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Misheel Mandalsaikhan
Lesley University, mmandals@lesley.edu

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Lesley University

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Misheel Mandalsaikhan

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Thesis Instructor: Dr. Ara Parker

Abstract

This thesis explores the influence of values on students' participatory patterns within higher

education settings and considers the importance of value exploration in art therapy education.

Based on the theory of critical pedagogy by Paulo Freire, the influence of historically oppressive

pedagogical practices on international and minority students is examined. Drawing on literature

that identifies factors in students' participatory patterns, students' participatory patterns were

found to be determined by values more than race or ethnicity. Though broader values exist

within racial and ethnic groups, the reduction of ethnic and racial groups to singular values strips

individuals of their unique and contextually formed values. These findings highlight the need for

re-structuring art therapy education to include learning that emphasizes reflection on values in

the development of multicultural competencies and equitable classroom practices. This

suggestion has implications for revisions in curricula, pedagogical practices, and teaching

strategies in the training requirements for art therapy professionals.

Keywords: values, critical pedagogy, Paulo Friere, participatory pattern, higher

education, competencies, formative education, art therapy, international students, minority

students

Introduction

Education is a formative process in which knowledge is shared, tested, and constructed in a multitude of settings. The methodology of teaching is called *pedagogy* (Merriam-Webster.com, 2020). As a method of knowledge sharing, pedagogy refers to the deliberate manipulation of how and what knowledge is constructed within a setting (Acuff, 2018). Therefore, rather than existing as a simple transaction of knowledge, education influences and is influenced by the way people understand a specific topic and how they act in response to information. Tehrani and Riede (2008) argue that early forms of teaching occurred between parents and offspring, where parents approved and/or disapproved of an offspring's behavior and modeled appropriate behavior to maximize their survival and adaptability within a given culture. The formative years of a person's life is spent obtaining knowledge that forms them as they grow and develop their own identities and understanding of the world. Like their parents or guardians before them, they teach their children to maximize their survival. This system of knowledge inheritance, then, results in the development of tradition and culture (Tehrani & Riede, 2008).

For those pursuing a career in mental health, higher education instills knowledge that undergirds students' development as mental health clinicians. This knowledge not only informs students' understanding of the complexity of mental health but allows students to hone their therapeutic skills and approach as clinicians. As the landscape of education and mental health has shifted its focus to diversity, mental health professionals and students are faced with the need to develop greater multicultural competencies. However, the inclusion of multicultural competencies within the educational standards of mental health programs has not necessarily affected the implementation of multicultural competencies within the classroom. Pedagogical

practices in the classroom continue to be defined by dominant cultural standards and values, alienating students whose cultural backgrounds do not align with the dominant culture.

During my time as an master' student studying Clinical Mental Health Counseling with a focus in Art Therapy at Lesley University, the inequitable sharing of expressive space within the classroom caused feelings of frustration and demoralization. In classroom discussions, I observed the monopolization of discussion by white American students while students of color and international students receded into the background. Only in discussions concerning race, ethnicity, nationality, and culture were international and minority students given space to share. However, even in such discussions I found domineering students speaking on behalf of cultures, nationalities, ethnicities, and races to which they did not belong. Though my professors at Lesley made strong efforts to include diversity and multicultural perspectives in our classrooms, the dynamics of the classroom continued to unfold in ways that gave space for these inequalities to exist. In some courses, these inequitable dynamics were purposefully allowed to promote deeper understanding and growth as clinicians. Yet, despite the efforts of my professors to use inequitable dynamics for growth, the same students who domineered the discussion space were perceived to remain oblivious and, at times, knowingly resistant to change.

As time passed and I found myself unwilling to bring up my observations and frustrations in my classes, I receded to a space of self-reflection to better understand my reactions. I considered why I reacted so strongly towards those who monopolized discussions and my own expectations for classroom etiquette. While reflecting further, I recognized that I value equitable sharing within the classroom space. Not only does my value for equity affect my reactions towards others whose behaviors contradict that value, but it also affects my own behavior in the classroom. In general, I process my thoughts prior to speaking and prefer to give space for others

to speak before I do. Therefore, when I see others behaving contrarily to my own values and expectations, projected feelings of resentment and frustration develop.

Through this period of self-exploration, I realized that ascribing differences in classroom behavior to ethnic, racial, and national backgrounds was limiting. Instead, the culturally formed values and the ordering of those values provided a better explanation for behavior. The day-to-day performance of humans are significantly influenced by the values they have chosen to adopt. Further, the ordering of these values will fundamentally affect the choices they make. Therefore, to further develop multicultural competencies, students and professionals must unpack how their identity and values have been influenced by the constellation of systems in which they belong. Some aspects of this constellation may include race, ethnicity, gender, sex, sexuality, socioeconomic status, geographic location, political beliefs, religious/spiritual beliefs, historical location, ancestral history, nationality, mental status, physical status, abilities/disabilities, familial structure, age, gifts/skills, and cultures. The influence of these identities may imbue certain values that guide the person's choices, behaviors, and beliefs.

Due to its gravity and complexity, identity exploration should be central to the structure of mental health pedagogy and take space throughout the entirety of a mental health program. As therapists and therapists-in-training, values concerning behavior, lifestyles, communication, and other aspects of being will influence the therapeutic approaches used when working with clients. Therefore, it is imperative for therapists and therapists-in-training to explore influences that have shaped the formation of these values.

Methodology

Literature reviews require the collection and integration of previous research on a given topic to support the advancement of further research and/or theory development (Baumeister &

Leary, 1997; Tranfield, Denyer, & Smart, 2003; Webster & Watson, 2002). A semi-systematic literature review, then, explores the evolution of a topic within multiple disciplines to provide a meta-narrative on which research or theory can be developed (Wong, Greenhalgh, Westhorp, Buckingham, & Pawson, 2013). For this thesis, a semi-systematic literature review was used to analyze the thematic patterns of pedagogies in higher education. The flexibility and structure of the semi-systematic literature allows for research that both honors and challenges the complexity of dismantling pedagogy in higher education.

Historical Context for Theory: The Evolution of Society, Philosophy, and Education

Colonization and the Industrial Revolution

The landscape of the known world was changed with the spread of colonialism between the 17th and 19th centuries. As European superpowers colonized Africa, Asia, Australia, and the Americas, they acquired wealth by enslaving the land, resources, and people of these continents (Loomba, 2015). Through the plundering of resources, division of lands, and with the hands of colonized peoples, the Industrial Revolution began. The Industrial Revolution brought great advancements in the fields of medicine, technology, science, machinery, travel, textiles, and agriculture (Mokyr, 1998). As these industries found rapid development and growth during the Revolution, the social landscape of the world also shifted.

The Industrial Revolution allowed people from the working class to move up the social and economic ladder and form the middle class. However, the working class continued to suffer the same plights as the serving class prior to the Industrial Revolution. The working class was subjected to low wages, poor working and living conditions, and dangers of industrial work (Montagna, 1981). As the living and working conditions of the working class deteriorated, the shifts in the social landscape allowed for advances in education to take place in the middle class.

With improved education among the middle class, critical socioeconomic philosophies began to develop and gained popularity. Thinkers such as Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels identified the disparities between the classes as both the byproduct and propagator of capitalism. While they criticized the status quo of socioeconomic division, their philosophy influenced others to develop their own critical review of social norms (Loomba, 2015).

Systems Theory

As industrialism and science advanced in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, sociologists Albert Schaffle and Guillaume de Greef began the work of exploring social systems and identity as a relative concept (Bauer, 2014). They proposed that social changes are complex, slow, and constantly evolving across time. However, it was not until after World War II that a biologist named Karl Ludwig von Bertalanffy put forth the Open Systems Theory. In his theory, von Bertalanffy described systems as operating within biological, psychological, and cultural factors (von Bertalanffy, 1972).

While these thinkers introduced systems theory into their respective fields, systems theory was not popularized until psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner's developed his Ecological Systems Theory in 1979 (Rosa & Tudge, 2013). While assigned to the development of social policies concerning the development of children in poverty, Bronfenbrenner recognized the lack of contextual research on human development and developed his ecological systems theory. The ecological systems theory understands that human behavior and development is influenced by the environments we encounter throughout our lifespan. Since its initial conception, the ecological systems theory has undergone multiple revisions and phases, eventually focusing on how individual characteristics are shaped by spatial and temporal contexts (Rosa & Tudge, 2013)

Civil Rights Movement and the Multicultural Education Theory in the U.S.

While the systems theory developed in the United States, another major shift in the social landscape was taking place. The Civil Rights Movement in the mid-19th century brought about changes in the social, economic, and political dynamics of the U.S. As African American and black citizens fought for equality and justice in the legal system, the education system was also forced to go through large-scale changes (Eagles, 2000). Despite the declaration of deliberate racial segregation of black and white students in schools as unconstitutional by *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954, tension and bitterness continued to wreak havoc in communities. Public schools were forced to shut down, predominantly affecting black and poor white students. As these children were unable to access education, middle- and upper- class white students continued their education in private schools (Banks, 2013).

When public schools re-opened, the education system was forced to change to reflect nondiscrimination. Multicultural education theory was conceived to provide all students equal opportunity to learn and improve academic achievement through the transformation of school curriculum and environment (Acuff, 2018). The historical and cultural backgrounds of ethnic and racial minority groups were incorporated into the curriculum to help students develop critical and diverse perspectives on history. As time passed, multiethnic education evolved to consider the structure of education and how pedagogical practices alienate minority and low-income students. Theorists proposed that using teaching strategies that respect and reflect the cultural strengths of students is more effective than framing diverse learning capacities with a deficit perspective. Going further, multiethnic education theory was replaced with multicultural education theory to include factors such as gender, exceptionality, social class, sexuality, language, nationality, and religion (Banks, 2013).

Paulo Freire and *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*

As the multicultural education theory developed in the U.S., Paulo Freire was developing his theory of critical pedagogy. Influenced by the critical thoughts of philosophers such as Plato, Marx and other anti-colonialist thinkers as well as his own experience with poverty and education, Freire wrote and published *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* in 1968. In his book, Freire unwinds and analyzes education as a system that has been monopolized by colonialism and oppression (Freire, 2005). His contention is that, through education, the oppressors change the consciousness of the oppressed to more easily dominate them and further marginalizing them as deviants from an organized and lawful society. Freire posits that, rather than pathologizing the marginalized and oppressed and forcing them to integrate to the norm, the system should be transformed to allow the oppressed to become "beings for themselves" (Freire, 2005, p. 74). To transform the education system, he proposes the adoption of a problem-posing, libertarian education that challenges and reforms banking education.

In the oppressive system of banking education, the educators consider reality as "motionless, static, compartmentalized, and predictable" (p. 71). However, a close analysis of the system shows that the educator-student relationship is based in narrative. Reality, therefore, takes place in authentic communication between the educator and student. In the problem-posing, libertarian method of teaching, the object of study is not a private property to be observed and accepted but reflected on by both educators and students as co-investigators (Freire, 2005).

People are continually in the process of becoming and, as such, are "unfinished, uncompleted beings in and with a likewise unfinished reality" (p. 76). The ongoing and relational nature of learning requires a system of education that supports it. Freire conceptualized teaching and education as a process that should be inherently reflexive, constantly requiring students and

teachers to question and challenge the dominant beliefs and practices of the education system (Freire, 2005).

Current Pedagogical and Theoretical Orientations

Evolution of Higher Education Theory

Where higher education once favored a goal of objectivity without bias in research, it has evolved to embrace the functionality and expertise. Rather than research for the sake of research, education has grown to promote the acquisition of skills and knowledge to improve functional capacity and maintain relevance to current issues (Brubacher, 1970). Students entering institutes of higher education wrestle with identity development, especially if they belong in the emerging adulthood category of 18 to 25. Often, these students pursue higher education for the purpose of developing knowledge with a specific occupational identity or set of identities in mind, such as those pursuing Art Therapy as a career. Through their field of study and occupation, students explore their identity and place within the world. When they find alignment with a specific identity, it can provide a deep sense of commitment, well-being, direction, and purpose (Sokol, 2009).

Identity Formation and Development of Students in Higher Education

Students entering higher education are in a developmental stage of life where the discovery of identity and purpose are central. While pursuing higher education, students learn to integrate the knowledge they learn in and outside the classroom with their moral and social engagement with the world. Educators support students' learning by imbuing them with knowledge and encouraging students to reflect critically on the knowledge they already have and the knowledge they learn (Solbrekke & Helstad, 2016). Prior to their entrance into higher education, students are mainly influenced by their familial and community backgrounds. The

cultures of their historical connections, family, neighborhood, state, and country inform their beliefs and identities (Morgan, 2019).

Students enter the higher education classroom with assumptions and schemas. Rather than simply guiding what they think, these assumptions shape how they think and make meaning of their experience (Magolda, 2009) They interact with the identities and beliefs of other students and the institution which they attend. When they encounter information and experiences that conflict with their assumptions and beliefs, students must revise their assumptions to include this newfound information. Each consecutive revision, then, leads to growth and construction of knowledge. This process does not only take place within the solitary confinement of the mind but occurs within the social contexts the student encounters new knowledge in. Through the interactions between the identities they come to their universities with and the identities they encounter at university, students continue to develop and refine their identities (Magolda, 2009, Morgan, 2019).

In critically considering the structure of pedagogy, it is imperative to consider changing the perception of culture as an all-encompassing, static system to acknowledging culture as dynamic and interpersonal. The cultural norms that students encounter in the classroom are composed of the contexts of both previous and current pedagogical practices. Students are continually exposed to new information that they make meaning of using previous experiences as well as interpersonal inquiry within the classroom (Straker, 2016).

Engaged Pedagogy

Building off of the work of Paulo Freire, Milam, Jupp, Hoyt, Kaufman, Grumbein, O'Malley, Carpenter, & Slattery (2014) propose a theory of education called engaged pedagogy. Engaged pedagogy allows for the exploration of concepts through both instructors' and students'

autobiography and self-disclosure. In this model of education, the sharing of lived experiences

through dialogue are hypothesized to promote well-being and growth. By placing the focus of

learning in disclosure and dialogue, instructors allow themselves to embody and model

vulnerability to the students. This not only promotes connection and intimacy within the

classroom but positions the instructor as learners, mentors, and guides who are committed to

their students (Milam, Jupp, Hoyt, Kaufman, Grumbein, O'Malley, Carpenter, & Slattery, 2014).

Critical Multiculturalism, Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy, and Social Constructivist

Theory

Critical multiculturalism requires instructors to critically reflect on the content of their

curricula to dismantle systemic oppression at a macro-level. Like engaged pedagogy, personal

narratives are used to explore culture, groups of people, and/or regions of the world. Unlike

traditional methods of teaching, critical multiculturalism promotes the obtainment of cultural

knowledge through the sharing of various personal experiences with said culture in order to

counter cultural subjugation (Acuff, 2018).

Similarly, culturally sustaining pedagogy identifies the student as a unique person formed

through culturally imbued and indoctrinated knowledge, experiences, and practices. In the frame

of culturally sustaining pedagogy, social constructivist theory is used to examine the systematic

inequities and injustices of the classroom. In the culturally sustaining classroom, knowledge and

meaning are understood as created in the interactions between individuals, allowing for the

inclusion of all people in the classroom. The culturally sustaining educator takes on the role of a

facilitator of learning, co-creating and maintaining inclusivity in the classroom. In addition, the

culturally sustaining educator allows space for the experiences of students of color whose voices

are dominated and omitted by the dominant discourse of white students (Grier-Reed, 2018).

Art Therapy Education and Multicultural Competence

In the field of Art Therapy, all clinicians seeking licensure and certification must complete a master's program specializing in Art Therapy at an accredited university. According to the American Art Therapy Association (AATA), art therapy education has been standardized to ensure that all art therapists seeking licensure and certification meet certain professional competencies. To meet professional requirements, art therapy students are required to take a course on cultural and social diversity theory (AATA, 2007). As outlined within the AATA Code of Ethics (2013), multicultural and diversity competence is defined as "the capacity of art therapists to continually acquire cultural and diversity awareness of and knowledge about cultural diversity with regard to self and others, and to successfully apply these skills in practice with clients" (AATA, 2013, p. 8).

Despite the inclusion of multicultural competence in both the educational and ethical requirements for Art Therapists, the field of Art Therapy is dominated by Euro-American norms and values. The policies and standards of the AATA continue to reflect the historically white, middle class, female narrative, materializing in curricular shortfalls in addressing and embodying multicultural sensitivity (Talwar, Iyer, & Doby-Copeland, 2004). In this thesis, I will address the issue of multicultural competence and how it materializes in the context of higher education institutes in the United States. Though the thoughts and ideas presented in this thesis do not necessarily reflect specific Art Therapy related issues, they may provide significant insights into issues of multiculturalism and diversity in Art Therapy programs.

Higher Education Culture in the United States

The Dominant Culture of Higher Education in the U.S.

In the United States, the higher education system reflects the dominant middle- and upper- class Euro-centric cultural norms, values, and expectations of the larger society (Altorf, 2019; Brunton & Jeffrey, 2014; Straker, 2016). In the classroom, the standard method of teaching is based in didactic lectures, formed around Socratic argumentative discussions, or a mixed model of both. In the didactic lecture format, the teacher takes most of the space in the classroom to inform the students on a given topic (Barraket, 2005). In the Socratic method, the entire class is involved in an open discussion concerning the topic at hand and sharing personal thoughts to investigate the topic from multiple perspectives (White, 2011).

Most educators will expect and enforce the cultural norms of the dominant culture, materializing in how students engage with the topic and in the classroom (Frymier & Houser, 2016). When educators come into the postsecondary classroom, they may come in with the expectation that these cultural norms of didactic or Socratic methods of teaching and learning are self-evident (Straker, 2016; White, 2011). However, without making these expectations clear and creating culturally inclusive boundaries in discussion, educators are at risk of indirectly silencing students who are unfamiliar with the norms.

For a student who has no prior experience with higher education, the extent of their adaptation to the culture and expectations of their university/college is significantly influenced by age, expectations, values, and socioeconomic and cultural background. Their study habits, familiarity with academic discourse, and ways of engaging in the classroom are inherently shaped by the way they were shaped by the systems around them prior to higher education (Trout, 2018). Students who are accustomed to the dominant middle- and upper- class, Euro-centric culture may find it easier to adapt. However, students whose socioeconomic and cultural

background do not reflect the dominant cultural norms may find it quite challenging to adapt and integrate into the university and classroom cultures.

Impact of Dominant Cultures on Minority and International Students

The pedagogical practices of the education system in the U.S. has seen changes within the past few decades. However, efforts to transform pedagogical practices remain localized rather than globalized. The U.S. higher education system continues to reflect the culture of White middle- and upper- class societies (Chu & Kim, 1999). For students of all backgrounds, interpersonal dialogue and disclosure concerning the topic is beneficial to sociocultural enrichment. However, rich dialogue and disclosure can only come in inclusive and equitable spaces. Unfortunately, when international and minority students enter the university/college classroom, they are subjected to isolation by the means of Othering by other students and educators. To improve their chances of being accepted into the dominant culture of the classroom, international and minority students choose to maintain the neutrality of silence and non-participation (Brunton & Jeffrey, 2014).

According to Beasley, Chapman-Hilliard, & McClain (2016), Black students attending predominantly White institutions (PWIs) face exclusion, marginalization, and invisibility on their campuses at the hands of White peers and professors in addition to the stressors of being a student. Because white supremacy and racism are reflected in the curriculum, traditions, customs and everyday practices of PWIs, black students' intellect and capabilities are pathologized. To succeed in such an environment, black students are socialized to associate middle- and upper- class Eurocentric values and norms with success and are rewarded for acculturating to them at the expense of the values and norms of their Afro-Carribean cultures (Beasley, Chapman-Hilliard, & McClain, 2016).

For international students, language competence is a significant factor in apprehension concerning participation. Studies indicate that international students' language competence caused anxiety in discussions and led educators and local students to ignore them (Straker, 2016). In addition, international students have been found to be reluctant to participate in discussion due to selectivity in what they wanted to share and a desire for the content of their sharing to be knowledgeable and useful to others (Brunton & Jeffrey, 2014). For minority students, the differences in communication styles between their university's classroom culture and their home culture forces students to conform to the dominant culture or face the prospect of having their ideas dismissed based on their own cultural communication norms (White, 2011).

International and Minority Students' Experience Adjusting to University Culture

A review of the literature on international and minority students' experiences in U.S. higher education classrooms revealed a heavy focus on the experiences of East Asian students, though studies on other ethnic and racial groups exist. According to these studies, international and minority students need sociocultural supports while adjusting to university culture above academic and practical supports (Bartram, 2008; Brunton & Jeffrey, 2014). International and minority students identified the need for greater sociocultural sensitivity among faculty and peers. Educators' and local students' indifference and avoidance were identified as significant factors in their negative experiences, expressing feelings of disappointment, isolation, and lack of relevance in the classroom (Brunton & Jeffrey, 2014). In addition to sociocultural factors, language was identified as a significant factor for international students' experiences (Will, 2019). Tatar (2005) described the challenge international students have in mediating immediate responses in oral classroom participation against native English speakers while sounding competent. International students are expected to participate on an equal basis with native

English speakers. However, when they fall short of native proficiency or use non-native language composition, they face judgment and exclusion from their learning environment.

A study of Chinese international students in the U.S. found that Chinese students struggled with adjusting to discussion-based classrooms (Will, 2019). The students expressed frustration with not being able to express complex thoughts in English in open discussions. A study of Turkish international students also found that students reported anxiety around discussion-oriented teaching, citing difference from the didactic style of teaching in their home culture (Tatar, 2019). Turkish students perceived oral participation as a formal presentation of knowledge, contrasting U.S. educators' and peers' perception of oral participation as an informal platform to share ideas and thoughts in. The students expressed discomfort around sharing thoughts without careful consideration of the content value and only shared when they perceived their thoughts or personal experiences to be useful and relevant to others. In addition, the students valued listening, reflecting, and evaluating above speaking (Tatar, 2005).

The students also identified cross-cultural barriers in classroom participation. The students described an over-representation of U.S. perspectives in class. Like the Turkish students, the other international students usually remained silent during classes due to shared value of meaningfulness and content value in oral participation. The students also saw the role of U.S. students in creating inequitable dynamics in the classroom. They divide U.S. students into two groups: supportive and verbally dominating. The participants perceived talkative students who shared their opinions frequently as dominating discussions and excluding international students. The expressive verbalization of these students caused resentment within the Turkish students, who perceived their sharing as wasting class time. The supportive students, on the other hand, were perceived as thoughtful and empathetic to the international students' difficulties,

providing time and space for international students to express meaningful thoughts (Tatar, 2005).

The Chinese students reported that U.S. students only took interest in their Chinese identity and

referred often to misinformed and prejudiced perspectives of China. The students also

experienced U.S. peers exhibiting superiority in the classroom and not being taken seriously,

indicating language proficiency, accent, and other sociocultural factors (Will, 2019).

Minority students also reported similar experiences as international students. In a study of

four minority students at a predominantly White university in the U.S., the students reported

issues of linguistic differences and cross-cultural barriers as significant deterrents to participation

in classroom discussions (White, 2011). The students expressed lacking familiarity with the

White middle- and upper- class academic discourse patterns used in the classroom, which

contrast with the discourse patterns they used in their homes. Despite participation being taken

into consideration for grades, the students were apprehensive about the adoption of academic

discourse. The students had negative perceptions of other minority students who used academic

discourse as not being true to their cultural identities and selling-out (White, 2011).

As these studies show, international and minority students encounter challenges that

dissuade them from sharing their perspectives in the higher education classroom. Where the

classroom is meant to be a place of equitable sharing of thoughts and experiences, the classroom

continues to propagate the same sociocultural inequalities that plague the society at large. The

integration of various cultural perspectives in the classroom is an important aspect of an effective

and engaging learning environment. The students' educational experiences are situated within a

social and historical context, requiring faculty to recognize the existence of local traditions and

values within their curricula and classroom environment. Therefore, faculty and students from

the host community who are familiar with the academic culture must make greater efforts to

embrace their roles in creating an inclusive learning environment (Brunton & Jeffrey, 2014).

The Problems in Pedagogy

Issues of Heterogeneity in Society and the Classroom

Social integration theory suggests that each society has a uniform value system (Collett,

2007; Chu & Kim, 1999). Within that theory, individuals of all races, classes, and genders

ascribe to a singular set of values. Interactions between people are defined by unstated patterns

of communication, norms, and behaviors (Collett, 2007). The differences between specific

sociocultural groups are erased and a dominant narrative is identified for sociocultural groups.

However, this not only reduces the complexities of intersecting identities to a larger system but

further minimizes the unique qualities of individuals. Informing intercultural interactions with

cultural generalizations binds individuals to a way of being that may not reflect the individual's

lived experiences. Rather than strictly adhering to larger sociocultural norms and values,

individuals interpret and make meaning of their experiences while navigating their heritage.

Therefore, individual differences within larger contexts must be considered in the understanding

and communication of ideas. Without explicit communication of the power of individual

differences in interactions, dominant rules of engagement and communication styles are

perpetuated (Collett, 2007).

All cultures and societies house norms that reflect the society at large. In the U.S., the

dominant society reflects middle- and upper- class White cultures (White, 2011). However,

culture is not homogenous to ethnic or racial groups. When educators try to include international

and minority students in discussions surrounding topics of race or ethnicity, they unknowingly

place these students in a position to speak for the entirety of their ethnic and racial cultures'

experiences (White, 2011). In forcing international and minority students to speak on behalf of their cultural identities, educators promote the homogenization of various sociocultural groups into harmful stereotypes. One aspect of the forceful homogenization of non-dominant cultural groups in education comes from deep-seated belief that Euro-centric pedagogies are superior (Straker, 2016). When international and minority students do not participate in classroom discussions according to the dominant cultural and pedagogical norms, they are considered as deviants from a deficit-oriented perspective (Freire, 2005). This further alienates these students, isolating the rich cultural backgrounds into the margins and maintaining the status quo of oppressive education.

In general, students are more likely to dropout when they experience stress, social isolation, lack of interaction with peers, and lack of advisor/mentor supports (Trout, 2018). For international and minority students, their integration and inclusion into the classroom is limited by factors like Euro-centric superiority, silencing by both peers and educators, judgment, lack of familiarity with academic discourse, language proficiency, and apprehensions regarding integrating into the dominant culture (Chu & Kim, 1999; Mitchell, Steele, Marie, & Timm, 2017; Will, 2019; White, 2011). Facing these factors in the process of adapting to the culture of higher education has been found to have deleterious effects on their well-being and leading to higher dropout rates than white students (Beasley, Chapman-Hilliard, & McClain, 2016). Without appropriate supports to promote the voices and cultures of minority and international students, the students continue to be marginalized and made Others in the U.S. education system (Bartram, 2008).

Homogenizing ethnic and racial groups' values, communication patterns, and classroom behavior minimizes the rich and complex identities of students into stereotypes. For international

and minority students in higher education, this oversimplification may lead stereotyping by

educators and peers. For example, Western educators have experienced Asian students as silent

participators and may ascribe non-specific cultural factors and stereotypes to these students'

learning. There is a general understanding that students from countries with Confucian Heritage

Culture (CHC) enter the Western classroom with CHC cultural values and beliefs. The

stereotype is that CHC values reflect collectivistic tendencies while Western cultures reflect

individual tendencies. As a result, CHC students may be reluctant to pose questions from

instructors due to respect and may consider Western dialectical discussions between students and

instructors immodest. To save face, CHC students may also refrain from speaking up in class and

risking exclusion from the group (Hodkinson & Poropat, 2014; Liu & Littlewood, 1997).

However, these sociocultural values are not the only determining factors in classroom

participation. In reality, CHC students have been found to be strong proponents of active

participation in the classroom (Liu & Littlewood, 1997).

Cultural Heterogeneity and the Complexity of Ways of Being in the Classroom

The understanding of Asian students as a group of people with homogenous values does

not consider the individual experiences and characteristics as influential factors in classroom

behavior. A study was conducted at a large multicultural university in Japan housing 3000

Japanese students and 3000 international students from predominantly Asian countries to

understand the complexity of intersecting values and their influence on students' classroom

engagement (Mack, 2012). The study found that students' ethnic and/or racial background was

not a significant determinant of classroom behavior. Rather, students' level of comfort speaking

among unfamiliar peers, level of dominance, speed of response, and instructor facilitation were

found to determine patterns of classroom discussion (Mack, 2012).

In a different study of 20 international students from Asian countries enrolled in a large U.S. university, the intersection of language, sociocultural, cognitive, pedagogical, affective, age, and gender factors were found to influence participation (Liu & Littlewood, 1997). Of interest was the use of language as a differential factor. The study found that Korean students valued using less words and only saying what is necessary while U.S. students valued talking as a mechanism of learning. Similarly, a study by Li & Jia (2006) indicate that students of East Asian backgrounds may have higher tolerance for silence than non-Asian students. As a result, non-Asian students are more likely to jump into the conversation after an instructor finishes talking while East Asian students refrain from interrupting and wait for their turn or to be called on. Similarly, the verbal agility of Latin American speech is expressed through quick responses and frequent interruptions, contrasting longer response times and allowance of silence by Asian students (Tatar, 2005). A study by Taras and Rowney (2007) found that East Asian students tend to provide agreeable answers to questions rather than risk confrontations or negative messages. Asian cultures may emphasize humbling oneself through the use of verbal restraints, hesitations, and self-deprecative statements. In contrast, Western communication may reflect values of self-enhancing confidence and Arabic cultures use assertive and exaggerative language to promote strong communicative effects.

However, these sociocultural norms and factors do not necessarily reflect the individual identities of students. The perception of culture as the dominant factor in determining student engagement limits the diversity and heterogeneity within larger sociocultural groups. Rather than attributing cultures with deficit-promoting Asian, Afro-Carribean, or Latinx caricatures, the individual sociocultural values of students must be considered and promoted within the intercultural classroom. In this regard, instructors and educators have the responsibility of

facilitating and guiding a classroom that promotes an inclusive and equitable learning

atmosphere (Chu & Kim, 1999; Marlina, 2009).

Considering Values in Education

Values are the abstract principles and beliefs that humans use to make sense of their

environment, guiding their attitudes and behaviors concerning the world around them

(Uzefovsky, Döring, & Knafo-Noam, 2016). As integral guiding principles, values generally

refer to what is believed to be good. In this regard, values can be understood as overarching

goals to strive towards and, therefore, guide human behavior (Deneulin, 2011). Though the exact

way values are developed and prioritized within each person is unclear, it is generally understood

that values are formed in and through interactions with one's environment (Uzefovsky, Döring,

& Knafo-Noam, 2016).

As humans are deeply embedded in a complex web of systems, the values they adopt into

their lives are shaped by the dynamic and exponential interactions of these systems. For example,

people's values are shaped by the values of the family they grew up in, the social groups their

families belong in, the political beliefs that surround them, the education system(s) they learn in,

the values of the geographic location they reside in, the national values and laws they are subject

to, and the deeply embedded natural laws and temperaments they are shaped by (Deneulin, 2011;

Uzefovsky, Döring, & Knafo-Noam, 2016). Larger sociocultural values, then, define the

behavioral norms and expectations of society. However, because conflicting values are bound to

exist, the management of the conflict may result in situation-specific prioritization where one

value supersedes the other to provide the most favorable or comfortable outcome (Giddens,

1986). According to research by Verplanken and Holland (2002), the prioritization of values and

the extent of a value's influence on behavior can be determined by three factors: the centrality of

the value in one's self-conception, the situational application of the value, and the presence and

significance of other values. Therefore, when considering the values of any person, it is

important to consider sociocultural values as heterogeneous and unique to each individual rather

than generalizable to larger sociocultural groups (Chu & Kim, 1999; Deneulin, 2011).

With the understanding that values are contextually imbued, prioritized, and expressed

uniquely in each person, it can be deduced that classroom engagement is significantly influenced

by values. In the classroom, the manner in which a student engages and interacts with the process

of learning, the educator, and classmates are guided by their values. The student's expression of

individuality or collectivity, the perception of the importance of the subject, the perception of the

competency of the educator or classmates, extraversion or introversion, and open or close

mindedness to new perspectives are bound to values that a student comes into the classroom

with. In turn, the sociocultural values and expectations of the university/college, the educator,

and the other students are also likely to shape how a student interacts in the classroom (Chu &

Kim, 1999; Uzefovsky, Döring, & Knafo-Noam, 2016). Therefore, it is imperative for both

student and educator to reflectively consider the sociocultural values that influence their

engagement in the classroom and their capacities to develop multicultural sensitivity as mental

health professionals. Without the explicit deconstruction of values, the risk of allowing

oppressive practices to flourish and diminish the voices of the oppressed is paramount (Carr,

2011; Freire, 2005). In this regard, self-reflection and reflexive dialogue have been found to be

beneficial for the development of greater intercultural interactive competency (Collett, 2007).

For example, theorists such as bell hooks propose the liberation of Black students to

connect with their Afro-Carribean heritage through analysis of history and culture in relation to

self and community. By interacting reflectively with their sociocultural heritage, Black students

are empowered to navigate racist ideologies and values within their academic environments to

develop academic self-concept (Beasley, Chapman-Hilliard, & McClain, 2016).

Transforming Pedagogy by Building Community within the Classroom

To truly transform education to address changes in the growing globalization of the

world, pedagogical changes must be undertaken at the structural and normative level (Grunspan,

Kline, & Brownell, 2018). Mental health educators are urged to develop their multicultural

sensitivity concerning both the dominant cultures that they operate within and the non-dominant

cultures that they are purporting to support. Therefore, the process of mediating the larger

cultural space to include perspectives from both dominant and non-dominant cultures must be

shaped by the interpersonal and reflexive dialogues between all members of the classroom

(Straker, 2016).

The classroom is a space in which dynamic and nuanced interactions take place. Though

it can be viewed strictly as a place in which students glean information, the classroom is also a

place in which students are developing their interpersonal and intrapersonal selves. The structure

of group learning can help develop students' capacities to interact with other people, think

critically, share thoughts and opinions, grow resilience, and discover more about oneself.

Without clearly defined guidelines and expectations, however, the classroom can easily become

inequitable (Tatar, 2005; White, 2011). As leaders, educators have the responsibility and

privilege to shape the dynamics of the classroom in a manner that promotes equity and furthers

students' learning (Brunton & Jeffrey, 2014) Expectations and rules for classroom engagement

must be made clear and enforced consistently to help structure group dynamics. Educators also

have an important role in preparing students for discussions, actively facilitating discussions, and

inviting diverse perspectives into the learning space (Tatar, 2005; White, 2011).

Approaches to Promote Community

Educators may use various techniques such as sitting in circles, modeling self-exploration, and going around the room to hear each student's opinions to promote a sense of community in the classroom (Nieto & Valery, 2006). To promote the integration of learning into students' personal and professional lives, educators may encourage the connection of learning to life experiences in the social process of sharing narratives (Beasley, Chapman-Hilliard, & McClain, 2016). By disclosing the self, both educators and students move away from knowledge as purely informational and narrate the real and authentic effects that their experiences have in forming their identities and values. To support deeper and systemic thinking, educators can encourage students to reflectively consider their narratives within historical, political, and sociocultural contexts while simultaneously maintaining awareness of knowing as an unfinished and tentative practice (Boulton-Funke, 2014; Milam et al, 2014).

The process of sharing diverse narratives in relation to a subject, then, allows students to develop greater sensitivity to the intersectionality of sociocultural factors with the subject. For all students, the integration of material with the lived experiences of their own narratives as well as the narratives of their peers broadens the macro narrative of a given topic. Rather than accepting information as is, students can develop their capacity to critically analyze information within both its historical and present contexts (Beasley, Chapman-Hilliard, & McClain, 2016).

For students whose worldviews and life experiences reflect the dominant middle- and upper- class Eurocentric perspectives, the process of hearing the reality of non-dominant groups' stories may be disorienting, uncomfortable, and difficult to accept (Grier-Reed & Williams-Wengerd, 2018). It is understandable to experience disbelief and confusion when a foreign paradigm is introduced. Students may deny the privilege of living within the dominant narrative,

feel guilt concerning one's propagation of oppressive beliefs and behaviors, and/or minimize the lived experiences of others by likening one's own struggles to others. However, these reactions and behaviors promote the erasure of non-dominant groups' traumas and fuel the oppression of international and minority groups (Grier-Reed & Williams-Wengred, 2018).

To facilitate the understanding of complex sociocultural identities and experiences, community-based exercises can be used. Exercises such as the Fishbowl Technique and cultural interviews can be used to promote critical analysis and sharing of sociocultural identities. Rather than oversimplifying sociocultural identities, these activities promote the understanding of complexities and nuances of being in intersecting sociocultural groups (Grier-Reed & Williams-Wengred, 2018). If discussion and interaction are also limited in expanding students' perspectives, the expressive arts can be used to mediate strong reactions, memories, and feelings.

Use of the Expressive Arts in Self-Exploration and Development of Empathy

Expressive Arts Therapies (EAT) educators are in a unique position to promote students' exploration of values through the arts. As experienced therapists, EAT educators can support their students' development of multicultural competencies in a manner that reflects both the rigors of scholastics and the rich personal nature of therapeutic sessions. By engrossing students in the arts process, EAT educators can encourage students to explore their values and engage deeply with themselves without the constrictions of words. Following the example of arts-based research, the expressive arts can be used to draw out and share the embodied narratives that are difficult to share through words (Pentassuglia, 2017; Wang, Coemans, Siegesmund, & Hannes, 2017).

Studies have shown that the arts can significantly improve students' learning and engagement with material (Upitis, 2011). Creativity and arts-based narratives are especially well-

suited to support embodied awareness of narratives and the dismantling of blocks to critical self-awareness (Boulton-Funke, 2014; Owens & Brien, 2014; Pentassuglia, 2017; Trout, 2018). Therefore, to encourage the integration of multicultural competencies with students' personal and professional identities, arts-based exercises can be used to promote engagement with material. Creative writing can be used to bridge the gap between language competency and communication for international students. A study by Owens and Brien (2014) found that international students were able to integrate the wealth of expressions and verbal structures from their home language with English to express experiences integrating into a new culture. The students presented unique perspectives concerning the challenges of integrating into a new culture through complex, multi-faceted, and engaging narratives.

Likewise, art forms have been found to be effective in supporting students' exploration of the complex and layered reality of integrating into university (Trout, 2018). Using narratives as authentic information in the development of multicultural awareness and sensitivity, students may transform their narratives into artwork. Because narrative sharing in the classroom requires a level of vulnerability, artwork can act as a mediator (Acuff, 2018). Films and literature have also been found to be effective in the development of student reflectivity. Milam et al. (2014) used films and literature to explore the narratives of significant people in history. The study found that students were able to improve connection with each other, grow in self-actualization, develop greater sensitivity and awareness of world issues, and reconsider their worldviews. The authors reflected the importance of using narratives and self-narratives in the classroom to strengthen reflective understanding of self within a contextual setting. In this regard, the classroom becomes a space in which the subjective experience of reality is shattered and re-built to allow the integration of multiple perspectives on reality.

Discussion

My inquiry of this thesis began with observations and personal experiences in the classroom. The literature that we explored in my courses seemed to emphasize the importance of self-awareness and multicultural competencies as a mental health clinician. In the therapeutic relationship, clinicians must be aware of the complex dynamics between them and their clients to best support clients' growth. As I continued to learn, I thought that it would only be natural to take what I'm learning and integrate it into my personal life. I applied awareness of interpersonal dynamics to the classroom and found that I would become quite frustrated by classmates who domineered discussions. These classmates often spoke soon after the teacher finished talking, answered first on questions, and brought irrelevant information into the discussion.

After months of silently holding in frustrations with inequitable classroom dynamics, I sought out to understand why I had such strong reactions towards peers who dominated the discussion space. Though most of my peers who dominated the classroom discussion with unformed thoughts and silencing practices were of European descent, I acknowledged that other classmates of European descent did not reflect such behavior. Finally, spending hours observing my embodied reactions as well the reactions of peers in my classes eventually led me to believe that sociocultural values are the main determinants of classroom behavior, not race and/or ethnicity as I had initially thought. My frustrations seemed to align with some of my core values: respect, equity, and self-awareness. My perspective of classmates who domineered discussions saw their behavior as disrespectful, inequitable, and lacking self-awareness. With this awareness in hand, I pursued the concept of values as the main determinants of classroom behavior within my thesis.

Through my thesis, I hoped to learn more about how exactly values manifested in the dynamics of the classroom. The research shows that, in the U.S. higher education classroom, interactive and independent learning patterns reflect middle- and upper- class Western values that promote individualism and verbal learning (Frambach, Driessen, Beh & Van der Vleuten, 2014). These values do not account for the complexity and diversity of participatory patterns that exist across cultures. Further, international and minority students in higher education institutes in the U.S. must navigate the complexity and nuances of middle- and upper- class Western values while continuing to operate within their own contextually formed values. For students whose learned values do not reflect the independent, assertive, and vocal traditions of U.S. classrooms, the classroom becomes a space of inequity (Brunton & Jeffrey, 2014; White, 2011).

With the movement towards greater diversification and multiculturalism, the art therapy and mental health counseling professions and programs of learning have identified multicultural competencies as a requirement (AATA, 2007; AATA, 2013; ACA, 2014; Talwar, Iyer, & Doby-Copeland, 2004). For professionals, educators, and students in the field of art therapy, the development of multicultural competencies is imperative. Without the development of these competencies, the work we do as art therapists and our capacity to positively affect our clients is limited. To begin the process of transforming the art therapy profession, it is imperative that the educational standards and curriculum reflect the diversification that the profession is striving for.

Current trends in the application of multicultural competency within the classroom place too great of a weight on the influence of larger sociocultural groups as the main determinant of classroom engagement and behavior. This trend not only furthers the narrative that all members of a sociocultural group adhere to the same norms but also allows for the stereotyping of people into the mold of their identity. In contrast to this oversimplification, I propose that values act as

the main determinants of classroom behavior. A person's values are inherently informed by the

sociocultural groups to which a person belongs. However, people also use their unique

personalities and perspectives to make sense of their intersection of their experiences and

sociocultural identities. Through this process, they test and verify the congruence of specific

values with their life and adopt values into their core belief and behavior system. Therefore,

value-conscious pedagogy can account for the complexities of human development and behavior.

By adopting value-conscious pedagogy, both Art Therapy educators and students can approach

the development of multicultural competencies with greater sensitivity and self-awareness.

     The exploration and awareness of one's own values in the mental health professions is

not new. It is an integral part of being a competent, effective, and aware clinician. It is time that

we practice the exploration and awareness of our values within the context of our educational

setting.

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THESIS APPROVAL FORM

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In the judgment of the following signatory this thesis meets the academic standards that have been established for the above degree.

Thesis Advisor: **Dr. Ara Parker**