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CULTURAL DIVERSITY AT FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES OF THE  
REGION OF WATERLOO: AN EVALUATION OF A CULTURAL COMPETENCY  
TRAINING PROGRAM

by

Jessica Leigh Vinograd

B.A. Hons. Psychology, University of Ottawa, 2003

THESIS

Submitted to the Department of Psychology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for

Master of Arts in Community Psychology

Wilfrid Laurier University

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## Abstract

Cultural competence among child welfare practitioners is imperative given rapidly changing Canadian demographics, current inadequacy in the delivery of social services due to ethnocentric bias, and the insufficiency of educational programs in providing multicultural training for future practitioners. This study investigated the extent to which a specific training program influences multicultural competencies. In Ontario, child welfare employees ( $N = 61$ ) completed the Multicultural Awareness Knowledge and Skills Survey (MAKSS) (D'Andrea, Daniels, & Heck, 1991) on two separate occasions. A 2 (pre, post) x 2 (experimental, comparison) mixed-model design was used to test the hypothesis that experimental participants would score significantly higher than comparison participants at post-test on measures of multicultural competence. Significant group by time interactions were detected for the Awareness measure,  $F(1, 49) = 12.07, p < .001$ , and the Knowledge measure,  $F(1, 45) = 14.62, p < .001$ , of the MAKSS, supporting the hypothesis; the Skills model was non-significant. A second research question explored participant responses to the training experience through open-ended focus groups ( $N = 13$ ). Overall, participants are satisfied, despite the perception that only 1 of 3 learning objectives were met. In general, reactions to training are positive, although participants expected a traditional curriculum. A linear regression analysis tested a third research question, exploring whether participant demographics predict cultural competency scores at baseline. Age and level of education significantly predicted 25% of the variance in overall multicultural competency scores. The findings have implications for establishing similar training programs in other organizations, potentially mitigating the negative consequences of discrimination.

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Cultural Diversity at Family and Children's Services of the Region of Waterloo:  
An Evaluation of a Cultural Competency Training Program

Introduction and Background

Cultural competency refers to an ability to interact with culturally different people in a way that is characterized by openness, integrity and respectful communication. This involves several competencies, including an awareness of one's own values, assumptions and biases, an understanding of the worldview of others, and a set of specialized abilities necessary for respectful communication with members of culturally diverse groups (Sue & Sue, 2003). Recently, a number of agencies have implemented cultural competency training programs designed to foster individual proficiency in multicultural awareness, knowledge and skill. However, few cultural competency training programs have been evaluated. As such, the extent to which cultural competency employee training programs work remains largely conjecture. Given the amount of time, energy and resources – both financial and human – devoted to the development and implementation of multicultural training initiatives, there remains a need to differentiate successful curricula from those deemed effective on speculation alone.

Many of the existing psychological, counseling and social work educational paradigms do not accurately or adequately address the mental health needs of many persons from diverse cultural backgrounds (Atkinson, Morten & Sue, 1989; D'Andrea, Daniels, & Heck; 1991; McPhatter & Ganaway, 2003). There is, presumably, a consequent dearth of cultural competence in child welfare services and therefore, inadequate service delivery (e.g., Abney, 2002; Dumbrill & Maiter, 2003). As Boyle and



Springer (2001) contend, “at the end of the twentieth century, cultural competence remains more of an abstract ideal than a measurable outcome” (p. 54).

Direct service providers working in child welfare agencies are faced with the pressures to evolve and continually modify their understanding of the specific needs of the children, families and communities with whom they work, and to develop appropriate and culturally-relevant services for the increasingly multicultural clientele which they serve (Malik & Velasquez, 2002). A number of Canadian human service agencies have begun to critically examine agency policies and standard practices as they relate to and affect culturally diverse communities (Plummer, 2003), and some agencies have even begun implementing diversity training. Although numerous models for the promotion of competency in multicultural counseling and training curricula have been proposed, a central question remains unanswered. That is, how effective are these programs in fostering cultural competence among participants of training?

The present research is an investigation of a cultural competence employee training program offered in a provincial, community-based child welfare agency. More specifically, the purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the Cultural Competency Training program offered by Family and Children’s Services of the Waterloo Region. Further, the goals of this research are to explore: (a) the effectiveness of the program in promoting and enhancing the awareness, knowledge and skills pertaining to culturally competent child welfare practice, and (b) participant responses to the training experience.

The primary focus of community psychology, an emerging domain of psychological theory, research and practice, is on people within their social contexts.

Among the seven core principles of community psychology is respect for human diversity (Dalton, Elias, & Wandersman, 2001; Trickett, 1996). The present research is grounded in the core values put forth by this psychological field of study. These values include *social justice*, which refers to the responsibility of dominant groups and individuals to work with disadvantaged people toward social change, and *caring, compassion and support for community structures*, which involves empathy and concern for the well-being of all members of a community (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005).

#### *Rationale for Promoting Cultural Competence*

The rapid changes in Canadian demographics currently taking place are considered by some to be quite progressive in relation to other nations. In fact, Canadians are often commended on an international level for embracing and celebrating human and cultural diversity. Although Canada's multicultural mosaic – a metaphorical term used to describe this country's cultural composition – is a continually growing work of art, the incidence of discrimination, prejudice and intolerance for differences in ethnicity, gender, religion, and sexual orientation continue to be major social concerns (e.g., Berry & Kalin, 1995; Kalin & Berry, 1996). In short, not all Canadians celebrate diversity. Other Canadians, those who do not necessarily feel threatened by the changing composition of Canadian society, nonetheless may lack the awareness, knowledge, and skills necessary to interact with culturally different individuals in appropriate, respectful, and culturally-sensitive ways. Such inadvertent ignorance or lack of knowledge can lead to cultural misunderstandings, which can, in turn, lead to divisiveness or circumstances in which minority groups are offended, hurt, or worse, oppressed.

In addition to an overarching desire to foster respect for diversity among Canadian people and to strengthen and enhance the cultural fabric of a multicultural society, there are at least three significant reasons why cultural sensitivity and awareness are valuable, if not necessary, competencies to possess. These include: (a) the rapidly changing Canadian demographic, (b) the inadequate delivery of culturally competent social and mental health services due to ethnocentric bias, and (c) the insufficiency of human service educational programs in providing cultural competency training to current and future workers.

### *Increasing Cultural Diversity in Canada*

Canada is a distinctly multicultural society. Indeed, it is among the most ethnically diverse countries in the world. Over the past century, Canada has welcomed more than 13.4 million immigrants, and each new wave of newcomers has contributed to this country's unique diversity. It is estimated that nearly 20% of the current Canadian population was born outside of Canada (Statistics Canada, 2003a). Almost four million Canadians belong to visible minority groups, and the most common of these are members of Chinese, South Asian, Black, and Filipino backgrounds (Statistics Canada, 2001).

It is important to note that Canadian immigration policy has not always been favorable toward all groups. Between the two world wars the Canadian government restricted entry to individuals from non-European source countries (George, 2003). It was not until 1967, through a dramatic shift in immigration policy and regulatory changes, that "racial discrimination was eliminated as the basis for selecting immigrants" (Isajiw, 1999, p. 149, as cited in George, 2003).

The Region of Waterloo, which comprises the cities of Kitchener, Waterloo, and Cambridge as well as several smaller surrounding communities, is home to nearly 409,000 Ontarians. Statistics Canada reported that in 2001, more than 20 per cent of the people living in the Waterloo region had immigrated to Canada. More than 43,000 people living in this region are members of visible minority groups (Statistics Canada, 2001). On a list of 25 Canadian cities most frequently chosen by immigrant newcomers as their new location of residence, Kitchener-Waterloo ranked fifth. Among the most frequent countries-of-origin of newcomers to this region are India, Romania, China, Yugoslavia, and Pakistan (Citizenship & Immigration data, 2002).

With the aforementioned diversity in ethnic backgrounds comes an accompanying diversity in religious and faith-based beliefs observed among the people of this country. Although 70% of Canadians identify themselves as either Roman Catholic or Protestant, the number of Canadians who report observing religions such as Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, and Buddhism has increased substantially over the past decade. In 1991, only 3.8% of Canadians reported observing religions other than Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, whereas in 2001 the number increased to 6% (Statistics Canada, 2001). In Ontario, the percentage of practicing Muslims rose from 1.4% in 1991 to 3% in 2001. Similarly, in 1991 only 1.1% of Ontarians reported practicing Hinduism, however, the number rose to 2.6% in 2001 (Statistics Canada, 2001).

Several other organized religions in much smaller numbers are found in Ontario, including, for example, Judaism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Baha'i, Taoism, Shinto, and Wicca, among others. Whereas, in the past, chapels have been available for Christians in certain public buildings (i.e., hospitals, airports, and university campuses), such places

for prayer are now offered to members of diverse religious groups. Respect for the diverse religions represented within the Canadian population has become a recent concern in a number of Canadian institutions. For instance, elementary and secondary schools, and colleges and universities recognize the importance of daily prayer in the lives of Muslim students and have made rooms available on campus for prayer and religious reflection.

Although the proportion of Canadian women and men is relatively equal – slightly more than half of all Canadians are women (Statistics Canada, 2001) – gender equality has not always been a pressing social concern in this country. In fact, it was not so long ago that many espoused and propagated certain patriarchal values and ideals to the deprecation of matriarchal values. Whereas only 50 years ago, women were largely limited in their occupational goals, the current view of North American women is progressively shifting from one of household manager to various and diverse high-level occupations such as executive manager, mechanical engineer, surgeon, politician, professional athlete, or even astronaut. Canadian women continue to break the barriers that once restricted their personal aspirations, meanwhile disconfirming long-established gender stereotypes and rejecting traditionally prescribed gender roles. Many North American women continue to seek equal opportunity in their occupations and respect in their personal relationships. Gender equality is now a prominent social concern for many Canadians, both women and men.

Diversity in sexual orientation is also reflected in the cultural composition of this country. In 2003, a Canadian community health survey (Statistics Canada, 2003b) reported that gay men and lesbian women represent one percent of the current Canadian

population, and that bisexual women and men comprise slightly less than one percent of the population. Members of the gay community, however, believe that a more accurate statistic lies somewhere between five and ten percent of the current Canadian population (Alphonso, 2004). Gay-rights advocacy groups argue that this numerical discrepancy is likely due to underreporting. Indeed, some gay men, lesbians, and bisexual women and men (LGB people) choose not to openly divulge their sexual orientation, perhaps, in part, to avoid marginalization from mainstream society which, both in the past and today, has deemed same-gender desire, attraction and behaviour as sinful, deviant, unclean or pathological (Harper, 2005).

In contrast, however, over the past three decades, many LGB people living in Canada have challenged many of the oppressive laws which infringe upon their basic human rights and privileges. Accordingly, same-gender sexual activity involving consenting adults was decriminalized in 1969, and in the late 1970s, sexual orientation was included in the Canadian Charter of Human Rights as a prohibited ground for discrimination (Department of Canadian Heritage, 2003). In 2003, both Ontario and British Columbia Courts of Appeal ruled that the prohibition of same-gender marriages is unconstitutional, and allowed gay and lesbian marriages to occur in those two provinces. Following these decisions, in 2004 the Québec Court of Appeal recognized the rights of same-sex couples to marry. The federal government proposed a draft bill to either correct existing legislation or to enact new legislation, giving same-gender couples the equal right to marry (Department of Canadian Heritage, 2003). It is expected that the Supreme Court of Canada will in the near future hand down a decision on its ruling (Canadian Heritage and Parks Canada, 2005).

In Canada today, many LGB people continue to challenge the oppressive mandates and policies that uphold the cultural and institutional oppression of LGB people, such as terminating LBG employees on the basis of sexual orientation, or denying parental rights to LGB individuals (Harper, 2005). In recent years, same-gender desire and attraction has received increasing attention in various forms of media, and has arguably become much more prominent in mainstream North American society. Several well-known celebrities advocate for gay-rights, and several popular television shows and movies focusing on the lives of gay and lesbian characters are gaining much critical acclaim and positive public reaction.

*Incidence of Discrimination, Hate Crimes and Bias Activity in Canada*

The *Ethnic Diversity Survey*, (Statistics Canada, 2003a) an exploration of Canada's multicultural composition, recently investigated newcomers' self-reported inclusion and perceptions of discrimination or unfair treatment within Canadian society. Seventy-eight percent – 17.1 million people – indicate that they never feel uncomfortable or out of place in Canada on the basis of ethnicity, race, skin colour, language, accent or religion. Overall, one would think, this is encouraging news. Nevertheless, an additional 10 percent – *nearly 2.2 million people* – report feeling uncomfortable or out of place sometimes, most of the time, or all of the time, due to their ethnic characteristics (Statistics Canada, 2003a, italics added for emphasis). Further, there is an increased likelihood for members of minority groups to report feeling uncomfortable or out of place in Canadian society on the basis of race or skin colour. Among the most common places and situations where perceived discrimination or unfair treatment was reportedly

encountered occurred in organizational settings, at work, or when applying for a job or promotion (Statistics Canada, 2003a).

Discrimination consists of negative actions or behaviour toward another person based on the negative attitudes one holds toward the members of a certain group (Jones, 1997). Discrimination can manifest itself through negative attitudes or beliefs, and subsequent actions based in power and prejudice about human differences, and can cause interpersonal or systemic oppression (Plummer, 2003). Expressions of hatred and discrimination should have no place in Canadian society. It is likely that many Canadians agree wholeheartedly with this statement. Our government supports this notion in both moral and legal terms, through the enactment of the Human Rights Code and the Multiculturalism Policy of Canada (Department of Canadian Heritage, 1985).

Hate crimes, however, which can include harassment, hate speech, physical violence and murder, motivated perhaps in part by the intolerance of some toward members of groups identified by difference, do nonetheless occur in this country. Because such intolerable acts are not often reported to police, it is difficult to ascertain the exact magnitude and frequency of hate activity in this country. However, Dr. Julian Roberts, professor of criminology at the University of Ottawa, speculates that in Canada nearly 60,000 hate crimes are committed each year (Roberts, 1998; as cited by the Department of Canadian Heritage). This estimation is derived from a compilation of regional police records, and information gathered from B'nai Brith, a Jewish advocacy group, and gay and lesbian community groups. This figure is representative of Canada's nine major urban centers only – those with populations of 500,000 or more – and does not reflect the random or systemic acts of violence and hatred against groups of



difference which occur in smaller towns and communities. The majority (61%) of hate crimes committed in Canada are directed against members of visible minority groups, particularly Black people. Twenty-three percent of such crimes are directed towards religious minorities, particularly Jews; 11% of these crimes are committed against LGB people; and 5% against members of minority ethnic groups (Roberts, 1998; as cited by the Department of Canadian Heritage).

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Department of Canadian Heritage, 1982) states that every individual should be considered equal, regardless of religion, race, national or ethnic origin, colour, sex, age or physical or mental disability (Section 15). As stated in the Canadian Multiculturalism Act (Department of Canadian Heritage, 1985) it is the role of the government of Canada to make certain that “all individuals receive equal treatment and equal protection under the law, while respecting and valuing diversity” [Section 3(1)(e)]. Despite our government’s commitment to protecting the human rights of *all* its citizens, it would appear that discrimination and hatred remain critical occurrences in this country. Some argue that minority groups, particularly people of colour, ethnic minorities, lesbian women, gay men and bisexual women and men, and people practicing non-mainstream religions are still considered by some as separate from Canadian society and culture, and that, as a society, we have yet to fulfill the promise of equality as proposed by Canada’s policy on multiculturalism. As Dumbrill and Maiter (2003) assert, “minorities are not seen as full members of society whose presence should add to the shaping of and influence Canada’s culture, practices, and national identity” (p. 28).

Promoting and maintaining peace, harmony, and safety for all members of society are valid motivations for the endorsing of cultural competence among Canadian individuals, and within Canadian agencies. The reduction, and ultimately the near eradication, of hate crimes and bias activity in Canada would undoubtedly serve the self-interest of society as a whole (Ridley, Mendoza, & Kanitz, 1994).

#### *Negative Psychosocial Consequences of Discrimination*

There is growing interest among social and psychological researchers in exploring the extent to which perceiving and experiencing discrimination are a type of stressful life event that can adversely impact physical and psychological health (e.g., Williams, Neighbors, & Jackson, 2003). Kessler, Mickelson, and Williams (1999) recently examined the prevalence and mental health correlates of perceived discrimination in the United States. These authors indicate that 33% of the respondents reported exposure to major lifetime discrimination, and 60.9% reported exposure to daily discrimination. More recent research shows that perceiving and experiencing discrimination is in fact associated with multiple indicators of poorer physical and mental health status (Williams, et al., 2003).

Racism is based on the belief in one's racial superiority over another, and is accompanied by beliefs, attitudes, and behavioral expressions which uphold the unfair treatment and oppression of others (Harper & McFadden, 2003; Riker & Warren, 2004). These intolerant beliefs are often enacted and reinforced through social, cultural, and institutional practices that endorse the hierarchical power of one racial group over another (Riker & Warren, 2004). Hatred borne out of a belief in one's racial superiority has resulted in verbal and emotional attacks, violent physical assaults, and worse yet, death.

Given the grim and destructive reality of racism, the impact of such intolerance for human diversity on personal well-being is well known. Furthermore, the association between racism and negative health outcomes is well-documented in scientific literature.

Williams et al. (2003) recently conducted a meta-analytic study examining the relation between racial and ethnic discrimination and subsequent physical and mental health outcomes. The authors conclude that “consistently, perceptions of discrimination tend to be associated with poorer mental health outcomes” (p. 206). In view of the population-based empirical studies reviewed, the mental health correlates of racism include psychological distress, decreased levels of self-esteem, major depression, generalized anxiety disorder, early initiation of substance use, and excessive anger, among several other negative psychosocial and mental health outcomes. The physical health correlates of perceiving or experiencing racist discrimination, according to this meta-analytic study, include atherosclerotic disease, hypertension, heart disease, low birth weight, and decreased ratings of global health (see Williams et al., 2003).

Sexism, discrimination on the basis of gender, is based on the belief that one’s biological sex is superior to the other, and involves an accompanying assumption that members of the supposedly superior sex are entitled to certain power and privileges (Harper & McFadden, 2003). The experience of sexism is known to be a source of psychosocial distress and subsequent adverse psychosocial health outcomes (Brannon, 2002). Swim, Hyers, Cohen, and Ferguson (2001) recently studied the incidence and psychosocial consequences of everyday sexism on its targets. Research findings showed that over a two-week period, women experienced approximately one to two sexist incidents per week. These incidents consisted of traditional gender role stereotypes and

prejudice, demeaning or degrading behaviour and comments, and sexual objectification. In comparison, men reported significantly fewer sexist incidents over the same period of time. Religion, ethnicity, and cultural self-identification of the research participants were not reported by the authors of this study.

Empirical research suggests that sexist discrimination is related to women's psychological well-being, in that women who experience high levels of sexist incidents exhibit decreased comfort levels, increased feelings of anger and depression, decreased levels of self-esteem, and more physical complaints (Klonoff, Landrine, & Campbell, 2000; Swim et al., 2001). Brannon (2002) argues that the repeated experience of sexist incidents "may be a substantial factor in the greater number of psychiatric symptoms among women" (p. 371).

Although mainstream North American attitudes towards lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals are progressively shifting towards more tolerant, positive, and accepting views, some people continue to uphold and express negative attitudes towards LGB people. Heterosexism, discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, has been defined as "the ideological system that denies, denigrates, and stigmatizes any non-heterosexual form of behaviour, identity, relationships, or community" (Herek, 1995, p. 321). Just as comments and actions that are based in an assumption that all people are, or should be, heterosexual is a form of heterosexism, so too are beliefs that translate into hateful actions reflective of homophobic attitudes. Such homophobic actions can include gay-bashing – making derogatory comments, jokes, slurs or innuendos about LGB people – and can lead to physical violence, sexual violence, or even murder fueled out of fear or hatred of non-heterosexual practices and preferences.

Experiences of stigma, prejudice, and discrimination borne out of homophobic attitudes can create stressful social circumstances which researchers call *minority stress* (Friedman, 1999). A number of researchers have investigated the extent to which minority stress can lead to mental health problems among people who belong to stigmatized minority groups, particularly LGB groups. Diaz, Ayala, Bein, Henne, & Marin (2001) assessed the relation between experiences of social discrimination, including homophobia, and mental health outcomes, and reported that among self-identified gay and bisexual Latino men, participants showed high rates of psychological symptoms of distress, including suicidal ideation, anxiety, and depressed mood. Evidence from Meyer's (2003) meta-analytic research suggests that gay men and lesbians experience more mental health problems, including substance use disorders (Cochran & Mays, 2000; Gilman et al., 2001), mood disorders, such as generalized anxiety disorders and major depressive disorders (Fergusson, Horwood, & Beautrais, 1999; Sandfort, de Graaf, Bijl, & Schnabel, 2001), and both suicide ideation and attempts among LGB youth (Garofalo, Wolf, Kessel, Palfrey, & DuRant, 1998). Finally, Grossman, D'Augelli, and O'Connell (2001) reported that in a sample of LGB adults over 60, participants reported elevated levels of loneliness.

The belief that one's religion is better or more valid than another has been the source of much hatred and destruction. Intolerance of religious difference has led to verbal and physical attacks, the desecration of houses of worship, and international holy wars. Despite the incidence of such occurrences, discrimination based on religious differences has not yet been captured by a single word. For present purposes, this type of

discrimination will be referred to as religious prejudice, denoting intolerance of religions or members of religions other than one's own.

Religion plays a vital role in the lives of many, and can confer several positive social functions. According to Roberts (1992), religion can provide a sense of purpose and meaning in life, provide individuals with feelings of belongingness, and enhance their sense of identity, all of which provide vital components in promoting personal and relational well-being. Religion can also enhance social solidarity and stability for the society as a whole, in that it provides a bond among people in the form of common beliefs and commitments (Roberts, 1992). Furthermore, as Pargament and Maton (2000) contend, religion has the potential to positively influence both individual and community levels of ecological analysis.

Maton and Wells (1995) have investigated the preventive, healing and empowering influences of membership in religious communities. These authors suggest that affiliation with religious groups presents many valuable resources for the promotion and maintenance of well-being. Such resources include viable parental support systems, lifestyle values, religion-based coping resources, social support, and reductions in distress and enhanced well-being over time. Given the protective, supportive, healing, and sustaining power of religious belief and practice, denying another person such supports, or denigrating such beliefs and practices can have adverse psychosocial consequences.

A small number of empirical investigations have examined the impact of religious prejudice and oppression on the mental health outcomes of members of religious minorities. Dion and Earn (1975) studied the effects of perceived religious prejudice upon affect and self-evaluation, and indicated that Jewish men report feeling more

aggression, sadness, and anxiety after experiences invoking perceived anti-Semitism. In a more recent study, Silveira and Allebeck (2001) reported that religious discrimination was associated with increased vulnerability to depression in Somalian men living in East London. Omeish (1999) investigated Muslim students' perceptions of on-campus prejudice and discrimination, and found that the majority of the students surveyed perceive religious discrimination to be a common phenomenon within their institutions of higher education.

*Inadequate Delivery of Social and Mental Health Services due to Ethnocentric Bias*

Institutional counseling, therapy and social work are predominantly Western concepts. Because the standards used to judge usual human functioning in the West originate within traditional Western value and belief systems, they may be unsuitable or inadequate in application to other cultural groups (Neville, Worthington, & Spanierman, 2001; Sue & Sue, 2003).

When counselors unwittingly impose Western standards on culturally-different clients regardless of the client's ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or religion, they may be engaging in cultural oppression (Sue & Sue, 2003). Practitioners may in fact inadvertently allow Western value systems to influence and affect professional decision-making. In her research investigating differences in parenting values between social workers and South Asian parents, Maiter (2004) found that the social workers tended to be judgmental of certain values held by the South Asian parents. Such critical assessment probably has a negative impact on professional interactions.

Culturally incompetent practice is inappropriate, unethical and potentially harmful (Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992). Social service organizations, including child

welfare agencies, are now facing genuine challenges to longstanding institutional and organizational practices (Malik & Velazquez, 2002). It has been said that current educational training in the provision of culturally appropriate social work is inadequate. McPhatter and Ganaway (2003) argue that, despite values to the contrary, “both practitioners and social work educators have limited awareness of and do not actively address issues of social justice and discrimination” (p. 104). Some authors assert that if social work policies and clinical practices are not culturally sensitive, the needs of children and families in the child welfare system will be neglected (e.g., Abney, 2002).

It would appear that there is a continuing need to fully explore and expand upon existing strategies for encouraging and fostering culturally competent practice among the child welfare practitioners who work with and influence the lives of culturally diverse communities. Given the scarcity of cultural competence in the delivery of child welfare services (e.g. Dumbrill & Maiter, 2003; McPhatter & Ganaway, 2003), cultural competency training programs designed to foster multicultural proficiency are undoubtedly required.

### *Theoretical Models of Multicultural Competencies*

To be effective and successful in their work, it is imperative that helping and human service professionals (i.e., counselors) be able to understand and relate empathically to their clients (Gladding, 1997). Counseling relationships characterized by understanding and empathy are perhaps easier to achieve when there is similarity between the client and the counselor. The knowledge that someone has similar life experiences or shares a common history and folklore facilitates interpersonal interactions. This is particularly true when the circumstances which bring about the counseling



relationship are characterized by fear and confusion, as is often the case at the beginning of most counseling relationships (D. Vinograd, clinical psychologist, personal communication, February 24, 2003). Total cultural sameness between client and counselor, however, is quite rare. In fact, because multicultural counseling refers to counseling in which the counselor and client differ from one another, it is valid, therefore, to assert that *all* counseling is multicultural (Gladding, 1997). Regardless of how and why differences originate, they must be bridged in order for counseling to be effective. In other words, for effective counseling to occur, the counselor and client must be able to “appropriately and accurately send and receive both verbal and nonverbal messages” (Sue, 1991, p. 103).

A diversity of theoretical models has been introduced as tools that helping and human service professionals can apply in their journey towards becoming culturally competent. Applied psychology, psychiatry, social work, counseling, and education are among the many professions that have acknowledged the importance of multicultural counseling competence. Whereas each of these professions has furthered existing knowledge in this area, the most substantial contributions have come from counseling psychology (Ridley & Kleiner, 2003).

Although the theoretical models and empirical evidence presented in the discussion that follows originate from counseling psychology literature, they nevertheless are valuable in guiding theory and research in other domains of human service, including social work and child welfare practice. For present purposes, the model offered by Sue and his colleagues (Sue et al., 1982; Sue & Sue, 2003) to conceptualize the proficiencies necessary to be a culturally competent counselor will be used, due to its inherent logic

and rigor, as well as its congruence with the cultural competency training program presently being investigated.

Several competing theoretical models have appeared in the counseling literature after Sue's (e.g., Beckett, Dungee-Anderson, Cox, & Daly, 1997; Nwachuka & Ivey, 1991; Wisnia & Falender, 1999). What follows is a brief overview of these three theoretical models, which were selected from the existing body of literature to represent the range of models available for the promotion of cultural competence. They are varied as to their rigor and complexity. In light of the existing research in the area of multicultural counseling competencies, and an examination of the strengths and limitations of each theoretical model, the conceptual model proposed by Sue and his colleagues, it would seem, is the most appropriate and logical choice for the present research.

#### *Culture-Specific Counseling Model*

Nwachuka and Ivey (1991) posit a model for understanding cultural differences in counseling relationships, entitled Culture-Specific Counseling. This theoretical perspective encourages counselors to seek out information regarding the natural helping styles of culturally different clients. Based on this newly acquired knowledge, the counselor develops a theory and accompanying strategies which are ostensibly congruent to those espoused by the client's own cultural background. "Culture-specific training is designed to look at the client's behaviour from the orientation of the insider, specifically persons from the client's culture" (p. 106). According to the authors, this approach makes the counselor a learner of the client's cultural values.

Although this theoretical framework has been shown to modify the thinking and behaviour of counseling trainees, there are several limitations to this perspective. First, it is assumed that all members of a specific cultural group believe in and practice similar healing techniques; there is no consideration given to the possibility of variation within a cultural group. Furthermore, the natural helping techniques of some cultures may not be explicitly stated (e.g., French Canadian culture), or they may simply not exist (e.g., gay culture). A second critique of the model questions the depth and breadth of knowledge a counselor can generate for each and every one of his or her clients. It is not likely that counselors can cultivate a complete and accurate understanding of proficient helping in a multitude of distinct cultures. Although this perspective promotes the generation of culture-specific knowledge, and thus implies that certain skills will be gleaned from this knowledge, the authors fail to propose multicultural awareness as a necessary proficiency in the attainment of cultural competence.

#### *Multicultural Communication Process Model*

Beckett and colleagues (1997) offer a two-tiered model, the Multicultural Communication Process Model (MCCPM), intended to increase multicultural counseling competence in any counseling relationship. The authors propose that counselors first use the model to guide their individual study and growth in multicultural knowledge (Tier One), and then apply the components of the model when interacting with clients (Tier Two). The model puts forward eight competencies required for culturally competent counseling practice: (a) knowledge of self, (b) acknowledgment of cultural differences, (c) identification and valuation of differences, (d) knowledge of other cultures, (e)

identification and avoidance of stereotypes, (f) empathy with people of other cultures, (g) ability to adapt rather than adopt, and (h) ability to acquire recovery skills.

Multicultural competence is thought to be a process, and therefore the components of the model are not sequential or linear. Although quite comprehensive, the model, initially published in the *Smith College Studies in Social Work*, is critiqued on the basis of several limitations. The MCCPM was designed for use with a specific population, namely African American individuals, and has not, as of yet, been subjected to validation studies. The model is also critiqued for being nondirective (Mollen, Ridley & Hill, 2003). In other words, whereas Beckett et al. identify the many competencies necessary in the attainment of multicultural competence, they fail to impart concrete guidance in how to achieve these ends.

#### *Cultural Maps Model*

A third approach towards cultural competency involves a counselor accessing his or her own cultural maps, through examination of interpersonal cultural experiences (Wisnia & Falender, 1999). The counselor subsequently “learns to establish the cultural maps of clients and understand points of consonance and dissonance between his/her own map and that of the client” (p. 12). Learning to access these maps occurs through a training seminar characterized by both didactic and experiential components, designed to increase cultural sensitivity and awareness of socio-cultural issues.

A limitation of this approach to enhancing multicultural counseling competence is an overemphasis on articulating cultural self-identity and self-awareness, to the neglect of multicultural knowledge and skills (Mollen, Ridley, & Hill, 2003). Furthermore, this

approach has received little empirical attention and thus remains untested in its ability to attain its intended goals.

### *The Tripartite Model of Cultural Competency*

D.W. Sue, a leading researcher in the domain of multiculturalism and diversity, has asserted that counselors and other helping professionals often encounter certain obstacles in interacting with a culturally-diverse clientele. For instance, Sue (1991) claims that the theoretical approaches, research, and subsequent scholarly literature in psychology, psychiatry, and social work, among several other helping professions, are immersed in traditional North American values and beliefs. Such approaches may therefore be inappropriate when applied to culturally-different populations (Sue, 1991). Furthermore, Sue and Sue (2003) contend that an insistence that mainstream North American values and norms are categorically superior to others can invalidate the life experiences of culturally-different individuals by classifying “cultural values or differences as deviant and pathological, by denying them culturally appropriate care, and by imposing the values of a dominant culture upon them” (Sue & Sue, 2003, p. 8).

Perhaps in response to what he considers an inadequate approach to addressing cultural diversity in the helping professions, Sue and colleagues have elucidated a highly comprehensive model which conceptualizes the competencies required for proficiency in multicultural counseling. An innovative article published in 1982 introduced three competencies necessary for effective counseling with culturally different individuals (Sue et al., 1982). What emerged from this revolutionary perspective on multicultural counseling is what is currently known as the tripartite model of cultural competency (Sue et al., 1992; Sue & Sue, 2003). According to Sue and colleagues, proficiency in

multicultural training involves three distinct, yet interrelated competencies: (a) practitioner awareness of one's own assumptions, values and biases (awareness), (b) understanding the worldview of culturally diverse clients (knowledge) and, (c) developing appropriate intervention strategies and techniques (skills).

The tripartite model of cultural competency remains to this day one of the most frequently cited models of multicultural competence, and has been the subject of much empirical research (e.g. Arredondo, Toporek, Brown, Sanchez, & Stadler, 1996; Holcomb-McCoy, 2000; Sadowsky, Taffe, & Gutkin, 1994). A concise overview of the tripartite model is presented in the discussion that follows.

*Competency One: Awareness.* Practitioner awareness of one's own assumptions, values and biases refers to an expansion of awareness regarding one's own culture and the cultures of diverse groups (Sue & Sue, 2003). Culturally competent counselors are aware of and sensitive to their own cultural heritage, in addition to that of their clients. They are able to recognize the limits of their own proficiencies and expertise, and to seek consultation when needed. These individuals are aware of and comfortable with the differences that exist between themselves and their diverse clientele (Sue et al., 1992).

Awareness also refers to the ability of a counselor to recognize how his or her own cultural background and experiences, attitudes and values, and biases can enter into the counseling relationship (Sue et al., 1992). Perhaps in part because psychology and related disciplines, including social work, emerged during a time when these fields of study were predominantly occupied by European and North American White men, the majority of the theories and practices put forth are based on White cultural values (Gladding, 1997; Katz, 1985). The major White cultural values include valuing

individuals over groups, action-oriented approaches to problem solving, the “work ethic,” the scientific method, and adherence to a rigid time schedule (Axelson, 1985; Katz, 1985). Approaches to counseling that rest on White cultural values are not always applicable to clients from other cultural traditions (Gladding, 1997). This becomes a problem when and if counselors impose mainstream values on culturally different individuals in ways that infringe upon the client’s own beliefs, traditions, and customs.

North American counselors who are members of the mainstream majority need also be aware of the privilege and power they possess. Peggy McIntosh (1988) exposes this reality in her critically reflective, yet eloquent dissertation on White privilege and the privilege society has traditionally conferred unto White men. She writes that such privilege is similar to having an invisible knapsack filled with “unearned assets that [one] can count on cashing in each day” (p. 1). In other words, McIntosh puts under a microscope and brings into sharp focus the as-yet unarticulated and unacknowledged privilege that is bestowed upon certain persons, simply as a function of their race or gender. According to McIntosh, such privilege “systemically overpowers certain groups” (p. 2). Cultural competence in counseling, therefore, necessitates an awareness of one’s own social location and cultural identity, and honest reflection upon how one’s inherent position of power and personal biases can negatively impact the counseling process.

Programs designed to increase cultural awareness could offer group discussions to explore individuals’ stereotypes, prejudices, and misconceptions about members of cultural groups that are different from their own. Such activities could also include learning exercises designed to examine the impact of stereotypes on the perception of persons of different cultural groups (e.g., D’Andrea et al., 1991).

*Competency Two: Knowledge.* Culturally competent counseling also involves an understanding of the worldview of culturally diverse clients. Culturally competent counselors need to understand how ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or religion may affect personality formation, parenting practices, and notions of psychopathology and wellness. Culturally competent counselors need to recognize that cultural identity often gives meaning to one's values, assumptions and biases about human behaviour and its development (Sue & Sue, 2003). This involves actively seeking information and learning about the history, experiences, cultural values, and lifestyles of various culturally diverse groups (Sue, 1991). Knowledge involves an additional understanding that not all members of the same cultural group can be characterized in the same way. Within-group variations exist, and cultural identity or affiliation does not necessarily allow for accurate predictions about personality, behaviour, attitudes, and values.

Programs for diversity training intended to enhance cultural knowledge could involve readings, lectures, and the presentation of accurate and relevant information concerning various cultural groups. These activities could also include group discussions meant to generate accurate definitions of fundamental terms and concepts relating to culture, including racism, ethnicity, social location, power, privilege, dominant culture, ethnocentrism and marginalization (e.g., D'Andrea et al., 1991).

*Competency Three: Skills.* The third competency necessary in becoming a culturally competent counselor is the development of appropriate intervention strategies and techniques for use when working with culturally different clients. Cultural competence involves a set of specialized skills and abilities that are necessary to work with culturally diverse groups. Among these are open, honest, and respectful



communication skills. Culturally competent helping professionals are continuously and actively in the process of “developing and practicing appropriate, relevant and sensitive intervention strategies and skills in working with his or her culturally different client” (Sue & Sue, 2003, p. 18).

Programs designed to foster multicultural skill acquisition can be structured in such a way that participants are directly involved in action-oriented learning activities, such as shaping the development of counseling skills in case study analyses and subsequent group discussions (e.g., D’Andrea et al., 1991).

*Strengths and Limitations of the Tripartite Model.* It should be evident that there is not one model encapsulating multicultural competency, but many unique perspectives and approaches (Pope-Davis, Coleman, Liu, & Toporek, 2003). In fact, the overview of theoretical models presented here is by no means an exhaustive portrayal of the existing body of literature. Each model is valuable in its own right, and each is in some way successful in capturing the essence of what it means to be culturally competent. Nevertheless, the tripartite model of multicultural counseling (Sue et al., 1992; Sue & Sue, 2003) will be used in the present study to reflect the proficiencies being promoted in the cultural competency employee training program offered in the provincial, community-based child welfare agency under investigation in the present study.

Several practical reasons exist for the selection of this model over any other. The model has several theoretical strengths. First, it is descriptive as well as prescriptive. Not only does it describe what it means to be culturally competent, it also presents methods with which to translate theory into action. Second, it is clear and coherent. Third, it makes a unique contribution to existing literature, and it includes the

components of multicultural competencies deemed essential by authorities in the field. Finally, the model strikes a balance between simplicity and complexity, in that it is not overly confusing, nor overly parsimonious.

Despite its noteworthy strengths, the tripartite model has been critiqued due to its adherence to a narrow view of culture, in which culture is defined exclusively in terms of racial and ethnic diversity, and therefore is inappropriate for use with groups characterized by diversity in gender, religion, and sexual orientation. Sue et al. (1992) state that in the development of the model, their primary focus was on four ethnic groups: African Americans, American Indians, Asian Americans and Hispanics and Latino/Latinas. However, the authors also state that “many of these standards have had useful relevance to other oppressed groups as well” (p. 477). Thus, although the tripartite model may have more relevance when applied to counseling characterized by ethnic and racial differences, it may also be valuable in research and cultural competency training involving all aspects of cultural diversity.

*Implications of Tripartite Model for Community Psychology.* An overarching motive for the selection of the tripartite model in conceptualizing the competencies promoted in the present study is its congruence with the core guiding values of community psychology. Proponents of community psychology acknowledge that certain social values exist, which include the right to love oneself and others, the right to human dignity and worth, and the right to live in a cooperative society (Rappaport, 1977).

Among the seven core values of community psychology is the respect for human diversity (e.g., Dalton et al., 2001; Trickett, 1996). The notion that individuals and organizations are currently striving to encourage and promote cultural competence

reflects an inherent respect for the diversity of humans. An appeal to promote cultural competency puts into action the desire to minimize the harm caused to culturally diverse people and groups by imposing dominant cultural beliefs upon them, and thus infringing upon their own values and worldviews.

While community psychology provides the underlying theory, the tripartite model provides the strategy and tools necessary to achieve these ends. In accordance with the values put forward by community psychologists, Sue et al. (1992) similarly state that the field of counseling “is in need of a philosophical change in the premise of counseling toward inclusivity, altruism, community mindedness, and concern for justice” (as cited in Ridley & Kleiner, 2003, p. 5). Proponents of community psychology also acknowledge that all research implicates subjective values (Shadish, 1990). Nelson and Prilleltensky (2005) similarly assert that “community psychology is a balancing act between values, research and action” (p. 4). Community-based researchers, therefore, are asked to critically examine and reflect upon existing biases, assumptions, and values, in order to identify ways that these subjective stances can be brought into focus during the research process, and the ways the interpretation of research findings may be influenced by these subjectivities. The theoretical notion of being explicitly aware of one’s values is indeed compatible with the first of the three competencies promoted in the tripartite model. That is, to be culturally competent, one must analyze and be attuned to one’s own values, biases, assumptions, and social location, and understand how these subjective influences affect others.

Proponents of community psychology are committed to the study of people in their social milieu; “there is a strong belief that people cannot be understood apart from

their context” (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005, p. 5). Helping people solve specific problems often involves reflecting upon and using the resources provided by the extended family and community. Thus, because the tripartite model proposes gaining knowledge of the customs and traditions of the client, we are asked to consider the individual within his or her social context, and to understand that behaviour is often mediated by one’s social context.

In summary, the tripartite model of multicultural counseling competency has been selected in this research to conceptualize what is meant by cultural competence. This model was chosen in preference of others for a number of reasons, which include its theoretical and methodological strengths, its clarity and parsimony, and that it is so widely respected in the field of multicultural training. Perhaps the most significant reason, however, is its concordance and compatibility with the core guiding values of community psychology.

#### *Efficacy of Multicultural Training Programs: Empirical Findings*

Given the social, political and professional realities of a culturally diverse society, members of a number of human and social service professions have recognized the imperative necessity of incorporating multicultural counseling competencies into the provision of culturally appropriate services. The translation of the theoretical conceptualization of multicultural counseling competence into everyday practice with clients has typically taken one of two formats. The first consists of the implementation of multicultural counseling courses into the existing curricula of graduate education programs offered in universities and colleges. These courses are aimed at fostering multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills among graduate students, thus supporting

counselors-in-training in becoming culturally competent service providers in future practice. The second format involves in-service multicultural training workshops for practicing counselors to likewise foster the development of proficient multicultural counseling practice.

Over the past three decades, a number of empirical studies have investigated the relation between multicultural counseling training (MCT) and subsequent changes in attitudinal, cognitive, and behavioural outcomes among trainees. Such research examines the efficacy of MCT by monitoring changes in scores reflecting trainee levels of acquired multicultural counseling competence before and after participation in training. Although multiculturalism has been deemed a “fourth force in counseling” (Pedersen, 1999), and many authors have highlighted the necessity of promoting proficiency among counselors, it is surprising to note that the volume of research in this area has remained relatively limited. This dearth of empirical research has been noted by a number of investigators (e.g., Abreu, Chung, & Atkinson, 2000; D’Andrea, Daniels, & Heck, 1991; Neville, 1996; Yutzenka, 1995). Indeed, the body of literature reviewed for this thesis uncovered less than 30 relevant studies establishing a link between MCT and positive changes in levels of perceived multicultural counseling competencies.

In most prior studies, participation in multicultural training initiatives has been linked to increases in counselors’ self-reported multicultural counseling competence (e.g., Brown, Parham, & Yonker, 1996; Carlson, Brack, Laygo, Cohen, & Kirkscey, 1998; Constantine, Juby, & Liang, 2001; Pope-Davis & Ottavi, 1994). The underlying assumptions in nearly every model of multicultural training is the notion that culturally competent individuals are aware of their own culture and biases, are knowledgeable

about cultures and worldviews different from one's own, and are able to develop and apply culturally-appropriate intervention techniques (Yutzenka, 1995). An emphasis on the three competencies involved in culturally-sensitive practice is congruent with the tripartite model of multicultural counseling competence put forward by Sue and his colleagues (Sue et al., 1982; Sue & Sue, 2003).

Research on multicultural training conducted and published during the 1970s and 1980s is typically descriptive, highlighting the nature of the training interventions themselves (e.g., Paradis, 1981; Parker & McDavis, 1979; Spiegel & Papajohn, 1986). A number of these earlier studies report the efficacy of training in the enhancement of cultural sensitivity, proficiency, and skill. For instance, Pedersen (Pedersen, 1988; Pedersen, Holwill, & Shapiro, 1978), who was among the first to posit awareness, knowledge, and skills as desirable outcomes for participants of multicultural training, reported that training was in fact implicated in the enhancement of these multicultural competencies among counselor trainees.

Lefley and colleagues (Lefley, 1985; Lefley & Bestman, 1991) evaluated the effectiveness of an intensive eight-day multicultural training program for mental health clinicians and administrators in enhancing proficiency in multicultural counseling. Self-report measures of knowledge, attitudes, and values were administered both before and after training. Additionally, behaviour and skill acquisition were assessed through videotaped interactions during a simulated clinical interview with culturally diverse clients. Comparisons between pre- and post-training ratings revealed that multicultural training is related to increased cross-cultural knowledge, sensitivity, and skills, as well as reduced social, attitudinal, and cognitive dissonance.

Merta, Stringham, and Ponterotto (1988) indicated that two months following the completion of a training workshop designed to enhance cognitive and behavioural skills, counseling psychology students reported enhanced cultural awareness. These learning experiences, which included both didactic activities and behavioural interactions with persons of diverse cultural backgrounds, are said to have additionally enhanced trainees' multicultural knowledge and skills. Although these earlier studies have merit in demonstrating the efficacy of multicultural training, their failure to use empirically validated measurement tools is noted as an inherent methodological limitation.

In studies conducted and published more recently, instruments designed to measure perceived multicultural competencies have been used. For example, Manese, Wu and Nepomuceno (2001) reported that participant scores on the Knowledge/Skills subscale of the Multicultural Counseling Awareness Scale Form B (MCAS:B) (Ponterotto, Sanchez, & Magids, 1991) significantly increased as a result of pre-doctoral internship training on the development of multicultural counseling competencies. Similar findings are reported by Aoki (2001), who noted that participants' scores increased after training. It is interesting to note that in both studies, the MCAS:B was only able to detect changes in Knowledge/Skills of participants, and not enhanced levels of awareness. In addition to quantitative measures administered to trainees, Aoki conducted weekly interviews with four students involved in the training, and conducted weekly thematic analysis of five randomly selected journals of student trainees. Analysis of qualitative data indicated that the cognitive portion of the training resulted in perceived personal connection with the material, which subsequently facilitated increased levels of multicultural awareness.

A recent study found that diversity-related counseling training is related to observer-rated multicultural competency among graduate counselor trainees, and training is related to increased levels of multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills (Constantine, 2001a). In the first published article of its kind, Constantine measured levels of multicultural competency using observational methods which included examination of actual counseling situations, using transcribed data from counseling intake sessions, rather than the use of traditional self-report ratings made by trainees themselves. The Multicultural Counseling Inventory (MCI) (Sodowsky et al., 1994), a measure assessing several of the proposed multicultural counseling competencies identified by Sue et al. (1982) was used to assess participants' multicultural counseling competencies. Constantine reported that objective observers rated Black and Latino/Latina counselor trainees as more competent than their White American peers, suggesting that members of minority groups may possess more advanced proficiencies in multicultural awareness, knowledge and skills. Other researchers have likewise reported a significant relation between multicultural counseling training and subsequent increases in multicultural competencies using the MCI as an assessment instrument (e.g., Bellini, 2002; Ottavi, Pope-Davis, & Dings, 1994; Robles-Pina & McPherson, 2001).

Tomlinson-Clarke (2000) used the Multicultural Competency Checklist (MCC) (Ponterotto, Alexander, & Grieger, 1995) to assess a counseling psychology training program's ability to promote multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills in counseling competencies among counselor trainees. Qualitative assessments, which included written evaluations and follow-up interviews, were used to assess the impact of training. Results of the MCC revealed that 16 out of 22 competencies were met, and



follow-up interviews with participants revealed that trainees valued the training experience and reported acquiring some multicultural counseling knowledge.

Tomlinson-Clarke also reported that trainees felt they needed further training, in order to gain further cultural self-development, self-awareness, and the necessary tools for working directly with diverse clients.

Using the Multicultural Counseling Competency and Training Survey (MCCTS), a 61-item survey developed to determine perceptions and multicultural counseling competences and training, Holcomb-McCoy and Myers (1999) assessed trainee self-perceptions of the efficacy of multicultural training. Results indicate that professional counselors believe that they are most competent on the awareness, skills and definitions areas of competence, and that they perceive themselves to be less competent on cultural knowledge and racial identity dimensions. Those participants who have taken a multicultural training course reported significantly higher levels of self-perceived knowledge and racial identity than those who had not taken such a course. Interestingly, respondents reported that the training they received was less adequate than they had hoped it would be.

D'Andrea, Daniels and Heck (1991) reported the results of three studies in which the same multicultural training course was offered to graduate counseling students using different presentation formats (i.e., a 15-week course offered during the regular academic semester; six-week summer semester; and intensive three-weekend training format). The investigators developed the Multicultural Awareness Knowledge and Skills Survey (MAKSS-Counselor's Edition) (D'Andrea, Daniels & Heck, 1990), a self-report, written assessment instrument consisting of three subscales (awareness, knowledge, and skills),

designed to evaluate trainees' levels of multicultural counseling development. Results of the study indicate that in each of the three investigations, significant advancements in the three distinct areas related to multicultural counseling competencies were detected. In comparison to their pre-test self-report ratings, trainees perceived themselves to be more aware, knowledgeable, and skillful after participation in the multicultural training course.

Similar comparisons of control group scores showed no significant pre- to post-test gains. These results provide further evidence in support of a relation between trainees' self-reported level of multicultural counseling awareness, knowledge, and skills before and after participation in a multicultural counseling training course.

Other researchers have reported statistically significant pre-test to post-test gains in self-reported multicultural counseling competencies using the MAKSS assessment instrument (e.g. Byington, Fischer, Walker, & Freedman, 1997; Callo, 2003; Neville et al., 1996). Neville et al. (1996) examined the effects of a multicultural training course on the enhancement of multicultural awareness, knowledge, skills among participants enrolled in a graduate multicultural therapy course. The authors also used the MAKSS for pre- and post-training assessment and comparisons, and obtained results similar to D'Andrea et al. (1991). Findings indicated that completion of a diversity-related course increased trainees' multicultural counseling competence, and that these changes remained stable at a one-year follow-up assessment.

Similarly, Byington et al. (1997) found significant increases in all three multicultural counseling competencies – awareness, knowledge and skills – among 50 professional rehabilitation counselors after having attended a two-day, 15-hour multicultural counseling workshop. Based on these findings, the authors concluded that

even a brief training session can have a measurable effect on the cultural competencies of trainees.

Callo (2003) likewise found evidence of enhanced multicultural competency as a result of participation in an experientially-based multicultural training initiative. Graduate students having participated in a multicultural counseling course scored significantly higher on the multicultural skill subscale of the MAKSS after participation. Additional results of this study indicate that training was also related to higher scores on subscales measuring empathy, respect, immediacy, cultural intentionality, and counseling technique, as assessed using the Interpersonal Intercultural Functioning Rating Scale (IIFRS) (Callo, 2003). Finally, recent studies have revealed that multicultural training for genetic counselors (Wang, 1998), and multicultural supervision for counselor trainees (Constantine, 2001b), are also significant predictors of trainees' multicultural counseling self-efficacy, as assessed using the MAKSS.

On the basis of the previous research highlighted here, it would appear that participation in multicultural counseling training initiatives is related to increases in levels of awareness of one's own culture and biases, knowledge of cultural definitions and constructs, and skill in developing culturally-sensitive and appropriate interventions. A number of the studies reviewed here, however, are variable in their methodological rigor. Others are narrow in their operational scope and research sample, which limits the generalizability of the research findings to other groups of people. Among the criticisms applicable to the literature reviewed for this study are the following: (a) the exclusive use of post-training outcome assessment, rather than measures administered both prior to and following training; (b) no comparison group used to make accurate between-group

comparisons; (c) exclusive use of paper-and-pencil outcome measures rather than multi-method outcome procedures which incorporate both traditional (i.e., quantitative) and nontraditional (i.e., qualitative) research methods; (d) the overuse of easily accessible university student populations in graduate programs, rather than a focus on professionals currently practicing in the field; (e) an overly narrow definition of culture, which comprises notions of race and ethnicity, but fails to include constructs of gender, religion, and sexual orientation; (f) failure to reflexively describe both the research sample and principal investigator(s) in terms of socially-derived cultural variables; and (g) the exclusive use of participants living in the United States, therefore limiting the generalizability of findings to Canadian populations. Finally, in the case of some studies, the principal investigator and training facilitator is the same person, which may lead to researcher bias. These methodological problems could be easily remedied with the use of a between-groups, and repeated-measures research design, using both qualitative and quantitative outcome assessments, use of a broader definition of culture, and external investigators without personal stake in the success of the program.

The studies reviewed here have provided evidence in support of the efficacy of and need for multicultural counselor training. Given the relatively small amount of empirical evidence published to date, as well as the inherent limitations of some existing studies, further research is needed to evaluate the effectiveness of such training programs. The development of the present study, therefore, will build upon and enhance prior research, and represents the next logical step, given the extant scientific research. This study will contribute to existing knowledge of what constitutes an effective multicultural training program, and how such a program is experienced by participants of training.

### *Scope of Current Project*

#### *Culture*

Although culture is an indisputable feature of human existence, it is an intricate and complex concept, one which can be difficult to express and articulate. When asked to define culture, many people respond by indicating that culture is reflective a person's race or national affiliation. Although partially true, this response is a common misunderstanding of the term. While culture *does* include notions of race, nationality, and country of origin, it also includes many other defining personal characteristics, such as gender, religion, and sexual orientation. Age, physical ability or disability, social location, socioeconomic status, language, and affiliations to a multitude of communities are also thought to influence one's cultural self-identity (Dalton et al., 2002).

Culture influences our beliefs, values, attitudes, and conventional modes of thinking, behaving, and viewing the world (Abney, 2002). The way we dress, the music we listen to, what we eat, and the way we are taught to prepare our food, are often shaped by our cultural background. Individuals of the same cultural background commonly share the same history and folklore. Culture can influence the way we communicate with those around us, and our worldview and subjective opinions on everything from morality to politics to sexuality. Our notions of wellness, physical, and emotional health, the methods we use to comfort and heal ourselves and one another, and the way we raise and discipline children are all influenced by our cultural self-identification (Harper & McFadden, 2003).

Just as there is Greek culture, Somalian culture, Lebanese culture, and Acadian culture, so too is there hip hop culture, gay culture, deaf culture, hockey culture, feminist

culture, and so on and so forth. Cultural self-identification is not merely restricted to individuals – organizations are also said to be environments in which a culture can develop. An organization, for example, can be defined by its helping culture, or by its competitive culture, and the relationships operating within the organization are affected by its organizational culture. Culture is determined by the ethos of the environment, the customary modes of behaving, styles of communication, and shared points of view. In short, culture is a socially defined construct, a creation of individuals who identify themselves as members of a certain group. What is more, culture is in constant flux, an ever-changing notion, which is dynamic and changing (Abney, 2002).

Numerous operational definitions of the term have been put forth in psychological, sociological and anthropological literature. Pedersen (1990) offers the following comprehensive explanation, in which culture includes:

...ethnographic variables such as ethnicity, nationality, religion, and language, as well as demographic variables such as age, gender, place of residence, etc., status variables such as social, economic and educational background and a wide range of formal or informal memberships and affiliations (p. 550).

Axelsson (1985) has defined culture as “any group of people who identify or associate with one another on the basis of some common purpose, need, or similarity of background” (p. 2). While the concept of culture clearly encapsulates far more than one’s race or country of origin, for purposes of clarity and succinctness, the scope of this study will focus on four distinct cultural characteristics in its operational definition: ethnicity, gender, religion and sexual orientation.

Harper and McFadden (2003) define an ethnic group as “a group of human beings who share in common specific physical traits, behavioural style, religious orientation, language, cultural heritage, or a common national or regional origin (p. 397). Ethnicity, therefore, refers to the cultural characteristics that connect a particular group or groups of people to each other. Religion refers to the structured beliefs, feelings, imaginings and actions that arise in response to the sacred and spiritual which creates meaning and sustenance (Connelly, 1996). Gender is the state of self-identifying as a woman or a man, and the complex of social meanings that is attached to each biological sex (Kimmel & Messner, 1992). An individual’s sexual orientation is defined by the identity of the person to whom an individual is physically and emotionally attracted (Harper, 2005). Although culture comprises far more than the four dimensions of identity described here, it is these which will encompass the scope of culture in the present study.

### *Cultural Competence*

Cultural competence refers to an individual’s ability to interact with culturally-different people in a way that is characterized by openness, integrity and respectful communication. This involves several competencies, including an awareness of one’s values, assumptions and biases, the knowledge of other cultures, and the skills necessary to interact and communicate respectfully and knowledgeably (Sue & Sue, 2003).

Competence in interaction with culturally-different others is not a simple task to achieve. It takes time, effort, and awareness on the part of the individual of the importance of being culturally-sensitive, aware and respectful. Cultural competence involves an understanding of human diversity. It means reflecting on the lives of others,

and oneself, from a pluralistic perspective, while recognizing how our own values affect our perspective. It means paying attention to differences, instead of pretending they do not exist, and examining ways of attaining our goals while minimizing the potential for psychological and emotional harm that can result from imposing our values and belief systems on others who may not necessarily share our views.

One definition offered by the Child Welfare League of America (2001), and subsequently adopted by some Canadian child welfare agencies, refers to cultural competence as “the ability of individuals and systems to respond respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures, races, ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations, and faiths or religions, in a manner that affirms, and values the work of the individuals, families, tribes and communities, and protects the dignity of each.” This definition clearly implies that cultural competence is more than simply comprehending the worldview of a particular ethnic group.

Culturally competent child welfare practice refers to an ability to work effectively with culturally-different coworkers, families and children, and community members, in a way which places value and importance on the cultural values of the individual without, either advertently or inadvertently, infringing on their cultural beliefs, customs and traditions. A culturally competent child welfare practitioner is one who possesses the skills necessary to work effectively and sensitively with clients from various cultural and ethnic backgrounds, religious affiliations, and sexual orientations.

#### *Cultural Competence Applied to Child Welfare*

Culture permeates all aspects of daily life, and child welfare practice is no exception. Mandated by the provincial government, the primary objective of child



welfare agencies in Ontario is to support and protect the emotional and physical well-being of children and youth. The Child and Family Services Act, legislation enacted by the Government of Ontario (1990), states that services provided to children and families should recognize the culture, heritage, and traditions of individuals, families, and groups.

In child welfare, three distinct yet interrelated applied areas are influenced by culture and cultural variables: organizational level practices, inter-professional relationships, and individual-level direct service delivery (McPhatter & Ganaway, 2003). For instance, culture is a salient construct at the organizational level of analysis, in decision-making practices such as hiring, policy directives, occupational procedures, the definition of organizational values and the creation and realization of a mission statement. Culture influences child welfare practice at the relational level of analysis, particularly in consideration of the inter-professional work relationships which develop in culturally diverse workplaces. A positive organizational stance towards diversity has important implications for worker well-being.

Mor Barak, Findler, and Wind (2003) propose that inclusive work environments which value diversity are integral in enhancing employee well-being. Although all ecological levels of analysis are vital in developing a culturally-sensitive agency, an examination of each is beyond the scope of this study. The focus of this study is worker to client interactions.

The direct service providers of child welfare agencies, also known as front line staff, are involved in several different capacities in child welfare, including intake, ongoing service, residential direct care, foster care, and adoption. In each circumstance

of case management, culture can play an important role in defining conventions, typically held beliefs and traditions, and customs.

Differences in culture can lead to cultural misunderstandings. This is particularly true when a direct service provider is culturally-different from the family with whom he or she is working. Certain misunderstandings are seemingly insignificant and harmless. Whether or not to remove one's shoes upon entering someone's home, for instance, can be highly influenced by culture. A Canadian-born child welfare practitioner visiting the home of a culturally-different family stands to offend, or appear inconsiderate, if the cultural directives of the family prescribe the removal of one's shoes upon entering a home. Although the direct service provider may come across as rude if he or she enters with footwear, psychological harm on the part of the family is not likely to ensue.

Other cultural misunderstandings, however, have potentially adverse consequences. Such scenarios can have more profound psychological and emotional repercussions for the culturally misunderstood other. A residential direct care provider may fail to recognize the significance in the Rastafarian religion of a distinctive hairstyle consisting of long, twisted strands of hair. Being unaware, a service provider may thereby unwittingly have a child's hair cut, in keeping with his or her own culturally-bound ways of thinking. Although there may be no malicious intentions in cutting the child's hair, this decision may nonetheless inadvertently infringe upon the religious or faith-based beliefs of the child's biological parents.

A foster home in which a child and foster family come from different cultural backgrounds represents another circumstance where cultural variables can affect interpersonal interactions. For instance, placing a child in a home in which the food,

dress, and daily household routines are markedly different from his or her own family-of-origin can undoubtedly result in anxiety and confusion for both the child and family.

Adoption service is another domain in which cultural misunderstandings can and do arise. The primary objective in selecting adoptive families is to find warm, loving households, free from physical harm and emotional neglect. Whether or not to place a Muslim child in a Mennonite home is another culturally-charged decision faced by adoption workers. Similarly, a lesbian couple wanting to adopt a newborn baby might, with due reasons, surmise that their request was rejected on the basis of a heterosexual adoption workers' cultural or religious bias towards heterosexism.

Direct service providers working in the realm of intake and ongoing services are also confronted with challenges derived from differences of culture. For those North Americans who subscribe to an individualistic notion of self-fulfillment, the idea that a young girl is expected by her family to assume most parental responsibilities of her infant cousin during the summer, rather than attend summer camp, may be considered by some to be neglectful, if not exploitative. Some members of collectivistic cultures, on the other hand, might consider this arrangement to reflect a noble willingness on the part of the girl to honour familial expectations. A direct service provider, steeped in individualistic values of North American society, however, may mistakenly label this scenario as one of child maltreatment. It is important to note, however, that one should not make over-generalizations about individuals on the basis of a person's cultural self-identification. An acknowledgement of the variations which exist among all groups is important.

Parenting and child discipline are exceedingly subjective and personal matters. When it comes to corporal punishment, what is deemed acceptable in some cultures is

viewed as abusive in others (Graziano, 1994, as cited in Fontes, 2002). Child-rearing practices are often highly influenced by one's cultural background. The norms and values that guide acceptable parenting practices vary by culture, and knowledge concerning the most practical methods for raising children is commonly passed down from one generation to another (Fontes, 2002). As such, the parenting styles of some cultures are markedly different from others.

Whereas spanking and other forms of physical punishment are acceptable within some cultures, overt corporal punishment, while not forbidden by law in Canada, is often accompanied by a negative social stigma or taboo. Just as corporal punishment is an unthinkable method of discipline for some North Americans, the typically sanctioned Western practices of circumcising male infants, denying children food between mealtimes, and forcing infants to cry themselves to sleep at night alone may be considered abusive and appalling in non-Western cultures (Fontes, 2002; Korbin & Spilsbury, 1999).

Sandler (1994) discusses the risks of ethnocentric bias in helping and human service professions by stating that "simply studying phenomena within a single culture we are too easily led to believe that we have identified universal laws of behaviour, and too easily induced to define problems as deviations from those purportedly universal laws" (p. 804). In other words, a categorical adherence to a belief in the superiority of traditionally Western notions and beliefs about parenting behaviour runs the risk of denying or denigrating the customs of those who are accustomed to other practices.

Situations characterized by cultural misunderstandings can have negative emotional and psychological repercussions for parents, children, and families. Such

misunderstandings can lead to fear, resentment, conflict, and segregation. It is evident that, in the eyes of their service recipients, direct service providers of child welfare agencies hold a lot of power. They have the power to break a family apart, as do they have the power to put a family back together. They have the power to grant an adoption request to one family, and deny a similar request to another. Not only must these individuals be aware of their power, they must also use this power in ways that are respectful and aware of the damage and havoc they can inflict when they do not, whether advertently or inadvertently, respect the cultural directives of others.

Child welfare practitioners have an obligation to provide protection and support for children and youth who are at risk of emotional or physical harm, as well as a responsibility to work toward the elimination of child maltreatment, neglect, and abuse. As members of the social work profession, which integrates dignity and respect, equity, and equality among its social policy principles, they must also understand the impact that imposing traditional Western beliefs and ideals can have on culturally-different clients (Canadian Association of Social Workers, 2003). These are the challenges with which Canadian child welfare practitioners are now faced. Those direct service providers who lack the competencies needed to provide protective and respectful child welfare services in a culturally competent manner are at an even greater disadvantage.

#### *Personal Motivation for Thesis Topic*

As a theoretical framework, community psychology asks us to examine and address our biases, assumptions, values, and intentions (Cosgrove & McHugh, 2000). Thus, what follows is a brief reflection on how I became interested in multiculturalism

and human diversity in general, and cultural competence among child welfare professionals in particular, and what has sustained this interest in me for so many years.

The religious composition of my own family is likely what sparked my personal interest in human diversity and subsequently, my motivation to contribute to the existing knowledge in this research area. I grew up in a large Canadian city, and was raised by Canadian parents. My father, born in Montréal, Québec near the start of World War II, was raised by Jewish-immigrant parents and grandparents from Russia and Poland. My mother grew up in a small, Northern Québec town, and was raised by Roman Catholic parents: a French-Canadian mother and second-generation Irish-immigrant father, and later, a Maritime-Canadian stepfather. To marry my father in a traditional orthodox ceremony, my mother converted to Judaism. Although our household is undoubtedly secular in relation to the traditional laws of Jewish orthodoxy (we do not keep a kosher house, nor do we observe the strict rules of the Sabbath), I identify myself as a Jew. I grew up celebrating Hanukkah and Passover with my immediate family and observe the two most holy days, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, by attending religious services in synagogue. In addition to these Jewish traditions, however, I also participate in several Christian celebrations with my maternal grandparents and relatives, most notably Christmas. As I grew up, I attended weddings, births, and funerals held in both synagogues and Roman Catholic churches.

Perhaps my personal involvement in and knowledge of both Jewish and Roman Catholic religious celebrations has fostered my understanding of how it is possible to simultaneously show respect for not just one, but several distinct, dissimilar, and seemingly contradictory faiths. I believe my familiarity with the customs, traditions, and

values of each religion has promoted in me an understanding that members of different religions hold different beliefs, yet this need not preclude peaceful coexistence. I strongly believe that although I may not practice or be a member of other religions, ethnicities, or sexual orientations, I can still appreciate that these are valid, legitimate, and *necessary* constructs in defining one's self-identity, because they provide the comfort, support and sustenance to prevail during times of grief and duress, and the path to living life during times of joy (Roberts, 1992).

Perhaps in part because my physical appearance does not reveal my religion, I have not (yet) been the personal target of anti-Semitism. I am, however, in a peculiar position. Because most people do not know that I am Jewish unless I tell them, I am not the target of religious discrimination. However, because others typically assume that I am not Jewish, I have encountered instances of subtle or covert discrimination, including insensitive jokes capitalizing on pejorative Jewish stereotypes, and a remark made by a university professor implying that the Holocaust, the systematic extermination of six million Jews which occurred not so long ago in wartime Europe, may not have in fact happened. Although nobody has painted swastikas on my front door, nor defaced the tombstones of my Jewish relatives, I shudder nonetheless when I see that such horrors have happened in my city, in my province, in my country ... during my lifetime. It frightens and alarms me that our society is not immune to repeating the atrocities of the Holocaust during these seemingly civilized modern times. Just as anti-Semitic acts of terror frighten me, however, so too do the barbaric acts being carried out against all oppressed people.

These inexplicably cruel and intolerable acts are irrational, hurtful and so unnecessary. In short, they must stop. Of course, they must stop, but how? I am hopeful that multicultural training, designed to promote sensitivity, awareness, and cultural competency will be a small step towards the reduction of racism, sexism, heterosexism, and religious prejudice and the accompanying negative psychosocial and physical outcomes that can ensue.

My personal long-term goals involve continuing my studies in graduate psychology, with a commitment to the topic of cultural and human diversity. My undergraduate thesis, an investigation of the psychosocial outcomes of youth-in-care in relation to their participation in extracurricular activities, is part of a larger, ongoing project on child welfare, called Looking after Children in Ontario. After having discussed my interest in cultural diversity with my undergraduate thesis supervisor, who had just learned of the Cultural Competency Training being offered at FACS in Waterloo, he suggested the possibility of carrying out the present research. I realize that this project will bridge my previous research with my current research interests, and will serve as a precursor to doctoral work in counseling diverse clients.

The core guiding principles directing this study necessitate an analysis of my own social location. I am a White, heterosexual, Canadian young woman, belonging to the middle-to-upper class socioeconomic status. I am educated, I have access to meaningful social support, and I have been exceptionally fortunate, in that I have not yet faced any significant life hardships, such as oppression, discrimination, and poverty. Despite membership in a religious group that has been repeatedly persecuted throughout history, nonetheless, I am part of the dominant, mainstream North American majority, and as



such, my life is characterized by power and privilege. When I bring my social reality into focus, I realize that I often, albeit unwittingly, take my position of privilege for granted.

Given the topic of the present research, I am faced with the following questions:

(a) what do I, a middle- to upper- class White woman, who has never experienced significant hardship, racism, heterosexism, or discrimination have to contribute to research on cultural diversity and, (b) will my social location and position of privilege in this society affect the present research design, analysis, and interpretation? I must admit that these are questions with which I continue to struggle. However, given my recent exposure to the literature on White racial identity and the potential negative effects of dominant social location upon minority groups, I am now more aware of my impact on others and I consciously reflect on the ways that I, as an individual, can minimize the negative experiences of others. This includes asking respectful questions when I do not know how to act in a situation that may lead to a cultural misunderstanding.

Canadians often pride themselves on being members of a multicultural society. So many people are so proud of the fact that many culturally-diverse and unique people inhabit our cities and towns. Nevertheless, to reiterate a point made previously, an alarming Canadian statistic indicates that *2.2 million* people have reported feeling out of place or uncomfortable in this country, either some or all of the time, on the basis of ethno-cultural characteristics (Statistics Canada, 2003a). Hate crimes against racial minorities, gay men and lesbian women, religious minorities and other oppressed groups continues to occur with startling magnitude. Thus, it would appear that some Canadians “talk the talk,” yet there remains the need to actually “walk the walk.”

As Peter Spier (1980), author of *People*, my favorite book from childhood so eloquently remarks, “each and every one of us is different from all the others. Each one is a unique individual in his or her own right ... imagine how dreadfully dull this world of ours would be if everybody would look, think, eat, dress and act the same!” Canadian diversity, expressed across ethnic, religious, gender, and sexual orientation boundaries, represents a rare opportunity to share values, to promote greater learning, and to foster mutual understanding and respect. Culturally-diverse working relationships, whether inter-professionally, or between professional and client, provide both organizations, and the individuals working in those organizations, the opportunity to maximize the strengths inherent within their human assets – the resources that can build a stronger, more positive, and holistic community in which to live, work, play, and interact. Perhaps among the most important of an agency’s assets is its social capital, that is, the capacity for individuals to work together and to take advantage of the rich and unique networks of relationships found within culturally diverse workplaces and communities. In essence, it is an opportunity to strengthen and enhance the cultural fabric of a multicultural society.

#### *Research Questions*

Given the theoretical perspectives on cultural competence and the previous empirical research in support of the efficacy of diversity-related training experiences, an overarching question was explored. That is, does change occur in self-reported multicultural competencies as a result of participation in a professional development and training program? The primary purpose of the present study was to assess the effectiveness of a cultural competency employee training program, offered in a provincial, community-based child welfare agency.

Three research questions were posed. Table 1 presents the research questions, hypotheses, and the methods and measures used to assess each question. An overview of each research question is presented in the text which follows.

Table 1: Research Questions and Methods

	Research Question [Hypothesis (H) / Exploratory (E)]	Method	Measure
Question 1	(H1) Interaction effect	Quantitative	MAKSS assessment
Question 2	(E1) Participant satisfaction	Quantitative	Post-training survey
	(E2) Participant self-perceptions	Qualitative	Interview protocol
	(E3) Participant reactions	Qualitative	Interview protocol
Question 3	(H2) Predicting competency	Quantitative	MAKSS assessment

The main research question is to test the interaction effect of time (pre-training, post-training) and group (training, comparison) on multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills. It was hypothesized that participation in training would contribute to significant gains in multicultural competencies. Specifically, it was expected that the experimental (training) group would report significantly higher levels of multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills at post-test than the comparison group.

A second research question examined subjective participant response to the training experience. This question was threefold: (a) Are participants satisfied with the training experience? (b) Do participants perceive themselves as being more culturally aware, knowledgeable, and skillful as a result of training? (c) What are participants' personal reactions to the training program? No *a priori* predictions concerning response and satisfaction outcomes were made, due to the exploratory nature of these inquiries.

The third and final research question assessed whether participant demographic characteristics predict cultural competency scores at baseline. This question tested whether members of ethnic minority groups, women, younger people, and individuals with more advanced levels of education report higher levels of multicultural competence.

Given previous studies that have reported variance in self-reported multicultural competence among different groups of individuals, it was expected that certain demographic variables would be related to increased levels of cultural competency. It was hypothesized that members of ethnic minority groups (e.g., Black Canadians, Hispanics or Latinos/Latinas, Asian Canadians), would report greater levels of cultural competence than their White Canadian peers (e.g., Constantine, 2001a; Holcomb-McCoy & Myers, 1999; Pope-Davis & Ottavi, 1994).

It was also expected that gender (Carter, 1990), level of education (Sabnani, Ponterotto, & Borodovsky, 1991; Green, Hamline, Ogden, & Walters, 2004), and age (Sodowsky et al., 1994) would be related to self-reported cultural competency at baseline. It was hypothesized that women, younger people, and individuals with more advanced levels of education would report higher levels of multicultural competence than men, older people, and individuals with less advanced levels of education.

## Method

### *Research Approach*

An important objective in the design of this research was to involve individuals who are directly affected by the process, outcomes, and potential actions generated on the basis of the evaluation findings. Thus, a steering committee was assembled to guide both the learning and decision-making processes of this study. This valuable research

mechanism ensures that the evaluation remain a process that is done *with* people, rather than *for* them or *to* them (Taylor & Botschner, 1998). Involving people who are affected by the research may lessen resistance, especially among those who may feel threatened by an evaluation. With the input and guidance of a steering committee, the evaluation questions and objectives may be revisited and developed as the evaluation progresses over time. When program stakeholders contribute to the process and planning of an evaluation, there is more of a commitment to the project, and the likelihood is greater that evaluation findings will promote further action (Taylor & Botschner, 1998).

Ideally, all individuals who are affected by a program should be represented in the steering committee, including employees, management, foster parents, service recipients, and community members. However, bringing together such a comprehensive stakeholder group goes beyond the scope of the present study. The steering committee members of this study are a cross-section of directors, managers, and supervisors of the agency. These members are the Director of Client Services, the Manager of Quality Assurance, the CARE Home Clinician, the Supervisor of Training and Development, the Supervisor of CARE Homes and Specialized School Programmes, and the Program Coordinator for CARE Homes. Four steering committee members are also facilitators of training.

Triangulation involves the collection of information using different sources, or different methods, in order to strengthen a study (Patton, 2002; Posavac & Carey, 2003). Denzin (1989) contends that “by combining multiple observers, theories, methods, and data sources, [researchers] can hope to overcome the intrinsic bias that comes from single-methods, single-observer, and single-theory studies” (p. 307, as cited in Patton,

2002, p. 555). Methodological triangulation involves the use of multiple research methods to study a single research question or program (Denzin, 1978).

In the present study, methodological triangulation has been accomplished through the use of two distinct epistemological research paradigms, in order to achieve a more profound understanding of the phenomenon under study, within its complex social context. A multi-method approach was used to answer the research questions. This study therefore used both qualitative and quantitative research methods (see Table 1).

Quantitative questionnaires were used to assess the effect of the multicultural training program. This aspect of the study, therefore, falls within a post-positivist research paradigm. Such a methodological choice is in keeping with an appeal for methodological diversity. The assumption is that the use of both qualitative and quantitative research methods allows me to more accurately capture the reality of the program through the use of different methods and sources of information which, in turn, result in a broader understanding of the training program itself, and how it is experienced by the participants of training (Patton, 2002; Taylor & Botschner, 1998).

The present research integrates the social constructivist perspective advanced by Lincoln and Guba (1989) known as the fourth generation approach to evaluation, a research strategy focused on understanding how a social program is experienced by the individuals directly affected. The primary methodology of fourth generation evaluation is the case study, an in-depth investigation in one setting, characterized by the use of thick description, and the development of a collaborative relationship between the researcher and the individuals who have a stake in the program. Banyard and Miller (1998) contend that thick description helps researchers “capture the details of multiple

voices and perspectives” (p. 491). The case study method used in this study is qualitative, open-ended focus group discussions with participants of training.

### *Research Context*

Family and Children’s Services (FACS) of the Waterloo region, located in Southwestern Ontario, Canada, is a charitable, non-profit organization, which operates under the authority of Ontario’s child welfare legislation (Child and Family Services Act, Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 1990). Most analogous agencies within the province are known as Children’s Aid Societies. This particular agency, however, has chosen an alternative name, based on an overarching belief that the effective protection of children is inextricably linked with supporting families. Such support thereby provides parents with the necessary resources for strengthening their families so that, whenever possible, children and youth can grow up safely at home (as cited on the FACS website, <http://www.facswaterloo.org>).

As a child welfare agency, FACS has a statutory responsibility to protect children in danger of physical and emotional harm and neglect. As such, FACS provides children with a safe, supportive, and nurturing environment in which to heal and grow, particularly in response to conflict and disruption within the family-of-origin home. In times of familial crisis, FACS provides parents with the support and opportunities necessary to create a better life for their families. Numerous services and programs are offered through the agency, including adoption services, crisis intervention, investigation of abuse and neglect, residential services, sexual abuse treatment, training for foster parents, referrals for counseling services, and community education. This agency has protected children in the region of Waterloo since 1894 (<http://www.facswaterloo.org>).

In 2001, more than 100 FACS stakeholders assessed the agency's organizational climate as part of a collaborative and interactive conference called Future Search (M. Dei-Amoah, Supervisor of CARE Homes and Specialized School Programmes, personal communication, March 18, 2004). Organizational issues and challenges pertinent to the development of an inclusive, respectful, and holistic working environment were identified, and scenarios reflective of an ideal future were expressed in writing.

What emerged from this collaborative activity was a plan-of-action for putting into practice the overarching themes through key strategic directions. The Strategic Plan focuses on ways of building the capacity of the agency in responding effectively and sensitively to the diverse people representative of the agency's service clientele. A number of key organizational strategies emanated from the conference. In response to the strategic direction of *Strengthening the Agency's Response to an Increasingly Diverse Community*, the Multicultural Committee was created. The Education Committee, a sub-committee of the Multicultural Committee, was mandated to work towards increasing knowledge and awareness concerning cultural diversity in client services among all agency staff through the provision of ongoing Cultural Competency Training.

The development of the training curriculum occurred in a collaborative process between members of the Education Committee and two professors of social work, Dr. Sarah Maiter of Wilfrid Laurier University, and Dr. Gary Dumbrill of McMaster University, both respected contributors to the fields of child welfare and multiculturalism (e.g., Dumbrill & Maiter, 1996; Dumbrill & Maiter, 2003; Maiter, 2004; Maiter & George, 2003). The Education Committee has since recruited 20 staff members to develop and implement ongoing agency-wide training on cultural competency. Trainers,



or facilitators, received preliminary training from Drs. Maiter and Dumbrill. Trainers were also given the opportunity to participate in curriculum development, curriculum training, and are currently providing training to agency staff.

### *Program Intervention*

In the spring of 2004, Family and Children's Services of the Waterloo Region implemented mandatory cultural competency training for all service providers, management, and administrative staff. In total, over 500 individuals will eventually attend training. Training sessions consist of groups of approximately 20 participants, and a new session is offered approximately once per month. The present study is a snapshot of training outcomes for training participants between September and December 2004.

As an implicit part of diversity training, the Education Committee purposively composed training groups with employees working in various agency departments (e.g., family services, intake services, children's services) and positions (e.g., front line workers, administrators, and supervisors). Each session met on two consecutive days, totaling approximately 12 hours of direct training. Training sessions were facilitated by a two- or three-person team of trainers, who have received preliminary instruction and preparation from the curriculum developers, Drs. Sarah Maiter and Gary Dumbrill. All trainers (approximately 20 in total) are FACS employees, and were selected from a larger group of employees who volunteered to facilitate the training program.

A program logic model, a tool used to visualize the relations among curriculum objectives, programmatic activities, mediating variables, and desired outcomes, is presented in Appendix A. This logic model, which presents the objectives and outcomes of the present curriculum, was developed by the principal researcher, in collaboration

with members of the FACS steering committee. As is illustrated in the logic model, the two-day training sessions comprise several programmatic activities, which include: (a) self-reflection exercises, (b) didactic presentation of theory and concepts, (c) group discussions, and (d) case study analyses. One homework exercise was assigned at the end of the first day, which participants were asked to complete prior to the beginning of the second day.

The training curriculum covers several overarching themes, including presentation of the concepts of social location, power and privilege, semantics and language, history, and an introduction to the experiential-phenomenological approach to culture, among several other diversity-related topics. The core training curriculum (Maiter & Dumbrill, unpublished working document), which highlights the learning activities and training sequence is presented in Appendix B.

#### *Research Design and Sampling*

A 2 (pre-training, post-training) x 2 (experimental, comparison) mixed-model design was used to test the experimental research hypothesis. As incentive to participate, respondents were invited to enter a draw for the chance of winning 1 of 3 \$25.00 gift certificates valid at a local restaurant.

Comparisons were made between test scores of the experimental group and a comparison group, in order to determine whether an interaction effect of time and group on multicultural competencies exists. Experimental (training) group participants completed a measure of multicultural competency, both before and after participation in the two-day training program. Pre-test scores provided a baseline measure of participants' perceptions of their own cultural competence prior to participation. Post-

test results assess the degree to which individuals report a change in self-reported cultural competence. A total of 43 FACS employees volunteered as experimental group participants of the present study. These participants were recruited across four training sessions which were offered between September and December 2004.

The comparison group is composed of FACS employees who had not yet participated in the training program. Comparison group participants were invited to complete the same assessment of cultural competency as the training group on two separate occasions, without having attended training in the interim. A total of 48 FACS employees contributed to the pre-test phase of the research. However, the attrition rate of this group was considerable, with only 18 of the initial 48 respondents participating in the post-test follow-up, representing a response rate of 38%.

Four focus groups were conducted with FACS employees who had attended training between May and December 2004. As incentive to participate, respondents were offered complimentary refreshments during the focus groups and received a \$5.00 gift certificate valid at Tim Horton's. A total of 13 employees contributed to focus groups.

#### *Recruitment of Survey Respondents*

Convenience sampling was used to recruit participants of the experimental group ( $n = 43$ ). The comparison group ( $n = 18$ ) is a convenience sample of individuals who had not yet attended training. The total sample ( $N = 61$ ) is a non-probability sample, because the principal researcher requested voluntary participation from a group of people who met the general inclusion criteria of the study.

The initial target sample was limited to direct service providers (e.g., intake or ongoing service workers, residential direct care workers, etc.). Because each training

session consisted of a diverse representation of FACS staff (e.g., direct service providers, support staff, administrative personnel, and managers), trainees in the sessions identified as experimental groups were asked to complete the survey both before and after training. However, because the response rate of direct service providers was not high enough to detect significant effect sizes, the present analyses include all respondents, both front line workers and administrative personnel.

#### *Recruitment of Focus Group Respondents*

Focus group participants were recruited by means of convenience sampling. All direct services providers who attended training between May and December 2004 received an invitation to participate in a focus group discussion regarding personal experience in and satisfaction with the Cultural Competency Training (Appendix C). Letters were distributed to prospective participants via the FACS interoffice mail system. Interested individuals completed a contact information sheet and returned it to the researcher in a self-addressed, postage-paid WLU return envelope.

Individuals who responded to the invitation were contacted by phone or via electronic mail to confirm the date, time, and location of the group discussion. Prospective participants were informed that their names and contact information would be kept private at all times, in order to maintain strict confidentiality. This was to ensure that participants felt able to communicate openly about their experiences in training, without fear of potential occupational repercussion for honest expression of opinions.

#### *Participants*

Chi-square values ( $\chi^2$ ) were computed for categorical variables, and independent samples *t* tests were computed for continuous variables, to determine the comparability of

the experimental group and the comparison group at baseline (see Tables 2 and 3). Pearson's chi-square criteria and *t* statistics indicate that no statistically significant differences exist between the two groups on any personal or employment-related demographics. Thus, the two groups are highly comparable at baseline, which therefore allows for a more accurate interpretation of experimental findings. Separate descriptions of each group are provided in the text which follows.

#### *Experimental (Training) Group*

Table 2 reports the personal demographics of all participants (i.e., experimental and comparison). The experimental (training) group was composed of 43 FACS employees. Experimental group survey respondents were mostly women (88.4%); 2.3% did not indicate gender. Respondents ranged in age from 27 to 63 years ( $M=38.47$ ,  $SD=10.16$ ). With respect to ethnocultural characteristics, 69.8% of the participants self-identified as Caucasian, while 20.9% identified themselves as belonging to an ethnic group other than the options provided, and 9.3% did not respond to this item. The ethnocultural response options included: African, East Asian, South Asian, European (i.e., Caucasian), South East Asian, West Asian/Arab, and Other. Religious affiliation was reported as follows: 79.1% self-identified as Christian, 9.3% as being a member of another religion, 4.7% as Atheist, and 7.0% did not provide information on religious affiliation. The majority of respondents, 88.4%, indicated being heterosexual, while 9.3% of respondents did not respond to this item and 2.3% declined to disclose sexual orientation information, by selecting the "*prefer not to say*" response option.

Employment-related demographics of both the experimental (training) and comparison groups are reported in Table 3. In the experimental group, employee-related

personal characteristics show that front line workers represented 44.2% of the participants, support staff accounted for 30.2%, and supervisors were reported at 14.0%; 11.6% of the respondents did not respond to this item.

Table 2: Personal Demographics of Research Participants

<i>Demographic</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>% or range</i>	<i>Mean (SD)</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>% or range</i>	<i>Mean (SD)</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Statistic<sup>a</sup></i>
	Training Group ( <i>N</i> = 43) <sup>b</sup>			Comparison Group ( <i>N</i> = 18)				
Gender								$\chi^2 = 1.76$
Women	38	88.4		14	77.8			
Men	4	9.3		4	22.2			
Age	36	27-63	38.5(10.2)	18	26-56	39.8(9.63)	52	$t = -.453$
Ethnicity <sup>c</sup>								$\chi^2 = .960$
Caucasian	30	69.8		15	83.3			
Other	9	20.9		2	11.1			
Religion								$\chi^2 = 3.44$
Christianity	34	79.1		10	55.6			
Atheism	2	4.7		2	11.1			
Other	4	9.3		4	22.2			
Sexual orientation								$\chi^2 = 4.89$
Heterosexual	38	88.4		16	88.9			
Bisexual	0	0.0		1	1			
Lesbian	0	0.0		1	1			
Prefer not to say	1	2.3		0	0.0			

a. All between-group difference scores were non-significant ( $p > .05$ ).

b. Sample sizes and percentages vary because of missing data.

c. The following options were offered, but received no responses: African, East Asian, South Asian, South East Asian, and West Asian/Arab.

Table 3: Employment-Related Demographics of Research Participants

<i>Demographic</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>% or range</i>	<i>Mean (SD)</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>% or range</i>	<i>Mean (SD)</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Statistic<sup>a</sup></i>
	Training Group ( <i>N</i> = 43) <sup>b</sup>			Comparison Group ( <i>N</i> = 18)				
Department								$\chi^2 = 7.29$
Family Services	13	30.2		3	16.7			
Intake Services	10	23.3		2	11.1			
Children's Services	4	9.3		5	27.8			
Residential Services	0	0.0		1	5.6			
Admin Services	10	23.3		6	33.3			
Position								$\chi^2 = 2.46$
Front Line Worker	19	44.2		7	38.9			
Support Staff	13	30.2		6	33.3			
Supervisor	6	14.0		3	16.7			
Manager	0	0		1	5.6			
Length at agency	38	0.3-17	6.6(4.8)	17	1.5-26	7.2(6.7)	53	$t = -.319$
Length in c/welfare	36	0.0-22	8.7(5.9)	17	0.0-26	6.8(6.6)	51	$t = 1.01$
Level of education								$\chi^2 = 2.26$
High school	4	9.3		1	5.6			
College	8	18.6		2	11.1			
BSW	4	9.3		3	16.7			
Other undergrad	9	20.9		5	27.8			
MSW	11	25.6		4	22.2			
Other Masters	1	2.3		1	5.6			
Other	1	2.3		1	5.6			
Previous CC Training								$\chi^2 = .153$
Yes	6	14.0		2	11.1			
No	32	74.4		15	83.3			

a. All between-group difference scores were non-significant ( $p > .05$ ).

b. Sample sizes and percentages vary because of missing data.

Length of employment at Family and Children's Services of the Waterloo Region ranged from 4 months to 17 years ( $M = 6.66$ ,  $SD = 4.85$ ). Length of employment in the field of child welfare ranged from less than a month to 22 years ( $M = 8.65$ ,  $SD = 5.91$ ).

Approximately one quarter of the participants, 25.6%, have completed a master's of social work (MSW) degree, while 9.3% have completed a bachelor of social work (BSW) degree, and 20.9% have completed an undergraduate university degree in an academic field other than social work. Other levels of education were reported as follows: high school, 9.3%, college diploma, 18.6%, master's degree in a field other than social work, 2.3%, an educational background other than the options provided, 2.3%; 11.6% did not respond to this item. Most respondents, 74.4%, had not previously attended cultural competence training, whereas 14.0% had, and 11.6% did not respond to this item.

#### *Comparison Group*

A non-equivalent comparison group was used. The comparison group was composed of 18 FACS employees. Table 2 (above) presents the personal demographics of comparison group participants. Comparison group respondents were mostly women (77.8%). Respondents ranged in age from 26 to 56 years ( $M = 39.78$ ,  $SD = 9.63$ ). With respect to ethnocultural characteristics, 83.3% of the participants self-identified as Caucasian, while 11.1% identified themselves as belonging to an ethnic group other than the options provided, and 5.6% did not respond to this item. Religious affiliation was reported as follows: 55.6% self-identified as Christian, 22.2% as being a member of another religion, 11.1% as Atheist, and 11.1% did not provide information on religious



affiliation. The majority of respondents, 88.9%, indicated being heterosexual, while 5.6% reported being lesbian, and 5.6% indicated being bisexual.

Table 3 (above) presents employment-related demographics of the comparison group. Employee characteristics showed that front line workers represented 38.9% of the participants, support staff accounted for 33.3%, supervisors were reported at 16.7%, and managers represented 5.6%; 5.6% did not respond to this item. Length of employment at Family and Children's Services ranged from 1.5 to 26 years ( $M = 7.18$ ,  $SD = 6.74$ ), and length of employment in the field of child welfare ranged from less than a month to 26 years ( $M = 6.82$ ,  $SD = 6.59$ ).

Most respondents, 27.8%, have completed an undergraduate degree in a field other than a BSW, and 11.1% have a college diploma. Respondents who have completed a MSW represent 22.2% of the comparison group while 16.7% have completed a BSW. Other levels of education were reported as follows: 5.6% attended high school, 5.6% have completed a master's degree other than an MSW, 5.6% reported an education other than the options provided, and 5.6% did not respond to this question. Most respondents, 83.3%, had not previously attended a cultural competency or multicultural training, whereas 11.1% had, and 5.6% did not respond to this item.

### *Measures and Interview Protocol*

#### *Self-Report Surveys*

Two quantitative measures were used to assess the effect of this instructional strategy on levels of multicultural competence. The Multicultural Awareness Knowledge and Skills Survey-Form T (MAKSS-Form T) (D'Andrea, Daniels & Noonan, 2003) is a self-administered written measure, developed to assess the effect of instructional

strategies on levels of multicultural competence of teachers. This 42-item measure is based on a similar scale which was originally developed to assess multicultural counseling competencies (MAKSS-Counselor Edition; D'Andrea et al., 1991).

The measure consists of three subscales, each assessing respondents' current level of multicultural awareness (7 items) (e.g., "In general, how would you rate your level of awareness regarding different cultural institutions and systems?"), knowledge (15 items) (e.g., "how would you rate your understanding of the term 'ethnicity'?"), and skills (20 items) (e.g., "how well would you rate your ability to analyze a culture into its component parts?").

Response options were presented in one of two multiple choice formats, using a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*very limited*) to 4 (*very good* or *very aware*) and 1 (*strongly agree*) to 4 (*strongly disagree*), and three summary scores were calculated. The Awareness sub-scale ranges from 7 to 29; the Knowledge sub-scale ranges from 20 to 80; the Skills sub-scale ranges from 15 to 61. Higher scores indicate greater multicultural competency. D'Andrea et al. (2003) tested the reliability of the MAKSS-Form-T and reported alpha coefficients of .73 (awareness), .86 (knowledge), and .93 (skills). In most prior research, the three MAKSS sub-scales are not summed to derive a total score (Kocarek, Talbot, Batka, & Anderson, 2001). Therefore, there is no reliability report for the total scale.

For use in the present study, the wording of the measure was slightly modified to more accurately reflect the learning objectives of the curriculum. For instance, the original item "How would you rate your ability to teach students from a cultural background significantly different from your own?" was modified in the following way

to increase relevance and applicability to a child welfare setting: “How would you rate your ability to work with clients from a cultural background significantly different from your own?” Additionally, participants were given the choice of using one of the following response options: *prefer not to say*, *don’t know*, and *not applicable to me*. These modifications were suggested, discussed, and approved by the steering committee prior to assessment. The instrument is hereafter referred to as the MAKSS (Appendix D).

Several other quantitative questionnaires were administered along with the MAKSS. These questionnaires include a measure of organizational-level multicultural competence, the Sense of Community Index (SCI), a measure of social support, and a measure of social dominance. The analysis and interpretation of these measures are part of a larger study (Loomis, Vinograd, Dei-Amoah, & Evans, in progress). See Appendix E for the additional measures.

The Post-Training Survey (PTS) is a 23-item questionnaire, developed by the principal researcher to assess participants’ satisfaction with the training experience and their personal, subjective evaluation of the curriculum, training content, and effectiveness of the trainer(s) (Appendix F). The survey was reviewed and approved by the steering committee. The following statement is a sample item: “The group discussions contributed to my understanding of what it means to be culturally competent.”

The response options are presented in a multiple choice format, with one of five possible choices for each item (e.g. *strongly disagree*, *disagree*, *neither agree nor disagree*, *agree*, and *strongly agree*). In addition, participants were offered three additional response options: *don’t know*, *prefer not to say*, and *not applicable to me*. Total score on this measure was determined by summing all items. Possible total scores

range from 22 to 110, and a higher score indicates greater satisfaction with the training. A total scale score is tabulated in order to determine whether overall satisfaction, as reflected by the total PTS score, is correlated with the three MAKSS sub-scale scores: Awareness, Knowledge, and Skills. Sub-scale scores are not tabulated. However, the frequencies of responses of single items are assessed.

In addition to the multiple choice response format participants were asked one dichotomous response question (e.g., yes or no): “Would you recommend this training to your friends and/or coworkers?” Furthermore, participants were given the opportunity to include their own comments and reflections in writing.

#### *Focus Group Discussions*

Four qualitative focus group discussions were conducted in order to understand participants’ lived experiences with and personal reflections on the cultural competence training program. The first focus group comprised five individuals, and four participated in the second focus group. The third and fourth group discussions were each attended by two respondents. Thus, a total of 13 FACS employees participated in the present study as focus group respondents.

Qualitative focus groups are valuable in the information-gathering phase of evaluation research, as direct interaction with the individuals personally involved in and affected by a program has the potential to lead to honest and responsive dialogue about the ability of a curriculum to attain intended outcomes (Patton, 1997).

Open-ended, semi-structured focus group discussions were conducted. Individual perceptions of the benefits of the training program were assessed (e.g., Kirkpatrick, 1998). Respondents reflected on whether they perceived cultural awareness, knowledge,

and skills to have been promoted through training. Respondents were also asked to discuss those aspects of training that worked well, and those which can be improved for future programming (see Appendix G for the focus group interview protocol).

### *Procedure*

#### *Steering Committee Involvement*

The purpose of steering committee involvement was to gain input from committee members regarding the proposed research design and method, and to guide both the learning and decision-making processes. The present study is a collaborative project, in which the organizational needs and requests of FACS staff are attended to and respected. Members of the steering committee have been involved throughout the design and administration phases of the research. The present research was part of a larger ongoing study (Loomis et al., in progress).

#### *Administering the Self-Report Surveys*

*Experimental (Training) Group.* The experimental sample was drawn from a larger group of employees who self-selected to attend cultural competency training during the fall of 2004. On the morning of the first day of training, pre-test survey packets were distributed to potential respondents prior to the beginning of training. Trainees were asked to take part in a confidential, voluntary survey of the effectiveness of the agency's cultural competency initiative. The study was introduced to trainees in each of the four training sessions given between September and December 2004 by Ms. Marlene Dei-Amoah, the principal investigator's primary contact at FACS. Ms. Dei-Amoah is a steering committee member, the supervisor of CARE Homes and Specialized School Programmes, and one of several on-site facilitators of training.

Survey packets contained the demographic information sheet (Appendix H), an informed consent letter and prize draw entry ballot (Appendix I), and the MAKSS. The surveys were administered in a group setting in the room in which training occurred. On average, survey completion took 20 to 25 minutes. To protect confidentiality, respondents returned the completed surveys in sealed envelopes, via a locked box located in the room in which training was taking place, but accessible only to the researchers.

Post-test data collection occurred immediately following the conclusion of the two-day training session, during the last half-hour of Day Two. On average, 30 hours had elapsed from pre- to post-training assessment. Participants were asked to complete a similar survey packet, to be returned via the same locked box. Pre-test and post-test surveys of individual respondents were matched using a randomly assigned ID number and a cross reference list to employee name. To ensure confidentiality, data were maintained separately from the list of employee names.

*Comparison group.* In fall 2004 the pre-test survey was sent to all FACS employees who had not yet attended Cultural Competency Training, excluding those who had self-selected to participate in 1 of 4 fall training sessions. Approximately 330 workers received the survey, which included the demographic information sheet, an informed consent statement, a prize draw entry ballot, and the MAKSS. Surveys were delivered to employees through FACS interoffice mail. Respondents returned the completed surveys in sealed envelopes, via a locked box located in the main lobbies of the three FACS office buildings, but were accessible only to the researchers.

Post-test data collection occurred six months after the first mailing. Individuals who responded to the pre-test survey were sent a similar survey packet via interoffice

mail, to be returned once complete via a locked box. Pre-test and post-test surveys were matched using a randomly assigned ID number and a cross reference list to name.

Forty-eight FACS employees volunteered and participated as comparison group participants in the pre-test phase of research. However, given the considerable amount of time which elapsed from pre- to post-assessment, approximately 18 individuals were no longer eligible for comparison group participation, due to their subsequent attendance in the training program, or due to professional leave of absence. Thus, approximately 30 employees received the post-test, in comparison to the 48 who responded at pre-test.

An extra incentive to participate was offered to the post-test comparison group sample. Potential respondents were invited to enter a draw to win a \$50.00 gift certificate redeemable at a restaurant of their choice. Despite this extra incentive and multiple timeline extensions, the post-test comparison group response rate was continually low.

In a further attempt to increase the response rate of this group, a revision to the initial data collection procedure was implemented. Those employees who had already participated in the pre-test survey were telephoned by the principal researcher and were asked if they would like to continue participation by completing the survey over the telephone. Participants were told that, if they preferred, the paper survey could still be returned. The confidentiality of participant responses via telephone was guaranteed and equal to those participants who responded on paper. Ultimately, a total of 18 post-test comparison surveys were received in contrast to the 48 which were received during the pre-test phase of research.

### *Conducting the Focus Groups*

Focus group discussions were facilitated by the principal researcher. Respondents were asked to contribute to a 45-minute discussion regarding personal experience in and satisfaction with training. Focus groups were held in private rooms at FACS.

With the written permission of respondents, group discussions were taped-recorded and later transcribed into an MS Word document. Respondents were told that focus group data would be reported in group format, with some non-identifying direct quotations. Respondents received refreshments and a \$5.00 Tim Horton's gift certificate.

### *Analyzing Qualitative Data*

Qualitative data were interpreted by coding, the systematic searching of data to identify and categorize specific observable themes, which became the main research variables (Merriam, 1988). Qualitative data analysis began with a review of the original research questions. All the qualitative data was read, during which time pre-determined themes, derived from the research questions, were identified. During a subsequent reading of the focus group transcripts, emerging themes, patterns, important points, ideas and insights were identified, as were the themes mentioned many times. An audit trail, a system to keep track of exactly where each quotation came from, was used.

The data that supported each of the broad and specific themes and sub-themes were identified and was placed within a qualitative report according to relevance (Taylor & Botschner, 1998). Table 4 presents an outline of the method used in the systematic analysis of qualitative data. The steps were predominantly followed in a sequential manner however variation in sequence did occur when required.



Table 4: Qualitative Analysis of Focus Group Data

<i>No.</i>	<i>Step</i>
1	As a component of the audit trail, a random identifier was assigned to each focus group respondent. In the electronic version of each focus group transcript, the identifier was placed at the end of each comment made by each respondent. Thus, all comments made by 'Respondent A' were followed with the citation, (Respondent A), and so on.
2	The electronic version of each transcript was printed and read in its entirety.
3	Each transcript was re-read. During the second reading, three broad pre-determined themes, which are based on the training curriculum and research literature, were identified by writing the broad theme in the margin beside relevant quotes. Broad themes are: (a) learning objectives, (b) participant reactions, and (c) participant recommendations.
4	Emergent themes were identified by writing themes beside relevant quotes.
5	A list of the three broad themes was handwritten on a sheet of paper.
6	A list of the emergent sub-themes relating to each of the three broad themes was handwritten on the same sheet of paper.
7	The relations between themes and sub-themes were identified by categorizing each sub-theme below the appropriate broad theme.
8	The three broad themes were listed in a Word document. Using the level-headings function, each of the broad themes was assigned a level 1 heading.
9	Below each of the three level 1 headings, the sub-themes which related to each broad theme were inserted. Sub-themes were assigned a level 2 heading.
10	Using the Cut and Paste functions in Word, all quotes from the focus group transcripts were categorized according to the appropriate heading.
11	Within each level 2 heading, sub-themes were further broken down, whenever possible. Level 3 headings were used to identify this third level of themes.
12	The frequency of each response was tabulated. A summary table for each broad theme was created, listing the frequency of response of each sub-theme.

(Table 4 continues)

(Table 4 continued)

<i>No.</i>	<i>Step</i>
13	Once all quotes were placed under the appropriate heading, each quote was edited. Extraneous or repetitive information was deleted; however, the implicit meaning of each statement was preserved. Alterations in language were made to enhance clarity, and are indicated by the use of parentheses [ ]. Colloquialisms used by the speaker are such as “and, like, well, you know” were deleted and are indicated by use of an ellipsis (...).
14	The most interesting, important, and relevant quotes for each theme and sub-theme were used. Similar or repetitive quotes were deleted.
15	Any potentially identifying information, such as work unit (i.e., “in my work in a CARE Home with a group of girls”), was omitted and replaced by a non-identifying statement (i.e., “where I work....”).
16	The findings from the summary tables were drafted into a restatement of themes. Short, direct quotes from respondents were used in the restatement sections, in order to re-emphasize the facts. The restatement of themes was written as objectively as possible, to minimize researcher interpretation. Personal reflections are not included.
17	The entire report was re-read. Writing style was edited and refined.

#### *Verification and Trustworthiness of Qualitative Data*

To assess the trustworthiness of qualitative data, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest four criteria to judge the value and plausibility of the interpretations: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Credibility concerns whether the research findings accurately reflect the reality of the phenomenon under study. In other words, credibility refers to the truth value of the findings of an investigation.

In the present study, credibility was achieved through methodological triangulation. Triangulation of methods makes data plausible, because “once a proposition has been confirmed by two or more measurement processes, the uncertainty

of its interpretation is greatly reduced. The most persuasive evidence comes through a . . . triangulation of measurement processes” (Webb, Campbell, Schwartz, & Sechrest, 1966, p. 3, as cited in Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 306). Prolonged engagement and persistent observation are additional mechanisms in achieving credibility, and these were achieved through the use of multiple focus group discussions for the collection of qualitative data, which occurred over a period of four months (see Timeline in Appendix J).

Transferability refers to the extent to which research findings can be applied to similar settings or contexts. In the present study, transferability was achieved through the use of thick description in describing the research process, the research context, and data provided (i.e., the quotes of participants) to provide sufficient information for readers to judge the extent of transferability. Thick description allows independent readers to determine whether the results of the present study are transferable to other settings.

Dependability, the ability of similar research attempts to yield consistent and stable findings under similar research conditions, and confirmability, the ability to demonstrate that the study’s rationale and methodology were able to account for its results, were achieved through the use of an audit trail. An audit trail is a systematic method of recording from where exactly each quote was obtained, which includes the raw data, data reduction, and analysis products.

#### Ethics and Dissemination Plan

The research proposal and Request for Ethics Review of Research Involving Human Subjects [sic] was reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Board of Wilfrid Laurier University on September 23, 2004, prior to the beginning of any data

collection. In no way were participants deceived or tricked at any time during their involvement in this study.

Two formal reports are generated on the basis of the evaluation findings: the present thesis and a final summary report to be presented to the steering committee. In addition to these reports, several other tools and outlets have been and will be used to communicate the research findings to the diverse groups of individuals who may be interested in this evaluation research.

First, a concise executive summary will be made available to all those who have a stake in FACS, including research participants, agency employees, foster families, and service recipients. Children's Aid Societies (CASs) across Ontario may also receive a summary sheet, at the discretion of the steering committee, in order to inform future decisions about the efficacy of such professional development programs for diversity. A final copy of the thesis will be given to Marlene Dei-Amoah, and the members of the FACS steering committee.

A research poster will be presented at the annual meeting of the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA). The poster will be presented by the principal investigator to other professionals in social and human services professions in an academic forum. Finally, a manuscript will be prepared and submitted for publication in a professional journal.

Publication and communication of research findings will allow others access to information and results generated through the present study. Researchers may replicate the study to assess the processes, outcomes, and the effectiveness of diversity initiatives in national and international child welfare agencies.

## Results

### *Preliminary Analysis: Intercorrelations among Demographics and Pre-test Scores*

The relation between participant demographics and baseline MAKSS sub-scale scores were explored to identify variables that might influence levels of cultural competency (Vinograd & Loomis, in preparation). Table 5 presents these correlations. Results demonstrated that age was significantly and inversely related to pre-training Knowledge ( $r = -.300, p < .05$ ) and Skills ( $r = -.326, p < .05$ ) sub-scale scores. In the present sample, younger people perceived themselves as having more in-depth knowledge of cultural issues and as having greater multicultural skills at baseline than did older people.

Length of employment in the field of child welfare was significantly and positively related to pre-training Awareness ( $r = .318, p < .05$ ) and Skills ( $r = .355, p < .05$ ) scores. In this sample, the longer an individual has worked in the child welfare field, the more knowledgeable and skillful they perceive themselves to be concerning multicultural issues.

Level of education was significantly and positively related to baseline Knowledge scores ( $r = .341, p < .05$ ). Individuals with more advanced levels of education self-reported greater multicultural knowledge. Finally, individuals who had previously attended a cultural competency or multicultural training program perceived themselves to be more knowledgeable at baseline than those who had not attended a similar program ( $r = .306, p < .05$ ). There were no other significant relations between the dependent variables and participants' demographics.

Table 5: Intercorrelations among Study Variables at Baseline ( $N = 58$ )<sup>a</sup>

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Group (0=Train., 1=Comparison)	1.000										
2. Sex (0=Woman, 1=Man)	-.081	1.000									
3. Age	.069	.068	1.000								
4. Ethnicity (0=Caucasian, 1=Other)	-.101	-.169	-.133	1.000							
5. Religion (0=Christian, 1=Other)	.200	-.033	-.169	-.014	1.000						
6. Length in agency	.081	.162	.563**	-.058	-.210	1.000					
7. Length in child welfare	-.111	.171	.414**	.046	-.189	.742**	1.000				
8. Education level <sup>b</sup>	-.087	.387**	-.008	.010	.155	-.124	.076	1.000			
9. Prior training <sup>c</sup> (0=No, 1=Yes)	-.092	.387**	.010	.012	.154	-.134	.165	.999**	1.000		
10. Awareness sub-scale	-.002	-.218	-.068	-.043	.182	.186	.318*	.122	.107	1.000	
11. Knowledge sub-scale	.000	.060	-.300*	.046	.235	.051	.271	.341*	.306*	.608**	1.000
12. Skills sub-scale	-.165	.004	-.326*	.027	-.047	.117	.355*	.137	.106	.473**	.681**

\*\* $p < .01$ , \* $p < .05$ 

a. Participants who reported education level as "other" ( $n = 3$ ) were excluded from correlational analyses, because insufficient information regarding educational history was provided to be able to run an ordinal analysis.

b. Education level (1 = high school diploma, 2 = college diploma, 3 = other undergraduate degree, 4 = BSW, 5 = other Masters degree, 6 = MSW).

c. Prior training = Attendance in a previous Cultural Competency or Multicultural Training program.

*Descriptive Analyses*

The means, standard deviations, and internal consistencies for MAKSS sub-scale scores at each time of testing for the experimental (training) group are presented in Table 6. The range of internal consistency coefficients on the three sub-scales was found to be from  $\alpha = .60$  to  $\alpha = .95$  at pre-test, and from  $\alpha = .68$  to  $\alpha = .97$  at post-test. These coefficients are comparable to prior research using the MAKSS (D'Andrea et al., 2003) on all scales except the Awareness scale that had lower reliability coefficients ( $\alpha = .60$  and  $\alpha = .68$ ) in the current study at pre-test and post-test than the previous study ( $\alpha = .75$ ).

Table 6: Means, Standard Deviations, and Internal Consistencies

Training Group ( $N = 43$ )								
Scale	<i>M</i>	Pre-Test		$\alpha$	Post-Test		<i>D</i> <sup>a</sup>	
		<i>SD</i>			<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Awareness sub-scale	19.38	2.41		.600	22.91	2.71	.684	3.53
Knowledge sub-scale	42.70	10.26		.911	51.12	7.34	.928	8.42
Skills sub-scale	49.93	13.26		.946	50.86	18.35	.972	.93
Comparison Group ( $N = 18$ )								
Scale	<i>M</i>	Pre-Test		$\alpha$	Post-Test		<i>D</i>	
		<i>SD</i>			<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Awareness sub-scale	19.76	5.40		.761	20.18	3.99	.774	.42
Knowledge sub-scale	43.88	11.9		.945	43.76	8.91	.880	-.12
Skills sub-scale	44.19	26.61		.984	43.56	22.96	.978	-.63

*Note:* The Awareness sub-scale ranges from 7 to 29; the Knowledge sub-scale ranges from 20 to 80; the Skills sub-scale ranges from 15 to 61.

a. *D* = Difference score.

Table 6 also presents the means, standard deviations, and internal consistency coefficients for the comparison group on the three MAKSS sub-scales at each time of testing. Reliability coefficients are reported to be from  $\alpha = .76$  to  $\alpha = .98$  at pre-test, and from  $\alpha = .77$  to  $\alpha = .98$  at post-test. These findings are comparable to previous research using the MAKSS on all three sub-scales. D'Andrea et al. (2003) tested the reliability of the MAKSS Form-T and reported reliability coefficients of  $\alpha = .73$ ,  $\alpha = .86$ , and  $\alpha = .93$ , respectively, on the Awareness, Knowledge, and Skills sub-scales.

#### *Mixed-Model ANOVAs*

To test the main hypotheses to determine whether participation in training improved cultural competency scores, three mixed-model, repeated-measures analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were conducted, with group (training, comparison) as the between-group factor and time of testing (pre-training, post-training) as the within-group factor. Three ANOVAs were computed, one for each of the three MAKSS sub-scales: Awareness, Knowledge, and Skills.

Four demographic variables were included as covariates because they were significantly correlated with the dependent measures at baseline. Participant age was added as a factor in both the Knowledge and Skills models. Length of employment in the field of child welfare was added as a factor in the Awareness and Skills models, level of education was added as a factor in the Knowledge model, and past training experience was added as a factor in the Knowledge model.

The results of the three repeated-measures ANOVAs are presented in Table 7. Using Wilks' criterion, the analyses indicated a significant group  $\times$  time interaction in both the Awareness model,  $F(1, 49) = 12.07, p < .001$ , and the Knowledge model,  $F(1,$



45) = 14.62,  $p < .001$ . Thus, the pattern of change over time with respect to multicultural awareness and knowledge differed between the two groups. In the Skills model, the group X time interaction was non-significant,  $F(1, 41) = .248$ ,  $ns$  ( $p = .62$ ).

Table 7: Repeated-Measures ANOVAs of MAKSS Sub-scales for Training and Comparison Groups Across Pre-Test and Post-Test Assessments

Source	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>
Awareness sub-scale				
Time	1	72.24	72.24	18.45***
Group	1	35.32	35.32	1.86
Time X Group	1	47.24	47.24	12.07***
Error	49	191.80	3.91	
Knowledge sub-scale				
Time	1	322.71	322.71	17.53***
Group	1	183.48	183.48	1.99
Time X Group	1	269.15	269.15	14.62***
Error	45	828.22	18.41	
Skills sub-scale				
Time	1	.106	.106	.002
Group	1	174.22	174.22	.347
Time X Group	1	17.03	17.03	.248
Error	41	2809.80	68.53	

*Note.* Sample sizes vary because of missing data on covariates.

\*\*\* $p < .001$

Post hoc tests of interactions were computed using paired-samples  $t$  tests to examine the pattern of change over time within each group. These analyses showed that the training group perceived themselves as being more aware,  $t(41) = -7.02$ ,  $p < .001$ , and more knowledgeable,  $t(38) = -7.52$ ,  $p < .001$ , with respect to multicultural child welfare practices at the conclusion of training, in comparison to their pre-training self-report ratings. In contrast, significant changes in these same competencies were not observed in comparison group participants from pre- to post-assessment. Changes over time in all

three models were non-significant: awareness sub-scale,  $t(17) = -3.08$ , *ns*, knowledge subscale,  $t(16) = .065$ , *ns*, and skills subscale,  $t(16) = .409$ , *ns*.

Figures 1 and 2 present the significant interaction effects. In both models, the main effect of time was significant ( $p < .001$ ), indicating an overall effect of participation in training on multicultural awareness and knowledge across time.

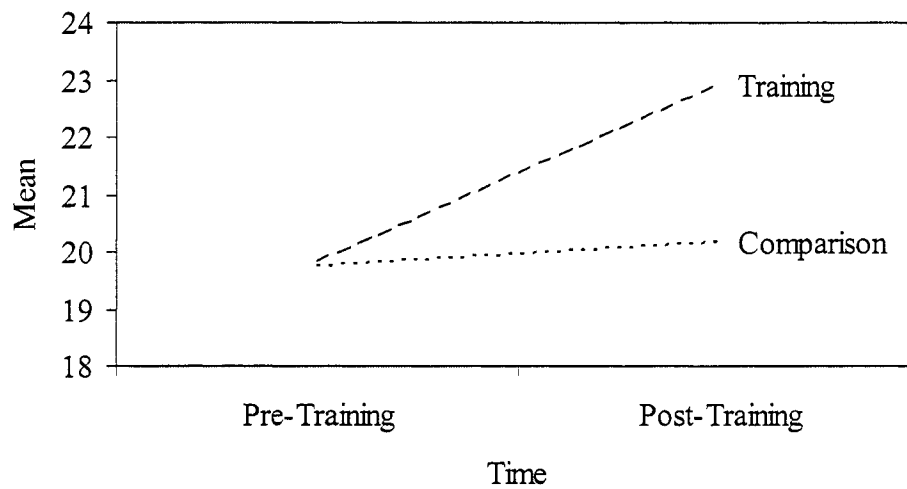


Figure 1: Interaction Effects on the MAKSS Awareness Sub-scale

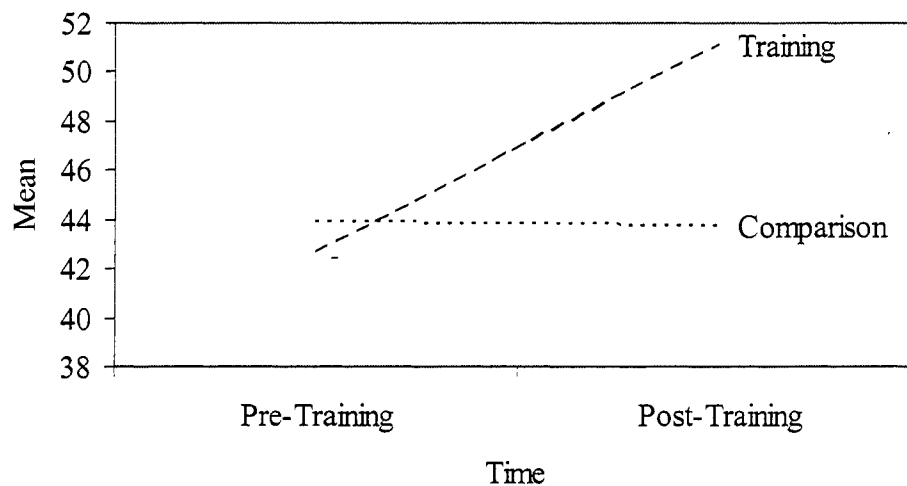


Figure 2: Interaction Effects on the MAKSS Knowledge Sub-scale

*Participant Satisfaction (Quantitative Analysis)*

To answer the second research question, whether participants are satisfied with the training experience, the Post-Training Survey (PTS) was administered to the experimental group ( $N = 43$ ) at the conclusion of the two-day training. This measure assessed participant satisfaction with the training program. The mean sum score of the Likert-scaled items on the PTS was 79.97 ( $SD = 12.60$ ), with an observed range of scores from 27 to 101. The possible total scores range from 22 to 110, where higher scores indicate a more favorable reaction to training. Sub-scale scores were not tabulated. However, the frequencies of responses on single items are assessed.

Many respondents, 70.2%, reported being satisfied with the training experience, and 78.4% of individuals indicated being happy that they attended training. Most respondents, 75.7%, indicated (i.e., either agree or strongly agree) that personal cultural self-awareness has increased as a result of participation in training.

Overall, respondents were very satisfied with the quality and skill of the trainers. Nearly everyone (94.6%) either agreed or strongly agreed that the trainers answered questions and responded to the concerns of the group. Most respondents (91.9%) reported that trainers effectively conveyed the program material, made effective use of examples to explain the concepts of the training curriculum, and respected the emotional safety and well-being of participants.

Many respondents either agreed (56.8%), or strongly agreed (8.1%), that the quality of their interactions with culturally diverse clients will improve as a direct result of training. Finally, 83.3% of respondents indicated that they would recommend FACS Cultural Competency Training to their friends and/or coworkers. Two respondents

(5.6%) said they would not, and two respondents (5.6%) were undecided. Another two respondents (5.6%) said they would recommend the training to some, but not all, of their friends and/or coworkers.

An additional post hoc research question was explored, which was not previously hypothesized. This question investigated whether participant satisfaction, as reflected by the PTS, is related to cultural competencies, as assessed by the MAKSS sub-scale scores. Results of correlational analyses demonstrated that satisfaction level was significantly and positively related to Awareness scores ( $r = .525, p < .01$ ) and to Knowledge scores ( $r = .308, p < .01$ ) after participation in the two-day training. Thus, at post-test, those who scored higher on indicators of multicultural awareness and knowledge reported greater satisfaction with the training experience.

#### *Predicting Cultural Competency*

To address the third research question, whether participant demographics predict cultural competency scores at baseline, a linear regression analysis was conducted. This test regressed four demographic variables on the baseline total MAKSS score. Although prior research has typically not used a total scale score, a sum score was computed for this test given that the three subscales are highly correlated (see Table 5, p. 79). The four demographic variables used are: sex, age, ethnicity, and level of education. These factors were selected as covariates based on the findings of previous research.

As reported in Table 8, significant effects were detected,  $F(4, 66) = 5.06, p < .001$ . Two of four demographic factors significantly predicted 25% ( $p < .001$ ) of the variance in overall multicultural competency scores: age ( $B = -1.14, p < .001$ ), and level of education ( $B = .262, p < .05$ ).

Table 8: Regression Analysis for Demographic Variables Predicting Baseline Scores

Variable	<i>B</i>	Standard Error <i>B</i>	$\beta$
Sex (0=woman, 1=man)	-2.81	10.86	-.030
Age	-1.14	.332	-.393***
Ethnicity (0=Caucasian, 1=Other)	.802	7.96	.011
Education level <sup>a</sup>	.262	.105	.279*

$R^2 = .25$  ( $N = 61$ ,  $p < .001$ ), \*\*\* $p < .001$ , \* $p < .05$

*Note.* Sample sizes vary due to missing data on covariates.

a. Education level (1 = high school diploma, 2 = college diploma, 3 = other undergraduate degree, 4 = BSW, 5 = other Masters degree, 6 = MSW).

In other words, younger respondents perceived themselves as being more culturally competent at baseline than did their older peers,  $t(62) = -3.44$ ,  $p < .001$ . Furthermore, individuals with more advanced levels of education reported higher levels of multicultural abilities at baseline than did individuals with less advanced levels of education,  $t(62) = 2.50$ ,  $p < .05$ . The standardized *B* values for the variables of sex and ethnicity were non-significant.

#### *Participant Perceptions and Reactions*

A more in-depth investigation of the second research question explored participant reactions to training through semi-structured, open-ended focus group discussion with participants. The questions explored through qualitative data collection are the following: (a) Do participants perceive themselves as being more culturally aware, knowledgeable, and skillful as a result of training? (b) What are participants' personal reactions to the training program and how satisfied are they?

A total of 13 direct service providers who attended Cultural Competency Training between May and December 2004 participated in four focus group discussions. Due to unforeseen medical appointments, and dangerous driving conditions caused by inclement weather during one of the scheduled discussions, four potential respondents were unable to attend a focus group, despite having expressed an interest in doing so.

Focus group respondents were asked to comment on what they felt they learned as a result of their participation in training, as well as their overall satisfaction with, and personal response to, the training experience. Respondents were also asked to identify areas of the curriculum which they felt can be improved for future training sessions and, whenever possible, to propose ways of implementing such recommendations.

The qualitative data, which includes direct quotations and testimonials from focus group respondents, was obtained during four group discussions and is presented as a collective account of the reflections and insights shared by respondents. The qualitative report is organized by the three main areas of inquiry: (a) learning objectives, (b) participant reactions, and (c) participant recommendations. Each main area of inquiry consists of a number of sub-themes. Tables 9, 10, and 11 introduce each of the three broad themes and each specific sub-theme which relates to the broad themes.

### *Learning Objectives*

Central to all focus group discussions was an exploration of the extent to which respondents perceived three learning objectives as having been met as a result of participation in the Cultural Competency Training program. These learning objectives originate from the tripartite model of cultural competency, as proposed by Sue and his

colleagues (e.g., Sue & Sue, 2003), which stipulates that cultural competence involves three distinct, yet interrelated competencies: awareness, knowledge, and skills.

These three areas of learning thus represent the predetermined sub-themes explored during focus group discussions: (1) the extent to which a direct service provider's awareness of his or her own assumptions, biases and values have been promoted (i.e., awareness), (2) the extent to which an understanding of the worldview of culturally diverse clients has been gained (i.e., knowledge), and (3) the extent to which an ability to develop culturally-appropriate intervention strategies and techniques has been acquired (i.e., skills).

Table 9 presents the three predetermined learning objective themes, as well as the relevant sub-themes which emerged during focus group discussions. The frequency of responses and percentage of each theme are likewise presented. The restatement of themes is organized by order of importance, as determined by the frequency with which focus group respondents raised and focused on each concept.

Table 9: Frequency of Responses on Learning Objectives

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Response Frequency (N)</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<b>Learning Objectives</b>		
<b>Awareness</b>		
Self-awareness of power and privileges	6	21
Self-awareness of one's assumptions and biases	6	21
Awareness of the need to ask cultural questions	4	14
Awareness of oneself	4	14
Belief of being self-aware prior to training	2	7
Awareness of challenges of the job	2	7
Self-awareness of one's social location	1	3.5
Experiential-phenomenological/solution focus approach	1	3.5
<b>Knowledge</b>	2	7
<b>Skills</b>	0	0
<b>Values</b>	0	0

*Awareness.* One of the intended outcomes of training is to develop and enhance participants' self-awareness. Respondents identified and discussed several core curriculum components which helped foster and enhance their cultural self-awareness.

The most frequently discussed cultural self-awareness sub-theme was a reflection on individual and group privilege, and the power traditionally associated with such privileges. Although talking about one's own position of power, and the privileges which accompany such a position, was "a humbling and powerful experience, because you realize who you are and all the things that go along with who you are" (Respondent F), nearly all respondents who discussed this aspect of the curriculum confirmed that open and honest self-reflection was an important part of training. Respondents stated that the group discussions about power and privilege which evolved during training provided an opportunity to reflect on certain personal characteristics which may be taken granted, for instance, the social privileges related to race, gender, or socioeconomic status.

*... We did an exercise where we noted certain privileges associated with our sex or our race [and so on] ... I thought that was a really interesting exercise. The exercise was difficult, because it is hard to recognize certain privileges that you just have always taken for granted. ... And then to discuss it among a very diverse group ... I thought that was a really good learning exercise for anyone.*  
(Respondent G)

Moreover, two respondents recognized the power and privileges characteristic of a position of authority within the child welfare profession and the importance of being aware of such power and the influence of these constructs on interpersonal relations.

*... The part about privilege, I thought, was really important. Especially at an agency like this, where a lot of us do have a lot of privilege in comparison to the people that we're working with ...* (Respondent E)

*It made me think ... about [my] privileges. ... One of the kids that [I work with] is living on the streets right now. [It is] just being aware that I am in "the box" and there are people struggling out there, not being able to eat, not being able to have*



*shelter...and just [thinking about] the things we take for granted... (Respondent H)*

Focus group respondents said that participation in the Cultural Competency Training program helped them develop an enhanced self-awareness of individual assumptions and biases. Respondents confirmed that this component of training was useful in revealing the ease with which assumptions and biases are made.

*I think a lot of biases were revealed that [people] weren't conscious that they had, particularly about assumptions that people make about other[s]. (Respondent F)*

One respondent stated that group discussions helped expose, both in oneself and in others, the tendency to rely on stereotypes, assumptions, and biases, and the apprehension which most likely accompanies such difficult self-realizations.

*...Half of the [training] group really struggled with the fact that people make assumptions, and stereotypes, biases, and prejudices exist ... and through discussion, or hearing about experiences of other people in the group, and actually dialoguing about it, they too were able to evolve in their thinking, in a sense. (Respondent F)*

Another positive self-awareness outcome which respondents perceived was influenced through participation in training is the importance of asking honest, yet respectful, cultural questions. According to the tripartite model (Sue & Sue, 2003), culturally competent individuals can recognize the limits of their own knowledge and expertise, and are comfortable asking direct and honest, yet respectful, questions concerning cultural variables. Asking questions, rather than making assumptions or relying on preconceptions and stereotypes, is an underlying aspect of cultural competence, and is therefore an integral component of this training curriculum. Several respondents reflected upon the interaction between asking pertinent, yet sensitive, questions and mitigating potentially harmful assumptions and cultural biases.

*...it is easy for all of us to make assumptions. I have to remind the foster parents that I work with, and the children that I work with, and myself, sometimes, that things are not necessarily as they appear. You need to ask the questions.*  
(Respondent F)

*It is really important to be sensitive and understanding towards other people, and feeling uncomfortable isn't necessarily a bad thing, but it can be easily overcome by just asking a lot of questions, and not being afraid to ask people about their background, their customs and practices ...* (Respondent G)

Other respondents also considered its ability to raise participants' awareness of the need to ask respectful cultural questions as an inherent strength of the curriculum. Two respondents gave examples of how this aspect of training has influenced professional conduct and performance.

*[The training] has reminded me to check in a little more, and ask more questions. If I have a home study on file, the home study [may have been] done last week, or it could have been done five years ago, and a lot of stuff has changed since then.* (Respondent E)

*I think [learning to ask questions] is the biggest thing that I've taken from the training, specifically with the families. Because when you ask kids questions, and you ask the parents questions, you can help bridge the gap for them and you can help to make a more comfortable place for them to live. And it fosters a sense of understanding and allows them to build trust relationships together, within themselves. [Eventually], they don't necessarily need me to [ask the questions], but they start to see it on their own. I think that's amazing.* (Respondent F)

Another aspect of training which respondents perceived as being effective was the promotion of awareness of oneself. A few respondents made positive comments on specific curriculum components intended to foster this type of cultural self-awareness.

*Every person has a story and every person has a background and we have to be mindful of that .... And just to take the time to ask, to talk. To step outside your cultural boundary, even within the context of your work. ... I think that creates and allows for awareness to evolve. It is only through doing and knowing and being aware of who you are that you can potentially change things.*  
(Respondent F)

Another respondent explained that that “it is easy to slide into complacency,” (Respondent E) with respect to being culturally aware, and the training offered a valuable opportunity to reflect on the importance of being aware of and sensitive to one’s own culture, as well as being aware of the cultures of diverse groups.

*I think just having that awareness itself is helpful, because you do tend to get wrapped up in your own little world and how things work at our area, and you start to get back into that routine of “this is how things are”, and sort of forgetting how everyone else fits in. After a while it is easy ... to look at the world through your own little eyes and not be aware of everyone else. So, [the training] was good for me, to remind me of that. (Respondent E)*

Although several respondents thought that attendance in training was beneficial because it brought into focus the importance of self-awareness with respect to professional and cultural interactions, other respondents felt that they were already self-aware prior to their participation in training. This group of respondents felt that the awareness aspect of training did not provide any new information or insights, and was therefore not valuable to them. Three focus group respondents explained that cultural self-awareness is a concept they have already been introduced to through university studies, and therefore felt they are already educated about the importance of being aware of one’s power and privilege, assumptions and biases, social location, and the need to ask questions in order to move beyond stereotypes, assumptions, and biases. Cultural self-awareness, one respondent stated, is “always at the forefront” (Respondent I), in both professional and interpersonal interactions and relationships.

Another awareness sub-theme raised during group discussions is the pre-existing awareness of the professional challenges with which child welfare practitioners are currently faced. Specifically, front line workers have an obligation to provide protection and support for children and youth who are at risk of emotional or physical harm, while

simultaneously being aware of the potentially harmful affect of imposing traditional Western beliefs and ideals upon culturally diverse children and families. Arguably, such challenges necessitate a fine balance between prudence and respect for cultural diversity. As the following quote shows, one FACS employee is aware of the obstacles with which front line workers are faced in the successful provision of culturally competent service.

*It's a culture clash. If you walk into a family where males are dominant and you feel, in order to protect those children, that mom and children need to be in a shelter, and mom and children – being in a shelter and working with us – become empowered, we're clashing with that culture in many ways. It's our job to do that, and still be sensitive. I think that is where we need [more] help.*  
(Respondent A)

This respondent also shared a story about an early experience as an FACS front line worker. As the following narrative reveals, the significance of being aware of and sensitive to variances in cultural norms and practices has not always been a salient feature of FACS agency consciousness.

*When I first came to work at this agency, I had a 15-year-old girl who had a child and they were both in our care, and she was pregnant with her second child, and she was from El Salvador. She had been counseled [to have] an abortion and she didn't understand that. She didn't understand also why there was such a fuss about a 15-year-old woman having two children. It was very common in her country. We proceeded, but ... we didn't take those culture variances into account at all. Our interventions were quite strange to her. But, there was no discourse in that as I recall, and I remember being puzzled by it, and conferring with people. I don't think the agency thought much about that, at all. And there is a significant Central American community in this town, as well.* (Respondent A)

At least one focus group respondent is aware of the challenges which face front line workers in the field of child welfare, given the increasingly diverse communities, families, and children which are served by FACS in the Waterloo region. The quote highlights the progression of the organization in its commitment to more effectively addressing human and cultural diversity.

A fundamental element of the Cultural Competency Training program was an introduction to the concept of social location. Together with the didactic presentation of this theory was an accompanying promotion of self-awareness of and personal reflection on one's social location, and a discussion on the interplay of dominance and oppression which is characteristic of mainstream versus minority group membership. The presentation of this material during training was followed by a group discussion regarding social location, and the influence one's membership in dominant groups can have on both interpersonal and professional interactions. One respondent confirmed the effect of this core curriculum component.

*I think what was really effective were the personal disclosures by the people attending the training. [We did an] exercise where we returned [to training] on the second day, and had written an example of a situation where either you could recognize your own privilege for whatever reason, whether it be race, religion, financial standing, or whether you felt marginalized because of the same thing. I thought that was a good exercise and it certainly prompted a lot of discussion among the group. (Respondent G)*

Although an introduction to the concept of social location was a primary focus of training, only one focus group respondent spoke about the effectiveness of the curriculum in promoting self-awareness of one's social location.

Another core curriculum component designed to raise self-awareness was an introduction to the concept of the experiential-phenomenological approach to cross-cultural therapy and/or social work interactions. This approach emphasizes that a practitioner view himself or herself as a learner, who approaches interpersonal and professional interactions with curiosity and a certain degree of naiveté. Interactions are approached with an open mind, in order to develop an understanding of each client as a unique individual with his or her own history, beliefs, and personal experiences. Further,

experiential-phenomenology cautions practitioners not to over-generalize about members of cultural, ethnic, or religious groups, but rather understand that individuals internalize culture in unique ways (Maiter & Dumbrill, 2003; unpublished draft working document). One respondent explained how the experiential-phenomenological approach has since been applied in a professional situation.

*Certainly I do talk to foster parents on a regular basis, but [the training] reminds me to take a little bit more time to ask them about what is changing. Or, if they are having a problem in their home, to kind of dig around a bit more about where they're coming from or their assumptions, and talking about where the child comes from and what their culture is, and helping to use that information to sort out some of the problems that do happen in foster homes. (Respondent E)*

Whereas this topic is another essential part of the curriculum, only one focus group respondent reported having adopted such an approach to direct service provision as a result of participation in training. Thus, although an introduction to the phenomenological approach to cross-cultural interactions was important, if not central to training, only one respondent reflected on this aspect of the curriculum.

Based on the comments and feedback collected during focus groups, many respondents perceived themselves as having gained an enhanced self-awareness and an awareness of others due to participation in the Cultural Competency Training program. Respondents said they gained self-awareness of individual and group power and privilege, awareness of assumptions and biases, awareness of the need to ask questions, and an awareness of oneself. A small subset of respondents stated that they were already self-aware prior to training, attributable to previous university-level educational experiences in diversity; however, this perception was limited to one focus group and was not voiced in multiple groups

*Knowledge.* According to the tripartite model, cultural competence involves an understanding of the worldview of culturally diverse others. Increased knowledge of the concepts and theories which relate to culturally competent child welfare practice is therefore the second intended outcome of training. During focus groups, respondents were asked to identify and discuss the extent to which knowledge and understanding has been gained as a result of participation in training. One respondent reported that Cultural Competency Training was “fairly informative” (Respondent A). According to a second respondent, an advantage of having attended the training is “coming away with a real understanding of the issues” (Respondent B).

Although focus group respondents were directly asked to report on their perceptions of knowledge outcomes, little feedback regarding this aspect of training was received. Most respondents perceived that gains in multicultural knowledge were negligible. However, many respondents proposed ways of improving this learning objective for future training, and these proposals are presented in the participant recommendations section, which follows.

*Skills.* A third proficiency necessary in becoming culturally competent is the ability to implement culturally sensitive and appropriate intervention strategies and techniques. Thus, the third intended outcome of Cultural Competency Training is the acquisition of the skills necessary in the provision of culturally competent child welfare service. Despite being directly asked to reflect upon the skills acquired through training, respondents did not talk about having acquired the skills needed for culturally sensitive practice. Nonetheless, respondents offered several ideas for better addressing this aspect of training, presented in the recommendations section, which follows. It is important to

note, however, that skill-building in the area of multicultural abilities was not a primary focus of this training curriculum.

### *Participant Reactions*

The second major area of inquiry was participants' personal reactions to training. Program stakeholders sought indication of participant satisfaction, and feedback regarding participant enjoyment of the training, the level of safety and comfort, and the appropriateness of the length of the training. This helped to determine the strengths and successes of the program, and at the same time, highlighted areas where the program can be enhanced for the future participants. Many aspects of training were addressed during the focus groups, both the positive, as well as those which respondents said require further development. Table 10 presents themes, sub-themes, and the frequency of each.

Table 10: Frequency of Responses on Participant Reactions

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Response Frequency (N)</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Participant Reactions		
Group climate	10	17
Level of training	10	17
Length of training	6	10
Effectiveness of trainers	6	10
Safety and comfort	3	5
Overall satisfaction	4	7
Programmatic activities	4	7
Belief that cultural comp�tency training is overdue	3	5
Dissatisfaction with training	3	5
Expectations regarding knowledge outcomes	3	5
Knowledge relating to worker safety	2	3
Expectations regarding skills outcomes	3	5
Professional benefits	2	3

*Group climate.* One issue raised during focus groups was the group climate which developed during training. Group climate refers to the quality of interpersonal



interactions and group processes among participants. Several respondents commented on this aspect of training. By two accounts, the group climate allowed for positive peer interactions, respectful discussion, and a safe environment for self reflection and personal disclosure.

*I thought it was quite participatory. I thought that it was fairly active, and I enjoyed it. (Respondent A)*

*[I was with] a very engaged group of people. They said what was on their minds, and they didn't feel threatened at all. (Respondent B)*

A third respondent spoke highly of the group discussions which evolved during training. According to this respondent, the opportunity to openly share and communicate with peers was a positive experience.

*The discussions in our group generated a lot of thought about different things. It helped us to come together as a group and discuss things, about figuring out where we are [in terms of cultural competency] ... (Respondent D)*

One respondent, however, indicated that the group climate which evolved during training was not favorable. This respondent explained that “there were a few people in the training who really monopolized it,” and that these participants were unnecessarily confrontational toward other participants, which “really shut down the process of actual learning” (Respondent H). This individual described how a negative group climate adversely affected the training experience.

*I didn't think [the training] would be as adversarial as it was. I found that our particular group was frustrating because there were a lot a people that were very opinionated in our group, and it was like you almost had to watch every single word you said. It was just really frustrating. [Some] people were very defensive about their positions ... and it didn't need to be that way. (Respondent H)*

Although several respondents reported positive reactions to the group climate and processes, one person perceived the group climate to be unnecessarily hostile, thus adversely affecting the entire training experience.

*Level of training.* Focus group respondents were asked to comment on the level of training; in other words, to discuss whether they perceived the curriculum to be either too challenging or not challenging enough. A number of respondents reported that the concepts and learning goals presented were not new to them. One respondent felt that training “was a refresher course,” because the curriculum comprised theory and concepts that direct service providers learn through university social work programs (Respondent M). Two other respondents reiterated this point of view.

*For me, it was more of a reminder than a lot of new material.* (Respondent E)

*Some of us are fairly far along in this, and I don't think that should be missed. I've been fairly active in these issues, and I've taken on rights issues for different groups of people.* (Respondent A)

Although some respondents felt that the curriculum addressed areas that direct service providers “ought to know already” (Respondent I), a few respondents acknowledged that many aspects of the core curriculum are valuable. These respondents are therefore not only appreciative of the opportunity to attend the initial Cultural Competency Training, but also expressed interest in further occasions to build upon current understanding through additional, future training experiences.

*It would be interesting to have a more in-depth training in some of the areas. If you have the basic awareness, [you are] able to go deeper into some of these areas and talk more about it. There were some times when I thought: “I wish we could spend an hour talking about this topic,” [but] we had to skim over it because there was only two days.* (Respondent E)

Although the training curriculum addressed areas of learning that some direct service providers felt was not new to them, others indicated that training provided a solid foundation from which to further explore areas of cultural competency, particularly with respect to the process of developing respectful, appropriate and relevant intervention skills in working with culturally diverse clients and families.

*Length of training.* Program stakeholders were interested in learning whether participants perceived the training to be either too short or too long. Respondent opinions were mixed with respect to the length of training. One respondent strongly believed that, given the both complexity and value of cultural competency, training sessions merit more than two days.

*I felt that we just went through things so quickly. I think the instructors tried to put a lot into the course. But, I think you could spend a lot more time on discussions, and that's why I feel it should be more than just two days. I think you could easily put this into a three-day package. In [my former place of employment] it is 40-hour training – 5-day program, 8 hours per day. It's a huge thing.* (Respondent B)

Conversely, two other respondents felt that the material was not diverse enough to warrant a two-day session, and therefore felt that “the entire curriculum could have been presented in one day” (Respondent K). Finally, a third respondent stated that the length of time devoted to training was neither too short, nor too long.

*I thought the length was really good. I felt it was important to have that much time to get to know each other, and to have the evening to go home and think about things [we had learned].* (Respondent E)

Discrepancies in respondent reactions regarding the length of training are due to a comparable divergence in participant reactions concerning the level, or degree of complexity, of the curriculum. In other words, those respondents who perceived the

training to be under-stimulating or unchallenging similarly expressed that the training session was too long.

*Effectiveness of the trainers.* Focus group respondents acknowledged the individuals who facilitated the training for their dedication to the enhancement of an agency which affirms and respects cultural diversity. Respondents observed that trainers were effective both in conveying the program material and in responding to the concerns of the group. In particular, respondents appreciated that trainers were both open-minded and non-judgmental. Such openness allowed for a safe environment in which comfortable self-expression and group dialogue could occur.

*I think the openness and the candor of the trainers was very effective in invoking discussion and promoting comfort within the training. I thought that was fantastic. I think the trainers did a fabulous job. They allowed the conversation to flow. (Respondent F)*

*The facilitators were quite open. People were able to reasonably ask questions and to express themselves. It didn't seem like a totally politically correct atmosphere. (Respondent A)*

It was further noted by several respondents that the trainers were skilled in achieving a balance between respecting participant comfort and a safe learning environment, meanwhile encouraging critical self-reflection, and challenging traditional attitudes, beliefs, and ways of thinking. One respondent commended the trainers for their ability to address sensitive topics that “could potentially create some inflamed discussions” (Respondent F), while attending to the emotional safety of all participants. Respondents felt that such skills were valuable in prompting participants to open up and to feel safe in starting or entering a group discussion, which perhaps would have otherwise been difficult for some.

*Our trainers were really good at confronting people without making them feel like they said something wrong. They were just able to do it in a nice, open way that allowed people to just sit back and allow them to think about what they were saying instead of feeling defensive. (Respondent E)*

The training room was regarded by several participants as “a safe place to really question some things” (Respondent A). Participants may have been reluctant to disclose personal views or opinions, for fear of appearing ignorant by asking an offensive or naïve question (Respondent G). One respondent observed, however, that through sharing their own personal reflections and experiences, the trainers were able to engage most participants in an open and honest group discussion (Respondent G). A second respondent expressed admiration for the trainers’ ability to train their peers. Through participation and observation, this respondent has incorporated a new approach to future work responsibilities.

*I do a lot of training with foster parents. I learned from the trainers things to train to foster parents, so I think that was great. It is really hard for me to get up and train peers. I can’t imagine all the work that the trainers put into it, and then having to get up in front of their peers and do this training for two whole days ...I think they did an amazing job. (Respondent E)*

Thus, the satisfaction level with respect to the quality of the trainers is quite high. These and similar comments demonstrate the extent to which trainers were capable in creating a safe, yet stimulating learning environment.

*Overall satisfaction.* In general, most respondents were satisfied with their experience in training. One respondent “enjoyed the discussions,” (Respondent A) which occurred during training, and another was grateful for the opportunity to engage in an open forum within which to discuss important, yet sensitive, issues with peers.

*I found [the training] very informative, and very provocative at the same time. A lot of people had to sit back and think about themselves, and their own actions and their own thought patterns ... people of all different cultural backgrounds*

*came together and shared pretty openly and honestly. It was amazing to see.*  
(Respondent F)

Not only did the training provide an opportunity for a “check in or tune-up” (Respondent C) regarding cultural topics, as one respondent remarked, it also opened the door for further learning, as another respondent observed.

*I think people left [the training] feeling open to learning more.* (Respondent A)

In general, respondents were satisfied with the spectrum of programmatic activities and group exercises that were offered during training. A few respondents indicated that the group discussions, self-reflection exercises, and the didactic learning through quizzes on historical events and semantics, were effective in conveying the core curriculum components. One respondent reported that the use of multimedia learning tools and the diverse teaching styles applied by the facilitators in the presentation of ideas and concepts was a definite strength of training.

*There were a variety of different activities which really focused on everybody's learning style in that group. There was some discussion, some audiovisual, some small group [work], and I thought it really touched on everybody, so that everybody had an opportunity to kind of explore...* (Respondent H)

A second respondent described the impact of becoming aware of certain historical realities on the development of cultural self-awareness. Specifically, this respondent referred to the video clip from the popular children's cartoon “School House Rock” that was shown during training. The clip, entitled “The Great American Melting Pot,” which advocates for the assimilation of immigrants and refugees into the American cultural landscape, was shown on public television during the 1970s and 1980s.

*I also liked some of the video clips [which were shown], that we used to see when we were kids. ... It was just amazing to think, 'wow, that's where we came from,' and those were the messages we were getting when we were growing up. It is helpful to look back on where our values came from.* (Respondent E)

As the quotation attests, this respondent was affected by having seen the video during training, and reflecting on the implications of the wide public exposure of the video clip, and the sentiments expressed therein.

Three respondents expressed that an agency-wide cultural competency training program was overdue. These individuals were pleased that such an important component of organizational policy is finally a reality. One of the three respondents noted that the implementation of training is “a positive step in the right direction” (Respondent F), and the two other respondents made similar observations.

*I found the training really helpful and I think it is long overdue. I'm surprised that I've been with the agency as long as I have, and haven't seen something like this prior to the training I took. (Respondent G)*

*I was very excited to hear that the agency was ... finally [using their resources]! But, it felt to me like it was a long time coming. I'm very glad that it has started. (Respondent E)*

A number of focus group respondents recognized the importance of addressing culture at the agency's organizational-level, and expressed satisfaction in knowing that Cultural Competency Training has become an integral facet of FACS training and development operations.

Although most focus group respondents were satisfied overall, a minority of respondents revealed being disappointed in their training experiences. For instance, four individuals clearly expressed that the training did not meet their needs or their expectations. These respondents felt that the training material was too dry, the activities did not engage, and that “there was too much paper” (Respondent I), which was distracting and unnecessary. This subset of respondents also felt that the curriculum was

inflexible, and suggested a “less rigid agenda, or no agenda at all” (Respondent J) for future programming.

*I usually leave training sessions feeling refreshed, and I did not leave this one feeling refreshed. I felt frustrated instead.* (Respondent I)

*It was a difficult day. It was frustrating. I was exhausted at the end of the day.* (Respondent H)

One respondent in particular felt that the curriculum did not stimulate, and therefore “tuned-out” (Respondent K) throughout the two-day session, reportedly due to boredom. A second respondent expressed a desire to be challenged by the curriculum and the trainers, and wanted to look critically at personal actions, but was disappointed when this did not occur (Respondent I). It is important to note, however, that all respondents who expressed an overall dissatisfaction with the Cultural Competency Training program were voiced during one focus group, and are not supported by respondents in multiple groups.

Thus, although the majority of focus group respondents were pleased with their experiences, a group of four respondents were not satisfied with the training program due to their perception that the curriculum did not present them with original or challenging learning opportunities.

*Expectations regarding knowledge outcomes.* Several focus group respondents explained that, prior to their attendance in training, they developed a conceptualization of the knowledge and concepts they felt would be valuable in their everyday responsibilities as child welfare practitioners. Thus, some respondents began training with precise expectations regarding the information they would gain through their participation in Cultural Competency Training.

*... I thought we were going to spend more time talking about other people's cultures. ... It was more of a self-awareness training, as opposed to learning*



*about other cultures. Not that that was a negative, but I didn't go there expecting to learn what I did. (Respondent E)*

Some focus group respondents reported having made the assumption that they would gain relevant and current facts about the customs and practices of various cultures. One respondent felt that receiving “little helpful hints in working with other diverse cultures” would have been useful in everyday workplace application (Respondent C).

On the basis of these assumptions, respondents felt that the curriculum was lacking in terms of desired expectations regarding knowledge outcomes. Moreover, a few respondents revealed that because the curriculum did not meet preconceived expectations, they were disappointed by the experience.

Two respondents expressed that an understanding of the worldview of specific cultures and knowledge of customary beliefs and practices of specific and diverse cultural groups is a matter of worker safety, and therefore believe that an introduction to such knowledge in training is required.

*I think there is a protection for workers issue, as well. Unless we're really versed specifically on some of the communities that are within KW, I think you have to be prepared to identify specific things about specific cultures. (Respondent A)*

*... We needed some more specific training. It is good to learn about the Human Rights aspects and about racism, sexism, and so on, and how that impacts society in general. You need that part, up-front in any Cultural Competency Training – the ground work. But then, you [also] need to move into our specific work on the front line. As to how we deal with ... that knowledge, about how to deal with people in their own homes. (Respondent B)*

Although precise examples of potentially unsafe situations which can arise due to a lack of knowledge were not described, these front line workers feel they may be at-risk of either emotional or physical harm when visiting clients' homes if they do not possess a certain degree of knowledge concerning the client's cultural background.

These two respondents expressed that Cultural Competency Training presents an appropriate opportunity to gain knowledge of specific cultures to draw upon when entering the homes of culturally different families. The respondents felt that such information would be valuable in order to show deference for the cultural customs of each family, meanwhile avoiding offensive behaviours, perhaps in order to minimize the possibility of conflict or confrontation.

*Expectations regarding skills outcomes.* Respondents did not perceive themselves as having gained the skills necessary for the provision of culturally competent child welfare practice through training, particularly with respect to the techniques and approaches necessary when entering the home of culturally different clients. “It felt like we just scratched the surface,” in terms of the development and enhancement of multicultural skills and intervention strategies, one respondent observed (Respondent K). Another respondent echoed the sentiment in the following statement.

*... I was really hoping that we could have talked about certain ways that you approach [certain situations] ... obviously at some point we're going to come across a gay couple who have problems with their child. And how do we deal with them differently than we would a regular parent, with their child, a mother and father, versus two same-sex [people]? ... I see more training that way.*  
(Respondent B)

A few respondents felt that, as direct service providers, they did not “learn enough about how to apply” culturally competent skills to their specific jobs (Respondent I). These respondents felt that it is difficult to transfer the theories and concepts regarding multiculturalism and self-awareness into their everyday practice as child welfare workers.

*Professional benefits.* Respondents were asked to reflect on the extent to which participation in Cultural Competency Training has influenced professional responsibilities. Few respondents explicitly responded to this area of inquiry. Two

respondents, however, did describe the ways in which training has enhanced professional decision-making relating to cultural issues.

One respondent gave an example of how the parent of a culturally-diverse foster home has since been encouraged to incorporate ethnically diverse food into the household's daily meals. Now, "the foster parent makes sure that different types of food are served" (Respondent H). A second respondent described how training has influenced programming in one of the agency's residences.

*In terms of my work, we try to implement things that we've learned in training into the programming in the house. We try to involve various community groups into the treatment groups that we're running. Three times a year the material that we cover in group, we try to make sure that it is culturally sensitive and inclusive. We have tried to educate the [youth] we work with about poverty and the community, so...we're looking at doing things like donations to the Food Bank as part of regular programming. So those would all be telling of the results of the training that we did. (Respondent G)*

Although a small number of individuals noted the professional benefits acquired through training, many others did not. Most respondents did not articulate the extent to which professional benefits have been acquired as a result of participation in the Cultural Competency Training program.

#### *Participant Recommendations*

Focus group respondents were asked to identify areas where they felt the Cultural Competency Training program can be improved and, if possible, to offer ideas about how these components of training might be enhanced. Respondents identified several specific areas where they felt the core curriculum can be further developed to improve and enhance future programming. Table 11 presents the themes and sub-themes relating to participant recommendations and the frequency of responses for each.

Table 11: Frequency of Responses on Participant Recommendations

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Response Frequency (N)</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Participant Recommendations		
Offering ongoing training sessions	12	20
Organizational level changes	12	20
FACS agency culture	9	15
Agency communication	6	10
Recommendations for improving skills outcomes	9	15
Recommendations for improving knowledge outcomes	7	12
Including foster parents in training	4	7
Recommendation for integrating values outcomes	1	1

*Ongoing training sessions.* Several respondents asserted that the present training curriculum is a first step, and in order to further promote and maintain a culturally competent working environment, training should be offered on an ongoing basis. One respondent stated that becoming culturally competent “is a process” (Respondent F) and another respondent suggested that the Cultural Competency Training program “should be ongoing” (Respondent G). Specifically, this respondent stated that the present curriculum is “just the beginning” and that it would be “very useful if we had this conversation at the agency on a regular basis” (Respondent G). One recommendation offered by respondents in sustaining and further developing the learning process is to offer intermittent follow-up or booster sessions in order to “keep the material fresh” (Respondent G). Two other respondents shared similar views.

*I like the idea of having the opportunity to discuss this kind of stuff on an ongoing basis. This training is a wonderful start, but if we just have to take it once ... if that's the end of it, I don't think that's the solution either. We're all going to get busy and ... a lot of people will not continue to put all of the ideas from Cultural Competency Training into their daily lives. (Respondent E)*

*...there needs to be a continuous discussion about it, because it is so easy to fall back into a pattern of thinking. Effecting change ... is a process. (Respondent F)*

Therefore, respondents acknowledge that although the implementation of agency-wide cultural competency training is certainly a step in the right direction, they also believe that in order to preserve the resources already invested, they consider that the program needs to be a permanent facet of FACS organizational functioning.

*Organizational-level changes.* Near the conclusion of Cultural Competency Training, participants were asked to describe ideal policies and practices as they relate to cultural competency at FACS. Participants were asked to reflect on how the agency would look or operate differently, and to discuss what would need to change on an organizational- or policy-level in order to create a culturally competent agency. Such organizational best practices were referred to as “FACS Miracles,” and this question was revisited during focus group discussions.

Most of the FACS Miracles proposed during focus groups related to ensuring that cultural competency remain an integral aspect of agency functioning through changes to certain existing organizational operations and policies. Two respondents explained that having an internal forum within which to discuss cultural issues with peers would be extremely helpful. Such a forum would allow coworkers to come together, to brainstorm, and to derive feasible solutions to complicated work-related situations, effectively drawing upon the previous experiences and knowledge of each other.

*I think it would be good to have a place to go and say: ‘this is the way that I handled this situation, and it was really ineffective, and let’s brainstorm and talk about it.’ Even if it was a bad experience, talk about what you could do different the next time. We have an opportunity to do that in our supervision, but sometimes it would be more effective to talk to our peers about that kind of stuff. (Respondent E)*

*I think there is a wealth of information within the agency ...we can embrace that. (Respondent H)*

Respondents had several concrete solutions for creating a more inclusive, sensitive, and respectful agency, both in terms of direct service provision, and enhanced organizational awareness of diversity issues. Table 12 presents an overview of these recommendations.

Table 12: FACS Miracles as Proposed by Focus Group Respondents

<i>No.</i>	<i>FACS Miracle</i>
1	Have translators present during counseling sessions to help families who are reaching out for help, but who face obstacles due to language barriers.
2	Diversify the composition of staff by hiring culturally-diverse employees.
3	Translate policies and expected parenting practices into the diverse languages representative of the different communities served by the agency.
4	Collaborate with the Multicultural Centre and/or the YMCA to obtain translations of relevant agency documents and policies.
5	Create a warmer atmosphere in the FACS lobbies, by removing the protective glass from main reception area, and creating a child-friendly waiting room, by expanding the play area and adding more toys/books.
6	Create a database of information which highlights important dates and typical practices of the cultural and religious celebrations of diverse groups. Allow all agency personnel to have access to the database.
7	Include information on diverse cultural and religious celebrations in agency bulletins, and provide information on customary greetings for specific cultural groups at important times of the year.
8	Create a full-time position for a “cultural consultant” who would communicate cultural information to all agency staff, and to facilitate the gathering of relevant and current cultural information by all employees.
9	Create a committee with representatives from each work group (i.e., residential, intake, family services, etc.) to communicate relevant cultural information to team members. Such information should be relevant to the typical responsibilities of each position.
10	Integrate discussions about cultural competence into weekly/monthly meetings.

On the basis of these recommendations for organizational improvement, several respondents have reflected on reasonable and pragmatic methods of overcoming obstacles through collaboration, cohesiveness and teamwork. In other words, the ideas and the determination exist for turning “FACS Miracles” into organizational reality.

*FACS agency culture.* During 2 of the 4 focus groups, respondents discussed an unfavorable organizational reality, which was referred to as the FACS “agency culture” (Respondent H). According to some, disrespectful or discriminatory behaviours occur between coworkers on the basis of group membership within the agency (i.e., position and department). The perception is that some employees believe that others are less intelligent or less capable, given job titles and accompanying roles and responsibilities. An analogy was drawn between discrimination based on group membership which occurs in society, and the type of tacit discrimination which some believe currently takes place within the agency.

A significant number of insightful observations were made during focus groups regarding the FACS agency culture. Although respondents were not directly probed for such information, this theme warrants a concise overview given the amount of attention it received during 2 of 4 focus groups.

*Although we try to ignore it ... there is a culture within the agency that needs to be addressed as well.* (Respondent H).

Two members of one focus group, in particular, explained that the agency culture exists as a result of actual or perceived animosity among various groups of workers in specific departments and positions across the agency. These respondents reflected on the internal “hierarchy” (Respondent E) among the different groups of FACS employees. One of these respondents asserted that workers have “stratified” themselves, and that such

stratification exists outside of the natural hierarchy which develops between supervisors and/or managers and agency workers (Respondent E). Instead, this hierarchy represents a forced stratification among positions comparable on dimensions of seniority and remuneration.

*... Some people very definitely feel that: 'well, my position is better than yours, and therefore I'm a better person than you.' That certainly doesn't help build teamwork and cohesiveness. (Respondent E)*

Respondent F suggested that a negative agency culture characterized by hierarchical stratification has adverse implications for coworker interactions and professional relationships.

*If we start seeing each other as people instead of seeing each other as positions, and titles, there will be a lot more positive results from what we do in the community, and together. It forces separation. It forces people into categories. It isolates individual clusters of work within the agency and then all of these awful things like bias and stereotypes are already in place. (Respondent F)*

A few focus group respondents explained that such stratification is likely the result of poor communication among coworkers in the agency's distinct areas of service. These respondents said that individuals make assumptions and negative prejudgments about others on the basis of job titles and work responsibilities, which tends to shut down respectful communication between peers.

*From my perspective, our biggest stumbling block is communication. That ties in with culture as well, and not being afraid to ask questions and actually talking to each other instead of assuming that you already know, and just going on about your little business, so that there are people going off in all directions. (Respondent E)*

*It's a question of not feeling intimidated by another person or position within the agency. [To] be able to talk about your experience with a specific client or family, and know that you can go to a different area of the agency and have [a] conversation and know that that is going to be taken as a professional experience ... is very important and would go a long way. (Respondent F)*



In response to this unfavorable circumstance, a few respondents proposed ways of bridging the gaps between coworkers by improving coworker communication and understanding. A number of respondents said that an appropriate forum for addressing the problem of a hostile agency culture is through Cultural Competency Training.

*[It] would be interesting to talk about the culture of the agency itself [during training]. Why not discuss the different types of jobs that are within the agency? ... [It is important] to discuss that underlying culture at the agency. Put it out there. Make people aware of it. (Respondent G)*

*If we had more opportunity, like in a Cultural Competency Training setting, to get to know one another and to talk about ourselves and our jobs, it would certainly go a long way to solving the problem ... there were a lot of people who didn't know what a lot of other people's jobs were. It was a good opportunity to share that. (Respondent E)*

*...the training actually brings out [an opportunity] for furthering the lines of communication within the agency and promoting cohesiveness and development. I think it is definitely needed. (Respondent F)*

One respondent said that coming together with peers to discuss the issue of the agency culture “would promote a lot more communication flow within the agency, a lot more sharing of ideas” (Respondent F), and may enhance cohesiveness among agency staff. Another respondent recognized the importance of embracing the human assets and resources present within the agency personnel in resolving organizational difficulties.

*There are certainly people that could serve as valuable resources to other people in the agency, [but] there just isn't that communication. So, maybe more frequent trainings or even just opportunities to return with the people you were originally trained with to discuss experiences and anything else that has happened since the training ...that would be helpful. (Respondent G)*

In sum, several focus group respondents are aware of the potentially detrimental agency culture currently in existence. These individuals are eager to work towards resolving this concern in a collaborative manner, ensuring a cohesive group of colleagues, working within a positive, diversity-affirming environment.

*Recommendations for improving skills outcomes.* As previously stated, respondents perceived that further training is required to facilitate the practical application of the concepts and theories introduced during training. A few respondents proposed methods for improving future programming, with respect to enhancing the skills learning objective. One respondent said that having a hands-on, “how-to-deal” learning approach would have been valuable (Respondent D). A second respondent shared a similar response.

*... We need to get a little deeper and more focused towards what our role is on the front line... how do I face situations, and how do I deal with certain situations ... when I get to the door of the house or in the home?... [If] you walk into the home, and you're faced with a different culture ... the way you deal with it is very difficult... What do you do when all their life they've done it a different way? Sure, you can tell them it's the law, you know: "the law says you can't do that," but they're saying: "my law, what I grew up with, says I can do that." So, how do you break that impasse? (Respondent B)*

This respondent stated that action-oriented learning activities, such as role play or case studies would be “a real big advantage” (Respondent B).

*... [Future training could integrate] role play or something that would give us more information as to how we can actually interact with groups that have been oppressed ... (Respondent B)*

Another respondent stated that incorporating more case studies would have been useful in facilitating the development of the specialized set of skills necessary to work respectfully and effectively with culturally diverse children and families.

*I would appreciate different case studies of different approaches to dealing with [a] particular culture, or things to avoid, which I might not be aware of. (Respondent C)*

One respondent explained that the composition of the training groups may affect the extent to which new skills for culturally competent child welfare practice are acquired. This respondent said that purposively composing training groups with

employees working in the same positions and departments of the agency, and to furthermore ensure that the session is facilitated by trainers who have experience in the position, may further aid workers in reflecting on, developing, and implementing culturally competent intervention strategies.

*...One of the facilitators was a part of a [specific service team] and was able to offer, as a facilitator, a lot of examples to complement what was being talked about, and I found that really helpful. ...It certainly made it a lot easier to understand the material. So, in terms of running the training, I think it would be helpful to run them specific to the job type ... (Respondent G)*

Another respondent made a comparable comment on the composition of the groups.

*I think for me it would have been more helpful to have another person or more than one person from part of my team [in training with me] ... There was not a lot of discussion about working directly with kids. It would have been more helpful to have the whole team get together and ask: "what can we do as a team to be more aware?" (Respondent H)*

According to these respondents, job-specific training would allow for more in-depth group discussions with peers with similar work responsibilities. Such collaborative reflection would generate effective methods of becoming culturally competent as a work team, rather than solely as an individual.

*Recommendations for improving knowledge outcomes.* As stated above, a few respondents made the assumption that they would gain relevant and current facts about the customs and practices of diverse cultures through training. Several respondents therefore had suggestions for incorporating an aspect of training which they perceived to be missing from the curriculum. For instance, one respondent stated that having culturally diverse guests speak to trainees about their own cultures would have been useful. This respondent wanted to know, for instance, that "Muslims are like this," and "Romanians are like that" (Respondent J). Although it was acknowledged that there is

often much variation within any given culture, Respondent J did suggest that having a starting point from which to gather more information would be useful. This point was reiterated by other respondents in multiple focus groups.

*It would have been more helpful to have access to information about different holidays for people. Because I know I'm not aware of all of them, and when I say "Merry Christmas" to someone and they don't celebrate Christmas – I don't know that. It's not to be offensive to them, it is to be friendly, but it [may not be] taken that way ... (Respondent H)*

*...It would be very helpful to understand each other's culture. I don't understand a lot of different cultures that exist within society, let alone within the agency. I think that I would really benefit from learning that. (Respondent F)*

Therefore, respondents perceived that collecting specific facts and details regarding diverse and various cultural groups would benefit their professional practice and enhance personal cultural knowledge.

Respondents offered several other suggestions for enhancing future sessions with respect to knowledge outcomes. Table 13 presents these recommendations made by respondents for improving the knowledge outcome of training.

Table 13: Respondent Recommendations for Improving Knowledge Outcomes

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Response Frequency (N)</i>
Invite culturally diverse guests to speak about their cultures.	2
Form partnerships with community groups, such as the Multicultural Centre of Kitchener-Waterloo, to further develop components of training.	2
Provide participants with a list of relevant resources and further learning materials, such as videos, books, and articles relating to training.	2
Provide professional references to local organizations who specialize in multicultural issues in general, or specific cultural groups in particular.	1

These comments are in keeping with the general consensus that, in future, the primary focus of the knowledge component be on providing specific, relevant, and detailed facts on the food, religious celebrations, customs, and beliefs of each of the many cultural and religious groups served by FACS in the Waterloo region.

*Including foster parents in training.* A few focus group respondents felt it is valuable to allow direct service workers and foster parents to attend Cultural Competency Training together. One respondent explained that direct service providers find themselves in a difficult situation if a foster family means well, but is not aware of the cultural customs and practices of a culturally different child's family-of-origin (Respondent J). Providing training sessions in which both front line workers and foster parents are present would provide a mutual basis from which further discussion and exploration of cultural variables may ensue.

*... The foster parents aren't getting this training, so I've found myself trying to pass on some of the information ... I think this training is going to be offered to them eventually, but they can benefit from it just as much as we can. I'm trying to help foster parents hear some of the stuff that we got in training, too, which I think has been helpful to them. (Respondent E)*

The strategic integration of diverse agency stakeholders, including foster parents, in the learning process would allow for more cohesion and "a lot more collaboration between families and outside workers from the agency, and the children" (Respondent F). This modification in group composition would "make a big difference" in opening the lines of communication between foster parents and agency personnel (Respondent F).

*Recommendation for integrating values outcomes.* One focus group respondent reflected on the implication of personal values as it relates to the outcomes of cultural competency training. As the following quote illustrates, this respondent recommends that

a global vision of respect for human rights be incorporated into the curriculum, in order to accentuate this valuable outcome among trainees. The quote explains the integral role of one's personal values in respecting human and cultural diversity, and substantiates a point made during the steering committee meeting.

*...everyone needs to be treated with equal rights and with respect. There has to be a master view, and the United Nations Charter of Human Rights puts that forward. I'd like to see some of that discussed in the module. [For instance], what is a Human Rights view of issues in the world, and what do they say should and should not happen? You're not looking at [specific] cultures, but in general. Children shouldn't be hit, women shouldn't be hit, and men shouldn't be hit, [and] so on. The global version is that every person has the right to be free of violence and discrimination ... I'd like to see that put in the program somehow.... (Respondent B)*

This respondent felt that the implicit role of personal values in developing culturally competent child welfare practice was not explored at length in training, and therefore a more explicit integration of respect for diversity would benefit future programming.

#### *Participant Satisfaction (Qualitative Analysis)*

As part of a more in-depth analysis of the second research question, whether participants are satisfied with the training experience, three open-ended survey questions were presented to which participants responded in handwritten comments. These items are part of the Post-Training Survey (PTS) which was administered to the experimental group ( $N = 43$ ) at the conclusion of the two-day training. The three items are: (a) What might you have done differently if you were presenting the material? (b) What further learning or next steps would you like as a result of this experience? (c) Additional comments, suggestions, and recommendations. A brief analysis is presented below.

Table 14 shows the frequency of responses to the first item which evaluated different approaches to training. Several respondents indicated that they would not do anything differently, were they presenting the material themselves.

Table 14: What Might You Have Done Differently if Presenting the Material?

<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency (N)</i>
Nothing.	5
Spend more time on translating learning into every day work.	3
Acknowledge that everyone brings different experiences and knowledge	3
More group discussion to replace some of the activities.	2
Ask participants to explore own prejudices and social location, etc.	2
Provide information about different cultures (i.e., facts about Muslims).	2
Rename the training. Only have workers with direct client contact attend.	1
More effective presentation. Better knowledge of material.	1
Less group discussion.	1
Don't know.	1

Consistent with the general consensus that the skills outcome learning objective was not met, several respondents felt that they would have spent more time teaching methods of transferring theories and concepts into everyday work responsibilities. One respondent indicated that this could be achieved using additional and specific case examples.

Some respondents expressed that, from the outset, trainers should acknowledge that each individual brings different knowledge and experiences to the group. It was also noted that trainers should not assume that trainees do not already possess some degree of multicultural ability. As one respondent reflected, the “assumption was made that the trainees were culturally incompetent.”

The second open-ended PTS question assessed what further learning and next steps respondents feel are needed as a result of the training experience. Table 15 presents the frequencies of responses to this question.

Table 15: Further Learning or Next Steps as a Result of the Training Experience

<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency (N)</i>
Systemic agency changes to reflect commitment to the diversity.	6
Ongoing follow-up sessions to further discuss cultural competency.	6
None.	2
Pass this new awareness on to family and friends.	1
Think about my words and actions and how they impact others.	1
Talk more to my clients about their “histories” and culture.	1
Explore this topic independently.	1
More information on different cultures.	1

Many respondents indicated that systemic, organizational-level changes are needed, which would reflect the agency’s commitment to diversity. Suggestions for such changes include modifications to agency policies and procedures to better meet the needs of diverse clients, implementing flexibility in guidelines and rules, a reassessment and expansion of the agency’s pamphlets and mission statement to reflect diversity issues, and translating agency signs and notices into different languages.

Further, consistent with other qualitative findings, respondents were strongly in favour of implementing ongoing training sessions. As one respondent stated, “any updating training, I would be interested in.” Some respondents reflected on the ways in which training has had a personal impact: “I will pass on this new awareness to my family and friends,” and “I think about my words and how they impact other people.”

As demonstrated in Table 16, numerous positive comments were made about the training experience. Many respondents thought both the training and the facilitators were



exceptional. One respondent said that “the trainers were excellent, and the material was well-prepared.”

A small group of respondents, however, stated that training is too basic, and that the curriculum is too similar to graduate level social work programs. One respondent stated, “Though a refresher is always good, the information wasn’t new and I didn’t learn anything that would change my practice.” Such comments substantiate similar observations made by a small subset of respondents who contributed to focus groups.

Table 16: Additional, Comments, Suggestions, and Recommendations.

<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency (N)</i>
The training was great.	10
The facilitators of training were great.	6
Training is similar to that received by those who have done an MSW.	2
Good use of learning tools.	2
Thank you!	2
Extend training to foster parents and volunteers.	2
The training was disrespectful of the knowledge that I bring.	1
Training was too basic.	1

Given the frequencies of positive responses to the final open-ended Post-Training Survey item, many more respondents were satisfied with the training experience than those who were dissatisfied. Overall, therefore, training was very well received. Most respondents enjoyed the training and some expressed gratitude for the opportunity.

### Discussion

The primary purpose of this research is to assess the efficacy of the Cultural Competency Training program offered by Family and Children’s Services of the Waterloo Region, a provincial, community-based child welfare agency. Specifically, three research questions are posed:

1. Is there an interaction effect of time (pre-training, post-training) and group (training, comparison) on multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills as a result of participation in the two-day training program?
2. What are participants' subjective responses to training?
  - a. Are participants satisfied with training?
  - b. Do participants perceive themselves as being more culturally aware, knowledgeable, and skillful after training?
  - c. What are participants' reactions to training?
3. Do participant demographic variables predict cultural competency at baseline?

#### *Research Question One*

The first research question examines whether a professional development and training program can improve multicultural competency in three domains: awareness, knowledge, and skills. It was hypothesized that after having attended training, participants would perceive themselves as being more culturally competent in these three areas of proficiency than their colleagues who had not yet attended training.

Results of three mixed model repeated measures ANOVAs reveal that, as hypothesized, participation in training contributed to significant improvement in 2 of the 3 expected multicultural competencies. Specifically, participating in a two-day cultural competency training program increased self-reported levels of multicultural awareness and knowledge. Post hoc paired samples *t* test analyses comparing means indicate that, while the comparison group scores remained stable from pre-test to post-test, the scores of the experimental group participants improved significantly post-training, in comparison with self-reported cultural competency ratings obtained prior to participation.

The interaction effect of group and time on multicultural skills was non-significant, thus failing to support the hypothesis. One explanation for this finding may be that relatively little of the curriculum content was related to skills. Some evidence for this explanation exists. For example, employees who participated in focus groups about their satisfaction with training reported that they wished there was more information in the program about multicultural abilities and skill-building strategies. Comments like those expressed in focus groups suggest that the training curriculum may not have enough material on skills and consequently did not impact the skill scale scores. Indeed, the primary focus of the training curriculum was purposely on the enhancement of multicultural awareness and knowledge, rather than being a skills training workshop. The curriculum developers' objectives and goals in designing the program were therefore met.

Overall, the results of this research question suggest that participating in a two-day cultural competency training program increases self-reported levels of multicultural awareness and knowledge. These findings are consistent with previous research which has found that participation in training programs, even those that are relatively short in duration, are associated with gains in multicultural proficiency. Previous studies with rehabilitation counselors and graduate students in counseling programs have supported the finding that participation in a multicultural training program is associated with increased cultural self-efficacy (e.g., Byington et al., 1997; D'Andrea et al., 1991; Neville et al., 1996).

The findings of the present study contribute to current understanding of the effect of multicultural training programs. This study extends existing knowledge and prior

research by providing further evidence in support of the success of this type of training program, using a sample of practitioners employed in a Canadian child welfare agency.

#### *Research Question Two*

The second research question investigated participants' subjective responses to training. Thirteen self-selected direct service providers who attended training between May and December 2004 contributed to 1 of 4 focus groups about their reactions to and satisfaction with training. The following two questions were explored: (a) do participants perceive themselves as having gained cultural awareness, knowledge, and skills as a result of participation? (i.e., learning objectives), and (b) what are participants' reactions to training (i.e., participant reactions)? Given the exploratory nature of these inquiries, no *a priori* hypotheses were made.

#### *Learning Objectives*

Only one of the three predetermined learning objectives was fulfilled according to respondents. Qualitative analysis of focus group data reveals that respondents perceived themselves as being more culturally aware, but not more knowledgeable or skillful after participating in the two-day training program.

These findings are consistent with a previous study which assessed the efficacy of multicultural counseling training programs in a sample of 500 professional counselors in the United States (Holcomb-McCoy & Myers, 2000). The authors found that respondents perceived themselves to be most competent on the awareness factor and least competent on dimensions of knowledge and racial identity. Other studies provide evidence in support of the success of training programs in promoting and enhancing multicultural awareness (e.g., Aoki, 2000). Furthermore, the quantitative findings of the present study

provide evidence in support of such findings. However, several authors have additionally reported improvements in the areas of multicultural knowledge and skills, and these findings are therefore inconsistent with the qualitative findings of this study (e.g., Constantine, 2001a; D'Andrea et al., 1999).

A possible explanation for this discrepancy may be that trainees did not comprehend the inherent interplay among the three domains of cultural competency. In other words, it is possible that trainees did not realize that being culturally self-aware and being aware of the need to ask respectful cultural questions are in fact tools used in the search for relevant cultural knowledge and the development of a customized set of skills for cross-cultural interpersonal communication and interactions.

Many respondents made the assumption that certain knowledge outcomes would be achieved through training and stated that these predetermined expectations were not met. Most respondents reported that they wished there was more information in the training about other cultures. In other words, participants wanted to learn that "Romanians are like this," and "Muslims don't eat that," and "Hindus believe this."

Respondents also felt that training was not effective in promoting the skill-building necessary to be able to develop culturally relevant intervention approaches. Most indicated that they expected a hands-on guide for how to deal with culturally diverse clients. For example, participants wanted to know if "this" happens in "that" culture then do "this." Observations like this one suggest that the curriculum may not have enough material on the enhancement of culturally appropriate interventions.

It stands to reason that front line workers who perceive that they do not possess knowledge of and prior experience with the cultural directives of a family, may feel

uninformed and vulnerable when entering the homes of culturally diverse clients. These and similar comments suggest that a change in content of the core curriculum is needed in future programming. Specifically, participants require more help in understanding how gains in awareness levels can effectively be used in the gathering of relevant knowledge and a more complete understanding of their clients, as well as in the application of self-developed and customized cross-cultural communication skills (Sue & Sue, 1992; Tomlinson-Clarke, 2000).

### *Participant Reactions*

Overall, respondents were quite satisfied with the training experience. In general, participants felt that the group climate was conducive to active learning. Respondents indicated that the comfort and emotional safety of participants was respected and that the facilitators were effective both in protecting participant well-being and encouraging critical self-reflection. Further evidence for this interpretation exists. Specifically, both the quantitative Post-Training Survey (PTS) data and participant responses to three open-ended PTS questions indicate that overall participant reactions to the training program are favorable. Previous studies report that, in general, participants are satisfied with their experiences in training, and that most trainees perceive the social climate at play within the training environment as being encouraging and supportive (e.g., Aoki, 2001, Tomlinson-Clarke, 2000).

Although participants are primarily satisfied with their training experience a small subset of focus group respondents expressed distinctive dissatisfaction with the training program. Specifically, these individuals reported that training was too basic, the agenda was too rigid, and that the core curriculum content did not stimulate interest in the

learning activities. Nevertheless, this negative reaction was expressed during one discussion and was not voiced in multiple groups.

An explanation for this finding may be that the individuals who were less than satisfied with training were those who had previously attended a multicultural training program, notably during their university studies. It is possible that material was not new to these individuals and was therefore under-stimulating. A potential solution is to allow recent university graduates and other employees who have attended similar workshops to review the curriculum outline prior to attendance, and to decide whether to participate on the basis of the similarity between the proposed content and previous training experience.

A final participant reaction concerned the composition of training groups. It appears that participants did not see the implicit value of having a heterogeneous group of FACS workers in the training sessions. Some respondents indicated it would have been advantageous if training sessions had been offered specific to job type. As such, several respondents recommended that in the future, training groups be composed of individuals with comparable work responsibilities and that colleagues attend training in work teams.

A possible explanation for this finding may relate to a perceived, detrimental FACS “agency culture,” given actual or alleged discrimination among co-workers on the basis of group membership (i.e., position, department). Such a toxic culture likely contributes to unwillingness on the part of employees to engage in collaborative activities and programs with coworkers labeled as “other.” A possible solution to this concern is to overtly emphasize the rationale and significance of diverse training group composition in future training sessions (see researcher recommendations, below).

### *Research Question Three*

The third and final research question assessed whether certain demographic characteristics predict self-reported cultural competency at baseline. Specifically, this question explored whether ethnicity, gender, age, and level of education are predictive of higher levels of multicultural competency. Given similar findings in prior studies, it was hypothesized that members of ethnic minority groups, women, younger people, and people with more advanced levels of education would perceive themselves as being more culturally competent than White Canadians, men, older people, and people with less advanced levels of education.

A regression analysis was computed to answer this question. As predicted, age and level of education are related to elevated levels of multicultural competency at baseline. These findings are consistent with previous research. Other studies have found that younger people (Sodowsky et al., 1994), and individuals with more advanced levels of education (Green et al., 2004), tend to be more confident in their multicultural abilities than older people, and individuals with less advanced levels of education.

An explanation for these findings may be that older individuals did not receive previous multicultural training, when society and individuals were less enlightened about the negative effects of racial and cultural stereotypes during the 1960s and 1970s. Similarly, those with less advanced levels of educational may not have previously encountered a diversity training initiative during their life experiences.

Contrary to prediction, there are no differences in cultural competency scores by ethnicity or by gender. This finding is unexpected because previous researchers have indicated that members of ethnically diverse groups report greater levels of multicultural



competence than their White peers (e.g., Constantine, 2001a; Holcomb-McCoy & Myers, 1999; Pope-Davis et al., 1994). Another study found that women are likely to be more confident in their cultural abilities than men (Carter, 1990).

One possible explanation for this finding may be the lack of demographic diversity in the present sample. Some evidence for this explanation exists. Because only 20% of participants are members of ethnic minority groups and men account for only 10.5% of participants, the demographic composition of the present sample may be too uniform to detect significant differences in scores by these two demographic variables. To understand these findings and the accompanying interpretation more fully, further research with a more diverse sample is needed.

#### *Researcher Recommendations for Future Programming*

The main research findings of this study indicate that the FACS Cultural Competency Training program is effective in enhancing participant abilities in the three dimensions of cultural competency as put forward by Sue's tripartite model (e.g., Sue & Sue, 2003). Furthermore, in general, the program was well-received by the participants of training. This is evidence in support of the importance and efficacy of a diversity training initiative in an organizational setting. The study also affirms the value of the resources invested into the development of the program.

Given the feedback from trainees who contributed to focus group discussions, there are several areas which represent directions for enrichment of the current curriculum, training format, and organizational processes. These recommendations include: (a) clarifying the training approach from the outset, (b) making clear the implicit value of a diverse training group, (c) integrating suggested "miracles" into daily FACS

agency functioning, and (d) initiating a process evaluation to assess the implementation of program goals and activities. What follows is a brief summary of each recommendation.

*Clarify the Training Approach to Training Participants*

Analysis of qualitative focus group data reveal that respondents perceived that the training failed to deliver the knowledge and skills necessary for culturally competent child welfare practice. It is interesting to note, however, that these reactions are paradoxical to the very purpose of the training. Although the program successfully promoted cultural self-awareness and awareness of others, and therefore worked in the way that the curriculum developers and the Education Committee had intended it to work, to some participants, training was a disappointment because their predetermined expectations were not met. It appears that participants were expecting to encounter the old model of multicultural training, which views other cultures as foreign and therefore needing to be studied. Both before and after training, respondents viewed “other” as different, strange, and exotic.

Indeed, there are many ways of fostering multicultural proficiency through training and some approaches are more promising than others. One expert in the field of diversity management describes the “cultural tourist approach” (Plummer, 2003). In this approach, the learner discovers other cultures by “visiting” and by being taught about cultural feasts, celebrations, food, traditions, dance, and dress. Plummer asserts that this method is too simplistic because it “does not deal with the differences in expression of cultural values and norms that often lead to clashes and miscommunication” (p. 25).

Moreover, given individual variation within each culture, it is nearly impossible to generalize about all people belonging to a specific cultural group.

Consistently, both qualitative and quantitative data show that the type of learning which program stakeholders had hoped would occur, did, in fact, occur. That is, stakeholders wanted to move from the conventional model which sees “other” as a topic of study, to teaching about oneself and the lenses we use to look at and make judgments about others. The program developers’ objective was to have a contemporary curriculum focused on helping trainees become aware of their social location and knowledgeable about how a position of privilege and power impacts interpersonal relations, rather than a traditional program focused on teaching about “the culture of others.”

Gains on the Awareness sub-scale of the MAKSS, as well as participant feedback obtained during focus groups show that this type of learning did occur. Furthermore, although participants did not perceive themselves as having gained significant knowledge, the repeated-measures comparison of MAKSS Knowledge sub-scale scores detected significant pre- to post-training differences on knowledge of multicultural concepts such as oppression, marginalization, and social location, among several others.

It is therefore imperative that the objectives of training, and the approach adopted with which to achieve these objectives, be integrated as a preliminary component of training. This can be done by having facilitators explain the weaknesses of the conventional model, and highlight the strengths of the contemporary model, and the rationale for selecting the latter over the former.

Perhaps a more explicit explanation of how cultural awareness assists in knowledge and skill domains is also needed. For instance, rather than being told that

some Muslim people do not eat pork, trainees are being taught how to respectfully ask clients about any dietary restrictions they or their families may have. Thus, reflecting on the relation between asking respectful questions and acquiring the knowledge necessary for culturally competent practice during training may be necessary to help trainees grasp the inherent interplay between the three learning outcomes. In other words, participants did in fact acquire skill with which to approach cross-cultural social interactions. The skill gained is an awareness of the importance of having an open-mind, remaining aware of one's biases, and being aware of one's own value system and to approach child welfare strategies from this frame of mind.

Although the Cultural Competency Training program is attaining its intended goals, if trainees fail to understand the value and importance of the present curriculum, and how to apply learning outcomes into daily work responsibilities, they may feel that training is a letdown, and the significant outcomes of training may be disregarded.

#### *Make Clear the Value of Diversity in Training Groups*

As stated, several focus group respondents did not see the implicit value of having a mixed representation of the various positions and departments in the composition of training groups. There may be some advantages to these individuals' suggestions regarding group makeup (i.e., discussions about how to implement culturally competent child welfare strategies as a team). However, making such a structural change to the implementation of training does not have the implicit value of working with diverse groups – an underlying strength of the training – helping people learn how to work appropriately with diversity, and with diverse people.

A future component of training might include discussion and reflection on the strengths of coming together as the diverse members of a whole agency. Trainers could make explicit the rationale for the heterogeneous groupings of trainees. Training sessions may also provide a constructive forum within which to shed light on the FACS agency culture. Collaborative processes facilitated by skilled facilitators may even allow trainees to derive a strategy for eliminating the detrimental aspects of the current hierarchical ethos among workers across diverse agency positions and departments.

*Turn “FACS Miracles” into FACS Reality*

An agency which values human and cultural diversity not only supports employees with training that will help them become culturally competent, but also has policies and practices that maintain a diversity-affirming working environment (Plummer, 2004). When asked to reflect on organizational-level changes needed in order to enhance service delivery for all members of a multicultural clientele, focus group respondents had numerous ideas and recommendations.

Among several others, respondents proposed the recruitment and retention of diverse employees, the implementation of ongoing diversity training opportunities, and the hiring of an internal “cultural consultant” with whom employees could meet to discuss cultural inquiries as ways of reflecting the agency’s commitment to diversity.

Given these and other recommendations for organizational improvement, it would appear that several FACS employees are aware of the challenges which currently impede complete organizational cultural competency. These individuals have evidently reflected on reasonable and pragmatic methods of overcoming such obstacles through

collaboration, cohesiveness, and teamwork. The determination and resolve exist for turning “FACS Miracles” into reality.

Undoubtedly, the realization of such ideas would require substantial investments in time, energy, and resources. However, implementing even a relatively small proportion of the changes proposed by FACS employees would demonstrate a genuine commitment to diversity on the part of senior management, and would furthermore display that the voices of workers are considered as being valuable. Bringing these proposals to fruition would not only result in improved agency performance, but would also contribute to a greater sense of workplace pride and connection among employees.

#### *Initiate a Process Evaluation*

A final recommendation for improving training is the initiation of an additional phase of research to evaluate the implementation of the curriculum in order to determine whether the program is conducting the activities and meeting implementation goals it agreed to do (Dalton et al., 2001). For instance, this aspect of research may assess whether the program activities are being introduced to trainees as the curriculum developers had intended. A process evaluation may also evaluate whether the trainers are effectively conveying curriculum concepts and materials to the trainees. This type of research is important because it may answer questions regarding the suitability of having trainers recruited from the agency to conduct the training rather than experts in the area of cultural competency training programs.

There is some evidence in support of the need for a process evaluation. As indicated in the presentation of qualitative focus group findings, only one respondent explained having applied the experiential-phenomenological approach to social work

interactions into everyday workplace practice. This finding is surprising because this component of training is arguably one of the most critical elements of the curriculum. Furthermore, the concept of social location, another prominent feature of training, was also discussed by a single respondent. Thus, it stands to reason that trainers are not spending sufficient time to introduce and discuss these crucial concepts, or perhaps they themselves have not fully accommodated these new life lessons. A process evaluation may provide some insight as to whether the facilitation of training should be left to experts who can draw upon their own expertise and experiences, and work in collaboration with agency stakeholders.

#### *Strengths and Limitations*

There several limitations of the present study which represent directions for future research. First, this study had a brief elapsed time from pre-training to post-training assessment of experimental group scores. Therefore, differences between pre- and post-test scores may reflect primacy of the assessment and training materials. This explanation may be ruled out, however, given that research participants did not show significant gains on the Skills sub-scale. If the differences found were due to primacy effects it stands to reason that there would have been significant improvement on the Skills sub-scale as well. This, however, was not the case.

A second limitation of the study is that post-test measures were assessed after two days. Increases in scores may reflect recency effects. Whether the gains in cultural competency, as seen in this study, remain stable over time is an empirical question being addressed in a longitudinal study assessing cultural competencies one year later (Loomis et al., in progress).

A third limitation is that recruitment of participants relied on self-selected sampling, rather than purposive sampling. Because a convenience sample was used, the sample is limited in terms of participant diversity in ethnicity, gender, religion, and sexual orientation. As the participant demographics confirm, the sample consists predominantly of White, Christian, heterosexual females and therefore may not represent all child welfare workers. Such sample homogeneity may limit generalizability to more diverse work settings. Thus, future research is required to test the generalizability of the findings with a more diverse group of individuals.

A fourth limitation is the relatively small sample size of focus group respondents. The target sample size was 30 respondents. However, because only 13 employees participated in focus group discussions, it is difficult to ascertain whether the range of responses obtained accurately represent the views of all trainees. Furthermore, the characteristics of those who self-selected to participate in focus groups may not correspond to all employees. For instance, perhaps individuals who had intense reactions to training – either positive or negative – were strongly compelled to attend, in order to voice their opinions. Future research with a larger sample of focus group respondents is needed to more fully understand whether the findings generalize to the whole agency.

The use of non-random assignment of participants to the two research groups represents another limitation of the present study. Moreover, the attrition rate of comparison group participants from the pre-assessment to the post-assessment phase of research is a further limitation. Finally, the primary purpose of this study is to evaluate the outcomes of the Cultural Competency Training program, and therefore does not provide information regarding the implementation of the curriculum, and whether the



program is conducting the activities it agreed to do (Dalton et al., 2001). Future research is therefore required to assess the intended and actual activities and goals of the program.

Despite these limitations, this study makes several significant contributions to existing research literature on multicultural training. This study is the first of its kind to assess the extent to which a cultural competency training program offered in a child welfare agency is related to significant gains in multicultural awareness and knowledge, arguably the competencies necessary to provide sensitive, appropriate, and respectful services to an increasingly diverse Canadian population. This type of training represents a major step toward the provision of child welfare services that is free from marginalization and the oppression of the culturally diverse children and families who are served by the child welfare system.

This study has several methodological strengths which help expand upon prior research. Among these strengths include an experimental research design using a mixed-model technique. The use of a multi-method outcome procedure which integrated both quantitative and qualitative research methods helped achieve a more insightful understanding of the phenomenon under study within its complex social context.

Most prior research on multicultural training has used easily accessible university student samples. The use of a professional sample, as is the case in this study, allows independent researchers and practitioners to decide whether the results of this study generalize to other social work and human service organizations.

#### *Implications for Practice and Research*

As one of the few empirical investigations to evaluate the efficacy of multicultural training, and the first of its kind to examine the effect of such training among a group of

child welfare employees, this study has a number of implications for future practice and research. Both child welfare agencies and the curriculum developers of organizational diversity initiatives may benefit from the results of this research.

One of the strengths of this study is the heterogeneous representation of most positions of employment in this child welfare agency. Consequently, the finding that multicultural awareness and knowledge may be enhanced with a two-day training program can be generalized throughout this particular agency. Moreover, the research findings have implications for implementing cultural competence training in other workplaces (e.g., other child welfare agencies within Ontario and across Canada and other organizations).

Such widespread implementation can potentially work towards mitigating the damaging consequences of racism, classism, sexism, religious prejudice, heterosexism, and other forms of discrimination. Finally, implications include promoting cultural competency training for all current and future child welfare workers to enhance culturally sensitive practice and developing future research to explore other factors that explain variance in training experiences.

### *Conclusion*

Given the increasingly diverse Canadian population, child welfare workers are currently faced with the challenges of responding effectively and sensitively to the diverse people representative of an agency's service clientele. Becoming a culturally competent practitioner is an ongoing process which requires continued organizational leadership, support, and encouragement.

This study provides an assessment of what can be learned through a specific diversity training initiative, and participants' subjective responses to the training. Using a small sample of child welfare workers who attended training during the first four months of the initiative, the results of this study indicate that the program positively influenced the development and enhancement of the awareness and knowledge necessary in the provision of culturally competent child welfare service. Findings furthermore indicate that, for the most part, employees view this diversity initiative as a positive aspect of organizational performance.

In this day and age, an agency which supports its employees by helping them become culturally competent, and which addresses the organizational issues and challenges pertinent to the development of an inclusive, respectful, and holistic working environment, is truly exceptional. The positive outcomes detected are essential in this agency's ability to successfully meet the demands associated with change and growth.

Perhaps among the most important of an agency's assets is its social capital, that is, the capacity for individuals to work together and to take advantage of the rich and unique networks of relationships found within culturally diverse workplaces and communities. The impact and outcomes of this training initiative have positive implications for the individual workers, organizational-level functioning, and for the larger community as a whole. In essence, this research provides evidence in support of the efficacy of working together toward strengthening and enhancing the cultural fabric of a multicultural society.

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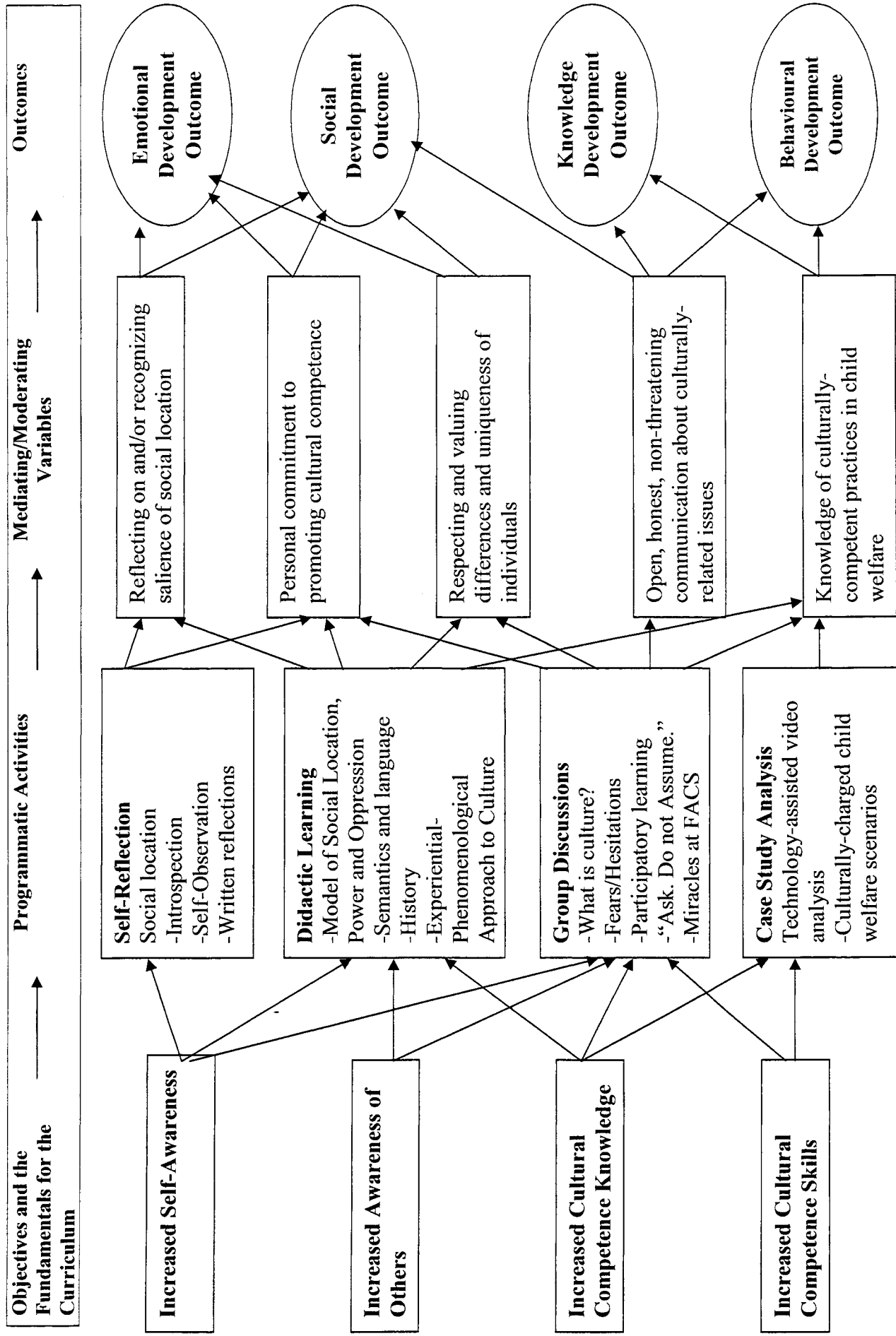
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Appendix A

*Program Logic Model—Development of Culturally Competent Child Welfare Practitioners through Training*



## Appendix B

*Core Training Curriculum*

Cultural Competence and Working across Difference  
 Developed by Dr. Sarah Maiter, Ph.D. and Dr. Gary Dumbrill, Ph.D. 2003  
 For Family and Children's Services of the Region of Waterloo

Day One: Cultural Competency Training

Start 9:00 a.m.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Welcome, introductions, learning plans           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What participants hope to get from training</li> <li>▪ Short video about historical development of Cultural Competency Training</li> <li>▪ Overview of training</li> <li>▪ Ground rules of training (i.e. "for me to feel comfortable in this training...")</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. What is culture?           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Thinking about difference</li> <li>▪ Definitions and issues of culture</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
Break – 15 minutes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Social location           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Handout, exercise and discussion</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Understanding marginalization           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Didactic component and Discussion: A Spatial Analysis of Domination and Oppression</li> <li>▪ Issues of assimilation, power and oppression</li> <li>▪ Genetic Diversity Quiz</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
Lunch – 1 hour
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Responses to diversity           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Discussion: How social work has responded to issues of diversity</li> <li>▪ Video and discussion: Melting Pot versus Multicultural Mosaic</li> <li>▪ Limitations of multiculturalism</li> <li>▪ Cultural literacy versus experiential-phenomenological approach to difference</li> <li>▪ Child welfare practitioner as learner and awareness of own cultural lenses</li> </ul> </li> <li>6. Self-awareness           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Stroop Effect exercise</li> <li>▪ Discussion: Cognitive interference and assumptions</li> </ul> </li> <li>7. Understanding the dominant culture           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Positive and negative aspects of Canadian multiculturalism</li> <li>▪ "Oh Canada!" A Canadian Equity Quiz</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
Break – 15 minutes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Marginalization/Stereotypes           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Video analysis and discussion: "Save the Last Dance"</li> </ul> </li> <li>9. Homework Assignment           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Self-reflection exercise regarding Social Location</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
End 4:00 p.m.

Day Two: Cultural Competency Training

Start 9:00 a.m.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review of Concepts and Questions from Day One <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Questions about Day One</li> <li>▪ Overview of Day Two</li> <li>▪ Review of homework assignment</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Understanding privilege <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reading and Discussion: “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack” (P. McIntosh)</li> <li>▪ Overheads (i.e. picture of cast of “Friends,” picture of Barbie, Band-aid)</li> <li>▪ Group discussion based on overheads and themes of privilege</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Language and dominant culture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Small group exercise: Communicating for Change</li> <li>▪ Discussion: culturally competent language</li> <li>▪ Discussion: Asking questions rather than making assumptions</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
Break – 15 minutes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Linking to practice and the organization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Didactic component: Explore definitions of cultural competence</li> <li>▪ Didactic component: Ecological levels of analysis (Societal, Political, Institutional, Organizational, Personal)</li> <li>▪ Discussion: How is dominance reinforced in day-to-day work with clients and coworkers?</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
Lunch – 1 hour
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Looking at internal issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Behaviour, Attitude, Skill, Knowledge</li> </ul> </li> <li>6. Case examples <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Linking theory to practice – The personal to the institutional</li> <li>▪ Case scenarios with Questions for Group Discussion</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
Break – 15 minutes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Miracles at FACS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Group exercise: What changes does the agency need to make? What changes do you need to make?</li> </ul> </li> <li>8. Wrap-up</li> </ol>
End 4:00 p.m.

## Appendix C

*Focus Group Invitation Letter*

You are invited to participate in a project being conducted by Ms. Jessica Vinograd, under the direction of Dr. Colleen Loomis, as part of master's thesis research at Wilfrid Laurier University. The study is being conducted in collaboration with Family and Children's Services (FACS). We are conducting a study entitled:

**"Cultural Diversity at Family and Children's Services of the Region of Waterloo: An Evaluation of a Cultural Competency Training Program."**

Would you contribute to this study by participating in a group discussion? We are interested in learning about your experience and reactions to the Cultural Competency Training you recently attended.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of a training program in promoting cultural competence, in order to enhance future training. You have been selected because you attended a Cultural Competency Training workshop, and because you are a Front Line Worker. Your participation is completely voluntary. There is no obligation to participate. Choosing not to participate will have no impact on your work. You may withdraw from the study at any time. If you have questions about the project please contact Dr. Colleen Loomis at Wilfrid Laurier University, (519) 884-0710, ext. 2858.

Your participation would consist of contributing to a 45-minute discussion regarding your personal experience in and satisfaction with the Cultural Competency Training workshop. For your convenience, the group discussions will be held in a private room at your workplace. A total of four focus group discussions will be conducted, and each discussion group will consist of six to eight individuals. Thus, approximately 30 individuals will be involved in the group discussion component of this study. The group facilitator will tape-record the discussion, which will be transcribed into an electronic document for later analysis.

If you choose to participate, you may choose not to respond to any one of the questions, and you may withdraw from the project at any time. Your responses to the questions will be kept strictly confidential. Please note that your name will not be associated in any way with your responses. We will not ask any information during the focus group that could identify you. The information you share during the discussion will be accessible to only Jessica Vinograd, Colleen Loomis, and one research assistant yet to be hired who will sign a confidentiality agreement. To further protect your confidentiality, the transcriptions of the discussions will be kept in a locked filing cabinet, within a locked office at Wilfrid Laurier University. In keeping with research standards, after completion of the project these data will be moved to secured, long term storage for 10 years and then destroyed. Audio tapes of focus group discussions will likewise be stored in a locked filing cabinet, and will be erased after 10 years. If you choose to withdraw from the study, any information you have previously provided will be immediately destroyed.

Although we can assure that your information will be kept confidential and that your name will not be associated with your responses, we cannot guarantee that other focus group participants will not discuss what they have heard during the session. At the outset of each session, the focus



*Focus Group Participant Contact Information Sheet*

If you are interested in participating in a discussion group regarding the Cultural Competency Training you attended, please complete the following contact information. Please return the form via mail using the enclosed Wilfrid Laurier University return envelope. You will be contacted by the principal investigator, Ms. Jessica Vinograd, within the next few weeks in order to confirm your participation.

Please note that no personnel of Family and Children's Services will be involved in facilitating the focus groups. Only the research investigators will have access to your name and the personal contact information provided here.

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Business phone number: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Evening phone number: (optional) \_\_\_\_\_
4. E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Preferred focus group date, time and location (Please check one):
  - Wednesday, November 3, 2004, 3:30 p.m., 200 Ardelt, Room 214
  - Thursday, November 25, 2004, 8:30 a.m., Cambridge Office, Room TBD
  - Friday, November 26, 2004, 9:00 a.m., 200 Ardelt, Room 214
  - Thursday, January 6, 2005, 8:30 a.m., 200 Ardelt, Room 214

## Appendix D

### *Multicultural Awareness Knowledge and Skills Survey (MAKSS)*



#### ***All information collected is completely confidential.***

The purpose of this survey is to gather your opinions about the effectiveness of a training program in promoting cultural competence, so we may improve future cultural competence programming, as well as service provided to the public. This survey is given to all full-time employees between September and December 2004. We encourage you to return the survey. You may choose not to respond to some or all of the questions on the survey. Your response is completely confidential and your participation is voluntary.

#### ***Principles of Confidentiality***

The data collected in the diversity survey is protected by the following principles of confidentiality:

- Confidentiality is ensured by both organizations involved in this research study. FACS will keep a cross reference list of employee name to a unique number for survey purposes, but will not receive copies of survey responses. Researchers from Wilfrid Laurier University will maintain the data with only the unique number on the survey form. The researchers will not report individual numbers or other potentially identifying information to FACS. Only group level data will be reported.
- Confidentiality is guaranteed by placing the completed survey form in a Wilfrid Laurier University return envelope, sealing it, and placing it into a locked box that goes directly to the university.
- Wilfrid Laurier University researchers will receive the survey and enter the information into a confidential database and produce the necessary statistical reports with group-level data so that no one individual can be identified.
- Only two researchers, Jessica Vinograd and Dr. Colleen Loomis, and one research assistant, yet to be hired, have access to individual employee surveys, and these individuals will sign a confidentiality agreement.
- Returned surveys are filed and protected in a locked cabinet within a locked research office at Wilfrid Laurier University. All data, electronic and paper, will be destroyed after ten years.
- No one will be given information on others and all reports will be group-level data.
- Information reported may be altered or removed from the survey only on the request of the employee who provided it.

- Grouped information will be used to generate a final summary report of findings, academic reports to be published in journals and presented at conferences. No individually identifying information will be published.
- The research findings will have implications for designing and enhancing future training and services provided to the public.

***Possible Benefit or Harm***

There is value in voicing your opinions (positive or negative, agreement or disagreement). We anticipate that this study will inform workplace program development on cultural competency and services to the public.

Should any of the questions make you uncomfortable, or stir up bad memories, you may wish to talk to someone about the survey or feelings it provoked. If so, please contact Dr. Colleen Loomis at Wilfrid Laurier University, 884-0710 ext. 2858.

**THANK YOU IN ADVANCE FOR COMPLETING THE SURVEY**

**DIVERSITY SURVEY**

*Keeping in mind diversity issues—meaning differences such as our colour, the country we came from or the culture we belong to, our religion, our sexual orientation, our marital status, our age or disability—please tell us how your feel about the following statements.*

*Please write the number (1, 2, 3, etc.) which best applies to you.*

- 1 Very Limited
- 2 Limited
- 3 Fairly Aware
- 4 Very Aware

- 8 Prefer not to say
- 9 Don't know
- 10 Not applicable to me

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. At this point in your life, how would you rate yourself in terms of understanding how your cultural background has influenced the way you think and act?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. At this point in your life, how would you rate your understanding of the impact of the way you think and act when interacting with persons of different cultural backgrounds?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. In general, how would you rate your level of awareness regarding different cultural institutions and systems?

*Please notice the different response options and write the number (1, 2, 3, etc.) which best applies to you.*

- 1 Very Limited
- 2 Limited
- 3 Good
- 4 Very Good

- 8 Prefer not to say
- 9 Don't know
- 10 Not applicable to me

- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. At the present time, how would you generally rate yourself in terms of being able to accurately compare your own cultural perspective with that of a person from another culture?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. How well do you think you could distinguish “intentional” from “accidental” communication signals in a multicultural situation?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. How would you rate your understanding of social location in terms of working with culturally different clients?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. How would you rate your ability to work with clients from a cultural background significantly different from your own?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. How would you rate your ability to effectively assess the needs of clients from a cultural background different from your own?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. In general, how would you rate yourself in terms of being able to effectively deal with biases, discrimination, and prejudices directed at you by clients?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. How well would you rate your ability to accurately identify culturally biased assumptions as they relate to your professional training?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. In general, how would you rate your ability to accurately articulate a child's behavioural problem when the child is from a cultural group significantly different from your own?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. How well would you rate your ability to analyze a culture into its component parts?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. How would you rate your ability to identify the strengths and weaknesses of standardized tests in terms of their use with clients from different cultural backgrounds?

5 Very Limited  
 6 Limited  
 7 Good  
 8 Very Good

8 Prefer not to say  
 9 Don't know  
 10 Not applicable to me

- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. How would you rate your ability to critique multicultural media (e.g., TV, newspaper, magazine, radio, etc.)?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. In general, how would you rate your skill level in terms of being able to provide appropriate child welfare services to culturally diverse clients?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. How would you rate your ability to effectively consult with another professional concerning the educational and behavioural needs of clients whose cultural background is significantly different from your own?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. How would you rate your ability to effectively secure information and resources to better serve culturally different clients?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. How would you rate your ability to accurately assess the needs of female clients?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. How would you rate your ability to accurately assess the needs of male clients?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. How would you rate your ability to accurately assess the needs of older clients?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 21. How would you rate your ability to accurately assess the needs of a male client who may be gay?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 22. How would you rate your ability to accurately assess the needs of a female client who may be a lesbian?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 23. How would you rate your ability to accurately assess the needs of clients with mental health issues?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 24. How would you rate your ability to accurately assess the needs of clients who come from very poor socioeconomic backgrounds?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 25. How would you rate your ability to accurately assess the needs of clients with physical disabilities?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 26. How would you rate your ability to accurately assess the needs of clients with developmental challenges?

*How would you rate your understanding of the following terms? Please write the number which best applies to you from the following response options:*

- 1 Very Limited
- 2 Limited
- 3 Good
- 4 Very Good

- 8 Prefer not to say
- 9 Don't know
- 10 Not applicable to me

- \_\_\_\_\_ 27. Culture
- \_\_\_\_\_ 28. Ethnicity
- \_\_\_\_\_ 29. Racism
- \_\_\_\_\_ 30. Power
- \_\_\_\_\_ 31. Prejudice
- \_\_\_\_\_ 32. Marginalization
- \_\_\_\_\_ 33. Oppression
- \_\_\_\_\_ 34. Ethnocentrism
- \_\_\_\_\_ 35. Privilege
- \_\_\_\_\_ 36. Social location
- \_\_\_\_\_ 37. Experiential phenomenology/Solution Focus
- \_\_\_\_\_ 38. Cultural competence
- \_\_\_\_\_ 39. Dominant culture
- \_\_\_\_\_ 40. Multiculturalism

---

*Please notice the different response options and write the number (1, 2, 3, etc.) which best applies to you.*

---

- 1 Strongly disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neither agree nor disagree
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly agree

- 8 Prefer not to say
- 9 Don't know
- 10 Not applicable to me

- \_\_\_\_\_ 41. The difficulty with assimilation is its implicit bias in favour of the dominant culture.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 42. Ambiguity and stress often result from multicultural situations because people are not sure what to expect from each other.

## Appendix E

*Additional Measures*


---



---

*Please write the number (1, 2, 3, etc.) which best applies to you.*

---



---

- |                                     |                                |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>1 Strongly disagree</b>          | <b>8 Prefer not to say</b>     |
| <b>2 Disagree</b>                   | <b>9 Don't know</b>            |
| <b>3 Neither agree nor disagree</b> | <b>10 Not applicable to me</b> |
| <b>4 Agree</b>                      |                                |
| <b>5 Strongly agree</b>             |                                |

- |       |   |
|-------|---|
| _____ | 1. When possible, work with families is done where comfortable for families.  |
| _____ | 2. Work is done in settings familiar to the families.   |
| _____ | 3. Staff work to maintain culturally relevant family supports.  |
| _____ | 4. A family's cultural supports are integrated into our services.   |
| _____ | 5. Family empowerment is an overarching goal of the work I do.  |
| _____ | 6. I understand the child rearing practices of the communities served.  |
| _____ | 7. For in-home placement, matching a child and family on religion is important.                                     |
| _____ | 8. Placements with a single woman who identifies herself as a lesbian are allowed.                                  |
| _____ | 9. A child may be placed with a gay or lesbian couple.  |
| _____ | 10. A family may foster a child of a race/ethnicity different from its own.   |
| _____ | 11. Supervisors are committed to an environment supportive of diversity.  |
| _____ | 12. Staff/colleagues are committed to an environment supportive of diversity.                                       |
| _____ | 13. Staff members have the knowledge to do their work with diverse cultures.  |
| _____ | 14. I am encouraged to continuously learn about my own culture and its impact on my work.                           |
| _____ | 15. I am encouraged to continuously learn about cultures of the families I serve.                                   |
| _____ | 16. Case managers are encouraged to involve ethnic organizations in case planning when identified by their clients. |
| _____ | 17. Community groups help FACS resolve cultural issues when they arise.   |
| _____ | 18. Partnerships with community organizations are important.  |
| _____ | 19. The agency consults with area faith based groups.   |
| _____ | 20. Local ethnic groups are aware of agency programs.   |
| _____ | 21. Working with community cultural groups is part of planning.   |
| _____ | 22. The agency values community partnerships.   |
| _____ | 23. Community organizations/groups are consulted prior to finalizing strategies that may indirectly impact them.    |
| _____ | 24. Local cultural groups value collaborating with the agency.  |
| _____ | 25. The agency advocates for ethnically appropriate services.   |
| _____ | 26. Nondiscrimination policies of the agency are written clearly.   |
| _____ | 27. I understand the nondiscrimination policies of the agency.  |

---

*Below is a series of statements with which you may either agree or disagree. For each statement, indicate the degree of your agreement/disagreement by writing the appropriate number from "1" to "7." Your first responses are usually the most accurate.*

---

1  
**Strongly  
Disagree**

2

3

4  
**Neither**

5

6

7  
**Strongly  
Agree**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 28. Some groups of people are just more worthy than others.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 29. It would be good if all groups could be equal.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 30. In getting what your group wants, it is sometimes necessary to use force against other groups.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 31. Group equality should be our ideal.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 32. Superior groups should dominate inferior groups.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 33. All groups should be given an equal chance in life.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 34. To get ahead in life, it is sometimes necessary to step on other groups.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 35. We should do what we can to equalize conditions for different groups.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 36. If certain groups of people stayed in their place, we would have fewer problems.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 37. Increased social equality.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 38. It's probably a good thing that certain groups are at the top and other groups are at the bottom.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 39. We would have fewer problems if we treated different groups more equally.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 40. Inferior groups should stay in their place.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 41. We should strive to make incomes more equal.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 42. Sometimes other groups must be kept in their place.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 43. No one group should dominate in society.



*We encourage you to complete the following questions, although they are not directly related to Cultural Competency Training program. Your answers are valuable in that they will help us learn more about the links between cultural competency, sense of community within the agency, and support among co-workers.*

---

*Please write the number (1, 2, 3, etc.) which best applies to you.*

---

- |                              |                         |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 6 Strongly disagree          | 8 Prefer not to say     |
| 7 Disagree                   | 9 Don't know            |
| 8 Neither agree nor disagree | 10 Not applicable to me |
| 9 Agree                      |                         |
| 10 Strongly agree            |                         |

- \_\_\_\_\_ 44. I think FACS is a good place for me to work.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 45. Employees here share the same values.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 46. Other employees and I want the same things from our workplace.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 47. I can recognize most of my co-workers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 48. I feel at home at FACS.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 49. Very few of my co-workers know me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 50. I care about what other co-workers think of my actions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 51. I have influence over what FACS is like.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 52. If there is a problem at FACS, employees have a voice in the solution.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 53. It is very important to me to work here.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 54. Employees get along with each other.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 55. I expect to work here a long time.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 56. I feel a sense of community with the FACS workplace.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 57. Feeling a sense of community with FACS is important to me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 58. Since starting to work here, I have developed close personal relationships with other employees.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 59. Most employees here have values and attitudes different from my own.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 60. My interpersonal relationships with other employees have had a positive influence on my intellectual growth and interest in ideas.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 61. Few of the co-workers I know would be willing to listen to me and help me if I had a personal problem.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 62. The friendships I have developed at work are personally satisfying.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 63. It has been difficult for me to meet and make friends with other employees.

## Appendix F

*Post-Training Survey*

*All information collected is completely confidential.*

*Please complete both front and back pages of this survey and place it in an envelope along with the Diversity Survey.*

---

*Please write the number (1, 2, 3, etc.) which best applies to your training experience in the Cultural Competency Training program.*

---

- |                                     |                                |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>1 Strongly disagree</b>          | <b>8 Prefer not to say</b>     |
| <b>2 Disagree</b>                   | <b>9 Don't know</b>            |
| <b>3 Neither agree nor disagree</b> | <b>10 Not applicable to me</b> |
| <b>4 Agree</b>                      |                                |
| <b>5 Strongly agree</b>             |                                |

- |       |     |   |
|-------|-----|---|
| _____ | 1.  | The learning objectives of the training program were clear.   |
| _____ | 2.  | The learning objectives of the training program were met.   |
| _____ | 3.  | The subject matter was clearly understood.  |
| _____ | 4.  | The training program was clearly developed.   |
| _____ | 5.  | Participation in the training program challenged my beliefs about culture.  |
| _____ | 6.  | I am satisfied with my experience in training.  |
| _____ | 7.  | I have gained new awareness as a result of training which will transfer to my everyday workplace tasks and relationships. |
| _____ | 8.  | I have gained new knowledge as a result of training which will transfer to my everyday workplace tasks and relationships. |
| _____ | 9.  | I have gained new skills as a result of training which will transfer to my everyday workplace tasks and relationships.    |
| _____ | 10. | I am happy that I attended the training program.  |
| _____ | 11. | The group discussions contributed to my understanding of what it means to be culturally competent.                        |
| _____ | 12. | The self-reflection exercises contributed to my understanding of what it means to be culturally competent.                |
| _____ | 13. | The case study analyses contributed to my understanding of what it means to be culturally competent.                      |
| _____ | 14. | As a result of training, I have experienced an increase in my own cultural self-awareness.                                |
| _____ | 15. | The emotional safety and well-being of training participants was respected.   |
| _____ | 16. | I felt anxious in the training environment.   |
| _____ | 17. | I felt frustrated at the conclusion of the training session.  |

- |                              |                         |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Strongly disagree          | 8 Prefer not to say     |
| 2 Disagree                   | 9 Don't know            |
| 3 Neither agree nor disagree | 10 Not applicable to me |
| 4 Agree                      |                         |
| 5 Strongly agree             |                         |

- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. The trainers effectively conveyed program material.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. The trainers answered questions and responded to the concerns of the group.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. The trainers' use of examples to explain concepts was effective.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 21. The content of the training was adequate to meet my needs on the subject of cultural competency.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 22. As a result of my participation in training, the quality of my interactions with culturally diverse clients will improve.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 23. Would you recommend this training to your friends and/or coworkers? (Yes/No)
24. What might you have done differently if you were presenting the material?
25. What further learning or next steps would you like as a result of this experience?
26. Additional comments, suggestions and recommendations:

**THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THE SURVEY**

*Please complete both front and back pages of this survey and place it in the enclosed Laurier envelope along with the Diversity Survey.*

Appendix G

*Focus Group Interview Protocol*

I'm here today to find out about two things:

1. Your experience in training
2. Your satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the training. In other words, your impressions.

**1. Let's talk about your training experience. What did you learn through training?**

**Probe for information on:**

- Awareness
- Knowledge
- Skills
- Attitudes

**2. How can this training program be improved for future groups?**

Every training program has both positives and negatives, let's talk about that....

**What do you see as being the advantages and the disadvantages of the training session?**

3. Near the conclusion of the Cultural Competency Training you were asked to describe ideal FACS best practices in terms of cultural competence on an organizational level. This was referred to as the "Miracles" question. **What do you see as being an FACS Miracle as it relates to cultural competence?**

Thank you for sharing your insights with me today.

**Verbal cues:**

1. *Is there anything more about X before we move on to Y?*
2. *Can we move on and talk about ...?*
3. *Can you say more about that?*
4. *Any more ideas?*
5. *What makes you say that?*

## Appendix H

*Demographic Information*

The following questions pertain to your personal cultural self-identity and employment characteristics. The information gathered here will be used to obtain a sense of participant demographics. Although questions are personal in nature, we encourage you to complete the form so we may help enhance future cultural competence training. Please note, however, that you are under no obligation to participate in any part of this research. The confidentiality of your responses is guaranteed. Thank you.

*Instructions:* Please indicate (check or enter) the response that best applies to you.

1. Sex:  Female  Male      2. Age: \_\_\_\_\_

3. I self-identify as a member of this ethnic group:

- African (examples: African American, Black African, Black Canadian, or Latin American of African descent)
- East Asian (examples: Chinese, Fijian, Japanese, Korean, Polynesian, West Indian or Latin American of East Asian descent)
- South Asian (examples: Bangladeshi, East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Indian or Latin American of South Asian descent)
- European (examples: Caucasian of European descent, Caucasian of Israeli descent, Caucasian of Scandinavian descent)
- South East Asia (examples: Burmese, Cambodian, Filipino, Indonesian, Laotian, Malay, Thai, Vietnamese, West Indian or Latin American of South East Asian descent)
- West Asian/Arab (examples: Arab, Armenian, Egyptian, Iranian, Lebanese, Palestinian, Syrian, Turk, West Indian, or Latin American of West Asian or Arab descent)
- Other Please Indicate: \_\_\_\_\_

4. I self-identify as a member of this religious group:

- Christianity
- Judaism
- Sikhism
- Hinduism
- Aboriginal Spirituality
- Islam
- Atheism
- Buddhism
- Jainism
- Wicca
- Other (Please Indicate): \_\_\_\_\_

5. Sexual orientation:

- Lesbian
- Gay
- Bisexual
- Questioning
- Straight (heterosexual)
- Prefer not to say

6. Other cultural factors you would like included in this survey: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Length of employment at Waterloo Family and Children's Services: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Length of employment in the field of child welfare: \_\_\_\_\_

9. Department:

- Family Services
- Intake Services
- Children's Services, Resources, and Adoption
- Residential Services (including CARE Homes)
- Administrative Services, Corporate Resources, and Legal

10. Position:

- Front Line Worker
- Support Staff
- Supervisor
- Manager

11. Education level:

- High school diploma
- College diploma
- Bachelor of Social Work (BSW)
- Any undergraduate university degree other than a BSW
- Master's of Social Work (MSW)
- Any Master's degree other than an MSW
- Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

12. Have you previously attended an external Cultural Competency or Multicultural Training program?       Yes       No

13. If yes, when? (Year and approximate month): \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix I

*Informed Consent Letter*



You are invited to participate in a project being conducted by Dr. Colleen Loomis and Ms. Jessica Vinograd, from Wilfrid Laurier University. The study is being conducted in collaboration with Family and Children's Services (FACS). We are conducting a study entitled:

**"Cultural Diversity at Family and Children's Services of the Region of Waterloo: An Evaluation of a Cultural Competency Training Program."**

We are evaluating the program, not you. Would you contribute to this study by completing the following survey packet?

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of a training program in promoting cultural competency, in order to enhance future training. Your participation is completely voluntary. There is no obligation to participate. Choosing not to participate will have no impact on your work, and you may withdraw from the study at any time. If you have questions about the project please contact Dr. Colleen Loomis at Wilfrid Laurier University, (519) 884-0710, ext. 2858.

Should you choose to participate you would complete a survey (enclosed). The survey takes about 25 minutes to complete. We are asking approximately 400 employees of Family and Children's Services of the Region of Waterloo to complete the survey. You will be asked to answer questions with respect to your current cultural competencies as they apply to your job in a child welfare agency, as well as your feelings of community and social support within the agency. You will also be asked questions about your personal cultural self-identity and employment characteristics. The purpose of these questions is to learn how the training was perceived by various groups of people. This will help guide the design of inclusive workplace programs and will enhance future training. As part of the study we will ask you to complete a similar survey in the future, once all agency employees have attended Cultural Competency Training. The second survey will also assess your personal reactions to the training experience.

Your participation is entirely voluntary. You may choose not to respond to any one of the questions, and you may withdraw from the project at any time. Your responses to the questions will be kept strictly confidential. Your name will not be associated in any way with your responses. The information gathered will be reported in group format. Any potentially identifying information will be excluded. The information you share will be accessible only to a Laurier research team comprised of Ms. Jessica Vinograd (graduate student), Dr. Colleen Loomis, and one research assistant yet to be hired, who will sign a confidentiality agreement. To further protect your confidentiality the completed surveys will be kept in a locked filing cabinet, within a locked office at Wilfrid Laurier University. In keeping with research standards, after completion of the project these data will be moved to secured, long term storage for 10 years and then destroyed. If you choose to withdraw from the study, any information you have previously provided will be immediately destroyed.

This project is expected to be completed by August 31, 2005 at which time a final summary report of the findings will be sent to all employees through interoffice mail. The researchers will

*Informed Consent Statement – Survey*



**“Cultural Diversity at Family and Children’s Services of the Region of Waterloo: An Evaluation of a Cultural Competency Training Program.”**

Jessica Vinograd and Dr. Colleen Loomis  
October and November 2004

I have read and understand the information provided to me regarding this research study. I have received a copy of the informed consent letter. I agree to participate in this study.

Participant’s signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE FOLD THIS FORM SO THAT IT IS SEPARATE FROM THE DIVERSITY SURVEY**

**PLACE THE FORM IN THE ENCLOSED LAURIER ENVELOPE**

**THANK YOU**



## Appendix J

*Timeline*


---

<i>Approximate date</i>	<i>Phase of research</i>
May 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Jessica Vinograd attends the Cultural Competency Training program at FACS.</li> </ul>
June-August 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Prepare and submit research proposal and ethics review</li> <li>▪ First steering committee meeting</li> <li>▪ First thesis committee meeting</li> </ul>
September 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pre-test and post-test quantitative data collection for Training Groups 1 and 2</li> </ul>
October 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Focus groups 1 and 2</li> <li>▪ Pre-test and post-test quantitative data collection for Training Groups 3 and 4</li> </ul>
November 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Focus groups 3 and 4</li> </ul>
December-February 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Transcription of qualitative focus group data</li> <li>▪ Analysis of qualitative data</li> <li>▪ Data entry and quantitative data analysis</li> </ul>
March-May 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Third steering committee meeting</li> <li>▪ Writing of thesis and final summary report</li> <li>▪ Thesis defense</li> </ul>
June 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Poster presentation at Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) Annual Convention</li> <li>▪ Final steering committee meeting</li> </ul>
August 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Submission of manuscript to a refereed journal for publication</li> </ul>

---

## Appendix K

*Budget*

<i>Item</i>	<i>Cost</i>
3 ½ floppy diskettes	\$15.00
Audio tapes	\$25.00
Recording device Sony Clear Voice Mic'n Micro	\$99.99
Batteries (one package of 4)	\$6.00
Photocopies and Printing	\$200.00
Travel	\$500.00
Compensation for survey participants \$25 gift certificate x 3	\$75.00
Compensation for focus group participants \$5 Tim Horton's gift certificate x 13 people	\$65.00
\$20.00 refreshments x 4 focus groups	\$80.00
Extra incentive for survey completion Gift certificate	\$50.00
<b>Total cost:</b>	<b>\$1115.99</b>