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Section Three

Measurement of the Relationships of Multicultural Counseling Competencies and Counselor Training

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Ponterotto, Sodowsky, and Pope-Davis are paying attention to the nomological net encompassing multicultural counseling competencies for definitional and utilitarian purposes. The studies reported in this section suggest that the Multicultural Counseling Awareness Scale (MCAS) and the Multicultural Counseling Inventory (MCI) are relatively reliable, valid, and pragmatic measures. Although the MCAS and MCI assess multicultural competencies, they differ in their item content, and, hence, in their operational definitions of multicultural knowledge, skills, and awareness. They have different numbers of factors. In addition, the item content of their respective factors/subscales indicates that the MCAS focuses on self-reported attitudes and the MCI on self-reported behaviors. Users need to be aware of the distinctiveness of the two measures and not treat them interchangeably. Nonetheless, one characteristic shared by the measures is their usefulness. After a decade's emphasis in counselor preparation for increased multicultural responsiveness and relevant theory-building in training, the MCAS and MCI have made available devices to assess multicultural training outcomes.

Joseph Ponterotto and his collaborators in "Development and Initial Validation of the Multicultural Counseling Awareness Scale" (MCAS) address (a) whether multicultural competence is a definable

construct, and (b) whether multicultural growth acquired through training can be assessed. After defining constructs a priori on the basis of preceding landmark papers on multicultural counseling competencies, the authors show that the MCAS has two subscales, Knowledge/Skills and Awareness, with high internal consistency reliabilities for the Knowledge/Skills subscale and the full scale, a moderate alpha for the Awareness subscale, and moderate interscale correlations. The longer Knowledge/Skills subscale consistently discriminates among various criterion groups, such as individuals with a higher level of educational preparation in counseling, national experts, students with supervised minority clinical work, participant race, participant gender, and pretested-posttested students in multicultural counseling classes. However, score differences are not shown consistently and across various groups on the Awareness subscale. This difference in the ability of the two subscales of the MCAS to discriminate among groups may be due to (a) the difficulty in operationalizing and measuring sensitivity to issues of race, ethnicity, and culture; (b) the MCAS being a measure of formal learning; (c) the homogeneity of the various criterion groups in each study in terms of their multicultural awareness; or (d) the possibility that multicultural awareness is a stable attitude that is not trainable.

Ponterotto and collaborators report four studies on the MCAS for which they made strong efforts to recruit participants who were practitioners or graduate students, and who represented some diversity with regard to age, race, ethnicity, and gender. Although most of their participants were from New York City, one group of students for their pre-post training study was from New Mexico. Ponterotto et al. explain the rational-quantitative methods for the development and refinement of the MCAS, such as logically keyed item-selection, authors' card sorts, experts' content validity check, the use of a counselor-trainee focus discussion group, item analysis through the study of item correlations, item means, and score variation, and principal components factor analysis.

Low, nonsignificant correlations have been shown between the MCAS subscales and the Crowne-Marlowe Social Desirability Scale. The MCAS Knowledge/Skills subscale and LaFromboise's CCCI-R full scale are shown to have a positive, significant, moderate correlation. The MCAS Awareness subscale and Jacobson's New Racism Scale (high score indicating lower White racism towards Blacks) have a positive, significant, moderate correlation. The authors state that these correlations provide evidence for the convergent validity of the MCAS. An interesting pre-post design showed that varying subscale

changes could be measured by the MCAS across three groups and for the pre-test post-test variable for each group. Such results suggest that the MCAS has great promise.

Gargi Roysircar Sodowsky in "The Multicultural Counseling Inventory: Validity and Applications in Multicultural Training" first addresses the professional, ethical, and advocacy philosophy of multicultural training. She then connects multicultural learning to the empirical need to test whether a multicultural curriculum leads to competence. This philosophical-psychometric framework is not typical in the measurement literature, but is perhaps a turn-of-the-century model that answers the values question "why have multicultural counseling competencies?" and the pragmatic question "how does one measure such competence?" Sodowsky conceptualizes that in the qualitative counseling session, validity of the data depends on the quality of the "multicultural counselor-client relationship" and on the counselor's metacognitive awareness process of "cultural self-reflexivity" and "self-monitoring." These new ideas suggest that Sodowsky is trying to understand via a wide review of conceptual and empirical literature the operationalization of competencies, as indicated by the four-factor structure of the MCI.

The instrument development methods Sodowsky and her collaborators used for the MCI were: exploratory factor analysis with a large sample of Whites from Nebraska; confirmatory factor analysis with a national sample of some diversity to test whether there were one, two, three, or four factors; higher order confirmatory factor analysis to test whether a "general" multicultural factor accounted for moderate interfactor correlations; estimates of internal consistency reliabilities and tests of factor congruence between the two samples. Thus, by using traditional measurement criteria, Sodowsky suggests a four-factor solution. She then did qualitative analyses of the Nebraskans' responses to open-ended questions. The themes that she enumerates show their concordance with at least one of the proposed four factors.

Analyses by multicultural work experience showed that those with more such experience had higher scores on Multicultural Awareness and Multicultural Counseling Relationship than those with less experience. Similar to the less experienced work group, students after taking a multicultural counseling course did not show any difference at posttest on the Relationship factor, but improved in Multicultural Counseling Skills, Multicultural Awareness, and Multicultural Counseling Knowledge, suggesting that didactic and experiential activities may show positive outcome in select

competencies. Explaining the implications of students' evaluation of multicultural counseling videotapes in another study, Sodowsky proposes a possible relationship between perceived counselor credibility, as measured by the Counselor Rating Form, and counselor multicultural competencies, as measured by the MCI. Sodowsky also reports a structural equation model for the MCI from initial analyses of an ongoing study with a national sample of university counselors. This model shows the relationships of a network of variables with the MCI: multicultural training, multicultural life experience, social desirability, cultural political correctness, and feelings of social inadequacy. Sodowsky also shows a positive, significant high correlation between the MCI and D'Andrea and Daniels's MAKSS.

Donald Pope-Davis and Deanna Nielson in "Assessing Multicultural Counseling Competencies Using the Multicultural Counseling Inventory: A Review of the Research" remind readers that a debate continues regarding what should be the content and method of multicultural counseling training. They suggest that identifying specific factors that may impact the development of multicultural counseling competencies across training modalities would be helpful data. Pope-Davis and Nielson review Pope-Davis and his collaborators' survey of various training situations, using Sodowsky's MCI. This integrated review may provide additional construct validity support for the MCI, in addition to suggesting possible subscale relationships with factors external to the MCI. Pope-Davis and Nielson provide tables of the internal consistency reliabilities and interscale correlations of the MCI across a variety of studies, thus making it possible for readers to examine the stability of the MCI across administrations, time, samples, and locations.

The reported studies include graduate professional psychology students, counselors in university counseling centers, nursing students, and occupational therapists, with some subjects being recruited nationally, and others from midwestern and western states. Examples of predictor variables studied were training in counseling versus clinical psychology; completion of multicultural seminars/workshops; number of general practica; discussion of multicultural issues in clinical supervision; work with minority clients; trainees' race and ethnicity; and trainees' White racial identity attitudes, as measured by Helms and Carter's WRIAS (see Section 2 for the WRIAS). The above and other predictor variables predicted the four MCI factors variously, with Multicultural Awareness being predicted most often, followed by Multicultural Counseling Knowledge, Multicultural Counseling Skills, and Multicultural Counseling Relationship (in that order).

It is interesting to note that the MCI's Awareness subscale discriminates among groups more consistently than the MCAS' similar titled subscale. With regard to trainees not reporting competence more often in the Relationship factor, Pope-Davis and Nielson agree with Sodowsky that current training methods may not address interpersonal process issues that are involved in the multicultural client-counselor dynamics.

Although Pope-Davis and Nielson present a configuration of relationships of training variables with multicultural competencies, they comment that they did not examine the depth or content of multicultural materials used in training or the theoretical orientation of instructors and supervisors. Their suggestion is that such investigations may eventually point to a theoretical basis for the selection of experiential learning activities that would influence the development of multicultural counseling competencies.

Because Pope-Davis, Ponterotto, and Sodowsky and their respective collaborators have been doing research simultaneously on the measurement of multicultural counseling competencies, they have helped to facilitate an empirical climate much needed in the multicultural training movement for educational process and outcome evaluation. Even though they have been doing research independent of each other, the above authors have raised some similar implications in the training of psychologists and counselors to which trainers and debaters may wish to pay heed.

