Teaching Culturally Competent Psychotherapy:
A Descriptive Psychology Approach

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Abstract

Providing training in cultural competence is an established and accepted professional standard in graduate programs in clinical psychology, but the implementation of this standard varies significantly in its methodology and effectiveness. This paper applies key relevant concepts and methodologies from the intellectual discipline of Descriptive Psychology (DP) to this meaningful pedagogical endeavor. It is based on courses actually taught by the author, and is not merely a proposed training model. DP concepts and perspectives were used to explicate the foundational notions related to cultural competence per se. Subsequently, particular DP concepts and strategies were employed to enhance the instructional methods for advancing culturally competent awareness, knowledge, and skills. These examples illustrate the compelling power and advantages of applying DP as a conceptual framework instead of as a theoretical orientation, particularly in multicultural psychology, to limit cultural insensitivity and ethnocentrism.

In our increasingly diversified world, the training of clinical psychology graduate students requires more than the traditional pedagogy of teaching foundational theories and skills. Rather, the training must integrate the acquisition of cultural competency

in order for clinicians to provide effective treatment to a growing diverse population. In this context, *cultural competence* refers to the practice of psychotherapy in ways that comprehensively attend to the various aspects of a person's identity, including but not limited to: the person's race, ethnicity, language, disability, religious/ spiritual orientation, sexual orientation, gender, national origin, and socioeconomic status (American Psychological Association, 2003). Given the unlimited combination and complexity of these various aspects of a person's identity, the achievement of cultural competence is clearly aspirational, as a clinician cannot achieve ultimate cultural competence. As such, the fundamental pedagogical aim cannot be to train students to become proficient in cultural competence, but rather to establish the requisite foundation upon which cultural competence can begin and continue to develop throughout their careers.

As a comprehensive and systematic conceptual framework, the intellectual discipline of Descriptive Psychology (DP) provides concepts and perspectives that can explicate the various aspects of cultural competence per se, and offers pedagogical and practical strategies for its acquisition and development. DP has characteristics that render it especially useful and effective in the discipline of multicultural psychology. As a conceptual system, as opposed to a theory, DP articulates "the conceptual framework within which persons, behavior, language, communities, and the real world can be described and understood" (Ossorio, 2006, p. ix). Unlike a theory, DP aims to articulate the sense that persons and their worlds *already make to begin with*, as opposed to purporting an artificial construct in order to make sense of persons and their worlds. In principle, such a conceptual system is as free of cultural bias as is practically possible, and can be regarded as "culturally universal". Accordingly, this paper will apply particular DP concepts and perspectives to the endeavor of training doctoral students in clinical psychology to begin developing their cultural competence.

This application will be illustrated through an actual case, rather than merely through a proposed hypothetical model. The author will describe his experience teaching courses in the Doctor

of Psychology (Psy.D.) clinical program at the University of Denver, Graduate School of Professional Psychology (GSPP), where he is the Director of Diversity and Multicultural Training and the Director of the Professional Psychology Clinic, which is the on-site training clinic. The curriculum of the Psy.D. program at GSPP includes a required four-course year-long sequence in multicultural psychology. Specifically, the courses are entitled "Racial/Ethnic Identity Development", "The Social Psychology of Racism and Oppression", "Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender (GLBT) Issues", and "Culturally Competent Psychotherapy". The author teaches the first and last of this course sequence.

This paper has the following structure. For the sake of elaborating on the meaning and implications of cultural competence, a set of guidelines are described. These guidelines, in turn, provide the pedagogical rationale for the four-course sequence on multicultural psychology. Subsequently, the majority of this chapter is comprised of an illustration of how the relevant DP concepts are applied to the curriculum of the two courses taught by the author. This chapter ends with a summary and conclusion.

Cultural Competence Guidelines

Sue & Sue (2008) operationalized cultural competence in terms of three central dimensions. The first dimension is *awareness*, wherein the culturally competent psychotherapist strives to become aware of one's own assumptions, values, and biases. The second dimension is *understanding*, wherein the culturally competent psychotherapist strives to understand the worldview of culturally diverse clients. The final dimension is *skills*, wherein the culturally competent psychotherapist strives to develop appropriate intervention strategies and techniques. Within each dimension, there are several specific goals, as described below by Sue & Sue (p. 47).

Awareness

1. Moved from being culturally unaware to being aware and sensitive to own cultural heritage and to valuing and respecting differences.

2. Aware of own values and biases and of how they may affect diverse clients.

3. Comfortable with differences that exist between themselves and their clients in terms of race, gender, sexual orientation, and other sociodemographic variables. Differences are not seen as deviant.

4. Sensitive to circumstances (personal biases; stage of racial, gender, and sexual orientation identity; sociopolitical influences, etc.) that may dictate referral of clients to members of their own sociodemographic group or to different therapists in general.

5. Aware of their own racist, sexist, heterosexist, or other detrimental attitudes, beliefs, and feelings.

Knowledge

1. Knowledgeable and informed on a number of culturally diverse groups, especially groups therapists work with.

2. Knowledgeable about the sociopolitical system's operation in the United States with respect to its treatment of marginalized groups in society.

3. Possess specific knowledge and understanding of the generic characteristics of counseling and therapy.

4. Knowledgeable of institutional barriers that prevent some diverse clients from using mental health services.

Skills

1. Able to generate a wide variety of verbal and nonverbal helping responses.

2. Able to communicate (send and receive both verbal and nonverbal messages) accurately and appropriately.

3. Able to exercise institutional intervention skills on behalf of their client when appropriate.

4. Able to anticipate impact of their helping styles, and limitations they possess on culturally diverse clients.

5. Able to play helping roles characterized by an active systemic focus, which leads to environmental interventions. Not restricted by the conventional counselor/therapist mode of operation.

Pedagogical Rationale for Course Sequence

Racial/Ethnic Identity Development

Broadly speaking, this course addresses the dimensions of awareness and knowledge. The specific objectives of this course include increasing the students' awareness and sensitivity to their own cultural heritage, assumptions, values and biases (vis-à-vis understanding their own racial/ethnic identity and its development), and understanding the culturally different clients' worldview (vis-à-vis understanding their racial/ethnic identity and its development). This course specifically addresses most of the goals described above in the awareness and understanding dimensions.

The Social Psychology of Racism and Oppression

This course also addresses the awareness and knowledge dimensions, with an emphasis on the latter. Specifically, the primary course objective is to increase the students' knowledge of the systems of institutional oppression in the United States. Additionally, the course promotes the understanding of the institutional barriers that prevent some diverse clients from using mental health services. With respect to the awareness dimension, this course also aims to increase

the students' awareness of their own biased and racist attitudes and beliefs, and the related emotions.

Gay, Lesbian. Bisexual Transgender Issues

Unlike the three other courses, this course focuses on a specific population, namely sexual minorities. The other courses have a broader focus with respect to the four prominent racial groups in the United States—namely, African Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos/as, and American Indians. The objectives of this course include developing the understanding and awareness of GLBT issues, as well as improving self understanding and self awareness with respect to these communities.

Culturally Competent Psychotherapy

As described above, the preceding three courses focus on the awareness and knowledge dimensions of cultural competence. For this final course, the emphasis is on the third dimension of skills. This course aims to integrate and synthesize the awareness and knowledge that was taught in the prior courses with the skills required to effectively implement their acquired awareness and knowledge. The specific goals include developing the ability to generate a range of effective verbal and nonverbal responses and interventions, the ability to communicate effectively with a wide range of diverse populations, and the ability to anticipate the impact of their therapeutic style and understand its limitations across diverse groups.

Application of Descriptive Psychology Concepts and Strategies

Racial/Ethnic Identity Development

The guiding questions for this course are: (a) Who are we? and (b) How did we get that way? In this class, the following prominent racial/ethnic groups are examined: African Americans, Asian

Americans, Latinos/as, American Indians, White Americans, and multiracial Americans. To review, the course focuses on the awareness and knowledge dimensions of cultural competence by examining the models of racial/ethnic identity development of the groups described above, as well as by examining the students' own racial/ethnic identity and its development.

As the first course of the sequence, establishing a clear understanding of fundamental concepts is essential. The phenomenon of personal identity development can be understood according to the following logical progressive sequence: (a) understanding and describing persons per se, (b) understanding and describing personal development, and (c) understanding and describing persons in relationships. In turn, understanding each of these logical domains calls for an understanding of its constituent concepts. The following sections will specify and explicate these constituent concepts from a DP perspective.

Describing Persons

Person Concept

The question "Who are we?" refers to persons. Accordingly, since we are examining the development of persons (as opposed to something else), the concept of a person per se must first be clarified. Ossorio (2006) defined a *Person* as "an individual whose history is, paradigmatically, a history of *Deliberate Action* in a *Dramaturgical* pattern" (p. 69, italics added). The DP conception of Person is distinct from the conventional notion of a Person as strictly referring to a human being, or equivalently, an organism who is a member of the species Homo Sapiens. Instead, the DP conception is not constrained by what persons are "made of" or their "form", but rather considers what persons "do" and the ways they "function". This functionalist perspective allows us to regard other organisms that engage in Deliberate Actions as persons, thereby expanding the scientific utility of the concept of person. Colloquially, to engage

in *Deliberate Action* is to "know what you're doing and to do it on purpose", and therefore, behaviors of persons are purposeful and not merely random. *Dramaturgical* pattern refers to the natural coherence of the behavior of persons. That is, persons do not merely engage in a random and arbitrary series of Deliberate Actions. Rather, persons essentially engage in a cultural way of life, and their behaviors reflect their unique personal enactment of that way of life.

Paradigm Case Formulation

The complexity of persons, particularly from a multicultural perspective and the inherent cultural relativity, cannot be adequately understood through mere definitions of particular phenomenon and concepts. Constructing a definition generally involves examining and specifying the commonalities across a wide range of instances of a specified phenomenon. Consequently, this inductive process limits definitions by either being too broad as to be ultimately meaningless and imprecise, and/or being too narrow as to be limited in scope and utility. Furthermore, definitions are often bound by a particular cultural context. For instance, the definition of "family" in the United States typically refers to a nuclear family consisting of blood relatives. In contrast, the definition of "family" in collectivist cultures (both within and without the United States) typically includes members of the extended family network and individuals who may not be necessarily blood related.

A paradigm case formulation (PCF) does not have the inherent limitations of a definition. Rather than engaging in an inductive procedure, the process of constructing a PCF involves specifying a clear-cut case and then relating other instances to that paradigm by varying one or more aspects of the paradigm case (Shideler, 1988). The clear-cut case is typically a normative instance, but not necessarily so. The paradigm case does not necessarily correspond to or reflect the "preferred", "valued", "right", or "proper" exemplar. Rather, the paradigm case can be regarded as simply an obvious instance. The paradigm case is then "transformed" by adding or deleting particular aspects or characteristics in order to suit the

purpose at hand. In other words, the paradigm case can either be expanded to be more inclusive, or restricted to be more precise and specific.

For example, a PCF of the phenomenon of "family" can proceed as follows. Begin with a paradigm case consisting of a father, mother, and two children, all of whom are blood related. In order to be more inclusive of a range of culturally normative conceptions of family, the following transformations can be applied. In cultures where family extends beyond the nuclear family and blood relatives, the transformation of including extended family members (e.g., grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and in-laws) and non-blood related persons can be applied. In the GLBT communities, the notion of family can include a network of intimate friends, who may or may not share the same sexual orientation (Hancock, 2000). In the case of same-sex couples, the genders of the parents in the paradigm case can be modified. Instead of a father and mother, a family could have two fathers or two mothers, for example. In contrast, a narrower and exclusive notion of family could also be specified by eliminating certain aspects of the paradigm case. For example, the transformation of eliminating the children would allow the couple to be regarded as a legitimate family. The transformations of the paradigm case allows for either the expansion or contraction of the specified domain and phenomenon, as determined by the purpose at hand. Accordingly, PCFs are both conceptually precise, yet flexible.

Parametric Analysis

Essentially, a parametric analysis is a conceptual device for distinguishing one phenomenon from another, and distinguishing different instances of the same phenomenon. A parametric analysis specifies the unique constituent aspects or parameters of a given phenomenon. By specifying the unique set of parameters of a phenomenon, one distinguishes that phenomenon from other distinct phenomenon. In turn, by ascribing particular characteristics to each of the parameters, one distinguishes different instances of the same phenomenon.

To illustrate and clarify, a parametric analysis of color will be conducted. The unique constituent aspects or parameters of color are *hue*, *saturation*, and *brightness*. That is, only the phenomenon of color has this unique set of parameters. This does not mean that these parameters cannot be aspects of other phenomenon. For instance, the parameter of brightness is an aspect of light. However, only color has these particular parameters, and only these three parameters. As such, this set of parameters effectively differentiates color from all other phenomenon. In turn, the particular variable characteristics of each parameter specify the different kinds of colors. For instance, the color red has a certain hue, saturation, and brightness that are distinct from those of the color blue. With respect to multicultural psychology, the utility and advantages of a parametric analysis will be described later in this chapter.

Behavior Formula

As described earlier, paradigm case formulations and parametric analyses are conceptually and pragmatically preferred over definitions in describing and understanding phenomena, particularly those involving persons. Accordingly, a parametric analysis will be applied to the concept of behavior. DP specifies the following parameters for behavior (from Ossorio, 2006).

$$<B> = <I, W, K, KH, P, A, PC, S>$$

where:

B   Behavior (e.g., the behavior of Peter riding a bicycle)

I   Identity: the identity of the person whose behavior it is (e.g., Peter)

W   Want: the state of affairs that is to be brought about and that serves as a logical criterion for the success or failure of the behavior (e.g., Peter operating the bicycle without falling, traversing a significant distance)

K   Know: the distinctions that are being made and acted on; the concepts being acted on (e.g., bicycle vs. motorcycle, pedaling vs. braking)

KH   Know-How: the competence that is being employed (e.g., skill in balancing on two wheels, regulating speed, steering to avoid obstacles)

P   Performance: the process, or procedural aspects of the behavior, including all bodily postures, movements, and processes that are involved in the behavior (e.g., all of the physical processes entailed in Peter riding the bicycle, which can be described, for example, in terms of fine and/or gross motor skills)

A   Achievement: the outcome of the behavior; the difference that the behavior makes (e.g., travelling down the road, getting exercise)

PC   Personal Characteristics: the personal characteristics of which the behavior in question is an expression; these may include Dispositions (traits, attitudes, interests, styles), Powers (abilities, knowledge, values), or Derivatives (capacities, states, embodiment). (e.g., Peter's knowledge of how bicycles operate, his skill in riding bicycles, and his value of exercise)

S   Significance: the more inclusive patterns of behavior enacted by virtue of enacting the behavior in question (e.g., by moving the pedals, Peter rides the bicycle; by riding the bicycle, he is getting exercise; by getting exercise, he is getting fit for participating in a triathlon; by participating in a triathlon, he is living the life of an athlete)

With regard to multicultural psychology, the parameter of Significance is especially salient. As reflective of patterns of behavior, these patterns are ultimately bound by cultural norms. Culture is essentially a way of living, which in turn is enacted

through behaviors. Hence, all behavior occurs within a particular cultural context, and the significance of any given behavior is ultimately culturally embedded. For instance, in traditional Asian cultures a central value to their way of living is to clearly show respect and deference (Sue & Sue, 2008). One of the behaviors for showing respect is to avoid direct eye contact with the person to whom respect is being given. In this instance, the culturally specific significance of an averted gaze is the expression of respect. However, if the significance or symbolic meaning of this behavior were to be understood from a different cultural context, this behavior could be regarded as expressing evasiveness, disrespect, and/or defensiveness.

As a complementary concept, *implementation* refers to the manner in which an intrinsic behavior is enacted. Intrinsic behaviors can be understood as reflecting the institutions and core values of a culture. As described above, a core value in traditional Asian cultures is showing respect to those in higher social standing. The importance of showing respect reflects the hierarchical structure of Asian cultures in general. With regard to the behavior of an averted gaze, the *significance* or meaning of this behavior is the expression of respect. Conversely, one of the ways in which respect is *implemented* or enacted is by averting one's gaze when addressing someone who deserves respect.

Person Characteristics

The usefulness of a parametric analysis can also be appreciated in understanding the differences and similarities across persons. Person Characteristics are the broad categories and characteristics that effectively distinguish one person from another. Given the complexity of persons, there are three broad categories, and within each category are specific subcategories and parameters, as outlined below (Ossorio, 2006).

Dispositions. Generally speaking, this aspect refers to the frequency with which patterns of behaviors are engaged by the person within a life history. Persons are generally disposed to behave in certain ways that reflect stable high or low frequencies

of occurrence. As such, these behavioral patterns are generally persistent, acquired slowly, and change slowly.

Traits—These refer to a behavioral tendency that spans across situations. Some examples of traits include generous, brave, honest, aggressive, and serene. Conditional or circumstantial traits are expressed only when particular conditions support or elicit them (e.g., inventive).

Attitudes—These refer to behaviors that are context-specific, as some sort of reference object is required, whether it be animate (e.g., person, animals, etc.) or inanimate (e.g., activity, institution, practice, etc.). For example, a person can be suspicious of *x*, intrigued by *y*, or loving toward *z*.

Interests—Similar to attitudes, interests also require an object, but dissimilar in that interests span a range of behaviors, have strong motivational priority, and have intrinsic value. For instance, a person who has interest in automobiles may collect them, read books and magazines about them, and join clubs.

Styles—Unlike the preceding dispositions that refer to *what* a person does, style refers to *how* a person does those things. For instance, a person can be formal, informal, graceful, or awkward.

Powers. This aspect refers to the behaviors that are possible or not possible for a given person.

Abilities—This characteristic refers to what a person can actually accomplish.

Knowledge—This refers to the set of facts and concepts that a person has the competence to act on.

Values—This refers to the set of motivational priorities that a person ordinarily acts on.

Derivatives. Dispositions and Powers are directly connected to behavior. In contrast, derivatives have only an indirect but significant relationship to behavior.

States—These refer to person characteristics that are non-persistent, change quickly, and are readily reversible. A person's state has a systematic affect on the person's dispositions and powers.

Common states include drowsy, exhausted, hungry, anxious, angry, depressed, and euphoric.

Capacities—Essentially, this refers to the power a person has to acquire person characteristics. Capacity codifies the possibilities and impossibilities for developing person characteristics.

Embodiment—All known persons so far, have had a mammalian embodiment and this includes the physiological characteristics or the kind of body of a person. Typically, we refer to such characteristics as a person's hair color, eye color, height, weight, and so on. As a reminder, the person concept in DP is not restricted or equivalent to human beings with the embodiment of homo sapiens. Recall that a person is "an individual whose history is, paradigmatically, a history of Deliberate Action in a Dramaturgical pattern". The embodiment of an individual can, in principle, be mechanical (at least in part, as in prosthetics). We can entertain the possibility of entirely nonhuman embodiments such as robots or insectoid embodiments. Indeed, it is logically possible to treat primates (as in the great apes), or amphibians (as in the case of dolphins) as special cases of persons—ones that have not yet shown themselves capable of developing science, art, government, and other cultural institutions.

With respect to multicultural psychology, applying the notion of person characteristics is an effective and useful way to clearly understand and describe members of a cultural or diverse group. After specifying a particular individual's person characteristics, this description can then be compared to the normative characteristics and values of that person's culture or group. By doing so, that individual's person characteristics can be understood in terms of the degree to which they represent individual characteristics, and the degree to which they reflect the cultural norms of that person's community. In other words, personal characteristics that are culturally non-normative are quite likely to be reflective of that person's unique person characteristics, as compared to those personal characteristics that are culturally normative.

Pathological State

Clearly, among clinical psychologists one of the salient distinguishing characteristics between persons is the presence of psychopathology. Accordingly, an explanation of pathology is called for. Ossorio (2006) stated, "When a person is in a pathological state there is a significant restriction on his ability (1) to engage in Deliberate Action and, equivalently, (2) to participate in the social practices of the community" (p. 403). The different aspects of this definition will be clarified as follows.

"Significant restriction in ability"—Psychopathology refers to a restriction in actual ability, rather than mere refusal or unwillingness to participate in one's community. This restricted ability is not due to circumstances beyond a person's control, such as oppression, discrimination, or incarceration. Rather, the significant restriction reflects a deficit is in the person's actual ability. The degree of this restriction is significant, as compared to trivial or inconsequential, because the person *ought* to, normatively, be able to engage in the behavior. The significance is based on the meaningfulness of the behavior that is being restricted. For instance, a restriction in a person's ability to drive a car (albeit inconvenient) does not preclude that individual from engaging meaningfully in the community. Accordingly, such a restriction does not constitute being in a pathological state.

"Deliberate Action"—As described earlier, when a person engages in Deliberate Action, s/he "knows what s/he is doing and is doing it on purpose". In contrast, we generally regard a person who does not really know what s/he is doing as being pathological, as in the cases of compulsive behaviors such as drinking (alcoholism), checking and hoarding (obsessive compulsive disorders), and starving oneself (anorexia).

"Participate"—Participation, in this sense, requires the experience of appreciation and satisfaction from engaging in the community, at least to a minimal degree. Such engagement is meaningful and not merely perfunctory. Persons who participate in their communities in a rather superficial manner are generally

regarded as both being pathological in some way (e.g., anhedonic and/or alienated), and experiencing inadequate meaning and satisfaction (e.g., clinically depressed).

"Social Practice"—Fundamentally, "a Social Practice is a social pattern of behavior" (Ossorio, 2006, p. 169). These social patterns of behavior constitute "*what* is done" in a culture and "*how* it is done". As such, they are teachable, learnable, doable, recognizable, public patterns of behavior that are learned through practice, experience, and participation in a culture (Ossorio, 2006; Shideler, 1988). There are three categories of social practices, namely: *fundamental*, *optional*, and *core practices*. Fundamental social practices are essential for the culture and community to exist and remain viable. These include such practices as raising children, acquiring an education, and earning a living. Optional social practices refer to those that only some members of a culture engage in, depending on one's place in that culture and community. These include such practices as having pets, teaching a class, and running a business. Core practices are not optional and reflect the essence of a culture or community. For instance, in an agrarian culture, the social practices of planting, cultivating, and harvesting are essential.

With respect to multicultural psychology, the cultural relativism that is inherent in this conception of psychopathology avoids ethnocentrism and promotes accuracy and clarity. This conception of psychopathology is not anchored on particular behaviors that are deemed "maladaptive", "deviant", or otherwise "inappropriate". Such a behavioristic perspective relies on appraising and specifying certain behaviors as pathological. Consequently, a "pathological" behavior in one culture is necessarily also pathological in a different culture, or even in the same culture but in a different time. For instance, homosexuality and homosexual behavior was regarded as pathological in the past (as specified by the first edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* published 1952), but is now no longer regarded as such. As another example, experiencing hallucinations about deceased ancestors is generally regarded as psychotic in American culture. However, such an experience is not

necessarily regarded the same in other cultures, such as some Asian and Latino cultures.

Status

Status refers to a person's place within a domain and a particular set of relations with others in that domain (Ossorio, 2006; Shideler, 1988). The DP notion of status differs from the conventional conception which connotes rank, social class, and social standing. Instead, status refers to a person's position within a particular social context. This position, in turn, corresponds to and reflects the range of relationships with others in that social domain and context. These relationships refer to all constituents of a domain, both animate and inanimate. These relationships provide both opportunities and limitations in the person's behaviors, based on the relative positions. For instance, the status of supervisee at a job provides the opportunities to perform one's duties and responsibilities (vis-à-vis one's job description), but also includes inherent limitations with regard to supervising other employees who are not under one's purview. Typically, a person has different statuses across the different domains of that person's life. A person may have the statuses of husband, father, son, supervisor, supervisee, coach, friend, competitor, and teammate, across the different times, situations, and places over the course of one's life. The notion of self-concept can be understood as the summary formulation of all of our statuses, or equivalently the place we take to have in the entire world (see Bergner & Holmes, 2000 or Ossorio, 2006, pp. 377-399).

In the context of multicultural psychology, one of the advantages and implications of the notion of status is reflected in the cultural specificity of statuses. Cultures determine the possible statuses or positions that members of that culture can occupy and act from. For instance, the status of psychologist exists in cultures that recognize the practice of psychology, and the status of shaman exists in a culture that recognizes the supernatural. Unless the cultural specificity of statuses was kept in mind, the legitimacy of certain statuses would be questionable at best.

Describing Personal Development

As a reminder, the context within which these concepts are being described and taught is a course on racial/ethnic identity development, as an introductory class in the four-course year-long sequence in multicultural psychology. Once the central concepts related to persons per se have been established, the notion of personal development can then be examined. In other words, having answered the question "Who are we?", we can now address the question, "How did we get that way?"

Developmental Formula

We can now build on the concept of Person Characteristics to examine and understand personal development. Essentially, personal development involves the acquisition of person characteristics. The developmental formula states that person characteristics develop by having the prior capacity and the relevant intervening history (Ossorio, 2006). A person's capacity refers to that person's potential to acquire certain person characteristics. The realization of that potential calls for the proper circumstances to elicit, develop, and maintain the corresponding personal characteristics. A person who has the capacity to become an accomplished musician would realize that potential only under the suitable conditions, which become the relevant history. Without the relevant history, that capacity would unlikely be realized, except perhaps by mere chance.

The developmental formula is recursive in that the newly acquired person characteristics provide the new capacity to develop other person characteristics, and so on. For instance, a person who has the capacity to be an accomplished triathlete may have first acquired the ability to swim at a young age while taking lessons (relevant history) during a summer vacation. This new ability then provided the capacity to regard oneself as physically capable and coordinated, which under the necessary circumstances led to learning how to ride a bicycle competently (relevant history). This acquired person characteristic provided the basis upon which the

person continued to pursue athletic activities (relevant history) and developed an interest (person characteristic) in running.

As a disposition, interests provide the basis and reasons to intrinsically engage in behaviors that are related to the particular interest in question, for instance running. As satisfaction, and presumably at least some minimal degree of competence, are acquired by engaging in an interest, the person typically has reasons and opportunities to develop and pursue other related interests. Upon engaging in these related interests, other related interests are likely to be acquired and pursued. For instance, a person interested in running may acquire an interest in hiking, and then later perhaps in swimming. In contrast, a person who has interests in more sedentary pursuits and/or indoor activities is unlikely to acquire and develop interests in athletic and/or outdoor activities.

Application Exercise. In order to enhance the students' level of understanding of these fundamental DP concepts, the students are instructed to apply these concepts through an exercise conducted during the class. Specifically, students are directed to apply the developmental formula to understand how they may have developed certain person characteristics. They are instructed to choose one or two of their own personal characteristics and apply the developmental formula to describe how they may have developed those particular characteristics. An alternative perspective and strategy is for them to consider a strong ability that they were once only "merely able" to do, and then to describe the developmental process that led to their current ability level. In this process, they were advised to focus on the relevant circumstances and events in their lives that provided opportunities for them to develop their capacities. One of the primary pedagogical goals of this exercise is to begin to sensitize the students to the complexity and degree of difficulty that is ordinarily involved in personal change and development.

Describing Persons in Relationships

The focus thus far has been on understanding persons as individuals by asking the questions "Who are we?" and "How did we get that way?" From this understanding of persons as individuals, we can now examine persons in relationships by asking "How do we describe, compare, and contrast groups of individuals?"

Culture

Culture, as a Way of Life, provides the behavioral patterns that guide the ways in which individuals and groups of individuals interrelate. Cultures are embodied in the social structure provided by societies (Ossorio, 2006). Understanding groups of individuals requires the explication of culture per se. Culture is a particular kind of community by virtue of having two distinguishing characteristics. First, cultures have "stand-alone viability", which refers to the self sufficiency with which they satisfy the needs of its members. In other words, a culture does not require anything but itself to have its members survive and thrive. Second, cultures have "life scope", which refers to how a culture encompasses the entire lives of its members. In contrast, communities lack both of these characteristics. For instance, a community of psychologists cannot sustain itself, as they rely on the larger community within a society for their survival. Furthermore, the community of psychologists does not encompass the entire life of any one psychologist, since a psychologist is a member of other communities as well. As a final essential characteristic of culture, in order for a Way of Life to be actually viable, a culture has to satisfy the Basic Human Needs of its members.

Basic Human Needs

Basic Human Needs refer to those conditions that if not met at all, make behavior impossible. In contrast, Needs refer to those conditions that if not met, result in a pathological state. Although there is no one definitive and universal list of Basic Human Needs,

the example that follows is representative and conveys the essence of this concept (Aylesworth & Ossorio, 1983; Lasater, 1983; Ossorio, 1983).

Status. A person requires a place in the world from which to behave.

Order and meaning. Order is required to provide distinctions, as the world cannot be random and chaotic. Worlds cannot be meaningless.

Adequacy. This refers to some minimal competence to engage successfully in the world and behave.

Personal relationships. Since all behaviors are essentially enactments of culturally ascribed social practices, personal relationships are required to engage in these social practices.

Self actualization. This refers to some ongoing personal development, without which personal growth is impossible.

Parametric Analysis of Culture

As a particular kind of community, the parameters of culture are closely related to those that Putman (1981) specified in his parametric analysis of communities. Ossorio (2006) specified the following parameters of culture:

World. This parameter refers to the context, structure, and principles of the world as it is understood. This includes (a) the place of the community in the world, (b) the history of the community, including its relations and interactions with other communities, and (c) the past, present, and (in principle) future history of the world.

Members. These are the individuals who have participated, or currently participate, or will participate in the particular culture. In general cultures outlive individuals, thereby the membership of a culture includes the historical totality of members and not merely the current participants.

Social Practices. This parameter refers to the repertoire of behavior patterns which in a given culture, constitute what there is for the members to do. Social practice also refers to the various ways in which a given behavior pattern can be done. Some instances

of social practices are having dinner, reading the newspaper, and attending an artistic performance. In general, social practices are components of organized sets or structures of social practices, the latter being referred to as institutions or organizations. Examples of institutions include getting married, passing and enforcing laws, educating children, earning a living, and engaging in commerce. Social practices are either intrinsic or non-intrinsic. An intrinsic social practice is one that can be understood as being engaged in without ulterior motives and without a further end in view. Accordingly, non-intrinsic social practices are those that are not intrinsic. In general, institutions are intrinsic in that individuals do not generally need reasons to get married, pass and enforce laws, and educate their children. Rather, those are simply what members of a culture do unless they have good enough reason not to do so.

Statuses. This parameter reflects the social structure which involves the differentiation and meshing of activities, standards, and the values among different sets of individuals. This social structure can be articulated in terms of statuses.

Language. Every culture has at least one language spoken by its members.

Choice Principles. A social practice is a behavior pattern which has a hierarchical structure that reflects the multiplicity of stages and of options through which a person can engage in that social practice. Choices are inevitable since, on any given occasion, a social practice must be done in *one* of the ways it can be done. These choices are usually within the organizational or institutional level, (e.g., one has to make various choices in the course of raising children). Cultural choice principles are more or less normative and provide guidelines for choosing behaviors in such a way as to express and preserve the coherence of human life as we (the members of the culture) live it and (generally) to preserve the stability of the social structure. Choice principles apply to the choice of a particular social practice to engage in, as well as the choice of options within a practice. Thus, they apply at all levels of cultural participation.

Choice principles are ordinarily articulated in the form of value statements, or policies, or slogans or mottoes, or maxims, or in scenarios such as myths and fables. Choice principles are most commonly articulated in value terms, and most directly expressed in policy terms; however, any of the forms described above will qualify. Accordingly, the delineation of the choice principles of a specific culture is particularly well suited to portray "the essence" or "the spirit" of that culture and distinguish it from others.

For the sake of illustrating the various ways in which choice principles are articulated, the following examples within the dominant culture of the United States will be provided. *Value statements* are primarily used descriptively, but can also be prescriptive of behaviors. Some common value statements include: individual freedom, self reliance, equal opportunity, self improvement, pursuit of happiness, competition, Protestant work ethic, upward mobility, and material wealth. *Policies* are direct prescriptions for choosing behavior. Some typical policies include: Every man for himself; Look out for number one; Be direct and to the point; Say what is on your mind; Fight your own battles; When the going gets tough, the tough get going. *Slogans* and *mottoes* are common sayings and beliefs including: Going from rags to riches; Keeping up with the Joneses; Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die; Actions speak louder than words; Life is what you make it; Cleanliness is next to Godliness; Time is money. *Maxims* have the general character of being warnings and reminders, such as: Look before you leap; Never look a gift horse in the mouth; Save for a rainy day; Idle hands are the devil's workshop. *Myths* and *fables* convey perspectives, beliefs and values in the form of a story, such as warning against treason through the story about Benedict Arnold, promoting patriotism through the story about Paul Revere, valuing ingenuity and inventiveness through the story about Thomas Edison, advancing the entrepreneurial spirit through the story about Henry Ford, and promoting philanthropy through the story about Andrew Carnegie.

In order to demonstrate how "the essence" or "spirit" of a culture can be captured by articulating its choice principles, a contrasting set of choice principles will be described—in this case, those of traditional Filipino culture (Lubuguin, 1998). Some common *values* include: religiosity; competition; modesty and humility; family and kinship; compassion (*awa*); respect, deference, and obedience of authority and elders (*galang*); education; attaining a position of authority and importance; and being well groomed. Some customary *policies* include: maintain smooth interpersonal relationships; pay a debt of gratitude (*utang na loob*); join a group for the sake of promoting the common good (*pakikisama*); be sensitive to the rights, feelings and individuality of others (*respeto*); and use formal titles (e.g., doctor, attorney, captain, Mr. and Mrs.) when addressing others to show respect for their age and authority. Two examples of slogans and mottoes are, (a) have the spirit of togetherness and gregariousness (*bayanihan*), and (b) follow the "Golden Rule" of "do unto others as you would have them do unto you". Common maxims include, (a) avoid bringing shame to yourself and your family (*hiya*), and (b) avoid affronting others (*amor propio*).

Based on these contrasting examples, one can appreciate the particular ways in which the individualistic culture in the United States can be enacted, as well as some of the ways in which the collectivistic Filipino culture can be expressed by its members. This manner of clearly and accurately describing the "essence" and "spirit" of a culture by articulating its choice principles is an effective ethnographic strategy that avoids the pitfalls of stereotyping.

Standard Normal Person

Having established an understanding of culture in ways that allow us to describe, compare, and contrast different ways of living, we can now address the following question—"How do we describe and differentiate individuals of a certain culture?" An approach to understanding an individual member of a culture is to employ a Paradigm Case Formulation. However, how can one accurately

specify a person description of a "clear-cut" member of a particular culture without resorting to stereotypes or simply failing? Another useful DP concept is that of the Standard Normal Person (SNP). A SNP is a hypothetical individual who does merely what the situation calls for in every instance (Ossorio, 1983). The behavior of the SNP strictly reflects the norms of a given culture, and as such, these behaviors have no personal distinguishing characteristics. In other words, all of the behaviors engaged in by this hypothetical individual are expressions of conforming to the cultural norms. The attributes of this individual are strictly social and not individual. In general, the kinds of descriptions attributed to the SNP are double negatives; for instance, "fairly independent", meaning "not especially independent, but not dependent either".

The person characteristics of a SNP are those that are anchored by the specific characteristics of a given culture, as derived from a parametric description of that culture. A parametric description is one that specifies the particular values of the parametric analysis of that culture. As a reminder, a parametric analysis of culture specifies the aspects of culture per se, while a parametric description specifies the characteristics of each of the parameters. For instance, a choice principle in U.S. culture is the value of freedom and self reliance. A corresponding person characteristic of a SNP person may be someone who is "reasonably self reliant", or someone who is not extremely self reliant, but not lacking in self reliance altogether.

The primary distinction between a SNP and a stereotype is that the former is hypothetical, whereas the latter is regarded as real. Stereotypes are regarded as real by virtue of being acted upon when relating to individuals. That is, those who have stereotypes about persons of a particular group tend to relate to persons of that group in ways that reflect the stereotypes they hold. Furthermore, stereotypes are fixed, specific, and conventional views of a group of persons that disallows any individual differences.

In contrast, a SNP provides nothing more than a reference point, from which to compare real individual members of a certain culture. As a reference point, comparisons are made against the "normative"

standards and personal characteristics. The greater the discrepancy between the SNP and the actual person, the more distinct that person is among members of his or her own culture.

The SNP can also be utilized to compare and contrast individuals of different cultures. First, each individual is compared to the SNP of that individual's culture. A person description is generated that clearly reflects the degree to which that individual differs from the cultural norm. These two descriptions are then compared to each other to understand the cross-cultural differences in person characteristics. This methodology effectively eliminates ethnocentric comparisons of person characteristics since the reference point for the comparison is neither the norms of one's own cultural group, nor a particular member of one's own cultural group. As such, one can avoid the "us versus them" discriminatory perspective and attitude of regarding an individual of a different cultural group as a "deficient", "defective", or otherwise poor version of "us".

Cultural Displacement and Acculturation

The guiding question regarding these phenomena is "How does a person adapt to a culture that s/he was not originally raised in?" In order to understand and respond to this question, the concepts of cultural displacement and acculturation must first be clarified. From a DP perspective, cultural displacement is conceptualized in the following way—"a culturally displaced person is an individual who has an experientially based, internalized culture of origin, a culture which contrasts in more or less important ways with a second, host, culture into which the person has been displaced and is currently living" (Aylesworth & Ossorio, 1983, p. 49). In turn, acculturation is conceptualized as the process involved when a culturally displaced person may, as a result of living in the host culture, undergo a change in Person Characteristics in the direction of the Person Characteristics of the SNP of the host culture (Lubuguin, 1998).

Lubuguin proposed a model of acculturation that involved a hierarchy of choice principles. Central Choice Principles are those

that have the greatest importance and priority relative to the others. There may or may not be any one central choice principle that is *the* highest in importance and priority. In turn, Intermediate Choice Principles are those that have relatively less importance than central choice principles. Finally, Peripheral Choice Principles have the least importance and priority to the other two. This hierarchy is based on the natural notion that the entire set of cultural choice principles do not hold equal value, importance, and priority.

The relationship between these three levels of choice principles is that the central choice principles are enacted through the intermediate choice principles, which in turn, are enacted through the peripheral choice principles. Formally speaking, central choice principles are *implemented* through engaging in intermediate choice principles, which are in turn, *implemented* through engaging in peripheral choice principles. For instance, within U.S. culture the central choice principle of individual freedom and rights (as a value) is implemented by acting on the intermediate choice principle of achieve financial and emotional independence from your parents (as a policy), which in turn is implemented by acting on the peripheral choice principle of "stand on your own two feet" (as a motto).

Conversely, the *significance* of a behavioral expression of a peripheral choice principle is the corresponding intermediate choice principle. In turn, the *significance* of the particular intermediate choice principle is the corresponding central choice principle. In the example described above, the significance of a person "standing on his own two feet" is the realization of the policy of achieving financial and emotional independence from one's parents. In turn, the *significance* of a person acting in ways that promote their independence is the realization of the value of having individual freedom and rights.

Regarding the process of acculturation, Lubuguin proposed the following Attraction Model of acculturation. This model asserts that the culturally displaced person wants to become a full member of the new host culture as soon as possible. This perspective is generally more applicable to culturally displaced individuals who chose to

move to the new host culture, such as in the case of immigrants. According to this model, the process of acculturation proceeds in the following manner. Peripheral choice principles change more and more quickly, relative to the intermediate choice principles. To review, the nature and direction of the change is toward the SNP of the new host culture. Intermediate choice principles, in turn, change less and less quickly, relative to the peripheral choice principles. Central choice principles change even less and less quickly, if at all, relative to the intermediate choice principles. As a doctoral dissertation, this model was tested empirically and the data supported this particular conceptualization of the process of acculturation.

Application Exercise

These DP concepts, perspectives, and methodologies are particularly applicable in promoting the students' self awareness, specifically regarding their own values, attitudes, and behaviors. The students are guided toward extending the earlier exercise by applying the developmental formula to their new understanding of culture in general and choice principles in particular. Specifically, they are instructed to interview their extended family members, especially the elders in their family, to gather stories about their heritage and their family's history in the United States. With this information, they are instructed to apply the developmental formula to examine and understand the development of their own racial/ethnic/cultural identity. This exercise is intended to promote the realization that their own and their family's values, attitudes, behaviors, and perspectives may be more than a matter of being "merely me" and "that's just how my family is". Instead, their person characteristics may be, at least to some significant degree, their own idiosyncratic implementation of culturally specific choice principles and social practices.

Culturally Competent Psychotherapy

As the final course in the year-long four-class multicultural psychology course sequence, this class integrates the

theoretical content of the preceding classes and explicates their psychotherapeutic implications. The class focuses on acquiring the necessary clinical judgment, sensitivity, and skills for providing culturally competent psychotherapy. The ultimate aim of the course is to acquire the following: (a) an understanding of multicultural psychotherapy, (b) an understanding of the process of acquiring cultural competence, (c) an accurate self-appraisal of one's current level of cultural competency, and (d) an individualized plan for developing one's degree of cultural competency. The following DP concepts are taught and utilized toward accomplishing these aims.

Understanding Multicultural Psychotherapy

Part-Whole Relationships

Generally speaking, we are familiar with the saying "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts." Essentially, this saying reminds us that understanding, knowing, and doing the "parts" of any given phenomenon does not necessarily provide us with a clear or adequate understanding and appreciation of the "whole" phenomenon. For instance, in the case of conducting psychotherapy, understanding, knowing, and doing active listening per se does not provide a person with a clear nor adequate understanding and appreciation of conducting psychotherapy, nor does it necessarily render that person competent to conduct psychotherapy.

Within the canon of DP, there are many instances of part-whole relationships. For instance, social practices in general, and institutions in particular, are an instance of a "whole"; whereas, the individual manner in which a particular person enacts those social practices (as guided by that person's choice principles) is an instance of a "part". Another clear example is reflected in the parametric analysis of culture, wherein the parameters themselves are "parts" of the "whole" phenomenon of culture. Similarly, the transformations added or deleted in a paradigm case formulation are "parts" of whatever "whole" phenomenon is being examined. In the case of

understanding multicultural psychotherapy, a particular part-whole relationship is especially salient—namely, task analysis (part) versus process description (whole).

Task Analysis Versus Process Description

The fundamental question involved in understanding multicultural psychotherapy is "How is doing therapy with a person of one cultural group different from doing it with a person of a different cultural group?" In order to adequately understand and respond to this very important question, two important concepts will be explicated.

Task analysis involves examining and describing the component activities and actions involved in a given behavior (Ossorio, 1983). The information that is acquired through this process is equivalent to achievement descriptions of the particular activity. For instance, some of the tasks involved in conducting psychotherapy include paying attention, actively listening, making empathic statements, asking questions, gathering information, and providing summaries and interpretations. It is important to note that when a person engages in any of these or any combination of these tasks, that person is not necessarily conducting psychotherapy. Each of these tasks is equivalent to an achievement description regarding whether or not that task is actually completed successfully. Therefore, a task analysis of a therapy session could include such descriptions as "the therapist paid attention" and "actively listened", but "failed to make empathic statements and provide summaries and interpretations". Such a reductionistic account of the tasks involved in conducting psychotherapy certainly fails to capture the essence, nuance, and meaning of the endeavor.

Process description includes delineating the sequential structure of the endeavor, the various options available over the course of the endeavor, and the contingencies involved during the course of the endeavor that reflect the characteristics of the person engaging in the activity (Ossorio, 1983). In the case of conducting psychotherapy, delineating the sequential structure of the therapy session could

involve describing the steps taken by the therapist to establish a therapeutic alliance, conduct an adequate assessment for the sake of generating a case formulation, and acting on that case formulation to provide an effective therapeutic intervention. A description of the various options available over the course of the therapy session could involve accounting for the options of actively listening, making empathic statements, asking probing questions, providing clarifying summaries, and stating insightful interpretations. Finally, an account of the contingencies involved during the course of the therapy session that reflect the characteristics of the therapist could include an appraisal of the therapist's ability to recognize and act on the opportunities to conduct effective interventions, thereby meeting at least some of the therapeutic needs of the client.

Based on this distinction, we can now address the original guiding question—"How is doing psychotherapy with a person of one cultural group different from doing it with a person of a different cultural group?" The simplest, albeit inadequate, response is "Nothing, you *do* the same activities in both cases." In other words, from the task analysis perspective, the actual activities such as paying attention, actively listening, asking questions, and so on, are essentially the same. However, from the process description perspective, the more complex, albeit vague, response is "You do therapy differently." Doing therapy differently involves attending and responding to the cultural differences that are clinically salient in the particular circumstances with the particular individual. In other words, doing therapy differently will vary across individuals of different cultures, and not across groups of individuals of different cultures. It is essential to maintain and apply the notion of part-whole relationships to truly understand how an individual is a "part" of the "whole" culture in which that individual lives. Culturally competent psychotherapy requires treating the individual as such, and not merely as a member of a particular cultural group.

Returning to the matter of "doing therapy differently", the complexity of this ostensibly simple approach calls for further elaboration. Two core powers are required for "doing therapy

differently" in a culturally competent manner—namely, sensitivity and judgment (Ossorio, 1983).

Conducting Culturally Competent Psychotherapy

Sensitivity

To have sensitivity requires knowledge about culture, cultural groups, and the experiences of individuals of different cultural groups. Having mere familiarity or some degree of knowledge about these matters is generally inadequate for acquiring the necessary level of sensitivity that providing culturally competent psychotherapy calls for. Knowledge about culture involves understanding the distinct perspective that each culture has regarding approaching and being in the world, which corresponds to the discrete way of life of that culture. The kind of knowledge that is required involves not only having information, but also having meaningful relevant experiences with cultures and cultural groups, and meaningful relationships with individuals of various cultural groups. Put simply and colloquially, "book knowledge" is insufficient since "real life" knowledge is what is required. With this kind of knowledge, a therapist is enabled to competently recognize the reasons and opportunities for clinical interventions.

For instance, traditional Asian American families tend to be structured in a hierarchical and patriarchal manner, in which the males and older family members hold greater power (Lee & Mock, 2005). Many decisions and choices are made by the parents and conveyed to the children, who are expected to defer to their parents. The general style of communication is indirect and high-context, which means that the actual meaning of what is communicated is not merely about the words that are expressed, but also about the social context, the immediate situation, and the relationship between those who are communicating, among other contextual variables. Understandably, it would be difficult to imagine how a therapist could acquire the degree of understanding about these cultural

characteristics that would enable that person to be adequately sensitive, without having experiential knowledge.

Judgment

The complementary power to sensitivity is judgment, which is required to weigh the reasons and opportunities that a therapist recognizes (by having the necessary sensitivity). In turn, sound judgment is exercised in order to intervene effectively. Exercising sound judgment involves recognizing the clinically and culturally relevant circumstances involved at the given time, weighing those circumstances appropriately, making the proper decision or choice among the available options, and finally implementing the decision.

For instance, in the case of a young Asian American college student who is struggling with selecting a major and deciding on a career path, knowledge about traditional family structure and expectations would be essential in order to understand the real meaning and implications of this struggle. Sound judgment may require determining the degree of acculturation of this individual, as an instance of recognizing the clinically and culturally relevant circumstances. Based on this assessment of the level of acculturation, the thinkable options could then be determined and prioritized, as an example of weighing the relevant circumstances appropriately. The preferred option(s) could then be determined upon further discussion and exploration with the client, as an example of making the proper choice among the available options. Finally, the proper timing and effective manner in which the option(s) were raised by the therapist is an example of implementing the decision effectively.

In summary, both of these essential powers of sensitivity and judgment are acquired by having the *relevant practice and experience* (Ossorio, 1983). Relevant practice comes primarily from actually conducting therapy with culturally diverse individuals. Relevant experience comes not only from conducting therapy, but also from having the real life experiences required to have "real life knowledge" and develop adequate sensitivity.

Understanding and Acquiring Cultural Sensitivity

Having established the essential nature of the two core powers of sensitivity and judgment, the question that naturally follows is "What are some ways to understand and acquire the relevant cultural sensitivity?" Two DP concepts that have been discussed earlier are especially pertinent to this question.

Significance

To review, Significance is the parameter of behavior that refers to the symbolic meaning of the particular behavior. All behaviors are essentially enactments of social practices, which refer to what and how "things are done" in a given culture. In other words, social practices correspond to the culturally specified repertoire of behavior patterns available to the members of a given culture. Accordingly, the constituents of social practices are individual behaviors. These individual behaviors that form patterns are interrelated to each other in terms of significance. For instance, Peter participating in a triathlon is a social practice, which in turn is the significance of Peter getting exercise (as a social practice) in order to prepare for the triathlon, which in turn is the significance of Peter riding his bicycle (as another social practice). Therefore, by attending to and becoming increasingly sensitized to the significance of behavior and social practices (as patterns of behavior), a clinician gains formal access to the behavioral patterns of a particular culture, thereby increasing the clinician's sensitivity to that particular cultures' characteristics.

Implementation

To review, conversely speaking, implementation refers to the person's individual manner of enacting intrinsic behaviors, which reflect the institutions and core values of the person's culture. A clinician can gain knowledge, understanding and sensitivity to these institutions and core values by attending to the significance of behaviors, as described earlier. The consequent broad and clear understanding of the culture's institutions then provides the essential

context and perspective with which to appreciate the real meaning and relationships among the social practices of a given culture. In turn, this contextualized understanding provides the perspective with which to comprehend the various ways in which members of a given culture can enact their culture in their own individual manners. In other words, applying the concept of implementation provides formal access to a particular individual's realization and enactment of his/her culture.

As another instance of part-whole relationships, the individual's idiosyncratic enactment (or *implementation*) of the social practices of his/her culture is the "part" to the "whole" of the totality of the social practices that are specified by that person's culture. Conversely, the *significance* of the individuals' enactments (as parts) reflect the range of social practices that are made available by the person's culture, all of which have the ultimate significance that reflects the institutions and core values of that culture (as the whole).

Understanding, Comparing, and Contrasting Differences Across Different Cultures and Individuals

We now turn to the problem of avoiding, or at least minimizing, ethnocentrism when we attempt to understand, compare, and contrast differences across different cultures and individuals of the same culture. For this important endeavor, we will employ the strategy of parametric descriptions of culture and the conceptual device of the behavior formula, respectively.

Parametric Descriptions of Culture

To review, a parametric analysis of culture *per se* specifies the constituent aspects of the phenomenon of culture. By doing so, we distinguish the phenomenon of culture from all other phenomena. In order to systematically describe the characteristics of a particular culture, we specify the "values" or "content" of each of the parameters. Specifically, we articulate the following: (a) the world as conceived by the particular culture, (b) the members who

comprise the culture, (c) the social practices that provide what there is for the members to do, (d) the statuses available to the members of that culture, (e) the language(s) spoken by members of the culture, and (f) the actual choice principles of the culture. In order for these descriptions to be accurate and meaningful, they are based on the perspective of a member of that culture as an ''insider'' and not on an ''outsider'' observer.

When comparing and contrasting cultures to one another, a parametric description is generated for each of the cultures in question. These descriptions are then compared to each other to appreciate the similarities and differences between the cultures. Conventionally, cultural comparisons are made by using one's own culture as the reference point and standard of comparison. Moreover, one typically applies one's own personal perspective and version of one's culture in order to understand and appraise other cultures. In contrast, by comparing parametric descriptions, the ethnocentrism that is inescapable by utilizing one's own culture as the standard and reference point is at least minimized, if not avoided in principle.

Behavior Formula

To review, the behavior formula specifies the parameters of behavior. The specific parameters are: (a) Identity—the person engaging in the behavior, (b) Want—the state of affairs intended by the behavior, (c) Know—the distinctions being acted upon, (d) Know-How—the competence being employed, (e) Performance— the ''skills'' involved in the behavior, (f) Achievement—the outcome of the behavior, (g) Personal Characteristics—the personal characteristics of which the behavior is an expression, and (h) Significance—the symbolic meaning of the behavior.

The process of understanding, comparing, and contrasting behaviors of individuals within the same culture is analogous to that of comparing parametric descriptions of cultures as described above. In this instance, the comparisons made are between the behaviors one would expect of a SNP of a given culture and that of the particular person in question. To review, the SNP is a hypothetical

person who is the embodiment of a particular culture, and as such behaves in ways that reflect simply what the situation calls for. In other words, the behaviors of the SNP reflect the culturally normative ways of behaving. As a hypothetical construct, the SNP differs markedly from stereotypes which are regarded as real, fixed, and rigid personal characteristics. By utilizing the SNP as the reference point, one can understand the extent to which a particular person's behavior complies with or deviates from the cultural norms of that person's culture. Hence, a clearer and more accurate understanding of individual differences is gained from this sort of comparison, as opposed to comparisons that are made by comparing two cultural members to each other, or by comparing a person to an individual of a different culture or to oneself; both of which have obvious detrimental implications and consequences.

Adapting Current Knowledge and Skills

This final section will address an important practical consideration in training students to develop cultural competence. Specifically, by the time students are taught this particular perspective on cultural competence and its acquisition and development, students generally have a range of pre-existing skills, knowledge and understanding about the nature of psychopathology and psychotherapy. Their current skills and perspectives may or may not be consistent or compatible with the DP conceptual framework. Accordingly, the question that arises is "What are some considerations and helpful DP concepts for adapting what I already know about how to conduct psychotherapy when working with diverse clients?"

Justification Ladder

A common dilemma is how a student can competently and effectively adapt various theoretical orientations of psychotherapy that may be in conflict with some of the principles of cultural competence. For instance, a common aim of psychotherapy held by

some popular theoretical orientations is the acquisition of insight as a means of promoting self-understanding and self-actualization. This perspective of psychotherapy and psychological well being is quite consistent and compatible with individualistic cultures. Collectivistic cultures, by nature, are not primarily concerned with gaining insight and focusing on oneself. Instead, these cultures tend to be much more concerned with the common good and social harmony. As such, how can a clinician adapt the orientation that promotes insight when working with individuals from collectivistic cultures?

The Justification Ladder is a conceptual device used to provide reasons and justifications for our behaviors and those of others (Ossorio, 1978). This device is structured hierarchically in that stronger justifications are those that are higher on the "ladder". Specifically, the bottom "rung" on the ladder is *judgment*, which reflects our personal appraisals of the immediate circumstances. Since our judgment relies primarily on our individual appraisals, we can justify our decisions and actions by appealing to the next "rung" up on the ladder. *Customs* refers to the ways in which the behavior in question is commonly and customarily done by others in the community. As such, the justification does not rest on the individual's sole appraisals, but rather relies on the common choices and actions of the collective. If the custom is challenged, then the next justification is based on *theory* or *principle*. These rely on the values and perspectives of the community that have broad scope. In other words, the justification extends beyond being merely one of personal appraisal (in judgment), and beyond merely what is conventional (in custom); and instead, relies on the broadly held shared beliefs of the community that are reflected in their theories and principles. Finally, the ultimate justification is that of *competence*. As the highest rung, the final justification relies on the simple criteria of effectiveness.

With respect to adapting one's theoretical orientation to justify culturally competent practices in psychotherapy, the clinician can utilize that Justification Ladder to confidently assert that there are occasions that call for rising above theory and principles in order to simply do what is effective. After all, the ultimate aim of providing

psychotherapy is to alleviate the pathological state that disables the person, and not to dogmatically implement psychotherapeutic theories and principles.

Emotions

The phenomenon of emotions is one that people in general, and psychologists in particular, have been unable to precisely and universally define. Notions of emotions include referring to some kind of feeling, experiencing some physiological sensations, being an affective state of consciousness, and being an instinctual response, among many others. Given the ambiguity and complexity of emotions, the body of literature in DP has articulated its formulation extensively over time. In the most comprehensive book about the foundational concepts of DP, Ossorio (2006) devoted an entire chapter to this phenomenon. An in depth review of emotions is beyond the scope of this current chapter. Instead, the aspects of emotion that are particularly applicable to culturally competent psychotherapy will be described.

From a DP perspective, emotions denote a particular relationship between a person and an object or state of affairs (Bergner, 2003). As such, the relationship reflects the appraisal made by the person about the other person, object, or state of affairs. This appraisal, in turn, carries motivational significance, and therefore elicits certain corresponding behaviors. The other person, object, or state of affairs corresponds to the "reality basis" of the emotion, while the appraisal made by the person about the reality basis reflects the nature of the relationship that person has with the reality basis. The person's appraisal of the relationship then provides the motivation to engage in the corresponding emotional behavior.

For instance, imagine a scenario in which a person is alone in a room engaged in some benign activity. Suddenly, a lion walks into the room. The person naturally appraises the lion as a dangerous animal, and realizes his relationship with the lion as one in which he is in great peril. Accordingly, his emotional response is fear, which in turn compellingly motivates him to escape from danger.

Hence, the reality basis of the lion (and being in danger) elicits the emotion of fear, which in turn motivates him to escape from peril. This particular example clearly demonstrates the logical relationship between the reality basis of the emotion, the emotion itself, and the corresponding behavior that the emotion elicits. Some other examples of this logical relationship are as follows (Bergner, 2003): (a) wrongdoing is the reality basis of guilt, which in turn elicits penance and restitution, (b) provocation is the reality basis of anger, which in turn elicits hostility, (c) loss or misfortune are the reality basis of sadness, which in turn elicits grieving, and (d) good fortune is the reality basis of joy and happiness, which in turn elicits celebration. Of course, this is merely an illustrative and not exhaustive list of emotions, their reality basis and the behaviors that the emotions elicit.

Broadly speaking, this formulation of emotions has meaningful clinical implications. Specifically, the critical importance of the reality basis of the emotions, and the person's appraisal of that reality basis are vital to assess and address. For instance, is the reality basis of the person's emotions real or is it misperception or delusion, as in the case of real or imagined provocation that elicits anger and hostility. In this case, treatment may focus on helping the person improve her ability to perceive realistically and think clearly. In another instance, the person's ability to perceive realistically is quite intact, but his ability to make reasonable appraisals may be impaired. For instance, a person may accurately perceive a real kitten in the room, but inaccurately appraises the kitten to be dangerous. In this example, treatment may focus on improving the person's ability to make accurate appraisals.

In the context of culturally competent psychotherapy, this formulation and perspective on emotions can have great utility. For example, traditional Asian cultures tend to value emotional restraint, as an indicator of self restraint and discipline (Leong, Lee, & Chang, 2008). However, some therapeutic orientations tend to value and emphasize emotional expressiveness, such as psychodynamic approaches. Clearly, eliciting emotional expressiveness from

someone who values emotional restraint is quite therapeutically inappropriate. In this instance, addressing and resolving emotional distress and conflicts can be effectively conducted by focusing on the reality basis of emotions, rather than on the emotions themselves. For example, rather than guiding and encouraging the client to express anger, the therapist can focus instead on the provocation itself and what to do about that.

In conclusion, the value placed on "feeling talk" is not culturally universal, as some cultures value and prefer a more pragmatic approach to therapy. Furthermore, such a value and perspective is not deficient in any way, but rather simply different. In these instances, addressing the reality basis of emotions themselves is a means of legitimizing this perspective and justifying how unnecessary engaging in "feeling talk" actually is in order to provide competent and effective psychotherapy.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to provide an example of the application of the intellectual discipline of DP to an important and meaningful scholarly and practical endeavor. The scholarly enterprise was to explicate the fundamental constituent concepts of cultural competence. The practical goal is the training of clinical psychology graduate students by providing the foundational concepts, perspectives, and methodologies required to begin their lifelong aspirational goal of developing their cultural competence as psychotherapists. Rather than offering a mere proposed training model, this paper described an actual successful case of such an application, specifically, the first and last courses of a year-long four-course sequence in multicultural psychology taught at the University of Denver, Graduate School of Professional Psychology.

The first course entitled "Racial/Ethnic Identity Development" posed the questions—"Who are we?" and "How did we get that way?" The course material answered these important questions by introducing the foundational concepts of person, behavior, person

characteristics, status, developmental formula, communities, culture, basic human needs, pathological state, standard normal person, cultural displacement, and acculturation. The course curriculum also introduced the conceptual devices of paradigm case formulation and parametric analysis. These concepts, in turn, are applied to promote self awareness, sensitivity, understanding, and knowledge about cultural differences between persons.

The last course entitled "Culturally Competent Psychotherapy" posed the overarching question—"How is doing psychotherapy with a person of one cultural group different from doing it with a person of a different cultural group? The specific sub-questions posed include: "What are some ways to acquire and understand the relevant cultural sensitivity?", "How can I understand differences and similarities of behavior across cultures and across individuals of a particular culture?", and "What are some considerations and helpful DP concepts for adapting what I already know about how to conduct psychotherapy when working with culturally diverse persons?"

In order to answer these important questions meaningfully and thoroughly, the following concepts and methodologies were introduced and articulated: part-whole relationships, task analysis versus process descriptions, sensitivity and judgment as essential powers, significance and implementation, utilizing parametric descriptions of cultures, applying the behavior formula to understand differences and similarities of behaviors across cultures and across individuals of a particular culture, applying the justification ladder as a way to mindfully adapt various theoretical orientations to culturally diverse persons, and finally, providing an alternative perspective on the notion of emotions that reduces some aspects of the culture-bound values and perspectives inherent in conventional psychotherapy (such as emotional expressiveness).

As an important caveat, for the purposes of this paper only the directly relevant and most applicable concepts and methodologies within DP were applied in this particular endeavor. The entire discipline of DP provides many more concepts that have been applied to a wide variety of scholarly and practical enterprises.

Conclusion

Given the compelling current and projected demographic trends within the United States combined with the ethical imperatives, the essential inclusion of cultural competence training in the curriculum of graduate programs in clinical psychology has been well established. In fact, the American Psychological Association requires training programs to "recognize the importance of cultural and individual differences and diversity in the training of psychologists" as reflected by Domain D of the Accreditation Guidelines (American Psychological Association, 2008).

In order to provide effective education and training in cultural competence, the utilization of a conceptual framework, as opposed to a theoretical perspective, is preferred. The majority of the traditional and predominant perspectives about psychotherapy are culturally bound. Sue & Sue (2008) regard the "generic characteristics" of psychotherapy as being embedded within and inextricable from the dominant culture within the United States. Specifically, these "culture-bound values" include the focus on the individual, verbal/emotional/behavioral expressiveness, insight, self disclosure (openness and intimacy), scientific empiricism, distinctions between mental and physical functioning, ambiguity, and particular patterns of communication. While it is beyond the scope of this chapter to demonstrate all of the ways in which this perspective of "generic" ethnocentric psychotherapy is potentially harmful in some cultural contexts, the comprehensive critical analysis articulated from a DP perspective intends to build upon Sue & Sue's thesis. Specifically, the analysis and recommendations described in this chapter provide a conceptual framework and pragmatic strategies that extend beyond being merely a response to the perspectives and values regarding psychotherapy that correspond to the dominant culture in the United States.

Since concepts have no "truth value" per se, utilizing a conceptual framework rather than a theoretical framework minimizes the cultural bias that is inherent in theories of human behavior. In

particular, DP is a conceptual framework that consists of a complex, comprehensive and precise set of interrelated concepts that articulate the grammar of the behavior of persons (Ossorio, 2006). As a conceptual framework that explicates the sense that persons *already make*, it lends itself quite naturally to multicultural psychology. In closing, the perspectives and methodology that Descriptive Psychology provide effectively preclude cultural insensitivity and ethnocentrism, at least in principle.

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