

TRANSFORMATION WITHIN COLLEGE STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN A
CULTURAL AWARENESS PROGRAM: PERCEPTIONS OF BECOMING
CULTURALLY COMPETENT

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ABSTRACT

Cultural competence is defined as having the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to interact and assist people from culturally and ethnically diverse backgrounds (Sue, 2001). People who are culturally competent are aware of their own cultural background and the backgrounds of groups that are different. These individuals understand and appreciate a variety of cultures. Much of the research on cultural competence has focused on practitioners or graduate students in medicine, psychology, education, and social work (Eunice, 2004). Primarily, this research has looked at the training that these individuals have received and their attitudes about interacting with diverse groups.

Howard-Hamilton, Richardson, and Shuford (1998) proposed that a set of competencies be developed for college students similar to those created for practitioners. Examples of those competencies include an understanding the cultural backgrounds of other groups, being able to interact with diverse individuals, an appreciation for diversity and valuing social justice for all cultural groups, etc. Research on cultural competence and college students has primarily focused on attitudes of college students towards diverse individuals (Hu & Kuh, 2005; Nelson-Laird, Engberg, & Hurtado; 2005; Pascerella & Terenzini, 2005; Pacerella, Edison, Nora, Hagedorn, & Terenzini, 1996; Whitt, Edison, Pascerella, Terenzini, & Nora, 2001). Students' in and out-of-class experiences give them a holistic education in which they develop an appreciation of individuals whose cultures are different (Kuh, 1995). Yet, very little research has focused on students' experiences learning about and interacting with individuals from other cultures.

The purpose of this study was to gain insight from students participating in a cultural awareness program regarding their experiences before and during college that shape their cultural competence. Specifically, I examined students' perspectives on pre-college and college experiences that influence their values and beliefs about their own and others' racial/ethnic culture. The participants of the study were college students who participate in a cultural awareness grant program.

This study is phenomenological by nature. Data was obtained from interviews, field notes, and students' journals. Three interviews were conducted with each of the participants. In the first interview, the students were asked about their backgrounds and how they describe their racial or ethnic culture. In second interview, the participants were asked about their interactions and experiences with other racial or ethnic groups on campus. The third interview focused on students' opinions about learning about issues of race and ethnicity.

The data were analyzed using constant comparative analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), inductive analysis (Patton, 2002) and open coding (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Profiles of the participants were created from the interview transcripts and field notes (Seidman, 2006). The background, experiences, and perspectives of students were described in narrative form. Results of this study indicate that four factors have an impact on participants becoming culturally competent: (a) family influences, (b) formal learning, (c) encounters with others, and (d) personal interests.

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“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”

Hebrews 11:1

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, many in this country have been fearful of different cultural groups and they struggle to understand their norms and values. Individuals might also have a fear of learning new information about cultural groups because it might challenge their values and beliefs and make them question their personal cultures (Allport, 1954). Such behavior has been exhibited not only toward groups of color in the U.S., but also towards individuals from other countries. Nevertheless, with the global economy, influx of diverse individuals to the U.S. and an increased life expectancy of individuals in the U.S., the need to prepare workers to interact readily and effectively with individuals from a variety of cultures or countries has become essential (Spring, 2006; Tomoeda & Bayles, 2002).

With technological advances such as the Internet, it has become increasingly easy for individuals around the globe to communicate with one another. According to Connerly and Pedersen (2005), many Fortune 500 corporations have plants in other countries or they outsource their products to other countries. Several of the companies with overseas customer departments have taken great pains to ensure that these employees can interact with customers from around the world, such as providing language courses that eliminate regional accents.

In the same way, to better assist or interact with an individual from a different culture or county, it is important to have some understanding of that person's background to avoid the fear or misunderstanding that can easily result from erroneous preconceptions. Having some knowledge of a culture's traditions, values, and behaviors is not only important for improved globalization, but for assisting cultural groups within our borders as well. The U.S. Census Bureau has projected that the Hispanic/Latino population is growing faster than any other racial group (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004). In fact, it is predicted that the Hispanic/Latino population

will comprise 24% of the population by 2050. The Asian and Black populations are increasing at a slower rate, while the population of individuals of European descent is expected to slowly decrease. These expected changes in the ethnic makeup of this country make knowing and understanding other cultures increasingly vital.

The concept of “culture” has been defined in a variety of ways throughout history. Culture can be defined as knowledge, beliefs, laws, morals, art, routines, and other skills and routines interwoven into a society and acquired by individuals within that society (Schusky & Culbert, 1973). Utilizing this definition of culture, the various aspects of culture can be categorized as material, non-material, ideal and real. Material culture refers to tangible items associated with culture such as clothing, food, shelter and tools. Non-material culture refers to a group’s values, beliefs, and attitudes. The material and non-material aspects of culture are generally what comes to mind when one thinks about culture.

Schusky and Culbert (1973) also categorized aspects of culture as ideal or real. Ideal culture can be defined as a group’s archetype of what their culture ought to be while the real aspect of culture can be regarded as what actually exists. Usually, people think of culture in terms of an individual’s primary characteristics such as race/ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation and religion. However, there are also additional characteristics of an individual’s culture, and these include such factors as socioeconomic status, geographic region and education. Considered together, all of the characteristics make an individual multi-dimensional and might dictate how he or she will behave (Sue, 2001).

In addition to the descriptors noted above, culture has also been defined as a society which creates practices and beliefs. In other words, individuals within the society create standards and values for which the practices and beliefs are judged (Ingold, 1994). Though the individuals within a specific culture play a major role in the creation of knowledge, beliefs, and

attitudes, individuals outside of the culture also exert an impact as to how individuals identified with a specific culture will behave.

People or groups who have power and authority have influence about cultural groups are perceived (Suzuki, Rae, & Short, 2001). Persons from cultures in positions of dominance have assumptions and biases about how those from other cultures should behave and ultimately define what is “normal.” This is not to say that a culture is fixed and does not and cannot respond to outside influences, such as the media or, as noted above, from individuals in other cultures. Indeed, people are beginning to understand the importance of learning how to interact and communicate with and benefit from diverse cultures.

Individuals within cultural groups might share common characteristics; however, one should remember that there is individuality within cultural groups. In specific contexts, an individual’s identity may shift in response to the expectations of the dominant group. “Developing awareness of attitudes and stereotypes and beliefs about which group holds power or authority fosters increased understanding and appropriate skills to negotiate these issues” (Suzuki, Rae & Short, 2001, p. 847).

One place for individuals to learn about diverse cultures is at our nation’s colleges and universities. With the ethnic diversity of the U.S. constantly in flux, college graduates need to be cognizant of the various cultural groups they will come in contact with and how to better interact with them, whether socially or vocationally. The role of colleges and universities have always been not only to educate (Thelin, 1996), but also to produce citizenry that will later contribute to the society. While higher education is primary associated with the production of new knowledge, its transmission through education and training, its dissemination through the information and communication technologies, and its use through new services or industrial processes, it has another, and some would argue, equally important responsibility. American

colleges and universities must also play a role in producing citizens that are able to contribute in positive ways to society. In an increasingly global environment that is constantly changing and is characterized by increasing competition to attract and retain outstanding talent, it is vital that students graduating from institutions of higher education are culturally competent.

Cultural competence can be defined as having the knowledge, awareness, skills, opinions, or behaviors that would enable one to work and interact effectively with individuals from other cultural groups (Cohen, Gabriel, & Terrell, 2002; Sue, 2001; Suh, 2004). An individual who is culturally competent should also possess a global perspective, which represents an awareness of the differing customs and belief systems of individuals from other countries (Howard, 2006; Hains et al., 2000; Sue et al., 1992; Tomoeda & Bayles, 2002). Such knowledge is likely to lead to a greater understanding of why diverse individuals might exhibit certain behaviors.

Statement of the Problem

As the United States is becoming more diverse, student populations at higher education institutions are also becoming more diverse. However, with this new diversity come attitudes from some individuals within the colleges and universities that are not welcoming or inclusive (Bowman & Smith, 2001). Many students who enter higher education to earn a degree enter an environment that stresses inclusiveness of different values and beliefs. However, this inclusiveness is sometimes difficult for some students who have had little interaction with individuals whose cultural background is different from their own. Though colleges and universities produce professionals that should be able to work with diverse populations, issues of intolerance are parallel to similar concerns in society.

To combat this problem, academic departments and student affairs offices at colleges and universities integrate opportunities to learn about multiculturalism and diversity into courses or programs they sponsor (Hu & Kuh, 2003). This is done to ensure that students not only

understand the importance of diversity and multiculturalism on the college campus, but to realize how pertinent it will be to for future employment.

Much of the research on diversity and multiculturalism in higher education focuses on campus climate (Hurtado, 1992; Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, & Allen, 1998; Jones, 2001), students' openness to diversity (Pascarella, Edna, Nora, Hagerdorn, & Terenzini, 1996; Whitt, Edison, Pascarella, Terenzini, & Nora, 1998) interactions with peers and faculty (Hurtado, 2005; Pike, 2002), and diversity-related activities (Umbach, 2006). There is also a wealth of research that addresses the benefits of diversity to students in higher education (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002; Gurin, Nagda, & Lopez, 2004). Learning about multiculturalism and diversity has been shown to assist students in developing attributes such as social agency (Hurtado, Engberg, Ponjuan, & Landreman, 2002; Nelson-Laird, Engberg, & Hurtado, 2005; Zúñiga, Williams, & Berger, 2005), critical thinking skills (Hurtado et al., 2002), and improved intergroup communications (Chang, 2001; Gurin et al, 2004; Hurtado & Carter, 1997). Thus, the research on diversity and multiculturalism in higher education has focused on the impact of learning about and interacting with diverse groups.

Specific academic departments and programs have also focused on college students and what they learn about various cultural groups (Anderson, MacPhee, & Govan, 2000; Mahoney & Schamber, 2004; Reeves & Fogg, 2006; Rubin, 2004). Research on academic programs and multiculturalism and diversity have examined whether information learned through curriculum and experiential experiences assist students in becoming culturally competent.

The research on cultural competence has focused on professionals and college students in the fields of medicine, counseling, psychology, and business (Eunice, 2004). Primarily, this research has looked at the training that these individuals have received and their attitudes about multiculturalism and diversity. Howard-Hamilton, Richardson, and Shuford (1998) proposed that

a set of competencies be developed for college students similar to those created for practitioners. When students matriculate from higher education, they should have the knowledge and awareness of other culture and they should have the skills to interact and speak out for other groups. Though the research on cultural competence and college students focuses on the areas of academic affairs and student affairs, there is little research that focuses on students' descriptions of experiences before and during college that assist them in becoming more culturally competent.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to gain insight from students participating in a cultural awareness program (CAP) regarding their experiences before and during college that shape their cultural competence. Specifically, the study is designed to examine students' perceptions about factors that influence their understanding of their own and others' racial/ethnic culture. The study will use phenomenological design to examine students' experiences.

The participants for this study were members of a cultural awareness program. Only undergraduates can participate in the program. The program members are selected to participate in the program as freshmen and can continue to participate until they graduate. The students learn about other cultures by attending cultural programs, enrolling in classes, and participating in campus organizations learning about cultures.

Much of the existing research has examined how students' attitudes toward diverse individuals, very few have examined what students have learned from peers or faculty on campus. This study will identify themes and patterns of the types of competencies students develop. The research questions for this study are:

1. What are CAP students' experiences learning about their personal culture?
2. What are CAP students' experiences learning about other cultural groups before college?

3. What are CAP students' experiences interacting with other cultural groups before college?
4. What are CAP students' experiences learning about other cultural groups in college?
5. What are CAP students' experiences interacting with other cultural groups in college?

Significance of the Study

This study is significant for higher education stakeholders, practice, and theory. One group that might benefit would be administrators who work in diversity or multicultural affairs offices. The results of this study will reflect students' perceptions regarding learning about multiculturalism and diversity. The administrators might use the results to determine if programmatic practices are beneficial to students.

The second group that might benefit from this study is student affairs professionals. The professionals might learn how students process their experiences interacting with different cultural groups. The results from this study might be used to create or improve programs that would help students learn about diverse individuals.

Faculty is another group that could utilize the findings in this study. This study will provide faculty with insight as to how they influence students' understanding of other cultures. Faculty might use the results to examine how the content of information disseminated in their classes impacts students' development of cultural competence.

This study can be useful for the development of future theory. Currently, the literature on cultural competence has primarily focused on college students in specific programs of study. The results of the present study can offer insight into how students from a variety of programs of study learn about different cultures. The information learned from the study can expand existing

theory to include information on how students from various racial/ethnic backgrounds learn about cultures that are different from their own.

Also, much of the current theory on cultural competence and college students focuses on what students learn during college. There is little research on college students' experience learning about diversity and multiculturalism before college. The data generated from this study will give insight about the ways in which family and peers influence students' attitudes about diverse individuals.

Much of the research on cultural competence and college students is an examination of students' attitudes regarding interacting with diverse individuals or the frequency of interactions. The results of the study will examine students' experiences learning about racially and ethnically diverse individuals. The results can be used to contribute to the literature by giving insight as to how students process the information learned about racial and ethnic cultural groups.

Delimitations

The first delimitation is with the participants as they will all be from one university. If this study was conducted at another institution, the results might be different. Second, utilizing students only in the cultural awareness program would be delimitation. If students who do not participate in a cultural awareness program were participants in this study, their responses to the questions might differ, especially if they have not learned about or interacted with other cultures.

The interview protocol for the study will provide participants open-ended questions about interacting and learning about other cultures. Some of the participants might misinterpret the questions that were asked of them. If the questions are unclear to the participants, their true beliefs may not be reflected in their responses.

Fourth, because discussing diversity and multiculturalism can make some individuals uncomfortable, some participants may not be forthcoming with information. Participants of this study might give responses to questions that they believe would appease the researcher.

Definitions

The following terms will be used throughout the study:

- *Race*: Groups of individuals who have similar physical characteristics or similar beliefs about their ancestry (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 1997).
- *Ethnicity or ethnic groups*: A subcategory of race; individuals who have similar beliefs about ancestry and that have national, religious, cultural, or linguistic similarities (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 1997).
- *Diversity*: Difference between and among cultural groups (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 1997).
- *Multiculturalism*: The practice of recognizing diverse groups, valuing cultural group differences, and promoting inclusiveness within a society or organization (Rosada, 1996).
- *Cognitive Outcomes*: Results pertaining to reasoning, logic, and mental processes (Astin, 1993).
- *Affective Outcomes*: Results pertaining to attitudes, values, self-concept, aspirations, or everyday behaviors (Astin, 1993).

Organization of the Study

This study has five chapters in which information is organized. The first chapter introduces the topic, provides research questions, and includes a description of this study's significance. Chapter Two provides a review of the literature that is relevant to the study. The third chapter describes the methodology, which includes a description of the participants, the criteria to participate in the study, the instrument, the indicators of quality and rigor, and the techniques that will be implemented to analyze the data. Chapter Four provides the results of the

study, while the fifth chapter concludes the study by summarizing the results and providing implications for future practice, research, and theory.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The review is provided to give readers background research and literature on cultural competence and college students. The first part of the literature review is a general discussion of cultural competence and how it has been used in a variety of professions. The second portion of the literature review is focused on cultural competence in higher education. Specifically, the section on college students and cultural competence is an examination of how the concept is utilized within medical and allied health programs and with study abroad programs. The third section within the literature review provides the reader with an overview of a few of the conceptual frameworks created to examine cultural competence. Thus, the first three sections of the literature review highlight how cultural competence has been adapted by a few professions and within higher education.

The last section of the literature review presents information on how college students can be shaped by interactions with diverse individuals or information. Information in this portion of the literature review was compartmentalized based on Astin's (1993) Input-Environment-Output model. The literature concludes with a summary of the literature and ways in which cultural competence can be further examined.

Cultural Competence

People who are culturally competent are aware of their own cultural background and the background of groups that are different. These individuals understand and appreciate a variety of cultures. A culturally competent individual will have knowledge not only about his or her own culture, but of other cultures as well. That knowledge could be rudimentary or extensive, depending on the individual's interests, but it represents an openness of learning about what

others believe and how they live (Sue, 2001). Developing cultural competence is an ongoing process that is a lifelong learning process (Hains, Lynch, & Winston, 2000).

The concept of cultural competence has been applied to organizations, professions, and individuals. In the literature, the term “cultural competence” is often used interchangeably with the terms cross-cultural competence (Banks, 1988), intercultural competence (Hains, et al., 2000), multicultural competence (Sue, 2001), and culturally skilled (Mollen, Ridley, & Hill, 2003). Whatever the designation, these terms refer to the successful interaction between individuals who do not share salient variables such as ethnicity, language and religion (Hains et al., 2000). In examining the literature pertaining to medicine, psychology, social work, and education, Suh (2004) found that each profession defines cultural competence differently. Despite the variety of definitions, Suh determined that the primary characteristic of an organization or individual that is considered culturally competent is empathy of other individuals (e.g. clients, patients, patrons, students) who are different. Although the need for cultural competence certainly varies from profession to profession, a worker’s empathy for a patron or client who is culturally, ethnically, or linguistically different is likely to lead to a more fruitful interaction. Accordingly, being open to learning more about various cultural groups they encounter in the workforce will contribute to the success of these professionals and result in an increasingly positive interaction with individuals receiving assistance.

The first step in becoming culturally competent is for people to know about their own culture. In other words, before individuals can interact more perceptively with others, they should know about the background and history of their personal culture --only then can individuals better understand their own biases and assumptions (Cross, 1988; Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992; Hains et al., 2000). It is very difficult for individuals to be honest about their true feelings about a particular topic, especially when it might result in a declaration of prejudice

or cultural bias. In order to be culturally competent, individuals must be open about how they feel about diverse groups and be willing to learn more about other cultures.

While cultural competence is associated with sensitivity and empathy toward a person from a different background, it should not be equated with integration into a different culture. It is important that people do not disregard their own culture (Banks, 1988), because when that happens, the individuals could then feel that their culture of origin is inferior. Moreover, others who observe this behavior might regard it as patronizing and manipulative.

Cultural Competence in the Professions

This section of the literature review demonstrates how cultural competence is used in a few professions. Though cultural competence has a similar meaning in various professions, this section will show how cultural competence is applied to the professions of medicine, counseling, business, and K-12 education. The information in this section will explain why cultural competence is important to these respective professions and will highlight some research on cultural competence within the professions.

Medicine

It is well known that healthcare practitioners who are culturally competent provide premium healthcare to diverse populations (Cohen, Gabriel, & Terrell, 2002). Since the early 1990s, the field of medicine has instituted rules and policies to help physicians and allied health providers to provide more culturally competent health care (Suh, 2004). Having practitioners trained to be culturally competent will “serve to ameliorate ethnic disparities in health and health care” (Nápoles-Springer, Sanity, Houston, Perez-Stable, & Stewart, 2005, p. 5). Therefore, health care providers have been engaging in training programs, experiential learning, and classes that focus on specific cultural populations.

Researchers have also shown that patients believe that healthcare providers make assumptions about who they are based on their cultural groups. For instance, Nápoles-Springer et al. (2005) found that patients believed physicians made certain assumptions about them because of the ethnic and linguistic group to which they belonged. Specifically, they reported discrimination because of their lack of English speaking ability, their use of alternative medicine, their lack of health insurance, and their ethnicity, social class, and age. For example, some Latinos in the study felt that their immigration status also affected the care they receive and that physicians were insensitive to the fact that they experienced cultural shock relocating to a new country. One participant described the treatment by physicians as inhumane:

“They assume because you are undocumented, you are not a human being. We are considered third class citizens because we don’t have rights here. This is why we are afraid to file a complaint against the hospital if a doctor refuses to offer services. What if he calls immigration? (p. 12)”

Counseling

Within the counseling and psychology literature, there is a plethora of research that has been conducted to examine cultural competency (Ridley & Kleiner, 2003). Much of this research has focused on the competencies that counselors and psychologists should possess to better serve their clients. For example, in a position paper to the counseling profession, Sue, Arrendondo, and McDavis (1992) have reported that counselors and psychologists should understand the beliefs of clients from other cultures before treating them. The researchers also stated that mental health workers should also be aware of their clients’ beliefs about mental health and how different cultures view the notion of receiving treatment.

Since the 1960s, the counseling and psychotherapy profession has been criticized for the imperceptive therapy that has been provided to minority clients (Sue, Bernier, Durran, Feinberg,

Pedersen et al., 1982). Mental health workers have been characterized as not understanding the viewpoints of their culturally-different clients. To counteract that deficiency and help counselors better serve their clientele, the Association of for Multicultural Competency and Development created a set of standards that would require a counselor to (a) be aware of his or her assumptions about human behavior, values and biases; (b) attempt to understand his or her clients' worldview without prejudice; and (c) continually develop and practice intervention techniques that would be of benefit to the counselor's culturally diverse clientele (Sue et al, 1992).

Research on cross-cultural dyads of counselors and clients has shown that a counselor's understanding of the culture of his/her client is critical for effective therapy. In fact, clients who identified themselves as culturally different were more likely to want counselors of the same race and gender as themselves (Pope-Davis et al., 2002). Not surprisingly, these clients believed that same-sex or same-culture counselors could identify with them and relate more effectively to the issues with which they were grappling. Thus, the more common characteristics between a counselor and client, the more the client will utilize the services provided by the counselor.

Business

To be successful in the business world, a professional business leader will not only have to understand the diverse backgrounds of his or her colleagues within the organization (Connerly & Pedersen, 2005), but should be cognizant of the background and culture of foreign colleagues (Prichman, 1965). Cultural competence training, therefore, is essential in large companies. Many companies employ a chief diversity officer that will provide the necessary training or information on diversity for its workers. This training enables coworkers to understand and work more capably with one another, but also assists them in interacting effectively with international clients.

As indicated earlier, many, if not most, Fortune 500 companies are multinational companies (Connerly & Pedersen, 2005), making the need for cultural expertise at all levels of the organization almost essential. In addition to facilitating greater productivity within the organization, showing evidence of cultural competence is also likely to attract business and even external investment. In essence, to be successful, a company must know the background of its customers, whether foreign or domestic. For instance, when McDonald's opened its first restaurant in India in 1996, sales were poor. Amazingly, the company featured beef burgers on its menu, as it does in all of its domestic restaurants. However, in India, the cow is considered sacred among Hindus, which by some estimates, comprise over 80% of the population. Once this rather obvious cultural mistake was identified, McDonald's changed the Indian menu to include more vegetarian and chicken items.

K-12 Education

Addressing the cultural competency needs of students within K-12 has always been important, and this is reflected in the push to help educators become more adept at working with students from other cultures or countries. For example, the State of Oregon's Department of Education purposefully addressed the need to increase social justice and equity in its schools through their 2004 Summit on Cultural Competency. As a result, new teachers and administrators in Oregon must show that they know what it means to be culturally competent before they are given licensure.

One way to promote cultural competency in education is through multicultural education. Howard (2006) stated that multicultural education engages students in five areas of learning, namely:

1. To know who we are racially and culturally
2. To learn about and value cultures different from our own

3. To view social reality through the lens of multiple perspectives
 4. To understand the history and dynamics of dominance
 5. To nurture in ourselves and students a passion for justice and the skills for social justice
- (p. 85).

Research targeting K-12 education has shown that effective teachers know and understand who they are as individuals, with race being the most salient characteristic (McAllister & Irvine, 2000). McAllister and Irvine maintained that a teacher's racial identity deeply influences how they perceive and interact with children of color. Since the majority of teachers in the U.S. are Caucasian and the racial makeup of K-12 students is 40% non-White (Howard, 2006), it is imperative for teachers to realize that without proper training, they are more likely to make erroneous assumptions about their students and be uncomfortable teaching certain material.

Educators should also be aware of how they communicate both verbally and non-verbally with their students (LeRoux, 2002). To be effective in the classroom, a teacher should have an understanding of the culture-specific vocabulary or codes their students use, as well as any body language that is culturally unique and meaningful. Also, an educator should have knowledge about eye contact patterns and proxemics of a cultural group, which refers to the nature, degree, and effect of the spatial separation individuals will naturally maintain and how the separation relates to cultural factors. As an example of this dynamic, students of Korean descent will stand about four feet away from an individual when they are communicating with them, whereas Americans will stand closer to talk to someone. Therefore, having some understanding of the proxemics of a culture is important for effective communications.

Acknowledging the need for greater competence, the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) held a seminar in 2004 to discuss the changing demographics in American classrooms and

what it meant for current and future school leaders (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2005).

Five themes emerged from the conversation with educational administrators:

1. Educational leaders who are not culturally competent cannot be fully effective.
2. Culturally competent leaders must work to understand their own biases as well as patterns of discrimination. They must also develop the skills to mitigate the attendant negative effects on student achievement and the personal courage and commitment to persist.
3. Much of what culturally competent leaders must know and be able to do is learned in relationships with families and communities.
4. Culturally competent leadership develops overtime and needs to be supported through practice. Creating collaborative frameworks and structures can be useful.
5. State and local policies need to build a sense of urgency about preparing culturally competent leaders.

Though this paper has highlighted cultural competency in medicine, counseling, business, and education, there is a growing trend to explore the topic in several professions. There is a need to have a culturally competent workforce, given the anticipated increase in the non-White population. Thus, higher education institutions are well positioned to help prepare students to work with diverse populations in a variety of professions.

College Students and Cultural Competence

As with almost every sector of society, the demographic changes in this country have also impacted higher education with college campuses much more diverse today than they were 25 years ago. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (2005), in 1980, 81% of all college students were white and 15% were non-white and/or non-resident alien. These percentages have changed significantly. In 2004, 66% of all college students were white and

30% were students of color and non-resident alien. Since the diversity of students on campuses has increased, colleges and universities have implemented a variety of programs to work more effectively with these students – as well as with faculty, staff, and administrators who serve them in order to create greater cultural competency across every sector. This will not only be useful to students while at college, but if they leave college with greater sensitivity toward other cultures and with the skills needed to be successful in an ethnically diverse workplace, they be better equipped to contribute to society.

Along with curricular and programmatic changes that colleges and universities have instituted to address the needs of their diverse populations, they have also been charged with the task of creating and publicizing official statements on the importance of diversity and multiculturalism in producing a culturally competent citizenry. For instance, public and private colleges and universities in Oregon have not only incorporated cultural competency courses into teacher education, but within student affairs programming and areas of study, such as liberal arts and business. The University of Oregon created a Diversity Plan that details how the institution will address the needs of the changing campus community (University of Oregon, 2006). The first point of that diversity plan defines and addresses cultural competence in unambiguous terms:

Cultural competence is about addressing culture in the broadest sense and does not refer only to race. Goals of cultural competence are to promote the importance of multiple viewpoints, to encourage critical pedagogy, and to engage in critical discussion about diversity and equity issues. Cultural competence should not be viewed as advocating political correctness or as any sort of infringement on academic freedom (p. 14).

Cultural competence also concerns the merging of cognitive and affective behaviors (Milem, 2003). Since cultural competence can be a very broad topic, various components of

topic have been studied in the higher education literature. Specifically, what has been studied is how learning about diversity benefits students (Gurin, Nagda, & Lopez, 2004; Hurtado, 2005; Milem, 2003) and what factors influence the development of cultural competence within college students (Zhao, 2001).

Cultural Competence Conceptual Frameworks

Although widely acknowledged to be an area of increasing importance, there are actually few models that address the development of cultural competence within college students. The cultural competence conceptual frameworks in the higher education setting have primarily focused on qualities that faculty, student affairs administrators, and counselors should exhibit when learning or interacting with diverse populations (Pope & Reynolds, 1997; Pope, Reynolds, & Mueller, 2004; Pope-Davis, Reynolds, Dings, & Ottavi, 1994). Howard-Hamilton, Richardson, and Shuford (1998) adapted the multicultural competency conceptual framework created by Pope and Reynolds (1994) for college students. The framework provides an idea of the knowledge, attitudes, and skills that college students should exhibit to be considered culturally competent. For instance, students should know and understand the qualities that make them unique and the qualities that are associated with their cultural groups. In fact, students should be able to examine ideas from multiple perspectives, yet be able to self-reflect about an issue or situation. The authors also believed that students should be open and willing to stand and speak out against social justice for all cultural groups. Nevertheless, students will continue to learn throughout their lifetime and it will be imperative for students to understand the importance of learning about different cultural groups.

Table 1

Attributes of a Culturally Competent Students

	Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
Awareness	<p>Informed about self as it relates to one’s cultural identity</p> <p>Has knowledge of other cultural groups and know similarities and differences between groups</p>	<p>Self-reflection</p> <p>Ability to recognize similarities and differences between cultures and skill to convey the information to others</p>	<p>Having pride in one’s own cultural group</p> <p>No cultural group is better than another</p>
Understanding	<p>Understands issues of oppressions</p> <p>Understands multiple oppressions that intersect such as race, gender, class, lifestyle, and religion</p>	<p>Ability to see and understand things from multiple perspectives and in various contexts</p>	<p>Individuals should not be discriminated against based on cultural status</p>
Appreciation/ Valuing	<p>Familiarity with elements involved in social change</p> <p>Knowledgeable about how communication patterns are affected by cultural differences</p>	<p>Able to communicate cross-culturally</p> <p>Propensity to challenge acts of discrimination</p>	<p>Interactions between cultural can enhance the quality of one’s life.</p>

Note. From “Promoting Multicultural Education: A Holistic Approach,” by M. F. Howard-Hamilton, B. J. Richardson, and B. Shuford, 1998, *College Student Affairs Journal*, 18, p. 10. Copyright 1998 by Southern Association for College Student Affairs.

Adapted with permission.

Intercultural maturity. King and Baxter Magolda (2005) created the intercultural maturity model to demonstrate how people develop cognitively, intrapersonally, and interpersonally. Utilizing theories from the cognitive (Baxter Magolda, 1992 ; King & Kitchener, 1990; Perry, 1970), intrapersonal (Cross, 1971; Helms, 1992; Josselson, 1987) and interpersonal (Bennett, 1986; Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Kegan, 1994) theorists, the intercultural maturity model takes on a 3x3 grid design to explain how individuals mature over time (see Table 1).

King and Baxter Magolda used data from the longitudinal studies of Baxter Magolda (1992) and Torres (2003) to validate the model.

Researchers have examined the cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal development of individuals from adolescence to adulthood (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005). Researchers who have studied the cognitive development of young adults have primarily used traditional college aged students as their subjects. Many have found that students are uncertain of their knowledge and think that authority figures have all the answers (Baxter Magolda, 1992; Kitchener & King, 1990; Perry, 1970), but the knowledge slowly begins to change once students have encounters with peers or situations the make them question the knowledge of authority.

Table 2

A Three-Dimensional Developmental Trajectory of Intercultural Maturity

Domain of Development	Initial Level of Development	Intermediate Level of Development	Mature Level of Development
Cognitive	Individual feels certain about what he or she knows; can only see issues dualistically	Open to hearing multiple perspectives; able to determine personal knowledge;	Can utilize multiple cultural frames to shift perspectives;
Intrapersonal	Unaware of one’s own cultural background and the background of others; feels identity is threatened when challenged	Others help to inform identity; conflict influences one to explore values about cultural identity	Is able to question social identity when it conflicts with personal identity; able to see cultural groups in a domestic and global context
Interpersonal	Socializes with individuals with similar identity; unaware of how social issues affect a group; closed to viewpoints of others	Others’ approval more important than self; can listen to viewpoints of others without making judgment	Appreciates and understands diverse cultural groups; willing to fight for the rights of others

Note. From “A developmental model of intercultural maturity,” by P. M. King and M. B. Baxter Magolda, 2005, *Journal of College Student Development*, 46, p. 572. Copyright 2005 by American College Personnel Association. Adapted with permission.

A similar type of metamorphosis takes place when students are developing intrapersonally. The research on intrapersonal development has primarily focused on race, gender, sexual orientation, and religion. Many of the intrapersonal development models examine how an individual moves from accepting the views of the majority culture to having an awareness of who they are as individuals within their culture (Atkinson, Morten, & Sue, 1993; Cross, 1971; Helms; 1992; Josselson, 1987).

While the college environment provides different experiences in which students can continue in their intrapersonal development, the environment also provides a means for students to develop interpersonally. Creating interpersonal relationships are important in understanding diverse individuals. For many college students, building relationships with peers and college personnel help students learn about other groups and become understanding about the group's culture, as well as their personal culture. There is a shift in perspectives from only seeing and understanding your culture's viewpoint to embracing others' viewpoint (Bennett, 1993; Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Keegan, 1994). However, like cognitive and interpersonal the shift in perspectives can take place at different times in an individual's life. It is only when views are challenged that one can see another perspective.

Intercultural sensitivity. A theory of interpersonal development that was utilized in King development, and Baxter Magolda's (2005) model examined intercultural sensitivity. Bennett (1986) created the Development Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) to show how encounters with diverse individuals help to increase one's intercultural competence. There are six stages in the DMIS, which correspond to what happens to an individual with regard to affective, cognitive, and behavioral development in response to cultural differences. The first three stages in the continuum are *ethnocentric*, which means one's personal culture is central to reality and the last three stages are *ethnorelative*, which mean that one's own culture is

experienced in the perspective of other cultures. The following are the six stages on the DMIS continuum:

1. *Denial* takes place when an individual is physically or socially isolated from contact with people who are culturally different. Individuals who have this viewpoint believe that their cultural reality is irrefutable.
2. *Defense* occurs when individuals recognize difference between dissimilar cultures. However, they adopt an “us or them” mentality during this stage and feel that the group to which they belong is superior to others.
3. *Minimization* takes place when individuals in a cultural group trivialize other cultures and feel that all cultural groups are the same. People at this stage believe that the behaviors of others should match their cultural expectations.
4. *Acceptance* is the recognition of different world views. At this stage, the individual is accepting of the behaviors and values of individuals from different cultures, although he or she may still view other cultures in a negative way.
5. *Adaptation* occurs when the individual is able to look at a situation through a different cultural lens. The individual may also change his/her behavior to communicate more effectively with individuals from different cultures.
6. *Integration* of cultural difference allows the person to transfer in and out of different cultural worldviews. The individual can evaluate situations and events in a cultural context. This stage is common for non-dominant minority groups.

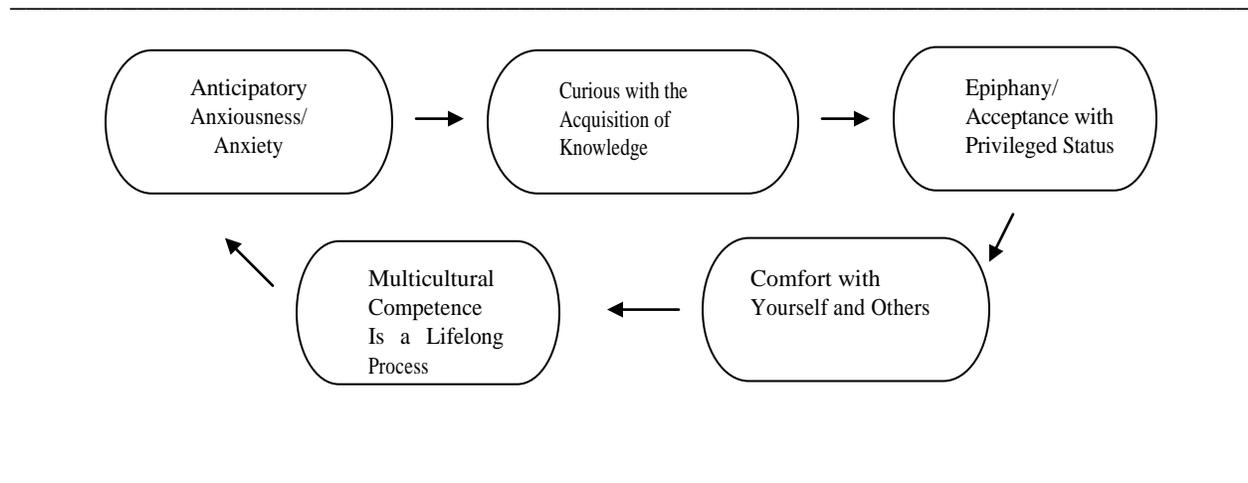
Behavioral patterns of multicultural competence. Howard-Hamilton and Hinton (2004) created the Behavioral Patterns of Multicultural Competence model to describe how people respond to topics and issues related to race, ethnicity, and diversity (see Figure 2). The model was created after studying the behavioral, emotional, and cognitive patterns of college students

in courses that focus on diverse and multicultural populations (as cited in Torres, Howard-Hamilton & Cooper, 2003).

Howard-Hamilton and Hinton (2004) examined the journals of students in a higher education diversity course. The journals were collected each week from the students by the instructors to gain insight into how students processed the topics that were discussed in the class. The instructors also observed and recorded the class discussions.

There are five behavioral patterns that people exhibit. The first pattern is *anticipatory anxiousness/anxiety*. Before students learn about diversity, they do not know what to expect. Some individuals are open to learning new information about a different culture, while others are

Figure 1
Behavioral Patterns of Multicultural Competence



Note. From “Using entertainment media in student affairs teaching and practice about multiculturalism,” by M.F. Howard-Hamilton and K.G. Hinton, 2004, *New Directions for Student Services*, no. 108. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Copyright 2004 by Wiley Periodicals, Inc. Adapted with permission.

indifferent. There will also be students who are opposed to learning new information because they are fearful about how their culture will be portrayed.

The second pattern is *curiosity about the acquisition of knowledge*. Students are surprised at what they learn about diverse groups and how much there is to discover about different cultural groups. They also realize that what they have learned is either not true or inadequate.

The third pattern is *epiphany/acceptance/privilege status*. After exposure to different cultural groups, students come to the realization that they have not earned the privileges that they receive. This pertains to not only white males or females, but also to students of color from higher socioeconomic backgrounds. The students realize that there are various levels of privilege.

The fourth pattern is *comfort with one's self and others*. The students appreciate who they are racially and ethnically. They realize that everyone is different and the experiences of others are just as important as their own experiences.

The fifth pattern is *multicultural competence as a lifelong process*. Students realize that it is their responsibility to promote social justice and educate others about oppression. Students are willing to educate others, and while some will be nervous about the responsibility, they will discover a variety of ways to help others become more culturally competent.

The conceptual models provide a means to examine cultural competence within individuals. There are also many factors and experiences that influence the development of cultural competence within college students. The following section of the literature review provides a model in which to categorize some of the factors, experiences, and transformations within college students.

Astin's Input-Environment-Outcomes Model

Students with various characteristics and a variety of experiences come to college. To better understand how student attitudes are shaped by their college experience, Astin (1993b) created the input-environment-outcomes (I-E-O) model to explain how college student development (see Figure 2). “The basic purpose of the model is to assess the impact of various environmental experiences by determining whether students grow or change differently under varying environments” (p. 7). Inputs refers to the demographics, family background, and experiences that a student brings to college while the environment factor corresponds to the culmination of experiences and encounters at college that impact a student's beliefs about cultural diversity and social equity. The outcomes are the characteristics, behaviors, and skills that students have developed while in college. This model will be utilized to help better understand how inputs, the environment, and outcomes help individuals move towards becoming culturally competent.

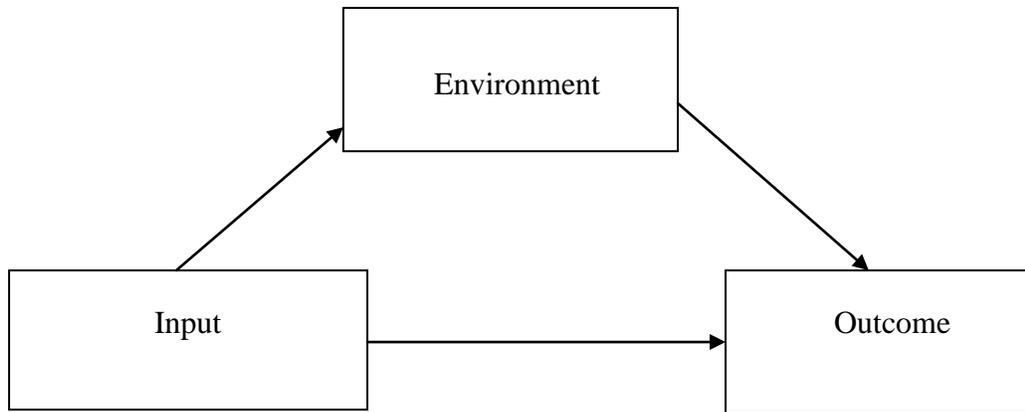
Inputs

For some students, college is the first time that students encounter racially and ethnically diverse individuals (Hurtado et al., 1999). Across the country in the last 10 years, there has been a movement to create more neighborhood schools and eliminate the busing of students across town. There is now a resegregation of schools (Spring, 2006), which can prevent students from interacting with other students who are diverse. As a result, colleges and universities must provide experiences that will assist students in understanding diverse groups.

Previous studies have examined students' precollege background to determine whether they will be able to participate fully and successfully in society and the types of activities that they will engage in while in college. Hurtado, Engberg, Ponjuan, & Landreman (2002) found that students who enter higher education with diverse friendship groups will be able to consider

Figure 2

Astin's Input-Environment-Outcomes Model



the world from another individual's perspective. Students in general, who had interactions with racial and ethnically diverse students before attending college, believed that participating in social justice activities were important, however, female students were more likely than men to participate in social justice activities. Students who participated in student clubs while in high school or discussions on race/ethnicity and other controversial issues, were more likely to believe that conflict enhances diversity. Yet, Asian American students were less likely to believe this is true.

Milem and Umbach (2003) surveyed 2,911 first year students to learn about precollege factors that contribute to students learning about diversity. What the researchers found was that most of their participants were from segregated neighborhoods or their primary friends were of the same racial/ethnic background. This study also inquired as to students' plans to engage in diversity related activities. The types of activities that were measured included joining an organization that promotes diversity, taking a course during the first year that is devoted to diversity, participating in group/activities reflecting personal cultural background and getting to

know individuals from diverse backgrounds. Milem and Umbach found that African American students were more likely to plan and engage in an organization that promotes diversity, take a course devoted to diversity in the first year, and participate in groups/activities reflecting their own backgrounds. Yet, data showed that Latino students were more likely to get to know individuals from diverse backgrounds than other racial groups.

Environment

The environment of a college and university can have a major impact as to whether a student is satisfied with their college experience (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). There are several variables that determine whether students will move towards becoming culturally competent. This section of the paper highlights some the variables in the campus environment that can influence a student's beliefs and attitudes about diversity and multiculturalism.

Campus climate. Given that the average university student will spend at least four years on a college campus, it seems inevitable that they will be impacted by the environment. Although student attitudes are certainly shaped by the college environment, it is their personal characteristics that influence what they understand and accept about diversity. Thus, although the goal of most college administrators is to increase racial and ethnic diversity on a college campus, they still must deal with a student population whose attitudes and beliefs are well entrenched by the time they reach the university (El-Khawas, 1996).

Hurtado et al. (1998) studied how educational policies and practices could enhance campus climate for racial and ethnic diversity. They grouped campus climate into four dimensions. The first dimension, historical legacy of inclusion/exclusion, describes the institution's resistance to desegregation and the institution's mission and policies. Colleges and universities have evolved from being institutions that trained only wealthy white males to institutions that have now opened their doors for all individuals. Though there were institutions

that allowed people of color or women to be members of the student body (Slater, 1994), this was abnormal at most institutions. Slowly colleges and universities began to open their doors for all students in the 1900s, whether the institutions willingly admitted students or the institutions were ordered to integrate by the courts. Because there was so much resistance to integrate from some of the institutions, there is still to this day a belief by some students of color that colleges and universities do not want them at their institutions (Geiger, 1999).

The history of institutions impacts the psychological climate and the behavioral dimension of a college or university (Hurtado, 1992; Hurtado et al., 1998). The second dimension of campus climate, the psychological climate, examines how racial and ethnic groups view diversity, prejudice and discrimination. There are some students on the campuses of PWI's that feel that there is no difference between racial and ethnic groups on campus and therefore, there is no tension. Based on experiences on the college campus or because of their racial/ethnic status in society, underrepresented students might feel that they receive unfair treatment by faculty and administrators (Fisher & Hartmann, 1995; Suarez-Balcazar, Orellana-Damacela, Portillo, Rowan, & Andrews-Guillen, 2003). Making underrepresented students feel welcomed has been a struggle for colleges and universities for many years.

The behavioral dimension, which is the third dimension of campus climate, describes the campus diversity and the social interactions between diverse groups on the campus (Hurtado et al., 1998). To provide a more inclusive environment, colleges and universities provide programs and curriculum to help students in their growth and development (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Institutions know that learning about other cultures will be beneficial to students while in college and in the future. Most students who attend colleges and universities are very supportive of learning about multiculturalism and diversity. However, Roper (2004) found that students were suspicious of colleges and universities' reasons for promoting diversity. The students in his study

questioned the institution's "dedication" to just treatment for all students. Roper also found that some students felt that the school's promotion of diversity within curriculum compromised the quality of the education that students receive.

The fourth dimension, structural diversity, is the numerical representation of diverse students, faculty, and staff (Hurtado et al., 1998). Many colleges use structural diversity as a measurement as to whether their campus is diverse. Higher education institutions work to recruit underrepresented groups to their respective campuses. For predominantly white institutions, this would include recruiting Black and Latino students, students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, and first-generation college students. Though institutions might have high structural diversity does not mean that they are supportive of diversity (Umbach & Kuh, 2006). Higher education institutions have always been in turmoil when it comes to issues of race and ethnicity. Though affirmative action programs have assisted in increasing the number underrepresented students on a college campus, there has been legal challenge to the programs. Programs that were at first geared for underrepresented groups are now open for all students following the *Gratz v. Bollinger* case.

Though the *Gratz* case focused on admissions policies at the University of Michigan, it affected programming specifically for students of color. Public higher education institutions have worked to improve campus climate on their campuses promoting diversity and multiculturalism in the classroom, creating more extracurricular programs that embrace diversity, and working to increase faculty and staff diversity at institutions. Much of this was done by institutions before *Gratz*, however, there has been a surge in institutions addressing the needs of all students. As Hurtado et al. (1998) indicate, all of the dimensions have an impact on if and how students develop cultural competency while at college.

The changing U.S. demographics and the move towards globalization have impacted what college and universities teach their students and how information is disseminated. Historically, higher education institutions have struggled with how to accommodate the needs of all students on campus. Thus, with the integration of predominately white institutions (PWI) with non-white students, there has been a need to provide curriculum and extracurricular activities that will teach students about diverse cultures.

Cultural brokers. Within the college environment, in order for college students to move towards becoming culturally competent, it is essential to have individuals on campus to assist students in their development. Stage and Manning (1992) describe faculty, administrators, and staff who want to promote multicultural and diversity on college campuses as cultural brokers. Cultural brokers can be utilized by higher education institutions to ensure that all students are successful on the college campus (Stage & Manning, 1992). Higher education institutions have had to make changes in curricular and administrative practices to prepare students on college campuses to be academically and socially successful. Also, once students graduate, they will take the skills learned and utilize them in the future. The responsibility of a cultural broker is to assist campuses in their development from monocultural into multicultural environments.

There are four necessary requirements to be a cultural broker. The first requirement is to *learn to think contextually*, which means the individual within the college community would need to be aware of his or her own cultural biases and assumptions, but be able to consider the viewpoint of someone from a different cultural group. Faculty and administrators must recognize that there is value in all cultural groups and be able to pass this knowledge to the college students.

The second requirement for cultural brokers is to *span boundaries*, which implies that educators should try to understand the student viewpoints and not attempt to assimilate the

student to the dominant culture. Because student cultural perspectives are sometimes disregarded by the higher education system, the students feel uncomfortable in the system. If the educators obtain knowledge of other cultures and dialogue with students, the students will learn and make meaning by using their personal knowledge structures.

Stage and Manning (1992) also note that cultural brokers should *ensure optimal performance*. To do this, cultural brokers would need to provide different cultural knowledge and experiences in and out of the classrooms. Both faculty members and student affairs administrators work collectively to ensure that students have the knowledge and skills to interact with diverse cultures. This would provide a way for students to realize that various cultures are acknowledged and held in high esteem.

Lastly, cultural brokers should *take action*, which means utilizing the knowledge obtained regarding different cultures when it comes to administrative policies and teaching methods. For the college administrator, this might include hiring diverse faculty, communicating with diverse populations on campus and creating policies to address the needs of diverse populations. Faculty members can take action by introducing diverse literature within their classrooms and utilizing a variety of teaching methods in their classrooms.

Curriculum. Even though a student comes to college with a certain pre-established world view, participation in classes in which topics of culture is integrated into the curriculum is critical for learning more about various racial, ethnic, and social cultures. However, the teaching style, program of study, and ethnic diversity of any given course all play a role in what and how students learn about cultural diversity. For example, Anderson, MacPhee, and Govan (2000) reported that students who are enrolled in courses that are infused with a multicultural curriculum learn best from working on class projects. In doing so, students felt that the

interactions with diverse peers during classroom discussions also assisted them in learning about diversity.

The didactic methods used by instructors to impart information are also important in teaching multiculturalism and diversity. In a study examining the impact of general education courses on intercultural sensitivity, Mahoney and Schamber (2004) found that students who were asked to analyze and evaluate cultural differences moved toward an ethnorelative stage of intercultural sensitivity. However, students who were only asked to read and comprehend course material from the general education class were more likely to remain in the ethnocentric range of intercultural sensitivity. Integrating curriculum with the opinions and theories of scholars from diverse backgrounds also helps to promote cultural competence. Though colleges and universities are increasingly offering specialized areas of study (e.g. Hispanic studies, women's studies, etc.) it is still important to incorporate diverse literature into any curriculum. Although students of color and non-resident aliens comprise about a third of the college population (NCES, 2005), only 14% of faculty integrate readings on race and ethnicity in their courses (Milem, 2001). To help students move toward becoming culturally competent, faculty need to expose students to a variety of authors and integrate appropriately diverse readings into their teachings. This will enable students to understand how authors of different racial and ethnic backgrounds decipher and analyze material in ways that might be unfamiliar to the students.

Teaching methods. Another component of promoting cultural awareness and social equity is through effective pedagogy. The role of the professor is not only to disseminate knowledge, but make it understandable to all students. Consequently, the use of a variety of teaching methods can more effectively address the needs of various cultural groups. The type of instruction that takes place in the classroom helps students make gains in academic and intellectual skills more than the structural diversity of the classroom (Terenzini, Cabrera,

Colbeck, Bjorklund, & Parénte, 2001). Thus, college faculty should incorporate collaborative and cooperative activities into their classes rather than being dependent on individualistic activities such as individual questions and answers (Marchesani & Adams, 1992).

In a related study, Milem (2001) found that faculty members who relied more on lecturing as a teaching method were less likely to use active learning and student-centered learning teaching methods. Sixty-six percent of faculty at research institutions, while 43% of faculty at liberal arts institutions, reported primarily using lecture as their primary teaching method. The factors that predict the likelihood that faculty use active learning include women faculty, Native American faculty, faculty in soft-applied sciences, faculty who perceive their colleges or universities as student centered, and faculty who feel their institutions want diversity integrated into the curriculum. Asian-American faculty, tenured faculty, faculty in hard-pure and soft pure disciplines, faculty on diverse campuses, and faculty in doctoral institutions are less likely to use active learning teaching methods. These factors can be a determinant as to whether students can become critical thinkers and therefore move towards being culturally competent.

Professors can also use other forms of media to help shape students perceptions about diverse groups. Howard-Hamilton and Hinton (2004) recommend that faculty utilize media in their college classrooms for students to understand depictions of diverse groups. The images that students observed can be discussed by the classes and clarification of incorrect information can be helpful in students developing cultural competence. Kincheloe (2004) wrote that educator Paulo Freire incorporated pictures and photographs in his teachings to help oppressed Brazilian students to understand and evaluate their environments through social, political and economic lens.

Freire induced the students to step back from these pictures, to think about what they told them about their lives. What are the unseen forces and structures that are at work at these

images, covertly shaping what is going on in the areas they depict? In this context, students begin to see their lives and the hardships they suffered in a new way (p.71)

Interactions with peers and faculty. Interactions with diverse peers and faculty are an essential element to students learning about diverse groups. What is important to remember is that it is not only the frequency of interactions that are important, but the quality of the interactions are equally important (Hurtado, 2005; Pike, 2002). Also, informal interactions of students with peers and faculty provide more insight into diversity than formal interactions (Kuh, 1995). The type of institutions that students attend can also influence the interactions they have with their peers. Students at liberal arts institutions have interactions with diverse peers at a higher rate than peers at other types of colleges and universities, (Umbach & Kuh, 2006), however, the percentages of racially/ethnically diverse students at these institutions are significantly smaller than at comprehensive or research institutions. Pike and Kuh (2006) posit that interactions with diverse peers may be higher at liberal arts institutions because students at these institutions have more diverse views on politics, religion, and social issues.

Also, interaction between faculty members and students outside of the classroom is also important in developing cultural competence. Hurtado and Carter (1997) found that the Latino students in their study developed a sense of belonging when they interacted with faculty outside of the classroom. The interactions with faculty outside the classroom help students gain interpersonal competence (Kuh, 1995), which is important when interacting with diverse individuals. Faculty members of color are more likely to interact with students outside of the classroom than white faculty (Umbach, 2006). The reason for this is that faculty of color understand that college students, especially first generation and underrepresented groups, need social support in adjusting to college and being successful in college.

Diversity-related activities. Academic programs, student affairs, and service learning programs can provide the means to promote cultural competence with college students. In addition, intergroup dialogues are also becoming popular on college campuses to vocalize how cultural groups feel about how their respective groups are depicted in society and to clarify incorrect information on the groups. Many colleges provide programming that not only addresses issues of race and ethnicity, but also highlight issues of gender, sexual orientation, religion, and socioeconomic status. These programs can provide insight into issues diverse groups face, but they also provide an understanding of the resiliency of various cultural groups.

Although many faculty and administrators are encouraged by their institution's administration to integrate multiculturalism and diversity into their curriculum, Umbach (2006) found that faculty of color, with the exception of Asian/Pacific Islanders, engage students more frequently in diversity related activities than White faculty. Results of the study also indicate that faculty members in the social sciences introduce diversity related activities into the curriculum more than faculty in other disciplines. Thus, faculty members who have personal experience with diversity or multiculturalism or their discipline focuses on the specific topics relating to culture are more likely to provide diversity activities within their classrooms.

Outcomes

Learning about and interacting with diverse individuals benefit college students in several ways. There is a variety of cognitive and affective outcomes for students when in and out of class experiences are integrated with multiculturalism. Researchers have found a variety of outcomes that demonstrate the significance of learning about multiculturalism and diversity. The following are some of the cognitive and affective outcomes researchers have found.

Critical thinking skills. Precollege experiences are an important factor in learning whether students will be open to diversity once they enter college. Having peer groups that are

diverse prior to college will allow students to see the world from another's viewpoint (Hurtado, Engberg, Ponjuan, & Landreman, 2002). When students interact with diverse individuals in their college courses, it assists the students with developing critical thinking skills, self-confidence and social agency (Gurin, Dey, Gurin, & Hurtado, 2003).

The level of diversity within a classroom also makes a difference in student learning. In a study measuring the impact of diversity on student learning in the classroom, Terenzini et al. (2001) found that having medium levels of racial and ethnic diversity (30-40%) promotes student learning. When there were low or high levels of racial and ethnic diversity, there was a negative correlation to learning gains.

Cultural awareness. When students interact with individuals from a diverse racial background, there is an increase in cultural awareness (Astin, 1993a). The interactions between racially diverse peers bring a stronger understanding of peers' knowledge and beliefs on subject matters (Meacham, McClellan, Pearse, & Greene, 2003). There are a variety of factors that contribute to students' cultural awareness while in college. Students who attend liberal arts colleges are more likely to be culturally aware of diverse groups than students in other types of higher education institutions (Umbach & Kuh, 2006). Meaningful and positive interactions also contribute to students being culturally aware. Hurtado (2005) found that frequent interactions with diverse peers promoted self-confidence of cultural awareness within students. Students of color, who have had greater interactions with diverse peers, are more interested in learning about different cultural groups, however, they also perceive more differences with other cultural groups (Gurin et al., 2004).

Openness to diversity. Frequent interactions with diverse individuals benefit students by increasing students' openness to diversity (Chang, Denson, Sáenz, & Misa, 2006; Gurin et al., 2004; Hu & Kuh, 2003; Milem, 2003; Nelson-Laird, 2005; Pascarella, Edison, Nora, Hagedorn,

& Terenzini, 1996; Whitt et al., 2001). Students who are open to diversity enjoy interacting with diverse individuals and enjoy learning about different individuals' thoughts and feelings on a variety of subjects. When topics of discussion between students are contentious or significant, opinions of students can be changed, and consequently, lead to students being receptive to diverse thoughts (Pascarella et al., 1996). Female students attending large institutions are more likely than male students to be open to diversity, while White students were less likely to be open to diversity than African American and Native American students (Summers, Svinicki, Gorin, & Sullivan, 2002). As mentioned previously, the quality of the interactions with diverse peers is also important in students being open to diversity (Hurtado, 2005; Pike, 2002). The stronger the quality of the interaction, the more open the student will be to diversity.

A student's major or the type of courses that he or she takes can also have an important effect on the openness to diversity. Whitt et al. (2001) found that during the third and fourth year of college, students who take a large number of liberal arts or humanities courses are more open to diversity. She and her colleagues also found that students who incorporated a variety of strategies to learn course material were less likely to be open to diversity. Summers et al. (2002) compared students' openness to diversity in liberal arts, nursing, engineering, natural sciences, education, fine arts, and business. The researchers found that students in nursing were more open to diversity than the students in other majors. This gives credence to the fact that nursing programs provide cultural competence curriculum and training for their students so that they can better serve the public (Suh, 2004). A student's second language aptitude is also an indication of their willingness to interact with other cultures. Students who are able to read, write or understand a second language are also likely to be open to diversity more so than those who just have a reading ability of a foreign language (Erwin & Coleman, 1998).

Out of class experiences can also have an impact on openness to diversity. Another avenue of making college students more culturally competent is by students participating in diversity related activities (Pascarella et al., 1996; Umbach & Kuh, 2006; Whitt et al., 2001). Participation in diversity activities will not only influence students to have an openness to diversity, but will increase leadership skills (Antonio, 2001). Researchers have also found that living on campus has a positive effect on students' openness to diversity (Pascarella et al., 1996; Pike, 2002; Whitt et al., 2001). Pike (2002) studied first year students' openness to diversity and their living arrangements. In his study, he found that students who lived on-campus were more open to diversity than students who lived off campus. Students living in a traditional residence hall or who lived in a freshmen interest group hall had more interactions with their peers.

Another out-of-class experience that research has examined regarding openness to diversity is participation in fraternity and sororities. While participating in fraternities and sororities is beneficial to students of color and their openness to diversity, the opposite is true for white students who participate in fraternities and sororities (Pascarella et al., 1996). Although fraternities and sororities provide a social network for students, students of color who participate in them tend to be secure enough to participate in other campus activities. Since white fraternities and sororities are more likely to have a house where members tend to live or interact, the members might feel less motivated to interact with diverse groups on campus.

Social agency. "Social agency refers to the belief that it is important to take action to improve society and work for social justice. It highlights the value one places on activities like helping others in difficulty and doing community work" (Nelson-Laird, 2005, p. 367). Social agency is also called social action. One aspect of cultural competence that participation in diversity and multicultural class's impact are students' participation in social justice. Researchers have found that enrollment in diversity courses has a significant effect on social agency (Hurtado

et al., 2002; Nelson-Laird, Engberg, & Hurtado, 2005; Zúñiga, Williams, & Berger, 2005). Also, students who come from middle class backgrounds and whose mothers are college educated were more likely to be interested in promoting social agency (Hurtado et al., 2002).

Subsequently, students also are able to develop greater humanity when they interact on an informal basis with individuals outside of the classroom (Kuh, 1995). Thus, interactions with diverse peers help students develop greater social agency.

Reduction of racial bias. Eliminating racial bias has been a goal of classes or workshops that focus on multiculturalism and diversity. Since students enter college with various levels of interactions with diverse groups, it is important for them to learn the history and current status of various racial and ethnic groups. Ultimately, discussing racial issues has a positive effect on student retention, satisfaction with college, social self-concept, and intellectual self-concept (Chang, 2001).

Astin (1993) found that students who participate in cultural awareness workshops were more likely to commit to promoting understanding racial diversity. In studying students prejudice towards blacks, Chang (2002) compared two groups, one that was finishing a diversity class, and the other that was enrolled in the same diversity class for the next semester. What he found was that current students in the class were less likely to have feelings of prejudice than the students who were enrolled for the next semester.

Improved intergroup communications. Interacting with diverse faculty and peers helps students to improve their communication with different groups. Students who enroll in curricular diversity course are able understand that conflict is a part of everyday life (Gurin et al., 2004) and are able to discuss topics without feeling threatened by the conversation. When students socialize with individuals from another race, has direct effects on satisfaction with college and social self-confidence (Chang, 2001; Hurtado & Carter, 1997). In fact, research has also found

that intergroup dialogues were significant to African-American college students' examination of different perspectives (Gurin et al., 2002), which indicates that intergroup dialogue not only educates individuals about themselves, but other cultural groups as well.

Summary

This literature review provides a foundation for this study. First, the review offers readers additional information regarding how cultural competence is defined by theorists in the disciplines of medicine, counseling, business, and education to demonstrate the importance of cultural competence across professions. Second, research on cultural competence in higher education is discussed for readers to understand how students can move forward to becoming culturally competent. The literature review also provides discussion regarding how higher education institutions introduce multiculturalism and diversity to students in a variety of ways, whether it's structural make-up of the campus, the curricular activities, or through extracurricular activities. There are also a variety of cognitive and affective outcomes for students when they learn about other cultures or interact with individuals from other cultures.

Since research has indicated that students' experiences with diversity before entering higher education have an impact as to whether the students will interact with diverse peers while in college, investigation needs to be conducted to get a perspective of the types of experiences before college was beneficial to students. This research will provide an explanation of students' attitudes before they enter higher education. Also, this research will help to understand students' perceptions of the campus climate and whether the climate influences their attitudes and beliefs about their personal culture and the culture of others. The information ascertained will help institution leaders develop new ways to help students develop cultural competency. Thus, by learning students' perception of their experiences, the data from this study can add to the literature on cultural competence.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to gain insight from students participating in a cultural awareness program regarding their experiences before and during college that shape their cultural competence. Specifically, the study was designed to examine students' perceptions about factors that influence their understanding of their own and others' racial/ethnic culture. In this chapter, I will describe the research methods, research site, participants, recruitment and selection of participants, data collection and data analysis. Included in the data analysis discussion will be information on the role of the researcher, trustworthiness and transferability, and how the results will be represented. The following were the research questions for this study:

1. What are CAP students' experiences learning about their personal culture?
2. What are CAP students' experiences interacting with cultural groups before college?
3. What are CAP students' experiences learning about cultural groups before college?
4. What are CAP students' experiences interacting with cultural groups in college?
5. What are CAP students' experiences learning about cultural groups in college?

Research Design

Qualitative research methods were used for this study because the purpose of the study was to gain insight from selected undergraduate students learning about diversity and multiculturalism regarding their experiences before and during college that shape their cultural competence. Qualitative research can be defined as inquiry that examines how observers interpret the world around them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). With qualitative research, the researcher's goal is to examine how people make meaning of a phenomena they experience (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Qualitative research can also be referred to as interpretive research because the aim of the methodology is to study "the immediate and local meanings of social

actions for the actors involved in them” (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996, p. 29). The researcher is the means by which data is collected and he or she then makes an interpretation of that data (Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

Since qualitative researchers examine how people process their experiences, the research setting is natural to participants (Creswell, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Patton, 2002; Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Researchers collect qualitative data in a variety of ways. Data can be collected through interviews, observations, document analysis, and questionnaires.

Qualitative data paints a picture that individuals can see in their minds whereas quantitative data provides numbers for readers to understand (Miles & Huberman, 1984). Since people have varied interpretations of experiences, the data generated from qualitative research creates a tapestry of the phenomena being studied (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Though some portions of the tapestry are similar, participants’ experiences create unique patterns within the tapestry. The data from qualitative research can be analyzed for description, interpretation, verification, and evaluation (Peshkin, 1993). A single category of analysis can be used for qualitative data or the categories can be combined.

There a variety strategies that can be utilized in qualitative research to learn about human experiences. The strategy of inquiry for this study was phenomenological, with the researcher’s aim to learn about participants’ lived experiences (Creswell, 2003; Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Participants in phenomenological studies describe their perceptions of various phenomena. During phenomenological research, researchers are not only collecting data from participants, but are also learning about themselves in the process. The researchers become connected to the phenomena being studied and create their own descriptions or interpretations. Interactions with participants of the study can provide a variety of views about phenomena and allow researchers to reflect on how they might respond to various situations or issues.

Since this study focused on students' experiences interacting with and learning about racial/ethnic cultures, face-to-face interviews will be conducted with students. An interpretive approach to interviewing focuses on understanding the world of participants by seeking vivid descriptions from them (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). During the interviews, the researcher strives to develop "an empathetic understanding of the world of others" (p.35).

For this study, I employed the three interview method that is recommended by Seidman (2006). The participants for this study were interviewed three times and the time between each interview was three to seven days apart. In the first interview with participants, I sought information about their background and personal history. Understanding the background and personal history of participants provides a description of how the individuals characterize themselves (Patton, 2002). The second interview focused on their present perspectives and experiences (Seidman, 2006). During this phase of the study, participants were asked to discuss behaviors, actions, and activities (Patton, 2002) pertaining to developing cultural competence. The questions of the third interview focused on participants' interpretation of their experiences. The researcher's goal was to examine how individuals process their experiences (Patton, 2002). A benefit of the three interview method is that "each interview provides a foundation of detail that helps to illuminate the next" (Seidman, 2006, p. 19). Seidman recommends that when conducting an interview, the interview should last no longer than 90 minutes.

While interviewing students, I took detailed field notes about what was discussed during the interviews to understand the point of conversation with the subsequent interviews. An issue that I might have in using the three interview structure is ensuring that the participants are available for the second and third interviews after the initial interview. Since students are involved in a variety of academic and social activities, I needed to remind students of the time and dates of the interviews.

In understanding the participants' world, the researcher should not only be a good listener, but observer as well (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). For this study, observed the body language and the emotions of the participants to have a better awareness which topics to explore further and those topics that might be uncomfortable for participants. Also, I tried to make arrangements to interview students in their living spaces, if possible. The living spaces provided me with social artifacts that might be important to participants.

Research Site

The research site for this study is a predominantly white university located in a mid-Southeastern state. The institution's main campus is located in a rural area of the state and there are other satellite campuses around the state. There were approximately 22,000 undergraduates enrolled at the institution during the 2007-2008 school year. Seventy-three percent of undergraduates at the research site were identified as white, while 27% of the students were identified as non-white or foreign.

Participants

The participants for the study were students who are a part of a cultural awareness program (CAP). The CAP program was established in 2001 to create a more diverse student body at the research site and to provide opportunities for students to learn about diverse groups. The mission of the program is to also build the skills and competencies of the students who participate in the program. CAP is only available to incoming first year college students and membership is renewable as long as the student is at the institution. To participate in CAP, students must submit an application, high school transcript, a Free Application for Federal Student Aid, and an essay. The essay prompt asks students to write about diversity and multicultural experiences before college and the importance of diversity and multiculturalism. If

students are selected to participate in the program, they receive a grant that is applied to their tuition for the school year.

The criteria to monitor membership in CAP are that the students must maintain a cumulative grade point average of 2.5 on a 4.0 grading scale each semester and attend diversity and multicultural activities. The activities include attending workshops or enrolling in classes that address the issue of diversity or multiculturalism. Students can also participate in student organizations for specific cultural groups in which the culture might be different from the students' culture group.

In addition, the students in CAP are required to submit journal entries to the assistant to the vice president of multicultural affairs at the university at the end of the fall and spring semesters. There is not a set number that they are required to submit in the fall. However, by the end of the spring semester, the students are required to submit 12 journal entries for the entire year. These journals will be collected and used in the data analysis phase of this study.

CAP students are in danger of losing their membership if they do not submit the appropriate amount of journals at the end of the spring semester or they do not meet the 2.5 grade point average. If the student fails to submit the 12 journal entries at the end of the spring semester, they are given an opportunity to submit the journal entries over the summer. Failure to submit the journals or meeting the 2.5 grade point average requirement lead to students being placed on probation for one semester. If students do not raise their GPA to 2.5 or higher and/or fail to submit the journal entries, they are expelled from the program.

The CAP students come from a variety of backgrounds. For the 2007-2008 school year, 54 of the CAP students are Caucasian, 17 are Black, 13 are Asian, 4 are Hispanic/Latino and 3 are American Indian. Thirty of the students are freshmen and 61 are upperclass students. Thus, 91 students currently participate in CAP.

Any CAP student was eligible to participate in this study. I employed purposeful sampling for this study. Utilizing this type of sampling provides a variety of viewpoints about how students feel regarding learning about and interacting with other cultures (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996).

In qualitative research, there is no set number of participants a researcher should seek to participate in a study (Patton, 2002). The researcher will have enough interviews when there is data saturation (Seidman, 2006). According to Seidman, data saturation occurs when “the interviewer begins to hear the same data reported. He or she is no longer learning anything new” (p. 55). Yet, when utilizing the three interview technique, Rossman and Rallis (2003) state that three to five participants for the study will be sufficient. For this study, I sent an e-mail to 30 students, who are members of the program, and asked them to participate in the study.

Instrumentation

Three interview protocols were created to examine the students’ perceptions. The interview questions were created based on the Input-Environment-Outcomes Theory (Astin, 1993) and Attributes of a Culturally Competent Student Framework (Howard-Hamilton, Richardson, & Shuford, 1998). Open-ended interview questions were developed to ensure participants are able to give their views, while answering set questions (Patton, 2002). Having the open-ended questions will probing the responses of participants by asking them to clarify their remarks and to give examples and stories.

Before the first interview began, participants were given a questionnaire asking for demographic information. The demographic questionnaire contains questions regarding students’ major, age, gender, race and ethnicity, and parents’ education. There are also questions that examine the number of times students have studied issues of race and ethnicity (see Appendix D). The three interview protocols consist of seven questions each that focus on students and

their personal culture. The questions of the first protocol are focused on students' race or ethnicity and what students have learned from family members and peers before they entered college. The second protocol focuses on students learning about racial and ethnic groups in college and their interactions with different cultures on campus. The focus on the third interview protocol is on students' personal growth and their opinions of what they have observed on campus (see Appendices E, F, and G).

At the end of the school year, students in CAP are asked to submit journals to the grant coordinator. The journals provide information regarding classes, programs, and organizations that the students in the grant program have participated in during the school year that pertain to multiculturalism. The students write about the purpose of each activity and their perceptions of the experiences. I asked students who participated in the study to provide me with electronic copies of the student journals from the previous school year.

Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research, the role of the researcher is to be reflexive about who she is as an individual and to be aware of how it might influence her interpretation of participant's responses (Patton, 2002; Rossman & Rallis, 2003). According to Borg, Gall, and Borg (1996), a researcher who is conducting a phenomenological study should have a strong interest and passion for the topic. I feel that every individual should have some familiarity with other cultures and be open to expand their knowledge on the topic. Yet, I also understand that students' backgrounds will greatly influence their beliefs. As the researcher, I will have to ensure that those individuals who are interviewed for the study feel comfortable answering the questions honestly. This means knowing my personal biases and opinions (Patton, 2002) on cultural competence. I understand that everyone's experiences are different and I might hear the views of participants in which I do not agree.

I am an African-American woman in my mid-30s who interacted with different races and ethnicities as the child of an Air Force serviceman. I moved to Charlotte, North Carolina when I was 11 and it was in Charlotte that I had more interactions with African-Americans. My interactions with the African-American students in school that made me realize that not all African-Americans were alike and some individuals within your own cultural group could be cruel if you were not considered “different” from others in the cultural group.

After graduating from college, I taught for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. For three years, I taught at my high school alma mater. I taught students who were African-American, White, Latino, Cambodian, Vietnamese, and Laotian. I enjoyed teaching these students, but sometimes cultural issues would impede their progress in school. I remember when one of my students, a Cambodian female, stopped coming to school. I called her house several times and left messages for her parents, but no one would ever return my calls. A male Cambodian student told me several weeks later that many Cambodian parents favor males receiving an education, but not females and that is why I probably had not heard from the female student or her parents. I naively assumed that all parents, regardless of their background, would be in favor of education for women.

I have always been interested in learning about other cultures from not only books or other media, but from those individuals who were members of that culture. While in graduate school, I became interested in how people learned about and interpreted their experiences learning about other cultures. I became interested in the topic of cultural competence while completing an independent study for the Vice-President for Multicultural Affairs at the research site. The Vice-President wanted an evaluation plan created for the grant program because the effectiveness of the program had never been examined. I was able to look at the research that had been conducted on college students and their attitudes regarding multiculturalism and diversity.

As I continued to research the topic, I found articles pertaining to college students and cultural competence. I understood what the grant program wanted students to understand and appreciate issues of multiculturalism and diversity, and the term cultural competence is a way to define the goal.

The following semester, I had accepted an offer of a graduate assistantship with the Vice-President for Multicultural Affairs. I worked with the student assistants who mentored the first year grant recipient students. The coordinator of the grant program also gave me an opportunity to lead a few of the informal meetings. It was interesting to me to hear how the students felt about diversity and multiculturalism. Some of the students were vocal about their experiences or their beliefs on various topics. However, I also observed students who just listened to the conversation and did not give any responses. I can only assume that those students either did not have an opinion or they were afraid that they would be verbally attacked if their opinions were different than other students in the room. Therefore, I feel that this study will lend insight regarding students' experiences and understanding about other cultures.

Trustworthiness and Transferability

Trustworthiness and transferability in qualitative research are similar in meaning to validity and generalizability in quantitative research. There are a few strategies that I employed to increase the trustworthiness of this study. Trustworthiness refers to “credibility of portrayals of constructed realities” (Kinchelone & McLaren, 1994, p.151). First, I shared the research questions with peer debriefers to ensure that my questions are clear and understandable from a variety of viewpoints as suggested by Creswell (2003). Second, once the data was collected and transcribed, I allowed the participants to examine their transcripts to ensure that the data collected are correct and to add more information they feel is important. Member checking is

used to ensure that the emic perspective of the participants is corroborated (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996).

Triangulation is another way to ensure the trustworthiness of the data. Triangulation can be defined as the use of different methods, researchers, theories, or data sources to answer questions of the research (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). For this study, triangulation was achieved by utilizing the interviews, journals, and field notes to answer the research questions. According to Patton (2002), the field notes during interviews can be used as an aid in formulating additional questions during the interview, early analysis of emerging themes, locating important quotations from participants, and backing up information in case of malfunction or damage of the tapes or tape recorders.

Though stating that data are transferable is cautioned in qualitative research, Patton (2002) contends that there are exceptions to this rule. Statements of transferability can be made in qualitative research if participant characteristics, settings, variables, treatments, or outcome measures are comparable to previous research or make no difference. Since this research examines students' perceptions of cultural competence before college and during college, the results of the study may be transferred to another higher education setting or to participants with similar characteristics.

Data Collection Procedures

Before data were collected for this study, I sought and received approval from the research site's Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct the study (see Appendix A). The role of the IRB is to protect human subjects from harm by approving the study's framework (Knight, n.d.). An informed consent letter was created for participants, which gave me permission to collect and use the data from the participants' interviews (see Appendix C).

Before I collected data, I conducted a pilot study. Seidman (2006) gives the following reason for conducting a pilot study:

Although it may not seem ahead of time that the world of interviewing research takes one along strange paths or through dangerous places, the unanticipated twists and turns of the interviewing process and the complexities of the interviewing relationship deserve exploration before the researchers plunge headlong into the thick of their projects (p. 39).

I piloted the study with two students who mentor the grant recipients. I asked the grant coordinator to recommend the student mentors who could assist me. I sent them an e-mail and asked for their assistance with the pilot study. They gave me feedback regarding the questions and I made the necessary changes to the research protocol.

The data collection began in spring 2008. I wrote a letter to students in the grant program which gave the purpose of the research and asked for students to participate in the study. The grant program coordinator sent the letter in an e-mail to the students on my behalf. For participating in the study, the students received an incentive of two merit points from the grant program coordinator for participating in the interviews and providing an electronic copy of their journals.

Once students contacted me, I set up a time and place to meet with the students for their interview. At the first interview, I restated the purpose of the research with students and provided an informed consent for the students to sign. The informed consent provides participants with the purpose of the research and the risks and benefits involved in being a participant (Patton, 2002). I also collected demographic information from participants before the interviews begin (see Appendix D).

The interviews were audio tape recorded to get the participants' perspective (Patton, 2002). Two tape recorders were used to record information in case a recorder malfunctions or the

tape breaks. I also took field notes during the interview that will reflect important quotes, additional questions, the setting of the interview, and the demeanor and emotions of the participants. Once I finished each interview, I reviewed the interview with the participants. This gave me an opportunity to see if I captured participants' perspectives and it allows participants to add information. Before the participant and I departed, I set up additional times to meet with them for the second and/or third interview.

After each interview, the tapes were locked in a desk drawer in my office. The field notes were also kept in a desk drawer in a notebook. Once the participants completed the interviews and submitted their journals, I sent the participants a thank you note for participating in the study. I sent the names of participants to the grant program coordinator for the students to receive their merit point after the study has concluded. Data from the interviews will not be given to the coordinator or individuals who work in the multicultural affairs office to ensure the confidentiality of the participants.

Data Analysis

Once the interviews are completed, I transcribed the audio tapes. I also typed the field notes that were taken during the interview. Line numbers and wide margins will be used for both the interview transcripts and the field notes (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). I printed a copy of each interview transcript and meet with the students who participated in the study. I reviewed the previous interview with the students to ensure that the information in the transcripts is accurate and to record any additional information.

After I have made the necessary corrections to the transcripts, I printed copies of the transcripts and the field notes to be used in different phases of analysis. The transcripts, journals, and field notes will be examined and individual profiles of participants were created, as suggested by Seidman (2006). I examined the three transcripts, journals, and field notes for each

individual and highlighted the information within the transcripts that describe the student's backgrounds, interests and values, and personalities. I then wrote a vignette describing the participants in the study.

After creating the vignettes, I coded the second copies of the original transcripts and field notes using inductive analysis and open coding. With inductive analysis, the data are organized around categories and themes that emerge from the data (Patton, 2002). While reading the documents, I coded the data into categories. The categories were based on similar words, expressions, viewpoints, or concepts used by most of the participants. I utilized the constant comparative method of data analysis, which is a comparison of categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Categories are compared until no new categories emerge from the data. I then collapsed the data further into themes. Rossman and Rallis (2003) describe a theme as "a phrase or sentence describing more subtle and tacit processes" (p. 282).

The journals provided me with the various programs and activities in which the students participated and/or what they learned from the experience. Within the journals were also passages in which students discussed personal interactions and made self-reflections. I coded the journals based on the themes created from the interviews and field notes. I utilized the code mapping described by Anfara, Brown, and Mangione (2002) to assist me organizing my categories and themes that I generated from the interview transcripts and the journals (see Appendix H).

Data analysis is an ongoing process. While collecting and analyzing the data, I maintained analytic memos. Analytic memos are used by researchers to make notations about methodology issues, emerging themes, and the researcher's reflections about the study (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). I maintained a journal throughout the research process and will write memos to myself about the study and to maintain an audit trail regarding the research procedures.

I described the background, experiences, and perspectives of students in narrative form. Themes discovered during analysis were discussed separately in the results section. Thick description will give readers an understanding of college students' thoughts on cultural competence.

Summary

To summarize, this research study is a phenomenological qualitative research study. In this chapter, I provided the purpose of the study and the research questions. The research site and a description of the grant program participants were also given in order. The role of the researcher was also discussed to demonstrate the experiences of the researcher on the topic and her work with the population.

To ensure this study has credibility, I also highlighted ways I was going to ensure the trustworthiness of the data and the transferability of this study. Lastly, this chapter provides information regarding data collection and data analysis plan. Both sections provide the audience the rationale for choices that were made for the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to gain insight from students participating in a cultural awareness program (CAP) regarding their experiences before and during college that have shaped their cultural competence. The research site of this study was a university in a mid-Atlantic state. To elicit information regarding their cultural competence, I interviewed each of them on three separate occasions and examined the journals that they submitted for the CAP program. When the students and I met for the second and third interviews, I brought the transcript from the previous interview with me. I conducted member checks with the participants to ensure that I was interpreting their experiences correctly. This also gave the participants an opportunity to provide additional information. As a result of examining interview transcripts and written journals, I identified four broad themes that emerged from the data: (a) family influences, (b) formal learning (c) encounters with others, and (d) personal interests.

The following section contains demographic information as well as a profile of each participant. After the demographics information, the subsequent sections of this chapter describe the themes and the sub-themes that emerged from the data. I have grouped the themes under the headings of Pre-College Factors and College Factors. To better understand the themes and sub-themes, an explanation is provided. Quotes and journal passages from the participants will be used to illuminate the meanings of the themes and sub-themes.

Profile of Participants

A total of 11 CAP students were interviewed for this study. The study's participants consisted of one freshman, four sophomores, three juniors, and three seniors. The respondents were given the option of being interviewed in their living space or a mutually agreed upon meeting place. I interviewed six of the participants in their residence hall or apartment and five

of the participants in a meeting room on campus. The interviewees were given a demographic information sheet to complete. Six females and five males participated in this study. The students were also required to identify the racial/ethnic group to which they belonged. In this study, there was one African, one African American, two Hispanics, six Caucasians, and one bi-racial student. Table 3 provides the following additional demographic information which includes: (a) age, (b) gender, (c) parents' college degree attainment, (d) number of courses taken with topics of race, (e) number of courses within major with topics of race and ethnicity, and (f) community service.

I also created profiles for each of the participants, which are short summaries of the students' backgrounds. These profiles provide a better means for understanding the viewpoints of the interviewees. Included in the profiles is information regarding racial/ethnic background, pre-college activities and collegiate activities. Each of the students was assigned a pseudonym to protect their identity. When I first began conceptualizing this chapter, I had planned to also conceal the home state and nationality of the students. However, I later believed that this information was pertinent to understanding the cultural and the environmental factors which had impacted the students' cultural competencies. Table 4 provides a summary description of the participants.

Nala

Nala, a sophomore, was born in Ghana and came to the United States to live when she was 14 years old. Nala's father had been in the U.S. for eight years before Nala, her mother, and her siblings joined him. According to Nala, most people who live in Ghana are Black, therefore, issues of race and ethnicity were not important until she came to the U.S.

Table 3

Demographic Information of Participants

Age	
19	1
20	6
21	1
22	3
Gender	
Male	5
Female	6
Parents' College Degree Attainment	
Neither Parent	3
Father Only	3
Mother Only	1
Both Parents	4
Number of Courses Taken Including Topics on Race/Ethnicity	
1-3	9
4-6	2
Number of Courses Taken Within Major Including Topics on Race/ Ethnicity	
0	3
1-3	8
Number of Community Service Activities	
0	2
1-3	4
4-6	3
7-9	2

Once she completes her undergraduate degree, Nala would like to attend medical school. Nala enjoys being a student at the university because she encounters people from all over the world. Currently, Nala participates in the African Student Association where she holds an office. She is also in the Pre-Med Club and is a resident assistant.

Julian

Julian, an African American, grew up in Florida. He is from a town with a university that is similar to the research site. Both of his parents graduated from the university in his hometown. While in high school, Julian played football, soccer, and he was a wrestler. In many of his high school classes, Julian was typically the only African American student.

Julian is majoring in Mechanical Engineering. He selected this university because his uncle recommended the engineering program. Julian is currently a member of the National Society of Black Engineers and works part-time at a local hotel. Once Julian completes college, he would like to work for a company that builds weapons for the United States military.

Carlos

Due to the advanced placement credits he earned in high school, Carlos is a junior majoring in Computer Science. Both of his parents immigrated to the United States from El Salvador. Carlos and his siblings were born in the U.S. and they grew up in Virginia. Because there were very few Latinos in Carlos's hometown, most of his friends were Caucasian. However, Carlos's family attended a church with other Latino families in a nearby city.

Carlos is a first-generation college student and he receives a scholarship through the College of Engineering. This scholarship program enabled Carlos to intern at an aircraft company during the summer after his first year of college. Although Carlos has attended a few meetings of the Latino student group on campus, he is not a member of the organization.

Pauline

Pauline is a first year legacy student at the university. Because of her interest in genealogy, Pauline has been able to trace her lineage back to Norway and Germany. She is fluent in Spanish and worked as a translator for Latino families in her hometown while she was in high school.

Currently, Pauline is majoring in Geography, International Studies, and Environmental Planning and Policy. She is active with the university's choir and the International Studies Club. Pauline attends a variety of cultural events on campus and participates in many Native American activities around the state. Once Pauline graduates, she would like to live and work in Europe with a non-profit environmental organization.

Mickey

Mickey is a senior who will be graduating with a degree in Mechanical Engineering. He describes himself as Caucasian from a family of European origins. His mother's side of the family comes from Italy and his father's side traces their lineage back to Ireland. Mickey's father is an avid reader of books about Celtic culture, which is an interest he shares with his son.

While in college, Mickey has been a member of Campus Crusade for Christ, which is an organization that offers an English immersion program to international students on campus – many of whom are Asian. Thus, Mickey has had opportunities to help international students with the English language skills. Mickey has already secured a job with an engineering firm and will be getting married the month after he graduates.

Carmen

Carmen identifies herself as biracial. Her father is Italian American and her mother is Panamanian. Both of Carmen's parents taught her about their families' culture, which were equally incorporated into her upbringing. Carmen learned to play the piano at a young age and

her piano teacher introduced Carmen to a variety of musical genres. She credits her parents and music teacher for teaching her about other cultures. She also learned about other cultures through a multicultural group in which she participated in while in high school.

Carmen is a junior majoring in Marketing. She came to the university with advanced placement credits she earned in high school; therefore, she has been at the university for only two years. Although Carmen does not participate in any organizations on campus, she does work for the university's athletic media office. Carmen's dream is to one day work for a professional sports organization in its marketing office.

Christine

Christine, who grew up in a rural area in Virginia, describes herself as Appalachian. Many of the classes that she has taken during her college career have focused on Appalachian culture and agriculture. She is very close to her family and goes home three days a week. She grew up on a farm, which her family still manages. When Christine goes home, she takes care of livestock that she owns.

Christine is a senior majoring in Agricultural Economics and Interdisciplinary Studies who will graduate in the summer of 2008. Christine participated in the study abroad opportunity sponsored by her college. She spent a semester at a college in an African country. Christine also plans to study abroad in a South American country before she graduates. After college, Christine will return to her hometown. Although she would eventually like to run her family farm, she feels that she will find full-time employment elsewhere. According to Christine, owning a private farm is not as profitable as it used to be.

Brian

Brian is a sophomore majoring in Communications who describes his ethnic background as Irish American. He lived in three different states (Texas, Pennsylvania, and Maryland) before

coming to college. Brian reported that he encountered more ethnic diversity while living in Texas, but practically none in the rural community in which he lived in Pennsylvania.

Brian is a member of the marching band at the university and plays the baritone. As a result of his involvement with CAP Brian has learned about gay and lesbian issues. In fact, he now considers himself an ally for that community. Brian has an interest in automobiles and is a member of an automotive club on campus where he interacts with a diverse group of individuals. Brian's goal is to work for an automotive magazine when he completes his studies.

Susan

Susan was born and raised in Maryland. Susan's father's family can trace their lineage back to Western Europe. Her grandfather jokes that her family should return to the country and "storm the castle." Susan stated that her mother's family is from Western Europe and there is also Native American ancestry in her line. While in high school, Susan interacted with diverse groups and was heavily involved with her church.

Susan is a member of the university's Honor Program. She is majoring in Animal & Poultry Science and Dairy Science and is a member of the pre-veterinarian club, the campus equestrian club, and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. Once Susan graduates with her undergraduate degrees, she would like to attend veterinary school.

Chase

Chase grew up in Virginia and self describes as three-fourths Caucasian and one-fourth Native American. Growing up, Chase had experiences participating in events with his Native American tribe. His grandfather was at one time the assistant chief of the tribe, and his great-grandfather was chief.

Chase is studying Geography and he hopes to follow in his father's footsteps and enter the U.S. Army once he finishes college. Chase is currently a student in the Reserve Officers

Training Corp and the campus's military program. He also plays baritone in the campus military band and jazz group.

Rosa

Rosa describes herself as Hispanic, although she stated that she has been mistaken for being Hawaiian, Filipino, and Korean. She was born in Honduras and she came to the United States when she was a little girl. While in school in her native country, she had some interactions with Americans, who were primarily children of missionaries. When she came to the U.S., Rosa received her primary and secondary education in small Catholic schools.

Rosa will graduate from the research site with a degree in Civil Engineering, after which she will move to another state. Rosa does not participate in any organizations on campus. She has had very little interactions with other Latino students on campus and does not attend programs sponsored by Latino student groups. All of her friends are Caucasian. Rosa is very passionate about affirmative action and immigration issues.

Pre-College Factors

Pre-college factors are defined as those experiences and interactions that take place before college that assist the students in learning about themselves as individuals, understanding their own racial/ethnic group(s), and learning about other racial/ethnic groups. Under pre-college factors are the broad themes of (a) family influence, (b) structured learning, and (c) encounters with others.

Family Influence

The first theme under pre-college factors is family influence. I was able to identify the following three ways in which families influence students' awareness of their racial/ethnic identity: (a) racial/ethnic history, (b) rituals and traditions, and (c) family history. Not

Table 4

Demographic Profile of Participants

Pseudonym	Race/Ethnicity	Classification	Major
Nala	African	Sophomore	Biology
Julian	African American	Junior	Mechanical Engineering
Carlos	Hispanic	Junior	Computer Science
Pauline	Caucasian	Freshman	Geography, International Studies, & Environmental Planning and Policy
Mickey	Caucasian	Senior	Mechanical Engineering
Carmen	Hispanic/Italian	Junior	Marketing
Christine	Caucasian	Senior	Agricultural Economics & Interdisciplinary Studies
Brian	Caucasian	Sophomore	Communications
Susan	Caucasian	Sophomore	Animal & Poultry Science
Chase	Caucasian	Sophomore	Geography
Rosa	Hispanic	Senior	Civil Engineering

surprisingly, the family provides the foundation for students to begin their journey toward cultural competency. In the cultural competence framework developed by Howard-Hamilton, Richardson, and Shuford (1998), the basic knowledge that a culturally competent student should possess is an awareness of their own cultural identity. In short, the student should be able to identify with the particular racial/culture to which they belong.

Racial/ethnic history. The students in the study learned about the history of their racial/ethnic group primarily from their parents and in primary and secondary school.

Discussions of their personal racial or ethnic groups allowed the participants to understand the struggles and triumphs their respective group. In many cases, interactions with immediate or extended family members also enabled the students to recognize how past behaviors currently impact their racial or ethnic group –particularly through the interactions with immediate or extended family members. For example, throughout the first interview with Christine, she mentioned how her family taught their children about Appalachian culture and its importance to their family history. Julian learned about African-American history from his father, who encouraged him also to work “twice as hard” as other people. Both Mickey and Brian stated that they learned about Irish history from their grandparents. Carlos provided detailed information about the struggles of the of El Salvadorian people. He stated the following:

.... My family was lucky enough to have left El Salvador before the civil war began. We’ve been here for quite a while. Me and my sisters were all born here and my parents actually met here. But in El Salvador, it was a big civil war and a lot of people were killed during that war. It caused a lot of people to immigrate to the United States..... El Salvadorians had to protect each other, [so] they formed gangs. The gangs became violent and they were deported. They went back to El Salvador and grew and right now, there is a lot of gang violence. (Carlos)

Though all of the students aligned themselves with specific racial or ethnic group, most of them also self-identified as American, which they considered a culture in itself. Historical information from family members helped students to realize the impact of their racial/ethnic group on American culture.

Rituals and traditions. Many participants reported that their families incorporated racial and ethnic tradition and rituals into their lives. Most of these practices had been passed down from generation to generation. During the interviews, the participants discussed and interpreted specific beliefs and activities associated with their racial or ethnic group that they considered important. Carmen, for example, revealed the traditions that her family practice when she

discussed her racial and ethnic background. She provided an example of how Hispanic culture and Italian culture have been interwoven into her life:

Well in Hispanic culture, like you know, has a quinceañera, which is when you celebrate your 15th birthday as like your big birthday, you know, coming into young adulthood and that is something I had when I turned 15. And they do the 12 Grapes at midnight on New Years, one for each month of the year as a good luck symbol. Umm, as far as Italian history, just that the jewelry the women wear with the Italian horn. My grandmother on my dad's side gave me a lot of those things, like before she passed away. Umm, like her old recipes, the food that they eat has been passed on among the family. (Carmen)

During my interviews with Christine, she provided a variety of examples of how her family members incorporated Appalachian culture into their lives. She discussed the rituals that were practiced by the people of Appalachia in regards to farming. Moreover, these rituals have had a major effect on Christine's belief and are a source of pride for her. Attending the university has helped her to better understand the rituals that have taken place within the Appalachian culture for decades. In the following narrative, Christine provided an interesting example of how Native American culture has influenced the Appalachian culture and way of life.

Well, I've taken a lot of Appalachian classes at [research site]. And I know that a lot of the things that my family knew, as Appalachian farm kid stuff...it comes from Native American cultures. My mom plants vegetables and flowers by the [astrological] sign and we breed colts by the sign. It sounds really crazy, but it actually works. So if you breed a colt and the sign is in the heart, it wants its mama. It will squeal and knicker, but if you wean it while it's in the feet, it's further from the heart and doesn't matter as much. (Christine)

Chase remembered an event that he participated in while growing up with his grandfather and the members of his Native American tribe. Participating in the ritual is a way that tribal members commemorate the anniversary of becoming a state recognized Native American tribe.

He describes the activity and the reason that the activity took place:

The one event that I specifically did was the tribal hunt. It takes place the week of Thanksgiving and that's a tradition that a couple of the tribes have done. It's based on a treaty that was established in 1600s stating that in order for the Indians to not pay taxes, they would give a tribute of animals or something to the governor in exchange for not paying taxes for a year. What I would do is go out with different people in the tribe on the

reservation and go hunt for deer. And then Wednesday before Thanksgiving, we would go up to Richmond and present the deer to the governor and there would be a brunch and like a speech from the governor thanking us and talking about the tradition. (Chase)

In some cases, participants discussed the traditional roles that individuals within their racial or ethnic groups were expected to fulfill. Their racial and ethnic background had a major influence on their values and beliefs and also dictated rituals and traditions. For instance, Julian discussed how his father encouraged him to reach out to other African Americans men to help them be successful. Christine discussed the closeness of her mother's family and one aunt constantly tells her that she should have children at this time in her life. Carlos talked about how his father expected him to carry on long-standing Latino traditions.

In the Latino culture, the parents have their kids, they raise their kids, and when they get old, they take care of their parents...My father is always talking about how he wants me to hurry up and graduate so that I can take care of him.(Carlos)

Family history. Family history also helped the participants understand who they were as individuals and why certain issues were important to family members. Their family history provided them with a better understanding of how world events affected family members, as well as specific information about the immigration history of their family. For example, both Carmen and Mickey had grandparents who came to the United States as adults. Both sets of grandparents told stories about their lives in their respective countries. Pauline detailed how her great grandfather came to the United States as a young boy from Germany:

He was just an adolescent child when Hitler took power. His family was fairly well-to-do. Like his father was a doctor, his mother also worked; they were very educated people..... One day, they came home from school and their parents weren't there. Two weeks went by and they didn't come back. So the boys had been hiding in the house and then finally they actually walked their way across Germany.... They came to New York City and my great-grandfather and his little brother, they were living on the streets and then they ended up in an orphanage....They dealt with it as best they could. (Pauline)

Family history was often a source of pride for many participants. For instance, Susan learned from her grandfather that her family's ancestors were Scottish royalty. In her interview,

she stated that her grandfather has jokingly told family members that that they needed to “storm the castle” to regain their birthright. Throughout Christine’s interview, she conveyed pride in her family’s heritage, adding that her family maintains their history by sharing stories:

Well my family is real big on oral history and we learned about what great grandmother did at this time and how great-great-grandmamma did this and this and this. ...They kind of talk about the old ways....we may not do that anymore...breaking oxen and horse trading and cooking rabbit and cooking groundhog.... If we have a dinner together, invite a family or a bunch of friends over, the night ends and we usually talk about old stories. That’s the fun stuff for us kids... We really like it... (Christine)

The interviews I conducted confirmed that the family had the greatest influence on what these students learned about their personal racial and ethnic group. However, the participants in this study also had opportunities to learn about other cultural groups through formal and informal ways –both of which combined to influence their cultural competency.

Formal Learning

Most of the participants reported that they first learned about different racial and ethnic groups in a structured learning environment, both formally (i.e. through classroom instruction) and informally (i.e. through interactions with teachers and classmates). Thus, the sub-themes for formal learning include classroom instruction and teachers.

Classroom instruction. The students in this study were asked what they learned about race and ethnicity in their schools before they entered college. The students provided responses that focused on the history, traditions, and foreign languages of cultural groups. Specific groups that students mentioned during the interviews included African American, Native American, and Jewish groups. Pauline, for instance, stated that learning about Native American history was tied to “fulfilling a history requirement.” When discussing formal classroom instruction, many students noted that teachers began discussing Muslim culture with them after 9/11. Julian provided an insight as to how education changed from elementary to secondary school:

We didn't talk about Arabic, Hispanic [groups] much in elementary school. It was pretty much African American, Caucasian, and Indian [Native American] history. In secondary [school], we talked a lot less about Indian [Native American] culture. Things got brought up in high school because of the whole 9/11 incident...Suddam Hussein and all of his followers. That was my freshman year and we had history class on that topic. (Julian)

Since most of Nala's early schooling took place in Ghana, what she learned about different racial/ethnic traditions was somewhat different than others in the study. For example, she recalled classroom discussions on religion:

We learned about religious diversity. That's what we focused on. Christianity, Islam, and the traditional religions....I don't know how to explain it. Not worshipping your ancestors, but sending your ancestors messages to God. Offering them sacrifices, asking them to take care of you.....it was just religious diversity. (Nala)

Some CAP students in the study commented that their elementary and secondary schools did not do enough to educate students in any formalized way about different races or ethnicities in any formalized way. They attributed the lack of structured education to state mandated testing. Christine summed up the feelings of several of the participants, "Most of the teachers, they didn't get to talk about this or that because they were on that deadline ... accreditation."

Though most of the students did receive formal instruction about other racial and ethnic groups in school, few had the kinds of informal interactions with diverse populations that can result in insightful learning. For instance, Mickey stated:

As far as education is concerned, I feel that primary and secondary schools are struggling to do a little bit more as time progresses, to teach about different ethnic groups. So, I learned all history...Native American history, African American history, I guess through education. I guess outside of the classroom, probably not very much, because I lived in an area that was predominantly white, so there wasn't much diversity in my school. As I kid, I was aware of the different groups out there, but I wasn't exposed to it very much. I don't think you were quite as prepared as other people in the world were. (Mickey)

Teachers. Some of the participants remarked that more informal interactions with their teachers –particularly those from other countries or cultures – were instrumental in helping them

understand different racial or ethnic groups. Pauline recounted her experience with her foreign language teacher. She discussed his influence, not only on her, but on her classmates as well:

In middle school, our Spanish-French teacher was Muslim. He kind of lead teaching us about Ramadan. It was enjoyable learning about his culture. He was from Morocco, so he talked to us about the native power. It sounds mysterious when you are reading about it somewhere, but then you realize that what's in the Muslim faith is similar to Judeo/Christian rhetoric because it developed in the early 2nd century. That was a really good thing for us because Sept. 11 happened when I was in 7th grade. All my friends and I had him as a teacher in 8th grade. I think his influence helped us from falling into a trap that other people did...prejudice against Muslim communities. (Pauline)

In other instances, teachers were able to educate students about other racial and ethnic groups because of their personal interests. For example, although Christine stated that she did not recall learning about other racial or ethnic groups in any organized way before college, she did remember that one of her teachers was enthralled with a particular Appalachian ethnic group. The influence of this teacher induced Christine to study Appalachian culture while in college:

One of my 10th grade teachers had a certain fascination with the Melungeon people and she told me about them. They are a tri-racial group. But they live in the mountains of Appalachia. Some of them still live in places that are ancestral, back on dirt roads; they have no electricity. It was just something that she thought we should know. She actually said that one girl in her class got really interested in it. She had black in her family line. She was actually Melungeon, a quarter Melungeon. And the way the legend goes, they are apparently dark eyed and dark haired. Part Black, part White, and part Indian...but the girl had blond hair. (Christine)

Some students benefited in specific ways from informal interactions with teachers, in addition to increasing their general knowledge of other racial and ethnic groups. For the CAP students who participated in extracurricular activities such as martial arts, dance and music, for example, their teachers taught the students about the influence of other cultures on the activities. Carmen stated that her music teacher was a major influence on her and introduced her to a variety of music genres.

... I started playing piano when I was 4 years old and from the time I was like 8 years old to my graduation from high school, I took piano lessons from the same man and he was Vietnamese. So, I learned a little about Vietnamese culture from him..... And he exposed

me to the music of different cultures as well...like I had a rounded musical experience..... I really like learning the tango, and all the different songs that I've learned and the styles of music I've studied and where they originated from..... Even the music today that you hear on the radio, it has been shaped from other cultures. So he wanted to take me back to the roots and where it came from. (Carmen)

Even though many participants learned about other racial and ethnic groups from teachers through formal curriculum, many of the students stated that more was needed in the way of in-class instruction. CAP students also seemed to agree that participating in extra-curricular activity with influential teachers facilitated lasting learning opportunities with respect to cultural competency. In some cases, their interests influenced CAP students to study a subject matter more in-depth.

Apart from the formal vs. informal learning opportunities I have discussed above, students also benefited from unanticipated interactions that I have elected to include under the theme, "Encounters with Others."

Encounters with Others

As noted earlier, all of the participants stated that their parents were their greatest influence with respect to learning about their racial or ethnic heritage. However, they also described a variety of encounters with others that helped them about other races or ethnicities. In fact, some of these experiences were so powerful that it made them reexamine who they were as individuals and how their racial/ethnic group was perceived by others. While conducting the participant interviews, there were three sub-themes that emerged with respect to the theme, "Encounters with Others:" (a) assisting others, (b) misconceptions, and (c) hostile encounters.

Before these sub-themes are discussed, it is important to note that in general, the participants had very few interactions with individuals of other racial or ethnic groups before attending to college. While many of the participants attended racially or ethnically diverse high schools, most lived in homogenous neighborhoods. All of the Caucasian students in this study,

except for Pauline, stated that they did not have close friends who were not Caucasian. Even the non-Caucasian CAP students, with the exception of Nala, had primarily Caucasian friends. As the interviews revealed, it was when the CAP students had opportunities to interact with people from other cultures in meaningful ways that cultural competency began to grow.

Assisting others. Several participants talked about how assisting others from diverse cultural groups helped them to better understand other ethnic groups. The process of reaching out also enabled the students to conceptualized key similarities and differences between other racial/ethnic groups and their own. In general, most of the interviewees found the experience of assisting others highly rewarding. For instance, Carmen recalled how she helped two Bolivian students at her school feel more comfortable with their new surroundings:

In middle school we had a group of girls that came over from Bolivia and they were new to the country. They were put in my art class because they wanted them to talk to the kids and get them to speak English. I spoke Spanish as well, so I would try to talk to them and help them and reach out to them....try to make them feel included because I didn't want them to feel challenged by the rest of the people in the class because they didn't speak the same language. (Carmen)

During her interview, Pauline informed me that while in high school, she worked with local Hispanic families to teach them English. Since she is fluent in Spanish, it was easy to interact with the families. She provided a narrative of how assisting another student in elementary school influenced her to further explore a different ethnic group:

In 5th grade a girl came to our school....They [school administrators] wanted me to be like her ambassador and show her around and stuff.... Her family was from Pakistan.... You know, I had no idea up until that point that someone in Pakistan could speak English because they go to European grammar school...I was so impressed by how she was so different from me and it was like a fairytale... She would tell stories about going to an outdoor festival and the different things they would have and the music. I've been getting into the Pakistani/Indian culture ever since I met her. Now recently I am listening to a lot of music from that area. She really opened that up for me that year in school. (Pauline)

A few of the students in the study engaged in missionary work with their churches before entering college. In some cases, they have traveled nationally and internationally to work with other communities. For some of the students, it was their first time interacting with individuals from different cultures. During my first interview with Mickey, he discussed assisting a man from South Africa who was visiting his church:

We met for lunch and he was like a 35 or 40 year old guy. And I met him the second day he was in America. I just went up and talked to him because he seemed like he was a pretty happy guy. When I met him, he didn't have a job, he had just come over and his family was still in South Africa. He was pretty much trying to establish himself and bring his family over. So, I ended up becoming really good friends with him and helped him get a job in the area. I learned a lot about his family. We kept in touch for a year or two after I came to college, but that was my first real exposure to someone different than me. (Mickey)

Misconceptions. The theme of misconceptions came up throughout the interviews. In talking to participants, I found that some of them still held misconceptions about a particular group—even though they may have learned about that group or even interacted with group members. As I talked to Mickey about his interactions with the South African, Mickey mentioned that he did not understand why the South African did not speak fluent English. Mickey assumed that everyone from South Africa spoke English.

Participants talked about misconceptions that some of their peers had about groups that were different. Throughout the interviews, the word “stereotype” came up repeatedly. Some of the participants described the negative assumptions made about their own racial or ethnic group. Carlos provided an account of an incident that made him reflect on his identity:

I guess I knew I was different, but I didn't realize it when I was with my friends. One day I was hanging out with my friends and like I said, they were predominantly White. One of my friends who was one of my closest friends, he said something about me being the foreign one, or something. And then I kind of thought....when I'm hanging out with them, do they always think of me as the Hispanic guy....the guy who is different because I'm Latino? I just thought about it; it just hit me that day. Will they always think of me that way? Is it because I'm Hispanic? (Carlos)

Nala discussed having to clarify information about African culture. In her first interview, Nala stated that at times, she became frustrated with the misconceptions that her American peers had about Africans:

In Ghana, you were either Black or White and it didn't matter. When I came here, a lot of people made a lot of ignorant comments, like, did you wear clothes, or did you wear shoes, or did everybody run around naked, or did you live in a hut or a tree or were there lions in your backyard. People kept asking me questions. I'm like, "Why are you asking me questions like that? I come from a different country that's different, but it's not so different. I mean it is different but still people live in houses and drive cars."(Nala)

The participants in the study who dated interracially discussed the challenges they faced being in those relationships. Although frustrating at times, those challenges nonetheless helped them to learn about discriminatory attitudes. For example, both Julian and Carlos reported experiences with discrimination when they dated Caucasian females. The misconceptions did not come from their partners, but the individuals around them. Carlos provided an example of how he was viewed by an acquaintance of a former girlfriend because of his racial group:

...With the same girl I was dating, her family, at first...they grew to like me, but at first, they didn't like me because I was Latino. She would tell me sometimes when I wasn't there, that some other people would come to visit. One of them was someone from Texas and he worked border patrol. He was very racist against Latinos and he would talk a lot about me when I wasn't there. So there were things like...things said about me because I was...obviously I didn't hear, but did happen because I was Latino. (Carlos)

Though participants' interactions with diverse individuals brought to light some differences among racial or ethnic groups, it also made the students realize that there were some commonalities among them. During my first interviews with participants, many of them used sayings such as "everyone was the same" or "there were no differences" when describing their classmates. However, Susan recalled a time when she had misconceptions about Black students who attended school with her:

I [attended] a small elementary school and there were only White people basically. I was always in the top of my class growing up. I always got picked up from school growing up and I didn't have to ride the bus and things like that. I was always sheltered. And then the

reality was [in middle school] that some of my best friends were Black people from the middle school that were like in all of my accelerated programs. I guess it was an eye opener for my family as well because they kind of stereotyped who I was....who was supposed to be in minority classes and it wasn't that way at all in the school system. (Susan)

Hostile encounters. Another theme that emerged from the data is that of hostile encounters. The participants in the study spoke about how people viewed race and ethnicity either by describing incidents that happened directly to them or in connection with the experiences of their friends. There were some students in the study, for instance, that discussed how their Muslim classmates were treated by their peers after 9/11. Negative remarks were written about the Muslim students or they were verbally attacked by classmates. The CAP students stated that although they tried to console the Muslim students, they did not attempt to defend these students in the face of the classmates who were hostile to them.

Some of the non-Caucasian students in this study also provided me with examples of antagonistic encounters with other individuals. Both Carlos and Julian discussed negative racist comments they have received from opponents while playing sports. They reported comments such as “go back to Mexico” and “go back to Africa” respectively. Rosa stated that when she first came to the United States, she had a hostile encounter with a peer:

I think when I first moved over, there was some kid who used to pick on me and said that I was going to start World War III because I was of a different race or something. That kind of made me aware that people were going to be sometimes mean. (Rosa)

Julian also provided other examples of hostile encounters he had experienced. He discussed how some individuals disagreed with his dating preferences. He described many incidents in which his dating preference was scrutinized or questioned. In fact, he reported that he was threatened with bodily harm for his dating a Caucasian woman. One of the hostile encounters happened with an African American female:

Nobody has really approached me about like, “Why are you dating a Caucasian female?” But, there was a store incident where me and my girl were in the mall buying something. At first it was going fine. She was in the store and I was still looking at something. I walked up to the counter and the [African American] cashier looked at me and then she looked at her and she started giving her [my girlfriend] an attitude. I think she slammed her credit card down instead of handing it to her. My mom was like, “Yeah, they can be like that, so don’t worry about it.”...It gave me a perspective of how to deal with something like that in the future and how to react to it. (Julian)

To conclude, the students’ pre-college experiences influenced what they learned about race and ethnicity. The CAP students’ family members provided them with the history and traditions of their respective group. Formal learning opportunities occurred in school when teachers integrated the information about race and ethnicity into the curriculum. For many of the students in the study, the encounters they had with other individuals from varied racial and ethnic groups also created meaningful occasions for increasing their cultural competency. The CAP students also learned how they were perceived by others, at times, was challenging. Nevertheless, the participants agreed that the learning experiences and the formal/informal interactions they had with diverse student before college helped prepare them for learning about other groups while in college.

College Factors

Once the CAP students entered college, they continued to learn about different racial or ethnic groups through classes, campus programs, and informal personal interactions. Moreover, since the research site has students from all over the world, those opportunities increased. In fact, all of the CAP students reported that for the first time, they were able to interact with individuals from several different countries. Participating in CAP also provided a first time to talk about issues of ethnicity and race in-depth with other students.

The following sections present information obtained from participants regarding the various college experiences and interactions that have assisted them in understanding other racial

and ethnic groups. The students' interviews and journals are incorporated herein to document their evolution toward increased cultural competency. There are three broad categories for college factors, which include: (a) formal learning, (b) encounters with others, and (c) personal interests.

Formal Learning

Formal learning is considered to be didactic opportunities that are facilitated by an individual or group in a structured setting. All of the formal learning experiences that the CAP students had took place on campus, with one exception. Christine was the only student in the study who had studied abroad while in college. In studying the interview transcripts and student journals, two sub-themes emerged under formal learning: coursework and campus programs.

Coursework. College coursework can provide a variety of ways for a student to become more culturally competent –particularly when a dynamic liberal arts curriculum is available to students. Many of the CAP students took classes both in their majors and in other departments that taught them about racially or ethnically diverse cultures. In her interviews, Christine discussed how she learned more about Appalachian culture and Native American cultures in her required and elective courses. She also mentioned taking a globalization class when she studied abroad in South Africa.

The participants also provided examples of what they learned about different racial and ethnic groups in courses provided by their departments. Topics in those courses focused on workplace diversity and etiquette. For instance, Rosa and Mickey both discussed learning about the benefits of working with diverse individuals, who can bring varied ideas and insights to a project. Carmen stated that the laws regarding hiring practices were discussed in her business courses, as well as how companies have to ensure they are not discriminating against candidates

based on race, ethnicity, and gender. Brian discussed how he learned in a communications course about the importance of proper wording is when writing stories for publication:

According to the Associated Press, if you are writing a story, it's African American or Black now, but it's been different, a hundred different times. And just several things like that because every group has their own way....like Native American and not Indian. Indians are from India, Native Americans are in American. Just things like that...and not just from journalism classes, but I also learned a lot of this from going to things. And also like for gay people the same thing...what's okay to talk about or to say. (Brian)

Some of the students in the study also mentioned how class topics helped them to consider the behavior and expectations of their own racial and ethnic group on issue such as family, politics, education, and economics. Christine, for example, wrote in her journal about learning how the concept of family is very similar in Native American and Appalachian cultures. Chase mentioned in his interview that in his Human Geography class, he learned that one's racial culture is shaped by his or her environment. In her World Politics class, a discussion regarding division of Ireland induced Pauline to write the following in her journal:

My emotions stumbled over Northern Ireland. They stumbled, I mean, in a way to imply that I have tripped and continued to run into the fragments of information about Northern Ireland that tug at my heart. As a Protestant, I cannot clearly explain how I, as a descendent of Catholics from Cork really feel about the division of the island. Trying to talk about nationalism in another nation is difficult enough, but even more challenging when suddenly you are involved with both sides. Who are my people here? Who do I believe should be the Master of the House? Is there a cause here for me to champion? Could I even fight for a cause that I have these types of ties to? (Pauline)

Discussions among professors and classmates also made the CAP students realize that their own racial or ethnic group was, at times, misunderstood or devalued by other groups. Some of those discussions, however, also helped the students to better understand different cultures as well. Nala, for example, recalled how her Sociology professor pointed out that most of the major philosophers who are studied in college classrooms will more than likely be Caucasian. Nala

added that she had never thought of this until it was pointed out to her by the professor. Rosa recalled a class discussion that gave her insights as to how she is viewed by others:

In my Environmental Engineering class, we were talking about California and I can't remember what river it is, but where you take most of your water from. That river ends up in the Gulf of Mexico. Someone asked if they had any policies with regards to Mexico because once California and the other states take all of the water, there is pretty much nothing left. She [the professor] said that they have some policies, but it mostly screws Mexico. One kid was like, "If you think about it, how many Mexicans are in California anyway drinking the water?" I was like, okay. He was looking at me thinking I was here illegally. That kind stuff bothers me. (Rosa)

In her journal entries, Christine discussed the benefits of having professors from other countries since they can share first hand accounts of the local customs and culture. Christine wrote the following about her Spanish teacher:

My Spanish teacher is actually an Argentinean citizen and she enjoys showing us the certain customs in her country. She's been here for a few years and she enjoys showing us the contrasts between Americans and Argentineans, and often just the students in both countries. I've never had a Spanish teacher who was so concerned with showing us the cultural differences and it's really interesting to constantly be around someone who has that different background. (Christine)

Campus programs. CAP participants agreed that attending campus programs was the primary way that they learned about issues of race and ethnicity while in college. Many of them, in fact, stated that they would not have attended many campus programs if they had not participated in CAP. Moreover, they were encouraged by the CAP coordinator to attend celebrations, musical performances, lectures, and fairs. At some of the programs, interviewees were able to listen to presentations by renowned speakers and entertainers.

Students agreed that one of the advantages of CAP is that they were able to choose the programs they wanted to attend –and on topics that interested them the most. For instance, the majority of programs that Brian attended focused on issues of sexual orientation. At the time of our second interview, he was planning to attend a lecture by a gay African-American author. The

journals of the students and data collected during the interview indicated that the participants primarily attended programs which focused on race/ethnicity, religion, and gender.

The participants' journals reflected what they learned about a variety of issues. Some of the programs focused on global or national issues, while others focused on concerns of the campus community. For instance, the programs ranged from a celebration of diversity to the genocide taking place in Darfur. Thus, the students were able to increase their cultural competency by addressing a multiplicity of topics.

As a result of the programmatic diversity on campus, students were confronted with a number of viewpoints on topics both familiar and unfamiliar. For instance, Susan wrote about attending a program by a former U.S. ambassador, which addressed the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. Though she was somewhat familiar with the topic, she felt that the program helped her view the issue in a new light. She stated:

This presentation was very interesting. Because the United States is allied with Israel, the media coverage demonstrates only examples of the ruthless acts of Palestinians, but some of the statistics presented were shocking. For example, on the West Bank, the area of dispute between the Israelis and Palestinians, 90% of the water available is reserved for Jews, which occupy only 10% of the area... He [the ambassador] presented interesting facts and figures that, again, just aren't available to the American Public given the relationship, or lack thereof that America has with Palestine.....I'm sure that as with all presentations defending the host group, this information is not 100% objective. This needs to be taken into account both when watching news coverage, in addition to attending programs like this. (Susan)

Within some of the journals and interview transcripts that I examined, there were passages regarding a program on stereotypes facilitated by two fellow CAP students. The interviewees wrote or discussed not only what they already knew about stereotypes, but also what they learned. Students were surprised that individuals experienced discrimination because of stereotypes. In his interview, Brian stated, "I thought that all racial groups were equal, but I learned that I was wrong." Julian wrote, "But because of this meeting, I have learned that one

thing that we as individuals learn at an early age is to stereotype.” The students also discussed the impact of their discussion regarding stereotypes. In her interview, Nala stated that many of the students in the meeting were not aware of the stereotypes and in fact, had a heated discussion about the topic. Carmen wrote a passage in her journal about the impact of the program:

The meeting really opened my eyes as to how stereotypical we can be without even realizing it. It was surprised at the racial injustices that still exist within the legal system we have today....To me, that is a prime example of the hypocrisy that still lingers in our “equal opportunity” society. (Carmen)

Various student organizations and academic departments on campus sponsored both foreign films of commercial appeal, as well as films that focused specifically on issues of race and ethnicity or the films were produced in other countries. Many of the participants expressed definite opinions about the films they viewed, some of which were obligatory for fulfilling their CAP requirements. In a few of the journals, for instance, students wrote about attending an annual Jewish film festival and watching a couple of the films that were shown. Nala watched the American movie *Crash* with a group of other students in a residence hall. In her journal, she reflected on how the film depicts the issue of discrimination:

Crash is a racist movie. Every character discriminates against another because of their race and perceived character, and they in turn get discriminated against. Discrimination is a cycle, and this movie depicted that very well. When someone discriminates against another, more often than not, the victim will victimize another person, and the cycle goes on, it never stops. (Nala)

The foreign films that the students in the program watched were from countries such as Israel, India, Japan, China, and Uganda and featured topics such as war, genocide, socioeconomic status, and relationships. By viewing films from other countries, the CAP students could understand that individuals from other racial and ethnic backgrounds grapple with similar problems. For instance, a few of the students screened a documentary entitled *Invisible*

Children, which revealed how children from Uganda are kidnapped and forced to join a rebel army. Susan wrote the following in her journal regarding the documentary's impact:

The movie was a stark realization about how blessed we are to live in a stable country where we can sleep comfortably in our beds at night without fear of waking in the clutches of an enemy, forced to join their army. This moved me into working at the retail booth of the next screening of *Invisible Children*, which took place in my dorm, [name of the dorm], one month after the original screening. I am planning to continue to donate and support the *Invisible Children* campaign to ensure that these helpless children are not forgotten. (Susan)

A few students' journal entries addressed the similar dilemmas Americans share with individuals from other countries. After watching the Japanese film *Twilight Samurai*, Carmen wrote the following journal entry:

One of the most touching concepts of this film was the fact that the hardships brought on by poverty and family deaths are universal. American and Japanese citizens, as well as other people all over the world share the same struggles in daily life. As human beings, we are more similar than we sometimes realize. (Carmen)

Clearly, the formal learning experiences in which the CAP students engaged presented important opportunities for them to become more culturally competent. Within classroom settings, students not only learned about different cultural issues from their teachers, but classroom discussions also illuminated idiosyncrasies as well. Campus programs were also a venue in which the CAP students learned about different cultural groups. In a few of the interviews, students stated that they would not have attended most of the programs had they not been mandated by CAP. Nevertheless, the students revealed in their journal entries that they benefited greatly from attending the campus programs.

Students also provided information about other college-based learning opportunities that I've elected to include under the themes "Encounters with Others" and "Personal Interests".

Encounters with Others

The CAP students who were interviewed for this study agreed that informal encounters with faculty, co-workers (if employed), and other students while in college increased their cultural competency. Though many of the participants attended high schools that were racially and ethnically diverse, the university provided an important setting, wherein they were able to engage in conversations with individuals from a great variety of backgrounds. The sub-themes that emerged under the umbrella of “encounters with others” include (a) extracurricular activities, (b) living spaces, and (c) misconceptions.

Extracurricular activities: There were many settings on and off campus that facilitated informal interactions with a diverse group of individuals. In their journey towards increased cultural competency, some of the students in this study discussed the ways in which they interacted with peers from different racial or ethnic groups during their extracurricular activities.

In addition to attending programs on campus, the interviewees described other extracurricular activities in which they engaged while in college. For instance, Mickey and Susan were involved in Campus Crusade for Christ (CRU). In his interview, Mickey stated that through CRU, he was able to practice English with students from China, which facilitated opportunities for learning about their culture. As a member of the African student group, Nala interacted with students from many different African countries. They also collaborated on community service projects on campus and in surrounding areas.

Participating in extracurricular activities also made the students aware of the dissimilarities among racial and ethnic groups. Despite the many commonalities among various groups, CAP students became more aware of divergent viewpoints as a result of working closely with individuals from different racial or ethnic groups. For instance, Brian talked about being in

the car club on campus and the ways in which different cultural groups focus on specific details when they are making improvements to their automobiles:

When the white community builds cars, they are focusing on speed. The black community likes to build cars for show...to look real nice and have big shiny wheels. I've seen cars with 30 in. wheels before. If we are talking about Hispanics, it's actually kind of funny because the rest of the car world...not that they... some of them do really good jobs, but sometimes it seems like when they modify cars, it's cheaply done. They place chrome and stickers on the cars. We laugh at them, but we still like them. We dig anybody who digs cars. (Brian)

Living spaces. All of the interviewees lived on campus their first year at the university. For most of them, this was their first time living in close proximity to individuals of different racial and ethnic backgrounds. Nevertheless, the participants noted that there were more commonalities than differences among the residents. In fact, some of the participants became close friends with individuals from different racial and ethnic backgrounds. One such example was provided by Susan, who had a Chinese roommate:

I have become more open minded to many issues. I have made friends from backgrounds that I would have never otherwise gotten the opportunity to meet. One of my best friends here at school is Chinese. Through her, I have met many incredible people, as well as have had the opportunity to attend gatherings with them. I also have met countless people from different religious backgrounds as me. (Susan)

While none of the participants described negative personal experiences while living in the residence halls, a few did report seeing racial epithets written on the residence hall walls. Both Nala and Mickey have worked as resident assistants (RAs) and they had good relationships with their residents and for the most part, the residents were cordial to each other. However, there was an incident in Mickey's hall when a negative epithet was written on the elevator doors.

According to Mickey, living in the residence hall enlightened him about discriminatory acts:

I guess that changed my beliefs because I thought it [discriminatory remarks] was something that was kind of the past and it seems like it's getting....maybe not getting worst, but it is still definitely an issue for anybody who views themselves as being

different than the majority population. I was surprised that educated students would still make remarks about other cultures. It kind of proves their ignorance. (Mickey)

To combat any discriminatory acts that took place in the residence hall, RAs and other staff members provided diversity programming for the students. The study participants attended a few of the programs facilitated by the RAs, one of which was entitled “The Tunnel of Oppression.” This particular program was advertised to the entire campus community and was attended by both students and campus employees. After attending the Tunnel of Oppression with his RA and other residents, Carlos recorded the following statement in his journal:

The event was designed to raise awareness of diversity and ethnic stereotypes. One of the ways in which this was done, and probably the most memorable part of the tunnel, was the black wall full of racial slurs, which were lit up by a black light to make the image more powerful....The experience of the tunnel as a whole was interesting not only because of the content of the tunnel, but because of the group of people that I went with. It was a good experience to go to one of these events and see how it impacts people I know who don't go to many of these types of events. (Carlos)

Misconceptions. Several students in this study noted that their involvement in CAP made them more aware of the various racial/ethnic misconceptions that still persist. For instance, nearly every participant wrote about a program on stereotypes facilitated by the CAP coordinator. Overall, the program made a significant impact on these students because they came to realize how stereotypes affect others. Julian, for example, wrote the following in his journal: “If everyone focused on the similarities they shared with everyone then no one would focus on the differences.” Rosa entered these thoughts about racial and ethnic stereotypes in her journal:

It was also interesting to hear how everyone viewed different ethnicities. I feel like a lot of the time Asian Americans are stereotyped as being really smart and nerdy, while Hispanics are thought of as being dumb and in America illegally. White individuals are seen as being in charge and articulate, while African Americans are seen as being inarticulate and lazy. I know that a lot of the time when people find out that I am Hispanic they'll ask if I have a green card or if I know anyone in jail, or they're surprised that I can speak English so well. It's a little ridiculous that we judge people without getting to know them, and everyone does it at some point, no matter how hard you try not to. Whether it is by the way someone talks or dresses, we tend to judge everyone at first glance. (Rosa)

Carmen echoed Rosa's insights about stereotypes by writing in her journal, "I was shocked to realize that we even stereotype our own groups that we belong to. It saddens me that as a society, we are more likely to stereotype someone than to reach out and try to learn more about where that person comes from."

The interviewees also gave examples of incidents that educated them about the misconceptions others have experienced. For many of the participants, being on a college campus was the first time that they came to understand how other groups felt about either being misidentified or mischaracterized. Nala, for instance, discussed how even at the university, some American students have misconceptions about international students. She recalled that during her first year of college, a male student commented that he did not realize Africans wore clothing. Julian provided an example during his second interview about how an Asian classmate responded angrily about being misidentified as Chinese. Julian stated:

With Asian Americans, I also learned that certain cultures don't like each other just because of couple of my friends... they are not Chinese. One is from Taiwan and one's Japanese and one's Korean. I didn't say it, but somebody said something about Chinese. They asked him if he was Chinese or something. It was back during [the summer bridge program]. He got so mad and said, "What makes you think I'm Chinese?" He was like, "I don't know, I'm just asking."(Julian)

Students in general are able to engage in a variety of activities and encounters while living and studying on a college campus. The CAP students, however, were able to engage in more conversations regarding issues of diversity. They appeared to be more aware of the struggles that other individuals face and are were better equipped to see the similarities and differences among groups. While I have already described a number of these opportunities, others fit into the following section called "Personal Interests."

Personal Interests

Personal interests are defined as issues, subjects, or factors that are important to the individual. The students in this study discussed or wrote about a number of topics that were important to them –many of which related to their identity or personal aspirations. As I categorized the data associated with personal interests, two sub-themes seemed to emerge: global and national issues and intrinsic benefits.

Global and national issues: Global and national issues have the potential to influence students to become culturally competent on specific topics. For example, several participants discussed the impact of the 9/11 attacks on themselves and on their classmates before they entered college. They also noted that the attacks marked the first time that their middle/high school teachers began addressing the importance of Islamic culture. In talking with the CAP students, it became clear that the 9/11 attacks still had a significant impact on them nearly seven years later. As an example, I asked the students which cultures they would like to know more about and they overwhelmingly stated Islam. Chase stated that he would like to learn Arabic. He predicted that once he graduates from the university and enters the military, he might be sent to the Middle East, where being able to converse in Arabic would be beneficial.

A few of the interviewees attended programs sponsored by their departments, which focused on global and national issues. The students noted that the program presenters made a point of including information that would be beneficial to their cultural competency. For instance, they discussed how national and international issues can impact local economies, communities, and policies. Christine provided an example in her journal of a presentation sponsored by her department, during which a retired professor talked to students about agricultural economics:

He was telling us about going to Mexico and how they are suffering the same problems that Americans are; all their jobs are going to China and Vietnam. I remember everyone from back home losing jobs because of NAFTA and our local factory jobs relocation, and it seems that the same thing may be happening, around a decade later, to the very people who gained our jobs. It's an endless cycle of how to get the cheapest labor. (Christine)

Learning about controversial issues affecting different racial or ethnic groups from the media, in classes, through campus programs, and through formal/informal interactions also influenced the students to become more culturally competent. Topics of interest included religion, education, discrimination, and poverty. The different learning environments provided the students with new information or reaffirmed their beliefs on various topics. For instance, Carmen, Rosa, and Carlos wrote in their journals about immigration issues and how they discussed these issues with various people. The students all believed that their friends and other individuals did not fully comprehend why groups from other countries immigrate to the United States, whether legally or illegally. After attending the keynote address for Hispanic Heritage Month, Carmen wrote the following in her journal:

It is a very strong connection to Ms. Hinojosa's lecture, as my mother was born in Panama and her side of the family consists of Hispanic immigrants. My mother's parents came to America in search of better opportunities and a better quality of life for their children. To me, the "American Dream" is not about materialistic glamour. It is about hope and hard work. It is about what can be accomplished as a result of determination. (Carmen)

Intrinsic Benefits. Having thoroughly reviewed interview transcripts and journal entries, it became clear that CAP students were benefiting from the opportunities they had for increasing cultural competency. As discussed earlier, these students attended a variety of campus programs in connection with CAP. Many of the study's participants reported that they would not have attended many of the diversity programs were it not for CAP.

One of the intrinsic benefits that the students received while participating in CAP is being able to self reflect on issues of diversity. During this study, several of the participants discussed

the dilemma of being associated with a particular racial or ethnic group. Specifically, some interviewees felt that there were certain behaviors expected of their cultural groups from society –and in order to “fit in,” the CAP students felt that, at times, they had to become someone different. For example, Christine wrote about and discussed how her Appalachian accent made other students look at her differently. She reflected on this issue in her journal:

I do not exactly know what this language situation can be related back to. Parents, television, foreign languages, you name it, I will never know. What I do know is that by simply losing part of myself, however unconsciously, I am able to fit in better and be less discriminated against than my heavily accented counterparts. However, the minute it is out that I am from Appalachia, the questions start. They want to know why I am different. The truth is that maybe I am not. Maybe they are the outsider. (Christine)

CAP students were also able to self-reflect on issues of race and ethnicity in connection with media representations of their own or another’s ethnic group. Often they did not agree with the ethnic/cultural images or ideas conveyed. For instance, Julian wrote about how lyrics composed by a rap artist conflicted with how he is as an individual. His journal contained the following passage:

Chamillionaire makes references to the war in Iraq, media groupies, as well as common stereotypes. One of the more interesting hinted upon stereotypes is when he says, “When your black and you educated people say “You ain’t black man!” May be black in your appearance but really whiter than Batman.” This is pretty upsetting to me since I am a black male, as well as the fact that it has been said more than once to me. When will a black man just be labeled as the individual that he is, instead of judging him on if he lives up to the stereotypical view of a black male? Society’s view is completely skewed if this way of life is continued. (Julian)

Another intrinsic benefit for students learning about other racial and ethnic groups is future employment. The participants told me their future career aspirations and how learning about diverse groups will benefit them. Some of the participants want to be in professions in which they will work with a diverse clientele. According to these participants, having a better understanding of the cultural and ethnic background of their clients will enable them to assist their clients better. Pauline, for instance, would like live and work in Europe once she finishes

college. She voiced her desire to learn about the history and culture of various racial and ethnic groups so that she can conduct her career with greater cultural sensitivity and competency.

For the students majoring in engineering, all had either interviewed with companies for future employment or interned. Julian and Carlos stated that when they had orientation at their internship sites, the topic of workplace diversity was part of the curriculum. At the time of their interviews, both Mickey and Rosa had secured jobs at engineering firms. Mickey wrote about workplace diversity in the following passage:

It has been amazing during my job search how much companies stress diversity in the workplace. At [the research site], the importance of diversity is well advertised, but you do not hear much of it from peers or professors. I recently visited both Lockheed Martin and General Electric, both of which stress employment diversity even during the interviews. A diverse group of employees leads to a broader range of knowledge, talents, skills, and life experiences, and it is not surprising that large companies see this as being critical to success. (Mickey)

From the various accounts of the participants, learning about different racial and ethnic groups not only gave them important insights, but also enabled them to be more open to talking to others about issues of race and ethnicity. The CAP students participated in a number of diversity-related programs on campus and in the surrounding communities. These varied experiences helped them to become more comfortable talking with their peers, who expressed some naïveté on topics of race, stereotyping, and cultural competency.

Another intrinsic benefit that students gained while learning about cultural groups was to think more critically about topics of national and global interest. Because they were able to expand their knowledge of a number of issues through formal and informal interactions both on- and off-campus, the students were able to reflect more competently on questions impacted by race, culture, and ethnicity. Moreover, having learned about and interacted with various cultural groups will better equip students when confronted with other groups in other situations in the future.

Summary

As documented herein, the participants in this study learned about their own and other's racial and ethnic groups both before and during college. Their experiences and interactions before college were very limited despite the fact that many attended racially/ethnically diverse high schools. As expected the students first learned about their racial or ethnic group from their families. As the participants advanced in school, they began to become more culturally competent as a result of classroom instruction and from interactions with peers. However, it wasn't until they attended college that students began to interact in meaningful ways with individuals from around the world. The participants in this study also learned about racial and ethnically diverse groups through a number of meaningful programmatic opportunities. In conclusion, these various formal and informal opportunities have resulted in increased cultural competency among the students in this study.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to gain insight from students participating in a cultural awareness program (CAP) regarding their experiences before and during college that shape their cultural competence. Specifically, the study was designed to examine students' perceptions about factors that influence their understanding of their own and others' racial/ethnic culture. The frameworks utilized for this study were Astin's Input-Environment-Outcomes Model (Astin, 1993b) and Howard-Hamilton, Richardson, and Shuford's Attributes of a Culturally Competent Student Framework (Howard-Hamilton, Richardson, & Shuford, 1998). The following were the research questions examined in this study:

1. What are CAP students' experiences learning about their personal culture?
2. What are CAP students' experiences interacting with cultural groups before college?
3. What are CAP students' experiences learning about cultural groups before college?
4. What are CAP students' experiences interacting with cultural groups in college?
5. What are CAP students' experiences learning about cultural groups in college?

Data was collected through interviews with 11 CAP participants. Each participant was interviewed three times to learn about their experiences learning about race and ethnicity and interactions with diverse individuals. The first interview focused on their experiences before college. The focal point of the second interview was participants experience during college. During the third interview, the participants provided their opinions about what they learned. Participants also provided copies of their journals they submitted for CAP, which highlighted their experiences learning about other cultures.

Data were analyzed using the constant comparative method (Strauss and Corbin, 1967). The researcher read through each of the transcripts and journal several times and created

categories for the data. Afterwards, themes were developed from the categories. A code map was created to organize the themes and categories (Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002).

This chapter is divided into seven sections. The first section contains a summary of the findings, providing differences between students' interactions and experiences before and during college. The focus of the second section is on the study's findings in relation to prior literature on cultural competence. In the next four sections, the limitations, implications, suggestions for future research and the researcher's personal reflections are provided. The final section concludes this study.

Summary of Findings

During the interviews and in their journals, participants discussed learning about their personal culture, learning about other cultures, and interacting with diverse individuals. Results of this study can be divided into three sections, which include: (a) knowing about one's self, (b) knowledge and awareness of other groups, (c) interactions with other groups.

Knowing about One's Self

In this study, participants were asked about the influences on their racial/ethnic identity. Findings from this study indicate that family members predominantly influenced the CAP students' understanding of their own culture, particularly before entering college. Family members incorporated aspects of culture such as rituals, traditions, and diet into the lives of the students; they also shared family histories, which was an important way to know and understand their heritage. Some of the students who explored their racial or ethnic group beyond the confines of family influence had an interest in learning more about their cultural group.

Conversely, the students agreed that peers had very little, if any, influence on their identity development. In fact, no students could give a single example of something they learned from their peers about their personal racial or ethnic group. However, as the interviews

progressed, the students recalled moments when statements were made by their peers that made the students attuned to how they were perceived by other racial or ethnic groups. Thus, the participants in this study did not realize the impact their peers have on their racial/ethnic identity.

Prior to entering college, the non-Caucasian students had to contend with a variety of misconceptions about their cultural groups. While some individuals were directly confronted with comments concerning their own cultural group, others heard these remarks through a third party. Some of the student indicated that they were asked by their peers to clarify cultural stereotypes. Even though the questions were on occasion annoying and reflected a frustrating lack of cultural awareness and sensitivity, the students in the study routinely took the time to respond to these inquiries. It should be noted that, at times, the students pondered the questions asked or comments made about their racial or ethnic groups, but, it did not change the students' beliefs about their racial or ethnic group.

Once students entered college, some began to increasingly explore their own racial/ethnic groups in a number of ways. Participating in CAP required them to attend programs on diversity topics, such as racial and ethnic diversity. They also began taking classes that presented previously unknown or supplemental information about their cultural history. Therefore, the students' personal views of their own racial/ethnic identity were challenged by factors that included interacting with peers and professors, as well as by more formalized media presentations. These challenges to their racial and ethnic identity made many of the participants realize that there were aspects of their cultural group that were both positive and negative. Thus, the students' exploration of their own racial or ethnic group while in college has helped them to better understand the plethora of historical and current issues associated with their racial/ethnic group.

Knowledge and Awareness of Other Groups

With respect to learning about other ethnic or racial groups, the several of the participants agreed that their experiences in primary and secondary school assisted them in becoming more culturally competent. Teachers, for example, shared fundamental information about other cultures through formalized lessons, which tended to focus on the history and traditions of other groups, especially those associated with important holidays. CAP students also discussed how teachers talked about their own cultural group to help their students better understand the beliefs of that group, which they believed to be very enlightening. Some of the students also commented that they wished that more information on racial and ethnic groups could have been learned when they were in elementary and high schools.

In addition to the more formalized learning that took place in classrooms, the participants commented that they also became interested in learning about other racial or ethnic groups after significant world events took place. For instance, all of the participants were either in middle or high school when 9/11 attacks took place. This event piqued the students' interest in learning about Islam or the Middle East. Therefore, they were able to increase their understanding of Islamic culture in less formalized ways through interactions with peers and teachers. However, once the participants entered college, they had increasing opportunities to learn about other racial/ethnic groups in more organized ways, as described below.

The research site for this study, a large public university, provided a variety of ways from the students to increase their cultural awareness. In terms of programmatic opportunities, the students were informed of important events by the CAP coordinator. All of the participants recalled attending programs that taught them about other racial or ethnic groups. However, while many of the students stated during the interviews or wrote in their journals that they acquired new knowledge from the programs, they did not always interpret the information that was

presented to them in the same ways. A couple of students also discussed how learning about a particular cultural topic encouraged them to seek additional information, either through supplementary classroom instruction, or through other means, such as volunteering on behalf of a particular cause, participating in an activity sponsored by a cultural group, or even studying abroad.

As noted above, the college classroom was an important place for students to learn about other racial or ethnic groups. Many of the study's participants took classes that focused on a particular racial or ethnic group. For example, a couple of the students took classes that highlighted Native American history and culture. Moreover, even though not specifically structured to investigate a particular race or ethnic group, some of the classes within individual majors gave students a chance to increase their cultural competency. The topics they discussed ranged from local to global issues. The students majoring in engineering and business gave examples of how their professors stressed the importance of diversity in the workplace. Whether the discussion was on specific laws or working with others, professors emphasized that learning about diverse groups would be beneficial to students in their future professions.

Interactions with Other Groups

The CAP students agreed that personal interactions with members of other racial and ethnic groups were pertinent for increasing cultural competency. This belief was reinforced through their interviews and journal entries, both of which underscore the significance of personal interactions as primarily informal exchanges with other classmates and friends who were of a different racial or ethnic group. Though students were able to learn about different cultural traditions in school, interactions with peers provided valuable opportunities for them to learn the rationale behind certain, unfamiliar cultural traditions.

Participants also described learning about different racial and ethnic groups from their teachers, who in many cases provided personal experiences and insights. It helped to clarify issues that the students didn't understand, but those interactions also influenced the students to explore a cultural group in greater depth. For instance, one student discussed learning about Muslim culture after 9/11 from her middle school teacher, who was a Muslim himself. The teacher helped the participant and her classmates understand the beliefs and practices of the group, which the participant stated was beneficial to her. Ultimately, the students were able to make distinctions among cultural groups and understand similarities as well.

Extracurricular activities also afforded valuable opportunities for the students to interact with members of other racial or ethnic groups. In fact, participating in extracurricular activities such as clubs and sports, served as a way for students of dissimilar backgrounds to share a unifying interest in a particular activity which ultimately transcended their cultural or ethnic differences.

The non-White students who participated in this study described several misconceptions that others had about them in their pre-college years, particularly in high school. They recalled instances of being questioned or hearing comments about their racial or ethnic group in ways that they believed were legitimate and innocuous, but other times in confrontational ways. This made the students aware of how they were perceived by others, but it also made them question whether their peers looked at them as individuals.

Once the CAP students entered college, they had more opportunities to interact with racially and ethnically diverse groups. Different groups were more visible around campus, especially in classrooms, where students had opportunities to discuss specific topics and give their opinions in a structured setting. When classroom discussions focused on race or ethnicity,

the CAP students learned that some students were hostile to specific groups. These students vocalized their opinions in the class, which at times, made the CAP students uncomfortable.

Ultimately, findings from the study also indicated that most of the CAP students became comfortable discussing issues of race and ethnicity with other individuals. Attending campus programs educated them on specific topics. Moreover, several of the participants noted that after attending some of the campus programs, they discussed what they had learned with their peers from different races and ethnicities to gain their opinions on the program topics. By doing this, the participants strengthened their cultural competency.

Relationship to the Literature

Researchers who have studied cultural competency have examined the topic in regards to disciplines such as counseling (Ridley & Kleiner, 2003; Sue, Arrendondo, & McDavis, 1992; medicine (Cohen, Gabriel, & Terrell, 2002; Nápoles-Springer et al., 2005; Suh, 2004), and business (Connerly & Pedersen, 2005). The focus of some of the literature is on how practitioners interact with diverse clients. Many of the studies have also focused on students in those respective fields learning about working with diverse clients or measuring their attitudes regarding diversity.

Cultural Competence and K-12 Education

Research on cultural competence in education has also been examined. Literature on cultural competence in K-12 education has primarily focused on teacher and other school personnel working with students from diverse backgrounds (Banks, 1988; Howard, 2006; LeRoux, 2002; McAllister & Irvine, 2000). Practitioners in K-12 education also need to understand their own biases to be fully effective when working with students (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2005). Though there is a wealth of literature of K-12 practitioners and cultural competence, the topic of K-12 students and cultural competence has yet to be explored.

Culturally Competent College Students

Research on college students and cultural competence confirms that there are various viewpoints, including personal development, interactions with diverse individuals, and openness to diversity. There are many developmental theories that document stages of cognitive, intrapersonal and interpersonal development of young adults or college students (King & Baxter-Magolda, 2005). Students travel through various stages of development in which they are able to not only learn about their cultural background, but the cultural backgrounds of others. Findings in this study revealed that the precollege experiences helped to shape the students' identities. Participants discussed what they learned from family, in school, and through interactions with other individuals. Although most of the participants learned about other cultural groups in school, the information tended to be superficial. Only one of the participants stated that she had explored other cultural groups in-depth before attending college.

In contrast to the lack of research documenting the cultural competence of K-12 students, there is a body of knowledge that has examined the characteristics of college students who would be more likely to interact with diverse individuals and be open to learning about other cultural groups (Astin, 1993b; Hu & Kuh, 2003; Milem & Umbach, 2003). Some of these characteristics include being African-American, Hispanic, female, and most importantly, a person who has interacted with diverse individuals prior to entering college (Hu & Kuh, 2003; Summers, Svinicki, Gorin, & Sullivan, 2002). Data from this study revealed that the non-White students had more interactions with individuals of other cultural groups prior to attending college than the Caucasian students.

There are a variety of attributes that students should possess to be culturally competent. Prior literature suggests that students who are culturally competent know about their cultural background and can provide details to support knowledge of their traditions. However, they also

know who they are as individuals (Howard-Hamilton, Richardson, & Shuford, 1998; King & Baxter Magolda, 2005). A college student who is culturally competent should also have the skills to be self-reflective and be able to interact with individuals whose backgrounds are different (Howard-Hamilton, Richardson, & Shuford, 1998). With respect to the current study, even though most participants had a very broad knowledge about their personal cultural groups, only a select few knew specific details. The students who had specific cultural knowledge were first or second generation Americans who were educated about specific rituals or histories by their parents or grandparents. When asked to provide examples of traditions of their cultural group, they were able to do so quickly.

Findings from this study coincide with Howard-Hamilton and Hinton's (2004) study of students in a student affairs diversity course. As discussed earlier, the researchers found that there are five behavioral patterns that individuals exhibit when moving towards cultural competency: (1) anticipatory anxiousness/anxiety, (2) curiosity about the acquisition of knowledge, (3) epiphany/acceptance/privilege, (4) comfort with one's self and others, and (5) multicultural competence as a lifelong process.

In the current study, it was apparent (based on their interview transcripts and personal journals) that the students were at different stages in their journey towards cultural competency and racial/ethnic sensitivity. For instance, in the fourth stage in Howard-Hamilton and Hinton's (2004) model, the fourth pattern that people exhibit is entitled "comfort with self." At this stage, individuals are comfortable with their identity, regardless of how it is challenged by new information. While most of the participants in the present study indicated that they were comfortable discussing issues of race and ethnicity, their journals reflected that newly acquired knowledge often made them rethink how they viewed issues.

Another factor that indicates whether an individual is culturally competent is the individual's openness to diversity. Previous studies have indicated that frequent interactions with diverse individuals positively impacts one's openness to diversity (Change, Denson, Sáenz, & Misa, 2006; Gurin et al., 2004; Hu & Kuh, 2003; Milem, 2003; Nelson-Laird, 2005; Pascarella, Edison, Nora, Hagedorn, & Terenzini, 1996; Whitt et al., 2001). Even though several students cited examples of voluntary interactions with diverse individuals, it was the female CAP students who provided more of these examples and positive supporting information regarding issues of race and ethnicity. This reinforces the finding that females have more interactions with diverse individuals than males (Springer et al., 1996; Summers, Svinicki, Gorin, & Sullivan, 2002).

As discussed earlier, prior researchers have measured students' awareness and attitudes regarding diverse groups (Kuh, 1995; Neville & Furlong, 1994). The results of these studies indicate that students with the same racial background are more comfortable with each other than with outside groups. Nevertheless, diverse interactions are beneficial to college students because the students learn about the values and beliefs of other cultural groups. All of the students interacted with diverse students in their classes or residence hall.

Campus Climate

Campus climate has also been shown to play an important role in students becoming culturally competent (Hurtado et al., 1997). Most of the participants stated that the campus environment had played a role in the formation of their cultural competence. Specifically, the students felt that campus administrators were interested in promoting diversity, especially racial and ethnic diversity. To support this observation, they gave examples of university programs, diverse campus organizations, and a wide variety of courses that could enable a student to learn more about race and ethnicity. Most participants in this study attended programs at the university to learn more about different cultural groups.

The psychological dimension of campus climate focuses on how different racial and ethnic groups view issues such as discrimination and oppression (Hurtado et al., 1997). In accordance with what Hurtado and her colleagues reported, some of the CAP students did not anticipate that there would be tension among different cultural groups on campus. Although none of the students could cite any personally-directed experiences of racial or ethnic hostility, several did report seeing racial epithets on the walls in a residence hall. These images reinforced for them that some individuals were not open to having diverse groups on the college campus.

Stage and Manning (1992) wrote that it was important to have faculty and administrators on campus to promote multiculturalism, and that it should be done through curriculum, campus policies, and extracurricular activities. In this study, the students identified a number of faculty and administrators on campus who directly or indirectly promoted their development toward greater cultural competency. The students provided examples of class lectures, activities, or programs on campus that made them more aware of other cultural groups.

Incentives

Previously, researchers found that students who participate in cultural awareness programs needed incentives to remain in such programs usually do so as a result of incentives (Neville & Furlong, 1994). In their study, Neville and Furlong reported that the two primary reasons that students did not participate in such programs were lack of academic credits and time constraints. The current study supports these findings. While the participants in this study received a grant to participate in CAP, several stated repeatedly that if it were not for the CAP requirements, they probably would not have attended many of the programs on campus.

Limitations

A few limitations were discovered while conducting this study. First, although all of the students participated in CAP, only some attended programs in which the focus was on issues of

race and ethnicity. The students attended a variety of programs that focused on topics such as religion, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status. If additional participation criteria had included the need to attend one or more programs that focused on race and ethnicity, the results of the study might have been different.

Second, the number and quality of journals participants provided varied quite significantly. For example, while most students provided journals for at least two semesters, while supplied one semester's worth of journals. Moreover, the usefulness of the entries varied widely. Some students reflected deeply on what they had learned from their cross-cultural interactions and from programs and classes they attended; others merely reported the logistics of the programs they attended. Thus, if every student's journal had reflected an equally profound understanding of his or her experience, more categories might have been created from the data.

Another limitation of this study involved the participants. As with any qualitative research, the results of the research cannot be generalized to all college students. The results can only be attributed to the participants in this study. Also, there were no Asian students in this study, although Asian students participate in CAP. This study might have yielded different results if Asians had contributed to its outcomes.

Implications

The results of this study provide implications for future practice. First, when administrators or faculty develop incentives for students to engage in programs or activities that are designed to increase cultural competence, students participate. Although many CAP students expressed an interest in learning about other racial and ethnic groups, it is important to note that there was a financial incentive for them to do so. Had the incentive not been available, it is unlikely that as many students would have attended programs that focused specifically on

diversity. Thus, the inclusion of an incentive would be beneficial for encouraging students to engage in activities that might increase their cultural competence.

Campus administrators might also want to consider creating a CAP at their institutions. Since the racial and ethnic demographics in the United States are changing, college campuses must have programs in place that will educate students about these growing populations. Since colleges and universities are developing future practitioners, having knowledge and understanding of the cultural background of the clients will allow practitioners to provide a better service. The CAP that is developed at other institutions might follow a similar format as the CAP profiled in this study or it might be connected to an experiential learning program on campus.

The results of this study indicated that the female CAP students were more open to interacting with diverse individuals. This might be the case because women are a marginalized group and they might identify with other marginalized groups. For educational practitioners, it will be beneficial to develop additional methods to assist male students in becoming culturally competent. Educators might also discuss issues such as discrimination or oppression so that male students will better understand issues other groups face.

The data from this study also provide implications for future policy also. Currently, K-12 students learn about other racial and ethnic groups in their classes. In many instances, state departments of public instruction have certain topics that students should learn regarding other cultural groups. Nevertheless, there are some teachers who do not talk about other cultural groups. Students in the study indicated that they did not learn more because accreditation or state-mandated testing. New policy might focus on infusing more topics on race and ethnicity into the curriculum to help increase cultural sensitivity.

Suggestions for Future Research

Suggestions for future research were also gleaned from the results of this study. Since this researcher investigated the perceptions of students in CAP, a subsequent study might be focused on differences between students who participate in CAP compared to those students who do not. Since the students in the study were required to attend the programs and participate in activities on campus that focus on diversity, it would be of interest to investigate the development of those students who are not required to attend such programs.

Participants of this study attended programs that not only focused on race/ethnicity, but gender, religion, and sexual orientation as well. The focus of a future study might be on ways in which students become culturally competent regarding religion, gender, or sexual orientation. The researchers for this study might recruit students from a CAP program, a specific department, or the general student body. The results from the study will indicate factors that might be beneficial in students becoming culturally competent.

Future researchers might also examine how students at Historically Black, Hispanic Serving and Tribal Colleges become culturally competent about issues of race and ethnicity. Students at these institutions, like other students at institutions across the country, will likely be interacting with individuals from a variety of backgrounds. Researchers can study the experiences and the interactions of students on these campuses to learn the factors that impact those respective populations.

A fourth possible study might focus on ways in which faculty and/or campus administrators assist students in becoming culturally competent. Cultural competence is a topic that some college faculty and administrators have addressed, either through programs or courses. Information regarding curriculum or methods used to educate students would add to the literature.

Researcher's Personal Reflection

When I embarked on this research endeavor, I was both excited and nervous. I have always been interested in learning about people's awareness of other cultural groups. It was not until I began examining this topic that I learned that some scholars had given it a name: cultural competence, multicultural competence, or cross-cultural competence. As I began examining the literature, I noticed that the research was primarily in the areas of counseling, psychology, social work, business, and student affairs. Fortunately, I eventually located research that looked at different aspects of cultural competence and college students. This literature assisted me in shaping my study.

After the first and second waves of invitations were sent to CAP students requesting their participation in the study, there were six students who agreed to join. This was exciting because I anticipated finally getting rich data from participants and we were going to talk endlessly and in detail about cultural competence. It did not quite turn out that way. While the data that participants gave me were helpful, many of the participants were too reserved. Some would answer my questions with rich detail; with others I had to pull answers from them without leading their responses toward any particular directions. Moreover, after asking for specific instances to support their replies, I received examples that focused on gender or sexual orientation, forcing me to refocus a few of the students back on my topic.

I wondered if there was an issue with me, an African-American woman, interviewing the students on the topics of race and ethnicity. I was cordial with participants and before I began tape recording our conversations, I engaged them in conversations about school or current events. In doing this, I wanted the participants to be as comfortable as possible discussing their experiences with me. I pondered this issue for a while, but remembered what Rossman and Rallis (2003) stated about the researcher being reflexive. I had to remember that my experiences were

going to be different from the experiences of my participants and accept the examples and reflections that they provided to me. After accepting this, I was able to examine the interview and journal data through a reflexive lens.

While interviewing the participants, many questions arose about the role of higher education in the lives of students becoming culturally competent. Results from this study indicate that interactions are important for students to learn about diverse groups. College curriculum is also important to students developing competency. Currently, many higher education institutions have a liberal arts curriculum in which students can learn about various racial and ethnic groups. There are a few programs of study also have classes in which they prepare students to work with diverse co-workers in the future. All programs of study need to have classes or workshops to prepare students to work with diverse co-workers and clients.

Conclusion

To conclude, this study focused on the various pre-college and college interactions and experiences that assisted students in a cultural awareness program in becoming culturally competent. The research primarily focused on how students become culturally competent regarding race and ethnicity. The students learned about their own cultural group from variety of individuals such as their family and instructors. Family members laid the foundation for the students. They taught the students not only about their personal family histories, but about the history and traditions of their cultural group. Teachers and instructors also introduced students to various topics regarding race and ethnicity, whether it was integrated into the curriculum or given through personal accounts. Their peers educated the students primarily through a variety of informal interactions. Interactions with culturally diverse peers were important in the students becoming culturally competent. In this way, students learned about different cultural groups as well as educated them with respect to how they were viewed by others.

For the CAP students, attending campus programs also provided a venue through which students could learn about different racial and ethnic groups. The programs either were celebratory or focused on local or global issues. The programs took place either in a public meeting place on campus or within the residence halls. In many cases, information gained as a result of their participation in these programs influenced the students to learn more about their own interest in a particular issue.

This study adds to the literature on cultural competence and college students. Hopefully, the results will be utilized by educators who want to better understand the ways in which college students might form attitudes and awareness about different racial or ethnic groups. Also, the findings described herein might influence campus administrators to plan and implement a CAP program at their own institution. As the U.S. becomes more diverse and as interactions with organizations around the world become more frequent, it will be vital to understand and be able to work effectively with different racial and ethnic groups.

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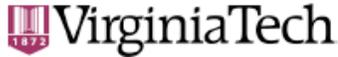
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Appendix A



Office of Research Compliance
 Institutional Review Board
 2000 Kraft Drive, Suite 2000 (0497)
 Blacksburg, Virginia 24061
 540/231-4991 Fax 540/231-0959
 e-mail moored@vt.edu
www.irb.vt.edu

FWA00000572(expires 1/20/2010)
 IRB # is IRB00000667

DATE: February 19, 2008

MEMORANDUM

TO: Jody Thompson
 Penny L. Burge
 Peter E. Doolittle

FROM: David M. Moore 

Approval date: 2/19/2008
 Continuing Review Due Date: 2/4/2009
 Expiration Date: 2/18/2009

SUBJECT: **IRB Expedited Approval: "Transformation Within College Students In A Cultural Awareness Program: Perceptions Of Becoming Culturally Competent"**, IRB # 08-080

This memo is regarding the above-mentioned protocol. The proposed research is eligible for expedited review according to the specifications authorized by 45 CFR 46.110 and 21 CFR 56.110. As Chair of the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board, I have granted approval to the study for a period of 12 months, effective February 19, 2008.

As an investigator of human subjects, your responsibilities include the following:

1. Report promptly proposed changes in previously approved human subject research activities to the IRB, including changes to your study forms, procedures and investigators, regardless of how minor. The proposed changes must not be initiated without IRB review and approval, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects.
2. Report promptly to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated or adverse events involving risks or harms to human research subjects or others.
3. Report promptly to the IRB of the study's closing (i.e., data collecting and data analysis complete at Virginia Tech). If the study is to continue past the expiration date (listed above), investigators must submit a request for continuing review prior to the continuing review due date (listed above). It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain re-approval from the IRB before the study's expiration date.
4. If re-approval is not obtained (unless the study has been reported to the IRB as closed) prior to the expiration date, all activities involving human subjects and data analysis must cease immediately, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects.

Important:

If you are conducting **federally funded non-exempt research**, this approval letter must state that the IRB has compared the OSP grant application and IRB application and found the documents to be consistent. Otherwise, this approval letter is invalid for OSP to release funds. Visit our website at <http://www.irb.vt.edu/pages/newstudy.htm#OSP> for further information.

cc: File

Invent the Future

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE UNIVERSITY AND STATE UNIVERSITY

An equal opportunity affirmative action institution

Appendix B
Recruitment Letter

Dear Student,

You are invited to participate in a study titled: *Transformation within College Students Participating in a Cultural Awareness Program: Perceptions of Becoming Culturally Competent*. The purpose of this study is to gain insight from students who participate in a cultural awareness program about their experiences before and during college that shape their cultural competence. Cultural competence can be defined as having the knowledge, skills, awareness, and attitudes to learn about and interact with individuals from other cultures. My hope is to understand what influences college students to move toward culturally competency.

For this study, you will be asked to participate in three separate interviews and submit an electronic copy of the cultural awareness journal you keep for this program. The interviews will last for 60 minutes each and will take place 3 to 7 days apart. For the interviews, I would like to meet you in your living space. If your living space is not a viable option, we can make arrangements to meet elsewhere. The interviews will be audio recorded to ensure that our conversation has been captured accurately.

To participate in this study, students must be a member of the cultural awareness program. For your participation, you will receive two merit points from your cultural awareness program coordinator.

A false name will replace your name on the interview transcripts, notes, journals, and the final report. I will give the cultural awareness coordinator the names of students who participate in the study so that they can receive the merit point. However, I will not discuss specific students' comments with the coordinator or anyone else. Any identifying information you provide will be masked to maintain anonymity.

If you would be interested in helping me with my study, please e-mail me at [@vt.edu](mailto: @vt.edu) and provide me a phone number in which I can reach you. I will then call you to see if you meet the criteria to participate in my study.

Thank you,
Jody Thompson

Appendix C

Informed Consent
VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY
Informed Consent for Participants of Investigative Projects

Title of Project: Transformation within College Students Participating in a Cultural Awareness Program: Becoming Culturally Competent

I. The Purpose of this Research Project

The purpose of this study is to gain insight from selected undergraduate students, learning about diversity and multiculturalism, regarding their experiences before and during college that shape their cultural competence.

II. Procedures

Participants will be asked to complete three semi-structured interviews. Interviews will be scheduled at a time and place that is convenient to both the researcher and participant. Each interview will last approximately one hour. By signing this form, the participant agrees to be interviewed three times, gives the researcher permission to tape record the sessions, and agrees to submit an electronic copy of the journal he/she maintains for the cultural awareness program.

III. Risks

The risks involved in participating in this study are minimal. Some of the questions might provoke anxiety as you think about your experiences before or during college. If this occurs and assistance is needed, you will be referred to appropriate counseling services at no cost to you.

IV. Benefits of this Project

This project will benefit the study of cultural competence by expanding the theory base on which we understand cultural competence within college students. No promise or guarantee of benefits is made to encourage you to participate.

V. Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality

The confidentiality of your response will be maintained at all times during this study. Your name will not be associated with the content of the interviews. Each participant will be given a false name to mask their identity. Audiotapes and transcripts will remain in the possession of the principal investigator. The principal investigator will keep the audiotapes and transcripts locked in secure location.

VI. Compensation

Students who participate in all three interviews and submit an electronic copy of their journal to the researcher will receive two merit points from the cultural awareness program coordinator.

VII. Freedom to Withdraw

Participants are free to withdraw from this study at any time. You are free not to answer any questions that you choose or to request that the tape recorder be turned off at any time during the interview.

VIII. Subject's Responsibilities

I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I understand that I will be expected to participate in three interviews for this study and I give the principal investigator permission to look at my journal from the cultural awareness program in which I participate. There are no restrictions on my participation.

IX. Subject's Permission

I have read the Consent Form and conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent:

Signature

Date

Should I have any questions about this research or its conduct, I may contact:

Jody Thompson
Principal Investigator

231-5499, jodyt@vt.edu

Dr. Peter Doolittle
Advisor

231-3954, pdoo@vt.edu

Dr. Penny Burge
Advisor

231-9730, burge@vt.edu

If I should have any questions about the protection of human research participants regarding this study, I may contact:

Dr. David Moore, Chair
Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
Office of Research Compliance
2000 Kraft Drive, Suite 2000
Blacksburg, VA 24060
(540) 231-4991
E-mail: moored@vt.edu

9. How many times have you participated in community service activities since being in college?

_____ 1-3

_____ 7-9

_____ 4-6

_____ 10 or more

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY.

Appendix E

Interview Protocol #1

1. How would you describe your racial or ethnic background?
 - What do you know about the history of your race or ethnic group?
 - What do you know about your ancestors (grandparents and great-grandparents?)
2. What individual or group most influenced your attitude about your racial or ethnic background growing up?
 - What was the individual's or group's attitude?
 - When did you first realize that you were (racial/ethnic group)?
 - What was that experience like?
 - Do you ever reflect on those moments?
 - What triggers that memory?
3. What have you learned about your racial/ethnic background from your family members?
 - In what settings did you learn this information?
 - What information do you feel has primarily shaped your values and beliefs?
4. What have you learned about your racial/ethnic background from your peers before college?
 - What has been the focus of the conversation regarding your race or ethnic group?
5. Can you tell me what you learned about different cultural groups when you were in primary and secondary schools?
 - Do you feel that your former teachers were open to talk about different cultural groups?
 - In what ways have you been taught about different cultural groups before college?
6. What have been your interactions with other cultural groups before college?
 - Describe the racial or ethnic make-up of your neighborhood(s) before college.
 - Describe the racial or ethnic make-up of your schools before college.
7. Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

Appendix F

Interview Protocol #2

1. Which racial or ethnic groups other than your own have you had the most interactions with while in college?
 - Please describe the context have you had interactions with these groups?
 - If the interactions have been outside of the classroom, what has influenced these interactions?
2. Do you feel that the campus community promotes or celebrates different racial or ethnic groups?
 - In what ways is it promoted on campus? Make sure the provide examples and did they attend these events or hear about through others?
 - What needs to be in place to promote or celebrate different races/ethnicities? Why do they believe that these things need to be in place to promote diversity?
3. What activities or organizations are you involved in currently in which you interact with individuals from different races or ethnicities?
 - What do you think hinders racial or ethnic groups from participating in campus activities or organizations?
 - What have you learned about racial/ethnic groups from the group members?
4. Have your professors attempted to integrate topics of race or ethnicity into your classes? If so, provide examples?
 - Why do you think this has/has not been done?
 - What topics in regards to race or ethnicity would assist you in your future profession?
5. Please provide examples of activities that you have participated in outside of the classroom in which you have learned about different races or ethnicities?
6. As a college student, what are some of your experiences that have challenged your beliefs about any racial or ethnic groups?
 - Did you form a different opinion or belief about the group?
7. Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

Appendix G

Interview Protocol #3

1. How have your beliefs regarding racial and ethnic issues evolved since coming to college?
2. Describe how you feel regarding learning about racial or ethnic groups.
 - What do you think has influenced this feeling?
3. What have you learned from your interactions with other racial or ethnic groups?
4. What are this university's strengths and weaknesses regarding racial or ethnic diversity?
 - Do you think the university has worked to prevent the weaknesses?
 - What could be some remedies to the weaknesses?
5. What would you want the campus community to understand about your racial or ethnic group?
How do you think that your racial or ethnic group is perceived by the campus community?
6. How will you utilize what you have learned about different races or ethnicities once you graduate from college?
 - How will you utilize this knowledge in the workplace?
 - How will you utilize this knowledge in the community?
7. Is there anything else that you would like to tell me about what?

Appendix H

Cultural Competence Code Map

RQ1	RQ2	RQ3	RQ4	RQ5
Experiences learning about personal culture	Experiences interacting with cultural groups before college	Experiences learning about cultural groups before college	Experiences interacting with cultural groups in college	Experiences learning about cultural groups in college
Second Iteration: Pattern Variables				
RQ1	RQ2	RQ3	RQ4	RQ5
Family Influences Rituals and traditions Racial/ethnic history Family History	Assisting others Misconceptions Hostile Encounters	Formal learning Classroom Instruction Teachers	Classrooms Assisting others Living spaces	Formal learning Global issues Intrinsic Benefits
First Iteration: Initial Codes				
Parents Grandparents Books Rituals Tradition History of racial/ethnic group Stereotype	Peers Dating Strangers Extracurricular Activities Classroom Neighborhood	Schools Peers Clubs K-12 Curriculum Teacher Current Issues Stereotypes	Residence Halls Apartments Classrooms Extracurricular Activities	Diversity Programs Admissions Campus Visitation Classes Personal interests Media interests Workplace policies
Data		Data		Data