"Making time to make a difference": Program Effects of a Cultural Competency Training

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By the year 2044, more than half the United States population will be non-white. Extension is faced with the challenge of being inclusive in our multicultural world; thus, it is important that Extension educators receive cultural competency training. Cultural competency training based on and informed by intercultural theory and practice leads to increased awareness and knowledge and changes in professional practices. This paper presents qualitative evaluation results to document outcomes of an 18-hour cultural competency training for Extension and outreach professionals. The study focused on two research questions: Does cultural competency training impact professional practice of Extension and outreach professionals? What factors facilitate or inhibit the practice of new interculturally appropriate behaviors? An evaluation protocol was intentionally designed to test participants' knowledge, skills, and professional practice changes. Previous work showed changes in knowledge and skills at post-training, as well as at six-month follow-up. Our findings in this study reflect that participants did make changes in some significant professional practices. It is possible to provide professionals with the knowledge and skills to make real change in their practices to better serve their communities.

Keywords: Cultural competence, diversity training, cultural competence training

Introduction

Land-grant universities (LGUs) maintain that higher education should be open to all and have the mission of providing liberal and practical education to prepare the citizenry for the labor market (Campbell, 1995; Gavazzi & Gee, 2018; McDowell, 2001). The mission of the LGU is trifold: research, teaching, and outreach. In most LGUs, the outreach component is implemented primarily by the Cooperative Extension or Extension System. Extension originated in 1914 with the passage of the federal Smith-Lever Act:

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> The mission of Extension is to identify community needs and to support the development of community practices, informed by university research, to meet those needs. County-based personnel serve as the link between campus-based researchers and community agencies, translating research to practice on the one hand and informing the research agenda of the university on the other. (Cooper et al., 2016, p. 37)

Extension offices, funded by federal, state, and county governments, continue to function today in most counties throughout the United States and territories (United States Department of Agriculture, 2018). However, many populations remain underserved, and the Extension system faces the challenge of being inclusive in our multicultural world. As a result, it is important that Extension educators receive training on intercultural knowledge and competence (Iverson, 2008). This will be ever more important as the population make-up of the United States becomes more and more diverse. It is projected that by the year 2044, more than half of the United States population will belong to a non-white racial/ethnic and by 2060, nearly one in five of the United States' population will be foreign-born (Colby & Ortman, 2015). In 1999, The Change Agent States for Diversity project was initiated to take on this task of inclusion. The goal of the project was to "build the capacity of land-grant universities to function inclusively and effectively in a multicultural world" and "set standards and implement a vision for supporting healthy, thriving, culturally diverse communities through Extension, research, and academic programs" (Ingram, 2006, Introduction section, para. 4).

Many efforts have been made within Extension to increase their educators' cultural competencies with programs that vary in design from video/discussion series to professional development curriculum to cross-cultural immersion programming (Daniel et al., 2014; Guion et al., 2004; Ingram, 2013). Studies specific to cultural competency training have suggested that knowledge and satisfaction gains have outweighed changes in behavior and attitudes (Perry & Southwell, 2011). For example, an immersion program in Mexico conducted with Extension educators from the University of Georgia found that "most of the participants noted that no changes had been implemented in their current programming since they had returned" (Daniel et al., 2014, Programmatic Difficulties, para. 1). The most notable criticism of these efforts is the lack of evidence regarding their impact on related professional behaviors. To address this gap in the literature, we present evaluation results related to outcomes of a cultural competency training, *Navigating Difference: Cultural Competency Training for Outreach Professionals* (Navigating Difference). The study focused on the impact of the training on culturally competent professional behaviors of Extension educators and the factors that inhibit or facilitate those behaviors.

Cultural Competency

A definition of intercultural knowledge and competence used by the Association of American Colleges and Universities is "a set of cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills and characteristics that support effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts"

(Bennett, 2008, p. 96). This is supported by Burchum's (2002, p. 10) definition of cultural competency as a "process of development that is built on the ongoing increase in knowledge and skill development related to the attributes of cultural awareness, knowledge, understanding, sensitivity, interaction, and skill."

Five dimensions of cultural competency can provide a sound organizational training framework to address the development of knowledge and skills that lead to culturally competent behaviors and professional practices. *Cultural awareness* refers to one's cognizance of his/her views of their own and others' cultures. It also encompasses understanding the influences that shape one's culture (Alizadeh & Chavan, 2015; Burchum, 2002). *Cultural knowledge* is the continued attainment of information about other cultures (Alizadeh & Chavan, 2015; Burchum, 2002). *Cultural understanding* is the continuing development of insights into how culture influences beliefs, values, and behavior. It also allows one to recognize that multiple perspectives bring multiple truths, solutions, and ways of knowing, which can address problems that arise when beliefs and values of one culture differ from the dominant culture (Burchum, 2002). With *cultural sensitivity,* one learns to appreciate, respect, and value cultural differences and realizes how personal cultural identity influences practice. Cultural sensitivity is necessary for effective cultural interaction. *Cultural interaction* is the communication and personal contact with people of different cultures. These interactions are necessary for developing cultural competency and progressing to cultural skill (Burchum, 2002). Cultural skill includes effectively communicating with individuals from different cultures and incorporating an individual's beliefs, values, and practices into procedures and techniques (Alizadeh & Chavan, 2015; Burchum, 2002).

Current Cultural Competency Programming in Extension

In the last few decades, different methods have been used to increase Extension educators' cultural competency; however, of the programs we identified, none have incorporated all five dimensions of cultural competency, nor have they demonstrated change in professional behaviors and practices. Cultural awareness, cultural knowledge, and cultural sensitivity were the most targeted dimensions. Interculturalists have clearly established that cultural knowledge does not equal intercultural competence (Bennett & Salonen, 2007), and this fact applies equally to participants and those that teach and mentor them. Moreover, merely having the experience of contact with cultural difference through international exchanges or a diverse population does not necessarily increase the intercultural competence of learners or teachers. In fact, it can reinforce stereotypes and prejudices in the absence of structured reflection and collective cross-cultural social experiences (Otten, 2003).

The training efforts offered by Extension organizations have included video/discussion series, program planning and implementation curriculum, state tour programs, and cross-cultural immersion (Daniel et al., 2014; Guion et al., 2004; Ingram, 2013; Shaklee et al., 2014; Traver et al., 2007). In the video/discussion series, Extension professionals were brought together over videoconferencing four times to view a 25–45-minute film followed by a discussion on the

diversity topic covered in the film. The objectives of this video/discussion series were to consider and reflect on diversity issues, share thoughts on those issues, and hear differing perspectives. An evaluation completed after the series found participants thought they increased their awareness of the diversity topic, the discussion helped them consider differing perspectives, and that a video followed by discussion was a good strategy for diversity education (Ingram, 2013). A program planning and implementation curriculum, *Strengthening Programs to Reach Diverse Audiences*, was developed to support Extension professionals working with youth and families to design more effective programs to reach ethnically diverse audiences. The curriculum focused on increasing cultural competency in cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains (Guion et al., 2004). However, the developers did not present evidence that the curriculum affected professional behaviors.

A third method used was a state tour where Extension professionals participated in a regional 2-day traveling workshop to visit sites and talk with stakeholders engaged in issues of diversity and human rights. Evaluation results showed that participants and site hosts believed they increased their knowledge on diversity and human rights issues, challenges, and strategies (cultural knowledge) and strengthened their connection and commitment to addressing those issues (cultural sensitivity) (Shaklee et al., 2014; Traver et al., 2007). Lastly, cultural awareness was also targeted through a cross-cultural immersion where Extension professionals traveled to a Latin American country for two weeks with the following objectives: increase knowledge on issues in Latin America, examine cultural values differences, learn about globalization impact, and have exposure to basic Spanish language instruction (Daniel et al., 2014). Upon returning to the states, the researchers conducted interviews with the seven participants and found that participants reported the benefits of the immersion to be increased cultural appreciation and increased knowledge/empathy based on first-hand experience. However, participants also reported persistent challenges in applying their learning to current work, including recruitment of diverse participants and other programmatic difficulties.

One program, *Culturally Responsive Youth Work: The Journey Matters*, came close to meeting the goals of incorporating all five dimensions of cultural competency and showing evidence of impact on professional behaviors. The program is an 18-hour training delivered in six sessions focusing on cultural awareness, cultural knowledge, cultural sensitivity, and cultural interaction through a series of mini-lectures, interactive learning activities, and opportunities for practice. Upon completing each session, participants completed an evaluation, and at completion of the training, participants completed a retrospective pre-then-posttest. Results showed significant gains in awareness, knowledge, and skills. Eight months after the training, participants were invited to complete a follow-up interview. The interview results ($n = 16$) showed 81% of the participants used material from the training, 69% reported ways the curriculum led to changes in working directly with youth, and 44% spoke to how the training had influenced their awareness of their own culture. Of the 16 participants interviewed, only two reported any major changes to their professional practice based on the training (Walter & Grant, 2011).

The lack of evidence from Extension programs is reflected in the larger literature. In a meta-review of 178 diversity training programs, 40 were identified as intercultural in nature (Bezrukova et al., 2012). In reviewing studies of diversity training outcomes, the authors noted several weaknesses in measurement. Many study designs established no baseline for participant outcomes or used designs that did not match pretest participant data with posttest data. Relatively few conducted evaluations using quasi-experimental (control groups) or longitudinal designs. Further, the majority of evaluations relied on self-report and were subject to response bias due to social desirability or participant lack of introspection. In addition, the majority of evaluations measured affective and attitudinal learning (55 of 178) versus cognitive (30 of 178) or behavioral (37 of 178) outcomes. Even fewer conducted follow-up evaluations to measure sustained changes. For example, only 18 of the 178 studies measured behavior change over time, and most of these were workplace programs (particularly in the private sector) rather than those conducted in educational settings.

In recommending an assessment process for intercultural competence, Deardorff (2012) reiterated some of these concerns. She advocated using multiple measures, noting that pen-and-paper measures are particularly limited in capturing the complexity of intercultural learning. Measures that have multiple perspectives beyond those of the learner, and include a combination of direct and indirect evidence, were also suggested. Other researchers agree, arguing that qualitative methods, such as observations, interviews, and portfolios, should be used to assess intercultural competence "more deeply, authentically, and perhaps accurately" (Perry & Southwell, 2011, p. 462).

Navigating Difference

Developers of the Navigating Difference cultural competency training sought to address the shortcomings of previous Extension approaches. The development team included department-based Extension faculty and faculty in the university's equity and diversity office. After several years of research, development, and piloting with Extension audiences, implementation of the curriculum began in 2008 with the overarching goals for participants to

- Become more aware of their own personal and organizational cultures;
- Examine how personal and organizational cultures affect our ability to work across difference, in both negative and positive ways; and
- Build skills to increase competencies as we work with others who are different from us.

Navigating Difference is based on the five cultural competencies adapted by the developers from the public health field (Burchum, 2002), with related skillsets developed for each competency area (https://www.diversity.wsu.edu/diversity-education/navigating-difference-training/cultural-competencies/). Specific attention was given to broaden participants' practices of diversity

moving from anti-discrimination compliance to effectively planning, implementing, and evaluating culturally appropriate classes and programs for their audiences (Bendick et al., 2001).

Although the duration of cultural competency training varies broadly, many are brief interventions. For example, a meta-review of cultural competency training interventions for healthcare professionals by Beach et al. (2005) documented that the majority of the training focused on work with specific cultures and was less than eight hours in duration. In contrast, Navigating Difference is composed of five modules, each 2 – 3.5 hours in length, for a total of 18 hours. It can be implemented in a face-to-face format through a three-day condensed version, in six weekly sessions, or by incorporating distance learning technology (video conferencing along with face-to-face sessions) over a longer period of time. Another issue noted in the literature is the lack of theoretical grounding of many diversity training efforts (Bezrukova et al., 2012; Paluck, 2006). Navigating Difference was informed by intercultural theory and practice that align with the five cultural competencies, specifically the Values Orientation model (Kluckhohn & Strodbeck, 1961); The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (Bennett, 1993); intercultural communications theory (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2012); the Intercultural Conflict Styles model (Hammer, 2003) and work by Alan G. Johnson (2006) on privilege, power, and difference. The training builds from offering definitions of key terms (diversity, culture, competencies) by practicing key communication skills and culminating in a discussion of privilege, power, and oppression. Based on the adult education best practice that all persons learn best when in a safe and welcoming environment (Vella, 2002), the training activities support individual learning styles by implementing a variety of teaching methods (experiential learning, small group discussions, lectures, and individual reflection) to assure active participation and optimal learning. There is general agreement that cultural competency training needs to include cognitive learning, affective and experiential learning, and skill development (Bennett & Salonen, 2007; Deardorff, 2011; Otten, 2003). In each module, an opportunity is provided to apply the new learning to a workplace situation supporting the learner to make professional practice change once they return to their job (Deen et al., 2014).

Since the full implementation of Navigating Difference began, the training has been offered to Extension professionals (administrators, faculty, and staff), campus-based teaching and research faculty, staff and graduate students, university residence hall advisors, public school teachers and counselors, human services caseworkers, community college faculty and staff, and state government agency professionals, with a total outreach to 577 persons from across the United States and Guam. All trainings are taught by certified Navigating Difference trainers who complete a three-step process to become qualified. Potential trainers participate in the entire 18-hour Navigating Difference training, a three-day Train-the-Trainer Retreat conducted by the original designers of the curriculum, and intern with certified trainers. Currently, 163 persons have been trained by the program designers to be certified Navigating Difference trainers. Five LGUs, in addition to Washington State University, implement the curriculum in their states through the Extension system.

A three-phase evaluation process has been used since the beginning implementation of *Navigating Difference*. This three-phase evaluation process was selected to best answer our evaluation questions on changes in knowledge, attitude, skills, and behavior (Patton, 1997). The first phase was an analysis of pretest-posttest survey data to test for changes in knowledge and attitude. Participants filled out the pretest survey at the beginning of the 3-day face-to-face training and then completed a posttest survey at the end of the training. The second phase was a delayed posttest survey six months after the training was completed. Participants completed the delayed posttest survey through an online survey service. The final phase consisted of qualitative analysis of interviews, one year after participants completed the program, to examine long-term changes in skills and behavior.

The results of the first two phases have been reported in previous work showing short-term and long-term changes in knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs. The evaluation using a 12-item survey assessing knowledge and positive attitudes/beliefs about cultural difference showed statistically significant increases in 11 of the 12 items at the completion of the program. The long-term results showed a continued increase in all items with eight statistically significant (Deen et al., 2014).

The Present Study

This paper presents the third phase evaluation results to document long-term changes in skills and behavior outcomes of the Navigating Difference training. The study focuses on two research questions:

1. Does cultural competency training impact the professional practices of Extension educators and outreach professionals?
2. What factors facilitate or inhibit the practice of new interculturally appropriate behaviors?

Method

Study Design

As part of the third phase of the Navigating Difference evaluation, a subset of all participants were invited to be interviewed to examine the long-term behavioral changes. Various strategies were utilized to ensure the four criteria of trustworthiness described by Lincoln and Guba (1985). Credibility or internal validity was assured through working with a peer reviewer to access and advise on techniques; random sampling of participants in the study; the use of tape recorders to obtain exact wording of interviewees; and using literal statements of participants in the analysis and reporting (Amankwaa, 2016; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Shenton, 2004). Transferability or external validity was attained by utilizing several thick description techniques such as working with the peer reviewer on creating the interview questions; asking open-ended

questions; acquiring detailed, robust responses; and replication of the process with each interviewee (Amankwaa, 2016; Merriam & Tisdel, 2016; Shenton, 2004). Techniques to assure dependability or reliability include describing the research design in enough detail for it to be replicated, keeping detailed records of the process, and reviewing the effectiveness of the methods used (Shenton, 2004). And lastly, confirmability was guaranteed by implementing triangulation between researchers, peer reviewer, and interviewer (Amankwaa, 2016; Shenton, 2004).

A random selection of participants was contacted from five of the trainings and asked to participate in the interviews. The participants were contacted by the Principal Investigator and invited to participate in the interviews via email. Once a participant agreed to the interview, the Principal Investigator sent out a consent form and interview questions. Upon receiving the consent form, participants were contacted by an evaluation assistant for the interview. We conducted 11 phone interviews, and each interview lasted 15 to 20 minutes. All participants consented to be recorded. We later transcribed the interviews and coded them. The results from the interviews were used to answer our research questions.

The University Institutional Review Board considered the surveys and interviews to be part of the ongoing evaluation of university programming and deemed the evaluation procedures exempt from review. We provided full information to participants about evaluation procedures and questions. We did not offer incentives for participation in either the surveys or the interviews.

Participants

A total of 577 participants attended twenty-six different trainings over the course of eleven years. Of those participating, 76% reported demographic information, and 61% were female. The participant's average age was 43 years, and ages ranged from 20 to 72. All participants reported having completed at least high school or GED. Of participants who reported their race/ethnicity, 50.5% were white, 7.9% were Black/African American, 4.9% were Latino/Latina, 3.7% were Asian/Asian American, and 9.9% reported multiple ethnicities. In addition, five people reported ethnicity as American Indian/Alaska Native, seven as White/Middle Eastern, four as Pacific Islander/Hawaiian Native, and one person as African. We did not ask demographic questions of the interview respondents. The interviews were confidential and not linked with survey data.

Measures

Interviews. Program developers created a set of outcomes and indicators that reflected the program's goals and sent them for review to diversity experts at six universities to establish content validity. We designed interview questions to reflect the desired program outcomes for professional practice change. For example, "Is the way that you have worked changed since you went through the cultural competency training?" and "Have you served on diversity-related committees for Extension, the university, or the community?" We used the program outcomes

and their indicators as coding categories (Table 1). In addition, we asked about barriers to the implementation of training skills and suggestions for future trainings; as a result, we added two categories to capture those comments. We developed a set of decision rules to guide the coding of all content related to the categories listed in Table 1. Two coders evaluated each interview. To establish reliability, they initially coded a small number of the interviews and then compared their responses. To further ensure consistency, coders met throughout the process to develop consensus to reinforce the established coding decision rules.

Table 1. Coding Categories for Interviews: Cultural Competencies, Barriers, and Suggestions

1. Outcome I: Engage in culturally diverse settings, initiatives, and programs
   a. Participate in opportunities to increase intercultural competence in specific job-related contexts.
   b. Partner with diverse organizations through board/committee membership, joint sponsorship of events, or other forms of collaboration.
   c. Serve on diversity-related committees for Extension, the university, or the community.
   d. Encourage, support and model cultural competencies among colleagues, staff, and volunteers.
2. Outcome II: Integrate cultural competencies in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of programming.
   a. Engage members of diverse communities in determining program design and content.
   b. Incorporate diversity outcomes and activities into Plans of Work.
   c. Adapt recruitment, marketing, and delivery strategies to effectively reach diverse audiences.
   d. Utilize evaluation approaches and methods that effectively measure change with diverse learners.
3. Outcome III: Practice strategies for successful intercultural communication in professional settings.
   a. Adapt personal communication style and behaviors to be effective in a variety of cultural situations and settings.
   b. Recognize and address conflict arising from cultural differences.
   c. Model and share best practices for communicating across differences.
4. Barriers to implementation of knowledge and skills gained in training
5. Suggestions for future trainings

Results

Interview Outcomes

Outcome #1: Did respondents increase engagement and encourage, support, and model cultural competency skills? Respondents voiced an increased commitment to apply new perspectives gained from the training when interacting with colleagues and new audiences and to continue learning about themselves and others. One respondent stated that the training gave her "a sensitivity that not everyone is from the same mold or has had the same experiences." Respondents also mentioned engaging in partnerships that facilitated the further development of their own cultural competencies. For example, one person talked about immersing herself into the tribal culture to better understand how to work with that group: "That was something I wouldn't have done if I hadn't taken the training, and kind of realized that we better jump in and

almost immerse ourselves in their culture to understand them better." Also reported was recognizing and capitalizing upon opportunities to partner with a wide variety of agencies and organizations to implement programs with diverse groups. Some examples included food banks, English as Second Language programs, churches, tribes, and other programs within the Extension system.

Although few respondents reported serving on formal diversity-related committees for Extension, the university, or the community, most described strategies they employed to encourage, support, or model cultural competencies and share best practices among colleagues, staff or volunteers, and community members. Several mentioned adapting current trainings they conduct for volunteers, community teams, and new and current faculty to incorporate tools they had learned in Navigating Difference. Others described giving feedback to peers suggesting different protocols for research projects with a diversity perspective.

Outcome #2: Did participants integrate knowledge and skills gained at the training into their planning, implementing, and evaluation of programming? One skill taught in the training is the identification of cultural guides to gain information and engagement of specific cultural groups. Several of the respondents related successful incidences in working with cultural guides. Through the guides, the respondents learned about skills in the specific group, as well as traditions, customs, and educational materials that improved both group participation in the program and overall program results. One respondent used her cultural guide to understand cultural time differences. When the respondent was frustrated that participants in her program did not show up for the indicated start time, her cultural guide helped her understand that the participants may have had other priorities that prohibited them from "being on time."

The interviews also revealed that respondents were implementing adaptations to their recruitment, marketing, and delivery strategies. The first step to these changes was voiced by one person that an increased cultural sensitivity "has really allowed us to be more thoughtful and intentional in our programming." Specifically, respondents enhanced their marketing to include more diverse urban populations, whereas, in the past, most marketing had been done in rural areas of the county. Other respondents used the advice given to them by their cultural guides and employed different learning materials than they had in the past. For example, one participant replaced the generic USDA Food Pyramid with a Native American Food Pyramid in a nutrition education program. Others engaged the actual participants themselves to help with the teaching, as was the case where older Spanish-speaking students helped instruct younger Spanish-speaking students. In one situation where the audience was 100% Latino youth, the respondents adapted learning tools to include photos relevant to the audience, as well as invited Latinos of various occupations to be guest speakers. Other strategies included securing funding to hire program staff indigenous to the culture, using cultural traditions to enhance learning, and considering the background of the participants in planning and implementing programs. One respondent shared

that during a needs assessment process, group facilitation techniques from the participating group were implemented as a way to better engage their participants.

Outcomes #3: Did participants practice strategies for successful intercultural communications? Among all the outcomes, this question generated the most responses. Overwhelmingly, respondents indicated that their greatest area of growth was an awareness that although others may think and act differently than they do, their challenge was avoiding judgment of that difference and instead adapting their communication styles accordingly. In our interviews, one respondent indicated that she was more aware of how people have different communication styles, and no one style is better than another. This awareness led some of the respondents to be better listeners. One interviewee stated: "I tend to be a better listener, I believe. And probably reflect a little bit more on my answers before I actually blurt them out in a way that allows me to consider who is speaking to me, what possibly are their own judgments or their own history." Many respondents spoke about how the training helped them to "pull back and consider what they are saying and perhaps form a response that is different than it would have been before I took this class." Several of the respondents spoke of a greater sensitivity to the background of the persons with whom they were speaking, a heightened sense of mindfulness to the differences, and how those differences had led to judgment in the past but now led more to curiosity about that person and how to work with them: "It's healthy to pull back and look at things a little more objectively" and "I go into every setting knowing that there are differences and I need to listen for those…, be aware of those, and look for ways that I can communicate respect for that person even [if] I don't understand that person's experience." Respondents also shared that they had gained confidence in communicating across differences and in serving as an ally for underrepresented communities: "It was a great opportunity … to have some tools that I could … bring home, use with my staff who are also diverse, and use with our program."

Training participants recognized a greater awareness that cultural backgrounds could affect how people deal with conflict across cultural differences. In one case, this led to a better understanding of the cause of the conflict and consideration of how to deal with the conflict. The respondent stated, "We were talking about maybe since this person grew up in another family culture that the way she was interacting was part of where she came from. I think I was able to articulate that because of this training."

Barriers to implementation. In addition to questions about behavioral outcomes (practice change), participants were asked what factors facilitated or inhibited the practice of culturally competent professional behaviors. When asked about barriers to implementing what they had learned in the training, respondents gave answers that fell into two categories: external and internal. External barriers were organizational barriers that inhibited the practice of skills or application of practices related to cultural competencies. One respondent felt that when she tried to make changes in her programming to be more inclusive, the organization reacted with "resistance or a raised eyebrow." Another respondent felt that the organization's image was a

barrier to reach new audiences because of preconceived ideas of what the organization traditionally had to offer. Often stated was the lack of resources, time, and money provided by the organization to reach out to new audiences. Although the goal to reach a more diverse audience was verbally supported at the administrative level, participants reported a lack of resources to accomplish the goal. Furthermore, they perceived that the goal of reaching out to new and diverse audiences was not valued or supported at higher levels of the organization.

Internal barriers were personal factors that blocked the implementation of learned skills. Some personal factors that impeded implementation included a lack of time, not being able to transfer the skills learned in the training to their local community needs, and a lack of confidence. Over-confidence in their abilities to implement the skills learned in training was also mentioned. One person shared, "Learning these great skills and then coming back and trying to implement them … with the public, there was an assumption on my part that I was … ready to go and knew so much; so that in itself creates an assumption of total understanding. … Which still means you don't necessarily listen or observe what people are saying because you already [think you have] got it all figured out."

Suggestions. Participants were then asked what would facilitate the application of their intercultural knowledge to changes in their professional behavior. Respondents were clear that some type of follow-up support was needed. Although they felt they had gained a great amount of knowledge at the training, participants wanted mentoring, coaching, and additional information, along with an opportunity to discuss the challenges they faced in overcoming obstacles that they had not expected or anticipated while in the training. Specifically, they suggested follow-up resource sheets or updates with reminders of what they had learned in the training, as well as new information. They also recommended a more advanced training where they could delve more deeply into the topics, learn more about specific cultures through a competency lens, have an opportunity to design specific action plans for their communities, and maintain a peer network with others who had completed the training.

Discussion

Land-grant universities are called to offer education to all people. With the United States population continually becoming more and more diverse, it is imperative that Extension educators be trained in cultural competencies (Iverson, 2008). Current efforts to train Extension professionals have resulted in increases in awareness, knowledge, and skills but often lack in impacting professional behaviors (Daniel et al., 2014; Guion et al., 2004; Ingram, 2013; Shaklee et al., 2014; Traver et al., 2007). Results from previous evaluation work (Deen et al., 2014) and the interviews in this study indicate that participants in Navigating Difference not only show increases in awareness, knowledge, and skills but also achieve changes in professional behaviors. This supports the idea that cultural competency training can impact the professional behaviors of Extension professionals and that there are specific factors that can facilitate or inhibit practice change.

Changes in Behavior

Changes in professional behaviors reported here vary widely and include examples such as continued learning about self and others; development of partnerships with organizations, agencies, and cultural guides; and adaptation of current training materials, research or evaluation protocols, communication styles and recruitment, marketing, and delivery strategies. Participants also reported barriers to making changes on the organizational and personal levels.

The greatest change reported by participants was their increased practice of intercultural communication skills. This area of post-training change has been noted in previous research. In a study conducted after the implementation of a cultural competency training program with community preceptors from 13 medical schools in New England and New York, evaluations showed that participants reported the highest level of intent to change after they had participated in the workshop unit that focused on communication and relationship-building skills. Researchers hypothesized that the positive response was due to the fact that the workshop included specific skills for practice and teaching (Ferguson et al., 2003). In another study reporting outcomes of a cultural competence training for child health professionals, Webb and Sergison (2003) indicated that of the 75% of participants who reported behavior changes (from two to seven years post-training), 56% of those changes were related to communication.

Barriers to Change

Interview results indicated two significant barriers to making practice change. The first barrier, at the organizational level, was a lack of resources, time, and money provided by the institution to reach out to new audiences. The respondents felt that although at the administrative level, the goal to reach more diverse audiences was verbally supported, at the local level, the resources were not available, nor was it perceived that the goal of reaching out to new audiences was valued at the higher levels of the institution. Lack of time was also noted as a key institutional barrier in a study done to understand if or how diversity topics were integrated into education classes at a major university (Alvarez McHatton et al., 2009). Daniel et al. (2014) also reported that little or no practice change was made by faculty following an immersion program to increase cultural competence due to a lack of resources from the institution.

A second barrier to change gleaned from the interview results was at the personal level: not being able to transfer skills learned at the training to the workplace and a lack of confidence. In their study on integrating diversity topics into the classroom, Alvarez McHatton et al. (2009) reported that faculty also voiced a lack of confidence in their skills to deal with diversity issues. Pasque et al. (2013) recommend organizational support as a means to assist individual faculty as they deal with ever-increasingly diverse classrooms. Daniel et al. (2014) urged the university leadership to create a "culture of inclusion" by recognizing faculty successes in diversity work. Training for administration leading to increased cultural competency awareness and skills may assist university leaders to better understand the issues and enhance their support to direct line

faculty and staff. Pasque et al. (2013) state that if change is to happen, then "changes both in individual faculty members approaches and in the organization within which they teach and learn will be required" (p. 12). They propose that for faculty to invest time in their own development of cultural competency skills, the organization, including department chairs, deans, and provosts, also needs to demonstrate a commitment to these efforts.

Ongoing Support as a Factor to Facilitate Change

Practice change requires ongoing engagement beyond the initial training. Work experience alone does not necessarily lead to cultural competence (Hansen et al., 2000). Interviewees in this study indicated that upon their return to work, even if they felt fully qualified after their training, implementation of new skills was more difficult than they had anticipated. The situations they encountered were more complex than they predicted, and more individualized strategies were needed. The interviewees suggested ongoing support through resource sheets, webinars, case studies, and an opportunity for one-on-one or group input on their particular circumstances. Hansen et al. (2000) also recommend "ongoing consultation groups … to facilitate the kinds of personal introspection necessary to ensure adequate awareness orientated competency" (p. 658). An example of the need for ongoing support is also reflected in the evaluation of a cultural competency training for healthcare providers. Thom et al. (2006) noted that "sustained changes in physician behaviors may require a combination of interactive training, dedicated practice time, and the reinforcement of behavioral changes in the practice environment" (p. 5).

Change at the Extension professional level must be supported by the institution. Abernethy (2005) notes that when training staff to provide culturally competent care in clinical mental health settings, "Cultural competency training is most effective when it is not simply mandated for staff, but when managers participate in training, model cultural competence and foster institutional change" (p. 92). Regarding what groups among the university personnel should participate in trainings, evidence exists that it needs to include everyone, regardless of demographics, race, ethnicity, or gender (Dunaway et al., 2012). Even though Pasque et al. (2013) found that white faculty and men were less likely to report that they had incorporated readings on racial issues into their classes, even non-majority groups need training. In addition, persons who perceive their backgrounds to be comparable to those they work with also need training, as too many assumptions may result from familiarity (Abernethy, 2005).

Strengths, Limitations, and Future Research

A major strength of the study is how it builds on the previous quantitative results showing specific, significant changes in attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge targeted by the program. These qualitative results enabled us to explore some of the specific practices implemented by participants in their daily work, as well as barriers to those practices and suggestions for strengthening trainings.

While the current study documented changes in professional practices among university faculty and staff, further research is needed to explore training effectiveness for a broader higher education audience. Because Navigating Difference participants were primarily faculty with Extension appointments, studies that include more campus-based research and teaching faculty, student services staff, and university administrators, would further inform the field about the differences in cultural competency training effects for personnel in a variety of institutional roles.

The current study participants also elected to attend cultural competency training. Differences in program effects for mandated versus voluntary training are a topic of considerable interest in the diversity field. Results of previous studies regarding the relative benefits of required versus self-selected training have been mixed (Bezrukova et al., 2012). Future work that examines differential training effects across mandated and voluntary contexts could clarify the effectiveness of various attendance models.

Future research should also utilize more sophisticated methodologies, including indirect measures of cultural competencies. Options might include incorporating direct observations by colleagues, supervisors, or students as third-party reports (Paluck, 2006), utilizing evaluations requiring study participants to problem solve, or apply knowledge to culturally complex scenarios or case studies. In addition, conducting psychometric work on the survey might yield a brief questionnaire that minimizes participant burden while still capturing change in beliefs and attitudes. Lastly, diversity training studies with experimental designs remain elusive. In Paluck's review of diversity training evaluations, only eight studies used randomized treatment and control groups. Until a body of research with greater methodological rigor is developed, it is difficult to determine which components of cultural competency training are most efficacious in promoting changes in behavioral outcomes and the degree to which training reliably and consistently impacts the professional practices of those who participate.

Implications for Land-Grant Institutions

Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (2004) describes what can happen in organizations if their members have not reached higher levels of cultural sensitivity. He proposes that such organizations may recognize the value of diversity and even institute recruitment and retention policies and practices to increase diversity in faculty, staff, and students. However, without training for the organization's members beyond simply recognizing cultural differences to specific training in cultural competency skills, diverse faculty, staff, and students will not remain engaged in the organization. Therefore, training for all members within an organization can lead to an environment where there is a high retention of a diverse workforce and the differences among employees are used as a resource to enhance the organization's work. Universities might consider developing stratified learning opportunities that include a variety of venues for developing cultural competency skills. A first-level opportunity for faculty, staff, and students could include a baseline course that focuses on competencies affecting knowledge and attitudinal changes (awareness and understanding), strategies and skills for engagement

(intercultural communications), and the sensitive issues of privilege, power, and oppression. A higher-level opportunity could include learning and discussion groups or mentoring from a broad range of peers to encourage ongoing introspection, which would assist learners in applying the knowledge and skills attained to real-life situations.

We propose that within institutions of higher education, everyone—administrators, faculty, staff, and students—benefits from increased cultural competencies and should therefore participate in activities to enhance these skills. Cocchiara and Connerley (2010) describe an integrated model for diversity training in the private sector consistent with our vision and equally relevant for higher education systems. To achieve a future state of cultural competence training that transforms organizations and sustains behavioral change, they advocate: "Training that encourages the desired behavioral changes and is embedded systematically throughout the organization, whereby participants transfer … training knowledge directly to their jobs. Effective training programs also emphasize continuously developing skills and establishing accountability for learning. Regardless of the format in which diversity training is conducted, effective training is measured, strategically linked to [institutional] goals, customized for different workgroups, inclusive, and competency-based" (Cocchiara & Connerley, 2010, p. 1096).

Conclusion

With the ever-changing population in the United States, it is important that professionals that serve the community, like Extension professionals, have the knowledge and skills to meet the needs of those they serve. This research indicates that it is possible to provide professionals with that knowledge and those skills to make real change in their practices to better serve their communities. Changing people's behaviors is not an easy task, but the current study shows promise in *Navigating Difference: Cultural Competency Training for Outreach Professionals* for changing professional practices.

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