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Exploring the impact of diversity training on the development and application of cultural  
competence skills in higher education professionals

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Virginia Commonwealth University

by

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## Acknowledgement

The transition between my senior year of high school and my freshman year of college shifted the foundation of my academic identity. After being told by classmates that I was only admitted into my now alma mater, because of my race; and encouraged by teachers to reconsider my decision and select a smaller institution. I found myself inundated with doubt and consumed by what I would later come to know as imposter syndrome and stereotype threat. A string of obstacles and challenges ultimately led me to the Center for Student Diversity and the sociology department, where I developed a love for understanding people, identities, and social constructs. This dissertation was developed in tribute to that college freshman.

Achieving this milestone would not have been possible without the support of family, friends, and mentors. First, thank you to my parents, Mr. Joe and Dr. Kathy Cabler, whose commitment to my education and success never wavered, even in the face of my own unbelief. This accomplishment is yours, just as much as it is mine; your love moved me, as your prayers covered me. To my extended village, you've rallied behind me and beside me throughout this experience, and I am grateful for you in more ways than I can express here. To the faculty and staff of the VCU School of Education and broader university community, to the classmates who walked this journey with me; I extend my deepest gratitude. To my committee: Dr. Robin Hurst, Dr. Jan Altman, Dr. Jeff Wilson, and my chair, Dr. Rosalyn Hobson Hargraves; I thank you for your support and flexibility, your strong push and your gentle reminder that each step in the process is required for the desired outcome.

To the little girl that still resides inside of me, representing generations and histories I've yet to fully uncover: You are called and qualified; strong and capable; you are your ancestors' wildest dreams. Congratulations, you did it!

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## Abstract

## EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF DIVERSITY TRAINING ON THE DEVELOPMENT AND APPLICATION OF CULTURAL COMPETENCE SKILLS IN HIGHER EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS

By Kendra Cabler, Ph.D.

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education, Urban Services Leadership, at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Virginia Commonwealth University, 2019

Director: Rosalyn Hobson Hargraves, PhD  
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In recent years the terms *diversity* and *inclusion* have become major buzzwords across industries and fields of study. Within the field of education broadly, and higher education in particular, a shifting student demographic can be seen across the country. Issues of equity and inclusion have become central complexities for present day educational strategists, and organizations committed to cultivating a culture of inclusion must do so with intentionality. In the context of higher education, this often requires the intentional development of professionals within a particular college or university. There has been a great deal of research concerning the development of cultural competence in traditional aged college students, but far fewer studies address development in higher education professionals. This project seeks to fill that gap.

This study explores how higher education professionals develop and demonstrate cultural competence in their professional roles. Through a mixed methods case-study approach (Jupp, 2006), the current study generally addresses how perceived levels of cultural competence in

higher education professionals is shaped by participation in an extended diversity training program. Additionally, this study addressed implications for individual career trajectories as a result of program completion and implementation of new learning.

In-depth interviews were conducted to explore how participants of an extended diversity training program at a large urban institution conceive of their development of cultural competence. The objective of the program was to prepare participants to facilitate diversity education workshops across campus for their peers. One-on-one interviews explored ways in which participants' individual development and application of cultural competence skills fits into the context of Social Cognitive Career Theory (Creswell, 2007; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2002). Additionally, secondary data analysis was conducted to assess participants' perceived levels of cultural competence throughout the training experience.

Study findings indicate that participants anticipate lasting effects from the training experience. The training introduced and ignited a reconfiguration of what it means to engage and work in spaces where institutional and organizational commitments are aligned with personal commitments. Following training, all participants expressed deep commitment to intentionally and actively cultivating a sense of belonging and inclusion in the workplace through shared language, shifts in policy, and more thoughtful interpersonal interactions with colleagues and peers.

## **Chapter One: Introduction**

As access to higher education continues to expand, institutions of learning that were once reserved for members of the elite continue to diversify. As a result, rapid growth and demographic shifts have become a defining feature of higher education (Gur-Rosenbilt, Šebková, & Tiechler, 2007). Such shifts are especially visible amongst student populations, while the diversification of higher education professionals is moving at a much slower pace. The diversification of college and university campuses has led to a proliferation of high priority diversity and inclusion initiatives. However, “diversification by itself does not suffice for providing equality of opportunity in higher education” (Guri-Rosenbilt et al., 2007, p. 20). If equity is the goal, newly developed diversity initiatives must be grounded in institutional strategy and commitment. For instance, these endeavors could be evidenced in many ways through the restructuring of institutional policy and procedure to account for the varied needs of community members. Notably, these sorts of structural changes are often only possible as a result of a more enhanced individual understanding of the role diversity plays in student success, career satisfaction, and institutional evolution. When individual members of university leadership are able to recognize the value of diversity, changes become more likely. As organizations continue to become diversified, employee morale, productivity, and success will be impacted by organizational commitments to create a culture of inclusion (Tan, Morris, & Romero, 1996). Worthington (2012) proposes a shifting diversity paradigm in higher education as a result of such rapid diversification. This paradigm shift can be attributed to five major factors: (1) Ongoing

disparities in educational attainment, (2) recent state referenda across the country, and executive, legislative, and judicial interventions; (3) ongoing pressure from businesses to prepare a competitive and multiculturally competent workforce; (4) substantial evidence that diversity is critical to the achievement of educational and intellectual missions, (5) and lastly rapid shifts in demographics as previously outlined. These imbalances have resulted in new dynamics in the learning environment. Most prevalent opportunity as a result of factors one, two, and three is an increased demand for professional development opportunities for faculty, staff, and administrators.

### **Unpacking Present-Day Diversity Initiatives**

As the diversity dialogue expands beyond race-based affirmative action and focuses on identity, inclusion, and equity more broadly, new initiatives continue to arise. A three-dimensional model of diversity in higher education provides historical context for current practices (Worthington, 2012). The tri-part model is based on (a) identity characteristics, (b) core areas of institutional initiatives, and (c) focal groups associated with the institution (Worthington, 2012, p. 2). Identity characteristics can be understood as race/ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, national and geographic origin, language, ability status, and socio-economic status. Core areas of institutional initiatives include recruitment and retention, curriculum and instruction, campus climate, intergroup relations and discourses, nondiscrimination, and faculty/staff/student/leadership development and success to name a few. The core areas within the diversity model also represent focus areas for diversity initiatives implemented across the institution. Lastly, focal groups highlight institutional affiliation; student, faculty, staff, administrators. As the components of the diversity model come together, institutions are better positioned to develop and implement diversity initiatives.

Historically, diversity initiatives more broadly have focused on affirmative action and race. Likewise, diversity training has consistently focused on aspects of race and gender and their implications for recruitment, hiring, and promotion [within businesses and corporations] (Kulik, Pepper, Roberson & Parker, 2007). However, present day conceptualizations of diversity training are often expanded; taking into consideration various dimensions of diversity and emphasizing individual development as a result of the training experience (Kulik et al., 2007). Of note is an expansion of diversity training across sectors and fields of study. Tan et al. (1996) argue that the effectiveness of diversity training can be measured in part by the training design. Effective training designs include consideration of the challenges that coincide with diverse learning environments, as well as the value added to both individual and organizational development (Tan et al., 1996). Still, within individual institutions, the practicality and value of diversity programming is often framed through the lens of institutional culture and climate, rather than the impact on individual community members. As such, the effects and impact of these developmental opportunities for higher education professionals are not heavily reflected in higher education literature.

In recent years, equality and diversity training has grown in importance across the higher education sector. Universities are increasingly accountable and responsible for ensuring good practices around equality and diversity. Effective diversity awareness training programs need to be in place in many organizations that want to be seen championing and effectively mainstreaming equality and diversity. (Hayat & Walton, 2013, p. 304)

University faculty, staff, and administrators are positioned to impact the institution at every level, thus their development in areas of cultural competence has the capacity to reach far and wide.

**The Problem.** Roughly 67% of U.S. organizations have instituted diversity training as a core component of their diversity initiatives (Esen, 2005); and yet, there persists a gap in the research literature that requires thoughtful exploration of this population. “Despite the priority higher education institutions have given to multicultural initiatives, little attention has been given to examining the multicultural experiences and other life events that influence those charged with developing and facilitating these initiatives” (Landreman, King, Rasmussen & Jiang, 2007, p. 275). As it relates to higher education, university faculty, staff, and administration are charged to develop and equip students with the tools necessary to engage diversity. In essence, what Landreman et al. (2007) highlight is that research on diversity programs in higher education is largely focused on solutions and student experience; rarely addressing the faculty, staff, and administrators involved in program development, facilitation, or even participation.

The importance of reflection, trust, and individualized attention is paramount in transformative learning, yet, ironically, there is a paucity of information available on the experiences of higher education instructors and those involved in the administration of a college campus. (Beer, Rodriguez, Taylor, Martinez-Jones, Griffin, Smith, Lamar, & Anaya, 2015, p 163)

This study explored the experiences of higher education professionals through their participation in diversity training as professional development.

**Diversity Training in the Workplace.** Diversity training literature explores both positive and negative understandings and associations of workplace diversity. While some studies show positive connections between profitability and innovation as a result of a more diverse workforce; others suggest that members of diverse work environments sometimes report lower levels of commitment and career satisfaction (Yap, Homes, Hannan, & Cukier, 2010).

...diversity management practitioners aim to increase commitment and satisfaction of employees through diversity training however, diversity training programs have been criticized for not addressing the structural or systematic practices that perpetuate inequitable work experiences and outcomes... (Yap et al., 2010, p. 522).

This perspective is counter to the previous discussion of diversity training. Yap et al. (2010) propose that the purpose of diversity training is individual development. However, the motivation for diversity training is often focused on institutional impact, with individual development serving as a bonus. While these outcomes are related, they are often compared prematurely, without the support of a well-rounded diversity program that intentionally addresses the individual, as well as the organization. Thus, in ideal circumstances, diversity training becomes a joint institutional effort to shift behavior, exhibit commitment, and account for structural barriers experienced by institutional members. Still, diversity training is often implemented in hopes of establishing or affirming a shift in individual behavior (Roberson, Kulik, & Pepper, 2009). Lai and Kleiner (2001) describe diversity training as the “process by which a workforce learns about cultural, socioeconomic, racial, and religious differences among employees as well as how to embrace those differences to create and maintain an effective work environment” (as cited in Hayat and Walton, 2013, p. 292). Yap et al. (2010) define diversity training according to three primary objectives: increased awareness, reducing bias, and changing behavior. Thus, as training participants engage in workshops, they will ideally be led through reflection, introspection, and skill building that ultimately impacts not only them as individuals, but the broader web of colleagues and peers with whom they are in constant contact. The manifestation of broader impact within an organization relies on a transfer of knowledge (Roberson et al., 2009). Knowledge transfer then becomes a more centralized and desirable

outcome of diversity training. Participant's capacity to transfer new learning to their professional roles is critical to an assessment of cultural competence more broadly. Roberson et al. (2009) assert, "Change in work behavior is often the primary goal of diversity training, but few studies have examined transfer of diversity training" (p. 67). This sort of transfer has the capacity to influence and impact the systematic and structural barriers experienced by members of an institution through policy and procedure. As a result, adjustments to policy and procedure serve as tangible evidence of institutional commitment.

## **Study Significance**

### **Statement of Significance**

This study is significant to the field because it addresses the intersection of career and professional identity with the development of cultural competence skills used to enhance institutional culture. Through the lens of knowledge transfer and applied learning, the present study explores the ways in which diversity training influences individual development and interpersonal interactions among higher education professionals. Additionally, this study poses implications for individual career trajectories as a result of program completion and implementation of new learning.

### **Literary Significance**

Yap et al. (2010) conducted a study to investigate the relationship between the availability of diversity training and its perceived effectiveness, with organizational commitment and career satisfaction. Within the context of the study, career satisfaction is associated with loyalty, productivity, performance, and engagement. Organizational commitment can be understood as the organization's core values. Over 11,000 managers representing nine organizations were surveyed about their perceptions of the work environment and the diversity



commitment of their respective organizations. Study results indicated that employees who believed their organizations provided effective diversity training were more satisfied with their careers in comparison to peers who found diversity training to be ineffective or unavailable. Further, study findings showed significant relationships between organizational commitment, career satisfaction, and diversity training.

Related to higher education professionals more specifically, Sanford and Kinch (2016) identified nine competency domains critical to faculty success. Knowledge of diversity, inclusion, and multiculturalism was identified as a core competency. Results of a mixed methods study indicated that 78.5% of participants considered knowledge of diversity, inclusion, and multiculturalism to be either very or moderately important. Qualitative findings emphasized “interpersonal skills such as relationship-building, collegiality, and respect for different opinions and viewpoints, along with career planning and efficiency as important skillsets” (Sanford and Kinch, 2016, p. 88-89). Thus, participants recognized the role of cultural competence skill development as a critical component to success and satisfaction in the workplace. Geleta and Amsale (2016) posit that higher education professionals who possess elevated levels of competence are better positioned to “create institutional ethos and climate, which are critical in promoting multicultural sensitivity within the universities” (p. 400).

Alhejji, Garavan, Carbery, O’Brien, and McGuire (2015) propose that a major limitation in diversity training research is the wide variation of training delivery methods, the goals and purposes for which trainings are orchestrated, and their anticipated learning outcomes. They posit that a restricted number of studies emphasize outcomes such as equity, equal opportunity, and enhanced individual and organizational learning (Alhejji, et al., 2015). “...Few studies have examined how individuals develop the skills, commitment, and habits of mind necessary to

confront issues of oppression effectively and to create positive social change” (Landremen, et al, 2007, p. 275).

In a longitudinal field study of diversity training program participants, Roberson et al. (2009) noted that the decision to apply new learning, particularly learning related to sensitive subject areas inherent to diversity training, was significantly related to transfer when tangible skills were developed. When program participants felt confident in their skill development and did not fear negative consequences for incorporating new learning into their work, findings showed a positive and significant relationship between the intentional decision to transfer knowledge or implement newly developed skills.

Still, there is no single diversity program that will meet the needs of all organizations. As a result, the customization of diversity training requires consideration of the institution and its culture, members of the institution, and individual levels of exposure and comfort engaging matters of equity and inclusion. This sort of variance creates a challenge for researchers hoping to pull together generalizable outcomes and parameters for diversity programming. While this study does not presume to be generalizable to all types of institutions, we anticipate presenting results that can be applied to higher education professionals and their career trajectories more broadly.

### **Research Questions**

The research questions guiding this study are: (a) How are perceived levels of cultural competence in higher education professionals impacted by participation in an extended diversity training program; (b) How has participation in extended diversity training affected participants’ efforts to engage in inclusive practices and behaviors; (c) How do participants utilize the skills and tools developed through extended diversity training in their roles as higher education

professionals; and (d) How do participants anticipate the skills and tools developed through extended diversity training will impact their career paths and career progression?

The following definitions have been provided to frame the lens used to create these research questions. Although multiple definitions exist for the following terms, the definitions outlined were selected because of their prevalence throughout the diversity training literature, giving specific consideration to educational contexts.

### **Definition of Terms**

**Diversity.** Definitions of diversity vary across and within industries and fields of study. At the core, diversity is a representation of various social identities. Konrad, Prasad, and Pringle (2006) define diversity as “representative of demographics, personality or values, knowledge, skills and experience” (p. 192).

**Diversity Training.** Lai and Kleiner (2001) define diversity training as “the process by which a workforce learns about cultural, socioeconomic, racial, and religious differences among employees as well as how to embrace those differences to create and maintain an effective work environment” (as cited in Hayat & Walton, 2013, p. 292)

**Cultural Competence.** Cultural competence is reflected in the combination of three major components: knowledge, skills, and attitudes or beliefs surrounding equity and inclusion (Sue, 2001). Displays of cultural competence are sometimes difficult to discern. As a result, cultural competence is most frequently identified through self-evaluation models.

**Cultural Attitudes.** As a single component of cultural competence more broadly, cultural attitude can be conceived of as, “a sensitivity and understanding of one’s own and others cultural identity as it manifests through one’s beliefs, values, and biases” (Geleta, 2016, p. 389).

**Cultural Knowledge.** As a single component of cultural competence and an intended outcome of diversity training, cultural knowledge refers to “knowledge of other cultures’ beliefs, values and practices, which allow for an understanding of different world views” (Geleta, 2016, p. 389).

**Cultural Skills.** As a tangible outcome of diversity training, cultural skills can be conceived of as “the synthesis and applications of both awareness and knowledge” (Geleta, 2016, p. 396); more simply, cultural skills are the “...skills needed to interact effectively with diverse cultures” (Geleta, 2016, p. 389).

### **Methodological Overview**

The purpose of this study was to explore how higher education professionals develop and demonstrate cultural competence in their professional roles. Through a mixed methods approach (Jupp, 2006), the current study more generally sought to address how perceived levels of cultural competence in higher education professionals is shaped by participation in an extended diversity training program.

A mixed methods case-study approach was implemented. In-depth interviews were conducted to explore how participants of an extended diversity training program at a large urban institution conceive of their development of cultural competence. In its initial implementation, the Cultural Awareness Building (CAB) training program included a cohort of 26 faculty, staff, and administrators. The cohort participated in a 13 month training process intended to enhance their ability to engage matters of diversity, equity, and inclusion in their workplaces. Participants applied and interviewed to participate in the initial cohort; they were ultimately selected by a team of university leaders. CAB participants represent many schools, departments, and units

across the institution. The objective of the program was to prepare participants to facilitate diversity education workshops across campus for their peers.

Research in areas of diversity training often employs qualitative methods that encourage the use of participant voice as narrative. One-on-one interviews will explore ways in which participants' individual development and application of cultural competence skills fits into the context of Social Cognitive Career Theory (Creswell, 2007; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2002). In addition, secondary data analysis will be conducted to assess participants' perceived levels of cultural competence throughout the training experience. The secondary data analyzed in this study was collected via self-assessments completed during the cohort's training process.

A case study design was selected as the most appropriate methodology for this study, as it explored how higher education professionals in a single university program conceive of cultural competence and apply cultural competence skills in their work. The program of interest was bounded and therefore a finite number of possible study participants were available for data collection; a common trademark of case studies (Merriam, 2009).

### **Subjectivity Statement**

As an African-American professional at the University where this study took place, the researcher perceived cultural competence skills to be infrequently applied in the workplace. The researcher also served as a member of the cohort sample and believed that the training experience was effective in preparing cohort members to facilitate diversity training workshops. However, the researcher did not hold preconceived ideas regarding how professionals conceive of their own level of cultural competence or their level of comfort applying skills in their respective workplaces. Notably, the researcher's membership within the cohort provided perspective regarding the training experience and a frame of reference regarding the language

and tools developed as a result of participation in CAB. Pre-existing relationships with cohort members served as an additional strength of the study because an element of trust had been previously established with study participants.

### **Organization of the Study**

Chapter 1 of this study serves as an introduction. Cultural competence as an outcome of extended diversity training is explored. Relevant themes in the literature are reviewed and the significance of the study is explored. Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature concerning subjects related to diversity training and the development of cultural competence in higher education professionals.

Chapter 3 reviews the methodology to be implemented within this study. A mixed-methods case study will be implemented because this study is a preliminary exploration of a topic with little previous research conducted in higher education settings. Diversity trainings are most frequently assessed in the research literature through the lens of the corporate sector, student-teacher relationship and interaction, and multi-cultural curriculum. Thus, previous research has not focused on diversity training as professional development for higher education professionals.

Chapter 4 provides analytical results from the data collection process outlined in Chapter 3, it will highlight themes and patterns within the data. Chapter 5 draws conclusions from the analyses provided in Chapter 4. Finally, references and appendices are also included.

## **Chapter Two: Review of the Literature**

The framework of the current study is situated within Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) (Lent et al., 2002). To understand the relevance of SCCT, an understanding of social cognitive theory is critical. The three basic building blocks of social cognitive theory are self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals (Lent et al., 2002). Each building block creates the foundation from which individuals build their professional identities. Self-efficacy, as defined by Bandura (1997), is most often developed through four primary sources: personal performance and accomplishments, vicarious learning, social persuasion, and one's physiological and affective states. That is to say, an individual's past experiences and current understanding of those experiences gives shape to their beliefs about their own potential for success. Outcome expectations are described as "personal beliefs about the consequences or outcomes of performing particular behaviors" (Lent et al., 2002, p. 262). Lastly, personal goals, according to Bandura (1986) can be understood as the "determination to engage in a particular activity to effect a particular future outcome" (Lent et al., 2002, p. 262). These building blocks are important within the framework of SCCT because they provide context for individual interests, the decision to pursue said interests, and ultimately the individual's performance or application of whatever skills have been developed in the process. Within the context of this study, these building blocks and the outcomes of training program participation can most accurately be conceptualized through the framework of SCCT.

SCCT is a tri-part model that reviews an individual's progression through interest development, choices, and performance as it relates to their career. The SCCT model encompasses individual career progression in its entirety. It considers participants' initial interests or introduction to diversity within the context of their profession, their choice or decision to pursue professional development in areas of diversity and inclusion more intentionally, and ultimately their application of skills or performance based on new knowledge. The SCCT model is dynamic and can be applied to an array of nuanced situations and circumstances; it differs from earlier career theory in this way. Previous theories often discounted the role of individual development, capacity to change, and self-regulate (Lent et al., 2002).

As a result, the framework of the current study is based on three assumptions. The first assumption is an assumed desire of diversity training participants to develop some level of cultural competence based on previously identified *interest*. The second assumption is that diversity training participants made a *choice* to pursue a training program as the vehicle through which they might develop a desired level of cultural competence. The third and final assumption is that diversity training participants intend to implement new learning within the workplace, thereby *performing* new skills.

### **Extended Diversity Training and SCCT**

An anticipated outcome of the CAB training program, the subject of this study, was the development of cultural competence (Sue, 2001) in cohort participants. Throughout the program, participants engaged in dialogue education (Freire, 2000) that required intentional reflection, introspection, and consideration of the role(s) of diversity and inclusion within the larger institution. Additionally, participants were challenged to explore the role of diversity and



inclusion within the context of their professional roles. In this way, dialogue education served as a conduit for transformational learning (Mezirow, 1991); which ideally increased the probability of a sustainable shift in institutional workplace culture. The impact of an institutional commitment to diversity and inclusion rests largely on members of that institution's community.

In cultural contexts, career development needs to be combined with an understanding of the impact of culture and the ability to communicate with people from other cultures.

The different aims of the development of personal career and cross-cultural communication competence must be interrelated and go alongside. (Balčiūnaitienė, Barvydienė, & Petkevičiūtė, 2013, p. 16)

Throughout education, counseling and social work literature, trends emerge around a conceptualization of cultural competence that relies on relationship building, communication skills, individual perspective and perception. Sue (2001) suggested that cultural competence is reflected in the combination of three major components: knowledge, skills, and attitudes or beliefs. Thus, cultural competence is a multi-faceted cognitive development that engages both inter- and intra-personal reflections and interactions. Ideally, learners are transformed in the process of developing cultural competence.

The theory of Transformational learning (Mezirow, 1991) is bounded by three structures: Meaning schemes, meaning perspectives, and reflection. Meaning schemes and perspectives are cultivated through experience and evolve as the learner begins to grapple with conflicting ideologies, expectations, and perceptions of the world around them (Mezirow, 1991). For Mezirow (1991), adult learning should be transformative. Thus, the pursuit of learning and development is often catalyzed by way of some *disorienting dilemma* that leads to increased drive and a desire to pursue knowledge in more hands-on, intentional ways. Such dilemmas are

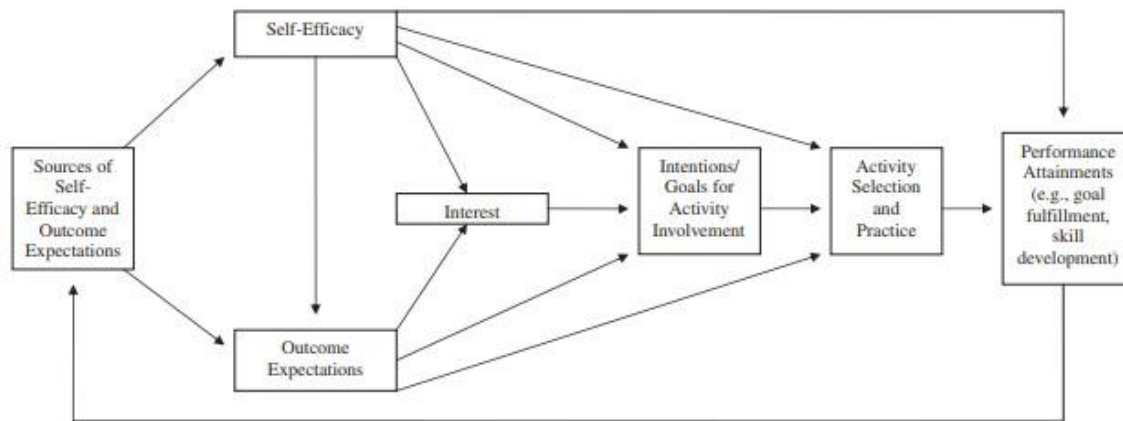
operationalized as personal encounters with individuals or the surrounding environment that upset what has become the status quo; moments that influence a reconfiguration of one's worldview. In order for learners in general and adult learners in particular, to be transformed through the learning process, they must be able to make meaning of the process and their experiences outside of the structured learning environment. Diversity training in this context, thrusts learners into an intentionally structured learning environment that immerses them in the theoretical, dialectal, and behavioral frameworks required to develop cultural competence. Still, the overarching goal is to equip participants with the tools to apply cultural competence outside of the training environment.

### **SCCT Models**

Each phase of the diversity training experience is broken out into the three models of SCCT that follow. Within the context of each model, aspects of Sue's (2001) theory of cultural competence, dialogue education (Freire, 2000), and transformational learning (Mezirow, 1991) are explored.

**The Interest Model.** The Interest Model, as shown in Figure 1, focuses on the role of individual interests in motivating choices of behavior and skill acquisition. Within this model fits a more general understanding of self-efficacy and outcome expectations. For instance, it could be assumed that diversity training participants each possessed some level of interest in learning more about diversity and inclusion prior to program participation. Further, participants likely held an interest in developing the skills necessary to have conversations with their peers about matters of diversity and inclusion. "SCCT asserts that people form enduring interest in an activity when they view themselves as competent and when they anticipate performing it will produce valued outcomes" (Lent et al., 2002, p. 265). These interests potentially influenced

participants' decision or choice to pursue participation in the diversity training program.



*Figure 1: Interest Development Model Reprinted from Lent et al. (1994) Social cognitive career theory interest development model*

**The Choice Model.** In Figure 2, The Choice Model depicts individual goals and the actions required to achieve them. As individual interests influence behaviors and decision making within the context of this study; participation in diversity training is the result of an individual choice to pursue a desired goal. “SCCT’s model of career choice holds that interests are typically related to the choices that people make and to the action they take to implement their choices” (Lent et al., 2002, p. 276).

As it relates to career, individual goals must at times be configured or reconfigured within the norms and guidelines of the larger organization or institution. For professionals committed to equity and inclusion, participation in diversity training as professional development is a conscious choice (within the context of this study). Similarly, some professionals may choose to forego professional development in exchange for alternative opportunities for skill development.

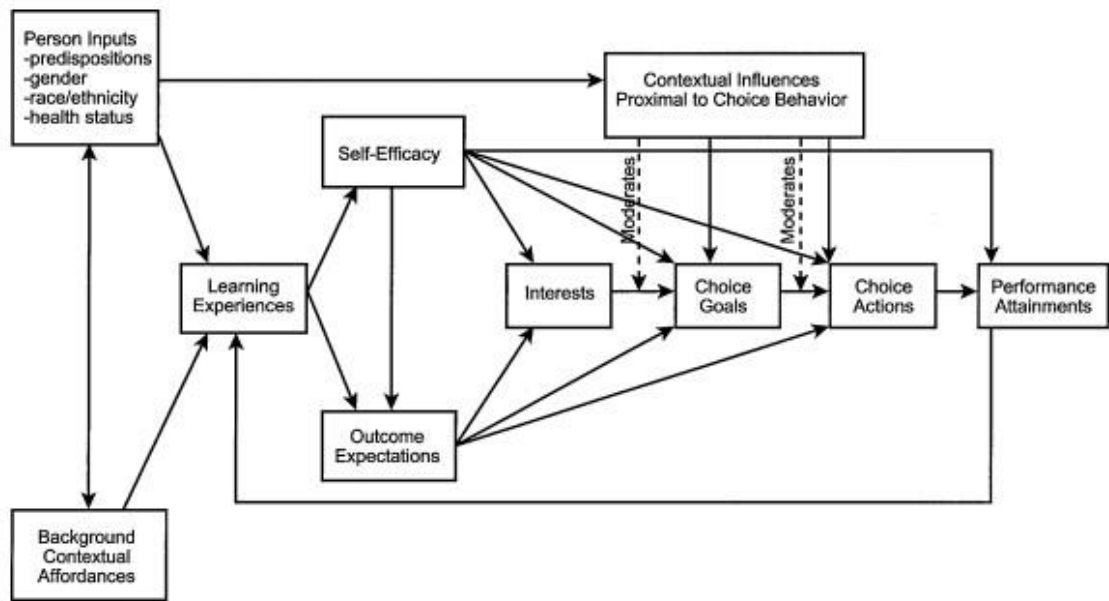


Figure 2. Reprinted from Lent et al. (1994) Social cognitive career theory choice model

An acknowledgement that choice may at times require a negotiation of barriers is a critical component to this model. Although diversity training is common practice within many colleges and universities, some institutions may opt for alternatives, providing different or additional choices for development. For professionals who choose diversity training, there may be a necessary realignment of institutional and departmental structures to become jointly responsible for the learning process in their respective workplaces. New learning, as a result of training, may or may not be aligned with previously held beliefs. While responsibilities can become shared in this sort of learning structure, the crux of its success is really predicated upon open, reflective dialogue. In response to personal and professional commitments to diversity and inclusion, Freire (2000) proposes *Problem-Posing Education*. “Problem-posing education, responding to the essence of consciousness – intentionality – rejects communiques and embodies communication. It epitomizes the special characteristic of consciousness...” (Freire, 2000, p. 79). Reflexive dialogue is critical for any group of learners (Freire, 2000). As participants prepare to

re-enter the workplace upon training completion, they become co-investigators, seeking to advance their own learning on their own volition (Freire, 2000).

In Problem-Posing Education, people develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation. (Freire, 2000, p. 83)

Participants' learning in this context is transformative. It embodies the theory of transformational learning (Mezirow, 1991) by calling for reflective action that challenges one's self-concept, in hopes of catapulting a movement of change within individuals and the institutions in which they are a part. Both Mezirow and Freire recognize the need and capacity for individual development to occur in tandem with evolving social norms and ideologies. For both authors, learning is a social process. "Effective consciousness raising in a group involves acknowledgement of oppression, critical reflection on personal experience, the legitimation of personal knowledge, homogeneity of the group, and reflection on the mechanisms of power and equality among group members" (Mezirow, 1991, p. 194).

**The Performance Model.** Like Freire, Mezirow recognizes the impact of historically minimized and erased realities in educational environments. According to Mezirow (1991), adult education was historically void of many dimensions; the most critical of which being: space for meaning making, foundational understanding of the way adults learn, needs assessments, goal setting, and interdisciplinary program development.

As a sociologist, Mezirow was keenly aware of the socialization that takes place in childhood and its implications for meaning making and framing in adulthood. He proposes that within socialization there is "inherent inequality". Adult learners often seek to assess their

current level of agreement with their previously socialized understandings of the world (Mezirow, 1991). As a result, the transference of newly developed skills is often disjointed upon early re-entry to workplace following a training experience. Attempts to transfer newly developed tools may not be in alignment with current institutional or departmental cultures (transfer climates). This could pose a challenge for training participants.

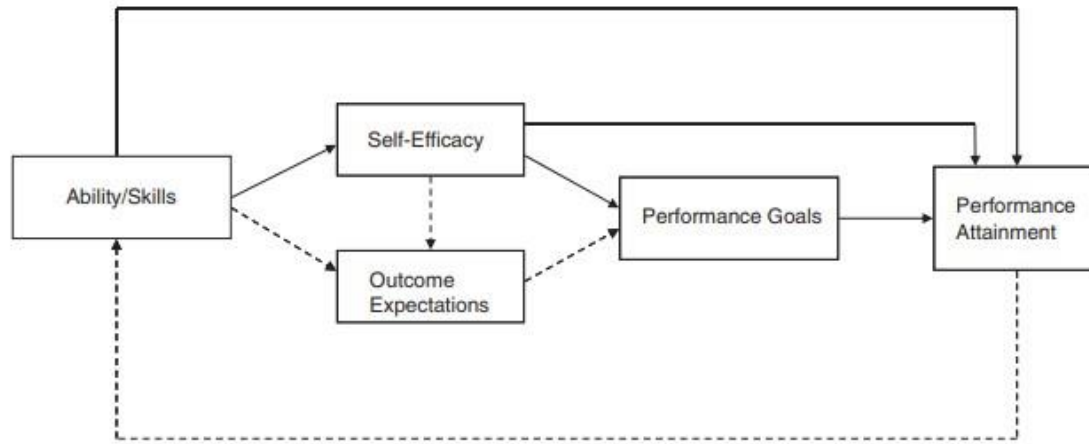
As socialization impacts perception, adult learners sometimes operate on a system of checks and balances. This system is used to determine and address discrepancies that might develop between one's socialized understanding of the world and one's personal philosophies as an inhabitant of a given environment. To do this, Mezirow (1991) suggests the intentional exploration of meaning perspectives or generalized expectations, that act as codes, limiting our thoughts, beliefs, feelings, and in some ways our capacity to learn new codes. This process of adjusting old interpretations and codes of understanding for new ones is a foundational component of adult learning. It is a process that bridges the decisions learners make in the choice model to their capacity to apply new learning in the performance model. "Perception, interpretation, learning, problem solving, remembering, and reflection are all significantly influenced by our line of action, which involves intention, purpose, and connotation" (Mezirow, 1991, p. 36). When individuals are confronted with conflicting ideologies and reframe their point of view, they are able to operate and engage in new ways. Learners who have been transformed are more likely to seek assistance from various perspectives and sources, take a critical stance on their beliefs, and possess an enhanced sense of self-awareness (Mezirow, 1991).

The Performance Model (Figure 3) is concerned with the persistent pursuit of individual accomplishments. Within the bounds of this study, the mere completion of an extended diversity training program could be considered a factor of individual performance. However, more critical

to the individual development of participants is the application of skills and new knowledge following program completion. These factors more adequately reflect individual performance. For instance, participants' perceptions of their ability to better engage peers or colleagues as a result of program completion can be understood through the performance model.

Current research has shown the importance of the use of transfer strategies for facilitating the transfer process. Transfer strategies refer to cognitive and behavioral techniques such as setting goals for skill and knowledge usage, anticipating and monitoring difficulties in utilizing training, identifying and using sources of feedback and support, analyzing situations, and monitoring and assessing opportunities to use trained knowledge on the job. (Roberson, Kulik, & Pepper, 2009, p. 68; Noe, Sears, & Fullenkamp, 1990)

The creation and implementation of transfer strategies, though employed at the individual level, are largely influenced by external factors or what Burke and Baldwin (1999) referred to as transfer climates (Roberson et al., 2009). Transfer climates are reflected in the work environments program participants re-enter at the close of a program. These environments may or may not mirror the larger climate of a particular campus or university. Individual interpretation of experiences within a given climate could influence the implementation of transfer strategy or an opportunity for program participants to put new learning to use.



*Figure 3.* Reprinted from S.D. Brown et al. / Journal of Vocational Behavior 79 (2011) 81–90

Although this process is rooted in individual transformation, it is important to note that learning cannot be truly transformative in isolation, much like career progression. “If we could begin to populate leadership ranks with interculturally competent individuals, they could begin advocating for diversity and its implications within their respective departments and areas of university influence, thus effecting change in the entire campus community” (Taylor, Van Zandt, & Menjares, 2013, p. 112). In essence, diversity training can act as a mode of capacity building. An institution’s capacity to engage its community and its commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equity simultaneously encourages the reciprocal development of individual community members. Ultimately, this study seeks to address individual development within the context of institutional commitment.

The section that follows will unpack the many ways in which facets of SCCT and other theoretical models can be seen throughout the research literature. Additionally, thoughtful exploration of the intersection between SCCT, the research literature, and the Cultural Awareness Building Program (CAB) will be reviewed.

### **A Systematic Literature Review of Diversity Training in Higher Education**



In recent years the terms *diversity* and *inclusion* have become major buzzwords across industries and fields of study. Within the field of education broadly, and higher education in particular, a shifting student demographic can be seen across the country. This evolving student demographic is at least in part a response to the civil rights movement of the 1960s when “... equity in higher education became a national priority” (Taylor, Apprey, Hill, McGrann, & Wang, 2010, para. 1). Since the 1960s, issues of equity and inclusion have been centralized complexities for educational strategists. Organizations committed to cultivating a culture of inclusion must do so with intentionality. Within higher education, this often requires the intentional development of professionals within a particular college or university. There has been a great deal of research concerning the development of cultural competence in traditional aged college students. However, as the current social climate has fostered a number of student protests, many colleges and universities are feeling the pressure to respond to student requests of a more culturally competent and developed university faculty, staff, and administrative body.

Student diversity continues to outweigh diverse representation in university faculty, staff, and leadership. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES 2008), “...just under 20 percent of the nation’s professoriate consists of persons of color—Blacks/African Americans (5.6 percent), Hispanic/Latinos (3.5 percent), Asian Americans (9.1 percent), and American Indians (1.4 percent)” (Taylor et al., 2010). Notably, those statistics vary within institutions across the country. Nonetheless, this imbalance has resulted in increased professional development opportunities for faculty, staff, and administrators as they navigate new dynamics within the learning environment.

Still, these developmental opportunities for higher education professionals are not heavily reflected in higher education literature. More specifically, the impact of diversity programming

on higher education professionals within the structure of a college or university setting is often overlooked in exchange for a more high level understanding of the impact of programming on institutional culture. As colleges and universities seek to engage culture and the unique needs of the campus community, a more intentional understanding of the developmental needs of university professionals must remain central.

### **Theoretical Framework for Diversity Training**

This systematic review of the literature is built on a tri-part theoretical framework that embodies individual participation in diversity training. It is the same framework explored within each model of SCCT. The diversity training research literature is examined here through the lens of cultural competence (Sue, 2001), dialogue education (Freire, 2000), and transformational learning (Mezirow, 1991). Sue (2001) defined *cultural competence* as “the ability to engage in actions or create conditions that maximize the optimal development of client and client systems” (p. 802). Diversity training is a frequently enacted intervention within organizations seeking to address matters of equity, respect, and cultural competence (Joubert & Martins, 2013). As institutions account for individual development of cultural competence, dialogue and communication become key components to the training experience.

The impact of dialogue and communication can be understood through Paulo Freire’s (2000) conceptualization of dialogue education. Dialogue education makes room for the exploration of limit-situations or boundaries of individual worldview (Freire, 2000). In this capacity, professionals are able to assess what limits or perceived limits those around them may be facing as barriers to inclusion. Diversity training can be operationalized through this context, as training participants engage in dialogue with one another to unpack their individual roles in the broader social systems in which colleges and universities are situated.

The final part of the framework for this review can be understood through the theory of transformational learning (Mezirow, 1991). Through transformational learning, the scope and long-term impact of diversity training is explored. Bounded by three structures: meaning schemes, meaning perspectives, and reflection; these structures are not necessarily consistent and require consideration of the varied levels of understanding, interest, and commitment that shape participation in diversity training.

### **Literature Review Purpose**

The purpose of this systematic review was to synthesize the results of several research studies to determine how perceived levels of cultural competence and the application of cultural competence tools by higher education professionals is impacted by participation in diversity training. Ultimately, this review seeks to assess gaps in the research literature in response to the following research questions: (a) How are perceived levels of cultural competence in higher education professionals impacted by participation in diversity training? and (b) How do participants utilize the skills and tools developed through extended diversity training in their roles as higher education professionals? As the definition and application of diversity and inclusion continue to evolve, it has become increasingly evident that a single top-down approach to shifting institutional culture will not return its intended outcomes. Diversity training presents an opportunity for an interspersed and widespread approach to individual development and a more evolved institutional culture and climate.

### **Methods for Literature Review**

#### **Study Identification Procedures**

Studies were identified through an electronic database search of Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), Education Research Complete, and Business Source Complete. The

series of search terms were as follows: Cross cultural training OR sensitivity training OR Diversity training OR Diversity education, AND Cultural sensitivity OR Cultural awareness OR intercultural communication OR multiculturalism OR cultural competence OR Cultural pluralism, AND Higher Education OR College OR University, AND Professional Development OR Faculty development, NOT Healthcare OR Medical OR Medicine OR Physician, NOT Students. In total, the three databases returned 1156 results.

### **Inclusion Criteria**

The following eligibility criteria were used to determine whether particular studies were eligible for inclusion. First, the study had to be conducted no earlier than 1964, as 1964 was the year in which the first of three federal TRIO programs was formed (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). In response to a reauthorization of the Higher Education Act of 1968 two additional programs were introduced and formed what is presently referred to as TRIO, though five additional programs have since been created. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2014), TRIO programs are intended to increase educational attainment among traditionally underrepresented student populations. Thus, the need for faculty and staff development in areas of cultural competence has steadily increased since 1964, as student demographics have rapidly diversified.

Second, the study had to be a report of an empirical evaluation that represented at least one of the following criteria:

- Diversity training for professionals (professional or faculty development)
- Research focus on the impact of diversity training on individual behavior
- Research focus on the impact of diversity training on future motivation for learning in individuals

- Individual or recurring diversity training opportunities
- Random or cohort models
- Self-reported outcomes
- Measures of cultural competence based on an empirically evaluated tool

For the purposes of this study, an empirical evaluation referred to an experimental, quasi-experimental, or non-experimental research design. Additionally, *diversity training* was defined as a learning environment (i.e. training or workshop) created to enhance the development of cultural competence skills in professionals within a particular field or work environment. Thus, this review sought to highlight studies that explored the impact of training experiences on individual participants. Formal classroom settings or assessments of classroom curriculum were not included in this review.

A schematic overview of the search process is provided in Appendix A. The application of search and inclusion criteria led to the identification of 49 studies for full-text review based on the scope and intended purposes of this particular review. It is important to note that initial search results included both conceptual and theoretical articles, in addition to the empirical studies discussed here.

## **Coding**

A coding system was developed to manage the 49 studies identified for full-text review. The system grouped studies into three functional areas. Studies were screened out of the review if they were not focused on at least one of the following functional areas: higher education environmental contexts, professional development, or individual behavior and motivations for learning within the frame of cultural competence.

## **Literature Review Results**

A total of ten studies met selection criteria. Each study is reviewed and organized according to the purpose and scope of the diversity training intervention. Eight of the studies reviewed took place within higher education contexts, often focusing on individual behavior and motivation. The two remaining studies explored the development of cultural competence through professional development (diversity training) in related fields. The studies represented in this review employed a variety of research methods. Five studies employed a mixed methods approach to data collection, most frequently utilizing questionnaires and one-on-one interviews. In some instances, focus groups were used to explore the impact of training experiences on individual participants or the cohort more generally. Three studies used quantitative methods and two studies took a qualitative approach to data collection and analysis. Results of the review are organized into four areas that address cultural competence as both an organizational commitment and an opportunity for individual development.

### **Organizational Commitments**

In an evaluation of factors that affect the implementation and perceived success of diversity training programs, Rynes and Rosen (1995) addressed the perceptions of 785 Human Resources professionals. Participants completed a 99-item questionnaire that ultimately addressed two recurring inquiries of those responsible for diversity programming within an organization: who are often the beneficiaries of diversity training and what factors determine the success of their programming? Several hypotheses were presented, the most pertinent for this review being considerations of organizational commitment to diversity and inclusion, length of training, the role of participants within the organization, and relevant follow-up after training is completed (Rynes & Rosen, 1995).

Study results suggested that larger organizations with broad community presence are more

likely to adopt some form of diversity training. However, only 33% of respondents believed their training experiences provided long-term results. Survey data showed perceptions of training benefits in the short term were favorable. In contrast, participants rated variables critical to knowledge transfer unfavorably. As such, findings suggested that the most salient indicator for programmatic success is longevity. "...It appears that many organizations fail to capitalize on their initial training investment by modeling, supporting, and reinforcing trained behaviors over the long term" (Rynes & Rosen, 1995, p. 255). More clearly, trainings are often not organized as ongoing components of larger institutional commitments to equity and inclusion.

### **Increased Awareness and Competency Development**

In a mixed methods study that reviewed a framework for faculty competencies, specifically with regard to their role as professionals and practitioners of learning; Sanford and Kinch (2016) conducted a national survey on faculty development. Nine competency domains were identified as critical to faculty success. Knowledge of diversity, inclusion, and multiculturalism was identified as a core competency. The sample of 300 included both organizational and educational development professionals representing various perspectives. Results indicated that 78.5% of participants considered knowledge of diversity, inclusion, and multiculturalism to be either very or moderately important. The diversity and inclusion domain within the competencies framework was largely shaped by teaching, leadership, and communication (Sanford & Kinch, 2016). Findings emphasized "interpersonal skills such as relationship-building, collegiality, and respect for different opinions and viewpoints, along with career planning, and efficiency as important skillsets" (Sanford & Kinch, 2016, p. 88-89). These results point to skill development as a valuable component in addressing the needs of professionals of diverse backgrounds in the workplace and building awareness.

In alignment with these reflective experiences, the University of South Africa implemented an awareness-based training program. The training was intended to heighten the awareness of university professionals and provide an opportunity for reflection on individual assumptions and biases (Joubert & Martins, 2013). A sample of 332 university professionals participated in the study. Participants attended 11 trainings and were invited to participate in the study alongside a matched, random sample of 548 employees who did not participate in diversity training. The study sought to uncover the impact of diversity training on the behaviors and perceptions of university professionals. Data collected through phone interviews and web-based surveys revealed that trainings had the greatest influence on perceptions and affirmations of experience based on race, sexual orientation, and age. Conversely, limited impact was seen in shifted behavior regarding culture more broadly, gender, religion, and actual skill building to affect day-to-day interactions. Overall, workshop participants cite their participation as a contributing factor in skill development, comfort engaging matter of diversity, and engaging individual and group differences directly.

### **Motivation and Participation**

In a phenomenological study of diversity trainers' development of cultural competence skills, Landreman et al. (2007) addressed the tools necessary to effectively lead others through diversity training. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 trainers over the period of one year to assess skill development. Interview data emphasized past experiences that motivated participants to engage issues of diversity and inclusion and become more intentionally involved in diversity education. Further, results indicated exposure to diverse communities and geographic location, self-reflection on critical incidents, and community involvement as key themes in developing critical consciousness (increased awareness) among participants. Opportunities to



reflect on the importance of various experiences often led to affirmations of meaning making or “aha” moments (Landreman et al., 2007). This consciousness in turn increased participants’ commitment to skill development and knowledge transfer more broadly.

In a field study of 53 diversity training participants at a large, public university in the southwestern United States, Kulik, Pepper, Roberson, and Parker (2007) addressed how social identity and pre-training cultural competence might predict participation in voluntary diversity training. Participants were sent a pre-training survey and invited to attend a half-day diversity training. Trainings were conducted in small groups and included a mixture of awareness building and skill development. Study results suggested that pre-training cultural competence was significantly related to individual decisions to participate in diversity training. Individuals who perceived themselves as possessing elevated levels of cultural competence were more likely to participate than those who perceived themselves as possessing lower levels of competence.

### **Opportunities for Application**

Roberson, Kulik, and Pepper (2009) utilized the same sample and additional data points to explore the use of transfer strategies in the workplace. Transfer strategies address the application of tools and skills learned in the training environment to the workplace. Through a review of program learning outcomes and the subsequent transference of knowledge throughout the institution, the research focus shifted from a simple assessment or evaluation of a training program, to a more nuanced exploration of participants’ applications of new learning. A quantitative approach to data collection included post-training surveys completed at the end of the training experience, and a follow-up survey four weeks later to measure the use of transfer strategies.

Ultimately, the study sought to explore the impact of program participation on individual

careers and workplaces more broadly. Findings suggested that the climate of a particular workplace is positively related to transfer strategies used to apply new learning (Roberson et al., 2009). The decision to apply new learning, particularly learning related to sensitive subject areas inherent to diversity training, was significantly related to transfer when tangible skills were developed. When training participants felt confident in their skill development and did not fear negative consequences for incorporating new learning into their work, there was a positive and significant relationship to knowledge transfer and the implementation of newly developed skills. Additionally, study results indicated participant race and ethnicity as a significant predictor of transfer strategies. Data showed that participants of color were significantly more likely to transfer their learning back to the workplace. The researcher attributed this finding to a perceived increase in applicability and relevance of diversity training.

In an assessment of the multicultural competence of Ethiopian higher education professionals, Geleta and Amsale (2016) used a mixed methods approach to uncover the development and application of multicultural attitudes, beliefs, and skills. A sample of 316 participants comprised of academic and administrative officials, office workers, and teachers engaged in semi-structured interviews and completed a questionnaire as part of the study. Results indicated a statistically significant difference in self-reports of cultural competence among senior level personnel in comparison to entry level professionals. Senior level employees perceived themselves as more culturally competent than their colleagues perceived them to be. Ultimately, findings suggested that while many leaders and professionals possess relevant knowledge and awareness of cultural issues, few make meaning of that information and apply it in their interactions with university partners.

In a mixed methods study of a faculty development pilot program, Taylor, Van Zandt,

and Menjares (2013) assessed a diversity training model indented to blend the cognitive, affective, and spiritual dimensions of program participants. A sample of 13 higher education professionals, all employed within a single institution, completed a one year cohort model diversity training program. Study hypotheses suggested an increase in participant comfort engaging in diversity dialogues, an expanded understanding of the experiences of colleagues through personal sharing, and an application to participants' professional roles. The mixed methods approach included one-on-one interviews, focus groups, and end-of-experience evaluations. Results revealed interview and focus group data aligned with researcher hypotheses. Most frequently, participants cited opportunities for reflection during and after the program as a critical component to their developmental success. Included in reflection were the aforementioned aha moments and disorienting dilemmas (Landreman et al., 2007; Mezirow, 1991).

In a study conducted at a university in the United Kingdom, Hayat and Walton (2012) explored drama-based diversity training. Using a mixed methods approach, the researchers administered questionnaires and facilitated focus groups for data collection. Results suggested that 89% of program participants preferred the drama-based training to distance learning through power points or e-learning. Thus, interactive and collaborative diversity training was deemed more desirable and perceived as more effective in the development of participants. Qualitative data collection illustrated that drama based training allowed participants to consider real-time applications of their learning. The training environment helped to facilitate a deeper understanding of the way individual emotions can impact outcomes in various diversity and inclusion scenarios. In turn, participants were able to contextualize how the results of transfer strategies can vary according to the environment and individuals involved. In many ways, this

simulated element of diversity training seeks to more effectively develop communities of practice in which participants are able to use the relationships developed with one another, to leverage the application of newly developed skills back in their work environments.

In conceptualizing professional development in the context of communities of practice more broadly, Barak, Gidron, and Turniansky (2010) found four themes that contribute to team dynamics. According to their work, group diversity, interwoven work, the novice stance, and collaborative research each contribute to professional learning experiences (Barak et al., 2010). A collaborative, narrative self-study of the mutual influences of a cohort of participants on the professional development of individuals and the group reflexively, highlighted the critical nature of dialogue and communication as central components of professional development.

### **Discussion of Literature Review**

The literature reviewed reflects an underdeveloped and under-researched aspect of cultural competence in higher education. A majority of the education-based cultural competence and diversity training studies focus on teacher preparation programs and curriculum development. As a result, very little research has been done to explore diversity training as professional development for higher education professionals. Three key themes emerged from this review of the literature: salient and impactful training experiences, increased skill development and levels of awareness as a result of training participation, and knowledge transfer to the workplace. Existing research is discussed here through the lenses of purpose, impact, and future directions for diversity training as professional development. Limitations of the literature are addressed, in addition to implications for future research and practice.

### **The Purpose of Diversity Training**

In ideal circumstances, training participants are committed to individual and institutional

growth in dimensions of cultural competency. Throughout the literature, cultural competence is sometimes referred to as cultural intelligence or CQ. Bucher (2008) conceives of cultural intelligence as “those key competencies that allow us to effectively interact with people from diverse cultural backgrounds in all kinds of settings” (p. 7). Developing skill sets that align with values of inclusion, advancement, and collaboration are the cornerstone of many diversity training programs. Such programming seeks to help members of an institution foster authentic relationship as a result of a more open-minded and intentional pursuit of workplace culture.

Professional development is often situated in relationship to the current realities of the institution and anticipation of future circumstances. This is not surprising, as adult learning theories are steeped in an articulation of the necessity of adult learners to recognize relationship and congruence in their experiences and new learning; ultimately making meaning of those situations in present and future circumstances. These moments become centralized and in some ways crystallized through diversity training. As a necessary component to achieve transformational learning (Mezirow, 1991), opportunities for intentional reflection, particularly as it relates to diversity and inclusion in the workplace are most frequently experienced through diversity training. Thus, learning conceptualized as a cycle of meaning-making and application is equally as critical in professional development as it is within the classroom.

Though often reactive, diversity training is common practice for colleges and universities. Campus leaders routinely move through reaction cycles initiated by a diversity crisis and navigated through the mobilization of campus partners to bring forward an institutional response (Williams, 2008). Regardless of intended training outcomes, few studies have examined long-term shifts in behavior and applications of new learning (Roberson et al., 2009).

Despite the frequent use of diversity training, the criteria used to define and contextualize

it is highly contested. Wheeler (1994) states, “The definition for diversity training is heavily influenced by the way the concept of diversity is understood in the organization” (as cited in Joubert & Martins, 2013, p. 117). As a result, there are many types of training programs, most of which can be categorized into three overarching domains. Trainings are often awareness-based, skills-based, or integrated into some other pre-existing program (Joubert & Martins, 2013).

**Emergent Themes.** The literature reviewed here reflects many themes regarding diversity training as a professional development experience. A thorough review of training experiences, skill development, and opportunities for application are reflected in various capacities. Training participants frequently highlight the value of opportunities for dialogue and connectivity within the training experience (Roberson et al., 2009; Sanford & Kinch, 2016; Taylor et al., 2016). Such experiences present an opportunity for more intentional discussion concerning the intersection of individual social identity(s) and worldview, in conjunction with professional identities, interpersonal communication, and workplace collaboration. Within the context of training, personal peer-to-peer sharing provided a framework for transparency and authenticity in relationship building. Relationship building then led to more intentional awareness and ultimately influenced participant desire for skill building. Thus, the training experience created a web of support for participants. Relationship and community building then become a necessary component of the diversity dialogue and the implementation of diversity training.

**Participant Motivation.** Several motivational factors influence an individual’s decision to participate in diversity training (Kulik, Pepper, Roberson & Parker, 2007). Individuals are often more motivated to pursue and participate in training experiences when they perceive their participation will result in some valued outcome. Further, individuals who possess a certain level

of awareness regarding their own cultural competence are consistently more motivated to pursue opportunities for development when the competency is aligned with personal or professional values. Thus, individual motivation and efficacy give shape to two predictors of training participation. First, the social identity (race and gender) of training participants may be related to the perceived value of diversity training; as a result, women and racial minorities often make up the majority of training participants (Kulik et al., 2007). Second, low levels of competency before training participation could potentially influence an individual to pursue training as a means to develop desired skills. Notably, individuals who are unconscious of their personal competency regarding diversity are unlikely to participate in training programs because they do not perceive added value as a result (Kulik et al., 2007).

As it relates to the present study, Figure 4 depicts an adapted Interest Model that explores the development of diversity and inclusion interests and commitments that ultimately lead to participation in diversity training.

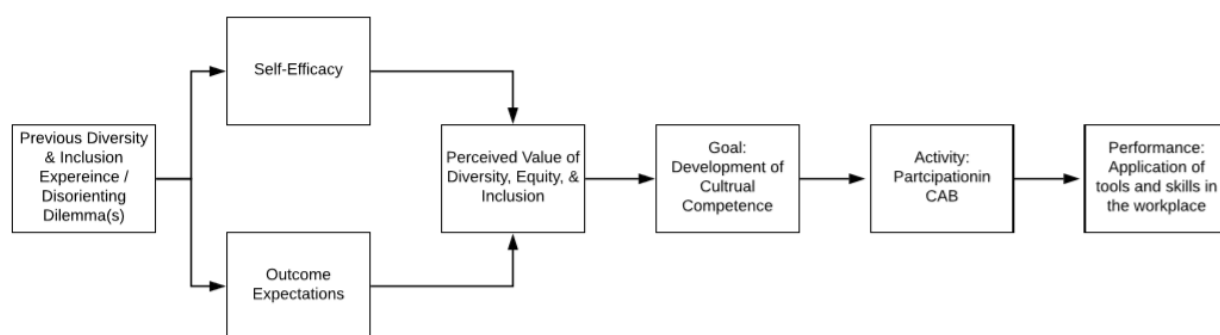


Figure 4. CAB Interest Model

**Impact of Training Experience.** The present literature represents a shift in a new direction by addressing what happens both during and after training experiences. Within the literature, skill development is often framed within the context of particular cultures or demographics and does not account for variation in experience and perspective within and across

cultures (Landreman et al., 2007). Thus, “aha moments” (Landreman et al., 2007) or disorienting dilemmas (Mezirow, 1991) often reflect a critical moment expressed by program participants, moments that resonate with many aspects of their identity. As such, the impact of training is intersectional. According to Roberson et al. (2009), the application of skills and tools developed in training experiences was more frequent amongst people of color. This is not surprising because as Kulik et al. (2007) pointed out, women and people of color comprise the majority of diversity training participants. Nonetheless, Roberson et al. (2009) proposed their findings can be attributed to perceived relevance of diversity training curriculum in participants’ day to day experiences. As an element of critical consciousness or increased awareness, relevance and perceived opportunities for application become critical components of this review.

***Skill Development.*** Demonstrations of cultural competence are attributed to the application of skills and requires a certain level of cognitive knowledge (Kulik et al., 2007). Individuals with high levels of diversity knowledge and skill will be more likely to volunteer for training than those with low knowledge or skill because they are able to identify deficits in their knowledge base. Concepts such as relationship-building, collegiality, and respect for different opinions were identified as necessary skills sets for career planning and development (Sanford & Kinch, 2016). As such, higher education professionals identified in this review often emphasized the value of interpersonal skills relative to elements of teaching, leadership, and communication. Landreman et al. (2007) pointed to exposure, self-reflection on critical incidents, and social interactions as factors that have a direct influence on individual commitments to skill development and knowledge transfer. As it relates to the present study, participant’s decision to pursue professional development through CAB is depicted in the adapted Choice Model in Figure 5.



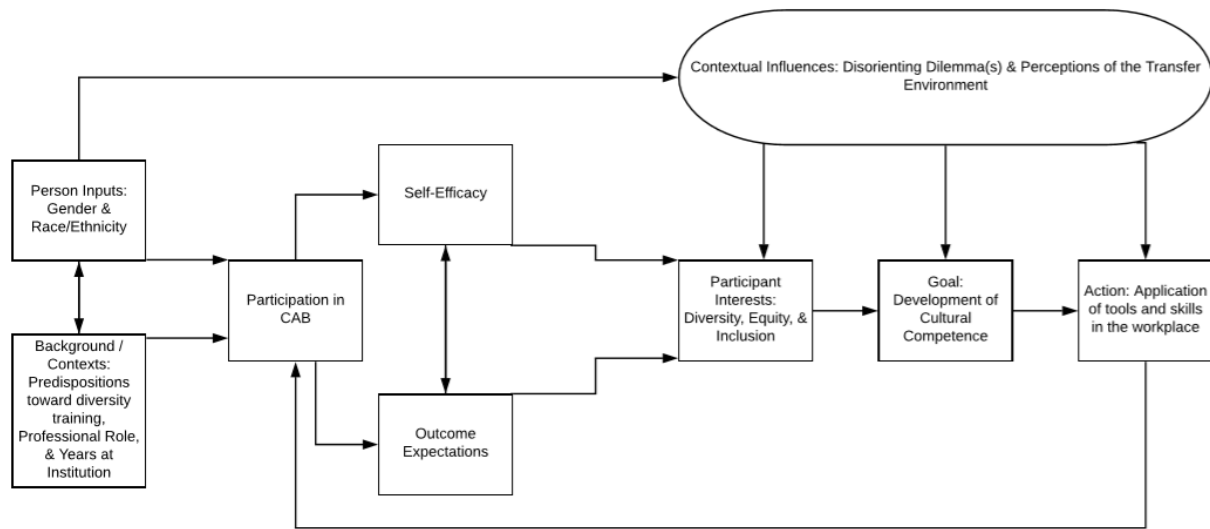


Figure 5. CAB Choice Model

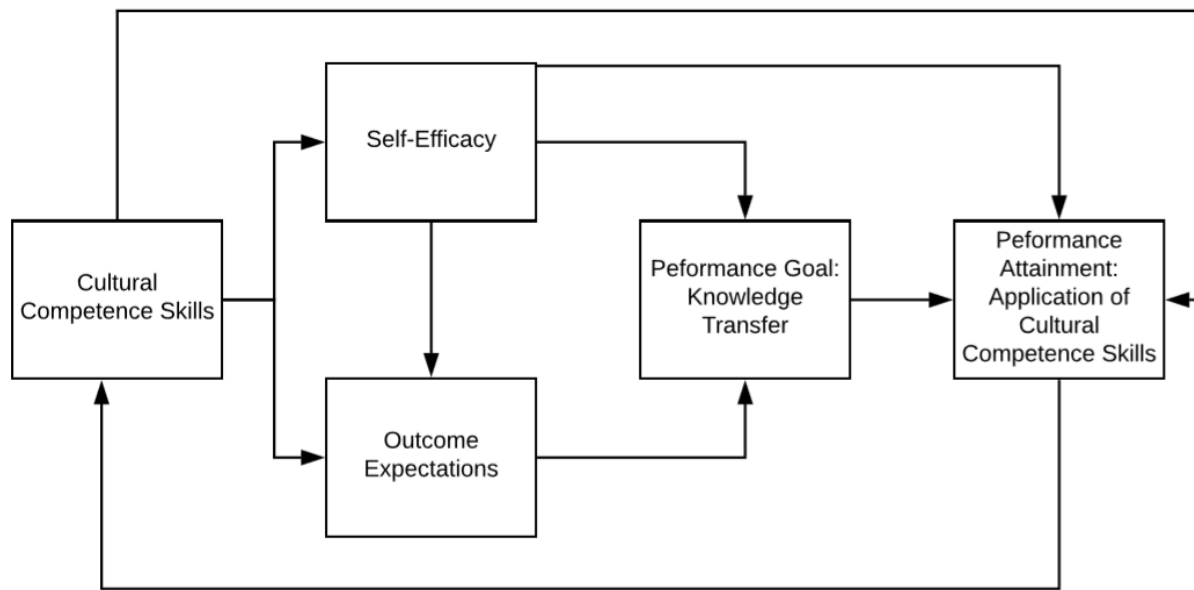
**Knowledge Transfer.** Notably, this web of support does not guarantee intended training outcomes of application and transfer; just as simple attendance to training programs does not guarantee knowledge transfer or application. Rather, knowledge transfer and application are largely dependent on active participation and engagement in the training experience, and ultimately the transfer environment. Even those professionals who perceive themselves as highly competent do not always meet the needs of colleagues and peers. For instance, Geleta and Amsale (2016) found that self-reports of senior level professionals' perceived levels of cultural competence were misaligned with the perceptions of their entry level employees. Thus, to achieve outcomes of a more enhanced worldview or the development of an institutional culture that facilitates the development of cultural competence, continued active participation in diversity training is a necessary component in leveraging diversity.

The structure of training programs reviewed here operated in one of two capacities: encouraging or inhibiting skill development. Trainings that cultivated some sense of community either through cohort models or through more intentionally structured curriculum focused on

group dynamics, often resulted in greater skill development and enhanced opportunity for application. Notably, the transfer environment (or departmental cultures) in which participants could apply their new learning were rarely accounted for in the discussion of knowledge transfer or skill application. Roberson et al. (2009) addressed the critical nature of supportive transfer environments in the consistent application of newly developed skills. For some participants, new knowledge and skills were established in the training environment, but transfer was not possible due to limited acceptance in the transfer environment, most frequently their home offices or departments.

Ultimately, review findings reinforced the notion that skill development is critical at all levels of the organization, but a lack of comfort in applying skills can negatively impact the transfer of knowledge (Roberson et al., 2009; Geleta & Amsale, 2016). Thus, awareness does not equate application. Many training participants highlighted increased levels of awareness. Awareness of self, awareness of peers, and social awareness more broadly; however, an application of skills or a transfer of knowledge were not directly related to simple awareness. Rather, the aforementioned elements of relationship and community building were necessary elements of both the training *and* transfer environments as it relates to application.

Figure 6 presents an adapted Performance Model for the present study; it represents opportunities for application among CAB program participants.



*Figure 6. CAB Performance Model*

### **Limitations Observed in the Literature**

There are a few major limitations consistently identified in diversity training research literature. First, the wide variation of training delivery methods, the goals and purposes for which trainings are orchestrated, and their anticipated learning outcomes vary across institutions (Alhejji, Garavan, Carbery, O'Brien, & McGuire, 2015). Alhejji et al. (2015) suggested that a restricted number of studies emphasize outcomes such as equity, equal opportunity, and enhanced individual and organizational learning. One dimension of this sort of enhanced learning is skill development. As an outcome of the training experience skill development is critical to a more robust exploration of cultural competence (Sue, 2001). Inherent to Sue's (2001) definition of cultural competence is an assumption of application. While skill development was often accounted for throughout the literature, there was no evidence of sustained development and application over time. Without an opportunity to apply new learning, cultural competence cannot be fully realized. Despite frequent use and conceptualization of Sue's (2001) model of

competence throughout the literature, none of the studies reviewed account for the assessment and evaluation of participants in these domains for extended periods beyond the training experience. Within the bounds of the training experience, participants were often evaluated through the lens of awareness building. As a result, a clear concept of knowledge development was inferred, rather than explicitly explored in the literature. Notably, the focus of this review was pointed at individual development as a result of program participation. It is possible that a review of the literature through a program evaluation lens would reveal a more central understanding of knowledge development.

**Participants.** For the majority of studies reviewed, sample sizes ranged from 13-30 participants. This is potentially due to an intentional alignment with training practices that recommend smaller class sizes (Bradt, 2014). Because the training programs included in this review generally had a pre-determined number of participants, it is difficult to discern generalizability. Notably however, Rynes and Rosen (1995) utilized the largest sample of the present studies and the depth of study findings were limited as a result. The scope of their survey items was broad and did not allow for more directed explanation of participant experience or voice. With limited qualitative considerations, Rynes and Rosen (1995) were unable to tap into the lived experience of training participants and the external factors that influence their development in areas of cultural competence.

**Length of Training Experience.** Length and frequency of training experiences varied throughout the literature. Rynes and Rosen (1995) argue that decentralized diversity training initiatives can be detrimental to an organization. They suggested that short-term programs often cause more harm than no training program at all because there has not been sufficient time for processing and consideration for applications in the day-to-day experiences of employees. While

some trainings were spread out with multiple meetings over a pre-determined length of time, other training experiences were only a few hours long. With such variance in the length of the intervention (the training experience) it is difficult to compare the effects of a training experience on individual development. However, due to limited research, training experiences of varying lengths were considered and included in this review.

**Instrumentation.** Landreman et al., (2010) highlighted the reliability and validity of instruments used to address cultural competence skills as one of the most pronounced limitations of their study, and the research literature more broadly. Within the literature, the most frequently disputed factor associated with individual levels of cultural competence is the reliable and valid testing of skill sets that often operate on an abstract and intellectual platform. Portions of the literature point to the need for continued assessment of instruments used to determine content validity, psychometric reliability, and ecological validity (Matsumoto & Hwang, 2013). In response to this call, Matsumoto and Hwang (2013) evaluated the content, constructs, and validity of ten evaluation tools used to assess cross-cultural competence. Although not included in the evaluation of Matsumoto and Hwang (2013), the Multicultural Counseling Inventory (MCI) was previously distinguished as “the cultural competence instrument with the strongest psychometric properties” (Williams, 2007, p. 127). However, critique of the MCI often highlights a susceptibility to social desirability and “anticipated rather than actual professional behaviors” (Williams, 2007). Social desirability is consistently identified as a limitation due to the social implications and varied understanding of cultural competence more broadly.

**Context.** The focus in cultural competence research is most often situated within classroom-based education or curriculum development and healthcare systems, as opposed to professional development training among faculty and staff (Williams, 2007).

## **Limitations of this Review**

This review excluded what constitutes the majority of education-based cultural competence literature. While much of the literature focuses on classroom-based education (Williams, 2007), this review focused on cultural competence as an outcome of professional development. As a result, the expansive literature was restricted to a focus on higher education through a professional development lens. Additionally, coding was limited to a single reviewer and therefore lacking in reliability. As a systematic review of the literature, reference checks were not conducted to identify additional research in this area. If conducted, reference checks may have enhanced not only the number of applicable studies, but accounted for more varied analysis and explanation of diversity training phenomena.

## **Implications**

Participant voices continue to be the greatest indicator of skill development, enhanced awareness, and knowledge transfer as it relates to diversity training and cultural competence. In an increasingly global workplace, the opportunity to leverage diversity is on the rise. As colleges and universities continue to address matters of diversity and inclusion, university leaders and administrators work to develop effective diversity programming. Whether implemented through drama-based training or more formally structured professional development, institutions are beginning to unpack the many ways in which their community members are impacted by institutional silence relative to matters of diversity, equity, and inclusion. The literature reflected here focused on the anticipated, intended, and actual outcomes of diversity training.

As previously stated, long-term post-program outcomes are not heavily reflected in the literature. Barak et al. (2010) asserted, “The stories of professional learning we discuss here can be conceived of as a journey into landscapes of knowing that are both personally authored and

socially shared” (p. 278). Throughout this review qualitative data offered a metaphor of professional development as a journey, and in doing so addressed what Rynes and Rosen (1995) highlight as the missing link in unsuccessful diversity training programs; connectivity to past, present, and future institutional issues and concerns. Tapia (2016) defines cross-cultural competence as “the ability to discern and take into account one’s own and others’ worldviews, to be able to solve problems, make decisions, and resolve conflicts in ways that optimize cultural differences for better, longer-lasting, and more creative solutions” (p. 76). In this way, developing cultural competence is intentionally woven into employee interaction, problem solving, departmental and institutional decision-making.

### **Future Directions**

The many functions of professionals within colleges and universities invite the expression of worldviews in a variety of ways. There is increased value in the study of professionals within this context. Likewise, the expressions of faculty, staff, and administrators influence various facets of the institution in different ways. Clark (1973) called for a more intentional study of the academy as a profession, most appropriately framed through a sociological perspective (as cited in Sanford & Kinch, 2016). “Given the myriad expectations for faculty members, prioritizing areas for professional development can be challenging (Sanford & Kinch, 2016, p. 80). Fundamentally, both the results and the limitations of this review align with Clark’s (1973) assertion that education should be considered through a sociological lens.

As individual worldviews continue to impact the many ways in which institutional commitments to diversity and inclusion are demonstrated, future research should be targeted to address the reciprocal relationship between individuals and the institutions in which they are a part. Minimal research has been conducted in this area, specifically within the contexts of higher

education (Geleta & Amsale, 2016; Lumby & Coleman, 2007; Andersen, 2012). As a result, the literature reviewed here could not be aligned with the most current shifts in practice, as researchers have not adequately explored previous trends. While diversity training continues to be a steadfast component of institutional diversity strategy, many universities are adjusting the conceptual framework of their training practices. Traditionally, external organizations or consultants have been selected to facilitate diversity training. More recent trends in practice indicate a shift to train-the-trainer models of diversity training. In these models, external consultants are brought in to facilitate a train-the-trainer program that will ultimately result in university faculty, staff, and administrators serving as a cohort of campus diversity trainers. Such programs have been launched at Cornell University (Faculty Institute for Diversity), University of California Davis (Diversity Trainers Institute), University of California Santa Cruz (Diversity and Inclusion Certificate Program), Wake Forest University (Gatekeepers Program), and Virginia Commonwealth University (Building Inclusive Communities Program) to name a few.

Overall, this review reveals the very limited research of applied cultural competence skills among higher education faculty, staff, and administrators. Future research might consider the use and impact of internal facilitators on the diversity training experience, extended training periods to include opportunities for application and feedback, and cohort program progression. Additionally, as groups of faculty, staff, and administrators continue to fulfill the role of diversity trainer on campus, an intentional study of the implications of their dual roles on campus might be explored. Lastly, as the research reviewed was largely void of train-the-trainer program models; future research should consider the intersectionality of training experiences and the career progression of internal trainers. For colleges and universities committed to cultivating a sense of inclusion, a career focused, interpersonal element of professional development is



critical. Hence, an exploration of the impact of diversity training on individual development and career progression is a necessary direction for future research.

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

As evidenced from the literature review in Chapter Two, little research has been conducted regarding diversity training as professional development for higher education professionals. The available research is largely focused on the diversity training experience and program evaluation, with less consideration for knowledge transfer and the application of newly developed skills. Recent trends at institutions across the country reflect diversity training implemented through train-the-trainer models. These models are intended to create a sense of community, inviting members of the institution to facilitate the development of cultural competence in their peers. Ideally, the development of cultural competence within individual professionals will have an impact on workplace culture more broadly. While train-the-trainer models and their impact on institutions is a necessary direction for future research, it is not the primary focus of the current study. Though this study examined the perceptions and experiences of higher education professionals who have participated in a train-the-trainer model diversity program (CAB), it focused on the impact of knowledge transfer on professional identity and career progression.

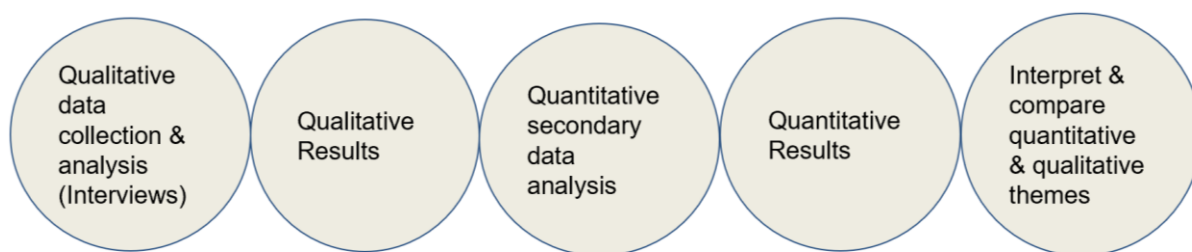
#### **Research Questions**

The current research was guided by the following questions:

- (a) Quantitative: How are perceived levels of cultural competence in higher education professionals impacted by participation in an extended diversity training program?
- (b) Qualitative: How has participation in extended diversity training affected participants' efforts to engage in inclusive practices and behaviors?
- (c) Qualitative: How do participants utilize the skills and tools developed through extended diversity training in their roles as higher education professionals?
- (d) Mixed method: How do participants anticipate the skills and tools developed through extended diversity training will impact their career paths and career progression?

### **Research Design**

This study followed a mixed method, convergent case study design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). "This design is used when the researcher wants to triangulate the methods by directly comparing and contrasting quantitative statistical results with qualitative findings..." (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p. 77). There were two phases of data collection. The first phase employed qualitative methods, collecting data through one-on-one interviews of CAB program participants. The second phase included secondary analysis of quantitative data collected via self-assessment before, during, and after participation in CAB. Quantitative evidence gathered from self-assessments allowed the researcher to better understand how CAB program participants perceive their own levels of cultural competence as a result of the training program; while qualitative evidence explained the feasibility of applying newly developed skills in the long term and the inherent impact of such applications. This design was selected to provide a more exhaustive understanding of a single phenomenon (McMillan, 2015). Notably, the qualitative data component was the primary focus of this study.



*Figure 7: Research design of the study. Convergent mixed methods design.*

Figure 7 shows the research design of this study. In spite of the challenges frequently associated with the use of mixed methods designs, it was purposely selected as the most appropriate method of study. “...The case study’s unique strength is its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence --- documents, artifacts, interviews, and direct observations, as well as participant-observation” (Yin, 2017, p. 12). Through secondary data analysis, the researcher was positioned to explore factors impacting the development and application of skills throughout the training experience. Further exploration of the impact of CAB training on professional identity development and career is best accounted for through participant narrative; hence, the selection of a mixed methods research design. As a somewhat pragmatic research inquiry, the present study is framed through both a theoretical and practical lens (Paul, 2005). As a result, exploration of participant’s personal beliefs, the construction, questioning, refining, and reframing of those beliefs are all vital components in developing new knowledge and understanding of cultural competence.

A major benefit of mixed methods research according to Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, and Turner (2007) is the provision of a third paradigm choice in research. Mixed methods research acknowledges the value in traditional quantitative and qualitative research, but offers elements of understanding and perspective that can only be uncovered when both methods are used to study a particular phenomenon (Johnson et al., 2007). “Case studies are preferred when the relevant behaviors still cannot be manipulated and when the desire is to study some contemporary event

or set of events” (Yin, 2017, p. 12). As such, this study was set at a single institution with a focus on participants of a single training program.

### **Study Setting**

The CAB training program was conducted at a large, urban, four year research institution. Program participants included a cohort of 26 faculty, staff, and administrators from across the university. The cohort participated in a 13 month training program intended to enhance their ability to engage matters of diversity, equity, and inclusion in their workplaces. Participants applied and interviewed to participate in the initial cohort; they were ultimately selected by a team of university leaders. CAB is the first program of its kind at the institution.

**Environmental Contexts.** CAB was developed in response to student protests surrounding perceived shortcomings in the application of cultural competence skills displayed by university faculty, staff, and administrators broadly. The university’s response was an institutional commitment to equity and inclusion across the institution. CAB served as part of a larger effort toward institutional change.

### **Data Collection and Analyses**

#### **Qualitative Data Collection: In-depth Interviews**

**Interview recruitment.** Purposive sampling was used in the recruitment of interview participants. Potential interviewees were invited to participate in the study via email. Email invitations were sent to 26 out of 27 cohort members to account for the researcher’s dual role as researcher and member of the cohort. A copy of the informed consent document was included in the email invitation and potential interviewees were asked to review the document electronically. If a participant chose to move forward in the interview process, they signed the informed consent

in person at the time of the interview; additionally, they were reminded that their participation was voluntary. A more thorough outline of the study protocol can be found in Appendix D.

**Interview protocol development.** The semi-structured interview protocol implemented in this study was submitted to the researcher's Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to data collection. Five goals shaped the proposed interview protocol. They were as follows:

**Goal 1.** To understand how participation in Cultural Awareness Building (CAB) training has impacted participants' professional identity and career paths (Corresponding to Research Question (d))

**Goal 2.** To understand from the participant's perspective their experience (from a social-interpersonal perspective) navigating work spaces before and after CAB program participation (Corresponding to Research Question (b))

**Goal 3.** To understand perceived levels of self-efficacy amongst participants (Corresponding to Research Questions (b) and (c))

**Goal 4.** To understand whether or not the skills taught within the CAB program transferred to the workplace (Corresponding to Research Question (c))

**Goal 5.** To understand the connection between self-reported levels of cultural competence and participation in CAB (Corresponding to Research Question (a))

Semi-structured interview questions were selected because they provide flexibility and allow for more organic dialogue during the interview, encouraging the narrative of participant voice (Merriam, 2009). The semi-structured interview questions can be found in Appendix B.

### **Transcript Analysis and Trustworthiness**

**Member checking.** To improve the trustworthiness of the data, participants were notified at the end of each interview of an opportunity to review the interview transcript (Merriam, 2009).

If a participant elected to review their transcript, the researcher notated a star on their informed consent page indicating that the transcription should be shared with the participant. Additionally, the researcher noted the request at the end of the audio recording. Requested transcripts were shared via a secure password-protected Dropbox file. Each file was accessible only by the researcher and the participant using a password shared via a separate email message. Participants were encouraged to review the transcript carefully and make any revisions, suggestions, or deletions as they deem necessary and appropriate. However, participants were encouraged not to make any substantial revisions that will threaten the authenticity of their responses. A time frame of two weeks will be allotted for this review process.

**Analysis.** Once transcripts selected for review were approved by interviewees, the researcher began the coding process using Atlas.ti software. One interview transcript was selected for initial coding. Five a priori codes were reviewed in initial coding: (a) perceived level of cultural competence, (b) inclusive engagement, (c) skill application, (d) professional identity, and (e) career progression. These codes were selected based on the research questions guiding the study. In vivo coding was then be applied to identify new emergent themes. As themes emerged, they were added to a comprehensive coding guide that listed each code, its associated definition, and decision trees for assigning codes. The remaining transcripts were coded using the guide.

### **Quantitative Data Collection**

**Instrumentation-Self-assessment.** CAB participants were asked to complete a 34 item multicultural skills self-assessment at the beginning, middle, and end of the 13 month training experience. The self-assessment can be found in Appendix C. The assessment was selected for use through the collaborative efforts of the university and external consultants brought in to

facilitate the train-the-trainer program. The assessment was intended to gauge participants' perceived proficiency level involving a multitude of skills related to multiculturalism and cultural competence. Notably, the developers of the self-assessment tool acknowledge use of the Modern Racism scale (McConahay, 1986), as well as elements of established organizational environment scales for assessment of attitude change over time, as influencers in the development of this tool. As a result, many of the items were specifically derived from and linked to the goals of the trainings. Thus, items for the tool were crafted and developed based on expertise. Neither instrument items, nor pilot test scores were analyzed for validity or reliability as part of the developmental process. Likewise, this tool was not developed for use as a pre-post assessment. However, secondary data was analyzed using a pre-post lens due to the researcher's interest in participants' perceptions upon entering the training experience and how they changed at the completion of the 14 month training program.

Assessment items addressed elements of learning, communication, application of skills, and comfort receiving feedback. The interval scaled, Likert-type assessment captured a wide range of ability levels. The scale was as follows:

- 0 - Inexperienced - No awareness or understanding about this concept, skill or technique
- 1 - Awareness –basic knowledge of these skills and techniques
- 2 - Novice –basic knowledge plus limited experience with using these skills and techniques
- 3 - Intermediate - have used these skills occasionally or able to perform these techniques in various settings on occasion
- 4 - Advanced – regularly use these skills or able to perform these techniques in various settings



5 - Expert –recognized as an authority in the use of these skills and techniques in a myriad of situations or settings

**Participants and secondary data analysis.** Self-assessments were completed by all 26 participants during the CAB training experience. The university granted the researcher access to de-identified self-assessment data per the direction of the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Though data used for secondary analysis was de-identified, the researcher requested that evaluations were paired using numerical sequencing prior to receiving the data, so that each participant's responses could be compared over time. This allowed the researcher to maximize usage of the data and adhere to requirements of anonymity. Data from all 26 sets of assessments were included in secondary data analysis. Due to de-identification of the data, there was no way to remove the researcher's self-assessments from the group. This did not negatively impact data analysis, as it allowed for a richer understanding of all participants' perceptions.

The researcher analyzed data using SPSS software. Quantitative data analysis consisted of descriptive statistical analyses of the data, exploratory factor analysis, as well as a series of paired sample t-tests. In alignment with the main focus of this study, only the first and final evaluations provided at the beginning and end of CAB were included in secondary data analysis, as this pairing of data provided the most relevant information for the present study. Due to the nature of the research questions and the small sample size, inferential statistics were not appropriate.

The self-assessment was a pre-established tool and all items were not relevant for this study; thus, specific items from the self-assessment were selected based on their alignment with the SCCT model and this study for further review. Selected items address skills and outcomes that focus on interpersonal interactions, as opposed to personal attitudes and beliefs concerning

equity and inclusion; in support of the researcher's interest in participants' perceptions of skill development over time. These items were grouped into the following categories (factors) for exploratory factor analysis: opportunities for *exposure*, opportunities for *engagement*, and opportunities for *implementation*. Notably, these factors are framed within the context of SCCT and address the interest model (exposure), exposure to the experiences, truths, and perspectives of others; the choice model (engagement), active engagement and skill development as a result of newly developed interests; and the performance model (implementation); resulting in shifted behaviors and intentional action. Exploratory factor analysis was conducted for the following sets of items: Items 3, 4, 5a and 5b were used to address the interest model, items 11, 15, 16, and 17 addressed the choice model, and items 31, 32, 33, and 34 addressed the performance model. Factor analysis was used to establish internal structure of the instrument and measurement validity (McMillan, 2015). Further, the researcher addressed internal consistency as an estimate of the reliability of self-assessment scores. Data were analyzed accordingly. Finally, a series of paired sample *t*-Tests exploring these factors allowed for greater understanding of participant changes from the beginning to the end of the CAB program.

### **Data Interpretation**

In preparation for data merging, the researcher considered threats to internal validity in both qualitative and quantitative analyses, as these threats may hold implications for data interpretation. Threats of maturation, social desirability, instrumentation, and researcher bias were possible during the qualitative phase of data collection; just as statistical regression and pretesting were potential threats to internal validity as it relates to secondary data analysis. Maturation was considered as participants are all employed by a single institution; new jobs, relocation, etc. may cause participants to leave the institution, making them ineligible for study

participation. The researcher engaged in reflective journaling to bracket assumptions and biases (Merriam, 2009).

The most critical phase of mixed methods research is merging the two forms of data. Through analysis, the researcher recognized the potential for instances of convergence and divergence of information. This sort of nuance is a benefit of mixed methods research because it allowed the researcher to explore and clarify why certain quantitative findings may exist (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Interview transcript data and self-assessment data were triangulated using factors associated with SCCT to explore participants' perceptions and experiences through parallel databases.

The parallel-databases variant is the common approach where two parallel strands are conducted independently and are only brought together during the interpretation. The researcher uses the two types of data to examine facets of a phenomenon, and the two sets of independent results are then synthesized or compared during the discussion.

(Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p. 80-81)

Two strategies were implemented to merge the data. The first strategy was to identify themes in both quantitative and qualitative findings and compare, contrast, and/or synthesize results. The second strategy focused on shared themes by conducting further analyses to relate the data. Upon completion, the merged results are explored in the discussion to address differences, similarities, and ultimately a more thorough understanding of study implications.

## **Limitations**

Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) note the challenges of data merging in convergent designs; most notably when two very different sets of data are being analyzed. The present study was positioned well to overcome such challenges, as the sample is identical for both qualitative

and quantitative elements. If the results of qualitative or quantitative analyses were contradictory, convergent designs encourage new insights and make way for more intentional future directions for research. Although the statistical findings of this study alone were not appropriate for generalizability; general study findings can be applied to various types of educational institutions regarding professional development, cultural transformation, etc.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The researcher sought to acknowledge and discipline researcher subjectivity and bias throughout this process. No names or identifying information were tied to self-assessment data or interview transcripts. Participants were informed that their engagement with this study throughout the interview process was voluntary and they had the option to end their participation at any time during the interviews. All self-assessment data was stored on a password-protected computer, and informed consent documentation was stored in a locked, secure file cabinet accessible only by the researcher. As part of the interview process, emails and names were collected for the purposes of recruiting and requested member checking only. Transcripts were recorded using a digital audio device. Audio recordings were saved in a secure password protected drive then deleted from the device after respondent validation processes.

## **Chapter 4: Results**

In this chapter, qualitative data from interviews and quantitative data from self-evaluations will be presented. Section by section, data will be reported and organized using the Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent et al., 2002) model. The research questions guiding this study are: (a) How are perceived levels of cultural competence in higher education professionals impacted by participation in an extended diversity training program? (b) How has participation in extended diversity training affected participants' efforts to engage in inclusive practices and behaviors? (c) How do participants utilize the skills and tools developed through extended diversity training in their roles as higher education professionals? and, (d) How do participants anticipate the skills and tools developed through extended diversity training will impact their career paths and career progression?

### **Qualitative Data Analysis**

Purposive sampling was used in the recruitment of interview participants. Email invitations were sent to 25 out of 26 cohort members, accounting for the researcher's dual role. A total of 11 participants opted to participate in the interview portion of the study, representing 44% of the total cohort. Participant demographics are as follows: Six white women, two white men, two black women, and one black man. Participants represent various roles across the institution: Faculty (Tenure and Term), Program Coordinators, Senior Leaders, Directors, Assistant Directors, and Trainers.

To answer the second, third, and fourth research questions guiding this study, qualitative interview data were analyzed through the lens of Lent et al.'s (2002) *Interest*, *Choice*, and *Performance* models. The intersection and implications of the data and Social Cognitive Career

Theory (Lent et al., 2002) will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5; as this section will serve solely as a report of data findings.

**Coding.** To aid in establishing the validity of study findings, the researcher proposed member checking. All participants were offered the opportunity to review the transcription of their interview; however, all participants declined. As a result, the researcher moved forward with the coding process using *Atlas.ti* software. One interview transcript was selected for initial coding using the five aforementioned a priori codes: (a) perceived level of cultural competence, (b) inclusive engagement, (c) skill application, (d) professional identity, and (e) career progression. As discussed in Chapter Three, these codes were selected based on the research questions guiding the study. Full quotes were coded and applied to the appropriate code family.

***Environmental changes and level two codes.*** Just before data collection for this study began, CAB program participants were notified of the immediate termination of the CAB training program and the cancellation of any pending training experiences. As a result, study participants' perspective and perception of institutional commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion were impacted. Though the interview questions developed for the study were not adjusted as a result of program termination; *all* study participants discussed the impact of the abrupt conclusion of the program on their skill application and willingness to engage in future programs. This shift facilitated what emerged as in vivo codes and thematic areas for analysis.

Following initial coding, in vivo coding was applied to identify new emergent themes from the interviews. In vivo coding revealed seven additional codes; they are as follows: (a) community seeking, (b) a desire for structured learning/training, (c) the training experience, (d) conflict resolution, (e) ending of the CAB program, (f) trust/institutional commitment, and (g) language. As themes emerged, they were added to a comprehensive coding guide that listed

each code, its associated definition, and decision trees for assigning codes. The remaining transcripts were coded using the guide.

As codes and themes emerged, they were subsequently categorized and grouped according to their relevance to each model of Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent et al., 2002): The interest model, the choice model, and the performance model. Likewise, the research questions guiding this study provided direction for which codes and models are most closely aligned. During analysis some codes were combined to provide a more well-rounded depiction of participant experience. The sections that follow outline the analysis of specific codes and the emergent themes used to explore participant experiences and perceptions. Table 1 provides a snapshot of qualitative findings explored within the context of SCCT (Lent et al., 2002). A more thorough exploration of resulting themes can be found in the sections that follow.

Throughout the interview process, the cyclical nature of SCCT and participant progression through each phase of the model was revealed. The results presented here reflect participants' journeys through initial interest development, decision making, and performance and then back into more refined interest development with shifted focus and commitment.

Table 1.  
*Snapshot of Qualitative Thematic Results*

SCCT Model	Analytic Code/Thematic Area	Influencers
The Interest Model		
	Perceived Cultural competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal Commitments</li> <li>• Personal Experience</li> <li>• Isolated Strengths</li> <li>• Previous Exposure</li> </ul>
	Community Seeking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long-term Commitment</li> <li>• Connection to the Institution</li> <li>• Connection to Peers</li> </ul>
	Structured Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traditional Learning Opportunities</li> <li>• Perceived Added Value to the Institution</li> </ul>
The Choice Model		
	Professional Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• External Perceptions</li> <li>• Visibility as a CAB cohort Member</li> <li>• Sense of Responsibility</li> </ul>
	Career Progression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reconsider, Reconfigure, Reframe Career Options</li> <li>• Use of Voice/Acting as an Advocate</li> <li>• Behavior Shifts</li> <li>• Stronger Connections with Students and Peers</li> <li>• More Intentional Job Searches</li> </ul>
The Performance Model		
	Skill Application/Inclusive Engagement/ Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Day to Day Unit/Departmental Function</li> <li>• Modeling</li> <li>• Shared Language</li> </ul>
	Termination of CAB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feelings of Abandonment</li> <li>• Feelings of Powerlessness</li> <li>• Lack of Clarity for Next Steps</li> </ul>
	Institutional Commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Opportunities</li> <li>• Lack of Trust</li> <li>• Shifted Personal and Professional Investments</li> </ul>



**The Interest Model.** The Interest Model focuses on the role of individual interests and motivations affecting specific choices intended to enhance inclusive behavior and skill acquisition. Within the context of participant interviews these interests are explored through the lens of three codes: *Perceived cultural competence*, *community seeking*, and *a desire for structured learning experiences and opportunities* as it relates to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Participants' desire for a community experience through structured learning opportunities was influenced by their perceived level of cultural competence.

*Perceived cultural competence* is defined as participant's consciousness of their own attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, and conception of skills in this area. *Community seeking* is defined as a participant's intentional pursuit of opportunities or experiences that involve a cohort or consistent grouping of people. *A desire for structured learning* is defined as a participant's indicated desire to engage matters of diversity, equity, and inclusion through formalized programming, rather than individual, informal opportunities for learning. The emergent themes resulting from these codes are explored here.

***Participants' perceived cultural competence.*** CAB program participants entered into the training program with varied experiences and levels of expertise. Participants reporting higher levels of cultural competence opted to participate in CAB to enhance pre-existing skills; whereas participants reporting lower levels of cultural competence were drawn to CAB largely by personal experience, family structure, and professional exposure.

For some participants, their perceived levels of competence can be understood as an outcome of their personal commitments to diversity and inclusion. They described these commitments as elements of their core worldview, ongoing and blossoming, developed as a result of personal experiences. "...because of my granddaughter, I knew I had to take action"

(Jack, personal communication, October 2018). Notably participants of color described their levels of cultural awareness and skills in more robust terms than their white counterparts. Recalling the first day of the training experience, one Black male participant described himself as “arrogant”; wondering what someone who had presumably not shared similar experiences could add to his repertoire of knowledge. Conversely, many white participants representative of all genders, frequently highlighted a perceived deficit in skills entering into the training program. One participant, Chloe stated,

Everything that I had run into up to that point felt like I needed to be an expert, and it felt like I had to have this deep content knowledge and expertise. I knew that there were only pieces of my identity where I could offer that from a different perspective, so I didn't feel skilled enough and I didn't feel like I had enough of an access point to generally go into that and be accepted and be valuable. (personal communication, November 2018)

A clear sense of isolated strengths was evident among many participants. These perceived strengths were often tied to some aspect of identity; race, gender, ability status, sexual orientation, and lived experiences more broadly.

The perceived cultural competence of participants ebbed and flowed throughout the CAB experience. Following the training experience, Devin, who acknowledged a level of arrogance entering into the program reflected on moments of new learning. Chloe (personal communication, November 2018) shared, “I would not have ever considered myself to be someone who has tools that can be helpful to others, to facilitate those conversations, if [CAB] didn't happen. 100%”. Similarly, reflecting on her growth, Joanne (personal communication, November 2018) stated, “the level of institutional work and the, I think the depth of personal work, I feel like I've grown exponentially in those areas”.

*Community seeking.* A vested interest in becoming part of something greater emerged throughout the interview process. What followed the development of initial participant interests in diversity, equity, and inclusion for some was a desire for camaraderie as an element of their learning. An opportunity to engage in long-term development with a defined group of people played a fundamental role in their decision to pursue CAB.

This was especially important for participants who pursued CAB in part due to their lack of familiarity with the institution more broadly. For participants who had recently joined the university, the perceived institutional commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion influenced their decision to pursue CAB, in an effort to better understand and become more connected to the institution.

“Having been new, [The institution] obviously challenges and values, the diversity and inclusion aspect of identity, and being new, I figured one of the best ways to understand the whole organization is to get involved with something that's quick to heart...”

(Veronica, personal communication, November 2018).

Conversely, some participants were driven to community as a result of feeling isolated in their work and development in this area. CAB served as an opportunity for engagement across the university's siloed unit and departmental structures.

“I think I wanted the training actually because I had been doing so much of the diversity inclusion work kind of on my own, like I was just reading books that I thought were interesting and finding articles. But it felt very isolated, like it was important to me but maybe not as much to everyone else”. (Alexis, personal communication, November 2018)

“I kind of wanted to find my people. I wanted to find a group, a cohort of people that felt

the same way that I did...as an administrator, I don't get a faculty cohort like you would ... Like oh, we're interested in studying this and so that was exciting to me”.

(Alexis, personal communication, November 2018)

The variety of opportunities for professional development available to individuals holding different roles within the institution were highlighted as participants lamented access to groups of professionals pursuing similar development, or more simply, sharing similar interests within the campus community.

***Desire for structured learning.*** Individual interests often led participants to more isolated learning through the informal pursuit of knowledge, without the added benefits of more formal or traditional learning methods. Equally valued among participants was the prospect of an opportunity to engage leadership and skill building opportunities recognized by the institution. “I was kind of flying by the seat of my pants in a lot of instances...it would be nice to be able to say I've been trained in a method...” (Alexis, personal communication, November 2018). Still, the structure of the experience and their interest in CAB was less critical for participants, than their perceived level of cultural competence prior to the training experience and their desire to identify a community of practice within the campus community.

**The Choice Model.** The Choice Model focuses on individual goals and the actions required to achieve them. As noted in Chapter Two; the framework of the current study is based on three assumptions. The first assumption is an assumed desire of diversity training participants to develop some level of cultural competence based on a previously identified *interest*. The second assumption is that diversity training participants made a *choice* to pursue a training program as the vehicle through which they might develop a desired level of cultural competence. The third and final assumption is that diversity training participants intend to implement new

learning within the workplace, thereby *performing* new skills. Participants' decisions or choice to pursue CAB training to achieve their goals of increased and demonstrable cultural competence is explored through the lens of two themes: *Professional identity* and *career progression*. Within these themes, elements of *the training experience and participant voice* are explored. Participants' perceived and labeled professional identities served as indicators for engagement and interaction with peers, and ultimately career progression and transition.

***Professional identity.*** Individual perceptions and labels proposed and espoused by supervisors and colleagues were critical components of participants' sense of self and the embodiment of their roles as both learners and practitioners of diversity, equity, and inclusion. At varying degrees each participant shared keen insights regarding the way they viewed themselves before, during, and after the training experience and how those perceptions were propelled and impacted by the perceptions of those around them. As a result, the impact of external influencers was experienced at multiple levels of professional identity. These experiences include revelations of increased visibility and an impending responsibility as a result; as well as the unanticipated development of an institutional *subculture of ownership*. These themes are explored here.

The visibility that accompanied membership in the CAB training cohort impacted not only the experiences of participants during the training program but continued to play a vital role in their identity upon reentry to the workplace following program completion, and its eventual termination. Overall, participants expressed an emboldened willingness and desire to "ask the tough questions", to "get the group to think...to reconsider". Dianna (personal communication, November 2018) shared:

"It's put me out there as somebody who does that work..."

“When you put yourself into a role and you're doing the thing, then you're putting yourself out there as a person who does that work and who others could come to if they had a question. And so, when others see you a certain way, then you start to see yourself that way, too...”

This sense of self and repositioning of identity carried weight for many participants. Assuming the role of CAB facilitator came with a responsibility and an acknowledgement that cultivating an inclusive and equitable culture was everyone’s job. Chloe (personal communication, November 2018) stated, "Every role is a diversity and inclusion role." The intersection of personal and institutional responsibility became increasingly more apparent. Active responsibility required more than passive understanding of this concept. It required participants to perform the responsibility through skill application and intentional engagement.

Before they shut it down I felt like we had, I felt like I had a large role to play on the University level, right? I felt like we were making impact because ... I still feel like there's a responsibility there. (Devin, personal communication, December 2018)

In spite of the program’s termination, the sense of responsibility to continue assuming the role of advocate, a cultivator of “safe space”, and ultimately taking ownership of that space continues. Alexis (personal communication, November 2018) affirmed; “I think because of the training, I've felt more comfortable in that, in owning it. Because at first, it just kind of felt like I was the Black person, and so I did the diversity stuff.”

Owning the space and the notion of cultivating a culture of ownership emerged as participants reflected on their experiences and the work they’ve been able to do as a result of CAB program participation. The aforementioned merging of personal and institutional responsibility in creating a deep-rooted culture that values, promotes, and actively pursues equity

and inclusion was for many participants taken on as an added element of professional identity. “I think it does create a different culture of ... It creates a different culture in terms like on a University level. I feel almost responsible when things happen” (Devin, personal communication, December 2018). For many participants an urge to become more intentionally engaged across the university surfaced during the program.

“It meant that my work relationships could be radically different...that they could be both intimate, but still work relationships...” (Bill, personal communication, November 2018)

“I can have much more meaningful work relationships, which means I can be more effective with the people I work with and be more aware of who they are...” (Bill, personal communication, November 2018)

***Career progression.*** Reconsidering, reconfiguring, and reframing professional identity and engagement were consistently highlighted as participants reflected on how CAB has impacted not only their day to day professional experience, but where they may look to go in the future. For Anne, CAB provided an opportunity for development as a facilitator and workshop designer, a career path she hopes to return to at some point. For others, the process restored and, in some instances, planted seeds to help them find their “voice”, modeling and *normalizing* for peers and colleagues.

“It's changed my worldview. It's also affirmed who I am. I would say that much. I'm more comfortable being in the skin that I'm in, and I think [CAB] kind of gave me that, allowed me to do that. It's allowed me to have a voice. Yeah, I think that's the one thing it's taught me that you have a voice.” (Devin, personal communication, December 2018)

Many participants attributed a new found “voice” or willingness to speak up in public and private spaces to the training experience. The openness of a training experience that did not

allow for expressions of blame and shame empowered participants to learn out loud, by way of personal and authentic engagement. Recounting the uniqueness of the experience, Daisy (personal communication, November 2018) reflected, “I expected it to be like, "Here's how to do this work," but it was more like, "Experience this work happening.” That distinction proved to be the most critical for all participants who had prior experience with diversity training. The act of experiencing the train-the-trainer model set the stage for many participants to begin practicing new learning in real time.

“My supervisor says it all the time..."Ever since you started that process, I've noticed a difference in the way that you approach the work and, in the way that you talk to other people." (Chloe, personal communication, November 2018)

Noticeable differences in behavior and engagement were common experiences for many participants. Daisy (personal communication, November 2018), a faculty member at the university stated,

“I think I'm 1000 a better teacher than I ever was...I don't think I would connect with these students in the way that I have if it weren't for the training that I got through CAB. And that's not gonna go away.”

Whether or not participants intend to remain at the university, their choice to participate in CAB has already impacted how they view themselves as professionals and the role they will hold in moving their individual workplaces toward inclusion and equity.

“It's really challenged me to look at other opportunities where I can have conversations that can be challenging, but they are going to help others be their best selves and be successful.” (Chloe, personal communication, November 2018)

“Even if I leave [the institution], I think CAB will still, CAB, all this work that I've done,



it'll still go with me.” (Devin, personal communication, December 2018)

“I applied for a diversity job and it was partly because I was really inspired to do this kind of work full time.” (Alexis, personal communication, November 2018)

**The Performance Model.** The Performance Model is concerned with the persistent pursuit of individual accomplishments. Critical to the individual development of participants is the application of skills and new knowledge following program completion. Participant’s pursuit of professional accomplishments are explored through; *skill application and inclusive engagement, language, perceptions of institutional commitment and the eventual termination of the CAB program*. As participants’ interests and commitments increased, CAB skills were applied in more intentional ways. Likewise, as participants’ perceptions of institutional commitment shifted with the ending of the CAB training program, so did their professional commitments to the institution.

*Skill application, inclusive engagement, and language.* Participants have chosen to enact newly developed skills in many ways. For some participants, elements of the CAB training experience have been implemented in the routine functioning of their unit or department. Conversely, some participants remain in a state of personal development, continuing to be mindful of patience with others and themselves. “The work does definitely change you. It changes the way you think” (Devin, personal communication, December 2018).

An exploration of what it means to engage inclusively with peers and supervisors took on many forms for study participants. Interview data revealed new levels of understanding regarding the nuance of identity, both personal and professional, on the interactions of CAB program participants and their peers who had not gone through the training experience. “It allowed me to start looking around, first in my own organization and then across the

organization...” (Jack, personal communication, October 2018). What emerged was the critical value of a shared language, the importance of modeling espoused behaviors in real time, and shifted perspective concerning conflict in the workplace.

Participants’ awareness of their own levels of cultural competence continued to influence their level of comfort engaging with peers specifically on matters related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. As their perceived levels of cultural competence continued to blossom and develop, so too did their level of comfort. Notably, participants overall were more comfortable engaging with other CAB participants due in part to the development of a shared language and an established level of trust within the cohort. As participants worked to increase their comfortability, many participants chose modeling as the most effective way to engage peers and influence departmental and unit cultures.

“I think I've modeled some things for some people. I think sometimes people look at me as an expert in a way that I don't really look at myself. It's definitely impacted the way I work and the way I think about how I do my work.” (Devin, personal communication, December 2018)

Following the CAB experience, no participant perceived themselves as an expert. Instead, many participants conceived of the most effective application of their abilities through the lens of a *normalizer*.

“...When I model those behaviors that [CAB]taught me, from all the questioning, the noticing, the appreciating, and all of that, that it can help ... It will help normalize that for other people who maybe look like me or belong to a similar category to me.” (Dianna, personal communication, November 2018)

Participants view themselves as learners and practitioners simultaneously, influencing the culture

by modeling behavior that will ideally become normalized and therefore accessible to their colleagues and peers. Still, arriving to this point of normalization has for many participants come with required understanding of how the skills and tools acquired through their participation in CAB can be used to mitigate and respond to the potential conflict surrounding matters of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

“Many of the strategies are really relevant during difficult conversations. Understanding that the conversations will be difficult. Allowing the space for that. Understanding that there's a personal, emotional component to it, is helpful.” (Joanne, personal communication, November 2018)

For many participants its these strategies that have facilitated career advancement and opportunities to reconsider, reconfigure, and reframe their self-identified and perceived professional identity(ies).

Shifted thought processes have led many participants to be more mindful of the impact of language. Language is one of the most common tools participants have been able to apply in an effort to expand personal, professional, and institutional commitments. As a cohort, participants share common language; the result of which has been an intentional integration of this shared language within the workplace.

“...having really critical conversations about the challenges of language, and how everyone has their own assumption with particular words, whether it's positive or negative, and allowing that space.” (Chloe, personal communication, November 2018)

Allowing space for continued learning with peers and colleagues who were not a part of the CAB cohort has been a challenge for some participants, while others have been quicker to embrace the concept. Skill implementation has taken place on search committees, in faculty meetings, in

research proposals, human resources trainings, and many other spaces across the institution. As the train the trainer portion of the CAB training program came to a close, participants expressed excitement to continue implementing new learning at new levels and in new ways.

“It wasn’t until actively working with [CAB]...that I started to understand deeper concepts about the real people I work with and not just abstraction. To recognize that inclusivity meant something much more than just a, a sort of a “good thing” ...it was much more that inclusivity was this new enriching part of my life that was giving me access to amazing stories and amazing insight”. (Bill, personal communication, November 2018)

***Termination of CAB.*** The train-the-trainer experience was a 14-month commitment for CAB program participants; and as in any field, with new leadership comes the possibility of change. Seven months following the cohort’s certification to become trainers for the university wide initiative, CAB participants were notified of the program’s immediate termination. Participants consistently identified feelings of abandonment and disregard for their work and the sacrifices made to participate actively in the program. “...it’s just infuriating to me that [he] so discounted how we felt about the program, and it was a thing that we were just doing, I don’t know, to check off a box...I have to find another spot” (Daisy, personal communication, November 2018). Feelings of powerlessness also emerged throughout the interview process. For some, participating in CAB affirmed their identity as change makers across the institution, holding membership among a diverse group of colleagues and peers, all engaging on a leveled playing field to create a more inclusive campus community. “I do feel like, I feel a little more emboldened to speak up. But I don’t think I sit in a place of power. So, I don’t know if I’m really able to do as much as I would like at a big university level” (Alexis, personal communication,

November 2018).

The abrupt termination of the program meant that many participants had not considered what their own next steps may be toward these efforts. Participants entered into the CAB program under the premise of a three-year institutional commitment. Finally, feeling comfortable to begin engaging the campus community through training and facilitation, some participants expressed concern about their newly developed skills.

“You lose it when you're not actively engaged in the information. And the further removed I am from it and from wanting to have these conversations, I know it will be easier for me to disengage, easier for me to not make an effort to reach out to people who are different.” (Alexis, personal communication, November 2018)

***Institutional commitment.*** With fewer opportunities to engage in the same kinds of work, on the same grand scale at the university; many participants have chosen to disengage and seek opportunities to do the work elsewhere. The institution’s forward-facing commitments to equity and inclusion are in question for many participants, due in large part to the experience of program termination.

“...I thought this university was different, that we were trying to do something big.”  
(Jack, personal communication, October 2018)

“Well, it's amazing how the elimination of [CAB] has affected me, because it's not that I'm less invested. Personally, I'm not, but institutionally, I don't give a f\*ck... I am no less invested on a personal and individual level. And will continue to use what I have learned, in my interactions, on an individual level.” (Wendy, personal communication, November 2018)

Though perceptions of institutional commitment shifted for many participants; their commitment to actively engaging issues of equity and inclusion remained intact. The section that follows will outline results from quantitative data analysis, representing participants' perceptions of their abilities, knowledge, and skills during the CAB training experience. When reviewed alongside the results of qualitative data analysis, a more holistic depiction of the impact of CAB training becomes clear.

### **Quantitative Data Analysis**

Self-evaluation tools were used throughout the training experience to assess participant's perceived skill level at the beginning, middle, and end of the training experience. However, only the first and final self-evaluations taken at the beginning and end of CAB training were included in secondary data analysis, as this pairing of data provided the most relevant information for the present study. The initial CAB training cohort was comprised of 27 professionals. Due to maturation, only 21 participants were eligible to complete the final self-assessment, as six participants chose not to complete the entire training program. The data set was cleaned and reviewed for missing values and invalid responses; as a result, some cases were removed pairwise during analysis via SPSS software. Of the 21 remaining participants, only 18 were used in secondary data analysis based on their completion of the twelve items analyzed.

Secondary data analysis was conducted using self-evaluation data completed by CAB participants on the first and last day of the 14-month training program. Quantitative data analysis consisted of descriptive statistical analyses of the data, exploratory factor analysis to assess the internal structure of the instrument and measurement validity, as well as a series of paired sample t-tests.

**Program entry self-assessment.** As outlined in Chapter 3, items from the self-evaluation were grouped into the following categories for factor analysis: opportunities for *exposure*,

opportunities for *engagement*, and opportunities for *implementation*. In the tables below these factors are framed within the context of SCCT to highlight the interest model (exposure), the choice model (engagement), and the performance model (implementation). Items 3,4, 5a and 5b were used to address the interest model, items 11, 15, 16, and 17 were used to address the choice model, and items 31, 32, 33, and 34 to address the performance model. Cronbach's alpha was selected as the most appropriate measure of scale reliability to assess internal consistency, or how closely related the items selected for review are. Cronbach's alpha for each grouping is represented in the tables below.

Table 2.

*Pre-Training Cronbach's Alpha Scores*

*Interest Model factors - Factor Reliability*

Item

**Opportunities for Exposure: (Cronbach's alpha = .91)**

Item 3: Listening for information about other's experiences and truths

Item 4: Asking questions to increase my understanding of another person's experience and point of view

Item 5a: Affirming other people's experiences even though they are different from my experiences

Item 5b: Gaining perspective on other people's interpretations of their experiences, even though their interpretation may differ from my interpretation of them

*Choice Model factors - Factor Reliability*

Item

**Opportunities for Engagement (Cronbach's alpha = .92)**

Item 11: Noticing what could be, or are, cultural differences between myself and others

Item 15: Using feelings as data to influence my thoughts and behaviors

Item 16: Exploring and admitting my cultural mistakes

Item 17: Exploring and admitting my prejudices

*Performance Model factors - Factor Reliability*

Item

**Opportunities for Implementation: (Cronbach's alpha = .94)**

Item 31: Receiving feedback on my behavior that others experience as insensitive or oppressive

Item 32: Asking for feedback on my behavior to learn if others experience it as insensitive or oppressive

Item 33: Exploring potential institutional responses to oppression and the ISM

Item 34: Using the personal and institutional power I have to challenge institutionalized oppression and the ISMS

Alpha scores indicate high levels of reliability and a strong internal structure with regard to the instrument items selected for analysis. Still, the use of a previously developed instrument limited the researcher's ability to control for most threats.

The interval scaled, Likert-type assessment captured a wide range of ability levels. The scale was as follows:

- 0 - Inexperienced - No awareness or understanding about this concept, skill or technique
- 1 - Awareness –basic knowledge of these skills and techniques
- 2 - Novice –basic knowledge plus limited experience with using these skills and techniques
- 3 - Intermediate - have used these skills occasionally or able to perform these techniques in various settings on occasion
- 4 - Advanced – regularly use these skills or able to perform these techniques in various settings
- 5 - Expert –recognized as an authority in the use of these skills and techniques in a myriad of situations or settings

Descriptive statistics were gathered for program entry data. Overall, items classified as opportunities for exposure ( $M = 3.6$ ) were scored highest, followed by opportunities for engagement ( $M = 3.3$ ), and then opportunities for implementation ( $M = 3$ ). As professionals working at an urban institution, it is not surprising that participants reported higher levels of exposure to difference and resultant opportunities to engage those differences. It can be assumed that daily interactions allow for this sort of exposure and interaction.

Descriptive statistics can be found below in Table 3. Mean scores suggest that on average, upon entry to the training experience, participants ranked their ability to respond to encounters with or recognize opportunities for exposure to matters of diversity, equity, and



inclusion as intermediate or advanced. Coming into the training experience, participants' greatest strength was in, "Asking questions to increase my understanding of another person's experience and point of view". Participants struggled to conceptualize large-scale, institutional responses to bias and exclusion. This is not surprising, as many participants point to CAB as their first entry point into formal diversity training, particularly as an element of professional development. The juxtaposition of evaluation results that point to opportunities for exposure as the most frequent experience of participants, and the stated lack of exposure to concepts and interpersonal tools in the interview process is of note. This finding highlights the distinction between exposure to difference and exposure to tools that can be applied in response to differences. Still, a lack of consideration for broader implementation can be expected, as many participants identified their propensity to notice differences through exposure, as greater than their ability to act or engage.

Table 3.  
Pre-Training Descriptive Statistics

		First Day Descriptive Statistics				
<u>SCCT Model</u>						
<u>Application</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>Maximum</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Std. Deviation</u>
Interest Model (Exposure)	Listening for information about other's experiences and truths	18	1	5	3.72	1.018
	Asking questions to increase my understanding of another person's experience and point of view	18	3	5	3.94	.639
	Affirming other people's experiences even though they are different from my experiences	18	1	5	3.61	.979
	Gaining perspective on other people's interpretations of their experiences, even though their interpretation may differ from my interpretation of them	18	1	5	3.39	1.037
Choice Model (Engagement)	Noticing what could be, or are, cultural differences between myself and others	18	1	5	3.50	1.249
	Using feelings as data to influence my thoughts and behaviors	18	1	5	3.39	1.145
	Exploring and admitting my cultural mistakes	18	1	5	3.33	1.085
	Exploring and admitting my prejudices	18	1	5	3.28	1.127
Performance Model (Implementation)	Receiving feedback on my behavior that others experience as insensitive or oppressive	18	0	5	3.39	1.243
	Asking for feedback on my behavior to learn if others experience it as insensitive or oppressive	18	0	5	3.39	1.335
	Exploring potential institutional responses to oppression and the ISM	18	0	4	2.72	1.364
	Using the personal and institutional power I have to challenge institutionalized oppression and the ISMS	18	0	5	2.83	1.465

**Program exit self-assessment.** Conversely, descriptive statistics for the final self-evaluation found in Table 4 below highlight growth among participants in *all* areas. Overall ability levels for items classified as opportunities for exposure ( $M = 4.4$ ) were equal to opportunities for engagement ( $M = 4.4$ ), and opportunities for implementation ( $M = 4.3$ ) were not much different. These mean scores suggest that on average, upon re-entry to the workplace, participants perceived ability to respond to and recognize opportunities for exposure, engagement, and skill implementation are consistently elevated in comparison to participant perceptions entering the training experience. Participants ranked their ability to “Notice what could be, or are, cultural differences between myself and others” as their greatest strength. This increase suggests elevated levels of awareness among participants. Their ability to perceive difference and the ways in which those differences can impact their interactions with colleagues and peers, as well as experiences of practice and policy, served as a key outcome of their development.

Still, “Exploring potential institutional responses to oppression and the ISM” provided the greatest opportunity for improvement. These findings indicate that participants intrapersonal development was elevated at the end of the training experience. However, participants’ scores still indicated that participants felt less equipped to engage matters of diversity, equity, and inclusion on a larger scale. Notably, the training experience focused almost exclusively on interpersonal communication and workplace collaboration. Much less focus was given to opportunities for institutional advancement. Still, interview data suggests that participants entered CAB with assumptions of institutional advancement on the horizon, albeit out of their purview.

Table 4.  
*Post-Training Descriptive Statistics*

		Last Day Descriptive Statistics				
<u>SCCT Model Application</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>Maximum</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Std. Deviation</u>
Interest Model (Exposure)	Listening for information about other's experiences and truths	18	4	5	4.44	.511
	Asking questions to increase my understanding of another person's experience and point of view	18	3	5	4.44	.616
	Affirming other people's experiences even though they are different from my experiences	18	4	5	4.44	.511
	Gaining perspective on other people's interpretations of their experiences, even though their interpretation may differ from my interpretation of them	18	4	5	4.22	.428
	Noticing what could be, or are, cultural differences between myself and others	18	4	5	4.50	.514
Choice Model (Engagement)	Using feelings as data to influence my thoughts and behaviors	18	3	5	4.17	.618
	Exploring and admitting my cultural mistakes	18	4	5	4.44	.511
	Exploring and admitting my prejudices	18	3	5	4.39	.608
Performance Model (Implementation)	Receiving feedback on my behavior that others experience as insensitive or oppressive	18	3	5	4.39	.778
	Asking for feedback on my behavior to learn if others experience it as insensitive or oppressive	18	3	5	4.39	.608
	Exploring potential institutional responses to oppression and the ISM	18	3	5	4.06	.725
	Using the personal and institutional power I have to challenge institutionalized oppression and the ISMS	18	3	5	4.28	.669

An analysis of internal consistency was repeated with the post training data set. Notably, alpha levels decreased significantly. Measures of Cronbach's alpha for the last day self-evaluation can be reviewed in Table 5 below. Though alpha level scores for the *interest* and *performance* models were moderate. The alpha score for the *choice* model was of concern. Scores indicate a more varied range of participant responses in their final evaluation, which likely led to lower measures of reliability. Entering the training experience, many participants did not have a baseline of comparison. They were unaccustomed to considering their level of cultural competence or their ability to apply skills that reflect any of the competencies being assessed in the evaluation tool. Furthermore, participants may have a more nuanced understanding of the questions after completing the training. Additionally, it is likely that the use of a single instrument three times throughout the training experience may have resulted in participant fatigue. Ultimately, descriptive statistics from post-training data reveal Mean increases in comparison to pre-training Mean scores; an indicator that participants' perceived level of competence in these areas increased, despite a wider range of scores.

Table 5.

*Post Training Cronbach's Alpha Scores*

*Interest Model factors - Factor Reliability*

Item

**Opportunities for Exposure: (Cronbach's alpha = .73)**

Item 3: Listening for information about other's experiences and truths

Item 4: Asking questions to increase my understanding of another person's experience and point of view

Item 5a: Affirming other people's experiences even though they are different from my experiences

Item 5b: Gaining perspective on other people's interpretations of their experiences, even though their interpretation may differ from my interpretation of them

*Choice Model factors - Factor Reliability*

Item

**Opportunities for Engagement: (Cronbach's alpha = .54)**

Item 11: Noticing what could be, or are, cultural differences between myself and others

Item 15: Using feelings as data to influence my thoughts and behaviors

Item 16: Exploring and admitting my cultural mistakes

Item 17: Exploring and admitting my prejudices

*Performance Model factors - Factor Reliability*

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Item

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**Opportunities for Implementation: (Cronbach's alpha = .78)**

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Item 31: Receiving feedback on my behavior that others experience as insensitive or oppressive

Item 32: Asking for feedback on my behavior to learn if others experience it as insensitive or oppressive

Item 33: Exploring potential institutional responses to oppression and the ISM

Item 34: Using the personal and institutional power I have to challenge institutionalized oppression and the ISMS

Notably, participants were asked to complete the self-evaluation three times; however, only the first and third evaluations were used in analysis for this study. Though not included here, alpha scores for the second self-evaluation factor analysis were as follows: .81 (Interest Model), .86 (Choice Model), and .87 (Performance Model) respectively. These scores reveal decreases over time that were unaccounted for in the original analysis.

**Comparative quantitative analysis.** A series of paired-samples *t*-Tests were run to analyze changes in reported ability levels from the beginning to the end of the CAB training program. Paired sample statistics can be found in Table 6. Notably however, the paired samples correlation table presented in Table 7 reveals small to medium effect sizes for each item pair. Third-variables may influence these results, as other measured or unmeasured variables affecting participants' responses. Additionally, limitations of instrumentation may be in effect. Table 8 provides results from the paired samples *t*-Test.

Increased self-evaluation scores over time from the first to the final evaluation indicate a positive shift in perceived ability among participants. For both pre and post training data, participants perceived their skills to be lower in the performance model, especially as it relates to their ability to respond to institutional challenges. This is not surprising, as most program participants do not hold professional roles that often require them to consider institutional

change, rather, they are more focused on opportunities to enact change within their units and departments.

Quantitative data results are aligned with participant reports throughout the interview process. Of note is the element of time; self-evaluation data was collected during the training experience, while interviews were conducted one year after training concluded. This separation suggests that participants experienced increased skill development within the training process, and they were able to sustain that development through application over time, one year later. As part of a larger train-the-trainer model, participants were able to apply new learning in real time. Prior to the close of the 14-month training, participants began co-facilitating diversity workshops for faculty and staff across the institution. Though evaluation results do not acknowledge the introduction of co-facilitation, it is likely that participants' propensity to apply these skills in the workplace was positively supported by their ability to simultaneously practice skill application in a more controlled environment.

In the tables that follow, instrument items are depicted as either Q1 or Q2 based on their association with Pre-Training and Post-Training scores respectively. Items 3, 4, 5A, 5B, 11, 15, 16, 17, 31, 32, 33, and 34 are listed accordingly.

Table 6.  
*Paired Sample Statistics*

		Paired Samples Statistics			
		<u>Mean</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Std. Deviation</u>	<u>Std. Error Mean</u>
Pair 1	Q1-3	3.72	18	1.018	.240
	Q2-3	4.44	18	.511	.121
Pair 2	Q1-4	3.94	18	.639	.151
	Q2-4	4.44	18	.616	.145
Pair 3	Q1-5A	3.61	18	.979	.231
	Q2-5A	4.44	18	.511	.121
Pair 4	Q1-5B	3.39	18	1.037	.244
	Q2-5B	4.22	18	.428	.101
Pair 5	Q1-11	3.50	18	1.249	.294
	Q2-11	4.50	18	.514	.121
Pair 6	Q1-15	3.39	18	1.145	.270
	Q2-15	4.17	18	.618	.146



		<u>Mean</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Std. Deviation</u>	<u>Std. Error Mean</u>
Pair 7	Q1-16	3.33	18	1.085	.256
	Q2-16	4.44	18	.511	.121
Pair 8	Q1-17	3.28	18	1.127	.266
	Q2-17	4.39	18	.608	.143
Pair 9	Q1-31	3.39	18	1.243	.293
	Q2-31	4.39	18	.778	.183
Pair 10	Q1-32	3.39	18	1.335	.315
	Q2-32	4.39	18	.608	.143
Pair 11	Q1-33	2.72	18	1.364	.321
	Q2-33	4.06	18	.725	.171
Pair 12	Q1-34	2.83	18	1.465	.345
	Q2-34	4.28	18	.669	.158

Table 7.  
*Paired Samples Correlation Table*

		Paired Samples Correlations		
		<u>N</u>	<u>Correlation</u>	<u>Sig.</u>
Pair 1	Q1-3 & Q2-3	18	.477	.045
Pair 2	Q1-4 & Q2-4	18	.216	.390
Pair 3	Q1-5A & Q2-5A	18	.013	.959
Pair 4	Q1-5B & Q2-5B	18	.192	.446
Pair 5	Q1-11 & Q2-11	18	.412	.089
Pair 6	Q1-15 & Q2-15	18	.402	.098
Pair 7	Q1-16 & Q2-16	18	.460	.055
Pair 8	Q1-17 & Q2-17	18	.262	.293
Pair 9	Q1-31 & Q2-31	18	.625	.006
Pair 10	Q1-32 & Q2-32	18	.165	.512
Pair 11	Q1-33 & Q2-33	18	.552	.018
Pair 12	Q1-34 & Q2-34	18	.050	.844

Table 8.  
*Paired Samples t-Test*

Paired Samples Test

Paired Differences		<u>95% Confidence Interval of the</u>							
		<u>Difference</u>					<u>t</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Sig. (2-tailed)</u>
		<u>Mean</u>	<u>Std. Deviation</u>	<u>Std. Error Mean</u>	<u>Lower</u>	<u>Upper</u>			
Pair 1	Q1-3 - Q2-3	-.722	.895	.211	-1.167	-.277	-3.424	17	.003
Pair 2	Q1-4 - Q2-4	-.500	.786	.185	-.891	-.109	-2.699	17	.015
Pair 3	Q1-5A - Q2-5A	-.833	1.098	.259	-1.379	-.287	-3.220	17	.005
Pair 4	Q1-5B - Q2-5B	-.833	1.043	.246	-1.352	-.315	-3.389	17	.003
Pair 5	Q1-11 - Q2-11	-1.000	1.138	.268	-1.566	-.434	-3.729	17	.002
Pair 6	Q1-15 - Q2-15	-.778	1.060	.250	-1.305	-.251	-3.112	17	.006
Pair 7	Q1-16 - Q2-16	-1.111	.963	.227	-1.590	-.632	-4.893	17	.000
Pair 8	Q1-17 - Q2-17	-1.111	1.132	.267	-1.674	-.548	-4.165	17	.001
Pair 9	Q1-31 - Q2-31	-1.000	.970	.229	-1.482	-.518	-4.373	17	.000
Pair 10	Q1-32 - Q2-32	-1.000	1.372	.323	-1.682	-.318	-3.092	17	.007
Pair 11	Q1-33 - Q2-33	-1.333	1.138	.268	-1.899	-.768	-4.973	17	.000
Pair 12	Q1-34 - Q2-34	-1.444	1.580	.372	-2.230	-.659	-3.878	17	.001

## **Chapter 5: Discussion**

The single institution setting, and mixed methods design of this study provided valuable insight into the development and application of cultural competence skills in higher education professionals. In this chapter, findings from both quantitative and qualitative phases of data collection have been merged to form a more holistic depiction of higher education professionals' perceptions of their own sense of efficacy and application regarding cultural competence skills, and the impending impact on the university community. A thorough discussion of the contextual factors impacting professional's willingness and ability to engage in more culturally competent ways is followed by limitations of the current study, suggestions for future research, and conclusions.

### **Review of Findings**

The present study was guided by five goals. Implications of study findings are explored here in response to each goal and the relevant research question(s). The first goal was to understand how participation in Cultural Awareness Building (CAB) training has impacted participants' professional identity and career paths. Responding to research question (d), *How do participants anticipate the skills and tools developed through extended diversity training will impact their career paths and career progression?* Study findings indicate that participants anticipate lasting effects from the CAB training experience. They routinely highlight the many ways in which they are able to incorporate new learning into their current professional role and

pursuit of new opportunities. For some participants, the training experience introduced new professional opportunities and organizational expectations. For Alexis, the training inspired a potential shift in roles altogether, seeking opportunities to do work concerning diversity and inclusion full time. For Chloe, being on the market for new professional opportunities has meant seeking opportunities accompanied by institutional culture and commitments to equity and inclusion inspired by the CAB training experience. For participants overall, CAB has introduced a reconfiguration of what it means to engage and work in spaces where institutional and organizational commitments are aligned with personal commitments. CAB participants are seeking tangible evidence of this through policy, procedure, and practice. “The dual administrative and collegial nature of higher education distinguishes postsecondary organizations from other types of organizations, with the collegial dimension emphasizing consensus building, shared power, and common commitments and aspirations” (Williams, Berger, and McClendon, 2005, p. 14). CAB enhanced individual recognition of this duality, leaving many participants attuned and engaged with the many ways in which equity and inclusion contribute to or limit power and consensus based on institutional buy-in.

The second goal of this study was to understand from the participant’s perspective their experience (through a social-interpersonal lens) navigating work spaces before and after CAB program participation. In response to research question (b), *How has participation in extended diversity training affected participants’ efforts to engage in inclusive practices and behaviors?* Findings revealed that participants practiced varied levels of engagement prior to CAB training. Simply by virtue of their professional role, some participants were more actively engaged in discussions and change making. For others, conversations on matters of equity and inclusion were isolated and infrequent; despite professed institutional commitments. Participants with

more student-facing roles, roles that require consistent interaction with students, at any level, were more accustomed to the traditional diversity dialogue than those who do not engage with students on a regular basis. Of note is the distinction between the traditional diversity dialogue, concerned with things like race and gender, and *institutional diversity*, concerned with classifications such as faculty or staff, senior or associate, etc.

For many, the process of inclusion will focus on race, given the historical legacy of inequality in the U.S. that persists in many ways today. For others, gender, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, and international issues will also weigh heavily in the process. These differences in perception illustrate the importance of clarifying, influencing, and aligning the symbolic messages that help shape organizational environments. (Williams et al., 2005, p. 17)

Following CAB training, all participants expressed deep commitment to intentionally and actively cultivating a sense of belonging and inclusion in the workplace through shared language, shifts in policy, and more thoughtful interpersonal interactions with colleagues and peers.

Inherent to this shift are opportunities to clarify commitments and expectations. In alignment with the third goal of this study; to understand perceived levels of self-efficacy amongst participants and research question (c), *How do participants utilize the skills and tools developed through extended diversity training in their roles as higher education professionals?*

Participants' perceived level of self-efficacy increased as a result of the training program. Jack shared, "I didn't know what I didn't know...I'm much more knowledgeable and more committed than I was before" (personal communication, October 2018). Likewise, Bill reflected, "The responses I have now...are not the response I would have had years ago..." (personal communication, November 2018). Self-evaluation data further supports changes in participant's

perceptions and skills as they developed throughout the training experience.

Participants reported opportunities for skill application in a multitude of ways; the most critical and frequent of which being matters of conflict resolution. Though not anticipated as a key outcome for participants, conflict resolution was repeatedly labeled as one of the greatest areas for skill application. Participants pointed to their ability to recognize the intersection of personal identity and working relationships as a critical component in their ability to consider what factors are at play in workplace disputes; and more importantly, their ability to consider various and at times conflicting perspectives to reach resolve.

The fourth goal of the study was to understand whether the skills taught within the CAB training program transferred to the workplace; it was also aligned with research question (c). Participant results indicated that skills taught within the program were easily transferred to the workplace and their implementation has had a noticeable impact. Many participants highlighted the guidelines used to facilitate their interaction within the training as their baseline for workplace interaction. Some participants keep the guidelines visible in their office space, others have shared them with friends and colleagues.

The fifth and final goal of this study was to understand the connection between self-reported levels of cultural competence and participation in CAB, in collaboration with research question (a) How are perceived levels of cultural competence in higher education professionals impacted by participation in an extended diversity training program. What emerged most clearly from participant data was the personal nature of their decision to pursue the CAB training program. Though based in a workplace setting and focused on workplace application, for most participants, their choice to pursue CAB was deeply personal. When asked to describe their personal commitment to diversity and inclusion, participants describe both deep rooted hurt and

deeply personal commitments to friends, family, and self as influencers. Access to resources and a community of peers engaged in this work has enhanced and increased perceived levels of competence among all participants. As indicated in self-evaluation data, participants' matched responses revealed elevated levels of skill and understanding. All participants point to CAB as a key part in that development.

Ultimately, study findings revealed key opportunities for application and understanding. The first is that a continuously evolving student demographic and even the slowest diversification of university professionals, should lead institutions to anticipate increases in engagement.

Institutions can anticipate a desire for increased opportunities to engage in diversity-related work and elevated expectations of institutional commitment as the campus community continues to diversify. For study participants, access to resources and a community of peers engaged in this work has enhanced and increased perceived levels of competence. As a result, institutions looking to cultivate a sense of belonging must recognize the value of a multi-dimensional, equity-based skill set in their endeavors. When professionals are more attuned to the perspectives and worldview of those around them, they are better equipped to respond to the unique needs of peers and colleagues.

The second opportunity for understanding and application is in the institutional management of a broader diversity strategic plan. Though this study focused on the use of diversity training as an element of institutional strategy, it is important to note that it cannot be the institution's only strategy. Once an institution commits to engage matters of equity and inclusion at any level, the expectation of community members is that they are also committed to a plan of action that responds to challenges at multiple levels of the institution and across units and departments.

For the institution at which this study took place, employing a train-the-trainer model through



an extended diversity training program created an opportunity to explore the full life-cycle of a training program. The 14 month training opportunity was longer than any training experience reflected in the literature reviewed in Chapter Two, which allowed the researcher to capture the full scope of launching and terminating a professional development opportunity. Further, it allowed participants to engage in skill development and refinement in real time. CAB program participants could establish new skills, apply them in the workplace, and reflect and refine new developments throughout the 14 month program; this was possible, at least in part, due to the university's negotiation of the length of training time. This time allowed participants to take advantage of an array of opportunities to leverage their learning, while enhancing institutional culture. Likewise, the extended training program allowed for trust-building that undoubtedly shaped their willingness to apply their learning and bring those experiences to the group in an effort to further refine their skills.

### **Field Implications**

Aligned institutional and personal commitments are critical to sustainable training outcomes. Likewise, elements of power and buy-in at all levels of the institution shape not only the training experience, but the way training outcomes are implemented. Defined and explicitly labeled intended outcomes of the training experience enhance opportunities for application and provide clarity concerning the institution's purpose and expectations regarding diversity initiatives. Without a clear understanding of the institution's strategy and future plans, diversity training participants cannot authentically become fully engaged in the process, while maintaining alignment with institutional goals.

Study results point to the generalizability and transferability of an equity-based skill set. For all professionals, regardless of their background or level within the institution, tools that

equip professionals to serve as leaders, problem solvers, and team players are invaluable. An equity-based skill set responds to this need. Many diversity training experiences are organized according to some set of guidelines, norms, or expectations of engagement. The guidelines referenced by participants in this study serve as the foundation of their equity-based skill set and helped to facilitate a new set of expectations and guidelines for the way they engage one another in the workplace.

Cultural competence in this study is conceived of as the intersection of personal experiences and their impact on individual attitudes, beliefs, knowledge and skills regarding equity and inclusion. As a result, study findings are filtered through this lens, as training participants navigated their very first memory of these topics long before they began working professionally. For higher education as a field and community of practice, this requires that diversity training as professional development is not separated from personal experience and identity. This connection suggests that the experiences of professionals outside of their workplace continue to play a role in their interactions on campus.

**What does this mean for higher education?** As frequently identified intended outcomes of diversity training, especially within the context of professional development, skill development and application are critical in establishing sustainable shifts in campus climate and culture. These outcomes filter through interpersonal interactions with colleagues and peers, shifted priorities for future endeavors, greater or increased expectations of institutions and organizations (organizational vs. institutional commitment), etc. As a result, institutions can anticipate a desire for increased opportunities to engage the work, but also elevated expectations of institutional commitment. Though that expectation was not met through the experience of study participants, the desire for follow-up and follow-through was apparent. When professionals

commit to engage matters of diversity on their campus, they do so with an assumption that the university will match that commitment and leverage their efforts through institutional change. When evaluated through the lens of SCCT, participant experiences highlight the transition between exposure and initial interests or introductions to diversity, equity, and inclusion; engagement and their experiences through an evolving professional identity, more closely related to the work; and ultimately their performance or application of skills in a way that facilitates knowledge transfer and new learning among peers. As institutions begin to implement diversity plans, the SCCT model, though developed for deeper consideration of career more broadly; provides a framework for understanding professional development and the creation of opportunities that lead professionals more intentionally toward sustainable skill development.

A secondary intended outcome of many diversity trainings is to assist in cultivating a sense of belonging. What emerged from study results was two-fold. In applying their newly developed skills, participants realized the multi-dimensional nature of their equity-focused skill set. For instance, though a participant may have set out to be more inclusive in their language; the dual outcome of this skill implementation is that it can be used to resolve conflict while simultaneously cultivating a sense of belonging. Study results suggest that the most frequently reported opportunity for skill application was in matters of conflict resolution. Participants' newly developed or enhanced equity-based skill set further equipped them to respond and provide feedback in a way that was well received by colleagues and peers because it was connected to the essence of who they are, both personally and professionally.

Because the United States' population is becoming more diverse and multicultural, just as elsewhere, it is essential that conflict resolution professionals and specialists acknowledge, support, and promote diversity in their work, whether in academia,

consulting, training, or other professional and organizational settings. (Cousins, 2014, p. 268)

Conversely, professionals in any setting and in any role should be equipped with the skills to respond to conflict, which is inevitable in groups and teams, with the appropriate skills. Though program participants do not identify as conflict resolution professionals, their experiences and training have in some ways equipped them to fill the gap.

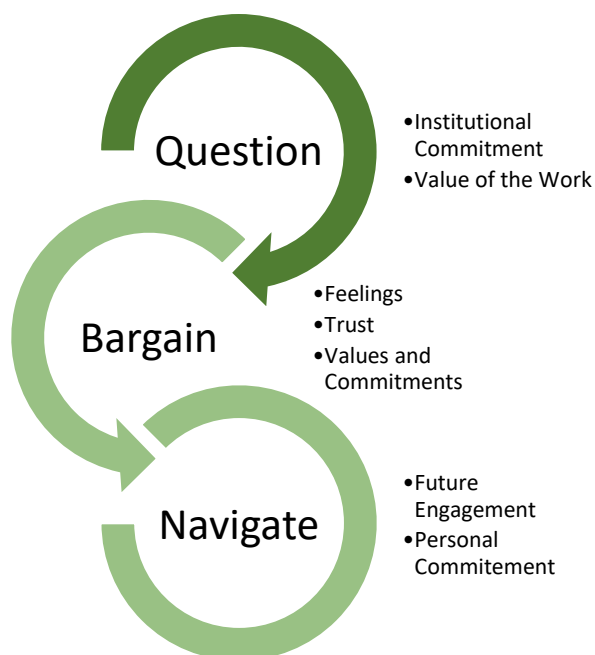
Furthermore, a new lens and perspective on what it means to give and receive feedback within a workplace setting meant that participants were better equipped with the tools to not only engage diversity and inclusion, but to more intentionally engage the core needs and requirements of basic communication. As a result, a skill set that was developed with equity and inclusion in mind, reflected and responded to broader requirements of effective communication and leadership. Participant reflections of interactions with supervisors and peers following the CAB training experience support this notion.

The tools acquired through participation in diversity training can enhance engagement with matters of equity and inclusion in support of more authentic interpersonal interaction. This is particularly important as university demographics become more reflective of a global campus community. These tools represent what should be the core of professional development experiences moving forward. Study results point to the effects of diversity training as a holistic professional development experience by addressing the humanistic nature of higher education, and the work of professionals engaging and navigating the campus communities of which they are a part.

As more institutions shift toward campus-wide diversity training, they should anticipate a growing number of community members who will begin to push the work forward. However,

this process is cyclical, propelled and halted at the discretion of the institution and the ways in which it chooses to merge its espoused and experienced values and commitment in areas of equity and inclusion. Professionals engaging this work at institutions that are not prepared for this increase in engagement will likely experience a *cycle of resistance*.

Within the university setting observed in this study, participants are navigating the push and pull of seemingly misaligned personal and institutional commitments. Participants' growing frustration as expressed in the content of their individual interviews reflects a cycle of institutional resistance rooted in questioning that transitions into bargaining, often navigated through a lens of disappointment and realigned trust, values, and commitments, and ultimately leads professionals into a phase of navigation that challenges them to make decisions about future engagement. A visual depiction of this model is reflected in Figure 8. The cost of a premature launch of diversity-based professional development before the institution is prepared for next steps is high. Study results highlighted that the outcome for many participants was the decision to walk away from the institutional work altogether; leaving gaps in the workplace toolkit, wasted resources, and a weakened morale that will be difficult to rebuild. Conversely, institutions that have developed a more thorough plan for next steps, beyond the introduction of skills and tools to include shifts in policy and procedure alongside a more developed workforce, can anticipate greater commitment, sustainable development over time, and a more enhanced and established institutional culture. Future research in settings that have met these standards should be conducted to establish a model of best practice.



*Figure 8: Cycle of Institutional Resistance*

### **Framing Study Results Within the Literature**

The academy as a field of study and practice is intentionally collaborative in many ways while still often operating in exclusion. Institutional culture, relevant opportunities for professional engagement, and ultimately institutional and professional commitment are what determine the likelihood that professionals will continue to pursue opportunities, even beyond the bounds of the developmental program. These efforts serve as key indicators for the cultivation of long-term engagement and positive perceptions of climate and culture.

In an era of social and political mishaps frequently taking place on the main stage across fields and industries of practice; many colleges and universities have enhanced previously espoused commitments to equity and inclusion in pursuit of what Williams, et al., (2005) have deemed *Inclusive Excellence*. Inclusive excellence requires “...Synergy within and across organizational structures, politics, curricular frameworks, faculty development policies, resources, symbols and cultures” (Williams, et al., 2005, p. 3). Within this model, an extended

diversity training program seeks to address each of these areas by tapping into institutional culture through both vertical and horizontal pathways. A 360° programming model that encompasses faculty and staff in shared spaces, addressing their unique roles within the campus community, moving toward a realistic transition of campus culture and climate, and the development of interpersonal relationships that shift and melt silos.

**Culture.** As with many colleges and universities, the institution from which the sample of this study was selected has been impacted by the four environmental factors Williams et al. (2005) point to as contributors to the achievement or derailment of inclusive excellence: shifting demographics, political and legal dynamics, societal inequalities and workforce needs. Study participants point to a perceived shift in institutional commitment as a result of reprioritized workforce needs, the effects of which pose a challenge for future engagement.

“It is easier to consider what it means to create transformational change when one ‘unpacks’ the multiple layers of organizational culture within colleges and universities” (Williams et al., 2005, p. 10). When Devin speaks of his social work students and their discomfort with race, despite the critical nature it plays in understanding the field; or Chloe states, “We’re not leveraging it. We’re not taking those values and making our institution stronger” (personal communication, November 2018); what they highlight are the multitude of layers being impacted by institutional commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion. These layers come together in the classroom, on search committees, in professional workspaces, etc. As a result, university community members become more aware of how the university functions as a whole and the impending implications for units and departments across campus. The gaps suddenly become gaping holes. To fill these holes new learning becomes even more imperative. Learning that levels the playing field and exposes opportunities for individual and institutional

growth. “Organizational learning is necessary to add formal routines and procedures as well as more informal, but very powerful, values and norms” (Argyris, 1999 as cited in Williams et al., 2005, p. 10). Institutional culture and climate are shaped and experienced as a result of this understanding.

**Engagement.** “Diversity workshops differ from typical instruction in a number of ways: They are usually shorter, more interactive, and emphasize affective rather than cognitive experiences only” (Bezrukova et al., 2005, p. 213; McCauley, 2000). Study participants consistently identified CAB as a program that took the nuance of diversity workshops a step further; adding more time than traditional workshops and intentionally tapping into both cognitive and affective focus areas. As it relates to the present study, cognitive learning can be understood as “the extent to which trainees acquire knowledge” and affective learning refers to the “changes in attitudes toward diversity as well as changes in trainee’s self-efficacy” (Bezrukova, 2012). The blending of both types of learning can be understood through participant voice and narrative, as they unpack elements of knowing and feeling from the beginning to the end of the training experience.

Though unintended and often invisible, many barriers can impact individual levels of comfort engaging in dialogue concerning matters of diversity, equity, and inclusion. That is not to say that individuals cannot engage in the work of unpacking inclusion and centralizing equity until they have removed the barriers, but rather that the task of removing these barriers is in fact an integral and perhaps primary step in engaging these efforts. These barriers are not inherently negative and can be conceptualized in part by the way participants conceived of their own skills and abilities at the beginning and early stages of the training experience. While some participants entered the experience feeling very secure in what they might be able to contribute, others



remained unsure and uneasy. As a result, the knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs any one participant brought into the training environment had the potential to not only impact group dynamics, but individual progression throughout the training process. Instead, participants reported high levels of satisfaction regarding the experience and their learning. Their satisfaction was undoubtedly a key factor in their comfort and ability to apply new learning.

**Commitment.** The gap between practitioners and researchers is often vast. What the two groups can reasonably agree upon is the notion that for adult learners, active engagement in the learning process is critical. Creating opportunities for learners to co-create and co-construct the learning environment through thoughtful collaboration extends beyond traditional learning platforms (Dirkx & Prenger, 1997). Within the context of diversity training, this requires elements of training curriculum and content that not only allow, but ultimately require participants to situate learning within the context of their lived experiences, in an effort to achieve sustained learning outcomes through application over time. To achieve this end, Dirkx and Prenger (1997) posit transformational learning (Mezirow, 1991) as a stance, rather than a strategy. Research points to the critical nature of both training and transfer environments (Roberson, et al., 2009). It would seem obvious then, that when learning is designed through the lens of transformation, participants engage one another and the material in vastly different ways. Likewise, the application and manifestation of new skills and tools varies. Regardless of these differences, a stance or posture of transformation is results focused, it becomes an outcome rather than a vehicle. This study focused on the development of a cultural awareness building paradigm that frames institutional culture change within the context of individual experiences. These experiences are amplified in the diversity training process to help participants more readily make connections to one another, their roles in the campus community, and opportunities

to intentionally engage inclusive practices through policy and procedure.

Still, this commitment is not impenetrable. Commitments can and often will take new shape and form, contingent upon a series of circumstances.

Diversity change is not a “quick fix” but requires sustained and deliberate institutional planning and action. Committed diversity leadership needs to shift the tides of institutional culture and navigate the rocky course of changing institutional mindsets in order to embed the value of diversity throughout a campus ecosystem...the progressive course of diversity organizational learning is subject to many variables and attainment can fluctuate based on institutional leadership and cultural readiness. (Chun & Evans, 2018, p. 2)

In the current study, the impact of new leadership and the expansive requirements of addressing the ways in which new leadership and different priorities can pause and in some instances, rewind forward movement become increasingly apparent. As participants expressed throughout the interview process, their decision to pursue CAB was at least in part influenced by the thought of contributing to the big picture. The notion that their personal commitments would and could collide with the institution's values and espoused commitments to enact change for a sustainable shift, that could be experienced by existing and incoming community members, was a desired outcome for program participants.

Though the trajectory of what participants set out to do for the institution was altered for some; what remains constant is the undeniable impact CAB has had on them as individuals and professionals. "... systematic organizational learning is an indispensable lever for transmitting diversity across a campus landscape. The dynamics of a diversity culture shift depend upon committed leadership, a governance infrastructure that supports change, and clear institutional

direction" (Chun & Evans, 2018, p. 3). Evolving direction continues to create new opportunities for engagement. Notably however, institutions should hesitate to make such rapid change without consideration of how professionals already committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion might also redirect their efforts to remain involved. For the institution where the current study took place, a core group of change-makers on campus have decided to pursue opportunities elsewhere. Repeated cycles of similar events would likely come at great cost to institutional diversity efforts.

### **Limitations**

One's ability to display identifiers of cultural competence manifests in markedly different ways for different people. Thus, visible representations of competence are often difficult to discern. As a result, cultural competence research relies heavily on self-reported data. Skill development and the application of newly developed skills is often the strongest depiction of competence in action for external parties (supervisors, colleagues, etc.). Because cultural competence is not easily discerned, research in this area often relies on direct communication via interviews and storytelling for the most authentic understanding. "Since attitudes toward diversity are likely formed before training, diversity training tends to be more emotionally charged than other types of training" (Bezrukova, Jehn, & Spell, 2012, p. 208; Alderfer, 1992; Paluck, 2006). The emotional and affective component of the training experience and what it means to shift attitudes and behavior have implications for the training and transfer environment alike.

Still, there were many factors beyond emotional and affective influences that posed limitations on this study. Five major limitations impacted this study: Generalizability, instrumentation, participant bias/fatigue, researcher bias, and reliability. The generalizability of

the study is low given the very small and non-replicable sample; still, it is anticipated that general study findings can be applied to various types of educational institutions regarding professional development, cultural transformation, etc.

Limitations on instrumentation were present, as the self-evaluation used in secondary data analysis was not analyzed for validity or reliability prior to its use with the sample. It is likely that this lack of testing in the early phases of instrument development impacted the reliability scores derived from items used for secondary data analysis. Further, participant bias and fatigue were likely at play, as participants were asked to complete the self-evaluation three separate times, following days long training experiences.

The validity and reliability of qualitative data was impacted by participants' decision not to review their transcripts. As a result, transcripts were reviewed by a single researcher. Though efforts were taken to bracket researcher bias, it is possible that the researcher's relationship to participants impacted what they were and were not willing to share in the interview process. Likewise, as the single reviewer of interview data, it is possible that the researcher analyzed and evaluated data with added knowledge and context despite bracketing attempts. As a member of the CAB training cohort, the researcher possessed a network of established connections, and a nuanced understanding of contextual experiences.

### **Future Directions for Research**

The social, cultural, and political implications of the surrounding world are undoubtedly present in any learning environment; they manifest in clear and undeniable ways within the diversity training experience (Brookfield, 1995). In consideration of the complexities that arise within the diversity training context, it becomes increasingly evident that a 'one-size fits all model' simply does not work. Diversity of perspective, experience, and worldview ensure that

everyone arrives to diversity trainings with varied expectations, levels of comfort, and buy-in. The impending tasks of critical reflection and introspection are impacted as a result (Brookfield, 1995).

More understanding of how people experience episodes of critical reflection (viscerally as well as cognitively), and how they deal with the risks of committing cultural suicide these entail, would help educators respond to fluctuating rhythms of denial and depression in learners. Much research in this area confirms that critical reflection is context or domain-specific. (Brookfield, 1995)

The domains and contexts in which learning takes place and is ultimately applied, carries huge implications for the requirements of both learning and transfer environments. As a result, the facilitation of workplace culture and interpersonal interactions require elevated levels of awareness, not only of individual community members, but of the institution broadly. Though extreme, Brookfield's acknowledgement of "cultural suicide" is not too far removed from the real-life fears and concerns experienced by professionals considering diversity training and active engagement in institutional diversity initiatives. A desire to say and do "the right thing" is a driving force in the emotional and psychological experiences of training participants. Within the context of diversity training are elements of previous and present lived experiences, aspects of career progression and an integration of new skills, the implications and impact of attitudes and beliefs, and ultimately engagement and interaction with university and community members.

When incorporated into a campus work setting, reflective thinking supports the development of mindfulness, contemplation, and feelings of stability in work and personal lives. Such reflection is also valued as a component of transformative education, for it encourages an openness of mind to new concepts and deepened understanding of

new materials. (Beer et al., 2015, p. 162)

So, what does that mean for developers of diversity training and the sustainable impact of training experiences?

In our increasingly global world, skills related to cultural competence are in high demand. As outlined in earlier chapters, academic spaces often attract increased levels of diversity, which inherently requires more intentional dialogue and communication at all levels of the university. Just as student demographics continue to shift in the face of globalization, so too do the demographics of university personnel. As faculty seek to implement more intentional multicultural education into their curriculum, and student affairs professionals seek to prepare students for the world they will enter after college; there persists a gap in the professional development of the individuals working to develop students in areas of equity and inclusion. “The practical rationale for advancing research and practice that will link diversity with the central educational and civic mission in higher education emerges from the needs of a society where economic, racial, and religious differences are prevalent and inevitable” (Hurtado, 2007, p. 186).

Though there has been much research in areas of multicultural education, diversity, and inclusion as it relates to the training of k-12 teachers, healthcare providers, social workers, and even the development of college students; there has been much less research done to assess levels of cultural competence and skill development among faculty and staff at colleges and universities. “...Faculty climate surveys have shown that the interactions that govern work at the departmental level can be problematic for women; men of color; members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community; and other historically marginalized groups” (Williams et al., 2005, p. 15; Rankin, 2003). Thus, this study is both timely and relevant. As the current social

and political climate in the United States has fostered a number of student protests; many colleges and universities recognize the need to address the role of diversity, equity, and inclusion within their campus communities.

In response to the limitations outlined in the diversity training literature, the present study sought to address skill development over time, individual development in domains related to cultural competence, and tangible knowledge as evidenced through skill application. Future research might consider the intersection of espoused institutional commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion, with the experiences of higher education professionals on campus. Additionally, continuous assessment of train-the-trainer models and their influence on institutional culture, and professional commitments is an under researched area with implications for institutional return on investment. For colleges and universities interested in large scale culture shifts, a more thorough investigation of the perceptions and experiences of professionals on campus can provide a more well-rounded explanation for levels of buy-in and a clearer direction for future programs.

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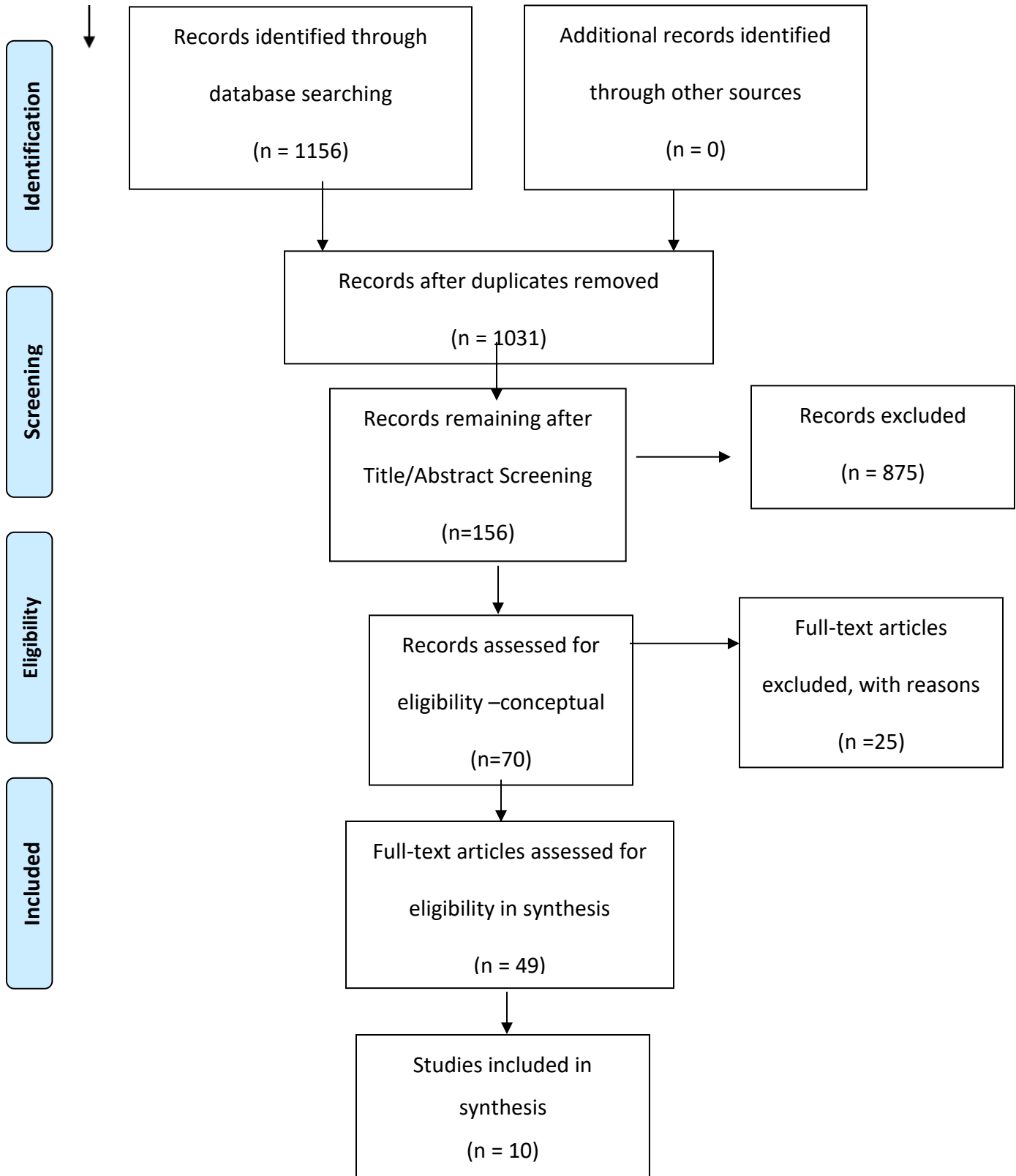
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## APPENDIX A



### PRISMA 2009 Flow Diagram



## APPENDIX B

### Study Protocol

A pre-determined group of 25 participants will be eligible to participate in the study as a result of their participation in the Building Inclusive Communities Training Program. All potential participants will be sent an initial email inviting them to participate in one-on-one interviews. Potential participants will also be emailed two additional reminders.

At the beginning of each individual interview, participants will be provided an informed consent page that specifies their ability to decline the continuation of the interview at any point. At the beginning of each interview, the interviewer will request that participants provide a pseudonym to be used throughout the interview process, as well as in the report of interview data. No identifiable information will be used in the report of interview findings. Interviews will take place either in the interviewer's office or the participant's office. Should a participant request that the interview take place in an alternate location, that request will be honored, so long as it does not pose a safety or privacy concern for the interviewer.

One-on-one interviews will be audio recorded so that participant experiences can be accurately transcribed and data can be appropriately analyzed. Participants will be asked to provide a pseudonym prior to the beginning of the audio recording. That pseudonym will be used in the interview process to protect the identity of the participant. Thus, all interviews will be conducted in person and recorded using a digital voice recorder. The data will be stored on a password protected university issued laptop. The recordings will be destroyed in accordance to VCU's data retention requirements.

The Division for Inclusive Excellence at VCU has agreed to provide de-identified self-

assessment data to the student investigator for analysis. Identifiable information will be removed prior to the student investigator being given access to the data. These self-assessments were completed throughout the training process and will be included following the permission of participants. As a result, no identifying information will be used during the study or any resulting data dissemination of results.

This study poses a minimal amount of risk. The questions asked during the interview may disclose levels of cultural competence that are not preferable for the participant. Likewise participation may result in participants' sharing of personal experiences that may cause them to feel emotional distress. Lastly, loss of confidentiality is a risk because the participants have built relationships through the Building Inclusive Communities program. There is potential for participants to discuss their participation in the study with one another.

In order to mitigate this risk, participants will receive a resource sheet that will provide them with contact information for the Division for Inclusive Excellence. Participants will be encouraged to keep their participation confidential so that their peers are not influenced by their experience.

Participants in the study may benefit from reflecting on ways that they can implement skills learned through diversity training in their own lives. The VCU community will benefit from this information since it will provide accurate data about the value of diversity education and its impact on the experiences of faculty and staff. Additionally, the VCU community will gain insight from participant data regarding the value of diversity training and factors that influence the development of cultural competence that can help inform programs, policies, and practices at VCU.



## APPENDIX C

### Interview Questions:

1. How would you describe your personal commitment to diversity and inclusion?
2. What led you to get involved with diversity and inclusion efforts on campus?
  - a. With BIC specifically?
3. Describe what was it like walking into that first day of the BIC training process
4. How do you see issues of equity and inclusion related to your professional role?
5. How has your participation in BIC impacted the way you engage and interact with colleagues?
6. How would you describe your level of knowledge or skills in areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion prior to the BIC workshop?
7. How has the program impacted your knowledge or skills related to areas of diversity, equity and inclusion?
8. Describe a time when you experienced or witnessed mistreatment VCU related to some aspect of diversity and inclusion since getting involved in BIC.
  - a. What role did BIC play in your response to that scenario?
9. How has participating in BIC impacted how you view your role at VCU?
  - a. Describe a time when you've incorporated the skills and tools you've learned in your professional role.

10. How would you describe the overall impact BIC has had on you as an individual?

11. How do you see the skills and tools you developed from BIC impacting your career in the long term?

## APPENDIX D

### **VCU BIC Multicultural Skills Self-Assessment**

Based on the VISIONS Inc. Multicultural Skills Self-Assessment by Cooper Thompson & Angela Bryant, VISIONS Inc.

The following assessment is to gauge your perceived proficiency level of the following skills. We recognize that some terminology used in the assessment may not be familiar, but please answer to the best of your ability. We also recognize that people have multiple and intersecting identities<sup>1</sup>; thus, when answering these questions, it may help if you consider the identities you believe are relevant.

We are asking that you share your name on this survey so that we can return it to you later, allowing you to reflect on your pre-training answers as you progress through the Building Inclusive Communities VISIONS training. Please note these surveys will only be viewed/reviewed by VISIONS staff and the VCU Division for Inclusive Excellence BIC training staff. Aggregate data of the survey results will be presented to the Division for Inclusive Excellence leadership.

Please use the following scale in this self-assessment. The scale captures a wide range of ability levels from no awareness to expert.

- 0 - Inexperienced** - No awareness or understanding about this concept, skill or technique
- 1 - Awareness** –basic knowledge of these skills and techniques
- 2 - Novice** –basic knowledge plus limited experience with using these skills and techniques
- 3 - Intermediate** - have used these skills occasionally or able to perform these techniques in various settings on occasion
- 4 - Advanced** – regularly use these skills or able to perform these techniques in various settings
- 5 - Expert** –recognized as an authority in the use of these skills and techniques in a myriad of situations or settings

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Learning about the impact of oppression on members of historically **-excluded** groups
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Learning about the impact of oppression on members of historically- **included** groups
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Listening for information about other's experiences and truths
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Asking questions to increase my understanding of another person's experience and point of view

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<sup>1</sup> Identities can be a variety of things: profession, socioeconomic status, race, gender, class, orientation, status, generation/age, religion, etc.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. (a) Affirming other people's experiences even though they are different from my experiences
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. (b) Gaining perspective on other people's interpretations of their experiences, even though their interpretation may differ from my interpretation of them
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Moving at another person's pace
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Recognizing the presence of institutional barriers that prevent members of historically-**excluded** groups from having equal access to power and authority
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Recognizing how institutional barriers maintain the power of members of historically-**included** groups
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Appreciating my contributions to the culture and climate at VCU
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Appreciating others' contributions to the culture and climate at VCU
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Noticing what could be, or are, cultural differences between myself and others
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Valuing the culturally different ways that other people express themselves
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Possessing the capacity to identify, understand and respond to emotions in myself in a healthy manner
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Possessing the capacity to identify, understand and respond to emotions in others in a healthy manner
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Using feelings as data to influence my thoughts and behaviors
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. Exploring and admitting my cultural mistakes
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. Exploring and admitting my prejudices
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. Identifying and exploring the meaning of my historically-**excluded** group memberships
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. Identifying and exploring the meaning of my historically-**included** group

memberships

- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. Exploring the impact of oppression on the historically- **excluded** group(s) to which I belong
- \_\_\_\_\_ 21. Exploring the impact of oppression on the historically- **included** group(s) to which I belong
- \_\_\_\_\_ 22. (a) Examining the messages I learned as a child about my own and other cultural groups
- \_\_\_\_\_ 22. (b) Updating these cultural messages from my childhood based on new information.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 23. (a) Supporting members of my own historically-**excluded** group(s) to overcome ISMS<sup>2</sup>
- \_\_\_\_\_ 23. (b) Challenging members of my own historically-**excluded** group(s) to overcome ISMS
- \_\_\_\_\_ 23. (c) Engaging members of my own historically-**excluded** group(s) in inclusive and equitable alternatives
- \_\_\_\_\_ 24. (a) Supporting members of my own historically-**included** group(s) to overcome ISMS
- \_\_\_\_\_ 24. (b) Challenging members of my own historically-**included** group(s) to overcome ISMS
- \_\_\_\_\_ 24. (c) Engaging members of my own historically-**included** group(s) in inclusive and equitable alternatives
- \_\_\_\_\_ 25. As a member of an historically-**excluded** group, knowing and saying what I want and need from members of the corresponding historically- **included** group
- \_\_\_\_\_ 26. As a member of an historically-**included** group, supporting members of the corresponding historically-**excluded** group, based on the type of support they have explicitly asked of me, not what I think they need
- \_\_\_\_\_ 27. Supporting members of historically-**excluded** groups in meeting with and getting support from others in their historically-**excluded** groups
- \_\_\_\_\_ 28. Accepting explicit, formal leadership from members of historically-**excluded** group(s) when I am in the corresponding historically-**included** group(s)

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<sup>2</sup> The term "ISMS" used in this context encompasses doctrines, practices, behaviors, philosophies, theories, etc.

that are typically oppressive, biased, or exclusive; for example racism, sexism, ageism, ableism, classism, etc.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 29. (a) Accepting and supporting explicit, formal leadership from members of the historically--**excluded** group(s) to which I belong
- \_\_\_\_\_ 29. (b) Confronting formal leadership of historically-**excluded** group(s) to which I belong when differences emerge and problem solving to address these differences
- \_\_\_\_\_ 30. Supporting leaders from historically-**excluded** group(s) when they are challenged by members of an historically-**included** group to which I belong
- \_\_\_\_\_ 31. Receiving feedback on my behavior that others experience as insensitive or oppressive
- \_\_\_\_\_ 32. Asking for feedback on my behavior to learn if others experience it as insensitive or oppressive
- \_\_\_\_\_ 33. Exploring potential institutional responses to oppression and the ISM
- \_\_\_\_\_ 34. Using the personal and institutional power I have to challenge institutionalized oppression and the ISMS

## Vita

Kendra Alexis Cabler was born on August 8, 1989, in Virginia Beach, Virginia. She graduated from Salem High School, Virginia Beach, Virginia in 2007. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from the College of William & Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia in 2011. Following a gap year and internship experience she earned a Master of Education in Educational Policy, Planning, and Leadership from the College of William & Mary in 2014. Since this time, she has held positions at William & Mary, the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities, and presently serves as a diversity and inclusion professional in the da Vinci Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship at Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia.