overall at pre-test corresponds with being moderately competent (M=3.4) at post-test the mean reported level of cultural competence increased and was closer to a rating of mostly competent (M=3.8). Both pre-

and post-test levels of self-reported cultural competence [moderately competent and mostly competent] on the 1-5 point scale, are higher than average. It is important for social work educators to communicate to incoming MSW students that cultural competence is a lifelong journey. According to NASW (2001) "cultural competence is never fully realized, achieved, or completed, but rather cultural competence is a lifelong process for social workers who will always encounter diverse clients and new situations in their practices".

Within focus groups, participants commented on learning from their peers. Students appreciated individuals with diverse life experiences sharing their stories. Statistical tests that compared post-test cultural competence scores between students from a diverse race with the group not from a diverse race, revealed significantly higher levels for those from a diverse race on 7 of the 10 cultural competence Standards. In addition, individuals raised in diverse geographic locations reported a higher level of cultural competence on five Standards at pre-test and four Standards at post-test. Do students from a diverse race or students raised in a diverse geographic location stimulate insight for their peers in the area of cultural competence?

Implications

Social Work Education

The results of this study illustrate a need for continued focus on cultural competence within social work education. As reviewed earlier within this document, CSWE requires diversity content within each social work course in accredited social work programs (EPAS, 2001). The literature review of this study documents that the

importance of cultural competence has evolved within social work education and the social work profession. Student focus groups within this study support the importance of incorporating cultural competence content and skills within courses such as HBSE, policy, practice and field and challenge social work educators to evaluate pedagogy around cultural competence. Continuing to prioritize research in cultural competence will provide attention, discussion and education to social work students, social work educators and CSWE to better serve those from varied cultures.

Social work researchers Garcia and VanSoest (2000) address the challenges and dynamics of teaching cultural diversity content within social work education stating that the effect evoked in students places heightened pressure and responsibility on faculty to be responsive to process issues that include students' emotional as well as learning needs. The heightened emotional classroom situation described by Garcia and Van Soest was supported by students within the focus groups of this study. Students desire that when discussions of cultural issues arise within the classroom, that faculty allow discussions to occur and facilitate the process. Garcia and Van Soest (2000) state that critical thinking skills can be valuable in assisting faculty while they facilitate intensive class discussions while maintaining a focus on learning. They go on to challenge social work educators to address their personal pedagogy while teaching diversity content, and encourage educators to evaluate how their personal beliefs impact teaching. The continued growth of social work educators in facilitating difficult conversations will add to the quality of the education.

In addition to pedagogy, social work educators are called to provide a classroom atmosphere of acceptance in order that all students, regardless of their level of cultural

competence, feel comfortable sharing their experiences and have an opportunity to learn form others who are different from themselves. Social work educators are challenged to establish an atmosphere of mutual respect and emotional safety in the classroom so that sensitive and at times controversial issues can be discussed. A safe classroom environment is essential for student learning. A number of authors recommend setting up discussion ground rules or guidelines (Chan & Traeacy, 1996; Good, 1995; Hyde & Ruth, 2002) and have students design norms for class discussions and activities (Fassinger, 1995). Using storytelling as a way of creating shared experience (Rockline, 1983) and discussing social identities to normalize students' feelings (Garcia & Van Soest, 1997) are additional methods that have been described as a beneficial learning experiences, reinforcing common understanding, in a safe environment. Within this study it could be interpreted that student feedback which consisted of projections of other students, and no or little reflection of personal confidence and/or comfort in cultural competence, demonstrates that the students did not feel safe within the focus group. As educators we must continue to evaluate how to create a safe atmosphere of mutual respect and safety.

Educators within all disciplines are challenged to expand the paradigm of teaching and understand the responsibility of educators to the learner. Whether in "lecture halls, seminar rooms, field settings, labs and even electronic classrooms- the place people now receive their formal education-teachers possess the power to create conditions that can helps students learn a great deal-or keep them from learning much at all. Teaching is the intentional act of creating those conditions, and good teaching requires that we understand the inner sources of both the intent and the act" (Parker, 1998, p.8). This study suggests that students desire a variety of activities while learning cultural

competence in a safe environment. Suggestions incorporate varied classroom activities including lecture, panels of diverse individuals, role-playing, and experiential learning exercises which will assist students in developing or improving their levels of cultural competence. Students describe the importance of faculty sharing their own professional, cross-cultural experiences in practice settings. This pedagogical approach can allow students to ask questions to clarify cross-cultural interactions. Social work educators continue to be challenged to approach teaching using modalities that will resonate with students with varied life and professional experience. As educators expand their pedagogy to include varied classroom activities, this study suggests students will grow in their understanding and comfort in becoming a culturally competent practitioner.

A key area of cultural competence within social work education lies within experiential learning. Within all CSWE accredited social work programs students complete field education within social services agencies as part of the curriculum. This experience allows students to practice social work while taking practice courses. Often assignments are given to students to assist their learning in field education and this study suggests that students understanding and growth in cultural competence can occur in this manner. Other areas of experiential learning within course work can include assignments that give students "hands on" experience with cultures different than their own. Assignments that can be included are shadowing a social worker in a social service agency, volunteering in a setting whose culture is different than the student, and/or interviewing an individual who has had different life experiences or comes from a different culture than the student. The above mentioned provides experiential learning that complements the traditional reading, lecture and group work that occurs in the

classroom. This style of learning benefits the inexperienced student seeking to interface with a diverse setting, working with diverse people, and diverse clients.

There is currently a new edition of EPAS within CSWE in DRAFT form. The DRAFT of the new EPAS, soon to be published by CSWE, addresses diversity within Standard 3. Standard 3 states that each CSWE accredited program's learning environment must show a commitment to diversity (CSWE, 2007).

3.1.1 The program describes the specific and continuous efforts it makes to provide a learning environment in which respect for all persons and understanding of diversity and difference (including age, class, color, disability, ethnicity, gender, immigration status, political ideology, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation) are practiced.

3.1.2 The program describes how its learning environment (including its institutional setting; selection of field education settings and their clientele; composition of program advisory or field committees; educational and social resources; resource allocation; program leadership; speakers series, seminars, and special programs; support groups; research and other initiatives as well as the demographic make-up of its faculty, staff, and student body) models affirmation and respect for diversity and difference.

3.1.3 The program discusses specific plans to improve the learning context to affirm and support persons with diverse identities.

CSWE continues to require an infusion of diversity content within social work education and requires a learning environment that respects and acknowledges the diversity of students, faculty and the greater community. The structure that CSWE requires aligns

with student focus group feedback within this study. Providing a safe learning environment that respects and acknowledges diverse student life experience is foundational to social work education.

This study also challenges social work education to continue developing ways to measure student cultural competence. The instrument used in this study is a preliminary tool offered as a way to begin measuring cultural competence among incoming MSW students' cultural competence. In order to refine and improve the evaluative process begun in this study, it is important for social work education to continue conducting empirical studies about cultural competence.

Research Measurement

The new tool within this study is to assist in measuring perceptions of cultural competence as it is described in the NASW Cultural Competence Standards. Program, classroom and individual educational research respond directly to concerns about better learning and effective teaching. Program and classroom research encourages academicians and students to become more systematic and sensitive observers of learning as it takes place every day in programs and classrooms (Angelo, T.A., & Cross, K.P.). Self-report assessment provides an avenue for students to actively be involved in their learning which is lauded as essential in higher education. The report titled *The Conditions of Excellence in American Higher Education* (1984) states "There is now a good deal of research evidence to suggest that the more intensely they engage in their own education, the greater will be their satisfaction with their education experiences, and their persistence in college, and more likely they are to continue their learning" (p.17). Active engagement in higher learning implies and requires self-awareness and self-direction. By

using self-report, students' present their awareness and understanding of their skills, performance, and habits which will assist social work educators in creating an atmosphere of learning. Challenges for educators include students varied awareness, understanding and skill within one classroom. We continue to seek the balance of creating a safe environment which provides respect and dignity of each student no matter their level of knowledge, values and skills.

Within this study a newly developed tool was created to allow students to report their level of cultural competence as described in the NASW Cultural Competence Standards. While answering the questions, students were able to draw on their personal awareness, life and professional experience in the area of cultural competence. This tool has demonstrated internal reliability within this study, yet further testing is needed to ensure continued reliability. This measure and other measures of cultural competence are important for social work educators and social work professionals as it provides a self-report instrument that can be used in a variety of settings. Although designed to measure cultural competence in MSW students, educators can use it to stimulate conversation about the NASW Cultural Competence Standards and to study concepts of cultural competence within the knowledge, values and skills paradigm.

Social Work Profession

Although the focus of this study has been on cultural competence in MSW students, this study holds implications for the social work profession as a whole. Measuring cultural competence as part of MSW education begins the process for the profession. Measurement of professional competencies, in this case cultural competence, is vital for social work

practice whether practiced at a micro, mezzo or macro level. Being able to serve diverse individuals, families and groups with dignity and respect is the goal of social workers being culturally competent. Understanding needs of specific cultural groups helps social workers provide community programming and services targeted for those being served. Measuring professional cultural competence will provide social workers with a better understanding of their knowledge and skills to provide such services.

The NASW Cultural Competence Standards provide conceptualization of cultural competence in 10 key areas. Social work professionals can use measurements of cultural competence for personal evaluation and goal setting within social service agencies. The tool used within this study is transferable to social service settings and can be used to educate staff at all organizational levels on the NASW Cultural Standards.

In addition, this study prompts the next step in evaluating perceptions of organizational cultural competence. Although the measure developed for this study was intended to be used by an individual, there is a body of literature and tools to evaluate cultural competence within a specific social service agency (Alvesson, 1993; Cooke & Szumal 2000; Golembiewski, 1988; Kilmann, 19985; Schwartzman, 1993). Individual and organizational evaluation findings could prompt agencies to offer trainings on cultural competence. Such trainings will encourage staff to better understand and serve a diverse population, and better meet the needs of clients.

Findings related to cultural competence levels of social workers and/or staff within a social service agency could be useful in fund development processes, when responding to requests for proposals (RFP) or for grant seeking. Often, social service agencies are competing with other agencies to provide similar services. Finding a

concrete way to promote competent workers and a competent work environment could give the edge in the awarding of contracts. The research tool developed for this study provides an evidence-based method that can measure social work cultural competence in social service agencies. If social service agencies show funding sources the importance they put on cultural competence, (through measurement, trainings, skills etc.) it could provide an edge to contracts being awarded.

NASW Cultural Competence

Formal standards in cultural competence in social work practice and education were adopted by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) in 2001. The NASW Cultural Competence Standards brought definition to cultural competence, but there has been a void in the research examining cultural competence among social work students and professionals with regard to knowledge, attitudes, and skills. This study contributes to the body of knowledge about cultural competence within social work education and practice. This study can assist social work educators and students with gaining a better understanding of the NASW Cultural Competence Standards by identifying the educational experiences graduate social work students have or seek out to improve their cultural competence.

This study also challenges NASW's definition of culture. NASW uses the definitional concepts, (1.) beliefs, values, tradition, and language, (2.) identification with a group, (3.) family, religion, (4.) society, race, ethnicity, nationality, within the professions definition of culture. However, the aggregation of student definitions included two additional concepts. These two additional themes refer to the importance of

geographic location and social location within society. Both concepts expand the NASW definition of culture in a way that acknowledges geographic location as part of an individual or group culture. These two additional themes recognize and emphasize that culture does not stand alone, that culture can be viewed only from within its social location in society.

Social Work Licensing

Recognizing cultural competence as important to social work practice the ASWB continues to address cultural competence in licensing. As social work NASW continues to measure cultural competence per the NASW Cultural Competence Standards, it will impact requirements for licensed social workers. Currently questions within social work licensing exams are primarily knowledge based, in order to obtain a comprehensive and accurate measure of cultural competence, questions related to social work values and skills will need to be included. In addition to testing for cultural competence, this study has implications for continued education (CECH's) credits needed to maintain individual social work licenses. Individual states have content specific CECH's; this study suggests that CECH's in cultural competence will benefit social workers.

How Culturally Competent are Social Workers?

Within this study we have looked at cultural competence requirements within social work education as described by CSWE. In addition, we have reviewed the NASW *Code of Ethics* and the NASW Cultural Competence Standards and licensing requirements. It is a priority of the profession that social workers grow in their cultural

competence. Yet, how culturally competent are social workers? To answer this question it is important to look at the social work programs, faculty, field education directors, field instructors and agency personnel.

As mentioned previously, accredited Schools of social work must adhere to EPAS within the program mission, goals and policy. EPAS states programs must provide an environment:

> in which respect for all persons and understanding of diversity and difference (including age, class, color, disability, ethnicity, gender, immigration status, political ideology, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation) are practiced (CSWE, 2007).

There are faith based Schools whose College/University mission conflicts with EPAS 3.1 in the area of sexual orientation, diverse religions and in some occurrences political ideology. Because of these differences, some faith based social work programs do not choose to have an accredited program but offer a bachelor's of science degree, with a social work major. But, there are accredited programs that submit an addendum during the accreditation process, to provide documentation on ideological differences. When all accredited programs do not provide allegiance to teach cultural competence as required by CSWE, how culturally competent are social work programs?

Within this study student focus groups stated often our professors did not address conflicts around culture. Another student stated during discussions about diverse groups, both faculty and students referred to a diverse group as "them" which lead to an attitude of "us and them" whether spoken or implied. These student comments lead this researcher to ask the question, how comfortable are social work faculty in addressing

issues around cultural competence? It is assumed that social work faculties are culturally competent, and teach from a fundamental belief and value system with a commitment to cultural competence. Yet, as Garcia and Van Soest (2000) discuss in the prior mentioned study, faculty responses to classroom situations around diversity represent a wide level of responses which are described as a harm-to-help continuum. The five levels described are Level 1, cultural destructiveness, involves colluding and harm-doing through the use of humor, Level 2, cultural incapacity, represents an inability to use the event as learning experience for the class; Level 3, cultural blindness, takes a position of neutrality rather than examining issues of race directly; Level 4, cultural pre-competence, attempts to address the issue with confrontational tactics; and Level 5, cultural competence, attempts to address the issue in an open way in order to transform it into a teachable moment (Garcia & Van Soest, 2000). The authors of the study state they found that the faculty surveyed in their study show similarities of social work faculty in general. So the question must be asked, how comfortable are social work faculty in addressing issues around cultural competence?

Field education placement is often described by students as the highlight of their social work education yet, how culturally sensitive are social work field education directors when placing students in social service agencies? Is student culture and agency culture considered? Messinger (2004) in her study with gay and lesbian students in social work field education, identified interpersonal issues which included homophobic attitudes and behaviors, heterosexist attitudes and behaviors, unfriendly climate of placement, conflicts in intimate relationships, conflicts with field instructors, and general feelings of lack of safety or anxiety as interpersonal issues within the practicum setting. Messinger's

work with gay and lesbian social work students offers the profession a glimpse into the field education experience of a sample of gay/lesbian students. This study provides a voice to the students' personal experiences, their social contexts of family and friends, their social work programs, and the social work agencies at which they were placed. At times these issues can be overlooked or minimized in the context of field education, yet Messinger's work challenges the directors of field education, field instructor's and agencies to ensure gay and lesbian students' experiences are not overlooked and offer areas where social work educators can provide support. And lastly, students within the study identified institutional issues which included homophobic attitudes and behaviors, heterosexist attitudes and behaviors, an absence of gay and lesbian issues, unfriendly climate in placement, and general feel of lack of safety or anxiety as issues from an institutional perspective (p.192). The question remains, how comfortable are field education directors, field instructors, agency personnel and social service agencies as a whole in addressing areas of difference?

When looking at cultural competence within School's of social work, faculty, field education directors, and field instructors, it is important to look at the geographic location of the individuals within the educational and practice settings. Some School's prioritize hiring diverse faculty and seek out field education settings with diverse field instructors and clientele. Some geographic locations do not attract diverse faculty to the College or University and social service agencies do not have diverse field instructors or diverse clientele. Geographic locations with little or no diversity make it difficult for students to learn to work with individuals different then themselves and develop their

cultural competence. Some students have never interacted with diverse people groups. Could it be that some students have never interacted with individuals from a different race or ethnicity than their own? If a student is attending a faith based College that does not teach inclusiveness of diverse religions or gay and lesbian individuals, how well are students trained in the area of cultural competence with gay and lesbian individuals and/or diverse religions? Although we can not create diverse geographic locations, it would be extremely important for School's of social work to prioritize student understanding of cultural competence in all settings, and ensure students can research best practices while providing culturally competent services.

To conclude the implications section of this study, we must ask how culturally competent are students? When School's of social work, faculty, field directors, field instructors, and social service agencies all provide varied input on cultural competence, how will we know the level of student cultural competence? This study provides a tool for student self rating in the area of cultural competence as described in the NASW Cultural Competence Standards. It is important to expand self rating in cultural competence to include faculty, field directors, field instructors and agency personnel to begin open dialogue about cultural competence.

Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations. The limitations are related to measurement, sampling, research design, and procedures. The remainder of this section details the nature of the limitations. When relevant, limitations are discussed with respect to limitations in the existing literature

First, the credibility of an outcome study depends, in large part; on sample size (Montcalm & Royse, 2002). A sample of 67 participants completed both the pre- and post-tests. This size sample compares to other published studies in which sample sizes were smaller (Courneya & Friedenreich, 1999). However, description of subgroups for demographic variables of race, LGBT, disability, faith other than Christian, and geographic locations revealed a homogeneous sample that is not representative of the population. This homogeneity may be accurate and reflect the incoming class of MSW students but it resulted in very restricted numbers for subgroup comparisons.

An additional study design limitation was that the study sample was not randomly selected. The study relied on the voluntary participation of students entering an identified MSW program in fall of 2007 in a large Midwest University. Although students were given the option to not participate, the atmosphere at a graduate social work program orientation often lends to students following directions and not questioning their new environment.

This study was initiated at the MSW orientation held in August, prior to the beginning of the fall semester. The atmosphere at orientation introduced another limitation. Many students entering the program were changing careers or had limited social work experience. During the delivery of instructions and explanation of the research for informed consent this researcher stressed that if a respondent had limited or no experience, it was appropriate to indicate no experience as an answer choice. Although clearly explained to students during the study introduction, that there was no expectation about the level of students' cultural competence at entry to an MSW program, as an educator, my experience has shown that students want to put their best

foot forward as they begin educational programs. Student participants confirmed this observation during the focus groups. Participants noted the high level of reported cultural competence in pre- and post-tests and wondered whether students self-reported having the level of cultural competence they believed to be appropriate for new social work graduate students.

A related procedural issue posed another limitation. The pre-test on cultural competence was not the only questionnaire the students were completing during orientation. The coordinators of the social work graduate orientation had a pre-program questionnaire for attendees to complete. The multiple demands brings into question the level of attention respondents brought to completing the cultural competence study questionnaire.

An additional limitation was the homogeneity of the sample. Out of 67 total participants at in the pre- and post-test, only seven males (11%), four individuals who identified as LGBT (6.8%), one student reported having a disability (1.6%) and six students reported practicing a faith other than Christian (9.5%). These small subgroups hinder the representativeness of the sample and limit the generalizability of study findings.

The geographic location of the sample also is a limitation. Using only the students attending a Midwest University as the sampling frame, the sample does not capture the diversity that could be gleaned from a study using multiple program sites and different locations to select a sample. Although the sample was drawn from two separate university campuses it cannot replace the strength gained by sampling from a variety of programs at varying geographic locations.

With students completing the questionnaire using a self-report methodology, this provides only one pre and post data points, both provided by the student. Self-report limits a study of cultural competence to the student's sense of their personal cultural competence.

The questionnaire itself posed limitations on the validity of this study. The questionnaire was crafted for the purposes of this study with the content and structure taken from the NASW Cultural Competence Standards and NASW Cultural Competence Standard Indicators. The Likert-type response scale used in the cultural competence questionnaire included five answer choices: no experience, minimally competent, moderately competent, mostly competent, and competent. This researcher identified no experience, as a stand alone rating option, and minimally competent, moderately competent, mostly competent and competent as a four point rating scale for student's that did have some experience. However, when five rating options are available to a respondent, the center of a rating scale could be perceived as a safe self-rating. In this study the middle answer choice was moderately competent. This value corresponds closely to the observed means for each of the subscales.

The post-test of the study was distributed to students at the end of their first semester during a class session in their Human Behavior and the Social Environment theory course. During each day that the post-test was given, the professors teaching the course also were given an end of semester post-test to assess the extent of knowledge learned in the course. Student attentiveness may have been compromised by needing to complete multiple questionnaires during one class period and thereby posed another limitation to the study.

Lastly, a limitation of the study was present in the relationship of this researcher and the students. Although for purposes of anonymity it was important that there was no relationship between students and researcher, it also did not lend to a safe environment of mutual respect. As discussed earlier, students seek a safe environment to learn and grow in cultural competence. Student lack of disclosure and response of projection of fellow students, is an example of that. This was a limitation.

Despite these constraints on the generalizability, validity and reliability of findings, this research has sufficient strengths to sustain a discussion of recommendations and has compelling heuristic value.

Recommendations

The study findings prompt questions about: social work students' and professionals' demographic characteristics and backgrounds, valid methods for assessing cultural competence, discussion of cultural competence extending beyond educational settings to practicing professionals; evaluation outcome research on social work programs' achievement of curriculum goals and attainment of practice Standards.

First, it is important that research continue in cultural competence within social work education and the social work profession. Within social work education, suggestions for next steps include expanding data collection to beyond student self-report to include multiple data points. Key individuals to provide evaluation of student cultural competence include social work professors, field liaisons, and field instructors. Developing a complimentary cultural competence evaluation of student for use by professors and field education instructors would strengthen student cultural competence evaluation by providing self-report evaluation and professor and field education

instructors' evaluation. A related recommendation for social work education relates to a pre-program and post-program self-report from social work students. Continued evaluation of students' levels of cultural competence would allow students to evaluate their own level of cultural competence after completing the entire MSW curriculum. Comparison of pre and post program questionnaires completed by students with professor and/or field instructor evaluations of students' self-reported cultural competence would enhance validity of student evaluations at a variety of points in time.

Second, future assessment should not only include students but should expand to include practicing social workers and agencies. The questionnaire designed for this study could be used by professionals and their supervisors to provide evaluation of practicing social workers with respect to cultural competence. It is recommended that the cultural competence of social service agencies also be evaluated. Although this questionnaire does not lend itself easily to use for agency evaluation, a complimentary agency evaluation of cultural competence would benefit the field of social work and the clients served.

Third, it is important within social work education and the social work profession to broaden the definition of cultural competence. Redefining cultural competence should include not only race and ethnicity, but all groups that contribute to a diverse U.S. society.

> The review of literature reported earlier in this study states that NASW acknowledges diversity and defines cultural competence as
>
> the process by which individuals and systems respond respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures, languages, classes, races, ethnic

> backgrounds, religions, and other diversity factors in a manner that recognizes, affirms, and values the worth of individuals, families, and communities and protects and preserves the dignity of each (NASW, 2000b, p. 61).

As social workers, we must continue to broaden individual student and professional definitions of cultural competence to include all peoples from all cultures. Through this study, MSW students suggest including geographic location and social location within society to the definition. This study suggests culture to be defined as the process by which individuals and systems respond respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures, languages, classes, races, ethnic backgrounds, religions, and other diversity factors within all geographic locations in a manner that recognizes, affirms, and values the worth of individuals, families, and communities and protects and preserves the dignity of each.

Fourth, we must continue to expand our knowledge on whether and why various demographic variables have an impact on individual and organizational levels of cultural competence. This study just begins to inform the profession's understanding of how individuals involved in social work education and social service agencies with varied demographic characteristics attain higher levels of cultural competence. Research should continue in this area to provide a better understanding to CSWE and social work professors on how specific pedagogy that embrace diverse student bodies can help all students grow in their understanding, knowledge and practice of cultural competence. As

students grow in their level of cultural competence, clients and communities stand to gain more competent social workers.

These recommendations lead to a fifth recommendation. As social work educators we must better understand the experiences and expertise students bring to the learning environment around cultural competence. Do diverse students coming from a diverse race or ethnic group, that self-identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender, report having a disability, come from a diverse geographic location, enter MSW programs with a higher level of cultural competence than incoming students that do not have these characteristics or life experiences? Does student diversity change the way we teach or our curriculum or the way students utilize this experience? This is not to suggest that any one student who comes from a diverse group is asked to speak for the diverse group. It is important to identify specific pedagogical exercises, writings, role- plays, panel discussions, and case studies that allow for student experience to be shared. These curricular experiences can only take place in an environment of respect where students can ask questions and struggle about differences with their classmates.

Finally, the NASW Cultural Competence Standards have existed since 2001. To use these Standards to benefit students and practicing social workers in their work with clients and communities, although this study only is a preliminary attempt at measuring cultural competence, it possibly provides a new measurement instrument. This new measure has empirical evidence of internal scale reliability strong enough to warrant additional use and refining. Suggested future expansion to this tool includes determining where each question fits within the knowledge, values and skills paradigm. As social workers rate their level of cultural competence, educators and agency supervisors can

better understand where student/employee confidence lies (knowledge, values or skills) and what areas need growth. It is suggested that researchers continue to use the instrument developed for this study to measure cultural competence in academic settings and social service agencies. This instrument can be used to inform and challenge all social work professionals to measure and improve their cultural competence. Increased cultural competence has the potential to benefit clients, communities and organizations in better service delivery, intervention effectiveness, and increased quality of life for professionals and the general population.

Conclusion

This study is a call to social workers to be culturally competent. As noted by NASW, cultural competence is a life-long journey, which begins while students are in their programs and continues throughout a professional life of social work practice. By providing continued research attention to cultural competence in social work education and social work practice, our profession strives for excellence on all levels of service delivery to the diverse cultures within our world.

Appendix A

Definitions

Culture The customs, habits, skills, technology, arts, values, ideology, science, and religious and political behavior of a group of people in a specific time period.

Cultural bias A belief about the supposed superiority or inferiority of individuals, groups, or nations based on their cultural or ethnic affiliations.

Cultural care The transmission of values and traditions, especially to people who have been isolated from the sociocultural group of their heritage. This can take the form of special group or individual educational programs, returning to groups to participate in the traditions, or efforts by the group to reach out and re-engage those who have become isolated.

Cultural diversity The existence within a social context of various racial, religious, and ethnic groups, as well as other distinct groups, each of which has different values and lifestyles. An appreciation of those variations, rather than efforts to facilitate assimilation, has been the goal of social workers in ethnic-sensitive practice. Cultural diversity is also known as cultural pluralism.

Culturally diverse Pertaining to individuals, families, groups, or communities who do not have full access to the society in which they live because of such factors as poor education, geographic isolation, discrimination, poverty, and political or ethnic conflicts.

Culturally sensitive practice In social work, the process of professional intervention while being knowledgeable, perceptive, empathic, and skillful about the unique as well as common characteristics of clients who possess racial, ethnic, religious, gender, age, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic differences. Theoretically, all professional social work practice is culturally sensitive practice. The term is synonymous with ethnic-sensitive practice.

Cultural marginality Belonging to two or more cultural groups while being fully accepted by neither. This often occurs with people from racially mixed or interfaith marriage or with individuals who immigrate.

Cultural pluralism The existence within a society of various racial, religious, and ethnic groups, as well as other distinct groups, each of which has different values and lifestyles.

Cultural racism The belief in the inherent inferiority of a particular cultural group's language, music, art, interests, lifestyles, and values.

Cultural relativism The view that specific norms or rituals can be understood accurately only in the context of a culture's goals, social history, and environmental demands.

Culture of poverty A premise according to which poor people are impoverished because their values, norms, and motivations prevent them from taking advantage of widespread opportunities to achieve economic independence.

Ethnicity 1. An orientation toward the shared national origin, religion, race, or language of a people. 2. A person's ethnic affiliation, by virtue of one or more of these characteristics and traditions. Ethnicity is a powerful determinant of an individual's patterns of feeling, thinking, and behaving.

Ethnic-sensitive practice Professional social work that emphasizes and values the special capabilities, distinctive cultural histories, and unique needs of people of various ethnic groups. Social work values and ethics emphasize ethnic-sensitive practice.

Ethnic stereotyping Perceived, usually negative, ideas about the behaviors of a racial, religious, or geographic group.

Ethnocentrism An orientation or set of beliefs that holds that one's own culture, racial or ethnic group or nation is inherently superior to others.

Ethnography The study and description of the behavior patterns of specific cultures or groups of people.

Appendix B

NASW Cultural Competence Indicators

Standard 1: Ethics and Values

Social workers shall function in accordance with the values, ethics, and Standards of the profession, recognizing how personal and professional values may conflict with or accommodate the needs of diverse populations.

Culturally competent social workers will demonstrate:

1. Knowledge of the NASW Code of Ethics.
2. Ability to describe areas of conflict and accommodation between personal values, professional values and that of other cultures.
3. Ability to recognize the convergence and disparity between the values of the dominant society and the values of the historically oppressed under-represented and underserved populations.
4. Appreciation and respect of differences and strengths in culture.
5. Awareness of the dilemmas they may encounter when they recognize the needs of diverse clients in domains such as:
    - Boundaries
    - Norms of Behavior
    - Advocacy
    - Controversial Issues (i.e. abortion, gay, lesbian)
    - Dual Relation

Standard 2: Self Awareness

Social Workers shall develop an understanding of their own personal and cultural values and beliefs as a first step in appreciating the importance of multicultural identities in the lives of people.

Culturally competent social workers will:

1. Examine and describe their cultural background and identities to increase awareness of assumptions, values, beliefs and biases and determine how these impact services and influence relationship with clients.
2. Identify how ignorance, fears, and "isms" (within the multicultural spectrum such as racism, sexism, ethnocentrism, heterosexualism, ageism, classism) have influenced their attitudes, beliefs, and feelings.
3. Demonstrate an awareness of personal or professional limitations that may warrant the referral of a client or organization to another resource that can better meet their needs.
4. Demonstrate increased comfort with self- and other-awareness about cultural customs and views of the world.

Standard 3: Cross-Cultural Knowledge

Social workers shall have and continue to develop knowledge and understanding about the history, traditions, values, family systems and artistic expressions of major client groups served.

Culturally competent social workers will:

1. Expand their cultural knowledge and expertise by studying:
    a. The help-seeking behaviors of diverse client groups

b. The historical context of diverse communities
c. The role of language, speech patterns and communication styles of diverse client groups
d. The impact of social service policies on diverse groups served
e. The resources such as agencies, people, informal helping networks and research that can be mobilized on behalf of diverse clients

2. Possess specific knowledge about traditional and non-traditional providers and client groups which they serve, including:
    a. Historical experiences, resettlement patterns, individual and group oppression, adjustment styles, socioeconomic backgrounds, life processes
    b. Learning styles, cognitive skills, world-views, and specific cultural concerns and practices
    c. Their definitions of and beliefs about the causation of wellness and illness or normality and abnormality; and how care and services should be delivered
3. Demonstrate knowledge of the power relationships in the community and institutions, and how these impact diverse groups.
4. Possess specific knowledge about US, global, social, cultural, and political systems, and how they operate and how they serve or fail to serve client groups. These groups include institutional, class, culture, and language barriers to service.
5. Identify the limitations and strengths of current theories, practice models, and select which have applicability and relevance to the diverse groups with which they work.
6. Transfer awareness of personal heritage to becoming culturally aware of the culture and heritage of others.
7. Describe how privilege is manifested by people within different dominant groups
8. Describe the effects that dominant and non-dominant status plays in the workplace regarding interpersonal relations and group dynamics.
9. Distinguish between intentional and unintentional assertion of privilege and manifestation of institutionalization of "isms".
10. Describe how group membership in the context of world-view is associated with patterns of privilege and internalized oppression.
11. Understand the interaction of the cultural systems of the social worker, client, the particular setting, and the broader immediate community.

Standard 4. Cross Cultural Skills

Social workers shall use appropriate methodological approaches, skills, and techniques that reflect the workers' understanding of the role of culture in the helping process.

Culturally competent social workers will:

1. Engage a wide range of persons who are culturally different or similar to themselves.
2. Display proficiency in discussing cultural difference, and helping clients to be comfortable with these discussions.
3. Conduct a comprehensive assessment of clients in which cultural norms and behaviors are differentiated from problematic or symptomatic behaviors.
4. Assess cultural strengths and limitations, and their impact on individual and group functioning, integrating this understanding into intervention plans.
5. Select and develop appropriate methods, skills and techniques that are attuned to their clients' cultural, bicultural or marginal experiences in their environments.
6. Adapt and use a variety of culturally proficient models.

7. Communicate effectively with culturally and linguistically different clients through language acquisition, proper use of interpreters, verbal and nonverbal skills, and culturally appropriate protocols.
8. Effectively employ the clients' natural support system in resolving problems, for example, folk healers, indigenous remedies, storefronts, religious leaders, friends, family and other community residents and organizations.
9. Advocate, negotiate, and employ empowerment skills in their work with clients.
10. Consult with supervisors and colleagues for feedback and monitoring of performance, and identify features of their own professional style that impede or enhance their culturally competent practice.

Standard 5. Service Delivery

Social workers shall be knowledgeable about and skillful in the use of services available in the community and broader society and be able to make appropriate referrals for their diverse clients.

Culturally competent social workers will:

1. Identify the formal and informal resources in the community, describe their strengths and weaknesses, and facilitate referrals as indicated, tailored to the culturally relevant needs of the client.
2. Actively advocate for and cooperate with efforts to create culturally competent services and programs.
3. Actively recruiting multi-ethnic staff and including cultural competence requirements in job descriptions and performance and promotion measures.
    a. Reviewing the current and emergent demographic trends for the geographic area served by the agency to determine service needs for the provision of interpretation and translation services
    b. Creating service delivery systems or models that are more appropriate to the targeted client populations or advocating for the creation of such services
    c. Including participation by clients as major stakeholders in the development of service delivery systems
    d. Ensuring that program decor and design is reflective of the cultural heritage of clients and families using the service
    e. Attending to social issues (for example, housing, education, policy, and social justice) that concern clients of diverse backgrounds
    f. Not accepting staff remarks that insult or demean clients and their culture
    g. Supporting the inclusion of cultural competence Standards in accreditation bodies and organizational policies as well as in licensing and certification examinations
    h. Developing staffing plans that reflect the organization and the targeted client population (for example, hiring, position descriptions, performance evaluations, training).
    i. Developing performance measures to assess culturally competent practice
    j. Participation of client groups in the development of research and treatment protocols.
4. Culturally competent programs, organizations, and service systems build culturally competent organizations through:
    a. Effective recruitment of multilingual and multicultural staff
    b. Staff composition reflecting the diversity of the client population

c. Service planning strategy that includes an assessment of the demographics and demographic trends of the service community
d. Expanded service capacity to improve the breadth and depth of services to a greater variety of cultural groups
e. Meaningful inclusion of clients representing relevant cultural groups and/or community members representing relevant cultural groups in decision-making and advisory governance entities, program planning, program evaluation, and research endeavors
f. Physical plant designed and decorated in a manner that is welcoming to the diverse cultural groups served
g. Engagement in advocacy to improve social issues relevant to client group
h. A work climate, through formal and informal means, that addresses workforce diversity challenges and promotes respect for clients and colleagues of different backgrounds
i. Documented advocacy for culturally competent policies and procedures of accrediting, licensing, certification bodies, contracting agencies, etc.
j. Inclusion of cultural competency as a component of human resource management – job descriptions, performance evaluations, promotions and training, etc.

Standard 6. Empowerment and Advocacy

Social workers shall be aware of the effect of social policies and programs on diverse client populations, advocating for and with clients whenever appropriate.

Culturally competent social workers will:

1. Advocate for public policies that honor the cultural values, norms and behaviors of diverse groups.
2. Select appropriate intervention strategies to help colleagues, collaborating partners, and institutional representatives examine their own conscious or unconscious manifestations of an "ism", exclusionary behaviors, or oppressive policies.
    a. Assess level of readiness for feedback and intervention of the dominant group member
    b. Select either education, dialogue, increased intergroup contact, social advocacy, or social action as a strategy
    c. Participate in social advocacy and social action to better empower diverse clients and communities at the local, state, and/or national level
3. Use practice methods and approaches that facilitate the client to connect with Their own power in a manner that is appropriate for Their cultural context
4. Provide support to diverse cultural groups who are advocating on their own behalf
    a. Partner, collaborate and ally with client groups during advocacy efforts to increase the members' skills and sense of self-efficacy as social change advocates
    b. Consciously choose when to assert personal values during advocacy work and when to avoid imposing personal values during empowerment work
    c. Demonstrate intentional effort to assure that they do not to impose their own personal values in practice

Standard 7. Diverse Workforce

Social workers shall support and advocate for recruitment, admissions and hiring, and retention efforts in social work programs and agencies that ensure diversity within the profession.

Culturally competent social workers will:

1. Advocate for and support human resource policies and procedures that ensure diversity and inclusion within their organization.
2. Work to achieve a workforce and organization that reflects the demographics of the population served throughout all levels of the organization.
3. Advocate for and support policies that assure equity and appropriate compensations for social workers who bring special skill or knowledge to the profession, such as bicultural and bilingual skills or American Sign Language skills.
4. Advocate for and support recruitment and retention strategies to social work programs and schools of social work that increase the diversity within the profession.
5. Promote and maintain the expectation that all staff regardless of cultural membership continuously engage in the process of improving cultural proficiency and capacity to serve a variety of populations.

Culturally competent organizations will:

1. Have in place human resource and other organizational policies and procedures that support staff diversity.
2. Regularly monitor the extent to which their management and staff composition reflect the diversity of the client population.
3. Take corrective action as appropriate and refocus recruitment efforts. Review their selection policies for inadvertent exclusion of the underrepresented, underserved, and oppressed cultural group.
4. Regularly monitor and take remedial action as needed to ensure that client groups may receive services in their native language.
    a. Actively recruit and seek to retain multilingual staff
    b. Provide "second language" courses to existing staff
    c. Provide appropriate compensations for social workers who bring special language skill or knowledge to the profession, such as bicultural and bilingual skills or American Sign Language skills
5. Include cultural competency as a requirement for job performance, by including these requirements in job descriptions, performance evaluations, promotions, and training.
6. Foster a work climate, through formal and informal means, that addresses workforce diversity challenges and promotes respect for clients and colleagues of different backgrounds.
7. Establish cultural norms of openness and respect for discussing situations in which insensitive or exclusionary behaviors were experienced.

Standard 8: Professional Education

Social workers shall advocate for and participate in educational and training programs that help advance cultural competence within the profession.

Culturally competent social workers will:

1. Promote professional education that advance cultural competency within the profession.

2. Advocate the infusion and integration of cultural competency Standards in social work curricula and research in the BSW, MSW, and Ph.D. levels.

    a. Conduct research that adds to cultural competent knowledge

    b. Advocate state-of-the art professional education on diversity and working with diverse populations

    c. Train staff in cross-cultural communication, culturally diverse customs, and techniques for resolving racial, ethnic or cultural conflicts between staff and the clients served

5. Culturally competent organizations will:

    1. Provide ongoing training and support for improving cultural competency skills to all employees, including top management, middle management, front line supervisors, front-line staff, and administrative/custodial staff.
    2. Resolve racial, ethnic or cultural conflicts between staff and the clients served and among employees within the organization itself.
    3. Conduct evaluation research to determine their effectiveness in serving or interacting with client groups from different populations.

Standard 9: Language Diversity

Social workers shall seek to provide and advocate for the provision of information, referrals, and services in the language appropriate to the client, which may include the use of interpreters.

Culturally competent social workers will:

1. Demonstrate an understanding that language is part of the total identity of a client.
2. Advocate for rights of individuals and groups to receive resources in their own language.
3. Provide and advocate for information, referrals, and services in appropriate language for the client.
4. Provide jargon-free print materials in easy to read, low literacy, and picture and symbol formats for individuals with limited English proficiency.
5. Advocate for the preservation and appreciation of language diversity among clients.
6. Advocate for reasonable accommodations of the client's language needs, including the provision of professional sign language interpreters and translators.
7. Improve their own linguistic proficiency.
8. Understand that words and phrases, especially those translated from one language to another, or one region of the country to another, may have different meanings, and check to ensure accurate communications when working with client groups.

Standard 10: Cross-Cultural Leadership

Social workers shall be able to communicate information about diverse client groups to other professionals.

Culturally competent social workers will:

1. Take leadership roles within the profession to promote cultural competence within the profession.

2. Take leadership roles in communicating and disseminating information on cultural competency and diverse clients to other professionals through activities such as serving on committees, making presentations writing articles, developing guidelines, and conducting research.
3. Take leadership roles in empowering diverse clients to assume advocacy roles within own organization and in the community.
    a. Advocate fair and equitable treatment for diverse groups in and outside of profession
    b. Create a proactive process that empowers individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
4. Establish strategies for people and organizations within the profession to share information and learning with one another on how to engage in culturally competent behavior and promote culturally competent practices and policies.
5. Model culturally competent behavior in their interactions with client groups, other professionals, and each other.

Appendix C

Dear Social Work Student:
I am requesting your help with a research project. As a doctoral student in social work, I am currently working on my dissertation which is a study to evaluate MSW social work student cultural competence. The *NASW Cultural Competence Standards* were adopted by NASW in 2001 as a way to provide definition to cultural competence within the social work profession. The questionnaire used in this study directly coincides with the Standards. The benefits that will result from this study do not accrue to you directly. This project helps me fulfill a doctoral program requirement. The goal of this project is that the research will provide ongoing information to the social work profession that can be used to assess social work education in the area of cultural competence. In the long run the results of this study will assist social work educators in understanding where, how and if MSW social work students learn cultural competence in their education. In addition, this study will evaluate the questionnaire tool used.

Completing the questionnaire will take 15-20 minutes. Your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to participate at all, or you may refuse to participate in certain procedures or answer certain questions or discontinue your participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. Your decision to complete or not complete the questionnaire will not affect your grade in any course either negatively or positively. Your response to the questionnaire is confidential; I will not know which questionnaire is yours. Your identity and privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law.

As with all research projects there are risks and benefits associated with this study. The risks to you may involve the emergence of painful memories or strong emotions that people sometimes experience when thinking about cultural injustices. If you experience any distress or troubling thoughts as a result of completing this questionnaire please contact MSU's Counseling Department at 355-8270 (TTY 353-7278).

If you have any questions about this study, please contact the investigator Dr. Rena Harold, 254 Baker Hall, School of Social Work, MSU, East Lansing, MI 48824-1118, she also can be reached by phone at (517) 353-8616, or by email to haroldr@msu.edu . (Judi Ravenhorst Meerman, 3333 E. Beltline NE Grand Rapids, Mi. 49425, (616) 988-3706, e-mail: ravenhor@ssc.msu.edu). If you have questions or concerns regarding your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact – anonymously, if you wish –Peter Vasilenko, Ph.D., Chair of the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects by phone: (517) 355-2180, fax: (517) 432-4503, e-mail: irb@msu.edu, or regular mail: 202 Olds Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824. The primary investigator and supervising faculty member also is available to address your concerns.

Your signature below indicates your voluntary agreement to participate in this study. You will not write your name on the questionnaire but will choose a unique personal identifier number which will be explained. Since each questionnaire is anonymous you will not be able to withdraw from the research once you have returned the completed questionnaire.

Thank you in advance for your time.

Judi Ravenhorst Meerman, LMSW, PhD. (ABD)

Dear Social Work Student:

I am requesting your help with a research project. As a doctoral student in social work, I am currently working on my dissertation which is a study to evaluate MSW social work student cultural competence. The *NASW Cultural Competence Standards* were adopted by NASW in 2001 as a way to provide definition to cultural competence within the social work profession. The questionnaire used in this study directly coincides with the Standards. The benefits that will result from this study do not accrue to you directly. This project helps me fulfill a doctoral program requirement. The goal of this project is that the research will provide ongoing information to the social work profession that can be used to assess social work education in the area of cultural competence. In the long run the results of this study will assist social work educators in understanding where, how and if MSW social work students learn cultural competence in their education. In addition, this study will evaluate the questionnaire tool used.

The focus group will last about 1 hour. Your decision to participate in the focus group will not affect your grade in any course either negatively or positively. Your participation is completely voluntary and confidential. Your responses to focus group questions are confidential. Your identity and privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law.

As with all research projects there are risks and benefits associated with this study. The risks to you may involve the emergence of painful memories or strong emotions that people sometimes experience when thinking about cultural injustices. You have the option to discontinue the focus group at any time. If you experience any distress or troubling thoughts as a result of participating in the focus group, please contact MSU counseling center at 355-8270 (TTY 353-7278).

If you have any questions about this study, please contact the investigator Dr. Rena Harold, 254 Baker Hall, School of Social Work, MSU, East Lansing, MI 48824-1118, she also can be reached by phone at (517) 353-8616, or by email to haroldr@msu.edu . (Judi Ravenhorst Meerman, 3333 E. Beltline NE Grand Rapids, Mi. 49425, (616) 988-3706, e-mail: ravenhor@ssc.msu.edu). If you have questions or concerns regarding your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact – anonymously, if you wish –Peter Vasilenko, Ph.D., Chair of the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects by phone: (517) 355-2180, fax: (517) 432-4503, e-mail: irb@msu.edu, or regular mail: 202 Olds Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824. The primary investigator and supervising faculty member also is available to address your concerns.

Your signature below indicates your voluntary agreement to participate in this study. Thank you in advance for your time.

Judi Ravenhorst Meerman, LMSW, PhD. (ABD)

Appendix D

Focus Group Participation

I am willing to participate in further research in the area of cultural competence as a member of a focus group in January of 2008.

_____

Print name

The best way to communicate with me is by email/telephone. (Circle)

_____

Email and/or telephone number.

Appendix E

PERSONAL UNIQUE IDENTIFIER

To create your unique identifier, please fill in the following spaces with the requested information.

What are the first two letters of your mother's maiden name?	
What are the last two digits of the year you graduated high school or finished your GED? Example: 1983=83	
How many siblings do you have? Example: 2= 02	
What is the day portion of your date of birth? Example: February 1, 1980 = 01	

Please record these eight digits at the corner of the questionnaire.

Appendix F

Cultural Competence Questionnaire

No Experience- (NO EX) I have no experience in this area of social work.
Minimally Competent- (MIN CO) I have little experience and barely feel competent.
Moderately Competent- (MOD CO) I have some experience and somewhat feel competent.
Mostly Competent- (MOS CO) I have experience and generally feel competent.
Competent- (COM) I have a lot of experience and feel competent.

Please circle the answer that best describes your level of competence.		No Experience	Minimally Competent	Moderately Competent	Mostly Competent	Competent
1.	I am familiar with *the NASW Code of Ethics*, and function in accordance with to the values, ethics and Standards of the profession in my social work practice.	NO EX	MIN CO	MOD CO	MOS CO	COM
2.	I am aware of my own personal and cultural values and beliefs.	NO EX	MIN CO	MOD CO	MOS CO	COM
3.	I understand the history of oppression that has occurred within some diverse populations.	NO EX	MIN CO	MOD CO	MOS CO	COM
4.	I am skilled at attending to verbal responses of clients of various cultures.	NO EX	MIN CO	MOD CO	MOS CO	COM
5.	I am skilled at identifying formal resources tailored to the culturally relevant needs of the client.	NO EX	MIN CO	MOD CO	MOS CO	COM
6.	I am aware of the effect that social policies have on diverse populations.	NO EX	MIN CO	MOD CO	MOS CO	COM
7.	I support the need for a diverse workforce within social service agencies.	NO EX	MIN CO	MOD CO	MOS CO	COM
8.	I actively support professional education that advances cultural competency within the profession.	NO EX	MIN CO	MOD CO	MOS CO	COM
9.	I understand that language is part of the total identity of a client.	NO EX	MIN CO	MOD CO	MOS CO	COM
10.	I model culturally competent behavior in my professional interactions.	NO EX	MIN CO	MOD CO	MOS CO	COM
11.	I recognize how my personal and professional values may conflict with or accommodate the needs of diverse populations.	NO EX	MIN CO	MOD CO	MOS CO	COM
12.	I recognize cultural values and beliefs that are different from my own.	NO EX	MIN CO	MOD CO	MOS CO	COM
13.	I understand family systems within a variety of cultural contexts.	NO EX	MIN CO	MOD CO	MOS CO	COM
14.	I am skilled at attending to non-verbal responses of clients of various cultures.	NO EX	MIN CO	MOD CO	MOS CO	COM
15.	I am skilled at evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of resources in the community.	NO EX	MIN CO	MOD CO	MOS CO	COM
16.	I am aware of the effect that social programs have on diverse populations.	NO EX	MIN CO	MOD CO	MOS CO	COM
17.	I am aware of the diversity hiring policies within my agency.	NO EX	MIN CO	MOD CO	MOS CO	COM
18.	I have taken one or more courses and have gained knowledge and skills in diversity.	NO EX	MIN CO	MOD CO	MOS CO	COM

Please circle the answer that best describes your level of competence.		No Experience	Minimally Competent	Moderately Competent	Mostly Competent	Competent
19.	I provide referrals to agencies that provide bi-lingual services.	NO EX	MIN CO	MOD CO	MOS CO	COM
20.	I take leadership roles within the profession to promote cultural competence.	NO EX	MIN CO	MOD CO	MOS CO	COM
21.	I am familiar with the *NASW Cultural Competence Standards* and practice social work in accordance with the Standards.	NO EX	MIN CO	MOD CO	MOS CO	COM
22.	I can recognize when my personal values and beliefs interfere with providing the best services to clients.	NO EX	MIN CO	MOD CO	MOS CO	COM
23.	I am aware of traditions, values, and artistic expressions within diverse populations.	NO EX	MIN CO	MOD CO	MOS CO	COM
24.	I am skilled at completing a client assessment by attending to the culturally relevant needs of the client.	NO EX	MIN CO	MOD CO	MOS CO	COM
25.	I am skilled at evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of resources in the community.	NO EX	MIN CO	MOD CO	MOS CO	COM
26.	I participate in social advocacy and social action to better empower diverse populations.	NO EX	MIN CO	MOD CO	MOS CO	COM
27.	I participate in advocacy efforts toward a diverse workforce.	NO EX	MIN CO	MOD CO	MOS CO	COM
28.	I have attended one or more diversity trainings and have gained knowledge and skills in diversity.	NO EX	MIN CO	MOD CO	MOS CO	COM
29.	I advocate for the rights of individuals and groups to receive resources in their own language.	NO EX	MIN CO	MOD CO	MOS CO	COM
30.	I advocate for fair and equitable treatment for diverse groups in and outside of the profession.	NO EX	MIN CO	MOD CO	MOS CO	COM
31.	I am skilled at completing a treatment plan by attending to the culturally relevant needs of the client.	NO EX	MIN CO	MOD CO	MOS CO	COM
32.	I am skilled at making appropriate referrals within the community tailored to the culturally relevant needs of the client.	NO EX	MIN CO	MOD CO	MOS CO	COM
33.	I ensure that information provided to clients is in their first language.	NO EX	MIN CO	MOD CO	MOS CO	COM
34.	At this time, I would rate my overall cultural competence as....	NO EX	MIN CO	MOD CO	MOS CO	COM
35.	Did you participate in field education this semester as part of your MSW education? (please circle) Yes or No					

Please write your definition of culture_____

Personal Characteristics and Background

For each of the following questions please choose the response that most clearly describes you. If none of the answer choices listed is accurate feel free to write in your preferred response.

Age_____ **Sex** Male_____ Female_____ Other (Please specifiy)_____

Ethnicity: (Please check all that apply)
African American____ Asian American_____ Caucasian American_____
Latino American_____ Middle Eastern_____ First Nations _____Biracial_____
International_____
Other (please specify)_____

Do you identify as LGBT Yes/No

Do you identify as a person with a disability Yes/No

Do you identify with a specific faith community Yes/No
If yes, which faith community?_____

Education

Degree	What was your major?	Where did you graduate?
❑ **BSW**	Social Work	
❑ **BS**		
❑ **BA**		
❑ **Previous Master's Degree**		

Years of previous social service volunteer experience?_____

Years of previous social work employment? _____

Number of courses completed in diversity? _____

Number of trainings completed in diversity? _____

Will you be enrolled in field education (internship) this semester? Yes/No

Which community best describes where you spent your childhood? (pick all that apply)

_____Urban (large densely populated city)
_____Urban (inner city)
_____Suburban (suburb outside of large city)
_____Rural (farmed or unused acreage)
_____International (U.S. citizen living in international setting)
_____ International (I am an international student)
_____ Military

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