INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE:
INITIAL APPLICATION TO INSTRUCTORS' COMMUNICATION
AS A BASIS TO ASSESS MULTICULTURAL TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

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DEDICATION

To my parents, who left the comforts of a familiar life so I can discover mine.

Any success I have is a direct result of your success as loving parents.
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ABSTRACT

This thesis was a preliminary application of the concept of intercultural communication competence to assess instructors’ communication with diverse student populations as a means of identifying successful classroom practice from which to trace back to multicultural teacher education programs. Twenty-five instructors and 247 of their students participated. Instructors’ self-reports and their students’ perceptions of instructors’ intercultural communication competence were obtained along with instructors’ degree of formal training and informal experiences relevant to teaching/communicating with diverse student populations.

Overall, both instructors and students reported moderate levels of intercultural communication competence regarding instructors’ communication. There was a positive association between instructors’ formal training and students’ perceptions of instructors’ intercultural communication competence but not with instructors’ self-reports. There was a positive association between instructors’ informal experiences and instructors’ self-reports of intercultural communication competence but not with students’ perceptions. Results indicate intercultural communication competence can successfully be applied to assess instructors’ communication.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Increasing ethnic diversity has triggered a trend toward multicultural education, which broadly aims at educational equality (Banks, 2004). According to the 2000 Census, the combined populations of various ethnic minorities in the U.S. now constitute more than a quarter of the entire population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002). The nation is inevitably becoming an increasingly multicultural society. Furthermore, due to lower fertility rates of whites in comparison to those of ethnic minorities, almost 40% of children younger than five years are currently nonwhite in comparison to the approximate 25% of all Americans (Hodgkinson, 1998). Responding to the challenges of providing equal opportunity for all students amidst increasing diversity is undoubtedly difficult, marked by numerous struggles including bureaucratic agendas and both institutionalized and community resistance to change (Cochran-Smith, Davis, & Fries, 2004). Y. Y. Kim, Ogawa, McClure, and Y.-S. Kim (2003) noted that “in many college campuses, especially larger and more selective ones, efforts for greater diversity of the faculty, student body, and curriculum have been accompanied by unintended consequences of ethnic hypersensitivity and self-segregation” (p. 5).

As a result of increasing diversity at U.S. university and college campuses, instructors face greater demands in maintaining high standards of instruction and an appropriate classroom atmosphere. Research indicates that culture affects student learning style preferences (Auyeung & Sands, 1996; Lam-Phoon, 1987; Ramburuth & McCormick, 2001; Sauceda-Castillo, 2001) and affects student perceptions of a number of instructor strategies (Roach, Cornett-DeVito, & DeVito, 2003). Such findings indicate
the need for instructors to consciously adapt their instructional communication in order to make course content accessible to all students.

To meet the challenges of diversity on U.S. university and college campuses, programs of multicultural teacher education have been developed to prepare instructors to teach diverse student populations. But while there has been a proliferation of a variety of multicultural teacher education programs and much attention given to increasing instructors’ ability to teach diverse student populations effectively, there has been relatively little by way of properly assessing the success of such programs (Cochran-Smith et al., 2004; Grant & Secada, 1990; Sleeter, 2001a, 2001b). Indeed, there has been speculation that “multicultural practice has tended to remain rather sporadic, fragmentary, superficial and haphazard” (Gay, 1992, p. 53) regardless of national mandates to increase instructors’ competence in dealing with cultural diversity and institutional endorsement of goals involving multicultural issues. In a recent review, Cochran-Smith et al. (2004) noted the current paucity of empirical and data-based research that focuses on practice or outcomes of multicultural teacher education programs.

The application of the concept of intercultural communication competence may be useful in addressing some of the problems regarding multicultural teacher education research. Banks (1977) initially commented on the lack of connection between research on multicultural teacher education with established theory and research in the social sciences, which still persists. Furthermore, much of the research on the practice of multicultural teacher education is based on unique experiential data of instructors studying their own classes or qualitative data regarding pre-service teachers enrolled in particular programs (Cochran-Smith et al., 2004; Sleeter, 2001b). Although extant
research on multicultural teacher education is valuable, but the current lack of theoretical cohesiveness and consistency among the studies do not allow for general conclusions and applications. One way of alleviating this problem may be to employ an interdisciplinary approach by using the concept of intercultural communication competence, which is a concept supported by social scientific research and involves characteristics associated with effective communication between culturally different individuals, to evaluate current instructors’ communication on a more broad and inclusive level.

Although applying the concept of intercultural communication competence would limit observation to communicative aspects of instruction and exclude other elements pertaining to teaching diverse student populations (e.g., modification of curriculum content), the focus is justified. Every instructor utilizes communication to teach course content and to maintain a positive learning atmosphere; communication has ubiquitous relevance to teaching. Le Roux (2002) argues that in a context of cultural diversity, communication is a critical component of school success because it is the “means and indeed the medium of education” (p. 37); communication is the primary tool by which instructors accomplish their teaching objectives. Therefore, a focus on communication in responding to diversity within the classroom is not only fitting but of fundamental importance.

The present study is a preliminary attempt to assess instructors’ communication involving diverse student populations in light of extant research regarding intercultural communication competence. First, definitions of what constitutes multiculturalism in the U.S. will be addressed. Second, implications of multiculturalism for instructors’ communication will be described in more detail. Third, a broad overview of the current
research on multicultural teacher education programs will be given. And fourth, the conceptualization and background literature on intercultural communication competence will be presented.

Multiculturalism in the U.S.

The cultural landscape of the U.S. exists on many levels, which not only includes a mainstream national culture, but also an intricate web of subcultures. Initially, the term *multiculturalism* that describes U.S. diversity seems simple enough—it refers to the inclusion of numerous cultures, that is, quite literally "multiple cultures." However, reviewing the literature on multicultural education quickly reveals that the term involves more than just delving into the definition of *culture*. Grant and Secada (1990) noted that there are many different but synonymous terms for multicultural education. Some examples include: *bicultural* education, *biracial* education, *multiracial* education, *intercultural* education, *ethnic* education, and *multiethnic* education (Grant & Secada, 1990). Mixed into these labels are the fundamental terms of *culture, ethnicity,* and *race,* which are all important for understanding multiculturalism within the U.S., and specifically within U.S. university and college campuses.

*Fundamental Terms*

*Culture.* Culture is one of those terms that is commonly used but difficult to define. As central as the concept of culture is to the social sciences, "there is nothing in the world more elusive. One cannot analyze it, for its components are infinite... An attempt to encompass its meaning in words is like trying to seize the air in the hand, when one finds that it is everywhere except within one’s grasp" (Lowell, 1934, p. 115). Part of the difficulty in defining culture is that there is no concrete and tangible representation of
culture in the real world; there are only people who live together in a wide variety of ways and somewhere in the midst of that emerges culture (Griswold, 1994). Furthermore, culture is thought to be dynamic and constantly changing, so any particular cultural characteristic that is identified for a particular group may eventually cease to be accurate (Singer, 1987).

In spite of the elusiveness of a precise definition of culture, there appear to be similarities that cut across all existing definitions (Dorjee, 2002; Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952). After surveying the concept of culture through the perspective of various social scientific disciplines of anthropology, sociology, psychology, and communication, Dorjee (2002) maintained that there are several recurring components/characteristics—patterns, symbols, beliefs, meanings, and values, which are learned and shared—generally found in all definitions. These observations are largely in keeping with the principle characteristics of culture that Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) identified from their analysis of 164 definitions across disciplines—that “culture is a product; is historical; includes ideas, patterns, and values; is selective; is learned; is based upon symbols; and is an abstraction from behavior and the products of behavior” (p. 308). Although neither Dorjee nor Kroeber and Kluckhohn intended their observations to be additional definitions of culture, the common components/characteristics they have identified from their analyses provide a good general sense of what culture involves in the social sciences.

Similarly, communication scholars generally hold a broad definition of culture that is in keeping with the components/characteristics identified by Dorjee (2002) and Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952). Singer (1987) defined culture as “a pattern of learned,
group-related perceptions—including both verbal and nonverbal language, attitudes, values, belief systems, disbelief systems, and behaviors—that is accepted and expected by an identity group” (p. 6). One of the key aspects of Singer’s definition is the notion that culture consist of perceptions. According to this definition, students’ cultural background color the way they interpret what their instructor says verbally and nonverbally in a classroom. In clarifying the domain of intercultural communication, Y. Y. Kim (1988) proposed that culture be viewed as being “potentially open to all levels of groups whose life patterns discernibly influence individual communication behaviors” (p. 12). This view is broad enough to account for the influence of national culture as well as various subcultures. In fact, Y. Y. Kim’s view is so inclusive that all communication could be viewed as being “intercultural” to some degree.

Sarbaugh (1988) held the same inclusive view as Y. Y. Kim (1988) and claimed that although all acts of communication are intercultural to some degree, they vary in their degree of interculturalness, which depends on the “level of homogeneity/heterogeneity of the participants” (p. 27). The assumption is that as the level of interculturalness increases, more effort is required to communicate, in addition to there being less likelihood of achieving communication goals (Sarbaugh, 1988). In order to address the question of how to determine the level of interculturalness of an interaction, Sarbaugh developed a taxonomic approach to conceptualize intercultural communication. The taxonomy consists of four variables—worldview, normative patterns of beliefs and overt behaviors, code system, and perceived relationship and intent—with each representing a set of more specific variables. The worldview variable, considered to be the most stable, encompasses the “set of beliefs about the nature of life, the purpose of
life, and our relation to the cosmos" (p. 30). The variable of normative patterns of beliefs and overt behaviors emphasize the “beliefs and actions pertaining to what is involved in being a ‘good’ person” (p. 32). The code system variable refers to “elements, structures, and psychological and sociological processes that influence the meanings attached to codes” (p. 33). Finally, the variable of perceived relationship and intent involves ideas about the quality of the relationship and motives for interaction. Specifically, perceived relationship consists of (a) compatibility of goals, (b) hierarchicalness of relationship, and (c) positiveness or negativeness of feelings toward the other person. Intent addresses whether the participant considers the other to be motivated by a desire to share or help, or a desire to injure, disrupt, or dominate. Degree of homogeneity/heterogeneity is based on how much interaction partners differ along each of the variables but the four variables are not exhaustive. Instead, they are intended to capture the essential similarities and differences between participants.

Sarbaugh’s (1988) taxonomic approach to determining an interaction’s level of interculturalness reflects the multicultural classroom because the cultural background of an individual (student or instructor) is not assumed to be influenced by a single culture and instead their communicative behaviors are a result of whatever ensemble of cultural backgrounds form their identity. There will be varying degrees of cultural overlap, but the degree of heterogeneity is greater when there is more diversity among the students, requiring more effort on the part of instructors to communicate and achieve the goal of student learning of course content. Sources of cultural diversity that contribute to heterogeneity include ethnic and racial backgrounds.
Ethnicity and race. There are an infinite number of ways to distinguish types of cultural groups. Groups identified as sharing cultural characteristics can be labeled to set them apart from other groups. Labels along the lines of gender, sexual orientation, and nationality exist, to name a few. Labels based on ethnicity or race are prevalent in the multicultural education literature. Indeed, advocates of multicultural education often rely on statistics that project growth in ethnic/racial diversity to illustrate the problem and need for action even though ethnicity/race is not the only means of determining cultural groups. Both ethnicity and race are socially constructed labels, that is, they only have meaning because people have attributed meaning to them and not because they inherently contain meaning (Cornell & Hartmann, 1998).

When talking about U.S. ethnic groups, general ethnic culture is not always viewed as the significant aspect of ethnicity, and an awareness of other key aspects is important for understanding the nuances of multicultural education. According to Phinney (1996), there are at least three important aspects of ethnicity: identity, minority status, and culture. When identity is the primary focus of ethnicity, it refers to the extent to which an individual feels connected to an ethnic group (Phinney, 1996). This aspect of ethnicity is important to the multicultural education context because of the plurality of cultural influences in the U.S. The extent of cultural difference is likely to be affected by an individual’s strength of ethnic identity with the differing culture (Phinney, 1990). On the other hand, when the focus is on the aspect of minority status, an ethnic group is only considered an ethnic group if it is also categorized as a marginal group (Phinney, 1996). Thus, a group representing a dominant culture would not be referred to as an ethnicity in this second view. Effects of culture based on one’s ethnicity may be a non-issue if it is
not salient as it would be if the ethnic group was considered a marginal group (Phinney, 1992). Finally, ethnicity that focuses on the aspect of culture identifies ethnic groups based on "the norms, values, attitudes, and behaviors that are typical of an ethnic group and that stem from a common culture or origin transmitted across generations" (Phinney, 1996, p. 920).

To distinguish race as a means of grouping people from ethnicity, race involves doing so purely based on physical characteristics. Race can be, but is not necessarily, equivalent to ethnicity because members of an ethnic group also often share physical characteristics (Cornell & Hartmann, 1998). Categories based on race can be powerful mediators of cultural experience as evidenced by the history of conflict in the U.S. as a result of being White versus non-White. Within the U.S., racial categories have generally overshadowed ethnic categories (Cornell & Hartmann, 1998); the commonly specified racial categories in the U.S. (e.g., Asian American) are multiethnic (e.g., Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Thai).

Multicultural Identities

M.-S. Kim (1993) reasoned that in order to properly understand how or why cultural differences occur, culture must be "unpackaged" by considering culture at the individual-level. Recognition of the influence of a variety of cultural traditions that shape a single individual is especially necessary with the development of multicultural identities, which may not be simply attributable to one or two primary cultures. Triandis (1989) addressed the issue of bringing culture-level analysis down to the individual-level by employing self-concept as a mediating variable between culture and individual behavior. Markus and Kitayama (1991) combined the notion of the concept of self as a
mediating variable with Hofstede's (1980) cultural-level dimension of individualism-collectivism. The result was a conceptual connection between a prominent cultural dimension and individual cognition, emotion, and motivation (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Markus and Kitayama referred to the mediating variable of self-concept as independent and interdependent self-construals.

Specifically, self-construal is conceptualized as a "constellation of thoughts, feelings, and actions concerning one's relationship to others, and the self as distinct from others" (Singelis, 1994, p. 581). Markus and Kitayama (1991) proposed that people are culturally primed to view themselves in basically two different ways in relation to others, either as being independent or interdependent. They argued that these two different construals of self affect the way people think, feel, and act. Markus and Kitayama proposed that individuals with an individualistic cultural background construe themselves to be more independent while individuals with a collectivistic cultural background construe themselves to be more interdependent. Independent and interdependent self-construals represent two extreme ways in which individuals can construe the self; rather than serving as categories for describing people, both types of self-construals exist in various degrees for each individual (Singelis & Brown, 1995). Researchers have found self-construals to be useful in predicting culturally affected communication outcomes such as the extent to which people place responsibility for miscommunication on the receiver/sender (Singelis & Brown, 1995) and perceived importance of particular conversational constraints (M.-S. Kim, 1994; M.-S. Kim & Sharkey, 1995). Upon noticing that simply transferring a model of instruction successful within one culture to another does not guarantee the same success, Boekaerts (1998) provided compelling
arguments that self-construals significantly affect students' ideas regarding important factors such as their perceived control over learning.

Considering cultural effects at the individual-level minimizes gross generalizations and stereotypes on the part of researchers regarding people who share a particular culture. Such sensitivity to the possibility of within-culture differences is particularly important when considering the impact of cultural diversity within U.S. university and college classrooms because (a) there may be significant differences among people of a dominant national culture, and (b) cultural influence may not necessarily be attributable to a single culture. In regards to difference within a dominant culture, Ting-Toomey, Oetzel, and Yee-Jung (2001) found that self-construal explains cultural differences in conflict style better than specific self-reported ethnicity in a study involving American ethnic groups of African-, Asian-, European-, Latina(o)-Americans. In terms of substantial cultural influence of more than one culture, Chen (2000) observed that few Chinese-American children reported being “mostly Americanized” or “mostly Chinese” and instead identified with both cultures in spite of growing up in the context of the American mainstream culture.

Implications of Multiculturalism for Instructors

Due to the multicultural context of U.S. universities and colleges, there is a compelling case for instructors to develop the ability to teach so information is readily accessible to diverse student populations. Promoting maintenance of identical styles of instructors' communication may no longer be adequate to teach due to the high degree of variance in the way students perceive and comprehend information. Research has shown that students' learning style preferences differ as a function of their culture (Auyeung &
Sands, 1996; Lam-Phoon, 1987; Ramburuth & McCormick, 2001; Sauceda-Castillo, 2001), and that they may also differ in their perceptions of teaching strategies (Roach et al., 2003). However, findings for the latter are mixed (Littlewood, 2001). Presenting course content in ways that students learn best will increasingly involve conscious modification of instructors’ communication to suit uniquely diverse student populations.

**Learning Styles**

Cross-cultural studies indicate that students of different countries differ in their learning style preferences (Auyeung & Sands, 1996; Lam-Phoon, 1987). Auyeung and Sands (1996) compared students from Australia, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. Australian students were viewed as being representative of Western individualistic cultures and students from Hong Kong and Taiwan were assumed to be representative of Eastern collectivistic cultures. As hypothesized, students from Australia indicated greater preference for concrete and active learning styles and less preference for abstract and reflective learning styles than students from Hong Kong and Taiwan. Lam-Phoon (1987) also found cross-cultural differences between Asian college students in Singapore with Caucasian college students in the U.S. Results indicated that Asians have a significantly higher preference for auditory and visual modes of learning than Caucasians.

In a sample involving Asian international and predominantly Australian born college students attending the same university in Australia, Ramburuth and McCormick (2001) observed that although the two culturally-different groups of students did not differ in their overall approaches to learning, they differed in their learning style preferences on a number of different modes of learning. The most interesting finding of the study was that Asians indicated preference for learning through groups to a much
greater extent than Australians, which is in keeping with general distinctions between collectivistic and individualistic cultures. In contrast to Lam-Phoon’s (1987) finding, Ramburuth and McCormick (2001) found that Australians have slightly greater preference for auditory modes of learning than Asians and there was no significant difference in preference for visual learning modes. Instead, Asians indicated a greater preference for tactile and kinesthetic modes of learning than Australians.

Cultural differences in learning styles were also observed among a sample of U.S. ethnic groups—African-American, Anglo-American, Asian-American, and Hispanic-American (Sauceda-Castillo, 2001). Interestingly, students of all the minority ethnic groups (i.e., African-, Asian-, and Hispanic-American) preferred the assimilator learning style while Anglo-American students indicated preference for the converger learning style. Both assimilators and convergers prefer to learn through abstract conceptualization but assimilators transform the knowledge through reflective observation and convergers do so by experimentation. This difference in learning style preferences may explain to some degree why minority students may be less vocal in class.

Teaching Strategies

The presence of significant cultural differences in student perceptions of teaching strategies is inconclusive; however, there is some evidence that there are a few cross-cultural differences (Roach et al., 2003). Roach et al. (2003) made cross-cultural comparisons in student perceptions of instructors’ use of power, affinity-seeking, and nonverbal immediacy in the U.S. and France. As teaching strategies, instructors use power—coercive, expert, legitimate, referent, or reward—to motivate students to engage in the learning process, affinity-seeking behaviors to increase student liking and thereby
possibly raise students' receptiveness to course content, and nonverbal immediacy to enhance student learning through increasing physical and psychological closeness. Roach et al. found that U.S. students perceived their instructors to utilize strategies of affinity-seeking, nonverbal immediacy, and reward, referent, and expert power significantly more than French students perceived of their instructors; French students perceived their instructors to use legitimate power significantly more than U.S. students did of their instructors. In spite of the differences in the perception of the amount of instructors’ use of various strategies in the classroom, nonverbal immediacy and affinity-seeking were associated with one or more positive instructional outcomes for both U.S. and French students. U.S. and French students perceived the use of coercive power differently; coercive power was inversely related to student affect toward the instructor and ratings of instruction for U.S. students but coercive power was positively associated with cognitive learning for French students. The differences in perceptions between U.S. and French students seem to suggest that they have different expectations regarding roles in the classroom.

Rather than finding differences as Roach et al. (2003) did, Littlewood (2001) found striking overall similarity among students of various cultures (i.e., 8 East Asian countries and 3 European countries). The study was conducted to explore the extent that broad cultural generalizations, primarily focusing on the collectivism-individualism cultural distinction, were related to students’ reported preferences regarding learning in the classroom and broad perceptions about knowledge and instructors. Regardless of culture, students indicated similar preferences and perceptions in all respects. When there were statistically significant differences between Asian and European students, the effect
sizes were small and the overall patterns of response were very similar. There was more variance in responses within each country or culture than between whole countries or whole cultures. In general, the findings indicated that most students preferred independent learning more than their instructors assuming a strictly dominant role in the classroom. This finding disconfirms the general assumption that students with more Eastern cultural backgrounds expect or prefer hierarchical roles within the classroom. Overall, students also had positive perceptions of participative learning and group work.

Increasing diversity at U.S. university and college campuses raises the likelihood of greater variance among students' learning style preferences as well as their perceptions of how and what an instructor does to communicate in the classroom. This makes teaching more challenging and difficult for instructors because more students may not understand the course material as readily due to their cultural orientations. Cultural differences between an instructor and student increase the likelihood of misunderstanding because "the more substantial the differences in cultural background between sender and receiver involved in the communicative process, the more substantial the differences in the meaning attached to the message... will be" (Le Roux, 2002, p. 38). Recognition of these issues has led to educational mandates pertaining to cultural diversity with specific focus on multicultural teacher education. In 1972, the American Association of Colleges and Teacher Education (AACTE) asserted the following: (a) cultural diversity is a valuable resource, (b) multicultural education maintains and expands the resource of cultural diversity, and (c) a commitment to cultural diversity should be injected into all aspects of programs to prepare instructors to teach (Baptiste & Baptiste, 1980). These mandates are indicative of the effort to accomplish the aims of multicultural education.
with a push to require all teachers to undergo some form of multicultural teacher education.

**Multicultural Teacher Education**

Effort to make teacher education more "multicultural" in order to prepare instructors to teach diverse students who vary greatly in the way they learn, behave, and think, has been going on for a little over three decades (Cochran-Smith et al., 2004). However, there are several indications that not much has really changed despite the long-standing effort; periodic reviews made by scholars to assess the current state of teacher education reform have generally concluded that there is a dearth of research on the subject (Grant & Secada, 1990), that extant research lacks cohesiveness (Sleeter, 2001b) and fails to adequately link teacher education with actual classroom practice (Sleeter, 2001a). Nevertheless, there are also signals of progress, with the emergence of specific multicultural teacher education programs that have the potential to serve as examples for other programs to follow (Ladson-Billings, 1999). The scope of multicultural teacher education is extremely broad and varied, involving relevant literature from a wide variety of disciplines and societal issues (Weiner, 2000) and therefore, getting a clear sense of the literature is difficult. Taking a closer look at a couple of different ways that scholars have organized the extant literature may help to arrive at a general idea of the current state of multicultural teacher education research and areas that require more investigation. Reviews conducted by Sleeter (2001b) and Cochran-Smith et al. (2004) have been selected for their relative timeliness, comprehensiveness, and distinction made between conceptual and empirical/data-based research on the current multicultural teacher education literature.
Data-Based Research

In one review of the literature, Sleeter (2001b) examined 80 data-based studies on the preparation of pre-service instructors, which she categorized into four broad categories: (a) recruitment and selection of pre-service students, (b) community-based cross-cultural immersion experiences, (c) multicultural education coursework, and (d) interventions at a program level. Each of these categories of research will be discussed further except for that of recruitment and selection of pre-service students, which involves more of a preemptive approach to ensure effective instruction of diverse student populations than actual training of pre-service instructors. Community-based cross-cultural immersion experiences, multicultural education coursework, and interventions at a program level will be elaborated on as they represent various types of current multicultural teacher education programs. Research on community-based cross-cultural immersion share the characteristic that pre-service instructors spend time living among a community of a different culture while learning how to teach. Research involving multicultural education coursework consists of those adding multicultural education coursework to the required pre-existing curriculum of courses for pre-service instructors. Finally, research pertaining to interventions at a program level refers to those focusing on restructuring/redesigning courses in some way by infusing multicultural content throughout the pre-existing coursework.

Community-based cross-cultural immersion. Although the research that Sleeter (2001b) cited generally highlights the power of community-based immersion experiences to develop the ability to address cultural issues among pre-service instructors, she observed that they were based on very small projects. Sleeter (2001b) pointed out that
community-based immersion experiences are very difficult to organize and implement, and therefore requires a strong research base upon which to justify the effort, which is currently lacking. Some questions that still need to be addressed include how long an immersion project needs to be and what the necessary conditions are in order for the experience to be effective, as well as what the specific impact of such experiences are when pre-service instructors actually enter the teaching profession.

*Multicultural education coursework.* Much of the research on multicultural education coursework are case studies of courses that the authors have taught themselves or personal narratives on what goes into effectively teaching White pre-service teachers enrolled in multicultural education courses. In general, such studies express positive findings regarding various strategies being utilized in such courses. However, results from empirical research are not as optimistic, showing zero to marginal gains among pre-service instructors' attitudes at the end of the course. Furthermore, a few qualitative studies indicate that some courses actually reinforce stereotypes held by pre-service instructors. Sleeter (2001b) stated that it is difficult to determine from the existing literature whether multicultural education coursework is indeed effective and reasoned that in order to find out whether the coursework is effective, (a) instructors should try to distance themselves from studying the impact of courses by observing courses they are not teaching themselves, and (b) researchers should follow pre-service instructors into the classroom once they begin teaching.

*Interventions at a program level.* Sleeter (2001b) generally found the number of studies regarding courses reflecting interventions at a program level to be extremely limited in quantity. Furthermore, research that has been conducted seems to indicate that
distributing multicultural content throughout existing courses mitigates its impact.

However, Sleeter (2001b) mentioned that there really is too little research to make any solid conclusions about the potential benefit of interventions at a program level at the present time.

*General conclusions for data-based research.* Sleeter's (2001b) overall conclusion regarding research on multicultural teacher education programs is that there is a general lack of research. One common strand running throughout her review is the need to assess actual instructional practice once pre-service instructors begin teaching on their own. Sleeter (2001b) also called attention to the "overwhelming presence of Whiteness" that is reflected by the focus of the vast majority of research on multicultural teacher education; previous studies have primarily focused on increasing cultural sensitivity and awareness of pre-service instructors who are *White.* She argued that this is in and of itself something that needs to change because both nonminority and minority pre-service instructors need training to teach diverse student populations, not just nonminority pre-service instructors.

*Current Status*

The most recent review of research on multicultural teacher education has been produced by Cochran-Smith et al. (2004) who constructed a formal theoretical framework to organize and make sense of the relevant literature. The framework described by Cochran-Smith et al. specifically includes the following aspects: diversity, ideology, knowledge, teacher learning, practice, outcomes, recruitment and selection, and coherence. *Diversity* pertains to the identification of teacher educational issues that are a result of shifting demographics. *Ideology* focuses on the value-based aspect of the
purpose of education and how it fits into the larger context of society. Knowledge refers to what instructors must know, especially about cultural effects on learning, in order to teach effectively. This aspect also includes appropriate attitudes and expectations. Teacher learning has to do with assumptions regarding the process by which instructors learn to teach. Practice involves the specific skills necessary to teach diverse populations. Outcomes have to do with the appropriate consequences of instructor preparation in terms of both instructional behavior and assessment. Recruitment and selection encompasses ideas about who should be recruited and selected to join teaching faculty. Finally, coherence encompasses the previous seven aspects and looks at how they are interconnected and balanced. Of these listed aspects, those that are most clearly relevant to the focus of the present paper of instructors’ communication are knowledge, practice, and outcomes, and therefore Cochran et al.’s specific review of empirical and data-based literature will be summarized only for those aspects.

Knowledge. The kinds of studies that Cochran-Smith et al. (2004) categorized as pertaining to knowledge were those that addressed the following questions: What are pre-service teacher’s attitudes, beliefs and conceptions about diversity? What experiences and other factors seem to influence those beliefs? Do beliefs change after program experiences intended to enhance capacity to deal with diversity? In regards to the first question, Cochran-Smith et al. determined that current research indicates that pre-service instructors generally hold traditional views regarding student expectations, some stereotypical perceptions, but desire to teach all students well although they are uncertain about whether they are adequately prepared to do so by their training programs. In regards to the second question, five studies were considered by Cochran-Smith et al.
Taken together, the five studies indicated that pre-service instructors' personal experiences, previous interpersonal attachments, and program characteristics had an impact on their experience with their multicultural teacher education program. Finally, six studies were examined in answering the third question regarding whether beliefs actually change after going through appropriate programs. The results of these studies indicated modest or uneven effects, which echo Sleeter's (2001b) observations from the literature several years prior. Clearly, there is not enough data-based research to make any definitive conclusions, however, about multicultural teacher education programs and the attitudes and beliefs of the pre-service instructors who take them.

**Practice.** Cochran-Smith et al. (2004) expressed surprise at the overall small number of data-based studies seeking to describe or assess classroom practice of pre-service instructors as they are going through training programs. A total of ten studies were identified by Cochran-Smith et al. as addressing actual classroom practice, all of which were primarily based on qualitative data. However, the results of such studies were promising, with pre-service instructors observed to be actively and effectively managing and grappling with issues of diversity within the classroom setting in addition to doing so conceptually.

**Outcomes.** Although Cochran-Smith et al. (2004) noted that there are still very few studies that explore the impact of multicultural teacher education programs on pre-service instructors' actual teaching once they begin their professional careers, they noted that there are more relevant studies than there were previously at the time of Grant and Secada's (1990) review. Cochran-Smith et al. located five studies focusing on outcomes, each of which were primarily based on qualitative data. As a whole, the findings are
inconclusive at best. Understandably, researchers discovered that interactions between instructors’ prior knowledge, beliefs, and decision making were complex, further complicated by unique classroom and school contexts. Discouragingly, several of the studies revealed, with some exceptions, that instructors’ actual classroom practice following completion of multicultural teacher education programs either did not reflect attitude changes they claimed they experienced or the experienced changes were not sustained over time. Cochran-Smith et al. also commented that definitive generalizations are hard to make based on these initial studies due to inadequate quantities of data, especially since most studies were based on qualitative data collected from a sample ranging from 2 to 26 instructors at a time.

*General conclusions for current status.* On a positive note, Cochran-Smith et al. (2004) concluded that there is no longer a dearth of research regarding multicultural teacher education as claimed previously (Grant & Secada, 1990) if one includes experiential data and those involving practitioners studying their own courses within the body of literature. But in keeping with previous reviews, Cochran-Smith et al. also expressed a lack of research specifically linking theory with practice emphasizing the fact that very few studies investigate actual classroom practice of pre-service instructors, and fewer still of actual classroom practice following the completion of multicultural teacher education programs.

In order to address the issue of linking theory with practice, Cochran-Smith et al. (2004) suggested a research agenda of “mapping forward” and “mapping back.” Specifically, they claimed that research must successfully link multicultural teacher education with teachers’ learning, their subsequent professional practice, and their
students’ learning. While the second aspect listed is addressed to a limited degree in extant research, the third is almost completely unaddressed as of yet. Cochran-Smith et al. explained that research that maps forward would be in the form of longitudinal studies that follow pre-service instructors from the beginning of training into their professional teaching experiences and conclude with assessments of learning outcomes from their students. On the other hand, research mapping backward begins with identifying currently successful classroom practices and investigating the instructors’ learning experiences and other factors that have prepared them to teach as effectively as they do. Sleeter (2001a) previously made a suggestion similar to the idea of mapping backward.

Intercultural Communication Competence

Communication competence has long been a primary concern among communication scholars (Bostrom, 1984; Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984). Due to the fact that communication is a fundamental part of everyday life, a person’s ability to communicate undoubtedly has a large impact on their well-being, happiness, and success. The two characteristics of communication competence commonly considered to be most essential are **effectiveness** and **appropriateness** (Koester, Wiseman, & Sanders, 1993; Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984). Effectiveness has to do with the ability to achieve one’s goals while appropriateness has to do with the ability to perform behaviors considered to be proper and acceptable to others in respective situations (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984). However, competence is not equivalent to excellence, which refers to particularly good ability that surpasses the average level of ability most people possess; “excellence rests on a foundation of competence, it is not the foundation itself” (McCroskey, 1984, p. 262). Therefore, average levels of effectiveness and appropriateness of communication satisfy
conditions of communication competence. Furthermore, communication competence only exists within the context of relationships and thus is interpersonal because it involves the response of other people and their perceptions (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984). Effectiveness is evidenced in what another person does in response to one’s communication and the level of appropriateness depends on whether others think the communicative behavior is fitting for the situation and does not seriously violate social rules.

**Conceptualization of Intercultural Communication Competence**

The treatment of *intercultural* communication competence within the literature is nearly synonymous with that of general communication competence but differs with an additional emphasis on the cultural context (Chen & Starosta, 1996; Spitzberg, 1989). Spitzberg (1989) argued that the only aspect that changes from general interpersonal to intercultural communicative interactions is the contextual parameters. Beyond communicating effectively and appropriately with other people in general, intercultural communication competence involves effectively and appropriately communicating with particular others “who identify with specific physical and symbolic environments” (p. 358) as a result of their cultural background (Chen & Starosta, 1996). The slight distinction between general interpersonal and intercultural communicative interactions regarding the emphasis on context support Y. Y. Kim (1988) and Sarbaugh’s (1988) idea that all communication is intercultural to some degree. The extent to which interactants’ cultural backgrounds overlap varies. Lower degrees of shared cultural context translate to higher degrees of interculturalness of communication (Sarbaugh, 1988).
Extending prevailing ideas about communication competence to intercultural interactions raised the question regarding whether to take a culture-specific versus culture-general perspective (Collier, 1989; Gudykunst & Hammer, 1983; Koester et al., 1993). Scholars realized that there was a Western bias on what was previously known about communication competence, which encompassed qualities that may or may not be perceived to be competent from non-western cultural perspectives (Martin, 1993). Thus, qualities of intercultural communication competence could not be assumed to be the same as for what was believed to be competent communication at the time. Given the discrepancy regarding what constitutes competence, scholars were faced with the choice of focusing on what is considered to be communicatively competent within particular cultures or to attempt to discover more universal qualities of intercultural communication competence that can be generalized across numerous cultures. Both approaches have merit (Gudykunst & Hammer, 1983). A culture-specific perspective can be informative regarding the range of cultural variance as well as being helpful for developing ideal social functioning within particular cultures. On the other hand, a culture-general perspective has potential to increase understanding regarding the interactive dynamics of communication between culturally different individuals. To account for the cultural differences in perceptions of communication competence, Collier (as cited in Martin, 1993) defined intercultural communication competence as "the mutual avowing/confirmation of the interactants' cultural identities where both interactants engage in behavior perceived to be appropriate and effective in advancing both cultural identities" (p. 25).
Model of Intercultural Communication Competence

After an extensive review of relevant literature, Chen and Starosta (1996) proposed a model of intercultural communication competence that synthesized the various approaches that researchers have taken to study the concept. Their model is comprised of the interdependent relationship between three primary dimensions involving affective (intercultural sensitivity), cognitive (intercultural awareness), and behavioral (intercultural adroitness) aspects.

*Intercultural sensitivity.* Chen and Starosta (1996) refer to the affective dimension of their model of intercultural communication competence as intercultural sensitivity. This dimension is a bit of a contrast with how “intercultural sensitivity” has been used by other researchers. Hammer, Bennett, and Wiseman (2003) defined intercultural sensitivity as “the ability to discriminate and experience relevant cultural differences” (p. 422) and intercultural competence as “the ability to think and act in interculturally appropriate ways (p. 422). In contrast to Hammer et al. (2003), Chen and Starosta not only include intercultural sensitivity in their overall conceptualization of intercultural communication competence, but they focus on the emotional/affective nature of intercultural sensitivity and relegate the ability to discriminate cultural differences more to the dimension of intercultural awareness. Within Chen and Starosta’s model, intercultural sensitivity refers to the ability to send and receive positive emotional responses in one’s interactions with individuals of another culture. The resulting affinity leads to acknowledgment and respect for cultural differences. Although there are other relevant attributes, Chen and Starosta stress four primary personal attributes affecting the
dimension of intercultural sensitivity: self-concept, open-mindedness, nonjudgmental attitudes, and social relaxation.

Self-concept is the way individuals see themselves and is relevant to communicating competently within intercultural situations because it mediates how a person interacts with the world, including others of different cultural backgrounds (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1989). Someone with a positive self-concept has been found to be more likely to be accepting and trusting of others who are culturally different than those who have less positive views of themselves (Bylsma, Cozzarelli, & Sumer, 1997).

Open-mindedness refers to an individual’s willingness to express oneself appropriately while also accepting what other people have to say, which may involve accepting ambiguities that result from contrasting cultural perspectives and explanations (Chen & Starosta, 1996). Gudykunst (1993) argued that those who are willing to “integrate new and old ideas and change their belief systems accordingly” (p. 50) are more likely to communicate effectively within intercultural interactions. Furthermore, the degree to which a negative belief about a cultural group is thought to be true for everyone of that group has been found to moderate the impact of negative affect toward culturally different others (Florack, Bless, & Piontkowski, 2003). Thus, individuals who are open to the possibility that certain stereotypes they possess may not hold for each individual of that culture are less likely to experience negative affect toward others from a different cultural background. The personal attribute of nonjudgmental attitudes naturally goes hand in hand with being open-minded, which involves having an absence of prejudices that may affect a sincere hearing of others (Chen & Starosta, 1996). If an individual lacks
prevailing negative beliefs regarding particular cultural groups, it is reasonable that they 
will be more capable of being open to learning about the other person.

Social relaxation pertains to the ability to reveal little anxiety while interacting 
with those of other cultures (Chen & Starosta, 1996). Anxiety is the emotional experience 
of uncertainty (Gudykunst, 1995) that is based on the expectations of negative 
consequences (Gudykunst & Hall, 1994). Thus, the more one expects undesirable 
outcomes to be a part of communicating with culturally different individuals, then the 
more anxious they will probably be during intercultural interactions. Gudykunst and Hall 
(1994) speculated that anxiety experienced as a result of intercultural contact leads to 
other emotions such as fear, hate, resentment, guilt, and disgust. So in order to 
communicate effectively with culturally different others, one must somehow be able to 

According to Chen and Starosta (1996), intercultural sensitivity is essentially 
positive regard for culturally different others with various personal attributes forming the 
foundation upon which people are sensitive enough to acknowledge and respect cultural 
differences. Each of the four personal attributes emphasized by Chen and Starosta for 
intercultural sensitivity is closely related to the components Gudykunst (1993) identified 
as being relevant to motivation to communicate competently during intercultural 
interactions. Having positive affect toward people of other cultures makes a person want 
and willing to communicate effectively during intercultural interactions.

*Intercultural awareness.* Chen and Starosta (1996) refer to the cognitive 
dimension of their model of intercultural communication competence as intercultural 
awareness. Along with the motivation to have positive interactions with culturally
different others, an individual must possess or obtain cognitive knowledge regarding what would be appropriate and effective in social interactions within a particular cultural context. Chen and Starosta highlight two aspects of this dimension: self-awareness and cultural awareness. No one knows all there is to know about every single culture, which is why uncertainty will probably exist when communicating with someone who identifies with a different culture, especially in the initial stages of interacting with such an individual (Gudykunst, 1993). Being aware of one’s own cultural background (self-awareness) and others’ cultural backgrounds (cultural awareness) is necessary in order to be able to perceive and understand similarities and differences with culturally different interaction partners. Seeking and recognizing similarities make existing differences less threatening while satisfying curiosity about differences facilitates understanding (Gudykunst & Hall, 1994).

Additionally, cultural awareness may provide a knowledge base that provides a useful repertoire of behavioral options for cultural adaptation than being limited to a repertoire of behaviors from just one cultural perspective. M.-S. Kim, Hunter, Miyahira, Horvath, Bresnahan, and Yoon (1996) surmised that bicultural individuals, those who identify with both independent and interdependent characteristics, are more likely to be better at adapting during cross-cultural conversations because such individuals have more freedom from “cultural pressure to restrict their strategic conversational choices to stereotypic roles” (p. 36).

Intercultural adroitness. The third dimension of intercultural communication competence identified by Chen and Starosta (1996) refers to tangible behaviors, termed intercultural adroitness. In addition to being sensitive and aware, intercultural
communication competence involves the ability to express such attitudes and knowledge tangibly to interaction partners. Chen and Starosta highlight five key components for this dimension: message skills, appropriate self-disclosure, behavioral flexibility, interaction management, and social skills.

Message skills encompass both specific knowledge of language other than that of one’s own culture as well as the general ability to utilize appropriate messages in response to others (Chen & Starosta, 1996). Being able to communicate adequately in a language of another culture reduces uncertainty and anxiety when communicating with members of that culture (Gudykunst, 1988). Focus groups involving primary care residents and faculty revealed that foreign language competence was considered to be a key component of the ability to provide effective medical care (Shapiro, Hollingshead, & Morrison, 2002). Medical residents even went so far as to express the opinion that language competence constitutes cultural competence.

Appropriate self-disclosure refers to reducing uncertainty to a degree and pace at which all interactants find comfortable (Chen & Starosta, 1996). Self-disclosure is defined as “revelation and communication of private information about self to another person” (Nakanishi & Johnson, 1993). Just as seeking to learn about the culture of one’s interaction partner is helpful, so is helping one’s interaction partner to do the same through self-disclosure. However, the extent and type of self-disclosure should be monitored. Various amounts of self-disclosure may involve different cultural perceptions of appropriateness (Nakanishi & Johnson, 1993). Furthermore, preferences for type of self-disclosure may also differ as a function of culture, such as whether it is self-enhancing or self-deprecating (M.-S. Kim, 2002).
Behavioral flexibility is the ability of an individual to adapt to different situations and contexts through the proper selection of behaviors (Chen & Starosta, 1996). Especially given that various cultures indicate different preferences regarding social behavior such as verbal promotion (Ellis & Wittenbaum, 2000), conversational constraints (M.-S. Kim, 1993, 1994; M.-S. Kim & Sharkey, 1995), and conflict management (M.-S. Kim & Kitani, 1998), being mindful of trying to avoid behaviors that may be offensive by the other while engaging in those that are likely to be desired or expected facilitates effective intercultural communication. Ellis and Wittenbaum (2000) observed that independent self-construals was positively related to self-promotion but negatively related to others-promotion and interdependent self-construals was positively related to others-promotion and negatively related to self-promotion. M.-S. Kim (1994) also found differences based on independent and interdependent self-construals. M.-S. Kim (1994) reasoned that differences in choices regarding conversational strategies among different cultures may be explained in part by differences in conversational goals. She observed that in individualistic cultures, there is a greater concern for clarity than in collectivistic cultures, which in turn was associated with a greater concern for not hurting others’ feelings and minimizing imposition than in individualistic cultures (M.-S. Kim, 1994). M.-S. Kim and Sharkey (1995) found similar associations regarding concern for clarity and not hurting others’ feelings within multicultural organizational settings. Additionally, M.-S. Kim and Kitani (1998) observed that when dealing with conflict in romantic relationships, Caucasian-Americans indicated a significantly greater preference for dominant conflict management styles than Asian-Americans, who in turn expressed significantly greater preference for obliging, avoiding, and integrating conflict
management styles. In short, performing appropriate behaviors matter when interacting with others who are culturally different, such as when an instructor communicates with diverse student populations, because perceptions and choices of communicative behavior varies by culture.

Interaction management involves the ability to engage in smooth interactions through the proper management of conversational turns as well as appropriately initiating and terminating conversations (Chen & Starosta, 1996). Aspects of interaction management that contribute to the smooth flow of interactions, such as interpersonal coordination, have been observed to be positively evaluated by students communicating with another student of a different culture (Ebesu Hubbard, 2000). Both same-culture and mixed-culture dyads found their conversations to be more enjoyable and pleasant when there was more behavior matching and interactional synchrony (Ebesu Hubbard, 2000).

Social skills, particularly regarding empathy and identity maintenance, are considered to be particularly significant in communicating competently during intercultural interactions. Empathy has to do with the ability to place oneself in another’s shoes while identity maintenance involves maintaining another’s unique identity throughout interactions. Social skills that communicate acceptance or liking of another individual such as nonverbal immediacy behaviors seem to be generally effective (Booth-Butterfield & Noguchi, 2000). In a study involving American and international students attending the same university in the U.S., Booth-Butterfield and Noguchi (2000) found that although American students perceived their instructor’s nonverbal immediacy to be more appropriate than international students, they also found that nonverbal immediacy
behaviors had a more positive impact on cognitive and affective learning for international than American students.

Chen and Starosta's (1996) model of intercultural communication competence provides a particularly useful framework to assess instructional communication of instructors teaching diverse student populations because it reflects components of a process orientation, which pertains to a suggested direction in the study of multicultural teacher education. McAllister and Irvine (2000) suggested that progress in multicultural teacher education requires research on the relationship among attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors—which coincide well with Chen and Starosta's (1996) dimensions of intercultural communication competence—in regards to intercultural interactions in order to have true understanding regarding how instructors develop the ability to interact with diverse student populations and plan training programs accordingly. Utilization of an evaluative measurement involving similar components upon which training programs are designed would probably increase validity of the outcome measure. In keeping with the three dimensions, Harris (2003) observed the emergence of affective, cognitive, and behavioral domains that categorized her students' experiences, based on an analysis of their narratives from a course she taught on interracial communication. Based on her findings, Harris determined that her course was effective in reducing prejudice and increasing cultural awareness among her students, which provides support for affective, cognitive, and behavioral components as being key components of developing competence in teaching diverse student populations.
Multicultural Teacher Education and Intercultural Communication Competence

Applying the communication concept of intercultural communication competence, which is supported by social scientific research, to assess current instructional communication may be one potential way to begin mapping backward from current practice to multicultural teacher education programs as suggested by Cochran-Smith et al. (2004) and Sleeter (2001a). Measuring levels of intercultural communication competence of instructors who have begun their professional teaching careers as perceived by their students as well as based on their own self-reports is one way to assess instructors’ ability to communicate with diverse student populations. Linking this information back to training experiences instructors have had may shed light on whether instructors who have had multicultural teacher education experiences possess more intercultural communication competence than instructors who have not.

Although various aspects of intercultural communication competence have constituted approaches to study intercultural communication competence at some point (Collier, 1989), the comprehensive set of dimensions (i.e., intercultural sensitivity, intercultural awareness, and intercultural adroitness) as included in Chen and Starosta’s (1996) model have not been applied simultaneously to the same setting. Therefore, the following research question is posed regarding intercultural communication competence and instructional communication:

RQ1: To what extent are the elements of intercultural communication competence indicated to be a part of instructors’ communication with diverse student populations?
The application of the concept of intercultural communication competence to evaluate instructors' communication is beneficial because it may help to connect multicultural teacher education programs with instructional practice. Applying the concept of intercultural communication competence is one way of assessing multicultural teacher education programs on a more broad and inclusive level, thereby helping to provide some continuity to a body of research that is lacking in overall cohesiveness. If multicultural teacher education programs are generally effective, then instructional communication of instructors who have completed such programs should have higher levels of intercultural communication competence.

Currently, multicultural teacher education programs focus on increasing cultural awareness of pre-service instructors (Cochran-Smith et al., 2004). One of the most prevalent themes in multicultural teacher education is the need to know about culture itself as a criterion for teaching diverse student populations successfully. Gay and Kirkland (2003) wrote about the necessity for pre-service instructors to develop a "critical cultural consciousness" (p. 182) asserting that "teachers knowing who they are as people, understanding the contexts in which they teach, and questioning their knowledge and assumptions are as important as the mastery of techniques for instructional effectiveness" (p. 181). More specifically, the focus on cultural knowledge seems to revolve primarily around an awareness of oneself as a cultural being in addition to sensitivity toward the unique cultural background of each student. This focus parallels the intercultural awareness dimension of Chen and Starosta's (1996) model of intercultural communication competence, which involves being aware of one's own cultural background (self-awareness) and others' cultural backgrounds (cultural
awareness). Thus, completing formal training programs of multicultural teacher education should increase intercultural awareness. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

\[ H: \text{Formal training will be positively associated with instructors' level of intercultural awareness.} \]

On the other hand, a predominant emphasis on increasing awareness and knowledge of pre-service instructors regarding instruction of diverse student populations may prevent equal development of affective and behavioral aspects of pre-service instructors' intercultural communication competence because equal attention is not given to training in those dimensions. However, due to mixed findings regarding pre-service instructors' attitudes throughout and after completing multicultural teacher education programs and the current lack of empirical and data-based research linking programs of multicultural teacher education with actual instructional practice in the classroom following such programs, the following research question is put forth:

\[ \text{RQ2: What is the relationship between formal training in multicultural communication/teaching and instructors' general intercultural communication competence and specific dimensions of intercultural sensitivity and adroitness?} \]

Furthermore, prior cultural experiences, such as an overseas living experience, enhance the likelihood of successfully adapting to a different culture due to insights and lessons learned from prior experiences (Thongprayoon, 1988). However, cultural experiences alone may or may not be sufficient to develop intercultural communication competence as demonstrated by the numerous difficulties that overseas sojourners have had in the past (Ruben, 1989). Thus, the following research question is posed:
RQ3: What is the relationship between informal experiences relevant to multicultural communication/teaching and instructors’ general intercultural communication competence and specific dimensions of intercultural sensitivity, awareness, and adroitness?
CHAPTER 2

METHOD

Participants

Participants consisted of 25 instructors and 247 of their students, with the number of student participants from each class ranging from 2 to 25 ($M = 9.88, SD = 6.39$), at the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa. Instructors’ length of employment at this university ranged from 4 to 28 months ($M = 9.08, SD = 5.69$). Instructors somewhat new to teaching at the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa were targeted because the specifics of their instructional communication would be more salient as a result of adapting to a new teaching environment. Participation was voluntary for both instructors and students. Instructors were given a handwritten note of thanks and the option of receiving a summary of study results while students were verbally thanked for their participation.

The instructor sample was predominantly male (4 females, 21 males) and included 19 assistant professors, 4 associate professors, and 1 full professor. Inclusive of their employment at the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa, length of general teaching experience ranged from 4 months to 25 years ($M = 66.96$ months, $SD = 63.74$ months). Forty-four percent of the instructors were not born in the U.S. (11 foreign-born, 14 U.S.-born). Among foreign-born instructors, residence in the U.S. ranged from 4 months to 28 years ($M = 7.38$ years, $SD = 8.03$ years). Residence in Hawai‘i for the entire instructor sample ranged from 4 months to 24 years ($M = 3.82$ years, $SD = 6.71$ years).

Instructors made distinctions between their ethnic and cultural background. Ethnically, the instructor sample included 13 Caucasians (52%), 2 Japanese (8%), 2 people (8%) of mixed ethnicities, and 6 people (24%) of other ethnicities than the options
listed. The specific 6 “other” ethnicities that instructor listed were “African American,” “Isreali-Jewish,” ‘Latino,” “Maori,” “Okinawan,” and “South Asian.” Participants who checked more than one box were coded as being of mixed ethnicity. The ethnicity of one participant (4%) was uncertain because two categories of ethnicity were selected that clearly did not indicate mixed ethnicity; the participant indicated being Caucasian and other, specifically listing “Jewish American (ethnicity),” in specifying the other category. Culturally, 6 instructors (24%) identified most with the U.S. mainland culture, 1 person (4%) with Japanese American culture, and 13 people (52%) with a different culture than the options listed. The specific “other” cultures that instructors listed were “African,” “Alaskan,” “British,” “Canadian,” “Chinese,” “Cosmopolitan,” “Hawaiian,” “Hawaiian American and Native American,” “Israeli-Jewish,” “Jewish American,” “Okinawan American,” and “South Asian and minority immigrant.” Five people (20%) said they identified with no culture in particular. Demographic information was not collected from students to minimize the length of student questionnaires due to time limitations on the opportunity to collect data from them.

Location of Study

The present study was conducted at the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa, which was deemed an ideal location due to the presence of a diverse student population and an institutional focus on diversity. Both undergraduate and graduate populations at this university are ethnically diverse. In Fall 2002, the undergraduate population consisted of 23% Japanese, 20% Caucasian, 10% Filipino, 9% Hawaiian (or part Hawaiian), 9% Chinese, 4% Korean, 3% Samoan/Pacific Islander, 2% Hispanic, and 21% other or mixed ethnicities (Kane, 2003). During the same semester, the graduate population consisted of

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33% Caucasian, 18% Japanese, 12% Chinese, 7% Hawaiian (or part Hawaiian), 4% Filipino, and 27% other or mixed ethnicities (Kane, 2003). Based on these statistics, I assumed instructors participating in the present study were teaching multicultural classes.

Procedure

Selection of participants: A list of 86 instructional faculty members was compiled for the present study from two lists. One list was obtained from the Center for Teaching Excellence at the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa and included instructional faculty hired at the start of the current academic year. A second list was later obtained from the Office of Human Resources at the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa to supplement the first list and included instructional faculty hired at the start of the current academic semester. Subsequent contacting of listed instructional faculty and/or their completed surveys revealed that both lists were inaccurate regarding length of employment. As a result, having taught at the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa for 30 months (2.5 years) or less was set as a criterion for participation to include instructor participants who were somewhat new to teaching at this university.

Of the list of 86 potential instructor participants, 3 faculty members were immediately taken off the list because they had been visiting instructors who were no longer at the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa. Another 20 faculty members were excluded because they did not meet all the criteria for participation—15 of them were not teaching courses with a traditional classroom set-up and instead were conducting labs or guiding students for community/clinical practicum, 3 individuals were not currently teaching and/or have never taught classes at the present university, and 2 individuals had been teaching at the present university longer (one continuously, the other intermittently)
than 30 months. This resulted in a pool of 63 potential instructor participants. Of the remaining list of instructors, 9 faculty members declined to participate. Eight individuals responded to request more information or express openness to participate but never definitively agreed/declined to do so. Nine faculty members did not complete both aspects of participation—4 individuals gave me permission to visit one of their classes but did not complete a survey, while 5 individuals completed surveys but did not allow me to visit one of their classes. Two faculty members were excluded because they did not have an appropriate class for me to visit; they were both co-teaching one class this semester, which I already visited, with another faculty member who had agreed to participate. Finally, I was unable to contact 10 of the potential instructor participants—9 of them never responded to any of my e-mail, phone messages, or materials I delivered to their respective departments, and I had incorrect contact information for 1 individual that was still incorrect after verifying the information with the appropriate department. In the end, there was a 40% response rate among instructors with 25 instructor participants from the eligible pool of 63 potential instructor participants, and 44% response rate among their students with 247 student participants from an eligible pool of 563 participants.

*Contacting and visitation.* Following preliminary verification with various academic departments of contact information and inquiry regarding posted office hours for potential instructor participants, an e-mail was initially sent to each person on the list. The e-mail included general information regarding the current study and an attached electronic copy of the consent form (see Appendix A for Instructor Consent Form). Potential instructor participants were asked to complete two components of participation: (a) completion of a 10 to 15 minute questionnaire and (b) permission to solicit
participation from students in one of the classes they were teaching this semester. Each instructor, except those who responded to the initial e-mail, was then called on the phone. Effort was made to call instructors during their office hours. If the potential instructor participant answered, I introduced myself, made reference to the e-mail I sent, responded to questions or concerns, asked for agreement to participate, and tried to arrange for delivery of the questionnaire and class visitation. If the potential instructor participant did not answer the phone, I left a voice message referring to the e-mail I had previously sent, provided my phone number and e-mail address, and again requested participation. Subsequent means of communication was determined by the medium of response chosen by instructors. For those who did not respond readily, I made periodic phone calls but only occasionally left phone messages. For individuals I persistently had problems contacting, I eventually sent a second e-mail briefly describing the present study and aspects of participation along with PDF versions of the questionnaire and consent form electronically attached. In addition, I delivered hard copies of the questionnaire and consent forms (researcher and participant copies), envelopes prepared for campus mail to return completed questionnaires and consent forms, and a written note of explanation to each instructor's mailbox in their respective departments.

Upon receiving agreement to participate, appropriate study materials were delivered to each instructor in-person to their office or when I visited their class. Otherwise, the materials were delivered via campus mail. Whenever possible at the time of face-to-face contact, (a) signed consent was obtained, and (b) a completed questionnaire was collected. If an instructor preferred to complete the questionnaire at a
later time, the materials were either returned to me via campus mail in the prepared 
envelope I provided or I walked to the instructor's office to collect it.

To maximize consent to solicit participation from the participating instructors’ 
students, classes were visited during transitional periods between classes. Participation 
was only solicited from early students unless instructors allowed me to have instructional 
class time. If there were scheduling conflicts with other visits, classes were visited at the 
end of class and participation was solicited from students who were willing to stay a few 
minutes later to complete a 2- to 4-minute questionnaire. For each of the class visits, I 
introduced myself to the class, mentioned I was conducting a thesis project on 
instructional communication within multicultural classrooms that their instructor was 
graciously participating in, and for which I am seeking data from some of her/his students 
who would be willing to help me. Students were assured that their participation was 
completely voluntary and anonymous. Students were also told they would receive a 
debriefing form containing more information regarding the study and contact information 
to reach me if they have any questions or would like to learn more about the present 
study. To those students who indicated willingness to participate, I then distributed the 
student questionnaires that were completed and collected immediately. A student 
debriefing form (see Appendix B) was distributed to each student who received a 
questionnaire. Questionnaires were not collected from students who were unable to 
complete them prior to the start of instructional class time unless the instructor offered to 
allow me to wait.
Instrumentation

Instructor questionnaires consisted of three parts pertaining to (a) multicultural training or experience, (b) intercultural communication competence, and (c) background and demographic information. Student questionnaires only focused on intercultural communication competence.

Formal training and informal experiences. Instructors were asked about multicultural training or experiences that have helped to foster their skill in communicating with diverse student populations. A distinction was made between formal training and informal experiences. Formal training included any courses, workshops, or other program that instructors had registered for or were required to have whereas informal experiences included those beyond formal training that instructors thought were relevant to their ability to communicate with or teach diverse student populations. To assess the amount of instructors’ formal training, they were asked the following question: “How many hours of formal training regarding communication/teaching effectiveness in culturally diverse classrooms have you completed?” To measure the amount of instructors’ informal experiences, instructors were asked to respond on a 7-point Likert-type scale to the following question, “How much informal experience that is relevant to your communication/teaching effectiveness in culturally diverse classrooms have you had?” Response options ranged from 1 (none at all) to 7 (very much). See Appendix C for items regarding formal training and informal experiences.

Intercultural communication competence. A 12-item measure that coincides with Chen and Starosta’s (1996) synthesized model of intercultural communication competence was created because there was no existing measure that adequately reflects
their model. Four items were generated for each of the three dimensions of intercultural sensitivity (e.g., 'I look forward to interacting with students of different cultural backgrounds'), intercultural awareness (e.g., "I am mindful of different ways I could present myself within a culturally diverse classroom"), and intercultural adroitness (e.g., "I incorporate my own cultural orientations as well as that of various students to teach course content"). See Appendix D for the 12-item measure of intercultural communication competence that appeared on instructor questionnaires. Only four items were generated for each dimension in order to keep the length of the questionnaire as short as possible to increase the likelihood of instructors completing it yet having enough items to assess reliability. Responses for all items in this section were based on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Whereas instructors responded to the items in regards to themselves, students responded to the items in terms of their perception of their instructor regarding intercultural sensitivity (e.g., "I think my instructor looks forward to interacting with students of different cultural backgrounds"), intercultural awareness (e.g., "I think my instructor is mindful of different ways she/he could present her/himself with a culturally diverse class"), and intercultural adroitness (e.g., "I think my instructor incorporates his/her own cultural orientations, as well as that of various students', to teach course content"). See Appendix E for the 12-item measure of intercultural communication competence modified for student questionnaires.

Two sets of scores, one generated by instructors and the other by students, for intercultural communication competence, were calculated as follows. First, two items were recoded for both instructor and student data sets (see Appendix D and Appendix E),
Second, intercultural communication competence for each dimension was calculated by averaging the sum of scores for items relevant to a particular dimension. Before calculating the average for each dimension of intercultural communication competence for instructors, student scores from each class were summed and averaged to determine a single class score per item for each instructor participant. Third, general intercultural communication competence was computed by averaging the scores for each dimension. General intercultural communication competence scores were calculated based on dimensional scores in order to equally weight the contribution of the dimensions. High scores indicated more intercultural communication competence and low scores indicated less intercultural communication competence.

Prior to calculating scores for intercultural communication competence, the overall measure and three specific dimensional measures were tested for reliability. To increase the reliability of the intercultural sensitivity and adroitness measures for instructors, the two reverse-coded items for sensitivity (i.e., “It is taxing to teach students of different cultural backgrounds” and “I feel uncomfortable around students of various cultures”) and one item for adroitness (i.e., “I adapt my communication strategies to my unique classroom audience”) were deleted. The corresponding items for students (i.e., “I think my instructor finds it taxing to teach students of different cultural backgrounds,” “I think my instructor feels uncomfortable around students of various cultures,” and “I think my instructor adapts her/his communication strategies to her/his unique classroom audience”) were also deleted in order to keep the measure parallel between instructors and students. The resulting reliabilities based on both instructor and student data for the overall and specific dimensional measures were moderate to high: overall, $\alpha = .91$.
(instructor $\alpha = .82$, student $\alpha = .93$); sensitivity, $\alpha = .90$ (instructor $\alpha = .82$, student $\alpha = .90$); awareness, $\alpha = .86$ (instructor $\alpha = .74$, student $\alpha = .87$); adroitness, $\alpha = .71$

Background and demographic information. Four questions about teaching experience/duties, two questions about residence, two questions regarding language, and six demographic questions constituted the background and demographic information section (see Appendix F). The first four questions pertaining to teaching experience/duties asked how long participants have been teaching at the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa, how long they have been teaching in general, and what was their current faculty position. The next two questions asked how long participants have lived in the U.S. and Hawai‘i thus far. Two questions about language then followed, one about instructors’ native language and another about whether they speak any other languages fluently. Instructors were asked to specify the non-native languages they were proficient in. The six demographic questions consisted of two questions about instructors’ ethnic background, two about their cultural background, one about age, and another regarding sex.
CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

*Perspectives for Analysis: Instructors and Students*

Each of the posed research questions and hypothesis to assess instructors’ communication within multicultural classrooms were analyzed from two perspectives: instructors and students. The first perspective involved looking at what instructors believed they were doing as they communicated with diverse student populations. The second perspective involved looking at how diverse student populations perceived their instructors’ communication with them in the classroom. Both perspectives were clearly necessary for a balanced assessment of instructors’ communication within multicultural classrooms, especially because the view of instructors and students are not always the same.

Given the argument that students of different cultural backgrounds may differ in their perceptions of instructors’ teaching strategies, considering both instructors’ and students’ perspectives is important. Teaching strategies are utilized deliberately at the discretion of the instructor, which points to the instructors’ perspective regarding what would be best in communicating effectively with diverse student populations. However, because the perception of these strategies may differ among students who identify with different cultures, considering students’ perspectives is also essential in adequately assessing instructors’ communication with diverse student populations.

*Extent of Intercultural Communication Competence*

The first research question (RQ1) explored to what extent intercultural communication competence was indicated to be a part of instructors’ communication
with diverse student populations. In their assessment of instructors’ communication, both students and instructors reported predominantly moderate levels of instructors’ general intercultural communication competence (instructor $M = 5.72$, $SD = .70$; student $M = 5.43$, $SD = .62$) and specific dimensions of intercultural sensitivity (instructor $M = 6.56$, $SD = .56$; student $M = 5.77$, $SD = .63$), intercultural awareness (instructor $M = 5.22$, $SD = 1.08$; student $M = 5.35$, $SD = .62$), and intercultural adroitness (instructor $M = 5.40$, $SD = 1.04$; student $M = 5.17$, $SD = .73$). Results of paired-samples $t$ tests indicated that instructors reported significantly greater levels of their general intercultural communication competence, $t(24) = 2.10$, $p < .05$, $d = .42$; and intercultural sensitivity, $t(24) = 5.43$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.08$; than their students perceived regarding their instructional communication. There were no significant differences between instructors’ self-reports and students’ perceptions of intercultural awareness, $t(24) = -.64$, $p = .53$; and intercultural adroitness, $t(24) = 1.17$, $p = .25$.

**Formal Training**

Prior to testing the relationship between formal training and intercultural communication competence, one of the cases was excluded from the statistical analysis because the instructor participant indicated having had formal training but failed to indicate how much training. Following the exclusion of this case, the relationship between formal training and instructors’ intercultural communication competence was explored by correlating the number of instructors’ formal training hours, which ranged from 0 to 80 hours ($M = 7.29$, $SD = 18.36$), with instructors’ self-reports and students’ perceptions of general intercultural communication competence, intercultural sensitivity, intercultural awareness, and intercultural adroitness.
The single hypothesis of the present study predicted that formal training would be positively associated with the intercultural awareness dimension of intercultural communication competence of instructors. This hypothesis was partially supported by the positive correlation found between instructors' formal training and students' perceptions of instructors' intercultural awareness, \( r(22) = .63, p < .01, r^2 = .40 \). But there was no significant relationship between formal training and instructors' self-reported levels of intercultural awareness, \( r(22) = .25, p = .24 \).

The second research question (RQ2) investigated the relationship between formal training in multicultural communication/teaching and instructors' general intercultural communication competence and specific dimensions of intercultural sensitivity and adroitness. There were moderate to relatively strong positive relationships between formal training and students' perception of instructors' general intercultural communication competence, \( r(22) = .56, p < .01, r^2 = .32 \); as well as with their perceptions of intercultural sensitivity, \( r(22) = .58, p < .01, r^2 = .34 \); and intercultural adroitness, \( r(22) = .41, p < .05, r^2 = .17 \). There were no significant relationships between formal training and instructors' self-reports of general intercultural communication competence, \( r(22) = .26, p = .22 \), or with its dimensions of intercultural sensitivity, \( r(22) = .13, p = .56 \); and intercultural adroitness, \( r(22) = .19, p = .38 \).

**Informal Experiences**

To investigate the relationship between informal experiences and intercultural communication competence (RQ3) and its dimensions, the extent of instructors' informal experiences \( (M = 5.24, SD = 1.67) \), was correlated with instructors' self-reports and students' perceptions of general intercultural communication competence, intercultural
sensitivity, intercultural awareness, and intercultural adroitness. There were moderately positive associations between informal experiences and instructors' self-reports of general intercultural communication competence, $r(23) = .48, p < .05, r^2 = .23$; and the dimension of intercultural awareness, $r(23) = .57, p < .01, r^2 = .33$; however, there were no significant relationships between informal experiences and the dimensions of intercultural sensitivity, $r(23) = .10, p = .65$; and intercultural adroitness, $r(23) = .31, p = .13$ from the instructors' perspective. Again differing from instructors' self-reports, there were no significant associations between informal experiences and students' perceptions of instructors' general intercultural communication competence, $r(23) = .14, p = .52$; or with any of its dimensions of intercultural sensitivity, $r(23) = .16, p = .44$; intercultural awareness, $r(23) = .19, p = .35$; and intercultural adroitness, $r(23) = .04, p = .83$. 
CHAPTER 4
DISCUSSION

The present study was a preliminary attempt to apply the concept of intercultural communication competence to assess instructional communication with diverse student populations in hopes of remedying the disparity between theory and practice of multicultural teacher education. Both self-reported measures of intercultural communication competence from instructor participants and those perceived by their students were collected. The results offer some support for using intercultural communication competence to assess instructors’ communication. Both formal training and informal experiences were observed to have clear correlations with measures of intercultural communication competence according to either students or instructors.

The current findings should be interpreted with consideration of the qualitative differences between instructors’ self-reports and students’ perceptions of instructors’ intercultural communication competence. Although differences between instructors’ and students’ perspectives may invite comparison, one must keep in mind that they are not directly comparable. Students report their perceptions based on their observations of their instructors while instructors assess their communication based on beliefs regarding how competent they feel they are versus how competent they think they can possibly be. Instructors’ formal training or informal experiences affect the latter, that is, the extent of competence instructors believe is attainable.

Overall, both instructors and students indicated moderate levels of intercultural communication competence in regards to instructors’ communication within their classrooms. However, instructors reported themselves to generally have more
intercultural communication competence than their students perceived them to have.

Upon closer examination of the three specific dimensions of intercultural communication competence—intercultural sensitivity, intercultural awareness, and intercultural adroitness—that were investigated, the findings show that the overall difference was due to variance in levels of intercultural sensitivity as instructors and students did not differ significantly on the other two dimensions of intercultural awareness and adroitness. In other words, instructors reported that their communication fostered more positive affect within the classroom than their students perceived. These differences may perhaps be a result of instructors failing to interpret students’ feedback accurately, or students not providing adequate feedback, or both. Differences could also be due to different baselines of what attitudes and behaviors instructors and students consider sufficient and/or appropriate during intercultural interactions.

Interestingly, formal training was positively associated with students’ perceptions of intercultural communication competence overall and with each dimension but not with any of the instructors’ self-reported measures. According to the current findings, instructors do not assess their level of intercultural communication competence differently as a result of completing formal training. However, students perceive greater levels of intercultural communication competence regarding instructors who have had formal training. Although such differences between instructors’ self-reports and students’ perceptions of instructors’ intercultural communication competence are interesting and may invite comparison, the two perspectives should be considered with the knowledge that they are not directly comparable. Students report their perceptions based on their observations while instructors assess themselves based on believes regarding how
competent they feel they are versus how competent they think they can possibly be. Furthermore, the level of competence an instructor believes is attainable may be affected by the extent of their formal training or informal experiences.

On a more specific level, due to the primary emphasis on increasing awareness of cultural diversity within multicultural teacher education programs than any other aspect, the single hypothesis of the present study predicted that there would be a positive correlation between formal training and the specific dimension of intercultural awareness. This hypothesis was partially supported in that there was a positive correlation between formal training and students’ perceptions of intercultural awareness but not with instructors’ self-reports of awareness. Additionally, despite focus on awareness in multicultural teacher education programs, intercultural awareness was not the only dimension of intercultural communication competence that was positively related to formal training. The fact that formal training was also positively related to students’ perception of intercultural sensitivity and adroitness is encouraging because it indicates that the currently centralized focus on increasing awareness does not seem to prevent development of other aspects of intercultural communication competence.

However, if instructors who have completed formal training to teach diverse student populations do not indicate that they are more competent than those who have not had formal training, are they really competent? Competence generally involves the notion that those who are competent know what is appropriate and would be effective within a particular situation and are then able to actively carry it out; competence generally implies both knowledge and action. Nevertheless, students’ perception of intercultural communication competence may be an adequate indicant of intercultural communication
competence as well as being preferable over instructors’ self-reports in this context. This may be because the fundamental goal of multicultural teacher education is to prepare instructors to teach diverse student populations effectively and the best measure of whether this goal has been accomplished or not is to look at student outcomes. If instructors report having more intercultural communication competence as a result of formal training but this change is not discernible among students, then the goal clearly has not been achieved. On the other hand, if students consistently perceive their instructors who have had formal training to have more intercultural communication competence than those who have not, then this indicates the goal has been achieved to some degree even though instructors may not be aware of what they are doing differently. Previous studies in the classroom context have found that although perceptions of instructors and students are related, they are far from being equal (McCroskey & Richmond, 1983). In light of differences between the perceptions of instructors and students, previous researchers have also acknowledged that greater emphasis should be placed on students’ perceptions (McCroskey & Richmond, 1983; Richmond & McCroskey, 1984).

Furthermore, instructors’ lack of reporting greater levels of intercultural communication competence as a function of completing formal training may actually be a sign of greater competence rather than less. Intercultural interactions require managing differences by being willing to adapt to those differences. This process requires a constant openness that is non-ethnocentric and non-egocentric, which Gay and Kirkland (2003) referred to as a “critical cultural consciousness” (p. 182). Truly having such a perspective may mean constantly questioning one’s own beliefs, attitudes, and actions so
that it may not be easy to express greater confidence in one’s own intercultural communication competence even after going through formal training. Perhaps due to the dynamic nature of culture and interaction of subcultures, the point when an individual reports being significantly more confident of their own intercultural communication competence may be the point when they actually become less so because it reflects a belief in some constancy of behavior or thought that is counter to a critical cultural consciousness.

Another possibility is that instructors who have had formal training did indeed report higher levels of intercultural communication competence than before, however, this was undetectable because those who have not had formal training reported relatively equal levels of intercultural communication competence despite not having had formal training. As a whole, instructor participants in the current study indicated moderate levels of intercultural communication competence. U.S. university and college instructors are currently not required to undergo formal training to teach, let alone training to specifically teach diverse student populations. Perhaps instructors who did not have any formal training generally thought taking such a course was unnecessary because they believe they already possess the skills necessary to teach diverse student populations effectively. This notion may be reflected in their personal assessments of their intercultural communication competence.

The relationship between informal experiences and intercultural communication competence was also given consideration in the current study because having had a lot of exposure and experiences with other cultures may be sufficient to develop intercultural communication competence even without formal training. According to the present data,
this does not seem to be the case because while informal training was positively related to instructors’ self-reports of intercultural communication competence, it was not related to students’ perceptions of intercultural communication competence. As previously mentioned, students’ perceptions of intercultural communication competence is probably a better measure within an instructional context where the goal is to elicit positive student outcomes. Furthermore, informal experience was only positively related to instructors’ self-reports of general intercultural communication competence as a result of higher levels of intercultural awareness and not for the other two dimensions. While a heavy emphasis on cultural awareness in formal training programs does not inhibit intercultural sensitivity and adroitness, it seems that informal experiences may lead to opinions of one’s intercultural awareness that does not coincide with their emotions or behavior. This finding points to the usefulness and necessity of multicultural teacher education programs to facilitate the development of skills in order to train instructors to teach diverse student populations effectively.

Limitations

Several limitations to the current study should be noted. First, only a small number (n = 5) of instructors who have had formal training to teach diverse student populations were included in the study while the majority of instructors (n = 20) had no formal training. Being that the primary impetus for the study was to apply intercultural communication competence as a means to assess instructors’ communication preceded by multicultural teacher education programs, a greater number of instructors who have had such formal training is desirable. Second, because instructors at U.S. universities and colleges are not required to complete multicultural teacher education courses, there may
have been a selection bias in the sample as instructors who have chosen to take such
courses may have already been more adept at communicating interculturally due to pre-
existing personal factors that motivated them to take such courses in the first place. Third,
enough student participants for many of the classes may not have been obtained to be
representative of the class. The response rate for individual classes ranged from 13% to
100% \( M = 52\%, \quad SD = 28\% \). Fourth, a rather rough measure of intercultural
communication competence was utilized. Although the items had face validity as
indicated by the consistencies and appropriateness of students’ and instructors’ responses,
and reliabilities overall and for each of the dimensions were good, the measure utilized
had not been developed rigorously. A properly constructed measure is necessary to have
confidence in the assessment of intercultural communication competence. Fifth, no
specific information pertaining to the type of formal training instructors have had was
collected. Instead, a gestalt assessment of instructional communication that does not
provide insight into particular programs, strategies, or behaviors was investigated. While
the current application of intercultural communication competence was intended to be
inclusive in order to consider the result of a multitude of potentially disparate
multicultural teacher education programs, taking this approach with the exclusion of
more specific details is less informative. Sixth, differences in types of instructors’
communication were not considered. Instructors’ communication within a large versus
small class, lecture versus discussion structured class, and so forth, is likely to be
qualitatively different and therefore may affect what is thought to be intercultural
communication competence. Finally, a more direct measure of student learning outcomes
should be adequately assessed because greater students’ perception of their instructors’
intercultural communication competence may not necessarily mean they are learning
more in the class.

Implications

In spite of various limitations, the present study involves some interesting
findings that have implications for multicultural teacher education, the nature of
intercultural communication competence, and the combination of the two. First, the
findings provide evidence that despite the current lack of cohesiveness among
multicultural teacher education programs, undergoing some sort of formal training
appears to help instructors to communicate better with diverse student populations.
Students of instructors who have completed any type of formal training relevant to
teaching/communicating with diverse student populations perceived them to have more
intercultural communication competence than instructors who have not. Additionally,
informal experiences were not associated with increases in students’ perceptions of
instructors’ intercultural communication competence, suggesting that in order for
intercultural experiences to lead to competence they must be facilitated by formal
training.

Second, the differences between instructors’ and students’ assessments of
intercultural communication competence may signify a slight need to reconceptualize
what is thought to constitute competence within intercultural interactions, at least within
an instructional context. Current findings point to the possibility that instructors’
intercultural communication competence within the classroom is manifested in students’
perceptions of competence but not necessarily in instructors’ self-perceptions.
Intercultural communication competence for instructors’ communication within an
instructional setting may involve various actions leading to consistent evaluations of competence by students but may not necessarily involve confidence in instructors' chosen behaviors. Given the dynamic contextual nature of multicultural situations, prior confidence in potential behaviors may not be a criterion for intercultural communication competence.

Finally, results of the present study offer some preliminary support for the use of intercultural communication competence to begin mapping backward to related multicultural teacher education programs as a means of connecting theory with practice. The present study shows that the concept of intercultural communication competence may be utilized to distinguish between communication of instructors who have had some type of formal training relevant to multicultural teaching/communication and those who have not. According to students' perceptions of their instructors' intercultural communication competence, the communication of instructors who have had formal training is more effective. Thus, intercultural communication competence may be a means by which to identify successful classroom practice in order to begin tracing back to aspects of training that have contributed to success. Furthermore, comparison of levels of intercultural communication competence among instructors who have had different types of formal training may also shed specific light on which multicultural teacher education programs are more effective than others.

Future Directions

The present study is a useful preliminary step for future studies involving the application of intercultural communication competence to aspects related to multicultural teacher education. First, a replication of the current study should be conducted utilizing a
larger sample of instructors including a substantial percentage who have completed formal training regarding teaching/communicating with diverse student populations, along with their students, in order to validate the current findings. Furthermore, instructors who have been required to take multicultural teacher education programs should be included in order to negate selection bias. Participants should also be recruited from a variety of teaching institutions and locations as geography will involve contrasting constitutions of diversity.

Second, a more valid measure of intercultural communication competence based on Chen and Starosta’s (1996) model should be developed. Such a measure would increase confidence in the measure of success regarding instructors’ communication with diverse student populations. Identifying successful classroom practice correctly is crucial in order to be able to map backward to successful multicultural teacher education programs.

Third, future studies should pay more attention to the specific classroom context that instructors are teaching in. For instance, information such class enrollment, subject of study, instructional format, and so forth, should be considered. There may be more inherent difficulty in establishing intercultural communication competence with larger classes of students because of the inability to connect to each student individually. Instruction in the humanities is more likely to involve direct communication about cultural issues while courses in the hard sciences may include more indirect consideration of cultural differences. Classes taught in lecture format involves a set of very different communication skills than other instructional formats, such as seminars. For one thing,
there is a big difference in how much the instructor contributes verbally. Therefore, variations in classroom contexts should be considered.

Fourth, subsequent studies could begin to explore particular strategies and behaviors that are effective for instructional communication with diverse student populations. This perhaps could be done by collecting additional qualitative data in the form of open-ended questions or interviews from instructors about what they specifically do to teach diverse student populations effectively. Content analysis could be conducted on the answers provided and (a) strategies/behaviors identified by instructors who have had formal training can be compared and contrasted with those identified by instructors who have not had formal training, and (b) the same can be done for statistically determined groups of instructors rated to have high and low intercultural communication competence by their students.

Fifth, in pursuing the application of intercultural communication competence to map backward to multicultural teacher education programs, studies should be conducted on samples of instructors who have all completed some sort of formal training in instruction of diverse student populations to investigate specific differences that may have been due to their particular training programs. Such studies should include additional qualitative data regarding various details of their training programs. Sleeter (2001b) tentatively concluded that community-based cross-cultural immersion programs seem to be the most promising form of multicultural teacher education. Determining whether there are significant differences in intercultural communication competence between instructors who have completed community-based cross-cultural immersion programs, multicultural education coursework, or training with interventions at a
programs level would be a positive step toward evaluating the effectiveness of these broad categories of programs that have been identified by Sleeter (2001b).

Sixth, in addition to measuring students’ perception of their instructors’ communication competence, various measures of learning outcomes among students should be assessed. Multicultural teacher education programs currently aim at developing cultural awareness among pre-service instructors with the assumption that doing so will help students to learn more in class in spite of their different cultural backgrounds. Measuring learning outcomes is necessary to determine that such training does indeed accomplish this goal by resulting in greater learning among students overall.

Seventh, future studies should also include a measure of students’ level of intercultural communication competence. Although communication partners mutually influence one another, the current study does not account for this and instead involves a unilateral perspective by focusing only on instructors’ intercultural communication competence. Aune (1998) reasoned that communicative responsibility plays an important part in facilitating understanding— instructors and students enter the classroom with the desire to reach a level of shared understanding regarding course content, each communicator within the classroom possesses some degree of responsibility to bring about the desired understanding, and communicators’ assessments of their level of responsibility to effect understanding determines how they go about processing information during the communicative situations. Both instructors and students play a role in shaping communication in the classroom, not just instructors.
Conclusion

The findings of the present study show that the concept of intercultural communication competence may be applied to assess instructors’ communication with diverse student populations. Assessing instructors’ communication in this way would allow researchers to identify current classroom practices that are successful and such an evaluation of current practice is more coherent and systematic than previous attempts to assess the outcomes of multicultural teacher education programs. Intercultural communication competence may be applied to all instructors’ communication, regardless of what kind of particular formal training or informal experiences instructors have had, and is therefore a broad and inclusive means of assessment. Considering both instructors’ self-reports and students’ perceptions of instructors’ intercultural communication competence also mitigates the bias that have often been present as instructors attempted to evaluate the effectiveness of their own multicultural teacher education courses.

The concept of intercultural communication competence is a means of filling the current void in multicultural teacher education research that links theory with practice. Applying the concept of intercultural communication competence to assess instructor’s communication is one means of identifying successful classroom practice. In turn, identifying successful classroom practice is the first step in tracing back to various multicultural teacher education programs that have been effective in developing instructors’ skill in teaching/communicating with diverse student populations. As Cochran-Smith et al. (2004) suggested, going through the process of mapping backward from identified successful practice to preceding training will contribute to properly
linking theory with practice regarding multicultural teacher education in a more systematic fashion.
APPENDIX A

AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN
Instructional Communication within Multicultural Classrooms

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Your participation is being requested for a research study regarding instructional communication within multicultural classrooms, which is being conducted to fulfill thesis requirements for a Master’s degree at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. This study attempts to provide further knowledge on how instructors communicate with diverse student populations and factors relevant to such communication. This information may be useful in assessing current training programs and improve instructional support for faculty. Approximately 50 instructors relatively new to teaching at the University of Hawaii at Manoa are being asked to participate.

If you have any questions about this project, you may contact the investigator listed above. There are no potential risks from your participation and a summary of results will be provided upon request. Participation is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of benefit to which you would otherwise be entitled. The survey will take approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete. You will be asked to be recorded if you should elect to provide verbal rather than written responses to a portion of the questionnaire. All recordings will be stored securely throughout the project, with access restricted to the principal investigator, and will be destroyed upon completion of the project.

All research data will be confidential to the extent allowed by law. Agencies with research oversight, such as the UH Committee on Human Studies, have the authority to review research data. The results of this research may be published, but only the combined data from all participants will be made public. You may drop out of the study at any time without penalty, if you wish.

I certify that I have read and that I understand the foregoing, that I have been given satisfactory answers to my inquiries concerning project procedures and other matters, and that I have been advised that I am free to withdraw my consent and to discontinue participation in this project or activity at any time without prejudice.

I herewith give my consent to participate in this project with the understanding that such consent does not waiver any of my legal rights, nor does it release the principal investigator or the institution or any employee or agent thereof from liability for negligence.

Participant’s Printed Name ____________________________

Participant’s Signature ____________________________ Date ____________________________

If you cannot obtain satisfactory answers to your questions or have comments or complaints about your treatment in this research project, contact: Committee on Human Studies, University of Hawaii, 2540 Maile Way, Honolulu, HI 96822; Phone: 956-5007

c: Participant copy

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APPENDIX B

STUDENT DEBRIEFING FORM
Instructional Communication within Multicultural Classrooms

Principle Investigator: Rachel K. Kim
rach@hawaii.edu
(808) 956-3319

The survey you were asked to complete was a part of a research study regarding instructional communication within multicultural classrooms, which is being conducted to fulfill thesis requirements for a Master’s degree at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. This study attempts to provide further knowledge on how instructors communicate with diverse student populations and factors relevant to such communication. This information may be useful in assessing current training programs and improve instructional support for faculty. Students enrolled in classes of approximately 50 instructors are included in this research study. If you have any questions about this project, you may contact the investigator listed above.

All research data will be confidential to the extent allowed by law. Agencies with research oversight, such as the UH Committee on Human Studies, have the authority to review research data. The results of this research may be published, but only the combined data from all participants will be made public.

Your participation in this project does not waive any of your legal rights, nor does it release the principle investigator or the institution or any employee thereof from liability for negligence. As previously stated, if you have any questions about this project, you may contact the investigator listed above. Otherwise, if you have comments or complaints about your treatment in this research project, contact: Committee on Human Studies, University of Hawaii, 2540 Maile Way, Honolulu, HI 96822; Phone: 956-5007).
APPENDIX C

Instructor Questionnaire: Items Measuring Formal Training and Informal Experiences

**Formal Training**

1. How many hours of formal training regarding communication/teaching effectiveness in culturally diverse classrooms have you completed?
   
   (estimate to the nearest number of hours) ____________ hour(s)

**Informal Experiences**

1. How much informal experience that is relevant to your communication/teaching effectiveness in culturally diverse classrooms have you had?

   none
   at all
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
   very
   much
APPENDIX D

Instructor Questionnaire: Items Measuring Intercultural Communication Competence

*Intercultural Sensitivity*

1. It is taxing to teach students of different cultural backgrounds.*
2. I look forward to interacting with student of different cultural backgrounds.
3. I enjoy the cultural variety in my classroom.
4. I feel uncomfortable around students of various cultures.*

* Items 1 and 4 are reverse-coded.

*Intercultural Awareness*

1. I am mindful of different ways I could present myself within a culturally diverse classroom.
2. I am aware of how culturally diverse students behave in the classroom.
3. I am aware of the similarities among various cultural backgrounds (including my own) that are represented in the classroom.
4. I am aware of the difference between cultural backgrounds (including my own) that are represented in the classroom.

*Intercultural Adroitness*

1. I incorporate my own cultural orientations as well as that of various students to teach course content.
2. I self-disclose relevant cultural information about myself to students.
3. I adapt my communication strategies to my unique classroom audience.
4. I tend to consciously conduct my classes in such a way to get participation from all of my students.
APPENDIX E

Student Questionnaire: Items Measuring Intercultural Communication Competence

*Intercultural Sensitivity*

1. I think my instructor finds it taxing to teach students of different cultural backgrounds.*

2. I think my instructor looks forward to interacting with students of different cultural backgrounds.

3. I think my instructor enjoys the cultural variety within this class.

4. I think my instructor feels uncomfortable around students of various cultures.*

* Items 1 and 4 are reverse-coded.

*Intercultural Awareness*

1. I think my instructor is mindful of different ways she/he could present her/himself with a culturally diverse class.

2. I think my instructor is aware of how culturally diverse students behave in this class.

3. I think my instructor is aware of the similarities among various cultural backgrounds (including his/her own) that are represented in this class.

4. I think my instructor is aware of the differences between cultural backgrounds (including his/her own) that are represented in the classroom.

*Intercultural Adroitness*

1. I think my instructor incorporates his/her own cultural orientations, as well as that of various students, to teach course content.

2. I think my instructor self-discloses relevant cultural information about him/herself to students.
3. I think my instructor adapts her/his communication strategies to her/his unique classroom audience.

4. I think my instructor consciously conducts class in such a way to get participation from all of her/his students.
APPENDIX F

Instructor Questionnaire: Items Measuring Background and Demographic Information

1. How long have you been teaching at UH Manoa?
   (please specify to the nearest month) ________ month(s)

2. How long have you been teaching in general?
   (please specify to the nearest month) ________ month(s)

3. What is your current position at UH Manoa?
   ____ (1) Lecturer
   ____ (2) Assistant Professor
   ____ (3) Associate Professor
   ____ (4) Full Professor
   ____ (5) Other (please specify) ____________________

4. Were you born in the U.S.? ____ (1) Yes ____ (2) No
   If NO, how long have you lived in the U.S.?
   (please specify to the nearest year) ________ year(s)
   If YES, what generation? (e.g., 1st, 2nd, 3rd) ________ generation

5. What is the total length of time you have been in Hawaii?
   (please specify to the nearest year) ________ year(s)

6. What is your native language? (indicate one)
   ____ (1) English
   ____ (2) Other (please specify) ____________________

7. Do you speak any other language(s) fluently? ____ (1) Yes ____ (2) No
   If YES, please specify language(s) ____________________

8. Your sex? ____ (1) Male ____ (2) Female

9. Which of the following BEST describes your ethnic background?
   ____ (1) Caucasian (non-Hispanic)
   ____ (2) Japanese
   ____ (3) Filipino
   ____ (4) Hawaiian
   ____ (5) Chinese
   ____ (6) Korean
   ____ (7) Hispanic
   ____ (8) African
   ____ (9) Native American
   ____ (10) Samoan
   ____ (11) Mixed (please specify) ____________________
   ____ (12) Other (please specify) ____________________

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10. To what extent do you identify with your *ethnic* background?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>not at all</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>very much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

11. Which of the following BEST describes the *cultural* background you most identify with?

- (1) Mainland, U.S.
- (2) Local
- (3) Japanese American
- (4) Filipino American
- (5) Hawaiian American
- (6) Chinese American
- (7) Korean American
- (8) Hispanic American
- (9) African American
- (10) Native American
- (11) Other (please specify) __________
- (12) Do not identify with any culture in particular

12. To what extent do you identify with your *cultural* background?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>not at all</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>very much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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REFERENCES


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Kane, K. O. (2003). In celebration of students: Reflections on learning at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa (2nd ed.). Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i at Manoa.


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