

# Historical Identity Development Patterns and Contemporary Multicultural Identity in First, Second, and Third Generation Counseling Students

By Nola Butler Byrd, San Diego State University

## ABSTRACT

*This study examines the historical and contemporary identity development patterns of first, second, and third generation students to determine the attributes students bring with them and how they develop through their experiences in a multicultural counselor training program. The paper examines patterns between groups, followed by a discussion of implications and recommendations for multicultural counseling and education.*

Studies have found that prior multicultural training and the race or ethnicity of the counselor can be predictive of counselor's self-assessed abilities to work with culturally diverse clients. Counselors of color in many of these studies have reported greater levels of multicultural counseling competence versus their European American counterparts, and higher levels of multicultural preparation have been associated with greater self-assessed multicultural counseling competence (Constantine, 2001; Constantine, Juby, and Liang, 2001; Neville et al., 1996; Ottavi, Pope-Davis, and Dings, 1994; Pope-Davis, Reynolds, Dings, and Nielson, 1995; Pope-Davis, Reynolds, Dings, and Ottavi, 1994; Sodowsky, Kuo-Jackson, Richardson, and Corey, 1998; Sodowsky, Taffe, Gutkin, and Wise, 1994). However, little is known, about the determinants of multicultural identity among students based on their generational background in the United States (U.S.).

For many years, practitioners in the fields of education and psychology responded to this need by developing multicultural education opportunities and researching multicultural awareness and identity development in order to prepare competent multicultural professionals. The field of counseling psychology was the first to develop a set of multicultural counseling competencies (Sue, Arredondo, and McDavid, 1992). Recently, the conceptualizations of multicultural counselors' and educators' regarding multiculturalism

have been challenged by scholars and activists calling for the inclusion of immigrant perspectives and linguistic diversity in order to end the oppression of immigrants. The majority of studies and preparation programs in the fields of education, counseling and psychology have tended to focus on English-speaking clients and practitioners born and raised in the U.S. and not those on with linguistic diversity or immigration status.

The utility of the Multicultural Experience Inventory (MEI) as an outcome measure was examined in this study of first, second and third or more generation students in the (CBB Program). This study assessed historical and contemporary multicultural development patterns prior to their matriculation in the CBB program to determine what participants brought with them in terms of their multicultural experiences and identity. It also contrasted their entry and exit scores on a measure of multicultural attitudes and behaviors to assess the affects of the preparation program on a student's behaviors and attitudes. The data used in this study was collected by the author, who was also a faculty member in the program, as part of a longitudinal study (2003-2006) of the CBB program.

## MULTICULTURAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

Traditionally, identity development

scholars have explored the significance of individual identities. In recent years, however, scholars have expanded this to include multiple identities, in part because the social movements of the 1950s and 60s exposed a range of identities and experiences that had been concealed by the dominant European American postwar culture. This shift was also influenced by the work of Zinn (1980), Takaki (1993, 1998), among others who reframed the history of the U.S. based on interviews with diverse ethnic and immigrant groups. Evidence revealed blatant and subtle discrimination and oppression of people in the U.S. based on class, race, gender, immigration status and other diverse identities. It exposed the complexities and intersectionalities of the identities of many people previously overlooked by scholars. Such revelations demand the services of competent multicultural counselors who can work successfully with individuals and communities with diverse, multiple identities.

Trends in multiple identity development address the complexity of human identity. These theories represent human identity as multifaceted, yet integrated. Each identity is a frame of reference that includes an array of social and cultural identities, gendered and sexual identities, and other identities based on beliefs, national and local alliances, socio-economic status, language, generation, etc. (Barvosa-Carter, 1998; Gutierrez Keeton, R., 2002).

Within this field, scholars have examined the characteristics that individuals need in order to develop healthy identities. Erickson (1987) theorized that healthy identity development occurs when people are provided psychosocial time and space and the freedom to experiment with different social roles before making long term commitments to a chosen occupation, to intimate relationships, social and political groups and ideas, and to a philosophy of life. Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, and Gurin (2002) added that psychosocial moratoriums of this nature should include exposure to diverse, complex interactions or people may passively make life decisions and commitments based solely on their limited past experiences. This would support decision-making informed by new, broader, and more complex perspectives and relationships, which has been supported by research on multiethnic juries (Sommers, 2006). As members of racially homogeneous or heterogeneous mock juries, European American participants deliberated on the trial of an African American defendant. Half of the groups were exposed to pretrial jury selection questions about racism. Analyses of these deliberations supported Sommer's hypothesis that diverse groups exchange a wider range of information than all-European American juries. European Americans in this study also cited more case facts, made fewer errors, and were more open to discussion of racism when in diverse versus homogeneous European American groups. Even before deliberations, European Americans in diverse groups who were exposed to blatant racial issues in pre-trial questionnaires showed more tolerance and mercy toward the African American defendant, demonstrating that the effects of diversity do not occur solely through information exchange (Sommers, 2006).

Other scholars advocate a more critical, hermeneutic orientation in identity development through analysis of multiple identities (Herda, 1999), transcultural identities (Huffman, 2001), and liminal identities stemming from the "borderization" of the U.S. Herda (1999) argues that identity development is a community process: (... ) the identity of an individual

does not arise from a developmental process resulting in a separate unit that when united with many others makes up a group, society, or community. Rather, the identity of an individual is found in a moral relationship with others which, when in aggregate form, makes up more than the sum of the membership. A full and mature sense of self does not stem from a developmental process grounded in individualism but instead arises from a recognition that in one's relationship with others there resides the possibility of seeing and understanding the world, and therefore one's self, differently. When I change, the rest of the world changes. (p. 7)

Borderization includes the physical boundary between the U.S., Mexico, Canada and other countries or territories occupied by the U.S. It includes a pedagogy that creates new knowledge that addresses social justice issues. Borders are "sites of interlinguistic engagement and liminal identities where many realities come together" (Estrada and McLaren, 1993). As borders widen, they create cultural instability where cultures collide creatively or destructively. People with bicultural/multicultural identities, such as immigrants, have extensive socialization and life experiences in two or more cultures and participate actively in these cultures. This is reflected by their behaviors and lived experiences with extensive and intimate interactions with people from other cultures (Ramirez, 1998). Competent bicultural/multicultural people have the potential to change American society and their development and contributions will have an impact on counseling and education practices in all of the countries and communities in which they are involved (Calderon and Carreon, 2000).

However, Steele's (1992, 2002) stereotype threat theory and its relationship to domain identification theory also pose important factors that can promote or impede the resilience of multicultural people. Stereotype threat theory asserts that the academic achievement of students-at-promise and women in advanced quantitative

areas is determined by their ability to identify with the school and its subdomains. Their ability to identify is influenced by societal pressures such as gender roles and economic disadvantage. In schools where students "at promise" identify with the domain of schooling, there is the additional barrier of stereotype threat, which Steele (2002) defines as "the threat that others' judgments or their own actions will negatively stereotype them in the domain" (p. 336).

This research shows that it is not enough for counselors to understand traditional identity scholarship. In our multicultural society, competent culturally responsive counselors must be aware of their own multiple identities, as well as those of their clients in order to foster transformative, socially just relationships with themselves, their clients and the community.

## METHODOLOGY

This study used the Multicultural Experience Inventory (MEI) (Ramirez, 1998) as the primary instrument to examine the experiences of first- and second-generation immigrant students contrasted with students who have been in the U.S. for three or more generations and addresses the following questions: What do first, second, and third or more generation students bring with them into multicultural education programs in terms of multicultural awareness and identity? Do historical identity patterns vary substantially among first, second and third or more generation students in this counselor preparation program? How did the CBB counselor preparation program affect first, second and third or more generation students' multicultural awareness and identity? This study used both qualitative and quantitative measures to address the research questions.

## Overview of the CBB Program's Multicultural Education Model

The 35-year-old Community-Based Block CBB Program is located in a large urban southwestern city on the U.S. border. The demographics are reflective of a highly diverse population in the U.S., including a growing

Latino population. CBB's mission is to prepare multicultural counselors committed to working with marginalized individuals and communities. Many of the students attracted to the program come from low-income communities and are the first in their families to matriculate in graduate school or college. CBB attracts more than three times the number of students it can accept, which makes it highly competitive.

The program operates in an affective experiential learning environment (Kolb, 1984), with a critical theoretical approach (Freire, 1972) designed to help learners look deeply within, without and beyond the self to find new ways of seeing, knowing and being in multicultural contexts. Through CBB's democratic partners-in-learning philosophy, students are empowered to take ownership of their own learning while they engage experientially in their own, and their colleagues', personal experiences of oppression, privilege, and personal growth issues. As part of this experiential process, students apply their learning in their work with clients and in the learning community. Knowledge and learning that occurs in affective experiential environments emphasizes the *experience* of what it is actually like to be a counseling professional/change agent. In this environment, information discussed and generated is most often current and immediate, and derived from learners' feelings, values, and opinions expressed in dialogues with peers or faculty. The program's culturally diverse faculty serve as role models for the counseling, social justice, and/or multicultural education profession, relating to learners more often as colleagues than as authority figures. Learner assessment is most often presented in the form of feedback that is personalized with regard to each individual's needs and goals (Kolb, 1984).

This approach builds on existing literature examining needs, conditions, and strategies for incorporating multicultural competence and social justice content into counselor preparation curricula. It attempts to meet the challenges that many educators have identified in teaching about diversity and social justice. The validity of this methodol-

ogy has been corroborated in research about racially diverse group decision-making performance contributing to positive cognitive effects. This includes more thorough information processing and accuracy than homogeneous European American group decision-making because of the diverse perspectives People of Color contribute, and because European Americans exhibited better comprehension in groups with ethnically diverse people (Sommers, 2006; Sommers, Warp and Mahoney, 2008).

High percentages of the over 800 CBB alumni have been accepted into further graduate training and doctoral programs. Typically, some 40% to 50% of each year's graduates go on to receiving school counseling and school psychology credentials or MFT licensure preparation. Approximately one third of alumni ultimately earn doctoral degrees. Longitudinal outcomes studies (Nieto and Senour, 2005; Robinson-Zanartu et al., 2004), demonstrate that CBB graduates often emerge in leadership positions; alumni include a college presidency, deanships, presidency of a faculty union and several in elected office. One group of alumni designed and operated an urban Afro-centric charter school. Results of employer surveys demonstrate high employer satisfaction with graduates' counseling and professional skills, sensitivity to issues of diversity, advocacy for social justice issues, and leadership (Senour, 1998).

## Participants

Ninety-six CBB students participated in the study. Demographic data about this sample population are presented in Table 1 by number of generations in the U.S. for the following characteristics: age, ethnicity, languages, gender and sexual orientation, and number of years in the U.S. Students enrolled in the CBB program agreed to participate in this study and were assessed prior to matriculation, and at the end of the nine-month program.

## Multicultural Experience Inventory

The Multicultural Experience Inventory (MEI) was designed by Ramirez (1998) to assess participants' Historical Development Pattern (HDP) or

path of development of multicultural orientations to life using 22 qualitative, fill-in-the-blank items. It also assessed their HDP and Contemporary Multicultural Identity (CMI), including attitudes towards dominant and non-dominant cultures and ability to function and move between dominant and non-dominant cultural groups using 26 Likert-type items for People of Color, and 23 items for European Americans. These items are divided into two types: A and B. The instrument was pilot-tested, reviewed by external consultants and revised three times. Ramirez' scoring methods are described below.

Type A items are scored so that People of Color who respond, "1 = almost entirely my ethnic group" or "5 = almost entirely Whites" or European Americans who respond, "1 = almost entirely my ethnic group" or "5 = almost entirely People of Color" receive one point; People of Color who respond "2 = mostly my ethnic group with a few People of Color from other groups" or "4 = mostly Whites with a few People of Color" or European Americans who respond, "2 = mostly my ethnic group with a few People of Color", or "4 = mostly People of Color with a few people of my ethnic group" receive two points; People of Color who respond, "3 = mixed (Whites, my ethnic group and People of Color about equally)" or European Americans who respond, "3 = mixed (my ethnic group and People of Color, about equally) receive three points. Higher scores signify a greater degree of multiculturalism.

Type B Likert-type items are scored so that a response of "Extensively" or "Frequently" is assigned two points. All other responses are assigned one point. Items 1-8 are HDP items and items 9-26 are CMI items. A total Multicultural score is obtained by summing HDP and CMI scores.

Finally, the MEI assesses participants' entry and exit degrees of comfort, acceptance and identification with different ethnic, sexual orientation, physical disabilities and other groups specified by the participant using Likert scaled items from 1 = Very Comfortable to 5 = Very Uncomfortable.

The Historical Development Pattern scale reveals five potential patterns or

**Table 1***2003-2006 Learning Community Demographics by Generations in the U.S.*

Generation	1 <sup>st</sup> n (%)	2 <sup>nd</sup> n (%)	3 or more n (%)	Total N (%)
<b>Characteristic</b>				
<b>Age</b>				
21-25	10 (41.7%)	10 (47.6%)	16 (28.6%)	36 (37%)
26-35	10 (41.7%)	10 (47.6%)	34 (60.7%)	51 (53%)
36-45	2 (8.3%)		6 (10.7%)	7 (7%)
46-55	2 (8.3%)	1 (4.8%)		3 (3%)
Total	24 (100%)	21 (100%)	56 (100%)	96 (100%)
<b>Ethnicity/Race</b>				
Latino/a & Hispanic	10 (41.7%)	10 (47.6%)	10 (17.9%)	29 (30%)
African American		1 (4.8%)	16 (28.6%)	18 (19%)
Asian/Pacific Islander	4 (16.7%)	2 (9.5%)	2 (3.6%)	8 (8%)
Euroamerican/White/Anglo	2 (8.3%)	2 (9.5%)	11 (19.6%)	14 (14%)
Multiracial	3 (12.5%)	6 (28.6%)	15 (26.8%)	23 (24%)
Other	5 (20.8%)		2 (3.6%)	5 (5%)
Total	24 (100%)	21 (100%)	56 (100%)	96 (100%)
<b>Languages</b>				
Bilingual	18 (75%)	12 (57.1%)	18 (32.1%)	46 (45%)
Multilingual	5 (20.8%)	1 (4.8%)	5 (8.9%)	9 (9%)
English Only	1 (4.2%)	7 (33.4%)	32 (57.1%)	39 (40%)
Total	24 (100%)	21 (100%)	56 (100%)	94 (100%)
Missing			1 (1.8%)	2 (2%)

paths of development toward a multi-cultural orientation to life, with several variations:

- a) Parallel Pattern (High score = 23-33)—indicates extensive, continuous parallel exposure to non-dominant and dominant cultures beginning during preschool and for a least two or more life periods.
- b) Early Non-dominant/Gradual Dominant Pattern (Medium

score = 12-22)—indicates extensive, almost total exposure to a non-dominant culture throughout most life periods with gradually increasing exposure to dominant culture with increasing age.

- c) Early Non-dominant/Abrupt Dominant Pattern (Medium score = 12-22)—indicates extensive, almost total exposure to non-dominant cultures in the

first two or three periods of life, followed by sudden immersion into dominant culture.

- d) Early Dominant/Gradual Non-dominant Pattern (Low score = 1-11)—indicates extensive, almost total exposure to dominant culture throughout most life periods with gradually increasing exposure to non-dominant culture with increasing age.
- e) Early Dominant/Abrupt Non-



dominant Pattern indicates (Low score = 1-11)—indicates extensive, almost total exposure to dominant culture in the first two or three periods of life followed by sudden immersion into non-dominant culture.

The CMI scale assesses the dynamics of identity formation according to the following criteria: functionalism, commitment, and transcendence. Functionalism indicates an individual's ability to move between two cultures without making corresponding changes to his/her first cultural identity. Degree of Commitment to the cultural groups to which an individual participates indicates level of emotional and time investment, including their willingness to work toward the improvement of the culture and well-being of group members. An individual with high commitment plays the role of cultural ambassador and mediator through her/his commitment to improve relationships and understanding among the several groups in which she/he participates. Transcendence refers to the dynamics of identity formation and indicates an individual's ability to be part of and stand apart from the different groups in which she/he participates. The CMIs are classified as follows:

- a) Synthesized Multicultural (High score = 27-54)—individuals with this orientation demonstrate positive attitudes toward several cultures and competent functioning in more than one culture. These individual feel accepted by members of more than one culture and are committed to more than one culture.
- b) Functional Bicultural/Dominant Orientation (Medium score = 19-36)—individuals with this orientation function competently in both non-dominant and dominant cultures, but are more comfortable and self-assured in the dominant culture. They exhibit a greater commitment to the dominant culture, which is expressed through their philosophy of life and life goals.
- c) Functional Bicultural/Non-dominant Orientation (Medium score = 19-36)—individuals with this orientation function competently in both non-dominant and dominant cultures, but are more comfortable and self-assured in their non-dominant culture. They express a greater commitment to the non-dominant culture through their philosophy of life and life goals.
- d) Mono-cultural (Low score = 1-18)—individuals with this orientation function competently and are more comfortable and self-assured in their culture of origin to the exclusion of other cultures (Ramirez, 1998).

## RESULTS

### Historical Development Patterns and Contemporary Multicultural Identities

These results address research questions one and two: What do first, second, and third or more generation students bring with them into multicultural education programs in terms of multicultural awareness and identity? And, Do historical identity patterns vary substantially among first, second and third or more generation students in this counselor preparation program?

**First generation students.** The HDP of the majority of the first generation students was in the medium range, Early Almost Entirely their Ethnic Group/Gradual Mainstream, with a mean of 20.14 (4.26). These students experienced extensive, almost total exposure to the culture of their ethnic group during their early life periods, with gradually increasing exposure to dominant European American culture with their increasing age. The ethnic composition of the neighborhoods they lived in before and during elementary school was almost entirely their ethnic group (2.25 [1.49]). As they progressed into middle and high school, their neighborhoods became mostly European American with a few People of Color (3.07 [1.44]). This reflects their transition from their native country or segregated ethnic neighborhood to

mainstream European American neighborhoods in the U.S. The HDP scores for these students ranged from 13-28, placing some in the outer extremes of segregation in their ethnic group, or as the only one of their ethnic group in the European American neighborhoods in which they grew up, with few People of Color. One student, Cessair, an Armenian-Azerbaijani-American, describes her experiences:

I was happy to finally be able to come to the U.S. From the age of sixteen, almost every night I prayed to God to help my family to get to the U.S. where we all can live together again since eventually my grandmother and mother had fled to a neighbor republic for a while. We knew that only the U.S. could give us an opportunity to unite us and become a family again. My prayers were heard after four years when my father won a Green Card, through the lottery, and by luck he was allowed to immigrate to the United States with his wife and all children under twenty-one. By that time, my sister and brother were above twenty-one, so it was the best and the worst news for our family. I had to separate [from them] again, and I did not know when I would have a chance to see them again. I will never forget how I was holding up in the airport [trying] not to cry, and even on the plane I was crying silently so that I would not [attract] the flight attendant's attention. I was not safe, and I knew I would not be until I could step on American land.

(...) I immigrated here when I was twenty, but I felt like I was fifteen. My life experiences, my first job, and my first relationship started in the United States (...) I hope that my future children would have a homeland; hopefully, it would not dishonor them because of who they are and who their parents are.

The mean CMI score of these first generation students was 37.27 (6.22). This score placed them in the category of synthesized multiculturals who express positive attitudes toward several

cultures, function competently in more than one culture, feel accepted by members of more than one culture, and are committed to more than one culture as expressed through their beliefs and goals in life. Their scores ranged from 25-45, the CMI medium to high range. First generation students with lower scores in this category fell into the medium range as functional multiculturals, with either a mainstream or ethno-centric orientation. Similar to synthesized multiculturals, functional multiculturals function competently in both ethno-centric and mainstream cultures. Still, they may be more comfortable and self-assured in either mainstream or ethno-centric cultures, not both, and demonstrate a commitment to either of those cultures as expressed through their philosophy of life and life goals.

### **Second generation students.**

The HDP of the majority of the second generation students were also Early Almost Entirely their Ethnic Group/Gradual Mainstream 20.24 (4.53), indicating extensive and almost total exposure to the culture of their ethnic group during their early life periods, with gradually increasing exposure to dominant culture with their increasing age. Like the first generation students, the majority of second generation students indicated that the ethnic composition of the neighborhoods in which they lived before going to school were almost entirely their ethnic group 2.24 (1.46), then their neighborhoods were progressively more diverse when they attended elementary through high school 2.79 (1.13). The HDP scores for these students ranged from 10-27, placing some of them in the outer extremes of segregation in their ethnic group or being the only one of their ethnic group in the neighborhoods in which that they grew up, with few People of Color. A Latina/Pilipina American student describes her experiences:

Having grown up in an impoverished community in Southeast San Diego, I witnessed many of my childhood friends and neighbors become single parents, gang members, drug addicts, dropouts, many were victims of violence and death. Statistically, the odds were against

me. My mom's hard work, her sacrifices, my sacrifices, determination and motivation allowed me to reach my educational goals. In 1999, with much support and patience from my family and friends, I became the first person in my family to receive a bachelor's degree, and in doing so; I became responsible to my friends, family and community. Academic achievement at San Diego State University proved to be very challenging. I was faced with all the issues that non-traditional students face in seeking a higher education and as I learned the ropes of academic and social survival, I shared them with other underrepresented students by becoming a peer advisor for the Student Affirmative Action office. As a peer advisor, I was able to introduce other students to the social, cultural and educational resources on campus. I also helped them explore student life, discussed academic difficulties with them, and encouraged community involvement. Being able to share my experience with others and witnessing them benefit from it was very rewarding for me.

The majority of second generation students scored as CMI synthesized multiculturals with a mean score of 36.29 (5.30), expressing positive attitudes toward several cultures; competent functioning in more than one culture, feeling accepted by members of more than one culture as expressed through their philosophy of life and life goals. Scores ranged from 24-43, the CMI medium to high range. The medium range describes functional multiculturals with either a mainstream or ethno-centric orientation. These individuals function competently in both ethno-centric and mainstream cultures. Yet, they may be more comfortable and self-assured in either mainstream or ethno-centric cultures, not both, and demonstrate a commitment to either of those cultures as expressed through their philosophy of life and life goals.

**Three or more generation students.** The HDP of the majority of the three or more generation students were also Early Almost Entirely their Eth-

nic Group/Gradual Mainstream 14.32 (3.66), though their scores were lower than first or second-generation students. They, too, experienced extensive, almost total exposure to the culture of their ethnic group during their early life periods, with gradually increasing exposure to dominant culture with their increasing age. The majority of these students indicated that the ethnic composition of the neighborhoods in which they lived before going to school were almost entirely their ethnic group 2.80 (1.47) and grew progressively more diverse through elementary, middle and high school 3.15 (1.46). The HDP scores for these students ranged from 9-22, which were lower than first or second generation students, placing some in the outer extremes of segregation in their ethnic group or being the only one of their ethnic group in the neighborhoods in which that they grew up, with few People of Color. Martin, an African American male described his experiences:

Living in poverty makes the world look and rotate on a separate axis. The ghetto causes its people to form a sub-culture. A culture where what's important in the normal world means nothing, but what's important in the neighborhood meant everything. Going to college and doing something positive with your life was looked down upon. What was prevalent in my neighborhood was selling drugs, gang banging, acquiring clothes, jewelry, cars and respect. I was unique though. I say this because I had different dreams and aspirations than most of my friends. In elementary school, I can remember that I was the only one in my neighborhood who was in the school orchestra, as well as being the school's president. I caught a lot of flack, but nevertheless I was class vice president in 5<sup>th</sup> grade, president in 6<sup>th</sup>, and learned how to play two instruments: clarinet and saxophone. In junior high I joined the band. My friends would laugh at my band uniform and when I marched in parades. They use to call me an L7, which meant that I was a square (conformist). I be-

**Table 2**

*Historical Development Patterns and Contemporary Multicultural Identities by Number of Generations in the U.S.*

	<u>1<sup>st</sup> Generation</u>	<u>2<sup>nd</sup> Generation</u>	<u>3 or More Generations</u>
	n = 15	n = 21	n = 37
Mean (Standard Deviation)			
<b>I. Historical Development Pattern</b>			
<i>High = 23-33</i>			
Parallel			
<i>Medium = 12-22</i>	19.67 (4.50)	20.24 (4.53)	14.32 (3.66)
Early Nondominant/ Gradual Dominant			
Early Dominant/ Gradual Nondominant			
<i>Low = 1-11</i>			
Early Nondominant/ Abrupt Dominant			
Early Dominant/ Abrupt Nondominant			
Mean (Standard Deviation)			
Score Range	13-28	10-27	9-22
<b>II. Contemporary Multicultural Identity</b>			
<i>High = 27-54</i>			
Synthesized Multicultural	37.27 (6.22)	36.29 (5.30)	37.03 (4.79)
<i>Medium = 19-36</i>			
Functional Bicultural/ Dominant Orientation			
Functional Bicultural/ Nondominant Orientation			
<i>Low = 1-18</i>			
Monocultural			
Mean (Standard Deviation)			
Score Range	25-45	24-43	27-44
<b>III. Total Multicultural Score</b>			
High = 59-87	56.93 (9.44)	56.52(8.13)	51.35 (6.73)
Medium = 30-58			
Low = 1-29			
Mean (Standard Deviation)			
Score Range	39-70	36-69	38-65

lieve from this point on, I began to hide the not so cool stuff from my friends. If I wanted to do something that no one else would do, I would sneak and do it. This caused me to struggle with self-acceptance... The high school district decided to

switch the boundaries around. They started busing kids from our neighborhood to schools, which were predominantly White. Almost all of my friends were Black and Hispanic. They refused to go to the new school, so they would catch the city bus and

attend school where we were suppose to go. All of them except me! My father had my brother and I go to the new school, because a friend of the family worked there. Here is was a different world. It was only 31 Black males attending the school

and I could hardly identify with the rest of the students. My neighborhood was mainly Afro-American and Mexican, with a few Caucasian. I had to adapt to a dissimilar world.

The majority of these students scored as CMI synthesized multiculturals, with a mean score of 37.03 (4.79), expressing positive attitudes toward several cultures; functioning competently in more than one culture, feeling accepted by members of more than one culture, committing to more than one culture as expressed through their philosophy of life and life goals. Scores ranged from 27-44, the CMI medium to high range. The medium range describes functional multiculturals with either a mainstream or ethno-centric orientation. These individuals function competently in both ethno-centric and mainstream cultures; however, they may be more comfortable and self-assured in either mainstream or ethno-centric cultures; not both and demonstrate a commitment to either of those cultures as expressed through their philosophy of life and life goals.

### Catching Multicultural Awareness in Counselor Preparation: Comfort, Acceptance, and Identification with Other Ethnicities

These results describe the analyses of the MEI that address research question three: How did the CBB counselor preparation program effect first, second and third or more generation students' multicultural awareness and identity?

On the entry/exit t-tests of measures of Comfort, Acceptance and Identification with Different Ethnicities (Likert scale: 1 = Very comfortable, accepted or identified, 2 = Somewhat comfortable, accepted, or identified, 3 = Sometimes/sometimes not comfortable, accepted, or identified, 4 = Somewhat uncomfortable, unaccepted, or minimally identified, 5 = Very uncomfortable, unaccepted, or not at all identified.), all of the mean scores increased slightly across all three groups. This indicates slight decreases in their comfort, acceptance and identification with other groups. Two of these categories were statistically significant in two-tailed comparisons for the combined group of 67 paired participants: Acceptance

(2.73 vs. 2.98,  $t(67) = 3.42$ ,  $p = .001$ , two-tailed), and Identification (3.80 vs. 4.12,  $t(67) = 3.46$ ,  $p = .001$ , two-tailed). Overall, by the end of the counselor preparation program, the group indicated that they felt slightly less comfort, acceptance and identification with other ethnic groups than they had when they began the program. Their scores were in the medium range 2.72 to 3.70 (sometimes accepted, comfortable or identified; sometimes not).

**First generation students.** First Generation participants' only statistically significant category was their identification with people of other diverse groups (3.39 vs. 3.70,  $t(16) = 1.53$ ,  $p = .012$ , two-tailed) indicating that they were sometimes identified/sometimes not with other groups. Their scores on comfort and feelings of acceptance by other ethnic groups were also slightly more negative at the exit of the program, but were not statistically significant.

**Second generation students.** Similar to first generation participants', second generation students' identification with people from other ethnic groups was their only statically significant category, (3.93 vs. 4.38,  $t(19)$

**Table 3**

*Entry and Exit Comfort, Acceptance and Identification with Other Ethnicities by Number of Generations in the U.S.*

	<u>1<sup>st</sup> Generation</u>		<u>2<sup>nd</sup> Generation</u>		<u>3<sup>+</sup> Generations</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	n = 16		n = 19		n = 33		n = 67	
	Entry	Exit	Entry	Exit	Entry	Exit	Entry	Exit
	Mean (Standard Deviation)							
IV. Comfort, Acceptance and Identification with Other Ethnic Groups								
1. Comfort felt with other ethnic groups								
	2.63	2.72	2.49	2.55**	2.75	2.78	2.65	2.70
	(.57)	(.50)	(.44)	(.50)	(.66)	(.58)	(.56)	(.54)
2. Acceptance felt with other ethnic groups								
	2.62	2.89	2.71	2.84***	2.82	3.10**	2.74	2.98***
	(.64)	(.47)	(.52)	(.51)	(.55)	(.51)	(.56)	(.51)
3. Identification felt with other ethnic groups								
	3.39	3.70**	3.93	4.38*	3.94	4.18***	3.80	4.12***
	(.98)	(.74)	(1.0)	(.81)	(.86)	(.78)	(.94)	(.81)

*Note.* (1 = very positive; 5 = very negative). \*\*\* $p \leq .001$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \* $p < .05$ , (two-tailed, paired  $t$ -test analyses).



=2.16,  $p = .045$ , two-tailed). Their entry and exit scores were slightly higher than first generation students, meaning that they felt less comfort, acceptance and identification with diverse groups than first generation students. Their comfort and feelings of acceptance by other groups also lessened at the end of the program, but were not statistically significant.

### Three or more generations.

Similar to the first and second generation students, third generation students' identification with people from other groups proved to be statistically significant (3.94 vs. 4.18,  $t(31) = 2.20$ ,  $p = .035$ , two-tailed), reflecting minimal identification with other groups. However, their degree of acceptance was even more statistically significant than first or second generation students (2.82 vs. 3.10,  $t(31) = 2.91$ ,  $p = .007$ , two-tailed), meaning that they felt less accepted with other groups compared to first or second generation students.

### Limitations

Because this study focused on students from one specific counselor preparation program, these findings are specific to that sample group and caution must be exercised in generalizing these findings to first, second and third or more generation students in multicultural counselor preparation programs. Still, these findings provide important information for educators and others working with immigrants and other diverse populations.

This investigation is also limited to the extent that the primary researcher was a faculty member in the program during the time of this study. Though the researcher attempted to account for her biases and expectations in analyzing the data by using an independent auditor and getting feedback directly from participants, it is possible that her perceptions uniquely influenced aspects of the study (e.g., selection of study instrument), which, in turn, may have affected the data obtained.

### DISCUSSION

The Multicultural Experience Inventory (MEI) provided a helpful set

of dimensions of multicultural identity development for this study. This instrument addresses the calls in identity and group decision-making scholarship for diverse, complex interactions in order to enhance identity development and improve the quality of group decision-making.

Findings in this study show that first, second, and third or more generation students brought very similar multicultural identity development patterns and identities into the CBB program from 2003 to 2006. Historical identity patterns (HDP) varied minimally among first, second and third or more generation students in this program and placed them in the same Early Almost Entirely their Ethnic Group/Gradual Mainstream category of multicultural development. These students had similar experiences growing up in ethnic/culturally segregated neighborhoods, whether they were born in another country or in the U.S. and, as they grew older, they gradually integrated into dominant European American neighborhoods. Third or more generation students lived in more segregated neighborhoods longer than either first or second-generation students. This finding may be a reflection of the ongoing segregation of People of Color in the U.S., especially for those in lower socioeconomic groups and points to another area of important research and consideration for working with students from these backgrounds.

The Contemporary Multicultural Identity (CMI) scores of students in this sample were even closer together than their HDP scores and all were in the category of Synthesized Multiculturals. Their scores indicate that they are individuals who exhibit positive attitudes toward several cultures and are competent functioning in more than one culture. They feel accepted by members of more than one culture and are committed to more than one culture. Having a clearer understanding of the backgrounds and identities of these students provides a more informed understanding of their scores on other measures of multicultural competence and identity.

One of the unfortunate aspects of many pre- post-measures is that there is no understanding of the backgrounds or identities of participants. The assumption is that these are equal or that the differences do

not matter. However, as can be seen on the HDP and CMI measures, there can be some significant background and identity differences between individuals who evaluate themselves on pre-post measures. A participant could be mono-cultural and self-assess themselves on pre-post measures with the same score as a synthesized multicultural and it would appear as if there was no difference in their scores. Understanding that students in this study are synthesized multiculturals provides a context for their other characteristics and can help counselors and educators develop more relevant curricula.

The pre-post assessments in this study show decreases in students' comfort, acceptance and identification with people from diverse groups at the end of the CBB program. This finding may be a sign of a negative program effect. Another possible explanation for this finding is that CBB programs and processes trigger significant identity disequilibrium in students with high levels of multicultural experience. This has the potential to help them learn to negotiate disequilibrium, ambiguity and tension in "real life" multicultural contexts, and to help them develop the agency to operationalize the multicultural competencies in these challenging contexts. Qualitative data collected as part of a five-year longitudinal study of the CBB program will be used to investigate this phenomenon. Preliminary analysis of this data suggests that students experience a good deal of tension and ambiguity during the CBB program related to their learning processes and identity development, especially related to group decision-making. This may be similar to some of the negative effects of diversity found in some studies of group decision-making, including increased conflict and decreased morale. Other studies on diverse decision-making and work groups have found that these variables weaken or disappear over time (De Drue and Weingart, 2003; Jackson, 1992; Jehn, Northcraft and Neale, 1999; O'Reilly, Caldwell and Barnett, 1989; Watson, Kumar and Michaelsen, 1993 as cited in Sommers, Warp, Mahoney, 2008).

Previous studies on semester-long intergroup dialogues using processes similar to the CBB program have produced findings similar to those of this

study. Their participants' self-assessed levels of multicultural awareness, commitment to dialogic processes and building bridges were high in pre-assessments, and then declined on post assessments. These scholars postulated several alternative explanations for this apparent lack of effectiveness, including: (a) Self-selection bias. Because students in their intergroup dialogues chose to participate, they already had well-developed attributes related to the outcomes and they sought out intergroup dialogues to further their interests in learning about racial issues, which have impacted their post assessment scores; (b) Differential outcomes on racial engagement measures for Students of Color and European Americans. Several scholars have documented the differential experiences and outcomes for Students of Color in multicultural education interventions (Gurin et al., 1999, as cited in Nagda and Zuniga, 2003; Solorzano, Ceja and Yosso, 2000; Tatum, 1997). Students of color who have been educated in environments dominated by European Americans have been shown to have experienced an accumulation of racial microaggressions—stereotyping, victimization and invisibility in the curriculum—that negatively affect their learning experiences. Therefore dialogic multicultural education may have a different effect on them, as well as on other participants from underrepresented groups versus European Americans (Tatum, 1997); and (c) A threshold effect. There may have been a threshold effect similar to Pettigrew and Tropp's (2000) explanation of their finding that contact effects are greater for participants who are forced to participate in intergroup interventions than those who were willing volunteer. Examining these hypotheses may lead to greater understanding of variables related to learning disequilibrium in the developmental process of multicultural identity and competence.

Investigating a mature multicultural training program with a high degree of ethnic diversity and immigrant representation in both its student and faculty populations was a significant research opportunity. This study extends the knowledge base in the fields

of multicultural counseling and education to include the experiences of first and second generation students in graduate-level education. These results provide important insights into the development of multicultural identity and competence in diverse individuals and encourage the investigation of historical multicultural patterns and contemporary multicultural identity in examinations of multicultural competence and identity. Understanding these variables can help programs and educators expand their conceptualization(s) of multiculturalism, better understand their students and improve their multicultural programming. More research needs to be conducted on first and second generation students, and the roles they play in diverse groups in terms of cultural brokering and borderization. Further research is especially needed to better understand identity development in dominant and nondominant people in highly diverse contexts, especially interventions that help people negotiate the tension and disequilibrium that can be produced in diverse decision-making groups, and recommendations about how educators and practitioners can integrate best practices into their work with individuals and communities.

**Nola Butler Byrd** is a scholar and Assistant Professor in the Community-Based Block Program in the Department of Counseling and School Psychology, College of Education at San Diego State University, 5500 Campanile Drive, San Diego, CA 92182-1179; email: [nbutler@mail.sdsu.edu](mailto:nbutler@mail.sdsu.edu). Her research interests include: experiential multicultural education and counseling for social justice, indigenous healing and world view, somatic body work, multicultural identity development, multi-ethnic faculty retention, and community practice.

## REFERENCES

- Butler-Byrd, Nieto, J. & Senour, M.N. (2006). Working successfully with diverse students and communities: The Community-Based Block counselor preparation program. *Urban Education*, 41(4), 376-401.
- Calderon, M. & Carreon, A. (2000). In search of new border pedagogy: Sociocultural conflicts facing bilingual teachers and students along the U.S.-Mexico border. In C.J. Ovando & P. McLaren (Eds.), *The politics of multiculturalism and bilingual education* (pp. 166-187). Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- Constantine, M.G. (2001). Predictors of observer ratings of multicultural counseling competence in Black, Latino, and White American trainees. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 48(4), 456-462.
- Constantine, M. G., Juby, H. L., & Liang, J. J-C. (2001). Examining self-reported multicultural counseling competence and race-related attitudes in White marital and family therapists. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 27, 353-362.
- De Drue, C.K.W., & Weingart, L.R. (2003). Task versus relationship conflict, team performance and team member satisfaction: A metanalysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88, 741-749.
- Erickson, F. (1987). Transformation and school success: The politics and culture of educational achievement. *Anthropology and Education*, 18(4), 335-356.
- Estrada, R. & McLaren, P. (1993). A dialogue on multiculturalism and democratic culture. *Educational Researchers*, 22(3), p. 27-33.
- Freire, P. (1972). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum Publishing Company.
- Gurin, P., Dey, E. L., Hurtado, S., & Gurin, G. (2002). Diversity and higher education: Theory and impact on educational outcomes. *Harvard Educational Review*, 72(3), 330-366.
- Gutierrez Keeton, R. (2002). *Reframing identities for justice: Honoring multiple identities*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Claremont Graduate University, Claremont, CA.
- Herda, E. (1999). *Research conversations and narrative: A Critical hermeneutic orientation in participatory inquiry*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Huffman, T. (2001). Resistance theory and the transculturation hypothesis as explanations of college attrition and persistence among culturally traditional American Indian students. *Journal of American Indian Education*, 40(3), 1-23.
- Kolb, D. A. (1981, revised 1985). *Learning-Style Inventory*. Boston: McBer & Company.
- Jackson, S.E. (1992). Team composition in organizational settings: Issues in managing an increasingly diverse work force. In S. Worchel, W. Wood, & J.A. Simpson (Eds.), *Group process and productivity* (pp. 138-173). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Jehn, K.A., Northcraft, G.B., & Neale, M.A. (1999). Why differences make a difference: A field study of diversity, conflict, and performance in workgroups. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 44, 741-763.
- Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Nagda, B. R. A., & Zuniga, X. (2003). Fostering meaningful racial engagement through intergroup dialogues. *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations*, 6(1), 111-12
- Neville, H. A., Heppner, M. J., Louie, C. E., Thompson, C. E., Brooks, L., & Baker, C. E. (1996). The impact of multicultural training on White racial identity attitudes and therapy competencies. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 27, 83-89.
- O'Reilly, C., Caldwell, D.F. & Barnett, W.P. (1989). Work group demography, social integration and turnover. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 34, 21-37.
- Ottavi, T. M., Pope-Davis, D. B., & Dings, J. G. (1994). Relationship between White racial identity attitudes and self-reported multicultural counseling competencies. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 41, 149-154.
- Pettigrew, T., & Tropp, L. (2000). Does intergroup contact reduce prejudice? Recent meta-analytic findings. In S. Oskamp (Ed.), *Reducing prejudice and discrimination* (pp. 93-114). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

- Pope-Davis, D. B., Reynolds, A. L., Dings, J. G., & Nielson, D. (1995). Examining multicultural competencies of graduate students in psychology. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 26, 322–329.
- Pope-Davis, D. B., Reynolds, A. L., Dings, J. G., & Ottavi, T. M. (1994). Multicultural competencies of doctoral interns at university counseling centers: An exploratory investigation. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 25, 466–470.
- Ramirez, M. (1998). Multicultural/multiracial Experience Inventory. In M. Ramirez (Ed.), *Multicultural/Multiracial Psychology* (pp. 245-254). Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, Inc.
- Sodowsky, G. R., Kuo-Jackson, P. Y., Richardson, M. F., & Corey, A. T. (1998). Correlates of self-reported multicultural competencies: Counselor multicultural social desirability, race, social inadequacy, locus of control racial ideology, and multicultural training. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 45, 256–264.
- Sodowsky, G. R., Taffe, R. C., Gutkin, T. B., & Wise, S. L. (1994). Development of the Multicultural Counseling Inventory: A self-report measure of multicultural competencies. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 41, 137–148.
- Solorzano, D., Ceja, M., & Yosso, T. (2000). Critical race theory, racial microaggressions and campus racial climate: The experiences of African American college students. *Journal of Negro Education*, 69(1-2), 60-73.
- Sommers, S.R., Warp, L.S. & Mahoney, C.C. (2008). Cognitive effects of racial diversity: White individuals' information processing in heterogeneous groups. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 44, 1129-1136.
- Sommers, S.R. (2006). On racial diversity and group decision making: Identifying multiple effects of racial composition on jury deliberations. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 90 (4), 597-612.
- Steele, C. M. (2002). A threat in the air: How stereotypes shape intellectual identity and performance. In C. S. Turner, A. A. Lising, M. Garcia, B. V. Laden, A. Nora & C. L. Presley (Eds.), *Racial and ethnic diversity in higher education* (pp. 336-356). Boston: Pearson Custom Publishing.
- Sue, D. W., Arredondo, P., & McDavid, R. J. (1992). Multicultural counseling competencies and standards: A call to the profession. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 70, 477-486.
- Takaki, R. (1993). *A different mirror: A history of multicultural America*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.
- Tatum, B. D. (1997). *"Why are all the Black kids sitting together in the cafeteria?" and other conversations about race*. New York: Basic Books.
- Wallace, B. (2000). Call for change in multicultural training at graduate schools of education: Educating to end oppression for social justice. *Teachers College Record*, 102(6), 1086-1111.
- Watson, W.E., Kumar, K. & Michaelsen, L.K. (1993). Cultural diversity's impact on interaction process and performance: Comparing homogeneous and diverse task groups. *Academy of Management Journal*, 36, 590-602.
- Zinn, H. (1980). *A people's history of the United States*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.
- Zuniga, X., Nagda, B. R. A., & Sevig, T. D. (2002). Intergroup dialogues: An educational model for cultivating engagement across differences. *Equity and Excellence in Education*, 35(1), 7-17.



Penn GSE Perspectives On Urban Education  
[www.urbanedjournal.org](http://www.urbanedjournal.org)  
Published by the University of Pennsylvania  
Graduate School of Education  
3700 Walnut Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19104  
Copyright © 2009