MULTICULTURAL COUNSELLING

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Multiculturalism: The Historical Context

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Introduction

My interest in multicultural education was initially sparked in 1997, after my husband and I adopted a child with Guatemalan ancestry from California. I am a teacher at a primary/elementary school, and aware of the challenges that all children face daily in their struggle to be accepted by their peers; thus, I realized even before Alexander was placed in our arms that growing up in a community and attending a school where the people were predominately Caucasian, with very similar backgrounds to one another, would be a challenge both for Alexander and for us as parents. I anticipated that Alexander, who was petite and had a darker skin tone, would be teased and/or mocked as a result of looking different. I dreaded the possibility that his differences would be highlighted by children who did not accept them. As a mother, I wanted to be prepared for the potential challenges that lay ahead. I wanted more than anything to be able to prepare Alexander, and protect him from what would inevitably happen. As adoptive parents, it was important for my husband and me to respect and honour Alexander's Guatemalan and American heritage. We wanted and needed to know more about how to educate our family, our friends and his teachers about accepting and celebrating diversity.

A number of years ago, I completed a course entitled Cultural Issues in Counselling. In pursuing this course, I became aware of the many issues and challenges of a multicultural society, and how the attitudes and behaviours of individuals within a larger society can also been seen in the microcosm of our schools. As I researched the topic of multiculturalism, I had the opportunity to interview a high school teacher of East Indian descent, a male Chinese high school student, and a female Vietnamese high school student about their feelings growing up and attending school as visible minorities in a

predominately white community. These interviews were enlightening. I learned very quickly that, from a minority perspective, cultural diversity is not as accepted as one would hope either in society as a whole or within the micro society of the school environment. Students' differences are not celebrated; rather, they are often highlighted through racial jokes, ignorant comments, and general misinformed statements. It is important that citizens of any society respect and celebrate individuality and cultural diversity, especially in schools.

After conducting this research, as a guidance counsellor in an elementary school, my interest in and understanding of multiculturalism has become even more significant. Each year, more and more students from various countries, and with diverse backgrounds and cultures, enrol in our schools. New immigrants face many challenges from the perspectives of the child, the family, the teacher, the other students, and staff. It is imperative, therefore, that I become better educated and informed in the area of multiculturalism and multicultural education in order to assist in creating an environment in which all children feel safe, comfortable, and celebrated.

The objective of this paper is to examine the concept of multiculturalism by exploring the definition of culture, and reviewing the historical events leading to the development of multiculturalism and the multiculturalism policy in Canada, as well as the implications of multiculturalism for education and students in Canadian schools. This is the first of three papers written in fulfillment of the Paper Folio component of my Master of Education (Counselling Program) degree. The three papers within the Paper Folio will address multiculturalism, multicultural education, and multicultural counselling, respectively.

What is Culture?

An understanding of multicultural education must begin with an understanding of the term *culture*. This is a complex concept that has been debated among researchers, resulting in numerous definitions. As early as 1871, Sir Edward Burnett Taylor defined culture in very broad terms: "Culture or civilization… is that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, law, morals, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (1871/1970, p. 1). This definition focuses on groups of people that share history, values, and patterns of behaviour. According to Defleur, D'Antonio, and Defleur (1976), culture is "the total of all material, social and symbolic creations that a society's members have incorporated into their overall design for living" (p. 96). Simply put, culture is everything we think (ideas and values), everything we do (norms), and everything we own (materials) as members of a given group.

Baruth and Manning's (1999) definition of culture also involves the complex integration of the values, beliefs, and behaviours common to a large group of people. The authors add, however, that each person is born into a culture and that our beliefs are derived from these ethnic and family backgrounds; furthermore, they continue to be shaped by all our experiences after birth.

The concept of groupness is also apparent in the definition put forth by Lindsey (2003). He defines culture as the set of practises and beliefs that is shared with members of a particular group, distinguishing one group from another. He broadens his definition to include all shared characteristics of human description, including gender, geography, ancestry, language, history, sexual orientation, and physical ability, as well as occupation

and affiliation. Thus, individuals may belong to several different cultural groups simultaneously.

In her book, *Multicultural Education: A Caring-Centered, Reflective Approach,* Pang (2005) defines culture as much more than a social system of rules, language, customs, rituals, arts, government, expectations, norms, values, and ideals that people share. Pang states that culture also includes assumptions, behaviours, ways of doing things, ways of seeing things, methods of learning, methods of interacting, choices made, expectations, and communication styles. She adds that culture shapes who we are and what we think.

While Valle's (1997) definition of culture is consistent with that of Pang, he differentiates between explicit and implicit culture. Explicit, or visual culture, is made up of tangible or outward symbols that an outsider may see or experience, such as food, ceremonies, music, dance, dress, history, and nonverbal behaviours. According to Valle, these aspects are directly taught and learned. Implicit, or invisible culture, on the other hand, is the hidden aspect of culture, and includes the underlying meanings and beliefs of a culture. These can be seen in such elements as gender role orientations, philosophies that are respected, interactional behaviours that are expected, and cultural values that are considered understood.

Often, when we meet others whose implicit or invisible culture and behaviours are different from those we expect, we do not recognize that what they are doing or saying is a result of what they have learned, or based on their cultural upbringing. At the same time, we forget that our own expectations are also culturally learned. Consequently, we may see them as rude or uncooperative and often judge them based on

their behaviours or comments. Whereas, if a person is dressed similarly to us, speaks our language or does not differ in obvious ways, we may fail to recognize the invisible cultural orientation.

In his attempt to explain the complex concept of culture further, Valle (1997), provides a very concise, three-layer multidimensional model; he argues these three layers of culture shape a collective social environment. The first layer is described as the people's means of communication. It includes their language, preferred dialects, sayings, jokes, stories, dances, games, currency, holidays, and history. Layer two includes the customs, practices, and both the verbal and non-verbal patterns of interaction of the people, as well as their communication patterns, family behaviours, conversational styles, friendship patterns, and community and gender roles. Layer three consists of the shared values, beliefs, norms, and expectations of the specific cultural group. It includes attitudes, cultural values, religious and spiritual beliefs, fears, laws, and levels of political participation and expectation.

Although there are many definitions of the word *culture*, a number of common elements can be identified among these definitions. According to Diamond and Moore (1995), each of the definitions of culture illustrate that it is a socially constructed phenomenon created by the interactions among people with the underlying premise of nurturing all members of the group. Despite the variation within the definitions, it can be said that culture helps people who are members of a group to determine the rules for acceptable behaviour, and provides consistency and predictability in everyday actions (Lindsey, 2003).

History of Multiculturalism

Migration from one place to another has been a phenomenon of human activity, and as a result of this movement across continents and oceans over a long period of time, cultural diversity has developed (Coelho, 1998). The land we now know as Canada has always been a land rich in diverse peoples and cultures; this has been a fundamental characteristic of Canada since its beginnings (Department of Canadian Heritage, 2003). Cultural diversity is not a new phenomenon. Canada was a multicultural and multilingual country long before the arrival of new languages and cultures from Europe, Africa, and Asia. This multiculturalism existed well before the arrival of the European settlers in the 15th and 16th centuries. Canada's indigenous people, also referred to as Aboriginal and Native people, are thought to have arrived from Asia in two major movements widely separated in time. The first people may have lived in what is now known as Canada for 100,000 years before the Europeans arrived (Coelho, 1998). In fact, "within" the aboriginal and Inuit peoples, the first occupants of "Canada," subcultures or subgroups were known to exist, each with its own language, culture, and social organization. According to Elizabeth Coelho (1998), there were more than 50 distinct cultural and linguistic groups, such as the Cree, Ojibway, Huron, Beothuck, Mohawk, and Haida peoples, inhabiting "Canada" by the time John Cabot arrived in Newfoundland in 1497. In the far North, the Inuit arrived about 2,000 years before the Europeans. It is estimated that 250,000 to 300,000 indigenous people were already living in Canada when the first explorers and colonists arrived from Europe.

This brief description of immigration trends throughout Canada's history shows that Canada has always been multicultural. The arrival of immigrants into Canada can be

categorized into four distinct phases (Cameron, 2004): Phase I: prior to the 1900s; Phase II: 1901-start of World War I (1914-1918); Phase III: 1920s; Phase IV: start of World War II (1939-1945).

Phase I – Prior to the 1900s

Immigrants arriving in Canada (British North America) prior to the 1900s were mainly of British, French, or German origin. Canada has been described as having a laissez-faire philosophy concerning immigration during this first phase, as market forces of supply and demand determined the migration flow into the country (Li, 2003). Before 1867, Chinese immigrants were eagerly sought for employment in the arduous and dangerous tasks of mining and building what is now known as the Canadian Pacific Railway. In 1869 Canada's first Act dealing with immigration matters was passed by Parliament, but nothing was said about the classes of immigrants that should be admitted and those that should be prohibited. In 1872 the Act was amended to deny the entry of criminals and other "vicious" classes; it was amended again in 1879 to exclude paupers and destitute immigrants (Knowles, 1992).

Sir Clifford Sifton, the Minister of the Interior of British North America (BNA) from 1896 to 1905, continued to make efforts to populate the west with preferred immigrant agriculturalists from western, central, and eastern Europe. He and many others disapproved of the immigration of Asians and other non-white people, as they were considered unlikely to assimilate because of their superficial racial and cultural differences (Li, 2003). In an effort to discourage further Chinese immigrants to Canada, the Chinese Immigration Act of 1885 was enacted, coinciding, ironically, with the completion of the railway (McLeod, 1987). As Minister, Sifton imposed a stiff head tax

of $50 on those Asians entering Canada, making it extremely difficult for prospective Chinese immigrants, or relatives of those already in the country, to gain admission. In 1900, he increased the tax to $100 and then to $500 in 1903 (Johnson, 2006).

Phase II – 1901-1914

The wave of emigration from Europe in 1880–1914 has been described as the "mightiest movement of people in modern history." The late 1890s saw the beginning of a mass immigration into Canada. Between 1896 and 1914, approximately three million people from the United Kingdom, continental Europe, the United States and Germany arrived in the country. In fact, records indicate that in 1913, 400,870 immigrants entered Canada; this is the highest number ever recorded. The Canadian government encouraged many of the new immigrants to settle in the largely unpopulated Canadian west. Although the immigration of new settlers into Canada was encouraged, the Minister of the Interior and Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Frank Oliver, wanted the process to be more selective and revised the existing Canadian Immigration Policy in 1906 to make the necessary changes. The new Act became the first legal mechanism for enforcing a policy of selective/restrictive immigration (Knowles, 1992). Following this, discriminatory legislation was first formally introduced into federal legislation in the Immigration Act of 1910. In this Act, the "colour bar" was introduced, denying many possible immigrants entry into Canada (Johnson, 2006).

In the early years of the 20th century, new sources of immigration included Japan and India. Most immigrants from these countries sailed to British Columbia, where anti-Chinese sentiment was already strong. As a result of racist marches and riots, the government began to take action to exclude non-European immigrants. The Canadian

government required that all Asian immigrants must have $200 in their possession on arrival and, in addition, the government negotiated an agreement with Japan to restrict the number of emigrants going to Canada to 400 a year. Furthermore, in 1908, the stipulation of a continuous journey from a home country was imposed; this was largely a means of preventing the voyage of East Indians from India to Canada (Li, 2003).

World War I and the Depression impeded immigration to Canada for several years. In 1919, immigration regulations excluded those whose cultural and linguistic backgrounds were deemed to make them unassimilable: non-Europeans.

Phase III – 1920s

By 1921, 15% of Canada's population consisted of eastern Europeans: Ukrainians, Poles, Hungarians, Romanians, and Russians. Canada was a favoured destination of immigrants because of the restrictions on immigration into the United States. During this time, however, the Canadian government established a list of preferred and non-preferred countries from which to select immigrants, excluding Chinese people and limiting other Asians. As a result of the large number of Chinese and Japanese immigrants, immigration restrictions increased in British Columbia, and a "gentleman's agreement" was made with Japan. In this agreement, Japan agreed to limit the migration of labourers to Canada, unless specifically requested by the Canadian government. In 1928, the Canadian government revisited the "gentleman's agreement" with Japan, and agreed to cap the immigration of Japanese people at 150 per year. In 1923, the Canadian government enacted the Chinese Exclusion Act completely prohibiting further Chinese immigration.

Phase IV – Beginning of World War II (1939-1945)

During the depression of the 1930s, the Canadian government cut off the flow of immigrants into Canada, except for those who had sufficient capital to establish and maintain themselves on farms, or those who were the wives or minor children of family heads already in Canada. Within a span of twenty years, immigration plummeted. From 1921 to 1931, 1,166,000 people immigrated to Canada, whereas from 1931 to 1941, this number dropped to 140,000. With the economy in dire straits, permanent residents of Canada perceived themselves threatened not only by prospective immigrants, but also by those immigrants already established in Canada. With almost a quarter of the labour force unemployed, immigrants were seen as a threat to those who were desperately searching for jobs (Knowles, 1992). In 1930–1935, approximately 30,000 immigrants were deported. The reasons for this included no longer holding a paying job, getting into trouble, failing to obtain a house, or only having been in Canada a short time.

After the end of World War II, substantial immigration into Canada resumed and a wider variety of ethnic origin categories, social classes, and occupations were represented. These new immigrants had greater skills and training than those of previous years (Knowles, 1992). British, Italian, German, Dutch, Polish, and Jewish were among the most strongly represented groups. During this phase, approximately 300,000 people came to Canada as refugees displaced by political disruption in their homelands, including Hungarian, Ukrainian, Lithuanian, Estonian, Latvian, Jewish, and Polish people. These individuals were well educated, with professional training, artistic talent, linguistic skills, or experience in business, military government, or a skilled trade.

Hence, most groups of immigrants since 1945 have included relatively large numbers of educated and skilled individuals.

The momentum of economic activity that continued in the first two decades after the Second World War made it quite apparent that the population of Canada could not supply all the workers or the skills and expertise that were needed to sustain the process of growth and development. Hence, immigrant manpower was needed to meet labour shortages and alleviate the production congestion. In order to acquire immigrants who possessed the skills and expertise urgently required, Canada's immigration program reached out to Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean Islands. Responding to the need for immigrant workers from non-traditional source countries, Canadian immigration policy was amended in the 1960s to reflect a more racially equal and universalistic approach. In 1962, the government's position shifted toward the promotion of a system that favoured universal and unbiased treatment of all applicants. This was based on entrance standards that did not focus on race, religion, or country of origin (Johnson, 2006). The principal criteria for immigrant selection were correlated to the occupational and manpower requirements of the Canadian economy. As more skilled labour and expertise was needed, workers migrated from many other countries, including India, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Jamaica, Trinidad, and Guyana. This great movement of people across continents and oceans further enhanced the multicultural composition of Canada.

While the new immigration policy of 1967 gave the impression that discrimination based on race had been eliminated, very subtle discriminatory restrictions were maintained. For example, there was a greater commitment to recruiting immigrants

from "developed" countries than from "third-world" countries. This suggested the preference for a lighter skinned population (Johnson, 2006). It was not until the Immigration Act of 1976 that there was there a formal commitment to eliminate discrimination on the grounds of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, or sex (Johnson, 2006).

Development of the Multicultural Policy

Critical events and historical developments of the 1960s led to the eventual demise of assimilation as government policy and the appearance of multiculturalism. The pressure for change came from the increasingly troubled relations between French and English Canadians, the growing assertiveness of Canada's aboriginal peoples, and the increased resentment among ethnic minorities of their inadequate treatment in society (Fleras & Elliot, 1992).

In 1963, in an effort to defuse the threats to Canadian unity and identity, Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson established the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism to study relations between French and English Canadians. According to Fleras and Elliott (1992), the Commission was assembled to

> inquire into and report upon existing state of bilingualism and biculturalism in Canada and to recommend what steps should be taken to develop the Canadian Confederation on the basis of equal partnership between the two founding races, taking into account the contribution made by other ethnic groups to the cultural enrichment of Canada. (p. 72)

The negative response of immigrant ethnic minorities to this study was the impetus for Canada's Multicultural Policy (Hryniuk, 1992). Reacting against the idea of a policy that would relegate non-English or -French Canadians to the status of second-class citizens, spokespersons for the "Third Force" of immigrated ethnic peoples demanded equal treatment. A group of Canadians of non-British, non-French, and non-Aboriginal origin, spearheaded by Ukrainians, feared they would be undervalued if their contributions were not symbolically recognized by the state. In 1969, this gave rise to Book IV of the Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism: *The Cultural Contributions of Other Ethnic Groups* (Cameron, 2004). This book revealed the involvement of other ethnic groups in the cultural enrichment of Canada, and suggested the measures that should be taken to safeguard that participation (Cameron, 2004; Cross-cultural Awareness Workshop; Hryniuk, 1992). In addition, this document contained sixteen recommendations for the implementation of an official government policy of multilingualism and multiculturalism that was designed as a model of integration for immigrant ethnic collectives (Cameron, 2004). Motivated by this report, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau argued for a policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework (Abu-Laban & Gabriel, 2002).

October 8, 1971, marked the official recognition of Canada as a multicultural society. On this date, Prime Minister Trudeau, committed the Canadian government to the principles of multiculturalism through his announcement of the national policy on multiculturalism entitled: "Bilingualism within a Multicultural Framework." This policy set out to: help all cultural groups develop the capacity to grow and contribute to Canada; assist minority groups in overcoming cultural barriers to participate in Canadian

society; promote intergroup relations; and provide facilities to minority groups for language learning.

Created within a bilingual framework, the policy acknowledged the culturally diverse character of this country and recognized the contribution and needs of various minority groups in Canada. The principles of cultural preservation, cultural sharing, equal participation, and freedom were included in the policy (Yu, 1992a). Multiculturalism included four key objectives: to assist cultural groups to retain and foster their identity; to assist cultural groups to overcome barriers to their full participation in Canadian society; to promote creative exchanges among all Canadian cultural groups; and to assist immigrants in acquiring at least one of the official languages.

The implementation of these policy objectives depended on government funding and, as a result, nearly $200 million was allocated for special initiatives in language and cultural maintenance in the first sixteen years (Fleras & Elliot, 1992). In 1972, the federal government established a Multicultural Directorate to assist in the execution of multicultural policies and programs; in 1973, a Ministry of Multiculturalism was created to monitor the implementation of multicultural initiatives within government departments. In addition, formal linkages between the government and ethnic organizations were established to provide permanent input into the decision-making process (Fleras & Elliot, 1992).

As the demands of a complex and pluralistic society increased, the need for modifications to Canada's 1971 policy on multiculturalism became apparent. Upon review of the policy, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Multiculturalism (1987)

stated that the policy was out of date, did not have the ability to meet the needs of today's multicultural society, and required clear direction (Fleras & Elliot, 1992).

On July 7, 1988, an Act for the Preservation and Enhancement of Multiculturalism in Canada (Bill C-93) was passed in the House of Commons. This Act was proclaimed as the Canadian Multiculturalism Act, the first of its kind in the world. Founded on the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982), the Act makes clear that multiculturalism is a fundamental characteristic of a Canadian heritage, comprising an evolving identity. It recognizes Canada's multicultural heritage as a great resource that should be fostered, preserved, and encouraged throughout all aspects of Canadian society. The Government of Canada continues to maintain that multiculturalism ensures the ability of all citizens to keep their identities, take pride in their ancestry, and have a sense of belonging. Acceptance of diversity gives Canadians a feeling of security and self-confidence, making them more open to, and accepting of, diverse cultures (Anonymous, 2004).

According to the 2006 Census, since the first census in 1666 and the enumeration of 3,215 people, Canada's population has increased by 31,609,682 people. Census figures illustrate that Canada is one of the most striking examples of a predominately immigrant society whose people have roots in every geographical, social, economic, political, cultural, religious, and ethnic background. Passaris (1987) noted that "this has given rise to a kaleidoscope of people with cultural, racial, religious beliefs and linguistic abilities from a diversity of ethnic origins that time has not erased" (p. 33).

Multicultural Education

Multicultural education emerged from the diverse courses, programs, and practises developed by educational institutions to respond to the demands, needs, and aspirations of the various groups of people (Banks & Banks, 2001). The actual definition of the term, however, and how it plays out in a school or classroom, may vary widely from classroom to classroom (Langer de Ramirez, 2006). Multicultural education does not refer to one course or program. Rather, practising educators use the term *multicultural education* to describe a wide variety of programs and practices related to educational equality for women, ethnic groups, language minorities, low-income groups, and people with disabilities (Sleeter & Grant, 2003). The multicultural character of our society ought to be reflected in the micro environment of our schools. Multicultural education needs to recognize cultural diversity as a fact of life in Canadian society, and as a valuable resource that should be preserved and extended. Educational institutions ought to, therefore, strive to preserve and enhance cultural diversity; commitment to this pursuit must permeate all areas of the educational experience. Multicultural education should promote individuality and freedom to practise one's own culture and to socialize within that culture. In addition, individuals from all backgrounds should be encouraged to share in the economic and civil rights of the community.

According to Passaris (1987), all children within the micro-society of the school need to feel welcome and comfortable regardless of their ethnic or religious background. Furthermore, it is the school's responsibility to help children learn tolerance and to respect the rights of all children, regardless of race, colour, or religion. Increased diversity within the population of our schools has captured the attention of many

educators in Canada. Today, there is greater awareness of equity and diversity, and most school groups have developed policy statements indicating that one of the roles of the school is to provide all students with experiences that will help them to live well-adjusted lives in a multicultural society (Coelho, 1998). Given that the ultimate objective of Multicultural Education is to teach students to live in a multicultural society, multicultural education is relevant in every classroom. Children need to learn to celebrate the richness of diversity, rather than to fear that which is different (Leicester, 1989). They need to receive an education that recognizes and values cultural diversity, rather than one that highlights differences and compels minority and ethnic children to fit into a host society. Multicultural education should permeate school life and the child's educational experience in their entirety, and involve all school staff members in working toward shared objectives.

Multiculturalism and Education in Newfoundland

In the autumn of 1981, a group of interested people met in the Newfoundland Teacher's Association boardroom to discuss the concept of multiculturalism and education (Yu, 1992b). In November of that year, 10 people were selected to attend the First National Conference on Multicultural and Intercultural Education in Winnipeg. In 1982, the Canadian Council for Multicultural and Intercultural Education was formed to establish a national network of people working in multiculturalism. The provincial representative was Mr. Jim Dobson.

Between 1982 and 1985, Mr. Dobson and a small group of educators actively promoted multicultural education. On October 31, 1984, the Newfoundland and

Labrador Association for Multicultural Education (NLAME) was formally established as a voluntary organization affiliated with the Canadian Council for Multicultural and Intercultural Education. Since its formation, this group has been committed to working with individuals and groups toward the goal of devising an educational system that will respond to the changing needs of an increasingly multicultural society (Yu, 1992). In 1986, Dr. R. Magsino and Dr. A. Singh conducted a study for the Secretary of State of Canada with the intent of generating possible recommendations for the promotion of multicultural education in Newfoundland and Labrador (Magsino & Singh, 1986). The researchers reviewed literature on multiculturalism and multicultural education, and surveyed the policies and activities being implemented in some provinces and school boards in Canada. They concluded that, given the ethnically homogenous nature of most communities in Newfoundland, the approach to multicultural education should aim for cultural understanding. However, in centres where there is a more diverse ethnic presence, Magsino and Singh (1986) suggested that elements of multicultural education should be incorporated into the curriculum for the purposes of cultural understanding. In addition, they proposed that attempts should be made to meet the needs of students belonging to cultural minorities in schools; these students should be given the opportunity for equal education and life opportunities. The researchers also indicated a need for education systems to promote cultural retention by minorities consistent with their accommodations and integration into the wider society, and that provisions for ethnic studies and heritage language studies should be explored. Their final recommendation was for ethnocultural groups and appropriate government education

officials to engage in dialogue regarding the delivery of multicultural education for the schools of Newfoundland and Labrador.

In 1987, the Newfoundland Teacher's Association (NTA) expressed its full support for multiculturalism, formulating its position in a document entitled *Multiculturalism: A Statement of Policy*. The NTA stressed its support for multiculturalism, and asserted that much has to be done in Newfoundland and Labrador schools to implement and attain the goals of multiculturalism (Yu, 1992a).

In 1990, the Department of Education established a multicultural Education Committee to review multicultural policies across Canada, and to draft a provincial multicultural policy for the Department of Education. Representatives of various cultural and ethnic groups, educational and service institutions, and advocacy agencies developed the policy over a two year period. In 1991, the draft copy was distributed to all school boards; special interest groups were formed and feedback on the policy was invited (Connors-Stack, 1995). In March, 1992, the policy was officially adopted by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's Department of Education. It was entitled *Multicultural Education Policy: Responding to Societal Needs*, and it continues to be used today.

In June, 2008, the government of Newfoundland and Labrador released the first provincial *Policy on Multiculturalism.* This policy is based on the review of existing policies on multiculturalism across Canada, and includes elements of the policies from the three Atlantic Provinces.

Conclusion

As a culturally rich country, Canada is increasingly accepting its responsibility for celebrating, preserving, and honouring its peoples' cultures so that each citizen can experience equality. The country's multicultural policies seek to formalize the systems needed to achieve these goals. A truly multicultural society, however, will only emerge when these policies have become fully integrated within the school systems and within individual classrooms throughout the country.

Education is the primary vehicle for multiculturalism (Yu, 1992a), as the educational system offers the most widespread and systemized mechanism for promoting diversity. Through schools, the principles embedded in the nation's multiculturalism policy can be implemented both comprehensively and effectively. All across Canada, Ministries, Departments of Education and School Boards have adopted policies and programmes in multicultural education, while educators are striving toward the achievement of multiculturalism.

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Running Head: MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

Multicultural Education

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Introduction

With the increasing numbers of people migrating from various countries to Canada and the United States, schools in North America are progressively characterized by their rich ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic diversity (Sleeter, 2007). As a result, multicultural education has become imperative in the 21st century.

Much of the research in the area of multicultural education (Banks & Banks, 2004; Gollnick & Chinn, 2002; Grant & Sleeter, 2003; Manning & Baruth, 2000) is U.S.-based and relates to the historical, demographic, and cultural reality of the United States. Banks (2004) has led research in the area of ethnic studies, and his work has been informative for educators, generating a foundation for the field of multicultural education. It is important, however, to recognize that, although most of the research is U.S.-based, there is a challenge in accepting the research for policy development in Canada. There are similarities between the two countries, but there are also huge differences. It is important, therefore, that we continue to develop our policies and procedures in the area and conduct more research in the area of Multicultural Education so that these policies can reflect relevant and meaningful issues within Canada.

Initially, as I researched the topic of multicultural education, I found myself unable to relate to what was reflected in the literature, as my personal experience of working with children from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds was minimal. It was not until I was faced with the challenge of meeting the needs of seven new Canadian students in our elementary school that I became truly engaged in the idea of multicultural education. When these students, with little or no English proficiency, and minimal or no educational experience, registered at our school and were placed in age-appropriate

classrooms, it became essential for me to learn as much as I could about meeting the needs of these children as a leader in the school.

Multicultural education means many different things to many different people; as a result, it is a term that is often misunderstood in education. Given the homogeneous nature of society in Newfoundland, especially in the smaller communities, I question the extent to which multicultural education is practiced. Undoubtedly, teachers are exposing students to different cultures through the cross-cultural sharing of foods, recognition of traditional days of celebration and festivals, and by infusing and supporting the curriculum with literature and videos. This, however, is only one part of multicultural education.

This paper is the second of three papers written in fulfillment of the Paper Folio component of my Master's Degree program. Its intent is to explore the concept and process of multicultural education by defining the term, reviewing the goals of the program, and exploring the five highly interrelated dimensions of multicultural education to gain an understanding of the role of the teacher and the multicultural education curriculum, as well as its implementation process.

Multicultural Education Defined

Multicultural education is a comprehensive approach to education that reflects the historical, demographic, and pluralistic character of our society. With cultural diversity and equal opportunity as its cornerstones (Hernandez, 1989), multicultural education emerged in the 1960s and 1970s from the different courses, programs, and practices that developed by educational institutions to respond to the demands, needs, and aspirations

of various groups within our society (Banks & Banks, 1989). Multicultural education is by no means a single course or educational program; rather, it represents a wide variety of programs and practices related to educational equity for women, ethnic groups, linguistic minorities, low-income groups, and people with disabilities (Grant & Sleeter, 2003).

In an attempt to clearly define the term *multicultural education*, it became obvious upon review of the literature that there was no one, absolute definition of the term; in fact, it can be defined in a number of ways. Interestingly, as a result of the range of definitions, the term has been criticized for its lack of unity. Banks and Banks (2007) define multicultural education as a:

> reform movement designed to change the total educational environment so that students from diverse racial and ethnic groups, both gender groups, exceptional students and students from each social-class group will experience equal educational opportunities in schools, colleges and universities. (p. 474)

They describe multicultural education as both an idea and a reform movement. First, they promote the idea that all students should experience educational equality in school, regardless of gender, ethnicity, race, culture, language, social class, religion, or exceptionality. Second, Banks and Banks view multicultural education as a reform movement, designed to bring about a transformation of the school so that both male and female students of diverse cultural, language, and ethnic groups will have an equal chance to succeed in school. Hence, if multicultural education is to be implemented and educational equality is to develop, all major components of the school must change (Banks & Banks, 2004).

Conversely, Gollnick and Chinn (2006) describe multicultural education not as a reform movement, but rather as an educational strategy in which students' cultural backgrounds are used to develop effective classroom instruction and school environments. Like Banks and Banks, however, these researchers see multicultural education as a concept that addresses cultural diversity and ensures that students are provided with the same access to social benefits regardless of gender, ethnicity, race, culture, language, social class, religion, or exceptionality (group membership). They also agree that, in order for multicultural education to become a reality in schools, the whole environment must reflect a commitment to this concept.

Bennett's (2007) definition of multicultural education is consistent with the definitions previously examined by Banks and Banks (2004) and Gollnick and Chinn (2006). Bennett describes multicultural education as "an approach to teaching and learning that is based on democratic values and beliefs and affirms cultural pluralism within culturally diverse society in an interdependent world" (2007, p. 4). Furthermore, she notes that multicultural education consists of four interactive dimensions: the movement toward equity, curriculum reform, multicultural competence (the process of being conscious of one's own and other cultural perspectives as a base for informed cross-cultural interactions), and teaching toward social justice, the commitment to combat prejudice and discrimination of all kinds, especially racism, classism, and sexism.

Nieto (2002) purports a more extensive definition of multicultural education that combines all of the definitions given above, providing an in-depth description of what previous researchers defined as multicultural education. She writes that multicultural education is

> a process of comprehensive school reform and basic education for all students. It challenges and rejects racism and other forms of discrimination in schools and society and accepts and affirms the pluralism (ethnic, racial, linguistic, religious, economic, and gender, among others) that students, their communities, and teachers reflect. Multicultural education permeates the schools' curriculum and instructional strategies, as well as the interactions among teachers, students and families, and the very way that schools conceptualize the nature of teaching and learning. Because it uses critical pedagogy as its underlying philosophy and focuses on knowledge, reflection, and action as the basis for social change, multicultural education promotes democratic principles of social justice. (p. 29-30)

Whether described as a reform movement, a catalyst for social justice, or an approach to teaching, multicultural education is an attempt to promote equality for the wide variety of students within the school and equity in the teaching of students, allowing each child the opportunity to succeed. Most scholars and researchers in the field of multicultural education agree that implementation at the school level requires a comprehensive approach. For the successful integration of multiculturalism within the curriculum, institutional change must take place in the nature of teaching materials, teaching and learning styles, attitudes, behaviours, and perceptions of teachers and administrators as to the goals, norms, and culture of the school (Banks & Banks, 2004).

Goals of Multicultural Education

According to Grant and Sleeter (2003), equal opportunity and culturalism are the ideals upon which multicultural education is based; it is from these ideals that the goals of multicultural education have been identified. The concept of equal opportunity entails that every child is given the chance to learn, succeed, and fulfil his or her aspirations with full affirmation of his or her race, sex, social background, sexual orientation, and/or disability. Unfortunately, equal opportunity does not automatically occur; rather, it must be deliberately and consistently implemented in order to be experienced by students.

Banks and Banks (2007) consider one of the major goals of multicultural education to be the transformation of teaching and learning approaches in such a way that male and female students from diverse cultural, ethnic, and language groups have equal opportunities to learn. Bennett (2007) adds that the development of the intellectual, social, and personal growth of all students to their highest potential is no different than the goal of educational excellence, which is also a goal of multicultural education.

The second ideal, cultural pluralism, is a process of compromise with mutual appreciation and respect between two or more cultures. In a culturally pluralistic society, ethnic groups are permitted to retain many of their cultural traditions, provided that they conform to those practices deemed necessary for social harmony and the survival of society as a whole (Bennett, 2007). This concept supports ethnic, gender, disability, and other groups as they enjoy and continue to develop distinctive group cultures (Grant & Sleeter, 2003).

Based on these two ideals, Grant and Sleeter (2003) and Banks (1989) have identified the following additional goals of multicultural education: to promote an

understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity; to promote alternative choices for people, with full affirmation of their race, gender, disability, language, sexual orientation, and social class background; to help all children achieve academic success; to promote awareness of social issues involving the unequal distribution of power and privilege, which limits the opportunity of those not in a dominant group; to help all students develop more positive attitudes toward different cultural, racial, ethnic, and religious groups; to empower students from victimized groups and help them to develop confidence in their ability to succeed academically and influence social, political, and economic institutions; and to help students to develop perspective-taking skills and to consider the perspectives of different groups. It is evident that, in order for multicultural education to become a reality, the entire school must be committed to it. This approach to education for all students calls for the reform of the entire classroom, and of the school itself. The diverse cultural backgrounds and micro-cultural memberships of students and families are as important in developing effective instructional strategies as are students' physical and mental abilities. Educators must understand the influences of racism, sexism, and classism on the lives of their students, and ensure that these biases are not perpetuated in the classroom (Gollnick & Chinn, 2002).

Five Dimensions of Multicultural Education

Based on their research, observations, and work in the field from the 1960s, Banks and Banks formulated five highly interrelated dimensions of multicultural education: content integration; the knowledge of construction process; prejudice reduction; equity pedagogy; and an empowering school culture and social structure. In an

attempt to implement school reform, educators can use these five dimensions as a guide. Sleeter (2007) concludes, however, that teachers and administrators must make a concerted effort to attend to these five dimensions in order to implement multicultural education effectively.

Content Integration

According to Banks and Banks (2004), "Content integration deals with the extent to which teachers use examples, data and information from a variety of cultures and groups to illustrate key concepts, principles, generalizations and theories in their subject area or discipline" (p. 13). The infusion of ethnic and cultural content into any subject area should be logical and not contrived (Banks & Banks, 2007). Banks and Banks (2004, p. 15) conceptualized four approaches to integrating ethnic content into the elementary and high school curriculum:

> Level 1: The Contributions Approach - This approach is characterized by the insertion of heroes, heroines, holidays, and discrete cultural artefacts into the curriculum. An important characteristic of this approach is that the basic structure, goals, and salient characteristics of the mainstream curriculum remain unchanged.
>
> Level 2: The Additive Approach – Using this approach, teachers append ethnic content, themes, and perspectives to the curriculum without changing its basic structure.
>
> Level 3: The Transformation Approach – This approach is designed to help students learn how knowledge is constructed. The structure of the curriculum is changed to enable the students to view concepts, issues, events, and themes from the perspectives of diverse ethnic and cultural groups.

Level 4: The Social Action Approach – This approach is an extension of the Transformation Approach. Students make decisions concerning important social issues and take action to help solve them.

The Knowledge Construction Process

The knowledge construction process is the second important dimension of multicultural education. This dimension "describes the ways in which teachers help students to understand, investigate, and determine how implicit cultural assumptions, frames of references, perspectives, and biases within a discipline influence how knowledge is created" (Banks & Banks, 2004, p. 14). For example, students can study how racism has been perpetuated in science by genetic theories of intelligence, Darwinism, and eugenics (Banks & Banks, 2007).

Prejudice Reduction

The prejudice reduction dimension of multicultural education describes lessons and activities used by teachers to help students to develop positive attitudes towards different racial, ethnic, and cultural groups (Banks & Banks, 2007). According to Banks and Banks (2007), children come to school with many misconceptions and negative attitudes concerning different racial and ethnic groups and, by the age of three, are aware of racial differences. This was surprising to elementary school teachers, as they typically believe that young children have little awareness of racial differences and hold positive attitudes towards African Americans and white people. Fortunately, however, Banks and Banks (2007) indicate that lessons, units, and teaching materials that include content related to different racial and ethnic groups can help students to develop more positive

inter-group attitudes, though images of these ethnic groups and multiethnic materials must be used in a consistent and sequential way.

Equity Pedagogy

Equity pedagogy, or the movement towards equity, exists when teachers modify their teaching in ways that facilitate the academic achievement of students from diverse racial, cultural, gender, and social class groups (Banks & Banks, 2007). Teachers can only modify their teaching if they first analyze their teaching practices and styles to determine the extent to which these reflect multicultural issues and concerns (Banks & Banks, 2007). By using a variety of teaching styles and approaches consistent with the wide range of learning styles within various cultural and ethnic groups, educational excellence can be achieved. Equity in education entails providing opportunities for students to develop to their fullest potential, with the underlying understanding that the potential of students may differ, and that different treatment based on their individual needs is required.

An Empowering School Culture and Social Structure

The final important dimension of multicultural education is to create a school culture and organization that promotes gender, racial, and social-class equity. In order to create a culture that empowers both male and female students from diverse racial and ethnic groups, all members of the school staff ought to participate in restructuring the culture and organization of the school. In order to create a climate and culture where all students feel empowered, careful consideration be given to the interaction of staff and students across racial and ethnic lines. In addition, staff must ensure that grouping and labelling practices, sports participation, course selection, and the definition of academic

achievement are unbiased (Banks & Banks, 2007). Further, there is general agreement among most scholars and researchers that, in order for multicultural education to be implemented successfully, there must be institutional changes made to the curriculum; teaching materials; teaching and learning styles; attitudes, perceptions and behaviours of teachers and administrators; and the goals, norms, and culture of the school (Banks & Banks, 2004, p. 3).

A truly multicultural approach is pervasive (Nieto, 2002). It permeates everything: the school climate, physical environment, curriculum, and relationships among teachers, students, and the community. It does not simply refer to a class or a teacher, but is rather a philosophy, a way of looking at the world.

Role of the Teacher

Today's classrooms are far from homogenous. Within one class, for example, there may be students of different gender, social classes, racial and ethnic backgrounds, linguistic proficiencies, cognitive abilities, and learning styles, levels of social development, and so on. The differences are endless. A successful teacher is one who acknowledges these differences, recognizes that diversity will affect learning, and works towards a classroom where diversity is celebrated (Tileston, 2004). For students to feel genuinely accepted, the teaching and learning process must demonstrate respect for cultural and ethnic differences, recognize the equality of different social classes, and accept all religious groups (Manning & Baruth, 2000).

According to Manning and Baruth (2000), the competencies of effective multicultural educators fall into three interdependent categories: attitude, knowledge, and

skills. The first competency needed for an effective multicultural educator is attitude. Attitude includes developing positive outlooks and values, creating culturally-appropriate learning environments, and modeling respect for the child and concern for all people. In a multicultural education classroom, the teacher's responsibility is to make students aware of the ethnic diversity of the nation and the world, irrespective of how assimilated students in a classroom may be (Gollnick & Chinn, 2006). None of the instructional strategies will work unless the teacher is aware of, and values, ethnic differences and their importance in the curriculum (Gollnick & Chinn, 2006).

Knowledge includes an understanding of individual learners' cultures. Knowledge of other cultures broaden perspectives of diversity in the classroom. Teachers who have an understanding of their students' backgrounds and cultures have a better understanding of the various skills that contribute to their learning; therefore, they are better able to incorporate culturally-different approaches into their instruction (Gaitan, 2006). Multicultural education is inclusive teaching, respecting and incorporating diversity throughout the learning process. If race, ethnicity, class, and gender are not interconnected in the curriculum, students do not learn that these are interrelated parts of them (Gollnick & Chinn, 2006). If the teacher fails to understand the cultural factors, in addition to the intellectual and physical factors, that affect student learning and behaviour, it will be impossible to promote the students' learning (Gollnick, 2006).

The final competency required for an effective multicultural educator is skills. Skills include recognizing and responding appropriately to learners' strengths and weaknesses, and responding to the relationship between learning styles and culture. Teachers should use their knowledge about students' cultures and make the academic

content of teaching more meaningful to the students by relating it to their own experiences and building on their prior knowledge (Gollnick, 2006). Educators who practice multicultural education in their classrooms are constantly learning about and providing for the needs of their students. Multicultural learning and teaching creates an educational culture that is constantly reacting and changing to meet the needs of all students (Cristol, 2001).

It is important to recognize that these three attributes are interrelated, and do not exist in isolation. Teachers who work in an environment that promotes multicultural education are responsible for building their expertise in these areas so that they can provide learners with the most effective learning environment (Manning & Baruth, 2000).

To teach within a multicultural classroom, one must always consider how the dynamics of social organization, race, social class, ethnicity, language, gender, and disability influence the teaching process. The manner in which a teacher sees the importance of these dynamics will affect his or her understanding of the students, and how he or she interacts with them. Studies of teaching and the overall school atmosphere have consistently revealed that the quality of the students' schooling experiences is dramatically influenced by such factors as economic status, race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation. In order to promote high quality schooling experiences for all students, teachers need to learn more about the diversity in students' backgrounds and the ways in which it impacts the teaching–learning process (Marshall, 2002).

Race

Race refers to immutable physical characteristics only, and should not be confused with culture. It is a social construction used to group humans according to observable traits such as size, skin colour, and hair texture (Trusty, Looby, & Sandhu, 2002). Individuals from any social group may become competent in any cultural milieu they access. Scientists estimate that only a tiny fraction of our genetic makeup is associated with racial features. If teachers are to have equally positive expectations of students of all races, they must understand the difference between race and culture, and the cultural differences that often exist within their classroom.

The improvement of race relations through the reduction of prejudice and racism is a central goal of multicultural education. A teacher whose goal is to reduce prejudice and discrimination requires an understanding of the prevalence and nature of prejudice as well as an understanding of prejudice, stereotyping, discrimination, racism, and individual perspectives on racial or ethnic identity (Bennett, 1999). Prejudice is a (usually negative) attitude based on preconceived judgments or beliefs that develops from unsubstantiated or incorrect information. It is typically learned from people who have significant influence in our lives such as parents and peers, experiences in school, and societal messages in films, television, and news media (Bennett, 1999). Prejudice can be directed at an individual within a group, or towards the entire group. It can be based on, or related to, race, gender, age, ethnicity, class, religion, and so on. While prejudice is an attitude, the attitude is often reflected in the individual's actions through such practices as telling ethnic jokes, talking about certain groups of people, or avoidance of particular areas or places because the negatively viewed group frequents them. Prejudice becomes

discrimination when the individual actively excludes members of the group or denies their participation in a desired activity. Acts of discrimination can range in intensity from exclusion to violent action. While discrimination usually stems from prejudice, individuals who are not prejudiced may discriminate unintentionally because they are unaware of fair societal practices and policies (Bennett, 1999). Although cultural similarities exist among people from a cultural group, gender, or social class, regional and individual differences also exist. Hence, it is important not to stereotype children's behaviour.

Ethnicity

An ethnic group is a community of people within a larger society that is socially distinguished by others and/or by itself; this distinction is primarily based on racial and/or cultural characteristics such as religion, language, and tradition. While an ethnic group is described as separate from the larger society, it is not an absolute category of people. Even within relatively well-defined ethnic groups, there exists tremendous heterogeneity (Bennett, 1999). Within an ethnic group, there are variations among individuals in such variables as income, education, skin color, values, beliefs, and behaviours.

Language

Language diversity has a strong influence on the content and process of schooling practices. It is a set of skills that enables children to function in a world of social interaction. According to Grant and Sleeter (2007), teachers play a primary role in constructing how a student's language will serve that student. Teachers who advocate multicultural education argue that a teacher who respects a student's home language will

influence how the student accepts this and, even more fundamentally, whether and how the student accepts his or her identity.

Teachers who have students in their classrooms whose first language is not English need to understand that all students bring knowledge and linguistic skills to the classroom. Thus, one of the teacher's first tasks is to provide an environment in which students can connect new language skills and information with what they already know. Teachers need to understand that it takes a student between five and seven years to develop adequate proficiency in a second language as it relates to the academic context. In contrast, children can pick up social language on the playground relatively easily from the numerous contextual cues that facilitate comprehension. Language is the primary vehicle for teaching new concepts, and in the higher grades, the vocabulary and sentence structures become more complex (Grant & Sleeter, 2007).

Gender

The term *gender* refers to thoughts, feelings, and behaviours that identify an individual as either male or female (Manning & Baruth, 2000). While there are many similarities between male and female students, teachers need to identify the differences that exist between them in an effort to treat all students equally. The multicultural education program should accept, appreciate, and address gender differences within the classroom as an integral component.

According to Banks and Banks (2004), at all levels of schooling, there exist interaction patterns whereby boys are called on more than girls, asked greater numbers of higher and lower order questions, and given more specific feedback, praise, constructive criticism and remediation than are girls. Gender differences have also raised concerns in

areas that include health, social networks, self-esteem, self-image, achievement, and sex roles, attitudes, and behaviours.

Teachers within a multicultural classroom ought to take the time to plan appropriate educational experiences, and to clarify stereotypical beliefs that exist between males and females. They need to be aware of and confront stereotyping and gender biases in texts, literature, videos, and other media, and provide supplementary materials to offset the influence of limited texts. Most importantly, they need to demonstrate the range of possible gender behaviours through their own actions. Role-modeling is central to learning (Banks & Banks, 2004). Students who observe the teacher "doing" are more likely to "do" themselves.

Social Class

Socioeconomic differences play a significant role in determining how a person acts, thinks, lives, and interacts with others. Teachers, for example, who come from middle or upper-class backgrounds, may have great difficulty understanding the social and economic problems faced by children from lower socioeconomic homes. Further, Banks and Banks (2004) caution that differences in values between students and teachers may represent social-class differences, as many minority-group learners come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Many teachers do not relate to a child's experience of poverty, hunger, low wages, lack of property, or unfulfilled basic needs; sadly, teachers may unconsciously form different learning expectations of students based on their social class backgrounds (Banks & Banks, 2004). Ritts, Patterson, and Tubbs (1992) have discovered that teachers' expectations of students can be influenced not only by their behaviours and physical appearance, but also by negative information received about the

student, regardless of the positive information received. In order for students to attain greater educational equity, it is essential that teachers' expectations of lower socioeconomic class students be realistic and positive.

Disability

A child with special learning needs often encounters challenges, including discrimination. Some students are labelled as exceptional or gifted learners, learning or physically disabled, handicapped, or at risk; the terms are many and diverse. Despite the terms used, however, students with special needs must have them met in the classroom, just as those considered mainstream have their needs met. Providing educational equity to all students is one goal of multicultural education. Treating them as individuals, as opposed to children with special needs, may be the most important factor in providing true educational equality (Banks & Banks, 2004).

Students from culturally-distinct backgrounds are sometimes placed in special education programs because educators assume that their learning difficulties are a result of disabilities rather than linguistic or cultural differences. This neglects the specific needs of the individual child, forcing the child to fit a pre-existing program/curriculum.

Inclusion has been the educational direction taken to provide a more welcoming learning environment to meet the needs of diverse groups of students within the classroom. Teachers who practice inclusion adjust the way in which they teach in an effort to meet the needs of the students, rather than expecting children to fit into the curriculum. This approach to teaching and learning encourages teachers to vary their instructional practices according to the characteristics of the classroom (Paterson, 2005).

In an effort to better integrate content concerning racial, ethnic, cultural, and language groups into the school curriculum, and to teach effectively in the multicultural classroom, Banks (2007) designed the following fourteen guidelines:

1. Teachers are extremely important in the teaching of the multicultural content. With the necessary knowledge, attitudes and skills teachers can use their own personal experiences to teach important lessons about the experiences of varied ethnic, racial or cultural groups.

2. Knowledge about ethnic groups is needed to teach ethnic content effectively.

3. Teachers need to be sensitive to their own racial attitudes, behaviours and the statements they make about ethnic groups in the classroom.

4. Teachers need to ensure that the classroom conveys positive and complex images of various ethnic groups.

5. Teachers need to be sensitive to the racial and ethnic attitudes of the students and not accept the belief that "kids do not see colors". They must not ignore the racial and ethnic differences that are evident but try to respond to these differences positively and sensitively.

6. Teachers need to be judicious when choosing and using teaching materials. They need to highlight to students when an ethnic, racial cultural or language group is being stereotyped, omitted or described in Eurocentric and Anglo centric points of view.

7. Teachers need to use a variety of materials to supplement the textbook treatment of ethnic, cultural and language groups and present the perspectives of these groups to the students.

8. Teachers need to explore their own cultural and ethnic heritage and share it with their students. This will assist them in creating a sharing climate in the classroom and will help other students to get in touch with their own ethnic and cultural roots.

9. Teachers need to be sensitive to the possible controversial nature of some ethnic studies materials. They need to keep their teaching objectives in mind when choosing materials.

10. Teachers need to be sensitive to the developmental level of the students when selecting concepts, content, and activities related to racial, ethnic, cultural and language groups.

11. Teachers need to believe in the ability of all students and be willing to help them to succeed, regardless of their color. Students are more likely to achieve highly when their teachers have high expectations of them.

12. Teachers need to keep in mind that parents of color are interested in education and they do want their children to succeed in school. These parents need to enlist as partners in their children's learning.

13. Teachers need to use cooperative learning techniques and group work to promote racial and ethnic integration in the school and classroom.

14. Teachers need to make sure that school plays, pageants, cheerleading squads' publications and other formal and informal groups are racially integrated. Various ethnic and racial groups should have equal status in school performances and presentations. (p. 262-265)

A Multicultural School Curriculum

Since the 1960s, educators have tried to move away from the mainstream-centric and Euro-centric curriculum and to integrate more multicultural content into the school curriculum (Banks & Banks, 2007). Traditionally, school curricula have been centered in the dominant culture, and special units or assemblies about specific ethnic people or topics have been included at certain times of year.

Multicultural education, in addition to this traditional practice, encourages a culturally responsive curriculum in which diversity is integrated throughout the courses, activities, and interactions within the classroom (Gollnick & Chinn, 2002). In a multicultural curriculum, ethnic diversity would be incorporated throughout. It would permeate all subject areas at all levels of education, from pre-school through to adult education. All courses would make accurate and positive references to ethnic diversity, and an awareness of the multiethnic nature of the nation would be reflected in all classroom experiences.

While the opportunities to integrate ethnic and cultural content into social studies, language arts, and music are greater than in mathematics or science, it is possible to generate a successful curriculum that is multicultural in all subject areas. Drawing on multicultural material in the classroom ought to be a natural, uncontrived practice. Often, the use of multicultural content is superficial and teachers are unwilling, unprepared, or both, when it comes to substantively engaging in the material.

In many schools, the development of a multicultural curriculum requires the educator to evaluate textbooks and classroom resources for ethnic content and biases (Gollnick & Chinn, 2002). There is often a profound mismatch between students' cultures and the content of the curriculum. In one study, a third of the students in a desegregated junior high school said that none of the class content related to their lives outside of class (Sleeter & Grant, 1991). Nieto (2004) stated that "it makes sense to begin with what the students know" (p. 182). The most effective teachers have been those who take active steps in connecting learning with their students' background, and who examine the curriculum to see how well it connects to the social context of the students' interests and experiential backgrounds (Grant & Sleeter, 2003, p. 201). Shor (1992) stated that "what students bring to class is where the learning begins. It starts there and goes places" (p. 44). Teachers need in-depth knowledge about ethnic cultures and experiences in order to integrate ethnic content, experiences, and points of view into the curriculum (Banks & Banks, 2007).

Multicultural education ought to include learning experiences to help students examine their own stereotypes and prejudices concerning ethnic groups. This topic is difficult to explore at times because of its nature, but it should be part of the curriculum at

a very early stage. When students use derogatory terms for ethnic groups or tell ethnic jokes, teachers should take the opportunity to discuss attitudes about these groups. It is the teacher's responsibility to ensure that ethnic groups become an integral part of the curriculum. Students should be encouraged to read literature by authors from different ethnic backgrounds and, in the lower grades, teachers should ensure that the illustrations and texts reflect various cultural and ethnic experiences.

Teachers ought to remember to select material that portrays the contributions and perspectives of a variety of cultural groups that are equitably represented. Fortunately, multicultural curricula that address a wide variety of perspectives have become available for use in classrooms.

According to Gollnick and Chinn (2002), a multicultural curriculum helps to prevent the distortion of both history and the present. While the authors realize that it is not possible for the teacher to discuss every ethnic group fully, they argue that the teacher should be responsible for ensuring that the classroom resources and instruction do not focus solely on the dominant group. In a multicultural curriculum, when discussing historical and cultural events, teachers should engage all students in discourse and encourage the perspectives of both the dominant and non-dominant groups.

A multicultural curriculum must attend to the hidden curriculum: teachers' values and expectations, student cliques and peer groupings, and school regulations. It must also address the values, cultural styles, knowledge, and perceptions that the students bring to the school. Furthermore, a multicultural curriculum will influence the total school environment (Bennett, 1999).

History of Multicultural Education in Canada

Historically, the diverse cultures of students represented in Canadian schools have neither been celebrated nor positively reinforced. Rather, "the education of minority groups was first characterized by a policy of assimilation" (Ghosh, 2002, p. 34). It has only been in recent years that the multicultural nature of our society has been acknowledged by the provincial education systems.

In Canada, provincial governments are responsible for the implementation of the federal multicultural policy in education. The federal government will assist in the development of multicultural programs and research in education, but it does not guarantee its implementation within each province. Currently, all Canadian provinces and the Yukon Territory have developed multicultural education policies. There are, however, considerable differences between these policies. In Newfoundland and Labrador, the Department of Education's multicultural policy was adopted in March, 1992, and is still in effect at the present time.

According to Ghosh (2002), multicultural education began in Canada with the observance of multicultural days; it then progressed to the study of other cultures beyond the dominant French and English Canadian cultures. As the movement continued, ethnic content was introduced into the curriculum and the stereotypical portrayal of minority groups was removed. With the aim of developing a sense of identity and positive self-concept in ethnic minority students, provincial governments began to hire visible, minority teachers. Despite this concerted attempt to become multicultural, however, ethnic-minority students continued to be discriminated against, and did not have the same opportunities as students belonging to the majority groups. The curriculum, for example,

was still considered Euro-centric. Racism and discrimination against some minority students in the schools still existed, and the school culture continued to marginalize or exclude minorities (Ghosh, 2002).

As multicultural education develops in Canada, attempts are being made to broaden the base of school knowledge by incorporating different worldviews into the curriculum and moving beyond the traditional male, middle class, Eurocentric bias (Ghosh, 2002). More recently, anti-racism and ethno-cultural education policies and programs have been developed and implemented in some provinces in an effort to meet the specific needs of the population.

Criticisms of Multicultural Education

Although the multicultural approach to education has been actively promoted, it has also received widespread criticism (Sleeter & Grant, 2007). Some critics argue that the focus on race and culture in schools creates a potential for conflict and divisiveness between the people that may harm the national unity of the country (Bennett, 1999). These critics contend that only English should be taught in schools, and that maintaining any first language other than English threatens the cohesiveness and unity of the population. Similarly, critics argue that the idea of multiculturalism stresses differences at the expense of our common bonds, driving us apart rather than keeping us together (Manning & Baruth, 2000). These opponents of multicultural education assert that when everyone sheds their past, a common culture is created that unifies the people (Marshall, 2002).

One serious limitation of multicultural education is that education for the culturally different is a condescending approach (Bennett, 1996). This method assumes that a student's failure in school results from cultural differences, although teachers stress the value and acceptance of cultural diversity. Other critics maintain that the program may not be representative of parents' expectations; parents may not always agree with, and may actually resent, the school's efforts to have their children think positively about specific groups (Manning & Baruth, 2000). If this is the case, more cooperation between the school, parents, and community would be required in order to inform and change parental and community attitudes with a view to ensuring the success of multicultural education.

There are impediments to the implementation of multicultural education. Few teachers have received a multicultural education themselves, so acquiring this skill requires considerable commitment, time, and creativity (Sleeter & Grant, 1999). Teachers need to acquire a broad and multicultural knowledge base, gain an understanding of differing cultures, and explore values and views of their own that inform their teaching. Teaching about the cultural practices of other people without stereotyping or misinterpretation is difficult. Added to this is the challenge of teaching about one's own cultural practices without discriminating against the practices of others. Educators do not always understand the difficulties associated with multicultural education.

One of the most prevalent criticisms in the literature is that the field of multicultural education lacks a coherent, stable definition. There are many misconceptions about the nature of multicultural education. Some critics claim that many teachers focus on surface culture such as food, dress, crafts, literature, language, and

festivals. As a result, students do not learn, nor are they encouraged to appreciate, aspects of deep culture such as concepts of courtesy, time, beauty, and personal hygiene (Bennett, 2000).

Marshall (2002) noted that some people consider multicultural education to be superficial because it does not address the source of the problems manifested in schools. Similarly, others argue that multicultural education has nothing to do with improving the quality of schools, but rather with promoting the interests of racial and ethnic minority groups.

Some liberal critics argue that multiculturalism could characterize all cultural practices as acceptable, including torture, genocide, and the suppression of women's rights; this could lead to "moral anarchy" in the absence of guiding principles or values to organize society. Other critics see a conflict between multicultural education and religious beliefs. Still others criticize the material being taught, and suggest that sound intellectual scholarship could be replaced by "politically correct trivia and dogma" (Bennett, 2007, p.11). Furthermore, multicultural education is sometimes criticized for not adequately addressing issues related to the power and oppression that keep a number of groups from participating equitably in society (Gollnick & Chinn, 2006).

These criticisms do not represent all of the arguments that may be found in the literature, but they give an overview of the current controversy. While the issue of multicultural education continues to receive both negative and positive attention, it is the responsibility of educators to develop their own views of multicultural education, as well as how the relationships among society, school structures, and contexts influence learning. Multicultural education is important in any setting, regardless of the

demographics of the students. It undoubtedly helps students to negotiate the multicultural society in which they live.

Conclusion

Within a school that promotes multicultural education, educators have a dual responsibility. First, they must provide students with many opportunities to explore diversity so that they can understand and appreciate the differences that exist within their own society. Second, they must ensure that every child is given an equal opportunity to learn and succeed. This, however, is not the sole responsibility of teachers. For multicultural education to become a reality in schools, all staff members, students, parents, and members of the community must make the commitment.

Multicultural education is not the way of the future; rather, it is the way of the present. It is an approach to education that reflects the needs and demands of a growing and ever changing society. It is an approach to education that teaches all children to be global citizens who function successfully in a multicultural world.

Mahatma Gandhi said, "We must be the change we wish to see in the world." As educators of multicultural education, we must nurture our students by modeling acceptance and respect for diversity in our own acts. We must teach our students to understand, accept, and respect the multiplicity of cultures, traditions, races, ethnicities, genders, sexual orientations, and social backgrounds. If we want to create a world where people live together in greater harmony, we need to practice this and teach our students how to do so as well. A multicultural approach to education is the way to achieve this goal.

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Running Head: MULTICULTURAL COUNSELLING

Multicultural Counselling

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Introduction

As we move into the 21st century, our society is becoming increasingly multicultural and diverse. As a result, cultural differences and ethnicity have become important considerations in the field of counselling. In the past forty years, multicultural counselling has become a major focus in psychology and counselling literature in both Canada and the United States. According to Lee, Blando, Mizelle, and Orozco (2007), the nature of the counselling process and the role of the counsellor need to change in order to ensure currency and relevancy within the profession. The recognition that counsellors need to incorporate culture sensitivity into the counselling process has led to dramatic changes within this professional area.

All counsellors, regardless of their working environment, need to be cognizant and understanding of the cultural differences in our society in order to meet the mental health and wellness needs of individuals, families, groups, and communities. As our society becomes more multicultural and diverse, counsellors are increasingly assisting clients with differing customs and traditions, values, and perspectives concerning life events. Counsellors and/or psychologists are no longer able to ignore the cultures of their clients or what they identify as their own culture. They must acknowledge the impact that multiculturalism has had on counselling and reflect such societal changes in their professional practice. Understanding the complex social and cultural background of each client is integral to a successful relationship between the counsellor and the client.

Sarma-Debnath and Castano (2007) assert that "In the past ten years, Newfoundland and Labrador has seen a considerable increase in the number of immigrant students whose culture, ethnicity, language, and religion are significantly different from

those of the mainstream students" (p. 6) As a counsellor in a St. John's elementary school, this change in the school population has had a significant impact both on my role as a counsellor and the direction in which my professional development has evolved. In an effort to meet the needs of these students in the best way possible, I have immersed myself in learning about the cultures of the new students; I have also studied the areas of multicultural and inclusive education, as well as differentiated instruction, extensively. I find myself working more and more closely with the school liaison from the Association for New Canadians, organizing interpreters for parent–teacher conferences, working with our new families on varying issues, and meeting regularly with administration, ESL teachers, and classroom teachers in an effort to provide the best learning environment for students.

Through its recognition of both the diversity of students and the importance of multicultural education, the objectives of this paper are to provide an overview of multicultural counselling, review the competencies required to become an effective counsellor, and examine how the role of the school counsellor is evolving within this environment.

Cultural Identity

To explore the concept of multicultural counselling, it is essential to examine the core constructs that impact our understanding of multiculturalism, and how these variables influence an individual's cultural identity. According to Ibrahim, Ohnishi, and Wilson (1994), cultural identity refers to an individual's definition of him or herself from a cultural perspective. Stewart (2005) defines cultural identity as "an individual

psychological process concerned with the individual's retention of cultural characteristics" (p. 245). Race, ethnicity, and culture are powerful variables in influencing how people think, make decisions, behave, and define events and relationships. As there are many ways to describe race, ethnicity, and culture, it is important that these definitions be clarified in order to understand how they influence the diverse characteristics of individuals, families, and groups.

Race

Skin pigmentation, facial features, and the color and texture of body hair are visible physical characteristics of an individual produced by the interaction of the genetic makeup of the individual and the environment (Trusty, Looby, & Sandhu, 2002). These characteristics have been used to categorize groups of people into different "races." The concept of race was historically defined as being biologically determined. Currently, however, most writers take the position that it is a socially constructed concept, externally defined by others (Norton & Coleman, 2003). Moreover, research (Lee et al., 2007) has indicated that racial groups are not homogeneous, and that there is often more diversity within a racial group than between groups. More recently, race has also taken on a social meaning related to how outsiders view members of a racial group, and how individuals within the racial group view themselves, members of their group, and members of other racial groups (Trusty et al., 2002).

Ethnicity

Ethnicity is a more complex construct than race that is used in describing individuals. Trusty et al. (2002) define ethnicity as the "culture, customs and traditions of a group of people" (p. 57). In some definitions, ethnicity has also included race, physical

characteristics and national, geographical, or tribal origins (Lee et al., 2007). Ethnicity is also influenced by the political climate, changes in the historical views of ethnic groups, and the current impact of economic forces on society as a whole (Trusty et al., 2002). Phinney (1996) stated that

> there are 3 aspects of ethnicity that impacts the psychological well-being of individuals: a) the cultural values, behaviors and attitudes that distinguish one group from another; b) the group members' subjective sense of what it means to be a member of the ethnic group; and (c) the experiences associated with minority status such as discrimination and powerlessness. (p. 923)

If race, ethnicity, and their related functions are important to an individual, then it can be assumed that culture will also have an effect on how he or she functions (Trusty et al., 2002).

Culture

Culture, like race and ethnicity, provides a perspective as to the nature of a group of people. Rose (1997) defines culture as "the way in which people live, the rules they set for themselves; the general ideas around how they organize their lives; the things they feel are good or bad, right or wrong, or pleasurable" (p. 9). It incorporates the language, art, music, tools, religion, spirituality, values and beliefs, and other activities of a group. According to Nieto (2002),"culture consists of the values, traditions, social and political relationships and worldview created, shared and transformed by a group of people bound together by a common history, geographic location, language, social class and/or religion" (p. 139).

There is currently a lot of debate in the literature about the definition of multiculturalism and the extent to which it should be expanded to include other minority characteristics such as age, disability, educational level, religion, sexual orientation, gender, and socioeconomic status. Those who support the inclusive definition of multiculturalism emphasize individual differences. They recognize that clients, counsellors, and the counselling process are influenced by the ongoing discrimination and unequal treatment of individuals (Lee et al., 2007). Those who support the exclusive definition focus only on ethnic, racial, and cultural differences (Locke, 1990), and are concerned that the influence of racism will be ignored or diluted if other cultural differences are included (Jackson, 1995b). For this discussion, I will adopt the definition of the term *multicultural* from Arthur and Collins (2005), which includes a wide range of identity factors such as ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, mental and physical disability, socioeconomic status, age and sometimes language, education or religious/spiritual orientation.

Culture has been accepted as a critical factor in the delivery of counselling services for a number of reasons (Arthur & Stewart, 2001). First, counselling does not take place in a vacuum; rather, it occurs within the cultural context of an office, school, or college, and within a larger society or community. A client, for example, who seeks treatment in an environment that is culturally foreign, may be reluctant to initiate or engage in counselling. Second, the client and counsellor's culture must be considered when conducting a thorough assessment of a client and his or her perceived problems. Third, the process of counselling is culturally based in that its development was influenced by the historical and social influences of white, straight, able-bodied young

clients. In fact, in some cultures, seeking the help of a counsellor is not contemplated: in others, a word for counselling does not exist. Finally, there are times when culture may be the focus of the counselling process. Clients may be experiencing a cultural transition, cultural differences may be interfering with relationships, or it could be that a client has been a victim of cultural racism, sexism, or homophobia. In these cases where a client's personal culture differs vastly from that of mainstream society, the stress can become unbearable and culture itself may become the center of the counselling process (Lee et al., 2007).

Minority Groups

A fourth term that requires clarification in our understanding of multicultural counselling is *minority groups*. Races, ethnic groups, and cultures may be classified as a minority groups. Within each of these groups, there exist minority groups that have been discriminated against or subjected to unequal treatment at some time. According to Corey, Corey, and Callahan (1988), any group of people exhibiting cultural differences, including gays and lesbians, women, the elderly, and persons with disabilities, and that has been subjected to unequal treatment, is a minority group. All members of minority groups experience discrimination at some point.

Worldview

An analysis of multicultural counselling would not be complete without some discussion about the concept of worldview, since an individual's worldview is a true reflection of who they really are. Worldview is not an isolated concept; rather, it encompasses an individual's ethnicity, race, and culture. According to Sue (1981), an individual's worldview is "how a person perceives his or her relationship with the world"

(p. 73). Our worldview is composed of our attitudes, opinions, values, and beliefs, influenced by our cultural heritage and life experiences, and affects how we think, make decisions, behave, or define events (Sue & Sue, 1999). Further, Stewart (2005) defines worldview as "a complex psych-social construct that involves a number of variables including nonverbal behaviour, perceptions of self and the cultural group of origin, language, and assumptions about human nature, time and causality" (p. 243).

Researchers have suggested that individuals from racial and ethnic groups have value systems and worldviews that differ significantly from those of individuals from the dominant culture; unsurprisingly, worldviews differ not only between cultures, but also between individuals within a specific culture. In fact, research has shown that a client's worldview is the most significant variable in cross cultural assessment and counselling (Grieger & Ponterotto, 1995). Understanding the worldview of clients from culturally diverse backgrounds will help counsellors to appreciate their client's ideas about various issues, including mental health and emotional difficulties, emotional expressiveness, beliefs about spirituality, expectations of authority figures, and the amount and type of information that can be shared outside the family unit (Aponte & Johnson, 2000). The worldview of one person may not be shared by racial/ethnic groups within the same country or by those who reside in a different country. Each cultural/racial group may have its own distinct interpretation of reality and offer a different perspective on the nature of people and the world.

History of Multiculturalism in Counselling

The study of multiculturalism is relatively new within the field of counselling. Traditionally, helping professionals in North America have been referencing and applying Western therapeutic theories to guide their thinking about the different types of problems that clients present in clinical settings. The use of any or a collection of these theories significantly influences how counsellors make sense of their clients' problems and the types of strategies they use in helping clients to address their concerns. However, since these counselling theories are rooted in European-American middle-class culture, they may be unsuitable and possibly harmful when used with culturally diverse individuals who have different beliefs about psychological illness and helping strategies (Ivey, D'Andrea, Ivey, & Simek-Morgan, 2002).

The multicultural counselling movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s stimulated a greater awareness of the relative effectiveness or ineffectiveness of traditional counselling theories used with people from culturally diverse backgrounds. Theorists identified the need to incorporate cultural sensitivity into the counselling process. During this time, racial and ethnic-minority psychologists in the United States formed professional groups and began pressuring the American Psychological Association to endorse their specific interests; other leaders in the field conducted research and published articles demonstrating that the current psychological services were not meeting the needs of ethnic and racial minorities (Patrick, 2007). At a major conference on the future of professional psychology, Korman (1973) cautioned that it was unethical for untrained staff or for those not competent in understanding to provide professional services to people of culturally diverse backgrounds. In addition, he stated

that it should be the obligation of all service agencies to employ competent persons or provide continuing education for current staff to meet the needs of the culturally diverse population they serve. In 1973, at a meeting of the American Psychological Association (APA) in Montreal, Canada, a group of seven psychologists participated in a symposium entitled "Counselling across Cultures." This led to the development and publication of the first edition of *Counseling across Culture* (Pedersen, Draguns, Lonner, & Trimble, 2002), which is generally recognized as the earliest of a number of comprehensive books addressing the challenges facing multicultural counselling.

By the late 1970s and early 1980s, the term minority counselling was replaced with cross cultural counselling and multicultural counselling; the term multicultural was also extended to include other groups such as those based on gender, age, religion, and sexual orientation (Patrick, 2007). In addition, a call was made for the development of identity models that extended beyond race and ethnicity, and a number of professional organizations within and beyond the counselling field were established. These were dedicated to expanding the understanding of cultural and diverse populations. By the 1980s, the need to focus on specific identifiable competencies in relation to multicultural counselling was identified. An ethical mandate was announced that identified the necessity of incorporating cultural diversity issues in education and training. The APA asserted that cultural competence was a requirement of professional competence. In 1982, the first formal description of the framework for multicultural competencies was developed by the Education and Training Committee of the APA.

Multicultural counselling continued to be at the forefront of research in the 1990s. In 1992, 31 multicultural competencies that needed to be attained for accreditation were

identified by the American Counseling Association (ACA). In 1996, these competencies were elaborated upon; moreover, an attempt was made to operationalize them. In addition, the terms multiculturalism and diversity were further differentiated, and multicultural counselling was proclaimed as the fourth force in psychology (Robinson & Morris, 2000).

In 1991, Pederson claimed that multiculturalism was a viable fourth force in psychology that had profoundly affected the counselling profession; he considered it a required foundational element along with psychoanalysis (the first force), behaviourism (the second force), and humanism (the third force). Other researchers agreed with this characterization, and the description of multiculturalism as the fourth force has grown out of the work of numerous authors (Pederson, 1999). Multiculturalism is considered to permeate all aspects of life and, as such, has been accepted in the counselling professions as a critical element in education, training, and practice (Patrick, 2007).

Multicultural Counselling Defined

The terms multicultural counselling and cross-cultural counselling were formulated in the late 1970s and early 1980s as a replacement for the term minority counselling (Jackson, 1995a). As previously stated, multiple terms were used to describe a counselling relationship where two or more of the participants had different cultural backgrounds, values, and lifestyles (Sue et al., 1982, p. 47). Nugent and Jones (2005) used the terms *multicultural counselling* and *cross-cultural counselling* synonymously, while Arthur and Collins (2005) use the term culture-infused counselling. Other terms

adopted in the literature include culturally-sensitive counselling, cultural competence, and culturally relevant intervention (Patrick, 2007).

In order to understand multicultural counselling, we must look at the definitions of both *multicultural* and *counselling*. *Multicultural*, of course, means having to do with a variety of cultures, while the term counselling, according to Arthur and Collins (2005), refers to

> a purposeful and collaborative relationship in which the counsellor draws on psychological, health promotion, developmental and educational processes to facilitate wellness, personal growth, healing, problem-solving and healthy personal and interpersonal development within individuals , groups, communities, or larger systems. (p. 16)

Some definitions are very simply stated, while others are quite extensive. Pederson (1988) defines multicultural counselling as "a situation in which two or more persons with different ways of perceiving their social environment are brought together in a helping relationship" (p. viii). Sue and Sue (2003), on the other hand, offer a more comprehensive definition of multicultural counselling:

> Multicultural counseling and therapy can be defined as both a helping role and process that uses modalities and defines goals consistent with the life experiences and cultural values of clients, recognizes client identities to include individual, group, and universal dimensions, advocates the use of universal and culture specific strategies and roles in the healing process, and balances the importance of individualism and collectivism in the assessment, diagnosis and treatment of client and client systems. (p. 325)

Arthur and Collins (2005) define *culture-infused counselling* as "the conscious and purposeful infusion of cultural awareness and sensitivity into all aspects of the counselling process and all other roles assumed by the counsellor or psychologist" (p. 16). Their use of the term reflects their view that culture is a core construct for understanding all people, and that counsellors approach their understanding of themselves and their clients from this perspective.

"Etic" or "Emic" Approach

There is ongoing debate in the area of counselling about the method that practitioners should adopt when working with multicultural clients. The first approach is the culturally universal, or *etic* perspective, and the second is the culturally specific, or *emic* perspective. Counsellors who use an etic approach focus on the commonalities that exist across cultural groups (Arthur & Collins, 2005). These practitioners assume that the origin, process, and manifestation of disorders in their clients are similar across cultures (Sue & Sue, 2003), and that certain core constructs and processes regarding the theory and practice of psychology transcend racial boundaries (Arthur & Collins, 2005; Trusty et al., 2002). This can be applied to various types of multicultural interactions (Patrick, 2007).

Those using an emic approach, on the other hand, suggest that perspectives that are culture-specific are more appropriate for conceptualizing the human experience; thus, counselling models should evolve from and reflect the specific characteristics of each cultural group (Trusty et al., 2002). These counsellors recognize individual differences within culturally different groups and work with clients within the context of their

primary cultural group. They would therefore study the specific culture of their client and adapt their techniques to suit the clients' needs (Fukuyama, 1990).

According to Das (1995), the best approach to counselling is a blend of the etic and emic methods. By integrating traditional counseling skills with acquired helping strategies from each culture, the counsellor should be able to engage actively in a counselling process that will best fit and meet the needs of the client. Modifying traditional counselling techniques to fit persons of various cultural backgrounds has been accepted as the best strategy by counselling professionals (Lee et al., 2007).

The Counsellor-Client Relationship

In order to create an effective relationship between the counsellor and the client, it is imperative that the counsellor become actively engaged in accurately perceiving the client's cultural identity. When clients from culturally diverse backgrounds seek counselling services, counsellors must initiate the relationship by establishing a rapport with the client and then assessing the personal and cultural variables that are influencing the client's behaviour and beliefs. In addition, it is important that the counsellor assess how the client functions within the dominant culture. With clients from racial and ethical minority groups, it is particularly important for the counsellor to attend to the cultural issues that may influence the client's perception of the counselling process and their expectations of its outcome (Pedersen & Carey, 2003). Sometimes, clients will need assistance in understanding who they are or identifying their cultural identity. Through conversation, the counsellor can delicately explore the clients' world from their accounts of personal experiences and how these experiences have affected them. Without the

counsellor's true understanding of the client's cultural background, the client may feel misunderstood and resentful toward the helping professional, hindering the effectiveness of the counselling relationship.

Numerous identity development models have been developed over the years to "describe the process that individuals may experience in becoming aware, accepting and positive in their attitudes about their own and others' racial/ethnic background" (Lee et al., 2007, p. 90). While many of these descriptive models are particular to individuals belonging to specific ethnic minority groups, such as Hispanic, black, or white people, others are considered applicable to a broad range of ethnic minority groups, as in the example of the Minority Identity Development Model (Trusty et al., 2002; Lee et al., 2007; Pedersen et al., 2002). While many parallels exist in the identity development of individuals within different ethnic groups, there are also many discontinuities. By studying these models in relation to stages of development, counsellors will be better able to understand the racial, ethical, and cultural identity processes of many individuals who request counselling services.

In order for the counselling relationship to be most effective, it is not only essential for the counsellor to assess the cultural identity of a client, but also to examine his or her own cultural identity and the extent to which it matches that of the client. Understanding one's own racial, ethical, and cultural identity is imperative when working with clients; this helps to ensure that the counsellor's own culture does not interfere with the counselling process (Colon, 1998). Pedersen and Carey (2003) state that

> counsellors must demonstrate flexibility in adjusting their styles to appropriately connect with the client, suspend their own stereotypes and biases and

> accommodate the needs and expectations of the client relative to the role the client desires the counsellor to assume in the relationship. (p. 241)

Effective Counsellors

Core Competencies

While the roles and responsibilities of counsellors vary considerably from one environment to another, there are core interpersonal elements in a counselling relationship that apply to all clients and are essential for an effective counsellor-client relationship. First, effective counsellors need to be aware of who they are and have a good understanding of their own worldviews. According to Cross (1988), it is impossible to appreciate the impact of culture on the lives of others, if one is out of touch with one's own cultural background. Thus, in order to meet the needs of their clients effectively, counsellors need a clear understanding of their own attitudes, beliefs, and values, and acknowledge the effect of these factors on their clients. In addition, they should be able to identify their motivations, dreams and desires, vulnerabilities, personal inadequacies, and biases. Effective counsellors need to be able to identify their own limitations and know when to seek both professional and personal support.

According to Nugent and Jones (2005), effective counsellors must not only have a good sense of self but must also have the sincere interest and facilitation skills necessary to get to know their client. They are respectful and empathetic; they are genuine, authentic, honest, trustworthy, and accepting of their clients in all circumstances. They must be objective and open to the values and beliefs of the client, aware of how the clients' values relate to their own values, and mindful of differences between them

without being judgmental or imposing their own views on the client (Nugent & Jones, 2005).

These core competencies are only some of the skills required of counsellors. Therapists who work in specialty areas or particular work settings require additional competencies that are specific to the work they do and the clients with whom they work (Nugent & Jones, 2005). With the increased diversity of our society, possessing these core characteristics for effective counselling is not enough. To be able to meet the needs of multicultural clients from diverse backgrounds, counsellors must be committed to developing their multicultural counselling competencies on an ongoing basis.

Multicultural Counsellor Competencies

Over the last thirty years, there have been numerous documents that identify the competencies a counsellor requires to function effectively in a multicultural counselling relationship. While the competencies developed were related to societal changes in the United States, Collins and Arthur (2005) state that they "have been assumed to be transferable and applicable across nations" (p. 42). In the literature, multicultural competencies are not presented as a list of isolated or specific skills required by counsellors who are working with clients with diverse backgrounds. Instead, they have been organized into conceptual models that provide counsellors with a framework for identifying and integrating the multicultural competencies into their professional practice.

In 1982, the Education and Training Committee of the American Psychological Association developed the first formal description of the framework for multicultural competencies. Eleven characteristics were identified as being necessary to provide effective counselling services to ethnic minority clients (Robinson & Morris, 2000).

These were categorized into the areas of attitudes and beliefs, knowledge, and skills (Sue et al., 1982). In 1992, Sue, Arredondo, and McDavis revised and expanded the number of competencies to 31 and reorganized them into the following three core characteristics: "counsellor awareness of own assumptions, values and biases, understanding of worldview of the culturally different client and developing appropriate intervention strategies and techniques" (p. 481). Each of these core characteristics was further defined using three dimensions: attitudes and beliefs, knowledge, and skills. In 1996, the Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development (AMCD) published a document that expanded Sue et al.'s (1992) version of the multicultural competencies. The expanded version maintained the same structure, but each of the competencies was elaborated upon and an attempt was made to operationalize the multicultural competencies (Collins & Arthur, 2005).

Much of the literature on multicultural competence has focused on the importance of awareness, knowledge, and skills. This three-stage developmental sequence "begins with the awareness of culturally learned assumptions, concentrates second on the knowledge about culturally relevant facts and then proceeds to the development of skills for culturally appropriate interventions" (Pedersen et al., 2002, p. 8).

Three-Dimensional Model of Multicultural Competency

Sue et al. (1992) identified 31 cross-cultural competencies and objectives endorsed by divisions of the ACA and APA in the broad areas of: a) "counsellor awareness of own assumptions, values and biases" (9 competencies), b) "understanding the worldview of the culturally different client" (7 competencies) and c) "developing appropriate intervention strategies and techniques" (15 competencies) (p. 481).

In addition to the three-dimensional conceptualization of multicultural competency, at least nine other models have been developed in an effort to describe the competencies required by multicultural counsellors (Lee et al., 2007). Arredondo et al. (1996) created a list of multicultural competencies based on the dimensions of the personal identity model. The model proposed by Sue (1998) consisted of three different dimensions of cultural competency: 1) scientific-mindedness, 2) dynamic-sizing, and 3) culture-specific expertise. The third dimension is similar to the cultural knowledge dimension included in the ACA multicultural counselling competencies and standards proposals and assessment measures. In a third model, Sue (2001) proposed that, in order to develop cultural competence, two additional areas must be added to the original three components of awareness, knowledge, and skills: the focus of competence (individual, professional, organizational, societal) and race- and culture-specific attributes (African American, Asian American, Latino/Hispanic American, Native American, European American) (Lee et al., 2007). While these three models for competency development only represent a fraction of those that exist, Mollen, Ridley, and Hill (2003) state that little empirical research has been completed on most.

A Revised Framework

In an effort to incorporate new ways of understanding culture-infused counselling competencies, Collins and Arthur (2005) have proposed a revised framework that incorporates both the current and historical work in this area. This new model is based on the assumption that the term culture includes race, ethnicity, and other factors such as gender, sexual orientation, age, and ability, and that it can be applied to all counselling relationships. The Collins and Arthur (2005) model illustrates that the awareness of one's

own cultural assumptions, values, and biases, and the understanding of the cultural context of the client, are core principles. As such, they are the basis for the wide range of functions that counsellors and psychologists perform. The creators of this new model specify that, at times, additional competences may be required when dealing with specific cultural groups or within particular areas of practice. In addition, they replace the intervention strategies and techniques construct of the previous model with the construct of the working alliance, and expand their discussion of culture-infused competencies in the domain of applied practice. In this proposed model, Collins and Arthur (2005) are able to extend their definitions in specific competency areas according to the dimensions of attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge.

The difference between the competency model proposed by Collins and Arthur (2005) and previous models is that, in previous models, the acquisition of specific competencies was the central focus. In contrast, the focus of this model is on the ability of the counsellor to integrate and apply the competencies identified across various dimensions in an effort to build an effective working relationship with the client.

Collins and Arthur (2005) describe their framework for culture-infused competencies in terms of a dial with a center that remains constant and three rotating rings that can be moved to line up with the competencies that are relevant in a particular counsellor-client interaction. At the center of the competency framework there are three core multicultural competency domains: cultural awareness of self, cultural awareness of client(s), and culture-centered working alliance. The first ring contains factors that describe cultural identities such as age, cultural heritage, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and ability. The second rotating ring describes areas of

practice, including factors such as assessment, social justice, research/evaluation, supervision, teaching/training, and organizational development. The third ring describes personal/contextual identity factors. According to Collins and Arthur (2005), the three core competencies can be applied across both the areas of cultural identities, in the first outer ring, and areas of practice, found in the second outer ring. The areas of practice and personal identity factor rings can be also be rotated to create a combination of factors that a multiculturally competent counsellor would consider when working with clients (Collins & Arthur, 2005).

Multicultural Competency Training

According to Arthur and Collins (2005),

> research on multicultural counseling competencies demonstrates that most graduates do not feel prepared for the realities of professional practice. The wide range of issues experienced by clients from culturally diverse backgrounds challenges counsellors to provide culturally responsive services that recognize and incorporate culture as an essential influence in all dimensions of service provision. (p. 35)

Multicultural competencies are becoming increasingly recognized as necessary areas of training for counsellors, who are working more and more often with clients from cultural groups different than their own. According to Lee et al. (2007), "Multicultural counselling training is a complex process that combines personal growth with content learning and skills development" (p. 30).

While several models have been proposed for multicultural competency training (Kahn, 1984; Ridley et al., 1994; Wehrly, 1991), the standards for training counsellors have been based on the three-stage developmental sequence for identifying multicultural competencies among counsellors created by Sue et al. (1982). According to Pedersen and Carey (2003), the three competencies of awareness, knowledge, and skills have been adopted by both the ACA and APA as standards for training.

Awareness is the first stage in the developmental sequence. In this stage, counsellors engage in activities that stimulate their reflection on their personal assumptions, attitudes, opinions, and values. They are encouraged to compare and contrast alternative viewpoints, identify constraints and opportunities in varying cultural contexts, relate or translate priorities in a variety of cultural settings, and gain a clear understanding of their own limitations (Pedersen & Carey, 2003). Pedersen and Carey (2003) state that "A well-defined awareness becomes essential for teaching, research, training, direct service and consultation" (p. 193).

In the second stage, knowledge, counsellors learn factual information about other cultures through discussions, lectures, and observation, as well as by reviewing the literature and examining the products of the culture. Based on the factual data collected, counsellors can gain an understanding of the differing cultures. If this stage is overlooked, then the counsellors' cultural awareness and skills will lack the essential foundation of facts and information in the multicultural context.

The last stage of the three-stage developmental sequence is skill. As multicultural awareness and knowledge increases, multicultural counselling skills may also grow, but it is at this stage that counsellors engage in specific techniques and strategies to develop

skills in multicultural counselling. Learning new skills and having opportunities to practice them will enhance counsellors' interactions with members of other cultures and lead to increased multicultural competencies (Pedersen et al., 2002). This would allow counsellors to become skilled in planning, conducting, and evaluating the multicultural contexts in which they work. They would also learn to interact, counsel, advise, and manage their tasks effectively (Pedersen & Carey, 2003). According to Lee et al. (2007), "Practical experience and ongoing interaction with diverse clients are crucial to the development of multicultural skills" (p. 19).

Leaders in the counselling profession are concerned about how well counsellor education programs prepare students for advising clients from cultural groups different from their own. According to Arthur and Collins (2005), "research with graduates generally concludes that students are not sufficiently prepared for working with a diverse clientele and they struggle with ways of bridging cultural differences" (p.15).

Multicultural training for counsellors varies from one institution to another. Most counsellor education programs offer only one course related to multicultural counselling. This approach is only a starting point for graduate students, and has been criticized for lacking the depth needed to foster a high level of awareness, knowledge, or skill, creating the potential for stereotyping, and preventing the integration of awareness, knowledge, and skills (Vasquez & Garcia-Vasquez, 2003). Formal training may also be obtained through the comprehensive incorporation of multicultural content in the course work, via field experience, or through a counselling practicum with minority clients. Although formal education in the area of multicultural counselling has only recently been included in post-secondary programs, many counsellors have taken the opportunity to attend

professional development sessions in an effort to become more informed. According to Trusty et al. (2002), "multicultural training should be comprehensive, intensive and inclusive in order to expand and enhance the trainee's prior multicultural learning and help them to overcome any cultural encapsulation they may bring to counseling" (p. 44).

There are still many counsellors who have not pursued either formal training or professional development related to multicultural counselling, yet work with culturally diverse populations every day. In a society that is rapidly becoming more diverse, counsellors ought to be prepared with sufficient awareness, knowledge, and skills. Developing multicultural counselling competence involves a lifelong learning process; it is the foundation for effective and ethical professional practice (Collins & Arthur, 2005). Thus, counsellors are obligated to enhance their professional competence in the area of multicultural counselling on an ongoing basis. According to Ridley and Kliener (2003), multicultural counselling competence "is not a luxury; it is a necessity. In fact, we argue that part of what it means to be competent as a professional is to be multicultural competent" (p. 15).

Instruments to Measure Multicultural Competency

Collins and Arthur (2005) point out that "Accurately assessing a student's or practitioner's level of multicultural competence continues to be a challenge that remains unresolved in the multicultural counselling literature" (p. 516). A number of standardized instruments have been developed that attempt to measure the multicultural competencies presented in conceptual models. These are designed to measure competencies against the framework for culture-infused counselling competencies. The first instrument, the Cross-Cultural Counseling Inventory – Revised (CCCI-R), is completed by the counsellor's

supervisor or other professional, who rates he counsellor on 20 Likert scale items. The other three measures are self-report Likert scale ratings: The Multicultural Awareness – Knowledge-Skills Survey (MAKSS), the Multicultural Counseling Knowledge and Awareness Scale (MCKAS) and the revised version of the Multicultural Counseling Awareness Scale – Form B (MCAS), and the Multicultural Counseling Inventory (MCI) (Arthur & Collins, 2005; Lee et al., 2007). However, although these measures are in place, researchers have concerns regarding their self-reporting nature, as well as their empirical foundations.

Role of the School Counsellor

The School Board and Department of Education determine the roles and responsibilities of the multicultural counsellor in a school setting. In most settings, school counsellors are actively involved in one-on-one counselling, providing guidance to students in a classroom or group, and the process of consultation, where they work collaboratively with other school counsellors, parents, teachers, administrators, school psychologists, social workers, visiting teachers, medical professionals, and community health personnel in an effort to plan and implement strategies to help students succeed in school. In addition to these traditional responsibilities, school counsellors are also involved in coordinating, organizing, managing, and evaluating the comprehensive school counselling program (Nugent & Jones, 2005).

As there is a heightened awareness of the needs of students from culturally diverse backgrounds in schools, it is critical that school counsellors recognize the unique and diverse cultures of all students, make a sincere effort to understand their cultures, and

modify or accommodate their counselling approaches and strategies in an effort to effectively meet their needs. Special considerations ought to be made when counselling students with diverse cultures, as there are both language barriers and barriers related to differing family and cultural values.

To identify all the roles and responsibilities of school counsellors working with students from diverse cultures is an impossible task. However, it is worthwhile to highlight recommendations made by Sarma-Debnath and Castano (2007), as well as Pederson and Carey (2003), on the roles and responsibilities of multicultural school counsellors. It will also be valuable to identify some of my own responsibilities as an elementary school counsellor working with an increasing number of students and families from different cultural backgrounds.

School counsellors working in an environment with students of diverse cultures need training or education in the area of developing their multicultural counselling competencies. Counsellors need to engage in self exploration in order to understand their own worldview. They need to learn about the diverse cultures of their students, and they need to develop their counselling skills in order to meet the needs of their students in the best possible way. All students have the right to one-on-one counselling services with a culturally competent counsellor who can help them both academically and emotionally. Primary and elementary school children who have just moved to a new country can suffer stress and trauma from their move; these students need individualized counselling. Children encountered by counsellors may have experienced traumatic conditions caused by war, left their country unwillingly, or left family members behind. These students often exhibit social difficulties, personal trauma and stress, and difficulties interacting

with teachers and peers; they require specialized counselling to overcome the effects of these obstacles and stressors (Sarma-Debnath & Castrano, 2007).

School counsellors need to provide a voice for the culturally diverse students at their school, and ought to assist administrators in providing the necessary resources, which may be above and beyond those currently available in the school. Schools often lack the resources to meet the special needs of their ethnic students. Appropriate literature, ESL support, and specially designed intervention programs that help students to acquire basic skills are only a few of the resources required. In addition, school counsellors can advocate for the provision of appropriate educational services for those children who experience severe gaps in their learning because they have not consistently, or never, attended school. Organizing after-school programs to assist these students with school work and/or homework completion can also be a responsibility of the school counsellor.

The school counsellor should model respect for cultural and ethnic differences to all members of the school community, including students, families, educators, and members of the ethnic community (Pederson & Carey, 2003). Too often, cultural differences are portrayed as weaknesses rather than strengths, and the school counsellor can combat this by demonstrating a personal appreciation of diversity. The counsellor ought to demonstrate that he or she is not prejudiced or racist, and that they he or she is knowledgeable and sensitive about issues related to cultural diversity. The counsellor can work with families, students, and members of the community in an effort to promote respect and appreciation for cultural diversity.

Parents of students with racial or ethnic minority backgrounds may encounter barriers to becoming involved in the school community. School counsellors can assist families in identifying and overcoming these barriers, as well as encouraging them to participate in their child's education and school activities. Parental involvement is essential, and is often considered the cornerstone of a child's education.

School counsellors can act as a liaison between the home, school, and community so that families can gain access to the services and opportunities they require. Counsellors can make use of community-based resources, such as the Association for New Canadians, and act as a "broker" of services required by the family. Providing a list of community and educational support services will be helpful in meeting the needs of culturally-diverse students and their families.

School counsellors sometimes mediate the ethnic-minority culture of the family to the school and larger community and, in turn, liaise the culture of the school and larger community to the ethnic minority student, the student's family, and the ethnic-minority community.

Increasingly, school counsellors work with teachers to develop activities that both help the students to understand different cultures and assist the teachers in understanding the "world" and culture from which the students have arrived. Cultural sensitivity training is needed on a regular basis. Given that racial and other prejudice exists in elementary schools, staff members can play a role in prevention and early intervention by engaging students in various types of cultural education (Pederson & Carey, 2003).

School counsellors working in a multicultural environment can develop and provide well-structured orientation programs, including PowerPoint presentations and

buddy systems for new students and their families. This will give them access to information, as well as helping them to integrate themselves into the school community. These programs will also assist the students in negotiating specific school situations that will require cultural interpretation, such as opening a locker, sitting at an assigned desk, and raising one's hand for permission to visit the washroom.

School counsellors can encourage friendship clubs that include all new students; they can invite a friend to attend the club with them weekly and do crafts, play games, or participate in sports. These functional, practical cues are effective in reducing the social isolation of new students, and encouraging new friendships.

Finally, practicing counsellors must be knowledgeable of the codes of ethics that regulate their practice. Professional bodies have developed codes of ethics for competent practice and specific guidelines for counselling clients from non-dominant populations.

Conclusion

Cultural differences exist within all populations. It is only within the last 40 years, however, that multiculturalism and counselling have merged to become an integral factor in the wellness of all individuals. For counsellors in today's society, it is important to strive toward becoming multiculturally competent. Gaining multicultural competence is a lifelong developmental process dependent on the continual acquisition of knowledge, the development and integration of new skills, and the ongoing self-reflective evaluation of progress. Understanding the complex social and cultural background of each client is integral to successful counselling (Lee et al., 2007).

Multicultural competence is important not only for counsellors and those in the helping profession, but also for the professional development of all educators. In order to foster the emotional, social, and academic growth of all students, there must be harmony between their educational and cultural experiences. This is especially the case for students from diverse cultural backgrounds.

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