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## **Incorporating Cultural Competence & Youth Program Volunteers: A Literature Review**

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**Abstract:** The increasing diversity of youth in the United States necessitates a shift in the ways that youth services and programming are designed and implemented. This article examines existing scholarship on developing the cultural competency of volunteers in youth development programs in an effort to improve 4-H YDP protocol. Drawing from a diverse, interdisciplinary range of peer-reviewed, academic articles, this literature review plots out recent pedagogical trends, theoretical concepts, and empirical studies dealing with the cultural competence of service workers and mentors interacting with youth. Based on a synthesis of the findings, this paper presents guiding principles for increasing cultural competence of youth program design through both training and organizational changes.

### **Introduction**

The increasing diversity of youth in the United States necessitates a shift in the ways that youth services and programming are designed and implemented. Scholars across disciplines support the concept of cultural competence as a means to address and inform the needs of growing diverse populations. Within the literature, numerous terms have been used interchangeably to define cultural competence including cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity, and cultural responsiveness. However, unlike the aforementioned terms, cultural competence moves beyond mere awareness to include action. For the purposes of this paper, cultural competence is

defined as a broad concept that not only encompasses one's understanding of other cultural groups but also the outward expression of this knowledge in one's conduct and interactions.

It is also important to consider the meanings of the terms "race," "ethnicity," and "culture" because they are frequently used interchangeably in relevant literature. There is no agreed upon theoretical or scientific definition of race. Race is not biologically determined but is a socially constructed classification system based on physical characteristics that shifts meaning over time and place. Racial classification is utilized (in conjunction with other classification systems) to maintain social hierarchies in societies (c.f. Hall, 1989; Helms, Jernigan, & Mascher, 2005). Culture is a broad term used to describe collective values, beliefs, as well as ways of thinking, acting, and feeling. Culture is not innate, but is behavior that is acquired over time as one grows up in/adapts to any society (c.f. Hall, 1989). Ethnicity generally refers to groups of people who share cultural characteristics such as language, religion, history, ancestry and traditions. An ethnic group refers to a particular group of people who see themselves and are seen by others as possessing a distinct cultural identity (c.f. Smedley, & Smedley, 2005).

Considering the contextually situated meanings of these terms, it is clear that much research that focuses on youth of color does not acknowledge the complexity of race and ethnicity and fails to take into account cultural diversity between sub-groups. [Authors' Note: The phrase "youth of color" is somewhat troublesome. The authors have selected this phrase to refer to youth of all cultures, excluding White culture. The selection of this term was made in an effort to avoid subordinate connotations (i.e. non-White, minority, marginalized); however, the term also has denotations of high-risk behaviors, at-risk youth, criminalization, and/or youth living in urban areas. The challenges in mindfully selecting this term highlighted the lack of positive terminology related to describe youth diversity in the United States, which contributes to the reification of cultural oppression that may exist in these youth's lives (c.f. Foucault, 1972; 1982).] Helms, et al., (2005) argued that racial and ethnic constructs are most useful when trying to understand the cultural narratives and experiences that one is exposed to and has available to internalize as identity. However, most research discusses race, ethnicity, and culture as concrete and measurable variables. While it is important to understand that there are consequences of treating race, ethnicity, and culture as concrete variables, research that does so should not be discounted altogether. Rather, it is more useful to further question and analyze research that makes conclusive statements regarding a specific race, ethnicity, etc.

## **Purpose**

Recognition that the University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) 4-H Youth Development Program (YDP) in San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties serves mostly White youth, attracts mostly White volunteers, and sustains low retention rates for culturally diverse youth has been the impetus for seeking ways to develop the cultural competence of volunteers who serve in this youth development organization. The interest in increasing these volunteers' cultural competence mirrors a wider trend to increase cultural competence of public service workers, which stems from the continued inadequacy of services for members of disadvantaged groups (Sue, 2003).

## Background

In recent years, there has been an emergence of research geared toward evaluating the efficacy of cultural competence training courses in the mental health (e.g. Castillo, et al., 2007; Coleman, et al., 2006; Seto, et al., 2006), medical (e.g. Crosson, et al., 2006; Kumas-Tan, et al., 2007), and educational fields (e.g. Brown, 2004; DeJaeghere, & Zhang, 2008). Utilizing a vast array of quantitative measurement models, researchers have generally concluded that an individual can improve cultural awareness over a period of time by participating in training courses/classes. The problem with these findings; however, is that there is no consistency among definitions of cultural competence or efficacy measurement tools for evaluating training programs. Each study measures different "competency" aspects (e.g. cultural knowledge, cultural skills, awareness of personal assumptions, willingness to learn about cultural differences) in different ways.

Further, most of the training courses that are evaluated in the literature are field specific and cannot be generalized. For example, much of the mental health and medical field training courses focus on understanding different cultural perspectives on health and wellness, which may not be relevant in the context of youth programming. Furthermore, Sue (2003) noted that most training courses are not based on any definitive needs--assessment research but are instead based on cultural match/fit theory, which may be problematic because of the overwhelming simplification of race that is present in most youth programming literature.

Scholars have stressed the need for research to move beyond simple pre-and post-test evaluations and use qualitative methods to learn more about the developmental process of becoming more culturally competent through training (c.f. Tomlinson-Clarke, 2000; Whitley, 2007).

Although there is a plethora of research on the positive effects of adult--youth mentoring relationships and youth civic engagement in programs like the 4-H YDP, there is a dearth of research on the training of mentors/volunteers working with these youth. The following sections provide a discussion of the literature review methods, as well as three main areas of findings:

- research addressing race and ethnicity in mentoring relationships,
- studies measuring the efficacy of cultural competence training courses, and
- suggestions for incorporating cultural competence into youth programming.

## Methods

This literature review began with a keyword search of peer-reviewed, English-language journal article and book databases (i.e. EBSCOhost, SCOPUS, Google Scholar) using the following search terms: cultural competence training, cultural competence education, youth program, mentoring, and volunteer training. Multiple combinations of these search terms were attempted in each database in order to find the combination that yielded the most relevant articles (see Table 1).

**Table 1**

*Database Search Terms and Number of Publications Found*

<b>Database</b>	<b>Search Terms</b>	<b># Publications</b>
SCOPUS	"cultural competence training"	55
SCOPUS	"cultural competence training" AND "evaluation"	36
SCOPUS	"cultural competence development"	5
EBSCOHOST	"cultural competence training"	14
EBSCOHOST	"cultural competence curriculum"	4
Google Scholar	"cultural competence" AND "volunteer training"	113
Google Scholar	"cultural competence training" AND "youth mentoring"	6

These searches yielded 233 journal articles and/or book chapters that were published between 2000 and 2014 in the United States, excluding dissertations, conference presentations, and reports. After examining the abstracts of these results, 35 publications were identified as relevant for understanding cultural competence development and training. The majority of these publications were targeted to narrow, field specific audiences (mostly in the medical and social work fields). Some studies were more relevant since they discussed either the general process of becoming more culturally competent or pedagogical recommendations for cultural competence training courses. No publications were found through this database search that directly discussed building the cultural competence of youth program services or of volunteers who serve in this youth development organization. Therefore, in order to find additional resources, reference lists were individually reviewed for other relevant publications.

## **Findings**

### **Ethnicity and Race in Mentoring Relationships**

Past studies that have aimed to answer the question of whether or not mentors and mentees in formal mentoring relationships should be matched based on race and ethnicity have largely been inconclusive (Ensher, & Murphy, 1997; Sanchez, et al., 2014). Findings from same-race versus cross-race mentoring matches have been mixed as some scholars recommended same-race matches (Cohen, et al., 1999; Yancey, et al., 2002) while others advocate for cross-race matches (Blechman, 1992). However variable, the results of these studies accentuate the importance of considering race and ethnicity to be pertinent concepts that need to be discussed and kept in mind when designing youth mentoring programs.

Rhodes (2002) found that participating in a mentoring relationship has the power to promote positive identity development for youth. She posited that youths' sense of self might develop as they identify with their mentors and receive positive feedback. Because mentoring relationships greatly influence youths' identities, it is important to think about the ways in which a mentor's racial attitudes could affect youths' racial/ethnic identity. Mentoring relationships can be

important with respect to both assuaging the impact of and/or inadvertently reinforcing the negative effects of cultural oppression in youths' lives (Sanchez, et al., 2014).

An individual's racial socialization experiences differ depending on whether one's racial group is privileged or marginalized in society. Helms (2007) indicated that one's racial identity is based on the internalization of their racial socialization experiences (i.e. what it means to be Black). Ethnic identity, on the other hand, refers to individuals' participation in a cultural group's distinct practices (e.g. language, tradition, etc.) regardless of one's racial group. Ethnicity and race may affect several aspects of the mentoring relationship, including the original selection of the mentee/mentor, the ways that mentors and mentees relate to one another, and how the individuals interact with each other. Prior research found that mentees in formal mentoring programs were typically racial/ethnic minorities, whereas most mentors were White (Grossman, & Tierney, 1998). However, other researchers discovered that when given the option to choose their own mentor, youth tended to select mentors who are of the same racial/ethnic background as themselves (Klaw, & Rhodes, 1995; Sanchez & Colon, 2014). Since racial socialization experiences may affect mentoring relationships, mentor/mentee negotiations of these experiences will influence the overall quality of the relationship.

Cross-race relationships may be affected by the cultural competence (or lack thereof) of the mentor or cultural mistrust on the part of the mentee (Sanchez & Colon, 2014). Mentors need to be culturally competent in order to develop and sustain successful cross-race relationships. Without cultural competence training and local cultural knowledge, well-intentioned mentors are at risk to make significant errors that may negatively affect their relationship with their mentee (Rhodes, 2002). When confronted with the systemic racial oppression experienced by a mentee, White mentors may feel a sense of guilt and defensiveness that could hinder their ability to address crucial issues that are of central importance to mentees (Ward, 2000). Another issue that may arise is that youth of color may feel hyperaware of being judged by their White mentors according to negative stereotypes, which may deter youth from taking risks and participating in new experiences that could potentially bolster their sense of self (Cohen, et al., 1999).

More recent scholarship has examined how other factors besides race affect a mentoring relationship. Rhodes, et al., (2002) used the Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America dataset to compare same-race and cross-race mentoring matches in which all cross-race mentors were White. They found that when matches were based on common interests, geographic proximity, and youth/parental preferences for same-race matches, no distinctions were found for the same-race and cross-race groups in the longevity of relationships or frequency of communication, suggesting that race is only one of a number of significant factors in a mentoring relationship. In a meta-analysis of youth mentoring program evaluations, Dubois, et al., (2011) found that matching youth and mentors on the basis of shared interest rather than racial matching was associated with greater effectiveness in terms of youth outcomes. These studies highlight the importance of taking into consideration other variables besides race when formally matching mentors/mentees.

A common theme that arose during the review was the need for practitioners/volunteers to have culture-specific knowledge of the population with which they are working. This knowledge includes but is not limited to a cultural groups' history and experiences with prejudice, discrimination, and racism, as well as general knowledge of a group's culture-specific beliefs.

Programs and services originally developed by and for the European American culture often fail to engage youth of color (Outley, & Floyd, 2001). Problems surrounding misunderstanding and racism exist within such programs for those with cultures other than European American (Outley, & Witt, 2006). Research shows that youth of color benefit from culture-specific programs and from staff who are sensitive to cultural difference. In this review, two studies addressed the assessment of culturally tailored group-mentoring programs. Hanlon, et al., (2009) evaluated a group-mentoring program that served 267 sixth-grade, low-income, urban, African American students. The intervention site was randomly selected, as was a demographically similar school that served as the comparison site. Group-mentoring program participants received greater grade-point-average increases during the academic year compared to those who did not participate. Yamauchi (2003) evaluated a culturally tailored program for Native Hawaiian students that utilized community mentors, field trips, and locally contextualized curriculum. Similarly, student participants showed better educational engagement than nonparticipants.

**Summary.** Youth are not a homogenous group and cannot be treated as such. If a program chooses to formally match mentors with mentees, it should not solely base matches on “race” but question participants about preferences and shared interests. Cultural groups experience unique barriers and opportunities within the United States; therefore, in order to develop youth programming that will successfully serve this diverse population, it is necessary to develop well-planned programs with appropriately trained staff. The program design should take into account theory and research on the cultural characteristics of the local youth populations served. Ongoing training and support for mentors/staff should be characterized by special attention to local cultural issues.

### **Measuring the Efficacy of Cultural Competence Training**

Given the demographic changes that are occurring within the United States, many scholars argue that there is now a systemic need to view cultural competence as a quality of care issue where each organization should be responsible for providing culturally competent services. Although there has been an emergence of research on the importance of cultural competence in the human services fields (e.g. mental health, medical, and social work), there is no consensual definition of the concept to inform the kinds of services, policies, and training that should be provided. In order to successfully provide services for all people, organizations need to develop standards, policies, and practices within appropriate cultural frameworks.

Across disciplines there has been a wide variety of studies conducted evaluating the efficacy of cultural competence training courses. A number of field-specific measurement tools have been used in order to assess trainees’ competency before and after courses. A few of these measures include the Multicultural Counseling Inventory (MCI; Sadowsky, et al., 1998), the White Racial Identity Attitude Scale (WRIAS; Helms, & Carter, 1990), White Racial Consciousness Development Scale & Interracial Comfort Index (Claney & Parker, 1989), the Multicultural Awareness Knowledge and Skills Survey (MAKSS; D’Andrea, Daniels, & Heck, 1991), the Multicultural Competency Checklist (MCC; Ponterotto, Alexander, & Grieger, 1995), the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS; Bennett, 1986), and the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI; Hammer, 2011).

Currently, the UCCE 4-H YDP is utilizing the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) to assess the intercultural competence of program staff and a few key volunteers across the state. The IDI is an assessment tool that measures an individual's or group's capability toward observing cultural differences and commonalities and modifying behavior to cultural context. The IDI measures are based on a developmental continuum originally developed by Bennett (1986) that ranges from a less complex set of perceptions and behaviors around cultural commonalities and differences (monocultural mindset) to a more complex set of perceptions and behaviors (intercultural/global mindset) (Hammer, 2011). The IDI takes approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete and is often accompanied by five open-ended questions that respondents can choose to fill out to better describe their specific cultural orientation; however, this initial assessment is followed up with confidential and individualized plans to promote and increase participants' cultural competence and placement on the developmental continuum. Within the UCCE 4-H YDP structure, IDI program participants have been placed into small Community of Practice groups to facilitate participant-led active learning and greater personal awareness through self-reflection.

Each of the aforementioned instruments measure changes in knowledge, attitude, and application skills. Just as there is no consensual definition of cultural competence, there also is no accepted method of measuring cultural competence, even within disciplines. Because of this discrepancy, it is difficult to determine best practices for training course design. However, that is not to say that the existing research fails to tell us anything. Rather, themes emerging across disciplines and studies help us to better understand the kinds of pedagogical strategies that lead to an increased cultural competence, however that may be defined.

**Developing cultural competence is processual.** Outley and Witt (2006) stress that the development of cultural competence cannot occur overnight or through one-day trainings but is processual: It necessitates intensive reflection and engagement over time. This process requires trainees to dispense with stereotypes and negative connotations regarding different ethnic groups, and instead replace them with relevant, culturally based understanding and knowledge. The ultimate goal of cultural competence training is to achieve an infusion of cultural competence values into daily practices.

Across disciplines, it is generally thought that the process of developing cultural competence consists of individuals moving from a state of "cultural encapsulation," a worldview according to a single set of cultural assumptions which are regarded as "right" (Pedersen, et al., 2002), to an awareness of one's learned assumptions, and finally to a knowledge about cultural differences that informs daily practices (Malot, 2010; Sue, et al., 1992).

Pernell-Arnold et al., (2012) examined the process of becoming more culturally competent through an evaluation study of a 10-month continuing education course for mental health administrators, practitioners, and peer providers. The researchers found that the training course brought about changes in worldview for the majority of trainees. In addition, there was a significant decline in ethnocentric thinking and an increase in ethnorelative thinking. A key finding of this study was that the process was nonlinear, illustrating that cultural competence development is not constant and one-directional, but instead fluctuates until new understandings emerge.



In a study evaluating the efficacy of cultural competence training for organizations serving people with disabilities, Taylor-Ritzler, et al., (2008) found that at the organizational level, providing support is critical for the success of individuals who are pursuing cultural competence. The researchers highlighted the importance of continuing education and on-going follow-up from the organization. Flory, et al. (2014) conducted a qualitative study examining urban teachers' perspectives of culturally competent professional development. Key findings included teachers' desire to have professional development trainers/leaders be racially diverse. Many of the teachers expressed frustration with the lack of cultural diversity among the professional development staff. Another major finding illustrated the need for cultural competence education to continue beyond one-time training courses. Teachers suggested creating a recurring workshop in which there was a space for continued learning and discussion surrounding shared experiences.

Past research that has analyzed the process of cultural competence development suggests that although single course training sessions have the ability to increase one's cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity, in order for an individual or group to demonstrate cultural competence on a daily basis, it is necessary to continuously participate in formal workshops or classes that challenge worldviews and personal assumptions.

**Utilize active learning techniques.** A number of recent studies have emphasized the need for active learning exercises to be included in cultural competence training courses to increase self-awareness and the capacity for self-reflection (e.g. Brown, 2004; McChesney, & Euster, 2000; Peterson Amour, et al., 2004). Active learning activities can be understood as exercises that necessitate active participant involvement, as opposed to passive (e.g. watching videos, listening to speakers). Some examples include having trainees participate in discussions addressing difference and oppression, or challenging individuals to reflect on and respond to past cross-cultural interactions.

McChesney and Euster (2000) found that active learning techniques have been helpful to social work field instructors by encouraging involvement, providing a sense of safety, and enhancing positive emotional states during training courses.

Brown (2004) compared posttest cultural competence scores among Caucasian undergraduate students teachers in two methodologically different cultural diversity training courses. The study found that although both courses brought about an increase in teachers' cultural competence, the course that used active learning activities (including small-group collaboration, in-depth interviews, and individuals' personal examples to encourage self-examination) was more successful than the course that was based on the passive observation of an inner-city classroom.

**Summary.** While there is no agreed upon, standard way of measuring cultural competence, there does seem to be a common understanding of what perceptions and behaviors are associated with a culturally competent (or culturally sensitive) person/group. Cultural competence is an active characteristic that requires one to be conscious and reflective of their personal assumptions, beliefs, and behaviors regarding their own culture and culturally different groups. Being culturally competent requires one to seek out new knowledge about other cultural groups and to constantly reflect and improve upon one's behaviors and practices. According to the research discussed in this section, cultural competence can be learned over



time. However, it is important to note that becoming culturally competent is a constant process and does not develop linearly. Rather, one's mindset develops over time as one has time to reflect on and confront personal assumptions and behaviors. This type of developmental learning seems to best occur when students actively engage with the material by participating in discussions and hands-on activities.

## **Theoretical/Pedagogical Recommendations for Cultural Competence**

Many research articles measuring the efficacy of training courses conclude with recommendations based on their findings for ways to improve curricula (e.g. Malott, 2010; Pernell-Arnold, et al., 2012). Outley and Witt (2006) published a guideline describing specific ways to incorporate cultural competence into programming for youth of color. The following section summarizes some of the more detailed recommendations found in study conclusions in order to convey frequently discussed theoretical and pedagogical suggestions for incorporating cultural competence into youth programming.

Outley and Witt (2006) developed a framework called Youth Cultural Competence (YCC) that encompasses a series of systematic strategies that aim to assist programs / organizations in the recruitment, engagement, education, and retention of youth of color. YCC has three main principles that are grounded in the concept of youth development: youth participation, positive peer influence, and "culturally specific" staff specialists. These principles have complementary guidelines developed by the authors in order to assist providers in enacting each principle. Among the guidelines, some recommendations include:

- 1) varying the types of programs offered and how they are delivered;
- 2) creating and nurturing youth councils comprised of youth of color;
- 3) building the capacity of providers to serve youth of color by utilizing community resources and leaders; and
- 4) forming adult community advisory boards made up of representatives of various cultural groups that can provide input on the best way to design programs and services to meet the needs of the community's youth.

Based on a systematic review of research on the efficacy of single course cultural competence training for mental health counselors, Malott (2010) put forth three recommendations for training course design. First, she stressed the need for courses to incorporate theory (addressing multicultural awareness, skills, and knowledge) and a variety of pedagogical strategies (lectures, discussions, video, etc.) in their design. In addition, she purported that exposing trainees to various cultural groups through readings, videos, and speakers can enhance a course but may also detract from its purpose if the material uses monolithic statements and/or does not illustrate differences within cultural groups. Her third recommendation consisted of program design that addresses student biases and racial identity through exploratory activities such as journal writing, class debates, and assignments that encouraged students to share details about their own ethnic and racial identity. By requiring the trainees to share and discuss personal assumptions and worldviews, as well as to listen to those of others, they are forced to reflect on cultural differences that may result in misunderstanding in everyday interactions.

Pernell-Arnold et al., (2012) discussed some of the key findings from their evaluative study of group-level cultural competence training. Upon reflection, they concluded that course

objectives, sequence of learning topics, time allocation, organizational leadership, and resources are all fundamental elements that should be well thought out and designed if individual and system wide transformation is to take place. To ensure that course elements are well designed, the authors suggested setting specific goals regarding the level of change the training facilitators wish to target. For example, there should be agreement of what attitudes, knowledge, and skills are needed in an organization in order to competently provide services to its target population. Skill acquisition, learned through training courses, should be structured and taught for applications pertaining to the specific setting of the organization (e.g. youth program, mental health office, study abroad program). Each aspect of the course should be designed keeping the targeted goals of the specific organization in mind. Through the analysis of participant journals, the researchers found a correlation between occasional intrapersonal and intergroup tension, which stimulated individual disorientation and transformative learning. Further, individual journal entries showed consistency between course curriculum and shifting worldviews.

**Summary.** Overwhelmingly, recommendations for improving cultural competence in programming focused on active engagement with local cultural issues. A variety of pedagogical strategies should be used to explore cultural similarities and differences including the use of journals, group discussions and debates surrounding participants' ethnic and racial identity, guest lecturers, and hands-on activities such as role-playing that confront personal assumptions. Program staff should not only be "fluent" in local culture but should "reflect" it as well. A program can reflect local culture by making sure that a number of staff, providers, and volunteers working at the organization are local community members themselves. Staff should be culturally diverse and reflect the communities served. Recruiting mentors and staff of various cultural groups should be a priority in order for an organization to enact cultural competence. Youth should have an active role in the development of programming relating to culture and should discuss, rather than ignore, relevant cultural issues.

### **Implications for County-Based 4-H YDPs**

In order to begin to consider the implications of this literature review on county-based 4-H YDPs, it is important to recognize that the 4-H YDP emerged from 19th century, rural American culture. As a program designed for and by those rooted in European American culture, the 4-H YDP was not founded in the culture-specific knowledge of diverse individuals and groups currently living in areas that these programs serve. Attracting a majority of White youth members, adult volunteers, and paid personnel it is important for the 4-H YDP to offer volunteers (and all members of the 4-H community) cultural training in the history, needs, and interests of all local populations. In order to promote change in cultural competence at the local level, 4-H YDP supervisors and administrators should be prepared for an iterative process of leading staff, volunteers, and other 4-H community members through self-reflection / assessment, professional development, exposure to different worldviews, and opportunities to engage with people from varied cultural backgrounds.

For all participants, training opportunities will be most successful if passive learning activities are limited and ample opportunities for participants to engage in active learning are provided. Countywide cultural competence training plans should be implemented over a significant span of time, providing ongoing activities to encourage participants to continue to reflect on their experiences, assumptions, and biases while moving in the direction of personal growth. At the

same time, it will be necessary to consider the experience and cultural backgrounds of those facilitating trainings and the cultural competence process. Until 4-H YDP staff and volunteers become more diverse themselves, it may be beneficial to recruit outside of the 4-H community in order to provide trainings from culturally diverse professionals. Likewise, in order for participants to obtain the greatest benefit from these opportunities, it will be important to create safe spaces for all participants to share experiences, insights, and reflections regardless of their placement on the developmental continuum of cultural competence.

Within the 4-H YDP structure, there are numerous mechanisms for addressing theoretical/pedagogical recommendations for cultural competence:

- Expansion & Review Committees are mandatory in each county-based 4-H YDP. These committees should be comprised of individuals—both youth and adults—with locally relevant knowledge of the diverse cultural groups in that community. These committee members should have the expertise to combine local resources, advocacy, and program development to meet the needs of diverse cultural groups in their community.
- Youth leadership is a cornerstone of the 4-H YDP. Building off of this program initiative, youth from varied cultural groups should be sought to assist in the development of programming, as well as to fill leadership positions at the project, club, and county-levels.
- Adult volunteers for 4-H YDPs generally reside within the community that their local 4-H programs serve; however, special emphasis should be placed on the recruitment of volunteers from local cultural groups that are currently underserved in county-based 4-H YDPs. Recruiting diverse volunteers and providing ongoing cultural competence training can increase countywide awareness of locally relevant cultural groups and issues, which may enable adult volunteers to
  1. partner more successfully with all youth in their communities,
  2. more effectively address the existence of cultural oppression in youths' lives, and
  3. reduce the risk of inadvertent, culturally-related negative impacts on youth-adult partnerships.
- In particular, the findings on the impact of race in mentoring relationships have implications for these youth-adult partnerships, which play a critical role in the philosophy, structure, and success of county-based 4-H YDPs. While recognizing that cultural differences can both positively and negatively impact youth-adult partnerships, it is also important to emphasize that shared interests (e.g. 4-H projects, activities, events) between youth and adults can lead to increased youth outcome obtainment despite any potential cultural differences between youth members and adult volunteers.

In order to provide relevant programming for all youth—and youth from underserved cultural groups in particular—local program leadership should consider ways to diversify and expand program modalities to meet local needs. Participation of local community members with personal knowledge of the needs of diverse groups can provide critical information on constraints that may impact program participation (e.g. transportation, family/work structures, cost), as well as potential topics for project areas that are meaningful to specific cultural groups. Beyond increasing the diversity of youth members/adult volunteers and expanding into new program modalities, particular consideration should be given to the development of programming that focuses on cultural competence, as well as issues relevant to local cultural groups.

## Conclusion

This literature review began as an investigation into contemporary methods for incorporating cultural competence into youth programming design. It was quickly realized that there is a dearth of empirical research that focuses specifically on this subject. Therefore, in order to better understand the general process of cultural competence development, this review looked beyond youth programming research and encompasses a wide body of multi-disciplinary work. Based on a synthesis of the findings, this paper presents guiding principles for increasing the cultural competence of youth program design through both training and organizational changes.

What is clear from the existing literature is that if training is to be effectively used as a strategy to increase the cultural competence of staff and volunteers, an organization must first make an effort to understand the local culture of the communities being served. In addition, the most successful cultural competence training courses were those that utilized a multitude of teaching methods, putting emphasis on hands-on, active engagement activities such as journal writing, group discussion, and debate that forced the trainees to confront their personal assumptions about other cultures. Perhaps the most common conclusion found in the literature was that cultural competence is an ongoing process that requires one to be in constant reflection about their worldview, surroundings, and interactions. At an organizational level, it is recommended that cultural competence workshops or discussions be regular occurrences. Implementation of the recommendations discussed in this paper would most likely result in various changes for a program, including relationships with surrounding communities, and a revision of wider conceptual frameworks based on European American culture. Incorporating these changes may increase the participation and retention of culturally diverse youth and volunteers in youth development programs, like the UCCE 4-H YDP.

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