Service Learning in Human Development: Promoting Social Justice Perspectives in Counseling

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The focus on human development is foundational to the field of counseling, with its importance codified in guiding documents and frameworks, such as the American Counseling Association's Code of Ethics (2014). Many developmental theories have been established using single-gender or single-culture groups, yet they claim universal application to all humans. Although counseling students must learn these theories because of accreditation standards and licensure requirements, counselor educators need to prepare students for practice in a multicultural world. Counselors are now called to act as social justice advocates, and teaching strategies are needed to prepare students for this role. This study's focus is on the use of service learning with community counseling students in a human development course. Results from a content analysis demonstrate how service learning enhances learning and broadens students' perceptions of themselves, others, and social justice in counseling. Findings indicate a shift in participants' perception of social justice in counseling.

Keywords: **service learning, social justice, human development, developmental theories, content analysis**

Distinct from the medical model that underlies psychology, the field of counseling has historically focused on developmental processes as the foundation to understanding what makes human life function well (Brady-Amoon, 2011; Kraus, 2008; Lewis, 2011; Stennbarger & LeClair, 1995). These processes of development are explained through theories about learning, normal personality development, and individual and family development, among others (Council for the Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs [CACREP], 2015). The American Counseling Association (ACA) identified "enhancing human development throughout the lifespan" as the first core value of the counseling profession (2014, p. 3). Further, human development has been established as one of eight knowledge areas by CACREP (2015), the national accrediting body for counselor education programs. Additionally, standardized tests, such as the National Counselor Examination for Licensure and Certification, require students to demonstrate mastery of studies that provide an understanding of the nature and needs of individuals at all developmental levels (National Board for Certified Counselors [NBCC], 2015).

Although understanding and promoting healthy human development across the lifespan are central themes in counselor education, there are critiques of the study of human development (Brady-Amoon, 2011). Many theories and models of human development reflect middle-class, Caucasian-American value systems and culture (Brady-Amoon, 2011; Broderick & Blewitt, 2015; Dixon, 2001; Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010), and thus lack utility in developing both a robust and a nuanced understanding of groups who are outside of this demographic. Broderick and Blewitt (2015) stated that there is a "growing concern that traditional theories are insufficient to explain development because they are biased in favor of single-culture or single-gender models" (p. 351). The role of culture in human development is crucial to consider (Rogoff, 2003), yet many theories consider culture an extraneous variable. Systematic misapplication of theories designed for the dominant population may not adequately account for the accepted indicators of development for diverse cultural and societal contexts (Broderick & Blewitt, 2015;

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Dixon, 2001; Kraus, 2008). Recognizing challenges in applying developmental theories to diverse populations is critical for counselors who promote social justice in counseling and in society (Kiselica & Robinson, 2001; MacLeod, 2013).

The Movement Toward a Social Justice Perspective in Counseling

Counselors have a unique position as frontline witnesses to how social inequities impact clients. Individual, couples, family, and group counseling are critical in helping clients in non-dominant groups navigate and survive systems of oppression and opportunity. However, these modalities of counseling may not be sufficient to prevent or meaningfully address mental health issues that have systemic causes (Toporek, Gerstein, Fouad, Roysircar, & Israel, 2006). The recognition for the need to adjust counseling approaches to work with issues of healthy human development in a pluralistic society has contributed to the growth of the social justice movement within the field of counseling (Ratts & Wood, 2011). At times identified as the "fifth force" (Ratts, 2009) in counseling, the social justice perspective not only addresses the individual needs of clients, but also seeks to change systems that inhibit human development for oppressed groups. Counselors are challenged to determine how to balance individual counseling interventions with advocacy interventions on local, state, or national levels. A social justice approach to counseling emphasizes the importance of healthy human development for individuals and social groups and necessitates a broader array of skills, knowledge, and perspectives, including advocacy skills (Bemak & Chung, 2011; Brady-Amoon, 2011; Lewis, 2011; Ratts, 2009).

Acceptance of the social justice counseling perspective is evidenced by its codification in important documents that guide many practitioners and educators in the field of counseling. In the preamble to the 2014 Code of Ethics, ACA identified "promoting social justice" (p. 3) as a core principle. Ethical counselors are called to "advocate at individual, group, institutional, and societal levels to address potential barriers and obstacles that inhibit access and/or the growth and development of clients" (2014, p. 5). In 2003, ACA endorsed the Advocacy Competencies (Lewis, Arnold, House, & Toporek, 2002), a document that describes skills and activities for counselor advocacy. Additionally, the 2016 CACREP standards call for preparation of counselors in "advocacy processes needed to address institutional and social barriers that impede access, equity, and success for clients" (2015, p. 10). These documents provide evidence that segments of the profession of counseling, particularly some counselor education programs, are embracing a social justice perspective that can be enacted through counselor advocacy.

Although many counselors may want to advocate for marginalized populations, they may not be comfortable doing so or they may not know how (West-Olatunji, 2010). Further, it is unclear whether counselor educators are adequately preparing students with the skills necessary to practice from a social justice perspective upon graduation (Bemak & Chung, 2011; Constantine, Hage, Kindaichi, & Bryant, 2007). Preparing counselors with effective and culturally relevant advocacy skills for work in today's pluralistic society requires that counselor educators rethink historically used teaching methods (Brady-Amoon, Makhija, Dixit, & Dator, 2012; Burnett, Long, & Horne, 2005; Herlihy & Watson, 2007; Hoover & Morrow, 2016; Manis, 2012). Rethinking traditional teaching methods and curricula is particularly important for courses such as human development, which have traditionally focused on universalist theories established using single-gender or single-culture groups (Broderick & Blewitt, 2015). However, for the foreseeable future students will be required to demonstrate their mastery of these traditional theories on licensing exams (NBCC, 2015). To meet the dual challenge of preparing students for licensure and preparing them for practice in a pluralistic society, new teaching

approaches are needed. The role of social justice advocacy has been conceptualized as central for counselors (Chang, Crethar, & Ratts, 2010; Lewis, Lewis, Daniels, & D'Andrea, 1998), yet few studies have demonstrated how to prepare students for this role.

Service Learning: A Pedagogy for Counselor Education

Defining Service Learning

Teaching that is active, experiential, and addresses real-world problems is needed to meet the call to prepare students as social justice advocates in the context of rapidly changing and diversifying demographics (Bemak, Chung, Talleyrand, Jones, & Daquin, 2011; Constantine et al., 2007; Manis, 2012). As an experiential teaching strategy that combines academic content learned in the classroom with activities in the community that address "human and community needs" (Jacoby, 2015, p. 6), service learning provides a potential avenue for more adequately preparing counseling students for work in today's pluralistic society.

Although similar to experiential learning, service learning has a set of characteristics that make it distinct from internships and volunteerism (Furco, 2002). With an emphasis on collaboration with community partners (CPs) who represent historically marginalized communities, all participants enter the service-learning experience as learners and as contributors. Community members and students benefit from a collaborative learning partnership through which a solution to a community-articulated problem is developed (Warter & Grossman, 2002).

Service learning can take two forms: placement-based and project-based. Placement-based service learning usually involves a requirement for students to spend a set number of hours at a community organization where a student completes agreed-upon tasks (Parker-Gwin & Mabry, 1998). In project-based service learning, small student groups work with CP organizations on specific projects that help to meet a need or solve a community-articulated problem (Hugg & Wurdinger, 2007).

Service Learning in Counselor Education

A growing number of counselor educators have called for the use of service learning within counselor education to provide students with an avenue for understanding complex systemic social inequities (Bemak & Chung, 2011; Bemak et al., 2011; Constantine et al., 2007; Manis, 2012). Additionally, the use of service learning within counselor education has been the focus of a limited number of studies. A qualitative study by Jett and Delgado-Romero (2009) focused on the impact of using service learning with pre-practicum counseling students. Results showed that service learning "was perceived to facilitate student counselors' professional development" (p. 116) through promoting a deeper understanding of counselors' roles and contexts. Exposure to counseling environments promoted student counselors' understanding of what counseling is, as opposed to what they imagined it to be (Jett & Delgado-Romero, 2009).

Service learning also has been found to increase multicultural competencies in counseling students. In utilizing service learning in a multicultural counseling class, Burnett, Hamel, and Long (2004) found that it provided "an opportunity to build community learning and cultural sensitivity" (p. 190). They found that service learning had merit in multicultural counseling competency training and in reducing a "missionary ideology" (p. 191) in students. These results suggest that service learning can be a useful strategy for helping students understand how to advocate with and on behalf of marginalized communities. In addition, service learning may give students the opportunity to practice advocacy skills in real-world contexts.

In order to explore the relationship between service learning and students' understanding of the role of social justice advocacy in counseling, the present study documented and analyzed community counseling students' experiences in project-based service learning in a human development course in a CACREP-accredited program. The study's research question has four foci: In what ways does the use of service learning in a human development course impact students' (a) understanding of course content; (b) understanding of development of people in non-dominant populations; (c) perceptions of themselves; and (d) understanding of a social justice perspective in counseling?

Method

Description of Participants and Sampling Procedures

The study included data from 40 participants. Seventy-six percent of participants identified as female, 24% identified as male, and no participant identified as "other," an option allowing for non-binary gender identities. Participants' age range was 22 to 56 with an average age of 31, and they identified with the following race or ethnic categories: Black, 5%; Hispanic, 22%; Native American, 2%; Two or More Races, 10%; White, 49%; and No Response, 12%.

To gain a broad understanding of students' experiences, data from nearly all community counseling students (hereafter called participants) who participated in the course over four academic terms were included in the study. The data for one student was left out of the study because of participation in the research process. Each participant was in the first of a three-year community counseling program while enrolled in the course with service learning. The program was in its final cycle of CACREP re-accreditation as a community counseling program at the time the data were collected. This study was approved by its host institution's Internal Review Board.

Class as Context

Service learning is grounded in a specific "academic house" (Lee & McAdams, 2017) that informs the type of service activities. The academic house for the current research project was a course designed to meet the CACREP human growth and development curriculum requirement. Entitled Counseling Across the Lifespan, it was positioned as the first course in a three-year community counseling program located in a private, urban, medium-sized university in the northwest region of the United States. Taught over a 10-week academic term, the course utilized a text that covered theories and models of human development across the lifespan (i.e., theories of learning, personality development, cognitive development, ecological models). Course elements included reading, class lectures, small and large group discussions, papers, and quizzes. Many theories of development included in the course to help students meet the requirements of licensure were developed using a single-gender, monocultural group. To incorporate a social justice perspective, the course instructor (first author) believed it was essential for students to understand how Euro-Western theories of development may or may not apply to populations for whom they were not developed. To provide context for critical analysis of class content, students engaged in a major class project, the Developmental Service-Learning Project (DSLP).

Developmental service-learning projects. In keeping with high-quality service-learning pedagogy with a social justice focus, the DSLPs were designed in collaboration with CP organizations working with marginalized populations. The primary instructor worked with a center on campus that supported faculty in developing service-learning courses to identify potential partners whose organizations serve people across the lifespan. Project examples included needs assessments, resource manual development, and socio-emotional lesson plan development. All project ideas were suggested by CPs and planned collaboratively with the course instructor. CPs visited class to introduce their organizations and projects

to students during the second class session. Students then selected a project and met with their CPs during class time to launch the collaborative project work.

The DSLP had several requirements. For students to gain an understanding of the organization and the population with whom they were working, students visited the site under the supervision of the CP. Each project included the development of a product that could go into immediate use at the CP organizations and that would continue to benefit the site after the project ended. Students also were required to read, analyze, and report how relevant scholarly literature informed their project work. A project proposal detailing what would be accomplished during the DSLP was submitted for approval to the CP and the course instructor. Upon approval, students carried out their projects while remaining in contact with their CPs. During the study's time period, there were a total of 24 completed DSLP projects. In collaboration with CPs, students completed projects on curriculum development, program evaluations, needs assessments through focus groups and interviews, and intake process development, among others. CP organizations served individuals across the lifespan and in historically marginalized communities ranging from a program on kindergarten readiness with refugee families, to developing resources for housing for an older African immigrant community.

CPs attended the final class session for DSLP group presentations. Partners asked questions, gave verbal feedback, and completed formal written evaluations of the projects. Project groups wrote a final report for their CP detailing their work and product. Digital and physical copies of all products were given to CPs for their continued use. The last class session served to celebrate partnerships and accomplishments. After the term ended, the course instructor met with each CP to discuss the experience, solicit feedback, and plan future collaborations; several CPs collaborated on projects over multiple academic terms.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected from three sources, each a required class assignment. The first two sources were reflection papers—one written by participants at midterm, and one at the end of the term. The third assignment was a self-evaluation completed by participants at the end of the DSLP experience. Participants responded to specific prompts such as "Did your experience with the Developmental Service-Learning Project impact your comprehension of the material from the text and lectures? If so, how?" and "Through the Developmental Service-Learning Project, what did you learn about: Yourself? Your community? Working with people who may have had a different developmental trajectory than you?"

Content analysis is a qualitative methodology that can be used for analyzing and drawing meaning from large amounts of textual data. It allows for the "subjective interpretation of the content of text or data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). This methodology has been widely used in counselor education research (Avent, Wahesh, Purgason, Borders, & Mobley, 2015; Burkholder, Hall, & Burkholder, 2014; Cook, Hayden, Gracia, & Tyrrell, 2015).

Using content analysis of secondary data, researchers analyzed existing textual data collected from study participants enrolled in the course over four academic terms, for a total of 120 documents (N = 40 students with three documents each). To maintain participants' confidentiality and to minimize possible researcher bias, all identifying information was removed from the data sources by the first author prior to analysis. Each participant was assigned a numerical identifier linking them to

the course section in which they participated. These identifiers were kept in an Excel file that was password protected and was kept away from the rest of the data in order to reduce bias.

Data were analyzed in two phases to identify central themes associated with the participants' experiences and perceptions with DSLP. First, data corresponding to each of the four foci of the research question were grouped into the following a priori categories: (a) understanding of course content, (b) understanding of human development in non-dominant groups, (c) perception of self, and (d) a social justice perspective in counseling. During the second phase of analysis, data within each category were coded by meaning units, which was defined as a collection of words, sentences, or paragraphs that referred to a discrete idea. Closely related codes were collapsed into themes. Researchers used NVivo 10 (QSR International, 2012) for the coding process and to calculate interrater reliability statistics.

Trustworthiness
During the study, the researchers engaged in several strategies to ensure the study's trustworthiness. The research team consisted of the course instructor and a graduate student research assistant who was trained in the research procedures. Prior to the study's design and again before data analysis, researchers examined their potential biases. As recommended by Rossman and Rallis (2003), researchers engaged in reflexivity through writing, discussing, and revising researcher-as-instrument statements throughout the process. This process was done to bracket the researchers' beliefs and opinions to ensure that the participants' voices could be heard fairly and clearly.

Data were collected from documents that participants completed at two different points during the academic term (midterm and end of term), providing the basis of a longitudinal analysis. At the beginning of data analysis, researchers spent several hours coding data together to support shared meaning of codes and ensure credibility of the analysis. Additionally, researchers engaged in peer debriefing of codes and the coding process at weekly research meetings. Within each phase of coding, the researchers calculated interrater reliability statistics in NVivo 10 (QSR International, 2012) to determine the credibility of the analysis. After each coding session, researchers documented their reflections, questions, and ideas in a reflexive journal designed to document decision making related to the analysis. An audit trail was kept ensuring confirmability of the study's findings.

Interrater Reliability
During each phase of coding, researchers conducted interrater reliability testing using NVivo 10 (QSR International, 2012) to ensure credibility of the coding process. In the first phase of grouping data into four a priori categories for further coding, an interrater reliability test resulted in a kappa coefficient of .68. This outcome is considered a "substantial" benchmark for kappa coefficients by Landis and Koch (1977). During the second phase of coding into emergent categories, the kappa coefficient for data that was coded by both researchers was .96. This is an "almost perfect" benchmark for kappa coefficients (Landis & Koch, 1977). These results demonstrated that raters consistently coded the data in a similar matter and increased the data's credibility.

Results

The study's results indicated the level of impact the DSLP experience had on participants' understanding of course content, understanding of people in non-dominant groups, perceptions of themselves, and what social justice in a counseling context meant to them. For participants, the DSLP experience became a lens to look at the world in a different way and was a primary frame of reference for

the course. In this section, results for each of the four a priori categories is reported, including qualitative results from the content analysis, as well as a narrative description of the data's emergent themes.

Understanding of Course Content

The first a priori category focused on the impact of the DSLP on participants' understanding of content in the human development course. Content analysis resulted in 374 meaning units that coalesced into two themes: connecting class material and reflections on learning.

Participants articulated coming away with a more complex and nuanced understanding of seemingly straightforward developmental theories because of the DSLP experience. The messiness of lived experience became real in a way participants did not believe the theories always described. For example, one participant stated that the DSLP experience "muddied the overly clear waters of the text's simplistic approach to the behavior of complex systems. The service-learning project was a much more realistic approach, introducing us to complex systems and their interactions." The hands-on nature of the DSLP, as well as the real-world context it provided, facilitated learning that participants described as broader, deeper, and more relevant to their professional futures. Participants reported that the class content was more accessible, more understandable, and easier to absorb because of the DSLP experience. One participant stated that the service-learning experience "required me to broaden my scope of what we were learning in the class. The focus can often be narrow in the classroom setting, but we were able to consider the 'big picture' in a realistic way because of this project."

Further, the context provided by the service-learning experience offered the opportunity for critical analysis of class content. Consistencies and inconsistencies between class content and the lives of the people at their DSLP sites became apparent to participants. Many times, students came away realizing the gaps between theoretical models and lived experiences, particularly for people in non-dominant groups. One participant stated that the experience "made me more critical of the dominant views of development presented in our text. . . . While I understand there are certain fundamental human needs, I really believe in thinking about context as much as content."

Human Development in Non-Dominant Groups

The next a priori category focused on how the experience with the DSLP impacted participants' understanding of development of people in non-dominant groups. As CP agencies worked with populations outside the dominant culture, the DSLP provided an opportunity for participants to learn about these groups. Data analysis resulted in 291 meaning units in five themes: access to resources, creating community, cultural awareness, cultural differences, and systems of oppression.

Because of the DSLP experience, participants noted better understanding of the challenges a person in a non-dominant group faces when creating or maintaining their identity. Several participants reported seeing community members' struggles by incorporating a social construct or standard that did not fit with their own cultural experiences. One participant stated, "As an immigrant parent, the stress is likely increased because the 'outside influences' are coming from a culture that is at the very least unfamiliar, and at worst, in conflict with cultural values important to the parents."

Participants observed a strong sense of resiliency in community members as they overcame obstacles to seek out support. Participants identified that engaging in wellness activities and having a sense of purpose and pride in their lives contributed to resiliency for community members. These wellness activities included groups offered at mental health agencies and informal gatherings

where stories and experiences were shared. A participant stated that at her DSLP site she witnessed "strength and resiliency with which people can create meaning and community that is not based on dominant cultural values."

Furthermore, participants witnessed that when faced with conflicts or challenges, community members found support by referring to their own cultural values and norms. A participant stated, "For an immigrant in a new country, believing that there are others around who not only speak the same language, but have the same values and interests can be powerful in promoting feelings of efficacy instead of helplessness."

Perceptions of Self

The third a priori category focused on how the DSLP experience impacted participants' perceptions of themselves. Content analysis resulted in 227 meaning units with three themes that focused on working with new populations, their personal role in social justice, and specific work-related skills.

As CP organizations worked with marginalized communities, such as the East African immigrant community and the youth of the Asian and Pacific Islander community, most participants interfaced with communities with whom they had not previously worked. These interactions spurred participant reflection on the similarities and differences between themselves and those with whom they were working. Participants expressed surprise in what they learned about communities new to them, expecting to find more similarities or more differences. One participant stated, "As a first-generation person, I assumed that I could relate to the issues that the families face. However, I learned that their experience here in (location) is much different than the one I had growing up." Another participant stated, "Although the students that were in the (CP program) may have a different developmental trajectory than me, there were still many similarities between us. Their values and work ethic reflected the same as mine."

The interaction with CPs and clients through the DSLP provided a lens for participants to see how structural inequities in society impact the health and development of people in marginalized groups. Because of this, participants were better able to see and understand their own privilege, whether that privilege was related to race, gender, socioeconomic status, or educational attainment. One participant stated, "To be able to briefly see through the eyes of another individual who does not have the same background or privilege as I do, I am better able to understand my own privilege." Another participant stated, "We all have our own biases and stereotypes and maybe even racist ideologies that we need to get rid of."

Many participants articulated their perspectives on what social justice meant to them personally and how to move social justice goals in society forward. These were general definitions of social justice not specific to how social justice related to counseling. One participant said, "I believe that being an advocate for social justice involves understanding that many factors in people's lives influence their development, and that not everyone has equal opportunity to environments conducive to healthy development." Another participant stated, "To me, social justice means recognizing human dignity across social categories and engaging in some way to distribute power more equitably among people."

A Social Justice Perspective in Counseling

The final a priori category was focused on how engagement in the DSLP experience impacted participants' understanding of a social justice perspective in counseling. Data analysis resulted in 416 meaning units with three themes: definitions of social justice in counseling, counselor social justice knowledge, and counselor action through advocacy.

Participants articulated what social justice in the counseling sphere meant to them. One participant stated, "In order to successfully incorporate a social justice approach to counseling, socioeconomic status, culture, academic proficiencies and group membership must be considered." Empowerment was identified by multiple participants as key to social justice approaches to counseling. According to one participant, "Empowering individuals is at the heart of social justice." Additionally, participants pointed to understanding each client as a whole individual, including their unique social location, as important in counseling from a social justice perspective.

Participants shared new knowledge of recognizing systems that impacted people in non-dominant groups and acknowledging that the external factors of barriers and injustices may play a role in the need for mental health services. One participant said, "A counselor can promote social justice by helping clients identify the foundation of their behavior and understand that their feelings of insecurity are valid."

Participants identified that a social justice perspective in counseling included a call to advocate for clients. One participant defined advocacy as, "Part of being a therapist who believes in social justice is advocating for and empowering those individuals who feel they have no voice or feel their voice has been extinguished through societal or institutional oppression." Participants stated that the goal of social justice counseling was, in fact, to strengthen and support the resiliency of their clients who experience challenges brought on by external factors. One person said, "Social justice advocacy seeks not only to fight oppression but to empower individuals and communities that have been historically oppressed to be self-determinant to live lives of meaning and hope through equitable redistribution of resources, power, and opportunities."

Discussion

The results of this study offer insight about how using service learning in a human development course impacted community counseling students. Because these findings document a shift in understanding the nature of human development in a pluralistic society, they may be useful for counselor educators who teach human development and who strive to prepare counseling students with a social justice perspective.

The Teaching and Learning of Human Development

As a core curricular area of accredited programs, coursework in human development is required for all counseling students (CACREP, 2015). Students who seek to become licensed counselors must demonstrate their mastery of this content area on national exams (NBCC, 2015). Therefore, counselor educators have an obligation to prepare students with this knowledge base. However, universalist theories of human development may not sufficiently explain development of all groups in a society (Broderick & Blewitt, 2015; Henrich et al., 2010). There is growing acknowledgement that often embedded in models are the worldviews of those who developed them (Rogoff, 2003). Counselor educators are called to teach human developmental theory in such a way that students will be able to responsibly apply (or not apply) theories to clients from whom and for whom they were not developed.

This study's findings demonstrate that service learning provides participants with a deeper and more nuanced understanding of human development course content through its application in real settings. Participants witnessed how theories did not always match the lives of people at their service-

learning sites. Further, participants articulated witnessing how systems of oppression negatively impacted the development of marginalized people. These results build on the evidence that the use of service learning can promote multicultural competence (Burnett et al., 2004) and help students be more prepared to move into the professional role of counselor with a more realistic perspective of what the role means (Jett & Delgado-Romero, 2009).

Preparing Counseling Students as Social Justice Advocates

According to the Code of Ethics (ACA, 2014), counselors should be ready to advocate for removing barriers to healthy growth and development, yet specific strategies for preparing students to do so are lacking. Participation in collaborative service learning focused on important issues for marginalized populations facilitates new awareness of what social justice counseling means. The need for counselors to be aware of their own privilege was stated clearly by participants. In addition, being a counselor for social justice also meant advocating for clients at multiple levels. Working with CPs provided opportunities to witness important work in the community and to practice enacting social justice advocacy. The results demonstrate that service learning can be used as a teaching strategy to meet CACREP requirements and to meet the call for using new "structures, requirements, and goals" (Constantine et al., 2007, p. 27) to prepare students as social justice advocates.

Limitations and Future Research

This study's findings demonstrated that service learning can be used to teach academic content as well as promote students' understanding of social justice and advocacy. However, limitations are important to note. First, the primary researcher was the course instructor and the co-researcher participated in the class as a student, although data for the co-researcher was not included in the analysis. Although steps were taken to ensure trustworthiness and authenticity, future studies should include an outside researcher to strengthen the methodology. Second, data for the study was drawn from written text. As such, there were no opportunities to ask participants follow-up or clarifying questions. Although content analysis was chosen to examine the participants' experiences of the DSLP while they were occurring, future studies using interviews or focus groups could provide more sources of data. Third, the current study focused only on the student experience in the DSLP. Although CPs were involved in every aspect of project creation, execution, and evaluation, they were not included in the systematic study of outcomes. Future studies should examine the impact of service learning on CPs, clients, and communities.

Conclusion

The demographics of the United States are rapidly changing, and soon there will be no one majority group (Cárdenas, Ajinkya, & Gibbs Léger, 2011). Continuing to teach monocultural theories is no longer sufficient; it risks further marginalizing non-dominant groups in society. If we were to better understand how different groups and cultures experience development through their own lenses and a shared pluralistic lens, the problem of applying theories to those from whom and for whom they were not developed would be eliminated. Counselor educators should work with CPs and community members to develop, research, and apply culturally appropriate theories of human development. Until that time, counselor educators must use effective teaching strategies that prepare students to work responsibly and competently in a multicultural world. Service learning, as an educational tool for social justice in counselor education, can contribute to meeting this need.

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