

1. The purpose of the Multicultural autobiography assignment is to increase cultural competency for counselors in training through understanding their own cultural identity development.
2. Some students may interview family members using the questions from Thomas and Schwarzbaum (2006) Culture and Identity addressing dimensions of ethnicity, immigration, acculturation, gender, socioeconomic status and spirituality. These procedures would be carried out between November, 2005 – January, 2006. Students who have access to family members will interview them in November and December. Students who do not have access to family members will conduct research about the experiences of immigration, ethnicity, socioeconomic status and gender that are part of their cultural identity.
3. Students will use their discretion and discernment in approaching family members to interview. Students are able to complete the assignment without interviewing family members if necessary.
4. Possible risks include family stress that may be exacerbated by the interviewing process and personal distress that may occur when working with issues of power, privilege and difference historically. The Multicultural Counseling curriculum is specifically working With cultural identity development over the nine month program and students are being exposed to many theories of identity development in which to contextualize their experience. The program faculty is available for consultation as needed throughout the process. Students are able to stop the interview process if needed and complete the assignment with library research if needed.
5. Understanding one's own cultural identity is crucial in being able to work effectively in a multicultural counseling context. The benefits from doing autobiographically work in this area will increase student's abilities to work with a greater degree of cultural competency in internship sites when working with diverse populations.
6. The information from this Multicultural autobiography assignment will be shared within the Multicultural Counseling program. Students will co-facilitate expressive arts laboratories incorporating music and cultural practices from their own cultural backgrounds during the Winter and Spring Quarter of the program.

Resources:

- Moodley, R and West. W. (2005) Integrating Traditional Healing Practices into Counseling and Psychotherapy. Sage Publications.
- Thomas, A. and Scharwbaum. S. (2006). Culture and Identity: Life Stories for Counselors and Therapists. Sage Publications