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ABSTRACT

A model suitable for use in a required social work course or a high-interest elective social work course on ethnic groups, racism, or cross cultural studies uses a five dimensional approach. An elective course entitled "Cultural Diversity and the Helping Process" provides a case study. This course has been taught since 1981 and has occasionally been team taught by faculty members with expertise on a particular ethnic group. The course is divided into five 3-week units. Each unit builds on the content of the previous unit. Unit 1 is a review of basic sociology concepts. Units 2-5 address content specific to four major ethnic groups: American Indians, Blacks, Hispanics, and Asian Americans. Course content is derived from three texts and supplementary articles. The format is lecture and seminar, with audiovisual aids and student presentations. The course has proven highly successful and popular. An appendix contains a course syllabus including description, purpose, educational outcomes, content, texts, teaching methods, and evaluation methods. (LP)

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## A Five Dimensional Model for Teaching An Ethnic Content Course

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Presented at the Southwestern Social Science Association APM  
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## INTRODUCTION:

It has been a little over eleven years since CSWE implemented Standard 1234A that required schools of social work to make "special, continual efforts" in including racial and cultural content in their curriculums (CSWE, 1973). The importance of this decision was further underscored by the NASW Delegate Assembly in its adoption of a policy which recommended that social work programs should.... "include relevant and meaningful content related to racial and ethnic groups of color." (NASW, 1979).

The profession and educational institutions responded by increasing their efforts to identify and recruit minority faculty and students who could fill present and future needs of the practice and educational communities. Educators, both majority and minority persons, struggled with "what to include" and "how to" questions. In the early 1970's resource materials in the social work literature were limited. There was some reluctance to utilize courses outside social work. The early courses stressed racism and discrimination which stirred both majority and minority students, not to mention how they affected faculty. Since that time, in the late 1970's and early 1980's a number of texts have appeared that have made an attempt at defining the parameters of a course that might specifically address what was intended in the initial CSWE Standard 1234A. Of course since then, the requirement includes content on women and there is some discussion about inclusion of other oppressed groups such as the gay and lesbian group. For purposes of this paper the focus will be only on ethnic groups designated as historically oppressed in the United States. This in no way represents lack of concern for other oppressed groups. It is felt that limiting the focus of the course results in less confusion for the learner. Examples of text books that might be used in ethnic content courses include but are not limited to: Cultural Awareness in the Human Services by James Green, Prentice Hall, 1982; The Ethnic Dilemma in Social Services by Shirley Jenkins, Free Press, 1981; and Ethnic Sensitive Social Work Practice by Wynetta Devore and Elfriede G. Schlesinger, C. V. Mosby Co., 1981. Most current text books include

chapters or sections that address aspects of variation found in practice and in particular with ethnic minority groups. Examples of current texts familiar to the authors include common social work texts like Social Work Processes by Compton and Galaway, Hepworth and Larsen's Direct Social Work Practice and a more recent text, Garvin and Seabury's Interpersonal Practice in Social Work. Of course, other texts like social policy and human development texts include content addressing ethnic issues. In addition there are numerous sources in the form of texts from other disciplines like anthropology, sociology or psychology that can be used as main or supplemental texts. A recent publication in the form of a self programmed text that uses case materials on Mexican-Americans, Asian-Americans and Blacks is Acosta, Yamamoto and Evan's text titled: Effective Treatment for Low Income and Minority Patients. There is so much now available that the instructor may be overwhelmed by the choices. It would be nice if one text could address all of the content that one wishes to address. It has been the experience of the authors that the main text needs to be supplemented by other texts. The course which will be described below includes three required texts and one optional i.e. recommended text.

Thus social work educators now have numerous resources in the form of texts, bibliographical indexes e.g. Hispanic Mental Health Research: A Reference Guide by Newton, Olmedo and Padilla, University of California Press, 1982 and numerous articles that prevail in social work and social science journals. What then is the problem? The problem is that one resource is missing in many schools, that is, the minority faculty member who usually taught the "minority" course is no longer around due to federal budget cuts, (like Title XX funding). The question is, can a non-minority faculty member teach an ethnic content course? The authors would say yes, of course. One's expertise should not be a function of one's standing in relationship to a reference group. Some faculty may be less motivated because of other interests, fear of not knowing the materials and the likelihood that some of the content is too controversial. There are of

course, numerous reasons why we make the choices we make. To reiterate, the authors premise is that anyone who wishes to develop expertise in cross cultural issues can become a scholar in a variety of ways without holding membership in one of the groups designated as historically oppressed by various government agencies.

Anderson and Dobrec (1984) identify five approaches utilized by schools of social work to integrate minority content into their curricula:

1. permeation model, where all courses contain ethnic content;
2. a required two or three credit hour course such as a course on racism;
3. elective course where enrollment is based on student interest such as a course in cross cultural practice;
4. selective course offerings within and outside the school where student may choose from a limited number of electives to complete their structured program e.g. courses in anthropology, sociology and psychology that address ethnicity;
5. a combination of two or more of the above.

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this paper is to present a five dimensional course model that may be used as option numbers two or three of the approaches described above. The University of Oklahoma faculty subscribes to the permeation model with the one course to be described as an elective for those students who want more depth in content addressed in this course. Our faculty, like faculties in other schools vary in the emphasis that they individually give to content required by Standard 1234A. The remainder of the paper will describe the process and the course which is the subject of this paper.

**Title:**

Considerable thought needs to be given to selecting an elective course title. The title should describe the subject area emphasis and at the same time appeal to all students. "Cultural Diversity and the Helping Process" is the present title of the

course. The authors believe that this title conveys breadth by using the concept of "diversity," this conveys the concept of variability which is a key concept that is relevant in treating any behavioral science phenomena. The authors believe that the terms "helping process" are sufficiently generic to attract both micro and macro practice students. Thus the title addresses two major concerns: one, it begins to identify the primary variables, both dependent and independent (the helping process is the independent variable) and two, it calls attention to the important concept of variability which is a characteristic of differences found between and within groups that are of concern to a student of ethnic issues. Others may question the validity of the authors' assumptions, the true test is whether we attract the students we wish to attract. It is highly probable that students do not appreciate the thought that instructors give to a course title. Tangentially, starting next fall, the college of education will cross list this course. It is possible that the focus of the course will have to be re-examined to incorporate the learning needs of those students.

#### **History of Course:**

The course was taught under another title by an instructor no longer with the school. The focus of the course included all ethnic groups found in the State of Oklahoma. The senior author first taught this course in 1981. In 1982 the course was team taught by the two authors and a third faculty member who has expertise in practice with American Indians. Each team member assumed responsibility for a specific section of the course, normally the faculty member's area of expertise e.g. the junior author taught the section of Blacks.

#### **Organization:**

This section of the paper will describe the organization of the course content. As the paper title indicates, there are five dimensions to the course, each dimension is in the form of a three week unit of study. Each unit builds on the content of the preceding unit. The first unit is designed to provide the students with a review for those who have



had a basic sociology course and a introduction for those who have not had a sociology course. This unit includes the basic sociological concepts that are the tools for understanding much of the phenomena which is addressed in a course of this nature. Included in this unit are an examination of dominant cultural values, societal characteristics of a melting pot versus a cultural pluralism model, examination of theories of individual prejudice, and issues related to majority-minority power conflicts.

The remaining four units are equally divided in terms of time given to address content that is specific to the four major ethnic groups addressed in the course. The groups include: American-Indians, American-Blacks, American-Hispanics and Asian-Americans. Each unit is covered in nine clock hours or a period of three weeks. Content is primarily derived from the three additional texts that are used in the course. A few additional articles may be required as outside reading. The students are subject to a midterm and final examination. One paper in the form of a book report is also required. A combination of lecture, visual aids and seminar-type sessions where students report on a specific reading are utilized.

#### Results:

We would like to report that we have had raving reviews and that students are standing in line to sign up for the course. We are learning and we feel we are moving in the right direction. Students are sure that having several instructors teach a course is both positive and negative. On the positive side, they get exposed to different perspectives and more information than would be the case if only one instructor were the master teacher. The opposite side of this coin is that it has meant more work for the students. The students feel that each instructor has approached the unit as if it were a course in itself. It is felt that too much is required for the amount of credit, the course credit is three hours. Students feel that it is difficult to prepare for examinations when varied emphasis is given to the subject matter by the various professors. On the positive side, the course has gained the respect of other faculty in the school. Faculty advisors

are increasingly recommending the course to students. The fact that the college of education has agreed to cross list the course indicates that we have some credibility outside the school too.

#### **Summary and Conclusions:**

The purpose of this paper was to describe a five dimensional model for teaching an ethnic content course. Five common approaches utilized by schools of social work to integrate ethnic minority content were identified. The history of the course, organization of content and pro and con student reactions in three years were reported.

The model presented is an evolving model. It is presented as one alternative for social work programs who desire to incorporate a specific course that addresses the ethnic/racial component requirement of the Council on Social Work Education Standard 1234A.



## REFERENCES

Guidelines for implementation of Accreditation Standard 1234A. New York: Council on Social Work Education, 1973.

1979 Delegate Assembly Actions. NASW News 25 (January, 1980) p. 30.

Proctor, E. K. and Davis L. Minority Content in Social Work Education: A question of objectives. Journal of Education for Social Work. 19 (Spring, 1983).

Compton, B. R. and Galaway B. Social Work Processes. Homewood, Illinois: The Dorsey Press, 1983.

Hepworth, D. H. and Larsen, J. A. Direct Social Work Practice. Homewood, Illinois: The Dorsey Press, 1982.

Garvin, C. D. and Seabury, B. A. Interpersonal Practice in Social Work: Processes and Procedures. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1984.

Acosta, F. A. Yamamoto, J. and Evans, L. A. Effective Psychotherapy for Low Income and Minority Patients. New York: Plenum Press, 1982.

**APPENDIX**  
**Course Syllabus**

**UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK  
COURSE SYLLABUS**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

Herman Curiel, Ph.D.  
Ella Euwing, M.S.W.

Spring, 1984

**I. Course Description:**

A. Title: Cultural Diversity and the Helping Process  
SWK 4323

B. Catalog Description:

Prerequisite: Open to social work majors and to others with permission of instructor. Study of the dynamic relationships between culture, ethnic minority status, and varied adaptations to majority cultural norms with emphasis on how social workers can recognize and respect cultural differences and adjust their intervention approaches.

**II. Purpose Statement:**

When minorities depend on the dominant society for survival needs, the conflicts in cultural values frequently present monumental problems for the providers as well as the recipients of social services. The purpose of this course is to provide students with knowledge and skills that will increase their understanding of ethnic-racial minority persons' world view and how this has implications for social service care providers. The course will focus on majority-minority group relations issues that impact on the four major ethnic-racial minority groups identified by the President's Commission on Mental Health (vol. II, 1978), i.e. American-Indians, Asian-Americans, American-Blacks and Hispanic-Americans.

**III. Educational Outcomes:**

As measures of satisfactory performance in meeting the objectives of this course, students will be able to:

1. identify and contrast the concepts of culture, ethnicity, race, minority status, assimilation and acculturation.
2. identify a minimum of four common attributes that distinguish the four ethnic/racial groups which are the focus of this course from majority individuals, e.g. racial characteristics.
3. identify a minimum of three characteristic value norm variations associated with individuals and groups identified in this course, e.g. emphasis on family group.
4. list a minimum of three societal benefits to a society that stresses cultural pluralism; three benefits to a society that stresses the "melting pot" ideology.

5. identify a minimum of two indicators of how urbanization, migration and discrimination practices have effected both minority and majority communities.
6. list a minimum of three ways in which a social agency can strengthen its position in serving ethnic/ racial minority clients.
7. identify a minimum of four scholarly journal sources on American ethnic/racial minority groups identified in this course.
8. identify and write a summary on a minimum of five scholarly articles that address issues that impact professional practice with minority groups identified.
9. write a two page critique-book report on one of the identified groups.

#### IV. Integration of Specific Content Areas

The emphasis on this course is on examining the various cultural conflicts experienced by ethnic/racial minority individuals and families in adapting to mainstream American lifestyles. To limit the scope of the content, the focus is limited to examining issues pertaining to the four ethnic/racial groups designated as "special populations" by the 1978 President's Commission on Mental Health (Vol. II, 1978). Content on other oppressed minority groups such as women, ageism and sexual preference are examined in light of how the identified ethnic/racial groups address these within group differences.

The student is exposed to anthropological and sociological concepts that address cultural change and types of cultural adaptation that are chosen by individuals and groups in response to cultural contact. Acosta's et. al's self programed text provides the student case examples that illustrate how knowledge of minority clients' culture enhances the position of the care provider.

#### V. Common Texts:

##### Required:

Acosta, F. X., Yamamoto, J.: & Evans, L. A. Effective Psychotherapy for Low Income and Minority Patients. New York: Plenum Press, 1982.

Blalock, H. M. Jr. Race and Ethnic Relations. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1982.

Green, J. W. Cultural Awareness in the Human Services, Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1982.

##### Recommended:

Rodriguez, R., Hunger of Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez. N. Y.: Bantam Windstone Books, 1982.

**Recommended Reading:**

**Task Panel Reports Submitted to the President's Commission on Mental Health. Volume III, Special Populations (see reports on Asian/Pacific Americans) Washington D. C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1978.**

**Recommended Journal Readings:**

**Journal of Social Service Review - University of Chicago Press**  
**Social Casework, Family Service Association of America**  
**Social Work, National Association of Social Workers**  
**American Journal of Sociology, University of Chicago Press**  
**Journal of Ethnic Studies**  
**Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Science - University of California at Los Angeles**

**VI. Major Divisions:**

- A. Introduction and Overview
- B. Definitions and Key Concepts
- C. Majority Cultural Norms and Issues of Power
- D. Asian/Pacific Americans
- E. American-Indians
- F. Black-Americans
- G. Hispanic-Americans

**VII. Teaching and Learning Methods:**

The course will utilize lecture and discussion methods. Students are expected to read extensively to familiarize themselves with the literature on ethnic/racial minorities that has relevance for either micro or macro social work practice. In addition to text assigned readings students are expected to submit evidence of supplemental readings in the form of a brief written summary and a class report. The subject matter must support the current class theme. Films, guest speakers and case materials will be used to support the subject matter.

**VIII. Methods of Evaluation:**

The instructor employs a standard of performance based on satisfactory achievement of the course's objectives as the basis of a grade of B (80-90 percent performance level). Exceeding this standard, is basis for a grade of A and performance less than this standard, is basis for a grade of C or below.

Grading will be based on the weighting of the following:

- 1. Performance on midterm and final exams.....50%
- 2. Performance on written assignments.....50%
- 3. Class attendance and participation.....25%

Late assignments are subject to a lower grade. Students have the opportunity to evaluate the instructor and the course operationalization of identified objectives.