A bottom-up approach to cultural competence

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Abstract

Cultural competence has, for the most part, been theoretically and scientifically constructed using a top-down approach with a paucity of actual, practice-informed empirical data. Thus, it includes embedded philosophical assumptions that are not always articulated, and the effectiveness of training and practice is unknown. The research inquires particularly into the operationalisation of cultural competence. Specifically, a compositional model of cultural competence: (knowledge, awareness-attitude and skills), was developed by closely examining how social workers build their cultural competence through educational learning and practicum, and also through their professional practice where they incorporate this learning into their own practice; and the research explores how they reconstruct their own understandings of cultural competence over time. This research uses a deductive bottom-up approach through which cultural competence is explored in the lived learning and practice experiences of participants. The data were collected from both student and practitioner participants. Ten current social work students from the Bachelor of Social Work and Master of Social Work (qualifying degree) who have completed at least one practicum as a part of their training were interviewed. Also, 18 social worker practitioners, who had at least two years of work experiences in various social work settings, participated in interviews about their educational experiences and including practicum. Additionally, the practitioner participants interviewed included a discussion about their transitional experiences from education to work and cross-cultural practice experiences in their career. From the findings, cultural competence was particularly demonstrated when building a client–social worker professional relationship which is fundamental to cross-cultural social work practice. The participants have developed the ability to use their professional self and personal self in different stages of the practice relationship as needed. A significant key to the development of cultural competence was critical self-reflection; this extends the ability to critically analyse the self in relation to the other (client) in a practice relationship. Cultural competence assists social workers to rediscover new insights of self and practice. They form and re-form their own practice learning through, and from, cross-cultural experience throughout their careers. This research will inform new aspects of cultural competence from social work students and practitioners that could extend the existing knowledge and also help to improve further educational learning and training in the future.

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Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Meaning
ANZASW	Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers
APA	American Psychological Association
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CPE	Continuing Professional Education
CR	Critical realism
EBP	Evidence-based practice
GT	Grounded theory

IFSW	International Federation of Social Workers
IASSW	International Association of Schools of Social Work
NASW	US National Association of Social Workers
RP	Reflective professionalism
SWRB	Social Workers Registration Board

Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

In the past decades, cultural competence has been a prominent concept and significant part of professional terminology in contemporary social work. With the phenomenon of growing cultural and ethnic diversity by global migration movements, in particular in Western societies, and the increasing emphasis on the position of indigenous communities, cultural competence has seen an increased demand for cultural considerations, culturally specific practice and service especially in helping professions such as social work. This is because disparities, specifically health (there are others such as education and socio-economy), among clients of historically marginalised populations (racial and ethnic minorities, indigenous people, immigrants and economically disadvantaged communities) are due to a lack of cultural appropriate services provision, they have received poor quality services compared with those received by their White counterparts (Fisher-Borne, Cain, & Martin, 2014). On the one hand, cultural competence has not been given a unified meaning. The concept lacks a focus on a common definition, there is insufficient provision of specific and concrete cultural competence guidelines and protocols in social work education to prepare social work students for practice. As a result, there are several key questions raised, such as an understanding of how social work students and practitioners develop their own cultural competence and how their acquired skills and knowledge from education are applied for practising effectively in cross-cultural situations. These are the key questions which inform this thesis. In addition to setting out the structure and approach to this work, this chapter sets out some of the background to these questions and provides context for them.

1.1 Cultural and social work

"Social work is constantly being defined and redefined as it evolves in response to shifting contexts and demands…although it retains unity around its core values and overall purpose" (Dominelli, 2004, p. 11). According to Cree (2008), social work is constructed through negotiating conflicts which occur within society and between society and individuals. Social workers have to negotiate sets of demands and expectations that can be complex and contradictory (Dominelli, 2004). These demands come from both sides: society and individuals. The profession is formed and changed from the interrelationships with society and individuals. One is the relationship between social work and individuals and involves social workers and people they serve. The workers' experiences with people influence social work (Cree, 2008. Another relationship is between social work and society. Society sets limitations and extensions of social work tasks and responsibilities – what social workers can do and should do – while social work seeks to influence the society (Cree, 2008). Particularly, the latter relationship is crucial as society significantly uniquely shapes social work in a country context. Social work has been influenced by society's demands and expectations through economic, political and social processes (Payne, 2005). In addition to these factors, culture has had a great impact on social work in recent decades. The construction of social work, illustrated from the history of social work, will be briefly outlined.

Social work originated in 19th century England. The profession was derived from the economic and social changes in the societies in which it developed, responding to the nature of human hardship and suffering (Baines, 2011a; Parton & O'Byrne, 2000). Due to the Industrial Revolution, far-reaching economic and social changes led to breaking down of the parish-based system of the Poor Laws from 1601 (McDonald, 2001). The residual welfare model enacted conservative values and emphasised the family as the primary source of welfare, covering dependency and life risks, while the state provided for the vulnerable, such as children, the aged, and the infirm (McDonald, 1998). For others who suffered from hardships in life, individual help-seeking was mostly encouraged. Consequently, a wide range of charities emerged in the 19th century in the United Kingdom (Cree, 2008). The non-state social services were expected to provide for others who the state did not support (McDonald, 1998). Charity work was clearly separated from state welfare provision. On the other hand, due to the Great Depression, which struck many English-speaking and European countries in the early 20th century, the economic downturn led to large-scale unemployment. Social work became institutionalised in Britain, and the government

took more responsibility for the citizens' well-being: the universal model based on social democratic values (Baines, 2011a).

During the early British and North American development of the profession, social services were increasingly incorporated into state functions; social work became responsible for regulating and controlling the voluntary sector and also social work activity was regulated and legally defined (Cree, 2008). Social workers played a key role in the expansion of welfare which aimed for national growth and well-being by promoting social responsivity and reducing social risk until the post-war era (Parton, 2000). The citizenship-based welfare provision was formulated on a homogeneous identity that applied equally to all residents within a particular geographic entity (Dominelli, 2010). However, the citizenship-based welfare state declined and nationality became less significant; thus, it does not strongly define people's social identity (Payne & Askeland, 2008). Modern society became more aware of diversity and/or difference within. Culture, ethnicity and localisation came to be imperative for defining people's social identity(ies) (Payne & Askeland, 2008). Since the late 20th century, culture has become a vital topic in social work and practice through the experiencing of such social phenomena as: *globalisation*, *post-colonialism* and *post-modernism*, all of which are associated with culture (Payne & Askeland, 2008). These phenomena provide an underpinning, and a broad context, for this thesis. Thus, each phenomenon's influence on social work will briefly discussed below.

1.1.1 Globalisation and social work

Globalisation refers to "closer integration of economic, social, political, environmental, and legal policies across nations" (Baines, 2011b, p. 30). One of the significant key features of globalisation is global capitalism which is rooted in the West. Economic systems play a central role in the current world economy; business organisations have become more efficient in accumulating capital to finance, in particular, transnational organisations; hence, this makes different countries' economies more interdependent (Payne & Askeland, 2008). As a result, nation-states have had progressively less control of their own economies as transnational companies often have larger economies than states; the economic system has altered the political system, due to the reduction in the political power of governments (Payne & Askeland, 2008). The political changes derived from economic changes have been associated with the introduction of neoliberalism (Baines, 2011b). This new ideology has an emphasis on economic rationality based on market value. This has had a great impact on social security systems of the universal model (citizenship base) of welfare that had been developed in the early 20th century. The neoliberal

governments led to a shift from universal model of welfare provision: meeting the social needs of all citizens to the targeted populations who need the most help (Baines, 2011b). The economic and political changes experienced through globalisation brought about social changes. One example is that the relationship between the state and citizen has changed (Dominelli, 2004).

These economic and political changes also resulted in change for social work. Neoliberal governments reformed public spending on social work services, emphasising privatisation of social services and increasing economic competition between service providers (Fook, 2012). In non-government social services, where much social work employment is located and relies on public funding in the Western world, social work has become fragmented and separated between purchaser (government) and provider (social work agency and social worker) for the sake of economic efficiency (Fook, 2012). The welfare state has become a primary sponsor, which prioritises rationality and legitimacy for regulating and inspecting social work (Parton, 2000). Social work became subject to the influence of managerialism which significantly changes both the organisations and their operations as a result: the social work profession has become a largely administrative response to people's needs (Bamford, 2015). Work is processed in an essentially bureaucratic way with manuals, guidelines and lines of accountability carried out in a purely functional way (Parton & O'Byrne, 2000). Social work in many Western countries, including New Zealand, has experienced a similar path. A traditional aim of social work, to create social change, grew weaker.

1.1.2 Post-colonialism

Another key characteristic of globalisation is technological advancement (Robertson, 1992). Developments in transport, efficient communication and information systems, the movements of people, goods and ideas across the globe have drastically increased (Ritzer, 2010). Due to the economic and technological successes of the West, Western culture is seen as a global connection and that trend has been adapted and adopted and has influenced other cultures. As a consequence, globalisation forces separate cultures into close contact with each other (Askeland & Payne, 2006; Payne & Askeland, 2008). This has made for closer connections in the global world by creating Western cultural homogenisation. On the other hand, cultural globalisation has brought unresolved colonial issues across the world; a process of cultural homogenisation under the dominant Western systems creates and reflects power relations between the West and the rest of the world (Fook, 2012). An historical form of power relationships of cultural superiority claimed by former colonial people over former colonised people has

significantly raised awareness of post-colonialism (Askeland & Payne, 2006). Yellow Bird (2008) explains that colonialism occurs when people invade the land held by an ethnic, racial or cultural group and establish political, social, spiritual, intellectual and economic dominance over the territory and people. Historically, Western nations dominated others through imposing their cultural 'superiority' – assumed because of their military conquests and types of government; post-colonialism is associated with the historical period from the 1600s to the middle of the 1900s (Payne & Askeland, 2008). "The idea of post-colonialism implies that our present is affected by past colonialism" (Askeland & Payne, 2006, p. 733).

With increasing global human movements in recent decades, new forms of inequality associated with colonialism have been found. Societies have become more diverse, in particular, in Western countries. Diversity is, however, a key relation to concepts of disadvantage as it exists in diverse societies where there are disadvantages in some form for particular groups; they can be excluded by individual prejudice and also by stigmatising policies and structures of the wider society (Sheppard, 2006). "Culture is an important link between apparently disparate people" (Payne & Askeland, 2008, p. 10). Grey, Yellow Bird and Coates (2008) report that many personal and social problems have derived from decades of mistreatment and exploitation under various government policies in societies where indigenous people live and these have affected those groups' life opportunities, self-identity, and self-esteem. Although physical colonialism has declined, cultural colonialism is more dominant at the present time (Askeland & Payne, 2006).

Furthermore, education has been a part of homogenisation processes allowing cultural dominance to be exerted in a post-colonial environment (Askeland & Payne, 2006). Colonisation is significantly relevant to the past history of social work, as it is part of exporting the modernity of social work; the Western concept of social work has been adopted in non-Western cultures and then applied to Indigenous people. Western knowledge is often perceived as superior, advanced, and has universal application – social work was reluctant to accept non-Western and Indigenous world views. As a result, local knowledge and traditional forms of helping and healing were pushed aside as a consequence of the processes of colonising, Westernisation, globalisation and Americanisation (Gray, Coates & Yellow Bird, 2008).

A critical question has been raised over the globalisation (or internationalisation) of Western social work: that its values and methods overlook local cultures and contexts (Gray & Coates, 2008).

Scholars such as Kee (2008) and Yip (2005) emphasise cultural constructivist perspectives that culture is considered as plural, hybrid and heterogeneous in social work. Banks (2012) also argues that social work is a value-based profession which has established distinctive methods and approaches to local conditions and cultures. Homogenisation of (Western) culture through cultural globalisation paradoxically creates opportunities for a form of 'heterogenisation', reflecting awareness of local differences in social work; for example, family group conferences, which involve public care of children in decisions affecting their lives, originated from a tradition of indigenous Māori people in New Zealand and has been adopted in many countries including those in the West (Payne & Askeland, 2008). Increasingly, social work has developed a new cultural awareness and taken seriously into consideration culturally appropriate practice which is suitable for a local context. Hence, global colonial issues have had an impact on local issues. On the other hand, the historical concept of colonisation still has a current effect in social work (Fook, 2012).

1.1.3 Post-modernism

Globalisation has led societies to face various changes. Due to the impact of an economic system rooted in the West, developing countries experience disadvantages when competing in the global market (Payne & Askeland, 2008). The economic inequality between developed and developing countries has led to economic-based migration (Ritzer, 2010). As a result, Western countries have become the most popular economic migration destinations (Payne & Askeland, 2008). For instance, the demographics of the United States have increased the number of non-White populations through international migration (Diller, 2011). Therefore, host countries are confronted with cultural diversity and face cultural changes stemming from the global economic migration (Payne & Askeland, 2008). Human diversity involves changes and those societies contain irrationalities coming up against modernist rational preferences for certainty and clarity (Payne & Askeland, 2008). The previous dominant ideology of modernism began to be undermined by a range of unsettling conditions and experiences in the post-modern era shaped by globalisation (Parton & O'Byrne, 2000). "Post-modernism refers to an approach to the development of society or societies or (indeed) cultures, which asserts that we have gone beyond the stage of modernism" (Sheppard, 2006, p. 60).

To a modernist way of thinking, human beings can, and should, manage their lives using their rational minds and modernism aims to identify central truths about the world which can be known through research relying on rational analysis based on external observation and experiment (Payne,

2014). Thus, helping can (and should) use evidence-based practice (EBP), drawing on knowledge gained through positivist scientific methods (Payne, 2014). However, such modernist knowledge was created by particular groups of people who developed the knowledge and accepted the methods (Fook, 2012). This gives explanations of human being and society in a general way through evidence built up into one overall perspective (Payne, 2005). Those groups of people were mostly located in Western societies (Fook, 2012). Western pathology, for instance, was used for explaining minority issues and behaviour from Western perspectives in social work (Payne, 2005). The people who are not in the majority group and have lived experience as a minority in society find these perspectives incompatible with their lives (Fleras & Spoonley, 1999). Post-modernism even raises doubts about the possibility of being accurate about our world and identifying rational solutions for social problems (Welsh, 2006).

The global migration and associated demographic changes led to a growing awareness of some inadequacies in the traditional models of social work (Tsang & George, 1998). The traditional approaches oversimplified issues of understanding people (Askeland & Payne, 2008). Social work began to be aware of the inadequacy of its day-to-day social work practice when it was deemed to have failed to recognise the complex nature of social work (Parton & O'Byrne, 2000). Problem solving through modernist knowledge/assumptions has not always fitted when practitioners are faced with actual practical experiences of complexity, uncertainty, instability, and value conflicts in practice, as the problematic settings were ignored (Schön, 1983, 1999). Post-modernism changes the ways of viewing or interpreting ourselves, experiences and problems (Payne, 2014). Many social workers experience changes in clients' needs and are required to perform different practice approaches and skills for the emergence of new populations (Baines, 2011a, Baines, 2011b). Social work needs to accommodate diverse populations and respond to various social problems. Hence, social work, in a sense, lost confidence because through using only positivist scientific knowledge in practice, it cannot aim to resolve problems – uncertainty and unpredictability are the key to understanding practice (Sheppard, 2006). Post-modernist influences on social work led to considering flexible thinking and practice from multiple perspectives. The post-modern influences on culture and identity, which contribute to understanding of current cultural competence, will be discussed in the following sections.

1.2 Conceptualisation of cultural competence practice

Cultural competence and related studies have been found in the social work literature over approximately the past 40 years. Studies of cultural competence have emerged from the field of multiculturalism

(Kwong, 2009). In social work, it has developed within a multicultural social work discourse (Nadan 2014). Cultural competence was originally rooted in the US civil rights movement of the 1960s (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Sakamoto, 2007). “The United States declared itself the country where races, cultures and orientations meet and blend together to form a new identity as Americans” (Allen-Meares, 2007, p.84). According to Allen-Meares, 2007, the country has been metaphorically referred to as a ‘melting pot’ with an underlying concept of assimilation and acculturation. The concept has proven to be outdated, however, reflecting an inaccurate view of their perceptions and attitudes towards culture, race and personal relationships. Over time, discussion around culture has increased and diversity is mainly acknowledged as synonymous with differences in skin colours in the United States (Johnson & Munch, 2009).

Since Solomon’s (1976) *Black Empowerment* was written, literature and practice with ethnic and cultural minority groups has significantly grown (Abrams & Moio, 2009). Prior to that time, publications on race and ethnicity were limited (Baines, 2011a). Social work education increased its discussions of the disparities of racial and ethnic minority groups (Johnson & Munch, 2009). Social work students of colour along with White students advocated challenging the Eurocentric biases in social work teaching and practice, and also challenged the current deficit view of individuals and communities of colour (Abrams & Moio, 2009). As a consequence, social work shifted from relying on the melting pot and assimilation models of the 1960s to the multiculturalism developed in the 1980 (Nadan, 2014).

Besides this, due to enormous global demographic changes, people of colour such as African Americans, Native American, Hispanics, Asians, and Pacific Islanders would eventually comprise a larger segment of the population than Caucasian Americans in that society (Welsh, 2006). In contrast to a melting pot, the term ‘multiculturalism’ is often used in a descriptive sense of society where diverse cultures co-exist within a society. Social work faces growing domestic diversity within the United States that challenges social work’s daily work (Nadan, 2014). Social workers are increasingly involved in working cross-culturally – that requires them to work effectively with diverse client populations and provide culturally appropriate services. Therefore, cultural competence emerged from the acknowledgement of deviation from the melting pot ideology and the large global demographic changes in the United States (Ben-Ari & Strier, 2010). These social changes influenced the helping professions, in particular social work, working with culturally diverse individuals and groups.

The earlier theoretical concept of cultural competence refers to Devore and Schlesinger's (1981) ethnic-sensitive practice which challenges social workers to be aware of their values and worldviews and to expose how racism creates structural disadvantages that impact on individual and community well-being (Schlesinger & Devore, 1995). Abram and Moio (2009) discuss a focal point of Devore and Schlesinger's (1981) definition that social work re-think its Eurocentric purview; social workers are required to increase their competence working with racial, ethnic and cultural minorities. This approach has extensively promoted an awareness of multiple forms of oppression, not only referring to racism but also including sexism, heterosexism, ageism and ableism which was a response arising from post-modernism's emphasis on multiple identities. Green (1982) also defined an idea of ethnic competence, "to be able to conduct one's professional work in a way that is congruent with the behaviour and expectations that members of a distinctive culture recognise as appropriate among themselves" (p. 52, cited in Tsang & George, 1998, p. 77). Green's definition emphasises that the social worker requires the ability to adapt to the cultural values and preferences of clients in professional work (Boyle & Springer, 2001). The most cited concept in the social work literature has been Cross, Bazron, Dennis, and Isaacs's (1989) cultural competence framework:

> The cultural competence model explored in this monograph is defined as a set of congruent behaviours, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals and enables that system, agency, or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations. (p.7)

The definition has some similarities with that of Green (1982), but Cross et al. (1989) give special attention to incorporation of cultural competence into the work of micro-professionals, meso-agency and macro-system levels.

On the other hand, authors, such as Nadan (2014), Fisher-Borne et al. (2014), Harrison and Turner (2011) and Kwong (2009), argue that cultural competence is theoretically and practically inadequate and requires further investigation. 'Cultural competence' is still difficult to define (Kwong, 2009) and measure with accuracy (Yan & Wong, 2005). One of the key challenges is that it is inconsistent, changeable and evolves over time (Harrison & Turner, 2011).

Those foundational theories of cultural competence have given conceptual frameworks for how cultural competence is constructed, and guide direction for the helping professions with culturally focused practice and also build understanding of the client from a culturally competent perspective (Lum,

2007). However, the concept of cultural competence is rather abstract (Yan & Wong, 2005). It can be understood in a broad sense that oversimplifies its meaning. Furthermore, cultural competence cannot be simply examined in the operationalisation of practice in research; hence, it often contains limited empirical evidence (in the common use of that term) and is inadequately tested for effectiveness in teaching and practice including whether the form of practice improves service delivery (Harrison & Turner, 2011). Although cultural competence is required for effective cross-cultural social work practice it is not sufficiently demonstrated as to what and how it is required for effective practice.

1.3 Coexistence of different perspectives on culture

As referred to earlier, the concept of cultural competence is not well defined. This is because 'culture' is a key foundation for building concepts and constructs of cultural competence; however, the concept of culture itself is not clearly and specifically defined (Kwong, 2009). Culture is a complex concept (Yan, 2008; Lum, 2007; Suh, 2004). It is elusive and can evoke a multitude of meanings (Johnson & Munch, 2009). In particular, in social work, culture is a discursive term and it is debated as to whether culture is an essentialist or holistic concept (Ben-Ari & Strier, 2010). Cultural competence has different epistemological interpretations (Abrams & Moio, 2009). This is due to the different theoretical perspectives of essentialism and constructivism (Nadan, 2014). Hence, to understand the nature of cultural competence, it is important to inspect thoroughly what 'culture' is and what is 'competence'; the two key words that are incorporated in the meaning of cultural competence.

1.3.1 Essentialism: a concept of culture

Nadan (2014) asserts that cultural competence is strongly influenced by essentialist perspectives. Essentialism was a dominant philosophical foundation from positivism up to the 20th century during the modernist era. According to DeLamater and Hyde (1998), in a reference to the work of Plato (BC 428–348), classical essentialism, the phenomena of the natural world, were simply a reflection of a finite number of fixed and unchanged forms, which was later named as essence, "[t]hat is an essence does not change and is categorically different from another essence" (p.10).

> In short, essentialism views phenomena as having as objective indwelling essence, a sort of "true nature". Hence, a category is viewed as a natural entity, possessing a special essence that sets it apart from other categories. This essence automatically and unambiguously places the

> phenomena into specific determined and unchangeable categories. The main task of science is to observe and discover the true nature of things, that is, their essential qualities. (Nadan, 2014, p. 4)

A specific cultural group is perceived as an entity whose members share some essential defining characteristics and thus the essentialist perspective would view cultural competence from the traditional point of culture as pre-determined, static and homogenous (Nadan, 2014). The fundamental assumption is that there is commonality within ethnic communities where they share their cultural values and norms as the fixed essence of community (Kumsa, 2011).

Culture is generally defined in an essentialist manner demonstrated in the US National Association of Social Workers' ([NASW] 2007) Standard of Cultural Competence Practice:

> …culture is often referred to as the totality of ways being passed on from generation to generation. The term culture includes ways in which people with disabilities or people from various religious backgrounds or people who are gay, lesbian or transgender experience the world around them. (p. 222, cited in Johnson & Munch, 2009)

The NASW statement shows that culture is always defined from a particular view. Mostly definitions of culture in cultural competence are expressed in a conceptual, cognitive, and behavioural sense from a psychological perspective (Kwong, 2009).

Lum (2007) proposes three major descriptions of culture: (1) the way of life of multiple groups in society which is broadened to race, ethnic, religious, people with disability, gay, lesbian, or transgender; (2) to become the sum total life patterns passed on from generation to generation within a group of people including institutions, language, habits of thinking and patterns of social and interpersonal relationships; and (3) to value the integrated patterns of human behaviours: thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values. The descriptions seem to suggest basic definitions of culture often used in cultural competence in social work. Cross et al. (1989) mention that: "The word culture is used because it implies the integration of patterns of human behaviour that includes thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions of a racial, ethnic, religious, or social group" (p. 18). This quote was also used in the NASW's policy statements in 2000 (Johnson & Munch, 2009). The definition of culture contributes to an elusive concept of cultural competence. Yan and Wong (2005) explicate further the NASW's Standard of Cultural Competence Practice in which the notion of culture exerts a strong influence on human behaviours, worldviews, perspectives on the patterns of life and people's concepts of the essential nature of human conditions within groups through their cultures: "[i]n general, the implicit assumption of cross-cultural discussion is that humans are, by nature, objects

of culture" (p. 184). Hence, cultural competence is significantly influenced by the construction of an essentialist concept of culture.

1.3.2 Constructivist/constructionist views of culture

The NASW also acknowledges that culture encompasses subjective experiences of people within specific cultures (Johnson & Munch, 2009). This view of culture is considered to be constructivist. Since the 1990s, the concepts of constructionism, incorporating post-modernist ideas, have been imported into social work practice (Payne, 2005). An important milestone in the development of constructivist views comes from the work of Berger and Luckmann (1966) in their publication, *The Social Construction of Reality*.

> The social construction of reality emphasises that shared social constructions contribute to the socialisation of individuals into society and into social groups within society, to the extent that social ideas are so widely shared that they become a form of reality to participants in that society. (Payne, 2005, p. 164)

Social construction theory proposes that people perceive their world as part of interchanges between people in their social, cultural and historical context (Payne, 2005). Culture is a lens on the individual through perceiving and interpreting the world (Maidment, 2009). Diller (2011) also explains that:

> Culture is viewed as a lens through which life is perceived. Each culture, through its differences (in language, values, personality and family patterns, worldview, sense of time and space, and rules of interaction), generates a phenomenologically different experience of reality. Thus, the same situation (e.g., an initial counselling session at a community mental health centre) may be experienced and interpreted very differently depending on the cultural background of individual clients and providers. (p. 5)

Thus, people shape their experience of reality through their cultural lens (Diller, 2011) and what we know as a society involves interpretations of the world – when we look at the world, we make sense of it by making interpretations (Sheppard, 2006). We process our reality (experience) through our cultural lens. In the constructivist perspective, our understanding of culture comes from internalised meaning to make sense of the world (Williams, 2006). Culture, therefore, is considered one of the influences shaping our views of the world and experiences which is a significant key understanding when working with individual clients, in particular, in social work practice in cross-cultural situations.

Moreover, these essentialist and constructivist perspectives of culture contribute to different understandings of human identity. Essentialism has been applied to collective or group-based identities,

conceptualising individuals as having a fixed, unchanged and essential identity (Collins & Bilge, 2016). This perspective emerged from the modernist/positivist paradigm – positivism acknowledges identity as common to members of a group, although there are individual differences within the group (Williams, 2006). However, constructivism understands the world, people and their experiences as complex. The collective identity is criticised by suppressing differences within a group (Collins & Bilge, 2016). "The post-modernist understanding of culture is that all cultural identities are constructed and, therefore, changeable in response to different internal and external contingencies" (Williams, 2006, p. 214). The static view of identity has been challenged in the post-modernist era; post-modernists argue that identity is complex, multifaceted and fluid as it changes over time depending on contexts and through interaction with others and thus, identity is a negotiated social entity (Dominelli, 2004). Under the post-modernist influence, understanding of our identity(ies) has multiple dimensions. Intersection of identities is recognised; those such as race, gender and sexual orientation are all included (Fisher-Borne et al., 2014). These conceptual understandings of culture and identity result in different approaches to cultural competence, which will be discussed further in the next chapter.

1.4 Contexts of cultural competence

As culture is understood variously, cultural competence is vaguely formulated. Hence, this can mean that social work practitioners understand the concept and form their actual practice from an implicit meaning. Harrison and Turner (2011) argue that 'cultural competence' and 'cultural competency' are often used interchangeably but there are differences between two. Competence takes the meaning of capability in a broad sense and cultural competence means more potentiality, while competency implies performance and it relates more to specific skills and knowledge (Harrison & Turner, 2011). Competence can also mean an ethical standard. For instance, the NASW Code of Ethics views competence in terms of a value of the social work profession that develops and enhances professional expertise through knowledge and skills applied to practice, while Fisher-Borne et al. (2014) assert that "[c]ompetency suggests that knowing broad descriptions of various group identities can translate into knowing the life experiences of an individual client" (p. 6).

In general, cultural competence holds both meanings. Cultural competence/competency works well in setting professional criteria or professional standards which indicate the attitudes, abilities, skills and knowledge practitioners are required to hold. The concept of cultural competence often implies mastery of a particular ability or area of expertise (Lum, 2007). Cultural competence not only means that

professionals acknowledge, embrace and respect cultural diversity but also have the ability to demonstrate effective practice in cross-cultural situations. In order to understand cultural competence in social work, exploration is imperative into how it is recognised in a global context, for instance in the United States where social work has significantly influenced the cultural competence movement in international social work. Also, the local context of New Zealand will, importantly, be discussed below.

1.4.1 International context

Cultural competence emerged through the civil rights movement in the United States and it was recognised at least from the 1970s in that country (Sakamoto, 2007). This resulted from the significant impact of the Civil Rights Act 1964, an Act that sets up legal protection based on non-discrimination of persons on the basis of race, sex, national origin, disability, age and religion; the NASW's Code of Ethics contains this as a strong standard (Lum, 2007). This states that:

> Social workers should not practice, condone, facilitate or collaborate with any form of discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, political belief, religion or mental or physical disability. (NASW, 1996, p. 4, as cited in Healy, 2007, pp. 16–17)
>
> Social workers should act to prevent and eliminate domination of, exploitation of, and discrimination against any person, group or class on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, political belief, religion or mental or physical disability. (NASW, 1996, p. 6, as cited in Healy, 2007, p. 17)

Social workers have a responsibility to provide professional services to individuals and groups without discrimination and with respect, regardless of the client's cultural and social status in the United States (Allen-Meares, 2007).

The NASW's Code of Ethics is reflected in an International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW)/ International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) document: social workers are expected "to challenge negative discrimination on the basis of characteristics such as ability, age, culture, gender or sex, marital status, socio-economic status, political opinions, skin colour or other physical characteristics, sexual orientation, or spiritual beliefs" (IFSW, 2004, p. 4, cited in Healy, 2007, p. 17). In countries in which there are members of the IFSW, their social work codes of ethics are influenced by the IFSW's Code of Ethics which support human rights and emphasises principles of equality and non-discrimination (Healy, 2007). In 1994, the IFSW and the IASSW reflected on the United Nations Centre for Human Rights' '*Human rights and Social Work*'. As social work has increasingly identified itself,

both stated that “human rights are inseparable from social work theory, values, ethics and practice” (United Nation, 1994, p. 5, cited in Healy, 2007, p. 13). The IFSW’s Code of Ethics firstly adopted ethical principles, “to formulate a set of basic principles for social work, which can be adapted to cultural and social settings” (IFSW, 1994, p. 2, cited in Healy, 2007, p. 13). Many countries’ social work codes of ethics have been constructed based on the IFSW’s principles and their Code of Ethics.

Furthermore, the NASW’s 1999 Code of Ethics has a section on cultural competence (Lum, 2011). The NASW’s 2001 code has adopted cultural competence as a set of standards of competence in social work – this has a section on cultural competence being an ethical responsibility of social workers. The NASW issued the Standards for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice; cultural competence is a part of professional standards which set 10 standards that provide guidelines, and the goals and objectives of cultural competence: (1) ethics and values; (2) self-awareness; (3) cross-cultural knowledge; (4) cultural skills; (5) service delivery; (6) empowerment and advocacy; (7) diverse workforce; (8) professional education; (9) language diversity; and (10) cross-cultural leadership (Lum, 2011). The cultural competence movement has grown at the clinical level, reflecting the cultural focus theme and it has also significantly influenced education and training (Lum, 2011). Training for cultural competence is mandated in social work education in the United States (Harrison & Turner, 2011). The education for cultural competence area will be explained in further detail in the next chapter.

From the above discussion, cultural competence has become a key feature of the social work profession and a crucial part of efforts to improve the standard and quality of practice. Nadan (2014) mentions that this is relevant, in particular in English-speaking countries; many Western societies have become increasingly diverse. Similarly, how cultural competence emerged in New Zealand social work will be explained in detail next.

1.4.2 New Zealand context

In New Zealand, due to the influence, action and impact of Māori, the indigenous people in the country, cultural competence was developed in a unique way based on Te Tiriti o Waitangi/The Treaty of Waitangi, which is the trajectory for Māori –Pākēhā (New Zealander of European descent) relations and society-building. Beddoe (2018) explicates that New Zealand was a British colony. Significant European settlement began in the 19th century. The Treaty agreement between various tribes of Māori and the British Crown was signed in two different versions in Te Reo Māori (the Māori language) and in English

in 1840, “The Treaty provided protection and governance but does not, according to the Māori version, cede sovereignty in exchange for British citizenship” (Beddoe, 2018, p. 306). New Zealand society was established based on Te Tiriti o Waitangi/The Treaty of Waitangi. The country is built on biculturalism, two distinct cultures: an indigenous Māori culture and a New Zealand national culture, co-existing within the society, incorporating the values and traditions of both cultures and reflecting this society’s customs, laws, practices and institutional arrangements (Eketone & Walker, 2015).

However, the relationship was challenging. When the Keynesian welfare state started failing, reinforced by economic recession in the 1970s, unemployment become a significant issue in New Zealand society (McClure, 1998). Māori people increasingly experienced economic disadvantage (Nash, 2001). They were subject to social disadvantage and discrimination. Consequently, Indigenous rights movements occurred among the Māori people (Herbert, 2002). A social development report written by the Department of Social Welfare (1986), ‘Puao-te Ata-tu’ identified three main types of racism Māori people experienced: institutional, cultural, and personal (Herbert, 2002; McClure, 1998; Nash, 2001). One of the significant indications is that under the Children and Young Person Act (1974), Māori children were seen as mistreated by the Department of Social Welfare (where a majority of social workers were employed), and Māori people claimed that their treatment was culturally unacceptable (Nash, 2001). Changes in the approach to child welfare emphasised a wide community need for cultural sensitivity and understanding in relationship to the Treaty of Waitangi and Māori cultural practice (Herbert, 2002; McClure, 1998; Nash, 2001). Subsequently the Treaty of Waitangi Act (1975) was passed (Herbert, 2002) which established the Waitangi Tribunal. Since 1985, the principles of Treaty partnership, participation and active protection of Māori interests have been important; these principles should inform work with Māori people and relations between Māori and non-Māori. As a result, the Treaty of Waitangi is formally recognised and is widely reflected in state-controlled activities, including research, theories, training and the practice of social work in Aotearoa New Zealand society. Since the 1986 Turangawaewae conference, New Zealand Association of Social Work: NZASW (currently Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers: ANZASW) has acknowledged Māori people as Tangata whenua of Aotearoa ‘people of the land’, and their right to self-determination (Fraser & Briggs, 2016). New Zealand social work has also begun to commit to indigenous identity in the wider society (Nash, 2001).

ANZASW is the main professional association for social workers in New Zealand. Its Code of Ethics, influenced by the IFSW's Code of Ethics (ANZASW, 2019), states that:

> ANZASW recognises that it is neither just nor equitable to attempt to impose a set of values on all groups that live in Aotearoa New Zealand. The social work task is to enable and empower people to take charge of their own lives in the context of their own values and aspirations where that does no harm to others. Social workers respect the worth and dignity of each person and group, and acknowledge their age, beliefs, culture, gender, marital, legal or family status, intellectual, psychological and physical abilities, race, religion, sexual orientation, and social and economic status. (ANZASW, 2019, p.5–6)

ANZASW has a set of practice standards that are exclusively reflected in the bicultural code of practice. This is illustrated in Standard 2 of the Practice Standards: The social worker demonstrates a commitment to practising social work with an understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Articles 1, 2, 3 and 4 and demonstrates competence to work with Māori (ANZASW, 2019).

This standard is met when the social worker:

1 Demonstrates a knowledge and understanding of Te Tiriti O Waitangi, te reo, tikanga and kawa and their implications for social work

2 Recognises the Tangata Whenua status of the indigenous Māori people of Aotearoa New Zealand

3 Respects Māori culture and protocol and has an understanding of their own culture and cultural heritage

4 Challenges racism at personal and institutional levels in Aotearoa New Zealand

5 Recognises the right of Māori people to determine their own needs and to develop services in accordance with those needs

6 Offers practical support to the local Tangata Whenua for their initiatives

7 Works collaboratively with Māori services in their area of work

8 Demonstrates and understands and respects Māori / Indigenous models of practice

9 Demonstrates, understands and constantly applies skills, knowledge and experience required for working with Tangata Whenua.

The ANZASW's Practice Standards inform the Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB). The Ten Core Competence Standards issued by the SWRB (SWRB, 2016a) are reflected in the Practice Standards and are also combined with SWRB's Code of Conduct (SWRB, 2016b):

1 Competence to practise social work with Māori

2 Competence to practise social work with different ethnic and cultural groups in Aotearoa New Zealand

3 Competence to work respectfully and inclusively with diversity and difference in practice

4 Competence to promote the principles of human rights and social and economic justice

5 Competence to engage in practice which promotes social change

6 Competence to understand and articulate social work theories, indigenous practice knowledge, other relevant theories, and social work practice methods and models

7 Competence to apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments

8 Competence to promote empowerment of people and communities to enable positive change

9 Competence to practice within legal and ethical boundaries of the social work profession

10 Represents the social work profession with integrity and professionalism.

One of ten key competencies give a significant emphasis to "competence to practise social work with Māori" and also "competence to practise social work with different ethnic and cultural groups in Aotearoa New Zealand" (Beddoe, 2018). This reflects the growing diversity of the New Zealand population. Although the European ethnic group is the largest and Māori is the next largest ethnic group in the country, Asian, Pacific, and Middle Eastern/Latin American/African ethnic groups have grown (Statistics New Zealand, 2019). The third-highest population (the Asian group), and the fourth-highest population (the Pacific group) have rapidly migrated to New Zealand at different times to provide a crucial human resource for New Zealand. The population of Pacific ethnic groups grew after 1950, contributing to the country's industrial growth as, during the 1960s and early 1970s, the country demanded semi-skilled and unskilled labour (Macpherson, 2006). The people of Pacific countries were encouraged to migrate to New Zealand to meet the post-war labour shortage, and Pacific people were attracted to job and educational opportunities and also higher incomes in New Zealand (Macpherson, 2006). Non-English-speaking-background migrants, in particular, Asian ethnic migrants', numbers had grown since New Zealand's immigration policies were amended in 1991. This aimed at increasing the country's human capital by targeting skilled migrants (Watt & Trlin, 2002). New Zealand has never had the 'white' law immigration criteria based on encouraging European races which Australia implemented until the 1970s (Ho, 2008). New Zealand immigration policies emphasised nationality and culture as criteria for selection of immigrants until 1987 (Tanaka, 1999). Consequently, British and European migrants had been favoured in New Zealand immigration and other, non-White, migrants were restricted from immigrating

into New Zealand (Tanaka, 1999). The new policy alters New Zealand ethnic demographics as diverse due to international migration (Watt & Trlin, 2002). Since then these ethnic groups have grown.

New Zealand social work acknowledges the country's diverse demographics. ANZASW's Code of Ethics (2019) mentions one of the purposes for offering guidance in the relationship between Tangata Whenua and Tauiwi (others) in social work in Aotearoa New Zealand. Social workers consider various cultural backgrounds of clients and they must demonstrate these competencies working with diverse clients in New Zealand under the Social Workers Registration Act 2003 (New Zealand Legislation, 2019a).

Although, cultural competence has a set of principles in the Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct there is no clear process of converting the concepts into empirical measurements for practice. Therefore, this research investigates further transforming conceptual knowledge into practice and the rationale for the research will be explained below.

1.5 Research aims

As modern society has become culturally diverse, culture becomes one of the strategies for practice; understanding the culture of clients helps working and building relationships with them and grasping their problems that may be associated with not only personal but also cultural factors relevant to historical and political factors. Cultural competence seems to have specific purposes – such as for growth of practitioners' potentiality to develop skills and knowledge for cross-cultural practice; however, it is an abstract concept that encompasses assumptions about how it is developed and transformed effectively in practice. Culture is an important part of our lives, one that influences our perspectives, thoughts and values as social work practitioners. Social workers make sense of cultural competence by clarifying a concept of culture from their own understanding (which originates from their own culture). Therefore, understanding of cultural competence should include specific meanings at the individual level. Thus, this research aims to explore interpretations of cultural competence and applications of it into practice demonstrated by social work students and professional practitioners. The research investigates conceptualisations of cultural competence from social work education and also operationalisation of cross-cultural practice and the relations between two.

There are several key research questions which seek to understand the progressive learning and development of cultural competence and their practice reality in cross-cultural situations. These questions involve:

- The developmental process of cultural competence from education to career: how research participants have learned and developed cultural competence over time.
- The utilisation of three main components for cultural competence: knowledge, awareness/attitude and skills in practice: how the participants apply their acquired knowledge and skills into practice.
- Gaps and links between educational learning and practice.
- The meanings of cultural competence interpreted by the participants: specifically, how they have established their understandings over time.

The research also has a strong interest in teaching and training for cultural competence by analysing the connection between educational preparation and actual practice in cross-cultural situations. Better training methods are often slow to progress (Kwong, 2009). However, currently there is limited evidence of the effectiveness of cultural competence training (Harrison & Turner, 2011). Exploration of educational learning of cultural competence and cross-cultural practice experienced by social work students and practitioners is, hence, crucial in order to enhance our understanding of cultural competence and to suggest clearer educational goals in order to become a culturally competent social worker.

1.6 Research rationale

Past trends in research on cultural competence have been mostly based on theoretical and philosophical foundations (Kwong, 2009). This work has explored conceptual definitions, factors (antecedents) and tools of cultural competence. Also, the research has scientifically searched for knowledge and skills to inform culturally specific interventions (Kwong, 2009). Cultural competence is, therefore, constructed from a top-down approach by social work scholars, researchers and educators. The knowledge generated by this input has significantly contributed to the promotion of cultural competence to the social work profession. On the other hand, there is a paucity of actual practice-informed data gained from research: a bottom-up approach with practitioners. In social work, theory and practice were seen as separate entities that have been constructed in a way that produces hierarchical splits between researchers and

practitioners and the relationship has privileged one over the other, preserving a dominance of researcher over practitioner views (Fook, 2012, 2016). Fook suggests 'inclusionary' ways of understanding the relationship between theory and practice. Both a top-down test of applicability and a bottom-up test of relevance are crucial to understand how theories and practice relate to each other. Therefore, output knowledge gained from the experiences of both social work students and professional practitioners could give feedback, inform, and add to existing, theoretically conceptualised knowledge that contributes to enhancing our understanding of cultural competence and to enrich cross-cultural practice. It could also suggest clearer guidance of cultural competence practice for social work students, educators and practitioners.

1.7 Methodological approach

This research was derived from an inductive inquiry about the developmental process of cultural competence and transformation of it in practice. The data were gathered via interviews with 10 social work students who had completed at least one practicum in their Bachelor of Social Work or qualifying Master of Social Work, and 18 practitioners who had worked a minimum of two years in various fields in social work. An in-depth, semi-structured interview method was selected for analysing the educational learning, practicum training and also the professional practice experience of the practitioners. The process of data collection and analysis is shown Figure 1. The two groups: students and practitioners were assessed separately.

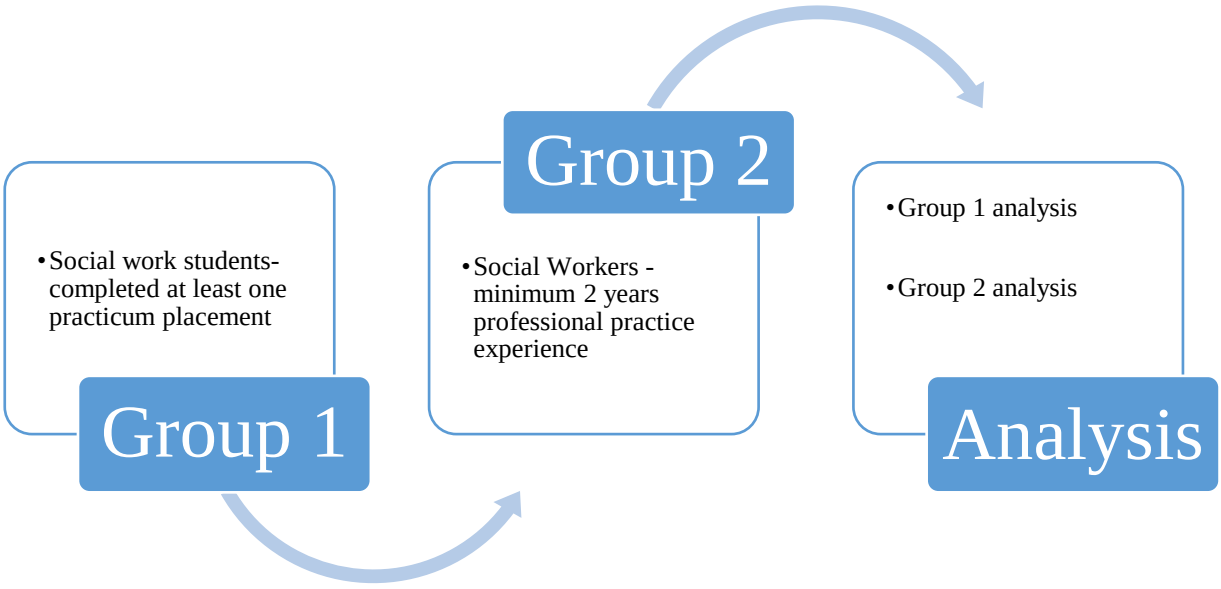

Figure 1. The process of conducting data collection and analysis.

The data were linked to three stages of the developmental process: (1) the educational stage: initial educational period; (2) the transitional stage: after completion of at least one practicum; and (3) the career stage: after beginning a social work career. The key themes in each stage were the three main components: knowledge, awareness-attitude, and skills. These components were constructed from accommodating similarities and exploring differences among the participants' experiences and comparing and contrasting within and between educational learning, practicum placements and practice. Their understandings of cultural competence were also examined. This began from the educational stage, exploring how the meaning has changed over time during the career stage. Additionally, the patterns of interaction and relationship building they had in their practice were explored from the divergent experiences of the participants in cross-cultural situations.

Constructivist grounded theory (GT) was utilised as a qualitative approach which enables the incorporation of diversity in this research. A specific race or ethnicity was not a central focus in this research; rather, the diverse backgrounds, perspectives and experiences of the participants attached to their meanings of cultural competence were all taken into consideration in the analysis. The approach also leads the researcher to acknowledge that the research is not bias free. The researcher's personal and professional experiences, her engagement with individual participants, and her knowledge of the area with literature, influenced the process of data collection and analysis; this is taken up further in Chapter 3.

1.8 Outline of the following chapters

Chapter 2 explores a model of cultural competence which usually consists of three main components: knowledge, awareness-attitude and skills. These components are used for the essential foundation in education for teaching and assessing cultural competence. The model is analysed in a particular epistemological interpretation of culture which suggests specific implications of cultural competence.

Chapter 3 discusses the philosophical foundations that are important in constructing the research. The framework and design for this research are explicated. This includes a description of the research process such as data collection, analysis and ethical considerations.

The Prelude provides a summary of the findings chapters. There are three developmental stages: Educational, Transitional, and Career. Each developmental stage gives detail of the three core components of cultural competence: knowledge, awareness-attitude and skills are developed throughout

those stages. Chapter 4 (Educational stage) and Chapter 5 (Transitional stage) report findings about the period of learning during the social work programme. In both stages, knowledge and awareness-attitude components were the central development of cultural competence; the knowledge component focuses on acquiring knowledge of cultures. The awareness-attitude component involves improving self-awareness, which identifies three different types: Type 1 self-awareness (T1): Self-identity; Type 2 self-awareness (T2): Cultural self-awareness; and Type 3 self-awareness (T3): Critical self-awareness through developing self-reflection. Chapter 6 (Career stage) illustrates the skills component. The chapter gives an indication of building cross-cultural relationships in practice. The knowledge and awareness components are utilised and develop cross-culturally as well as social work skills and how to perform in cross-cultural situations in professional practice is discussed. These research findings show what cultural competence looks like from the details of the practitioner participants' practice experiences.

Chapter 7 discusses issues and challenges in a bicultural context in Aotearoa New Zealand social work. The discussion was developed from participants' frequently expressed concerns in the interviews.

Chapter 8 analyses the key gaps and links between the conceptualisation of cultural competence from social work education and the operationalisation of practice in cross-cultural situations. Key practice wisdom gained through integrating conceptual knowledge (theory) into practice is also discussed.

Chapter 9 is the conclusion of the thesis, in which an exploration is made of the strengths and limitations of the research and recommendations for further research.

Chapter 2: Literature review

Introduction

In the introductory chapter of this thesis it is stated that the concept of cultural competence is part of an ideological struggle about culture between essentialist and social constructivist perspectives. Because of these differences, there is a lack of a common definition of cultural competence. This chapter focuses on the literature about aspects of cultural competence in social work education. There is no universally agreed approach to the understanding of cultural competence or its nature and structure, although the nature and composition of cultural competence has been widely discussed in the social work literature. This chapter begins with a review of the relevant conceptual and theoretical work, with a particular focus on the three core component parts of cultural competence, namely: knowledge, self-awareness-attitude, and skills. From there it proceeds to a discussion of some of the issues and debates around the teaching of cultural competence in social work education programmes before moving on to an examination of the issues and tensions between the work in educational programmes and the experience, learning and development that occurs in social work practice.

The second part of the chapter introduces some of the debates and discussions about the nature and practice of cultural competence. These focuses, in particular, on the constructionist nature of the development of cultural competence and the location of the concept and approach in broader post-modern debates about the nature of cultural and ethnic identity. A key debate of the nature of ‘othering’ is also included. From there, the chapter moves to an exploration of the implications of these issues for the practice of cultural competence in social work, with a particular focus on relational self–other/social worker–client relationships as critical to this practice. Lastly, the issues of knowledge generation and discussions of a new approach to professional knowledge to cross-cultural social work practice are considered.

Developing a literature review was divided into three steps: grasp of the research area, and continuous note taking, and evaluation and analysis of the previous studies and the data. The first part of the literature review was mostly formed before interviewing participants for data collection. The initial search aimed to define key ideas, debates and problems and understand the main theory and the application of the theory. Scholarly sources related to cultural competence in social work, counselling,

and healthcare, and education and training for culture and cultural practice were searched from databases such as JSTOR, Scopus, Sage Journals, Springer Link, Taylor & Francis Online, ProQuest (Psychology and Social Science Journals). Te Ara Encyclopedias of New Zealand was used for the understanding of Te Reo Māori, history and culture. Statistics New Zealand was also accessed to gain information about the demographic changes of New Zealand. I identified the gaps in current knowledge and established a main argument claiming the need for my research.

During the data collection and analysis, I took notes when new questions arose, and issues emerged. The second part of the literature review was developed after the data analysis. I collected additional literature material as when I analysed participants' cross-cultural practice experiences I realised that an aspect of the topic had not been considered before. Some participants strive to improve their performance approaching differently and using various techniques (these are not always from formal knowledge) in practice. I got a lead from them about other approaches to cultural practice such as narrative approach to practice and the concept of intersectionality. Furthermore, reflectivity, reflexivity and critical reflection became the centre of this research from the findings. At the end of the literature review process, the focus of my argument/conclusion for this research were strengthened.

2.1 Bicultural and Multicultural approaches to cross-cultural practice

Cultural competence is one of the dimensions of cross-cultural practice. Since the occurrence of the cultural competence movement, there are hundreds of conceptual definitions (Boyle & Springer, 2001) and related terminologies found, although there are features in common despite differences which can cause confusion (Kwong, 2009). For instance, cultural safety, which is an approach to healthcare in relation to culture. The concept has uniquely developed within a bicultural framework in New Zealand nursing and midwifery professions through the 1970s and the 1980s with growing awareness of the long-term impact of colonisation on Māori health outcomes (Ramsden, 2015). Māori health professionals emphasised Māori health issues and how these were different from other populations in the society. They strongly suggested the importance of understanding Māori health concept and the provision of specific health services for Māori (Ramsden, 2015).

In New Zealand nursing, cultural safety is integrated with Māori health and the Treaty of Waitangi (Nursing Council of New Zealand, 2011). A New Zealand professor of Māori studies, Sir Mason Durie, who contributed to Māori health, stresses the importance of biculturalism in healthcare, nothing that

people avoid using health services because they perceive the health professionals are disrespectful of their cultural practices and traditions. Within a cultural safety process, learning from foundation concepts of New Zealand biculturalism and from developing a partnership between Māori and the Crown, the bicultural relationship has developed approaches in nursing and midwifery with patients so that they receive health services through their own cultural frameworks (Wepa, 2015). Cultural safety is thus, different from an approach of cultural competence.

> Cultural safety is about the client feeling comfortable or safe with health care, while cultural competence is about the ability of health practitioners to demonstrate what is needed to achieve that. (Vernon & Papps, 2015, p.60)

Cultural safety aims to improve the experience of patients in health care (Nursing Council, 2011) and supports a patient's culture and tradition in a healthcare setting (Wepa, 2015). In comparison, cultural competence focuses on the practitioners' ability to work effectively with clients from different cultural backgrounds and to integrate a client's culture in the practice context.

2.2 Models of cultural competence

The cultural competence movement has significantly grown as a direction to develop academic and professional expertise and skills in the area of working with culturally diverse clients (Lum, 2011). In the introductory chapter, I explicated the interchangeable use of the terms 'cultural competence' and 'cultural competency'. Both are interconnected to each other. The theoretical foundation of 'cultural competence' is also understood as having three major components (the compositional model): knowledge, awareness, and skills. The model is close to the meaning of cultural competency, which means specific cultural knowledge and skills, focusing on knowledge and awareness for skill development, that enhances the practitioner's cultural competence - the ability to work cross-culturally.

> To work effectively with diversity, practitioners are expected to know about different cultural practices and world-views, to develop awareness of their own cultural world-view, to have a positive attitude towards cultural differences and to develop cross-cultural skills. (Nadan, 2014, p. 5)

Primarily, cultural competence has three dimensions: knowledge, values and skills in social work (Manoleas, 1994). That originated from *Cross-Cultural Counseling Competencies* introduced by D. W. Sue and his colleagues in 1981 (Boyle & Springer, 2001). The model was published by the Division of Counselling Psychology (17) Education and Training Committee (Sue et al., 1982). The three dimensions

of cultural competence are defined: (1) The first dimension is to explore the counsellor's race, culture, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation, and examine their awareness of their own assumptions, values and biases, and develop a positive orientation toward multiculturalism. (2) The second dimension is cultural knowledge of the clients with whom counsellors work that lead to better understanding of the worldview of different cultures without negative judgement. (3) The third dimension is the development of culturally specific skills for practice such as the intervention strategies and techniques needed in working with culturally different groups (Sue et al., 1998). The American Psychological Association (APA) first adopted this model (Lum, 2011) which set up an initial foundation for APA's eleven traits of a culturally skilled counsellor (Boyle & Springer, 2001).

Social work has developed its own cultural competence framework parallel to the field of psychology. Social work had the concept of cultural competence from its early establishment, as the profession has been committed to working with underserved and marginalised populations. Social work advocated for civil rights and the social welfare of oppressed minority populations which originated from the Western civilisation's view of individual and society (Suh, 2004). In the early 1900s, Jane Adams (social reform) and Mary Richmond (individual assistance) both developed the initial principles although with different methods (Welsh, 2006). Jane Adams's settlement house movement advocated social diagnosis and reform (Van Heugten, 2001). Over time, the social reform agenda within social work became marginalised (Cree, 2008). Richmond's case work (individual assistance) became the centre of social work activities in which she advocated a casework orientation working with individuals and families (Van Heugten, 2001), although she attempted to bridge between the two by emphasising the importance of working with individuals and families and the interaction between the person and the environment (Cornell, 2006). Van Heugten (2001) argues that, "[i]t appears that Richmond's orientation promised more status for social work than did Adams's because it aligned more closely with the way the dominant medical and psychiatric professions thought about the problems of individuals" (p. 7). Traditional social work practice (case work) emphasised individualised forms of helping that gives an implication of individualised notions of personal problems (Fook, 2016). The expansion of training and growing practice focused on personal traits associated with science. Fook (2012) explains:

> As social work developed as a profession, with elements of social legitimation this entailed, professional knowledge was developed in ways which allowed it to be taught, and appear acceptable, in traditional contexts (the university). Thus we can argue that it was the need to scientise our knowledge, so that it was acceptable in essentially masculinist environments, which

> motivated social workers to adopt models and ways of conceptualising our practical knowledge from more masculinist traditions, such as psychoanalysis and psychology. (p. 4)

Psychoanalytic theory, especially Freud's work of individual pathology, was increasingly popular among social workers (Cornell, 2006). The term *psychodynamic* from psychoanalytic theory underlies an assumption that "behaviour comes from movements and interactions in people's minds" (Payne, 2005, p. 73). Payne (2014) explains that the theory is familiar as most people have some basic concepts of the mind in Western culture. 'Traditional social work' was influenced and developed from a base of the scientific and psychological theories between the 1930s and the 1960s when social work as a profession was established (Payne, 2014). As a result, social work failed to develop its own practice theories until the 1970s (Paton & O'Byrne, 2000). Consequently, social work literature around practice with clients from minority cultures only increased from the 1960s and 1970s (Welsh, 2006).

In 1989, Terry Cross (a social worker), and his colleagues led the development of the systematic approach to cultural competence. The conceptual framework, cited in the previous chapter, is well recognised within social work at micro, meso and macro dimensions (Lum, 2007) reflecting the person-in-environment approach to social work. Social work had a tendency to adapt and accept theory and knowledge from psychological perspectives.

D. W. Sue's model (1981) has been the most widely acknowledged as a conceptualisation of cultural competence (Boyle & Springer, 2001). Yan and Wong (2005) discuss that in social work the dimensions are commonly found among various cultural competence models and frameworks such as Cross et al. (1989), Green (1999), Lum (1999), McPhatter (1997) and Pinderhughes (1989). Lum's process stage was initially established in *Social Work Practice and People of Color: A Process Stage Approach,* in 1986; his culturally competent practice model/framework is probably most relevant to current trends of social work cultural competence. The functions of cultural competence consist of four components: (1) cultural awareness: to develop an awareness of ethnicity and racism and its impact on professional attitudes, perception and behaviour; (2) knowledge acquisition: to gain a body of information that organises material about a topic such as systems, psychosocial theory and also theories about ethnicity, culture, minorities and social class into sets of facts that explain phenomena; (3) skill development: the integration of cultural awareness and knowledge acquisition when applying them in a helping situation; and (4) inductive learning: to continue developing skills and insights relating to

multicultural social work. Cultural competence continuously requires new learning to maintain its development (Lum, 2011).

Lum's model specifically includes the recognition of an on-going process in development. The definition of cultural competence is a process of lifelong learning for improving skills and knowledge as well as developing positive attitudes towards cultural diversity or cultural difference that all apply in social work practice:

> …cultural competence can be understood as an ongoing process whereby one gains awareness of, and appreciation for, cultural diversity and an ability to work sensitively, respectfully, and proficiently with those from diverse backgrounds. (Azzopardi & McNeill, 2016, p. 283)

This compositional model provides a concept and framework of cultural competence that has a significant impact on practice, policy, training and research. The model is particularly useful for setting a standard to prepare social work students, to evaluate their ability of working cross-culturally and to develop skills to enhance performance when working with minorities (Yan & Wong, 2005). Training in cultural competence has been increasingly promoted over the decades.

2.3 Educational objectives

Social work education and training for cultural competence is based on three main components, *knowledge of culture*, *awareness-attitude* and *skills* remain conceptually useful, while the fourth component, of *inductive learning*, seems to develop through individual students and social workers in their professional development. The goal of education and training aims for learners to gain cultural knowledge, increase level of self-awareness and to develop skills (Sue, 2001).

Each component is intertwined with the others; however, the definition of each component is ambiguous (Kwong, 2009). These components are not clearly delineated in policy documents and have a lack of a common understanding as to the meaning and relevance, as reported in recent research (Harrison & Turner, 2011). The next section gives brief outlines of the three main components, drawn from an analysis of early definitions of cultural competence, which still contributes to the foundation of education and training of social workers.

2.3.1 Knowledge of culture

The competence and competency-based approach to education has behavioural and positivist origins (Fook, Ryan, & Hawkins, 2000). Knowledge of culture is a central part of cultural competence as this is key when converting and interpreting in communication across cultures (Ben-Ari & Strier, 2010). The positivism perspective indicates that:

> Culture is understood as part of an identity that is common to members of a group and maintained in a continuous form because of its foundation in their shared experiences…but culture is made by privileging the experiences that are common to everyone within a group and asserting their experiences as a core of cultural identity. This stable constellation of their traits, behaviours and expectations is something that can be defined and validated and shared with others. (Williams, 2006, p. 211)

The type of knowledge associated with positivism assumes that there is an objective world that exists separately from human beings and is not influenced by them; knowledge is, therefore, a reflection of empirical relations (Fook, 2016). Although contemporary social researchers acknowledge that the existence of independent reality cannot be completely observed and apprehended accurately by objective processes due to the influence of the theories and biases of researchers, research still proposes that knowledge can be obtained uncontaminated and reasonably stably; culture can be captured without the influence of the observer's cultural expectations and biases (Williams, 2006).

Various approaches to and frameworks of cultural competence that are related to practice have developed over time. Many of them are associated with the cultural literacy model rooted in anthropology and ethnography which has been grounded in the modernist paradigm: the cultural literacy model sets early definitions of culture as a static and monolithic construct (Azzopardi & McNeill, 2016). The method of the cultural literacy model relies on the systematic gathering of cultural information in categories (Williams, 2006). Azzopardi & McNeill (2016) elucidate understanding of culture embedded in cultural competence, that culture generally indicates the shared identity of a group of people. This is based on their common traits, customs, values and patterns of behaviour that are socially transmitted and are highly influential in shaping their beliefs, experiences and worldviews. Knowledge of culture refers to the culture of the one with whom a practitioner is working (Fisher-Borne et al., 2014; Johnson & Munch, 2009). The knowledge of culture is often defined in descriptions of culturally specific groups of clients by their history (oppression), norms, traditional cultural characteristics, gestures, communication styles, behaviours, and attitudes (Nadan, 2014). Presumably, the information on a specific cultural group is

thought to completely apply to work with clients from that culture (Johnson & Munch, 2009). The education approaches to knowledge of culture as 'learning about' a client's culture is that culture can be learned from gathering cultural information. As a result, the perspectives of culture can determine what culture means and how practitioners attain knowledge of it.

2.3.2 Awareness-attitude

Many approaches to cross-cultural practice, including cultural competence in social work, are concerned with cultural barriers between a client and a social worker in the practice relationship as both parties bring their own cultural biases, values and beliefs into that relationship (Yan, 2005; Yan & Wong, 2005). There seems to be an assumption that the social workers who build and achieve their cultural competence are able to deal with cultural difference by acknowledging and accepting cultural diversity. First, the dynamic of cultural difference needs to be assessed: cultural self-awareness of the social worker and the cultural 'other' awareness of the person being worked with (Lum, 2011). The awareness-attitude component is therefore, highlighted by cultural self-awareness. According to Yan and Wong (2005), when processing self-awareness, social workers examine their own culture and their perception of the client's culture through self-reflection. As a result, the social worker is expected to be aware of their own culture/cultural identification(s) and be able to manage their own cultural influence when engaging with a client from a different culture. This is because, when developing their own self-awareness, the social worker becomes aware of their own cultural contexts and the existence of their own cultural assumptions and prejudices that may have an effect on working with the client; hence, the dynamic of cultural difference between the client and the social worker can be overcome by managing the worker's own cultural influence (Yan & Wong, 2005). To become a culturally competent social worker, he or she develops a high level of self-awareness of their own cultural background, so that they can be 'culturally neutral' by being not totally a part of, or not totally apart from, their own culture; the ultimate purpose of self-awareness is therefore, 'conscious use of self' which means full use of *professional self* rather than bringing personal and cultural self into practice (Yan & Wong, 2005). In order to master the use of professional self, knowing the nature of self is an essential attribute.

Hence, a starting point is to increase the social worker's cultural self-awareness through exploration of their own racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds (cultural identity) and how their life experiences shape them as a person related to culture(s) (Lum, 2007). Maidment (2009) explicates cultural self-awareness:

> We are reminded that our connectedness with own culture exists below the level of consciousness and is so deeply embedded that escapes everyday thought. As such, developing cultural self-awareness requires a concerted level of critical self-examination of the influence of our cultural roots on our thinking about and responses to others. Such an exercise commonly uncovers disturbing personal prejudices and unexpected levels of intolerance towards difference. (p, 151)

Cultural self-awareness suggests knowing oneself before knowing others, which is crucial for a pre-intervention activity. Additionally, the worker's attitude is considered as a vital process for helping in relationships. The attitudinal factors in their interaction with clients have an impact on the client–social worker relationship (Yan & Wong, 2005) as this directly influences the cultural intervention – how the worker interacts with clients (Lum, 2007). Therefore, awareness of their own both positive and negative attitudes toward cultural difference is imperative for cultural practice. Presumably, when they acknowledge and accept cultural difference/diversity, eventually there will be changes in their attitude toward difference.

2.3.3 Cross-cultural skills

There are few mentions of the skills component of cultural competence in the literature. Lum (2011, see pp. 131–134) lists a set of skills the culturally competent social worker is required to possess:

- The social worker understands how to overcome the resistance and lower the communication barriers of a multicultural client.
- The social worker obtains personal and family background information from a multicultural client and determines the extent of his or her ethnic/community sense of identity.
- The social worker understands the concepts of ethnic community and practises relationship protocols with a multicultural client.
- The social worker uses professional self-disclosure with a multicultural client.
- The social worker develops a positive and open communication style and uses open-ended listening responses.
- The social worker obtains problem information, facilitates problem area disclosure and promotes problem understanding.
- The social worker views a problem as an unsatisfied want, or an unfulfilled need.

- The social work classifies problems as being at micro, meso, and macro levels.
- The social worker explains problem themes of racism, prejudice, and discrimination and their expressions.
- The social worker finds out problem details.
- The social work assesses socio-environmental stressors, psycho-individual reactions and cultural strengths.
- The social worker assesses the biological, psychological, social, cultural and spiritual dimensions of a multicultural client.
- The social worker establishes joint goals and agreements with the client that are culturally acceptable.
- The social worker formulates micro, meso and macro intervention strategies that address the cultural and special needs of the client.
- The social worker initiates termination in a way that links the client to an ethnic community resource, reviews significant progress and growth, evaluates goal outcomes and establishes a follow-up strategy.

Such lists seem to suggest that cross-cultural skills - such as having the ability to deal with differences through identifying similarities and differences, taking multiple perspectives, and understanding and analysing problems from various dimensions and the ability to collaboratively work with clients from any background - are required in order to work effectively in cross-cultural practice. Social workers must be equipped with essential social work skills in order to gain cross-cultural skills. These are presumed to be helpful for understanding the culture of the client and in cross-cultural communication and interaction in practice. On the other hand, many existing models of cultural competence, based on knowledge, awareness and skills components, imply that cultural competence can be attained when the practitioners acquire sufficient knowledge of, and/or master awareness of, specific ethnic cultural groups (Kumas-Tan, Beagan, Loppie, MacLeod, & Frank, 2007). The skill component of cultural competence is an indication of the ability to combine knowledge and awareness components in professional practice (Nadan, 2014). This may give an indication to social work students that the skills for cultural practice

can be developed through gaining knowledge of culture and cultivating awareness in the classroom, and the practicum training provides attributes for becoming a culturally competent social worker. Consequently, the social work programmes are particularly apt to focus on knowledge and awareness components for developing skills towards cross-cultural practice.

2.4 Educational and training implications

The model of cultural competence is well constructed and is useful for understanding cultural competence. When teaching and training for cultural competence, there are assumptions of culture and how culture is conceptualised. Several perspectives of culture are illustrated by a typology of assumptions underlying multicultural training provided by Carter and Qureshi (1995). One of their five perspectives of culture, called the 'Traditional culture approach' explains a mechanism for organising ideals and beliefs about cultural competence often utilised in social work and that approach embeds a particular concept of culture. The approach to the concept of culture gives fundamental indications for cultural competence and is discussed below.

2.4.1 Culture as ethnic and racialised groups

From Carter and Qureshi's (1995) perspective of the Traditional cultural approach, culture is understood as a common experience – as a function of socialisation and social environment; it provides and limits the range of possible experiences. Culture is a shared background and one's identity related to a worldview; thus, an individual's development of cultural identity is mostly a function of how the individual interprets his or her world, due to the possibilities and limitations contained within his or her culture. As a result, cultural membership is a matter of birth, upbringing and environment; other domains of difference such as social class, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, gender or educational level may exist within a cultural group, but these do not solely constitute the cultural experience. This implies the definition of culture is only based on ethnic and racialised groups (Carter & Qureshi, 1995). The perspective is closely connected to the assumption of culture inherent in the model of cultural competence often used. Although cultural competence generally applies to any groups at risk of social exclusion (not only relative to ethnicity and race but also, gender, socio-economic status, disability, sexual orientation), culture is often defined as a matter of ethnicity and race; measurements of cultural competence have most strongly highlighted ethnic and racial differences (Kumas-Tan et al., 2007).

In social work in particular, the term *culture* often indicates that minority groups are conflated with the terms *ethnicity* and *race* in the social work literature (Fisher-Borne et al., 2014; Harrison & Turner, 2011; Sakamoto, 2007). Historically, the social work profession has committed to work with socially excluded and oppressed groups in society. The term *cultural competence* is typically derived from race-based oppression which emerged through developing radical and structural approaches to social work between the 1960s and 1980s. Radical and structural social work brought the profession back to issues of social context, as personal problems and experiences might be traced to the wider socio-economic structure and historical conditions in society such as class-based, gender-based, or race-based oppressions (Fook, 2016). In radical and structural social work, identity is defined in terms of social structural categories such as race, gender and class.

Sue (2001) illustrates this in a tripartite framework for exploring and understanding the formation of personal identity inherent in the model of cultural competence. There are three different levels of identity: the *Universal* level (common features of being human), *Group* level (shared cultural values and beliefs with reference groups) and *Individual* level (uniqueness – like no others). Social scientists often fail to acknowledge or clarify the importance of the many cultural dimensions of human identity; research may lead to biased conclusions about human behaviour that are simply categorised as culture bound, class bound, and gender bound (Sue, 2001). Also, identity is often defined on the basis of social categories such as race, gender, and class in radical and structural social work (Fook, 2016). In the development of cultural competence during the radical and structural social work movement, cultural competence seems to have had a tendency to focus on the group level of identity – in particular, on ethnic and racialised groups.

2.4.2 Knowledge of culture as a key indicator of cultural competence

The perspective of the Traditional cultural approach leads to the way of thinking that any human being can master any culture (Carter & Qureshi, 1995). This gives an indication of culture as knowable, that it can be understood from positivist and essentialist perspectives. As a result, there is a significant underlying assumption that cultural competence can be taught and learned through education and training (Ben-Ari & Strier, 2010). Nadan (2014) mentions that, in cultural competence, there can be seen a linear relationship between the knowledge of specific cultural groups and working effectively with difference. One of the major critics of cultural competence is that learning and understanding specific cultural groups is seen as a sufficient strategy for competence (Fishier-Borne et al., 2014).

The Traditional cultural approach also designates that exposure to culture is the key to effective cross-cultural practice. This assumes that the experience of interacting with specific individuals and families of an ethnic/cultural group can come to be translated as knowledge of the culture as a whole. As a result, training aims to give the learner some experience of another culture: "the idea is that one person or family is representative of the entire group" (Carter & Qureshi, 1995, p. 249). The learner develops his or her cultural awareness through negative and positive experiences through contact with these individuals and families and groups from other cultures and ethnicities (Lum, 2007). Cultural familiarity allows practitioners to create an environment where they are more comfortable with others through some levels of self-awareness (Fisher-Borne et al., 2014). Importantly, cultural exposure is a way for the learner to develop comfort with cultural difference (Carter & Qureshi, 1995). Culturally competent practitioners are assumed to be confident in themselves and comfortable working with others in cross-cultural practice situations while a lack of competence is seen as engrained in practitioners' lack of familiarity with cultural difference (Kumas-Tan et al., 2007). As a consequence, cultural competence is thought to depend on familiarity through increasing contact and communication with people of different ethnic and cultural groups and that this develops overall cultural competency (Kumas-Tan et al., 2007). It becomes a popular idea because the concrete information about ethnic/cultural groups such as beliefs and characteristics, and specific practices of various cultural groups provided in the literature, alleviates the social worker's level of anxiety over working with diverse groups of people (Johnson & Munch, 2009). To be culturally competent, practitioners must be knowledgeable about the client's culture. In the concept of cultural competence, practitioners can attain knowledge from 'learning about' cultures.

2.5 Transforming knowledge into professional practice

Cultural competence is proposed as a technical and rational solution to the challenge of cross-cultural social work (Yan & Wong, 2005). There is an assumption that "cultural competence can be acquired in a developmental and cumulative learning process" (Nadan, 2014, p. 4), while social work education particularly emphasises acquiring knowledge of culture and improving cultural self-awareness for developing skills for practice; professional practice often gives central attention to skills and knowledge (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Kwong, 2009; Nadan, 2014; Yan & Wong, 2005). The literature has inadequately explained the process of skill development and how the skills are actually developed. Spitzberg and Changnon (2009) explain that a practitioner is expected to value his or her own group as well as the client's and, developed through increasing awareness, such attitudes will complement the

knowledge to understand cultural identities, group boundaries, history of oppression and the influence of cultural differences on the communication process. Thus, awareness and knowledge are compatible with skills. Lum (2007) also indicates that skill development eventually occurs when the social worker applies what he or she understands to the helping situation based on cultural awareness and knowledge acquisition. These indications suggest that skills development occurs through practice experience during a career. However, this may leave critical questions, such as: What are the actual outcomes from accomplishing the knowledge and awareness-attitude components from the education? How are these components transformed to skills? How are the skills usefully applied into professional practice?; and also, are there skill gaps between the three core components aimed to gain skills from the educational objectives and the required skills for practice?

Fundamentally, in this approach, cultural competence is knowledge-based learned capacity – knowledge is a key for the development of skills (Ben-Ari & Strier, 2010). The knowledge component is probably a focal point for the attainment of cultural competency which is related to the discussion earlier in this chapter; knowledge of culture is suggested as a significant indication of cultural competence. Cultural competence is determined as integration and adaptation of knowledge of individuals and groups into practice, policies, standards and attitudes (Nadan, 2014). Abrams and Moio (2009) explain that developing practice techniques are accompanied by building knowledge about specific ethnic or cultural groups which contributes to a part of the skill component. Furthermore, when translating cultural competence into practice, it often indicates intervention skills with particular groups (Nadan, 2014). Skills for cultural competence addressed by Lum (2011) are effective for understanding of clients and communication and interaction with them when practising in cross-cultural cultural settings. The set of useful skills would come from knowledge such as the culturally appropriate boundary and relationship protocol in working with the cultural clients. Hence, ‘skills’ may be more likely to refer to knowledge of interventions for specific cultural groups. As an example, models for intervention in social work are based on US models of long-established family practice among African Americans and Native Americans, as culture is understood as the core of a helping process, such as helping and help-seeking patterns, and behavioural patterns (Williams, 2006). Hence knowledge of culture is assumed to apply culturally specific intervention in practice (Azzopardi & McNeill, 2016). “Basically, the more we ‘learn about’ others the better skilled we are to meet their needs” (Ben-Ari & Strier, 2010, p. 2158).

Cultural competence can be about how social workers can be congruent with client's culture in practice. Yan and Wong (2005) discuss an outcome through achieving the three core components: "[o]nce social workers gain awareness and master the needed knowledge and skills, they can adjust their practice to meet the needs of their clients" (p. 182). Cultural competence is not just attaining three components but also developing the ability to transform knowledge within practice.

2.6 Critiques of the traditional sense of cultural competence

As reflected in the earlier discussion of the conceptualisation and implications of cultural competence, it has been strongly influenced by positivist and essentialist perspectives. This comes as no surprise. As mentioned in the previous chapter, social work has been regarded as a creation of modernism which is strongly influenced by positivism because of its origins in 19th century social movements (Payne, 2014). The early establishment of cultural competence was a part of a turning point from the previous trend of modernism through to post-modernism. The characteristics of modernism are embedded in cultural competence; particularly, power relations are significant and are encompassed within client–social worker practice relationships. Nadan (2014) mentions that power relations emanate from the colonial power differences between historically privileged groups and marginalised groups – as well as the present-day power differences of construction between the self and the other. However, the power relations of social inequality tend to ignore forming the model of cultural competence.

2.6.1 Construction of 'Other' as opposed to 'self'

Cultural competence is a precondition for effective cultural practice dealing with problems related to working with difference. 'Difference' is often indicated as cultural otherness (Carter & Qureshi, 1995). The Traditional cultural approach previously used for explaining the education and training for cultural competence also attributes that categorising cultural otherness to primary differences. The 'Other' usually assumes that the 'locus of normalcy' is White Western culture (Fisher-Boren et al., 2014). The difference often means non-White, non-Western, non-English-speaking, non-heterosexual, and also non-Christian (Kumas-Tan et al., 2007). The construction of the 'Other' in a context of cultural competence seems to come from cultural essentialism or cultural imperialism.

Narayan (1998) delineates cultural essentialism, which is derived from feminist critique of essentialist generalisations of women's problems. All women are represented as privileged women who

are often White, Western, middle-class and heterosexual women, hence women's problems were more likely exemplified as privileged women's issues; they are overgeneralised, and the generalisations are hegemonic with the result that many women are marginalised in terms of their class, race, ethnic and sexual orientation. In the developing of transnational and global feminist perspectives, the universal essentialist generalisation of women was replaced by a cultural-specific essentialist generalisation.

A feminist theorist, Chandra Mohanty, criticised the generalisations from 'Western eyes' through her work *Under Western Eyes* in 1986 (Cho, Crenshaw, & McCall, 2013). In Western feminist work, instead of avoiding gender essentialism, differences among women are categorised by cultural differences, usually between Western women and non-Western women or particular other women such as African women, Muslim women and Indian women. Within the same ethnic groups of women there is some sort of obvious cultural coherence; Narayan (1998) calls it 'cultural essentialism'. However, this essentialist notion of culture is also problematic. Both gender essentialism and cultural essentialism are forms of cultural imperialism. Gender essentialism is perpetuated by socially dominant men and women as if their problems and interests were represented as 'all men' or 'all women' whereas cultural essentialism often conflates socially dominant cultural norms, values, worldviews, and practices such as Western cultures equating as 'all members of the culture' (Narayan, 1998). Seemingly, this constructs the sense of gender identity and cultural identity that creates binaries – between men and women and between Western culture and non-Western culture and other particular cultures. Therefore, the construction of 'Other' can be relevant to the past power relations between Western and non-Western groups. This discussion will be taken up further later.

A crucial matter here is that the cultural otherness inherent in cultural competence can be constructed as binary opposites that form a power relationship between the 'Other' as a client and the self as a social worker in practice. "It is a way of constructing and producing the 'other' who can only be viewed as subordinated to the 'self'" (Nadan, 2014, p. 6). Fook (2016) explains that the modernist construction of identity lies in dichotomous thinking which leads to binary oppositional categories. This is because dichotomous thinking implies that most phenomena fit into 'binary' and 'oppositional' categories, in which one item of the binary is devalued in relation to the 'Other' and they become mutually exclusive – as well as a victim or a perpetrator; a binary opposite creates forced categories of choice that oppose each other; one member of the pair is usually privileged (Fook, 2016).

Nadan (2014) argues that social work educators tend to construct the 'Other' as having culture while the social workers, the self, who mostly belong to socially dominant groups such as Western people are opposed to the 'Other'. The construction of the 'Other' (non-Western-clients/patients) and the self (Western health professionals) is also demonstrated in Kumas-Tan et al.'s (2007) study; cultural competence is often measured within the assumption that practitioners are Caucasian, health care professionals while health care recipients are from racial and ethnic minority groups. The 'Other' is, presumably, clients who belong to cultural groups different from the practitioners (Johnson & Munch, 2009). This produces a structure of hierarchical relations between the client and the social worker in their practice relationship. Yan and Wong (2005) argue this is a 'subject-object dichotomy'; social workers are trained professionals who have specific techniques such as 'conscious use of self', "as it assumes that social workers are subjects capable of becoming neutral and impartial cultural-free agents, while clients are objects who stay within the limits of their culture, to be regarded as such by social workers" (pp. 181–182). There is no equal involvement between them and such social work intervention is seen as a one-way process (Yan & Wong, 2005).

Conventionally, professions are understood as an occupational grouping which exercises social control over a specified area of expertise which is played out by power relations. Professional practice creates power inequalities as professionals possess a body of expert knowledge to use in order to practise effectively in a constantly changing and complex environment (Fook, et al., 2000). Needless to say, social workers possess some sorts of professional power within the client–social worker practice relationship. While the profession has moved away from the approaches of 'social worker expert' in understanding and solving a client's problem over the past 100 years of professional social work history (Johnson & Munch, 2009), the culturally competent social worker can be still deemed as a culture expert who understands the client's culture and who is also able to work with anyone from any cultural background. Consequently, in the traditional sense of cultural competence, the construction of binary opposition between the 'Other' and the self may create a power difference between the two in the practice relationship.

2.6.2 Totalising knowledge of the 'Other'

Social work education has a tendency to give an indication that knowledge of culture is gained from 'learning about' clients' cultures, specifically those who belong to other cultural groups. Cultural competence highlights knowledge of the 'Other' applied in cultural practice for effective cultural

interventions. However, the knowledge of the 'Other' is formed within a context of power relations. Cultural competence can be constructed as race privilege. Most existing cultural competence measurements and instruments are predominately normed on white, middle-class, highly educated populations (Kums-Tan et al., 2007). The knowledge tends to totalise the 'Other' by particular perspectives which are usually from socially dominant groups such as Western White people (Ben-Ari & Strier, 2010; Nadan, 2014). Thus, the knowledge is mostly produced from a standpoint of White/Western people – how they look at the 'Other' in order to work with the 'Other', different from themselves. In this sense, the knowledge is beneficial for the dominant groups to 'learn about' the characteristics of non-dominant groups.

On the other hand, totalised knowledge of the 'Other' can be theoretically impossible. This is illustrated by a theory of the conceptualisations of the 'Other' by a French philosopher, Emanuel Levinas (1905–1995), who analyses the implications of connection between knowledge of the 'Other' and dominating the 'Other'. There are two opposite terms: totality and infinity/need and desire:

> The concept of totality comes from the experience that something is nothing more than whatever I make out of it. The concept of infinity comes from the experience that something is always more than what I know, or what I judge. (Ben-Ari & Strier, 2010, p. 2160)

Levinas explains that totality involves the idea that something is exactly what we make of it, that there is nothing beyond what we perceive about the 'Other', while infinity means that something is more than what one could make of it, that refers to experience of the 'Other' as unknowable, incomprehensible and uncontrollable (Ben-Ari & Strier, 2010). If we totalise the 'Other' it is totalised by us and for satisfying our needs. According to Levinas's argument, when something is totalised, something must be an object; as the 'Other' cannot be the object of the self, and the 'Other' is infinite – that is always beyond what the self attempts to understand and know about the 'Other' (Nadan, 2014). Thus, when we totalise the 'Other', we reduce our understanding of it (Ben-Ari & Strier, 2010). There is a crucial question left: Can cultural competence be learned and taught? As we cannot have knowledge about the 'Other', how do we understand clients from different cultures from our own? (Ben-Ari & Strier, 2010).

Furthermore, Fisher-Borne et al. (2014) argue that the danger of knowledge of the 'Other' strategy, "supposes 'culture' is monolithic and knowable and may create a stereotype of composites of various group identities" (p. 6). In many measurements of cultural competence, differences among community members are minimised (Kumas-Tan et al., 2007). There are differences and variations within ethnic/

cultural groups; however, this may not be acknowledged when a totalising approach is in play. For instance, although Asian ethnic groups are contrasted with the nuclear family found in Eurocentric cultures, within the Asian ethnic category it is important to differentiate between Chinese Americans and Filipino Americans. In one US study, college students from these groups had very different views on attitudes toward dating violence (Johnson & Munch, 2009). Therefore, social worker's knowledge of the 'Other' may lead to overgeneralising people who belong to specific cultural groups by social workers (Nadan, 2014). Generalisation eventually promotes stereotyping of individuals by observed characteristics of those who identify with the specific groups (Williams, 2006). Particularly, from the essentialist perspectives, culture can be understood as a simple combination of cultural elements such as language, dress, music, food, religious customs that are erroneously seen to characterise an entire country or ethnic group; such a strong view of 'Other' can be perceived as uniform (Nadan, 2014). There are, hence, possibilities that the descriptions of cultures may not be accurate and may not be applicable to the norms and behaviour of particular individuals and families within the ethnic and cultural group (Johnson & Munch, 2009). As a result, culture is thought of as a stereotype of clients rather than as a dynamic and changing set of practices (Maidment, 2009).

2.7 Alternative possibilities of professional knowledge and practice

From the 1990s, post-modernism has been highly influential in social work (Williams, 2006). In addition to this, constructivism, which shares some characteristics of post-modernism, has had a significant impact on social work theory, education and practice which, in turn, also has an effect on cultural competence. As noted in Chapter 1, post-modernism has given new ways of understanding ourselves and the world around us through experience of broad changes associated with globalisation. 'Post' ideas emerge when something that previously existed is replaced. However, the replacement pattern is complex; it can co-exist with the previous thinking and the new thinking emerges from a relationship between the original trend and reactions to it (Payne & Askeland, 2008). Both modernist and post-modernist ideologies may have an influence on the current perspectives on cultural competence although this possibility may cause contradiction, limitation and confusion in social work practice. Fook (2016) explains that modernism is concerned with what we know: what causes might underpin a social phenomenon. From modernist thought, we can identify a cause(s) for a problem from observing the real world and that is a way to solve problems. While post-modernism seeks for how we know because, *what* we know is influenced by *how* we know it, how and what we know is formed and what counts as knowledge (Fook, 2016). From the

post-modernist perspective, the positivist way of knowledge production is seen with scepticism. Accordingly, the traditional sense of cultural competence has faced challenges. One of the key ideas of post-modernism pays more attention to *how* power is exercised rather than *who* possesses the power (Healy, 2005). A critical point here is that the traditional approach to cultural competence, influenced by the modernist perspective, tends to ignore the unequal distribution of power in processing of knowledge generation as well as the power imbalance within any client–social worker practice relationship.

Since social work faces increasing demands for covering the diverse content of social and personal problems and confronting the challenges of work with increasingly diverse client populations, the profession needs to move in multiple directions and take various approaches to ensure that practice in particular cultural settings is as flexible as possible. Post-modernism can investigate cultural competence from various epistemological positions that allows flexibility of thinking and application to cultural practice. Several post-modernist and constructivist approaches to cultural competence are outlined below.

2.7.1 Intersectionality of identity

As discussed in this chapter, cultural competence in social work was conceptualised with a strong influence from modernism. Cultural competence, influenced by positivist approaches, is where culture is seen a part of identity that is common to members of a group maintained by their shared experiences (Williams, 2006). The one-dimensional view of group identity based on race and ethnicity seems to dominate in social work, and this can lead to creating a fixed identity of a client. On the other hand, the modernist construction of identity as a way of defining ourselves such as ‘Asian woman’ may not be an adequate description of ourselves. Fook (2016) argues that social structural categories such as race, gender and class-based identities are fixed in a structure located outside of the domain of the individual person and people who belong to marginal or oppressed populations in these categories can be stigmatised in society; they, however, cannot change their identities (Fook, 2016). People may feel themselves fitting in some sorts of fixed social category although this does not truly identify them. Furthermore, globalisation has come to recognise diversity. There is an emergence of various categories in modern society – diversity yields up different groups of people in society (Sheppard, 2006). One of the reasons is that social exclusion, which originates, in part, from financial hardship, divides groups in society; this has increasingly grown to different forms of exclusion through global changes (Fook, 2012). Socially categorised groups become diverse as well.

Post-modernism changes the way of understanding individual identity that forms within contemporary social structures and contexts (Fook, 2016). Through globalisation, societies have gone through a wide range of changes: geographical boundaries, cultures, social relations and structures (Dominelli, 2004). Reality is, hence, not determined by fixed condition; rather it is socially constructed. In social work, a sociological view of identity has been increasingly concerned with how the self or identity develops in relation to society and social structures, as identity(ies) is/are made in relation to, and in interaction with, the social world (Fook, 2016). We are influenced not only by one factor but by many factors in the events and conditions of our social and political life (Collins & Bilge, 2016). Personal identity is therefore, understood to be more complex by the intersectionality of identity in post-modernist and post-structuralist thinking. The term *intersectionality* is attributed to the experience of Black African women in America, their marginalised experience of race and gender; complex experience acknowledges that individual identity is not a rigid social categorisation (Fook, 2016).

> Intersectionality consists of an assemblage of ideas and practices that maintain that gender, race, class, sexuality, age, ethnicity, ability, and similar phenomena cannot be analytically understood in isolation from one another; instead these constructs signal an intersecting constellation of power relationships that produce unequal material realities and distinctive social experiences for individuals and groups positioned within them. (Collins & Chepp, 2013, p. 3)

Feminists have been aware of the limitations of a single analytical category such as race, gender or class and promote extending the analysis of multiple dimensions of social life and intersections of race, gender, class and other categories (McCall, 2005). Intersectionality becomes a way of analysing the complexity of the world where we live and our experiences. This abandons a fixed and unified notion of self-identification (Healy, 2005). People's identities are multifaceted. Hence, each individual is the unit of analysis required. Fisher-Borne et al. (2014) argue that social work needs to acknowledge the complexity of cultural competence; when defining ourselves, our identity(ies) are not fixed. Individuals should be defined as a whole, intersecting and interacting within several social identities (dimensions of inequality). This can lead to more accurate understanding of individual identity(ies).

2.7.2 Notions of self and 'Other'

Reflective self: self opposed to 'Other'

The traditional sense of cultural competence seems to be attached to ethnocentric elements of Western perspectives, such as the concept of 'Other' or cultural otherness. One focal point is that the traditional approach neglects consideration of the relationship between self (social worker) and 'Other' (client) in a

context of power relations. This approach can be criticised. In practice, this relationship may cause tensions between the client and the social worker, in particular in a cross-cultural situation. Fisher-Borne et al. (2014) contend that, when working with clients from different cultural backgrounds, self-awareness can challenge the inherent power imbalance through analysing the power differences in a helping relationship and what biases and assumptions social workers may bring to the relationship in practice. Although many cultural competence frameworks encourage increasing some level of self-awareness, they fail to emphasise awareness of power differences (Fisher-Borne et al., 2014). This is probably because self-awareness involves both reflective and reflexive approaches, reflecting on oneself; on the other hand, social work education tends to lay stress on the reflective approach to self-awareness.

Reflectivity has emerged from professional practitioner and educational discourse that refers more to a process of reflecting upon practice (Fook, 2016). This indicates a reflective practice, which is used in post-intervention activity when social workers learn from what they have done in practice and they critically reflect on their actions and analyse how their own culture has an effect on their practice (Yan & Wong, 2005). Self-reflection is a significant part of the process mentioned earlier in this chapter, which importantly advocates knowing oneself by increasing one's own cultural-self-awareness; this contributes to developing the social worker's sense of self (especially to define cultural self-identity). The terms 'reflection' or 'reflective practice' are often used interchangeably (Fook, & Askeland, 2006). Reflection means to examine our past experience and assess what we reflect back in order to create meaning and new understanding of something that we did not expect to happen or, something is unfamiliar or problematic to us (Fook & Askeland, 2006). Thus, reflection is used in a process of learning from practice experience which is important to the development of practice for practitioners (reflective practice). The process of reflectivity is explicated by Kondrat's (1999) reflective self-awareness below.

Kondrat's (1999) reflection approaches to self-awareness are useful to an understanding of the process of reflection. Firstly, the social worker becomes aware of the self, of what is being experienced. This is 'the simple conscious awareness'. The focus is on the experience itself – not on the self. Subsequently, the social worker reflects on the self who is experiencing something which refers to 'reflective self-awareness'. The concept stems from Western philosophical tradition, Gorger Herbert Mead's classic distinction between the 'I' and 'me' (Kondrat, 1999). Reflective self-awareness distinguishes between the subject-self 'I' (the reflecting aspect of the self) and the object-self 'me' (the self as reflected on) in the reflection process. The formula is straightforward, "the self steps back to observe and consider its

own performance" (Kondrat, 1999, p. 454). The reflective approach to self-awareness forms a dichotomy between the knower of self and the self as known in reflection (Yan & Wong, 2005). This can create self-knowledge from an objective assessment of the self. The greater distance between the two means that one become more objective about self and that is a reliable source of self-knowledge (Kondrat, 1999). However, the process tends to focus on the self in a situation (experience) that leaves out the 'Other' (one of the influential factors in the experience). The approach to self-awareness may lead to making self and 'Other' into separate entities and the self has no relation to the 'Other'. Relying on the reflective self-awareness may exclude a relationship with the client in a practice context.

Reflexive self: 'self' as related to 'Other'

One of the branches of constructivist theory, social constructionism, which holds post-modern ideas, puts an emphasis on a relationship based in social work practice; the interactions between a client and a social worker may have an impact on the relationship. The perspective premises that the reality of social work is constructed through interacting between workers and clients in a social work agency context, and each affects and changes the others; the worker contributes to the construction process with their clients (Payne, 2005). Hence, analysing the relationship is necessary. Since we have experienced various changes within society through globalisation, this has had a significant effect on ourselves in many ways in the post-modernist era. The importance of this may arise from the experience of how we perceive and interpret ourselves, people, and the world we live in. The post-modernist perspective influences how we know; what we know is considered as contextual and situated and, therefore, knowing something is drawing attention to the perspective of the knower (Fook, 2016). Another branch of constructivist theory, social constructivism also shares the similar intellectual orientation with post-modernism:

> The theory of social constructivism maintains that there is no objective reality that people might all apprehend and agree on. In comparison to postmodernism, this is a "bottom-up" perspective that considers how individuals and groups "create" their social worlds. All of us experience an objective physical reality (our bodies), but what that reality means to us (including our perspectives on relationship, social situations, and ourselves, including our physical bodies) is a mental creation. We apply our beliefs acquired from prior experiences to new input received from the environment. (Welsh, 2013, p. 281)

One of the main implications from the social constructivist perspective is that, one's presumed knowledge about self and other is wholly subjective (Welsh, 2013). Hence, our sense of self becomes significant to define the self. The conception of the self is an internalised relationship between an inner reflective agent and external experiences; the self has these internal and external aspects, and the idea

that they interact and have the capacity to act back upon and influence each other is crucial to the social idea of identity (Fook, 2016). James Mark Baldwin (1897), a social interactionist who believed in the self as social construction, argued that interacting with significant others impacts on the formation of one's self-portrait (Rubin & Rosenburg, 1997). Baldwin proposed a comprehensive conception of self that all aspects of the self are a social and cultural product (Rubin & Rosenburg, 1997). There are two interrelated 'selves': ego (self) the thoughts you have about yourself, how you view yourself and alter (other) the thoughts you have about people that you know or you can imagine and these two are interrelated (Rubin & Rosenburg, 1997). Our 'selves' are generated in relation to others, there can be no self without the other and there is no other without the self (Yan & Wong, 2005). The relation between the self and the 'Other' can be one of identity. Our own sense of other also results from how we understand the 'Other'. Nadan (2014) asserts the importance of contextuality in social work practice as, for her, it was formed in contexts from her participation in international social work with German and Israeli social work students. One example is that their perceptions of other were changed within contexts; the other could be seen as similar and also it could be seen as 'Other' in another context. Thus, context shapes how they perceive the 'Other'/other. Ben-Ari and Strier (2010) maintain that the relation between self and 'Other' plays an important role when working with differences in practice; how one regards oneself as a cultural being and how one views the client as the other cultural being in the helping relationship. Cultural competence thus, needs to examine the self, the 'Other', and the relationship between the two through reflection (Nadan, 2014). As a result, reflexivity self, which is subjective knowledge of the 'whole self', grows in importance. The idea of reflexivity comes from social science researcher discourse that refers to a stance of being able to locate oneself in the picture, to appreciate how one's own self influences the research act (Fook, 1999b, Fook, 2016). Reflexivity is elucidated by Kondrat (1999) in another approach to self-awareness, described as 'reflexive self-awareness'.

Kondrat (1999) explains that, "as you look in a mirror, also consider ways in which the shape/substance of the mirror, the lighting, the eyes or eyesight of the viewer, and the viewer's particular angle of observation contribute to the construction of the image" (p. 457). How we see others is based on what we see – but we cannot see ourselves by extrospection. "We cannot observe and make judgments about the self the way we can about another. This is because our knowledge of the self is inherently reflexive – that is, self-referential" (Kondrat, 1999, p. 456). Although reflective self-awareness used for gaining self-knowledge by being objective about oneself through distancing between the knower (the subjective-self 'I') and the known (objective-self 'me') is questioned, this is also one's subjective state since an

assessment of the self is the same self being assessed, the knower and known are in the same social and historical contexts (Yan & Wong, 2005). Hence, subjective knowledge is derived from the knowing. 'I' is "sine qua non for interpersonal communication to occur since such communication rests, in part, on one's ability to use intuitive familiarity with his or her own experience (derived from one's socializing communities) as a way of understanding others" (Kondrat, 1999, p. 458). "Reflexivity is a process looking outward, to the social and cultural artifacts and forms of thought which saturate our practice and inward to challenge the processes by which we make sense of the world." (D'Cruz, Gillingham, & Melendez, 2007, p. 78). The subjective processes shape our sense of self and 'Other' (Welsh, 2006). We are part of the knowledge (the self and the other) creating process. Kondrat (1999) claims that the reflexive approach to self-awareness is not necessarily accurate about knowledge of self (and others) as this is always imperfect; if seeking accuracy, it makes the same limited knowledge from objective approaches to self-awareness: "[the] reflexive approach does form the basis for such crucial conceptual functions as personal meaning, interpersonal and interpretive understanding, and accurate empathy as a way of knowing self and other" (p.458). Reflexivity is hence crucial for understanding the construction of the self and the other in practice context. The process includes a relationship between the self and the 'Other' in the practice analysis.

2.7.3 Balancing power difference in practice relationship

Reflexivity also encourages social work practitioners to consider and examine the structural power relations in practice. This can help to balance the power difference in the client–social worker relationship. Power is produced in the micro-context of social work practice. Social workers need to analyse how a power relationship between themselves and the clients may operate in actual practice. Foucault urges understanding and analysing the micro-political power in a local context in order to challenge the macro-process of power as power relations are not merely an effect of macro structures (Healy, 2005). According to Nadan (2014), reflexivity begins to reflect on power differentials between different actors in the relationship, such as the less powerful group (their experiences of marginality, oppression), and the more powerful group (privileges such as access to resources, the silencing of other groups):

> Power relations reflect on the "weight" given to each side's collective narrative and to the realization that the narrative of the more powerful group is perceived as representing historical fact and truth, while that of the less powerful group is perceived as being of doubtful reliability. (Nadan, 2014, p. 7)

Reflexivity takes into account how relations of power influence the processes of knowledge generation – the reflexive practitioner is aware of their own subjectivity affecting how knowledge about clients can be created through their experiences of the clients; hence, they question their own knowledge claims about the clients they have interaction with (D'Cruz et al., 2007). Parton and O'Byrne (2000) proposed *relational reflexivity* which refers to knowledge about clients constructed by practitioners. Reflexivity can be relational when knowledge about clients is constructed by practitioners; hence, the knowledge should be shared with clients and discussed openly with them. The relational reflexive approach challenges the assumptions that practitioners may have about their clients and encourages them to ask questions about their assumptions (D'Cruz et al., 2007). Nadan (2014) strongly suggests asking the self such questions as: "which point of view counts, whose voice is being heard, and whose professional knowledge is considered 'reliable' and 'advanced'" (p.7).

The idea of a connection between knowledge and power is also a post-modern one, in that it is argued that whatever group controls the way things are *seen* (in some ways) also has the power to control the way things *are* (Fook, 2016). Post-modernism does not agree on social progress generated through a fixed and objective body of ideas and rejects the idea of the totalising of knowledge as the knowledge is uniform; it is a theory from a dominant perspective as various perspectives exist (Welsh, 2006). As a post-modernist/structuralist, Foucault asserts that "any generalizations about people and societies serve to reinforce positions of power among groups rather than represent objective truth" (Welsh, 2006, p. 251). In this sense, the traditional approach to knowledge about the client's culture cannot be acquired. From the constructivist/constructionist perspective, knowledge is constructed based on the shared experiences of a group and the social interactions that shape the knowledge and it is specific to a particular context as the participants in the context involved in knowledge production: a dialectic process of knowledge production (Williams, 2006). Instead of the positing of knowledge about the client, practitioners learn from the client through listening and giving prominence to the client's history; the narrative approach does not assume that the practitioner can know another culture to which he or she does not belong (Williams, 2006). Culture can be learned from the individual client (who shapes his or her own worldview) and the practitioner explores the collection of identities and experiences that produce and evolve cultural experiences for the client (Williams, 2006). Eventually, social workers pay more attention to the voices of underrepresented and marginalised citizens (Johnson & Munch, 2009).

One of the post-modern approaches, narrative theory, can be seen as the foundation of cultural competence by using the reflexive approach. Narrative theory, in the examination of, and intervention in, social problems has emerged from a variety of theories of post-modernism and social constructivism of the 1980s (Welsh, 2006). The idea of narrative theory is that people's lives and relationships are shaped by their life stories which are told from the perspective of the individual (Payne, 2005). "All people are engaged in an on-going process of constructing a life story or personal narrative that determines their understanding of themselves and their position of the world" (Welsh, 2006, p. 249). Narrative theory can be premised on the construction of the social worker's knowledge about the self and the 'Other' in practice. Narrative theory shapes practice. Social workers reflect on the construction of the self through their personal narratives as well as they reflect on the client's identities and narrative in practice (Healy, 2005). Michael White (social worker) and David Epston (family therapist) began to develop narrative therapy for practice and published '*Narrative Means to Therapeutic Ends'* in 1990. The therapy encourages the individual to view themselves as a person rather than solving their problem or changing destructive behaviour as a part of treatment (Welsh, 2013).

White and Epston's (1990) narrative therapy for practice views the client as expert in their own lives. The narrative approach to practice can change the traditional approach to professional practice that can break down the tyranny traditionally exercised by professionals and they do not misplace assumptions of expertise and knowledge so that the power imbalance in the helping relationship can be diminished (Williams, 2006). William's suggestion to the approach can value the client's expertise and knowledge regarded as his or her strength in finding a solution and both the client and the social worker participate in the process. Therefore, the practitioner must cultivate an attitude of complete openness and respect for cultural experience (Williams, 2006). Fisher-Borne et al. (2014) mention that a key for cultural competence concerns changing social workers' attitudes, and being positive and respectful toward people from different cultural backgrounds. This underlines openness to those who are culturally different in order to develop understanding (Johnson & Munch, 2009).

In this sense, the narrative approach encourages a dialogue process within the helping relationship between a client and a social worker. The self and the other can be understood through making sense of revealed similarities and differences between them in a social constructionist perspective (Williams, 2006). A dialogue between two is a way to change the context that allows the social worker to include the client's world in their own, which enables them to make a connection in their relationship (Yan &

Wong, 2005). The idea of reflection is therefore the exercise of reflexivity that practitioners can change existing power relations or shift the balance of power in the social worker–client practice relationship (D'Cruz et al., 2007). Interaction between the client and the social worker is an aspect of reflexivity which influences the context and creates meanings in the relationship (Fook, 2012).

2.8 A constructivist approach to professional knowledge

As discussed above, cultural competence has developed challenges to the strong influence of essentialism/positivism for approaching cultural practice. With the recent influence of post-modernism and constructivism, there are different approaches to cultural competence depending on theoretical perspectives. Theory is vital for social work professional practice but there are debates over how best to develop and how to use it in practice (Healy, 2005). Types of knowledge are distinct: between 'knowing that' is knowledge based on facts and rules and 'knowing how' is knowledge more practice-based derived from experience (Fook et al., 2000). Professional knowledge is usually understood and constructed from the idea based on 'knowing that' or 'facts' or 'general theory' that is acknowledged as useful knowledge, and it can be taught to professionals as simple rules and guidelines to practice (Fook & Gardner, 2007).

Healy (2005) explains the two different theory developments in social work: one is the empirical practice movement known as evidence-based practice (EBP) and the other is the reflective tradition. The EBP advocates practice based on rational knowledge validated through scientific methods that articulate the knowledge base for decision making especially when engaging with the life of a client. The empirical practice movement promotes a top-down approach to theory development and use; the social work researcher develops social work theory and then the practitioner applies it in practice. Cultural competence is mostly developed from theoretical and philosophical foundations through the top-down approach. The literature discussed previously has reviewed the limitations and contradictions of simply applying knowledge to actual practice.

The reflective tradition is advocated among social workers who argue for recognition of practitioners' lived experience of practice as a basis for creating knowledge in practice. A scholar, Donald Schön (1983, 1999), whose work developed the reflective approach to professional practice, describes the EBP as a technological rational approach to professional knowledge derived from knowledge based on science and applied to defined scientific problems. However, problem-solving by the use of scientific (modernist) knowledge has not always worked when practitioners are faced with actual practical

experiences of complexity, uncertainty, instability, and value conflicts; this is because the problem setting was ignored (Schön, 1999). As mentioned earlier, theory and practice have been constructed as separate entities and that has led to the hierarchical split between researchers and practitioners in social work (Fook, 2016). Formal theory developed from social work academics has been privileged over theory developed in practice: practice wisdom (D'Cruz et al., 2007).

Reflexivity on the other hand, can create different types of theory and the new ways of theorising knowledge have an impact on our understanding of what it is to be professional and to practise in responsive and effective ways (Fook, 2016). Healy (2005) argues that reflexivity overcomes the limitations of both evidence-based and the relational traditions of knowledge to use in practice as both are needed to adequately scrutinise practitioners' accounts of the truths of their practice through combining the two sets of knowledge. Aristotle's three types of intellectual virtues illustrate this further.

> In brief, *episteme* refers to the type of "scientific"' knowledge we would traditionally equate with theory – it is generalisable, universal, precise and explanatory, and allows us to reason in a deductive (from general to specific) manner. *Techne* refers to the practical knowledge which is involved in making or crafting artefacts or producing objects. *Phronesis* is a type of knowledge that allows practical or wise reasoning, in order to act for the good (praxis) in a particular context. (Fook, 2016, p. 50)

Aristotle's types of knowledge explain the difference between theory (*episteme*) and practice (*techne*) and also a new type of knowledge (*phronesis*), which is crucial in social work practice and particularly in cultural competence practice. The phronesis type of knowledge can make for common ground between theory and practice.

Reflexivity is a close link to critical reflection as defined by Fook (2012, 2016). Critical reflection is an analysis of how power relations and arrangements may be supported, and the analysis is related to Foucault's idea of connection between knowledge and power; in this sense critical reflection is a process of deconstruction and reconstruction of the meaning of the wider context and is also an approach to linking theory (knowledge) and practice (Fook & Gardener, 2007). In the process, social work practitioners may be able to create their own knowledge from their own practice experience by closing gaps between theory and practice. The phronesis type of knowledge is more related to practice. Practice can be understood from less of a 'top-down' approach. Social work can gain benefits from 'knowledge of how' as practice is contextual and situational in that it requires flexible actions. 'Cultural competence' is perceived by individual practitioners from their own understanding of culture and this has an effect on

their approaches to cultural practice settings. Practice is, therefore, subjective experiences of interaction and dialogue with clients and processes of how to make decisions when cultural conflicts occur and what actions to take. The research for this thesis therefore promotes cultural competence using a bottom-up approach for improving and increasing the knowledge for effective cross-cultural practice. The phronesis type of knowledge can be gained through experiences of professionals and learners. The knowledge developed through their own practice experiences/learning experiences of cross-cultural practice should be valued as practice knowledge. Importantly, their voices and views on cultural competence should be heard in a contribution to develop further formal knowledge.

Conclusion

In this chapter, social work education for cultural competence makes an emphasis on three core components: knowledge, awareness-attitude and skills has been discussed. It has been noted that the early establishment of cultural competence was strongly influenced by essentialist/positivist perspectives. These traditional approaches give significant emphasis to knowledge-based learning. Thus, cultural competence tends to focus on knowledge of 'Others', the way of knowing ethnically and socially categorised cultural groups can be objectively attained. However, this may imply limiting our openness to understanding the 'Other'.

Since the influence of post-modernism and constructivism in social work, our subjective views on self and other are considered. Knowing both the self and other is a subjective perspective of oneself through interaction and dialogue. Thus, both are not separate entities but are, rather, related to each other. Reflective awareness is useful for reflecting upon oneself in practice, but also reflexive awareness can be a part of reflective awareness in reflection that includes not only oneself, but also the other, and the relationship between self and other in context. This can help to analyse how the client–social worker practice relationship is constructed and how power difference is generated in the relationship. In this way, practitioners can make a relationship with their clients in practice.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

In most studies, cultural competence has been established from deductive research approaches. The literature review in the previous chapter reviewed the theoretical constructs of cultural competence in particular. There are on-going discussions in the profession about the adequacy of practice guidelines and limitations of practice; moreover the effectiveness of cross-cultural practice is questioned. This exploratory study investigates cultural competence from an inductive research approach. The research highlights cross-cultural practice as experienced by social workers. This study examines the developmental process of cultural competence from education to career; how three core components, knowledge, awareness-attitude and skills, have developed from their educational and practicum learning and also how these components were utilised in the participants' professional practice. The research offers the opportunity to reveal what lies inside their practice reality and to unpack issues of current cultural competence that social work students have when faced with challenges in their education and practicum and what tensions practitioners have confronted in practice in various cultural situations and what they have gained from the experiences in order to improve their knowledge and skills for practice.

A qualitative research approach was therefore selected for this contextual research as it can choose from a variety of methods and organise a structure flexibly for examining a process of conceptual knowledge development and a relationship between knowledge and practice. The analysis focuses on understanding participants' lived experiences of cross-cultural practice, interpreted in their own terms, from their points of view. The interviews were highly valuable sources for the main data. In this chapter, the conceptual framework will be described in detail which includes the theoretical foundations of the research, research methods, and ethical considerations.

3.1 Ontology and epistemology

Historically, traditional philosophy was inflexibly divided between studies of human subjectivity and human experiences of worldly objects and physical reality (Polkinghorne, 2004). However, social work has been influenced by both philosophies. Social work can be described as a hybrid and technical–rational profession, as well as being socially constructed on the other. One of the effects of these influences is

that social work has debated between the scientific and more client-centred approaches to practice (Parton, 2000). As briefly noted in Chapter 1, social work is influenced by society and social workers are required to take state-mandated or legitimate actions and this, in part, defines what social work is and the what the roles of social workers are (Parton, 2000). Child protection and mental health for instance, the concepts of 'child abuse' or 'mental health' are legitimated by examination of evidence – they are not concepts with an 'objective' status so social workers cannot clearly identify their objective status (Sheppard, 2006). Hence, objectivity of practice is a part of reality in social work.

As a result of the growing diversity, through the enormous global demographic and social movements in particular, contemporary social work practice is unclear and unpredictable; it is quite diverse. Social work practice results from an interaction between a client and a practitioner; the relationship between the two is highly significant in cross-cultural social work practice (Abram & Moiom 2009; Maidment, Egan, & Wexler, 2011, and Yan & Wong, 2005). There is a subjective practice reality that social workers experience in their practice. Social workers are required to manage more uncertainty rather than problem solving in practice (Sheppard, 2006). England (1986) promotes giving greater attention to the way the worker and their clients relate, their feelings and the responses they arouse from each other in practice. Social work practice has, therefore, two sides: both objective and subjective realities.

3.1.1 Modernism (postivism) and post-modernism

Contemporary knowledge draws on three epistemological positions such as post-positivism, constructivism and critical theory in social science; these paradigms encapsulate specific beliefs and worldviews which guide us to choose appropriate methods for social research (Williams, 2006). In the early 20th century, social work shifted to scientise practice based on rational understanding of human beings and society during the modernist era (Payne, 2005). Social work has been increasingly influenced by the post-modern revolution from the late 20th century (Fook, 2012). As discussed in the previous chapters, post-modernists increasingly developed doubts about modernist knowledge: "[t]here is a decline in confidence in the efficacy and progress of knowledge in solving human problems" (Sheppard, 2006, p. 69).

Modernism is defined as the period from the 18th century when the widespread authority of religious dogma was altered by the social revolution of the Enlightenment in Western societies (Witkin, 2009). This was a significant revolution of the norm that "knowledge is available to anyone, not only

people with power and authority, by investigating the real world through observation of it" (Askeland & Payne, 2008, p. 23). Modernism is therefore a philosophical movement that refers to a scientific-philosophical reality of Western societies (Danermark, Ekstrom, Jakobsen, & Karlsson, 2002). Modernism is a uniform theory that asserts the universal notions of objective reality, morality, truth and human nature – as the world is understood in terms of grand theories. Knowledge is a reflection of empirical relations and comes from causal analysis (Fook, 2016). The goal is to produce knowledge with a greater certainty so that it can indicate a definite and progressive direction (Parton & O'Byrne, 2000).

> The characterising feature of the modernist world is the belief that conditions can be progressively improved through the establishment of reliable, universal and generalisable knowledge, developed through the use of reason and scientific methods. Knowledge in this sense is cumulatively developed, in a linear sequence, and disciplinary knowledge is clearly bounded and controlled. (Fook, 2016, p.12)

Scientific knowledge is believed to be generalisable, and applicable, across different situations and contexts (Fook, 2016). Auguste Comte, who was the founder of the discipline of sociology, accepted the doctrine of positivism as the model for social inquiry in the 19th century; the natural laws of physical science searched for the laws of social life (Pascale, 2011). Science could identify and resolve issues in the natural world, hence, it can also be applicable to offer solutions in the social world (Sheppard, 2006). The possibility of 'objective knowledge' can be accurate in our world and society as the idea can provide a basis for all activities (Parton & O' Byrne, 2000). Early social work pioneers sought the utilisation of science in practice, and social work is referred to as a science of action that is situated in an area where science and practice converge and interact (Gredig & Marsh, 2010). The scientific practice is associated with modern systems of knowledge, which are grounded on scientific assertions and analysis, and where knowledge is generated through scientific methods (Fleras & Spoonley, 1999; Fook, 2012; Payne, 2005; Parton & O'Byrne, 2000). Therefore, social work science has had a positivist influence on practice, which guides actions based on the evidence from the world around us (Payne, 2005).

Post-modernism is a reaction to the previous dominant ideology of modernism (Payne & Askeland, 2008). The modernist paradigm determines the conditions of knowledge, and locates knowledge as predictable, certain or interpretable within some type of structure (Williams, 2006). Modernist thinking, which can be described as structural thinking, assumes that there is an underlying structure that explains the causes of a phenomenon (Fook, 2016). It seeks one overall explanation of social trends (Payne, 2014). On the other hand, post-modernists are sceptical about modernist knowledge as reality in the post-modern

paradigm is a moving target that cannot provide reassurance of regularities (Williams, 2006). Science has established the facets of social work: a unified form of social work activity and social work values (Sheppard, 2006). However, such knowledge-based practice is not always compatible with real practice. The theory or general rules from modernist knowledge can be limited to specific situations because individual practitioners are not always aware of the myriad of different rules that might be needed to inform any one set of actions in a changing situation (Fook & Gardner, 2007). The social world can be traced as non-physical reality that is distinct from sets of relations and bounded meanings (Potter & Lopez, 2001). Social reality cannot exist independently of us, and it has been created by us (Potter & Lopez, 2001). Modernist ways of knowing and practicing tend to be discarded. Several authors, such as Parton (2000), Payne (2005) and Parton and O'Byrne (2000), have drawn on this in their analysis of social work and, in doing so, have contributed to the development and understanding of constructivist practice in social work.

The new area of study emerged when social scientists consider further the nature of 'reality' for human beings (Charon, 1979). For instance, symbolic interactionism can be useful for understanding, discovering and examining social work practice. Symbolic interactionism approaches to the study of human action, which is understood as the process of making meaning, were developed by Herbert George Blumer (1969) through the initial work of a philosopher, George Herbert Mead who found that mind and self emerged from a social process of communication by signs (Charon, 1992). Blumer's symbolic interactionism has three assertions:

> (1) human beings act toward things on the basis of meanings that the things have for them (2) the meaning of such things is derived from social interaction that one has with one's fellow (3) these meanings are handled in and modified through an interpretive process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters. (Blumer, 1969, p.4)

Blumer (1969) critically argues that traditionally predominant doctrines of psychology and sociology that describe human action as based on initiative or causative factors ignore human action resulting from the relationship between people. Human beings are purposive agents, and engage in minded and self-reflective behaviour (Blumer, 1969). "They confront a world that they must interpret in order to act rather than a set of environmental stimuli to which they are forced to respond" (Schwandt, 1998, p. 233). The Blumer-Mead theory shares the fundamental concepts of constructivism and interpretivism and takes a position of reality as a social construction that exists within people's minds, which are culturally defined and historically formed through their interpretations and experiences (Sarantakos, 2005). Denzin (1992)

argues that cultural and social aspects influencing the interpretation of individual reality cannot be overlooked. Since practice involves at least two people, it is not merely an action that the practitioner takes on his or her own, but it is developed through an interaction with the client. Practice is therefore created meaningfully through the relationship between two. Their experience varies, depending on their meaning of the interaction and influencing by their social and cultural locations, how they interpret the interaction which leads to their behaviours and responses.

Sheppard (2006) mentions that social work however, cannot be post-modernist, "There is an unavoidable 'core of objectivity' in social work" (p. 71) as social work is built on the modernist assumption that some forms of evidence count as knowledge, which can inform our understanding of the world, though reality may not be consistent. Polkinghorne (2004) discusses that two contested philosophies between human subjectivity (human experience) and world objects (physical reality) were related; human subjective experience reflects the world. Polkinghorne further explains that there is another way to understand social action; using a French theorist, Bourdieu (1972/1977)'s, view, he proposed in his *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. This interacts between subjectivity (person) and objectivity (environment and culture). For instance, there are both every-day practice and specialised practice:

> Every- day practices are activities that people ordinarily engage in as they go about in the world and interact with other people. (*Practice* and *activity* are used as synonyms in this chapter and are interchanged in the text only for stylistic reasons.) Specialized practices in the human realm are bounded by specific, agreed-upon goals or shared assumptions about their purpose and are most often conducted in specified locations. They include such practices as law, medicine, nursing, social work, teaching, and psychotherapy. Practice theory does not make an essential distinction between everyday and specialized practices. Both take place in interactions between person and environment, and their operations can be understood through a general theory of practice. (Polkinghorne, 2004, p. 48)

Social work moves between objectivity and subjectivity. Both objective and subjective practice realities are factual to social workers; one is regulated practice reality, in which social workers work under the laws and mandated rules. On the other hand, practice is diverse, contextual and situational through interacting with individuals from various cultural and social backgrounds whose needs and issues are varied. Social workers move between two different practice realities during practice. Therefore, the two distinctive ontological concepts have been acknowledged when viewing social work practice in this research, as social workers experience objective and subjective practice realities which are both 'real'.

3.1.2 Critical realism

Qualitative research often focuses on an epistemological position; however, in this research, the ontological position is also taken into consideration. Ontology is about our assumptions of how the existence of the world is made up. A philosopher of science, Thomas Kuhn's views of the existence of the world underwent changes throughout his career, demonstrating that our assumptions of the existence of the world can be changed, which has ontological significance. Prior to the emergence of Thomas Kuhn's (1962) paradigm theory in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, the dominant idea of the philosophy of science was the accumulation of knowledge through scientific methods, and progress was believed to be linear and uniform (Bird, 2000). He argued for science's objectivity; that science undergoes a periodic paradigm shift, rather than accumulating knowledge, "when paradigms change, the world itself changes with them". (Kuhn, 1970, p. 111). The community of scientists generate knowledge based upon past scientific achievements, it determines whether to accept or reject theories that enforce the current acceptance of theory (paradigm) when it is time for a theory change (Dietze, 2001). The scientific revolution is therefore not progressive, but it shifts horizontally from one paradigm to another that is closer to the reality (Gargen, 2009).

> Knowledge according to Kuhn, is at least in part socially conditioned, by which he means that the place, culture, society and era in which a discovery is made and the conditions under which it is made play a role in how a discovery is made and how it is perceived. (Dietze, 2001, pp. 1–2)

Thus, subjectivity cannot be denied in science (Bird, 2000).

Furthermore, the positivist assumption is that it is doubtful that actual reality has a straightforward relationship between the existing world and perception of the world. A philosopher, Roy Bhaskar, who developed critical realism (CR), claimed that reality is complex, temporal and changing in a situation over time (Bhaskar, 1978). CR view is that reality is not merely whether it is universal or multiple, rather, it sees both concepts as a paradox (Maree, 2009). Reality is assumed to consist of three ontological domains: the real (discovery of structure or mechanism); the actual (an actual event that has taken place); and the empirical (experience of an actual event) (Bhaskar, 1978). He argues that positivism misleads the domain of the *empirical*: thus, the epistemic fallacy. It fails to see that reality has ontological depth: it does not only indicate the objective reality of what we can see and sense, but also connects with the empirical reality we experience (Danermark et al., 2002). The domain of the real occurs only in certain situations in a closed system, which we can create so that a single mechanism is isolated, such as by

scientific experiment (Maress, 2009). Positivists believe that the natural mechanism can be applied to the outside of the system; however, the social world is unable to be controlled by external influences: the open system (Maree, 2009) that is continuously changed by external interaction in daily life (Sarantakos, 2013). Such a profound dimension of reality makes it difficult to observe spontaneously occurring events with single causes (Danermark et al., 2002). Therefore, the social world cannot be understood as the domain of the *real* alone, as social reality can be perceived and interpreted differently by people who experience it directly or indirectly at the time. Thus, understanding of reality and human interpretation of reality are not identical (Danermark et al., 2002).

CR suggests that dualism is a solution to the prevailing problems in sociology. Although a realist position is retained, the general concepts and knowledge we attain within the scientific paradigm based on objectivism/empiricism are fallible, as scientific results always consist of a set of theories of the independent reality built on previous science, continuously transforming the deepening knowledge of reality. CR also accepts the elements of the relativist/constructivist idea that the world is inevitably constructed by our understanding of reality, which is interpreted from our perception and standpoint. Such a statement cannot be made without conceptual prejudgement of reality; eventually, no one can step out of their conceptual world (Danermark et al., 2002). Therefore, CR is not a one-sided approach or perspective in research.

All methods are imperfect, so multiple methods, both qualitative and quantitative, are needed to generate knowledge. Utilising and considering both methods' specific benefits and limitations assist sense making for practice. Although epistemological and ontological issues can be complex, a qualitative research design can resolve them through utilising flexible methods for the research. CR leads to making more sense of what the researcher is investigating, and solidifies what phenomenon is studied – which can have a subtle impact on research – but this can be a better way to investigate social phenomena. Therefore, all domains (the real, the actual and the empirical) of reality are imperative for understanding of cultural competence and how this is translated into practice.

On the one hand, previous research on cultural competence seems to be less focused on the domain of the empirical – how practitioners perceive their practice experience in cultural situations and what they come to understand from the experience (developing own knowledge) in order to understand the practice situation better. In this research, the framework is particularly developed through the subjective reality

experienced by social work practitioners, while acknowledging the existence of objective reality of regulated or rational practice.

3.2 Knowledge and practice

Since contemporary models of professionalism are defined as the utilisation of science in practice, use of knowledge, the relationship between scientific knowledge and practice, are imperative in social work (Gredig & Marsh, 2010). However, Fook (2012) mentions that the development of social work theory and practice is traditionally divided. Science was significantly associated with social work research (Shaw, 2010), which has been strongly attached to context-independent attributed knowledge influenced by positivism (Coulshed & Orme, 2012). As discussed earlier, a major drawback of the scientific approach is inherently embedded in specific paradigms which limit explanation of a multifaceted social phenomenon. The traditional methodology of natural science based on realist ontology and positivist epistemology puts reality aside from humanity (Maree, 2009). The approach tends to give homogenised descriptions (Shaw, 2010); the world of clients, problems, and phenomena are simplistically understood and explained (Payne, 2005). This can make a point of separation between theory for practice and actual practice in social work; there seems to be inconsistency between theory and practice. Social work needs an approach to theories for relational aspects of practice; production of knowledge places more emphasis on practice relevance (Coulshed & Orme, 2012). Hence, one of today's central debates in social work underlines bridging gaps between theory (scientific base) and practice. Social workers need to manage the contradiction in their practice and mend the gaps from learning from practice and developing their own practice knowledge.

3.2.1 Knowledge for practice

Social work tends to rely on research, attaining scientifically evidenced knowledge, and evidence as a means to develop and improve practice (Gredig & Marsh, 2010). Since the nature of social work also recognises ambiguity and uncertainty, social work practice is prone to be further scientised and rationalised, focusing on empiricism, outcomes and the evidence-based approach (Parton, 2000). Scientific-evidence-based knowledge is imperative to justification and legitimacy of practice; furthermore, knowledge is proclaimed to be increasing the effectiveness and rationalism of professional practice; on the other hand, conventional practice tends to rely on common sense and personal experience (Gredig & Marsh, 2010). Scientific-evidence-based knowledge gives description and explanatory

information about a problem that comes into operation; research supplies factual and explanatory knowledge, which provides validating standards and services to guide practitioners in their activities so that they apply the explanatory and rational action derived from theoretical knowledge by scientific research (Gredig & Marsh, 2010). However, England (1986) argues that to 'define' knowledge is fallible on its own; social situations people encounter have no certainties and are more than a rational–technical activity (Coulshed & Orme, 2012).

Since the late 20th century, evidence-based practice (EBP) has significantly contributed to bridging social work practice with scientific inquiry, something which has had a significant impact on social work research; it aims to generate knowledge to inform social work practice, "the relevance to practice alongside the pursuit of 'good' scientific research" (Powell & Ramos, 2010, p. 4). EBP was proposed to help clinicians make more research-informed decisions about the care of individual clients and to use less unsystematic clinical experience and intuition, which is described as "integration of best research evidence with clinical expertise and patient values" (Thyer, 2012, p. 408). EBP presumably uses research findings to aid clinical decision making, to find the appropriate course of action and to resolve the problem in order to improve social work intervention and practice; however, the research tends to focus on the best available evidence-based on scientifically generated evidence (Gredig & Marsh, 2010) EBP increasingly underscores the client-centred nature of social work practice and is criticised by some researchers (Powell & Ramos, 2010). Moreover, the empirical findings on effectiveness are not understood to be a direct source of guidance for professional actions (Gredig & Marsh, 2010).

3.2.2 Knowledge of/about practice

The key elements of the actual 'real' practice of social work, uncertainty and ambiguity, become more obvious to those in the field; the problems cannot be solved in any clear, measurable or calculative way. Parton (2000) explicates that contemporary practice is complex, as the real world is not well formed, but rather, is messy; "knowing in such situations is *tacit* and *implicit* in the practitioners' patterns of action and feel for what they are dealing with" (p.453). Since the post-modern intellectual revolution, a new way of thinking about practice has appeared. Schön's (1983) 'reflective practitioner' has had a significant impact, which enables social workers to explore the intuitive and personal aspects of practice (Padgett, 2012). A reflective approach to practice, in which learning relies on experiential methods from a process of reflecting upon practice, is significantly considered for practice knowledge (Fook, 1999a, Fook, 2013). Practitioners reflect on practice incidents in order to recognise how their assumptive nature of 'knowing

in action' may cause subversion in the context (D'Cruz et al., 2007; Fook, 2002; Schön, 1999). Schön (1999) argues that the nature of professional practice is beyond the technical–rational model associated with modernity; that model fails to capture how professionals operate in practice, as problems are not presented in a way that represents what they face in real practice (Parton, 2000).

Scientific evidence is not an adequate measure for the intuitive basis of social work practice; the worker uses their intuition (self), rather than scientific activity for understanding the client's experience, which requires an intellectual, imaginative, and emotional engagement (England, 1986). Social work has adopted the use of the critical reflective approach to produce knowledge in a reasoned way, based on values and in relation to context (Fook, 2012):

> The idea of critical reflection is one such approach which can assist us in subjecting our own practice to a more critical gaze, at the same time allowing us to integrate our theory and practice in creative and complex ways. (Fook, 2012, p. 45)

Since reflective judgement becomes vital in professional practice, social workers reflect on their own practice; practice knowledge is generated from their self-reflection.

In contemporary practice, cases are diverse, heterogeneous and discrete; therefore, social work becomes more about the communicative process between client and social worker. Parton (2000) suggests that social workers need to improve dialogue, understanding and interpretation through individual specific case issues. As an approach to the relationship between theory and practice, Gredig and Marsh (2010) suggest reflective professionalism (RP), which enables a focus on diverse and heterogeneous cases through mutual communication between social workers and service users, which is essential to how social workers interpret the problems from clients' contexts. RP is crucially important in social work, as social work professionals see the service user's problem in a context and understand what is specific and special about it and deliver an interpretative reconstruction of the problem with the service user (Gredig & Marsh, 2010). Hence, the relationship between theory and practice can be more creative and imaginative, not only seeing theory as generating knowledge for practice, but also giving more insights and perspectives so that social workers can act differently in situations, rather than be limited and restricted in practice. Knowledge can, therefore, be gained from practice.

3.2.3 Knowing how and knowing that

A broad range of methodologies and methods have been adopted within social work; hence, this requires research processes (in the pursuit of generating knowledge) that are both rigorous and relevant and conducted in ways that seek to make the research process both transparent and inclusive (Powell & Ramos, 2010). Fook (2012, 2016) encourages understanding of the relationship between theory and practice in an inclusive way. Although 'theories of being' tend to be reducible, favoured over epistemological positions in the post-modern idea of research, 'theories of knowing' underline *how* we know the knowledge, rather than *what* we know: "Yet on the other hand, knowing is an integral part of 'being', so it is important to understand how what we know affects how we act and practice" (Fook, 2012, p. 39). For instance, from the previous discussion, the RP approach conceptualises professional action through assisting interpretation of a problem and a subsequent supportive process, compared to the EBP approach, which is more closely conceptualised as a problem-solving process and professional decision making (Gredig & Marsh, 2010). RP, referred to as 'knowing how', is an additional way of making a relationship between science and practice that differs from EBP, which can be an indication of 'knowing that' (Gredig & Marsh, 2010). Both approaches are supportive of each other for the relationship between theory and practice.

> Thus, in reflective professionalism, the function performed by research findings is not so much to guide professional courses of action but to underpin the professional's understanding of the specificities of a case in light of generalising scientific knowledge about social problems. To this extent, generalising scientific knowledge is refracted in the hermeneutic approach to the case itself. Generalising abstract, explanatory knowledge is compounded with the understanding of the case. (Gredig & Marsh. 2010, p. 14)

EBP and RP approaches are both essential in social work research. Theory for practice can hence be formed and developed through generating knowledge from various sources which would create a better understanding of practice.

3.3 Linking with cultural competence

Cultural competence has a lack of 'knowing how' approaches and is more commonly researched than 'knowing that' approaches; this means that cultural competence is more developed from knowledge *for* practice, rather than knowledge *of/about* practice. Both theoretical (objective) and practice (subjective) aspects of knowledge from top-down and bottom-up approaches are important for professional practice (Fook, 2012). The standards and indications of cultural competence, however, offer mostly a top-down

(deductive approach) guideline (Davis, 2011), which is constructed from objective standpoints by researchers, excluding practitioners' and service users' views from the process of development (Fook, 2012). The practice of social work has been criticised in post-modernist discussions; the modernist utilisation of generated knowledge causes hierarchical splits between researchers and practitioners (also between practitioners and service users): researchers' knowledge is valued over practitioners' perspectives which relates to the division between theory and practice (Fook, 2012). Modernist knowledge is created by the people who discovered it and accepted the methods in its creation; generally, such knowledge privileges Western perspectives (Fook 2012). Cultural competence appears to have the assumptions and biases of the group of people who formed it, who consist of mostly White, middle-class populations (Kumas-Tan et al., 2007). Positivist science erased useful epistemologies by systematically devaluing cultures and specific groups of people within cultures by the dominance of one powerful cultural community (Pascale, 2011). From a post-modern perspective, such modernist knowledge is seen as a dominant ideology of Eurocentric universalism (Sheppard, 2006). As a result, cultural competence can be deficient for cross-cultural practice; as mentioned in Chapter 2, practice can ignore the unequal distribution of power within the relationship. Furthermore, the assessment methods of cultural competence have inherited assumptions from the privileged group. Cultural competence is therefore understood and viewed in a particular way, by a particular group.

Thus, scientific and superior knowledge and value systems are re-evaluated as post-modernism challenges the patterns of power of how knowledge and values are formed (Fleras & Spoonley, 1999). The post-modernist view of knowledge is not privileged, or better, but all perspectives are equally valued. It encourages the relationship between theory and practice, as divergent from the modernist approach; there are different ways of understanding theories and making meaning of practice and ways of theorising practice (Fook, 2012). Fook (2000) mentions that, in modernist conceptions, abstract generalised theories are deductively applied to make meaning of a situation, whereas, in post-modernist conceptions, meaning is created inductively from the experience. The post-modernist approach to knowledge values practitioners' practice knowledge through reasoning (Coulshed & Orme, 2012); individual's experiences, ideas, and facts give a general rule or conclusion from the bottom up (inductively), as practice is often conducted in specific locations (Polkinghorne, 2004). Therefore, post-modernist ways of thinking seek meanings so that comprehensive assessment can be done, as previously this was missing (Parton & O'Byrne, 2000).

This research gives more attention to understanding the nature of practice from subjective epistemology (understanding/assessing the reality subjectively) rather than objective epistemology (understanding/assessing the reality objectively). This study is derived from epistemological and post-modernist questions: what and how we know about cultural competence gathering information from lived experience of practitioners in an inductive (bottom-up) approach.

The research aims are thus to:

- explore cultural competence through what social workers and students perceived from their education and own practice;
- study the developmental process of cultural competence, how participants develop their understanding of cultural competence, and how they practise from their education to career;
- investigate what and how they learn the relations of three core components from their educational learning and utilisation in practice; and
- identify links and gaps between their learned knowledge from education and practice.

3.4 Qualitative research design

A qualitative approach was used to design a study that is as flexible and creative as possible, to gain insight into cultural competence as it is understood and experienced by students and social workers. Quantitative research determines a relationship between one thing (independent variable) and another (a dependent variable) within a population which is good for an understanding of associations between variables and this is useful for descriptive and experimental studies (Babbie, 2013). On the other hand, the research predominately would overlook key considerations such as ethnic and racial differences by focusing on broad generalisability (Padgett, 2012). Qualitative research gives more attention to the plurality of views that do not only focus on a single source but are drawn from multiple sources. “Qualitative methods originated in cross cultural venues” (Padgett, 2012, p. 461). In this research, perspectives of students and social workers from diverse cultural backgrounds have been accessed.

Diverse perspectives provide a prospect for generating new understanding and alternative forms of knowing about social work practice (Powell & Ramos, 2010). The participants’ perceptions, thoughts and subjectivity of their learning and practice experiences vary, depending on their personal, cultural and

social locations, and are all taken into consideration. A qualitative methodology guides the most applicable methods for collecting rich and in-depth detailed data which is generated based on the validity of information, such as meanings, views, experiences, and practices expressed by the research participants' own framing around issues from their perspectives (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

3.5 Research methods

3.5.1 Semi-structured interview

The semi-structured interview is useful for identifying the perceptions, beliefs and feelings of individual participants (Hennick, Hutter, & Bailey, 2011). The individual interview is suitable for understanding personal experiences in the context of the participants' circumstances (Hennick et al., 2011). The interviews in this research aimed to pay close attention to the participants, particularly the student participants', development of three components of cultural competence from their educational learning and practicum experiences. Furthermore, the research investigated the practitioner participants' own cross-cultural practice experiences, describing examples of both good and challenging cross-cultural practice experiences that they have had in their practice, plus exploring their understandings and meanings of cultural competence and the way in which individual practitioners make sense from their own practice over time. Individual interviews encouraged participants to illustrate stories or cases; this can also be flexible for exploring in detail the respondent's own perception during interviewing (Brikci & Green, 2007).

The face-to-face interview was effective and useful, as it enabled the researcher to engage in observation. When the researcher can respond to the participants' signs of puzzlement or facial unease when they are asked, she or he can restate the question or clarify the meaning of the question, since measurement is not a major consideration in qualitative research (Bryman, 2012). Understanding truthful meanings and experiences of participants are significantly important; both for a researcher and also a participant; constructing confidence of data ensures trustworthiness and the credibility of this research (Bryman, 2012).

Initially, a focus group discussion was planned for a new social work graduate group before having semi-structured interviews with social work practitioners. The focus group method is inevitably applied to explore the way in which individuals discuss a certain issue and build up a view through the

interaction of each other's views (Bryman, 2012). Group discussions bring about spontaneous feelings, reasons, explanations, attitudes, and opinions of group members about issues in the study area (Sarantakos, 2013) and may discover new issues around the topic of the research (Legard, Keegan, & Ward, 2003). The focus group method works by effectively sharing participants' learning for cultural competence from education and discussing the challenges and the usefulness of education and practicum, including their preparation during the programmes for becoming a culturally competent social worker. The main purpose of the focus group method is to enable the researcher to uncover their preliminary learning experiences around cultural studies in classrooms and practicum through their social work programmes in New Zealand. It was envisaged that this would assist in forming the key interview questions before interviewing social work practitioners for their professional practice experiences. However, the focus groups were not held due to an inadequate number of participants able to be recruited. Consequently, the method was changed to semi-structured interviews with social work students which will be explained in detail below.

3.5.2 Recruitment

This research recruited two different types of participant and divided them into two groups. Group 1 was social work students who were enrolled at the time of interview and who had completed one practicum at the time of interview and Group 2 comprised social work practitioners who had at least a minimum of two years of professional social work experience while holding social work qualifications recognised by the SWRB for purposes of registration. In addition to this, those practitioner participants were registered or non-registered social workers at the time of interview when registration was not mandated in New Zealand.

In total, 28 participants from various cultural backgrounds were recruited: 10 social work students and 18 social work practitioners, and their qualifications and work experiences in social work fields were also varied.

Table 1. *Demographics of Participants.*

Qualification	
Diploma	6
Bachelor	13
Master	9

Work experience	
Less than 5 years	5
More than 5 years less than 10 years	6
More than 10 years	4
More than 20 years	3
Ethnicities	
European New Zealander	9
New Zealander	2
Māori	5
Pacific Islander	2
Asian	9
Other	1
18 Social workers	
10 Social work students	

The key research focus was to explore the developmental process of cultural competence with a particular focus on gaining information about attaining three main components: knowledge, awareness-attitude and skill, and to apply the three components into cross-cultural practice situations. Hence, the period covered begins from formal social work education to the start of career. Social work students would give inclusive details of their educational learning including practicum, how the current social work education teaches cultural competence and what they had mostly learned about it from their education. Social work practitioners would be able to give in-depth details of transforming knowledge into practice. These data can provide us with a full picture of cultural competence as a whole and its development.

Group 1: Social work students

A purposive sampling method, which targets individuals who have particular knowledge about the issue, situation, or experience relevant to the study (Sarantakos, 2013; Creswell, 2009), was used for finding potential participants for Group 1. The strategy was an appropriate approach, as a population of participants was a specific type of participant who was enrolled in social work programmes in the Auckland region. The research advertisement flyer was sent (see Appendix 1) to Massey University and Unitec in Auckland. These education institutions forwarded the information to potential participants. Also, the same flyer was displayed in the University of Auckland newsletter. The flyer was displayed on various public notice boards on the University of Auckland Epsom campus and Massey University Albany campus. Additionally, it was also posted on the social work Facebook group: Social Work in Aotearoa New Zealand, which had approximately 800 members at that time. Snowball sampling was

used effectively in finding further potential participants. People who meet the criteria of the research can be recommended by others (Sarantakos, 2013).

Before meeting, the participants were informed of the key questions. The interview guide (Appendix 2), which focused on the participant's cultural learning and cultural experience in classroom and practicum experience related to cross-cultural practice, was sent to them so that they could prepare for the interview. Feedback from university staff and PhD student colleagues from various cultural backgrounds played a significant part in forming the foundation of the interview questions. Their assistance was requested for avoiding cultural and social bias possibly being attached to the questions.

The interviews took up to 90 minutes. At the end, a total of 10 students' data was gathered: four students on the Bachelor of Social Work programmes and six students on the Master of Social Work (Applied) and (Professional) programmes. Nearly half of the participants were international students. Study abroad is uncommon in social work education so presumably the number of social work students from overseas has increased in New Zealand. Those students were mostly young and some of them had little knowledge about social work; they were in the process of acculturation and adjustment to New Zealand culture and society. In this sense, group discussion might have been contested between local and non-local students; each participant's perception and understanding of social work practice from their personal, cultural and social locations would have significantly affected the discussion. Hence, individual interviews were more appropriate. When completing the interviews, at 10 participants, saturation was reached and the participants' experiences then showed similar patterns.

Group 2: Social work practitioners

The eligible participants for Group 2 were social work practitioners who had worked for a minimum of two years in various social services in New Zealand. The invitation letter (Appendix 3) was sent by email through the Social Workers Registration Board and Aotearoa New Zealand Association for Social Workers to their members who met the criteria. SWRB sent this to registered social workers and ANZASW sent it to members who reside in Whangarei (the Northland region), North Shore, Rodney, West Auckland, Central Auckland, South Auckland the Auckland region, Hamilton (the Waikato region), and Central Rotorua and Central Tauranga (the Bay of Plenty region). Those who had more extended practice experience were also included for the recruitment to see how their understanding of cultural competence might be different or have changed from those held in the early stages of their career, and

their own way of cultural practice can be firmly formed over time so that it can demonstrate a better picture of cultural competence and how it has developed from their earlier practice. However, a few respondents were social work educators and they were excluded, as their participation may bring different samples for this research aims and purposes due to their expert knowledge.

Group 2 (18 social work practitioners who worked in the Auckland and Waikato region) participated in semi-structured interviews. The participants were informed of the key interview questions before the interview, to prepare for discussion of specific topics. Interview guide (Appendix 4), which was developed using a similar format from Group 1, was sent to them. Key questions were added from the interview guide for Group 1, such as their practice experience of both 'challenging' and 'good' cases, their learning from those experiences, their reflection on their social work education, and their application to their current practice. The interview took up to 90 minutes.

All interviews with social work students and social workers were recorded and transcribed. The transcriptions were sent to the participants; as requested, a few of them pointed out corrections to clarify what they meant, which contributed to the quality of data and strengthened validity and reliability. Figure 1 illustrates the process of data collection and analysis.

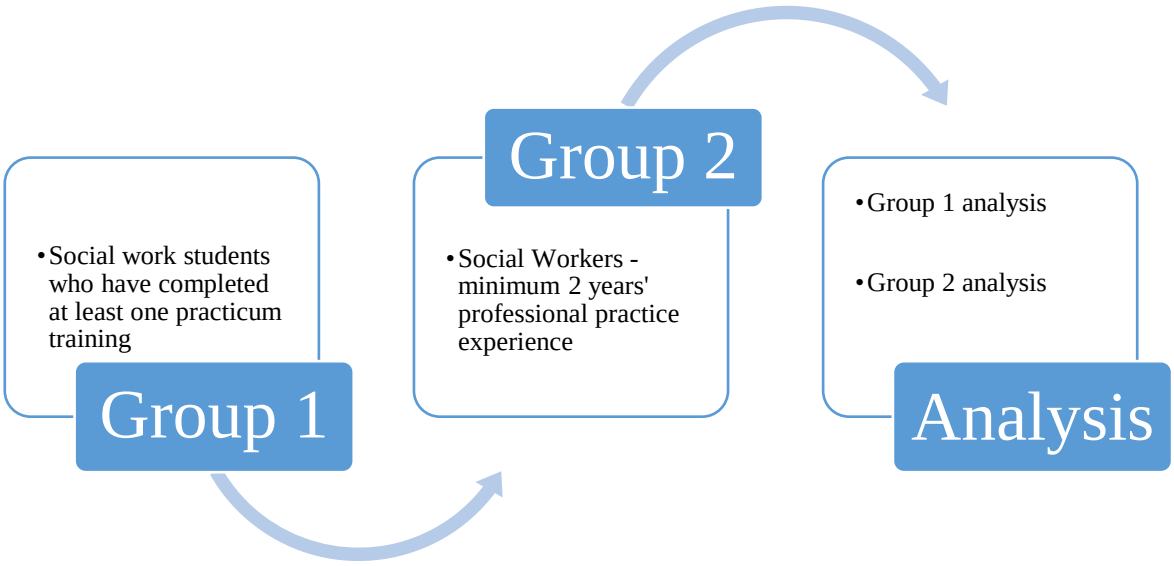

Figure 1. The process of conducting data collection and analysis.

3.6 Ethical considerations

3.6.1 Consent

This research gained the approval of the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee (UAHPEC) on 4 June 2015 (Appendix 5). The research was considered as having a low risk of harm to participants. The ethical considerations are a set of minimum standards and, due to the fluidity of qualitative research design, can be broadened as situations can be more uncertain and complex (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Research participation was absolutely voluntary and all participants were provided with a participant information sheet (PIS) (Appendices 6 and 7) and given as much as information as possible before deciding on their participation. The PIS contains the explanation of the nature, purpose and procedures of research and the description of the manner in which the potential participants are selected and the clarification of the benefits of the research, their right to withdraw from the research, their right to know the use of data and the outcome of the study. Bryman (2012) identifies that all information given to potential participants affects their willingness to participate. Participants were able to consider all aspects of the research and were also given the opportunity to ask any questions before giving consent to it by signing an informed consent form (CF) (Appendices 8 and 9). During the recruitment process, a couple of potential participants approached the researcher for clarification of the research topic. This also appeared to be useful for them when making their decision on whether to participate. Lastly, the agreed-upon participants were required to sign a CF on the day of the interview.

3.6.2 Confidentiality and anonymity

Interviews involved discussions around participants' educational experiences, as well as practice experience in detail and their opinions of social work education and professional training offered by their tertiary institutions and employers. Breaching of confidentiality, such as disclosure of any specific descriptions of their institutions and employers in relation to the identifications of participants and their clients, was therefore a substantial risk that may potentially cause significant harm to the relationships with their employers, supervisors, educators, colleagues, clients, and communities. ANZASW's Code of Ethics requires that client integrity is preserved by maintaining their confidentiality (ANZASW, 2019). Therefore, the participant and client confidentialities were carefully considered and protected throughout this research. All participants were allocated a pseudonym and their clients were anonymised; furthermore, potentially identifying information, including names of employers, tertiary institutions, or

placement agencies, were carefully avoided, from collecting data to writing the analysis of data in the report. Data referring to recording and transcribing, including note taking, containing all participants' personal and private information, were kept safe in locked storage at the university during the research. The harmful consequences of anonymity were also taken into account. There is the possibility that individuals could be identified in the final publication or report, due to the relatively small social work networks in Auckland, New Zealand. Additionally, the researcher never mentioned or shared any participant's name or information with other participants; although they may mention and know each other, this should be confidential. Although the existence of limitations of client confidentiality is acknowledged, the possible violation of their confidentiality should be kept to an absolute minimum.

3.6.3 Potential risk of emotional harm: cultural and social sensitivities

All consequences of the research, in particular the risks of harm, were carefully considered. Hidden potential harm could emerge as the interviews delved into their private realms when touching upon their sensitivity to particular questions, such as perspectives on their own culture as well as others' cultures, including rejection, racism and prejudice. The participants might have felt uncomfortable or fear revealing such information during and after interviewing. Humiliating, embarrassing, frightening, or painful experiences in the interview can cause anxiety (Brikci & Green, 2007). Bryman (2012) adds that disclosure in the interview may lead to stress and loss of self-esteem. Regardless of the fact the interview was in a private setting, the participants who were hesitant about disclosure of their experiences and details and wished to refuse the questions from the researcher, were respected. Invasion of such privacy may cause potential harm to the participants (Bryman, 2012).

As a part of the strategy, they were informed in advance about the types of research questions they would be asked, so that they were able to prepare not to answer certain questions whenever they wished (Marvasti, 2004). Participants were also able to stop and leave at any point during the interview and were advised and supported to seek professional assistance if the participants felt emotional, psychological, or physical concerns due to the effect of the interview. These matters were explained in the PIS. A participant had an emotional moment during the interview, and the researcher contacted her to ask if she needed assistance after the interview.

3.6.4 Participant interests and reflections

Concerns about ethical dilemmas in research may be derived from the unbalanced weight between the interests of the researcher and the interests of participants. Flick (2009) points out that the researcher tends to focus on his or her research interest in gaining knowledge, whereas participants are more likely concerned with their confidentiality and avoidance of harm. Conflicts of interest were therefore considered. In fact, a few participants were concerned with the researcher's intention; however, a statement was prepared indicating that the research was not merely for personal interest, but also for the research participants who had concerns and curiosity about the research area.

Firstly, this research could offer the benefits for cross-cultural social work practice they might provide. That their practice knowledge, developed through their own practice experience, is more meaningful to them and relevant to their practice is acknowledged as a useful and valuable resource for practice knowledge in this research. Their knowledge develops further understanding of cultural competence and, moreover, this could inform existing knowledge and/or re-conceptualise this into new knowledge on cultural competence. Secondly, the interviews could be an opportunity for critically reflecting on their practice, which might provide more awareness of the work they do in daily practice. For the student participants, the participation might assist their reflection on their educational learning and practicum training, particularly if they did not have enough opportunity to process analysing, articulating, and critiquing of their learning experience. Additionally, the participants were encouraged to give any feedback, thoughts and opinions on this research. The research findings emphasised the constructive work between all the research participants and the researcher. Their collaborative work can contribute to the addition of knowledge for cultural competence in the future. This was the only way that the research goal could have been achieved successfully. The summary of the findings was provided to all participants who requested it at the interview.

3.6.5 Reflective and reflexive researcher

Since research involves a degree of uncertainty and negotiation through the process, Powell and Ramos (2010) mention that the researcher's practice is "not fixed, pre-determined or entirely predictable" (p. 237). As a result, this challenges the boundaries of research and the researcher's role. The researcher's capacity for reflectivity and reflexivity was deliberated on throughout the data collection and analysis, which assisted her in making sure her role adhered to ethical considerations and to appropriate conduct

of this research. Reflection and reflexive approaches are noted in the previous chapter; these refers to Schön's (1983) reflection-on action (reflectivity) and reflection-in action (reflexivity) that was imperative to the researcher processing this research. Reflection on action was used, which is a learning opportunity for future practice. The process often occurs when practitioners think back on their practical incident and what they had done in order to improve or change practice in the future (Fook, 1999b). Reflection on action is about thinking of doing things differently and making change for the better in the future event. Reflection in action is about responding in a current situation, using knowing in action which is practice knowledge that the practitioner has gained in other or similar situations and recognise how our assumptive nature of 'knowing in action' might have contributed to unexpected outcomes (Schön, 1999). Knowing in action often comes from our learning in other fields; when something does not work for the current task, reflection in action can find out new ways of achieving a task to change our thinking (Schön, 1999). Reflection in action assists practitioners to engage in a process of construction of their theory or knowledge (D'Cruz et al., 2007).

Reflection on action was especially useful for evaluating my performance and how I responded to crucial conversations that I had with participants; why I responded the way I did, and how it affected the interaction with the participants. After each interview, I reflected, asking these questions of myself:

- How did I talk/interact with a participant?
- How was the interview conducted?
- How did I ask sensitive questions? How did the participant respond?
- How did my personality match with the participant?
- Did I understand/acknowledge their perspectives?
- Did I identify differences that I needed to be aware of?
- Were there any miscommunications, misunderstandings or inappropriateness during the interview?

I mainly reflected on my communication and interaction style from each interview, seeking improvement in processing the interviews.

Fook (1996) also suggests that researchers need to reflect on their own accounts, much like professional practitioners, especially their skills of reflexivity – reflection in action is required.

> …reflectivity refers to the ability to collate oneself squarely within a situation, to know and take into account the influence of personal interpretation, position and action within a specific context. Expert practitioners are reflective in that they are self-knowing and responsible actions, rather than detached observers. (Fook, 2000, p. 117)

Reflection in action reshapes what we are working on, while we are working on it, through reflecting on our actions, which are reasoned and purposeful, and practitioners' considerations for what our knowing in action indicates that we know, is often unexplained. I also used reflection in action in understanding the whole interview process, engagement, and relationship building, especially when confronted with unusual situations in which I had to react differently to a few participants.

During interviews, I noticed that several Māori participants took the position of educating me about their culture, their viewpoint of New Zealand society, how it has impacted on them and also working with Māori people in social work. Interviewing with the Māori participants was quite different experiences for me from interviewing with other participants. Those interviews with Māori participant challenged me to discuss the research topic. They might have seen me as being incompetent in conducting the area of research, as I am not a Māori person. The context of cultural competence practice in New Zealand is tightly attached to bicultural practice, which often emphasises working with Māori people by incorporating Māori models or perspectives in practice; this may imply that Māori social workers are considered as being culturally competent or cultural experts in a unique Aotearoa New Zealand social work context. I might have been quite defensive at the beginning of the interview. I however, questioned my assumption about them that I perceived the experience (the interaction with them) from my perspective. I seek understanding from the participants' perspectives: what do they intend to tell me? What does their culture mean to them? What do they mean by cultural competence, as these seem to be different from my understanding. In a reflexive process, I might have understood those participants emphasising the acknowledgement and respect for indigenous Māori people and their culture in social work practice by their words. Through listening to their life stories, they demonstrated the resistance of one dominant culture in practice; that is important in supporting Māori people (and people of any other cultures). My internal dialogue might have changed my attitude toward them. Although this research focus is not specifically about Māori culture, I was willing to take a position as a learner. At the end of the interview, I was more appreciative of their participation and contribution to this research.

Both reflection in, and on, actions assisted in making sense of the particular situations and interactions through interviewing. Researchers therefore, need to be self-aware of their own beliefs,

values and attitudes and their cultural and personal effects may have an impact on research/interviewing settings, as well as being self-critical about their research methods and how they have been applied. A critical analysis of the researcher's own work in qualitative research is crucial through reflexivity. It involves continuously reviewing the research process and improving the interview questions being delicately developed and conducting the interviews in a non-discriminatory and non-culturally biased manner as much as possible.

3.7 Data analysis method

3.7.1 Charmaz's constructivist grounded theory

The data analysis for this research employed the constructivist grounded theory (GT) approach promoted by Charmaz (2006). Charmaz's GT (constructivist) differs from Glaser and Strauss's initial GT (emergent) introduced in 1967, and Strauss and Corbin's theory (systematic) in 1990, which are referred to as objectivist GT (Charmaz, 2008a, 2008b). The beginning of data analysis used Glaser and Strauss's method, which is an emergent method that can study research problems or questions that arise in the empirical world and can pursue unanticipated directions of inquiry (Charmaz, 2008b). GT is to generate a theory or concept which is developed from systematically gathered data and the emergent nature of the analysis (Bryman, 2012). The data are categorised into segments (Charmaz, 2014) and the researcher looks for patterns, themes, categories (Rubin & Babbie, 2011) or constructs (Urquhart, 2013). The researcher is seen as a separate entity who incorporates the development of research questions, data collection, data analysis/interpretation and validates findings (O'Neil Green, Creswell, Shope, & PlanoClark, 2007).

Charmaz's GT has expanded from that of Glaser and Strauss (1967), and is influenced by both constructivism and post-modernism (Padgett, 2012), and recognises subjectivity embedded in the research process (Charmaz, 2008a, 2008b): "this perspective recognizes the relativity of varied standpoints and takes into count the subjectivity of social actions as they engage in practical actions in the world" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 269). The constructivist GT does not only emphasise people's stories and how people make sense of their experiences, as interpretive phenomenological analysis is concerned, or identify themes or patterns of data, and how these are constructed as thematic analysis is focused, but also behaviour, action and process in which people engage, and participants' subjectively constructed meanings to their realities, which may be inconsistent (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

Furthermore constructivist GT enables one to contain racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse perspectives. The study incorporates perspectives, values, experiences, voices, and issues relevant to the racial/ethnic diversity of the participants that improve the study at various points and complement its conceptualisation (O'Neil Green et al., 2007). In this research, although a particular culture, race, or ethnic group of the research participants was not a primary focus, the researcher placed a great emphasis on the constructed data with the participants who come from, and are located within, their specific contexts. The research values and embraces the diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives of the participants. Their cultural and social locations were taken into consideration in the analysis as these could affect their definitions of 'cultural competence' and their experiences of cross-cultural practice in social work. Their practice actions are attached to their understandings and meanings of cultural competence, which result from their personal and cultural values reflected on their practice.

3.7.2 Subjectivity and data analysis

Constructivist GT is, therefore, not totally objective, as Glaser and Strauss indicated. It acknowledges that the researcher's analysis also shapes the meanings; hence, one pure and true reading of data is impossible (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The value of personal involvement and subjectivity in research is not gained only from the research participants, but also from the researcher (Braun & Clarke, 2013). This is reflected throughout the research processes, and emerges from interaction (Charmaz, 2008b). The researcher's involvement in the construction and interpretation of data does not assume that the researcher enters the data-collection process without any biases, assumptions or existing beliefs (Charmaz, 2014). The constructivist GT approach takes into account the researcher's position, privileges, perspective, and interactions integrated into the analysis as a research reality (Charmaz, 2006, 2008a). Hence, the researcher does not stand outside the research process, but is a part of it (Charmaz, 2008a).

> Rather, we are part of the world we study, the data we collect, and the analyses we produce. We *construct* [emphasis in original] our grounded theories through our past and present involvements and interactions with people, perspectives and research practices. (Charmaz, 2014, p. 17)

Reflexivity is crucial for subjective data analysis. It is a process of questioning, examining, and recognising my position in relation to the study such as my own assumptions, professional and personal experiences, theoretical perspectives, beliefs and values that I bring into the analysis and interpretation of the data and that shapes the research outcome. Therefore, using reflexivity as a methodological tool I need to examine how my whole self influences the research act.

Firstly, reflexivity assisted me to recognise my personal, cultural and social locations and how these influence the data collection and analysis. I generally had good understanding of the participants' experiences and opinions, and where these came from. This is probably relevant to my cultural and social backgrounds, my professional as well as personal experiences, which helped in connecting and understanding the diverse participants. I have experienced being in and out of cultural groups. At the external level, I come from a country where I belonged to a strong majority cultural group. After immigrating into New Zealand, I became a minority person in the society. At the internal level, my ethnicity as a Japanese person is always at the core of who I am; on the other hand, my world view has been dramatically changed by being exposed to different cultures through interacting with various backgrounds of people in New Zealand. In addition to this, speaking in English in daily life has significantly changed my way of thinking. I no longer fully belong to my country of origin and the people. At the same time, I am not a New Zealander who shares the history and culture at the same level as 'Kiwis'. I have lost my cultural identity and sense of belonging, but I have developed more of my own individuality while I still hold the collectivist values from my culture. My dual perspectives and values reflect on my view of the participants.

Secondly, reflexivity challenged my preconceived idea about the research interviews and processes. In the previous section of reflective and reflexive research, the significant importance of biculturalism in social work for Māori participants was discussed. One of them shared with me her experience in the society that includes about 'being other'. I did not doubt about the meaning as I have experienced it myself in New Zealand. However, she seemed to be frustrated when I acknowledged her view. The moment triggered me to think why she responded in this way. In reflection, I often look into myself as to what and why did I do, act or say that might have an effect on another person in a situation. The reflection (reflection on action) did not give me any clarification of what happened. Then I looked outward, how did she think about what I said? How does she see me as a Japanese/Tau iwi social work researcher in New Zealand? What does she mean 'being other' from her perspective and position as a Māori person? The reflexive process helped me to take into account the participant's view as to what it would be like putting myself into her shoes. Through the process, I realised that we understand 'being other' from different standpoints. I understand it from my experience which is by my choice. I am more likely to expect and accept to be the other. Her meaning of 'being other' does not come from my position. I have learned from the process, my way of seeing influences how I understand the experience of the participants.

Reflexivity gave me a great sense of my involvement of the research, I become a researcher as well as a person in the context. My analysis and understanding create new knowledge, which is viewed as a dynamic process in which theory and practice are interrelated; as a researcher, like a social work practitioner, I need to develop the ability to participate in the generation of knowledge (Fook, 2000). Furthermore my own cultural competency is significant with respect to race and ethnicity; self-awareness, knowledge, skills and sensitivity can increase throughout the process, which uncovers concepts informing the emerging theory (O'Neil Green et al., 2007). This acknowledgement can also lead to significant awareness of research limitations. Multiple perspectives showed contradictions that caused tensions that I had to confront. I did not pit these differences and complexities against each other, but acknowledged them as they were.

3.7.3 Data analysis process

GT entails inductive coding so that a theory or concept is built on from scratch based on the data; therefore, the data process starts with open coding of the interview transcripts (Padgett, 2017). In this research, the data were firstly categorised into the three different experiences: education, practicum and practice of the participants. Those categories were broken down for examining and comparing the development of cultural competence at different stages. Through reading the transcriptions several times, initial codes were defined, such as identifying common words, expressions and phrases. Also, similar ideas and meanings were thematically sorted. Here are examples of the first level of coding. In the educational category, words related to culture and knowledge such as Māori colonisation, the Treaty of Waitangi and Tikanga Māori were found. The participants identified similarities and or differences between their own cultural groups and other cultural groups through working with other students in a multicultural classroom; those similarities and/or differences were placed in the same groups. In the practicum category, the participants often undertook self-reflection. They frequently expressed such as, 'I reflected on' or 'I am aware of' something when explaining a difficult relationship or situation. All reflective experiences were gathered. In the practice category, the participants used their techniques for practice relationship building such as sharing personal information and life experience, listening to clients, letting them talk, demonstrating self-confidence, and being a role model to them.

These initial codes were refined at the next level of coding (axial coding) (Padgett, 2017). The reflective experiences were grouped by the types of reflection, such as reflecting on the self or experience. The different techniques for relationship building were categorised.

Category:	**Education**	**Practicum**	**Practice**
Axial Code:			
	Māori culture (Tikanga Māori)		
	Treaty of Waitangi (Māori colonisation)		
	Difference/similarity between own cultural group and other cultural groups		
	Exploring own backgrounds		
	Self-knowledge		
		Knowing oneself	
		Difference between the self and others	
		Reflecting on an experience	
			Responsibility to listen
			Self-disclosure
			Empathy for clients
			Role model

Table 2. Initial coding.

Axial codes were used to analyse the relationships among the codes. Those themes were created by integrating data through axial coding (a process of selective coding) (Williams & Moser, 2019). In the educational category, for instance, both exploration of own background and gaining self-knowledge help to achieve self-awareness. Hence, these codes were in a classification of self-awareness for knowing the self and also similarity/difference between one's own cultural group and other cultural groups, contributing to awareness of cultural self. On the other hand, reflection in an experience is about becoming aware of one's own thoughts and assumptions and emotions through reflection. In the practice category, self-disclosure and empathy for clients link to relationship building that makes the participants and their clients closer in the relationship; the theme is formed as a close relationship whereas responsibility to listen and role model are related actions toward professionalism; the theme forms a professional boundary. Themes are broader than codes, providing an overview of the main points of the data.

Category: **Education**	**Practicum**	**Practice**
Theme: Difference	Difference	
Awareness of the self/ cultural self	Awareness of intrapsychic	
		Professional boundary
		Close relationship

Table 3. Creation of theme.

Selective coding finalised refining of code at a high level (Williams & Moser, 2019). I analysed each theme in detail to ensure useful and accurate representation of the data. The difference generally means 'cultural difference' between the participant and others. Furthermore, the difference also indicates power imbalance. The participants did not specifically use the word 'power'; however, when they talked about difference, that is when they felt powerless or devalued by others for their perspectives and opinions of others. In this case, power imbalance became a new theme separated from the theme of difference. The process continued until there was no more theme found. From the outcomes of selective coding, a picture of the patterns was identified through analysing and comparing the relationships among the themes and between them in categories. That contributes to building theory emerging from the data.

3.8 Research limitations

The theoretical knowledge adapted from various theories has been the main domain of cultural competence. That significantly contributes to theoretical understanding and gives general guidance of practice and intervention approaches. However, this is one of the attributes of cultural competence. This research gives central attention to another attribute: learning and development in how social work students learn the knowledge and practitioners actually utilise the knowledge in their practice; how the information is translated into practice, and what and how practice knowledge is developed through processing their educational, professional and personal experiences.

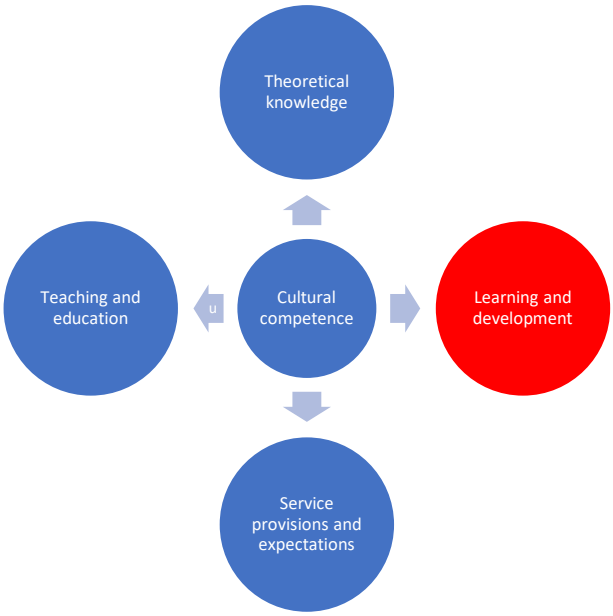

Figure 2. A structure of cultural competence.

On the other hand, this research does not investigate the teaching and education attributes such as perspectives from social work educators, their views on culture and cultural competence that presumably influence their approaches to teaching. Furthermore, the service provisions and expectations can contribute to feedback and output of cultural competence; how do clients perceive services that they receive from social workers and what their expectations are and the appropriateness of cultural services. To better understand cultural competence, a comprehensive understanding of all attributes is required.

Conclusion

This research took into consideration subjective ontology: social reality derived from human cognitive processes and gives special importance to investigating the nature of practice from subjective epistemology: understanding practice experienced by participants. Qualitative methodology and methods were used for this research with attention to ethical concerns and respectful engagement with research participants. The research has been constantly monitored and managed in an ethically appropriate manner. However, limitations exist due to the small number of participants involved in this research; the data do not represent the totality of educational and practice experiences of social work students and social work practitioners. Also, the interpretation of the participants' experiences is particular to the researcher. Although the researcher needs to understand the standpoints of the research participants and how they construct their world, the researcher's own cultural and social locations may affect the process of interpretation through reflection, due to her cultural and social barriers. All participants' meanings and practical actions influenced by their cultural and social locations may not be fully explicated. Therefore, these possible limitations should be recognised when analysing the data in this research.

Prelude

Before discussing research findings, the fundamental elements are briefly outlined in this introduction to the next three chapters. The themes reported in the findings chapters, from Chapters 4–6, focus on the developmental process of cultural competence from initial social work education to career, drawing on the interviews with both social work student participants and practitioner participants. The interview guides mentioned in Chapter 3 are particularly designed to analyse their experiences of educational learning and practicum training, as well as the practitioners' cross-cultural practice experiences in the early stage of their career. In the research findings, the three developmental stages are defined: educational, transitional and career stages.

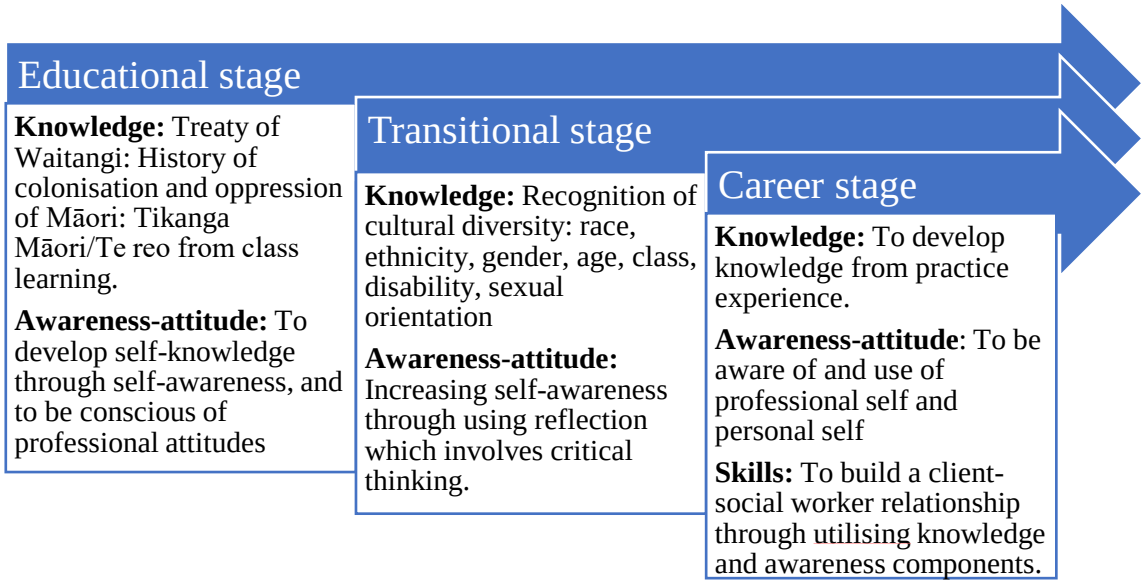

Figure 3. Developmental stages of cultural competence.

The educational stage indicates the initial introduction to cultural competence in classroom learning in social work programmes. The transitional stage specifies a time period after completing at least one practicum training in which they are exposed to cultural context(s) before entering their career. The career stage is after entering their social work career. The research gives special attention to the development of the three components: knowledge, awareness-attitude and skills throughout the stages, and the participants' utilisation of these in practice. Knowledge and awareness components are key elements of

cultural competence in education and training (Kumas-Tan et al., 2007). In this research, these components were also the main foci of development among the participants particularly during the educational and transitional stages. Self-awareness is one of the essential antecedents for cultural competence (Suh, 2004). Lum (2001) mentions that "...cultural competence begins with an understanding of your own personal and professional cultural awareness" (p. 136). It was a significant part of the participants' learning of cultural competence. Many participants acknowledged that being self-aware is the prerequisite for cultural competence as, in order to understand others, you first need to understand the self. In these research findings, three different types of self-awareness were found that the participants had exercised throughout the stages.

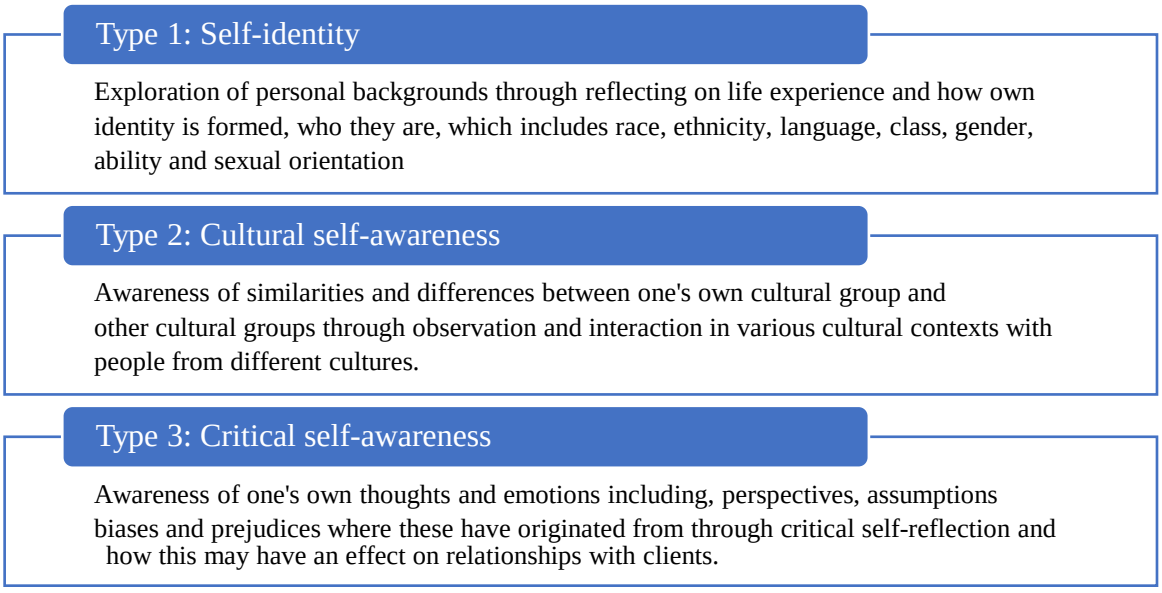

Figure 4. Three types of self-awareness.

Type 1 (T1): Self-identity is to explore one's own background. Type 2 (T2): Cultural self-awareness is to be aware of the self through comparing, observing similarities and differences between one's own cultural group and other cultural groups. Cultural self-awareness is often indicative of a social worker's cultural identification (Yan & Wong, 2005). The participants became more aware of their cultural identities. Type 3 (T3): Critical self-awareness is to be aware of or question one's own assumptions and biases toward others and where these have originated from.

All three different types of self-awareness were reoccurring throughout all stages. The development is not a clear sequential process from T1 to T3; however, T1 and T2 seem to be prerequisite for T3. Increasing one's own self-awareness involves reflection. The process refers to Kondrat's (1999) three self-reflection approaches to self-awareness explained in Chapter 2. 'Simple conscious awareness' is awareness of an experience. The first approach was often processed in beginning their own self-awareness journey. 'Reflective self-awareness' is to reflect on the self who is experiencing something, which is assumed to have a distance between an object-self 'Me' and a subject-self 'I'; the objective-self is examined by the subject-self. The second approach led to further reflection, the participants engaged in critical thinking which resulted in increasing their self-awareness at a deeper level. They began to question and examine their own perspectives, assumptions and biases (T3), and eventually they altered their own behaviour for strategic practice situations. The reflective approach refers to Donald Schön's (1983) reflection-on action, "We reflect *on* action, thinking back on what we have done in order to discover how our knowing-in-action may have contributed to an unexpected outcome" (p. 26). The third approach of 'reflexive self-awareness' was shown in this research findings.

Schön (1983) suggests a two-way process of reflection, using not only reflection on action but also including reflection *in* action. The latter is a cognitive habit of observing how we think in the process of the action and of adapting our thoughts which may require change. This process occurs while we are analysing the situation in real time. Both reflection in action and reflection on action are a whole process for internal (thought) and external (action) changes. The process leads to reflective practice through critical self-reflection which, in this research, is defined as reflecting critically upon oneself. The reflective approach is akin to Fook's (2012, 2016) definition of critical reflection, which is not just thinking about experience and processing for understanding individual perceptions, assumptions and biases, but also helps build integrated practice. Knott (2016) also mentions that the process of reflection is a transforming of experience into knowledge which is necessary for a beginning professional practitioner to achieve. The participants gain practice knowledge from their experiences through reflection and close gaps between theory and actual practice by adjusting their practice at the career stage. It is worth noting here this distinction between reflection in action and reflection on action, are two linked, but distinct processes.

Chapter 4: Educational stage: Social work education-classroom learning

Introduction

As noted in Chapter 1, Te Tiriti o Waitangi/the Treaty of Waitangi has a significant impact on social work in Aotearoa New Zealand. Beddoe (2018) mentions that Te Tiriti is a great influence on the education system in the country, one example is that social work students are familiar with the Treaty of Waitangi and know about the impact of colonisation from their education, "how Victorian, western regulative values were framed and imposed on Māori people" (p. 308). The practitioner is required to demonstrate their competence working with Māori people as well as other ethnic and cultural groups in New Zealand.

Cultural competence is well acknowledged as a professional requirement for practice. The social work curriculum has gradually developed education for cultural competence formed from anti-racism training (Simmons, Mafile'o, Webster, Jacobs, & Thomas, 2008). The research findings show that there was a distinct educational learning experience for those participants who completed their education prior to the early 1990s, because cultural competence seemed to be not as strongly emphasised as it currently is; they were more likely to have been self-directed, gaining knowledge and skills for cultural practice throughout their social work career unlike those participants who were studying in social work programmes when the interviews were taking place or have completed a qualification within the last 10–15 years.

This chapter explains the initial introduction to cultural competence, which mainly alludes to knowledge and awareness-attitude components from the classroom learning experiences among those participants in social work programmes. The knowledge component contains biculturalism. Then the awareness-attitude component, which is mainly development of self-awareness, will be discussed.

4.1 Knowledge component

New Zealand social work education strongly emphasises biculturalism in relation to Māori as the indigenous people and the history of colonisation and cultural contact giving a prominence to a focus emic (culture specific) approach to learn about Māori culture in the bicultural context in New Zealand.

4.1.1 Te Tiriti o Waitangi: The Treaty of Waitangi

During the early social work programme, the participants increased knowledge about the history of New Zealand: a partnership between Māori and the British Crown including oppression and colonisation of Māori. Betty explained the content of the paper:

> I think from like in year one we had our Te Tiriti o Waitangi paper which was all about the Treaty of Waitangi, the history of Māori and colonisation, and it was interesting to learn kind of about the Māori culture and its values, its way of being and working and the processes....

The classroom learning was a challenge to some participants at the beginning. A New Zealand European/ Pākēhā, Deborah was reluctant to understand the Treaty of Waitangi and Māori-bicultural concept as she thought she already knew about it:

> There were a lot of classes where we were learning about the Treaty and that the challenges were tutors [their view of the Treaty]…because it was quite different views [from her].

The studies have given her better understanding about Māori people, why they act the way they do. She has changed her perspective on them. At the end of her course, she realised, "I was ignorant about that to start with…the studies opened my eyes." Māori lecturers seemed to have had a great impact on some participants' world views; their social work, as well as life experiences being Māori in New Zealand, have given them insight. Melissa said, "....I think what real value was the lecturers were all Māori…So that was really educational and the Māori lecturers they worked in 70s, 80s and 90s…" Particularly the participants who were born and bred in New Zealand and who identify themselves as a New Zealand European/ Pākēhā were more likely to appreciate the distinctive world views between Māori and Pākēhā. Betty was able to see a broad picture of the Treaty of Waitangi: "….you get the other side of the story as well and, you know, it is a respect thing and it is being inclusive…." In general, the participants acknowledged the impact of these differences between Māori and Pākēhā working together.

Biculturalism is a foundation of how culture is recognised in New Zealand that reflects in cross-cultural social work practice. Those participants who were in the social work programmes at the time of interviews were more likely to perceive that understanding of the Māori history would assist them to work with Māori clients in practice; although they did not always know why and how it was so. A second year, Master student, Kim answered; "…how can you really interact with the people without knowing their historical background?" A second-year, undergraduate student, Betty, contemplated this:

> ….I guess having gone through the process of learning, you know, the history of Māori and Treaty of Waitangi and colonisation and having that kind of basic understanding in the back, kind of you know about it but it is not like you are consciously thinking about it all the time….gosh how does this apply?
>
> But you have that understanding and that means when you are working with somebody it is something to think about, like why are they struggling with this particular thing or why is there this issue, does it link back to generations and generations of inequality or is it some other issue?

The participants learned about oppression experienced by Māori people through the colonisation history of Aotearoa New Zealand. They also explored the Māori world view, including how the Māori people have perceived the experience. This may have a significant impact on their views on today's society where they live. With that understanding, the participants may be able to trace the hidden issues of Māori clients in their cultural context.

4.1.2 Tikanga Māori (Māori custom) and cultural experience

Tikanga Māori (Māori way of doing things) teaches knowledge about Māori culture. Betty gained a better understanding of the Māori cultural processes:

> It was interesting you know the whole pōwhiri [ceremonial welcome], the poroporoaki [farewell ceremony] process, doing your mihi [formal greeting], the whānau system [multi-layered family systems], the strong whānau system and how everything is kind of centred around whānau as opposed to an individual.

Māori cultural learning includes Te Reo (Māori language). She explained:

> …. in that [Māori] paper we learned a lot of key words and phrases and we had to learn different karakia [prayers or incantations] and waiata [songs] and all of that kind of stuff.

Cultural experience, such as Noho mārae (staying at mārae: meeting house) was a demonstration of Tikanga Māori. Many participants have learned effectively through being in a Māori cultural environment and practising Māori customs. Deborah described her experience as "hands on" learning. Melissa said, "We stayed at mārae, eating breakfast together and just observing protocols that was really exposure with the culture. I thought it was very valuable." Some participants mentioned that experiential learning like Noho mārae, was better for learning about a culture than classroom learning. Alice said, "That's demonstrated how to engage [with Māori people]." For a Māori social worker, Alison, in the social work education programme she was enrolled in, attendance at the Noho mārae was compulsory in each of the three years of the social work programme. She explained that: "So, every year throw in a little

bit more about what practice should look like when working with Māori." Her non-Māori classmates were often reluctant to go to mārae in the first year; she analysed the reasons: "…only because they are uncomfortable leaving their comfort zone, sharing the space [the cultural/personal environment]." However, she saw them changing their attitude toward Māori culture over the course; they gradually broke down their barriers by the final years.

The cultural environment could play an important role in student learning. A few participants were enrolled in social work programmes immersed within a Māori framework. Tikanga was an everyday class experience, which had a significant effect on their learning. For Carol:

> We [her ethnic cultural people including Māori people] are more visual, more kinaesthetic, so they created what was called, an active class room where we would always present and acting with lecturers rather than lecturers telling us what to do and writing it down. We did Whanau Ora, which was making sure we bring our lunch, make sure we do self-care, we practised every-day.

She also gave one example of how Māori people express their willingness to invite guests within her educational institution. "If anybody wants to come to mārae, we'd stop class and go and welcome. So it's very practical."

A New Zealand European/Pākēhā, Kelly, had also been in a Māori cultural immersion programme at the time of the interview; she was impressed by the educators; they demonstrated engagement with people and problem solving from a Māori approach:

> Kaiako [teachers] are very competent and they deal with things very realistically not just get paper written, if you're having a problem, what is the problem and how we do to deal with that.
>
> [The name of educational institution] exposes us to good Takepu [set of principles], which are principle ways engaging with people. One of those is Whakakoha rangatiratanga, which roughly means respectful relationships. Come to the group work, don't expect to do everything my way. Look at their ways and realise that there is a room for every presentation and everybody's perspective is shared.

She summarised the above discussion; "It's Kaupapa Māori" which is not only relevant and useful for Māori people, but also anyone, including herself, in life. A New Zealand European/Pākēhā, Melissa, who has been involved with Māori people in her personal life, acknowledges that those Māori studies from the social work education are not only beneficial for working with Māori clients, but she said, "You can use for anybody it's basically a holistic approach to care and life type of things."

Unfortunately, the participants who were enrolled at the time of the interview or who had graduated from the Master's programmes offered by the universities, felt that their education had not adequately provided opportunities for learning Tikanga Māori, due to the short duration of the programmes. A Master's student, Jane, therefore took an additional Māori course outside of her educational institution:

> Well, at the beginning of semester at [the name of educational institution offers the additional course], I was very uncomfortable. I didn't know what they were saying. If it's waiata I'm kind of pushing myself if I was a part of it. I felt fake inside of me. If I don't know anything about the culture, how can I be like singing, prayer, even I'm not Christian. What shall I say "Amen?"

She recognised that her confidence being in Māori culture has gradually built during the course; the more she was exposed to Māori culture and experienced being with the people in their environment, the more she was familiar with the culture. Jane said, "I was getting comfortable about mihi and hui [Māori assembly], everything meeting with Māori." Exposure to Māori culture was an effective way of learning about culture. The participants had become comfortable being in that cultural space.

4.2 Awareness-attitude component

Awareness-attitude component was given attention within gaining one's self-knowledge at the educational stage. The participants began to develop this, going through Type 1 (T1) self-awareness: Self-identity and Type 2 (T2) self-awareness: Cultural self-awareness. Attitudes were also a central part of cultural competence as they perceived professionalism signified having a professional attitude, which means responding positively to differences. They were conscious of being culturally responsive from the educational stage.

4.2.1 Self-awareness

The participants firstly involved with T1 through exploring their self-identity from cultural and family backgrounds, through reflecting on life experiences and how their identity has formed who they are, which includes race, ethnicity, languages, class, gender, ability and sexual orientation. The participants had sufficient opportunities to exercise T1 that were usually given through classwork and assignments. For an example, Betty found her roots through working on assignments:

> ….we had to do some assignments around different cultures and we had to do just a little thousand word essay or something on the values and the traditions of a culture different from our

> own and I thought I would choose Scotland just for the sake of it and it wasn't until after I had done the assignment and like doing the assignment and doing all the reading and all the research it was like actually this actually sits really well with me. It must be really similar to my [ethnic] culture in some ways like, some strong value, beliefs, which I know that the [her ethnic culture] can kind of have as well.

Through sharing her discovery with her grandmother, she found out that she is of Scottish descent. She also realised through the social work programme that her values are attached to her religion:

> ….because the programme is faith based and, being a Christian myself…when the entire programme is kind of based on the same faith foundations that I have and especially like as I've learned over the last few years you work out who you are and what you believe in are your values….

The participants who immigrated into New Zealand from non-Western cultures tended to struggle to define their self-identity. The concept of 'individual self' may not be relevant to define the self for some of them, as they are more likely to see the self as a group identity. This showed during interviewing – they often mentioned 'us' rather than 'I', even when talking about themselves. Gina found the process uneasy:

> …we had a presentation about "who am I". To be honest, I still do not recognise about who am I. I didn't know why such a topic of "who am I". Other students said ten minutes presentation is too short, but I had just seven minutes. After that, I still keep thinking about who I am.

Eventually, she found her identity, seemingly coming from her sense of belonging to her culture:

> I've gradually learned about it. You have no choice about who you are. You are born with who you are. For me, my childhood experience, my living context, my culture, my parents, and [her cultural] traditional food, these shape who I am. So I have a deeper understanding of this topic now than last year.

The immigrant participants from non-Western cultures may not be conscious about an individual self. Self-identity can be belonging to a widely accepted group in a community, region, or society. When discussing self-identity, Alice immediately said: "I didn't think about my culture [until she took a social work programme]", as her country of origin largely consists of a majority ethnic people including herself. It seemed that she assumed that there is no difference herself and others in society. In New Zealand, she dedicates herself to socio-cultural adaptation and integration into the society while she does not seem to value maintaining her culture as such. Exploring her cultural identity seemed to be experienced as a confrontation between her original identity and new identity.

The T1 process could generate problems when developing those immigrant participants' cultural identity while also engaging with both Māori and Pākēhā cultures. Gina was confused about her cultural identity and she once lost herself while she tried to find it:

> For me, the struggling about my own cultural identification. I was quite lost. Firstly, "oh, this is Kiwi culture how they respect Māori culture." I want to learn Western culture and Māori culture but there was a time I was lost, I don't know how I identify myself. Then I keep reflecting, do reflection…

In the social work education approach in Aotearoa New Zealand, cultural competence is underpinned by biculturalism; immigrant participants tended to perceive that becoming a culturally competent social worker would mean the social worker has Western values and is able to work with Māori clients competently, although cultural competence does not mean only between Māori and Pākēhā but also between Tangata whenua and Tauiwi (tauiwi refers to anyone who is not from your iwi). In this research, Tauiwi means anyone who is not Māori or Pākēhā. This could be because teaching and measuring for cultural competence often assume that the social worker is a Westerner/Pākēhā as noted in Chapter 2. Jane believed becoming a competent social worker meant that she had to act like a Western social worker who is able to work appropriately with Māori people. Thus, she endeavoured:

> I have to take on like Pākēhā and Māori cultures….Being a social worker in New Zealand means embracing mainstream culture [Western culture] and Māori culture, somehow, I need to fit in there.

She was concerned with her cultural position and where she stands in New Zealand social work.

Linda, on the other hand, identifies herself as 'the other' in the bicultural context. She has an objective view of the social work context:

> …social work is developed from Western countries, I've learned Western values and viewpoints. And of course, Māori is native citizen here so I've learned Māori culture which is an important element [in the New Zealand social work context].

She is her position flexible between the Māori side and Pākēhā side, depending on the situation. From her explanation, she seems to understand Māori colonisation by positioning herself on the mainstream (Pākēhā) side from her social work education. Also, she is able to view the Māori position of being oppressed by seeing her position as that of a migrant into a Western society from a non-Western culture.

She also maintains being in the other position, between two sides, or switching between the two, in a situation, as she can.

The T2 process frequently occurs in an everyday classroom context, especially if the class consists of students from diverse cultural backgrounds. T2 often involves processing through observing and comparing cultural similarities and differences with other students in class. Similarity of cultural traits between other cultural groups and one's own made self-awareness easier. In particular, the participants from non-Western cultures often identified commonalities between their cultures and Māori and Pacific cultures. Megan views Māori history as analogous to her cultural history; "It showed me how close I am to the two cultures, my cultural background – collectivism." Alice found a particular similarity of "the concept of family" comparable to her cultural value. Laura also elaborated on this:

> I think for Māori and Pacific cultures, and [her ethnic culture], the important thing is we have to respect for elders. Normally we have to take care of them even though you grow up, you have own family, you have to take care of parents. Some of Māori and Pacific families and like [her ethnic group], they're living together, like three generations together.

Those participants more likely develop empathy for Māori and Pacific people. Michelle explained:

> So when talking about Māori culture, I can relate to it. People that I am talking to especially Māori people it's very easy for me to get their attention [it is easy for her to understand them and also vice versa]. They are sympathised. They accept me as a person not because I'm [her ethnicity] but as a person.

Cultural differences between one's own cultural group and other cultural groups is another way to be aware of the self. In one class discussion, Kim realised that the way most of her classmates understand good health is different to her culture. In her culture, eating well symbolises as having a bigger body:

> …if you work with Pacific Islanders, [you may say to them] "your weight is overweight"….this is not appropriate for people in the culture. Because bigger body means having a good and strong body.

She has learned that people can be offended by these differences as she seemed to be offended by it.

Also, Alice became aware of her many personal traits coming from her culture by comparing herself and local students; "…personally [her ethnic group] character is very shy, and we don't speak out much. So sometimes I feel little bit difficult to engage with other students." She perceives herself as 'passive' or 'reserved', behaving differently from the local students in class:

> [In her country] teachers told us what we have to do. So I was not being active [a typical student behaviour in her country]. Here, New Zealand students have to be active, so when I went to placement I had to be active and proactive. Not being passive just sitting down and waiting.

Kelly exposed herself to different perspectives when working on assignments with classmates:

> The last one [group assignment] was about world view. Six of us in the group from different cultures so we took up all different views that we have and how they relate to social work issues….Each culture presents from their point of views…it had challenges obviously, group work always does, but it's also been understanding, because getting different perspectives and where we are all in multi-culture that have different perspectives.

She identifies a significant difference between her culture and other non-Western cultures, especially Māori and Pacific cultures:

> Pākēhā culture essentially isn't as rich as lots of other cultures. Pākēhā culture the way I was brought up, like just get on with that and putting us together. Holistic approach that I was talking about before it doesn't exist in Pākēhā.

Her non-Pākēhā classmates had less opportunity to know about Pākēhā culture. Her explanation of Pākēhā culture from her perspective: a Pākēhā (Western) person has seemingly impacted on them: "…they've been so surprised I probably give them Pākēhā why they do things the way they do." Sharing each other's cultural perspective results in awareness of one's own culture as well as awareness of other cultures. Awareness of both similarities and differences between the self and the others can assist to know the self. The findings demonstrate the observation of Karl Tomm (1993), well known in the field of family therapy and emphasises therapeutic conversation in practice, in his statement, "our sense of self is generated in relation to others" (p. 77). Knowing the self can be interrelated by knowing the other.

On the other hand, the T2 process may also lead to separating the self from others by becoming more conscious of cultural difference between the self and the others. For instance, Laura differentiates between 'Asian students', including herself, and 'Kiwi/local/White students', often seen in our conversation in the interview. One of the examples she pointed out to show this difference, "…Kiwi students often put their hand up and ask questions, but Asian students always listen and take notes and listen and take notes". She sees that there are different roles between local (Western) students and international (non-Western) students in the class:

> We sometimes divide into different groups for discussion and after group discussion we typically ask Kiwi students to do the presentation. They know our English is not good, so they are happy to help us.

Although Laura appreciates local students helping international students in class, not all participants see it in the same way. An international student, Michelle, understands this situation as a power dynamic (difference) between local and international students:

> I am not a part of the crowd [Western classmates] in class….You have that kind of pressure [the strongest opinions come from mainstream/Western cultural perspectives in class]. Sometimes they [local/White students] don't understand us [other cultural perspectives]. They don't accept you as a person as a classmate or part of class. I don't know if you call it like inferiority. Because I come from a developing country, I am from not developed society you have the kind of sense. When I told them about my culture, I can see that they are not interested. Because they may not be related to my culture, especially coming to family values in their culture.

She was conscious of her position as an international student, overpowered by local students who seemed to create barriers between herself and local students (others). A local student, Rose was aware of these participants' perspectives from another perspective:

> Just because when you think of how even the classes and the systems which are put in place they are all done mainly by a group of people who are the predominant culture rather than like there may be some kind of input from other groups of people because by nature there are more people in the predominant culture. That means that kind of flows through more into how things are set out and structured, if that makes sense.

When looking beyond similarity and difference, this leads to a further step, to T3, which examines one's own thoughts, assumptions and biases and where these are from. Rose recognised the importance of self-awareness, in particular cross-cultural practice:

> ….to be able to understand other cultures you need to be able to understand who you are and where you come from and what forms what you believe and how that impacts on how you see other things and how your awareness and being able to acknowledge and respect other cultures, but you have to understand where you sit first.

When students come to understand why they need to develop their self-awareness, then they may begin critically reflecting on the self. Reupert (2009) asserts that knowing the self is knowing how one thinks and acts, as we tend to take for granted our own views of reality which consequently have blind spots about ourselves and others. Our own assumptions, values, and beliefs influence our actions which may have an effect on others who are culturally different from us; therefore, a higher self-awareness such as the T3 self-awareness, 'exploring the self' or 'examining the self' is vital, particularly in cross-cultural relationships. However, at the education stage, very few participants demonstrated the process of T3 in

this research. Rose had gone through T3 becoming aware of her perspective – to a degree it comes from her cultural location where she stands as she described:

> And that is always interesting to do as well because it is something you don't really tend to think about that much and obviously being Pākēhā and the predominant culture I am in that group which hasn't had to think about much before because I'm in the group of people who do the other [her cultural group: a dominant group decides who are the 'others'], you know, it's not something that I set out to do. It is just that where I fall and so that is interesting to kind of become more aware about that and work out ways to try and work beyond that and accept that maybe how it is, but it is not necessarily, you know, it's hard to pin down because you always work on I think because there is that awareness of it and needing to actually acknowledge that when you are helping other people as well.

She is also conscious about how others may see her from their different locations.

Self-awareness usually involves self-reflection. Many participants often mentioned 'reflecting on myself' when they processed T1 and T2. At this stage, they began to think about something by merely reflecting upon the self. T3 can take the thinking process as critically reflecting on the self. Often this was further triggered by an incident (experience) that left them with uncomfortable feelings. For instance, Megan became irritable about something through classwork. She firstly recognised an experience in the past that had caused her emotional turmoil. At the time, she was aware of the experience which refers to Kondrat's (1999) first approach to self-reflection: simple conscious awareness. She further reflected on the incident, understanding what caused her to feel the way she did. She shared her experience:

> Before I was doing that classwork, I was thinking I had very happy childhood, teenage time….I was very free woman and strong and outstanding…until I started to write about my experience I didn't know how that experience have impacted on my life…
>
> After 40 something years I'm able to understand what was happening to me that day. I understand I'm a woman because I've found my period and being a mum…. My mum tried to support me but the way she did, it made me to hate myself as a woman. Since that moment, I acted not a woman like a boy because it was better and easier…I've got that knowledge in me which I hadn't had it before about myself.

As a result, she realised her issue which had been ignored for a long time: "…for me it was kind of having a battle inside of me." She also said: "Without knowing [the part of] myself, I wouldn't be able to take on board hearing these [related issues] from others." Megan thought if she did not process it, she might have been unable to understand her clients who have similar issues. This would have had an effect on the clients in practice and therefore she stressed that:

> Doing that course opened lots of windows for me. So knowing about myself, which I didn't know for years, helped me to hear better what I was listening to.
>
> If you still have something inside [unsolved issues] not opened up, how can you be aware of yourself and others and help them to find their own ways [to solve issues]?

She must have taken a step back herself (as the knower) from the experience and reflected on the self (the known) in the experience and analysed it. T3 is a key transit point to change one's own perception of the self. On the other hand, the participants who reached T3 at the educational stage, tended to be mature-age students. Thus, T3 can be influenced by personal life stages as well as learning stages. The T3 process occurred more among participants at transitional and career stages, and this will be discussed further in the following chapters.

4.2.2 Professional attitude

The multicultural classroom was a simulated learning environment for many participants to respond to difference. From the educational stage, the participants have grown to be culturally responsive. In a culturally diverse class, they also have some expectations of their classmates responding readily to difference. Alice made a comment: "I think we study social work, so I think we accept differences, I hope." They seemed to discern no difference between learning with their classmates and working with clients, colleagues and other professionals from various cultural backgrounds. Megan said: "[in a diverse cultural classroom] everyone was talking about their cultures. It gives you a picture of what you are going to see in the future [in social work] and in the community." They recognised having professional attitudes, which indicates acknowledgment, acceptance and respect for difference as being essential for becoming a professional social worker.

Through working and interacting with their classmates from various cultures, participants faced some differences especially while working together for group assignments. Jenny described that, "People have so many different ideas." Kelly also explained:

> I'm not going to say it comes easy but I find out what's different and find out how to make it work. Because, somebody's strength might be slightly different from mine but somebody's strength might work better than mine, their strength supports my weakness. Likely my strength will support theirs.
>
> I think it comes again to that Whakakoha rangatiratanga – respecting relationship[s] [respecting elders and leaders], respecting differences and cultures.

She has grown her respect for differences, she called it “embracing cultural difference.” Gina has proudly learned a non-judgemental manner from local students in class. She recognises the people of her culture using a typical approach when meeting new people as being judgemental; they commonly ask questions like “aren’t you married?” and “how much money do you make?” as a measure of knowing others. She sees it as inappropriate as a professional and that influences her personally. She now avoids judging others in the way she used to do. Alice also recognises her judgmental views of others, which she now acknowledges as unprofessional:

> I’m always on time and don’t want to be late; I guess this is my cultural expectation. Because in my country, bus, train and traffic are always on time and nobody wants to be late for work. Here is quite different. I have very interesting story from a Samoan classmate, when he was young there was no clock in his house and there were no public clocks [when he lived in Samoa]. They are easy going. Maybe when sun is rising then it’s kind of a sign of morning. They see time frame differently from mine. I can’t say they are lazy. That’s my cultural lens [if she sees being not on time as being lazy] so they are different.

She has developed better tolerance for difference through studying and working together in a culturally diverse class; “now my way of thinking and attitude [toward others] are changing.” Although she said she is “still irritated by differences.”

Cultural tension can occur and is to be expected in a multicultural class due to confronting each other’s differences; Donna has experienced and witnessed it in her class:

> At university, it was a challenge, because students had different values, different beliefs, different cultures, different upbringings, and young and old. Cultural diversity was always there…I’ve learned a lot from different cultures when I was at university.

She explained that cultural tension can be caused because, “…sometimes we believe that we are the same. That’s the problem….” Melissa also said, “people are pretty much understanding we are the same”. Alice explained:

> I think at the beginning of social work course, I was wearing [the] glasses of my cultural perspective. I judged people through the glasses.
>
> If we see through our cultural perspectives, we stereotype, or judge people based on our own cultural perspectives.

As we are likely to view and understand things and people from our standpoint, from our perspective, we tend to expect others to view and understand in the same way as we do – then we are less aware of difference.

The participants tended to have or feel cultural tensions were more likely to be from non-Western cultures. Alice shared one incident in class:

> One classmate she was talking about shark declines globally….She emphasised China, because of Chinese people what they do [criticised China for overfishing]….I felt very uncomfortable during the presentation. I felt she blamed Asians.

She took the presentation as suggesting that all Asians or Asian countries have committed the supposedly inappropriate activity from her perception. She felt even more disappointed when discussing her concern with a lecturer. He advised her not to take it personally. She felt she was being misunderstood, as he did not show much sympathy and she said, "He is Pākēhā, maybe because, he is in a dominant cultural group. In hierarchy, he is also here [she was pointing her finger up] and I am here [she was pointing her finger down]." She perceived that he was unable to understand her point from his standpoint.

Another example, Jane responded to conflict by confronting:

> …..we talked about sex workers in class, I know this is legal in New Zealand but back in my country this isn't legal. Most of Asian students who want to be a social worker, what would you do? Most of mainstream students would say "oh that's their life, that's their choice [working as a sex worker] at the end of the day."
>
> I mean verbally they said they [Western/White students] do understand other perspectives but I don't think they do. I mean you can't say verbally "oh we understand your view".
>
> I am an Asian and having a sister, if she is a sex worker, it is not acceptable. It's not a better social worker or not. It comes to differences, it's clashed.
>
> I expressed my opinions [in the class discussion] I was kind of angry because at the end of discussion, how it flew was "Oh but it's New Zealand we have to accept as it is." It's a [job] so whether if you accept or not, like leave it or take it, if you can't accept it then you can't be [a] social worker.

She has perceived that New Zealand mainstream perspectives are regarded as correct and the local students overpower the discussion as righteous from the New Zealand mainstream perspective. Furthermore, these participants see the situations where local New Zealand students lack cultural sensitivity and cultural consideration for other students who might be affected by strong Western perspectives that contradict social work and where they paid a significant amount of attention to the culture of clients but not to that of the social workers themselves.

Jenny has developed resilience through several experiences of cultural tensions between herself and some of her classmates:

> What I think of respect for cultural diversity is you keep an open mind. That's important. Because we always have some bad experiences with certain people from certain groups. When you try to open your mind, you already accept [others]. I mean I still don't agree with something [others say and do], but I try to understand them.
>
> You can't be satisfied with everybody. One is right and other one is also right; the argument is never end[ing].

She mentioned that "compromise on differences" is a key for working with difference: "It's finding a common place. I try to do that. Even when I do assignments in the group. People have so many different ideas. Personally, I am the one who says, 'I compromise in a way'".

The participants reflect on how they perceive, manage, and respond [or do not respond] to the situation. Not responding seems to be a common coping mechanism in the situation, which can also be a professional action. Jane expects similar conflicts when entering her social work career but has learned that she should not be emotional and does not respond to conflict, as this is her way of dealing with it. From the educational stage, many participants had prepared for becoming professionals who have professional attitudes, such as acknowledging, accepting and respecting difference and reacting positively to one's surroundings.

Conclusion

At the educational stage, the initial education for cultural competence was introduced. First and foremost, New Zealand social work education is built on a uniquely bicultural framework. 'Cultural' studies underscore the Treaty of Waitangi which includes learning about colonisation and racism. The key educational learnings for cultural competence were a knowledge of biculturalism in the New Zealand context, growing cultural self-awareness and positive professional attitudes to Māori people and those from diverse cultural backgrounds. Tikanga Māori was a basis of cultural knowledge. The participants (especially non-Māori) learned about Māori culture and that perspective may have differed from their own – all of which contributes to acknowledging and possibly accepting and respecting difference. In addition to this, the participants began to develop significantly, T1: Self-identity and T2: Cultural self-awareness through exploration of the self and through interaction with classmates from different cultures from their own in class. To be self-aware has become a significant key for becoming a culturally

competent social worker. Self-awareness is an essential process for understanding the self, who you are, including own beliefs and values and how these are formed from one's own life experience and background before understanding others who also have their own beliefs and values that shape who they are. These knowledge and awareness-attitude components were the foundational learning of cultural competence at the educational stage.

Chapter 5: Transitional stage: Practicum placement

Introduction

In the previous chapter, participants' main educational contributions to the knowledge and awareness-attitude components of cultural competence were explained. The participants developed the foundational concept of cultural competence which is based on biculturalism. They also explored their own culture, as well as different cultures from their own, through classroom learning. They have become more aware of themselves, being surrounded by people who have different and or similar values to them. Both knowledge and awareness-attitude components learned from social work education were demonstrated in their practicum placement. In this chapter, the further development of these components at a transitional stage – a period when participants made their first attempts at transforming educational learning into practice – will be set out in detail. Particularly, increasing self-awareness was significantly shown among the participants. This section will explicate each type of self-awareness: Type 1 self-awareness (T1): Self-identity; Type 2 self-awareness (T2): Cultural self-awareness; and Type 3 self-awareness (T3): Critical self-awareness. These were reoccurring and processing further at this stage. The participants more likely involved in critical thinking when reflecting on themselves and that contributed to understanding the self at a deeper level. It often occurs when intersecting between the self, others and practice environment, that the self is exposed in various cultural contexts. Critical self-reflection (critically reflecting on the self), involves a process of critical thinking and questioning fundamental beliefs/thinking. This is more likely to be used as T3 was key to developing a higher self-awareness. Drawing on the interview data, this chapter explores these issues in detail.

5.1 Knowledge component

Although the knowledge component was a large portion of the learning at the educational stage, it was less significant among many participants' practicum experiences. Māori cultural learning was more likely to continue by the participants who worked closely with a Māori social worker and/or had practicum training within a Māori social work organisation. Laura found Māori culture fascinating through talking and listening to a Māori social worker; "I even asked a Māori colleague, asked her to recommend some Māori movies and Māori books to me." The more she became knowledgeable about Māori culture, the more she felt competent working with Māori staff and clients. Kelly, who identifies herself as 'Pākēhā

New Zealander', chose a Māori social work organisation for her first practicum, learned much more about Māori culture within the organisation where mostly Māori staff work and clients are all young Māori people. She became comfortable and built confidence working with Māori people in their cultural environment at the end of practicum and said, "I was working with Mahitahi [a working group/team] out of Pākēhā, I thought [of] myself as a person I could help the people out there." She learned from her practicum that culture can be an aspect of an individual, but it is one of many aspects; when working with people, whether it is crossing cultures or not, importantly, you work with an individual person. She said: "I don't put culture first, I put helping them first." She does not distinguish between herself as a Pākēhā or her culture and Māori people or their culture.

Deborah had an opportunity to work with a Māori social worker and visited a Māori client during her practicum. She explained one remarkable incident:

> We went to the town and saw this Māori woman, at the woman's place [she was] sitting on the chair. I was with my supervisor from [the name of organisation], and when we were talking to this woman, these two swallows came inside, and I thought "oh a couple of birds came inside" and these two [her supervisor and the client] were crying and had tears running down the face. That was really uncomfortable and that birds were circling sometimes there. They were saying nothing and crying. When birds were out in the house and then they came back again. My supervisor looked after this woman and said, "would you like us to come back later?" She said "yes". I still didn't understand what [was] going on.

On the way back to the office, her supervisor explained the incident. Deborah said:

> In Māori culture, if birds come in the house and do that means someone is going to die….When we got back into the car, she [her supervisor] told me…then a week later her [the client's] grandmother died so that was so powerful.

The experience gave Deborah a sense of Māori spirituality, which has contributed to her further understanding of the Māori worldview and how to work with them. Interacting with cultural individuals seemed to bring personal meaning to the participants.

Although culture often meant ethnicity and race to many participants, especially during the educational stage, some participants recognised that culture is diverse through encountering clients from various backgrounds during practicum. Nicole realised that she cannot categorise 'women' as simply one group. She assisted organising a women's group and talked to various women through her practicum; she said: "[I've] got all women from all different groups of life there's no one set of class or person or experience." Gender and age were also obvious matters that significantly affected Jane's practicum

experience as working with older Asian males were challenging to her, she mentioned, “they don’t want to expose themselves [to me]….” mainly because she is a woman who is younger than those male clients. A younger Master’s student, Michelle found the age gap an obstacle and she was unsure how she could work with a group of schoolchildren: “So for me I needed to adjust working with children because I didn’t have any experiences with children.” In addition to this, she had a cultural gap:

> But being with children Pacific Islanders or Kiwi children, my observation, their perspectives are already Westernised. So, they are more vocal about what they think. They are not obedient to authority [not obedient to adult requests] which isn’t in my culture. Asian culture, usually it’s seldom [seen among Asian children]….I was so surprised, I don’t know how to manage [those] kind of behaviours. So, when I was there I was shocked. I didn’t know what to do.

These participants were able to perceive culture as having multiple dimensions.

5.2 Awareness-attitude component

At the transitional stage, the participants themselves were more likely to be exposed to various cultural contexts on a day-to-day basis. In their practicum environment, they were intersecting between themselves, others (clients/supervisors) and the environment (practicum learning site), all of which influenced cultural learning, understanding and experience. Their self-awareness was significantly enhanced especially by those who experienced the centre of cultural tensions. The participants were most likely to involve critical thinking in processing self-awareness. Critical thinking about the implication of one’s own current perspective is a process of awareness of personal values and beliefs and reflecting on where those values and beliefs originate (Lum, 2011). They critically reflected on the self that probably involves the process of Kondrat’s (1999) ‘reflective self-awareness’, reflecting on the self who is experiencing something, mentioned in Chapter 2. In reflection, they presumably distinguished between the objective-self ‘I’ and the subject-self ‘me’. They stepped the self back from the situation (Kondrat, 1999) so that the subject-self could reflect on the object-self who is doing the experiencing. Critical self-reflection leads to developing T3. It assists in increasing awareness of how their own assumptions originate, which is about the connection of the self and social context and structure; such awareness of assumptions can provide a platform for transformative action (Fook, 2015). The development of the three levels of self-awareness is not a linear process. In order to go through T3, you need to process at least T1 and/or T2. On the other hand, this stage’s focus was predominately on self-awareness.

5.2.1 T1: reclaim own identity

At the transition stage, some participants further developed their self-identities contributing to building their confidence in who they are. The participants began to use critical self-reflection. At the beginning, reflection can be descriptive of what has happened. This references Kondrat's (1999) approach to self-reflection 'simple conscious awareness': being aware of experience. The social worker becomes aware of a particular experience (Yan & Wong, 2005). For instance, Kim was attached to an extremely uncomfortable feeling in her placement. She recognised that feeling disturbed her, especially when calling clients 'offenders'; she felt she treated them as offenders, even she did not see them that way. During the interview, her conversation was often about the experience which has had an impact on her and expressed her serious concerns for those offenders after being released from jail:

> Because they have criminal history so it's hard for them to find a job. If they apply for jobs and they would get a criminal check. Then if they have many criminal offences, they may not be likely to be employed.
>
> You know for example, there is a person [a client she knew from the training organisation], he's committed offences over and over. And they [officers] said [to him] "you are breaking the law" [but they do not help him to improve his life]. I wanted to talk to him why, so I could do more for him [help him] but it's social work [it restricts her in what she can do].

She has a strong belief in social work principles, that anyone, including those who have breached laws, should be given a chance for recovery and social workers are supposed to assist them. Her social work definition seems to come from her life and social work experience in her country of origin, which clashes with the mission and duty of statutory social work. Therefore, she was disappointed that the department ethos counteracts social work values, limiting the social work mission of helping people. However, she did not seem to be aware of where her values and beliefs, that influenced her experience, came from.

At this stage, participants increasingly used Kondrat's (1999) 'reflective self-awareness'; presumably they step back from the experience or situation when reflecting on the self so that they can objectively analyse the self. Jane (who is Asian) went through T1 again during her practicum. Her perception of cultural competence from social work education strongly emphasised biculturalism, highlighting a working relationship between a Western social worker and a Māori client. As a result, becoming a culturally competent social worker means, she thought, taking a position of a Western social worker. This is relevant to Yan's (2005) study, the image of 'Whiteness': a Western White worker is perceived as the standard of competence by not only professionals but also clients; the image

(assumption) is embedded in training and practice setting and the nature of the profession. While working with the staff and clients who are from her ethnic culture in her practicum organisation, she realised that there was no one like her ideal of a social worker and how they work with their clients. That made her re-think her cultural identity. Through reflection, she recognised her intention, in which she tried hard to act like a Western social worker to become a culturally competent social worker by suppressing her own cultural identity. She said before she went to the practicum placement, she tried to have both Pākēhā and Māori cultures within her, "….I put [her ethnicity] into a box, and I learned biculturalism….I enforced myself as Pākēhā, my Pākēhā side was huge and Māori side was untouched." During and after the placement she further reflected on herself in the placement experience: "….you are kind of feeling where this is [where she comes from], what is going on [she is trying to be a Westerner], this is how I'm seen [as Asian even when she acts like a Westerner] in the society…I'm kind of opening up the box and took my Asian identity out, 'yes, it is me'." In this process, she must have used 'reflective awareness' by stepping herself back from the experience and examining it. After the reflection process, she acknowledges that she ignored who she is because she tried to fit herself into a bicultural context. Then she questioned herself: "When you said biculturalism, what does it mean? [her understanding is about Pākēhā and Māori cultures] then I couldn't fit in myself there….I don't know what [was the] meaning of being culturally competent [to her] in biculturalism" From this point, she has valued her cultural identity – and valued becoming a culturally competent social worker:

> I think I have to be [her ethnicity] or Asian first, rather than embracing Whiteness or Māori-ness in me. That was missing. I sucked in all the information [about biculturalism], but I hadn't had a chance to look into myself.
>
> Now, I have to bring my strong identity which means Asian, [her ethnicity] cultural background. So that's something I've got from the practicum which couldn't get from the classroom.

Eventually, she seriously considered how she can be located as a social worker who has the (Western) social work value of professionalism while maintaining her cultural self. Jane's case was not unusual among the participants who are not from Tauiwi: Western cultures or Māori culture. T1 and also T2 can be revisited over and over during the transitional stage. The more the participants experience this learning, the more they develop their sense of self. Self-reflection is crucial for increasing self-awareness which is seen as a specific skill that the participants have gained from the education and practicum. Rose explained:

> I would say that is one thing that definitely the studies have brought out is having to kind of sit and reflect on who I am and where I've come from and why and the way I am or what has made me the way I am.

Betty also talked about self-reflection which helped to enhance understanding herself:

> ….you figure out a lot more about yourself….that is where that kind of personality comes from or that is where that value base comes from or that is why I react this to a situation or a comment [like I do].
>
> I have really struggled with prior to study was what am I doing, why am I here, why am I the way I am, what's made me who I am?
>
> Why am I having a reaction like this, why is that causing this reaction or this response, and I suppose in the learning and the study that I've done, I'm like ok makes sense now, ok just tone it down a little, take a deep breath.
>
> The more you find out, the less you actually know.

On the other hand, some participants experienced difficulties using self-reflection, especially when they were on practicum. Michelle struggled with going through her practicum, but she could not understand or explain what caused her struggles at the time:

> When you are there [practicum placement], your sense is always up. I need to be a student. And I also need to be a social worker….You have to neglect who you are. Because you have to stay in the certain roles.

The practicum environment was overwhelming, and she was overloaded with new information and training tasks. She was just getting by each day and was unable to reflect on herself in the situation. After finishing the practicum, she reflected on her learning; she now understands that one of her struggles was over a conflict between her personal characteristics she described as introverted and the 'professional' traits of social worker, which are not compatible. She realises that she was extremely uncomfortable possessing power with her professional position in relation to the clients in the practicum organisation. She explained:

> …when I was there [the practicum organisation], my supervisor always said, "you have the authority, because of that children [clients] will listen to you," but it's not my personality; it's not who I am.

Simultaneously, she tried to develop a good relationship with her clients by reducing the power balance between herself and them, "….when you interact or connect with them, you don't offend them as a

professional." This was difficult for her as she reflected on how to manage it. She thinks being a social work professional overrides her personality:

> …I've learned that being a social worker, it has kind of power somehow at the same time you need to step out of the shoe [her personal-self] which is probably hard to do you know. How would you put in the shoe which has two different roles [being social worker and being herself in a situation] ….That's really clashing [between two]"

Self-reflection presumably assists in analysing one's self in a situation that brings a better understanding of the self; however, it may not solve problems. Moreover, students may not always accomplish developing self-awareness or even reflection in their practicum placement. The issue will be discussed further in Chapter 7.

5.2.2 T2: awareness of difference at micro and macro levels

Many participants spent a great amount of time working closely with their clients, supervisors and colleagues within the practicum organisation. In particular, student–supervisor relationships appeared to be prominent, and this had a significant impact on their development of self-awareness. When a student and a supervisor have less personal, social, and cultural differences between them, their relationship seems to be smoother. Rose's relationship with her supervisor demonstrates that:

> I got on really well with my supervisor at my placement….we would talk to her about any issues which had come up in the behaviour of the clients….we would talk about strategies because they would sometimes make new people feel quite uncomfortable in the group and that was quite interesting that whole, that was a good thing from placement actually...

Both Rose and her supervisor seem to understand clearly their roles and tasks. She was an active learner who asserted her need for knowledge and was self-directed in exploring practice experience. She also shared her difficulty in working with some clients with her supervisor; her supervisor made herself available when she needed discussions and support. Her student–supervisor relationship appeared to be further developed at the interpersonal level:

> ….we just had a good relationship in general of just talking about others, like not just stuff which happened at placement but general. There was an interest of your life as well which I think is quite important and when you are on a placement is that they are actually interested in you as who you are rather than someone who has come to pick up the slack for a little bit and will go again.

The connection within the boundary of the student–supervisor relationship would have an effect on the student's learning.

When a student and a supervisor are from different cultures, they may need to compromise and manage their differences in the relationship. Tsui (2005) explains that culture is a significant matter in supervision because the student's training and emotional needs, the supervisor's skills and styles, are all influenced by their cultures. The transactions in a supervision context can be interrupted if each party does not give sufficient cultural consideration and acknowledgement. In this research, the participants who are from non-Western cultures tended to have challenges working with their supervisors who were from Western cultures and they, as students, were more likely urged to adjust to their supervisor's culture. As those participants often mentioned their supervisors and also colleagues, "work with Kiwis" or "work with Native English speakers" or 'work with Pākēhā' – all indicating Westerners in the interviews. They tended to pay special attention to how they could work with them.

The T2 process was frequent among those participants. At the beginning, they were just distinguishing between themselves and their supervisors/colleagues from different cultures (often Western culture) from their own. One of the differences between them was illustrated by Laura – that there were different communication styles between them: "I think when I speak in English to clients or to colleagues, I am just working with them. When I speak [her native language], I think I can engage with them." According to her, "working with someone" merely means understanding what each other was saying, whereas "engaging' with someone" means having a good sense of each other from their interaction, which is imperative for building relationships. Laura insisted that good communication and interaction influence any relationships in social work. She reluctantly said, "I think I am not able to build up a very good relationship, strong relationship." Laura specifically mentioned that relationship building with native English speakers [Westerners] was challenging and, seemingly, she does not have the confidence to break through the communication barriers.

Some participants explored the difference further, exploring what they found difficult to make work and/or why they were bothered by working with self-reflection. They seemed determined to understand the self and find a way to compromise the difference. Michelle was also aware of communication or language barriers between herself and the Western colleagues in her practicum organisation. Through reflection, she had noticed several occasions that those colleagues misinterpreted the way she expressed herself and responded. She thought her English was not good enough for working

in the social work field, and that affected her confidence in speaking to them. She felt she received negative responses from them and said, “I am not sure about Western culture…you have to speak fluently in English [speak at a native level of English] so they can understand you.”

On the other hand, in a reflection she also realised that there were no communication and language barriers with her supervisor, although both Michelle and her supervisor are from different countries and they had to communicate in English to each other:

> ….when it comes to working with Pacific Islanders (PI), my supervisor, I don’t feel hard to talk with them [PI people]….I have the sense of [their use of English] language, and understand their meanings from the way they say, they also understand me in the sense….She [her supervisor] won’t misunderstand me. She comes from [a] similar cultural background from mine. When they [PI people] say, “Hello Michelle, how are you?” they are really touching [body language]. It’s just like my culture. Once you get to know them, you feel ease and you can really hug them if you want. You really feel they are like a family…I feel more confident talking to them and can relate to them, interact with them personally.

This seems like there are some similar cultural traits between the cultures of her and her supervisor that they were able to develop a mutual understanding between them and this could break down the communication and language barriers. At the end of this conversation, she mentioned that she might have built the barriers herself because she already assumed that her Western colleagues would not have understood her. Therefore, she was probably closed herself to those colleagues. As her interpretation of the experience has changed, her attitude to difference seems to have followed. She is willing to accept and is open to difference:

> Probably, I need to be more aware of how they react to what I say and how I do…When I sense that they don’t like this kind of language or action I adjust to it [talk and act in more appropriate ways to them].

Gina also realised that she had assumptions about others; people’s behaviour commonly conforms. However, the concept of *normal* behaviour comes from her family, culture or her country of origin. From reflection on a particular experience, she understood she expected to receive a specific response from a Western staff member, but he did not respond in the expected way. Therefore, she was upset:

> If I say to [teachers from her culture] “I promise I try my best” they would be very happy. Maybe Kiwi culture you don’t need to promise to teachers, your work is own business and you just do well.

> You know working with supervisors, and teachers [from her cultures], you show them, your respect and you are humble, you are keen to learn all the things and you show them you are hard working. It's very important [for relationship building in her culture]. But I don't know, it's not clear about this in Kiwi culture how they do, how it [the relationship] works between students and supervisors.

This incident triggered her to reflect further on her thoughts and response to the situation. Through reflection, she was aware of her approach to relationship building with people in higher positions, which is to gain trust by showing the ordinary dedication to work seen in her culture – but this may not be applicable to people from different cultures. She acknowledges that her approach is not necessary, and nobody expects her to express her willingness to work. She mentioned that "you just do well" as they would like to see whether you do well or not in your work. Thus, she cannot expect them to have the same response as people from her culture. Both Michelle and Gina were aware of cultural differences between themselves and others (T2) and reflected further on the experiences they had faced. Through critical self-reflection, they recognised their assumptions and biases towards the others (T3) then their interpretation of the experiences had been altered and they became more accepting of difference. Their insights seemed to come from critically reflecting on themselves (critical self-reflection); they questioned their actions and responses to the experience. This process will be discussed in the section on T3 later in this chapter.

Additionally, cultural difference is not evident only within relationships with specific ethnic and cultural groups from the participants' own culture. Quite a few participants picked up culture(s) within social work organisations while they were on practicum. Johnson and Williams (2007) explicate the organisational culture that statutory agencies tend to undertake the pyramidal structure of a hierarchy in which there is little opportunity for bottom-up feedback, whereas the voluntary or smaller charitable/private sector agencies are more likely have a flatter structure, in which decision making is owned by management, staff, and service users; employees act within the organisational structure, strategy and goals. Those differences are described simply as "strict" (statutory agencies) and "community driven" (non-profit organisations) by the participants.

Every organisation has a culture, which is influenced by the employees, as they are part of the environment of the workplace: where they grew up, where they live, and where they spend non-working hours (Johnson & Williams, 2007). This probably reflects employees' personal and cultural backgrounds. According to some participants, the demographic structure of employees seems to reflect on the target

service users of the organisation. In cultural service organisations that provide services for particular cultural groups and individuals, the staff are more likely to be from the culture of the service users.

The participants were conscious of their own culture in their practicum environment (organisational cultural environment). This presumably comes from their T2 process of being aware of similarities (being culturally comfortable in an environment) and differences (being culturally uncomfortable in an environment). A Māori social worker, Alison, had distinctive practicum experiences from her first placement, which consisted of mostly Māori staff, and the second placement, where there were fewer Māori staff. She was comfortable in the first organisation and felt accepted by the staff. Mostly she appreciated the way they approached social work:

> The first placement was a community. I was really fortunate enough to be in the organisation that has a strong Treaty component. And there are lots of policies and guidelines that are based on the Treaty. Also, a lot of the staff were Māori so it was everyday there, lived and bred in bi-cultural practice.
>
> I just think Māori understands Māori, Māori staff understand whānau. So, when you work with lots of Māori, feel like whānau, people there to support you, make sure it's going okay. You know there are lots of accountability for good cultural competency.

She explained that the ratio of ethnic demographics of staff has a significant influence on the organisational culture:

> ….coming here [her second practicum site and now her current employment] is fewer Māori staff, there is no whānau feeling. You are a minority, so your world view and values aren't prioritised or significant….

An Asian student, Laura, whose placement was in a different branch of the same organisation as Alison, Laura encountered many Māori and Pacific social workers and clients and described her practicum experience as a culturally inclusive work environment.

Those participants who were a cultural minority in their organisation felt they had to fit into the organisational culture. Jenny who migrated from Asia, mentioned her self-adjustment in a statutory organisation where most staff she worked with were New Zealanders; " I don't know this is a good word to use, 'pretend'. You know we are migrants and we fit into this environment [New Zealand society]. I think social work is similar. I try to fit or pretend to fit in." The participants who are from non-Western cultures and train in mainstream New Zealand (Western) social work organisations tend to experience enormous tension and pressure; they become aware of the self as different from others in the environment

through reflecting on the self in relation to their clients, supervisors and colleagues, and also the self within a social work organisational environment – that has a great effect on those participants becoming more aware of the self.

5.2.3 T3: conscious of personal self and own emotions

Critical self-reflection often occurred when processing T3 in post-intervention activity, after a significant incident or experience has happened that triggered participants to think about it further. They critically reflected upon one's self that they had already taken an action or have strongly felt something through examining the self; about why they felt, behaved or responded in the way they did. They began to analyse and understand the self objectively by stepping back (separating the self) from the experience.

They sought clarification of their thoughts, emotions or assumptions and where these came from, and how they may have had an effect on the client–social worker relationship. Through reflection, their interpretation of the experience has changed, and their thought patterns and their actions followed; their attitudes towards difference have altered from the reflection.

Laura shared her work narrative from when she was involved during her practicum at a child protection agency. In her expression, she seemed to be quite emotional about the experience as she questioned the New Zealand anti-smacking law (physical discipline of children is illegal) and strongly disagreed with it. She explained at the time she was on placement:

> …. [at her practicum organisation] we were faced with the cases such as "hitting children" everyday. I remembered, it was a case like that [she is demonstrating lightly smacking] but those children were reported to school, and the school reported to us and we talked to the mum. In my personal opinion, it's nothing.
>
> In my culture, I was growing up [in] that environment. My grandparents hit me. My parents hit me as well because I was naughty. I did wrong thing. Within my culture, hitting is a part of punishment [for wrong doing]. And the punishment is a kind of education.

Through her reflection after the placement, she was also able to distinguish the family values between her culture and New Zealand/Western culture:

> In my culture, [if] we are parents, we know a lot more than children [adults are presumably knowledgeable and sensible than their children] so we try to avoid children from making wrong choices before taking the choices…They need to know [to be told] which is wrong, and which is right. But Western culture they just let their children do and let them to choose.

She meant that Western parents respect their children's individuality and their own decisions, whereas in her culture, parents are more involved in their children's lives and decision making. This can be an ordinary process of T2 at this stage. Her important recognition through the reflection, was, "there is no right or wrong." She understood her feelings of being upset and angry about the social work she observed and where her emotions came from. She judged herself from a social worker's position; as a result, her upbringing was seen as reflecting poor parenting. The law made her feel like her parents had done wrong for parenting the way they did, and she defended her parents. Also, she judged the statutory social work from her own cultural and personal position; the social work responses and actions that are based on the law about physical discipline of children, in her view, are not respectful to other cultures including her culture. She realises that the law does not judge her, her culture or parents but she herself judges things depending on her cultural, personal and professional positions. When working in social work in New Zealand, she has learned to separate her personal morality from social work professional ethics; her cultural perspective does not matter in New Zealand social work and thus she needs to be culturally neutral (she does not strongly support or judge based on her personal and cultural perspective). In processing T3, she now acknowledges the different approach to parenting and accepts the difference between her culture and New Zealand culture.

Megan also went through T3 when she attended a group programme in which clients shared their own problems in a group:

> For me, the first time hearing somebody's problem…what the problem was, her boyfriend brought another woman [in their house] and asked her to have sex all together. It was my first time in my life hearing this thing….
>
> For a few minutes, I was lost. I didn't know how to deal with myself, sitting or leaving or looking up at the ceiling or scratching my face. It was a huge difficulty [listening] for me.

After the meeting, she thought about why she was stunned by the experience as she could not believe her shocked reaction without conscious thought at the time. Through reflection, she realised that sharing such personal and private information in an open group environment was an extremely abnormal behaviour in her culture:

> I come from the culture [clearly defining] "this is good", "this is bad", "this is normal", "this is abnormal" that was my big dilemma working with different cultures. Because it [normalising such behaviour and attitude within other cultures] is abnormal [unfamiliar] to you. And you don't know how to deal with [it].

She was surprised how strongly her culture influenced her thoughts. Her assumptions of abnormal or normal behaviours are derived from her cultural values. She recognised that she was the one who defined it as abnormal behaviour. Moreover, her assumptions about others doing or behaving in different ways from her causes a barrier to listen and understand other people who have different perspectives and lifestyles from her. Megan overcame this:

> What was help me how to deal with [differences], being more with people [of various backgrounds], listening to them more so it [difference's] kind [of] normalised for me hearing this thing [things that she does not normally do].

She tries to understand her clients from their standpoint, not from her own. This seems that she has also learned a way of distinguishing between herself (what is normal to her from her standpoint) and clients (what is normal to the clients from their standpoint) for managing herself or emphasising less her perspective in practice. After the reflection, she is more aware of her perspective which could be judgemental of others.

A young Master's student, Gina, experienced an incident in which she was judged by a client, where she received some negative comments from the client, expressing her low confidence in Gina such as, "you are so young", "how can I trust you?" or "you have so little experience [unexperienced in life]". She was very upset, but held on to her emotions to avoid immediately responding to the situation because she did not want to make a judgement based on feeling upset.

After closing the session, Gina reflected on the experience as she was trying to understand whether she behaved appropriately as a professional in the situation. She also analysed possible explanations as to why the client spoke to her in this way and what are the better responses to a similar situation in the future. The reflection process helped to clarify her thoughts. She realised that anyone can easily make judgements on another, whether you are young or old. She gave an example:

> Even if you look professional, that's another assumption, that's another powerful perspective [this also judges on a person].

Being judged can be unavoidable whoever you are; she could not take it personally. Then she focused on thinking - from the client's position - about why the client had made such comments about her. Gina thought the client's comment might have come from her fear of being belittled by a younger professional; as an older person, she might have felt embarrassed. Gina was aware of the client's culture where age and seniority are importantly respected in social relationships. Therefore, her attention was then on

developing a collaborative and equal relationship with the client at the next meeting: “I tried my best to engage with her, don’t make her feel like I [wanted to] teach her something but just talked in ordinary conversation. Then several sessions she disclosed her experiences to me.” Gina mentioned her action in this particular situation:

> I understand why we need critical thinking. Like this client, she judged me in that way. In [the] past I would definitely feel upset. But at the moment I could think of other perspectives and think critically immediately. I was satisfied [with] my reaction. I was surprised I could do such reaction.

These participants went through a meaning-making process of what was going on in their unsettled emotions and what had caused them. When the participants increased their awareness, they were able to alter patterns of thought, interpretations of situations and eventually change behaviours in strategic practice situations. This led to developing reflection on action and in action (introduced by Schön (1983)) and deepened their practice skills.

Conclusion

At the transitional stage, there are two developments involved. One is the development of self-awareness at a deeper level which was the use of reflection techniques. The participants significantly demonstrated that T3 particularly required them to use critical self-reflection which built on the foundation of T1 and T2. However, T1, T2 and T3 are not a sequential process. Critical self-reflection underlies the development of T3 self-awareness, which led to develop further reflection on action and in action. Knott (2016) emphasises that both reflection in action and reflection on action needs to be developed during social work education. In this research, most of the participants used reflection on action rather than reflection in action at this stage.

The second development is reflective practice: learning from experience. The participants’ practicum experiences played a crucial part through them using T3. According to an educational theorist, Kolb (1984), who promotes an experiential learning theory, experience has two meanings: one is the person’s *internal state* (how he or she experiences), and another is the *environment* and learning involves transactions between the person and the environment. His four-stage cycle: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and the implications of concepts, can illustrate participants’ learning processes at the transitional stage. In the real practice environment in which the participants were faced with cultural circumstances such as cultural difference and tension, they were

aware of the specific experiences (concrete experience), especially those involving their emotions, had impacts on them. They began to investigate the experience through reflection (reflective observation). They have often learned from reflecting upon the experience that led them to change their fundamental perspective or interpretation of the experience (abstract conceptualisation), eventually altering their behaviour in practice. The new concept is informed and tested in an experience (implication of concepts), then the cycle is repeated. In this process T3 was vital for the development of reflective practice through (critical) self-reflection.

Chapter 6: Career stage

Introduction

This chapter highlights the cross-cultural practice experienced by practitioner participants who have worked in the social work field for at least two years and enables us to see a picture of actual practice. A core tenet of cross-cultural practice is building relationships with clients of diverse backgrounds. The knowledge and awareness-attitude components of cultural competence from the education and transitional stages were progressively developed at the career stage. Type 1 self-awareness (T1): Self-identity and Type 2 self-awareness (T2): Cultural self-awareness were significantly emphasised from education and this was grown further in the practicum. In addition to this, Type 3 self-awareness (T3): Critical self-awareness began to develop among participants during the transitional stage, especially those who had been faced with experiences that involved their own emotions. They critically reflected on the experience and constantly endeavoured to understand the effect of the experience on them.

At the career stage, utilisation of T3 in practice was particularly demonstrated by the practitioner participants' practice experiences. T3 seemed to be a crucial key for building cross-cultural relationships; they critically reflect back on the self in specific situations they have already acted upon, and rethink what would be the best approach or action next time through analysing: reflection on action. They committed to the post-intervention activity. This also contributes to skill development to influence their practice by reflecting on their own practice and how they utilise their knowledge in practice: critical reflection. That is a foundation for practice wisdom.

In the first part of the chapter, the knowledge and awareness-attitude components are discussed – how the participants maintain and improve their knowledge and own self-awareness in their career. In the second part of the chapter, a process of client–social worker relationship building in cross-cultural situation will describe how they utilise the two components (knowledge and awareness-attitudes) in the relationship building and what skills they have developed for practice through combining the two components.

6.1 Knowledge component

The knowledge component seems to be a continuous process throughout the participants' career. Learning of culture is on-going, and knowledge is never perceived as enough by many practitioner

participants. Melissa, who had been working in the social work profession for several years said, “But I still feel not [I don’t have] enough [knowledge]. So, I still try to keep educated myself.” Especially, when entering their careers, they were more likely to face a gap between the knowledge gained from the social work education and the knowledge required for practice. The education focuses on learning about Māori culture and also possibly Pasifika cultures; knowledge about these cultures are mostly beneficial to the participants who work with Māori and Pasifika clients; Amanda explained:

> Well particularly if you are going to work in statutory social work when such a high proportion of not only our children in care [and the Whanau they are dealing with]….I think something like 52% of children we have the care are Māori. Māori are 15% of New Zealand population but …52% of children in care are Māori.
>
> Also around 50% of the prison population is Māori. Again, it compares with 15% of the overall population – that’s a hugely over-represented population [according to the demographic researched within her organisation].

Carol works in the area where many Māori and Pasifika people live and as most services users are from those communities, the social work organisation’s central focus is to provide culturally appropriate and specific services for them.

On the other hand, according to Statistics New Zealand, in the 2013 Census, ethnic diversity is increasing. Due to the change in ethnic demographics in New Zealand, the participants were visibly aware of how fast the various ethnic populations are growing and the change of ethnic demographics has significantly influenced their practice. Amanda mentioned that:

> Fifteen to twenty years ago there was an expectation that social workers have a good understanding of Māori culture and Biculturalism and also Pacific cultures, largely Tongan and Samoan. Now with the multicultural aspects, there isn’t an ability for social workers to understand Buddhism culture, Islamic culture, Sikh culture. People are coming from Malawi, and from Afghanistan. We’ve got people are coming from all over the world. Social workers can’t any longer have an in depth understanding of these countries.

Many participants’ practice reality is encountering and working with clients from various cultures rather than Māori and Pacific cultures in their practice. Therefore, the participants often recognise a lack of knowledge of their clients’ cultures and the educational knowledge is insufficient for working cross-culturally in practice. Nancy explained: “We need to be realistic about the population that we are working with. We need to be broad about that.”

As a result, they were urged to extend their knowledge in their own ways. Deborah spent her private time learning about culture when she started to work in an organisation where there were clients from various cultures with whom she needed to work. One of her approaches was that she attended monthly meetings of cultural groups so that she could have a better understanding of issues among the clients' cultural groups. A New Zealand European/Pākēhā, Nancy has been voluntarily involved with a cultural community for her own learning:

> I've been working here for five years, and I think I've had one Pākēhā family. I work everyday with people that their cultures are not my own….it's constant, it's a part of everyday that I have to be very aware of that. I have to be very proactive about exploring that so I can do my work as well as I possibly can. Otherwise I feel like I'm missing something or not going to deliver the service that people deserve.

Through working with clients from various cultures, the participants realised that culture, which they had previously understood to be an abstract concept, was not merely knowing specifically categorised groups of people who share cultural characteristics and traditions. Brenda has learned from her practice that, "….there are so many cultures within cultures." Sara also understands this from working with the people of her culture, which represents many ethnic minority groups:

> Although we are from the same country and same home town, we have different cultures and we have different understandings, different viewpoints to see the world and different ways to see the system.

She sees everyone as individually different within her culture. Brenda recognises that everyone is different beyond cultural difference. She talked about the tradition of removing shoes in house within Māori culture:

> But there'd be those Māori people say, "no don't take your shoes off, it's all right", as they saw me taking them off, and that doesn't matter to us and there'd be Muslim people who I think sort of always would be glad if you took your shoes off and there would be other groups too. The people who has nothing to do with their culture but simply to do with their carpet or I've washed this floor once already today.

Nancy shared one of her experiences in which her assumption overlooked an important factor of a family:

> ….you assume that everyone from Myanmar is Buddhist but they are Christian so I missed out, because I've learned [about Burmese culture] from the class…so I didn't ask questions [about their beliefs] therefore I didn't talk about it.

> ….you might have learned, that [your knowledge of a particular culture] is not applicable to everyone, not applicable to a whole group of people or maybe it's just an individual person or individual family.

Social workers cannot neglect to consider a client as a person. Brenda gave an example:

> Let's say we've got the 18 year old adolescent and she is in a bit of trouble and she's clearly identifiable as Māori, but maybe she more clearly identifies with an 18 year old culture than what she does with her being Māori, particularly if she's a suburban Māori…she might think I don't want any more of that thank you very much I want to be 18 and I want to be having fun, I want to be drinking.
>
> I think sometimes again I might say that 18 year old is to a certain extent disenfranchised from things that she needs because we look at her and say "oh she is Māori or she is Pasifika"….I don't know if I say it is a judgement, but we look at people in the face and we just immediately decide who is the best on the face.

Therefore, a person cannot be categorised into a specific culture according to where they are from. Brenda said; "…it doesn't mean to say they are like every other Samoan, Tongan, this person is Māori, this person is Tongan, this person is Samoan…" Nicole also explained that:

> Putting people on the spot and saying, "you do this because this is what your culture does." That's actually quite arrogant. So that was interesting because you can't assume that you're going to perform in these certain ways. It's because someone may say "this book says what is going to happen,"….Being culturally appropriate means that it's interesting that people may not behave in ways that books describe.

Other participants also made similar points; they were more likely to see clients as individuals, person to person, rather than as a cultural person, although the consideration of each client's culture(s) is substantial. They acknowledge that culture is a part of the understanding of who they are, but not the whole picture of who they are, when closely working with them. Culture is rather complex and cannot be defined personally.

Some participants have altered the way they gain knowledge of a culture from the educational approach. Nancy has developed her own cultural knowledge from her clients through her experiences working with them:

> [She recalled the time when working with Burmese clients], we spend more time on relationship building, they also like to get straight to the point….[she recalled the time working with Chinese clients] you know they don't worry about the relationship, just get to the facts, they really like that. Whereas Pasifika, you spend more time, let's say a Tongan family I spent several sessions

> just sort of you know feeling around each other, a few jokes and a few chit chats, you don't get to any of the work. You know just that kind of knowledge if little bit of key information is helpful.

Listening to clients' life experiences is a way of learning the clients' cultures, which opens a few participants' world views. Racheal has learned from her clients' experiences immigrating into New Zealand from different cultures, something which has had a significant impact on their lives:

> I guess, you know, a sort of self-directed learning, when I was working with older adults I saw a lot of different cultures. There were a lot of people struggling to integrate into New Zealand society. I guess a lot of people we saw the parents of children who had migrated to New Zealand. They were often older and had a sort of own community and they had ways of doing own things [ways of lifestyle] that turned sort of upside down when they came here….

She comes to understand her clients' issues are sometimes related to their immigration experience. Through working closely with clients from various cultural backgrounds, the participants have gained some knowledge of clients' cultures, learning to understand client individuality, as a person is also valued. The knowledge can therefore, be developed not only from education through reading about particular cultures, or staff training and experiencing the cultures, but learning and asking directly from clients.

There is significant agreement amongst participants that knowledge may not be fully learned from education. Although Megan acknowledges that educational learning of Māori culture is essential, it does not complete this learning because knowledge of a culture is not just knowing the culture of the client, but also understanding how they understand and make sense of their world. She said, "Learning about the history of Māori and New Zealand, and also their beliefs and the systems they've lived on, it just gives you highlights [a glimpse of their culture]."

She explained an example, when she was a social work student, she often heard about the collectivism of Māori culture. She strongly remembered one of the phrases: "They [Māori] see themselves a part of all." She did not understand what it really means for a while. Then, after she had started to practise on her own for some time, she realised that:

> When they introduce themselves, "I'm from that mountain, from that river, from that land, from the tribe, from that history." This is the introduction of one person. At the beginning, I was like, "yeah they give me their information." Then I understood it's not just the information. They're letting me know who they are and how they are…They accept you in, you are a part of. They're letting you know all about them.

Megan believes that working with Māori clients is a crucial key to understanding Māori culture:

> As I said, learning these [Māori] papers were the first opening door for me to see it [Māori world]. When I started to practise, I could see everyday the connection [between the studies and Māori world] and how that connection affects spirit, body, and mind and everything.
>
> ….As a social worker, understanding of the concept of culture is important, training yourself how to deal with difference [between clients and the self] is the main point.

She agrees with gaining a basic knowledge of some cultures from education; however, she said; "Having knowledge about different cultures and values, it doesn't make me a good social worker…how you practise with the knowledge is a big problem." She implied that the use of cultural knowledge in actual practice is built upon each social worker's ability.

6.2 Awareness-attitude component

6.2.1 Self-awareness

Continuously, the participants have developed their self-awareness through Type 1 self-awareness (T1): Self-identity, Type 2 self-awareness (T2): Cultural self-awareness and Type 3 self-awareness (T3): Critical self-awareness throughout their careers. Mostly, they refined T1 and T2 self-awareness which discern different positions: difference between the self and their clients in practice. Melissa explained knowing yourself, your own values, and beliefs denotes understanding of who you are, which is the basis of working with clients from diverse cultures: "I think basically you have to have understanding of self and own values…If you understand where you're coming from. It's easier to understand where someone's coming from."

Linda also mentioned that knowing oneself is fundamental to her practice:

> ….if I don't know myself how do I know others? Of course, knowing myself is not good enough [for practice]. What I mean of knowing myself, it is also about knowing the ugly side of myself and accepting and improving myself.

A few participants recognised that the cultural identity of a person is multifaceted through understanding their multiple racial and cultural backgrounds. This has an impact on their own practice. Britany is of mixed heritage, and that makes her feel different from anyone in both ethnic groups. "So it makes me know instinctively that everyone has a different world view." She values her uniqueness of cultural background which makes her who she is, hence she respects and values culture(s) of any person in the same way.

Carol is from the first generation born in New Zealand in her family and, as a result, she is immersed in New Zealand culture, rather than her family's ethnic and cultural origins. Her family's culture is a strong influence on her which takes in multiple cultures within it; there are over three generations in a household. She said: "….it's really a matter of family culture rather than ethnic culture." She believes that individuality is influenced by environmental factors – where they are from, how their lives have been – she always starts from understanding a person's background in social work.

> If you are a Japanese, are you a Japanese born in Japan? or born in New Zealand? or born in Japan and migrated in New Zealand? so it's three in one. I definitely ask for one person. Just it gets of the feel of their knowledge of New Zealand culture. Knowledge of their conditions. Making sure I've got a good understanding of the person….

These participants understood a person is complex – from the T1 and T2 processing of knowing the self – it is not just the person's identity based on an ethnic and cultural group, but it includes understanding her and his values and beliefs.

When participants establish their own identity, this contributes to building their confidence over who they are. Being confident about their self-identity had a great impact on their practice, where they stand, in which cultures of the self and the client intersect in the relationship. Their practices are not only about knowing a client's culture or focusing (identifying) on differences between the self and the client but practice is more about making a good connection with the client. Therefore, self-awareness especially T1, is a foundation for cultural competence. Some participants critically examined themselves. Donna explained that knowing the self is imperative as social workers are role models to clients. She tries to be aware of how she presents herself, and talks and behaves with her clients: "I have to make sure how I look, the way I work, the way I say, everything I do to show them." Seemingly, the participants who know and accept themselves for who they are unafraid of opening themselves up to clients. Sara also said, "social workers are a mirror to clients"; this is because the client sees himself or herself through the projection of the social worker's strengths and weaknesses. Hence, she values self-awareness; she needs to be better aware of who she is, what she does and how she thinks, taking into consideration how she might have an effect on her clients in a client–social worker relationship.

Linda also noticed her own fear or anxiety that often comes from herself through use of self-awareness in practice. Therefore, she can make changes to the way she processes her emotions and takes control of her feelings: "If I know myself: true of myself, I know how to bring the best of myself and

that's good enough." As she pressures herself to be a good social worker, even if no one complains about her, she tries her best. Finally, a couple of participants mentioned that self-awareness also means knowing one's own limitations: "what I can do and what I can't do". These participants made the most of self-awareness in cross-cultural practice. Self-awareness is recognised as a technique by some participants. T3, in particular, is the capability of being aware of their own thoughts and emotions and managing their internal dialogue to change what they are thinking so that they can respond better in practice (reflection on action).

6.2.2 Professional attitude

During their careers, many participants acknowledged establishment of themselves as professionals but also, the development of empathy toward others – becoming more a people's person. Those practitioner participants frequently mentioned their 'willingness' to work with clients. This attitude seems to be crucial, particularly when language, communication or cultural barriers occur in cross-cultural settings. Alison importantly said, "At least you're willing to try to know the client's culture…at least for research about their culture before meeting with them and you're willing to learn about their culture." Melissa also said, "…you have to have willingness to understand [clients]. I find that, if you have that, people really respond well. They will let you know." Their willing attitude was illustrated, especially when they were confronted with disengaged clients; their readiness to work with the clients reflected on their practice positively in many cases. Nancy makes an extra effort and time for disengaged clients:

> I guess I want to show that I'm really willing to work with people if they want to work with me. [Nancy talks about reasons why her clients did not come for an appointment] I want to make sure that it's not that we're miscommunicating or just they've been busy, because social work is all about their environments and the context of their living. I think so many times there're reasons that they didn't engage with me; they had to go to doctor on the day, they totally forgot about me or they really had chaotic week something happened that's why they didn't come to the meeting.

She makes phone calls to those disengaged clients until she receives their response.

> I am quite persistent in clarifying "do you want to work with me?"…. I've found that generally most people respond quite well to that. One time someone said, "oh you really care, you're coming back." Particularly people who have only spoken to me on the phone or they haven't actually met me yet, you know there is a gap between building relationship.
>
> The fact that effort, the little bit more extra effort tracking down people, it's breaking down some of the barriers for me. It doesn't work always, but surprisingly how often it does.

Donna has also experienced a number of times that clients refused to engage with her. She recalled, at the time those clients might have mistrusted social workers due to previous experiences, or they might have been afraid of intervention into their lives and being judged by social workers. However, she never gave up on them and was patient. She visited the clients over and over until they talked to her. Working with challenging clients, Melissa said "tried all sorts of things," she always does try to find what works for each client:

> One of [her] challenges was that she [client] required us picking up for her appointment; she won't make her way to here even though she does have a car. She does work. She does walk to town. I just make sure that one thing I do [for her] because I know it's a small thing…

Even though it is not her duty, she uses many ways to engage with clients as much as she can. Sara also had a client who missed a few appointments with her. The client had difficult issues to face and sometimes ran away from the situation, which was challenging for her while supporting the client; however, she never withdrew from her commitment to him, and continuously contacted him and visited him: "We went through all the process, and every time I accompanied him and said [to him] he had a lot of strength, he had a lot of skills. Quickly, I saw his situation was improved…" This client gradually developed trust in her and could discuss his worries, and also shared his achievements with her. Challenging relationships may bring about a positive outcome in the end. Demonstrating the social worker's willing attitude seems to convey their good intentions to their clients even when there are cultural or language barriers between them.

A willing attitude also involves a positive listening attitude. A listening attitude is particularly important in cross-cultural communication and interaction, as not listening leads to misunderstanding, as mentioned by some participants. Racheal, who learns from clients' life experiences, explains that:

> I think for social workers, the important thing is that I go with an open heart and I go with my open mind to learn from the people that I see and meet without, I hope, too much causing damage, if you know what I mean. So it's more about your willingness and openness to engage, your inherent respect for people and for difference and that I also acknowledge they could be easily to be with me sitting other side and [Racheal thinks as if she were in the client's position] how would I feel or how would I be as a daughter of my mother, how would I like her to be treated by a social worker sitting opposite of her. So, I mean it's very much kind of guide that my practice in terms of working cross-culturally.

Carol tries to "[n]ot jump to a conclusion. It's just giving [the clients] the time, pausing in conversation, because you allow them to try to share their thoughts". Listening without assumptions is

also a key, as Britany said, “I don’t assume I have the same world view or the lens as people I meet. So, I haven’t had complaints in my years of working. Because I’m a good listener. I am respectful.” Listening can mean participating in, and acknowledging, the conversation. Sara managed to listen to a client’s husband, who judged and blamed his wife (the client) because of her cultural background. As Sara is also from the culture of this client, she felt indirectly being judged by him, but did not react to him: “I just listened to the client [husband]. I didn’t make assumptions [about him] because I may not be right.” Even though she disagreed with his understanding of his wife and explanation of her issue, she acknowledged his opinion. Amanda also explained a case:

> I’ve met a complainant recently – she was angry and upset. She had a poor relationship with one of our sites and thought they didn’t listen and they were rude. So when I met her, I must have spent an hour and a half, just listening to what she has to say. I pretty much said “okay”, “right”, and “yes” and those sorts of responses. At the end of that, I emailed her to make another appointment. She said to me “I was listened to for the first time.” Then I went back to her with things that she didn’t really want to hear. I hadn’t fixed what she wanted because I couldn’t. But when I went to her again spent time with her and went over it with her.

She emphasised that listening to clients and acknowledging their feelings due to what they had experienced de-escalates the situation.

Eventually, the willingness can contribute to “valuing clients” which means to value clients’ ideas/person/life on an individual basis (which will be different from one’s own) was mentioned by some participants; whatever issues clients have, wherever they are from, whoever they are, all clients are meaningful to those participants. Megan said, “As a social worker, if you are not able to value what they are dealing with, you can’t see the importance how the little issue [from your view] may affect their lives badly [to them]?” This comment came from her learning in her early career, when she received complaints from clients about the services. At the time, she thought they were ungrateful, as she never had the support and services those clients received in her country, even though she had wished for it. Megan recognised her judgement on the clients’ situations was based on her own life experience:

> Because they are coming from a different culture and have grown up in a different society and system. The citizens [of New Zealand] have been given the rights which I’ve never had in my home country. That was my own cultural difference I was learning [from the clients].
>
> Sometimes listening to them, personally it’s not really a problem [to her]. But because it is a problem to the person calling you and requesting you, requiring you to listen to them to support them, in what they want.

This experience was her turning point. She said, “I could … value their problems.” She respects the client’s view of their hardship in their specific circumstances; understanding of each client’s background is meaningful for knowing who they are which is the key to addressing issues below the surface. Sara also explained that she was unable to understand clients from their point of view, but she focused more on her ‘practice’: what and how she managed her practice in her earlier career. Now she sees practice as “a collaboration” that integrates both values into practice, and she cannot ignore a client’s part in this.

6.3 Skill component

At the career stage, they began to demonstrate their ability to engage with clients from different cultures in practice. Many participants strive for skill development, in particular skills for developing effective client–social worker practice relationships from their knowledge into practice (practice wisdom). A significant challenge in building the relationship can be when clients and social workers are unable to communicate with each other in a certain language with good levels of proficiency. Communication breakdown can cause barriers in relationship building.

One research study shows that communication problems comprise the main issues in cross-cultural practice due to lack of common language and understanding different codes of behaviour among social workers (BØ, 2015). In the research findings, the participants often have their own strategies, such as using non-verbal communication techniques and translating Māori words into English or English words into the clients’ languages as one way to improve communication in practice. Moreover, they access cultural and language assistance within their social work organisations and external networking with cultural support social services, cultural advisers, and people of clients’ cultural communities. The participants do not seem to have experienced major communication and language issues working cross-culturally in their practice, although not all of them are multilingual speakers. Many participants contend that language is a useful tool for communication; however, good engagement is the most important for practice. Britany said:

> We have a European social worker who can speak Te Reo [Māori language]. Whether it’s dear to clients or not, it’s up to her engagement…when you’re actually with people, it’s the first contact, the engagement that tells you you’re working well with or not from all different cultures.

The participants significantly prioritised relationship building with any clients in their practice. Amanda explained that:

> ....if you spend time with engagement and get to know the people building the relationship, then the rest of your work will go much easier. If you don't spend that time, then it's a struggle for the rest of [the] work. So, the actual work is spending time engaging clients.

Relationship building is absolutely necessary for social work practice. Sara said that without a good relationship with clients, practice is not so effective: "…social work relies on the relationship. Even you tell your clients 'don't gamble, just do good hobbies like go for a swim or go for gym,' they don't take it seriously [any suggestions social workers would give]…." The participants discussed that a good rapport with clients could minimise cross-cultural issues and unnecessary conflicts through having dialogue with each other. Thus, the client–social worker relationship is a foundation of social work practice.

From the research findings, three stages of relationship building: early relationship, working relationship, and authentic relationship, are identified; these are indicated by the participants' practice experiences. Knowledge and awareness-attitude components come together to be utilised for client–social worker relationships through all stages of contact (skill component).

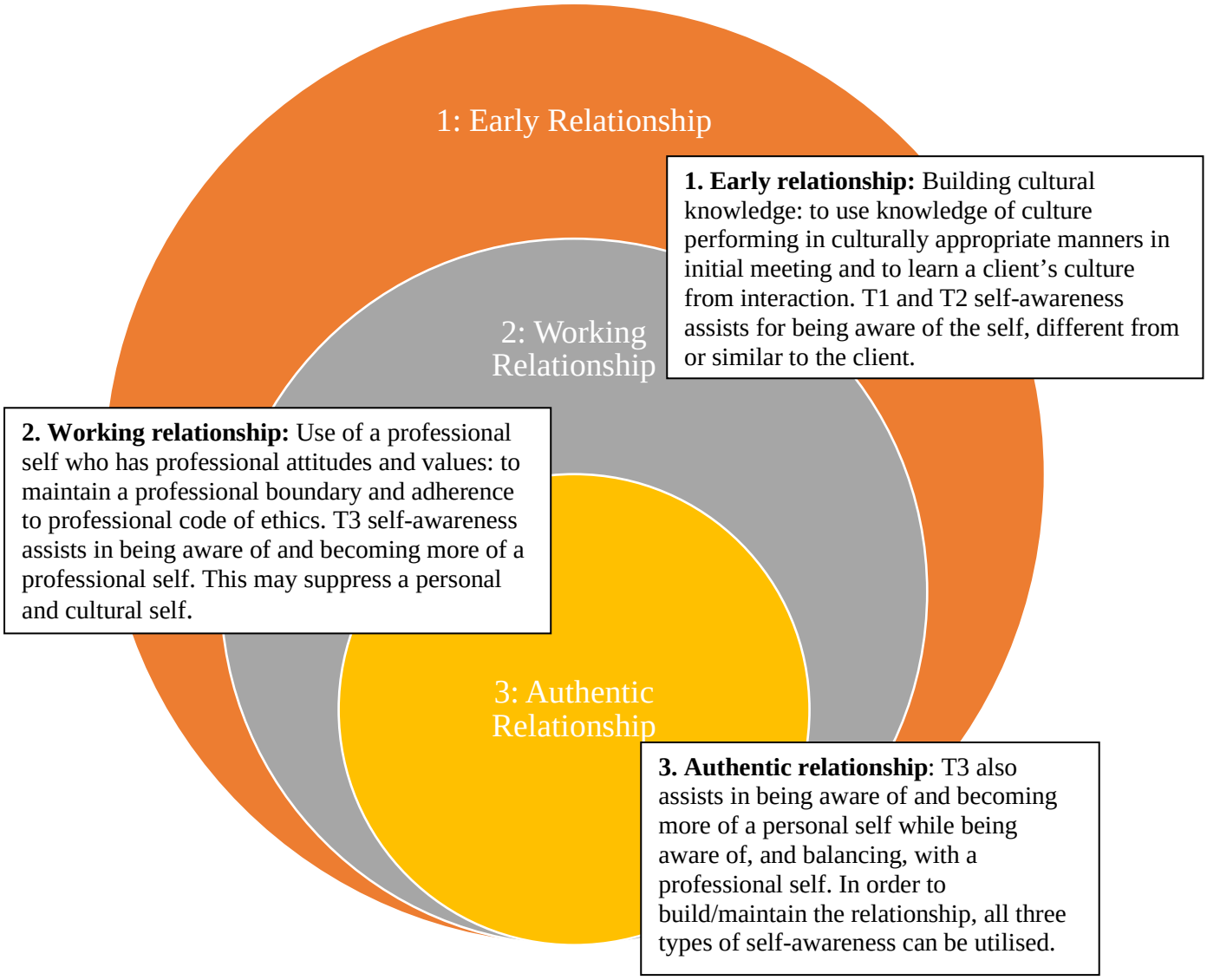

Figure 5. Building cross-cultural relationships.

6.3.1 Early relationship stage

The early stage is signified when social workers initially enter a client's cultural space. First encounters seem to be extremely important to the participants, as clients' decisions about whether they are willing to work with a social worker or not will be made based on a first impression of the social worker. Melissa explained:

> I think I have good relationship with people in other cultures. Because I am quite careful at the initial greeting stage with people, because when you find a sort of barriers, particularly Māori, it's quite important to find out where they are from just to have a little bit of meeting and greeting, instead of doing straightway [not going straight to the reason for meeting].

The participants endeavoured to make their clients comfortable as much as possible, as clients may feel worried or nervous in the situation. Carol always started with a smile, which is a universal symbol of happiness. She said, "it sets the mood for whole engagement, I mean it sets the tone, mainly your tone of voice, [to show] you're patient to listen, 'listening ears', those are basic for cultural work."

Greeting in the client's language is commonly used among the participants. Nicole has learned from working with the diverse cultural background of clients. She perceived that: "….they like to be treated with respect and dignity. They like to be spoken to often in their languages." Amanda said, "One word can make such a difference. Finding out greeting in Iran, people know that you are making effort." Alison also explained:

> It's just any cultures I work with I will try to cooperate even just say 'hello' in their language. Just to be respectful….at least when I greet with them in their language, I show them I care enough to be in their space and working with them.

In an initial meeting, the participants carefully consider cultural appropriateness towards clients. It was often mentioned as "manners" by them. Melissa explained that:

> ….it means that if you work with a person from another culture, you show some manners that benefit to them in order to work so you have to have some awareness and knowledge of the cultures and willingness to learn that I think.

The concept of cultural manners or appropriateness appears to come from their educational learning of Māori culture. Nicole said, "You were taught about protocol about going to mārae. You were taught about walking into a house for Māori people where it is, and you must take off your shoes."

Brenda also said that working with clients from different cultures from their own is about growing your own cultural knowledge; "…not to offend people in their home and to be respectful." She had a further explanation:

> I guess if we can kind of look at these personal ways of approaching Māori…That we don't walk into somebody's home and place our handbag on the table or sit down before we are asked to sit or kind of just be if we are going to be mannerly, if we are taught manners to one group I think we should be able to, in a sense, kind of have manners towards the other group.

Many participants mentioned that preparation is, therefore, essential for meeting with a client. Nicole said, "[p]robably it's sensible ideal searching what would you do when you are meeting." Emily also described her preparation:

> I would make sure that I did my homework first. So, it would be what is the normal protocol for entering a home addressing [a client], or do I address her husband or his wife? I think it's taking that initiative to actually find out for yourself, prepare yourself if you know what cultures you're going to be working with.

Although the participants were keen to expand their cultural knowledge, including languages, cultural traits, and customs specific to their clients as much as they could, they understand that these are just a useful instrument for initial engagement.

These cultural manners are not standardised by their basic knowledge of clients' cultural traits; the appropriate manners can vary depending on each individual. Brenda explained:

> It is like, yes to work with other people you need to understand and you should be aware of the mana [spiritual force] of the person they are coming from, but it is like as a person to person working together, sort of you get to know the person and get to know their role, what the person believes, to getting to know the person's culture, the person's thinking and that [and then] you sort of engage.

Asking questions of clients about their culture is imperative. Racheal tries to avoid making her own assumptions and conclusions if there is anything she is unsure about, "this needs to be in the context of understanding there are variances within cultures and never assume, ask questions if you don't understand." Amanda sometimes spends time talking to her clients about their cultures, if there is a need to discuss it, by asking, "How does it work for you in New Zealand and what might work for you?" Nancy similarly approaches clients; even if she knows something about the client's culture, she does not assume that she knows all about them:

> I know a little bit of Māori culture, but [she asks herself] am I going to do anything differently? or am I going to discuss about that? or am I going to ask open questions about it?, because I know that something potentially gives me more information or understanding and help our work together or what they bring into this the reason to work together.

The information clients give could also help find a way that would be suitable or preferable for them. Donna therefore, encourages clients to express themselves and to show their ways, because, she said, "I want to know my clients, I let them lead us. I don't want to go there and make the family feel uncomfortable with me." Alison also explained that:

> My example of Islamic family, I haven't known what to expect going there. I looked up Google and different cultures within Islamic religion. Although Muslim, not all Muslim people are the same. I've gotten a little bit of an overview. So when I went to the room, I let the mother guide. You know, she looked toward where I can sit, which is on the ground. So sweet, I sit on the ground. And then she brings a tea pot, some really funky tea. You know it's yuck but I drink it, just it's out of respect. Just watching and mirroring what they are doing.

Cultural manners are about 'what is acceptable' from clients; social workers figure out appropriate ways to work with them through understanding their implications and meanings in interaction. Melissa demonstrated this when she met a client, a Muslim family, for the first time. She made sure herself that she presented herself appropriately to them: "I didn't have to wear burka and I had an awareness that I'm going to wear long sleeves and not going to wear a short skirt. You know the stuff like that really helps for relationship."

Nicole explicated that social workers do not necessarily have to act like a person from the client's culture and vice versa:

> I worked with a Middle Eastern family who are Muslim and they wore hijab. I must have made the comment "I'm going to visit them to make sure you know cover the normal [clothing]." Not that I tend to wear revealing clothing but they [other social workers] were like "you don't need to because they are here [New Zealand]." So, they are here so just we wear shorts, is that how that works? …we have a lot of Muslim people in New Zealand. We have a lot of people who are also uncovered but these two it's not necessarily to behave [in a particular way] it's just about not being arrogant. Just because someone is here, doesn't mean they have to be acclimatised completely to New Zealand culture.

Social workers' awareness and consideration for the culture of clients is crucial.

Nancy explained that cultural knowledge is cultivated through a part of the process of cultural awareness, as you recognise other cultures and their differences from your own:

> I think it's a combination of specific knowledge of culture, maybe knowing about cultures, the way of doing different things and seeing different world views [from your own way and view]. It's also about an awareness of and taking into the consideration of cultures, rather than just ignoring cultures like it doesn't exist.

Developing cultural manners seems to require T1 and T2 types of self-awareness; social workers need to understand themselves (T1) in order to be aware of a client's culture which is different from their own (T2).

6.3.2 Working relationship stage

The client–social worker relationship develops further at the next stage. The working relationship is a stage that social workers begin to form a professional relationship with clients. The research participants were consciously or unconsciously more 'the self' as professionals rather than being their personal or cultural self. They prioritised their professional role and responsibilities and responded and acted on the basis of professional values, and the adherence to social work code of ethics and code of conduct. Miley, O'Melia, and DuBois (2013) explain that "[v]alues abstractly shape social workers' ways of thinking and concretely direct their actions through principles for social work practice" (p. 54).

In order to be a fully professional self, one of the key professional attitudes, a non-judgmental attitude, is essential. T3 is effectively used for managing and limiting one's own cultural and personal influence; the participants recognise their own assumptions and biases about others, which could form positive, as well as negative, judgements on others. Donna gave an example:

> From my experience, some social workers they're judgemental [subconsciously]. For example, at the moment, Middle Eastern people, Muslim people, when you look at them, and think about what they've done [terrorist attacks in the world].

She explained that those social workers tend to prejudge their clients and seem to decide who they are even before getting to know them, which she thinks is unprofessional. Donna further discussed, on a related point, that barriers formed by being judgmental can be easily built between clients and social workers if the social workers are unaware of their own biases. We tend to see others from our own standing point – as if everyone is standing at the same point; we tend to think everyone thinks the same way that we do. The consciousness of sameness causes misunderstanding of clients and misinterpreting their issues and needs. Social workers can do that too.

Nicole understands the way that judgemental people evaluate what others are doing as good or bad, based on their own perspectives:

> If you put anybody under scrutiny like social workers do, they probably come out not looking good. If you put my life under the microscope [in my house] at the moment, dishes on my bench, my floor needs to be vacuuming, I have a dog inside and [it's] very hairy at the moment. There is washing, gardening, it's untidy. Does it look a bad parent? If you look inside my recycling box there are bottles of wine, does it mean I drink a lot? It's easy to make judgements through the microscope looking at a particular situation.

T3 helps them to recognise that we easily make judgments based on our own assumptions and biases of others.

Kathleen experienced herself being judgemental when one of her clients constantly asked for what she wanted by claiming it as "my rights" from the time they first met. Kathleen perceived the client's action as rude and, in a way, she subconsciously judged this client for a while. Having a hard time with the client, she reflected on herself why she was bothered so much by the client's behaviour. After a while she realised that she expected the client to behave according to her cultural manners, as the people of her culture do not explicitly ask for something if they want or need it as this is often considered impolite. She tried to understand the client from her perspective: "I read about her culture [history of the country where she is from] and they are rights oriented [because of the country's political conflict, people of the country have been raising their voice for rights]." She considered the client action might have been influenced by the political, social and cultural situation where she is from; speaking out for her own needs is important for this client. Through the reflection, Kathleen's perception of the client changed, and eventually she accepted the difference between them and understood the client's frustration, as well as her own (reflection on action). Racheal is also concerned with the societal level of racism that may influence individuals, including social workers:

> …I saw something on TV last week about young Asian students talking about racism that they experienced. That was across whole Asian cultures and just everyday they experience some kind of racism, you know, lesser or greater degrees in New Zealand…we see ourselves in New Zealand as incredibly inclusive and tolerant, but I feel "are we?"
>
> You know I used to work with a caring man from India in my last job. We have talked about how he experienced a lot of racism on a regular basis [within an organisation]. So really it's a concern for me. You know they are health professionals and mental health professionals.

The barriers seem to come from avenues such as social media, when specific races/ethnic or social groups have been negatively labelled in society; that may influence our assumptions of the groups of people in the society.

In order to avoid being judgemental, Sara tries to turn her 'cultural channel' off, which seemingly refers to her cultural values, beliefs, and traits she naturally displays while being herself: "If you work with people from different culture, I drop my assumptions [from her cultural perspective] and listen to clients [without her cultural perspective]. I try to understand the person, who he or she is." She asserted that staying on her cultural channel can cause misunderstanding with clients who are from different cultural backgrounds in various circumstances.

Racheal also mentioned, "[f]or me, it's really about being able to put my own culture aside in order to understand and be with another person's culture." She gave an illustration of putting her culture aside:

> For instance, I have my views about the rights of women but when I am working with someone from a culture who has a prescriptive and more traditional perspective about women's roles, I can be with them without needing to express my views or attempt to change their attitudes.

Racheal tries as much as possible not to make any assumptions from what she knows or hears about cultures:

> …I would as much as I could ensure that I prepare before meeting with people but having the knowledge there are such various insights, so not kind of stereotypes, not going there with a fixed idea about what people might believe in or prioritise or understand about things

Lisa, on the other hand, mentioned that social workers tend to judge others because of the work; they cannot completely avoid making personal judgements on a person in practice. She explained the duty of social work in her organisation, as she is required to investigate each case through external inquiries, which involves inspecting people. She said, "it's really finding out what you do in terms of judging people's characters." Social workers may not be able to completely be non-judgemental, as they naturally make some levels of judgement on others personally and professionally, which are influenced by their world views.

'Acceptance' of clients is another key professional attitude discussed by many participants. They demonstrated their pleasant attitude regardless of difference and accept as clients are. Amanda presented an example that Pākēhā social workers commonly experience; Māori clients express political statements to Pākēhā social workers, "People talk about the urban move of Māori from their tūrangawaewae [home area] to the city". She has received and also heard from other Pākēhā social workers' experiences of Māori people statements such as, "it's your fault, it's colonisation." Those clients might say, "oh I want [a] Māori social worker," or, "I don't want Pākēhā." In such cases, she seeks a possible solution by asking them "….can you tell me more about what would work for you?" instead of reacting to their words. She is well aware of the historical context and the effects of colonisation; thus, she understands where their comments come from. Amanda and many other participants acknowledge that they are required to have an attitude of do "not take it personally."

Professional attitudes can enhance respect and dignity in cross-cultural practice. This can lead to positive transformation of their working relationships with clients. A Māori social worker, Alison, shared one of her experiences of working with a Pākēhā family:

> I think they learn to respect Māori. I think they learn to share their world views with Māori. I think a lot of Pākēhā have an imperial view where this is their world, and anyone else should conform. But after working with me, they learn to share and be equal.

The experience also seems to have a positive impact on her perspective of working with Pākēhā people. Developing mutual respect and acceptance of each other's culture can be a great accomplishment for a client–social work relationship at the working relationship stage.

6.3.3 Authentic relationship stage

The final stage of client–social worker relationship building is signified when social workers develop a good rapport with clients. Many participants endeavour to make a genuine connection with clients, as that is the most effective for practice. At this stage, the participants reveal more of their personal self: use of the self to their clients in the relationship. The concept of the use of self in practice is acknowledged. Social workers bring their personal persona as well as their professional persona in practice. However, the use of self is often ambiguous and conceptualised in different ways in the social work literature (Reupert, 2007). The use of self is described as being of several types by Dewane (2006), such as: use of personality; use of belief system; use of relational dynamics; and use of self-disclosure. The participants' practice experiences significantly demonstrate those techniques in this research.

The use of open personality appears to assist in lighting up a relationship. Deborah described her experience of working with a client who was shutting down to all staff, as the client did not have good experiences previously with social workers. Her colleagues were reluctant to visit this client. Deborah decided to offer to visit the client to see if she could do better. She brought flowers and was apologetic about what the client had experienced; then she showed her openness to communication: "You know being respectful and going for the attitude like 'Look I don't know about you but tell me [about yourself]' because I want to respect what they want…."

Deborah always has an attitude of "being open" to her clients and she would like to know what her clients seek help for, and she would like to help as much as she can. This client of hers sensed a positive and good attitude in her and decided to talk to her.

Nancy also said a key for working with clients was "being open to each other as possible" and that she always takes the initiative. She described using a metaphor of a connection between people being an act of shaking hands; social workers should have the initiative to present their hands first:

> I think I've got brave as well as being about more open about you know 'this is me, this is who I am, tell me about you, what's important to you?' and perhaps and acknowledging explicit about. I suppose I'm reasonably a young Pākēhā girl, [asking clients] "I'm not the same as you I may need your help." I've found most my clients that work quite well usually, we have a giggle, you know we are kind of lightening [the mood by her open personality].

Social workers' openness can make it easier for clients to perceive their social workers' personalities – who they are without verbal communication. The social workers would receive their clients' responses that give an indication of the client–social worker relationship. Some participants described it as using both sides' "sense". Racheal also talked about:

> As you know as a social worker, when a family meeting is going well or whether the initial assessment is going well by the energy I talk about, it's synergy, I always have. I always feel it's about a chemistry. Some people you have an automatic chemistry with and I guess some part of your tribe if you like.

Sara explained this, "our sense or maybe our intuition", her sense of being with a client assists her to choose a practice approach that may suit the client better.

A few participants acknowledged that a relationship is made for both sides, not only social workers getting to know clients, but also clients getting to know social workers. Therefore, showing the personal aspects of themselves to clients, to a reasonable degree, is vital in practice. Emily said, "I think sharing a little bit of self helps the process. People want to know if you are genuine and your intention." Racheal also mentioned that: "I think that it's like any place people get to know you and know you come with good intentions and people are just getting to suss you out I suppose…people could see that I've had genuine commitments."

When it was an appropriate time in the relationship, the participants used self-disclosure, to share their life experiences related to those of clients by revealing their personal information to the clients. Amanda understood, when having a meeting at her office with one of her clients who had home schooled her children, the client was concerned about taking her children to the office. Amanda kindly said to the client, " 'that's absolutely fine. I am a mother and grandmother;' sometimes there are constraints. I don't mind sharing that kind of thing [personal information] because it's a forming a bridge [relationship building skills]."

Also, if social workers come from a similar background to their clients, the connection between them seems to be easier to develop; they have things to share between them. Brenda said, "you know, I've known what it's like to be a single mother with X number of children and or to have been an abused woman and to have social services not do the right thing." Also, Emily, a Māori social worker, talked about one of her experiences working with a client:

> I'm thinking of one person in particular, where she's been through hardships, you know, she's been through poverty and all that, so she can kind of, apart from the colour of her skin and what nationality she identifies with, that's the only difference between her and Māori families. That's the only difference. She's a single mother. There is nothing different there, so I think culturally it's not a problem.

Emily also mentioned that the connection with the client led to a good and meaningful relationship, despite other differences between them:

> I think that's what social workers are good at – finding that commonality between you and your clients, whether it's cultural, whether it's life, and that's what I do go in there using. With discretion – so if I'm working with a solo mother, I will often say I was a solo mother too… So you find any sort of connection you can. Cultural connection, social connection, you just do what you can to connect.

The use of self-disclosure is particularly important when working with Māori clients, Amanda explained:

> Generally, we talk about social workers making no personal disclosures. Whereas when you are working with Māori, that's a part of connection in relationship building and engagement, around your work –mahi. To make those connections, that's absolutely essential.

Furthermore, a few participants clarified that they were more likely to develop sympathy and empathy toward their clients who had had similar emotional experiences to themselves, such as vulnerability and humanness. This is called the use of relational dynamics. For instance, Deborah, who is a New Zealand European and grew up in a smaller town where most of the population was New Zealand European; the Treaty of Waitangi was not seen as valuable when she was younger. The social work programme she was enrolled in at a mature age was her turning point; she is now able to better understand about Māori people, where their feelings of loss or vulnerability come from in New Zealand society, through her life experience and she develops connections with them:

> Maybe I sympathised with Māori because I've lost my house through Work and Income, not going to tell much details but they forced me to sell my home when my children were young…So I know what it's like [when] the government takes something away from you.

She sincerely respects Māori culture, spirituality, and holistic approach to life, which relates to her current life. Therefore, establishing a relationship with Māori clients becomes meaningful to her practice.

Megan also has personally felt a connection with Māori people and their culture, as she experienced a similar path to Māori people, loss of her culture and language in her country of origin. She described the experience as "…lost respect, belief, and trust", which may cause other personal issues. She explained that

those who have experienced a loss of culture are more likely to lose their identity because culture is a part of self-identity. Therefore, she strongly supports Māori people as they may take an enormous amount of time to recover and regain their own identity:

> ….their culture in their lives which is disconnected for such a long time. Now they've started to connect [their culture and people] but it's not easy to do that. It's still working on it….they can't really click like that [implying a quick fix].

Her empathy for Māori people is profound. She appears to have mutual understanding with the people, which contributes to the relationship with them in her practice.

Additionally, some participants used their belief system, which resonates with their relationship with clients, positively in practice. Linda believes that the meaning of respect is "treat others the way you would want to be treated," which always is reflected in her interaction with clients. Also, Lisa's belief of 'embracing diversity' which was formed by her blended family and cultural background:

> My belief, my grounding come from my culture. You can have all theorists in the world but I've got learning from my life and how I grew up in terms of mārae…. I came from working class background. My father had an attitude of no steps [step-siblings], so you have either brother or sister, there is no barrier. Then being in the youngest, you're welcome to diversity. Didn't know back then [the family value impacts on her]. But [she has accepted the value since she was younger] you're welcome because that was your culture and that was your home.

Her belief has influenced working with children in her practice. She treats all children (clients) as her own 'mokopuna' (grandchildren) and is concerned with their lives; there is no distinguishing between her own grandchildren and clients.

On the other hand, the use of one's belief system may cause value conflicts between a client and a social worker. Donna sets her religious beliefs aside in her relationship with her clients:

> I'm Christian, I grew up with Christian values, and I believe in God and it works for me and my family, but it doesn't mean I have to force them [clients] to be Christian and believe in God, they can believe what they want to believe as long as they focus and take responsibility for their treatment and grow. I am there to help them to help themselves.

Her Christian perspective gives her strength to believe in all clients, whoever they are, whatever they have done in the past. She does not impose her beliefs on clients, as long as each other's worldviews are acknowledged and considered in a relationship. She also acknowledges that she is aware of her own religious beliefs and that these may influence unintentionally working with her clients in her practice. The participants demonstrated that

their use of self in practice, whether it is in cross-cultural situation or not, is a useful tool for enhancement of the client–social worker relationship, which has mostly positive outcomes, from their experiences.

The authentic relationship stage is interconnected with the working relationship stage. Although practitioners use more of their personal self in building an authentic relationship with a client, the personal self is the same self as the professional; there is no fixed boundary between the personal self and the professional self. The participants seem to find a balance between being a professional self and being a personal self subconsciously in practice.

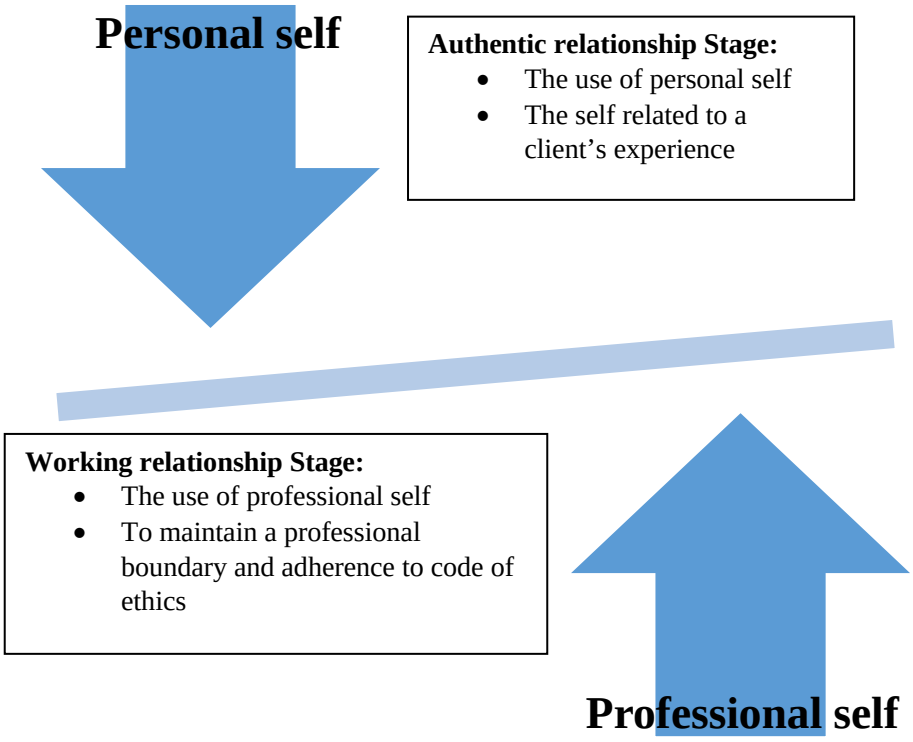

Figure 6. A boundary between professional self and personal self.

During the balancing between professional self and personal self, participants seemed to go through analysing the self who feels empathy for the client and also how their personal feelings may have an effect on the role of a professional in the relationship. T3 presumably involves critically reflecting upon the self and the relationship with the client through reflection in/on action.

Some participants have confronted their dilemmas. Megan has found it hard to accept Māori and Pasifika female clients who accept "male hierarchy" within their cultures, as she is opposed to it:

> When women sitting behind men at a mārae setting - official ceremony I understand the reason. Because they [men] are warriors, they want to support their women. Because I grew up in a different culture which is we are fighting for [women] rights and being equal [with men]. That was always personally affecting me….
>
> Because I was fighting for women's rights freedom against male hierarchy. Here I was finding myself and facing the male hierarchy culture in Pasifika [through working with Pasifika women].…You know I respected that hierarchy. Because that's their culture, I needed to accept that…. They didn't need me to, you know fight for equal rights for male and female. It wasn't my job. Because they accept it in the society and they don't fight against that.

She was well aware that her own values and beliefs separated her from her clients and she avoided placing her values on the clients and said: "When you practise, you see lots of things you have to move on your things as well."

Alison also mentioned positioning herself in a complicated situation where she works between two different views; one is the organisational view, which is based on the New Zealand law, and the other is her clients' cultural views. In particular cases, she discussed when working with refugee clients, she understands that their parenting often involves physical punishments as a form of discipline; those clients make their decisions about child discipline based on their cultural values, without knowing the about New Zealand's anti-smacking law. As this relates to her culture, she does not look negatively on them: "….doesn't make them bad parents. That's only they are known so…." – but the law views them differently. She, however, had to prioritise playing her professional role as a social worker, and letting go of what she thinks of it as this affects her action. She sees this situation: "[t]here can be a real cultural clash." She usually suggests different parenting approaches to them and never expects them to conform to the New Zealand culture and change their cultures, because she said, "It's okay to make some changes. It's the law so it's not against their cultures." Therefore, she needs to learn "being able to work in the middle." These participants were aware of the effect their cultural and personal values and beliefs might have on their practice as professionals. They might need to manage a significantly difficult situation. Dewane (2006) argues that a social worker's professional persona, with acquired specific techniques and knowledge, is not separated from their personal persona in practice, as their choices of techniques and perceptions of client's issues result from their own world views. There is no space between the personal persona and the professional persona, it is all personal self, working with clients.

Conclusion

At the career stage, the participants demonstrated their cultural competence through developing their own practice wisdom/skills (skills component) for developing practice relationships with clients in cross-cultural situations, which they have integrated into the knowledge and awareness-attitude components. Self-awareness, especially, leads to developing the participants' reflection skills which are a foundation of cultural competence. The three types of self-awareness appeared to have been processed continually from the educational stage to the career stage. It is not a sequential process, however; T1 and T2 required self-reflection and seem to be prerequisites for T3, which requires critical self-reflection. T3 contributes to developing the participants' reflective skills: reflection in and on actions through reflective practice. This is akin to Fook's (2012, 2016) critical reflection. It involves integrating a body of informal knowledge- experiential wisdom developed through working with people in practice - and theoretical learning into practice (Knott, 2016).

The participants' reflective skills seemed to assist in building their own practice wisdom. They reflected on their practice for better understanding and rethinking appropriate or effective ways forward in situations. Several participants described the process of the integration of knowledge and practice as turning their knowledge into action; their knowledge about clients' cultures was utilised as a tool in practice. This involved finding out about clients' cultures, "what is normal for clients" and "the way they do things". In the process, making mistakes is unavoidable; the participants learned from their mistakes in practice and figured out their practice with each client while they are working together. Hence, many participants perceived that social work is a creative practice, which requires them to be as flexible as possible, in particular in cross-cultural situations, and that practice is not clearly defined as right or wrong.

Chapter 7: Cultural competence in Aotearoa New Zealand

Introduction

This chapter will discuss issues of cultural competence in the bicultural context of Aotearoa New Zealand social work. The critical discussion emerged from conversations with research participants in interviews. They have been concerned with various understandings of the meaning of cultural competence which can be a unique challenge in Aotearoa New Zealand social work. First, the complexity of understandings of cultural competence in social work is explained. Then dimensions of cultural competence are critically discussed. Previous research on cultural competence often shows substantial concern for practitioners' competency (at a micro level) for improving cross-cultural practice. This research also gives an importance of organisational influence (at a meso level) as part of cultural competence as a whole.

7.1 Cultural competence in the bicultural context of Aotearoa New Zealand Social work

In general, cultural competence is well recognised among participants as the ability to work with clients of any culture. The culturally competent practitioner is someone who is able to demonstrate her or his skills and knowledge in working cross-culturally and has confidence in various cultural practice settings. The general concept is more commonly applied to countries where there is a plurality of cultures and ethnicities living in a given society. Cultural competence can signify including the views of diverse members of society and maintaining respect for differences while there may be demands for links with dominant cultural practices. In multicultural countries, non-dominant cultural groups are accommodated, as long as they live under the country's laws and customs within society and such a society generates a power dynamic where the privileged in the society maintain mono-culturalism; the less privileged groups of people may need to adapt to fit into mono-cultural institutions, policies and the laws of the land (Eketone & Walker, 2015). The participants usually understood that cultural competence is practically required of them as New Zealand has become more diverse than it has been, and there are many ethnic and cultural groups existing in the society. On the other hand, New Zealand does not identify with, nor is it understood with the same sense or expectations, as a general definition of multicultural society recognised in other multicultural countries (Eketone & Walker, 2015). Aotearoa New Zealand recognises biculturalism stemming from Te Tiriti which is a formal, political, social and cultural structure within the country. "With this view, New Zealand could not claim to be multicultural because

government institutions and policies only accommodate one, or at best two, cultural ways of being, knowing, valuing, and doing" (Eketone & Walker, 2015, p. 108).

Biculturalism is acknowledged and well respected in New Zealand social work. The social work profession is built on the foundation of biculturalism emphasising partnership and collaborative work between Māori and Pākēhā and also between Tangata Whenua and Tauiwi (non-Māori/Pākēhā) and this is signaled in the codes of ethics and conduct which apply. On the other hand, the SWRB has an expectation with its emphasis on non-Māori social workers being able to practise with competence when working with Māori clients (Eketone & Walker, 2015). Biculturalism often gives central attention to non-Māori social workers working with Māori clients in New Zealand social work. This can relate to the history described in Chapter 1. Their case workers and social workers have mistreated Māori people. Social work education in recent decades has advanced and progressed. The study of biculturalism exclusively focuses on Te Tiriti o Waitangi/The Treaty of Waitangi and indigenous Māori people as Tangata Whenua; education tends to emphasise cultural, ethnic, and racial 'differences' through teaching Māori peoples' experience of colonisation in the history of New Zealand and learning about their worldview as different from the majority cultural group: Pākēhā/New Zealand culture. Non-Māori social workers have become more knowledgeable of Māori culture, history and practice theory and models from education than in the past and Māori clients would expect these professional workers to be much more culturally competent (Eketone & Walker, 2015). Therefore, 'culture' is often understood to involve ethnic and racial-based groups. 'Competency' is more likely to mean the ability to work in culturally appropriate ways with Māori people and different ethnic cultural individuals and groups. This can designate a capability for adjusting practitioners into a client's (Māori) culture. Consequently, 'cultural competence' is understood as bicultural practice working with Māori people as well as working with minority cultural, ethnic and racial groups of people in New Zealand.

Cultural competence is deeply ingrained in the concept of biculturalism in Aotearoa New Zealand social work. This is demonstrated by the practitioner participants who had been longer in the field of social work; they tended to support a strong view of cultural competence as biculturalism. An experienced Māori social worker, Britany said, "[i]t's about understanding Tangata Whenua." Furthermore, participants who were born in non-Western countries and came to New Zealand as young adults, are one third of the participant demographic; they first learned about Tangata Whenua, including the Treaty and the history of colonisation and oppression of Māori people, through their social work education. Those participants are more likely to perceive biculturalism, working with Māori clients, as a weighty concept, a core element of cultural

competence. Jenny, who is from Asia, answered when asked what cultural competence means to her, she said, “Firstly, I can think of biculturalism. This means Māori and Pākehā cultures, because these cultures are focused on the Treaty.” At the same time, they have a concept of cultural competence perceived in multiculturalism. As a result, in this research, cultural competence can be a blurred concept. Cross-cultural or multicultural practice and bicultural practice are understood indistinguishably, especially by those student participants who come from overseas training to become social workers in New Zealand.

The dual concept of cultural competence may confuse in practice situations. Amanda discussed one of the main issues in New Zealand social work, “it is a gap in bicultural and multicultural practice.” Social workers are trained for bicultural practice, mainly working with Māori clients; however, they are more likely required to work in professional practice with, not only Māori clients, but also clients from culturally diverse backgrounds. In this research, participants were faced with a big gap between bicultural education and multicultural practice, in particular in their earlier careers. In their practice reality, they are required to be capable of multicultural practice by encountering clients from various cultures other than Māori clients. Nancy said, “[w]e are in a bicultural nation, we have to know about the Treaty and Māori; that is an absolute priority, I truly believe that. But we also need to acknowledge that we’re actually working with a lot of cultures as well.” In order to close the gap between biculturalism and multiculturalism in practice, social work education may need to step in further to raise awareness of multiculturalism in social work, augmenting New Zealand biculturalism.

Biculturalism challenges mono-culturalism. However, New Zealand is still not truly, genuinely bicultural, but rather, mono-culturalism remains dominant within society as well as in social work (Eketone & Walker, 2015). The similar statement is also made by Loya (2011). She mentions that social work education has a tendency for learning about minorities which focuses on ‘Others’; however, this may not lead to culturally competent practice. The way of teaching and learning of cultural competence (also thinking in the way of cultural competence) is more likely to be understood from a one-sided viewpoint. Comparably, New Zealand social work education for cultural competence is spotlighted in relation to how to work with Māori clients that appears to be more useful for non-Māori students. Nicole said, “when you are studying [about culture/cultural competence], you expect to learn about the ways of dealing with people from cross-cultural points of view, but [New Zealand] education is predominately about how to treat Māori people and then Pacific Islanders.” She points out that, in the way the education is organised, Māori students are less likely to learn other cultures.

Nadan (2014) also argues that models of cultural competence tend to focus on Other, referring to minority cultural groups of clients and neglecting the self, referring to the dominant culture of groups of social workers.

Māori participants who completed social work programmes within the past five years also mention that they do not see the benefit of learning about their own culture from their education. One of the participants, Emily, talked about the study of Māori (not the language) during a social work programme, “I think, for me, because I am Māori, it was reminding me of what's important in terms of bicultural practice in New Zealand. I felt that paper was more tailored for those that didn't have an understanding of Māori culture in New Zealand.” On the other hand, there was a high demand for learning about individualistic/Western cultures in social work education by many participants especially Māori and Tauiwi participants. They seemed to feel that they knew little about Western culture. A few Pākēhā participants also perceived that, on some occasions they have heard from non-Western people that ‘White people have no culture’, although these Pākēhā participants certainly recognised their cultures influence by general Western, or family, traditions and their worldviews and values. This reflects findings from one research project which shows that measures of cultural competence rarely acknowledge or examine dominant (Western) cultures (Kumas-Tan et al., 2007). Social work education has given little attention to personal, cultural and racial privilege (Loya, 2011). Alison made a point that biculturalism involves two cultures in a two-way relationship toward working together with difference between a client and a social worker and said, “If we are truly working in a bicultural way, it should be both ways.” This does not mean only working with Māori people. Eketone and Walker (2015) contend that the Treaty of Waitangi can be usefully applied to cross-cultural practice. This is probably because the Treaty demonstrates how different cultures can compromise with each other and work collaboratively together. The fundamental concept can be easily transferred not only for working with Māori people but also working with any minority cultural, ethnic and racialised clients. However, the Treaty may not be transferable when working with clients of the majority Pākēhā/New Zealand culture.

Developing teaching and curriculum in social work education in a bicultural context can be extremely difficult because of the imperative to provide training in cultural competence, particularly when social work students are from various cultures. This means that the cultural position of social workers is also not found simply in the relationship between Māori clients and Pākēhā social workers but that there are other variations such as between Māori social workers and Pākēhā clients, Tauiwi social workers and Māori clients or Pākēhā clients, etcetera. Therefore, cultural competence is complex to define as a concept (and to teach) as an idea, belief and/or method in practice in New Zealand social work. Cultural competence can denote in New Zealand

that social workers work with both Māori and New Zealand Western cultures as the main foundation of cultural practice; in addition to this, social workers acknowledge the existence of other cultural and ethnic groups within the society and these individuals and communities are also taken into consideration in social work practice. In this sense, all social workers need to show willingness to learn about new cultures which differ from their own. The culturally competent social workers are receptive to different and or new ways of thinking, views of the world, approaches to life and problem-solving, and acknowledge that there is no privilege or superiority over others.

7.2 Micro and meso levels of cultural competence

Cultural competence predominately focuses on individual practitioners' competence. Many participants seemed to be responsible for their practice if they are confronted with the conflicts caused by differences related to their cultural competence. As briefly discussed in Chapter 2, the foundation of cultural competence in social work was established alongside psychology. The work on cultural competence tends to focus exclusively on the micro level in psychology (Sue, 2001), although the social work profession has always addressed the needs of individuals, families and communities (IFSW, 2014). The social work profession developed further. The work of Cross et al. (1989) provided the micro as well as the meso and macro level concerns of cultural competence. In order to work effectively in cross-cultural situations, it is not only working among professionals, but an agency and a system come together for providing services that meet needs for clients from culturally diverse backgrounds. Cultural competence is thus, "a set of attitudes, skills, behaviours and policies enabling individuals and organizations to establish effective interpersonal and working relationships that supersede cultural differences" (Cross et al., 1989, p. 3). Cultural competence is not only the practitioner's competency at the individual (micro) level but also incorporates the organisational (meso) level, including organisational attitudes toward cultural diversity and cultural differences. However, some participants questioned the level of cultural competence of social work organisations where they are employed. They believed that the organisational cultural competence influences their workers' cultural competence which may have (directly or indirectly) an effect on their attitude to cultural diversity and difference and also their performance in cross-cultural practice. However, their employer organisations do not draw attention to this.

Research around cultural competence is often discussed within the health care system and also previous literature tends to focus on culturally specific practice and culturally appropriate service in social work. Cultural competence seems, in part, to be achieved by providing these practices and service for clients who are minority and disadvantaged groups in society. Historically marginalised populations (racial and ethnic minorities,

immigrants and economic disadvantaged communities) are less likely to access and receive culturally appropriate services (Fisher-Borne et al., 2014). The outcome results are health disparities in society. According to Anderson, Scrimshaw, Fielding, Normand, and The Task Force on Community Preventive Services (2003), healthcare providers tend to focus on culturally and linguistically appropriate services; they recruit staff members who reflect the cultural diversity of the service users and also use interpreter services and bilingual providers for clients with limited English proficiency, as this potentially reduces racial and ethnic health disparities.

This seems to link with Henrickson's (2005) explanation. He argues that one way of framing cultural competence in traditional assessments is significantly related to cultural literacy. However, the numbers of ethnic cultural groups of clients in particular Western countries, including New Zealand, is growing due to migration and resettlement; knowing about all cultural groups existing in the society is impossible for social workers. Hence, there is an increasing need for cultural consultation and translation in social work, cross-cultural practice relies more on social workers who are from various ethnic cultures and also who speak the languages of clients. Henrickson (2005) further discusses that the traditional approach may lead to an emphasis on representing an agency and the worker is culturally close to their target service users. He explains that:

> First we may ask how many "circles and squares" are in the client population, and how many circles and squares are represented in agency staff. The "how many" questions presume that the cultural worker, by virtue of her/his identity, will share a way of understanding of the world with culturally similar clients. The assumption behind this kind of assessment is that a particular circle or square is both willing to and capable of representing the needs of the entire circle or square community to the agency, and that a particular circle or square will "leaven" the agency with the appropriate world view. (Henrickson, 2005, p. 1)

In New Zealand, culturally specific services are available to service users. Clients can be referred to culturally specific services or cultural coordinators/liaisons within and outside social work organisations. According to participants who have had practicum placement or been employed in cultural service providers, the workers are more likely to reflect on the culture served for services users of the culture. Those culturally specific services tend to seek culturally insider social workers matching their target services users' cultures and who speak the languages of the service users. Matching ethnicity between clients and social workers can contribute to easing cultural differences or tensions between them in practice. Also, some clients (and social workers) may prefer to work with social workers (clients) who are from the same countries of origin, cultures or religions as their own. The emergence of culturally specific services may lead to meaning that cultural competence involves providing culturally and linguistically matching staff for clients. Matching ethnic cultures

between clients and social workers seems to be considered as culturally appropriate, and this may become imperative in practice perceived by social workers as well as clients. From the findings, participants tended to seek support and advice from their colleagues who were 'cultural insiders': they are from the specific cultures of clients. However, a significant concern raised by other participants was that cultural competence would lose its meaning. As social work is a profession importantly dedicated to collaborative work across cultures, the worker must consider different views, and expectations and also find ways to work with their clients.

In New Zealand social work, cultural competence can be deeply ingrained often meaning that cultural insider practitioners provide the best cultural practice. The assumption is that Māori social workers are culturally competent by virtue of their own nature; they are considered as knowledgeable and proficient in practising with Māori clients. This was illustrated by a few Māori practitioner participants who have had cultural supervision provided by Māori social workers within the social work organisations where they are employed. Interestingly, those participants have similar experiences with their Māori supervisors when discussing in supervision their difficulties working with Pākēhā clients; their supervisors more likely acknowledged the difficulties they were going through and tended to be hostile to Pākēhā people. The participants found it unhelpful and expected their supervisors to suggest and demonstrate 'how to' manage their difficulties. A Māori social worker, Alison, talked about her disappointment when she was offered cultural supervision based on matching ethnicity between a supervisor and herself. Ethnicity seems to be given prominence for cultural supervision; she described the situation; "You (Alison) are Māori and I (supervisor) am Māori [so it must work well] but it's more than that." She stresses that "Quality supervision is a key while you are practising." That can be offered by trained and experienced supervisors, not automatically or exclusively by ethnic-matching-based supervision.

On the other hand, matching ethnicity between client and social work is still significant in that several participant social workers (both Māori and non-Māori) who worked in the field of mental health where there are a higher proportion of Māori service users, presented their cases. They had witnessed occasions where non-Māori social workers lack understanding of Māori clients, and how the past history of colonisation has had an enormous effect on them currently. Megan was frustrated with people (in the social work field) who do not understand that once Māori people lost their core of self such as culture and language, it takes time to regain the self and said: "They try to re-connect with their culture but it's not easy and it's still working on because of what has happened to them. So, Māori people need to receive support specific to them."

Britany also discusses a significant point that non-Māori social workers misunderstand Māori spiritual beliefs:

> I think that people working with Māori find it difficult…. I think the reason for that [is] because you can have all of these theories and practices but for Māori people we are wairua people, spiritual beings. I think sometimes other cultures overlook their spiritual aspect.

A New Zealand European/Pākēhā, Melissa, also emphasised that understanding the spiritual aspect of Māori people is imperative when working with them in mental health: "One thing regarding to Māori clients is that for some cultural acceptance is speaking of ancestors. That's difficult to understand from European perspectives." Deborah explains about one of her most memorable experiences working with a Māori client who suffered from mental illness. When she visited the client several times, he started to talk about something he saw but he could not explain well what it was. From her experience working with Māori clients, she suggested him meeting with a kaumātua (respected tribal elder in a Māori community) who had been involved with their whanau for a number of years. She thought tracing his Māori roots to be important because she said: "He hadn't done his Whakapapa [a line of descent from one's ancestors], his mother was Pākēhā and his father was Māori, but he left the family." During the meeting, "He [the kaumātua] talked about spirituality of this boy [client] as he could see spirits." Later Deborah visited this client with a psychiatrist when the client talked about spirits again in the meeting. She needed to explain to the psychiatrist what the client was talking about spirits; "this is how Māori people look at things, it's metaphors" as it might have seen as psychosis or hallucinations from Western pathology. Melissa is also concerned that social workers tend to lack confidence in discussing religion and spirituality with clients. Therefore, she said, "I think Māori clients should access to Māori staff. But the staff are not available [shortage]." Those participants who work in mental health mention that there is a shortage of Māori social workers although there is high demand for service use by Māori people. Nicole also explains that the statutory organisation where she has worked for years are also lacking in Māori social workers although a high proportion of Māori clients are service users. She said, "the ethnic ratio of clients and social workers is imbalanced." Those participants strongly suggested that Māori clients need Māori social workers in order to provide those clients with not only culturally appropriate practice but also to create cultural safety and protection for them.

Cultural competence still focuses mainly on the micro level (practitioners) of cultural competence in social work. Previous literature on cultural competence often mentions more about the insufficiency of 'practitioner's competence'; therefore, the studies tend to focus on improvement of their competence and finding better methods for teaching and training of cultural competence. A few researchers mention cultural

competence at the meso level. Issues at the micro level of cultural competence are not unrelated to issues at the meso level. For instance, Eketone and Walker (2015) argue that Māori social workers are more likely to work bi-culturally in practice. This research also found that not only Māori participants, but also Tauiwi participants, tended to be cautious working with Pākēhā clients, colleagues and other professionals. Similarly, these Māori and Tauiwi participants are more likely to comply within organisations, especially those who practice in a statutory context where they have been challenged with Western European ideologies. They tended to feel a strong conformity which seemed to involve the pressure of Western norms, perspectives or expectations within the organisations. They did not always agree with the approach to social work in the organisations, but they had to follow the arbitrary rules and systems. Even a Pākēhā participant, Deborah would agree with this, as she was confronted with Western ways in her field of social work and described the social work organisation as "rigid" and "lacking in flexibility" for the needs of clients. She thinks that social work practice is about considering the cultures of all clients. A Māori, Alison, explains her experience working under a statutory organisation:

> I am not sure how other organisations work but it's [her employment organisation] very much just the whole structure, hierarchy, policies, and acts based on Western ideology. There are lots of conflicts with other ideologies….but If you don't conform, or you don't share with the same view as this organisation of [Western] ideology then you can be singled out.

She also, sadly, said that "You don't feel like you can raise it to your manager." These other participants were also reluctant to raise issues and or suggest alternative approaches from Western ways. This is because there is an organisational ethos perceived by them where they were unable to openly discuss culture, other ideologies or perspectives and were discouraged from approaching different practice and adapting new theories within the organisation, but they were expected to fit into the organisational culture. These participants seem to more readily recognise the self as being different; their values and beliefs differ from others, as they do not belong to a majority group in the society and are distinguished from the majority, although society acknowledges biculturalism based on the Treaty and respect for any ethnic and cultural groups of people in New Zealand. A Māori social worker, Lisa, mentioned; "that's a continuous tension as a Māori practitioner [who] works in a Pākēhā organisation" while Tauiwi participants were more likely to accept the organisational conformity.

A micro level of cultural competence would have an influence directly on practice. Furthermore, a meso level of cultural competence has a large impact on practitioner's practice working with clients from culturally diverse backgrounds. If one is working in an organisation with poor cultural competence, the best performance cannot be expected. It can be assumed that organisational attitudes toward cultural diversity and difference are

reflected in the support systems where social workers received their cultural support, respect and acceptance within their employer organisation. Those participants who themselves are not from the culture of the organisation are more likely to have to cope with anxiety and an uncomfortable environment – being culturally, racially and ethnically different from other staff within the organisational culture where those other staff seem to be unaware of cultures apart from their own. As a result, they sought support outside of the organisation or found colleagues with whom they could share their views and thoughts. Support and acceptance from other staff are a central coping mechanism. If organisations give consideration and acknowledge and accommodate difference, workers are more able to receive support. Cultural competence at meso and micro levels may therefore have an effect on a significant part of enhancement of culturally competent practice as a whole.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed different intended meanings of cultural competence perceived by the participants due to the bicultural context of Aotearoa New Zealand. A concept of cultural competence becomes complex to define further; this needs further effort for social work students and practitioners to deal with. Cultural competence seems to depend on individual practitioners; they presumably develop confidence working cross-culturally by the time of completion of their social work education and practicum. On the other hand, social work education and organisations may need to draw more attention to the wider context of cultural competence within social work.

Chapter 8: Discussion

Introduction

In Chapters 4–6, the developmental process of cultural competence from education to career was illustrated. These chapters explicated a developmental process of cultural competence model; acquisition of cultural knowledge and three types of self-awareness: Type 1 self-awareness (T1): Self-identity, Type 2 self-awareness (T2): Cultural self-awareness and Type 3 self-awareness (T3): Critical self-awareness from social work education and practicum, and operationalisation of cross-cultural practice – how they utilised the knowledge and self-awareness in establishing practice relationships.

This chapter discusses the crucial processes in developing cultural competence. In the educational stage, students begin to understand concepts and beliefs of cultural competence from their fundamental learning. The Transitional stage incorporates the learning into the practice environment to explore how practice operates in cross-cultural settings. Both types of learnings stimulate and encourage increased understanding of cultural competence. Practice wisdom is developed through the learning process that helps them to make decisions and adjust their own practice. The learning continues in their social work career that contributes to a developmental cycle of cultural competence.

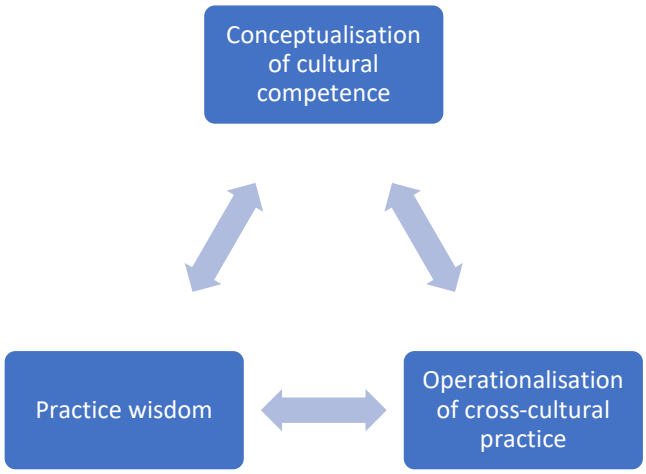

Figure 7. A developmental cycle of cultural competence.

In this chapter, first the usefulness of knowledge and awareness-attitude components gained from education and practicum for practice is analysed. Second, practice wisdom, which is developed from their practice experience in cross-cultural situations, is detailed. Finally, the discussion highlights gaps between the

conceptualisation of cultural competence and the operationalisation of cross-cultural practice that participants have experienced in a transitional process from education to career. Theoretical concepts and components of cultural competence are deemed as fundamental standards for working cross-culturally, while practice wisdom is a necessary process of integration between theory and practice in order to perform better, more effective practice. The process takes place through critically reflecting upon practitioners' own practice. As a result, practitioners' understanding of the meanings of cultural competence is re-conceptualised through the reflection of both the conceptualisation of cultural competence and operationalisation in their practice.

8.1 Effectiveness of education for practice

Social work education encompasses both educational and transitional stages; gaining cultural knowledge and beginning the development of self-awareness are the focal points of educational achievements shown in this research. Two main components, knowledge and awareness-attitude to cross-cultural practice utilised from the education, are explained below.

8.1.1 Broad knowledge of culture

Education for cultural competence has a tendency to focus on knowledge-based learning alone as a measure for evaluating cultural competence. As New Zealand social work education tends to focus on acquiring knowledge of Māori culture including Tikanga Māori and history of Te Tiriti o Waitangi/The Treaty of Waitangi from education is generally specific to Māori culture, as discussed in Chapter 4. This research indicates that student participants were more likely to understand that working with a particular group of clients requires a specific cultural approach in practice; thus, gaining knowledge such as customs, traditions and history of client's culture different from their own is essential for effective cross-cultural practice. They tended to perceive that this is achieved by learning about Māori culture. The knowledge of culture was particularly useful for initial meetings with new clients in practice, as illustrated in Chapter 6. On the other hand, when entering their social work careers, many practitioner participants felt they were not prepared for professional practice in various cultural settings. The significant gap from education to career was addressed by one third of participants; they thought they lacked the knowledge and skills for cross-cultural practice. However, New Zealand society has increased cultural diversity: there are more ethnic groups than the world has countries (Statistics New Zealand, 2017). The demographic changes are particularly reflected in the Auckland region, which has the most diverse population in the country and is where most participants have been employed. They are more likely to encounter, not only Māori clients, but also many clients from broader cultural backgrounds

in their everyday practice. As a result, participants were more likely to be under the enormous pressure of expectations to demonstrate their competence in practice – in particular in their early careers. They considered that the knowledge of Māori culture is not sufficient for working with clients from culturally diverse backgrounds.

The education process gives an impression of culture as *knowable* – that social workers can learn about a culture; hence, participants often anticipated that social work education would provide additional cultural studies (other than Māori and Pasifika cultures) as a part of their education so that they can know various cultures. One international study in Norway also shows that their social worker participants feel there is a lack of information of clients' cultures and would expect social work education to cover an increasing number of cultures in the country (BØ, 2015). In this Norwegian study, social workers were reluctant to seek information about clients' cultures in their own activities and to ask their clients about their cultures. In contrast, the participants in this research seemed positively inclined to learn and ask about the cultures of clients. Furthermore, they asked for cultural advice from their colleagues who are from similar cultural backgrounds to clients.

A way to bridge the gap, extending their knowledge of the clients' culture they encounter, is crucial. However, professional training opportunities for cultural competence do not seem to be adequately provided during their career. Thus, 'self-directed learning', which means seeking and finding their own learning, is essential for them. The participants who were in earlier career stages sought additional knowledge of cultures – as much as they could. They often used an approach to 'learning about' culture from social work education for gaining knowledge of clients. Moreover, the approach may be linked with cultural insiders; they have the best knowledge of their own culture. They are considered as experts through their knowledge of a set of the cultural characteristics, patterns and behaviours that give/teach you 'know-how' to work with clients of that culture.

8.1.2 Use of professional self

As discussed in Chapter 2, self-awareness is often seen as one of the professional techniques for cultural adjustment which assists cross-cultural relationships in practice. The purpose of self-awareness is 'conscious use of self' by managing social workers' own cultural and personal influence (difference) when interacting with their clients from different cultures from their own. In order to do so, the social worker first attains self-knowledge of who she or he is, and defines her or his own cultural identity so that they can be aware of the

dynamic of cultural difference between the self and the client in a relationship. Thus, self-awareness aims to use the professional self through reflection.

This research also shows that social work education guides students to identify their own cultural (and personal) identity and to know their own culture so that they become aware of difference from others – from there they can develop the ability to work with differences in practice. Knowing oneself tended to be a centre of learning experienced by participants from social work programmes. They cultivated mainly T1 and T2 types of self-awareness, which are both applicable for knowing oneself during the educational and transitional stages explained in Chapters 4 and 5. Various self-awareness activities were provided for participants through classwork and assignments which were useful for beginning the path to, primarily, T1; they have discovered a part of the self that they did not know about before. Furthermore, learning in a multicultural classroom contributed to T2 through comparing and observing similarities and differences between themselves and other classmates from different cultures from their own. The participants have gained more about self-knowledge through knowing the self and others (related to and also differentiated from). The further development of T1 and T2 were continued in practicum placements. In professional practice, in particular, practitioner participants presumably used T1 and T2 self-awareness for identifying differences with others in early client–social work relationship building.

T3 self-awareness is also usefully applied for an objective analysis of the self as a professional. The participants presumably used it for being more of the professional self. The process involves reflective awareness which assists in reducing their own subjective influences by being aware of their own perspectives, assumptions and biases in practice. This enables social workers to avoid judging situations and clients unprofessionally so that they could achieve better work with them and develop a good, professional 'client' and 'social worker' relationship. Especially when social workers are inexperienced in practice, they may be more likely to focus on mastering their professional self in practice. In this research, participants showed a tendency of giving importance to the 'working relationship' stage of client–social worker practice relationship. In particular, those who were earlier in their careers were more conscious of being professional and maintaining professional boundaries in their practice than those who have worked for a number of years. Within the working relationship, the social worker can take on the role of professional while the client is a help-seeker. This can be related to a critique discussed by Yan and Wong (2005) in Chapter 2 when they argue that the traditional approach to cultural competence suggests a hierarchical subjective–objective dichotomy in client–social worker relationships which implies a one-way relationship; they are not equally involved in the relationship.

However, maintaining the working relationship throughout practice is not sufficient to develop an effective cross-cultural relationship with a client. This is because the relationship can create distance between the client and the social worker that may lead to tensions between them due to power differences. A crucial point is that self-awareness does not fully guide building a client–social worker relationship on its own during social work programmes. T1 and T2 self-awareness, knowing one's self and identifying differences between the self and the 'Other', and also reducing negative impacts on the subjective self in practice through T3 self-awareness gives a central focus in the education. The participants were often uncertain how self-awareness was utilised in practice; they assumed that knowing oneself from self-awareness assists in interacting with clients from different cultures from their own, and that would help develop the relationship. On the other hand, they were unsure about engagement of clients in cross-cultural interaction, even in their earlier careers. During practicum, observation was the main medium of learning for cultural competence. They sought to observe the early relationship building, how a client and a social worker develop their relationships, while such exposure to practice is often limited in their practicum training. Therefore, early social work professionals may not always know how to work or engage with clients through self-awareness (especially with T1 and T2) in cross-cultural practice. Self-awareness may not sufficiently inform the practitioner as to how T3 can be used effectively for further client–social worker relationship development.

8.2 Demands of managing cross-cultural practice

Social work education gives a broad sense of the concept and tends to focus on attaining specific cultural knowledge and developing one's own self-awareness. This may imply cultural competence as achievable or obtainable through competence-based education. However, the conceptualisation of cultural competence from education is not well linked with operationalisation of cross-cultural practice as this lacks a clear prescription of how social workers work with clients in cross-cultural settings. Moreover, neither social work education nor the ANZSW or the SWRB provides clear guidelines or policy documents to define or explain the operationalisation of cross-cultural practice in detail.

Consequently, the earlier career period can be the most challenging time. At the beginning of practice, social workers are still in the process of working out how they form their practice. Many practitioner participants faced some challenges when managing actual practice on their own from their professional experience at the time. Early social work professionals are more likely to confront gaps between formal theories (knowledge) gained from education and how they practise in professional contexts. They need to learn from experience and form their own effective practice style. Through critical reflection, they mend the gaps and form

and reform their practice. As a result of applied knowledge and skills gained from education into practice, participants have reflected upon their practice – that some things work well, but other things do not – then they attempted to find their own way that worked better in practice: practice wisdom. They have gradually formed their practice. In this way they can reduce the gap between theory/knowledge (conceptualisation) and practice (operationalisation). Two main practice wisdom insights will be outlined below.

8.2.1 'Learning about' culture AND 'learning from' clients' cultures

One of the significant gains in practice wisdom for practitioner participants to emerge from their professional practice experience is an approach to knowledge 'learning from' their encounters with clients from different cultures from their own. Many participants have discovered an educational approach to knowledge of 'learning about' culture in the abstract. The 'learning about' approach to knowledge of culture underpins a process of gathering information about history, beliefs, traits, traditions, and languages of specific cultural groups, but this research found this to have limitations.

For instance, knowledge of Māori culture is mostly derived from Tikanga Māori and strongly emphasises understanding basic Māori customs and protocol including the structure of Whānau (Māori family structure). The knowledge guides how to behave appropriately when involving formal Māori ceremonies and interacting with Māori people. Acquiring such knowledge of culture gained from the education is only useful for interaction with a client from a different culture from social worker's own culture in an initial meeting, as discussed in Chapter 6. Furthermore, exposure to culture was suggested as an effective way of 'learning about' culture. In this research, Noho mārae, and other cultural experience made participants more easily grasp Māori culture. On the other hand, the exposure to culture was more likely successful for familiarising the culture that contributes to developing their confidence and comfort around various Māori cultural settings. Fisher-Borne et al. (2014) discuss that cultural competence seems to focus on social workers' confidence in working with difference, but it excludes from consideration how clients feel comfortable working with their social workers. Confidence presumably helps for working cross-culturally; however, it does not seem to be consistently effective for actual practice from participants' experiences.

On the one hand, the 'learning about' culture can give emphasis to knowledge of the 'Other' and gaining general knowledge about different cultural and ethnic groups of clients from their own. The Norwegian research previously mentioned also showed that 50 social workers were asked for the most significant challenges in their professional practice with minority clients. There were several key challenges, such as communication

problems, health problems, cultural difference in parent–child relationships, and structural barriers, and most challenges indicated a lack of information about the culture of clients; they dominantly focus on the information about the 'Other' (BØ, 2015). Cultural competence may lead to form the 'Other' as a separate entity from self: the self as opposed to or no relation to the 'Other'. This can result in distancing between two parties in the helping relationship. Thus, the approach to 'learning about' culture does not always establish a good rapport with clients.

Furthermore, in working with individual clients in cross-cultural practice, the research participants have faced a challenge over their fixed mindsets toward their clients. The approach to 'learning about' a client's culture, the knowledge of the client, is limited to understanding a person on the basis of one aspect by categorising a specific group. The participants have experienced in working with individual clients in real practice situations and discovered that the individuality of each client cannot be ignored as not all clients from a particular cultural group think, express or behave in the same way. Through observations and reflections, they realised that understanding of a person is far more complicated than merely learning about the person's culture. Clients are all individually different, with their own perspectives, which are influenced by the type of person they are and their life experiences as well as their cultural and personal backgrounds. Many aspects contribute to our identity: intersectionality. As a result, it is not realistic to expect every person from a specific ethnic, cultural group to behave in the same way. Also, the knowledge of 'learning about' culture may not be accurate about the clients themselves. Education tends to focus on particular groups of culture which categorise a large group of people. Having the basic knowledge of specific cultures may lead to generalising or even stereotyping a cultural group of clients. Although there are similarities of people within a culture, there are variations among the people; they are an exception to the norm. From the educational implication, social workers may easily categorise their clients who belong to specific category groups such as ethnic, religious and social groups. Those learning from practice experience question the 'learning about' culture approach.

Through their practice experiences and reflections (reflective practice), a new conceptualisation to practice, applying 'learning from' the client into practice, which is mentioned in Chapter 6, was demonstrated in many participants' practices. They considered their clients as not only cultural beings but also individual beings. An understanding of each client as a person is crucial. This does not only come from social worker's own 'learning about' a client's culture but also 'learning from' the client through interaction and dialogue about their life stories and experiences which may have an impact in their life. Experienced practitioner participants in this research notably demonstrated this. A willing attitude is essential; the social worker is willing to listen

to and learn from their clients about how they make sense of their world around them. Thus, building an authentic relationship, which is a more personal connection with the client and which may give meaning to the client-social worker practice relationship, is imperative. The relationship can break down barriers between a client and a social worker through getting to know each other. Eventually, this changes both the client and the social worker's attitude toward difference. The process should be meaningful in both ways. In this sense, social workers bring more than knowledge, but also their persona into their practice.

8.2.2 Use of personal self

Another gain in practice wisdom was the use of personal self: revealing the self to clients is deemed as a crucial part of the process in practice. Many participants identified that practice is based on a client-social worker practice relationship. Using personal self is one of the ways that they developed the relationship as genuinely as possible, and this is more effective for their practice, illustrated in Chapter 6. From these research findings, T1, T2 and T3 levels of self-awareness are all involved in the process of developing an 'authentic relationship'. In order to create an effective relationship between a client and a social worker, mutual respect, honesty and understanding from both parties are vital. This means not only the self as a professional but also that the self as personal and cultural being must not be forgotten. Hence, the participants often went back to the core aspect of self-awareness: T1, which is an essential foundation for use of self in their career. T2 is to define not only differences between oneself and others but also similarities between the two, that can lead to making the self more relatable to clients. From there, T3 allows social workers to be more able to reveal themselves such as in sharing their personal life experiences and showing their empathy toward their clients within a professional boundary, assisting the development of an authentic client–social worker relationship.

In social work, self-awareness mainly refers to the practitioner's self-awareness of his or her own cultural values, beliefs, attitudes, prejudices, and his or her own emotional and cognitive processing of cross-cultural encounters (Nadan, 2014). This probably indicates T3, using the reflective side of awareness which mostly assists in evaluating/assessing of oneself. However, building an authentic relationship requires T3, involving the reflexive side of awareness, which recognise subjective and personal self influenced in context. The reflexive awareness helps to analyse a connection between the self and the other and the influence of the self on the relationship. In this sense, utilising self-awareness in practice can be comprehended. BØ (2015) strongly suggests that social workers need to look into the self, being more aware of how their cultural predispositions determine how they understand the problems of their clients. This significantly requires social worker's reflexivity, acknowledging their own subjectivity and assumptions influencing the relationship with

clients such as how the social worker perceives the client and her or his experience and problems and how she or he makes sense of the practice situation from their own standpoint. Hence T3 involves both reflective and reflexive awareness through critical self-reflection in practice. On the other hand, this is less likely to occur in the early career stage, and it may also take time to develop T3 using both forms of awareness themselves through practice.

8.3 A gap between knowledge and practice: Generation of knowledge from practice experience

The above discussion around having experience in cross-cultural practice settings certainly helps practitioners to gain a better understanding of, and to develop, their own techniques for practice. They create practice wisdom through interaction between formal (educational) knowledge of cultural competence and practice experience. This refers to Fook's critical reflection approach to knowledge mentioned in Chapter 2. T3 is crucial for this process which leads to developing knowledge for practice that would be more relevant to their practice. Kolb's (1984) four-stage cycle of experiential learning, briefly discussed at the end of Chapter 5, is useful here. As an abstract concept formed through observation and reflection of a concrete experience from practice, experiential learning creates reflection on a concept in a situation where it is similar to the concrete experience initially reflected upon. This feeds back to the experience with a new perspective in an experiential learning cycle. As a result, they would alter their actions and behaviours in the future when similar incidents occurred. This links to Schön's (1983) idea about reflection on action; practitioners can take their reflection on the concrete experience and the next time similar things happen, they have more of a repertoire of skills to draw on, in the moment. In this research, Fook's (2012, 2016) critical reflection approach to knowledge was found through processing experiential learning from the transitional stage after completing at least one practicum placement. Student participants endeavoured to digest all information and knowledge they had gained from the educational stage and to absorb their learning from practicum experiences, to make the links between them for understanding the 'know-how' to work cross-culturally and how they prepare for professional practice. The process occurred more commonly in the career stage.

A significant key is the reflection technique which is an integral part in developing all three types of self-awareness moving through all educational, transitional and career stages. The basic use of reflection seems to be well guided in the transitional stage when the participants were more frequently exposed to different cultures through working closely with clients, supervisors and colleagues from various cultural backgrounds. During practicum placements, journal writing was strongly recommended or given as a learning task to the participants on practicum. The activity would help a process of self-reflection which includes, not only merely

reflecting on self, but also explores what they are doing, why they are reacting in an experience that triggers them to reflect back and think about the impact the experience has on themselves and others (Reupert, 2009). The participants began to use Kondrat's (1999) second reflection approach of 'reflective self-awareness'. It usually occurred when an incident (experience) was unforeseen. The participants sought to assess their action in the situation as appropriate and professional. Through the reflection, they have a better understanding of the self in the experience and are enabled to see the experience from different angles and interpret the incident differently. Eventually they may gain new knowledge in order to act/respond differently.

However, the reflective practice may not always be achieved during social work programmes, although participants demonstrated the activity of self-reflection during the educational and transitional stages. This was more likely to use Kondrat's (1999) first reflection approach of 'simple conscious awareness', becoming aware of an experience rather than 'the reflective awareness' of several participants. They recalled particular incidents they have experienced in the classroom and practicum and described the experience – what was occurring after the incident. They seemed not to process it further. They tended to know what and why that bothered them from their perspectives but reflected less on how their subjective views on the experience may be perceived differently from other perspectives. Although social work students gradually utilise critical self-reflection which involves critical thinking for understanding the self at a deeper level during social work programmes, the progressive development of the self-reflection technique may be more likely to occur during their career depending on individual practitioner's practice experience as well as their life experience. Supervision can assist the process further and effectively; this will be discussed next in this chapter.

The most remarkable growth of cultural competence shown in this research could have come from confronting culturally challenging experiences in practice through critical self-reflection. That often involves participants' emotions and thoughts on the incidents, which are a crucial aspect of the process of developing cultural competence. Participants have come to understand that their emotions can induce attitudes toward difference that can enhance, as well as diminish, the relationship. O'Conner (2019) discusses that emotions are a part of professional practice; both social workers and their clients are at the centre of their lived experience of practice. However, emotions are negatively associated with professionalism and professional standards; thus, this creates a paradox for practitioners (O'Conner, 2019). This research also found that participants tended to view their own emotions in relationships with clients as emotions that are not perceived as professional.

8.4 Crucial roles of supervision in facilitation and supporting developing T3

As noted in the above discussion, critical self-reflection is vital for experiential learning from practice which, in turn, contributes to the elaboration to cultural competence. The more participants experience confrontation with cultural differences and tensions, including making mistakes, the more they critically reflect back on those experiences. T3 self-awareness engaged with critical self-reflection becomes significant when social work practitioners increasingly experience cross-cultural situations in practice. One way of using T3 assists in understanding and dealing with one's own thoughts, emotions, assumptions and biases; the practitioner puts her or his personal interests/agenda aside and focuses more on what is necessary and appropriate in a situation (practising with clients) as a professional. On the other hand, T3 may not be well developed during social work programmes and therefore, it may not be able to be undertaken in early career.

The most difficulty students and early professionals may experience for developing T3 can be managing their own emotions. As previously mentioned, emotion is a part of practice; when participants were overwhelmed by particular experiences in practicum placements or practice, they were faced with situations that bought out emotions which are perceived by them as both good and bad. Primarily, they had strong feelings which are more likely perceived as unfavourable. In these research findings, most participants were aware of a specific experience which had an impact on them (which refers to Kolb's (1984) first stage of concrete experience), and this triggered them to reflect upon the experience – the second stage of reflective observation. The serious difficulty seemed, for some participants, to be moving from the second stage to the third stage of abstract conceptualisation. Other participants observed their particular experience from different angles and they came to understand what the experience meant clearly and distinctly. This requires significant critical reflection (the ability to reflect critically), and eventually they figured it out and tried to act and respond differently from the past experience for improvement. Some participants were, however, not well equipped to undertake such reflection for processing it, partially because those participants tended to be stuck with their own negative emotions and/or partially because other's verbal and non-verbal responses were perceived negatively. Their unpleasant feelings seemed to prevent them from investigating what they were experiencing and what caused them to have struggles – they were stuck with the experience.

In this research, the participants who talked through challenging experience with their supervisors (including their thoughts and emotions), were able to move forward to the next process. Such personal supervision provides emotional support for the worker in the work setting (Tsui, 2005). The supervisors' support was crucial to the participants as they were not just noticing a particular experience that had an impact

on them, but they grasped their experience in placement. Eventually, they could observe and analyse the experience and why they acted the way they did which, in turn, led to reflective practice. This significantly contributes to a critical part of the learning process bridging between the education they have had in the classroom and the reality of practice: critical reflection. Those participants comprehended better what practice involves and what it is like to work in a social work organisation and they are more likely to seek support and discussion with their supervisors and colleagues, asking for their opinions and suggestions.

However, this kind of reflective personal supervision does not often happen regularly among practitioner participants in their career. This can be because, supervision in professional settings may focus more on administrative accountability rather than any emotional and educational support offered during practicum placement. The possible reason can be relevant to the core of social work supervision. The administrative functions such as workload and assessing the results of service delivery tend to emerge first rather than the emotional and educational functions of supervision (Tsui, 2005). Furthermore, the movement for professional supervision for enhancement and professional development of social workers occurred in New Zealand in the 1960s; however, the introduction of neoliberalism and its managerialism in the 1980s and 1990s has moved supervision toward an administrative focus (Rankine, 2017). Currently, professional supervision is well acknowledged as a part of professional development for social workers in New Zealand social work, but the administrative form of supervision still seemed to be more commonly experienced at their workplaces by the participants in this research.

As demonstrated in the interviews with practitioner participants about their relationships with their supervisors, they were more likely to perceive supervision as a place to discuss case reviews and their supervisor's roles and responsibilities are mainly to manage the overall work of all social workers in the department. Also, there seems to be a perception from the participants that they should manage their own professional development and take their responsibility for it and/or there is an expectation from social work agencies that when entering on their social work career, practitioners should be competent to practise. Their perception would be the link between their professional responsibility based on the code of conducts and ethics, and also Continuing Professional Development (CPD). The SWRB (2019) sets out that CPD registered social workers are expected to complete at least two core competencies out of the ten required, and they need to spend a minimum 20 hours each year doing this throughout their career. Their career pathways are varied depending on their employers and supervisors; these research findings suggest that they may need additional training,

education, support and assistance, including supervision, as a part of professional development for continuously learning and developing cultural competence.

On the other hand, a more reflective type of personal supervision can be particularly needed by early-career social work professionals when they are still progressing their self-awareness through reflection; this is essential in a cycle of experiential learning. Supervision can have a beneficial effect on their learning – for exploring practice experience such as relationship with clients, social worker's emotions, thoughts and actions in the relationship assisted by supervisors. This is an essential part of professional supervision, which focuses on equipping the required social work professional values, knowledge and skills for problem solving; importantly, this includes professional growth (Tsui, 2005). Professional supervision is, therefore, for assisting professional growth and the time should be invested in social workers having access to this kind of supervision.

8.5 Understanding the meaning of cultural competence from practitioners

Cultural competence can lead to making social work practice conform to a standard in the profession. This is indicated by the fact that the Social Workers Registration Legislation Act 2019 (New Zealand Legislation, 2019b) now mandates that social workers be registered. Otherwise they must not claim to be a social worker. In New Zealand, the social work practitioner's competencies are required by their registration status as a professional. As noted in Chapter 1, cultural competence is included as a part of the Core Competence Standards set by the SWRB (2016a). Registered social workers must demonstrate their competence practising with Māori people and also with different ethnic and cultural groups in New Zealand; they must practise respectfully and inclusively with diversity and difference as a requirement of registration. They are expected to develop knowledge and skills throughout their careers. Cultural competences take these into account when delivering social services. Thus, social work service providers play a part in that their employees should continuously improve and constantly demonstrate their cultural competency in practice. Participants understood cultural competence as a requirement for professional practice standards and that social workers have an obligation to provide quality and equitable professional practice set by the ANZSW and the SWRB. This was illustrated in the research in that participants often perceived cultural competence to be part of the code of ethics and professional conduct and that registration proves their competence to act and respond in practice as registered social workers. The participants who were in their early career and student participants were more likely to perceive cultural competence in this way than those who were experienced practitioners.

These practitioner participants further developed their understanding of cultural competence in their own terms; they interpreted it in a way that makes sense of it explicitly – from its implicit meaning through their own practice experience of 'working cross-culturally'. Reflecting this point, the meaning of cultural competence has been changed from using knowledge and skills for effective cross-cultural practice. Cultural competence is not only about treating clients differently based on their cultures; the social worker who acts/behaves in keeping with the culture of their client does so for the sake of the client. Social workers consider their clients' cultural background if there is a need for taking particular aspects into account due to any special situations or circumstances. They also seek to understand an individual client as a whole person – not seeing the person in a specific cultural category.

Culture can be understood in an intuitive sense. Hence, cultural competence is the possibility of understanding the client as a whole person, the values he or she holds that is based on his or her make-up as a whole; this may help recognise how they perceive their issues. Understanding the client's culture can be a key by which the social worker scrutinises or assesses the client's situation and addresses issues that may (or may not) have affected them because of their cultural identity. Also, cultural competence may remind social workers that, while they may not always know the culture of the client, they may learn new aspects of the culture from the client which may influence how he or she sees one's own culture. Cross-cultural practice is not a different concept from basic social work practice which proposes providing the best care and support for clients with personal and social problems and finding out ways to work with individual clients through interaction and dialogue with them. That is more about understanding the meanings behind their clients' words; what they value most in their lives. This could be having family, relationships, safety, or even just comfortable space. Social workers value whatever the clients seek and they find it out together in order to improve their current circumstances. Hence, there is no particular way to work with them. Culture is no longer the only factor for consideration when working with clients from different cultures.

Conclusion

'Cultural competence' is not just part of professional terminology or a practice condition but it brings more awareness to attention to self through exploring and understanding of one's own worldview, values and beliefs that lead to making social work practitioners think about and respond to differences. Practitioners continuously process this throughout their career and take on challenges working with differences. Therefore, it cannot be a goal ultimately achieved through social work education. As the NASW (2007) Standard of Cultural

Competence Practice stated, “cultural competence is never fully realized, achieved or completed, but rather cultural competence is a lifelong process for social workers who will always encounter diverse clients and new situations in their practice” (p. 12, as cited in Johnson & Munch, 2009). Cultural competence is an on-going process that contributes to the practitioner’s constant self-growth in developing self-awareness and also continuous learning about/from and understanding clients as people and working with them in uncertain conditions and various cultural contexts.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

Introduction

This final chapter will outline some suggestions for social work education for cultural competence, and for the social work professional body (SWRB) and social work organisations for professional development (for cross-cultural social work practice). A personal reflection on researching my thesis will be included at the end.

9.1 Recommendations for Social work education

Social work education may need to consider possible changes for further improving and developing education and learning for cultural competence. As the prime focus of this research was development of cultural competence which has a link between education and learning, the current key issues were discussed in previous chapters. Chapter 2 discussed a model of cultural competence, which consists of three main components: knowledge, awareness-attitude and skills. That is a central framework for education for cultural competence, namely competence-based education. The competence model has been prominent, in particular, in qualifying social work education (initial education for a qualifying social worker) in the UK and this has significantly influenced the development of social work education in Australia and New Zealand (Halton, Powell, & Scanlon, 2014). In this research, the model was fundamental learning of cultural competence experienced by participants in their social work educations. Their learning has a tendency for acquisition of basic knowledge of specific ethnic and cultural groups and gaining self-knowledge through increasing self-awareness. That would be an accomplishment of cultural competence, illustrated in the findings chapters, Chapters 4–5.

As mentioned in the discussion chapter, competence-based education implies that cultural competence can be taught by transferring knowledge which reflects what is defined as the ‘knowing that’ method of knowledge production. This often indicates knowledge of culture which is gained from general information about the culture as it is knowable, that is it is understood as static. Consequently, learning from competence-based education can lead to having an intention of achieving through becoming knowledgeable about culture. Students may expect to learn more about specific ethnic and cultural groups from education and think that would be a sufficient condition for working with clients of specific cultures in professional practice. The competence-based approach to education and learning in social work has appeared to be popular. This can be relevant to the social work profession increasingly influenced by neoliberalism and this has had an impact on social work practice, noted in the introductory chapter. Public services become more competitive to get funding

and social work is more accountable in order to prove its effectiveness and improvement. As a result, managerialism emerges within social work as a result of the significant agenda of neoliberalism in social work. The agenda extends to social work education. However, my study shows that this competence-based approach does not adequately prepare social work students for cross-cultural practice in their social work careers. There are several suggestions below for the approach to cultural competence which social work students may find useful and relevant to professional practice in their future careers.

First, education for cultural competence needs to draw more attention to the creative practice of social work by encouraging more students to use their personal self in practice. As practice involves at least two parties – a client and a social worker – the relationship between two creates a context in which the therapeutic work occurs. The client–social worker practice relationship is crucial to effective practice, as was mentioned by most practitioner participants in this research. This was particularly demonstrated by their dedication to relationship building with clients in cross-cultural settings, as reflected in Chapter 6. Developing an authentic relationship with the client within practice is an effective way to overcome difference and/or barriers and to connect with them. This requires use of the personal self by revealing a practitioner's self to a client and sharing some of their own experiences that may relate to the client (within a professional boundary, by balancing with use of professional self) what she or he is experiencing. The practitioner adjusts, develops and forms and reforms the relationship with the client in practice. On the other hand, use of the professional self is more emphasised in education. That is often the competence and attitude expected of a professional as perceived by participants.

The use of the professional self was one of the outcomes from competence-based education, discussed in Chapter 8. This reflects Yan and Wong (2005)'s argument mentioned in Chapter 2; many approaches to cross-cultural social work practice, including cultural competence, are concerned with cultural barriers and conflicts that may occur when working with clients from different cultural backgrounds from their practitioners. The approaches mostly aim to solve the cultural issues in practice. One of the solutions to cross-cultural practice is full use of professional self (taking a culturally neutral position), by managing a practitioner's personal self in practice. This indicates that the practitioner's personal and cultural influence should be minimised when working cross-culturally, especially working with clients who are from minority ethnic and cultural groups. In this research, early professional participants were more likely to apply the use of professional self in the practice relationship. This leads to achieving the stage of a working relationship in practice. However, this stage of the relationship may keep a distance between a client and a practitioner and may also create a one-way relationship:

the practitioner maintains a leading role as professional and the clients is more passive in the relationship. This kind of working relationship is, however, not always effective for cross-cultural practice.

Second, guidance for further use of self-awareness in practice should be sufficiently provided in education. In this research, many participants did not seem to comprehend how self-awareness worked in practice. Self-awareness can be significantly useful for relationship building with clients that has had an effect on developing and forming their practice. This research shows that participants mostly developed Type 1 self-awareness (T1): Self-identity and Type 2 self-awareness (T2): Cultural self-awareness that often focuses on knowing oneself in competence-based education in Chapter 4 and 5. They understood becoming more self-aware through exploring one's own cultural and personal backgrounds (T1) that influence our own values, beliefs and worldviews, and that can help understanding others who also have their own values, beliefs and worldviews influenced by their cultural and personal backgrounds. This designates a need for identifying and also acknowledging 'cultural difference' (T2). On the other hand, T1 and T2 self-awareness (knowing oneself), on its own, is not enough for effective practice in order to build a good rapport with clients.

As discussed in Chapter 8, this current study has found that Type 3 self-awareness (T3): Critical self-awareness entails reflective awareness, as well as reflexive awareness, is vital for building an authentic practice relationship. T3 (both using reflective and reflexive awareness) is essential for critically analysing the self, as well as the self in relation to the client in practice. However, T3 was often encouraged for addressing their own biases and assumptions about groups to whom they may unconsciously have biases and assumptions. We may instinctively categorise people according to such things as age, gender, skin colour, disability, social status, socio-economic and educational level and that may lead to making assumptions about others who are outside our own groups. Also, we may rely on oversimplified ideas and images of others and take actions based on those. This is why social workers need to recognise their own biases and assumptions before working with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds. The participants were more likely to learn to analyse the self objectively using T3 reflective awareness. The awareness was particularly useful for reflection on action through analysing their behaviour from the way they reacted/responded to particular situations; this occurred especially when they were confronted with tensions and conflicts with clients, colleagues and supervisors from different cultures from their own, as explicated in Chapter 5. Through recognising their own thoughts and emotions attached to their actions, they may able to, in the future, alter the direction for taking action by changing their own thinking and interpretations. This would contribute to minimising unnecessary tensions and conflicts due to differences in practice. Understanding the self solely, however, does not enhance the client–

social worker practice relationship. Connecting the self with clients is necessary in practice that requires the ability to develop empathy in others, understanding other people's emotions, and imagining what they might be thinking or feeling from their standpoints.

As practice is contextual, that shapes the relationship between a client and a social worker. Therefore, understanding the relationship between the two is imperative. When increasing practice experience in the career stage, experienced practitioner participants demonstrated their concerns, analysis and assessments of practice relationship with their clients by balancing their personal and professional selves through reflection in/on action, as discussed in Chapter 6. Reflexive awareness can assist social workers to extend their analysis of the self, not only in an internal psychological process (how one sees the self and perceives the world from one's own standpoint), but also including the analysis of the self in wider social processes such as contextual interaction with their client and the impact of this on the relationship. Reflexive awareness helps to analyse and understand the 'here and now' of the self in relation to the client and how the social worker's culture, which influences her or his own worldviews, values, biases and assumptions may have an effect on the client in the relationship and how the client may perceive it (their self) and view the world. The reflexive process may contribute to viewing situations from the client's standpoint and develop the social worker's ability to understand the intended meaning of the client's perspective, point of view or opinion. Reflexivity reinforces the idea that, in order to develop practice relationships with clients, both reflective and reflexive awareness can be better used for effective practice.

Qualifying social work education may not be able to cover the learning and using of reflexive awareness. This research shows that reflective awareness began to be used at the transitional stage. Before using reflexive awareness, students need to be more proficient using reflective awareness. Halton et al. (2014) further made the point that competence-based education and learning limits training for cultural competence in the post-qualifying level of education, as reflexive awareness is not well used. This may suggest that advanced training may be required for social work practitioners during their career. Experienced practitioners must prepare for making professional decisions in complex practice situations by using critical reflection in practice that develops the practitioner's capability and expertise (Halton et al., 2014). Therefore, they require advanced reflection skills from further education such as Continuing Professional Education (CPE), which is discussed below.

9.2 Recommendations for the Social Work Professional Body (SWRB)

This research strongly encourages the Social Work Registration Board to investigate further Continuing Professional Development (CPD) which is briefly mentioned in Chapter 8. CPD, which means "learning in which professionals engage in the context of their working lives" (Rutter, 2013, p. 8), is a significant feature in many professions. Social work has developed the idea of learning as an on-going process for at least two decades in New Zealand (Beddoe, 1999). As a result, the terms *lifelong learning* or *learning organisation* are well acknowledged in the profession (Halton et al., 2014). Although the Social Workers Registration Act (2013) empowers the SWRB to establish the standards for registering social workers, the Board decided a bachelor's level of social work, or a qualifying master's degree is required for new practitioners and these have been a registration requirement since 2016 (Beddoe, 2018). Qualifying social work education can no longer be seen as sufficient for the entire social work practitioners' lifetime careers. Rutter (2013) discusses that professions like social work have to operate within legislation, policy and procedures that give a framework to work within and that any rules or guidance still need to be managed, interpreted and implemented in real situations. Professionalism in practice requires skills consisting of a perceptive awareness of any situation and wise ethical judgement in respect of which is knowing about *how* to do something, *when* to do it and also *why* it should be done in a certain way for a particular set of circumstances (Rutter, 2013). Therefore, the development of professional competence is on-going and involves a range of learning opportunities that maintain and enhance professional practice and service quality. This on-going learning extends existing knowledge and skills and advances practice for career progression purposes. On the other hand, research around CPD generally lacks in social work.

On-going learning is strongly advised in New Zealand social work. Social workers have a responsibility to develop knowledge and skills throughout their careers. The requirement is determined by the Code of Conduct: Principle 4: Be competent and responsible for your professional development, social workers are expected to:

> 4.7 maintain and improve your knowledge and skills, including those required for using any form of technology
>
> 4.8 know and work within the limits of your own practice and seek supervision and guidance where necessary
>
> 4.9 use a recognised ethical code or framework to assist in ethical decision-making (for example, the ANZASW Code of Ethics)

> 4.10 actively participate in supervision and critically reflect on practice
>
> 4.11 be responsible for, and engage in, continuing professional development. (SWRB, 2016b)

The ANZASW Code of Ethics: Responsibility for self:

> 7.2 Members are required to acquire the knowledge and skills that are relevant to their field of work, and to ensure that these are kept up to date. They will maintain a critical response to new knowledge.
>
> 7.3 Similarly, continuing professional development is a requirement, through activities such as formal or ad hoc continuing education courses, familiarity with the current social work literature, professional forums and debates, in order to maintain their skills, knowledge and competence. (ANZASW, 2019)

These policies are designed to ensure that social work practitioners engage with activities for maintaining and improving their knowledge, skills and competence throughout their careers.

CPD is furthermore emphasised in New Zealand social work. The SWRB (2019) sets requirements for CPD. Registered social workers are required to undertake CPD. A plan of CPD activities connected to the 10 core competencies and undertaking at least two core competencies is required each year:

> Completed a minimum of 20 hours
>
> Critically reflected on your CPD learning and the relevance of the learning for your practice
>
> Utilised at least two types of CPD, at least one of which should involve engagement with others
>
> A sign-off from your supervisor. (SWRB, 2019 Continuing Professional Development (CPD).)

CPD has a range of activities introduced by the SWRB (Halton et al., 2014). Common CPD activities relevant to New Zealand social workers are listed by Beddoe and Duke (2013, pp. 42–43). The lists are summarised below.

> Competency to practise social work with Māori and competency to work with cultural and other groups: Community-based work with iwi and cultural communities. Enhance knowledge of language and culture.
>
> Broad professional development activities: Tertiary courses, in-service courses, induction or beginning practitioner programmes, conferences, workshops and seminars in social work or particular fields of practice.

> Scholarly activities: Continuing professional education (CPE): higher degrees and research including participating in journal clubs and contributing to journals via book peer reviews or peer reviewed papers.
>
> Practice leadership: providing supervision or mentoring (including social work students on fields work placement). Leadership, management, supervisor training.
>
> Community engagement: participation in social service or community development activities such as hapu/iwi boards or committees.
>
> Service to the profession: participation in professional activities such as professional association.

CPD is engaged with not only in formal learning but also incorporates informal learning (Beddoe & Duke, 2013). Halton et al. (2014) categorise professional development activities as comprising four different types: the first comprises work-based activities, for example, peer-review, journal club, in-service training. Second, professional activities: for example, involvement in a professional body and mentoring. The third type is delineated as formal education, for example, further education, distance learning, seminars. Finally, self-directed learning is the most common activity, including reading, or reviewing books and articles. Many participants mentioned these above activities during interviews. Some practitioner participants created their own learning to extend their knowledge such as participating in cultural communities. Others use their opportunities working with clients from various cultural and ethnic groups as their primary learning, as discussed in Chapter 6. The research showed that it was primarily those who were earlier professionals were highly motivated for CPD. As explained in Chapter 6, the participants faced a formidable challenge transitioning from social work education to social work careers and were urged to attain further knowledge and skills so that they are able to practise competently. Mainly, work-based activities (informal learning) were considered preferable and useful for their needs in practice; on the other hand, self-directed learning (formal learning) could be more flexible for their learning and also convenient to access various materials; hence, it could be more frequently used for CPD. However, previous studies have mentioned that knowledge gained from formal learning has little effect on enhancing practice (Halton et al., 2014). A balance between formal and informal learning could be appropriate. On the other hand, practitioners' involvement in CPD, or demands for learning among practitioners for their professional development (and receiving the opportunities and support from their employer organisations), is unknown. Understanding of the current condition for implementation of CPD can contribute to further professional development of social work practitioners.

Although CPD is a requirement of registration, social work organisations play vital roles and develop internal learning cultures adequately. Increasing opportunity for CPD can require negotiations and incorporate

other work with social work organisations. Moreover, there may be a need for discussions between social work practitioners and their employer organisations. Issues like conflict of interest between them may occur as the practitioner's intention or goals for CPD are not necessarily the same as those of their employer organisations. CPD is ideal, but it may be unable to be provided adequately as time and finance for learning/training for practitioners due to neoliberal and managerial constrictions for social work organisations – as the time and investment costs for their workers may not directly benefit the organisation's objectives. On the other hand, the worker's professional development as well as personal development could contribute to quality and effective services as a whole.

9.3 Effective Supervision

Finally, I strongly urge that social work professional bodies, education and organisations promote reflection which involves critical thinking (critical self-reflection) further and gives adequate time for students during practicum and practitioners for day-to-day practice. They need to have a space to do their own self-reflection, particularly reflecting upon their challenging experiences and also share this process with supervisors. This can be a foundation for supervision. Davys and Beddoes's (2009) reflective learning model would be suitable and can be included for CPD (informal learning). A reflective learning model uses different methods and techniques from those of supervising experienced practitioners; there are two dimensions: one is to facilitate learning and development, and another is to learn and become transformational through reflection (Davys & Beddoe, 2009, 2010).

The SWRB (2016b) has already mentioned the importance of supervision and critical reflective practice in 4.10 in the Code of Conduct. This research shows that supervision is significant to participants' improvement of reflection. This is critically important for practice development as well as the quality of practice. Reflection, in particular critical self-reflection, is required for processing Kolb's (1984) four-stage cycle of experiential learning: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, and for the implications of concepts explained in Chapter 5. That chapter further discussed that while some student participants could process the experiential learning themselves, other participants found it difficult to reflect on what they were experiencing in particular situations. The participants tended to feel resistance to reflecting on their experience mostly when it involved negative emotions. They might have been afraid of facing their feelings, knowing/admitting their misunderstandings and misinterpretations about people with whom they interacted. Those participants who received supervision which focused on their learning process through reflecting on particular experiences could go through the next stage of experiential learning; they were able to understand

their experience in practice and then develop new concepts/ideas for practice and also perform differently in similar situations (reflection on action). Reflecting on themselves, their thoughts and emotions, is critical as the social work profession is connected with the worker's emotion in the job, although being aware of their own thoughts and emotions before and after practice experience can be uncomfortable. The participants realised that they cannot ignore the personal self (including their perception of experience) which is a large part of the process in social work. From their improvement of reflection, they recognise and understand the feelings, emotions and thoughts attached to their own assumptions and biases that may cause conflicts and tensions in cross-cultural settings. The insight has greater impact on development of participants when working cross-culturally (building cross-cultural relationship) in professional practice, as noted in Chapter 6. Supporting the process of learning can be an essential requirement for practitioners in their early careers when they are still developing practice skills. However, such effective supervision, which assists social work students and practitioners, is not always given to them as was often reported by the participants.

In this research, some participants received support and supervision while they were in social work programmes. On the other hand, there were very few opportunities during their career. Particularly in the conversations with practitioner participants, I perceived that some of them felt they were not adequately provided with opportunities for this type of supervision and also they were not well supported in their need for learning and development in their careers. Hence, Continuing Professional Education (CPE) may be a better option for them. CPE may be increasingly demanded to prepare for practice and to improve services in the future. Practitioners can be trained further when they need advancement at their career stages, even though CPE or advanced education may be fully or partially costed for individual practitioners. Further training and education could also provide aspirations for them, and that could progress their careers. However, the literature on CPE for social work is scarce and is even scarcer in New Zealand (Beddoe, 2006). This means that further investigation for CPE New Zealand social work is highly required.

Another crucial point that can be made here is that education for cultural competence should underpin development of social work students' and practitioners' capacity to learn and gain from experience, especially in relation to cultural conflicts and tensions in practice. This should lay greater stress on reflective learning supported by supervision. Critical reflection is a significant key for participants where they are able to develop their creative knowledge for cultural practice and also use the knowledge of 'how to' perform/respond in contextual situations through reflection in/on action. Competence-based education has a role in understanding the particular nature of cross-cultural social work practice; hence, theoretical knowledge is essential for

considering and comparing why one technique works better than another in a context and can assist in setting up practical strategies. However, this does not work in all situations. As social work is situational and has unpredictable and challenging aspects of practice, social work practitioners are expected to manage unexpected and uncertain situations all the time. On the other hand, 'knowledge of how' is generated from their experience which is more relevant to their own practice.

Reflective learning is better suited in preparing for practice and working with clients where each individual situation is unique and complex (Halton et al., 2014). The process is suggested by Fook's (2012, 2016) critical reflection, which integrates knowledge and practice. In this research, practitioner participants demonstrated their own knowledge for practice from their practice experiences. They addressed gaps between formal theory – what they know from their education and practice – with what they experienced in their practice. They critically thought about what works in situations through analysing/reflecting upon their practice experiences. Such creative knowledge for practice can be transferable to different practice contexts and practitioners are able to handle complex practice situations better and be flexible to act differently in different situations. One of the examples is that they reflect on the approach to knowledge of culture: 'learning about' culture from education. This ('learning about') can lead to relying on a fixed idea of the culture that is not adequate when working with the culture of clients. Participants also acknowledged that they may not always know about the cultures of clients as each client is uniquely different. Instead, they learn from interaction and dialogue with their clients and asking questions about their culture. In the process of moving between the gaps, they gradually create knowledge for application to practice. In such exercises they are able to use reflectivity (reflection *on* action) and they adjust their practice while they are practising (reflexivity/reflection *in* action). Education for cultural competence needs to promote critical reflection adequately. Social work students and practitioners should be encouraged to value their own tactic/implicit knowledge from both their personal and professional experiences.

Conclusion

This research was motivated by my curiosity about the influence of culture in social work practice. I had several concerns about approaches to cross-cultural practice from social work education. One is that cultural practice emphasises 'cultural difference'. I perceived from social work education and practice that working with 'cultural difference' is a major challenge in practice and a practitioner's own culture is a significant aspect of their cross-cultural practice. A crucial key is the practitioner's cultural competence in managing cultural

tensions or conflicts that may occur in practice. The first step toward developing cultural competence is awareness of the practitioner's own culture, awareness of the cultural 'difference' of others and consideration of the practitioner's own culture (influence) that may have an effect on practice relationships with clients who are from different cultures. I thought that the current way of thinking may develop further cultural barriers between client and social work practitioner in practice in which 'cultural difference' is a strong focus. At the very least, I became too cautious about cultural differences between myself and others and was scared of being inappropriate (making mistakes).

Another concern was that understanding our own culture is based on belonging to the particular group into which we are born such as race, ethnicity, gender, nationality. A person's own identity mostly defines this sense of culture in social work. I did not feel completely comfortable putting myself into a big cultural box to define myself. I was confused. My first response was, "Yes, my ethnic background is a part of me, but this does not strongly indicate to me who I am. Is this the way to understanding a person?"

I have experienced through my life that culture evolves over time and my identity(ies) change through moving between different contexts. I was born and bred in Japan. My parents are Japanese and I identity myself as Japanese. In my earlier life, I was strongly influenced by a Japanese cultural and social context, for example, my view of the world, lifestyle choice, and social relationships. I appreciate the culture that was passed on to me by my family. One example is the way of demonstrating kindness and respect to others that is ingrained in this culture. Since I moved to New Zealand, I have learned about respecting and valuing myself as a person. Thinking about only oneself may be seen as self-centred, as conformity and harmony with others within a group are important in Japanese culture. My experiences interacting with new encounters outside of my cultural group and country, and thus learning new ideas and perspectives from them, has largely made me who I am today.

Moreover, my ethnic identity is more significant in New Zealand than when I am in Japan. Although Japan society has become diverse, particularly in urban areas, the majority of the population is still Japanese, and Japan is a homogenous country. Therefore, the people often assume that everyone agrees to the same principles and has the same understandings. They are quickly aware of 'others' who do things differently from them. I used to deal with cultural shock when Japanese people treat me as 'Yosomon' (an outsider) because my Japanese language is rusty and the way I think, express, and act are not really 'Japanese-like'. While I am in New Zealand, people mostly see me as 'Asian' or 'Japanese' from my appearance. My Asian/Japanese identity is often used for distinguishing from the people of New Zealand and for medical and statistical purposes. I have

this identity crisis all the time. I believe that this is not particular to me. Do I still have to categorise myself simply as someone so that people can understand me? Do we categorise clients in order to understand them?

This type of complexity occurs in social work practice. Cultural competence tends to look at one angle of working: between a dominant cultural group of social workers and a cultural minority groups of clients in society. In New Zealand, for example, this places great emphasis on working respectfully and appropriately with Māori people due to the impact of cultural hegemony coming from historical factors as well as the power relations between themselves and Pākēhā. This is one of the practice relationships between clients and social workers. There are different variations that power may shape the client–social worker practice relationship differently. This was also seen in a case in this research which was briefly discussed in Chapter 3. When interviewing Māori participants, I might have been seen as less knowledgeable about Aotearoa New Zealand biculturalism as I am Tauiwi (non-Māori/Pākēhā). From their standpoint, I may be out of the bicultural context. In fact, some participants were curious about who conducted this research and posed some questions and comments to me. Their intentions seemed to be protective of their people from not crossing their boundary (the area of research/topic/issue) where it is sensitive to them. I am in the position of researcher, but it does not necessarily follow that I am an expert of the area (or possess power over participants).

For meeting with all participants, especially Māori participants, acceptance was important to me. This does not fit in a common relationship between a researcher and a participant. The participant–researcher relationship can be a hierarchical one as the researcher manages and is in control of the interview whereas the participant's position is not inherently one of control (Braun & Clarke, 2013). In my particular relationship with the Māori participants, they were confident in the area of study and belong to a powerful/dominant group in relation to me. Power relations are therefore not consistent, depending on contexts. Thus, the core of the research question has been developed from 'What does cultural competence really mean?' For example, cultural competence is not simply about considering minority ethnic and cultural groups of clients since 'minority' or 'dominant' status is difficult to define as power relations are contextual. Research questions were further constructed as to how social work practitioners understand cultural competence from education, how they develop their competence from education to career, how they apply it into their professional practice and then how practitioners develop their own understanding of the meaning of cultural competence, and how they approach it in their professional practice.

Cultural competence reminds us of who we are. There are many aspects that we may not always know about ourselves through interaction with people. In the same way, we may not always know about clients and

their cultures. I finally get the meaning for some participants saying, “social workers are not expert on cultures”. We cannot fully prepare for working cross-culturally with clients. Their background information before meeting may help to ask further questions and make it easier. Social workers often deal with unknown situations, constantly take risks and they make mistakes; thus, they need to accept the situations and be bold in the face of the unknown.

This research gives me confidence that we can relate ourselves to others regardless of our differences. We can relate to a client as a person in practice. Through conducting the research, I could relate to participants’ points of view, regardless of our difference. This is not because I have special skills or knowledge, but I was willing to listen to and to learn from them. This was also heard from the participants when they had worked with their clients from different cultures. This research also contributes to my professional, as well as personal, development as a person/researcher. I have improved my awareness and identity. From this I found some parts of myself that were not apparent to me before. I need to accept the changes within me, and this will keep occurring throughout my life. I no longer think of myself as a single whole that defines me. I do not need to be a certain person that may be socially expected of me as Asian/Japanese woman or researcher. I accept, respect and remind me of who I am. This approach is relevant to cultural competence which has many angles for viewing clients and social work practitioners, and the relationship between two. Much of the thinking about cultural competence tends to focus on a vertical view – of relationship between a dominant group and a minority group that leads to forming a hierarchical position between two groups. The work on cultural competence pays less attention to developing a horizontal view of the relationship between clients and social workers. Practice is developing a relationship which involves two or more people who are connected. Relations to each other should be emphasised while difference is acknowledged.

Appendix 1

Seeking Volunteers
Cross Cultural Social Work Research

What has been you experience of practicing social work that is cultural competent? How did you develop your cultural competence and how has practicing in a culturally competent way been influenced (or not) by your social work education? Most of the discussion about cultural competence has been top down; I am interesting in contributing the experiences of social work students to these discussions. These experience are vital in understanding the practice culturally competent social work. I would love to talk with you about the experience of cultural competence in your social work practice.

Eligibility to Participate

I would like to hear from you if you:

- Are currently in the final or third year of Bachelor of Social Work or Master of Applied Social Work or Master of Social Work (Professional) programme

Individual Interview

You will:

- **Share and reflect on your leaning and practice experience of cross cultural social work during your social work programme**

The interview will take approximately 90 minutes. The interview venue will be at a mutually agreed location in Auckland. All cultural backgrounds of social workers are welcome! I hope your participation helps reflecting your learning and practice which contributes to develop your cultural awareness and cross cultural skills.

Contact Information

PhD candidate: **Yayoi Ide**: y.ide@auckland.ac.nz: 09 623 8899 extn 84194
Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Auckland

Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 4th June, 2015
Reference Number: 013775

Appendix 2

Sense of own culture

- What culture they are identified with and what they have sense of cultural being
- How has their journey been in social work

Classroom experience and key leaning from education

- How their interaction with other students coming from different cultural backgrounds from them
- Have you learned other students' cultures from their own during the programme
- What have they shared their cultural perspectives and discussed with other students, and lecturers in class
- What were their key learning for knowledge and skills that relate to cross cultural practice from class

Practice training experience and key learning from practice training

- What and how have they learned or experienced from practice training relating cross cultural social work practice
- How was their relationship with clients (and supervisor and colleagues) in cross cultural setting
- What were their challenges during training

Reflection on classroom studies and practice training

- What are their awareness of the links and gaps between classroom studies and practice

Meaning of cultural competency

- What do they mean by cross cultural social work practice
- In order to work effectively in cross cultural setting, what things are you think as important

Preparation for becoming a professional practitioner

- How well do they feel prepared for working with clients from different cultures
- How do they develop their confidence

Appendix 3

School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work
Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Auckland,
74 Epsom Ave, Epsom
Private Bag 92-601 Symonds St,
Auckland NZ

Dear Prospective participant

I am Yayoi Ide, a Doctoral student from the University of Auckland and I am conducting a research of cultural competence practice for my doctoral theses. My research is entitled, *Bottom up approach to cultural competence practice*. I am seeking participants to contribute their cross cultural practice knowledge from your social work experiences. Social work practice has mostly been guided by a top-down approach from social work scholars and researchers. A particularly widely used practice model is cultural competence practice which has been insufficiently empirically researched and encompasses several assumptions. These factors may lead to a gap between theory and practice. My research intention is to explore the processes of development of practitioners' cultural competence and how their learning applies in practice. In addition I also will examine the nature of learning and practice and the extent of gaps between them, if any, in order to enhance cross cultural practice in social work. Practitioners' perspectives are highly valued and appreciated for developing social work practice.

Eligibility to Participate

I would like to hear from you if you:

- Have completed a social work degree from an New Zealand educational institution and currently have practiced a minimum of 2 years up to a maximum of 6 years in New Zealand

Individual Interview

You will:

- Share and reflect on your leaning and practice experience of cross cultural social work during your social work programme

The interview will take approximately up to 90 minutes. The interview venue will be at a mutually agreed location. All cultural backgrounds of social workers are welcome. I hope your participation helps your understanding of cross cultural social work practice.

If you would like to know more information regarding this letter or study, please feel free to contact me via email y.ide@auckland.ac.nz or telephone +64 09 623 8899 extn.84194.

Contact details for the University of Auckland researchers/supervisors

The University of Auckland Private Bag 92601 Symonds Street Auckland 1050 New Zealand Tel: +64 09 623 8899	PhD candidate: Yayoi Ide Email: y.ide@auckland.ac.nz: Extn. 84194 Supervisor: Associate Professor, Michael O'Brien Email: ma.obrien@auckland.ac.nz

	Exten. 46357 Supervisor: Associate Professor, Elizabeth Beddoe Email:e.beddoe@auckland.ac.nz Extn. 48559

 Chair contact details: —For any concerns regarding ethical issues you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 extn.87830/83761. Email: humanethics@auckland.ac.nz.

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 4th June for (3) years, Reference Number **013775**

Appendix 4

Sense of own culture

- What culture they are identified with and what they have sense of cultural being
- Brief introduction to their educational and practice backgrounds

Educational experience

- What were their key learning for knowledge and skills that relate to cross cultural practice from social work education
- How was their practice training and what did they learn about cross cultural practice on the placement while they were students

Transitional from studies to career

- How was their transitional process from studies to career?

Professional training

- What kinds of training for cultural competence practice or related cross cultural practice have they done after graduation
- How were these training useful for their practice
- When, how and what have they used supervisions for cultural training-self-directed learning for cultural practice?
- How is their organisations' cultural competency-have they shared their cultural perspectives to colleagues, managers or supervisors.

Practice experience-challenging and good cases

- How their learning has been utilised into practice through discussing their practice case examples-good and challenging cross cultural practice experiences
- What did they perceive client's problem, how did they conduct the practice, how did they interact and engage with the client, and what did they take actions and what was the outcome

Reflection on their education/professional trainings and education and practice

- What do they recognised the links and gaps between education and practice
- Where do they place their cultural and personal self in a cross cultural setting

Meaning of cultural competency

- What do they mean to be a culturally competence practice?

Appendix 5

Office of the Vice-Chancellor
Finance, Ethics and Compliance

The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019 Auckland, New Zealand

Level 10, 49 Symonds Street
Telephone: 64 9 373 7599
Extension: 87830 / 83761
Facsimile: 64 9 373 7432

UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE (UAHPEC)

04-Jun-2015

MEMORANDUM TO:
Assoc Prof Michael O'Brien Counselling,
HumServ & SocWrk

Re: Application for Ethics Approval (Our Ref. 013775): Approved

The Committee considered your application for ethics approval for your project entitled **The bottom up approach to cultural competence practice**.

We are pleased to inform you that ethics approval is granted for a period of three years.

The expiry date for this approval is 04-Jun-2018.

If the project changes significantly, you are required to submit a new application to UAHPEC for further consideration.

If you have obtained funding other than from UniServices, send a copy of this approval letter to the Research Office, at ro-awards@auckland.ac.nz. For UniServices contracts, send a copy of the approval letter to the Contract Manager, UniServices.

In order that an up-to-date record can be maintained, you are requested to notify UAHPEC once your project is completed.

The Chair and the members of UAHPEC would be happy to discuss general matters relating to ethics approvals. If you wish to do so, please contact the UAHPEC Ethics Administrators at ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz in the first instance.

Please quote reference number: **013775** on all communication with the UAHPEC regarding this application.

(This is a computer generated letter. No signature required.)

UAHPEC Administrators
University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee

c.c. Head of Department / School, Counselling, HumServ & SocWrk
Ms Yayoi Ide
Assoc Prof Elizabeth Beddoe

Appendix 6

School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work
Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Auckland,
74 Epsom Ave, Epsom
Private Bag 92-601 Symonds St,
Auckland NZ
64 9 6238899

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET
(Semi Structured Individual Interview Participants: Students)

Project title: The bottom up approach to cultural competence practice
Name of Researcher: Yayoi Ide, Doctoral candidate

Project description and invitation

I am a doctoral candidate from the Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Auckland. I am conducting the above research for my doctoral thesis supervised by Associate Professor Michael O'Brien and Associate Professor Elizabeth Beddoe. This research is to explore new practitioners' developmental processes of their cultural competence during the transitional period between their study and career, as well as how their learning for cultural competence practice is applied to their practice. Cultural competence knowledge and practice experience from practitioners will contribute to inform existing theoretical practice knowledge and to evolve the practice of social work further.
I invite you to participate in this research as a final or third year social work student who is working toward a Bachelor of Social Work or Master of Applied Social Work, Master of Social Work (Professional). All potential participants who meet the participant criteria for this research will be considered for participation. All ethnic and cultural groups of participants are welcome. All participants receive compensation in the form of a 20 dollar Westfield voucher after completing the interview.

Project procedures

Your involvement in this research is to take part in a semi-structured interview in Auckland. The interview will take up to ninety minutes. You will be asked to share your learning experience of cross cultural practice during your social work programme and to reflect on it. The interview will require recording (digital voice recording) and will be transcribed by the researcher. You will also have an opportunity to edit the transcript of the recording. If you agree to participate after considering all aspects of the research, you will be asked to give consent to it by signing an informed consent form on the day of interview. Your participation is absolutely voluntary. The summary of findings will be provided to all participants on request. The research information will be used for a PhD thesis and associated publications and will be presented at conferences and professional meetings.

Data retention

Information gathered from you will be kept in safe custody. The data including all papers, note taking and memos during the data collection and data analysis will be stored safely in locked storage by the researcher at her office located at the University of Auckland Epsom Campus. All research materials including the digital file of recordings will be protected by a secure password on my University's computer. The data will be accessed only by myself and my supervisors. The data will be kept for six years. After that period it will be destroyed as soon as the data is no longer required. This will be disposed through a university security box for confidential documents.

Right to withdraw from participation

You have the right to withdraw from participation at any stage of the research process for whatever reasons as well as the right to withdraw data you have already supplied until October 31st, 2016. Also you have the right to ask for the recorder to be turned off at any point during the interviews.

Confidentiality

Your privacy will be protected throughout this research. Particularly, confidentiality is carefully considered. Although you will be asked about your learning experience of cultural competence practice provided by your tertiary institution (and or placement agency), any description or identification of you, your social work programme, educational provider, placement agency, your clients and their residential suburbs, will not be identified. I will allocate you a pseudonym and will avoid using potentially identifying information in the report and any associated publications. There will be no disclosure and you will not be recognisable to your educational providers, supervisors, colleagues, other members or communities.

Distress and discomfort

Personally and culturally sensitive questions including rejection, racism and prejudice may trigger feelings of discomfort that you may not anticipate prior to your participation. You will be informed in advance of the interview guide which I have formed through consultations with university staff and colleagues who are from various cultural backgrounds. You may prepare for answering or not answering certain questions if you wish. If you feel any emotional, psychological and/or physical concerns due to the effect of the interview, you will be advised and supported to seek professional assistance.

Contact details

PhD candidate: Yayoi Ide
Email: y.ide@auckland.ac.nz.
Telephone: 09 623-8899 extn.84194

Supervisor: Associate Professor, Michael O'Brien
Email: ma.obrien@auckland.ac.nz
Telephone: 09 623-8899 extn.46357

Supervisor: Associate Professor, Elizabeth Beddoe
Email:e.beddoe@auckland.ac.nz
Telephone: 09 623-8899 extn.48559

Head of Department: School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work
Associate Professor, Christa Fouche
Email:c.fouche@auckland.ac.nz
Telephone: 09 623-8899 extn.48648

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 extn.83711. Email: ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz
APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 4th JUNE FOR (3) YEARS, REFERENCE NUMBER 013775

Appendix 7

School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work
Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Auckland,
74 Epsom Ave, Epsom
Private Bag 92-601 Symonds St,
Auckland NZ
64 9 6238899

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET
(Semi Structured Individual Interview Participants)

Project title: The bottom up approach to cultural competence practice
Name of Researcher: Yayoi Ide, Doctoral candidate

Project description and invitation

I am a doctoral candidate from the Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Auckland. I am conducting the above research for my doctoral thesis supervised by Associate Professor Michael O'Brien and Associate Professor Elizabeth Beddoe. This research is to explore new practitioners' developmental processes of their cultural competence during the transitional period between their study and career, as well as how their learning for cultural competence practice is applied to their practice. Cultural competence knowledge and practice experience from practitioners will contribute to inform existing theoretical practice knowledge and to evolve the practice of social work further.
I invite you to participate in this research as a practitioner who has minimum of two years and less than six years of social work experience after completion of a social work degree in New Zealand and currently practice in New Zealand. All potential participants who meet the participant criteria for this research will be considered for participation. All ethnic and cultural groups of participants are welcome. However selection may take place due to seeking participants from various cultural backgrounds. If you are interested in participating in this research, please return the consent form to the researcher via email.

Project procedures

Your involvement in this research is to take part in a semi-structured interview. The interview will take up to ninety minutes. You will be asked about your reflection on your cultural competence practice, especially your cross-cultural interaction with your clients in practice. The interview will require recording (digital voice recording) and will be transcribed by the researcher and/or transcriber. You will also have an opportunity to edit the transcript of the recording. If you agree to participate after considering all aspects of the research, you will be asked to give consent to it by signing an informed consent form on the day of interview. Your participation is absolutely voluntary. The summary of findings will be provided to all participants on request. The research information will be used for a PhD thesis and associated publications and will be presented at conferences and professional meetings.

Data retention

Information gathered from you will be kept in safe custody. The data including all papers, note taking and memos during the data collection and data analysis will be stored safely in locked storage by the researcher at her office located at the University of Auckland Epsom Campus. All research materials including the digital file of recordings will be protected by a secure password on my University's computer. The data will be accessed only by myself and my supervisors. Also a third party may view data for transcription purpose. The information given to me is confidential and must not be disclosed to and discussed with anyone other than myself and my supervisors. The transcriber signs a transcriber confidential agreement. The Data will be kept for six years. After

that period it will be destroyed as soon as the data is no longer required. This will be disposed through a university security box for confidential documents.

Right to withdraw from participation

You have the right to withdraw from participation at any stage of the research process for whatever reasons as well as the right to withdraw data you have already supplied until August 31st, 2016. Also you have the right to ask for the recorder to be turned off at any point during the interviews.

Confidentiality

Your privacy will be protected throughout this research. Particularly, confidentiality is carefully considered. Although you will be asked about your cross cultural interaction with your clients in practice, any specific description or identification of you or your clients, including your work place, and your client's residential suburb, will not be identified. I will allocate you a pseudonym and will avoid using potentially identifying information in the report and any associated publications. There will be no disclosure and you will not be recognisable to your employers, supervisors, colleagues, other members or communities.

Distress and discomfort

Personally and culturally sensitive questions including rejection, racism and prejudice may trigger feelings of discomfort that you may not anticipate prior to your participation. You will be informed in advance of the interview guide which I have formed through consultations with university staff and colleagues who are from various cultural backgrounds. You may prepare for answering or not answering certain questions if you wish. If you feel any emotional, psychological and/or physical concerns due to the effect of the interview, you will be advised and supported to seek professional assistance.

Contact details

PhD candidate: Yayoi Ide
Email: y.ide@auckland.ac.nz.
Telephone: 09 623-8899 extn.84194

Supervisor: Associate Professor, Michael O'Brien
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Telephone: 09 623-8899 extn.46357

Supervisor: Associate Professor, Elizabeth Beddoe
Email:e.beddoe@auckland.ac.nz
Telephone: 09 623-8899 extn.48559

Head of Department: School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work
Associate Professor, Christa Fouche
Email:c.fouche@auckland.ac.nz
Telephone: 09 623-8899 extn.48648

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 extn.83711. Email: ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz
APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 4th JUNE FOR (3) YEARS, REFERENCE NUMBER 013775

Appendix 8

School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work
Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Auckland,
74 Epsom Ave, Epsom
Private Bag 92-601 Symonds St,
Auckland NZ
64 9 6238899

CONSENT FORM
Semi structured Individual interview: Student
This form will be held for a period of 6 years

Project title: The bottom up approach to cultural competence practice
Researcher: Yayoi Ide

- I have read the Participant Information Sheet and I have understood the nature of the research and why I have been selected. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered to my satisfaction.
- I understand that participation in this research is voluntary and I agree to take part.
- I understand that I can refuse to answer any question
- I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time, and to withdraw any data traceable to me up to August 31st, 2016.
- I can be allocated a pseudonym when my data are reported.
- I understand that the interview will be recorded.
- I understand that the recording will be transcribed by the researcher and the data will be stored in a format accessible only by the researcher and her supervisors and kept for 6 years.
- I understand that should any distress occur during and after interviewing appropriate support will be offered.
- I agree / do not agree to review the transcripts.
- I wish / do not wish to receive a summary of findings.
- I understand that data will be kept for 6 years, after which they will be destroyed.

Name
Signature
Email address for transcript/ summary of findings
Date

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 4th JUNE 2015 FOR (3) YEARS REFERENCE NUMBER

Appendix 9

School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work
Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Auckland,
74 Epsom Ave, Epsom
Private Bag 92-601 Symonds St,
Auckland NZ
64 9 6238899

CONSENT FORM
Semi structured Individual interview: Social worker
This form will be held for a period of 6 years

Project title: The bottom up approach to cultural competence practice
Researcher: Yayoi Ide

- I have read the Participant Information Sheet and I have understood the nature of the research and why I have been selected. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered to my satisfaction.
- I understand that participation in this research is voluntary and I agree to take part.
- I understand that I can refuse to answer any question
- I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time, and to withdraw any data traceable to me up to August 31st, 2016.
- I can be allocated a pseudonym when my data are reported.
- I understand that the interview will be recorded.
- I understand that the recording will be transcribed by the researcher and/ or a transcriber and the data will be stored in a format accessible only by the researcher and her supervisors and kept for 6 years.
- I understand that the transcriber will sign a confidentiality agreement stating that the information contained within the transcription is confidential and must not be disclosed to, or discussed with, anyone other than the researcher and her supervisors.
- I understand that should any distress occur during and after interviewing appropriate support will be offered.
- I agree / do not agree to review the transcripts.
- I wish / do not wish to receive a summary of findings.
- I understand that data will be kept for 6 years, after which they will be destroyed.

Name
Signature
Email address for transcript/ summary of findings
Date

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 4th JUNE 2015 FOR (3) YEARS REFERENCE NUMBER 013775

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