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Using Art-Based Multicultural Interventions to Reduce Counselor Trainees' Ethnocentrism

Abstract

This qualitative research explored the use of the Cultural De-Centering Activity-Visual (CDCA-V) as a means of challenging culture-centrism in a graduate-level multicultural counseling course. Results indicated that the CDCA-V provoked students to question their received norms about religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and/or social class.

Keywords

multicultural education, arts-based learning, instructional strategies

Creating the collage really put it in front of me the person I have become and how that differs from my upbringing. (A participant)

A major purpose of multicultural counselor education is to help students know their cultural assumptions, thereby reducing the risk of imposing them on future clients. In particular, the Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development's Multicultural Counseling Competencies (Sue, Arrendondo, & McDavis, 1992) assert that, "Culturally skilled counselors are aware of how their own cultural background and experiences have influenced attitudes, values, and biases about psychological processes" (Arredondo et al., 1996, Item I.A.2). It is a task of counselor preparation to develop trainees' sensitivity to their own beliefs and attitudes about culture by becoming cognizant of how their current perceptions have been influenced by cultural background. Such a challenge requires a sound research-based pedagogy that triggers cultural decentering (Heppner & O'Brien, 1994; Smith, Constantine, Dunn, Dinehart, & Montoya, 2006). This requires learning experiences that are active and engaging (Dewey, 1938). Toward that end, counselor educators must design innovative teaching strategies for transforming student cultural self-awareness.

Multicultural Counselor Education and Cultural De-centering

Multicultural counselor education can be an epistemology-expanding experience in that it can move individuals from an objective reliance on cultural givens as universal truths to a recognition of cultural relativism. Thus, cultural givens move from absolutes to stories told by a community about how to live well. Greater cognitive complexity is required to live in a multicultural world, as individuals must confront variations on religion, sexual orientation, gender, race and ethnicity, to name some examples. High cognitive complexity can be defined as the ability to take multiple perspectives on issues and to be aware of the assumptions from which

one is operating. Low cognitive complexity, by contrast, is the tendency to take a single perspective on an issue, relying on one set of assumptions for answers. Greater cognitive complexity allows a person to question the assumptions from which she or he operates and to consider alternate possibilities. It increases choice, mitigating the tendency to rely on automatic, often culturally-derived answers to questions of what is right or good. Cognitive developmental theory plots the movement from lower to greater cognitive complexity (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1997; Kegan, 1998; Perry, 1998). In order to increase their complexity, individuals need to experience conflict, or dilemmas, about their ways of deciding what is good and right.

One expression of low complexity is the notion of ethnocentrism. It is one of the foci of multicultural counselor education. Ethnocentrism consists of a person's experiencing her or his culture as the only reality. It is characterized by an unquestioned acceptance of one's cultural norms as true and universal. In this article the term ethnocentrism will be used interchangeably with the broader notion of culture-centrism, which incorporates gender, religion, sexual orientation, social class, disability, and ethnicity (McAuliffe, 2013). It follows that a pedagogy that has a strong impact on such a solipsistic stance and its attendant ethnocentrism would be desirable. Such pedagogy would challenge a person's cultural embeddedness in a single worldview (Kegan, 1998). It would offer a whole new way of knowing, one that considers alternate perspectives rather than strict adherence to inherited norms. To achieve this end, the teaching approach would emphasize a major experiential component as experience, accompanied by opportunity for reflection and deep processing, as an integral part of the learning process (Kolb, 1984).

Experience-based education is particularly rooted in the thinking of John Dewey (Dewey, 1938). Dewey called for educators to engage students with active, experiential methods. Those methods can be called “constructivist” (McAuliffe & Eriksen, 2011) in that they put the learner at the center of the action. The student is seen as a person who constructs meanings rather than receiving them without question from an authority (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1997; Burnett, Hamel, & Long, 2004). Experiential interventions that advance multicultural education should invite students to challenge their own ethnocentrism, recognize the impact of cultural upbringing, and identify the experiences that have affected their current perceptions. Such multicultural counseling interventions have not received sufficient attention in the counselor preparation literature. The focus has instead been on multicultural counseling itself (Arthur & Achenbach, 2002). It was the purpose of this research to extend knowledge of counselor preparation practices in the area of cultural alertness.

The Cultural De-Centering Model

One example of a theory-based experiential teaching method for reducing culture-centrism is the Cultural De-Centering Activity (CDCA) (see Appendix) developed by McAuliffe & Milliken (2009). It is based on the developmental theory of Robert Kegan (1998). Kegan’s developmental theory emphasizes the importance of presenting learners with contradictions to their received ways of knowing. The CDCA asks individuals to “de-center” from their cultural assumptions and to instead authorize chosen beliefs separate from the received cultural context. Research on the CDCA (McAuliffe, Grothaus, Michel, & Jensen, 2012) revealed that conventional and post-conventional thinkers could be distinguished from each other by their level of cultural de-centeredness in the responses on the CDCA.

The CDCA begins by asking the individual to name a received belief, from family, religion, or community. Then the individual is asked to name an opposite view, which represents Kegan's (1998) "culture of contradiction." The third question asks, "What is the basis for the original belief?" The individual is then asked to name her or his current belief, followed by the epistemological question regarding how she or he came to this belief. Such responses might indicate a received/conventional source of knowing or a relatively self-authorized (Kegan, 1998) one. The final question asks the students to set learning goals that might help them move in the direction of becoming more self-authorized, de-centered thinkers (i.e., less likely to see the world through their culture's lens).

Artmaking and Cultural Decentering

Although the verbal dimension of the CDCA activity stimulates personal inquiry into cultural self-awareness, the authors of the current research proposed that visual methods could provide a value-added dimension to the CDCA. For that purpose, the Cultural De-Centering Activity-Visual (CDCA-V) was created. Artmaking is an experiential learning activity that engages cognitive, emotional, and sensorial modes to transform ideas into symbolic and metaphoric language, resulting in a tangible product. As applied to multicultural counselor preparation, incorporating purposeful art-based learning strategies has been found to increase learners' appreciation of difference and capacity for compassion (Heck, 2001). Art-based challenges to ethnocentrism can ask counselor trainees to question the reality and origin of accepted cultural norms in a way that may be more engaging and accessible, especially for the visual and kinesthetic learner. Visual learners learn best by seeing graphics or watching a demonstration, rather than listening. Kinesthetic learners handle information through actually

doing an activity rather than reading about it or hearing it (Dunn, Griggs, Olson, Beasley, & Gorman, 1995).

Ethical and effective inclusion of art-based experiential learning in counselor education may be guided by research regarding the artmaking experiences routinely included in the multicultural education of graduate art therapy students. One foray into using artmaking to increase multicultural competence was described through personal experience by Coseo (1997). She wrote:

Artmaking provided a way to uncover stereotypes I was not consciously aware of, and proved to be a valuable tool in exploring and revealing [my] deeply held and denied feelings about African Americans. By removing barriers of denial, the art allowed me to gain a difficult and frank view of prejudices and stereotypes held.

(p. 156)

By reflecting on her imagery, Coseo (1997) recognized how her cultural beliefs were inherited from family and reinforced by community and society. This vivid recognition is the basis for using artmaking to reduce ethnocentrism. Doby-Copeland (2006) focused on cultural self-awareness by having art therapy trainees visually represent their responses to initial encounters with diverse others, especially identifying their stereotypes. To do this, she described a process of creating countertransference drawings and personal cultural symbols as a way to illuminate deeply-held implicit beliefs.

Another educational artmaking strategy that increased multicultural competency involved having students produce a layered collage followed by a reflective discussion (Linesch & Carnay 2005). Specifically, trainees first used a piece of cardboard with collage images that represented their cultural and professional identity (“layer of identity”). Afterward, they layered the collage

imagery with a “filter” of tracing paper. Students then were encouraged to visually respond to the underlying image by altering the tracing paper and naming themes that emerged, which the authors called the “layer or filter of culture.” On the second day, preceded by a film and discussion, students were asked to add a piece of construction paper to create a “layer of fear,” which encouraged students to explore their fears and resistances to cultural diversities. On the third day of the course, students were asked to develop a “layer of change.” This process aimed at uncovering and challenging culture-related biases, fears, and resistances.

Development of the Cultural De-Centering Activity – Visual (CDCA-V)

The original CDCA is depicted in the Appendix. Instead of using words, the layered collage technique developed by Linesch and Carney (2005) was used to provide a more direct, experiential process, one that might have more vivid impact on participants’ ethnocentrism due to its access to primary visual sensory processes in the brain (Sousa, 2011). The power of primary sensory experiences in learning is described by Jarvis (2012): “We experience the world through our senses... ; they are...us ‘touching’ the world directly” (p. 84). These experiences are opportunities for meaning-making if they go beyond sensations through reflection. The visual arts-based component represented the primary experience and the subsequent reflection activity addressed the meaning-making that participants might do around culture-centeredness. This research was designed to explore the potential for a visual arts-based multicultural activity to trigger cultural de-centering in counselor trainees.

Research Design and Method

A social constructionist research paradigm guided this grounded theory research study. Grounded theory provides a systematic method for generating theory from the perspective of the participants (Creswell, 2009; Glaser & Strauss, 1967), and social constructionism emphasizes the

narrative among people that creates knowledge (Hays & Singh, 2012). The researchers selected this method of inquiry for several reasons. A qualitative research design is useful when there is little information available (Creswell, 2009). Research about using art-based instruction in multicultural counselor preparation appears to be non-existent. Additionally, qualitative researchers attempt to understand the topic of interest through the meaning participants attribute to a process (Creswell, 2009). The researchers value the voices of participants in constructing knowledge about their experience of using art-based methods in multicultural education. Further, the research was conducted in the context of the participants' natural environment, the classroom, rather than a contrived setting, another benefit of this research method.

Because qualitative researchers inherently bring personal qualities that influence how data is collected and analyzed, researchers are obligated to be reflexive throughout their inquiry to offer valid results (Charmaz, 2009). Due to the nature of this research and the potential impact of cultural factors on student participant responses, deep descriptions of the cultural backgrounds of the authors are offered. One researcher was a white, middle-aged, heterosexual male originally from the Northeastern United States and from an Irish Catholic background. He is the author of a textbook on culture and counseling and the creator of the CDCA. He is a counselor educator at a public university that is located in the Southeastern United States. Another researcher was a white, middle-aged, heterosexual, cis-gender female from a rural mountain Southern Baptist community in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. She is an art therapy and counseling educator in a graduate program in the Southeastern United States. The third researcher was a white, heterosexual, cis-gender female raised in a large city in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States and from an English/Scottish Protestant background. She has been an art therapy educator and researcher and is currently a faculty member in a university in the Southeastern

United States. To promote researcher sensitivity and trustworthiness, the researchers in this study discussed assumptions and biases throughout data collection and analysis, triangulated data sources and investigators, included thick description of participant responses, established an audit trail, and employed an external auditor.

Data Collection

Prior to data collection, this study protocol was reviewed and declared exempt by two Institutional Review Boards. Researchers adhered to the American Counseling Association's (ACA) Ethical Codes (2014) and the American Art Therapy (AATA) Ethical Principles (2013) for research. Criterion sampling was used to choose the students enrolled in a master's level social and cultural issues in counseling course who completed the CDCA. Twenty graduate students enrolled in a mid-Atlantic university who attended the three-hour multicultural class on the day the CDCA-V instruction was delivered participated in this research. Students were informed and permitted to opt out of participating in this research study. Demographic data was not collected on students who agreed to participate. Students did not receive a grade on this assignment.

Prior to attending a multicultural issues counseling course, students completed the written version of the CDCA assignment (McAuliffe & Milliken, 2009). Then, for the first part of the CDCA-V procedure, participants were provided cardstock, tracing paper, tape, glue, pencil, markers, colored pencil, and magazines. The art materials were selected to provide participants with a high degree of structure. Contemporary popular magazines provided included images of males and females and people of varying age, physical abilities, and race, as well as images that could be viewed as portraying heterosexual and same-sex couples. Although the physical properties of magazine images set some limits on participants' ability to be expressive, setting

boundaries with media is an important way to allow learners to safely contain emotional expression (Hinz, 2009).

Based on their prior written responses to each of the CDCA prompts, students completed the first part of the procedure. Students were told:

1. “Create a collage or drawing that depicts the strong, deeply held beliefs that you were taught about race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, and gender. Use symbols and imagery to represent and expand your written responses.” (This represented received knowledge.)
2. “On top of your collage, layer and secure a sheet of tracing paper. On the tracing paper, use drawing and collage materials to depict the alternate position to your inherited view. Use symbols and imagery to expand your written responses.” (This represented a contradiction to the received view.)
3. “Secure a third layer of tracing paper to the top of your collage. Add words and images reflecting your current perspectives about race/ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, and gender.” (This represented either a student’s challenge to the received views or conformity to those views.)

During the second part of the procedure, participants formed small groups for discussion. During the small groups, participants were given the following directions to discuss:

1. “What stands out now after doing the activity and discussing it?”
2. “What experiences led to your layers of change, if you changed your views?”
3. “Consider the imagery that you have included. What beliefs and positions are most visible? Which are hidden?”
4. “How was doing the art activity different from the written exercise?”

5. “What did you learn about yourself through doing the art exercise?”

Following the small group discussion, every participant was asked to construct a written response to each of the questions above.

Data Analysis

The research team, comprised of two university faculty members, analyzed the written responses. Data analysis followed the grounded theory procedures described by Corbin and Strauss (2008) and began with each team member individually completing open coding of all 20 written responses to the CDCA-V activity. The open coding process required each researcher to thoroughly read written responses and assign a conceptual label to abbreviate and represent the researcher’s interpretation of the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Research team members reviewed each other’s open codes and met several times to determine axial codes; they then arrived at a consensus of selective codes. Memos were generated throughout analysis to document the decision-making process. The auditor, a university faculty member and expert qualitative researcher, reviewed the audit trail and coding procedures for verification. The final codebook consisted of four themes.

Results

Data analysis revealed four major themes. The first two themes, Benefits of Artmaking and Difficulties of Artmaking, relate to the process of artmaking. The last two themes, Questioning Received Norms and Influences on Relativism, relate to the process of cultural de-centering (see Table 1).

Table 1

Analysis of the Cultural De-Centering Activity Visual (CDCA-V)

Themes	Definitions	Examples
<p>Benefits of Artmaking</p> <p>Subthemes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Imagery as a Stimulus for Thinking 2. Enhancing Openness through Sharing the Tangible Images 3. Experiencing Deeper Personalized Learning 4. Making Visible Representations of Importantly-held Beliefs about Dimensions of Culture 	<p>A person's recognition of the emotional power of visually representing beliefs.</p>	<p>"The art activity helped to think of what certain beliefs looked like in real life."</p> <p>"Adds a creative component, uses a different part of your brain. Certain images register different things you might not have thought about."</p> <p>"What stands out for me after discussing the collage is that I am not alone in some of the things I was taught."</p> <p>"The art activity evoked more emotion and felt more powerful with the images."</p> <p>"The art activity was much deeper."</p> <p>"I realized I have completely covered what I was taught by my family. I don't feel I did it on purpose."</p>
<p>Difficulties of Artmaking</p>	<p>The individual variations in usefulness and/or threat of doing art, with some expression of discomfort.</p>	<p>"It was difficult to find/think of images and symbols to convey my thoughts."</p> <p>"I felt that my views were too complex to accurately portray through images."</p>
<p>Questioning Received Norms</p>	<p>Consistently taking positions that are based on self-determined criteria rather than using an external authority's frame of reference.</p>	<p>"I am very ashamed of many of my inherited beliefs."</p> <p>"From an early age, I was taught questioning anything is bad; but I've done more of it than anyone I know."</p>
<p>Influences on Relativism</p>	<p>Exposure to many voices that led to broadened</p>	<p>"Education and personal experiences with those different</p>

	perspective.	than me and living in different places/countries.” “Opening up to others, sharing experiences and friendships with people who are different from me.”
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Benefits of Artmaking

This first theme addressed the central question of the research regarding the added value of visual representation for triggering cultural decentering. *Benefits of Artmaking* was defined as participants’ recognition of the emotional power of their visually representing beliefs. This theme illustrated the supremacy of primary brain processes in stimulating awareness and learning (Jarvis, 2012). Four subthemes accompanied the theme of Benefits of Artmaking, namely those related to visual imagery, sharing, personalization, and visual representation.

Visual imagery as a stimulus for thinking. Here participants identified the power of the senses, in this case visual imagery, for vividly evoking cultural values and beliefs. This phenomenon occurred through the experiences of both original drawing and selecting instructor-provided images. For example, one participant said, “The art activity helped [me] to think of what certain beliefs looked like in real life.” Through creating visual illustrations, participants translated their abstract ideas about culture into viewable, concrete images.

Artmaking was also a memory trigger. Participants noted that scrutinizing magazine images in order to get ideas for representing their beliefs helped them to identify those beliefs, making them more personally relevant. Several participants noted that artmaking engages the brain in an immediate and vital fashion. One participant wrote, it “adds a creative component, use(s) a different part of your brain. Certain images register different things you might not have thought about.” The power of visualizing cultural values was expressed by one participant thus,

“Creating the collage really put it in front of me the person I have become and how that differs from my upbringing.”

Enhancing openness through discussion and reflection. The second subtheme to Benefits of Artmaking was learners’ attributions about the importance of reflection and discussion in making more complex meaning of their art-stimulated recognitions. In other words, once the image was created, participants recognized the impact of reflecting on the image through communicating their discoveries with others.

Participants indicated that sharing visual representation through discussion enhanced two experiences. First, it triggered reflection on the meanings and implications of the expressed values, as in, “I learned more about myself and my views though the discussion of the art/writing.” Second, it reduced learners’ feelings of isolation and “aloneness” regarding their inherited and self-authored beliefs about culture. Sharing their artwork seemed to promote feelings of acceptance by group members, as in, “What stands out for me after discussing the collage is that I am not alone in some of the things I was taught.”

Experiencing deeper, personalized learning. In this third subtheme under the Benefits of Artmaking, participants compared the impact of the visual component with the verbal version of the CDCA. Trainees stated, “The art activity allowed me to see more culture norms that I had been taught than I could remember during the written [version]” “The art activity evoked more emotion and felt more powerful with the images” and “The art activity was much deeper.” Another learner wrote, “. . . it was hard to translate the ideas in my head to paper, but I felt that it was much more personal, and can tell much more of a story than my written activity. I had to think very deeply about my beliefs, and where they stem from.”

Discovery of hidden beliefs about dimensions of culture. The fourth subtheme was defined as declaring one's culturally-related beliefs. This open declaration of values echoes Simon, Howe, and Kirschenbaum's (1972) classic third step in values clarification, namely prizing one's values. Creating and reflecting on the art piece provoked participants to recognize the hiddenness of their beliefs about gender, religion/spirituality, race/ ethnicity, and marriage equality, in particular. One participant noted, "My opinions on racial things are much more hidden." Another stated, "I realized I have completely covered [up] what I was taught by my family. I don't feel I did it on purpose, but more because that's not me as a whole anymore." Another wrote, "What is hidden is what I was taught and what I no longer agree with."

Difficulties of Artmaking

The second theme, Difficulties of Artmaking, by contrast, was defined as the participants' views on the challenge of doing art. Two of the difficulties of artmaking that participants described included (1) being able to visually express complex ideas with the available materials and (2) fearing judgment about their artwork. Some felt hampered by the visual medium. One wrote, "It was difficult to find/think of images and symbols to convey my thoughts." Another declared, "I preferred the written activity. I felt that my views were too complex to accurately portray through images. I had a hard time turning abstract ideas into concrete images." Another found artwork too limiting for her or his taste: "This art activity was different from the written activity because I found it harder to do. I felt my beliefs were too complex to be put in pictures." Some found the materials lacking, as in, "I felt limited by the lack of magazine choices" and "I think that the activity was good although very limiting since there was (sic) not enough magazines with a variety of things."

The second difficulty in artmaking lay in the concern about being judged. Participants expressed concern that their artwork would be misconstrued if viewed without explanation. For example, one participant stated, “I feel my poster made sense when I explained it to my group. However, I feared if someone simply looked at my poster they wouldn’t understand all I was trying to say in it.”

Questioning Received Norms

The third theme, *Questioning Received Norms*, was defined as consistently taking positions that are based on self-determined criteria rather than using an external authority’s frame of reference. Participants were consistently able to reflect on and then question the importance of their received cultural norms. Some examples of this questioning were, “I am very ashamed of many of my inherited beliefs” and “From an early age, I was taught questioning anything is bad; but I’ve done more of it than anyone I know.” Another participant wrote, “I learned that although I’m proud of who I am now, I’m very ashamed of things I was taught” and “. . . [In doing the first phase of the exercise] I had to blatantly express views that I may no longer agree with and feel shame over.” Other similar comments included, “After doing this activity what stands out to me is that what I was taught in school and church [while I was] growing up was very close-minded.” The following comment indicated one participant’s conscious shift to a more self-authorized way of knowing: “I learned that I’ve separated myself and my beliefs a lot from how I was raised and become my own person slowly, but there is more to come.” There were 13 such comments wherein participants named and challenged inherited cultural beliefs. Thus most of them had already distinguished their own possible perspectives from the views they had received from family, religion, and community (see Figure 1).

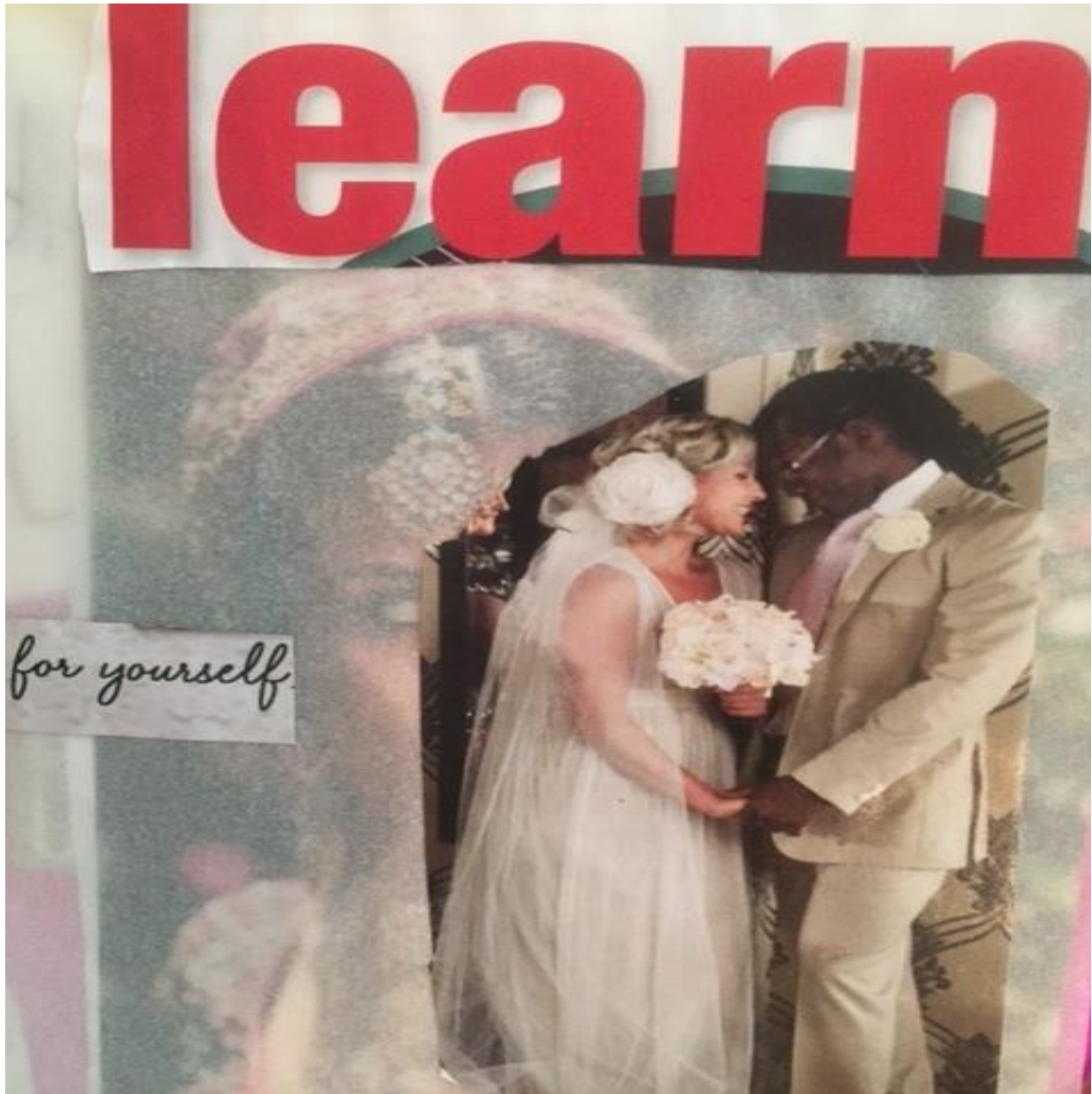


Figure 1. Collage representing *Questioning Received Norms*. This figure illustrates a participant's current perspective about race/ethnicity and relationships/marriage.

Influences on Relativism

The fourth theme, *Influences on Relativism*, was defined as participants' noting the positive impact of being exposed to alternate values and cultural perspectives, resulting in their

having a more culturally de-centered outlook. Participants specifically identified the positive effects of education, meeting diverse others, some religious experiences, and open-minded family culture on increasing their cultural relativism. Here are samples of participant identification of such culturally de-centering influences: “Education and personal experiences with those different than me and living in different places/countries” and “Opening up to others, sharing experiences and friendships with people who are different from me and seeing the world through a different lens.”

Religion and family were two such influences. In the area of religion, there were two divergent trends, religion of origin that increased cultural relativism and religion that reinforced received ethnocentric knowing. In the area of family effects, those participants who had an open-minded family culture were more likely to be culturally de-centered. One participant said, “I didn’t realize how open mindedly I was raised. My parents raised me pretty much without bias, I was taught that race doesn’t matter, that all religions are valid (I come from an agnostic/atheist family), that being gay is ok and that traditional gender roles would never hold me back . . .” and “I was trying to figure out where my parent’s (sic) open-mindedness came from that they passed down to me. I’m not totally sure, but I was raised to be very accepting and open. It has really benefitted me.” Again, there are implications for individualized training, which will be discussed later, based on the level of relativism that a student brings to multicultural counselor education.

Grounded in the themes extrapolated, a theory of the effect of an art-based experiential learning activity on counselor trainee multicultural education was constructed (see Figure 2).

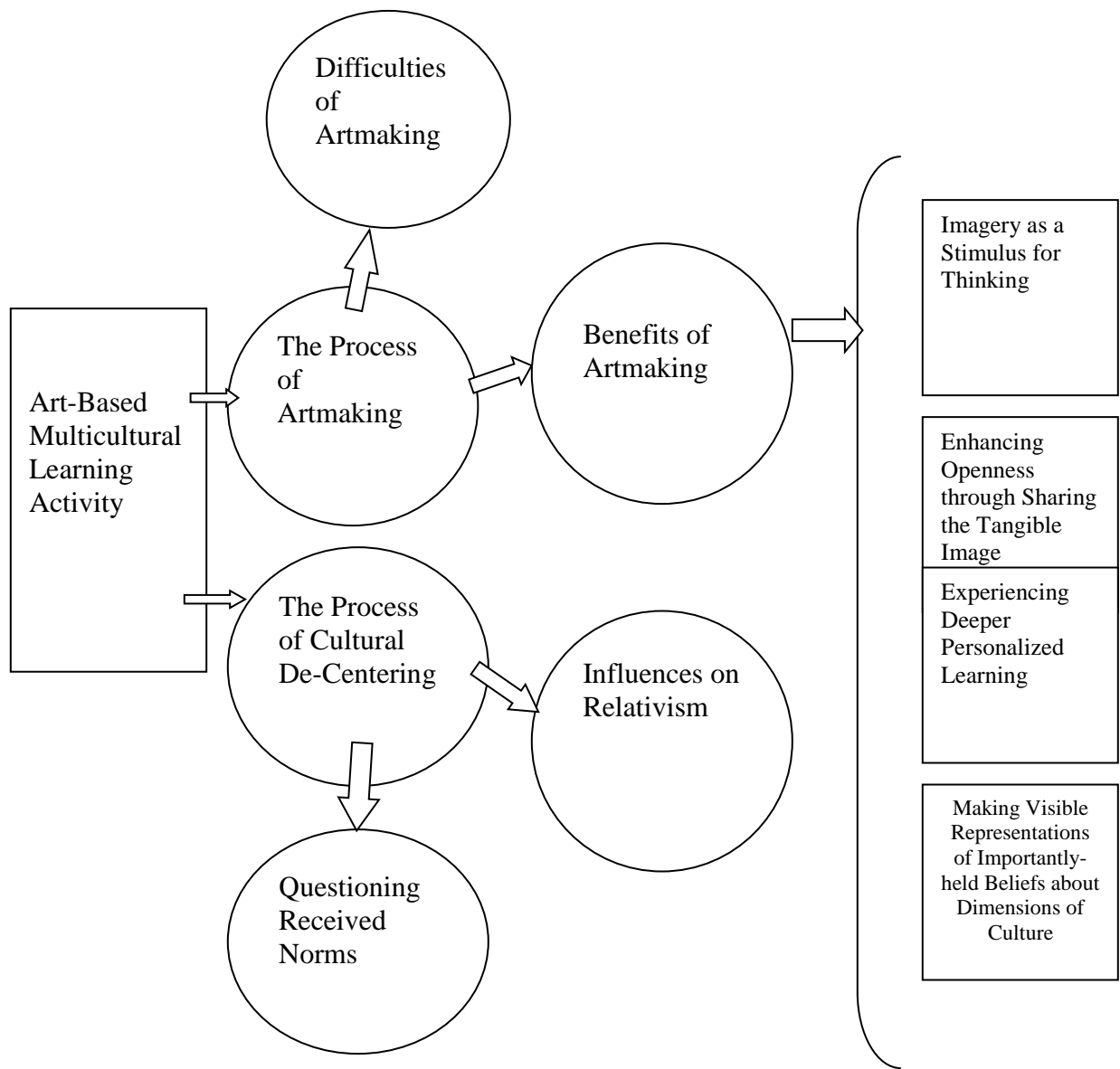


Figure 2. The effect of an art-based multicultural activity to reduce counselor trainee's ethnocentrism: A theory

Discussion

Introducing art-based instruction in multicultural education evokes two overarching processes, the process of artmaking and the process of cultural de-centering. The first two themes, Benefits of Artmaking and Difficulties of Artmaking, are both related to the overall process of artmaking. The second two themes, Questioning Received Norms and Influences on Relativism, relate to the process of cultural de-centering.

The Process of Artmaking

Both the value of artmaking and the struggle to make art were noteworthy.

Benefits of artmaking. Benefits of Artmaking theme is defined as a person's recognition of the emotional power of visually representing beliefs. Generally, counselor trainees responded to the use of collage, a highly structured approach that bypasses the usual apprehensions about artistic skill (Westwood, 2007), in a way that prompted a comfortable exploration of dimensions of culture. Artmaking, and collage specifically, provides a non-threatening way for trainees to uncover and explore unconscious bias around dimensions of culture and counselor trainee ethnocentrism (Doby-Copeland, 2011). Counselor trainees, by reflecting on the visual evidence in the collage, had the opportunity to identify previously hidden perceptions and biases and consider how these perspectives developed. Providing art-based multicultural interventions has the potential to confront and reduce counselor trainees' ethnocentrism.

The four subthemes illuminate specific dimensions of how the art-based activity was beneficial for the learner.

Visual imagery as a stimulus for thinking. The first subtheme pointed out the power of participants visually representing culturally-related values to enhance memory and provoke

thought. Sorting and selecting images can stimulate memories (Johnson & Sullivan-Marx, 2006) and collage provides an opportunity for reminiscence (Stallings, 2010).

In that vein, the CDCA-V invited students to consider their cultural upbringing through generating their own pictures or selecting prefabricated images. Most learners incorporated both. Participants acknowledged that such imagery was a stimulus for their reflective thinking. Through the process of selecting and/or creating images representative of cultural beliefs, learners were challenged to consider how these images represented their culturally-related views, both received and self-authorized. Participants initially had an intuitive resonance with an image, perhaps not fully understanding their selection and only later attaching new meaning when there was an opportunity for reflective writing and group discussion. Culturally-related artmaking thus serves as a vivid stimulus for personal reflection, which subsequently can be used for further insight and opportunities for group discussion.

Enhancing openness through sharing the tangible images created. The second subtheme of the Benefits of Artmaking theme reflected the potential of the art product to enhance the effectiveness of discussion. Creating and sharing art in a group experience accelerates intimacy and group cohesiveness (Riley, 2001). In Riley's view, the tangible image not only becomes the stimulus for discussion, it also allows the creator of that image control how much he or she would like to verbally share with group members. This control factor is important, as open discussion of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, and spirituality can be challenging for new counselor trainees. Having some control over what is shared is important to establishing a classroom culture of safety and trust.

Experiencing deeper, personalized learning. The third subtheme parallels Hughes' (2009) findings about including an arts-based learning activity in a leadership and management

course. As with this study, her students commented that, “these activities often get to deeper issues than any verbal response would” (Hughes, p. 84). This may be due to the “unique role of images in information processing . . . (and that) images appear to be more intimately linked to the individual experience than the verbal labels naming these experiences” (Lusebrink, 1990, p. 27). In Craik and Tulving’s (1975) classic formulation, deep processing requires engaging meanings rather than merely accumulating data. Deep processing, sometimes called deep learning, is characterized by connecting ideas to pre-existing meanings (“familiarity”) and personal contexts, making analogies to other knowledge, and moving from specifics to the patterns that they imply. Deep learning is associated with the ability to apply knowledge to real-world problems.

Making visible representations of importantly-held beliefs about dimensions of culture.

The fourth subtheme was defined as declaring one’s beliefs about dimensions of culture. The collage served as a tangible record for learner reflection on the transformation from inherited cultural beliefs to their current beliefs. Such reflection can provoke learners to question deeply held beliefs, that is, visual representation invites the learner to examine the beliefs that are now made visible (Larrivee, 2000). Students’ initial art pieces, created early in the multicultural course, could serve as formative, or beginning, evaluation of current cultural self-awareness and self-understanding. During the course, students will experience challenges to such initial views. At the conclusion of the course, students then have the opportunity to reflect on their earlier piece or to create a second piece for comparison. The comparison could illuminate changes in students’ perceptions about dimensions of culture and comfort level with discussing race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and the like.

Difficulties of artmaking. Artmaking was not universally successful nor was it appreciated by all participants. The fourth theme, Difficulties of Artmaking, emphasized the struggle required for artmaking. This theme was defined as individual variations in the usefulness and/or, conversely, the discomfort of making art. The power to deepen and personalize learning through artmaking that was appreciated by some participants made others uncomfortable. As mentioned earlier, experiential learning, including arts-based learning, has the power to challenge and confront the learner's current perceptions and awareness of self. On the other hand, it "involves a certain degree of psychological risk" (Fier & Ramsey, 2005, p. 33). The protocol for the activity, consisting of recognizing past inherited beliefs, creating a visible object reflective of those beliefs, and discussing them with a peer group, can be experienced as threatening.

Counselor educators are responsible for considering the ethical dimension of strategies they include. Some considerations should include the student learner's culture, comfort level, and learning style (Morrissette & Gadbois, 2006). Some participants struggled with visual thinking and expressing complex ideas, noting that they felt they could more adequately convey their thoughts through the CDCA written version. Deaver and McAuliffe (2009) found that some counseling interns who used reflective visual journaling found visual thinking problematic, noting, "It was very difficult for them to imagine their thoughts and feelings as images" (p. 625). Those researchers suggested that the novelty of creating imagery requires some "trust in the process." They proposed optimistically that with time and continued effort, visual thinking could improve (Deaver & McAuliffe, p. 630).

In addition to being daunted by making visual representation, other participants feared judgment about their art product. Some felt limited by the availability of provided materials.

Although attempts were made to capture a broad range of images of culturally diverse individuals in the magazines made available for collage, participants still felt limited by what was offered. Perhaps this is a reflection of the limited depictions of cultural minorities in print media or possibly the lack of researchers' diligence in providing an adequate quantity of images representing all of the dimensions of culture participants sought to include in their collage. For such an art-based experiential, it becomes the educator's responsibility to search for an abundance of images representative of diversity within all dimensions of culture with specific attention to cultural minorities.

The Process of Cultural De-Centering

The data revealed effects of the activity on students' relationship to culture. The final two themes indicated that these counselor trainees were able to think for themselves regarding their values. Participants had moved toward cultural relativism (Bennett, 1993). Cultural relativism is defined as the understanding that behavior can only be understood within a cultural context. In this study, instead of thinking that what they had been taught was the only way to think, they could step outside of the learned cultural norms to consider alternate views.

Questioning received norms. The third theme, Questioning Received Norms, was defined as "consistently taking positions that are based on self-determined criteria rather than using an external authority's frame of reference." This finding suggests that these master's level counselor trainees recognized that they didn't have to follow cultural or family dictates to decide on their values. They were ready to reject, reconstruct, or affirm inherited cultural attitudes. Such ability parallels Bennett's (1993) notion of ethnorelativism. They were able to question inherited norms, separate and de-center from their inherited cultural assumptions, and intentionally shift to a perspective of their own creation (Kegan, 1998). That is a major epistemological achievement.

It contrasts to the opposite, ethnocentric, tendency to treat cultural values as the only way to think. With this capacity to decide on values for themselves, a counseling student would be less likely to impose cultural norms on clients or judge them by their own received view in such areas as religion, gender, and sexuality.

Influences on relativism. The fourth theme, Recognizing Influences on Relativism, referred to students' knowing what they had been taught through culture. There were two general variations on participants' upbringing. Some participants had been raised in ethnocentric and/or intolerant environments. Others experienced more open minded environments in their families and communities. The latter group reveals that many counseling students might already be open to alternate cultural perspectives, before the completion of a course in multicultural counseling. They were ready and open to messages about cultural diversity.

This group of students was less culture-bound, already appreciating social diversity. These already-relativistic students may need less education on the values of multiculturalism. They did not have to be convinced that diversity is a value. Instead, the course can focus on their learning the particulars of cultural groups, and encouraging these students to engage in social justice actions. Students who are already relativistic are more likely to begin to engage in tolerance and oppression-reducing actions (McAuliffe et al., 2011). Such movement has been characterized by D'Andrea and Daniels (1999) as a move from "passionless thoughtfulness" to "principled activism." Given the difference in cultural relativism among these counseling students, counselor educators might have to aim at two different goals. For the more ethnocentric students, basic teaching on the value of tolerance might be called for. At the other end of the continuum, the cultural relativists might be encouraged to engage in advocacy actions.

In practice, counselor educators can maximize group discussion and activities so that the more culturally de-centered students might model cultural relativism to those whose background is more culturally bound. Peer modeling for openness to multiculturalism in class through peer sharing is a powerful vehicle for student change toward relativism, even more potent than teacher-centered influences (Perry, 1998). Students thus teach other students by sharing their open-mindedness.

Implications and Recommendations for Including Arts-Based Learning in Multicultural Counselor Education

In this study, the CDCA-V was an effective strategy for counselor trainees to visually examine their emerging thinking regarding their cultural beliefs, and to recognize what factors influenced those changes from inherited to self-authored. The research results imply that using the CDCA-V as an instructional strategy may deepen and personalize the learning, assist learners with visualizing what their beliefs look like, provide a safer way to discuss sensitive topics in a peer group, and produce a tangible representation of current beliefs on which to reflect later. Additionally, the visual version of the CDCA may be a more accessible tool for visual and kinesthetic learners. In general, the CDCA-V may be an engaging way to enhance multicultural counselor training.

Although the benefits of artmaking to evoke cultural awareness have been noted, there remain some cautions that ethical counselor educators should note. Morrissette and Gadbois (2006) cautioned counselor educators who employ teaching strategies that invite self-exploration and reflection, such as is inherent in experiential learning, of the possibility of evoking student anxiety and provoking unintentional consequences. Counselor educators who include such activities should be trained in both group process and experiential-based teaching (Westwood,

1994). This warning is particularly necessary with arts-based activities. Educators who include arts-based activities should have some knowledge of the psychological properties of art media as well as understanding of the creative process.

Limitations

This grounded theory research may be limited by the researchers' subjectivity and experience in multicultural counselor education and art-related teaching, the dual role of the instructor as researcher, the limited cultural dimensions of the researchers, and the participant noted limitations in magazines offered. Verification procedures implemented to promote credibility through methodological rigor included explicating researcher assumptions and biases, triangulating data types and analysts, providing thick description of context, establishing an audit trail, and external auditing. Although researchers attempted to provide magazines that included images of culturally diverse individuals, individuals of varying race, gender, sexuality, age, and ability, participants noted that the quantity of these images were inadequate. Another limitation of this study is the lack of depth of demographic data collected. The characteristics of the participant sample limit the transferability or generalizability of the results. Another possible limitation lies in the fact that participants were students attending a required graduate level course for credit. Although they did not receive a grade on this assignment and were informed of their right to opt out of the research, their visual and written responses to the activity may have reflected a student's desire for a favorable response from the course instructor and researchers. Additionally, the authors' similar cultural backgrounds may have affected student responses and comfort with completing the CDCA-V.

Conclusion

Although the importance of multicultural education in counselor training has been well established, developing and studying the impact of experiential instructional strategies for promoting cultural self-awareness has been limited. During a multicultural counseling class, the CDCA-V, which adds a visual component to the established CDCA, provoked students to question inherited beliefs and acknowledge the factors that influenced developing open-mindedness. Beyond the traditional CDCA, the visual component was described as stimulating additional thoughts, promoting open dialogue during small group sharing, deepening and personalizing learning, and making beliefs about culture visible. Recognizing that the inclusion of art-based learning activities is not universally appreciated, and may produce unintended consequences, counselor educators are encouraged to select multicultural training experiences that attend to students' learning styles, offer optional approaches to the activity, seek training in the experiential methods offered, and solicit feedback about students' experiences.

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Appendix

Cultural De-Centering Activity (McAuliffe, 2013)

<p>I. Directions for Column 1. In the boxes below, name some strong, deeply held beliefs, values, or customs that you were taught through home, school, or religion in each of the categories. These beliefs, values, or customs may or may not be ones that you currently hold. Write one for each category. Put them in Column 1 in your own words.</p>			
<p>II. Directions for Column 2. In the second column, “Alternate Perspectives,” write an alternative belief, value, or custom for each box, one that differs from the one that you were taught. (For example, boys might have been taught that men should be the primary income provider for the family. An alternative perspective is that men can be stay-at-home dads.)</p>			
<p>III. Directions for Column 3. In the third column, describe your current perspectives. What do you think <u>now</u> in each area? It can be the same, slightly different, or very different from the perspectives in columns 1 and 2.</p>			
<p>IV. Directions for Column 4 Write your reasons for each of your current perspectives. What has contributed to your current beliefs? How strongly do you adhere to these beliefs?</p>			
<p><u>Column 1</u> <u>BELIEF OR</u> <u>CUSTOM</u> <u>TAUGHT TO ME</u> <u>EARLY ON</u></p>	<p><u>Column 2</u> <u>ALTERNATE</u> <u>BELIEF OR</u> <u>CUSTOM</u> (Name an alternative belief, value, or custom, one that is different from and challenges the inherited one.)</p>	<p><u>Column 3</u> <u>MY CURRENT</u> <u>PERSPECTIVE IN</u> <u>EACH AREA</u></p>	<p><u>Column 4</u> <u>THE BASIS FOR MY</u> <u>CURRENT</u> <u>PERSPECTIVE</u> (How you came to know your current view, e.g., experience, reasoning, source of evidence, considerations)</p>

<p><u>Column 1</u> <u>RACE/ETHNICITY</u> What I was taught based on my and others' race/ethnicity. (Be as specific as possible. E.g. ethnic customs, community expectations, attitudes about members of other groups; often learned through family and community.)</p>	<p><u>Column 2</u> <u>ALTERNATE</u></p>	<p><u>Column 3</u> <u>CURRENT POSITIONS</u></p>	<p><u>Column 4</u> <u>REASONS FOR THEM</u></p>
<p><u>Column 1</u> <u>RELIGION</u> Beliefs or customs I was taught from the religious/ spiritual tradition in which I was raised:</p>	<p><u>Column 2</u> <u>ALTERNATE</u></p>	<p><u>Column 3</u> <u>CURRENT POSITIONS</u></p>	<p><u>Column 4</u> <u>REASONS FOR THEM</u></p>

<p><u>Column 1</u> <u>GENDER</u> What I was taught based on or about being male or female (e.g., about roles, career, proper behavior.) Be as specific as possible:</p>	<p><u>Column 2</u> <u>ALTERNATE</u></p>	<p><u>Column 3</u> <u>CURRENT POSITIONS</u></p>	<p><u>Column 4</u> <u>REASONS FOR THEM</u></p>
<p><u>Column 1</u> <u>SOCIAL CLASS</u> What I was taught as a member of my social class about how to think or behave (e.g., how to communicate, career aspiration, manners, style, etc.) and/or about lower, lower-middle, middle, upper-middle, and upper classes</p>	<p><u>Column 2</u> <u>ALTERNATE</u></p>	<p><u>Column 3</u> <u>CURRENT POSITIONS</u></p>	<p><u>Column 4</u> <u>REASONS FOR THEM</u></p>

<u>Column 1</u> <u>SEXUAL</u> <u>ORIENTATION</u> What I was taught about being gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered.	<u>Column 2</u> <u>ALTERNATE</u>	<u>Column 3</u> <u>CURRENT</u> <u>POSITIONS</u>	<u>Column 4</u> <u>REASONS FOR THEM</u>

Finally, below or on a blank page, write a paragraph on your reactions to doing this activity—your feelings and thoughts.