

Running head: FIRST ARTICLE REVIEW

First Article Review on:
“Challenges and Promises of Becoming a Culturally Competent Counselor in a
Sociopolitical Era of Change and Empowerment”

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Counseling Profession Preparing for the New Face of Society

Society in the United States is changing. With each passing year this society is becoming more culturally diverse and more cognizant of the need to treat those individuals fairly and appropriately who are culturally diverse from the heterosexual, middle class, able-bodied, white male. It is important for the counseling profession, at the vanguard to help these culturally diverse individuals, to be sensitive to this diverse population's needs and know how to assist these individuals in an effective manner. The importance of this issue led me to select this article to review.

The authors of the article traced the development of the Multicultural Counseling Competencies (hereafter MCC) and gave a look ahead to the use of these competencies in the future. The article gave a convincing demonstration of how these competencies were the direct result of the Civil Rights movement of the late 1950's and 1960's. By the late 1960's and early 1970's, culturally diverse counseling professionals started to develop their own professional organizations in response to the lack of cultural sensitivity that existed in the primary counseling organizations. Throughout the 1970's and 1980's, many different scholars began to put together theories and approaches to make the counseling profession as a whole responsive to the cultural diversity that existed. Two of the authors of this article were included in those making contributions during this period.

In the early 1990's Sue (one of the main scholars developing cultural sensitivity into counseling since the 1970's) and others were asked to develop multicultural counseling competencies for the counseling profession. The result was the MCC as disclosed in an article "Multicultural Counseling Competencies and Standards: A Call to

the Profession” (Sue et al., 1992). The primary author of this article being reviewed was the secondary author of this landmark article that developed the MCC. The MCC have been well received and it has influenced changes in the profession such as an inclusion of these competencies in the latest ethical guidelines published in 2005.

The MCC do not define an end, but just a good starting point as described in the article. There is a call now to verify and strengthen these MCC by engaging in empirically based research. Some of this research has occurred, but much work remains. The article concludes like it begins comparing this struggle for multicultural counseling competencies with the Civil Rights struggles. It compares the current state of multicultural counseling like having accomplished desegregation. No longer are the needs of those in culturally diverse populations addressed only in separate culturally specific organizations. But what has yet to occur is what is still lacking in the Civil Rights movement: true integration.

I enjoyed the article and believe it does accurately describe the history and direction of MCC. Being competent to counsel individuals from diverse backgrounds is particularly important in the college environment. Not only are there more foreign students attending college, but culturally diverse students from this country are in dire need of effective counseling at the higher education level to help them close the gap that they face with the dominant culture. I am aware of the privilege I have received as being a part of the dominant culture. I believe all counselors (and future counselors) need to be aware of who they are and what they need to do in order to effectively counsel those who are culturally different from themselves. This article gave a good outline of how we have progressed and what direction we need to go in the future.