

EXPLORING MULTICULTURAL INITIATIVES IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A  
PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

By

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EXPLORING MULTICULTURAL INITIATIVES IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A  
PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

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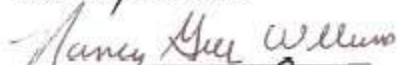
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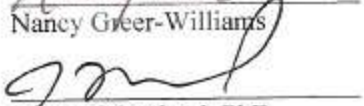
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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore faculty and administrators' perceptions of multicultural initiatives in higher education. A demographic survey was used to select the study participants, which consisted of 10 faculty members and 10 administrators with at least two to five years of experience working with diverse student populations in Maricopa County, Arizona. Data was obtained through the use of focus group sessions and coding was done by utilizing Liamputtong and Ezzy's (2005) three column format and NVivo10. The four major themes that emerged were: 1) Leadership support is needed to facilitate diversity policies and programs, 2) Curriculum and programming need to be adapted to engage students and enhance learning beyond the classroom, 3) Incorporating multicultural education created a welcoming environment in which students felt respected and safe to express themselves, and 4) No special instruction needed because incorporating culture does not necessarily enhance learning or the retention of knowledge. Findings indicated that faculty, administrators, and those in key leadership positions are at odds when deciding how best to meet the needs of diverse students. As the diversity of students increases on college campuses, it will be important for academic affairs professionals to be prepared to meet the needs of these diverse student populations by constructing learning environments in which a diversity of perspectives are represented (Bolman & Gallos, 2011; Kuk & Banning, 2010). Study results suggest that important steps institutional leaders can take to achieve this goal are to: (1) carefully draft definitions and policies of what constitutes a multicultural program, (2) ensure that these definitions and policies are clearly communicated, understood, and implemented by all members of the academic community, and (3) provide ongoing education to students and staff about the benefits of multicultural initiatives within the campus and the community at large.

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my fiancé, DaVaun Sanders, who stood beside me through this incredible journey and aspiring faculty and administrators searching for ways to enhance learning beyond the classroom. My journey to become a doctoral student began with the goal to create dialogue about the quality of education students are receiving and incorporate more inclusive educational practices into curriculum. Growing up I had the opportunity to experience the learning environment in poor and rich schools. In low-income schools the books were second hand or worst and the teachers were overworked and tired. In comparison, wealthier schools had brand new textbooks, state of the art technology, and teachers who were educated and prepared to teach. Although student's in both environments received an education, the quality of education received was not the same, which creates an imbalance between students who are prepared to move onto to college and succeed. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century education is more important than ever. Technology, competition, and global affairs are creating new problems for the next generation to solve. Therefore, students must be guaranteed equal access to quality education. The responsibility of higher education is to prepare students to think critically. To accomplish this goal, curriculum and programming must reflect diverse perspectives, worldviews, and ways of knowing. Likewise, faculty must be the driving force pushing students to research, analyze, and critic their environment. I hope that my research findings will help build a bridge to allow critical conversations about diversity and multicultural initiatives to take place on all levels of academia.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Every doctoral candidate deserves an amazing team and I am glad to know that I had one of the best and most supportive teams for my doctoral journey! I would first like to thank my dissertation chair, Dr. Marianne Justus, for her insightful feedback and suggestions that helped me take my dissertation from infancy to adulthood! When I look back on my earlier drafts, compared to what has now evolved, I realized how blessed that I was to have a chair who could provide feedback in a meaningful way and bring out the best in my writing. Without her guidance, I would not have been able to advance as quickly as I did. I thank you for your wisdom, dedication, and honesty.

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I am also eternally grateful to the 20 participants who made this study possible! I would not have been able to complete this study without their willingness to volunteer and provide me with their insight. Thank you all for showing me how complicated the discussion of multicultural education can be in different institutions and sharing the amazing experiences that shaped your philosophical approach. I learned so much from each focus group session and I am glad that each participant felt the same. I wish each of you the best of luck with your academic pursuits and thank you for your willingness to start conversations about diversity and multiculturalism at your respective institutions.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

Recruiting and retaining minority students remains a pressing issue in higher education (Love, 2008). Although more minority students are entering postsecondary institutions, less are staying to obtain a degree. Some attribute this low retention rate to the stark contrast between culturally diverse students and predominantly white faculty and staff found at most universities (Center for American Progress, 2011; Furr & Elling, 2002). Recent studies have shown positive correlations between students' perceived campus climate and faculty relationships (Ancis, Sedlacek & Mohr, 2000; Love, 2008; Petrova, 2012). Other studies argue that providing positive role models, mentors, and academic readiness programs increase the likelihood of minority students succeeding in postsecondary institutions regardless of school demographics (Schmidt, 2009). These results have encouraged learning institutions to create more inclusive education and campus environments through the use of multicultural programs. Yet the diversity of academic programs, curriculum, and staff has still not reached satisfactory levels in higher education institutions (Center for American Progress, 2011). For such program initiatives to be successful, faculty and administrative personnel must fully embrace multicultural education and its ability to construct learning environments in which diverse perspectives are represented (Johnson, Luciak & Van Driel, 2010).

### **Background of the Problem**

The goal of multicultural program initiatives is to enhance multicultural competence and create equity in learning environments (Banks & Banks, 2001). Because the deficit between diverse students and faculty will take time to fix, changes at the faculty, administrative, and curricular level can be made to address the lack of diversity. At the faculty and administrative

level, some institutions provide multicultural training to prepare educators for diversity issues that could arise in the classroom or on campus (Chao & Nath, 2011). Several studies have proven that a positive relationship exists between multicultural training, counseling awareness, knowledge, and skills (Deardorff, 2011; Urraca, Ledoux & Harris, 2009). In 2011, Chao and Nath conducted a study that revealed counselors who participated in some type of diversity or multicultural training were more aware of diversity issues and comfortable with addressing multicultural topics. As a result, counselors reported more positive interactions with students (Chao & Nath, 2011).

Culture is also an essential part of education that can be used to assist faculty and administrators who work with diverse students. Researchers advocated that curriculum and programming that target only academic aspects of a student's life may miss out on the opportunity to engage students' learning beyond the classroom (Boykin, Tyler & Miller, 2005; Gardner, 2009). To bring cultural perspectives into curriculum, Krishnamurthi (2003) suggested using a four-dimensional model that focuses on curricular initiatives such as pedagogy, content, faculty, and students. Introducing these types of multicultural initiatives can balance the cultural biases found in curriculum and standardized tests at every level of education (Banks & Banks, 2001; Krishnamurthi, 2003; Petrova, 2012). Other multicultural initiatives include using an additive, integrative, or transformative approach (Banks & Banks, 2008; Peterson & Davila, 2011). These approaches allow educators to designate a portion of the class to multiculturalism, integrate diverse concepts throughout the course, or completely transform the curriculum. Taken together, these program initiatives represent best practices institutions can implement to address changing demographics, create inclusive learning environments, and build an appreciation for diversity (Petrova, 2012).

## **Statement of the Problem**

Changing student demographics in higher education are making the term “diversity” the new topic of interest in academia. According to the Center for American Progress (2011), minority students “make up 40.7% of the public school population nationally. Although many schools (both urban and rural) are increasingly made up of a majority of Black and Latino students, Black and Latino teachers represent only about 14.6% of the teaching workforce” (Center for American Progress, 2011, p. 5). The continued lack of ethnic diversity among college faculty and administrators suggests a failure to address under-representation in learning environments (Petrova, 2012).

According to the Center for American Progress (2011), the lack of diversity in learning environments is detrimental for several reasons. Fewer minority teachers may result in fewer minority students interested in pursuing a career in teaching. Likewise, the low number of minority teachers indicates that there are less minority candidates qualified to enter academia (Center for American Progress, 2011). Although universities are encouraging multicultural initiatives, many educators report feeling uncomfortable teaching multicultural topics related to race and ethnicity without the proper tools and support (Urraca, Ledoux, & Harris, 2009). As the diversity of students increases on college campuses, it will be important for academic affairs professionals to be prepared to meet the needs of these diverse student populations by constructing learning environments in which a diversity of perspectives are represented (Kuk & Banning, 2010; Pica-Smith, 2009).

## **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this phenomenological research study was to explore 10 faculty and 10 administrators’ perceptions of multicultural initiatives and what impact they perceived the

initiatives had on students' development. Although survey and interview results from various studies reflect that teachers participating in multicultural courses internalize the need and purpose for multicultural education, most respondents expressed stress when attempting to implement multicultural practices due to lack of institutional support or insufficient curriculum (Colon-Muniz, Brady, & SooHoo, 2010; Herzog, 2010; Olson, 2001; Woody, 2010). Some educators even advocate against the use of multicultural practices claiming that it is "dumbing down" education and undermining students' ability to read, write, and reason (Stotsky, 2002). Understanding these different perspectives of multicultural education can provide insight on policy and curriculum changes that can be made to increase the integration of multicultural initiatives in higher education.

### **Significance of the Problem to Higher Education**

Incorporating multicultural program initiatives into learning environments promotes growth, change, and the use of interactive teaching methodologies, such as cooperative learning and service learning projects (Herzog, 2010). Combining service learning and interdisciplinary learning can provide students with opportunities to solve problems collaboratively and appreciate diverse ways of thinking (Yoon, Martin & Murphy, 2012). Using these types of interactive teaching methodologies can help strengthen programs and services, build well-rounded students, and increase mutuality, equality, cooperation, and collaboration in learning environments (Jenkins & Sheehey, 2012). For faculty and staff, the benefit is the ability to create environments in which exchanging, learning, motivating, and negotiating can take place between students and teachers. This kind of exchange is important in learning environments and stimulates further growth and development in both students and faculty (Bolman & Gallos, 2011; Jenkins & Sheehey, 2012). It truly takes a campus to graduate a student. Therefore, a student's educational

success or failure can no longer be seen as a solitary event, but a reflection of the institutions commitment to students (Kezar & Lester, 2011). Viewing education in this way will allow educators to take greater responsibility for students' success and retention, regardless of ethnicity, class, or race.

### **Nature of the Study**

A phenomenological design was chosen for its ability to explore phenomenon through lived experiences. The perception of multicultural education is a phenomenon within itself because of its adaptive nature and instruction. As a result, the way in which multicultural initiatives are defined and implemented are based on an individual's perceptions of multicultural education as a bridge or divider. Thus, a phenomenological design assisted the researcher in understanding the lived experiences shaping faculty and administrators' perception of multicultural education. A demographic survey was used to select 10 faculty and 10 administrators from postsecondary institutions within Maricopa County, Arizona.

Qualified participants had at least two to five years of experience working with diverse student populations and varied perceptions of multicultural education ranging from positive to negative. To collect data, three focus group sessions were conducted over a three week time span to capture participants' views on multicultural education, strategies for teaching diverse student populations, teacher preparation, and perceptions of institutional support for multicultural initiatives (see Appendix G). Faculty members and administrators were grouped separately and each focus group met once a week for two hours at the Burton Barr Library (see Appendix E). All focus group sessions were recorded and permission was sought from participants before recording.



## Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study and assisted with understanding how faculty and administrators perceived multicultural initiatives:

- RQ1: How do faculty and administrators experiences shape their perception of multicultural initiatives in higher education?
- RQ2: Based on their experience, what criteria do faculty and administrators perceive as important to the integration of multicultural education?
- RQ3: Based on their experience, what policies do faculty and administrators perceive as important to the integration of multicultural education?

## Conceptual Framework

Student development theories, such as Chickering's *Seven Vector* and Bloom's *Taxonomy of Learning*, helped frame the study (Bloom, 1956; Chickering, 1990). These theories were chosen because each demonstrates how interpersonal relationships help students establish their identity and process their environment (Gardner, 2009). Chickering's *Seven Vectors* explains how students move from developing competency, managing emotions, moving from autonomy to independence, developing mature interpersonal relationships, establishing identity, developing purpose, and integrity (Chickering, 1990). Although Chickering believed that students move through these vectors in stages, he also argued that not all students move through these developmental stages in order or at the same rate of speed. The author provides examples of considering students who are dealing with the loss of a parent (vector two) or struggling with identity issues (vector seven) to illustrate how students move through vectors. Chickering advocated that both students would be working from different stages in the development process, which would ultimately affect their personal and academic development (Chickering, 1990).

*Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning* was developed to understand thinking behaviors related to the process of learning (Bloom, 1956). Bloom's theory identified that learning occurs in three domains which were classified as cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. In 1956, five new terms were added *Bloom's Taxonomy* to further define the cognitive learning process. These new terms included understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating (Krathwohl & Anderson, 2001). Because these cognitive domains are used to construct meaning, determine how information relates to one another, and make judgments based on evidence presented, biases linked to race, culture, or gender can hinder the process of learning (Bloom, 1956). As Western culture is decisively stratified by gender, race, and class, *Bloom's Taxonomy* adds another layer to the importance of creating equity in learning environments.

Currently, higher education systems in the United States are primarily based on European ideas and principles that ignore minorities or portray them as victims or individuals with less power and status (Herzog, 2010; Peterson & Davila, 2011; Petrova, 2012). This negative portrayal often puts minority students at odds with the educational system as a whole (Baker, 2005; Flowers-Ashton, 2008; Herzog, 2010). Because this study examined faculty and administrators' perceptions and experiences with learning environments, Chickering's *Seven Vector* and Bloom's *Taxonomy of Learning*, provide a cohesive theoretical framework to understand how the lived experiences of participants affect their view of multicultural education.

### **Definition of Terms**

*Cultural Competency* refers to the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and attitudes that allow people to interact effectively with individuals from different cultural backgrounds (Deardorff, 2011).

*Cultural Diversity* is when members of a community are valued and feel a sense of belonging and a shared sense of identity (Petrova, 2012).

*Diversity/Multicultural training* is training geared toward increasing the awareness, sensitivity, and tolerance of differences that exist between individuals in terms of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, and sexual orientation (Chao & Nath, 2011; Colon-Muniz, Brady, & SooHoo, 2010).

*Multicultural education* is a field of study that aims to construct equitable learning environments in which a diversity of perspectives are represented from a variety of racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and cultural groups (Colon-Muniz, Brady, & SooHoo, 2010; Banks & Banks, 1995).

*Multicultural program initiatives* enhance multicultural competence and create equity in learning environments (Banks & Banks, 2001).

### **Assumptions**

To complete this study, several assumptions were made. The first assumption was that all survey and focus group responses were truthful and stemmed from participants lived educational experiences. The second assumption was that responses from the study were representative of each participant's status as a faculty member or administrator at a college or university within Maricopa County, Arizona. Likewise, it was assumed that the participants represented faculty and administrators who had experience working with diverse student populations or multicultural initiatives.

### **Scope**

The scope of the study involved the lived experiences and perspectives of a purposive sample of 20 faculty and administrators at institutions within Maricopa County, Arizona. The

focus of this study was to identify themes regarding how faculty and administrators perceive multicultural education and how this perception affects the ability to embrace multicultural initiatives. Focus group data from faculty and administrators was used to triangulate data and increase the reliability of the themes and patterns that emerged.

### **Limitations**

The limitations of this study relate to the sample size, interview bias, and the socially desirable way in which participants may answer questions. Having a sample size of only 20 participants may reduce the transferability of the study. Likewise, a small sample size may not provide enough data to arrive at conclusions and recommendations of value to colleges. The race and gender of the interviewer is also an important factor that can affect rapport and how much participants chose to disclose. Studies show that in face-to-face interviews, respondents are often more agreeable, which could affect the way they respond to questions (Holbrook, Green & Krosnick, 2003). Likewise, in face-to-face situations, people tend to answer questions in a socially desirable way, which can also influence what type of information and opinions people are willing to disclose (Kreuter, Presser & Tourangeau, 2009). To increase rapport and facilitate discussion, study questions remained neutral to place participants at ease and encourage an environment of openness and interaction.

Because of the nature of qualitative research, researcher bias is also a concern. To minimize researcher bias, triangulation and member checking were used. Triangulation helps validate data by comparing different perspectives, theories, methods, or data sources to see if similarities can be found (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006). To limit researcher bias in the interpretation of data, member checking was also incorporated into the study. Member checking allows participants to review a summary of the conceptual themes and categories derived from the focus

groups to determine if the findings accurately portray their viewpoints (Lietz, Langer & Furman, 2006). Using these methods helped minimize researcher bias and ensure the story being told accurately depicted participants' view of multicultural initiatives.

### **Delimitations**

The delimitations of a study help narrow the scope by indicating what is not included in the study (Creswell, 2009). The study was confined to faculty and administrators who worked at institutions within Maricopa County, Arizona. The decision to limit the sample population to participants in Maricopa County, Arizona was made because several laws have made the social and political environment in Arizona extremely tense in terms of multicultural education (House Bill, 2010). The colleges and universities that reside within the Maricopa County district represent diverse student populations that lack equally diverse faculty and staff (NCES, 2010). Because this study sought to understand the perception educators have toward multicultural education, Maricopa County provided a rich sample of diverse ideas and perspectives.

### **Summary**

The increasing number of diverse students versus faculty found on college campuses is forcing institutions to explore how to create more inclusive environments through the use of multicultural initiatives (Herzog, 2010). The goal of multicultural education is to construct learning environments in which diverse perspectives are represented (Baker, 2005; Boykin, Tyler & Miller, 2005). For multicultural initiatives to be successful, faculty and administrative personnel must be properly trained and armed with the necessary tools to create equitable learning environments (Chao & Nath, 2011; Petrova, 2012). As the deficit between diverse students and faculty will take time to fix, research suggests changes at the faculty, administrative, and curricular level can be made to address the lack of diversity (Jenkins &

Sheehey, 2012; Petrova, 2012). A review of literature in Chapter 2 will examine the origin of multicultural education through historical and social events. The chapter will also highlight previous research on faculty and administrators' experience with multicultural initiatives in terms of training, policies, and implementation, in addition to examining any gaps that remain in the literature. Understanding these different perspectives can provide insight on how to increase the integration of multicultural initiatives in higher education.

## Chapter 2

### Review of Literature

The purpose of this research study was to explore faculty and administrators' perceptions of multicultural initiatives and what impact they perceive the initiatives have on students' development. The review of literature includes the origin and purpose of multicultural education, an overview of foundational theories, pedagogical approaches, policies affecting multicultural initiatives, and how identity and social comparisons in learning environments affect student's development. Literature in this section will also highlight gaps in the literature and educators' perceptions of the effectiveness of training and credentialing programs aimed at preparing educators for diverse settings.

Relevant information was obtained by reviewing peer-reviewed journals from the University of Phoenix's ProQuest and EBSCOhost databases, ERIC database, and online publications from Sage and Google searches. Information was gleaned from more than 30 books and 160 peer-reviewed publications and government reports. Keywords and terms searched that related to section headings included cultural biases in teaching, ethnic studies, identity formation, identity and social comparison, multicultural education, multicultural education policies, multicultural education and integration, pedagogical approaches, and student development theories.

#### **Historical Overview**

The concept of multicultural education emerged from the ethnic studies movement that began the fight for civil rights in the 1960s and 1970s (Banks, 2002). The reversal of *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954, which found that segregated schools were inherently not equal, inspired expectations of equal opportunity and social justice in public education (Banks, 1996).

Instead of equality, curriculum taught at integrated schools portrayed African Americans as “culturally different” and aimed to help minorities assimilate into mainstream culture (Landerman, 2005; Sleeter, 1999). The ethnic studies movement grew out of resistance to assimilation and the desire to present a more balanced representation of African American contributions than what was traditionally presented in U.S. classrooms (Cornwell & Stoddard, 1999). Inspired by scholars, such as Carter G. Woodson and W. E. B. DuBois, the ethnic studies movement sought to challenge the negative depictions and stereotypes of African Americans that were prevalent in society (Banks, 2002). These scholars believed that providing positive images of African Americans through objective historical research could change the collective identity of African Americans in media and society (Banks, 1996).

To create such programs, minority student organizations at UC Berkeley united to form the Third World Liberation Front (TWLF). In 1968, TWLF led a strike demanding an ethnic studies program and increased efforts to recruit and admit students of color (Landerman, 2005). The success of the student strike inspired similar actions at campuses across the U.S., eventually leading to the formation of the National Association for Ethnic Studies in 1972 (Chapman, 2004). The goal of the association was to foster interdisciplinary discussions between scholars and activists regarding the importance of ethnicity in education. Although, ethnic studies programs were recognized as important, these initial reforms did not address the structural problems and pedagogy embedded in the educational system (Sheets, 2009). As a result, the focus of ethnic studies programs in higher education shifted toward examining policies, formalized curriculum, assessment procedures, as well as the languages and dialects sanctioned within the educational system (Banks & Banks, 1995; Landerman, 2005).



Inspired by these developments, women, people with disabilities, and other ethnic groups pushed for program changes in colleges and universities throughout the U.S. (Banks & Banks, 1995; Gollnick & Chinn, 2002; Landerman, 2005). To include these new perspectives, educators expanded multiethnic education to what is now known as multicultural education in order to examine topics such as race, religion, class, language, and gender. Currently, multicultural curriculum includes the historical relationship between these variables and its effect on identity formation, politics, and socioeconomic problems (Ford & Quinn, 2010; Hechanova, 2012; Peterson & Davila, 2011). An increasing number of teachers are incorporating literature written by women and authors of color to address the growing diversity of students by providing different viewpoints in class. Likewise, some colleges and universities have revised core curriculum to include ethnic content and course requirements (Higbee, Schultz & Goff, 2010).

Critics of multicultural approaches to education question whether or not teachers should promote social justice issues in the classroom or remain neutral. These questions led to the polarized view of multicultural education that still exist today (Banks, 2008; Peterson & Davila, 2011). Opponents blame multicultural education for fragmenting students by race, whereas advocates claim “colleges offer the best laboratory for finding ways to achieve greater equity, recognition of differences, and common civic causes”(Cornwell & Stoddard, 1999, p. 8; Landerman, 2005; Peterson & Davila, 2011). Although multicultural education is now an interdisciplinary field of study, the varied perspectives and political beliefs about the purpose and goals of multicultural education still hinder implementation efforts.

### **Attitudes Toward Cultural Diversity and Multicultural Education**

Because cultural diversity encompasses more than race or ethnicity, educators must understand how students’ country of origin, education level of parents, and socioeconomic status

affect students' identity and perception of education (Petrova, 2012). By 2050, the U.S. Census Bureau projects that 47% of the population will consist of people from non-white ethnic groups. Census projections also indicate that if the current demographic trend continues, students of color will make up 46% of the student population and more than half will speak a first language other than English (Center for American Progress, 2011). These demographics are in sharp contrast to the current makeup of teachers in secondary and postsecondary institutions who are primarily white, middle-class, and female (Center for American Progress, 2011; Petrova, 2012). The unequal demographics call into question whether or not teachers can understand the perspectives and experiences of the current generation of students (Landreman, 2005; Pica-Smith, 2009).

To increase understanding, some educators are searching for ways to incorporate multicultural practices to bridge the cultural gaps between students and teachers. Unfortunately, terms like “diversity” and “multicultural education” are viewed by some educators as a means to separate students by race or “dumb down” education for minority students (Ford & Quinn, 2010; Parrish & VanBerschot, 2010; Stotsky, 2002). As a result, there are many myths about the purpose of multicultural education and who should participate in multicultural programs. According to Petrova (2012), the following myths are central to the perception of multicultural education and underscore the challenges of implementing multicultural programs: a) “There should be a separate curriculum for multicultural education, b) Multicultural education is only about changing the curriculum, c) Other cultures should be presented as opposed to the dominant culture, and d) Multicultural education is relevant only in classes with students who are members of the cultural and racial groups to be studied” (Petrova, 2012, pp 1093-1094).

Because society is culturally diverse, multicultural education benefits all students regardless of race, class, or culture. In fact, some scholars advocate that neglecting to incorporate multicultural perspectives in non-ethnically diverse classrooms, does students a disservice by failing to prepare them for cultural interactions outside the classroom (Banks & Banks, 2001; Kuk & Banning, 2010). Likewise, separating multicultural curriculum coincides with the perception of division, and works against the inclusive purpose of multicultural initiatives (Higbee, Schultz & Goff, 2010). Scholars argue that many of the myths associated with cultural diversity and multiculturalism stem from uncertainty and the unwillingness to let go of stereotypes pertaining to certain racial and ethnic groups (Ford & Quinn, 2010; Parrish & VanBerschot, 2010). Thus, attitudes toward multiculturalism in learning environments can generally be categorized into the following four groups: (1) negative, (2) null, (3) contributing, and (4) transformational (Kuk & Banning, 2010; Petrova, 2012).

Research suggested that negative and null viewpoints are sometimes formed by xenophobia (fear of foreigners) or ethnocentrism, which creates an unwillingness to deal with diversity (Urraca, Ledoux & Harris, 2009; Woody, 2010). Those with contributing viewpoints will generally acknowledge cultural holidays accepted by the dominate culture and make an effort to incorporate diversity activities within the current structure of education (Kuk & Banning, 2010). In contrast, individuals with transformational viewpoints actively support multicultural initiatives and seek to restructure the current educational system (Banks & Banks, 2001; Petrova, 2012). As the ethnic, cultural, and language diversity found in schools and society continues to increase, multicultural initiatives will play an important part in providing people with the knowledge and skills to communicate across-cultural borders in the U.S. and abroad (Chao & Nath, 2011; Yoon, Martin & Murphy, 2012).

## **Overview of Foundational Theories**

Student development theories focus on the purpose of higher education and the ways in which learning institutions can promote change, growth, and development (Gardner, 2009). Basic assumptions of student development theories revolve around understanding *holistic learning* and inclusive educational approaches. The four schools of theory are 1) Psychosocial, 2) Cognitive and Moral Development, 3) Typology, and 4) Person-Environment (Evans, Forney & Guido-DiBrito, 1998). *Person-Environment Theories* explore the interaction between students and their environment and advocate that behavior is a function of one's environment (Gardner, 2009). This theory was chosen to frame the research study because it specifically looks at relationships that exist between students and their environment. Curriculum and programming are a large part of learning environments that can affect students' perceptions and behavior. Thus, *Person-Environment Theories* provide a cohesive theoretical framework in which to explore the impact of multicultural education on student's development. Significant theories in the field of *Person-Environment Theories* are Abraham Maslow's *Hierarchy of Needs*, Chickering's *Seven Vectors*, and Benjamin Bloom's *Taxonomy of Learning* (Evans, Forney & Guido-DiBrito, 1998). In addition to *Person-Environment Theories*, identity and social comparison theories were included to demonstrate how student's perception of their environment in the classroom and in society affect student's development (Gardner, 2009).

### **Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs**

Maslow's article, *A Theory of Human Motivation*, published in 1943 changed the field of psychology. In *Toward a Psychology of Being*, Maslow formulated a needs-based framework of human motivation based upon clinical experiences with humans (Wahba & Bridwell, 1976). Prior to this time, psychology theories were based on animal behavior, mentally ill, or neurotic

patients. Maslow studied exemplary people such as Albert Einstein, Jane Adams, and Frederick Douglas because he believed that “studying crippled, stunted, immature, or mentally ill people could only yield crippled psychology and a crippled philosophy” (Maslow, 1954, p 20). As a result, Maslow studied the top one percent of the college student population to obtain the theories explained in his book *Motivation and Personality* in 1954 (Globe, 1970). Although contested by some, Maslow’s *Hierarchy of Needs* still serves as a framework for what motivates people to develop into self-actualized beings capable of realizing one’s potential. This theory advocated that unless basic psychological, safety, and social needs of belonging are met, a person cannot fully move into the levels of esteem and cognitive development (Gardner, 2009; Ryan & Deci, 2000). As culture is an essential part of education, Maslow’s *Hierarchy of Needs* provides support for curriculum that includes a variety of cultural perspectives. Introducing multicultural initiatives can balance the cultural biases found in curriculum that alienate or ignore minority contributions (Banks & Banks, 2001; Herzog, 2010). These efforts may provide a greater sense of belonging for minority students and underrepresented groups in academia.

### **Chickering’s Seven Vectors**

Self-esteem and cognitive development are most affected by one’s sense of belonging (Luria, 1976; Tay & Diener, 2011). Similar to Maslow, Arthur Chickering’s *Vectors* explain how students move through a series of developmental stages. These vectors include: (1) Developing competence, (2) Managing emotions, (3) Moving through autonomy toward independence, (4) Developing mature interpersonal relationships, (5) Establishing identity, (6) Developing purpose, and (7) Developing integrity (Chickering, 1990). Unlike stage theories, Chickering (1990) argued that each student experiences vectors differently in terms of coping and emotional stress. Utilizing developmental psychology can help educators work effectively

with college students by understanding their moods and designing experiences to promote growth (Strange & Banning, 2001; Walker, 2008).

Chickering's *Seven Vectors* demonstrates that student development is a process in which not all students experience in the same way. Thus, students' perception of interpersonal relationships with peers and inequalities in the learning can have varying affects on student's personal development (Gardner, 2009; Tay & Diener, 2011). An essential function of multicultural education is creating equitable learning environments where diverse perspectives are included. Learning about the history and culture of various ethnic groups helps reduce the effects of stereotypic images of minorities portrayed in the media (Thompson, 2008; Wilson & Gutierrez, 1995). In this way, multicultural education can enhance communication between students and teachers by breaking down barriers that separate people by race, class, or religion.

### ***Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning***

Educators have always sought ways in which to improve the capacity and retention of knowledge (Tehie, 2007). In 1948, Benjamin Bloom and a group of educators set out to define the nature of thinking. The goal was to develop a method of classification for thinking behaviors related to the process of learning. Eventually, this framework became the taxonomy for three domains of the brain referred to now as cognitive, affective, and psychomotor (Krathwohl & Anderson, 2001). The cognitive level consists of six levels and is considered the knowledge based domain. The affective domain is attitudinal based and the psychomotor domain is skills based.

In 1956, *Bloom's Taxonomy* was published which provided educators with explanations and research about how the cognitive domain worked (Bloom, 1956). In this publication, five new terms were included to further define the process of learning. These new terms included

understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating (Krathwohl & Anderson, 2001). Later studies found that the understanding, analyzing, and evaluating process of learning are most affected by biases in learning environments (Baker, 2005; Flowers-Ashton, 2008; Herzog, 2010). Because these domains are used to construct meaning and make judgments based on evidence presented, biases linked to race, culture, or gender can drastically hinder the process of learning (Herzog, 2010). As Western culture is decisively stratified by gender, race, and class, *Bloom's Taxonomy* demonstrates why creating equity in learning environments is important for healthy student development.

### **Identity and Social Comparison Theories**

An individual's interpersonal and social relationships are the foundations by which identity is formed (Chickering, 1990). According to Stets and Burke (2000), social identity is shaped by the process of self-categorization and social comparison. The problem with self-categorization is the accentuation of perceived differences and similarities between the self and out-group members (Hechanova, 2012). The consequence of social comparison occurs when an individual's self-esteem is developed by measuring the characteristics of in-groups and out-groups. Based on these characteristics, individuals place themselves into categories, such as black versus white, male versus female, or rich versus poor. Each category has more or less power, prestige, or status (Abrams & Hogg, 1990). Assumptions about the nature of the self and identity underlie many pedagogical approaches to education (Martin, 2006). Two major schools of thought stem from Tajfel's *Social Identity Theory* (1981) and Turner's *Social Categorization Theory* (1982). Another school of thought is based on cultural psychology and socio-cultural approaches described by Vygotsky (1978) and Luria (1976) who researched the effects of cultural biases in teaching (Rogoff, 1995; Martin, 2006; Wertsch, 1991).

In 1947, Drs. Kenneth and Mamie Clark demonstrated that not only does a child's racial awareness begin around age three, but also that children are aware of the positive and negative attributes assigned to White and Black racial groups (Clarke & Clarke, 1947). In the *Clark & Clarke Doll Test*, 100 Black and White children between the ages of three and seven were asked to choose among four dolls, two black and two white. In the study, each child was asked to choose the doll they liked best, the doll they liked the least, and which doll best represented them self. Two-thirds of the children, both Black and White, said that they liked the white doll the best and that it best represented them (Clarke & Clarke, 1947). Because children want to project a positive self image, children learn to hate differences viewed by society as negative. Wilson and Gutierrez (1995) discussed how media perceptions of minorities contribute to a lot of misunderstandings and assumptions about various ethnic groups. In the media, images of white people are often synonymous with beauty, intelligence, success, and happiness, whereas images of Black people are associated with negativity, violence, poverty, and ignorance (Harnois, 2010; Wilson & Gutierrez, 1995). These portrayals are harmful to both minority and non-minority groups. Studies show that minority students either rise above these negative stereotypes or internalize them (Baker, 2005; Herzog, 2010). Non-minority groups usually accept the negative depictions as a reality unless they have friends belonging to other racial groups to challenge what is portrayed in the media (Flowers-Ashton, 2008; Yoon, Martin & Murphy, 2012). Incorporating multicultural initiatives is one way to balance inequalities found in learning environments and address stereotypes predicated throughout society and the media (Banks, 2008; Higbee, Schultz & Goff, 2010).



## **Standpoint Theory**

Understanding the need for diverse perspectives in learning environments can best be described through the framework of *Standpoint Theory*. This theory focuses on how gender, race, and class influence the circumstances of an individual's life (Wood, 2008). Although modern theorists have developed *Standpoint Theory*, it began with Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's reflections on the institution of slavery (Rouse, 2009). Hegel noted that society as a whole recognized that slavery existed, but the nature of the institution was perceived differently depending on whether one's position was that of the master or the slave (Harnois, 2010). From this insight, Hegel reasoned that in any society where power relationships exist there can be no single perspective or absolute understanding of social life. Because each person sees society as it appears from the perspective of his or her social group, the perspective is severely limited (Abrams & Hogg, 1990; Harnois, 2010). As Western culture is decisively stratified by gender, race, and class, *Standpoint Theory* adds importance to the realization that an individual's position within society influences how they view social life and define themselves within that society (Harnois, 2010). Higher education systems in the United States are primarily based on European ideas and principles. Multicultural education is needed to create equitable learning environments in which diverse perspectives and ideas are represented without bias (Banks & Banks, 2008; Sheets, 2009).

## **Pedagogical Approaches to Multicultural Education**

Pedagogy guides the way in which educators construct and deliver knowledge in learning environments. Pedagogical approaches used in multicultural education have been greatly influenced by the cognitivism of Piaget (1985), the social-interactionist theories of Bruner (1986), and the social and cultural theories of Vygotsky (1978) (Martin, 2006). Each of these

perspectives caused theorists and educators to reexamine the process of learning and the role of education (Gardner, 2009). Based on these early schools of thought, educators began to dissect the traditional methods of instruction and evaluate its effectiveness on minorities and under-represented groups (Banks & Banks, 2001). As the diversity of students continues to increase, more educators are attempting to use multicultural approaches to address changing demographics, create inclusive learning environments, and build an appreciation for diversity (Parrish & VanBershot, 2010; Pica-Smith, 2009).

### **Banks Dimensions of Multicultural Education**

Banks and Banks (2001) *Dimensions of Multicultural Education* is an example of how multicultural initiatives can be used to transform classrooms into equitable learning environments. As a result, Banks *Dimensions of Multicultural Education* is widely used by schools and educators in the development of diverse programs and curriculum (Colon-Muniz, Brady, & SooHoo, 2010; Higbee, Schultz & Goff, 2010). Bank's dimensions include: 1) content integration; (2) knowledge construction; (3) prejudice reduction; (4) equity pedagogy; and (5) empowering school culture (Banks & Banks, 2001). Content integration refers to how educators incorporate different cultural concepts and examples to illustrate theories and principles in class. For example, when discussing U.S. history, teachers can include historical perspectives and contributions made by minority groups, such as Native Americans, African Americans, and Latin Americans. Using this approach can bring balance to curriculum by increasing students' awareness of challenges faced by minority groups, in addition to those experienced by the dominate culture (Higbee, Schultz & Goff, 2010).

Knowledge construction is the process by which teachers use activities to help students understand, investigate, and challenge knowledge constructs found in research and textbooks

(Banks & Banks, 2001). Multicultural practices seek to not only infuse ethnic content, but also enable students to critically examine the construction of social systems such as race, class, and gender (Woody, 2010). Likewise, students are challenged to take notice of inherent biases that are present when knowledge is presented from only one dominate viewpoint. The goal of prejudice reduction is to assist students with developing positive racial attitudes through collaborative learning (Banks & Bank, 2001). The concept of prejudice reduction was developed by Gordon Allport (1954) who hypothesized that prejudice could be reduced through interracial contact if the interactions were cooperative, based on equal status, and administered by learning institutions. Studies support Allport's hypothesis by demonstrating how service learning projects and community service activities help students recognize personal biases and see commonalities rather than differences among cultural groups (Jenkins & Sheehey, 2012; Yoon, Martin & Murphy, 2012).

Equity pedagogy involves the use of culturally responsive techniques educators can use to incorporate aspects of students' family, community, and culture when teaching (Banks & Bank, 2001). Utilizing this approach can enhance learning by making curriculum relevant to concepts and principles found in student's daily lives (Gay, 2000; Herzog, 2010). The final dimension of Banks *Dimensions of Multicultural Education* refers to the need for educators to transform the culture of the organization in a way that supports equality for students from diverse racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds (Banks & Bank, 2001). Creating an empowering school structure can be challenging because it requires school-wide support of multicultural initiatives in terms of programming and governance.

## **Humanistic Approach**

The humanistic approach to education developed during the Renaissance as a reaction to the unhealthy environment found in many of America's classrooms (Murphy, 2006). Education had suddenly become rigid, systematic, and impersonal, which many argued led to children's negative perception of education (Banks & Banks, 2001). One of the main goals of humanistic education is to provide education that fosters students' desire to learn (Patterson, 1973). The idea of providing humanistic-based education reawakened in society with the development of Abraham Maslow's (1956) concept of self-actualization. According to Maslow, man has an internal drive to reach the greater self within them. Thus, creating learning environments that give student's the freedom to grow through exploration and self discovery, result in self-actualized adults who are self-directed, confident, and realistic about goals (Maslow, 1956). Humanistic teachers encourage students to be creative and curious about the world. Statistics show that students are more successful when given opportunities to create projects that demonstrate the learning objectives (Gage & Berliner, 1991; Yoon, Martin & Murphy, 2012). In traditional settings, tests are usually administered to evaluate what students have learned. This method of evaluation forces students to learn through memorization and repetition rather than internalizing what they have learned. Studies show that teachers can increase the retention of knowledge by making lessons applicable to students (Banks, 2008; Gogineni, 2000; Higbee, Schultz & Goff, 2010).

Humanism is focused on the development of students' self-concept and learning as the means to progress toward greater self-development. Likewise, humanism believes that students learn because they are inwardly driven by the sense of accomplishment that learning affords (Gage & Berliner, 1991; Huitt, 2009). In traditional education settings, extrinsic motivators, such

as money and praise are used to entice students to learn and achieve. The goal of the humanistic approach to education is to instill self-motivation within the learner. It emphasizes the natural desire to learn and gives the learner control over the learning process (DeCarvalho, 1991).

Multicultural initiatives provide educators with tools to engage students and extend learning beyond the classroom by making curriculum applicable to their lives' (Banks, 2008).

Incorporating multicultural education from a humanistic perspective allows educators to ensure that student's are invested in the learning process by providing avenues for cultural exploration and opportunities to develop projects central to student's personal beliefs and experiences.

Studies show that approaching learning in this way can increase the retention of knowledge and build life-long learners (Gay, 2000; Higbee, Schultz & Goff, 2010; Huitt, 2009).

### **Models of Multicultural Teaching and Learning**

Currently, higher education systems in the United States are primarily based on European ideas and principles that ignore minorities or portray them as victims or individuals with less power and status (Herzog, 2010; Peterson & Davila, 2011; Petrova, 2012). To balance cultural biases found in curriculum, Marchesani and Adams (1992) suggested using a four-dimensional model that focuses on curricular initiatives such as pedagogy, content, faculty, and students (Krishnamurthi, 2003; Marchesani & Adams, 1992). Introducing these types of initiatives allows educators to create curriculum that targets cultural aspects of student's lives and extend learning beyond the classroom (Banks & Banks, 2008; Gardner, 2009).

Other multicultural initiatives include using an additive, integrative, or transformative approach (Banks & Banks, 2008; Krishnamurthi, 2003). These approaches allow educators to designate a portion of the class to multiculturalism, integrate diverse concepts throughout the course, or completely transform the curriculum. For example, in elementary schools

multicultural content is usually introduced in curriculum by focusing on heroes and holidays. In high school and college, culturally diverse literature is more prevalent in English and history courses, but less in science and math (Boykin, Tyler & Miller, 2005). In most cases, educators draw from the cultures represented in the classroom. Unfortunately, this means that schools with less culturally diverse students could experience less culturally diverse programs (Peterson & Davila, 2011).

To enhance campus diversity, Garcia (2001) proposed a four-dimensional model that focuses on: 1) Education and scholarship, 2) Access and success, 3) Campus climate and intergroup relations, and 4) Institutional viability and vitality (Garcia, Hudgins & Musil, 2001; Krishnamurthi, 2003). Access and success addresses recruiting and retention practices for under-represented groups on campus, whereas campus climate focuses on initiatives that create welcoming environments for marginalized groups (Krishnamurthi, 2003; Kuk & Banning, 2010). Institutional viability refers to the support university's provide for multicultural initiatives in terms of funding and policy decisions. Combining Garcia's (2001) model with Marchesani and Adams' (1992) program initiatives represent best practices institutions can implement to address changing demographics, create inclusive learning environments, and build an appreciation for diversity (Peterson & Davila, 2011).

### **Faculty Perceptions of Multicultural Training**

Diversity training is often offered as a way to prepare faculty and administrators for diverse settings and increase comfort with issues related to race, religion, and ethnicity (Chao & Nath, 2011). Several studies have been conducted to measure the impact of multicultural training on participants. In a case study conducted by Olson (2001), participants were education majors enrolled in a multiculturalism class at the University of Wisconsin. The purpose of the study was

to examine pre-service teacher attitudes toward multiculturalism. Olson (2001) hypothesized that participants would have a more favorable attitude toward multiculturalism after completing a multicultural training course. To test this hypothesis, a pre and post survey comprised of six questions was designed to measure the change in students' attitude after completing the multicultural course. Although the study results supported the research hypothesis, Olson did not expect the majority of students to respond that the pre-service training received did not properly prepare them to deal with multicultural approaches to education (Olson, 2001). Similar results were found in a study conducted by Colon-Muniz, Brady and Soo in 2010 that focused on teacher education programs in California. California was chosen because multicultural education is a component of the credentialing programs used to certify teachers. The goal of the study was to determine how universities address diversity and teachers response to the university's efforts to prepare teachers for diverse settings (Colon-Muniz, Brady, & SooHoo, 2010).

The recurring themes found in Olson's (2001) and Colon-Muniz (2010) studies affirmed that teachers viewed themselves as multicultural educators who used multicultural practices, but lacked institutional support for multiculturalism at their respective schools (Colon-Muniz, Brady, & SooHoo, 2010; Olson, 2001). These responses coincide with pre and post data from other studies, in which educators claimed that the multicultural training received did not properly prepare them to deal with multicultural approaches to education (Ford & Quinn, 2010; Parrish, & VanBerschoot, 2010; Peterson & Davila, 2011). Survey and interview results from various studies also reflect that teachers participating in multicultural classes internalize the need and purpose for multicultural education, but experience stress when attempting to implement multicultural practices in the classroom (Ford & Quinn, 2010; Herzog, 2010; Woody, 2010). Teachers in K-12 schools often reported that scripted curriculum and standardized tests left little

room for multicultural initiatives (Colon-Muniz, Brady, & SooHoo, 2010). However, educators from secondary and postsecondary institutions voiced concern about the lack of training offered on multicultural education; leaving teachers with the problem of deciding how to engage diverse students in the classroom (Boykin, Tyler & Miller, 2005; Pica-Smith, 2009). To further multicultural efforts in schools, educators suggested providing teachers with better preparation courses and the skills to overcome resistance to multicultural initiatives at their respective schools (Colon-Muniz, Brady & SooHoo, 2010). These findings support the purpose of this study to explore the perceptions of multicultural initiatives as a tool to enhance student development. Understanding the reasons for resisting the use of multicultural practices from an educator and institutional standpoint, may provide insight on how to build an appreciation for multicultural initiatives.

### **Policies Affecting Multicultural Initiatives**

The increasing diversity of the United States affects policy decisions on both state and federal levels. The Census Bureau also projects that 82% of population increases from 2005 to 2050 will come from immigration (Census, 2013). These projections have had positive and negative effects on diversity and multicultural initiatives. In 1998, many states like California and Arizona started voter initiatives to end bilingual education (Steinberg, 2000). However, these earlier initiatives are now being reviewed due to the influx of non-native English speaking students enrolling in schools. Likewise, states that once ruled in favor of English only programs are recognizing the need to have students and employees who are bilingual (Duff, 2008). The increase of diverse students has also challenged educators to examine the dominant narrative traditionally taught in schools in terms of whose religion, worldview, and customs are more valued in society (Banks, 2008).



The decentralized educational system in the U.S. affords each state control to create educational policies. Some states have implemented statewide school systems, while others delegate power to county or city-level school boards (Kezar, Chambers, Burkhardt & Associates, 2005). Although the states exercise the majority of control, the federal government has the power to decrease federal funding to schools that do not follow federal regulations. Several policy decisions in the past decade have affected the ability to implement multicultural initiatives on state and federal levels. Budget cuts in educational programs and greater focus on STEM initiatives are some of the policy decisions that impact multicultural programs (Archibald & Feldman, 2008; Michael & Kretovics, 2008). Conversely, some states have chosen to ban ethnic studies programs and reverse affirmative action initiatives aimed at recruiting and retaining diverse students and faculty (HB 2218, 2010; Kahlenberg, 2010; Okihiro, 2010). States decisions to revise textbooks by reframing historical moments in U.S. history can also impact multicultural education if minority perspectives and contributions are excluded (Mendiola, 2007; Sewall & Emberling, 1998). Because textbooks represent a source of legitimate knowledge for schools, who determines what knowledge and experiences are legitimate play an important part of what information is included and excluded from textbooks (Mendiola, 2007). These types of policy decisions affect multicultural programs in terms of funding and the perception of multicultural education as a tool or deterrent in learning environments.

### **Diversity Training Institute**

Arizona State University (ASU) is an example of how universities can incorporate policies that encourage inclusion and diversity. Their vision was to establish a model for a “New American University” measured by inclusion rather than exclusion (ASU, 2010). To aid this vision, a Diversity Training Institute was developed to provide training to employees and staff

regarding diversity initiatives and mentoring programs. New policies were also created that aligned the university's goal of inclusion with the overarching mission of education to make diversity part of the curriculum (Crow, 2006).

To initiate the diversity plan the university launched a six-part initiative consisting of communication, university dialogue, college/school focus, trainings for chairs and deans, building synergy, and building private investment to advance diversity. Communication includes maintaining a web page with information on initiatives related to diversity and promoting tolerance (ASU, 2010). University dialogue consists of creating discussions among students, staff, and faculty by bringing in speakers and "Living Legends" from diverse backgrounds to share their experiences. College/School focus deals with recruiting and retaining diverse faculty from underrepresented groups. Training for chairs and deans will deal with overcoming personal biases and stereotypes, mentoring, and facilitating intergroup relations.

Building synergy means collaborating with existing organizations like Relations Center, Commission on the Status of Women, the Faculty Women's Association, and Campus Environment Teams to ensure ASU's vision expands into the community and beyond (ASU, 2010). Building private investment to advance diversity is another way for ASU to create bridges to the community and identify resources to support faculty, staff, and students (ASU, 2010). "ASU is committed to these ideals and to creating an environment that promotes inclusion, respect, community, and appreciation for the full tapestry that comprises the human experience" (Crow, 2006, p. 2). Utilizing techniques such as these will enable universities to develop collaborative funding strategies and build sustainable relationships in the community and across the globe.

## **Gaps in the Literature**

Although a large body of literature exists on multicultural educational practices, the social and political environment in Arizona provides a unique sample of diverse ideas and perspectives on issues related to multicultural education. Little prior research has been conducted examining the social and political repercussions of the Ethnic Studies Ban and immigration laws passed in 2010. As a border state, Arizona's schools are representative of the growing number of minority students versus minority teachers and faculty. A third of Arizona's population is comprised of foreign born immigrants from countries in South America, Africa, and India (Census Bureau, 2013). Thus, multicultural initiatives are needed to build awareness and provide students a way of interacting with notions of identity, history, and culture in an academic setting (Gay, 2000; Higbee, Schultz & Goff, 2010). Building awareness through multicultural initiatives may allow community discussions to take place that limit Arizona legislators' ability to pass laws that alienate certain groups of people or ban programs designed to appreciate differences. Gaining perspective from educators who teach in socially and politically charged environments, may also provide a new frame of reference for examining factors related to implementing multicultural initiatives in higher education.

The way in which multicultural initiatives are defined and implemented are based on an individual's perception of multicultural education as a bridge or divider. As a result, the perception of multicultural education is a phenomenon within itself because of its adaptive nature and instruction. Thus, a qualitative phenomenological approach was chosen for its ability to explore phenomenon through lived experiences. Using a qualitative phenomenological design will assist the researcher in understanding the lived experiences shaping faculty and administrators' perception of multicultural education. This approach may also provide insight on

institutional perceptions of multicultural initiatives and solutions for furthering integration efforts.

### **Summary of Literature Review**

During the civil rights movement, ethnic studies broadened into multicultural education as the need for equal treatment and representation increased among various ethnic and minority groups (Banks, 1996). By challenging Eurocentric principles and concepts taught in schools, multicultural educators sought to reform curriculum by incorporating the history and contributions of marginalized groups (Banks & Banks, 2002). Inspired by these developments, women, people with disabilities, and other ethnic groups pushed for program changes in colleges and universities throughout the U.S. (Banks & Banks, 1995; Gollnick & Chinn, 2002, Landerman, 2005). To include these new perspectives, multiethnic education was expanded into what is now known as multicultural education.

Because society is culturally diverse, multicultural education benefits all students regardless of race, class, or culture. In fact, some scholars advocate that neglecting to incorporate multicultural perspectives in non-ethnically diverse classrooms, does students a disservice by failing to prepare them for cultural interactions outside the classroom (Banks & Banks, 2008; Kuk & Banning, 2010). To increase understanding, some educators are searching for ways to incorporate multicultural practices to bridge the cultural gaps between students and teachers. *Person-Environment Theories*, identity, and social comparison theories were chosen as foundational theories to frame the research study. These theories were selected because they specifically look at the relationships that exist between students and their environment in terms of student development (Gardner, 2009).

Assumptions about the nature of the self and identity also underlie many pedagogical approaches to education (Martin, 2006). Thus, research suggests that incorporating multicultural initiatives is one way to balance inequalities found in learning environments and address stereotypes predicated throughout society and the media (Higbee, Schultz & Goff, 2010; Sheets, 2009; Yoon, Martin & Murphy, 2012). Pedagogical approaches used in multicultural education have been greatly influenced by the cognitivism of Piaget (1985), the social-interactionist theories of Bruner (1986), and the social and cultural theories of Vygotsky (1978) (Martin, 2006). Humanistic approaches, in addition to Banks and Banks (2001) *Dimensions of Multicultural Education* and Marchesani and Adam's (1992) four-dimensional model of multicultural teaching and learning, are also used to create inclusive learning environments.

Diversity training is often offered as a way to prepare faculty and administrators for diverse settings and increase comfort with issues related to race, religion, and ethnicity (Chao & Nath, 2011). However, educators from secondary and postsecondary institutions voiced concern about the lack of training offered on multicultural education; leaving teachers with the problem of deciding how to engage diverse students in the classroom (Boykin, Tyler & Miller, 2005; Pica-Smith, 2009). To further multicultural efforts in schools, educators suggested providing teachers with more effective preparation courses and the skills to overcome resistance to multicultural initiatives at their respective schools (Colon-Muniz, Brady & SooHoo, 2010; Olson, 2001).

The increasing diversity of the United States has affected policy decisions on both state and federal levels. In recent years, some states have chosen to ban ethnic studies programs and reverse affirmative action initiatives aimed at recruiting and retaining diverse students and faculty (HB 2218, 2010; Kahlenberg, 2010; Okihiro, 2010). However, institutions like Arizona

State University (ASU) have used the increase in diversity to incorporate policies that encourage inclusion and diversity. To initiate the diversity plan the ASU launched a six-part initiative consisting of communication, university dialogue, college/school focus, trainings for chairs and deans, building synergy, and building private investment to advance diversity (Crow, 2006). Utilizing techniques such as these will enable universities to develop collaborative funding strategies and build sustainable relationships in the community and across the globe.

Although a large body of literature exists on multicultural educational practices, Arizona provides a unique sample of diverse ideas and perspectives on issues related to multicultural education. As a border state, Arizona's schools are representative of the growing number of minority students versus minority teachers and faculty (Census, 2013). The social and political environment of Arizona in the wake of the Ethnic Studies Ban and immigration laws passed in 2010, also provide a rich sample of diverse ideas and perspectives on issues related to multicultural education (House Bill, 2010; Kahlenberg, 2010). Gaining perspective from educators who teach in socially and politically charged environments, may also provide a new frame of reference in which to examine factors related to multicultural initiatives in higher education.

## **Conclusion**

College is the place where many students begin experimenting with their lives and discovering who they are in relation to the world around them (Gardner, 2009). Because identity is constructed through social comparisons and interpersonal relationships, biases in learning environments can seriously affect students' development (Abrams & Hogg, 1990; Chickering, 1990; Piaget, 1987). Multicultural education provides an opportunity to reduce biases found in curriculum and predicated in society. Although multicultural initiatives can be implemented most

effectively at the faculty, administrative, and curricular level, educators have indicated that they lack institutional support (Colon-Muniz, Brady, & SooHoo, 2010; Olson, 2001). Studies indicated that lack of support may stems from the belief that diversity and multicultural education are a means to separate students by race or “dumb down” education for minority students (Ford & Quinn, 2010; Parrish & VanBerschoot, 2010, Stotsky, 2002). These assumptions have created a variety of myths about the purpose of multicultural education and who should participate in multicultural programs (Petrova, 2012). Thus, the belief that multicultural education can be used as a tool to create equitable learning environments has not yet been fully accepted (Banks, 2008; Higbee, Schultz & Goff, 2010; Landreman, 2005).

The research methodology and design appropriateness will be discussed in Chapter 3 to explain how a qualitative phenomenological approach will inform the study’s research goals and objectives. The population, sampling methods, data collection procedures, geographical location, validity issues, and data analysis for the research study will also be discussed in this chapter. Assumptions about the purpose and goal of multicultural education have created myths and varying opinions on who should participate in multicultural programs. Using a qualitative phenomenological design assisted with understanding the lived experiences shaping faculty and administrators’ perception of multicultural education. This approach also provided insight on institutional perceptions of multicultural initiatives and solutions for furthering integration efforts.

## Chapter 3

### Method

The purpose of this research study was to explore faculty and administrators' perceptions of multicultural initiatives and what impact they perceive the initiatives have on students' development. As recent studies have shown positive correlations between students' perceived campus climate and faculty relationships, learning institutions have been encouraged to create more inclusive education and campus environments through the use of multicultural programs (Chao & Nath, 2011; Kuk & Banning, 2010; Pica-Smith, 2009). Yet the diversity of academic programs, curriculum, and staff has still not reached satisfactory levels in higher education institutions (Center for American Progress, 2011). This chapter provides an explanation of the research method used for this study and a rationale for the appropriateness of using a phenomenological design. The population, sampling methods, data collection procedures, geographical location, validity issues, and data analysis for the research study will also be discussed in this chapter.

#### **Research Method**

Qualitative research revolves around examining how people experience a phenomenon. The phenomenon of multicultural education has varying affects on educators. In some cases, educators advocate against the use of multicultural practices claiming that it separates students by race and "dumbs down" education for minority students (Ford & Quinn , 2010; Parrish & VanBerschot, 2010, Petrova, 2012; Stotsky, 2002, p. 2). In other studies, multicultural initiatives are viewed by educators as a tool to balance curriculum and bridge cultural divides between students and teachers (Banks, 2008; Herzog, 2010; Higbee, Schultz & Goff, 2010). A qualitative methodology was chosen to better understand the lived experiences that have shaped educators



perception of multicultural initiatives in higher education. Although quantitative research is effective when determining whether or not a relationship exists between variables, it is less effective at quantifying human emotions and experiences (Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Qualitative research enables researchers to describe a phenomenon from the participants' viewpoint. Because people do not experience a phenomenon in exactly the same way, qualitative methods allow researchers to capture individual experiences through interviews, focus groups, and personal narratives (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). Utilizing a qualitative approach informed the study's research goals by providing insight on faculty and administrators' perception of multicultural initiatives. Understanding these different perspectives of multicultural education provides insight on policy and curriculum changes that can be made to increase the integration of multicultural initiatives in higher education.

### **Design and Appropriateness**

A hermeneutic phenomenological design was chosen for its ability to explore phenomenon through lived experiences. Although phenomenology originates from the work of Kant (1965) and Hegel (1977), Husserl is often referred to as the fountainhead of phenomenology in the twentieth century (Groenewald, 2004; Rockmore, 2011; Vandenberg, 1997). Hermeneutic phenomenology was born out of Martin Heidegger's opposition to Husserl's subjective approach to meaning. Initially a student of Husserl, Heidegger moved away from Husserl's transcendental approach because he believed that humans derived meaning from experience that in itself is influenced by tradition, culture, language, and time (Heidegger, 1962; Heidegger, 1988). The central premise of Heidegger's approach was that meaning is derived from human existence through language, but could be separated from the weight of tradition with the use of interpretative methods (Heidegger, 1962; Moran, 2007). As a result, Heidegger viewed

existence in terms of a specific person's experiences over the course of their lifespan, rather than a timeless or eternal event. During one's lifetime, Heidegger proposed that meaning is replaced by culture and tradition. To reveal essential meaning a person must deconstruct presupposed ideas and assumptions in order to reconstruct knowledge based on a fresh interpretation of their experiences (Heidegger, 1988).

Although both Husserl and Heidegger sought the same end in phenomenological research, their philosophical approaches to understanding lived experiences were significantly different. For example, Husserl's view of time and history revolves around the idea that human beings are both timeless and eternal because of our subjective mind. Thus, the use of intentionality and bracketing was necessary for researchers to grasp consciousness and make sense of a phenomenon. In contrast, Heidegger believed that human existence occurred over a continuum of time consisting of the past, present, and future (Heidegger, 1962; Moran, 2007). Therefore, the perception of a phenomenon stems from a person's history and experiences of being in the world. As a result, Heidegger saw bracketing as impossible because a person cannot stand outside the pre-understandings and historicity of their own experiences, nor can the researcher make sense of the phenomenon without knowing a participant's history (Heidegger, 1962). These different philosophical approaches to phenomenological research are important to understand as they dictate how the researcher will collect, analyze, and interpret participants' lived experiences.

Because this study sought to understand how faculty and administrators' experiences shaped their perception of multicultural initiatives, Heidegger's hermeneutic approach to phenomenology is an appropriate design to assist the researcher with achieving the research goals. Similar to Hegel's *Standpoint Theory*, Heidegger's concept of phenomenology advocates

that there can be no absolute “truth” because reality is merely the construction of one’s lived experiences (Fouche, 1993; Groenewald, 2004; Harnois, 2010). Thus, a phenomenon can be viewed from multiple perspectives based on an individual’s lived experiences. The perception of multicultural education is a phenomenon within itself because of its adaptive nature and instruction. As a result, the way in which multicultural initiatives are defined and implemented are based on an individual’s perceptions of multicultural education as a bridge or divider. Utilizing a hermeneutic phenomenological design allowed the researcher to understand the lived experiences shaping faculty and administrators’ perception of multicultural education. Using this research design also enabled the researcher to gain insight on institutional perceptions of multicultural initiatives and solutions for furthering integration efforts.

### **Research Questions**

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of faculty and administrators who have experience working with diverse student populations. The focus of the research study will explore faculty and administrators’ perceptions of multicultural initiatives as tool to enhance student development. The following research questions guided the study:

1. How do faculty and administrators experiences shape their perception of multicultural initiatives in higher education?
2. Based on your experience, what criteria do faculty and administrators perceive as important to the integration of multicultural education?
3. Based on your experience, what policies do faculty and administrators perceive as important to the integration of multicultural education?

## **Population and Geographic Location**

When conducting a qualitative phenomenological study, Creswell (2009) suggests including 20-25 participants with direct experience. Thus, the study population in this study consisted of 20 participants, 10 faculty members and 10 administrators. Characteristics of the sample population included two to five years of experience working with diverse student populations in Maricopa County, Arizona. Participants teaching experience came from a mix of private, public, and online postsecondary institutions within Maricopa County, Arizona. Faculty and administrators with less than two years of teaching experience who work at a college or university outside of Maricopa County, Arizona were excluded from the study. The characteristics for the study population were chosen to ensure selected participants could provide adequate experiential knowledge of multicultural initiatives, from a personal and institutional standpoint. For this reason, faculty and administrators with more than five years of experience teaching diverse students were welcomed, while those with less than two years of experience were not included.

Two years was selected as a starting point for experience because adjunct faculty working with Maricopa Community Colleges are required to take a certification course by the end of their second year to continue teaching (MCCCD, 2013). The certification course EDU250 is designed to build on teachers experience by preparing them for a variety of learning environments. In addition to developing a lesson plan, teachers are provided with research on the latest teaching methodologies and engagement strategies (MCCCD, 2007). These strategies combined with educators experience are designed to create well-rounded instructors. The experience of such well-rounded educators helped inform the study's research goals of understanding how faculty and administrators perceive multicultural initiatives.

The rationale for choosing Arizona as the geographic location to sample stems from the knowledge that a third of Arizona's population is comprised of foreign born immigrants from countries in South America, Africa, and India (Census Bureau, 2013). As a border state, Arizona's schools are representative of the growing number of minority students versus minority teachers and faculty. The social and political environment of Arizona in the wake of stricter immigration laws and the Ethnic Studies Ban passed in 2010, also provide a rich sample of diverse ideas and perspectives on issues related to multicultural education. Because the majority of the postsecondary institutions fall within the Maricopa County district, Maricopa County, Arizona was chosen as the specific population to capture a wider variety of institutional perspectives (Census Bureau, 2013).

### **Sampling Frame**

Creswell (2009) advocated that understanding a phenomenon comes from purposefully selecting sites and participants. In this study, a purposive sampling method was used to select faculty and administrators from postsecondary institutions within Maricopa County, Arizona. A demographic survey was sent to faculty and administrators who work at colleges and universities in Maricopa County, Arizona. The demographic survey helped qualify participants by asking questions related to educators' experience working with diverse student populations, use of multicultural techniques, and years of teaching. Qualified participants had at least two to five years of experience working with diverse student populations and varied perceptions of multicultural education ranging from positive to negative. Likewise, participants chosen had varied experiences with multicultural education that ranged from daily use in the classroom to those who worked with diverse populations, but did not implement multicultural initiatives in their classroom. Based on the survey responses, a participant solicitation letter was sent

electronically to invite 20 participants to join the study (see Appendix A). The desired number for the sample population was 10 faculty members and 10 administrators. Focus group sessions took place at the Burton Barr Library (See Appendix E). This location was selected for its ability to accommodate focus group research and provide participants with a neutral environment in which to speak freely. Each focus group session was recorded and permission was sought from participants prior to recording. Because the researcher was also the moderator, recording focus group sessions allowed the researcher to review recordings and make additional notes.

### **Informed Consent**

To gain voluntary consent for this study, selected participants received an informed consent letter explaining the purpose of the study, procedures that would take place, confidentiality, how information would be shared, and participants' right to discontinue the study at any point (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). The informed consent letter was sent electronically once participants accepted the study invitation and was collected on the first day of the study (see Appendix B). Participants were provided with the researchers contact information and encouraged to ask questions to mitigate concerns. Likewise, participants had the opportunity to abstain or withdraw from the study at any point. Before the start of each focus group session, participants were reminded of the purpose of the study and asked for permission to record the session. Once a focus group session began, participants still had the opportunity to stop the recording or remove themselves if uncomfortable. An official withdrawal form was available to participants who chose to withdraw from the study. The withdrawal letter allowed participants to leave the study at any point with no penalty. To protect the researcher and the participant, the withdrawal letter needed to be signed by both parties. Incorporating these measures allowed the researcher to ensure participants were properly informed about the study before participating and

that the requirements set forth by the Protection of Human Research Subjects were adhered to. The informed consent letter also notified participants that data from this study would be stored in a secure location for three years and then destroyed (see Appendix B).

### **Confidentiality**

Because research data included surveys and recordings of focus group sessions, maintaining the confidentiality and privacy of participants was an important ethical consideration. To keep participants responses anonymous, each participant was randomly assigned a number between 1 and 10 to protect personally identifiable information. In addition, participants in each focus group were asked to sign a non-disclosure form stating that individual's were not to disclose any information pertaining to the study (see Appendix D). After the study was completed, a copy of the final study analysis was sent to participants. All data from this study will be stored in a locked safe deposit box for three years and then destroyed.

### **Data Collection**

Data to inform the research questions in this study came from a demographic survey and focus group sessions. The demographic survey served as means of identifying participants with relevant characteristics to participate in the study (see Appendix F). Focus groups are often used as a method of collecting data for market research or evaluation studies (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). In an evaluation study, focus groups enable researchers to identify strengths and weaknesses of a proposed concept or product. In this study, focus groups were used to allow faculty and administrators to evaluate perceptions of multicultural initiatives as tool to enhance student development.

To achieve this goal, six focus group sessions were conducted over a three week time span to capture participants' views on multicultural education, strategies for teaching diverse

student populations, teacher preparation, and perceptions of institutional support for multicultural initiatives (see Appendix G). Faculty members and administrators were grouped separately and each focus group met once a week for two hours at the Burton Barr Library (see Appendix E). All focus group sessions were recorded and permission was sought from participants before recording. During the third session, member-checking was used to allow participants to determine if the findings accurately portrayed their perspectives (Lietz, Langer & Furman, 2006). Member checking is another form of peer-review that can be used to reduce researcher bias. To accomplish this goal, both focus groups were given a transcript of the categories and themes that emerged from the previous sessions to see if they accurately reflected participants' viewpoints on multicultural initiatives (Lietz, Langer & Furman, 2006). At the end of each session, recordings were reviewed to enable the researcher to accurately transcribe and code participants' responses.

To organize focus group data, participants' responses were coded based on a number randomly assigned between 1 and 10. Coded faculty focus group responses ranged from F1 to F10, whereas administrator focus group responses were assigned a code from A1 to A10. Focus group data organized and coded using Liamputtong and Ezzy's (2005) three column format. Pattern coding and in-text coding were used to highlight themes and linguistic characters found in the transcripts. Data was then entered into NVivo 10 to check for additional themes and patterns. Organizing data in this way assisted the researcher with identifying similarities and differences between responses from the faculty and administrator focus groups (Creswell, 2009).

### **Instrumentation**

The online demographic survey was created and administered using surveymonkey.com. The survey was a two-part questionnaire. The first section gathered data related to respondents experience, age, background, and years of teaching. The second section was a mix of open-ended



questions about educators' perception of multicultural initiatives and questions asking respondents to rate their experience with multicultural initiatives on a scale of 1 to 5 (see Appendix F). Survey monkey was chosen as the instrumentation for the demographic survey because of its ability to gather and organize large amounts of data efficiently. Nvivo 10 software was the instrumentation used to analyze data from focus group sessions. Nvivo 10 software was selected because it was specifically designed to analyze qualitative research data.

### **Data Analysis**

Liamputtong and Ezzy's (2005) three column format and Heidegger's phenomenological reflection were used to analyze data in this study (Heidegger, 1962; Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005). Pre-coding began with utilizing Liamputtong and Ezzy's (2005) three column format. The first column contains participants' actual responses. The second column contains the researcher's initial thoughts and preliminary code notes, while the third column is reserved for the researchers final codes (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005; Saldana, 2008). Pattern coding helped identify themes related to similarities and differences between faculty and administrators attitudes and word choices when describing their experiences. Using this format assisted the researcher with finding a link between the raw data and codes applied to the text (see Appendixes L and M). In-text coding was also used to ensure the data remained rooted in participants own language (Saldana, 2008).

Once texts were transcribed, Heidegger's phenomenological reflection was used to derive meaning from participants lived experiences as educators. According to Heidegger, phenomenological reflection is necessary to deconstruct and reconstruct meaning (Heidegger, 1962). Deconstruction involves searching for the "logos of origin" by releasing a phenomenon from the layers of traditional assumptions and beliefs that are steeped in a person's lived

experiences. The process of deconstruction occurred in the first focus group sessions in which participants were asked to describe experiences that shaped their philosophy of education and approach to working with diverse student populations. Analyzing transcripts from these first sessions enabled the researcher to understand the origin of beliefs that influenced participant's personal experiences and their perceptions of multicultural initiatives. Reconstruction begins with interpreting the texts built from participants accounts of their lived experiences. The process of reconstruction took place in the final focus group sessions in which participants were given a list of themes from the previous two sessions and asked to reflect upon themes they felt were the most and least important according to their experience working with diverse students. Utilizing Heidegger's circular process of deconstruction and reconstruction provides a means of clearing away tradition and allows the researcher to clarify meaning through multiple layers and dimensions of experience (van Manen, 1990). Textual descriptions are then added to coded data in Nvivo 10 to justify conceptual themes and categories that emerged from participants' statements and lived experiences (Moustakas, 1994; Salkind, 2008).

### **Validity**

According to Creswell (2009), validity is essential to establishing credibility in a qualitative study. Thus triangulation was used to improve the credibility and transferability of this study. Triangulation helps validate data by comparing different perspectives, theories, methods, or data sources to see if similarities are found (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). In this study, data triangulation was used to compare similarities and differences between faculty and administrators' focus group responses. The approximate age differences between groups were also compared to see if the perspectives of younger faculty and administrators differed from the perspectives of veteran teachers. The coding system employed by the researcher assisted with

identifying conceptual themes and categories that emerged from data pertaining to faculty and administrators.

Heidegger's phenomenological reflection (Heidegger, 1962) and the member checking step suggested by Lietz, Langer and Furman (2006) both focus on gaining knowledge and understanding through participants' perceptions. However, to achieve that understanding, both processes take a very different approach. In 2006, Lietz, Langer and Furman utilized member checking in their study about the implications of spirituality to minimize the effects of reactivity and researcher bias. The debriefing involved engaging in dialogue with researchers who had experience with the topic and methodology. Employing member checking helped the researchers see how some participants felt that spirituality was a birthright, while others viewed it as choice (Lietz, Langer & Furman, 2006). This insight provided researchers with another angle in which to analyze and interpret data obtained from their study. Member checking was used in this study to allow participants an opportunity to review a summary of the conceptual themes and categories derived from the focus groups to determine if the findings accurately portrayed their viewpoints (Lietz, Langer & Furman, 2006). Incorporating data triangulation and member checking served as a way to validate the study and reduce researcher bias associated with the collection and interpretation of data.

## **Reliability**

Reliability often refers to how researchers choose to gather data (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). To increase reliability, a pilot study consisting of three faculty members and three administrators was conducted to ensure the survey instruments and focus group questions adequately captured and categorized participants' responses. Participants in the pilot study were asked a total of 12 open-ended questions during the first and second focus group sessions (see

Appendix H). In the final sessions, participants were asked to identify the questions they felt met the purpose of the study and questions that seemed unclear or vague. Once the pilot study concluded, follow up interviews were conducted with participants regarding the appropriateness of each focus group question. Conducting the pilot study helped the researcher identify flaws in the design of the instrument and focus group questions that were not aligned with the research goals (Creswell, 2009). Utilizing a pilot study provided the opportunity to revise focus group questions in a way that aligned them with the purpose of the study and increased the reliability of the instrument (see Appendix I). Incorporating these changes ensured that the information collected during the research study adequately captured participants' responses and connected them to applicable research questions.

### **Summary**

The goal of this study was to explore the different perspectives of multicultural education through the lived experiences of faculty and administrators. Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenological approach was used to achieve the proposed research goals. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach to explore the phenomenon of multicultural education through faculty and administrators' viewpoints increased the study's credibility by providing a variety of diverse perspectives and experiences (Creswell, 2009). The proposed sample included 20 participants, 10 faculty members and 10 administrators, from colleges and universities in Maricopa County, Arizona. Participants were selected based on responses to a demographic survey that was sent to colleges and universities in Maricopa County, Arizona. To keep participants responses anonymous, participants' responses were coded based on letters identifying faculty responses (F) and administrator responses (A), combined with a number between 1 and 10. Focus group data was organized using Liamputtong and Ezzy's (2005) three

column format and Nvivo 10 software. Heidegger's method of phenomenological reflection was used to identify conceptual categories and themes emerging from the data (Heidegger, 1962). Data triangulation and member checking were used to support the validity and reliability of the study. Incorporating these measures served as a way to validate the study and reduce researcher bias associated with the collection and interpretation of data. In Chapter 4, an analysis of the study's data and results will be presented to determine whether or not the research goals were achieved.

## Chapter 4

### Results

The purpose of this phenomenological research study was to explore faculty and administrators' perceptions of multicultural initiatives and what impact they perceived the initiatives had on students' development. The intimate nature of a phenomenological approach helped establish rapport with participants and produce more accurate results when exploring the phenomenon of multicultural education. The sample included 10 faculty members and 10 administrators from colleges and universities in Maricopa County, Arizona. Using participants' lived experiences and background enabled the researcher to gain insight on multicultural initiatives that would not have been gained without direct experience. A demographic survey and focus groups sessions were used to collect data and coded using Liamputtong and Ezzy's (2005) three column format. Pattern coding and in-text coding were used to highlight themes and linguistic characters found in the transcripts. This chapter provides an explanation of the results, including participant demographics, data analysis, the reliability of the instruments used, and the themes that emerged from the study.

#### **Pilot Study**

After receiving IRB approval a pilot study was conducted to test the research instruments prior to the main study. The purpose of the pilot study was to determine the suitability of the focus group questions and to identify flaws in the design of the instrument (Creswell, 2009). The pilot study included a convenience sample of three administrators and three faculty members employed at both public and private colleges and universities within Maricopa County, Arizona. Pilot study participants completed an informed consent form prior to the pilot study and alphanumeric codes (i.e., PS1, PS2, and PS3) were assigned to protect participants' identities.

Three separate focus group sessions were conducted with faculty and administrators at the Burton Barr Library over the course of three days. Each focus group session lasted approximately 90 minutes and participants gave permission to audio record the session. Each pilot study participant provided verbal feedback concerning the appropriateness of the research questions as an instrument. Follow up interviews were conducted with each participant once the pilot study concluded.

Table 1 *Pilot Study Participant Demographics*

| Participant | Position        | Gender | Age   | Race/Ethnicity   | Years of Experience |
|-------------|-----------------|--------|-------|------------------|---------------------|
| PS1         | Administrator   | Male   | 45-60 | African American | More than 10 yrs    |
| PS2         | Faculty         | Male   | 45-60 | African American | More than 10 yrs    |
| PS3         | Adjunct Faculty | Female | 35-44 | Caucasian        | 3-4 yrs             |
| PS4         | Administrator   | Male   | 45-60 | African American | 3-4 yrs             |
| PS5         | Administrator   | Male   | 45-60 | Caucasian        | More than 10 yrs    |
| PS6         | Adjunct Faculty | Female | 26-34 | Caucasian        | 3-4 yrs             |

Participants in the pilot study were asked a total of 12 open-ended questions during the first and second focus group sessions (see Appendix H). In the final sessions, participants were asked to identify the questions they felt met the purpose of the study and questions that seemed unclear or vague. Once the pilot study concluded, follow up interviews were conducted with each participant regarding the appropriateness of the focus group questions. Pilot study participants indicated that some of the focus group questions were not aligned with the research questions and purpose of the study. Participants stated that only questions 2, 3, 8, 5, 10, 11 and 12 directly connected to the research questions and the problem under study. They recommended removing questions 6 and 7 related to their colleagues' use of multicultural initiatives and

revising question 3 to allow participants to answer whether or not they use multicultural practices in their classrooms.

According to Simon (2006), pilot tests assist the researcher with evaluating the quality of the instrument in order to correct deficiencies before the primary study. Revising the focus group questions to better align with the purpose of the study improved both the deficiencies and reliability of the instrument (see Appendix I). The pilot study also helped the researcher determine which focus group questions aligned with the research questions (see Appendix J). Pilot study participants were not involved in the primary study, and data collected from the pilot test were excluded from the primary study. Conducting the pilot study helped determine the appropriateness of the focus group questions as an instrument and contributed to the reliability and validity of the study (Creswell, 2009).

### **Data Collection**

Data to inform the research questions in this study came from a demographic survey and focus group sessions. The demographic survey served as a means of identifying participants with relevant characteristics to participate in the study (see Appendix F). Faculty and administrators participated in three focus group sessions to capture their views on multicultural education, strategies for teaching diverse student populations, teacher preparation, and perceptions of institutional support for multicultural initiatives. Faculty members and administrators were grouped separately. Each focus group met once a week for two hours at the Burton Barr Library. Informed consent letters were sent electronically once participants accepted the study invitation and were collected on the first day of the study. A copy of the informed consent form can be seen in Appendix B. To ensure participants understood the purpose of the study and the extent of their involvement, the informed consent form was read out loud at the beginning of the first focus



group sessions. Participants were also informed that each focus group session would be recorded with their permission and that they could withdraw from the study at any time or refrain from answering questions that made them uncomfortable. Signing the informed consent forms indicated participants understanding of the research study, how focus group sessions would be conducted, and how their confidentiality would be protected. To protect the identity of participants, faculty responses were coded F1-F10 and administrator responses were coded A1-A10.

### **Participant Demographics**

Purposeful sampling was used to select the study participants. Purposeful sampling ensured that all participants had at least two to five years of teaching experience with diverse student populations and worked in a college or university within Maricopa County, Arizona. The characteristics for the study population were chosen to ensure selected participants could provide adequate experiential knowledge of multicultural initiatives, from a personal and institutional standpoint. These characteristics also enabled the researcher to uncover the philosophical assumptions educators have toward multicultural education and whether or not participants' perceptions changed based on the focus group sessions. Table 2 displays the gender and race/ethnicity of the 20 participants selected for the study. The number of male participants slightly outnumbered female participants. However, the majority of the participants were either Caucasian or African American. There were only two participants that identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino and no Native American or Asian participants.

Table 2 *Gender and Race/Ethnicity of Participants*

|        | Caucasian | African American | Hispanic/Latino |
|--------|-----------|------------------|-----------------|
| Male   | 4         | 6                | 1               |
| Female | 5         | 3                | 1               |

Table 3 shows the years of teaching experience of each study participant. Purposeful sampling yielded a rich sample of experienced faculty and administrators. Half of the participants had 10 or more years of teaching experience, which helped provide significant experiential knowledge for the study.

Table 3 *Participants Years of Teaching Experience*

|                   | 3-4 years | 5-10 years | More than 10 years |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|--------------------|
| # of Participants | 6         | 4          | 10                 |

Table 4 displays the age range of participants. Although the age range of participants varied, the majority of participants fell into the 35-44 or 45-60 category. The age of participants matched the years of experience and allowed participants to share different perspectives and philosophies on multicultural education depending on the time period they grew up in.

Table 4 *Age Range of Participants*

|                   | 26-34 | 35-44 | 45-60 | 61 and over |
|-------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------------|
| # of Participants | 4     | 6     | 8     | 2           |

The diverse demographics and experience of participants enabled the participants to share personal stories and explain how their philosophy of education and views on multicultural initiatives changed over time. The range of participant demographics also allowed the researcher to compare and contrast participants experiences based on age, gender, position, and years of teaching.

### **Data Analysis**

A mix of manual and computer-assisted analysis was used to interpret data collected from the study. The primary source of data consisted of focus group transcripts from 20 study participants, which yielded 40 pages of raw text and provided rich, descriptive data to examine the research questions. Pattern coding and in-text coding were used to highlight themes and linguistic characters found in the transcripts. Pattern coding helped identify themes related to similarities and differences between faculty and administrators attitudes and word choices when describing their experiences. Pre-coding began manually by utilizing Liamputtong and Ezzy's (2005) three column format. Using this format assisted the researcher with finding a link between the raw data and codes applied to the text. In-text coding was also used to ensure the data remained rooted in participants own language (Saldana, 2008).

Once texts were transcribed, Heidegger's phenomenological reflection was used to derive meaning from participants lived experiences as faculty and administrators. According to Heidegger, phenomenological reflection is necessary to deconstruct and reconstruct meaning (Heidegger, 1962). Deconstruction involves searching for the "logos of origin" by releasing a phenomenon from the layers of traditional assumptions and beliefs that are steeped in a person's lived experiences. Heidegger advocated that the process of deconstruction enabled people to analyze their lived experiences, correct prejudices, and see life with new eyes (Heidegger, 1988).

The process of deconstruction began by analyzing transcripts from the first focus group sessions in which participants were asked to describe experiences that shaped their philosophy of education and approach to working with diverse student populations. These experiences enabled the researcher to understand the origin of beliefs that influenced participant's personal experiences and their perceptions of multicultural initiatives.

Reconstruction begins with interpreting the texts built from participants accounts of their lived experiences. Transcripts from the final sessions were essential to the reconstruction process. During the final sessions, participants were given a list of the themes identified from the previous two sessions and asked to reflect upon which ones they felt were the most and least important according to their experience working with diverse students. Analyzing themes allowed participants to reevaluate how they felt about certain experiences and determine if their perceptions were still accurate based on knowledge gained from previous focus group sessions. Thematic analysis of texts was then used to highlight structures of meaning and create the phenomenological text to answer the researcher's questions (van Manen, 1990). Van Manen suggests Heidegger's use of reflection, thinking, and rethinking assists the research with sifting through the parts of a whole to uncover essential truth (van Manen, 1990). Thus, the circular process of deconstruction and reconstruction becomes a means of clearing away tradition and allowing the researcher to clarify meaning through multiple layers and dimensions of experience (van Manen, 1990).

Significant items from the data were identified and used to generate themes. Emergent themes were deemed significant if (1) there was unanimity or near-unanimity of responses on that theme and (2) if the themes were broad enough to be applicable to at least one of the research questions. Data was then entered into NVivo 10 to check for additional themes and

patterns. Triangulation was achieved by using two different respondent groups consisting of faculty and administrators, three different focus group sessions for each respondent group, and member checking to ensure the data accurately reflected participants' experiences.

### **Findings of the Study**

The study consisted of three separate focus group sessions for faculty and administrators in which the researcher recorded and coded participants responses based on repetitive phrases to identify relevant themes. Central questions from each focus group session were selected to assist with answering the research questions. According to Giorgi (2003), presenting a description of the phenomenon through experiences of participants is an important part of the phenomenological analysis process (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003). Thus, a provision of direct quotes was used to provide a clear picture of the participants' lived experiences with diverse student populations and multicultural initiatives.

### **Participant Responses from Focus Group Session 1**

The first session was designed to explore the personal experiences that shaped participants' philosophical approach to working with diverse students, experiences that affected how they perceive multicultural education, and the perceived support experienced at their respective institutions in regard to multicultural initiatives. Three central questions assisted the researcher with accomplishing the goals set for the first session.

#### **Central Question 1**

Question 2: What is your philosophy/approach to multicultural education? What experiences shaped your philosophy/approach?

Personal experiences that influenced participants approach to multicultural education, stemmed from growing up in diverse and non-diverse environments, traveling abroad, and

viewing students as equals. Several participants cited experiences from their first time traveling abroad and being faced with misconceptions and assumptions about other cultures that they did not realize they harbored. Others discussed experiences about growing up in rural towns or places where few minorities were seen. As a result, many of their first interactions with people from other cultures were mixed with curiosity and fear. These first experiences impacted participants view of multicultural education in several ways. Participants who realized they harbored misconceptions fought to justify their assumptions or correct misconceptions by being open and meeting students where they are academically and culturally. Participants who experienced curiosity and fear when interacting with different cultures strived to learn as much about other cultures in order to find common ground and minimize the fear of the unknown.

The majority of participants stated that they use some type of multicultural pedagogy in their classrooms based on positive experiences with student engagement and “finding ways to connect to get the lesson across.” Other suggested that they tried to “meet students where they are personally, professionally, and culturally to help build rapport.” However, a few participants stated that they used “various methodologies but nothing special for diverse students” because “working with students is pretty much the same, regardless of race or ethnicity.” Other participants advocated that they tried to “leverage the diversity in the classroom to allow students to gain awareness of different perspectives and ideas.” Based on participants’ experiences, their approach to multicultural education in their classrooms revolved around 1) Finding common ground with students, 2) Building rapport, 3) Student engagement, 4) All students are the same, and 5) Leveraging the diversity of students in the classroom to enhance learning.

## Central Question 2

Question 4: Based on your experience, do you believe that your institution supports multicultural initiatives?

More than half of the participants stated that they received varying ranges of support from cooperative to non-cooperative when trying to implement multicultural programs or curriculum changes. Several participants discussed experiencing push back when they tried to develop a multicultural fair to showcase different student organizations or fund an event to highlight a specific minority group such as Latino or Native American cultures. Resistance came in the form of leadership stating no funds were available for special events and co-workers arguing why some cultures were being included or excluded in a showcase. In some cases, participants were able to raise the funds for multicultural events on their own with the help of students, while others were denied permission to host such events on campus because it went against school policy. Other participants stated that they experienced a great deal of support when planning multicultural events and that their respective institutions allocated a certain amount of funds each semester to ensure such events could occur.

A smaller subset of participants replied they had never tried initiating a large scale multicultural event outside of their classroom and were unsure whether or not they would receive support from their institution. These participants advocated that smaller scale programs inside the classroom, such as bringing in cultural foods or inviting a speaker, were more effective with students because of the intimate nature of interaction between students. The majority of participants agreed with the effectiveness of in class programs compared to a one day cultural event in which all students may or may not interact with one another. Based on participants' responses, this question revealed that the majority of participants received varying support from

their institutions when implementing multicultural initiatives. Reasons for support or resistance related to the 1) Attitude of leadership, 2) Availability of funds, and 3) Whether or not institutional policies enforced the need for diverse programming.

### **Central Question 3**

Question 5: What lessons have you learned from your experiences as a multicultural educator or from teaching diverse groups of students?

Over the years, participants stated that they learned many lessons from their experiences working with diverse students in terms of listening, respect, and understanding. The majority of participants advocated that the biggest lesson was being “open to change and the ability to adapt to different learning styles.” Learning how to adapt curriculum was another valuable lesson many participants cited. One participant stated that they realized “a students’ perspective on education, is greatly influenced by their cultural norms and experiences. Thus, educators should be sensitive to the learning styles of each student and try to adapt accordingly.” This comment sparked resistance from a few participants who insisted that “the diversity of curriculum had little to do with learning and retaining a lesson.” Many participants disagreed with this point and advocated that students learn differently based on many factors, one of which includes culture. Some participants added that including “diverse perspectives and backgrounds lead to enhanced learning, critical thinking and problem-solving.” Others agreed and added that it was important to create a welcoming environment in which students could safely express themselves. Likewise, instructors had to “be armed to diffuse cultural differences in the classroom and remember that students are impacted by our actions and embark on our decisions.” Based on participants responses, the lessons learned from being a multicultural educator and working with diverse students were 1) Respect for differences, 2) Being open to change, 3) Adapting curriculum to



include culture can enhance learning, 4) Culture influences learning, and 5) Create a welcoming environment for students to express themselves.

After transcribing participants' responses from the first focus group sessions and examining responses from the three central questions, 12 themes emerged from the first session. The 12 themes identified were: 1) Finding a common ground, 2) Building rapport, 3) Respect, 4) Being open to change, 5) Enhanced learning, 6) No special needed to work with diverse students, 7) All students are the same, 8) Student engagement, 9) Adapting curriculum and programming, 10) Creating a welcoming environment, 11) Culture influences education, and 12) Leveraging the diversity in the classroom. Appendix K depicts the themes discovered in the first focus group sessions using Liamputtong and Ezzy's (2005) three column format to record patterns in participants' responses.

### **Participant Responses from Focus Group Session 2**

The second focus group sessions were designed to examine what participants believed to be the positive and negative aspects of multicultural initiatives based on their experiences and changes or policies they believed could improve the perception of multicultural initiatives at their respective institutions. Three central questions assisted the researcher with accomplishing the goals set for the second session.

#### **Central Question 1**

Question 1: Based on your experience, what would you consider the positive and negative aspects of multicultural education?

Positive aspects of multicultural education related to understanding our shared humanity, finding common ground with students, and creating a welcoming environment. Several faculty shared experiences from their classrooms about how discussing cultural topics such as the

Japanese imprisonment camps, the annexation of Hawaii, or U.S. policies that forced thousands of Native Americans off their land opened students eyes to different ways of seeing the world and America history. A faculty member who teaches multicultural communication, stated many students cried after learning about how Native America children had been taken from their homes, placed into boarding schools, and forced to learn English in an effort to “save the child and kill the Indian.” Many students could not imagine been taken from the only home they knew, punished for speaking their native tongue, and forced to learn another language. The faculty member was awed that students actually hugged Native American students in the class and apologized for the treatment their ancestors had endured. This was an intense experience for the Native American students and they thanked the class and the teacher for discussing a part of history that is rarely taught in public education. An administrator shared their experience of brining in a speaker during Black History Month to talk about the Underground Railroad. The speaker discussed famous conductors such as Harriet Tubman and Thomas Garret and the role that many Caucasians played in aiding, sheltering, and feeding runaway slaves on the road to freedom. The speaker also talked about freedom quilts slaves made with intricate patterns to send messages back and forth in plain sight. The administrator stated the event allowed African American and Caucasian students to see the important role entire communities played in helping thousands of slaves obtain freedom through the Underground Railroad. In this way, participants agreed that multicultural education “helps diverse groups get along, compromise, and see a common goal.” Others advocated that “changing student demographics and global connectivity makes diversity critical for students to engage and be successful in the future.”

Negative aspects of multicultural education corresponded with the perception that it could be viewed as unpatriotic, divisive, and make minority groups feel oppressed. Several

participants cited the ban on ethnic studies in Tucson, Arizona as an example of how “people are guided by assumptions versus trying to gain another's perspective before taking action.” Other participants defended the ban on ethnic studies because the Mexican American course that incited the ban was said to be dividing students by race and teaching Latino students that the territory known as Arizona was taken from Mexico and should be returned. Likewise, participants cited the experiences shared about Indian boarding schools and Japanese imprisonment camps and stated that learning about the ugly part of American history can make students less patriotic and ashamed to be American. Although most participants agreed with the statement, many added that “good or bad history should be taught in its entirety.”

## **Central Question 2**

Question 6: What solutions or approach to multicultural education could be used to change the perception of those who view multicultural initiatives in a negative way?

Based on their experiences, the majority of participants agreed that training was essential to changing the perception of multicultural initiatives. One administrator replied, “I work with a diverse team of individuals who provide services indirectly to students. Having cultural sensitivity is key to interfacing with a broad mix of cultures.” Many participants agreed with this point and stated that discussing cultural topics could be uncomfortable if you are not prepared. One faculty member shared their experience of being caught off guard when they were discussing media representation and a student brought up how the media portrayed Trayvon Martin’s choice to wear a hoodie as justification that he was a thug and deserved to be shot. This comment sparked a debate in class about the negative media portrayal of various racial groups that the faculty member was not prepared or knowledgeable enough to discuss. Other faculty members had experienced similar situations and advocated that training would have prepared

them and allowed the incidents to become “teachable moments” rather than “moments of tension and discomfort.” Support from leadership was another factor that participants agreed influenced the perception and integration of multicultural initiatives in an institution. The majority of participants agreed that “leadership sets the tone for diversity and programming, so without their support, institutional change is impossible.” Likewise, with the help of leadership, faculty and administrators could be encouraged to work across departments and develop interdisciplinary programs aimed at diversity.

### **Central Question 3**

Question 7: Based on your experience, are there any state or institutional policies that need to be changed or modified regarding multicultural education?

The majority of participants indicated that developing a clearly defined diversity plan and having state allocated resources to fund multicultural initiatives would further the integration of multicultural education. When asked if participants knew whether or not their institutions had a diversity policy, only half of the participants responded yes. Of the participants who said their institution had a diversity policy, only seven had actually read it. This observation sparked concern among participants and many indicated that they had never even thought to look up their institutions stance on diversity or multicultural programming. Those that were aware of their institutions policies stated that they were vague and did not clearly define the term diversity, which left the policies open to interpretation. Participants advocated that to be successful, the institutions diversity policy should be known to all employees and evident in the types of programs offered on campus.

Having state or school funds specifically ear marked for multicultural initiatives was another point voiced by participants that many believed could further the integration of

multicultural education. The majority of administrators agreed with these points and stated that dedicated funding could help create pre-college programs, bridge programs, and direct connections to cultural organizations and mentors for diverse students. Faculty insisted that dedicated funding could allow for more student driven projects and events based on multicultural topics to enhance learning beyond the classroom. Some participants stated that although certain funds were supposed to be earmarked for multicultural programs, they had witnessed such funds given to Anglo students based on the premise that the committee could not find eligible minority students. Therefore, if funds were specifically earmarked for multicultural initiatives, schools may be more likely to create the necessary programming, rather than lose the funds altogether.

After transcribing participants' response from the second focus group sessions and examining responses from the three central questions, 11 themes emerged. The 11 themes identified were: 1) Diversity does not impact learning, 2) Recognizing our shared humanity, 3) Misconceptions/assumptions, 4) Exchange of information, 5) Cultural Sensitivity, 6) Training/Preparation needed when working with diverse students, 7) Creating a welcoming environment, 8) Support from leadership, 9) Changing demographics, 10) Having a clearly defined diversity policy, and 11) Resource allocation for multicultural initiatives. Appendix M depicts the themes discovered in the second focus group sessions using Liamputtong and Ezzy's (2005) three column format to record patterns in participants' responses.

### **Participant Responses from Focus Group Session 3**

Member checking was used in the third focus group sessions to allow participants to review the major themes captured from each session and determine if the findings accurately portrayed their perspectives based on their experiences (Lietz, Langer & Furman, 2006). To facilitate this session each participant was given a copy of the themes from the first and second

focus group sessions and asked to circle the most relevant themes according to their experiences. Participants were then asked to share their selections with the group. Once everyone provided their feedback, a list was compiled with the relevant themes identified. As a group, participants were asked to simplify the themes and categorize them in order of what they perceived was the most important based on their experiences with diverse students and multicultural initiatives. Table 5 provides the themes displayed from sessions one and two and the simplified themes that emerged from participants during session 3.

*Table 5 Relevant Themes from Focus Group Sessions*

| Session 1 Themes              | Session 2 Themes                   | Session 3 Simplified Themes    |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Finding Common Ground         | Diversity Does not Impact Learning | Leadership Support             |
| Building Rapport              | Recognize our Shared Humanity      | Adapt Curriculum/Programming   |
| Respect                       | Misconceptions/Assumptions         | Create a Welcoming Environment |
| Be Open to Change             | Exchange of Information            | No Special Instruction Needed  |
| Enhanced Learning             | Cultural Sensitivity               |                                |
| No Special Instruction Needed | Training/Preparation               |                                |
| All Students are the Same     | Welcoming Environment              |                                |
| Student Engagement            | Leadership Support                 |                                |
| Adapt Curriculum/Programming  | Changing Demographics              |                                |
| Welcoming Environment         | Clearly Defined Diversity Policy   |                                |
| Culture Influences Education  | Resource Allocation                |                                |
| Leverage Diversity            |                                    |                                |

Member checking enabled participants to narrow the 21 themes from the first and second session down to four themes, which were 1) Leadership support, 2) Adapting curriculum/programming, 3) Creating a welcoming environment, and 4) No special instruction needed. Participants were able to simplify the 21 themes by splitting them into categories based on association. Leadership support was selected as the overarching category responsible for developing and implementing diversity policies, allocating funding for multicultural events, and providing the necessary training to prepare staff to engage with diverse students. Adapting curriculum and programming was selected as the overarching category that enables faculty and administrators to build rapport with students, find a common ground, engage students, enhance learning beyond the classroom, leverage the changing demographics of students, and combat negative misconceptions and assumptions about other cultures. Creating a welcoming environment was selected as an overarching theme because it encompassed the principles of respect, being open to change, building cultural sensitivity, allowing students to recognize their shared humanity, and discuss their experiences in a safe place. No special instruction was selected as an overarching theme to capture the experiences of participant's who viewed multicultural education as inconsequential because all students learn the same and the diversity of curriculum had little to do with learning and retaining a lesson.

In the third session, participants were also asked to rank the themes in order of importance based on their experiences with diverse students and multicultural education. Participants ranked leadership support as the most important factor because it “sets the tone for diversity in regard to policy decisions” and “dictates the programming” offered at an institution. Adapting curriculum/programming and creating a welcoming environment were ranked second and third because participants advocated that diverse curriculum and programming helped create

an environment where students felt comfortable expressing themselves culturally. Participants ranked “no special instruction needed” as the least important because the changing demographics of students demands that institutions acknowledge that “culture influences learning.” Although many participants wanted to remove this theme, they felt it important to keep as it represented how some faculty and administrators in the group viewed multicultural initiatives. All participants indicated that they learned something from the focus group sessions that they would incorporate into their classrooms. Many participants also advocated that these types of conversations with faculty, administrators, and those in key leadership position could be beneficial in “moving the topic of multicultural initiatives to the forefront” and “dispelling myths associated with multicultural practices.”

## **Summary**

Over the course of three weeks, 10 administrators and 10 faculty members participated in three separate focus group sessions in order to explore their perceptions of multicultural initiatives within their respective institutions. During the focus group sessions a total of 19 questions were asked of participants. Coding was done by utilizing Liamputtong and Ezzy’s (2005) three column format and NVivo10. Pattern coding and in-text coding were used to highlight themes and linguistic characters found in the transcripts, which yielded 21 initial themes. In the final sessions, participants were tasked with narrowing the themes and ordering them based on experiences with diverse students and their perceived importance to the integration of multicultural initiatives.

The four major themes that emerged were: 1) Leadership Support in facilitating diversity policies and programs, 2) Adapting Curriculum/Programming to engage students and enhance learning beyond the classroom, 3) Creating a Welcoming Environment in which students felt



respected and safe to express themselves, and 4) No Special Instruction Needed because incorporating culture did not necessarily enhance learning or the retention of knowledge. Identifying these themes assisted the researcher with answering the research questions related to how faculty and administrators perceive multicultural initiatives, the positive and negative aspects of multicultural education, and policies that are integral to the implementation of multicultural initiatives in higher education. Positive aspects of multicultural education related to understanding our shared humanity, finding common ground with students, and creating a welcoming environment. Negative aspects of multicultural education corresponded with the perception that it could be viewed as unpatriotic, divisive, and make minority groups feel oppressed. All participants advocated that the focus group sessions gave them a new perspective on multicultural initiatives and looked forward to starting similar conversations at their respective institutions. Chapter 5 will examine the implications of the study's findings, limitations, significance to higher education, recommendations for educational leaders, and suggestions for future research.

## Chapter 5

### Conclusions and Recommendations

The way in which multicultural initiatives are defined and implemented are based on an individual's perception of multicultural education as a bridge or divider. Using a qualitative phenomenological design assisted the researcher in understanding the lived experiences shaping faculty and administrators' perception of multicultural education within their respective institutions. Although colleges and universities recognize the need for diverse ways of teaching and learning, the policies needed to implement these types of changes have been slow (Kuk & Banning, 2010). One of the major reasons cited by participants in the study for the slow progress revolves around leaderships' assumptions about the purpose of multicultural education and who should participate in multicultural programs. Thus, the belief that multicultural education can be used as a tool to create equitable learning environments has not yet been fully accepted in most higher education institutions (Banks, 2008; Higbee, Schultz & Goff, 2010; Landreman, 2005).

### **Theoretical Framework**

Student development theories, such as Chickering's *Seven Vector*, and Bloom's *Taxonomy of Learning*, were used to frame the study (Bloom, 1956; Chickering, 1990). These theories were chosen because each demonstrates how interpersonal relationships help students establish their identity and process their environment (Gardner, 2009). Assumptions about the nature of the self and identity underlie many pedagogical approaches to education (Martin, 2006). Because pedagogy guides the way in which educators construct and deliver knowledge in learning environments, understanding the experiences that shaped participants philosophy of education was essential to answering the research questions. Pedagogical approaches used in multicultural education have been greatly influenced by the cognitivism of Piaget (1985), the

social-interactionist theories of Bruner (1986), and the social and cultural theories of Vygotsky (1978) (Martin, 2006). Participants who used multicultural pedagogy in their classrooms referenced many of principles advocated by these theorists in terms of student-centered curriculum, the impact of social identity, and culturally relevant content (Bruner, 1986; Piaget, 1985; Vygotsky, 1978).

Selecting a hermeneutic phenomenological design also helped provide a cohesive framework for the study. The central premise of Heidegger's approach to hermeneutic phenomenology was that meaning is derived from human existence through language, but could be separated from the weight of tradition with the use of interpretative methods (Heidegger, 1962; Moran, 2007). As a result, Heidegger viewed existence in terms of a specific person's experiences over the course of their lifespan, rather than a timeless or eternal event. Thus, Heidegger saw bracketing as impossible because a person cannot stand outside the pre-understandings and historicity of their own experiences, nor can the researcher make sense of the phenomenon without knowing a participant's history (Heidegger, 1962). Using Heidegger's approach to phenomenology allowed the researcher to immerse themselves in participants' experiences with multicultural education from a personal and institutional standpoint. Without understanding participants' history and past experiences, the researcher would not have been able to uncover the philosophical underpinnings and assumptions shaping participants' views on multicultural education.

## **Major Findings**

Based on participants' experiences, the study yielded four emergent themes pertaining to improving the perception and integration of multicultural initiatives in higher education. These themes were: (1) Leadership support, (2) Adapting curriculum and programming to meet the

needs of students, (3) Creating a welcoming environment for students and staff, and (4) No special instruction needed because culture does not affect retention or application of knowledge.

### **Leadership Support**

In the study many participants experienced varying levels of support and resistance when trying to implement multicultural programs. The majority cited the source of resistance or support to the active role that leadership played in enforcing or negating multicultural initiatives. All participants agreed that leadership, faculty, and staff play a huge part in setting the tone for diversity and maintaining the campus climate. Faculty often has the closest relationship with students because of their daily interactions in class. Therefore, faculty are more visible and have greater influence on students perception of whether or not the classroom is a welcoming environment. Leadership is important in relation to hiring practices and program design. Likewise, leadership is responsible for setting the foundation for growth and development within the institution by creating the mission, vision, organizational structure, and governance process. The foundation set by leadership allows for the campus environment to be constructed.

Participants advocated that the type of system adopted by the institution can also affect the campus climate. These responses correspond with literature and recent studies about organizational culture and the importance of leadership (Bolman & Gallos, 2011; Hechanova, 2012; Kuk & Banning, 2010). The choice to adopt an “open” or “closed” model of communication and structuring usually spills over into how programs are designed and facilitated. Colleges with a “closed system have boundaries that are relatively rigid and impenetrable”, which limits the kinds of interactions that take place (Birnbaum, 1988, p. 34). Faculty in colleges organized in this type of system generally surround themselves with other faculty and staff who think the same way. Policies and programs designed in an environment of

this type can create a hostile or unwelcoming climate for students and staff who go against the status quo (Kuk & Banning, 2010). This research aligns with participants who experienced resistance and expressed concerns about not wanting to press the issue of multicultural education for fear of being ostracized by their peers.

In contrast, open systems are dynamic and constantly change as they interact with themselves and the environment, which allows the system to evolve over time (Birnbaum, 1988). In these types of environments cross-campus functioning units can grow and expand successfully because of the exchange of ideas (Bolman & Gallos, 2011). Participants who experienced support typically belonged to open systems and advocated that open systems rely on participative leadership that allows members to have a more active role in the decision-making process. Although leadership had the final say, participants stated that everyone was encouraged to share ideas, opinions, and best practices that could improve the university.

### **Creating a Welcoming Environment**

Participants in the study indicated that creating a welcoming environment in and outside the classroom was important for establishing common ground and relating to students. Studies show many students choose universities based on their perceived perceptions of the campus climate and educational programs (Love, Trammel & Cartner, 2010; McClanahan, 2011). In a healthy climate, individuals and groups generally feel welcomed, respected, and valued by the university. However, the “campus climate is a measure—real or perceived—of the campus environment as it relates to interpersonal, academic, and professional interactions” (UCR, 2007, p. 1). As a result the majority of participants believed that faculty were responsible for creating a safe space for students to express themselves in the classroom, but leadership was responsible for developing policies and support systems for students outside the classroom. Many participants

expressed concern that not all students perceived their institutions as welcoming. These concerns support research that indicates all students do not necessarily experience a similar campus environment (Fischer, 2010; Jayakumar, Howard, Allen & Han, 2009; Zamani-Gallaher & Choudhuri, 2010). For example, students of color enrolled in predominately white institutes often report experiencing a lack of support and an unwelcoming academic climate (Fischer, 2010; Hall, Cabrera & Milem, 2011). In addition to encountering different experiences, research demonstrates that students of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds have varied perceptions of campus life, such as the pressure to conform to racial and ethnic stereotypes and changing characteristics like language and dress to be accepted by peers (Price, Hyle & Jordan, 2009). Because of the varying experiences that diverse students encounter when enrolling in a university, participants agreed that creating a welcoming environment can ease the tension by providing services, mentors, and student assistance programs to let students know that they are not alone.

### **Adapting Curriculum/Programming**

The majority of faculty that participated in the study stated that they use some type of multicultural pedagogy in their classrooms. However, both faculty and administrators agreed that changing curriculum and programming on an institutional wide level could be problematic if cultural aspects were associated with the changes. A few participants cited experiences with past intervention efforts that attempted to "adjust" the current educational environment instead of changing the structure, cultural, and systematic shifts that cause transformation within an organization. These participants stated that instead of trying to fix the problem, their institutions simply changed curriculum without addressing the cultural aspects of the issue. The majority of participants agreed that cultural norms and experiences greatly influence students' perception of

education. For a more proactive approach, participants advocated that curriculum and programming should go beyond academics to personal development. Some participants used humanistic principles and critical reflectivity to achieve personal development and enhance learning. These responses fit with pedagogy designed to motivate and engage students in the learning process (Sheets, 2009; Parrish & VanBershot, 2010). Confucius and Socrates both taught students by asking questions and creating dialogue that forced students to reflect upon the knowledge they obtained (Ozmon & Carver, 2007). The idea of developing curriculum with discussion questions and reflection statements stems from this educational philosophy. By asking questions, Confucius and Socrates believed students were more likely to think critically about what they learned and apply it to their daily lives. Experience-based and learner-centered curriculum also incorporates this educational philosophy (Henson, 2003; Gardner, 2009). Incorporating experience-based curriculum can help educators engage students by targeting aspects of students' lives and using it as learning opportunities for both the student and the class.

When discussing racially charged topics or different worldviews, many participants found that engaging students in critical reflectivity eased tension and gave students an opportunity to assess personal beliefs, intentions, and attitudes. Studies show that assessing how one perceives and interacts with those who are different is a meaningful way to identify unconscious biases (Herzog, 2010; Higbee, Schultz & Goff, 2010; Pica-Smith, 2009). Critical reflectivity highlights areas in which assumptions and interactions between oneself and others result in behaviors that perpetuate the marginalization of various groups (Sheets, 2009). It also reveals how assumptions make a difference in determining whether interactions are productive, hurtful, or destructive (Deardorff, 2011). This type of critical reflection allows people to begin to understand how their experience of themselves is embedded in their interactions with others and

how shared meanings are created (Higbee, Schultz & Goff, 2010). Based on participant's experiences with diverse students, the majority believed that incorporating practices such as humanistic principles and critical reflectivity enabled faculty and advisors to produce students who are both academically and personally prepared to engage in a global society.

### **No Special Instruction Needed**

Although only a small percentage of participants felt that no special instruction was needed when teaching diverse students, it is significant because many educators believe that all students learn the same regardless of cultural differences (Ford & Quinn, 2010; Thornton & Jaeger, 2008; Woody, 2010). Even without incorporating cultural differences, student development theories, such as Bloom's *Taxonomy of Learning* and Chickering's *Seven Vectors*, indicate that students learn differently (Anderson & Sosniak, 1994; Chickering, 1990).

Therefore, the majority of participants advocated that educators using curriculum aimed at a "one size fits all" approach to teaching and learning are missing out on opportunities to enhance learning for all students.

A smaller subset of participants argued that multicultural education is relevant only in classes in which diverse student groups are present. This point coincides with recent arguments related to whether multicultural initiatives are still needed in such an ethnically diverse society (Peterson & Davila, 2011; Petrova, 2012). To this point, participants cited the way media depicted Muslims after 9/11 and the current perception of Hispanics in Arizona as "illegal" aliens. Participants argued that with multicultural education, the harmful stereotypes that Muslims, Hispanics, and other racial groups endure could be examined and discarded rather than accepted as truth. Because society is culturally diverse, participants agreed that multicultural education benefits all students regardless of race, class, or culture. In fact, some scholars



advocate that neglecting to incorporate multicultural perspectives in non-ethnically diverse classrooms, does students a disservice by failing to prepare them for cultural interactions outside the classroom (Banks, 2008; Kuk & Banning, 2010).

### **Implications of Findings**

The primary research questions guiding the study were: 1) How do faculty and administrators experiences shape their perception of multicultural initiatives in higher education, 2) Based on their experience, what criteria do faculty and administrators perceive as important to the integration of multicultural education, and 3) Based on their experience, what policies do faculty and administrators perceive as important to the integration of multicultural education? The data collected from participants helped answer the research questions and highlight areas of future study.

### **RQ1: Perceptions of Multicultural Initiatives in Higher Education**

With the regard to participants' perceptions of multicultural initiatives, the findings from the study indicate that faculty and administrators understand the need to connect with students and create an environment in which all students feel welcomed. Unfortunately, most participants could not agree on a solution to accomplish this task due to their varied experiences with diverse student populations and views on multicultural education. Sources of contention related to the purpose of multicultural initiatives, the role leadership should play in policy decisions, and funding to support multicultural programming. Some participants believed that leadership should take an active role in providing funding and programming for multicultural initiatives, while others held that faculty and administrators were responsible for developing multicultural curriculum and programs. Likewise, most participants were in agreement with diversity policies until it affected them monetarily in terms of hiring or promotion. Several faculty and

administrators cited concerns with diversity policies that encourage racial or ethnic quotas for hiring and promoting staff. In contrast, minority faculty and administrators welcomed such quotas as a possible way to gain tenure or a needed promotion. These arguments coincide with concerns voiced about affirmative action quota policies and the reasons cited for the reversal of affirmative action policies in many states, including Arizona (Kahlenberg, 2010).

Points of agreement pertained to participants' perception of multicultural education as a way to create inclusive learning environments and build an appreciation for diversity. Even participants who did not use multicultural pedagogy agreed that the purpose of multicultural education was to bring equity into the classroom. Some participants, however, believed that the role of educators was to teach students, not to provide cultural awareness. This is a prominent argument among those who support multicultural education and those who do not. Advocates claim that culture cannot be separated from learning, thus, multicultural initiatives are needed to build awareness and provide students a way of interacting with notions of identity, history, and culture in an academic setting (Gay, 2000; Higbee, Schultz & Goff, 2010). Critics state that multicultural education is a way to push political agendas and use inequality to argue for social justice (Ford & Quinn, 2010; Kirova, 2008). These polarizing views about the purpose of multicultural education shed light on why multicultural initiatives have not been fully accepted in most higher education institutions (Banks, 2008; Higbee, Schultz & Goff, 2010; Petrova, 2012).

## **RQ2: Criteria Important to the Integration of Multicultural Education**

Based on their experiences, faculty and administrators indicated that training to prepare staff to engage with diverse students, curriculum changes to enhance learning beyond the classroom, and the support of leadership were needed to further the integration of multicultural

education. These findings correspond with studies conducted by Chao and Nath (2011) and Ford and Quinn (2010) in which a shockingly low amount of educators stated they were only moderately ready to address the needs of diverse students. Similar studies, conducted by Colon-Muniz, Brady, and SooHoo (2010), also support the lack of preparation educators have in terms of cultural diversity and relating to students (Olson, 2001; Parrish & VanBershot, 2010).

Currently, California is one of the few states that include multicultural training in the credentialing process for teacher certification (Colon-Muniz, Brady & SooHoo, 2010). This suggests that few schools view multicultural education as an important component teachers need to know. However, the majority of study participants, even those who did not use multicultural pedagogy, advocated that training was essential to prepare faculty and staff to engage with diverse students and topics that arise in the classroom.

Many participants stated that they learned how to be multicultural educators because of uncomfortable situations they encountered in the classroom. The majority also agreed that having some type of training beforehand would have greatly benefited them and helped to create a more welcoming environment. Leadership was identified as a key factor in whether or not some type of diversity training or support network was offered at participants' respective institutions. Participants stated that if diversity was important the institution found a way to provide tools for faculty and staff. Likewise, if diversity was not viewed as a priority, participants were forced to seek outside help to gain the necessary skills they needed. These findings support literature indicating that faculty and administrative personnel must be properly trained and armed with the necessary tools for multicultural initiatives to be successful (Chao & Nath, 2011; Petrova, 2012).

### **RQ3: Policies Important to the Integration of Multicultural Education**

In regard to policies needed to further the integration of multicultural education, findings from the study indicated that faculty and administrators advocated developing a clear and concise diversity plan. All participants agreed that without the support of leadership to promote diversity practices and allocate resources for teacher preparation, furthering multicultural initiatives is next to impossible for faculty and administrators to incorporate on their own. These points correspond with literature stating that an effective diversity plan should be known to all employees and align the university's goal of inclusion with the overarching mission of education to make diversity part of the curriculum (Hechanova, 2012; Kuk & Banning, 2010). Unfortunately, when asked if participants knew whether or not their institutions had a diversity policy, only half of the participants responded yes. Of the participants who said their institution had a diversity policy, only seven had actually read it. This observation is troubling because it implies that the majority of faculty and administrators have never even thought to look up their institutions stance on diversity or multicultural programming.

All participants agreed that developing an effective diversity plan was like putting together pieces of a complex puzzle. Each piece has a specific place in the design and must fit perfectly in place to complete the puzzle successfully. Designing an institutional program has many of the same principles. However, unlike a puzzle, the consequences for creating an incomplete program have far reaching ramifications because it involves departments, faculty, and students (Kuk & Banning, 2010). For this reason, participants advocated that collaboration is essential when designing a diversity plan or program. Likewise, diversity plans should include provisions to ensure funding is allocated for multicultural programs, speakers, and cultural events.

When creating a diversity plan or program, participants stated that strategic planning is essential. Arizona State University (ASU) is an example of how universities can incorporate policies that encourage inclusion and diversity. To initiate their diversity plan, the university launched a six-part initiative consisting of communication, university dialogue, college/school focus, trainings for chairs and deans, building synergy, and building private investment to advance diversity (Crow, 2006). A Diversity Training Institute was also developed to provide training to employees and staff regarding diversity initiatives and mentoring programs (ASU, 2010). Without a clearly defined plan, there are apt to be defenseless, costly and irreparable blunders, hasty decisions, conflict, and misunderstandings (Kuk & Banning, 2010). Participants argued that because leadership, faculty and staff cannot agree on how to define diversity and develop the necessary programming, implementing change on an institutional wide level could be problematic.

### **Significance to Higher Education**

Based on participants responses, serious disconnects exist between faculty, administrators and those in key leadership positions in regard to how to meet the needs of diverse students. To find common ground, participants suggested that conversations need to take place on all levels of academia to determine a course of action. Too often faculty and administrators cited experiences about being left solely to handle the issue of engaging students without the help of leadership to enforce policy decisions. Research supports that incorporating multicultural program initiatives into learning environments requires interactive teaching methodologies and cooperative networking (Herzog, 2010). Thus, university staff and personnel must work together across disciplines to provide students with opportunities to solve problems collaboratively and appreciate diverse ways of thinking (Yoon, Martin & Murphy, 2012). Participants advocated that

using these types of interactive teaching methods can help strengthen programs and services, build well-rounded students, and increase mutuality, equality, cooperation, and collaboration in learning environments (Jenkins & Sheehey, 2012). However, most study participants agreed that none of these advancements can take place until faculty, administrators, and those in key leadership positions combine forces and began discussing the best course of action for their respective institutions.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Arizona was selected as the location for this study because it provided a rich sample of diverse ideas and perspectives on issues related to multicultural education in the wake of social and political turmoil caused by the ban on ethnics studies programs in K-12 public schools in 2010 and stricter immigration laws (House Bill, 2010; Kahlenberg, 2010). However, the location and sample size of 20 participants could reduce the transferability of the study. Studies with small sample sizes run the risk of not providing enough data to arrive at conclusions and recommendations of value (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). Race and gender are also important factors that can affect rapport and how much participants chose to disclose (Holbrook, Green & Krosnick, 2003). To increase rapport and facilitate discussion, focus group questions remained neutral to put participants at ease and encourage an environment of openness and interaction.

Because of the nature of qualitative research, researcher bias is also a concern. To minimize researcher bias, triangulation and member checking were used. Triangulation helped validate data by comparing the different perspectives of faculty and administrators based on age, gender, position, and years of teaching experience to see if similarities existed. To limit researcher bias in the interpretation of data, member checking was also incorporated into the study. Member checking allowed participants to review a summary of the conceptual themes and

categories derived from the focus groups to determine if the findings accurately portrayed their viewpoints (Lietz, Langer & Furman, 2006). Employing these methods, in addition to Liamputtong and Ezzy's (2005) three column format and Nvivo 10, minimized researcher bias and ensured the data collected accurately depicted participants' views on multicultural initiatives.

### **Recommendations for Administrators**

Working directly with student organizations can help administrators in student services departments become proactive instead of reactive. On a college campus, student organizations can range from sororities and fraternities to cultural, business, and philanthropic groups. Holding events on a monthly basis that encourages these organizations to work together is one way to help students understand one another. Without understanding, people continue to see individuals whom they perceive different from themselves as the "other." Seeing those with different experiences as the "other" is what enables stereotyping and discrimination to grow (Urraca, Ledoux & Harris, 2009). Because one cannot fully escape societal influences, one's conscious anti-racist convictions, attitudes, and behaviors do not exclude one from participation in the perpetuation of inequality (Woody, 2010).

Racist and other oppressive acts are often perceived as overt actions, but inaction can produce the same results. What a person does not know consciously or unconsciously can have unintended negative consequences for marginalized groups (Pica-Smith, 2009; Woody, 2010). Understanding is the first step in moving a person toward seeing similarities rather than differences. Once a person considers the possibility that there may be alternative interpretations of reality, a bridge can be opened that allows common ground to be explored (Banks, 2008; Parrish & VanBerschot, 2010). Learning new perspectives also gives students different ways of looking at the world and an appreciation of cultural differences. Providing opportunities for

students to challenge their perceptions can connect students and administrators in positive ways and create lifelong bonds.

### **Recommendations for Higher Education Institutions**

Few issues in higher education have received more public attention over the past decade than diversity in education on America's campuses. Past intervention efforts have attempted to "adjust" the current educational environment instead of changing the structure, cultural and systematic shifts that cause transformation within organizations (Banks, 2008; Kuk & Banning, 2010). The demographics of many institutions are changing while the administration and faculty remain the same. Cross-campus functionality includes diversity and the ability to blend new ideas and concepts in a way that creates a more efficient environment. Recognizing the growth of diverse student bodies, many colleges and universities have made efforts to increase the representation of women and people of color among students, faculty, and staff (Bolman & Gallos, 2011). Several changes can be implemented to improve race relations and campus climate. These changes include equipping faculty with the skills to help students develop positive racial identities, facilitate intergroup dynamics, reform curriculum, and initiate community building activities (Banks, 2008; Jenkins & Sheehey, 2012).

DEEP schools use these types of practices to recruit new faculty and staff members with values, educational philosophies, and pedagogical skills that match with student's needs, learning styles, and the institution's mission (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh & Whitt, 2005; Parrish, P. & VanBerschot, 2010). For example, Wheaton is a DEEP school that insists that junior faculty and faculty of color have a strong voice in the curriculum review process. Ursinus, another DEEP school, meets with new faculty each week to discuss various teaching and pedagogical approaches that seem to be effective with students (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh & Whitt, 2005).



Implementing techniques and strategies used by DEEP schools has proven to have a positive effect on campus climates.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Gaining perspective from educators who teach in socially and politically charged environments like Arizona can provide a new frame of reference in which to examine factors related to multicultural initiatives in higher education. Based on the themes identified in this study, further research could explore why some leadership teams in higher education choose to support training and professional development relevant to multicultural education and why some choose not to support such training. Related to this topic is the question of why cultural sensitivity and diversity training are not part of the credentialing process for educators. It is unclear whether this situation exists because of lack of funding, lack of leaders' awareness of the importance of pre-service training for effective multicultural teaching, or leaders' beliefs that teachers acquire elsewhere the skills needed to be effective multicultural educators.

Currently, California is one of the few states that makes this type of training mandatory for teachers' certification (Colon-Muniz, Brady, & SooHoo, 2010). Another area for future study involves investigating the effectiveness of college practices with multicultural programs. A mixed methods study could be conducted comparing two different institutions to determine the differences on students' achievement and engagement when multicultural practices are encouraged throughout an institution. Both research endeavors would enhance the body of literature related to multicultural education and provide avenues for faculty, administrators, and key leadership personnel to address multicultural initiatives at their respective institutions.

## **Conclusion**

Although changing student demographics in higher education are making the term “diversity” a topic of interest, findings indicate that faculty, administrators, and those in key leadership positions are at odds when deciding how best to meet the needs of diverse students. Despite the nationwide emphasis on school improvement, ineffective policies, training, and educational practices are obstacles to accomplishing change (Bolman & Gallos, 2011). To address the problems facing schools, results from the study suggest that policymakers, leaders, and educators must join together to create systemic change and a shared vision of the future of education. For many, multicultural education is seen as a means of engaging diverse students and creating inclusive learning environments in which a variety of perspectives are represented. Although more universities are encouraging multicultural initiatives, many educators report feeling uncomfortable teaching multicultural topics related to race and ethnicity without the proper tools and support (Chao & Nath, 2011; Colón-Muñiz, Brady & SooHoo, 2010). As the diversity of students increases on college campuses, it will be important for academic affairs professionals to be prepared to meet the needs of these diverse student populations (Kuh & Banning, 2010).

Findings from faculty and administrators in this study could be used to determine the types of policies, staff training, and multicultural programs needed to create inclusive campus environments. To aid this cause, members of institutional boards of governance and university administrators must work together to support diversity and multicultural programming. Study results indicate important steps that institutional leaders can take to achieve this goal are to: (1) carefully draft definitions and policies of what constitutes a multicultural program, (2) ensure that these definitions and policies are clearly communicated, understood, and implemented by all

members of the academic community, and (3) provide ongoing education to students and staff about the benefits of multicultural initiatives within the campus and the community at large. Student mentoring programs also can be used to assist with identifying support services and helping students adjust to college life. Conversely, administrative efforts can be made to increase the number of under-represented faculty and staff in leadership positions (Center for American Progress, 2011). Taken together, these steps represent best practices institutions can implement to address changing demographics and build an appreciation for diversity. Doing this will allow colleges and universities to truly be moral exemplars of inclusiveness.

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## Appendix A

### Participant Solicitation Letter

Dear Participant:

I am a doctoral student at University of Phoenix (School of Advanced Studies) and preparing a dissertation exploring the impact faculty and administrators' perceive multicultural initiatives have on student development. I would like to invite you to participate in a focus group to discuss your experiences working with diverse groups of students and views on multicultural initiatives in higher education. Know that your participation will be both voluntary and confidential.

As the researcher, I will act as the moderator for each focus group session. There will be a total of six focus groups sessions that will meet once a week for 3 weeks. Faculty and administrators will be divided into two separate groups. All sessions will be conducted at the Burton Barr Library located in Phoenix, AZ. I will greet focus group participants upon their arrival to the focus group site and verifying the status of each participant. Please bring your (college or university) faculty/administrator ID for verification purposes. Focus group sessions will be informal and last for 2 hours. Deli sandwiches, along with soft drinks and other light refreshments will be served.

Focus group discussions will be audio and video taped and become a part of the actual written dissertation. Participant names will remain confidential and held with the utmost discretion. All audio and video tape recordings will be kept in a safe and secure location for 3 years. After 3 years, all confidential materials, paper records, and tapes will be destroyed.

To be included in the study, participants must meet the following criteria:

1. Be a faculty member or administrator at a public/private college or university within Maricopa County, Arizona.
2. Have 2 to 5 years of teaching experience working with diverse student populations or multicultural education.

Name of college or University: \_\_\_\_\_

Start date (date of hire): \_\_\_\_\_

3. Can produce a college or university (faculty/administrator ID), if selected as a focus group participant? Please circle Yes or No

I look forward to your participation and insight related to your educational experiences with diverse groups. Hopefully your insight can provide faculty, administrators, and educational leaders in Maricopa County, Arizona with the tools to positively impact multicultural initiatives in higher education.

I can be reached by phone at 480-266-9747 or by email at [Savvypenconsultants@gmail.com](mailto:Savvypenconsultants@gmail.com).

Thanking you for your consideration in advance,  
Tamika Lamb

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tamika Lamb". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid, with the first name and last name clearly distinguishable.

## Appendix B

### Informed Consent: Participants 18 Years of Age and Older



Dear Participant,

My name is Tamika Lamb and I am a student at the University of Phoenix working on a doctoral degree. I am doing a research study entitled Exploring Multicultural Initiatives in Higher Education. The purpose of this research study is to explore faculty and administrators' perceptions of multicultural initiatives and what impact they perceive the initiatives have on students' development.

Your participation will involve participating in three 2-hour focus group sessions that will meet once a week. Focus group sessions will be recorded to assist the researcher with accurately capturing participants' responses. Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, you can do so without penalty or loss of benefit to yourself. The results of the research study may be published but your identity will remain confidential and your name will not be disclosed to any outside party.

In this research, there are no foreseeable risks. Although there may be no direct benefit to you, a possible benefit from your being part of this study is that your insight can provide faculty, administrators, and educational leaders in Maricopa County, Arizona with the tools to positively impact multicultural initiatives in higher education.

If you have any questions about the research study, please call me at by phone at 480-266-9747 or by email at [savvypenconsultants@gmail.com](mailto:savvypenconsultants@gmail.com). For questions about your rights as a study participant, or any concerns or complaints, please contact the University of Phoenix Institutional Review Board via email at [IRB@phoenix.edu](mailto:IRB@phoenix.edu).

As a participant in this study, you should understand the following:

1. You may decide not to be part of this study or you may want to withdraw from the study at any time. If you want to withdraw, you can do so without any problems.
2. Your identity will be kept confidential.
3. Tamika Lamb, the researcher, has fully explained the nature of the research study and has answered all of your questions and concerns.
4. If interviews are done, they may be recorded. If they are recorded, you must give permission for the researcher, Tamika Lamb, to record the interviews. You understand that the information from the recorded interviews may be transcribed. The researcher will develop a way to code the data to assure that your name is protected.
5. Data will be kept in a secure and locked area. The data will be kept for three years, and then destroyed.
6. The results of this study will be published.

"By signing this form, you agree that you understand the nature of the study, the possible risks to you as a participant, and how your identity will be kept confidential. When you sign this form, this means that you are 18 years old or older and that you give your permission to volunteer as a participant in the study that is described here."

☐ I accept the above terms.      ☐ I do not accept the above terms. (CHECK ONE)

Signature of the interviewee \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the researcher \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C

### Confidentiality Agreement



Exploring Multicultural Initiatives in Higher Education  
Tamika Lamb

As a researcher working on the above research study at the University of Phoenix, I understand that I must maintain the confidentiality of all information concerning all research participants as required by law. Only the University of Phoenix Institutional Review Board may have access to this information. "Confidential Information" of participants includes but is not limited to: names, characteristics, or other identifying information, questionnaire scores, ratings, incidental comments, other information accrued either directly or indirectly through contact with any participant, and/or any other information that by its nature would be considered confidential. In order to maintain the confidentiality of the information, I hereby agree to refrain from discussing or disclosing any Confidential Information regarding research participants, to any individual who is not part of the above research study or in need of the information for the expressed purposes on the research program. This includes having a conversation regarding the research project or its participants in a place where such a discussion might be overheard; or discussing any Confidential Information in a way that would allow an unauthorized person to associate (either correctly or incorrectly) an identity with such information. I further agree to store research records whether paper, electronic or otherwise in a secure locked location under my direct control or with appropriate safe guards. I hereby further agree that if I have to use the services of a third party to assist in the research study, who will potentially have access to any Confidential Information of participants, that I will enter into an agreement with said third party prior to using any of the services, which shall provide at a minimum the confidential obligations set forth herein. I agree that I will immediately report any known or suspected breach of this confidentiality statement regarding the above research project to the University of Phoenix, Institutional Review Board.

Tamika Lamb  
Signature of Researcher

Tamika Lamb  
Printed Name

9/18/14  
Date

Marianne Justus  
Signature of Witness

MARIANNE JUSTUS  
Printed Name

10/09/14  
Date

## Appendix D

### Non-Disclosure Agreement



As a Participant in this study, I acknowledge that in order to provide the services to <Tamika Lamb> (hereinafter “Researcher”) who is a researcher in a confidential study with the University of Phoenix, Inc., I must agree to keep the information obtained as part of its services (as more fully described below) confidential. Therefore the parties agree as follows:

1. The information to be disclosed under this Non-disclosure Agreement (“Agreement”) is described as follows and shall be considered “Confidential Information”:
  - All focus group responses and personally identifiable information pertaining to yourself and other study participants.
  - All questions, data, and transcripts provided during focus group sessions.

The items described above shall remain the property of Researcher and must be kept confidential, unless given direct permission by the Researcher to do otherwise.

2. I, Tamika Lamb, agree to keep in confidence and to use the Confidential Information to conduct out the study as described in the Informed Consent.
3. As a Participant, I further agree to keep in confidence and not disclose any Confidential Information to a third party or parties for a period of five (5) years from the date of such disclosure. All oral disclosures of Confidential Information as well as written disclosures of the Confidential Information are covered by this Agreement.
4. If applicable, upon the Researcher’s request I shall either destroy or return the Confidential Information upon termination of this Agreement.
5. Any obligation as a Participant under this Agreement shall not apply to Confidential Information that:
  - a) Is or becomes a part of the public knowledge through no fault of the Participant;
  - b) The Participant can demonstrate was rightfully in its possession before disclosure by Researcher/ research subjects; or
  - c) The Participant can demonstrate was rightfully received from a third party who was not Researcher/research subjects and was not under confidentiality restriction on disclosure and without breach of any nondisclosure obligation.
6. In the event the Participant receives a subpoena and believes it has a legal obligation to disclose Confidential Information, then the Participant will notify Researcher as soon as possible, and in any event at least five (5) business days prior to the proposed release. If Researcher objects to the release of such Confidential Information, the Participant in question will allow Researcher to

exercise any legal rights or remedies regarding the release and protection of the Confidential Information.

7. As a Participant, I expressly acknowledge and agree that the breach, or threatened breach, by it through a disclosure of Confidential Information may cause irreparable harm and that Researcher may not have an adequate remedy at law. Therefore, I agree that upon such breach, or threatened breach, Researcher will be entitled to seek injunctive relief to prevent Participant(s) from commencing or continuing any action constituting such breach without showing or providing evidence of actual damage.
8. The interpretation and validity of this Agreement and the rights of the parties shall be governed by the laws of the State of Arizona.
9. The parties to this Agreement agree that a copy of the original signature (including an electronic copy) may be used for any and all purposes for which the original signature may have been used. The parties further waive any right to challenge the admissibility or authenticity of this document in a court of law based solely on the absence of an original signature.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, each of the undersigned has caused this Agreement to be duly executed in its name and on its behalf:

Printed Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name of Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix E

### Permission to Use Premises



#### Burton Barr Library

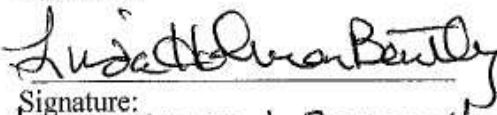
#### Name of Facility, Organization, University, Institution, or Association

*Please complete the following by check marking any permissions listed here that you approve, and please provide your signature, title, date, and organizational information below. If you have any questions or concerns about this research study, please contact the University of Phoenix Institutional Review Board via email at [IRB@phoenix.edu](mailto:IRB@phoenix.edu).*

Check any that apply:

☒ I hereby authorize Tamika Lamb, a student of University of Phoenix, to use the premises (facility identified below) to conduct a study entitled Exploring Multicultural Initiatives in Higher Education.

☒ I hereby authorize Tamika Lamb, a student of University of Phoenix, to use the name of the facility, organization, university, institution, or association identified above when publishing results from the study entitled Exploring Multicultural Initiatives in Higher Education.

  
Signature:

LINDA HOLMAN BENTLEY

10/11/13  
Date

Name:

MANAGER, BURTON BARR PUBLIC SERVICES

Title:

Address of Facility:

Burton Barr Library  
1221 N Central Ave  
Phoenix, AZ 85004



## Appendix F

### Demographic Survey

#### **Part 1:**

1. How many years have you been a teacher?
  - ☐ 0-2
  - ☐ 3-4
  - ☐ 5-10
  - ☐ more than 10
2. Do you work in a rural, suburban, or urban school?
  - ☐ rural
  - ☐ suburban
  - ☐ urban
3. Do you have experience working with diverse student populations?
  - ☐ No experience
  - ☐ a little experience working with diverse populations
  - ☐ all of my experience has been working with diverse populations
4. Do you teach in a public or private school?
  - ☐ Public
  - ☐ Private
5. Are you White, Black or African-American, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific islander, or some other race?
  - ☐ White
  - ☐ Black or African-American
  - ☐ American Indian or Alaskan Native
  - ☐ Asian
  - ☐ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
  - ☐ From multiple races
6. Are you male or female?
  - ☐ Male
  - ☐ Female
7. What age group do you belong to?
  - ☐ 16-25
  - ☐ 25-34
  - ☐ 35-44
  - ☐ 45-60
  - ☐ 61 and over

**Part 2:**

8. What is your definition of multicultural education?
9. What is your philosophy/approach to working with diverse students?
10. What experiences shaped your philosophy/approach?
11. Do you use multicultural pedagogy when teaching diverse student populations?
  - Yes
  - No
12. What lessons have you learned from your experiences as a multicultural educator or from working with diverse groups of students?

## Appendix G

### Focus Group Questions

#### Focus Group Session 1 Questions

##### **Questions:**

1. To begin, please share a little bit about your background and experience in academia.
2. What is your definition of multicultural education? How is it similar to or different from social justice education?
3. What is your philosophy/approach to multicultural education? What experiences shaped your philosophy/approach?

##### **Prompts if necessary:**

- What are some examples of this approach?
  - How do you address multiple social identities within your approach?
  - What has influenced your practice?
  - How has the context at your respective institution influenced your practice?
  - How has your practice changed over time?
5. Describe your day-to-day multicultural education practice.

##### **Prompts if necessary:**

- How often do your colleague's use multicultural pedagogy in their classrooms (Dailey, Weekly, Not at all)
6. Based on your experience, do you believe that your institution supports multicultural initiatives? Explain

##### **Prompts if necessary:**

- What kind of support, dilemmas, or forms of resistance do you experience?
  - Where do you receive your primary support for your efforts?
  - How have you overcome resistance?
  - What have been the major issues/challenges on campus concerning multicultural education?
  - How do you make sense of the resistance you face?
  - Is there a particular story you could share to illustrate your challenges?
7. What multicultural education successes can you name that have taken place on your campus?

**Prompts if necessary:**

- What was your involvement in the effort?
- How do you measure the success of your efforts?

8. What lessons have you learned from your experiences as a multicultural educator or from teaching diverse groups of students?

**Focus Group Session 2 Questions**

**Instruction:** In this session, the Moderator will be writing participants' responses on a whiteboard or easel pad to allow participants to list various aspects of multicultural education.

**Questions:**

1. Based on your experience, what would you consider the positive and negative aspects of multicultural education?
2. How would you rate your colleagues perception of multicultural education/initiatives on a scale of 1 to 5? (5= Very Positive and 1= Very Negative) Explain?
3. How often do your colleague's use multicultural pedagogy in their classrooms on a scale of 1 to 5? (5= Dailey and 1= Not at All) Explain?
4. For your colleagues who view multicultural education positively and use it often when instructing, what reasons do they use to support their choice?
5. For your colleagues who view multicultural education negatively and do not use it when instructing, what reasons do they use to support their choice?
6. What solutions or approach to multicultural education could be used to change the perception of those who view multicultural initiatives in a negative way?
7. Based on your experience, are there any state or institutional policies that need to be changed or modified regarding multicultural education?

**Focus Group Session 3 Questions**

**Instruction:** In this session, the Moderator will provide participants with a summary of conceptual themes and categories derived from the previous focus group sessions. Participants will then be asked questions based on data presented.

**Questions:**

1. Looking at the themes and categories, what items stand out or surprise you the most?

2. Are there any categories or themes that you do not agree with or do not fit with your perception of multicultural initiatives?
3. Are there any categories or themes you believe should be added or removed?
4. Do the categories and themes presented fit with your perception of multicultural education?
5. Based on the discussions, has anyone's perception of multicultural education changed? Explain?
6. Based on your experience, would having these types of discussions within your institution help or hinder multicultural initiatives?
7. Did you learn something new from our sessions that you will incorporate in your teaching pedagogy?

## Appendix H

### Pilot Study Focus Group Questions

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#### Focus Group Questions

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- 1 What is your definition of multicultural education? How is it similar to or different from social justice education?
  - 2 What experiences shaped your philosophy/approach toward multicultural education or working with diverse students?
  - 3 How often do your colleague's use multicultural pedagogy in their classrooms (Dailey, Weekly, Not at all)
  - 4 Based on your experience, do you believe that your institution supports multicultural initiatives? Explain
  - 5 What kind of support, dilemmas, or forms of resistance do you experience within your institution in terms of multicultural initiatives or programs?
  - 6 What multicultural education successes can you name that have taken place on your campus?
  - 7 Were you involved in these successes? If yes, what was your involvement?
  - 8 Based on your experience, what would you consider the positive and negative aspects of multicultural education or working with diverse students?
  - 9 For yourself or colleagues who view multicultural education positively and use it often when instructing, what reasons do they use to support their choice?
  - 10 For yourself or colleagues who view multicultural education negatively and do not use it when instructing, what reasons do they use to support their choice?
  - 11 In your opinion, what solutions or approach to multicultural education could be used to change the perception of those who view multicultural initiatives in a negative way?
  - 12 Based on your experience, are there any state or institutional policies that need to be changed or modified regarding multicultural education or working with diverse students?
-

## Appendix I

### Revised Focus Group Questions

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#### Focus Group Questions

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- 1 What is your definition of multicultural education?
  - 2 What experiences shaped your philosophy/approach toward multicultural education or working with diverse students?
  - 3 Do you use multicultural pedagogy in your classrooms
  - 4 What lessons have you learned from working with diverse students?
  - 5 Based on your experience, do you believe that your institution supports multicultural initiatives? Explain
  - 6 What kind of support, dilemmas, or forms of resistance do you experience within your institution in terms of multicultural initiatives or programs?
  - 7 Based on your experience, what would you consider the positive and negative aspects of multicultural education or working with diverse students?
  - 8 For yourself or colleagues who view multicultural education positively and use it often when instructing, what reasons do they use to support their choice?
  - 9 For yourself or colleagues who view multicultural education negatively and do not use it when instructing, what reasons do they use to support their choice?
  - 10 In your opinion, what solutions or approach to multicultural education could be used to change the perception of those who view multicultural initiatives in a negative way?
  - 11 Based on your experience, are there any state or institutional policies that need to be changed or modified regarding multicultural education or working with diverse students?
-

## Appendix J

### Research Questions and Associated Focus Group Questions

| Research Questions (RQ)   | Associated Focus Group Questions (FQ)  |
|---|--|
| RQ1: How do faculty and administrators perceive multicultural initiatives in higher education?                        | <p>FQ2: What experiences shaped your philosophy/approach toward multicultural education or working with diverse students?</p> <p>FQ3: How often do your colleague's use multicultural pedagogy in their classrooms (Dailey, Weekly, Not at all)</p> <p>FQ7: Based on your experience, what would you consider the positive and negative aspects of multicultural education or working with diverse students?</p>   |
| RQ2: What criteria do faculty and administrators perceive as important to the integration of multicultural education? | <p>FQ6: What kind of support, dilemmas, or forms of resistance do you experience within your institution in terms of multicultural initiatives or programs?</p> <p>FQ8: For yourself or colleagues who view multicultural education positively and use it often when instructing, what reasons do they use to support their choice?</p> <p>IQ9: For yourself or colleagues who view multicultural education negatively and do not use it when instructing, what reasons do they use to support their choice?</p> <p>IQ10: In your opinion, what solutions or approach to multicultural education could be used to change the perception of those who view multicultural initiatives in a negative way?</p> |
| RQ2: What policies do faculty and administrators perceive as important to the integration of multicultural education? | <p>IQ11: Based on your experience, are there any state or institutional policies that need to be changed or modified regarding multicultural education or working with diverse students?</p>   |



## Appendix K

### Study Participant Demographics

| Participant | Position        | Gender | Age         | Race/Ethnicity   | Years of Experience |
|-------------|-----------------|--------|-------------|------------------|---------------------|
| F1          | Faculty         | Male   | 35-44       | African American | 3-4 yrs             |
| F2          | Faculty         | Male   | 35-44       | Hispanic/Latino  | More than 10 yrs    |
| F3          | Faculty         | Female | 45-60       | Caucasian        | More than 10 yrs    |
| F4          | Faculty         | Female | 45-60       | Hispanic/Latino  | More than 10 yrs    |
| F5          | Adjunct Faculty | Male   | 61 and over | African American | 5-10 yrs            |
| F6          | Adjunct Faculty | Male   | 45-60       | African American | More than 10 yrs    |
| F7          | Adjunct Faculty | Female | 45-60       | Caucasian        | 5-10 yrs            |
| F8          | Adjunct Faculty | Male   | 61 and over | Caucasian        | More than 10 yrs    |
| F9          | Adjunct Faculty | Female | 26-34       | African American | 3-4 yrs             |
| F10         | Adjunct Faculty | Female | 26-34       | Caucasian        | 3-4 yrs             |
| A1          | Administrator   | Male   | 45-60       | African American | More than 10 yrs    |
| A2          | Administrator   | Female | 35-44       | African American | More than 10 yrs    |
| A3          | Administrator   | Male   | 35-44       | Caucasian        | More than 10 yrs    |
| A4          | Administrator   | Male   | 45-60       | Caucasian        | More than 10 yrs    |
| A5          | Administrator   | Female | 35-44       | Caucasian        | 5-10 yrs            |
| A6          | Administrator   | Male   | 35-44       | African American | 5-10 yrs            |
| A7          | Administrator   | Female | 45-60       | African American | 3-4 yrs             |
| A8          | Administrator   | Male   | 45-60       | African American | More than 10 yrs    |
| A9          | Administrator   | Female | 26-34       | Caucasian        | 3-4 yrs             |
| A10         | Administrator   | Male   | 26-34       | Caucasian        | 3-4 yrs             |

## Appendix L

### Focus Group Session 1- Major Themes/Phrases

| Column 1 (Raw Data)   | Column 2 (Preliminary Codes)                   | Column 3 (Final Codes)                     |
|---|--|--|
| <sup>1</sup> Find something in common that we can relate to.  | <i>Relate to students</i>                      | <sup>1</sup> FIND COMMON GROUND            |
| <sup>2</sup> To find what works for them and use good ways to connect to get the lesson across  | <i>Connect to learners</i>                     | <sup>2</sup> BUILDING RAPPORT              |
| <sup>3</sup> Meet them where they are academically, personally and culturally. Address immediate needs, establish rapport, and encourage cultural growth and awareness.                                       | <i>Meet students where they are</i>            |  |
| <sup>3</sup> Listen. Respect. Understanding   | <i>Listen, respect, and understand</i>         | <sup>3</sup> RESPECT                       |
| <sup>3</sup> Everyone wants to be listened to, respected, and feel valued   | <i>Feeling valued</i>                          |  |
| <sup>4</sup> Being open to change, and able to adapt to different learning styles   | <i>Be open to change</i>                       | <sup>4</sup> BE OPEN TO CHANGE             |
| <sup>5</sup> Diverse perspectives and backgrounds lead to enhanced learning, critical thinking and problem-solving.   | <i>Enhanced learning and critical thinking</i> | <sup>5</sup> ENHANCED LEARNING             |
| <sup>6</sup> As an African-American Professor and Administrator Anglos are considered diverse. I taught the way I taught. There were various methodologies employed but nothing special for diverse students. | <i>Nothing special needed</i>                  | <sup>6</sup> NO SPECIAL INSTRUCTION NEEDED |
| <sup>6</sup> Working with students is pretty much the same. I haven't had to venture into race relations.   | <i>All students are the same</i>               |  |
| <sup>7</sup> I treat all students the same with   | <i>I treat students the same</i>               | <sup>7</sup> ALL STUDENTS ARE THE          |

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| genuine passion and concern for their future but there is a greater desire to encourage each student to be their best despite how society might treat them.   |   | SAME                                      |
| <sup>7</sup> It doesn't matter what ethnicity a student comes from. <sup>8</sup> If you can convince that student that you are truly interested and that you truly want them to succeed, then they're gonna warm up to you. | <i>Ethnicity does not matter, it's about engagement</i>         | <sup>8</sup> STUDENT ENGAGEMENT           |
| <sup>9</sup> Meet students where they, use examples rooted in diverse worldviews and cultural practices, and be willing to learn from your students.  | <i>Use examples rooted in diverse worldviews and practices</i>  | <sup>9</sup> ADAPT CURRICULUM/PROGRAMMING |
| <sup>10</sup> Diversity is not always apparent and it is important to create a safe shared space where differences can be expressed.  | <i>Creating a safe space for students to express themselves</i> | <sup>10</sup> WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT       |
| <sup>10</sup> Be armed to diffuse cultural differences within a professional classroom setting. As an instructor, students are impacted by our actions and embark on our decisions.   | <i>Diffuse cultural differences in the classroom</i>            |   |
| <sup>11</sup> I've learned that a students' perspective on education, is greatly influenced by their cultural norms and experiences. I have learned to be sensitive to the learning styles of each student.                 | <i>Student's perception of education influenced by culture</i>  | <sup>11</sup> CULTURE INFUENCES EDUCATION |
| <sup>11</sup> Students learn differently based on many factors.   | <i>Student learn differently</i>                                |   |
| <sup>12</sup> My approach is to leverage the diversity in the room to allow for my students to gain awareness of different perspectives and help dispel various stereotypes and misconceptions about others.                | <i>Leverage the diversity in the classroom</i>                  | <sup>12</sup> LEVERAGE DIVERSITY          |

## Appendix M

### Focus Group Session 2- Major Themes/Phrases

| Column 1 (Raw Data)  | Column 2 (Preliminary Codes)   | Column 3 (Final Codes)   |
|--|--|--|
| <sup>1</sup> The most important in my opinion is that I feel that as far as "learning the lesson and retaining it...ethnic diversity has little to do with the result whereas environmental upbringing plays a much more significant role.   | <i>Ethnicity and diversity does not affect learning and retention</i>  | <sup>1</sup> DIVERSITY DOES NOT IMPACT LEARNING                          |
| <sup>2</sup> Helps diverse groups get along, compromise, and see a common goal.  | <i>See a common goal</i>   | <sup>2</sup> RECOGNIZING OUR SHARED HUMANITY                             |
| <sup>3</sup> I was aware but have also learned more that many people are guided by assumptions versus trying to gain another's perspective before taking action.   | <i>People are guided by their own assumptions</i>  | <sup>3</sup> MISCONCEPTIONS/ASSUMPTIONS                                  |
| <sup>4</sup> Students have as much to teach as they do to learn. We have a great exchange of information.  | <i>Students both teach and learn</i>   | <sup>4</sup> EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION                                     |
| <sup>5</sup> I work with a diverse team of individuals who provide services indirectly to students. Having cultural sensitivity is key to interfacing with a broad mix of cultures. <sup>6</sup> If something feels awkward or uncomfortable, it is probably due to a gap in assumed norms and/or conventions that do not apply across cultures. | <i>Cultural sensitivity is key</i><br><br><i>Award or uncomfortable discussing interacting with different cultures</i> | <sup>5</sup> CULTURAL SENSIVITY<br><br><sup>6</sup> TRAINING/PREPARATION |
| <sup>7</sup> Stereotypes and jokes (after a few drinks) made certain environments uncomfortable.   | <i>Create a welcoming environment</i>  | <sup>7</sup> WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT                                       |

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|---|---|---|
| <p><sup>8</sup>Leadership sets the tone for diversity and programming.</p>  | <p><i>Leadership matters</i></p>                      | <p><sup>8</sup>LEADERSHIP SUPPORT</p>           |
| <p><sup>8</sup>Leadership dictates programming. The historical narrative around multicultural students disproportionately hinders the community with low income, first generation, and other barriers to success.</p>   |   |   |
| <p><sup>8</sup>The community as a whole is best served towards college success when pre-college programs, bridge programs, direct connection to cultural organizations and mentors, and consistent follow up are employed and targeted to multicultural students.</p>                                 |   |   |
| <p><sup>9</sup>Changing student demographics and global connectivity makes diversity critical for students to engage and be success in the future.</p>  | <p><i>Diversity is critical to moving forward</i></p> | <p><sup>9</sup>CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS</p>        |
| <p><sup>10</sup>We have to change the way we think about diversity because it encompasses many facets outside of race and gender.</p>   | <p><i>Expand the term “diversity”</i></p>             | <p><sup>10</sup>DEFINE THE TERM “DIVERSITY”</p> |
| <p><sup>11</sup>As a multicultural educator I observed things both as an administrator and professor that disturbed me such as funds earmarked for diverse students being given to Anglo students based on the premise that the committee couldn't find eligible students. That was not the case.</p> | <p><i>Allocation of resources</i></p>                 | <p><sup>11</sup>RESOURCE ALLOCATION</p>         |

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