

Reflections of a Multicultural Counseling Course: A Qualitative Study with Counseling Students and Counselors*

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Abstract

The present study aimed to examine the contributions of a single multicultural counseling course designed with experiential learning strategies on multicultural awareness and knowledge competencies and the reflections of the training on the counselors' social and vocational life after graduation. For this purpose, two studies were conducted. In the first study, the contributions of the multicultural counseling course on thirty senior counseling students' multicultural competencies were examined through students' reflection papers collected during the course. In the second study, after fifteen months of their graduations, those counseling students who had participated in the first study were contacted through an online survey to examine the durability of the course's outcomes. In the present study, qualitative research design was used, and the data were analyzed through content analysis. According to the results, the multicultural counseling course contributed to counseling students' multicultural awareness and knowledge, and it was furthermore observed that after fifteen months, the counselors were able both to deal with the challenges of their new social and work environments and cope with ensuing difficulties. The findings of the study were discussed under the light of the literature and suggestions for further studies were provided.

Key Words

Experiential Strategies, Multicultural Awareness, Multicultural Counseling Course, Multicultural Knowledge, Undergraduate Counseling Program.

Multiculturalism has demonstrating its ubiquitous influence over the last decades. The reflections of these influences in the area of counseling have been observed mainly in the provision of counseling services. Providing counseling services to clients of different cultural backgrounds has required extra competencies beyond basic counseling competencies. As a result of this necessity, the American Counseling Association mandated that multicultural counseling competencies training

and counselor program curricula be integrated with multicultural counseling courses (Utsey, Gernat, & Bolden, 2003 as cited in Chae, Foley, & Chae, 2006).

Briefly, while multicultural counseling competencies consist of cultural self-awareness, knowledge, and skills, a culturally competent counselor acquires these competencies in order to work both effectively and ethically with different cultural groups (Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992). As Hill (2003) has mentioned, the integration of

* A part of the present study (Study I) was presented in XI. National Guidance and Counseling Conference, İzmir, Turkey, 3-5 October 2011.

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these competencies into counseling programs has become a local point of counseling programs. For this aim, various multicultural models have been designed (e.g. LaFromboise & Foster, 1992; Ridley, Mendoza, & Kanitz, 1994). Among the models, three prominent ones have emerged: (1) separate course; (2) integration and infusion; and (3) area of concentration (Chae et al., 2006). Among these multicultural training models, the separate course model is the one most commonly used. In this model, one or more courses are added to the program's training curriculum in which these courses are designed to promote trainee competence in cross-cultural counseling (Ridley et al., 1994). Although such courses do not provide sufficient opportunities for counseling students to experience their competencies with actual culturally different clients, it has been observed that students are encouraged to place greater value and consideration on cultural-racial, gender, and class differences as a result of integrating such courses into counseling programs (D'Andrea & Daniels, 1991, p. 82).

According to a review study regarding multicultural counselor training in a single course, the results of the studies (e.g. Castillo, Brossart, Reyes, Coneley, & Phoummarath, 2007; Murphy, Park, & Londsedale, 2006; Neville Heppner, Louie, Brooks & Baker, 1996; Seto, Young, Becker, & Kiselica, 2006) indicated that a single multicultural counseling course positively affects variables related to multicultural competence (Malott, 2010). In other words, trainees gain multicultural counseling competencies following such courses. In the success of the single course model, the design of the courses also plays a critical role.

In many of the multicultural courses, didactic instruction, including course readings and student presentations, seems to be common (Thomlison-Clarke, 2000). In addition to the more traditional didactic activities, experiential teaching strategies; including multicultural genograms, films, journaling, and games, have also been proposed for inclusion (Chae et al., 2006; Kim, & Lyons, 2003; Vazques, & Garcia-Vazques, 2003). According to a relatively recent study (Priester et al., 2008), experiential teaching strategies have also gained attention by counseling instructors. In a study that reviewed 64 syllabi of introductory multicultural counseling training courses, some of the teaching strategies commonly used were found to be journal writing, cultural-examination paper, reaction paper to a book or film, class presentations, and interviews with a member of a different cultural

group. As Constantine, Miville and Kindaichi (2008) indicated, experiential training activities make a great deal of intuitive sense. Similarly, according to Arthur and Achenbach (2002), just as experiential learning encourages students to consider what cultural contexts may influence their own behavior, attitudes, and beliefs, so may it provoke them to be more reflective about the impact on their professional role.

As all over the world, multicultural counseling has become an issue of interest in Turkey (e.g. Bektaş, 2006, 2007, 2009; Erdur Baker, 2007; Kağnıcı, 2011; Karairmak, 2008; Koç, 2003). However, the number of studies conducted is very limited and multicultural counseling training has yet to be included in the counseling programs, with the exception of a select few programs. In this regard, according to D'Andrea and Daniels' (1991) classification, it can be said that the counseling programs in Turkey are still at the *cultural encapsulation level* in which counselor educators hold the belief that the basic therapeutic skills are enough in working with all kinds of client profiles. However, as mentioned above, there are few counseling programs that include multicultural counseling training in their curricula. In one of these programs; that is the present study was conducted, the multicultural counseling course is an elective in its undergraduate counseling curriculum. As in other countries, it is aimed that multicultural counseling competencies be provided with a single course model designed with experiential learning at its core. The results of the only study conducted in Turkey examining the effectiveness of the multicultural counseling training in terms of multicultural competencies has demonstrated that the course was effective in teaching multicultural counseling competencies. Moreover, the role of experiential instructional strategies in teaching multicultural counseling was also underscored (Kağnıcı, 2011). Since, in Turkey, graduates of undergraduate counseling programs work as counselors in different settings without a graduate degree, it is believed that counselor candidates should be introduced to multicultural competencies during their undergraduate education. Therefore, research studies concerning multicultural counseling training have become critically essential in Turkey, just as they are in other countries.

Present Study

Studies examining the effectiveness of multicultural training on multicultural counseling competencies have found that training has a positive effect

(Castillo et al., 2007). However, as can be observed from Mallott's (2010) study, most of such studies are not longitudinal and follow-up studies have not been conducted. It can be argued that in multicultural counseling courses, counseling students are mainly introduced to multicultural counseling concepts, becoming familiar with those competencies generally considered to be part of the cognitive domain. However, counseling

students also have a critical need for actual cultural contact experiences in order to test their behaviors in real-life settings. In other words, there is a need to understand whether they are able to use these competencies when challenged with clients of different cultural backgrounds and with environments different than their own cultural norms. Therefore, in the present study, it has been aimed to examine both the contributions of

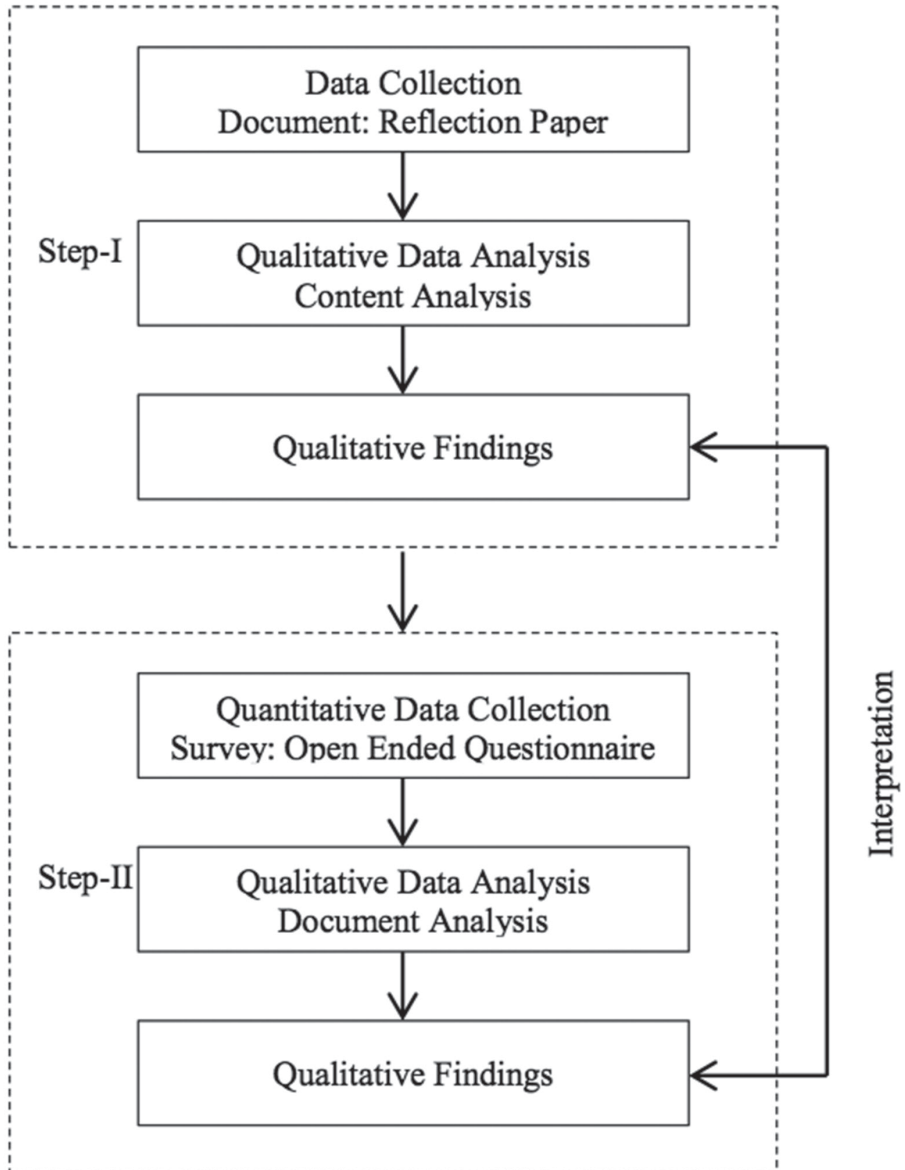


Figure 1.
Design of the Study's

a multicultural course on multicultural awareness and on knowledge as well as to gather students' reflections of the course post-graduation. For these purposes, the present study has sought to answer the following research question:

"What are the contributions of a multicultural counseling course designed with various experiential strategies on senior counseling students' multicultural awareness and multicultural knowledge and what are the reflections of the training on the counselors' social and vocational life after graduation?"

Method

Design

In the present study, a sequential exploratory strategy; that is, a mixed methods approach, was used (Cresswell, 2003). The findings of these two phases were integrated during the interpretation phase. Figure 1 presents the design of the study.

Procedure

In the present study, two studies were conducted sequentially. The data of the first study were collected during the multicultural counseling course through senior counseling students' reflection papers. The students were informed about the research at the beginning of the course during which they were asked to participate in the study. All the students in the course volunteered to participate in the study. After fifteen months of their graduation, they were contacted through an exploratory e-mail about the study which included a link to an online survey and were asked to participate in the second study.

Multicultural Counseling Course

The course was taught during the 2010-2011 spring semester as an elective course. The course was improved based on the findings of the current researcher's previous study (Kağnıcı, 2011). The students met once a week for three hours for 15 weeks. The main purpose of the semester-long course was to expose students to multicultural awareness and to the knowledge that is found in the majority of the multicultural counseling courses taught elsewhere in the world (Priester et al., 2008). The content of the course included five areas: (1) definition of culture; (2); cultural variety of Turkey; (3) the acculturation process mainly psychological adaptation model (Berry, 1997); (4) the historical development and current status of multicultural

counseling; and (5) multicultural training, including theories (e.g. Theory of Multicultural Counseling and Therapy; Culture-Centered Counseling) and training models (e.g. Triad Model). The course outline is presented in Table 1.

Table 1.
Course Outline

Week	Content	Process
1-2	Concept of Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Lecture ✓ Preparing and Presenting Cultural Genogram ✓ Reflection Paper ✓ Class Discussions
3-4	Cultural Variety in Turkey <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Being Armenian, Alaouite, Kurd, Ezidis, Laz, Romen, Suriyani, transsexual and women in Turkey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Literature Review and Reading ✓ Group Presentation
5	Cultural Contact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Berry's Acculturation Framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Game ✓ Reflection Paper ✓ Lecture ✓ Class Discussions
6-7	Culture and Counseling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Limitations of Contemporary Counseling Theories in terms of Multicultural Counseling ✓ Assumptions of Multicultural Counseling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Lecture ✓ Article Reading ✓ Article Review ✓ Class Discussions
8-14	Multicultural Counselor Training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Multicultural Counseling Competencies ✓ Theories (Theory of Multicultural Counseling and Therapy; Culture-Centered Counseling), models (Triad Model) and Research in Multicultural Counseling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Lecture ✓ Article Reading ✓ Article Review ✓ Class Discussions

Experiential activities, reaction papers, class discussions, written assignments, presentations, and lectures were among the various instructional strategies used. The main experiential activities used in the course were cultural genogram and game. Selecting experiential learning exercises requires considering the purpose and its ability to be linked to the development of a specific area of multicultural counseling competence (Arthur & Achenbach, 2002). The main improvement of the present study was localizing multiculturalism through student presentations. The presentation topics included "Being Armenian, Alaouite, Kurd, Ezidis, Laz, Romen, Suriyani, transsexual, and women in Turkey."

Participants

Participants of Study I: The participants of the study were 30 undergraduate senior counseling

students enrolled in an undergraduate counseling program at a large university located in western Turkey. Of the 30 students, 20 were female and 10 were male.

Participants of Study II: Of the 30 counseling students who had participated in the first study, 21 were contacted using the researcher's contact list 15 months after their graduation. The other students were neither in touch with the researcher nor with their former classmates. Twenty-one graduates were contacted through e-mail and invited to participate to the study through an online survey. Of the 21 graduates, 17 participated in the study, making a return rate of 78%. According to the demographic results of the study, most of the counselors were appointed to different geographical regions, as was anticipated by the researcher. The counselors were located mainly in the Marmara region (24%), Aegean region (24%), Southeastern regions (24%), and Central Anatolia region (13%). Of the 17 counselors, 88% were working in schools as school counselors. Most of the counselors (38%) had been working for 10-12 months, followed by 7-9 months (29%). Most of the counselors (57%) were appointed to a city in which they had neither lived nor visited.

Data Collection Instruments

Data Collection Instruments of Study I: The data were collected by students' reflection papers, as is commonly the case in psychology courses on multiculturalism (Preister, 2001 as cited in Mio & Barker-Hackett, 2003). As Gorman (1998) has indicated, reaction papers provide students the opportunity to express their personal experiences and beliefs and to enhance their level of self-knowledge and awareness. Therefore, in the present study, the data were collected by the students' reflection papers. The students were informed that they would be required to write two reflection papers during the first class of the course. The first reflection paper revolved around students' experiences about the cultural genogram and student presentations whereas the second paper aimed to gauge students' perceptions about the game. Both reflection papers were written immediately after each experiential strategy. The reflection papers were structured as follows:

Reflection paper 1:

- "The experience of students while preparing their cultural genogram"

- "The experience of students when they presented their cultural genograms in the class"
- "The experience of students while preparing their presentations"
- "The experience of students when they presented their topics in the class"

Reflection paper 2:

- "The experience of students in the game"

Data Collection Instruments of Study II: The data of Study 2 were collected through an online survey developed by the researcher. The survey included 12 questions (both open ended and multiple choice questions) regarding the counselors' experiences in their new settings. Of the 12 questions asked, four questions consisted of demographic information, such as counselors' institutions or length of their work experience. One question was concerned with the strategies used in the multicultural counseling course while the other questions revolved around counselors' experiences in their new environment. Sample questions were: (1) "Have you been in the city that you are working currently before?" with the follow up question: "(If your answer is no) what did you experience during your adjustment period?" and (2) "Have you worked with different client groups" with the follow up question: "(If your answer is yes), what did you experience in your helping relationship?" Demographics data were also collected through the survey.

Reliability and Validity Studies

In order to verify the external reliability of the study, both the participants and the data collection instruments were described in as much detail as possible. For the internal validity of the study, consistency was achieved during the data collection, data analysis, and data interpretation processes. In order to achieve consistency during data collection, coding, conceptualizing the meaningful data units, and relating these to the findings during the data analysis process were strategies mentioned in the literature that were followed. Moreover, researcher variation was used in order to verify the findings of the study. Another researcher, himself with a Ph.D. and who is specialized in educational sciences and qualitative research, participated in the data analysis process. For the external validity of the study, the research design, data collection procedure, data collection instruments, data analysis, interpretation of data, and organization of the findings were described in detail. The researcher of the present

study actively participated as the instructor of the course during Study I and as a researcher with an objective point of view throughout the entire process during Study II.

Data Analysis

In order to test the research question, content analysis was used. A qualitative data set was created by combining participants' reflection papers for the first study and by combining participants' survey results for the second study. For the first study, in order to eliminate ethical problems, participants were coded. For the second study the participants' names were not asked. The participants were informed about the confidentiality of their responses. For both of the studies, the data set was continuously read by the researcher during which a draft coding list was formed. By this draft coding list, qualitative data were coded. During the draft coding, possible themes were created. After defining certain themes and the codes under these themes, the researcher conducted a new coding system based on this theme-code relationship. The researcher then shared the themes and codes with the other researcher. Later, both researchers came together and discussed the codes, themes, and their possible conflicts. For the second study, percentiles regarding the sample were also reported.

Results

The content analysis results of the first study indicated three main themes, a) cultural awareness, b) cultural knowledge, and c) parental inclusion. Table 2 presents the themes and codes of Study I.

Table 2.
Themes and Codes of Study I

Themes and Codes	f
Cultural awareness	
<i>Prejudgments</i>	8
<i>Self-awareness</i>	16
<i>Respect to diversity</i>	17
Cultural knowledge	
<i>Being knowledgeable about other cultures</i>	25
<i>Gaining knowledge about one's own culture</i>	20
<i>Understanding the role of culture in the counseling process</i>	3
Family inclusion	11

Under *cultural awareness* theme, three main codes emerged; *prejudgments* ($n = 8$), *self-awareness* ($n = 16$), and *respect to diversity* ($n = 17$). Regarding *prejudgments*, students indicated that they explored their prejudgments, that they challenged their prejudgments in order to develop more positive

attitudes. A student wrote that:

“I asked myself why I had never wondered or researched about this culture although I knew that this culture has been living in this land for a long time. Society has held prejudgments about this culture, I guess I have, too. Although I do feel a since of shame for doing this so late, I finally did some research about this culture, challenging myself about my prejudgments. If this presentation had not been given, maybe I would have lived my entire life with misconceptions and prejudgments.”

In terms of *self-awareness*, students indicated that they questioned their personally held beliefs, that they were confronted with their selves, and that they began to be more careful and skeptical about how realistic their prejudgments were. A student indicated that:

“This course provided me with the chance to be aware of my taboos, to confront myself, and to correct my false information that I had believed to be true.”

Students mentioned that they understood that each culture is unique, that people should be *respectful* toward each culture, and the importance of cherishing all cultures. One of the students wrote the following, “I realized how important it is for people of different cultures to only expect respect for their cultural characteristics.” Moreover, most students underlined a number of emotions related with the process of becoming aware of other cultures and their realities. The main emotions experienced by the students while they questioned their own biases were those of shame and strain.

Under *knowledge* theme, three codes emerged; *being knowledgeable about other cultures* ($n = 25$), *gaining knowledge about one's own culture* ($n = 20$), and *understanding the role of culture in the counseling process* ($n = 3$). Students mentioned that they understood the role of geographical environment, similarities and differences among cultures, that they corrected their false information regarding different cultural backgrounds, and learned about new cultural backgrounds. One of the students indicated, “For the first time I was given the chance to learn about the various cultures of Turkey in detail.” In terms of *gaining knowledge about one's own cultural backgrounds*, students indicated that they had gained new information about their own cultural backgrounds and that they had the opportunity to appraise their parental relationships. One of the students mentioned

that, "I have realized that I didn't know most of my father's relatives." Students also indicated that they understood the effect of culture in counseling process. Finally, those emotions related with the knowledge process were astonishment, excitement, and enjoyment.

The third theme of the present study, *family inclusion* ($n = 11$), was an unintended outcome of the course. Although including parents in the curriculum was an intended outcome of the educators, it was not one of the specific aims of the course. Students indicated that their cultural genogram preparations resulted in family unions. The exercises provided family members the opportunity to come together and remember their ancestors, talk about their customs that had almost forgotten, and build ties with their memories. One student mentioned:

"Everybody in my family was excited about this project. My father even went to the birth registration office to find out our records."

While another student wrote:

"My grandfather told me all the memories that he could remember. I had fun while preparing my family tree and I enjoyed it, but I guess the happiest one of all was my grandfather."

Another student wrote:

"I listened to the memories about my background and I videotaped all of it. The most amazing moment was the time when I showed my records to my family members, I saw true happiness in their eyes."

In the second study, the role of multicultural counseling training on counselors' social and vocational life was examined indirectly from whose results, three main themes emerged: a) challenges, b) feelings, and c) coping in counselors' adaptation process. Table 3 presents the themes and codes of Study II.

Table 3.
Themes and Codes of Study II

Themes and Codes	f
Challenges	
<i>Challenges in the social environment</i>	7
<i>Challenges in the work environment</i>	18
Feelings	
<i>Feeling about one's new environment</i>	13
<i>Feelings about counseling culturally different clients</i>	8
Coping	10
<i>Multicultural competencies</i>	7
<i>Social support</i>	

Of the 17 counselors, 12 counselors mentioned that they experienced difficulties adapting to their environment at the beginning but that they managed to deal with the difficulties over time. Under the *challenges* theme, two main codes emerged, a) *challenges in the social environment* and b) *challenges in the work environment*. In terms of *challenges in the social environment*, counselors ($n = 7$) mentioned that they had difficulty adapting to smaller, more conservative cities which had limited social opportunities. Counselors mentioned that they had difficulties even in daily issues such as leasing an apartment as a single individual, communicating with the opposite sex, and what style of dress one should wear. One of the counselors indicated that:

"Coming from a city which has many social opportunities to a city that I cannot even walk on the streets relaxed was very devastating."

Another counselor indicated that:

"I had difficulty in leasing an apartment. The city has a nature that does not want to lease an apartment to single. Again because of the conservative nature of the city I couldn't wear shorts during summer."

In terms of *challenges in the work environment*, counselors mentioned that they had experienced problems with school administrators ($n = 7$), teachers ($n = 8$), and parents ($n = 3$). The problems experienced with the school administration were mentioned as extra work loads, paper work, work unrelated with their job description, and the physical conditions of the school. Problems experienced with teachers were their false expectations about counseling and their negative perceptions about counselors. Problems experienced with parents included their conservative attitude and their lack of open-mindedness. One of the counselors mentioned that:

"According to me, my major challenge is the unrealistic expectations of the counseling service [held by others]. Many teachers think that I have a magic stick or that I have magic powers."

Under the *feelings* themes, two codes emerged a) *feelings about one's new environment* and b) *feelings about counseling culturally different clients*. Feelings about one's new environment were mentioned as: feeling out of place ($n = 2$), finding things odd ($n = 2$), feeling restricted ($n = 4$), burnout ($n = 2$), and the desire to give up ($n = 3$), whereas *feelings about counseling culturally different clients* were mentioned as: feeling inadequate ($n = 3$), burnout

($n = 3$), despair ($n = 1$), and feeling helpful ($n = 1$). One of the counselors mentioned that:

“I didn’t know what to do. Because of the training sessions, I couldn’t go out of the city. I was completely depressed. I ate a lot, especially deserts. I gained 6 kg.”

Another counselor mentioned that:

“Although it is my first year in the profession, I think that I can provide helpful services to my clients. However, feelings and thoughts of being inadequate are very bad.”

Under the *coping* theme, two codes emerged: a) *multicultural competencies* and b) *social support*. It was ascertained that counselors had managed to adapt to their new environments by using their multicultural competencies and developing social networks.

In terms of *multicultural competencies* ($n = 10$), it was found that counselors used these competencies both in their social environment and in their counseling processes. Multicultural competencies used in their social environments were *multicultural awareness* and *multicultural knowledge*. The counselors mentioned that they tried to understand the culture of the new environment, observe cultural factors, and try to adapt to cultural issues.

“There is a very different culture here compared to where I had grown up. These differences, and the culture in general, affected me at the beginning. Of course I found them, their language, and their traditions odd, but I also found them attractive. I investigated the culture and tried to understand it.”

Multicultural competencies used in the counseling processes were *multicultural awareness* and *multicultural knowledge*. In terms of multicultural awareness, counselors mentioned that they were able to see the cultural differences, normalize these differences, and accept their clients as they were. In terms of *multicultural knowledge*, counselors mentioned that they had tried to learn more about their cultural backgrounds, investigate their cultures, and do personal research about them. One of the counselors mentioned that:

“At the beginning, because I was different from them, I thought that I was not helpful. When I started to learn about their lives and opportunities, I figured out how to be helpful to them.”

Under the theme of *social support*, it was found that making friends in their new social environment

and in their new work environment eased counselors’ adaptation process ($n = 4$). In the work environment, building relationship with other counselors with whom they could seek personal consultation was mentioned as a resource ($n = 3$). One of the counselors mentioned: “Having a good friendship environment eased my adaptation process.”

Finally, for this study, counselors were also asked to evaluate their experiences in the multicultural counseling course and indicate the most influential strategies as much as they were able to remember. All the participants indicated that the course had a positive impact on their counseling processes and presentations ($n = 8$), experiential game ($n = 3$), and article reviews ($n = 2$) were mentioned as the most influential strategies used.

Discussion

The aim of the present study was to investigate the contributions of a single multicultural course on multicultural awareness and knowledge as well as to collect students’ reflections of the course after having graduated. According to the results of the initial study, the experiential learning oriented multicultural counseling course contributed to counseling students’ multicultural awareness and knowledge. As an interesting finding of the initial study, the course was also found to have an indirect effect on counseling students’ families. Inclusion of families in students’ cultural genogram activity resulted in family union. The finding might underline the role of the cultural environment in which such training activities are carried out. Since in Turkey the concept of family is highly valued and strong relations with family members are commonly observed, the finding might be observed as an anticipated outcome in further studies. However, more research findings are needed to test this assumption. According to the result of the second study, multicultural awareness and knowledge competencies were used as a means to cope by counselors while they dealt with new personal and professional challenges in their social and vocational life in their new culturally different settings.

In brief, the present study indicated that a single multicultural counseling course contributed to multicultural awareness and knowledge. When the literature is reviewed, the findings of the study were found to be parallel with other studies (Castillo et al., 2007; Kağnıcı, 2011; Murphy et al., 2006; Neville

et al., 1996; Seto et al., 2006). Even more, the follow up study underlined that the gains of the course had been sustained. This finding was also parallel with the study of Neville et al. (1996). In their study, which had been conducted after a 1 year follow-up period, the results demonstrated that multicultural competencies had been sustained.

Counselor educators display great effort in training as competent counselors as possible by using every available means. The literature on how to teach multicultural counseling competencies has been expanding every day. As mentioned above, there was a need to determine whether counseling students would be able to benefit from these competencies when faced with challenges based on cultural differences and unfamiliar environments. The findings of the second study are important that all of these efforts might result in positive outcomes in counselors' lives after graduation. In the present study, those counselors working as school counselors in culturally different settings were able to use their competencies as a means to cope when challenged with culturally different clients and environments.

As in the other studies mentioned above, experiential learning activities were the type mainly used in the multicultural course. The role of using experiential learning activities in multicultural counseling training has been underlined more than once in the present study. In other words, the results supported the literature's finding that experiential training is effective (Constantine et al., 2008; Kim & Lyons, 2003; Villalba, & Remond, 2008) in multicultural counseling training. After fifteen months of being graduated, the most influential strategies remembered by the participants were found to be experiential games and presentations.

Implications, Future Research and Limitations

The present study has a number of implications both for counseling training and for future research. In terms of training, in those countries whose counseling education is provided during the undergraduate level, it seems important to integrate multicultural counseling training

into counseling curricula. As supported by the literature, designing such courses with experiential strategies seems to have a positive effect on gaining multicultural competencies. Therefore, counselor trainers are recommended to include different experiential strategies in their courses. Besides the experiential strategies mentioned in the present study, other strategies, such as cultural immersion (Alexander, Kruczek, & Ponterot, 2005; Canfield, Low, & Hovenstadt, 2009; Tomlinson-Clarke & Clarke, 2010), role playing (Rapisarda, Jencius, & McGlothlin, 2011), and interactive drama (Tromski & Doston, 2003), all which seem to have a positive effect on gaining and honing one's multicultural counseling competences, may be used by trainers.

As mentioned in the previous study (Kağnıcı, 2011) conducted in Turkey, efforts for the localization of multiculturalism provided a positive outcome. Students' presentations about the different cultural groups within Turkey were found to be the most effective learning strategy by the counseling students. Therefore, for international counselor educators, it would appear important to integrate their own multicultural groups into their curriculum besides those multicultural groups mainly mentioned in the United States or in current publications regarding multicultural counseling.

In terms of future studies, since studies supported by follow-up studies are limited, as Manese, Wu, and Nepomuceno (2001) mentioned, it seems important that the researchers conduct longitudinal studies to determine whether multicultural competency remains stable or whether it changes in individuals over time. Moreover, mixed research methods are believed to be more useful in gaining deeper information about the effectiveness of such training programs (Mallott, 2010).

The present study also has its own limitations. One of the limitations is the elective nature of the multicultural counseling course. Students' willingness to take the course and their early registration behavior might be a sign of their multicultural awareness. The second limitation is the sample size of the second study, as all the participants in the first the study were not able to be reached for the second study.

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