THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF PARTICIPATING IN

DIVERSITY TRAINING:

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL CASE STUDY

A DISSERTATION

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Abstract

Despite significant expenditures on diversity training by organizations and increasing interest in the study of diversity training as a phenomenon by organizational scholars and practitioners, little research has been conducted regarding the lived experience of diversity training. The present study utilized hermeneutic phenomenology and case study methodologies to investigate the lived experience of participating in diversity training in a county government setting. Six county government employees who recently attended a diversity training at a large Midwestern county served as study participants. Study participants shared their insights, feelings, thoughts, emotions, and experiences regarding this unique and complex phenomenon.

The analysis revealed that participating in a diversity training is a complex and emotional phenomenon. A summary of findings suggests that the diversity training experience required participants to confront strong visceral emotions. Additionally, these emotions were cultivated over time and influenced by many facets external to the course itself with the course serving as the catalyst and providing the motivation for this convergence to take place. Finally, results indicate that study participants were left with a motivation to take personal responsibility, albeit to varying degrees, for mobilizing for change.

The knowledge acquired from this study may assist Human Resource Development (HRD) practitioners by providing additional, in depth insights and analysis beyond trainee reaction measures which may inform the design, delivery, and evaluation of diversity training interventions. Furthermore, the insights obtained from this study may assist HRD scholars by contributing a new line of research for HRD scholars as it concerns the study of this complex organizational phenomenon.

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CHAPTER ONE:

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

"You'll never find a rainbow if you're looking down." – Charlie Chaplin

Organizations, large and small, depend on their employees' ability to interact with customers and organizational members that are different than themselves (Kulik & Roberson, 2008). Toossi (2012) projected that between the years 2010 and 2020, every race and ethnicity in the United States is poised to experience growth; however, the author also noted that the share of White residents in the total population is expected to decrease. Consequently, the growth rate of Whites in the workforce is expected to decrease while those of women, Blacks, Latinx and Asians is projected to increase between the years 2014 and 2024 (Toossi, 2015), marking a significant change from past workforce compositions and suggesting increased gender diversity. These projections are similar to those of the Pew Research Center who estimated that by the year 2065, racially and ethnically diverse populations are poised to experience population growth while the population of Whites is expected to decrease (Cohn, 2015). National demographic projections, coupled with shifts and sustained growth in the racial composition of the workforce, have produced significant interest in diversity training as organizations seek to create inclusive environments that harness the talents of an increasingly diverse population.

Organizations spent $1,273 per employee on learning and development in 2016 (ATD, 2017), of which, by rough estimation, an average of several hundred dollars on a per employee basis were spent on diversity training initiatives. Exact diversity training

expenditures are difficult to locate in the literature, however, Hansen (2003) estimated what the author described as the "diversity business" to be an eight-billion-dollar industry. Despite these significant expenditures, research on the results and outcomes of diversity training have been mixed.

Despite the attention and investment in diversity training, evaluation efforts are limited, lacking rigor, and often unable to provide useful information to organizations. Additionally, the most common means of diversity training evaluation remain trainee reaction measures. Bennett (2006) declared that when organizations evaluate training, they use reaction measures over more rigorous approaches because such measures are easy to develop, quick to administer, and cost effective. Russ-Eft and Preskill (2008) offered that trainee reactions can provide useful feedback regarding the design of a training and areas for improvement. Despite this widely used approach to training evaluation, Bezrukova, Perry, Spell, and Jehn, (2016) wrote "increasing demand for diversity training due to changing workforce demographics, globalization, continuing litigation, and other trends call for a better understanding of the types of programs that can be effective" (p. 1227).

Notwithstanding the myriad contributions to diversity training knowledge gained through the exploration of previous work conducted by scholars and practitioners, a problem remains in that very few studies have examined the lived experience of participating in a diversity training and the lessons this may have for a greater understanding for the evaluation of this type of training. In my view, without the knowledge gained from this area of inquiry, Human Resource Development (HRD)

professionals are designing and implementing diversity interventions using incomplete information and potentially overlooking critical data related to the participant experience.

Definitions of Workplace Diversity

The concept of diversity is wide ranging, and consequently, workplace diversity can take many definitions and is largely dependent on context. However, it should be noted that in the organization studies literature, diversity generally refers to the composition of workforces and groups (Roberson, 2006). Organizational scholars have explored many dimensions of workplace diversity which include race and ethnicity (Cox & Blake, 1991; Cox & Nkomo, 1990), gender (Dwyer, Richard, & Chadwick, 2003), sexual orientation (Day & Greene, 2008), disability (Nafukho, Roessler, & Kacirek, 2010; Procknow & Rocco, 2016) and LGBTQ issues in the workplace (Collins, 2012). More recently, scholars have begun to examine areas such as how to harness workforce diversity and moderating effects (Guillaume, Dawson, Otaye-Ebede, Woods, & West, 2015), the importance of inclusion with diversity (Sherbin & Rashid, 2017), and explored contemporary constructs such as emotional and cultural intelligence and their applications in diverse workplaces (Clark & Polesello, 2017).

In their comprehensive review of over 40 years of diversity related research, Williams and O'Reilly (1998) noted the effects of diversity may come as a result of any attribute individuals use to differentiate themselves from another. Five years later, Konrad (2003) recognized the rather simplistic nature of using any attribute as a means of differentiation when the author wrote, in part, "if individual differences are all that is necessary to make a workplace diverse, then all groups are diverse by definition, and the entire concept of workplace diversity could become meaningless" (p. 7). Konrad further

suggested that rather than including all individual differences within the realm of workplace diversity, the related literature should instead focus on identity groups or "collectivities that people use to categorize themselves and others" (p.7). As a result of these differences in orientation, scholars have studied many facets of workforce diversity, been guided by various theories, and offered numerous findings. However, a lack of consensus and robust debate remain in terms of what constitutes workplace diversity. This debate is reflected in the literature through the variety of definitions of diversity and workplace diversity that exist. A sample of workforce diversity definitions will be discussed next.

Marques (2010) adopted a more corporate approach to the definition of workplace diversity defining the construct as "the non-discriminatory utilization of all eligible workforce members, including members of local majority ethnicities, local minority ethnicities, women, working parents, immigrants, people with different sexual orientations or interests, people with disabilities, older and younger workers" (p. 436). Harrison and Klein (2007) noted that despite the use of the word diversity and synonyms such as heterogeneity, dispersion and the like, the exact definition of diversity remains unclear. The authors defined diversity as: "the distribution of differences among the members of a unit with respect to a common attribute, X, such as tenure, ethnicity, conscientiousness, task attitude, or pay" (p. 1200). The authors further noted that diversity is a unit level construct. Finally, some scholars have offered expansive views of diversity in organizational contexts and described the construct as acknowledging, understanding, accepting, valuing, and celebrating differences among people with respect to class, ethnicity, gender, physical and mental ability, race, age, sexual orientation,

spiritual practice, and even public assistance status (Etsy, Griffin, & Schorr-Hirsch, 1995).

As demographic changes continue to take place in society at large, organizations will undoubtedly continue to face increasing workplace diversity. As a result, HRD scholars and practitioners have an opportunity to research, advise, design, and implement diversity training initiatives that will assist organizations with navigating the complexities associated with increased workplace diversity. In the section that follows, I will briefly discuss the core HRD function of training and situate diversity training within the realm of HRD.

Human Resource Development, Training, and Diversity

Employee training is a central aspect of HRD. Swanson (1995) defined HRD as "the process of developing and/or unleashing human expertise through organization development and personnel training and development for the purpose of improving performance" (p. 208). Taking a more expansive view of HRD, McLean and McLean (2001) offered the following definition:

> HRD is any process or activity that, either initially or over the long-term, has the potential to develop adult's work-based knowledge, expertise, productivity, and satisfaction, whether for personal or group/team gain, or for the benefit of an organization, community, nation, or ultimately the whole of humanity. (p. 322)

Hamlin and Stewart (2011) reviewed and analyzed HRD definitions and found that while many definitions describe what constitutes HRD and where its limits lie, four key intended purposes emerged. They are:

- Improving individual or group effectiveness and performance
- Improving organizational effectiveness and performance
- Developing knowledge, skills and competencies
- Enhancing human potential and personal growth

Organizations use diversity training as a means of instilling knowledge, promoting positive and inclusive work environments, developing intercultural skills, and fostering individual growth (Combs & Luthans, 2007) – all recognized as intended purposes and HRD responsibilities. In an increasingly diverse internal and external organizational operating environment and global economy, the HRD field claims diversity as a vital responsibility, and diversity management a key competency (Bierema, 2010).

Even though training is squarely situated within the domain of HRD, there remains a scarcity of research with respect to diversity training and HRD. For a field that is responsible for assisting organizations with maximizing performance and building inclusive cultures – among many other responsibilities – I find this lack of attention to be problematic. Bierema (2010) wrote that she has become "increasingly concerned about our field's lack of attention to diversity education and research" (p. 565). Likewise, Byrd (2014) stated that as the field of HRD continues to evolve and address modern organizational issues, HRD, as a field, will need to engage in those discussions. In my view, organizational diversity in general, and diversity training specifically are undoubtedly two of those issues. Further, it should be noted few, if any, HRD diversity studies have examined the lived experience of participating in a diversity training.

In the section that follows, I will discuss diversity and diversity training in organizations.

Diversity and Diversity Training

Since the passage of the American Civil Rights Act of 1964, organizations in the U.S. have consistently encountered increased workplace diversity and have struggled to integrate diverse others into organizations (Ross-Gordon & Brooks, 2004). Further, according to the U.S Census Bureau, the projected change in the U.S population of those under the age of 18 for the years 2014-2060, the number of Blacks, Asians, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders, and Latinx are poised to experience growth while the projected White and American Indian and Alaska Native populations are expected to decline (Colby & Ortman, 2015). These projections empirically suggest that increased workplace diversity is a phenomenon that is all but certain to continue as more individuals from these demographic communities enter the workforce. Consequently, organizations are increasingly interested in diversity training. With trends of greater diversity in organizations and in society-at-large expected to continue, there exists a need to provide training – across all organizational levels – which will assist individuals with developing sensitivity to difference (McGuire & Patterson, 2012). King, Dawson, Kravitz, and Gulick (2010) wrote "In general terms, diversity training programs are educational or developmental initiatives that address issues related to variability in employee social identities" (p. 7). Pendry, Driscoll, and Field (2007) defined diversity training as "any discrete programme, or set of programmes, which aims to influence participants to increase their positive – or decrease their negative – intergroup behaviours, such that less prejudice or discrimination is displayed towards others perceived as different in their group affiliation(s) (p. 29)."

Initially seen as an issue of human resource management (HRM), or more specifically, providing guidance and training to organizations in terms of candidate recruitment and selection to avoid litigation, organizational diversity paradigms have shifted as of late to one that seeks to gain a competitive advantage by harnessing the talents of the many through diversity management. Consequently, literature on diversity training reflects the breadth and shifting focus of the construct. Paluck (2006) described diversity training as a "catchall phrase" that leverages many different activities which may range from lectures to role play exercises. Further, the author wrote "Whether from an instructional or experiential approach, most diversity trainings are based on implicit assumptions about the value of overcoming ignorance, expressing one's hidden assumptions, or feeling empathy for an oppressed group or individual" (p. 581) - in other words, raising awareness. This raising of awareness is featured prominently in the diversity and diversity training literature.

In their review of diversity related literature, Bezrukova et al. (2012), found there are two dominant types of diversity training: awareness and behavior-based training. Lindsay (1994) noted that as diversity training requires individuals to discuss topics that often remain undiscussed, interventions often create participant fear of being considered a racist, sexist, or otherwise offensive. The extant related literature has provided some evidence to support this assertion. For example, when examining diversity's effects on diverse teams, Riordan (2000) found that with respect to racial and ethnic diversity, Whites have lower work-related attitudes when in diverse work teams which may affect cooperation and group cohesion. A more thorough review of diversity related findings will be explored in the review of literature that follows.

It should also be noted that an opportunity for qualitative inquiry into the area of diversity training exists. Organizational scholars and practitioners have qualitatively studied a range of diversity issues that have included: the pitfalls and possibilities of diversity training in the context of small and mid-size organizations (Hite & McDonald, 2006); spiritual and religious diversity training (McMinn et al., 2014); and cultural diversity teaching in medicine (Dorga, Giordano, & France, 2007). Despite this breadth of topics investigated from an interpretative perspective, many diversity training related studies have relied primarily on quantitative measures as scholars seek generalizability and practitioners seek quick feedback and data on cost effectiveness. While there is much to be learned from large sample sizes and experimental designs - and there is often an incentive for cost control in organizations - I strongly believe that without qualitative inquiry, the knowledge foundation related to diversity training is incomplete, at best.

In the section that follows, I will discuss the current models of evaluation with respect to diversity training that feature prominently in the literature.

Evaluation of Diversity Training and Needed Change

Investigation of the lived experience of participating in diversity training has the potential to provide scholars and practitioners with much needed knowledge that is currently lacking. Most of the extant data acquired regarding diversity training, and the training experience, has come from reaction measures provided by course participants. While these data are valuable, I contend that due to the unique nature of these types of HRD interventions, much can be gained from the study of the lived experience. Kraiger, Ford, and Salas (1993) wrote "although training evaluation is recognized as an important component of the instructional design model, there are no theoretically based models of

training evaluation" (p. 311). I submit, many years later, this assessment on the lack of theoretical foundations still holds true for diversity training.

Consistent with the evaluation of most learning and development interventions, diversity training is often only evaluated at the trainee reaction level (Rynes &Rosen, 1995). In their meta-analysis of training evaluation research, Bezrukova et al. (2016) examined the effects of diversity training on trainee cognitive, behavioral, and attitudinal learning as well as trainee reactions. Holladay and Quinones (2005) explored diversity training trainee reactions and noted the interaction between trainee culture, perceptions of diversity training, training utility, and trainer effectiveness.

The challenges of training evaluation in general, and diversity training in particular remain, inextricably linked. Kraiger et al. (1993) noted the shortcomings of using reaction level measures and advocated for a more multi-dimensional approach to training evaluation. Further, the authors developed a model of training evaluation which examines the effect of a training intervention across cognitive, behavioral, and skill-based outcomes. In the diversity training evaluation literature, this model features prominently along with the ubiquitous Kirkpatrick model. Asserting the goal of diversity training is to increase participant knowledge with respect to diversity, improve attitudes as they relate to diversity, and enhance diversity skills, Kulik and Roberson (2008) examined the effects of diversity training on knowledge, attitudes, and skill and concluded that diversity education has a positive effect on participant outcomes across these dimensions. Likewise, Roberson, Kulik, and Pepper (2009) conducted a longitudinal field study in which they measured diversity training effects across affective, cognitive, and behavioral measures as well as transfer strategies and found support for the usefulness and validity

of the Kraiger model. In summary, despite concern at the overall lack of research, existing diversity training literature reflects that scholars and practitioners are beginning to embrace a more multi-dimensional approach to diversity training evaluation.

Kalinoski et al. (2013) wrote "practitioners have quantitative evidence that diversity training changes affective-based, cognitive-based, and skill-based trainee outcomes" (p. 1076). However, a search of the literature for phenomenological diversity training studies produced scant results with respect to research which examined the lived experience in organizational contexts. It should also be noted that public sector diversity training research and methods largely mirror those of private sector organizations with fewer qualitative studies available for review. In the section that follows, I will discuss diversity in the public sector.

Workforce Diversity, Diversity Training, and the Public Sector

Public sector organizations operate in a largely unique environment. Hartley and Skelcher (2008) recognized the distinct nature of public service management and noted that it is often complex, political, and subject to a high degree of scrutiny and accountability. As public-sector organizations are funded by the taxpayers of a particular jurisdiction, one may expect these organizations to serve as the quintessential microcosm in which to study diversity and diversity training. Page, Oldfield, and Urstad (2008) recognized this when the authors noted "Public service has played and continues to play a leading role historically in developing and modelling equal opportunities initiatives in employment and service delivery" (p. 369). However, as public organizations become increasingly diverse, public sector managers must work to acquire the skills necessary to

be successful in the new contemporary workforce and demographic environment (Ewoh, 2013).

In U.S. organizational contexts, diversity training is frequently used to provide the skills necessary to interact with individuals that are different. Most U.S. public sector organizations have implemented diversity management interventions designed to raise awareness, address intercultural sensitivities, recognize the value in diversity, reduce inequality, and address any cultural issues (Soni, 2000). Further, as noted by Wise and Tschirhart (2000), the concept of managing for diversity is gaining popularity in both public and private organizations as evidenced by investments of time and resources into diversity programs and strategies.

Considering both the interest in, and the imperative on, public sector organizations with respect to workforce diversity, it could be expected that there would be a robust literature available to guide public sector practitioners as they navigate the complexities of a diverse workforce. Pitts (2005) identified two research streams that address the issue of organizational diversity in the public sector: representative bureaucracy and research on diversity effects. Clark, Jr., Ochs, and Frazier (2013) wrote "Representative bureaucracy refers to the relationship between a demographically representative public service and policy outcomes" (p. 77). Further, the authors noted that underlying this theory is the belief that public service administrators, through their diverse backgrounds, status, and experience, may make government more responsive to demographic changes.

Research on the effects of diversity in the public sector is primarily concerned with how increased organizational diversity impacts organizational performance. Pitts

and Jarry (2007) examined the effects of ethnic diversity on organizational performance in Texas Public Schools and found manager diversity to be non-significant in terms of predicting performance at the organizational level. However, the authors found teacher diversity to be consistently significant in having a negative impact on performance. These findings were consistent with those of Choi and Rainey (2010) who in their study of the effects of diversity, diversity management, and perceived organizational performance in U.S federal agencies found racial diversity to be negatively related to organizational performance. However, it should also be noted that diversity management practices and team processes served as a moderator in terms of organizational performance. I contend that these findings highlight the importance of the role of organizational culture on diversity initiatives.

Overall, my initial review of the public-sector literature related to workforce diversity and diversity training in the public sector suggests opportunities for further study remain. While much has been written regarding the importance of valuing and managing for diversity in public sector organizations, diversity's impact on organizational performance remains unclear. Wise and Tschirhart (2000) recognized this when they wrote:

> Public managers who want to integrate a managing-for-diversity approach into their leadership behaviors and into the policies, structure, and culture of their organizations are likely to have a difficult time identifying lessons from the research literature that can be reliably applied to actual work situations. (p. 386)

Finally, it is important to note that my review of public sector literature as it relates to the lived experience of participating in a diversity training in the public sector produced few results. In my view, such an exploration may provide deeper insight regarding how diversity training effects individual development and provide guidance to HRD practitioners who design interventions.

Summary

The impact of changing workplace demographics cannot be overstated. It is clear that organizations are encountering increased diversity in many forms. These forms include, but are not limited to: ethnic, cultural, individuals with disabilities, multi-generational workforce, diversity with respect to sexual orientation and gender identity, and the primary foci of this study, racial diversity. Despite significant investment in diversity training initiatives by organizations, the results of diversity training research may be described as limited with findings providing guidance for practice that is, at best, mixed. Several factors contribute to this however, it is important to note that scholars and practitioners have principally relied on reaction measures to evaluate training and gain an understanding of the experience. While the evaluation of training is not the focus of this primarily phenomenological work, I submit, training evaluation research is important to consider in that it comprises much of the available research on the diversity training experience and highlights the opportunity to investigate the lived experience of participating in diversity training. I contend that such investigation may expand the body of knowledge available with respect to this unique and complex phenomenon. Finally, of note, is that my initial review of the diversity training literature produced no studies

which investigated the lived experience of diversity training, however, it does not mean that they do not exist.

Workplace diversity, as a construct, is quite broad in its orientation and exploration. Scholars and practitioners have engaged in a debate and have been unable to achieve agreement on what constitutes workplace diversity. Some authors take a more expansive view of diversity and define the construct as concerning any attribute of perceived difference while others argue that the focus should be on the how the effects of diversity manifest themselves through the collective by focusing on identity groups or human associations. What is also important to note is that these constructs often intersect making it difficult to determine which facet of individual diversity takes precedence. As a researcher, this represents opportunity to me and further validates this academic endeavor.

Training in general, and diversity training specifically, are clearly situated within the responsibility of HRD. This is primarily due to HRD's focus on increasing organizational effectiveness and individual performance through creating positive work environments and building inclusive cultures. HRD scholars and practitioners are tasked with the design and delivery of diversity training initiatives. Despite these significant responsibilities, however, organizational diversity broadly, and diversity training in particular have remained largely understudied in the HRD field. I contend, this represents a significant opportunity to expand the collective knowledge base as it concerns diversity training to assist organizations as they navigate this often-complex organizational operating environment. It is important to note that an increasing number of HRD scholars have heeded the call to engage in organizational diversity related scholarly work as

evidenced by the growing number of studies (Collins, 2017; Hite & McDonald, 2010; Pleasant, 2017; Williams & Mavin, 2014). I suggest this is very promising as the available data show that this organizational phenomenon is expected to continue as the workforce, and consequently, the workplace, continue to become more diverse – irrespective of how the construct is defined.

It is clear that since the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 organizations have been struggling to deal with the explosion of increased organizational diversity. It is also promising that the organizational paradigm with respect to the accommodation of this increased diversity has shifted from one concerned principally with legal and regulatory compliance toward the recognition of the value in diversity and leveraging diversity as a means of competitive advantage. Considering the nature of public sector organizations and their frequent employ of representative bureaucracy, it could be expected they would serve as the quintessential microcosm of diversity reflection and practices. However, it should be noted that my review of the related literature found that research and publications focused on public sector diversity largely reflects the literature more broadly, with few studies conducted in the public sector and fewer still on examination of participant experiences with, diversity training. Consequently, it appears that an opportunity for qualitative inquiry into diversity training exists and this study endeavors to take advantage of this gap in the literature.

In the following section, I will discuss the purpose of this study, explore how the present study contributes to expanding the body of diversity training literature and knowledge, and present the over-arching research question that guided this study.

Purpose of Study and Research Question

Approximately 20 years ago, Williams and O'Reilly (1998) wrote "With the changes in the demography of the workforce, understanding the effects of visible attributes is even more important than it used to be" (p. 80). Even a cursory review of the diversity literature will reveal that the body of knowledge available on diversity training is quite developed; although, there are few studies that examine the lived experience of participating in a diversity training. The present study provides the opportunity to supplement existing empirical work, gain a more in-depth understanding from the participants' point of view, and potentially provide direction for future research. Further, it is hoped that this work may inspire others to pursue similar lines of inquiry with respect to this dynamic and important area of organizational research. Expressly, this study will accomplish this through examination of the following research question:

What is the lived experience of participating in diversity training?

To answer this question, this study will utilize aspects of both phenomenological and case study research methodologies. According to van Manen (1997), phenomenology is the systematic attempt to uncover and describe the structures and internal meaning of lived experience. Creswell (1998) summarized that the case study methodology may be used to provide an in depth understanding of a case. Additionally, the author noted that the unit of analysis of a case study may be an activity, a program, or more than one individual. As the present study examined the lived experience of participating in a diversity training, specifically in a public-sector setting, I contend that this amalgamation of case study and phenomenological methodologies allowed for a more robust

examination of the lived experience of participants in diversity trainings by examination of the voices, perspectives, and actual of lived experience.

Summary

Although there exists a collection of knowledge available to scholars and practitioners regarding organizational diversity and diversity training, opportunities for further study remain. Further, much of the knowledge concerning diversity training and the training experience has been gathered through trainee reaction measures and academic studies which apply quantitative methods to explore this phenomenon. I submit, much can be learned through qualitative inquiry of diversity training. Consequently, this study's purpose was to add to the existing knowledge by contributing the voices of diversity training participants through the application of phenomenological and case study methodologies and subsequent interpretation of their lived experience of participating in this diversity training in a public-sector environment. Finally, it is my hope that this work will inspire other human resource development and organizational scholars to pursue similar lines of study to add to the robustness of the diversity training literature.

CHAPTER TWO:

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

"Know from whence you came. If you know from whence you came, there are absolutely

no limitations to where you can go." – James Baldwin

To limit potential bias through the influence of findings of previous work related

to diversity training, a brief preliminary review of literature was conducted. This review

was performed consistent with Sylvester, Tate, and Johnstone (2013) who noted that the

purpose of such literature reviews is to synthesize the extant literature and identify gaps

in knowledge.

Electronic searches were conducted primarily using the University of Minnesota's

library database which provided access to major journals and databases such as EBSCO

Host, Business and Source Premier. Additionally, Google Scholar and physical copies of

human resource development journals such as *Advances in Developing Human*

Resources, Human Resource Development Quarterly, and *Human Resource Development*

Review were reviewed. Initial search terms were broad, and examples of queries included

"qualitative HRD studies of diversity training," "diversity training in organizations," "the

lived experience of diversity training," "workplace diversity," "human resource

development and diversity training," "diversity training outcomes," "public-sector

workplace diversity," and "diversity training in the public sector." These search terms

allowed for sufficient examination of the relevant literature and substantiated the need for

the present study while having the effect of limiting bias as it concerns the findings of

previous studies. Only those studies that were deemed relevant in terms of framing or

discussing the increased organizational diversity prevalent today were included in the

study. It is also important to note that some queries such as "the lived experience of diversity training" and "diversity training in the public-sector" produced few usable results. Approximately 50 studies were reviewed with approximately 30 included in the preliminary literature review.

Before I discuss the diversity prevalent in contemporary society, and consequently, the organizational environment, it is important to first discuss the forces and trends that have led to increased workforce diversity. In 1964 the U.S. Congress passed the Civil Rights Act. Title VII of this law made it unlawful for an employer to "fail or refuse to hire or to discharge any individual, or otherwise to discriminate against any individual with respect to his compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges or employment, because of such individual's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin" (Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, 1964). Additionally, the legislation created the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and charged that body with oversight and implementation of the law. As written by Cox and Nkomo (1990), "this legislation contributed to significant changes in the composition of the workforce and provided a major impetus for academic researchers in management and related fields to study racial issues in the workplace" (p. 419).

Additionally, the Equal Pay Act of 1963, the Age Discrimination Act of 1967, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 provided additional workplace protections as it concerned wages and gender, age, and disabilities, respectively. Passage of these laws provided the foundation for the myriad forms of diversity prevalent in organizations today. Moreover, these laws created a new imperative for organizations in terms of hiring, onboarding, training, and integrating individuals – basically the people

management process - of differing backgrounds into the organization. Initially, these responsibilities mainly fell within the domain of HRM professionals (Shen, Chanda, D'Netto & Monga, 2009). The following section will briefly discuss the topic of diversity management and HRM.

Diversity and Human Resource Management

As workforce diversity became more pervasive, organizations and researchers began to make what would be referred to as the "business case for diversity." The business case for diversity postulates that diversity is not just the right thing to do, rather, it may be a strategic contributor in organizations and impact productivity, motivation, innovation, cost reduction, and overall competitiveness (Bagshaw, 2004). Further, organizations and their leaders began to establish paradigms for managing increased diversity and harnessing it toward the attainment of organizational goals and effectiveness (Thomas & Ely, 1996). These authors also noted that with respect to managing diversity, organizations usually take one of two paths: they expect women and minorities to blend in or they assign them to roles that relate specifically to their background such as placement in jobs that require them to interact with those from the same identity group. It would seem these authors recognized this discriminatory approach as ineffective.

With time and continued increases in workforce diversity, organizations, scholars, and practitioners began to shift and explore concepts such as linking strategic diversity management to organizational culture and inclusion as effective diversity management requires a strategic approach to HRM (Shen et al., 2009). Additionally, the authors noted that strategic diversity management requires HRM practices to be reflected in employee

recruitment and selection, training and development (an HRD mandate), pay and compensation, performance appraisals, and occur at the strategic, tactical, and operational levels. Dwyer, Richard, and Chadwick (2003) asserted that to be effective, diversity management requires that organizations create cultures of inclusion which foster organizational environments that encourage and nurture teamwork and cohesiveness. This concept of creating inclusive organizational cultures (also an HRD mandate) which foster diversity will be explored in more detail in the HRD section of this literature review.

At its core, organizational commitment to inclusion is about access and full organizational membership. Roberson (2006) recognized that inclusion is different from diversity. The author noted that while diversity is concerned with demographics and the makeup of the organization's population, inclusion centers around concepts such as employee engagement and the general integration of the organizational diversity into the processes of the organization. Finally, as stated by Turnbull, Greenwood, Tworoger, and Golden (2010) "If the organizational goal of embedding an inclusive environment is at odds with the values, behaviors, attitudes and feelings of its employees, then the goal will not be fully achieved" (p. 2).

The question remains, how have organizations, HRM professionals, and researchers done in terms of guiding this transition from merely complying with legal requirements to recognizing value in diversity? In their study providing an international perspective to managing diversity through HRM, Shen at al. (2009) critically examined the diversity management literature and found that inequality and discrimination remain prevalent in organizations and further noted that HRM has remained focused on legal and

regulatory compliance and less on valuing and leveraging diversity for its positive attributes. These findings represent an opportunity for HRD scholars and practitioners.

Now that I have provided a brief history of workforce diversity within the area of HRM, I will now move toward an examination of workforce diversity, diversity training, and HRD.

Human Resource Development, Workforce Diversity, and Diversity Training

As noted previously, accommodation of increased workforce diversity often requires organizational culture change and training and development interventions (Cox & Blake, 1991) which are usually viewed as core components of HRD professional practice. An examination of the response from HRD to increased workforce diversity also requires a review of the history of the development of diversity initiatives in HRD research and practice.

Nearly 30 years ago, McLagan (1989) considered possible future scenarios for HRD in the 1990's and predicted, in part, that the workforce would undergo significant changes. Among the changes predicted, was that the workforce would become more diverse. These assertions were contemporaneously supported by those of Kimmerling (1989) who postulated that in the future, the field of HRD would be influenced in part by an increasing number of women and minorities in the workplace. Additionally, Yeomans (1989) advocated for what the author described as an HRD renewal and noted that HRD would be called on to, among other things, provide guidance to managers on how to deal with increased workforce diversity and attitudes that may be different than their own. As predicted by these HRD scholars, the workforce has become more diverse and as a result,

HRD has been called on to help organizations address the issues associated with a more diverse workforce.

In the 1990's, the field of HRD responded to increased workforce diversity by advocating for tapping into the power of a diverse workforce (Galagan, 1991) and recognizing the value in diversity (Carnevale & Stone, 1994). Further, it is during this time that the concept of diversity training began to appear in the HRD related literature. Additionally, in a literary conversation which largely mirrored that of HRM and other organizational studies disciplines, HRD scholars began to discuss concepts such as "managing diversity" and the "business case for diversity" (Moore, 1999; Wentling & Palma-Rivas, 1998). Finally, it should be noted that whether the organization's operational paradigm was one of managing diversity or making the business case for diversity, diversity training was often used as a means of accomplishing these goals.

As organizations began to shift in their orientation from the moral reasons for diversity training toward recognizing the value in diversity as a form of competitive advantage, concepts such as managing for diversity began to appear in the related literature. Iles (1995) asserted that diversity competencies were not only essential for recruiting, selecting, and training but also to assist in building cross cultural teams and other cross-cultural interaction activities such as negotiations. Carnevale and Stone (1994) observed that organizations use many initiatives in their efforts to manage and value diversity, one of which is diversity training. During this time, the authors noted, two types of diversity training were prevalent: awareness training and skill-based training. Awareness training sought to increase individual awareness related to items such as assumptions and stereotyping whereas, skill-based training focused on developing

skills to effectively deal with workplace diversity. This is consistent with the contention of Hanover and Cellar (1998) who identified the goals of diversity training as: increasing awareness of issues related to diversity, reducing biases and stereotypes, and changing behaviors to more effectively manage a diverse workforce.

It is noteworthy to consider that during this time in the HRD literature, scholars were also debating the effects of diversity and the concept of managing for diversity. Thomas (1994) described managing diversity as a "desirable and profitable aim" (p. 60). In the context of developing learning organizations, Marsick and Watkins (1994) wrote about how societal pressures impact organizational transitions to becoming learning organizations and described the challenges organizations face with respect to the inclusion of those different from the White male which had dominated organizations. Further, the authors described managing diversity as an effort to control others in hopes of minimizing disruption of the norm.

Over the past two decades, HRD scholars and practitioners have explored many aspects of diversity training. In general terms, most studies have examined the factors that contribute to the success or failure of diversity training and engaged in discussions related to diversity training evaluation. Further, it should be noted the majority of these studies have applied quantitative approaches. Holladay, Knight, Paige, and Quiñones (2003) examined the influence of framing (training title, focus, and assignment) on participant attitudes toward a diversity training and found no support for their postulate that any single feature of framing effected pre-training attitudes. However, it should be noted that the authors did find that features of framing collectively had an impact. Additionally, the authors found support for their hypothesis that participant gender

effected attitudes toward the diversity training intervention. Specifically, males were found to perceive backlash and view the organizational messages less favorably. Finally, the hypothesis that men and women would respond differently in terms of pre-training attitudes to the diversity training's framing was supported.

Summary

My initial review of the literature suggests that organizations have been working to accommodate increased workplace diversity since the passage of the Civil Rights Act. This powerful law mandated a shift in organizational operating paradigms in that it forced organizations to broaden their choices when it comes to talent recruitment and selection or face potential legal penalties. Furthermore, the impact of this act produced a change at all organizational levels considering that prior to this law's passage, organizations were mostly comprised of White males with this reflected in most organizational policies, procedures, and organizational structures. This is reflected in the literature as it related to concepts such as inclusion and access; although this issue is beyond the purview of this work, however, it is worthy of note.

Organizational diversity was primarily seen as a responsibility of human resource management (HRM) as these professionals were tasked with reducing organizational exposure to legal and regulatory risks. Like the HRD literature, HRM scholars and practitioners' approach toward increased organizational diversity shifted over time from compliance with all laws and regulations to recognize the benefits diversity can bring to a business. Furthermore, HRM scholars and professionals began to recognize that the accommodation of increased organizational diversity often requires commitment from leadership, organizational culture changes, and inclusive practices. My review of the

HRM literature suggests that although much work has been done, much remains. Again, it is encouraging to see this recognized in scholarly work and in practice and suggests that such efforts are being taken seriously.

In the field of HRD, some scholars saw these demographic changes on the horizon and recognized the unique role that HRD can play in terms of assisting organization with accommodating this increased workplace diversity. Despite these predictions, my review of the literature suggests that as a field, HRD was late in direction of focus towards issues related to organizational diversity. My preliminary literature review also suggests that as organizational operating paradigms as they relate to diversity shifted, so, too, did their actions designed to accommodate increased diversity. Diversity training was used as means of developing the requisite skills and competencies necessary to accomplish organizational goals in a diverse environment, reduce individual biases, stereotypes, and drive behavior change. Despite diversity training's prevalence in organizations today, few scholars have explored the lived experience of participating in such training.

In the section that follows, I will discuss my individual history with diversity, my resulting interest in the topic, and explore my personal beliefs in an attempt to bracket my personal biases.

Researcher History, Interest, and Personal Bias

My life has been touched by diversity for as long as I can remember. I was born in the late 1970's to an unmarried couple. As was common in the Black community at that time, my parents separated and my time was split between the two households. In 1981, my father met a woman, fell in love, and shortly thereafter, they were married. This was

perhaps my earliest memory of racial and theistic diversity as my father's new wife was both White and Jewish and came from a family that was truly immersed in their faith and Jewish lifestyle. This was significant for many reasons. First, reflecting their Louisiana and Mississippi roots, my mother and father were both raised in Southern Baptist households, like many, a symbol of their legacy acquired during slavery. I remember growing up and hearing about the power of Jesus and prayer. Secondly, this was significant because it was the first time that I experienced having a parent that was not Black.

Over the years, I participated in many Hanukkah and Yom Kippur celebrations, wore a Yamakuh and consumed more Gifelte fish and Manischewitz products than a Black person would usually consume in a lifetime. While initially I felt strange participating in these events (I am not Jewish), my father reminded me that it is always important to keep an open mind and that it was our duty to show our respect for Donna's religion. My step-grandparents were ultimately very supportive, although not initially very accepting of my father's interracial relationship. This, too, served as a critical moment in my development and perspective as it served to show that ultimately, people can grow and learn to be accepting of things they once considered anathema to their personal beliefs or preferences.

As time progressed (mid to late 1980's), I began to notice that family gatherings on my mother's side of the family were beginning to look very similar to my father's side. More specifically, of my mother's three brothers, two of them married Caucasian women which produced biracial cousins for me (some were already there as I am the oldest child of my grandparent's youngest child). At this time in Southern California, the

Latino population was beginning to significantly increase. This led to a few of my aunt's marrying Latino husbands. When you take into account my older cousins whose dating preferences included Asians, Persians, Blacks, and everything in between, you can get a sense of what my family began to look like. I often joke that Christmas, or even a regular cookout on a Saturday afternoon, looked like a conference of the United Nations was taking place at my grandmother's house.

During a period of my high school years, I began to explore the writings of Malcolm X and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Like many young people presented with a choice between non-violence and a more assertive, hands on approach, I felt more compelled to adopt the views of Malcolm X. As you may imagine, this contributed to a more, shall we say, challenging environment in my home considering at during this period of time I lived with my Dad, stepmother, and sister. As the writings of Malcom X began to influence my worldview, I became increasingly, well, racist. I temporarily abandoned (or at least obscured) knowledge of the benefits I came to recognize and admire in terms of growing up in a multiracial and multicultural family. I began to see my stepmother as nothing more than a repressive force that was not interested in my wellbeing but rather as some covert agent looking to control my father – I was clearly an idiot!

During this time, rather than punish or become repelled by my newly obtained worldview, my stepmother, and father, for that matter, allowed me to go through this phase uninhibited. As I reflect back on these days I can now imagine how difficult it must have been to allow someone to hold such views – especially when this person lived in your house, ate your food, and you nursed them back to health when they were sick. This

must have been more challenging considering this person did not share biological links to you. It was not until my high school English teacher, Ms. Baker, noticed my attitude change and became concerned. One day, she asked me to stay after class and it was that day that another critical point in my development was to take place. Ms. Baker, leaning on our candid personal relationship, reminded me that she was White and we got along fine (she was my favorite teacher) and further reminded me of the love that must be required from the perspective of my stepmother to deal with this attitude in her own home. Still resistant, I recall communicating that while there may be a few "good Whites" out there, the majority of them would like to see my people back in chains. After much back and forth, she made me realize that my father and Donna come from a generation where they encountered much criticism regarding their relationship and yet endured and it was unfair to them to have to encounter this at home. She also made me realize that much progress had been made since the days of Malcom X and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and that while there was much more progress to be made. Ms. Baker reminded me that the views that I held were no different from the views White racists held only reversed. She encouraged me to be the change I wanted to see. It clicked!

In 1997, after I graduated high school, I immediately attended California State University, Northridge. While there, I continued to develop my newly reacquired perspective and made friends from very diverse backgrounds. At the request of one of my friends, I attended a party at the Phi Delta Theta house on campus. The Phi Delts were an overwhelmingly Caucasian fraternity but had a reputation for throwing the best parties on campus. During the party I attended, I was offered a bid - extended an invitation to pledge the fraternity – I accepted along with my best friend at the time. As word began to

spread around campus, my boss at the time became frustrated that I had chosen to pledge a fraternity that was not exclusively African American. Having recently expanded to accepting other races and with the knowledge that he was a brother in a Black fraternity, I understood. However, it still felt weird that my boss was engaging in these discussions with a subordinate regarding personal life choices. It was at this point that I had to learn how to deal with pressure from "my own" around issues of race and defend my decisions to expand my associations. I vividly remembered communicating that I made the decision not exclusively based on race but rather because my best friend and I made the decision together, I enjoyed hanging out with the guys and felt comfortable. I was basically branded a sell-out as far as he was concerned but that didn't bother me, I was happy with my new, expanded set of friends and brothers – many of whom I remain close with now over 20 years later.

My boss' feelings didn't bother me. Black fraternities and sororities exist because we were not given access to the White ones. We were deemed unworthy and were forced to go about other ways of fulfilling that need for brother and sisterhood - which is common across all races and cultures, I might add. We created our own fraternal organizations. With that in mind, I can understand how my former boss felt and his strong opinion that we honor the legacy of our ancestors by building upon it. Over the course of my time in Northridge, I made many friends and grew individually and professionally. Unfortunately for me, at this time I was not focused on my education and ended up failing all of my classes and was subsequently dismissed from the university. At 19 years old, I took a break from school and got a job at a bank.

Over the next five years, I would go on to learn about banking and finance, work with talented individuals of all races, cultures, and ethnicities, and continue to grow. However, despite the many introductions made and relationships cultivated, I noticed something. I noticed that while many of the organizations I worked for were generally diverse, many of the individuals in leadership roles were often White and male. I began to wonder why that was. Throughout my life, I have been told that I am a natural leader. That I possessed a certain je ne sais quoi about me that allowed me to connect with others, gain buy in, and lead them toward a shared goal. In truth, I knew this myself but it was not until a few years later that I began to develop it.

During my professional life in banking, I often found myself being one of the few managers of color in my area. During my undergraduate studies, I was the first Black president of the campus business and economics club – twice and different ends of the state of California - although it should be noted that during my experience in Southern California, I had a Latinx co-founder. These experiences raised questions for me because while talented, I never considered myself to be one of the above anyone. Surely, I couldn't have been the first Black student to want to lead a business and economics club? Likewise, surely, I couldn't have been the only qualified Black candidate for managerial positions at banks? Nevertheless, as these questions began to populate my mind, I placed them on the back burner to engage in regular normal activities of a twentysomething kid.

It was also during this time that in my personal life I began dating the woman who would eventually become my wife, life partner, and primary support structure – who incidentally happens to be White – and began to build a life. The irony of a self-proclaimed racist marring a woman of Irish and German heritage is not lost on me.

Together, we created two very beautiful children, merged two very different families, and continue to enjoy all of the benefits and challenges associated with a multiracial family. At the beginning of this period, I was also a manager in the banking sector and made sure that my offices and teams – almost to an exclusion – very diverse. This diversity encompassed racial and cultural diversity, gender diversity, and I did my best to cultivate thought diversity. You see, I believe in and see the value in diversity. I have personally leveraged diversity in both the workplace and in my personal life as a means of accomplishing goals and personal growth. Perhaps this is why when I read studies which find that team racial diversity often creates conflict or that diverse team performance outcomes are inferior to those of homogenous teams, or that leaders of color are do not command the same respect as White leaders, I find this difficult to understand. Further, when I read studies which assert that the primary value in diversity is that it allows firms to leverage Somali's to reach Somali consumers or Koreans to reach Koreans or the disabled to reach the disabled, I think it reflects a very narrow understanding of how workforce diversity can be used.

As I have participated in many diversity trainings whose focus has been to raise awareness, I often leave those interventions - which were well designed and facilitated - feeling a sense of renewal. That maybe the other participants got a sense of the challenges and stereotypes that Black Americans face daily. That maybe some of the problems that we face as a society are due to a lack of exposure to the "other" and that through these training, if done properly, individuals can begin to contemplate the profound racial questions as I did many years ago during my conversations with Ms. Baker. That they may understand that even although I am Black that is merely a small part of who I am. I

am a husband, father, leader, student, researcher, former campus club executive, consultant, classmate, class facilitator, and organizational colleague and fellow American.

While I remain a proponent of diversity in most of its forms, I also understand that when it comes to these issues, they are both deeply rooted and personal. As a result, shifting mental models and moving toward an understanding with respect to diversity often requires time, perspective, and individual growth. Additionally, there needs to be a catalyst. That catalyst can be a move, a recent experience, or work. To that end, I believe in the power of organizations to create change and inspire shifts in thinking. As I reflect, I strongly contend that organizations have played a critical role in my development. The organizations that educated me provided me with the opportunity to expand my thinking and engage with those different from me. This was evidenced in my undergraduate studies where I had the pleasure of making friends with people that I otherwise may not have had the opportunity to interact with. This includes my fraternity brothers, friends, fellow business and economics club members, fellow students, and highly educated professors.

The organization of family provided me with the opportunity to form familial bonds with individuals that while not directly chosen by me, became family nonetheless and accepted all of the responsibilities that accompanied their choice. Examples of this include my step-mother, step-grandparents, aunts and uncles by marriage, and resulting offspring. As noted earlier, my extended family is very racially and culturally diverse and while I was not initially accepting of some at times, their compassion and understanding now has proven to be instrumental in my development.

The organization that is marriage has perhaps had the most profound impact on me in terms of how I see the works and the value of diversity. This is the case because as noted previously, my wife is White and my children biracial. While this union has revealed much regarding differences in race, it is perhaps the nonracial elements that have had the most profound impact to my way of seeing the world. My wife and I have different stories. I am the product of unmarried parents while my wife's parents have been married for 49 years. I grew up primarily in South Central Los Angeles while my wife grew up in rural Northern California. My relationship with law enforcement – as with many in my community - can best be described as tenuous at best, my father-in-law is a retired police officer. My mother received federal assistance when I was growing up while my mother-in-law was an entrepreneur. My parents did not graduate from college, my mother-in-law did. The list goes on.

Much like how my upbringing and experiences have helped shape my worldview, epistemology, and ontology, I must accept that my wife's experiences have shaped hers. It may come as no surprise to learn that at times, these differences present challenges. The challenges are further exacerbated when they concern our children. My racially diverse marriage has provided me perhaps the most valuable lesson as it pertains to and area of diversity that is largely overlooked: thought diversity. It has reminded me that although we may disagree on many things, as long as we have each other's best interest at heart, we can make it through whatever is thrown at us. My marriage has served as a reminder that although two people can come from completely different worlds and racial backgrounds, they can create something together that is beautiful. The organization that is

marriage and immediate family reminds me daily that there is beauty in difference and in ideal situations, its outcome can be something that reflects the best of all inputs.

The work organizations that I have served in have also proved instrumental in my development and the way I see the world. It is through my work organizations that I have been exposed to so much diversity. Whether is it working on a team that was comprised of team members that were ethically, racially, or culturally diverse or working for a female manager in a male dominated industry, my work organizations have taught me lessons about what can be accomplished when people, often of different backgrounds, come together to achieve a common goal. I have witnessed first-hand how common goals can erase individual preferences and mitigate biases. Further, I have seen the power of transformational leadership and the role it can play in bringing people together.

All of the experiences detailed above have shaped my worldview and have reinforced my constructivist orientation. These experiences have served to remind me that reality is socially constructed and depending on where, how, and what experiences shape an individual's life and resulting worldview and biases. As I write this, America is undergoing significant change. Race relations are faltering, African Americans are often killed in the streets without due process, Democrats are worse than Russians and Republicans are considered fascists. Professional sports teams no longer wish to attend celebrations at the White House, and it seems there are constant calls for boycotts of everything, depending on what end of an issue an individual may fall. Families are being torn apart at the nation's southern border and immigrants – particularly those of color – are seen as unworthy and as stealing the jobs of Americans. In my view, we lack the transformational leadership needed to overcome such obstacles. We have become victims

of our own biases to the extent that we no longer wish to conquer them but rather seek to reinforce them. We are living in a time where organizations, large and small, are working to provide the leadership necessary to overcome these challenges – often going against lawmakers and policy – and accommodate and harness the power of diversity, often using diversity training as a tool to accomplish this. I think this is noteworthy considering that typically, organizations react to legal and regulatory policy changes. Some may say that America is getting better. That the current environment is a reaction to the displeasure to previous environments. I say that it is a sad day when the nation that freed slaves, gave women the right to vote, created massive, global organizations and large-scale prosperity, a nation of slaves and immigrants, has reached this point.

I am not concerned with the political components of this debate, rather, I am saddened that as a nation of immigrants (both voluntary and involuntary), we have chosen to move away from accepting diversity and allowed our tribal impulses to overtake our more measured, thoughtful selves. I am disappointed that we have consciously made a decision to move away from accepting diversity, more specifically, racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity because in my view, the trend of a browning America is frightening to many. Despite this, I understand their concerns. I can understand how people are reluctant to give up power. I understand that as one of my participants in this study noted, that when you have been privileged all of your life, equality can feel like oppression. I often think back to that conversation with Ms. Baker and how what I needed at that time was to have someone that disagreed with me, that cared for me, share with me a different perspective and remind me that there are those whom we may hate

that display their love for us in their actions. I regret that the lives of some have not had the opportunity to be touched by diversity as I have and continue to be in my life.

When I think of the challenges we collectively face, I strongly contend that diversity training in organizations can be an important tool for creating that change. Not for political purposes but so that individuals of different backgrounds, cultures, races, and worldviews can work together toward a common goal. If nothing else, like many organizations, it can bring people together, often individuals that may not have otherwise had the opportunity to interact with each other, to collectively explore a range of opinions, learn, and grow, in a relatively safe space and move towards cohesion, if not a deeper level of understanding.

During this study I explored and discussed a little of my own growth in this area and noted that my shift was brought about by a teacher that I held in high regard, not by my parents making me do or realize something – it doesn't work that way with these issues. Similarly, I believe that diversity training can be used, if designed and facilitated effectively, as a driver of that internal change. From a research perspective, I continue to believe that an examination of the lived experience of participating in such training can assist with filling in the gaps in diversity training knowledge. I posit that this work has the potential to highlight the minutiae often overlooked when explored using quantitative methods and methodologies to explore this complex phenomenon. On a human level, I submit that the exploration of the lived experience of diversity training will allow me to learn more about what it is like to participate, either actively in the sense that the individual asked questions, engaged with others, and contributed to discussions, or passively in the sense that the person decided to absorb the information and engage in

deep reflection on their own time, perhaps in a different venue. Finally, I recognize that my role as a researcher is to allow my participants to elucidate their own individual feelings around participating in a diversity training and understand that their feelings and experiences will be different from mine.

In the following chapter, I will present the methodologies which guided this study, discuss the methods employed, identify data collection processes and analysis, and present my biases as a researcher and explore how I see the world which heavily influenced my motivation to undertake this important work.

CHAPTER THREE:

METHODOLOGY, METHODS, AND DATA ANALYSIS

"Do you have the patience to wait till your mud settles and the water is clear? Can

you remain unmoving till the right action arises by itself?" – Lao Tzu

This study endeavored to answer the simple, yet complex and complicated

research question of: what is the lived experience of participating in diversity training?

As such, this study was interpretive in nature and incorporated and applied aspects of

both hermeneutic phenomenology and case study qualitative research traditions. Further,

this study was descriptive in that it sought to describe, in thorough detail, the lived

experience of participating in a diversity training in a county government setting.

Throughout this chapter, I will describe and discuss the hermeneutic phenomenology and

case study methodologies that served to guide this work. Additionally, I will describe, in

detail, the methods used for data collection and analysis. Finally, I will also discuss

participant selection criteria, introduce study participants, and describe the data analysis

processes which guided this research.

Hermeneutic Phenomenology as a Research Methodology

An interpretive approach in both conception and design for this study was

selected as this research endeavored to develop a profound in-depth understanding of the

complex phenomena of the lived experience of participating in diversity training.

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005) qualitative researchers study things in their

natural settings as they attempt to make sense of and interpret the meanings people bring

to various phenomena. As such, a qualitative methodology served as a natural fit for this

work given the stated purpose and research question.

According to Creswell (1998), phenomenology provides a method for the researcher to develop an understanding of the essence of experience with respect to a certain phenomenon, thereby, allowing for description of the lived experience with respect to a phenomenon. van Manen (1977) identified hermeneutics and phenomenology among the primary sources of knowledge with respect to interpretive practices and offered the following definition of hermeneutics as: the science of interpretation, or as the phenomenology of social understanding" (p. 213). Laverty (2003) noted that like phenomenology, hermeneutic phenomenology's primary concern is with the human experience as it is lived. Knorr (2006) wrote "Hermeneutic phenomenology is a descriptive and interpretive methodology that is concerned with how things appear and with letting things speak for themselves" (p. 39). Further, Dilthey (1985), described the lived experience as follows:

> Lived experience is determined by presence and by qualitatively
> determinate reality. The qualitative aspect of lived experience is
> something totally different from that of the natural object. In the latter the
> quality is apprehended in relation to that whose quality it is. In lived
> experience there is only this qualitatively determinate reality and nothing
> exists for us behind it. That's is indeed the whole reality of the lived
> experience. (p. 226)

The present study recognized the unique role of lived experience as essential to knowledge acquisition with respect to certain phenomena. Further, considering the inimitable nature of diversity training in organizations, I submit, that hermeneutic phenomenology offers the most appropriate means through which to investigate this

phenomenon. In the following section, I will discuss how aspects of case study

methodology was applied in the investigation of the research question that guided this

work. In the section that follows, I will discuss case study as a research methodology.

Case Study as a Research Methodology

The current study applied aspects of case study methodology as it sought to

investigate the lived experience of participating in diversity training within the bounds of

one course offered in a U.S. county government setting. Yin (2009) offered that "As a

research method, the case study is used in many situations to contribute to our knowledge

of individual, group, organizational, social, political, and related phenomena" (p.4).

Creswell (2013) described case study research as:

> A qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real-life,
>
> contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems
>
> (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving
>
> multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual
>
> material, and documents and reports), and reports a case description and
>
> case themes. (p. 97)

Miles and Huberman (1994), defined the case as "a phenomenon of some sort

occurring in a bounded context. The case is in effect, your unit of analysis" (p.25). For

the purposes of this study, the case served as the analysis of individual experiences of the

participants of diversity training, bounded in a context of a large Midwestern county

government organization. I selected this blended methodological approach as I believed it

allowed for a more profound and robust understanding of the lived experience of

participating in diversity training in the setting which served as the bounded system of the case.

Phenomenology

In the following section, I will discuss phenomenology generally, examine its philosophical roots, and discuss how phenomenology was ideally suited to execute this study Racher and Robinson (2003) wrote: "Lived reality serves as a focus of inquiry with subjective and objective realities merging in an alliance between that reality and our knowledge of it" (p. 466). Dowling (2007) described phenomenology as not only a research method often employed by qualitative researchers, but also emphasized its philosophical roots. The author further stated that amongst the number of extant phenomenological schools, all share common attributes, however, observed distinct differences exist. Likewise, Gill (2014) described "phenomenology as both a philosophical movement and a family of qualitative research methodologies" (p. 3). Gentles, Charles, Ploeg, and McKibbon (2015) defined phenomenology as "a qualitative approach in which researchers aim to develop new understandings of human lived experience, relying on first person accounts generally obtained through participant interviews" (p. 1773).

The word phenomenology is Greek in origin. Stewart and Mickunas (1974) offered that the term phenomenology finds its roots in the Greek words *phainomenon,* which denotes appearance and *logos*, which denotes reason or word. As such, phenomenology may be described as a reasoned inquiry which seeks to discover the essence of appearance with respect to anything of which one is conscious (Knorr, 2006). Phenomenology, as it relates to research, primarily finds its roots in the philosophy of

Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger. Gill (2014) wrote, "Whilst a variety of philosophers have advanced and developed phenomenology, most types of phenomenology draw principally from the work of Edmund Husserl or Martin Heidegger" (p. 4). Husserl, a philosopher and mathematician, challenged the epistemological status quo of the time through his consideration of experience as the fundamental source of meaning and knowledge (Racher & Robinson, 2003). Further, Husserl was deeply critical of the approach of positivist science applying the methods of natural science to the exploration of questions related to the human sciences due to the core differences of objectives between the two modes of inquiry (Salada & Adorno, 2002). Further, Salada and Adorno described Husserl's conception as "an alternative proposal to positivism, [that] tries to reintegrate the world of science and the lifeworld" (p. 283).

Central to the phenomenology of Husserl was the concept of phenomenological reduction. Phenomenological reduction is concerned with developing an understanding of a phenomenon as free as possible from cultural contexts (Dowling, 2007), in essence, the lifeworld. The lifeworld refers to the totality of life in its numerous facets or "the field in which life in general carries itself out in its everydayness" (Luft, 2004, p.5). This focus on the lifeworld, or pre-reflective experience, served to distinguish this type of phenomenology from subsequent approaches which seek to describe phenomena from the personal perspective of the individual (Dowling, 2007).

Another approach to phenomenology which is centrally featured in the literature is that of Martin Heidegger. Like the phenomenology of Husserl, Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology is concerned with the human experience as lived (Dowling,

2007). Heidegger, while in general agreement with Husserl's mantra of "to the things themselves" - or emphasis on the pre-reflective experience - was critical of Husserl. More specifically, Heidegger critiqued Husserl's emphasis on description rather than developing understanding of a phenomenon (Racher, 2003). Heidegger posited that phenomenology should reveal the meaning of being (generally understood as presence in the world) as opposed to being (pre-reflective) (Cohen & Omery, 1994). Further, through hermeneutic phenomenology Heidegger gave birth to interpretivist phenomenology (p.63). Heidegger's new ontological phenomenology, with its focus on the science of the being of entities, marked a stark contrast to Husserl's epistemological approach to phenomenology (Gill, 2014). It should be noted that while Husserl and Heidegger's impact on phenomenology cannot be underestimated, others have contributed greatly to phenomenology, its development, and application.

Scholarly work investigating the lived experience has been conducted in the fields of medicine and nursing (Benzein, Norberg, & Saveman, 2001; Norlyk & Harder, 2009), education (Beitin, Duckett, & Fackina, 2008) and politics and organizational change (Buchanan & Badham, 1999), to name a few. In the business and organization studies literature, phenomenological work has been done in the areas of African women's leadership training (Wakahiu & Keller, 2011), project leadership (Cullen & Leavy, 2017), women's career advancement (Knorr, 2011) and accounting and the gendered workplace (Carmona & Ezzamel, 2015). While these lines of research and their application of phenomenological methodology are promising, an opportunity for further phenomenological inquiry remains as I contend that it is through examination of the lived experience that a deeper understanding of complex phenomena may be gained.

Hermeneutic Phenomenology

As previously discussed, hermeneutic phenomenology finds its roots in the phenomenology of Heiddeger. Laverty (2003) wrote: "Like phenomenology, hermeneutic phenomenology is concerned with the life world or human experience as it is lived" (p. 24). Additionally, Laverty remarked that Heiddeger went as far as asserting "nothing can be encountered without reference to a person's background understanding" (p.24). As such, hermeneutic phenomenology may be described as an interpretative and descriptive methodology whose focus is allowing things to speak for themselves and how they appear. Further central to the concept of hermeneutic phenomenology is the examination of texts. Tan, Wilson, and Olver (2009) noted as much when simply describing hermeneutic phenomenology as being concerned with the understanding of texts. Consequently, the hermeneutic phenomenological process is concerned with contextualization and amplification rather than structural essentialization (Hein & Austin, 2001).

Hermeneutics, as expressed by Heidegger, endeavors to interpret lived experience through text. Further, Heidegger proclaimed that the lived experience was "veiled" and saw the job of the researcher as unveiling the lived experience through collaboration with the participant (Wilson & Hutchinson, 1991). The present study, through transcription and analysis of the text associated with participant interviews, sought to unveil the lived experience of participating in a diversity training. In the following section, I will discuss the role of the researcher.

The Role of the Researcher

Knorr (2005) stated that in human sciences, an assumption can be made that the researcher will come with a prior interest related to their profession. Therefore, it is important for the phenomenological researcher to reflect and describe the origin and impact of their interest in the topic of investigation. Throughout my career, I have always been interested in the power of organizations and how they can bring diverse individuals together toward the attainment of organizational goals. I appreciate how organizations provide their members with opportunities to interact with and learn from people different from themselves. I can unequivocally state that without organizations, be they academic or business enterprises, I would not have had the exposure and opportunity to work with and learn from people different than me, primarily racially and culturally. This study provides a window into the organizational experiences of others which is of significant interest to me.

In phenomenology, the researcher is required to engage in the analysis and display fidelity to the accounts conveyed by the data (Starks & Trinidad, 2007). The authors further noted "Even as the researcher immerses herself in the data, she must be honest and vigilant about her own perspective, preexisting thoughts and beliefs, and developing hypotheses" (p. 1376). This assertion is consistent with that of van Manen (2001) who offered that in phenomenological research, researchers need to be aware of their own assumptions and experiences before they may learn about participant experiences. I have experienced many diversity training events and can relate to the experience of participation. Further, I as a Black American, I have my own experiences and thoughts with respect to race and have encountered situation that are similar to those

reflected in this work. Moreover, I have attempted to bracket my biases and share my experiences in this work in hopes of viewing this phenomenon through as clear a lens as possible to accurately interpret the participant experience. Additionally, member checking was performed to ensure my accounts of the participant experience was accurately reflected from the standpoint of the participant.

Similar to phenomenology, case study research seeks to ensure the thorough exploration of the phenomenon under investigation and reveal its essence (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Yin (2009) identified five skills critical for the case study investigator: the ability to ask good questions, the ability to be a good listener, the ability to adaptive and flexible, possess a firm grasp of the issue under investigation, and be unbiased by preconceived notions (p. 69). Throughout the execution of this study, I was guided by pointed, opened ended questions and probes which served to illicit information regarding the participant experience in this diversity training. Moreover, trust with the participants was established through communicating my knowledge of the related literature and sharing personal information about myself, my family, and making expressive, my biases, when appropriate.

Methods

Ensuring rigor in qualitative inquiry is paramount. Chief among the means of achieving rigor is through the collection of data that is both adequate and appropriate (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Further, Denzin and Lincoln noted that qualitative researchers seek to answer questions that examine how social experience is created and meaning ascribed. As it concerns hermeneutic phenomenology, adequacy may refer to the number of participants that allow for the phenomenon to be explored. Appropriateness, concerns

the participants ability to share their experiences as it relates to the phenomenon under investigation. According to van Manen (1990), "the aim of phenomenology is to transform lived experience into a textual expression of its essence" (p.36). Gill (2014) described how van Manen's approach to phenomenology represented a departure from other types of phenomenology in that it straddles both descriptive and interpretive phenomenology. As the present study endeavored to both describe and interpret the lived experience of participating in diversity training through the interpretation and analysis of the transcripts associated with participant interviews, I submit that this approach to phenomenology represented an appropriate methodology through which to explore this phenomenon.

The approach to sampling and sample size represent an important distinction from quantitative research which often utilizes larger sample sizes and statistical precision. Qualitative research is often concerned with obtaining information that provides a rich and deep understanding of the depth, complexity, variation, and context as it concerns a certain phenomenon. Consequently, smaller sample sizes are often used in qualitative research (Gentles et al., 2015). Cohen, Kahn, and Steeves, (2000) wrote, in part: The scientifically important criterion for determining sample size for the hermeneutic phenomenological researcher is the intensity of the contact needed to gather sufficient data regarding a phenomenon or experience" (p. 56). Further, the authors examined sample size estimates across three qualitative research traditions (grounded theory, phenomenology, and case study) and observed that as it concerns hermeneutic phenomenology, fewer than ten participants are appropriate provided an intense following of participants.

Another central aspect to qualitative research is saturation. Gentles et al., (2015) noted the concept of saturation occurs frequently in the literature. Several scholars have discussed the topic of saturation as it relates to qualitative research and sampling (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Sandelowski, 1995; Saunders et al, 2018) with most describing it as the point where additional data collection and analyses produces marginal returns for the researcher. In the current study, saturation with respect to the phenomena under investigation, was reached with participant number five, largely due to the rich detail of their lived experience provided by participants during the interviews. Despite reaching this point of saturation, I decided to interview an additional participant because she responded to my invitation and was very interested in participating in the study. I am glad that I chose to move forward with the interview because this participant's background and rich detailed descriptions of her course experience provided insightful additional perspective to the study. In the section that follows, I will detail the participant selection process employed for the present study.

Participant Selection

Participants for this study were employees from several departments at a large county government organization located in the Midwestern United States. I was specifically interested in how these individuals would experience this training and respond to its content which I found to be of great interest based off the course description provided. Further, due to the diversity training's focus on race and racism, during the conception phase of this study, I initially wanted to explore the lived experience of a racially diverse participant base, however, as is common in research, a

researcher must work with the participants that express interest in and are willing to participate.

To obtain permission to recruit participants for this study, I contacted the Chief Human Resources Officer of the county and expressed interest in conducting my study using their course as my setting. The specific steps to this process were as follows: I emailed the Chief Human Resources Officer at the county a formal research proposal on July 19, 2017. I contemporaneously emailed the trainer associated with this training to express my interest in using this course as my setting for this study. I was subsequently contacted by a Workforce Development representative at the county and advised that to accommodate my request they, too, required the submission of a formal proposal which detailed the need for the study, outlined the methodological processes, and communicated why this specific county would be an ideal location to conduct this research. Subsequently, I was advised that the proposal would be reviewed and discussed with management and I would be contacted with a decision related to my request. Approximately two weeks later, approval was granted.

An application for human subject research approval was submitted to the University of Minnesota's Institutional Review Board (IRB) on August 18, 2017 with final approval and exemption determination being granted on August 22, 2017. The research protocol associated with this request allowed me to send the approved invitation to participate in research out to registered course participants and use the approved consent forms to obtain participant consent to participate in this study. The protocol indicated that I would like to obtain ten participants. Due to a lower than anticipated response rate, a study modification seeking approval to resend the invitation email was

submitted to the IRB on September 18, 2017 with modification approval received on

September 28, 2017. Once the modification email was received, I requested that Large

Mid-Western County's Workforce Development Department send the same invitation to

participate in research study to course registrants.

Study participants were initially recruited via email. As the confidentiality of the

course enrollees was paramount, I emailed a copy of my IRB approved invitation to

participate in a research study (See Appendix C) to the Department of Workforce

Development so that they could be distributed to course enrollees. It is important to note

that at no time did I have access to the private information of employees enrolled in this

training as the Department of Workforce Development acted as an intermediary to ensure

confidentiality was maintained.

The initial participant recruitment email was sent two weeks before

commencement of the course. On the day of the training, and at the request of Workforce

Development, I was granted a few minutes prior to the beginning of the training course to

elaborate on my study's goals, discuss the gap in the literature with respect to this

phenomenon, and invite enrollees to participate in person. Consistent with the invitational

email previously sent to course registrants, interested enrollees were advised to contact

me through my University of Minnesota email account. It is important to note that I chose

not to enroll in this course as I did not want my experience to bias my interactions with

study participants.

Initially, I received three responses from participants expressing a desire to

participate in this study. A week later, I received another email from a course participant

expressing interest which brought the total number of participants to four. After

scheduling and completing interviews with these four participants and feeling that I had not yet reached the saturation point to fully gain an understanding of the lived experience, I emailed Workforce Development again asking it they could resend the invitation email to which they agreed. I was then contacted by one additional participant expressing interest. This fifth interview was conducted and after I felt the saturation point was reached.

Specifically, I felt that saturation was achieved as the range of experiences described provided an accurate view and sufficient insight to fully examine the lived experience as related to the phenomenon under investigation. Several weeks later, I was contacted by Workforce Development again to determine how many participants I was able to recruit. After I informed them of the number, they offered to send a final recruitment email. I was then contacted by a sixth course enrollee expressing their interest and the interview was subsequently conducted. Despite feeling that I had reached saturation, I decided to interview this participant as I felt that they could provide a unique perspective with respect to this phenomenon.

Throughout the recruitment process, the confidentiality of course enrollees remained paramount. I, as the researcher, was not allowed access to enrollee data or personal information. Further, the identity of study participants was not disclosed to any member of the Workforce Development Department, County management, or other study participants. It is through these controls that confidentiality was maintained and trust was established between me and study participants. In the following section, I will discuss my approach to participant interviews.

Interviews

Data for this study were collected primarily through interviews with interview lengths ranging between 48 to 90 minutes. Interviews were conducted at a location chosen by the participant, often during their lunch break. Interview locations included coffee houses, restaurants, and county offices. It is important to note that the range of the interview length reflects the participants' availability and that during the one 48-minute interview, the participant was excited about the interview and ready to engage and substantial information regarding the training experience was gathered.

Throughout the interview process, occasional notes were taken to record and document poignant moments and reactions. Additionally, consistent with hermeneutic phenomenology, audio recorded interviews were subsequently transcribed verbatim and analyzed with pseudonyms applied to ensure confidentiality. To limit researcher bias, a brief preliminary literature review was conducted to limit the influence of previous findings on my execution of this study. Once interviews were concluded, transcripts analyzed, and themes developed I then conducted a more comprehensive review of the literature to determine whether the themes identified in my work were substantiated in the extant diversity training literature.

In hermeneutic phenomenology, interviews are essential and serve an integral purpose with respect to developing an understanding of the lived experience of the phenomenon under investigation. Additionally, interviews are a vehicle through which a conversational relationship with a participant with respect to the meaning of an experience may be developed (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007). This is consistent with the assertions of van Manen (1997) who described the two main purposes of interviews as

being to gather narratives of experiences that help better understand a phenomenon and to develop a conversation about the meaning of experiences. As the present study investigated the lived experience of participating in diversity training, interviews proved critical as they were the primary means through which I was able to develop a deep understanding of the lived experience and its meaning in the lives of participants.

Interview questions were open-ended to allow the participant to guide the discussion. Consistent with the hermeneutic approach, once interviews were completed, interview recordings were transcribed, analyzed, and interpreted so that meaning was derived. Creswell (1998) cited in Moustakas (1994) who suggested participants should be asked two broad questions in a phenomenological study. They are:

- What have you experienced in terms of the phenomenon?
- What contexts or situations have typically influenced or affected your experiences of the phenomenon?

In addition to these questions, probes were used to further expand the dialogue, when appropriate, to allow for a deeper understanding of the lived experience of participating in diversity training in a public-sector organization. Examples of probes used included:

- What was the experience like of participating in this training?
- Can you describe the emotions elicited, if any, from participating in this experience?
- Can you tell me about a time during the training when you felt that way?
- I want to make sure I understand you, did you mean…?
- How does this relate to how you felt before this training?

In the section that follows, I will discuss my approach to data analysis and theme development.

Data Analysis Process and Theme Development

In addition to using a professional transcription service, I chose to personally fully transcribe two participant interviews to gain familiarity with the transcription process. I also wanted to know if transcribing the interviews would provide for a more in depth understanding of the participant's experience. Further, I reviewed the text for all six completed interviews thoroughly several times with a minimum of four reviews per participant interview.

The first textual review of each transcript was performed to gain a general sense of the interview. The second review consisted of reading the text again, reflecting and analyzing my notes taken during the interview, making additional notation and comments in the margins to indicate indicated key or significant statements, and performing first cycle coding (Saldaña, 2009). The third and fourth transcript review consisted of taking additional detailed notes in the margins of the transcript and highlighting blocks of text as they related to structures of meaning as proposed by van Manen (1997) and engaging in second cycle coding (Saldaña, 2009). This process continued a minimum of four times; however, it is also important to note that two interview transcripts were analyzed more than four times as additional analyses were required to capture nuance and accurately interpret the meaning associated with these participant's experience. Once the data were coded, they were subsequently analyzed for individual level themes then aggregated across all participants. van Manen (1997) noted that to understand the meaning of text, it is imperative that the researcher identify meaning units and themes. Potential themes

throughout this iterative process were kept in a table form so that I could refer to them when necessary during the analysis. In the following section, I will discuss bracketing and its application in the present study.

Bracketing

Creswell (1998) identified the issue of bracketing one's personal experiences as a potential issue when conducting phenomenological research. As the topic and discussions of diversity in general, and diversity training specifically often elicit strong emotional responses, I felt it necessary to reflect on my own experiences and thoughts and feelings as they relate to diversity generally, the role of diversity in organizations, and diversity training. Specifically, as I was conducting my initial literature review with respect to findings of diversity related studies, I was compelled to reflect and compare the findings of such studies to my own personal experiences participating and leading diverse teams, contributing to diverse organizations, as well as reflection on my hiring decisions and the organizational cultures I strove to create during my previous employment experiences. Additionally, I began to reflect and examine what the benefits of diversity are for organizations and for countries writ large. Further, as a former employee of this County, a public-sector organization that requires employee participation in a certain amount of diversity training hours each year, I examined my feelings with respect to my experience in such classes.

Site Selection and Case Background

The large Midwestern County government agency selected as the case study site was chosen for three primarily reasons: (1) the size of the organization, (2) the racial and ethnic diversity of the organization, and (3) the organization's stated commitment to

diversity and inclusion. Large Midwestern County is the most populous and diverse

county within this Upper-Midwest state and represented an ideal context in which to

explore the phenomenon of the participatory experience of diversity training. Citing the

2010 Census, this County reported a population of 1,152,425 (Large Midwestern County,

2011). What's more, according to the 2010 Census, the majority of the residents of this

county were under the age of 44.

Along racial lines, this large Midwestern county has a majority White population

with its website indicating 74% White residents, 12% Black/African American residents,

six percent Asian/Pacific Islander residents, seven percent Hispanic/Latino residents, and

fewer than one percent American Indian/Alaskan Native residents (Large Midwestern

County, 2018). The county's website which contains these data also noted that Blacks

and Hispanics have a much higher proportion of children and young adults while Whites

have a much higher proportion of Baby Boomers (46 to 64) and elderly (65 and over).

Further, the County's demographic statistics noted that the proportion of the population

which is foreign born increased 13 percent from 2000 to 2013. Such a demographic

profile and population composition shifts suggested that this county represented an ideal

setting in which to conduct this research.

Large Midwestern County also has a diverse workforce and their commitment to

diversity is evident. When walking into the downtown metropolitan headquarters of this

organization, you are immediately confronted with racial diversity. It is commonplace to

see demographically diverse employees walking to meetings or grabbing a cup of coffee

from the café located in the mezzanine level of the building. Also, I noticed and

participated in the very strict security protocols that were in place as the building also

houses the County Courthouse. I also immediately noticed the racial diversity apparent in the security guards that are tasked with protecting the building. Upon passing through security and entering the offices of the large downtown tower, I encountered men and women of all races waiting for elevators, carrying laptop bags, and engaging in conversation. While obtaining specific and accurate data regarding an organization's workforce diversity is difficult to obtain generally (as diversity has many dimensions and intersections), efforts to obtain diversity data in public organizations is more difficult due to laws, regulations, and internal processes with respect to questions asked on employment applications. As a former intern at this organization, I can anecdotally offer that my experience at this county is that the organization reflects many dimensions of diversity in terms of its workforce.

Large Midwestern County has a stated commitment to diversity and inclusion and lists its core values as: continuous improvement, customer service, diversity and inclusion, employee engagement, and workforce development (Large Midwestern County, 2017). Additionally, the organization took the extra step of creating an office of Diversity and Inclusion – an area within the Human Resources Department – complete with its own Executive Director whose responsibility is solely related to diversity and inclusion related issues in the organization, and in some cases, the entire County. The Diversity and Inclusion department lists its vision as a diverse, inclusive workplace where everyone is engaged, valued, and treated fairly. I contend that the organization, with its stated values and mission, represented the ideal setting to execute my study.

Large Midwestern County is a forward-looking organization. The organization allows employees to work from home or out of other county offices which may be closer

to them, promotes work/life balance, rewards community engagement and volunteerism, encourages employee health and wellbeing, serves as host to farmer's markets during the summer, and provides incentives for making healthy decisions. Further, the organization requires each employee to engage in five to six hours of diversity training or engage in diversity activities in the community annually. This large Midwestern County is attuned to the demographic changes that are taking place within the community and seeks to address racial disparities related to employment, education, and healthcare and is one of few county governments nationally that have a Disparities Director tasked with addressing racial employment inequities. This is done through community engagement, partnerships with local colleges and universities, a career pathways program which seeks to assist those on public assistance with gaining employment at this county, and through forming partnerships with local hospitals and engaging in healthcare education. As an individual that has worked in more than one government organization, I can unequivocally state that this County is truly engaged in the community it serves.

In the following section, I will provide background information regarding the diversity training course which served as the activity which provided the context for this study.

Course Description and Background

County employees that chose to enroll in the Five Myths of Racism course selected the course from a menu of course offerings which would satisfy the annual diversity and inclusion education requirements assigned to all county employees. Registration was done solely through the learning management system at this

organization and the only information available to potential registrants was the description below:

Description:

This two-and-a-half-hour dialogue uses both small and large group activities to help participants recognize the 'myths' in everyday experiences, explore their power, and practice countering them.

Abstract:

The Five 'Myths' tool draws on the work of white author Peggy McIntosh who believes that people in our society are raised on five strong cultural myths. These myths deter us from entering into serious discussions about racism. The dialogue uses Dr. McIntosh's five myths as a jumping-off place to examine the impact of the myths on both people of color and White people.

* Join the Conversation-Inclusion

* Develop a definition of inclusion.

* Identify a list of inclusive behaviors to promote county-wide.

The course was delivered by two Senior Workforce Development Department trainers, Kevin and Sam (pseudonyms used to ensure confidentiality). Kevin is Black, and Sam is White. During my visit to the course, I was advised that these trainers have been delivering this training and other diversity and inclusion related training for many years. A total of 26 county employees registered for this course and during my visit to the course I noticed that the racial composition of the enrollees was approximately two thirds White with minority ethnicities representing the remaining third of registrants.

The training took place in a first-floor training room located at the downtown headquarters of this organization. During my visit, the room was arranged with seats in one large circle with the trainers positioned to stand in the middle near the white board. While I did not participate in this training event, it is my understanding that the seating arrangements changed throughout the delivery of the training depending on whether the participants were engaged in group work, team discussions, or observing images on the screen. The training ran over time and lasted approximately three hours with a scheduled break provided. Additionally, enrollees were encouraged to participate and engage in course discussions and candid dialogue.

Summary

The present study investigated the lived experience of participating in diversity training and was guided by the research question of: What is the lived experience of participating in diversity training? A blend of case study and hermeneutic phenomenological research methodologies were selected as an appropriate approach to investigate this phenomenon. Large Midwestern County, as an organization, has an expressed commitment to diversity and inclusion and had demonstrated this in many ways highlighted above. Like many county government units across the country, the organization is attempting to address the demographic changes that are taking place in both locally and in society more broadly. Further, the Five Myths of Racism training course offered at Large Midwestern County represented the ideal setting in which to explore this phenomenon due to its content, design, and the voluntary nature of enrollment.

CHAPTER FOUR:

RESULTS

"A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree

without roots." - Marcus Garvey

This chapter will present results gained through analysis of participant themes

discovered from this study to investigate the lived experience of participating in diversity

training. Moreover, this chapter will discuss the emergent overarching meta-theme –

confronting visceral emotion - which was revealed to be an essential aspect of meaning

with respect to the lived experience of participating in this diversity training as noted in

the interviews with all six participants. Furthermore, it was discovered that the origin and

evolution of these visceral emotions were developed over time through what may be

described as key influencers that shaped the lived experience. What's more, it became

clear that course participation provided the context in which to confront these profound

emotions.

To recognize the unique and often diverse human experience of the participants

which informed this work and highlight individual experience, this chapter will also

integrate, where appropriate, what may be described as distinctive individual findings

(those unique to an individual and not included in aggregated shared themes). The

identification of these findings associated with an individual participant highlight

defining moments, profound thoughts, and deep emotion which shaped their course

experience. Consequently, both shared themes and distinctive individual findings are

explored to gain an understanding of the experience of participating in diversity training.

This chapter will expand on how my hermeneutic analysis of the transcripts associated

with each participant interview suggested that in addition to the emergent meta-theme of confronting visceral emotion, participants communicated that their overall lived course experience may be segmented as follows: the nature of the overall experience as indicated by the identified overarching meta-theme, personal factors which influenced the participant experience and contributed to their confrontation of the visceral emotions as identified in the meta-theme, and what effect course participation and the confrontation of these visceral emotions had in terms of how they motivated a majority of study informants to want to take action in some form to produce change.

Additionally, this chapter will provide descriptions of the participant experience - in their own words - and in some cases present longer statements to describe critical components of the experience of participating in diversity training. All references to participants are made using pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality and the presentation of themes reflect the frequency of their occurrence. This may lead to some themes containing more participant quotes and reactions than others. Lastly, it should be noted the terms participant and informant are used interchangeably throughout this chapter to note their formal participation in this study but also recognize their unique position to inform this work consistent with qualitative research. Likewise, the terms Black and African-American are also used interchangeably.

The overarching theme, confronting visceral emotion, was identified after completing a hermeneutic analysis process in which all individual participant themes were identified, member checked, and refined as needed. The theme of the experience of facing or confronting a strong emotion during the training or subsequent reflection was shared among all informants. Once individual themes were verified by each participant,

all individual participant themes were then aggregated to identify themes shared by a majority of study participants. Once identified, transcripts and themes were reanalyzed until saturation was achieved. In aggregate, it became clear that the lived experience of participating in this diversity training was not only emotional but required participants to confront strong, often visceral emotions that were deeply rooted in life experience. The emotions reported by participants were developed over time, largely through individual life experiences, personal background, and other external factors which served to influence participant lived experience. In the section that follows, I will present and discuss the identified over-arching meta-theme and explore how the impact of stories shared during the training experience and specific attributes of course content interacted to produce emotional responses.

Overarching Theme: Confronting Visceral Emotion

The lived experience of participating in diversity training can be interpreted and described as deeply emotional. Evidence of this overarching broad-level theme was present in the text of all study participants. Given the numerous ways in which the emotion of being a participant in this diversity training surfaced in words, tone, and even facial expressions, it became clear that the experience of a strong, visceral emotion(s) was the unifying overarching theme of course participation. It is important to note that while emotional, this experience did not provoke emotion in the sense of an inability to contain tears, rage, or other outward expressions of emotion. Rather, the emotion was profound in the sense that the training experience resonated with the participants on multiple levels as the course content and learning before, during, and after the training event provided the context in which to confront these visceral emotions related to

individual and collective exploration of myths of racism. Examples of the myriad emotions expressed include feelings of irritation, sadness, hopefulness, and an anxiety related feeling described as being on "pins and needles." Study informants indicated these feelings were provoked before the training in terms of anticipation and expectation. Participants wondered how the course was framed, reflected on what they had heard about the course from others, and the very nature of the course subject matter. Further, emotions were provoked during the training through the stories shared by other course enrollees as they recalled personal experiences. And lastly, emotions were a defining presence after the training as participants reflected on the meaning of the experience as shared during our interviews.

While many aspects of the experience of participating in this diversity training program contributed to its emotional resonance, my analysis of the interview transcripts suggests that the experience was emotional primarily because of two identified themes: (1) participants learned from and were impacted by the personal experiences of others shared in the class and, (2) certain attributes or features of the course content. Participants indicated primary learning occurred through stories shared by other participants and resulting discussions - both planned and unintentional - that may be attributed to the course content and general design of the training class.

Before further discussion of the feelings associated with the participant experience, it is important to note that several participants expressed they had thoughts or ideas of what this class experience would be like before the training session began, largely due to its title and framing. Moreover, it is important to acknowledge that this course specifically had been described as one of the more "envelope pushing" diversity

training offerings provided by the agency. As a result, many informants took this class

purposefully and were aware that its content has been known to elicit strong and

sometimes emotional responses.

Consider the following from participant Mary as she described her feelings going

into the class and the resulting questions they inspired:

> I was saying in the beginning, I was kind of on pins and needles, worried
>
> and cautious maybe about like, OK, how is this going to go down? Is this
>
> going to be a good experience? Is this going to be a bad experience?
>
> How's it going to re-traumatize people?

Mary's pre-course emotions and concerns centered on how the course content and

personal views of other enrollees could interact and potentially retraumatize the

individuals of color in the class. Voicing similar concerns, Liz expressed anxieties related

to the general preparedness of other enrollees in terms of their ability to deal with the

challenges associated with having candid discussions around race and responding to

hearing emotional, and in some cases tragic, stories. Liz recalled the guidance received

from an employee of the Department of Diversity and Inclusion at this government

agency in terms of why they do not recommend taking this course as an introduction to

diversity training. Specifically, she recalled being advised:

> You [Liz] have to be able to engage for this to be useful. And if you're in
>
> a space where you're still kind of learning about your own privilege, it's
>
> gonna feel really defensive because it's gonna feel like every, every time
>
> Whiteness came up, people were talking about me.

In addition to concern for the minorities in the course and apprehensions concerning whether class participants as whole would be ready to effectively engage in a course where the associated content can provoke strong emotional responses, one informant experienced pre-course anxiety related to whether the design of the course would be such to make her feel guilty for being White and attempt to hold her responsible historical racial wrongs. What follows is an excerpt from my discussion with Stephanie as she described aspects of the course that went well: "There was a way in which, and maybe it was the participants, that people were encouraged to share their experiences that didn't make everyone person in the room feel guilty and embarrassed and ashamed."

It is important to note that this informant had attended another diversity training event the previous day in which she described her experience in that training as unproductive. Further, Stephanie noted that during that training experience she was made, and even encouraged, to feel guilty. This aversion to feeling guilty reflected two individual distinctive findings associated with this informant which were: this diversity training experience was viewed within the context of previous courses and being unburdened by the historical wrongs of the past toward certain minority groups (e.g. historical conflicts with Native Americans, slavery, etc.).

Another participant described her pre-course state of mind as "concerned" in terms of how individual life experiences, specifically those related to cross racial exposure, would contribute to the tone and tenor of the training, especially as it concerned Black Americans. What's more, this informant noted the influence of her upbringing in the predominately Black North Minneapolis neighborhood and expressed concern around how Black's would be portrayed and understood in the course. Consider

the following from Lana when discussing the intersection of her personal life experiences and how they informed her experience in the class:

> I was raised around African-Americans and to me they were no different than me. So, I just get really upset about the things that they have to go through compared to what other people think about them. So, I just, I don't know how to explain. It hurts me, it hurts me, it literally hurts me.

These concerns and intersections feature prominently throughout this study's findings. It seems the experience of participating in diversity training provokes much thought and, in some cases, anxiety before the course even began. These concerns were frequently expressed by study participants and will be further examined in the sections that follow.

Now that I have provided some insight as to questions and concerns held by some participants regarding the course content, enrollee engagement, and design, in the section that follows, I will expand on a key finding and further elaborate on themes considered a significant contributor to the emotional experience of participating in this diversity training: the finding that most participants learned from and were impacted by the stories of others that were shared during this training experience.

Learning from and Impacted by Others' Stories.

Reasons behind the feelings provoked throughout this diversity training experience varied between participants; however, it is important to again convey that primary learning was largely acquired through hearing the experiences of others in the class through shared stories. More specifically, participants were impacted – albeit to varying degrees – by stories shared by other course participants at various times during

the training event. To illustrate this, consider the reaction of Michael as he reflected on the impact of stories shared by another course enrollee which concerned situations in which she perceived and described as workplace discrimination:

> Her stories were powerful, and they were direct examples. She came off as very credible and not just someone who is bitching. She had done what she was supposed to do, she moved herself up in the world. It was like, she wanted to work at one place, she was totally qualified, and they were like, "uh, you have too much education" or something. Then there was another example with a chiropractor [while interviewing for a job]. She had some other stories too, she talked about some [discriminatory experiences encountered] in the County.

While with these words this participant conveyed his deep discontent with these stories shared by another participant in the course specifically, and the fact that any individual would encounter this treatment generally, it is important to add that I noted a physical reaction as well while discussing this which I would interpret as being consistent with disgust. It is further noteworthy that others in the course were not as trusting in the accuracy of these stories. For Lana, the impact of these stories produced doubt, mainly based on her own previous experiences. For example, her reaction to a story shared (it is believed this is one of the same stories Michael referenced above) by a class participant regarding perceived racial discrimination during the interview process for a potential job opportunity:

> When she spoke, part of me thought, bullshit. And it might have
> just been where I was [emotionally] that morning. And part of me

thought, that card has been played one time too many. And maybe

it was that remember I worked in HR, I was a supervisor. So, when

she said this I thought I'm not really sure, and she was angry about

it and she had every right to be angry. But the answer is, she

doesn't know that for sure. And by sharing that story and by

repeating that story in her head, she makes that true. And maybe it

is true, and maybe it's not.

These divergent views, as related to the stories shared in the class, represent the range of

opinions found during this study and highlight the unique and individual nature of

participation and the meaning making process of the experience of the training

intervention.

While these reactions were to a story(ies) that took place within the context of

meeting with prospective employers to interview and engage in the hiring process, it

became clear to me that stories shared during the training were broad in scope. For

example, the following comments from Liz reflect a particularly poignant moment in the

training for her when another course enrollee shared a story in which a cashier at a

supermarket inquired about the origins of her biracial child while paying for her

groceries:

He [the father] is from Haiti. And, they have a daughter together. And she

told a story about a woman, she was checking out in a grocery store, and

the woman [cashier] saw her daughter and asked: Where did you get that

one?

Liz reflected:

That was interesting on a personal level because my partner and I have

had a lot of conversations around, having kids through IVF [in vitro

fertilization] or adopting kids and what we, as two white women, would

need to think about if we were adopting children of color and what we

would need to think about by way of where we were living, and

communities we have access to, and kind of the ethical considerations of,

two white lesbian women, raising children of color. So that was very

touching on a personal level not because I haven't thought about these

things before but because it felt like it connected to me in a really weird,

very real way because it might be a future that I have.

Evident in these comments is the participant's strong reaction appears to be driven

by two realizations. First, the respondent seems to react strongly to the idea that another

individual would feel comfortable asking this question period, let alone, in a professional

environment such as at their workplace. My interpretation is that this instance served to

reinforce this participant's belief that disparate racial treatment and insensitive statements

can and do occur in the workplace. Second, as this participant identifies as lesbian, this

aspect of the training experience compelled her to consider what implications such

behavior may have on her and her partner if they choose to adopt and parent a child of a

minority race. Further, it is my interpretation that this shared story served to remind Liz

that these situations do occur and are more common than one might think and should be

thoroughly considered. Finally, these concerns contributed to an individual distinctive

finding associated with this participant of: a focus on other Whites in the class as she

considered how they would respond to hearing these stories of personal encounters and

whether they would be able to respond to these matters with the appropriate amount of sensitivity and understanding.

Stories shared during the course discussions were described by one participant as enlightening. This participant acknowledged that while shared stories throughout the training generally provoked sadness in her, she felt them necessary and thought that the stories shared during this training program could do much to raise to the awareness of organizational members by bringing to light the difficult experiences encountered by some. Daiane's words follow below:

> A lot of the stories were shared by this one woman when she was in Ohio. She was probably more vocal, so I remember more of her stories; and then we grouped [and discussed] and just realized how strongly those things are out there. I think a lot of times people are oblivious.

Additionally, the sharing of personal stories made this participant reflect on who was doing the sharing as she expressed her disappointment that more people of color did not participate as she thought it would add to the level of education afforded by the training experience.

Daiane added:

> One thing that I was disappointed with was that there were a lot more Caucasian people who were willing to share their thoughts. There was one woman who ended up being very vocal, and I was very glad that she would share because the concern is that people that aren't sharing are more not wanting to express what has really gone on, which I think is the

big problem whenever we talk about racial stuff, whenever we talk about discrimination.

Through her enrollment in this training course, this participant sought to further her education around topics of race, racism, and how it is perpetuated. Moreover, Daiane was keen to learn more about challenges faced through the engagement of the racial minorities enrolled in the class. This supports and contributes to the distinctive individual finding associated with this participant of: desired more minority participation to make learning experience more profound through hearing the perspective of minorities.

In addition to the power of the stories shared in terms of their impact on the participant experience, informants reacted strongly to some aspects of the course content. In the following section, I will examine the role of the course content and its role in shaping the emotion associated with the training experience of study informants.

Course Content.

For most participants the emotional aspect of their experience in this diversity training was profoundly affected by how certain aspects of the course curriculum elicited thoughtful reactions in others. It is important to recall that the overall framework of this course was that the *5 Myths of Racism* discussed in the course provided the framework through which course participants examine how these myths deter people from engaging in serious discussions about racism. As such, the course content has been known to elicit strong emotions, concerns, and reactions.

For example, consider Mary's recollection of hearing a story shared by another course participant during a breakout session (a formal learning activity) in which class

enrollees discussed a situation in which another course enrollee encountered bullying because of her name:

> This was the story of somebody getting bullied for their name that was more African sounding and my understanding was this woman that was in our group. She may, I think, have been of African origin, maybe even from Africa; I don't think she was Somali. Honestly, I don't know but she didn't identify. She recalled an experience she had from high school that still brought her to tears. About how painful it was to be ostracized, she had to stop for a moment to collect herself and she was reading this scenario. She was reading this scenario and it brought up so much pain that she had experienced in high school being ostracized, being made fun of for her name and it was still painful.

For Mary, this story's impact manifested itself in the form of concern which caused her to consider whether diversity training is an appropriate intervention for all workers or whether it is most appropriate for White people. Mary continued: "Well, I was like, in my head: see, see, are these diversity experiences really beneficial for people of color? Or is it just White people that need diversity training, you know what I mean?"

It is important to note that these broader concerns and resulting comments represented a cornerstone of Mary's training experience and meaning making of participating in a diversity training and contributed to two distinctive individual findings associated with this participant: strong focus on other Whites in the class and a concern for the people of color in the class as she was primarily concerned with how people of color would experience this training intervention.

Another course content related attribute associated with the training experience that resonated strongly and contributed to the passion and emotional tone of participating in this diversity training was discussion related to history. While engaging in a discussion with a participant around her frustration with what she described as how people are educated, Lana offered: "I got frustrated because, well, my biggest frustration right now seems to be education wise." Specifically, this informant noted that as the class conversation turned to history it provoked thought and consideration of related to topics such as who writes history and how history portrayed, the topic of slavery, and the controversy around Columbus Day in America. As it relates to history more broadly, Lana added:

> I don't think that White America does the best job of portraying what the truth is, what actually happened to Black Americans. History is written by White people for White people and I think that needs to change. It definitely has to change.

Additionally, while discussing her thoughts on Columbus Day, she continued:

> [People say] Columbus discovered America" I'm like, no, he didn't discover America. America was already here. It was already settled. It just wasn't settled by White people. So, they [White settlers] just came in, pushed their way in, pushed the Natives out and did whatever they wanted to do. And that irritates me, it just irritates me. I'm so glad they changed Columbus Day to include Indigenous people. Because, honestly, I think everybody including government, literature, classrooms are all written by

White men for White men and I don't think children are learning from it, they're just not.

It should be noted that while discussions around history were contributory to the depth of the experience, a range of perspectives were offered. Consider the following from Daiane as she described the discussions around the historical course content: "They weren't Americans. None of them were. I mean, to me the story about the Pilgrims coming wasn't about coming to pillage, it was about, like, going on an adventure."

It is further noteworthy that this participant's emotional response to this specific historical aspect of the course was sincerity. She described her understanding of the times and noted the importance of context recognizing that was how things were in the 17th century United States. She further noted that we now have the benefit of hindsight in contemporary society while acknowledging that at that time in U.S. history, that was the norm. Further, Daiane's emotional experience in the class as it concerns the historical conversations was also one of appreciation for how much progress has been made regarding issues related to race. Additional insight on this course content theme was provided from Daiane:

> Things have changed, and I think definitely for the better. So, sometimes looking at it contextually or historically [helps]. They used an example from *Little House on the Prairie* are they gonna make the Indians move further West, and White settlers are coming and they're gonna make the Indians move further west so that we [White settlers] can have the land. We get it now. And everyone's like, "that's outrageous," and it's like, well, that's what it was during that time.

Overall, study informants indicated that the learning which took place through the sharing of personal stories in tandem with certain aspects of the course content - specifically group breakout sessions and an examination of certain aspects of US history and how they contribute to current issues of racism - proved to significantly contribute to the emotional nature of the diversity training. While these reactions were myriad and unique for each person, it was very clear that participants were impacted and learned from others' stories and certain modules of the course content,

The course content proved to contribute to the emotional experience of participating in diversity training by igniting conversations and discussion around historical wrongs, the role that history contributes to contemporary race relations, and biases that individuals may hold and how they may perpetuate the myths of racism and contribute to societal divisions. Furthermore, certain content related attributes provided the basis for discussion around contentious issues and highlighted individual differences. Participants' thoughts, feelings, and reactions to this element of the training experience proved to greatly depend on their personal experiences and were linked to subsequent themes discovered during this study.

Upon further analysis, it became clear that in aggregate, study participants' experience in this diversity training was viewed through a lens whose axis connects several influencers external to the training experience itself. One of the most pronounced influencers in shaping the experience was the contemporary U.S. political climate and certain current events. Whether used as an example to demonstrate perceived racial progress or to illustrate reasons for current conflict as it relates to race relations, comments related to the present U.S. political environment were found among all

participants to some extent. The next section will discuss and describe the role of current events and the existing political climate in shaping the participant experience and explore additional subsequent themes that served to influence the lived experience of participating in diversity training.

Emotion Influencers

This section will discuss the key influencers of the training experience as identified through my analysis of participant interview texts. More specifically, my analysis revealed that current events and the U.S. political climate, participant previous personal experiences, family, the participant's own personal growth and development as well as that of other course enrollees, and social media interacted to profoundly influence the diversity training experience.

Current Events and the Current Political Climate.

The lived experience of engaging in this training was described by participants as emotional. While the emotion displayed and communicated by study informants was largely driven by hearing the stories of others elicited through certain aspects of the course content, current events and the political climate also provoked strong emotional responses and served to influence participant experience in the course. These emotions, and the resultant theme were present in responses related to various aspects of course participation. To illustrate, Michael reacted to a probing question regarding key learnings and insights gained from this diversity training:

> I just feel like a lot of people don't recognize that these things [instances
>
> of racism] occur. They just don't take the same perspective. You know,
>
> Colin Kaepernick is being held back, or held down or things like that. I

just think well yeah, it's not about Colin per se, it's about this bigger

system. People today say Black Lives Matter, and [other] people say, "oh,

well they're a hate group." Yeah, the things that [some activists] have

done, I strongly say they shouldn't have done; but I think behind it is a

very valid point and message that they are trying to say. But a lot of

people don't see that as reality because it is kind of behind the scenes.

With this statement, Michael was discussing the confluence of the training

generally, stories shared throughout the training event, and their impact of him while

making connections to current events. He mentioned the current Colin Kaepernick

controversy within the context of previous conversations and disagreements he has had

with those close to him regarding this issue and the larger discussion of the role of race in

social movements. Further, Michael expanded and began discussing the Black Lives

Matter movement prevalent today and mentioned that although, in his view, some group

members have made some mistakes, he generally supports the idea and recognizes its

importance in terms of raising awareness and combating systemic racial inequities.

Throughout our discussion, I was left with the sense that Michael's views often differ

from those closest to him. Further, I contend that these differing views often create a

sense of conflict between him, his friends, and family as he seeks to develop an enhanced

understanding of racism and racial issues and gain tools to engage others in candid,

meaningful discussions around these issues which was his primary motivation for taking

this course. These views are consistent with another individual distinctive finding

associated with this informant of: hoped to learn more about difference; hoped for a more

informational and prescriptive approach. This participant offered that he views dialogue

and understanding as critical to progress and made clear that his positions often differ from those closest to him.

In addition to the Colin Kaepernick issue, another current event that found its way into my discourse with some participants was the current controversy surrounding the National Football League and certain Black players choosing to engage in silent protest against what they describe as social injustice and systemic racism by sitting, knelling, or raising a fist during the singing of the National Anthem. While the players that have participated in these protests have unequivocally stated on many occasions, in public forums that such demonstrations are not meant to disrespect the flag, the military, or Americans writ large, some, including President Donald Trump, disagree. Despite several claims that the demonstrations are meant to protest what they describe as police brutality, institutional racism, systemic oppression, and an unfair justice system that disproportionately impacts Black and Brown Americans, the protests have generated many opinions leaving some to say the message has been hijacked – an assertion with which I also agree. That said, the controversy has generated a range of attitudes and opinions and those opinions were evident in the interviews with participants.

For one informant, the National Anthem controversy of players kneeling or sitting during the anthem was perceived as a radical move and used to demonstrate negative activism. While discussing her appreciation for how the course's myths provided the appropriate framing and allowed for a more focused experience, Stephanie also offered the following:

They had probably one of the clearer objectives, in any of the diversity

trainings I've been to, in that we want you to understand these myths. I

didn't get the sense like, walk out of this room and start sitting down

through the National Anthem. This [training course] is about finding out;

it was about information that then would encourage you to change or

expand your own mind and your own way of thinking. It's different than

others saying to you, this is what you should be thinking.

In the case of this participant, sitting during the National Anthem represents a more radical move or form of social protest, however it is consistent with her unburdened orientation and attitudes. Further, she was very appreciative of what she described as the facilitator's ability to frame and manage the class around the myths, the respectful sharing information, and allowing adequate space for the individual to come to their own conclusions.

While a current event was used to highlight Stephanie's experience in what she would describe as a positive way, this was not the case for all informants. While discussing her general experience in the class, Mary offered a different perspective all together. She viewed a certain relatively recent event as providing the impetus to really engage in some deep reflection as it concerns issues of race, disparate treatment, and White privilege. Mary commented in response to a query regarding the general experience of participating in this diversity training:

I feel like since Trayvon Martin happened years ago, we've just been on

this journey to work on ourselves within our own house, so to speak. How

do we internalize racism? How do we benefit? Like, doing some deep

digging into it, like, what it means for us as a family. And so, I've always

had a passion to be in a room full of White folks who haven't done all the

work yet, on themselves.

For Mary, the Trayvon Martin incident was tragic, emotional, and was responsible for provoking profound thought and reflection for her and her family. During our conversation, she expressed great concern for the parents of Trayvon Martin and offered the following: "I just feel sad with them (The Martin family) and know how devastated I would be to have this happen to our kids; someone said once a kid is your heart walking around outside your body." Recall that Mary was concerned with what this experience would be like for other Whites that have not yet done what she described as the appropriate amount of work on themselves, an individual distinctive finding associated with her experience in the training.

In addition to the Trayvon Martin murder, the topic of President Donald Trump and what his election means for race relations also entered the discourse during my interviews with participants. More specifically since, President Trump's election, many Americans, myself included, have argued that those that harbor racist views feel emboldened and comfortable in allowing their hate or racial prejudices to shine. Reflecting this orientation, consider the comments from Mary as they relate to her passion around racial equality, White privilege, and what informs her views:

Things have to get better. I'm really disheartened by the fact that the

President we have is so clearly racist; I mean like not even try to hide it,

and literally is overt about it in the days before he took office and he's

speaking to this whole community who are comfortable with being how

they are. That's who they are and what they feel is best, overtly. I think we

are sitting in this messy soup of White supremacy that is filled with good intentions but at the same time taking up arms. You know, scary stuff.

While Mary was very passionate in her views and demonstrated no reluctance in describing President Trump as racist, others were more inclined to employ subtlety as far as linking description of their experience in the class to current events and the President was concerned. Consider the response from Daiane while discussing the intersection of her class experience – understanding different viewpoints – and her work: "Somebody elected somebody. It wasn't me. But clearly someone did. So, I mean, people have beliefs and all reason and logic goes out. You know, because she [her client] has to deal with discrimination in a number of ways."

Here, Daiane's class experience made her think of a client that she works with, consistent with her individual distinctive finding of: connection to work; class experienced within the context of her role as a social worker. While the information regarding the client remained confidential and was not shared during the interview, it was communicated that this client was a member of a minority group, transgendered, and orphaned – all groups that for the most part feel targeted by the current administration. Daiane was able to reflect and made these connections during her descriptions of the course experience.

The role and power of current events and the political climate as a significant influence of the experience of this training course cannot be overstated for study participants. It was clear that their training class experiences were taken within the context of this larger framework for race relations and how race and race relations are perceived. My interpretation of participant statements as related to current events suggest

that the views held by these participants reflect the range of opinions prevalent in society. Some used current events to highlight negatives while others used them to highlight radicalism. The possibility for current events to highlight issues and bring difficult discussions into a more public space were viewed as positives by some participants. Further, it is clear that current events and the political climate affected the experience in this course, despite differences in how each participant connected current events to their lived experience in diversity training. This should serve to highlight the uniqueness of the phenomenon that is the experience of participation in diversity training.

In addition to current events and the political climate, the third significant theme that emerged from the data to describe and influence participation in a diversity training was the previous personal life experiences of the participants. In the section that follows, I will explore the theme of previous personal life experiences and how these contributed to the overall experience of participating in this diversity training event.

Previous Personal Life Experiences.

The confrontation of emotion which occurred during the training intervention was largely influenced by the participant's own previous personal life experiences. Certain specific personal life experiences proved to be very influential to the training experience and contributed to the emotional nature of the training in that they forced participants to recall uncomfortable events, relive traumatic experiences, or reminisce on key character shaping life moments. These personal experiences were varied and included several significant life events. Of all study participants, Stephanie was the only informant that shared the story of being able to recall her first meeting with a person of color. After framing the discussion by advising me that she was from a small town in Minnesota with

a population of 3,000 with no persons of color - which I commented as mind blowing - she described the experience as follows:

> Mind blowing to you. Yes! So here is what is even more mind blowing: My first encounter with a person of color, I was 6. I was lost in a Target store, down here in the big city and an African-American giant man, who worked security found me. That's fairly problematic, to a little 35-pound, blonde hair, blue-eyed, White girl lost in the big city. And so, my mother tells that story as me being taken to the front of that store and sat on the podium up at the front for somebody to come collect me and me launching myself at my mother.

During this conversation, Stephanie was forced to relive the emotion of this encounter, her first recollection of social interaction with a person of color. While she is now able to recall this event and laugh, it was clear that this was a traumatic experience which may be why she is able to recall it so vividly. Moreover, the course provided the context through which to relive this poignant moment in her childhood. Stephanie further disclosed that as she grew older her father, an active member of Rotary, opened the family home to host people of color. She reported that this increased her exposure and interaction with people of color significantly and contributed to her desire and subsequent efforts to view people as individuals and not representative of any larger group.

While Stephanie was able to recall the first time she met a Black American, another participant described connections between how their personal experiences may provide insight into some of the challenges that minority racial groups may face. For

example, Liz discussed how her time in the Peace Corps intersected with her experience in the diversity training class:

> There were a lot of conversations around race in the Peace Corps because for most people, it was the first time they had lived in a context where they were an extreme minority. I was the only White person in my entire community. It was the first time where that was very apparent in a very real way. It [Peace Corps experience] forced me to think about things differently because I was an extreme minority. And suddenly, the concept of, like, being followed around somewhere when I walked into a store, obviously, not for bad reasons [resonated]. It was like, oh, we will sell you all the things because you have all the money.

This participant further noted that when interacting with Black Peace Corps volunteers and local Africans, she used to seek protection from perceived negative impressions by highlighting her American immigrant roots. She continued:

> My grandfather came from Greece. I'd wave those credentials around like they protected from something; some sort of responsibility because I hadn't had to think about it. And I think that's where that defensiveness comes from for most people is we're not forced to think about it because at no point in time have most of us ever been a minority anywhere when it comes to our race.

Liz concluded:

> There are days when I feel guilt. But most of the days, I'm smart enough to know that, that emotion is not necessarily useful. And when we're

talking about White supremacy and the bullshit that stems from it, I don't

feel as much [guilt] as I feel more personally responsible to take that on

and fight. I feel getting caught up in the responsibility of taking that on as

a weight on my shoulders as one White person in a system that has that

existed before me and will exist after me but can be impacted by me

through action. I need to lean away from feelings that make me feel like I

can't act.

In these comments, Liz described her change in perspective over time and

discussed how her Peace Corps experience informed her views generally, and her

experience in this diversity training event. More specifically, I noted she conveyed a deep

understanding and expressed compassion for racial minorities and the challenges they

face in the sense that she has experienced being a racial minority while others may not

have. It is important to note that while Liz stated that she does not consider her Peace

Corps experience to represent what she described as the majority of her racial education,

I interpreted this personal life experience of serving in the Peace Corps to be critical in

forming Liz's thoughts and feelings related to issues of race. Further, the emotion of

recalling the Peace Corps experience in connection to her participation in the training was

evident in her speech patterns and reflected in the sincerity in the words she spoke.

In a similar reaction, Michael discussed how his sensitivity to disparate racial

treatment and attitudes was, in part, born out of a personal experience driving an Black

American friend home from school one day when they were pulled over by police. He

described the event as follows:

It is just something I feel strongly about [disparate racial treatment]. I've

seen things that really upset me, like I've said, getting pulled over by the

police with my buddy Rob, basically [police asking], "What are you guys

doing?" They only pulled me over when I was driving with my buddy,

Rob.

He continued:

What do you mean, what am I doing, I'm driving! So, I think those things

have made me somewhat sensitive to it and Facebook can definitely

heighten that experience, I mean, I see friends on both sides. Just whatever

it is, my experiences have made me interested in it [racism and race

relations]. I took classes in sociology in college that were about race and

relations and different things like that. So, it has always been something

that has interested me too. I mean, I think I have experienced some of it

[disparate treatment].

In this conversation, Michael discussed how his experience being pulled over by

police while dropping his Black friend off after school enlightened him by providing

some insight into the unique challenges and treatment some ethnic groups face, especially

while driving. It is important to note that as a country, we are currently engaged in a

national conversation related to Black males, often unarmed, being killed by law

enforcement during routine traffic stops. The National Anthem controversy, discussed

earlier, sees this epidemic as one of its primary focuses. Michael selected to highlight the

fact that he was only pulled over while his Black American friend was in the car with

him. This personal memory informed his experience in the class by allowing him to

understand the experiences of others in the class, give them proper consideration, and relate to some of the challenges they face. This course experience made Michael confront the emotion connected with his memory associated with the traffic stop. Further, it is through this confrontation of the memory and the interpretation of meanings from that experience that he was able to fully engage in this course.

In a similar way, another participant discussed how one specific and profound personal experience with a Black friend contributed to depth of her diversity training experience. Mary highlighted how one specific personal experience greatly contributed to her diversity training experience in the course. Specifically, she recalled an experience she had in a previous diversity training with a colleague after traveling to Atlanta together for a work opportunity. Her words follow:

> So, I was really worried because I remember it was 20 years ago now, this
> diversity training still sticks out to me. My really good friend Susan, we
> were in this program together. We spent a summer down at [a large US
> government agency office] in Atlanta, we carpooled down, we did this
> whole program together, she's my main buddy. Midway through the
> summer we had this diversity training that, it voiced all of this crap that's
> in White people, thinking about fear, crossing the street when they see an
> African-American man is a really common one, right?

She continued:

> My good buddy, watching her hear these things and how painful it was,
> broke my heart. So, I worry about that every time. Like, how are we going
> to traumatize these people that are still sorting this stuff out, still voicing

their internalized racism and their White supremacy and like. How is that

for them? There are professionals that had to go back, like in the summer

experience, that we all had to go back to classes in our group with the

same folks who had just said, "yeah, I cross the street when I see an

African-American man approaching." And Daphne's like, I'm thinking of

my brother and you would treat my brother like that?

Mary's reaction to events in this class was greatly influenced by her personal

experience in a previous diversity training program. That experience had a profound

effect on her thoughts going into the current course and I contend, provided the

foundation for the visceral emotion that she would be confronted with throughout this

training event. Furthermore, this personal experience contributed to an individual

distinctive finding associated with Mary: concern for people of color in the class and

what their experience would be like. Finally, as she did for her friend mentioned in the

story she shared, Mary was concerned with whether the minorities in the class would

encounter an experience comparable to Daphne's in that White participants would make

comments that could be considered insensitive and have the effect of re-traumatizing

others by forcing them to recall and relive past traumatic events.

Throughout this training program, it was clear that previous personal encounters

greatly influenced how study informants experienced this training event. Again, it is

important to note the breadth of personal experiences and the role they played in shaping

participant reactions during the diversity training. While Stephine could remember her

first encounter with a Black American, she eventually made the acquaintance of

additional minorities which contributed to her ability and desire to view people as

individuals and resist the temptation to group all people by race, an ability that is critical

in the execution of her work responsibilities. Liz, on the other hand, felt she was able to

relate, to a certain extent, to the experience of being a minority because of her assignment

in the Peace Corps in an African country where she was one of few Whites. She felt this

experience contributed to her ability to participate in what she described as an envelope

pushing course and allowed her deal with the discomfort of discussing what she

described as her privilege. Michael's experience with a police traffic stop while driving

his friend home from school provided some insight for him into what a simple activity

such as driving can entail for some people of color. This encounter contributed to his

overall diversity training experience by validating the concerns and lived realities of

others, mainly as it relates to issues related to African-Americans and law enforcement.

Finally, Mary's personal experience in a previous diversity training event and its

resulting impact on her friend produced a concern going into the class about whether

Whites in the course would be prepared to engage in discussions of privilege. Further, her

previous experience had the impact of making her question whether diversity training is

even necessary for all racial groups or if Whites should be the sole participants. Memory

of pertinent previous personal experiences greatly contributed to the confrontation of the

emotion participants encountered throughout this training experience as they forced

informants to recall painful events, recall certain aspects of their individual histories, and

make connections to the content explored in the training course.

While this study highlighted undoubted connections between the lived experience

of participating in this diversity training and pervious personal experiences, my analysis

revealed that participant experiences in this course were also influenced by an additional

aspect or theme: family. Most study participants made connections to some aspect of this course experience and to their families or close friends. In the section that follows, I will discuss the theme of family and describe and discuss its impact on the lived experience of participating in this diversity training.

Family.

Family proved to be a major influencer to the lived experience of participating in this diversity training. Connections to family were reflected in participant discussions related to various situations. Examples included: comments made regarding certain racial or ethnic groups at a family gathering; the content of candid, private conversations with family members; fearful situations; or the reflective contemplation of how one family may benefit from White privilege. The theme of close friends or family and how this training event forced informants to recall certain familial events further contributed to the confrontation of emotion that took place during this training.

An example of this concerned a discussion between a participant and her children around whether racism even exists and the generational differences in perspective related to the topic. A powerful example was shared by Lana as it related to her appreciation for the educational aspect of the class and the positives associated with the dialogue it provoked between her and her children:

> I think it's important for us to have dialogue. Even my young children, my kids were raised in the military, they happen to be White because I had them before I married my husband. They tried to tell me in some ways, there is no such thing as racism. And I'm like, shit you might not feel it as much as I feel it or as much as I did feel it because you personally don't

look at things that way, but I said, ask your friends. Ask your friends and

see what they say.

It is important to note that Lana, while herself White, was raised in a

predominantly Black inner-city community - this was highlighted above in the personal

experience section - and her upbringing significantly informed her view in the class. Her

quote highlights the generational difference in attitudes and opinions with respect to race

and racism. Family connections were further discussed when this informant recognized

how her own attitudes were shaped by her mother, as noted below:

My Mom took a stand, she was a part of Spike Moss and the riots and

flattening police car tires during that time and all that stuff. All of her

friends were doing that; I was raised around, you know, African-

Americans and to me they were no different.

In the case of Lana, her course experience and general attitude toward race

relations were ingrained at an early age through her mother and her community.

Throughout her diversity training experience, all information was filtered through this

lens. What's more, participation in this course provoked the visceral emotion caused by

surfaced memories associated with her upbringing and strong belief that members of her

majority Black community were often mistreated or viewed as being something

"different." While Lana's familial experience may, in part, be described as one which

encouraged community, and activism, Daiane recalled comments made by her father

which may reflect the breadth of familial experiences. Daiane offered: "My Dad, who

lives in Wisconsin, he's 70 and he'll be like, 'Oh, yeah, those Black folk,' and I'm just

like, are you kidding me?"

She continued:

> And he's like, "Well, he's playing this music". I say, "You know why he's playing his music loud? Because he's 20." Because now I'm 50 and I'm like, "Ah, turn it down!" I think that there's gonna be people that make decisions about people when they have absolutely no idea about what it is, they automatically assume.
>
> In this case, Daiane was highlighting and describing some of the connections

between the myths discussed in class, primarily stereotyping, – the course content of the class – and how stereotypes are perpetuated by using a family member as an example. It is important to note that Daiane contends that these attitudes are often based on a lack of exposure to other races, in this case, Black Americans. Further, she noted that in this example she chose to share, the individual was most likely playing music loudly due to age, not race and therefore, attribution of the behavior of playing loud music to race caused a strong emotional reaction for her.

The range of the impact of statements regarding family was evident and interestingly, almost exclusively related to Black Americans. Highlighting this is another familial incident that was revealed regarding an experience where a participant's mother called him concerned because a group of Black kids were walking down the street. Michael shared: "My Mom basically, she would say things like: "There were a bunch of Black kids walking down the street and they were being really loud and I just locked the door and felt kind of afraid."

Michael continued:

And I think there are a bunch of Black guys walking down the street and it

ended up being that they were a bunch of football players going off trying

to fundraise for the football team for the school down the road.

During this exchange, Michael discussed how the myths explored in the course reflect the

reality of some, in this case, the participant's mother. Additionally, this situation served

as a reminder of the predispositions some hold. This contributed to this participant's

desire to increase awareness, gain skills to address situations, and engage in dialogue. It

is important to note that Michael also described how his mother was very welcoming to

his Black friends when they would come over and was clear to note that his mother,

while she may have made a misjudgment on this occasion, is a good person.

Providing an additional example which further elaborates on the connections

between friends and family and reflections of the training event, Michael highlighted a

past experience in which he encountered a difficult situation while at a family barbeque.

He made further connections to a memory related to family and his motivation in terms

of what he hoped to obtain from the course.

I have friends that to me would not support things that I would definitely

support, that I feel are really important. Like the experience with my

brother-in-law. His Grandma told him a story: His Grandma said, "Oh,

Black kids are so cute when they're kids but then they grow up." And I

was thinking, because this guy, my wife's sister and him, used to live up

here [Northern Minnesota] and he had a buddy named Darius, and I'm

like, "You wouldn't say that in front of him, why?" And they're from

Minnesota, a small town, a bunch of White people get together for a

birthday party, but then he just says that, I mean to me, I felt that, that

wasn't the time to say anything, but I wasn't going to stay around to listen

to it either. But, like I said earlier, [I hoped] to just gain a better

understanding on how a person can say something meaningful at that point

without putting someone down, making them feel, whatever and actually

go in the right direction. Which is a really hard thing to do.

With this comment, the informant discussed why he took the class, the importance

of understanding, and explored how views differ from those closest to him. The power of

the emotion associated with this memory was evidenced by the frustration and

disappointment Michael felt hearing these words spoken by his friends and family.

What's more, he felt that his brother-in-law betrayed their friend Darius by speaking

these words that he would not have spoken if Darius was present. Moreover, this

experience contributed to the overall training experience by reinforcing his desire to gain

skills to address these issues as they arise. In my view, this encounter ultimately had the

effect of adding validity to the stories Michael heard in class in that they demonstrated,

very clearly, biases that some hold and may only reveal when in safe circumstances such

as a gathering where no Black people are present.

Another course experience and family connection came from Mary. In addition to

provoking examination of how her family benefits from what she describes as White

privilege, she also discussed how her family influenced her course experience. She shared

the following story as an illustration:

My daughter was in this play called, "1776" over the summer and she is

obsessed with the *Hamilton* soundtrack. We listen to that soundtrack non-

stop in our house, it's always on. But it's interesting hearing some of my

daughter's interests from that time in our country and having to describe

the reality that folks came with slaves and perpetuated this fantasy. How

do we, how do I, wrap my mind around that. I think the ones that have to

do with our early history are really common myths, those are the hardest.

In this example, Mary was making connections between her course experience,

the myths which framed the training content, and her reflection on how her young

daughter may learn about the role of race in US history. Additionally, her course

experience caused her to reflect on having to engage in conversations with her young

daughter around what America was like during the Colonial period for some people

proved to be challenging and emotional. It was clear that this emotive experience served

to influence her overall course experience in this diversity training. Family influenced the

experience of participating in this diversity training and served to remind participants of

the complexity of these issues. Overall, familial interactions served to enhance the

emotion of this diversity training experience largely due to both the influence and

expectation of those closest to us.

Marking a change from previous themes, participant personal growth and

development arose as the primary reason that most participants decided to enroll in this

emotionally challenging course. What's more, the personal growth and development of

others in the course served as a cause for anxiety for some study participants. In the

section that follows, I will explore the theme of personal growth and development and

how it contributed to the lived experience of participating in this diversity training.

Personal Growth and Development.

Another emergent theme associated with this research was personal growth and development. Specifically, personal growth and development served to influence informant training experience in terms of providing the motivation for taking this innovative, challenging, and envelope pushing diversity training course. Personal growth and development was the primary reason most study informants decided to engage in the training program. Furthermore, personal growth and development of other enrollees also served as a point of concern for most participants in terms of how it would affect the overall course experience. This theme was strongly associated with four informants and to a lesser extent, all study participants. One particularly strong connection was found in the comments from Stephanie in terms of how her experience in this training class impacted her on both a personal and professional level.

> I think, once again, the class motivated me to go back and open my mind, ask the question, remind myself and question any of my own prejudices that might be there. Once again, I think the awareness piece says, "am I doing it?" And you know what? In my business if I start looking at my clients based on race, I'm going to find patterns. If that's how I approach the next client because of his or her race, I will find the patterns because I will go looking for them. If I choose not to, to remind myself again that there are patterns of all kinds and really, a lot of them or socially and economically driven, yeah, I could find those too. So, it reminds me to not go looking for patterns. And not to go looking for groupings.

With this comment, Stephanie was discussing key elements of learning from the course and making connections between how the training contributed to her individual personal development as well as how it may impact her approach to work. Further, it is important to note that she has invested much in her personal development in this area and reported a history of frequent prior participation in diversity-related training. The positive influence of personal growth and development allowed her to process the emotion confronted during the training event.

Another example of the connection between the experience of participating in this diversity training and personal growth and development came from Michael. He made very clear throughout our interview that he is very sensitive to, and interested in, matters of race, race relations, and discrimination. Further, Michael recognizes the many divergent views that exist with respect to the subject, however, he made clear that he views continued education around these matters as essential to his personal development. Michael's comments discussing the impact of the class on his racial sensitivities provided insight into his thinking about race relations and racism, how they manifest themselves in individuals, and his personal responsibility to have a positive impact as it concerns these matters. Michael offered:

> It [the course] reinforced things and sometimes gave words to things I've seen and my experiences. It gave titles to the myths of racism and whatnot. So, that was interesting to me. I guess I would say that, in some ways, I think it makes me think more about ways I can do more about it and how can I be better. Like, great that I notice it but am I doing anything to help the situation? How could I improve on that? I don't know if there

are great answers but there are better ways of going about things and to me

that would be beneficial and helpful. I guess, in a way it [the class] just

reinforced the beliefs I already had and made me think about some of it a

little bit more and in a sense categorized some of it.

Through this comment, Michael was alluding to the impact of the class on his

development in terms of providing guidance for how to respond when in situations in

which racial comments that could be considered unacceptable and untoward are made.

Additionally, he suggested that the myths themselves categorized some of what he

already believed to be true. It is noteworthy to consider that this participant was one of

the informants that reported, and in my opinion, demonstrated, a high level of awareness

of issues related to race and racism. He reported that he has participated in many diversity

training classes, studied the subject matter in college, and maintains a racially diverse

group of friends. It was clear that he was looking at how he can address situations

involving others when they occur in a respectful manner. For Michael, the emotion of

participating in the training class was influenced by the personal growth of both himself

and those closest to him with whom he often disagrees. What's more, Michael reported

that he seeks to enlighten those around him and hopes that he may serve as a change

agent, or at least an educator, regarding issues related to race and racism and views his

continual growth and development as essential in that endeavor.

While some informants' experience encouraged reflection and thoughtful

examination of where prejudices lie, and provided tools to address and engage others, for

one informant, the course experience was more profound in that it afforded an

opportunity to recognize areas for personal growth. The report of this experience came

from Liz who, after self-identifying as someone who has done much work around this area and was seeking an "envelope pushing class" found she had to confront and question the reality of how her motivation for self-growth and development were exposed during a class exercise. To illustrate this growth, she first described her previous work around these issues while also recognizing that she cannot expect the same from everyone: "I've taken grad[uate] classes on racial inequality. And, like, I've very intentionally attempted to educate myself around this. And so, I can't expect that of everyone who's gonna be in a room."

This description showed she had a fairly advanced level of awareness and preparedness for participating in this course. During a course activity which involved discussing a scenario in which a supervisor was receiving disparate treatment because of race, Liz discussed how she would respond to this fictional situation by publicly allying with the supervisor; however, after the exercise was completed, she reflected that additional opportunities exist and noted that there was room for growth:

> I put that as the thing I was walking away with is, I need to have more
>
> conversations with the people of color in my life about how they
>
> specifically would like me to ally in situations that we see.

Again, it is important to note that Liz has done much work around issues of race, racism, and how to confront myths. Further, she noted that to a certain extent, her experience being a racial minority while in the Peace Corps and the fact that she identifies as a lesbian was perhaps pivotal to how she made meaning of her experiences. This is consistent with her individual distinctive finding of: hoped for more prescriptive content. For another participant, personal growth and development with respect to racial

issues was inspired long ago and this course served as a step in the development process. Mary discussed the impetus for her development generally and how she hoped to develop or inspire others by sharing the course content and key learnings with others. Mary stated:

> I guess just seeing and observing things over the years and just coming into your own consciousness on how racist your country is. Probably working in the my early 20's and really learning how problematic some of these things really are; how unjust those things are and then um, thinking how I feel tired, what the fuck? This is ridiculous. There is so much work to be done.

Mary added:

> I guess if you are looking for any 'aha' moment or different feelings from before and after, I guess it's nice to have some more tools to talk to my parents about it [racism] and talk to other White people in my life, whether it be touching on or giving those examples. I actually saved the sheet with the stories because I thought they were interesting and shows how entrenched racism is in our country and in the story of ourselves. Our story, our history. So, yeah, that is one thing I definitely walked away with how to be braver, how to have more conversations; use these ideas, these lessons to point out that racism still exists and stuff.

Personal growth and development emerged as a theme across study informants. It served as both a key influencer of the lived experience both in terms of informant desire to take an advanced diversity training such as this and by providing an opportunity for

further growth and the development of additional skills as related to race and race relations. In the following section, I will discuss the theme of social media and its influence on this diversity training.

Social Media.

One of the more surprising themes associated with the lived experience of participating in diversity training was the impact of social media and how it influenced the confrontation of visceral emotion associated with this experience. Among study informants, social media proved influential in terms of highlighting differences in opinions related to race, racism, and current events, serving as a source of information, providing a means of assessing the climate with respect to racial issues, and communication. Study informants offered many insightful comments which described the role social media platforms play and how they were connected to their lived experience of participating in this diversity training.

One such example of the power of social media came from Mary, who in discussing how recent racial events have influenced her family, noted that her husband's social media habits have changed: "My husband too, he basically, on Twitter, he said, "I only want to follow Black people, it's the only reason I'm here." My interpretation of this comment is that following Black people on Twitter provided an opportunity for her husband to engage Black Americans and gain their perspective – an opportunity that may be more difficult to obtain in the real world.

From shifting to only follow black people in hopes of receiving accurate information related to challenges faced, to engaging in conflicts on Facebook, social media appeared to help shape participant experiences during the training course. As

discussed previously, Michael described the impact of social media platforms while discussing a personal experience driving a friend home and being stopped by the police. Michael commented: "I think those things have made me somewhat sensitive to it and Facebook can definitely heighten that experience, I mean, I see friends on both sides [of many social issues related to] race and racism and law enforcement."

With this comment, Michael described how a profound personal experience in directly confronting racial profiling by police in turn influenced his learning and experience in the course. Additionally, he was able to make connections to how the content he views on social media platforms inform his interest in issues related to race and contributed to the strong emotion associated with the experience of participation in the training course. He further noted the challenges and emotions associated with addressing race related issues and social media, specifically noting the role of Facebook:

> There's a lot of emotions that come out from both sides. On Facebook I'll challenge ideas but I'm not going to get in people's faces about it, where people stand. I don't know, I don't think there is a good way [to engage regarding these topics] on Facebook for sure.

Michael was noting the power of social media, specifically, Facebook and how it can offer a range of opinions with respect racial issues. Further, Michael appeared to have reached the conclusion that Facebook may not be the appropriate medium to discuss these issues. Yet, it was clear that social media influenced his experience in the course by forcing him to recall previous emotional encounters on Facebook.

In addition to the key influencers that served to contribute to the visceral emotion confronted throughout the training experience, my analysis of participant interview texts

further suggested the experience in diversity training left study participants with a strong desire to take some sort of action after the class. More specifically, after participating in this course, reflecting on personal previous experiences, and absorbing and considering all the information obtained during the training event, study informants were left with a desire to take action in some way to effect change as it concerns issues of race and race relations.

The desire to act was broad and described in many ways but may generally be labeled as a desire to mobilize for change. This desire was strong and clear. Even amongst study informants where this theme was less pronounced, it was clear that they believed some change needed to happen. In the section that follows, I will explore the emergent theme of a desire to mobilize for change.

Made me Want to…. Mobilize for Change.

The experience of participating in this diversity training left study informants with a desire to take action in the future to produce change. In some cases, this action was expressly stated, with others it was implied, but clearly identified from my analysis of participant interview texts. This change was discussed in terms of both societal change and in terms of the types of diversity training offered. It is important to note that this change was described to varying degrees of specificity. Some informants were inspired to mobilize large scale change consistent with levels associated with activism while others were more inclined to focus on mobilizing change on a small scale by focusing on issues related to those within their immediate social orbit such as close friends or family members. In this section, the theme of mobilizing for change will be discussed.

For one of the study informants, it was clear that she felt that sufficient steps have been taken in terms of building awareness to racial issues and further advocated for a class in which White privilege is examined and individuals are offered tools. Comments from Mary follow:

I don't know that I need another awareness building class. I would love to take a class where after leaving, like [we learn how to] really undo White supremacy, spend some energy into that. How is racism learned? How do White people learn about other races? Really be proactive and dismantle. You know, I haven't seen [anything] beyond "how to not sound racist" really? We are there? How to not sound racist? How about we not be racist.

Furthermore, this informant views Whites as key stakeholders and contends that most of the work required as it concerns issues of race is incumbent upon them. As a result, she strongly believes that it is time to move beyond awareness training and toward an examination of White privilege. Further, her emotion with respect to what she considers as a lack of progress was evident. Mary specifically pointed to an organization called Standing Up for Racial Justice or S.U.R.J., a majority White the group responsible to producing the ubiquitous Black Lives Matter signs placed around the city. Mary continued:

It is a movement where White people are trying to really deal with their stuff as opposed to, like, "Hey, person of color can you please educate me on how to get out of my racism." It's more of OK, White folks, you know what to do, so let's dig into this and work on this. How can we not just be

a common ally but how can we affect this work and raise up community,

like support them. Not take over but in ways that are really supporting

other communities and non-profit organizations on behalf of African-

Americans or other people of color. So, it's to champion ourselves as

White people, it's really about opening ourselves to places. It's about

White people [trying] to do something worth it, that we all need to be

doing as White people across the country.

It is important to note that Mary has paid much attention to racial issues and has

engaged in much personal reflection, as previously noted. Further, she offered that her

experience in the class served as a reminder that in her view, much work remains. In

addition, she viewed Whites as critical to the process of creating systemic change around

racial issues. Moreover, Mary expressed a profound desire to move beyond learning

interventions which simply seek to raise awareness and move toward those that recognize

Whites as key stakeholders in this process and engage them in finding solutions. Mary's

recognition of Whites as critical to the social change process and robust support and

advocacy for a movement away from awareness courses and toward activism served as

two elements of her strong desire to mobilize change.

Further reflecting the breadth of perspectives, one course participant commented

on how she maintains sanity in these challenging times by managing her emotions and

raising her own personal awareness as it concerns issues of race. Reflecting her personal

resolve to push forward and her hope for increased awareness, Daiane commented:

I can't let myself get totally despondent about things because then, just

like you do in the job, if you aren't able to function and think about

everything terrible that's going on. But I do think and I'm hoping that

there's just gonna be some more awareness of about [what] is really

happening here [racism and discrimination].

She continued:

I have to believe that there's some potential for change or maybe like my

client, I just think, "Maybe if someone explained it to them they would get

it," but I don't know that people will until it does happen.

With these comments, Daiane was noting both the challenges of current times but

also the unfortunate nature of humans in that we often do not change our positions and

attitudes until personally impacted. Further, it is important to note that unlike Mary,

Daiane was one of the study informants whose desire for change was more localized in

terms of mobilizing change by developing herself and those close to her around these

issues.

After sharing with one informant my family's racial make-up (my wife is White

and my children biracial) and my personal struggle to resist societal pressures to assign a

racial label to them, reflecting compassion while not straying far from her unburdened

nature, Stephanie commented: "There were some stories like that and some, make me

sad. That we are in a place where we have to do that. But it didn't make me feel

responsible for it." Stephanie recognized her responsibility for creating change but

rejected calls for broad activism. Moreover, she added the following: "Well, I'm

responsible for making the world a better place but only from my locus of control."

From this comment, and the overall tone she displayed throughout the interview, I

can unequivocally state that this participant recognized the need for change. However,

she does not believe that she is responsible for producing large scale change but rather subscribes to the old adage of "be the change you want to see."

Another informant, Lana, also viewed change as necessary, but noted minorities should recognize the key role they play in the process. She commented:

> The thing that we can do is, and especially in my view, people of color, and I don't care, that's any color, need to put themselves in positions of power to help change things. Because, so often the standing out in the street holding the picket sign doesn't do anything. It just frustrates me because they're not getting what they want out of it. And the only way to change it is to be a part of the system and change the system.

Lana strongly believed that to mobilize large scale change, minorities must first acquire power. Further, she asserted her belief that the current methods of non-violent protest may not be producing change as hoped. This acknowledgement was an emotional one for her and contributed to her overall emotional reaction to the training experience. Lana's desire to mobilize for change was on a smaller scale by starting with those close to her and through encouraging others to get involved. It is important to note that this participant was raised around Black Americans and has many personal experiences with them. This, undoubtedly, contributed to how she experienced the training and how the course impacted her motivation to mobilize change as a result of her learning and participation.

Summary

Overall, the lived experience of participating in diversity training was found to be emotional and influenced by multiple factors. It is important to note that in addition to the

themes discussed above, there were additional individual distinctive findings associated with study participants. These individual level findings emerged through analysis of key statements associated with participant texts and were reinforced through connections with other evident themes.

Awareness and introspection was featured as a theme with respect to some participants. Several study informants expressed that this course experience inspired deep thought and made them consider how they perpetuate the 5 Myths discussed in their own lives and actions. Intersectionality was also featured as a theme related to some informants. Whether related to their sexual orientation in terms of identifying as lesbian or queer, having an African-American spouse, or having a Latino son-in-law from Guatemala, some informants felt that they were able to make connections to their own lives which lent credence to some of the stories that were shared throughout the training program. Finally, it is noteworthy that while study informants felt the myths that framed the course provided an appropriate framework to discuss controversial topics and share personal experiences, not a single study participant was able to recall the five myths in their entirety, reflecting the finding of: myths not remembered.

Throughout this training experience, study participants were forced to confront strong visceral emotions. These emotions were primarily associated with engagement with some of the training course content and through hearing the stories of other course enrollees. Moreover, these emotional reactions were shaped by previous personal experiences and other external forces and events.

Current events and the U.S. political climate served to highlight the discord present in society today. This was echoed by the personal experience of study

participants. While some participants grew up with individuals of other races and backgrounds, others were able to recall the exact moment they first encountered a person of color. Participants with higher levels of exposure to people of color - or those that thought they could relate in some way to the minority experience - expressed a heightened concern for minority participants enrolled in the class. Moreover, through stories shared in the course, the personal experiences of some study participants were forced to be recalled which added to the emotional nature of the experience.

Family also served as an influencer to the participant experience. As the myths were explored, some study participants recalled memories or statements from family members that reinforced the myths. This greatly added to the visceral emotion of the training experience in that it forced study participants to consider the meaning of such statements and their implications. Further, family was used to demarcate progression between the attitudes of participants and those of their family members – usually to convey progress being made. Personal growth and development served as a common motivator for taking the course but also served as a point of concern for some study participants. Study participants indicated they chose to enroll in this course because of its challenging content, a sincere desire to learn from others, and to expand their own personal growth and development. Many felt participation in the course would force self-examination and provide an opportunity to question how they may consciously and unconsciously perpetuate the myths that served as the content framework for the course. It is also important to note that the personal development of others served as a source of concern for some participants in terms of the abilities of others to participate with the level of engagement necessary for a class of this type and format.

Finally, social media emerged as a theme for determining the temperature or current status with respect to recent events, learning where others stand on racial issues, and learning about the minority experience. The lived experience of participating in this diversity training proved impactful even before the experience began as study participants contemplated what the experience would be like and how others would respond. The findings of the present study suggest diversity training is somewhat unique insofar as its content both relates to, and was impacted by, the state of current affairs. As a country, we are living in trying and concerning times and that fact was reflected in the words of the participants in this study. More specifically, this was evident in the exasperation displayed in participant voices during interviews, comments and quotes from informant texts, and reflected in the themes identified.

A final theme that emerged was that study participants were left with a desire to mobilize for change in some way. While some believed large scale activism was warranted, others were inclined to employ a more focused and local approach to creating change. Regardless of the level of change advocated, study participants felt that we, as a nation, are at a turning point and that to navigate this complexity, we must make changes at individual, organizational, and societal levels. The lived experience of participating and meaning making in this diversity training caused study participants to confront visceral emotions. However, I contend that it would not be sufficient, nor accurate, to simply leave it at that. I found that the visceral emotions confronted during this training experience had been built up over time through the themes previously discussed. That is because the training experience did not happen in a vacuum. Study participants were aware of the challenges we face as individuals, a nation, and as members of an

organization, in this case, large Midwestern County. Further, study participants brought with them the sum of their experiences to this training and were forced to recognize that others did the same.

In the following chapter, I will attempt to link the themes identified in this study with the findings of related literature.

CHAPTER FIVE:

POST ANALYSIS REVIEW OF LITERATURE

"Understanding is the heartwood of well-spoken words." The Buddha

After analyzing the findings of the present study, a post analysis review of literature was conducted to analyze and compare connections to themes discovered in the present study. Again, the literature review was conducted primarily through electronic means using my access to the University of Minnesota's library database. Databases such as Business Source Premier, EBSCO Host, Academic Source Premier, and Google Scholar were used. Additionally, physical copies of human resource development journals such as *Human Resource Development Review* and *Advances in Developing Human Resources* were reviewed.

Initially, and to ensure significant alignment with the themes discovered in the present study, initial queries reflected verbatim the themes which included "diversity training and emotion," "diversity training course content," "diversity training course content and emotion," "learning from others' stories in diversity training," "influence of personal experiences on diversity training," "the impact of personal experience on diversity training," "diversity training and current events and the political climate," "diversity training and family," "previous personal experiences and diversity training," "personal growth and development and diversity training," "the impact of personal growth and development on the diversity training experience," "diversity training and mobilize for change," "diversity training course content and emotion" "the lived experience of participating in diversity training," " and "diversity training and social media." After finding that certain connections were more pronounced in that queries such

as "diversity training and emotion" produced more results than "the impact of personal growth and development on diversity training" or "social media and diversity training" the search criteria were expanded to include more general relationships and connections through queries such as "learning and emotion," "course content and emotion," "the lived experience of diversity training in schools" "family and learning," and "social media and diversity training." This iterative process continued and was refined until an appropriate number of connections were discovered. Utilizing a snowball method, the most relevant publications were ultimately identified and included. In aggregate, approximately 52 studies were reviewed with approximately 26 included.

Articles were included in the literature review if they supported the connections made in terms of the themes identified in the present study, had findings counter to those discovered in the present study, or established general connections or substantiation between themes identified in this study generally, such as emotion and learning or diversity training and action.

This chapter will present the findings of my post-analysis review of literature and discuss connections to the themes identified through this study which investigated the lived experience of participating in diversity training. Additionally, this chapter will examine and discuss how the extant literature either supports or disagrees with the emergent findings of this largely exploratory study. Analysis of participant texts indicated that the visceral emotion confronted during the training was driven by certain aspects of the course content; more specifically, how certain course exercises and the reflective learning that was inspired through hearing stories that were shared by course enrollees throughout the training event interacted to produce an emotional experience for course

participants. In the following section, I will expand on relevant connections between the course content and reflective learning through shared stories in diversity training that were discovered in the related literature.

Course Content

Connections between the content of learning, and specifically work-place related learning, and their connection to emotion are found in the literature. Moreover, relationships between the diversity training experience and emotion are also evident in the literature. In fact, there exists some evidence that the association of emotion with the diversity training experience is not only preferred but viewed as essential to the awareness raising process. An example comes from Pinterits and Atkinson (1998) who in their advocacy for using certain films in sensitivity diversity training asserted "The capacity to evoke an emotional response for the viewer is one of the reasons films are ideal for increasing diversity awareness" (p. 205). In addition, it is common for diversity trainers to occasionally and purposefully elicit emotional responses from their trainees (Brewis, 2017). Some scholars have argued that emotions are likely to influence the training process and overall effectiveness of learning and advocated for a deeper understanding of the impact of emotions on training (Short & Yorks, 2002). Further, these authors concluded:

> Emotions are integral to training: They can influence employees' attitudes toward learning needs and affect decisions about whether or not to attend training courses. They can be brought into the training room and be generated in response to course material, course process, course context, and social interactions. (p .93)

The ability of diversity training course content to elicit emotional responses is well established in the literature, and more specifically, the higher education literature. Jackson (1999) examined the experience of mental health students of color and faculty reactions to a multicultural training course and noted that such courses produce emotional reactions which include anger, silence, avoidance, and passivity, all of which may produce resistance to the course content being explored. Further, the author observed "Some students of color are very uncomfortable discussing issues related to racial and cultural identities in such a public arena. Students who do discuss these issues run the risk of exposing themselves to hostile judgments" (p. 32). It is important to note that some participants in the present study expressed a desire for more minority participation in the course as they thought such participation would provide a more robust learning experience.

Another connection between emotion and diversity course content in higher education comes from Perry, Moore, Edwards, Acosta, and Frey (2009) who qualitatively studied the credibility and authority of university diversity course instructors at predominately White colleges and universities and found that student resistance was generated when the instructor was viewed as an "outsider." Further, the authors observed "systematic questioning by students of their participant-instructors' integrity and fairness in negotiating the diversity classroom processes and topics. Students also actively devalued the subject matter of the diversity course" (p. 100). Finally, the study suggests that the instructors took steps to reduce the emotional nature of the course through taking measures to depoliticize the content and the overall training experience to disarm students' resistance to protect their credibility through ensuring all views and worldviews

are considered. In my view, this supports the findings of this study in that the diversity training experience is a complex and emotional phenomenon.

Hassouneh (2006) advocated for shift away from cultural based awareness diversity training in nursing and toward antiracist education. "This narrow focus allows nurses to depoliticize discussions of race and other social differences, largely ignoring the influence that systems of oppression, imperialism, and historical trauma have had on health in marginalized populations" (Hassouneh, p. 255). In other words, the author argued that the focus on cultural awareness diversity education may remove some of the emotional content associated with the training experience even though such emotion is often required to produce a significant impact on trainees and inspire learning. Finally, the author reflected on the emotion of her own experiences as a faculty member of color and concluded "As my experience and that of others documented in the literature demonstrates, faculty of color engaged in anti-racist pedagogy in primarily White schools face many challenges, challenges that can be personally painful and professionally taxing" (p. 261) indicating that the diversity training experience is emotional for faculty as well. Further, faculty teaching diversity courses can influence the student experience in diversity training through course content that includes the use of various media, the inclusion of experiential exercises, and assignments which identify what students are bringing into the course and areas for further development (Beitin et al., 2008).

Overall, my review of the literature suggests that the connection between diversity course content and emotion is acknowledged and strong. This relationship is notable because diversity training is largely unique as a training intervention. Diversity training may cause its participants to challenge their worldviews, and, as suggested by the

findings of this work, challenge the views of those closest to the participants such as family and friends. Moreover, diversity training is extraordinary in that its subject matter is often controversial, political, and experienced differently by all participants. The findings of support in existing literature, seem to support this. I contend that the qualitative exploration of diversity training provides a proverbial "look behind the curtains" and allows for a deeper exploration of the phenomena that is diversity training.

Another key finding of this study was how the participant experience, and the emotion contained therein, was greatly induced by hearing and learning from the stories and experiences of other course enrollees. This connection was clear and profound. In the following section, I will explore the role of learning from others and discuss its prominence in the literature.

Learning from Others' Stories

The impact of, and reflexive learning from, the stories shared by other course enrollees in terms of contributing to the emotion of the training experience cannot be understated and was associated within the interview text from five study participants. The concept of learning from others is common in awareness-based diversity training programs. Awareness-based programs seek to develop trainee awareness of, and sensitivity to behaviors that may be discriminatory and prejudicial (Chavez & Weisinger, 2008). Central to awareness training methods are lecture, experiential exercises, and group discussion (Sanchez & Medkik, 2004). This approach to diversity training contends that through lecture, key information can be communicated to course participants and through experiential exercises, trainees may gain additional insights which may contribute to their development. Further, as trainees hear about the

experiences of diverse others through group discussion, their ability to empathize may be increased. Additionally, face-to-face interactions with people of different races often serves as a powerful tool in countering stereotypes (Rossett & Bickham, 1994). Roberson et al., (2001) offered that diversity training may be helpful for trainees with limited diversity training experience by providing interactions with heterogeneous groups and assisting with recognizing the need for change.

My analysis of participant interview text suggested that the impact of hearing stories from other course enrollees afforded an opportunity for reflexive learning and connection with other enrollees. What's more, the stories brought to life the experiences that some study informants may have heard of from their friends and family or may have experienced themselves - this will be expanded in greater detail later in this chapter. There is some support in the literature for stories shared during a diversity training having a profound impact on participants. In their study of a cultural awareness diversity training, which included the sharing of food to enhance participation and promote cultural awareness, Chavez and Weisinger (2008) observed that stories shared during a diversity training prompted the exploration of difference among trainees. Further, the authors noted "This approach resulted in an atmosphere of openness and dialogue within which participants shared aspects of themselves (the "me") that might otherwise have been overlooked in the collective identity (the "we") of the organization" (p. 338).

The findings of the present study suggested that the course content and stories of others produced an emotional experience for course participants. What's more, my findings indicate the emotional nature training experience was influenced by several additional factors which included: current events and the political climate, previous

personal experiences, family (and close friends), personal growth and development, and social media. Additionally, the net effect of the training intervention, in terms of participant desire to mobilize for change will be explored further. These influencers, combined with the course content and the stories of other enrollees interacted to cause study participants to confront visceral emotion that had been developed over time by the influencers and left participants with a desire to mobilize for change to varying degrees. Consequently, this confrontation of visceral emotion was identified as the meta-theme of this study and will be presented and discussed next.

In the following section, I will discuss the emergent meta-theme of this study and present similar findings in the related literature.

Meta Theme: Confrontation of Visceral Emotion

The emergent meta-theme of this study was the confrontation of visceral emotion experienced by course participants. This emotion was primarily inspired by elements of the course content and through hearing the stories of others enrolled in the class. This finding was present in the text from the interviews with all six study participants. My post-analysis review of the literature found few studies that directly identified emotion, or the confrontation thereof, as the primary outcome of participation in a diversity training event. That said, evidence of emotion as an outcome as it relates to diversity training can be found in the literature. Curtis-Boles and Bourg (2010) examined the experiences of students of color in a diversity training and found that almost two-thirds or 65% of study participants reported feelings of sadness, anger, and frustration as a result of racism they experienced in both the outside world and the class itself. Further, the authors concluded that their study demonstrated that multicultural diversity courses may have the ability to

reactivate painful memories of racism and thus, provoke strong emotional responses. It is important to note that the authors also observed that as study participants were provided with the opportunity to process their emotional reactions, acceptance of themselves and a better understanding was acquired. Finally, it is important to note that the authors observed higher emotions in among Blacks and Latino participants and fewer emotion in Asian participants.

Emotion also featured prominently in another study which investigated how learning about racism influenced awareness and emotion. Kernahan and Davis (2007) used a mixed methods design to examine the effects of participation in a diversity course among 49 undergraduate students. Moreover, the authors chose to focus on how "a psychology of prejudice and racism course can increase students' awareness of White privilege and racism" (p.49). The authors found that overall, course enrollees became more aware of racism, its pervasiveness, and the extent of White privilege. The authors also reported that course enrollees also displayed emotional changes which included guilt and discomfort when it was learned that they were benefiting from White privilege.

Many scholars have argued support for a connection between emotion and learning. One of these arguments is that emotion can impact a learning experience by activating adrenaline which, consequently, increases receptors in the brain which causes the experience to be stored (Wolfe, 2006). Further, the author postulated that "By intensifying the student's emotional state, they may enhance both meaning and memory (p.39). Moreover, Dirkx (2001) acknowledged the role of emotion in the meaning making process when he argued "personally significant and meaningful learning is fundamentally grounded in and is derived from the adult's emotional, imaginative, connection with the

self and with the broader social world" (p.64). This assertion echoes that of Shuck,

Albornoz, and Weinberg (2007) who offered "Experience is not isolated, but connected

to previous opportunities for learning often associated with emotions. Emotions, the

cognitive manifestations of behavioral acts, are at our deepest core" (p.108). The role of

emotion and its connection to the learning and the meaning making process have been

explored by many scholars (Boekaerts, 2011; Bower, 1992; Christie, Tett, Cree,

Hounsell, & McCune, 2008; Dirkx, 2001; 2008). However, despite this, it is important to

note that my review of the literature produced few studies that identified the

confrontation of emotion and the primary outcome of a training intervention.

In the following section, I will briefly discuss human resource development and

diversity training.

Human Resource Development and Diversity Training

Numerous HRD scholars and practitioners have studied various aspects related to

the phenomena of diversity training (Bierema, 2010; Combs & Luthans, 2007; Hite &

McDonald, 2006; Hite & McDonald, 2010; Holladay, Knight, Paige, & Quinones, 2003;

Holladay & Quinones, 2008). However, my review of the HRD related literature suggest

that few, if any, studies have qualitatively explored the lived experience of participating

in diversity training. Moreover, few studies identified emotion as the primary outcome of

a diversity training intervention and examined connections between diversity training,

course content, and emotional responses from course participants.

This current state of research was recently confirmed in a systematic review of

literature conducted by Alhejji, Garavan, Carbery, O'Brien, and McGuire (2015). This

study highlighted three key findings:

(1) research on diversity-training outcomes is published in a diverse set of

publication outlets; (2) studies utilize a narrow range of theoretical

perspectives; (3) methodologically, studies suffer from significant

limitations including small sample sizes, poor use of diversity-training

measures, too much reliance on self-report measures and little longitudinal

investigation of outcomes. (p. 46)

Some of these findings support my assertions offered in this study. Specifically,

the authors finding that diversity studies utilize "a narrow range of theoretical

perspectives" suggest that much can be gained from exploratory work such as this which

may offer additional insights and expand the use of theories underpinning diversity

studies. Additionally, the use of poor diversity training measures serves to highlight the

importance of work such as this to inform future measurement approaches. Finally, the

wide dispersion of diversity training studies suggests that HRD scholars are missing an

opportunity to lead in this area by applying a focus on diversity in HRD related journals.

Again, it is important to note that my review of HRD literature was unable to find a study

which identified the confrontation of visceral emotion as a primary outcome of a training

intervention.

My review of the literature for HRD connections between diversity course content

and reflexive learning produced no results. I contend this finding is troubling considering

as noted by McGuire and Bagher (2010) "With the dual effects of globalization and

workforce mobility increasing, diversity training is becoming a more pressing priority for

human resource development (HRD) professionals" (p. 494). However, despite this

recognition, there is scant evidence to support that HRD is a diversity leader (Bierema, 2010).

My hermeneutic analysis of informant text also strongly suggested that the experience of this diversity training, and the confrontation of emotion contained therein, was greatly influenced by several factors external to the training event itself. The key influencers of the visceral emotion confronted during this training event were found to include: current events and the political climate, previous personal experiences, family, personal growth and development, and to a certain extent, social media. In the section that follows, I will discuss the first of these identified influencers, the political climate and current events, and discuss connections discovered in the literature.

Political Climate and Current Events

Analysis of participant texts revealed that current events and the political climate served to influence the emotion encountered during the training experience. Whether used to provide examples of the current state of race relations or highlight the discord present in society today, this finding was associated with all six participant interview texts. The ability of training to elicit considerations of politics and the political climate may be found in the literature. One example comes from Curtis-Boles and Bourg (2010) who studied the experiences of students of color in a diversity training and noted as a limitation that "Although the course format was the same for each class, variations in class dynamics based on student composition as well as concurrent sociopolitical events could have affected participants' responses and limit generalizability" (p.211). While there is no direct finding in this study that the political climate or current events shaped

the experience of the students in the study, I argue the finding is implicit in the limitations presented.

Overall, my post analysis review of literature produced few results which contained findings that the influence of the political climate and current events as key in the creation of meaning as it relates to a diversity training. Mickens (1994) advocated for the inclusion of sexual orientation in diversity training programs and discussed enlisting the help of gays and lesbians in formal training initiatives. Additionally, the author offered: "Whether the educational approach is by example or through diversity training, its impact is increased exponentially with personal testimony-i.e., by having an open and visible lesbian or gay employee make political abstractions into tangible reality" (p. 270). I offer that this is relevant to the present study in that study participants indicated that current events and the political climate served to make tangible certain experiences (i.e., getting pulled over while driving a Black American home and connections to Black Lives Matter). Again, it is both concerning and important to note that few, if any, studies of diversity training have noted the role of current events and the political climate in shaping the participant training experience.

The current U.S. political climate and current events served to influence the training experience of study participants. While there are few studies whose results substantiate the findings of the present study, there is some support in the literature. For example, another finding discovered in participant texts which greatly influenced the participant lived experience in this diversity training was the impact of the previous personal experiences of the participants. In the section that follows, I will explore

connections between participant previous experiences and their impact to the diversity training experience evident in the literature.

Previous Personal Experiences

Analysis of interview texts revealed that the previous personal experiences of course participants served to influence the emotion confronted during the training experience. These previous personal experiences produced anxiety, understanding, motivated reflection, inspired empathy, and provided unique insights for study participants as it concerned the training. This finding was strongly associated with five of the six participant texts.

When individuals participate in diversity training, the experience is often unique and emotional. Participants bring with them their personal histories which may interact with their past in painful ways (Jackson, 1999). In the present study, the previous personal experiences of study participants influenced the emotion of the overall experience by adding credibility to the stories shared in the class, reinforcing biases displayed and discussed during the training event, and by providing concrete connections to and validating the material discussed in the class. Arguments for, and the proven ability of, previous personal experiences to influence or contribute to the emotion of a diversity training encounter is supported in the literature. In their article which presented the ethical case for diversity training in organizations, Jones, King, Nelson, Geller, and Bowes-Sperry (2013) discussed the role of advanced organizers and noted in diversity training they typically focus on the framing of the course. The authors further argued that diversity trainers could then ask trainees to engage in discussion around when they were angered by injustice and describe their feelings with the idea being that such emotional

exercises may allow for trainees to make connections between previous personal experiences and the material being explored in the course.

An example of this comes again from the work of Curtis-Boles and Bourg (2010) who found in phase two (reflection and journal review) of their study on the experiences of students of color in a graduate level diversity course that students made connections between the course material and their personal experiences and feelings about racism. In addition to noting all study participants reported heightened awareness and sensitivity to racism in their everyday interactions, the authors observed "Sixty-five percent of the participants reported feelings of anger, frustration, and sadness at the racism they experienced in the outside world, and more immediately, in the classroom" (p. 207). I submit, these connections between personal experience and diversity training highlight the visceral nature of the diversity training experience and support the findings of this similar work.

Another connection between previous personal experience and the emotion of a training experience comes from antiracism training. Davis (2016) explored an antiracism project in social work doctoral education which involved a cross racial group of social work doctoral students engaging in shared journaling with the goal of increasing self-awareness, and engaging across difference, in essence, awareness diversity training. The author found that participant thoughts focused on personal experiences and how emotions such as empathy were described. Finally, the author discussed: "Through engaging in critical reflection on personal experiences with racism and White privilege, participants deepened their understanding of their racial identity, and considered its impact on their personal relationships and professional roles" (p. 372).

In summary, my post analysis review of literature found that the previous personal experiences of diversity training course participants can produce emotional responses in trainees. This was evidenced, in part, by the findings discussed above. However, it is important to note that my review also suggests that HRD is lagging in the exploration of this phenomenon and the phenomenon of diversity training generally. Moreover, my review also produced few studies which employed qualitative methodologies and discovered these connections. This represents an opportunity for future research.

In addition to the influence of previous personal experiences, the text associated with participants in the present study also indicated that family/close friend interactions served influenced the emotional nature of the training and contributed to the visceral emotion confronted throughout the experience. In the following, section, I will explore, and present connections found in the literature which support the impact of friends and family and emotion in a diversity training event.

Family

My analysis of participant text revealed that participant's family and close friends served to influence the training experience and contribute to the emotional nature of event. The findings of the present study indicated that whether used to highlight prejudice, denote familial progress with respect to awareness of racial issues, or serve as a real-life example of the content that was discussed in the course, the influence of family was clear and associated with five participant texts. The contention that, and subsequent findings, of the impact of family on diversity training can be substantiated in the literature. Betin, Duckett, and Fackina (2008) conducted a phenomenological

examination of six students enrolled in a marriage and family therapy diversity class whose content was specifically focused on race, class, gender, ethnicity, culture, spirituality, religion, and sexual orientation. The authors found when students enter diversity classes, they bring with them complicated identities and ideas with respect to the content and noted that these issues are influenced by childhood exposure to diversity, society, and family messages. Further, the authors observed:

> The participants in this study worked hard to differentiate themselves from their families of-origin on issues related to race, culture, gender, religion, and sexual orientation within their families-of-origin. Five of the six participants reported that their families were conservative in their discussions of diversity and carried biases and stereotypes, which were expressed to all family members. (p. 259)

These findings support the findings of the present study in that family served to influence the training experience in that participants often differentiated themselves from their family after highlighting examples of prejudice from family members. Further, this work lends support to my findings that when individuals engage in diversity training, they do so in a way that is largely unique for a training intervention in that the training often challenges norms and elements of participant upbringing.

In another example of diversity training, family was used to highlight the absence of bias. For example, Israel et al. (2017) studied the reactions of law enforcement officers to LGBTQ diversity training whose content included participating in group activities and discussions, answering trainer questions, and answering questions related to how they learned about gender and sexuality and the role or influence of the media,

family, and peers growing up and interactions with members of the LGBTQ community, to name a few. Further, the authors found that one participant made a point of noting that he was raised in a tolerant family and did not receive any negative messages regarding the LGBTQ community from his family. Moreover, the authors found some "officers seemed to struggle with the idea that they could have any bias against this marginalized community, or that they had received any negative messages from family, media, or peers about LGBTQ people" (p. 11).

In my view, these findings offer support for my finding that the influence of family on diversity training is a real phenomenon. Whether the influence is positive or negative, the influence of family is something that participants note when participating in diversity training. Family can prove instrumental in the forming of views regarding certain groups or motivate a shift in views. An example of this is the finding that those who have a family member that is homosexual are twice as likely to be supportive of gay rights (Walsh, 2010). Overall, my post analysis review of literature suggests that opportunities to further explore the connection between family and diversity training exist. Further, the field of HRD is well positioned to explore these connections so that we may consider this relationship when designing diversity training interventions.

In addition to the current events and the current U.S. political climate, previous personal experiences, and family, study informant text indicated that their own personal growth and development served to influence their diversity training experience. In the section that follows, I will detail the role of personal growth and development and how it contributed to the emotional nature of the experience and present findings from my post analysis review of literature.

Personal Growth and Development

The interview texts of four study participant revealed that personal growth and development served to influence the training experience and contribute to the emotional nature of the intervention. Interestingly, personal growth and development served to both motivate study participants to enroll in this emotionally challenging course while also producing anxiety related to whether other course enrollees would be advanced enough in their development to engage in such a course without subjecting others to a painful experience through insensitive comments or behaviors. Before I move to present my findings and connections from the related literature, I must first state that I was unable to locate a single study which found that individual personal growth and development directly influenced the emotional of a diversity training. This may be due the fact that few phenomenological studies of diversity training have been undertaken by scholars and reaction measures are ineffective at identifying motivation to enroll in a course and pre-course concerns regarding other enrollees.

In their examination and presentation of models of diversity training, Ferdman and Brody (1996) presented the "Moral Imperative" for diversity training which recognizes certain ethnic and racial groups have been victims of discrimination throughout American history while others, mainly White males, have benefited. Further, the authors noted that it is through heightening of awareness of the inequities that beneficiaries may contribute to a better society, in essence engaging in personal growth and development through diversity training. Findings of personal growth and development as an influence of diversity training are scant in the literature. One notable exception is from Pattison (2003) who examined one part of the experiences of a diverse

group of international counseling post graduate students and reported significant findings as related to personal growth and development. Specifically, the author found "Several participants referred to experiences of personal growth and development, often involving a strengthening of what they regarded as their 'core self" (p. 111). Additionally, the author noted personal development for some students included an increased or raised awareness of the needs of others. It is important to note that while this was not a diversity training per se, the exposure to and interaction with a diverse group of peers served as an experiential learning exercise in diversity.

Rooney, Flores and Mercier (1998) expressed concern regarding the level of personal development of others in a diversity training when the authors noted that in addition to the influence of the diversity training instructor, the tone of the class is set by other course participants and noted the required balance for learning to occur.

The findings of my post analysis review of literature suggest that there is some evidence that the impact of personal growth and development may be associated with the experience of diversity training, however, it is important to note that direct connections in the literature are few and this may represent an opportunity for further research into the complex phenomenon of diversity training. Further, as indicated by Rooney, Flores and Mercier (1998), the level of personal development of others may prove impactful to the training experience of others.

In addition to the current events and the current U.S. political climate, previous personal experiences, family, and personal growth and development, my hermeneutic analysis of study informant texts indicated that social media served to influence their diversity training experience. In the section that follows, I will discuss the role of social

media and how it contributed to the emotional nature of the experience and present findings from my post analysis review of literature.

Social Media

My examination of study participant interview texts revealed that in addition to current events and the political climate, previous personal experiences, family, and personal growth and development, social media also served to influence the training event. While primarily discussed within the context of "taking the temperature" with respect to certain issues or gaining the perspective of others, social media was associated in interview with three study participants. While my review of literature produced no studies which directly linked social media to the emotional experience of diversity training, there is evidence of the impact of social media on learning generally and emotion.

Learning resources are critical for organizations. Further, the current learning mix common in organizations, which is based on formal training and development, informal learning, and knowledge sharing have great influence on human capital in organizations (Noe, Clarke, & Klein, 2014). Further, the authors asserted "Social learning remains relevant, but the social context for learning has drastically changed with advancements such as social media providing access to a greater number of models or social others to learn from" (p. 250). This learning from others was evident in the present study and was discussed within the context of assessing and engaging with social others around racial matters. What's more, the emotional nature of the training experience was influenced through participant interactions on social media through social learning and interactions with others who hold both similar and dissimilar views.

Another example of social media and emotion comes from Dai, Han, Dai, and Xu (2015) examined vocal media communication, social networks, and the transmission of emotion information and concluded "The widespread use of emerging vocal social media has greatly facilitated communication as well as emotion propagation on social networks and is therefore having greater impacts on social psychological cognition and group behaviors than ever before" (p. 787). These findings are consistent with those of Schwartz et al (2013) who studied personality, gender, and age through the analysis of 700 million words, phrases, and topics from 75,000 volunteers from Facebook and noted:

> Online social media such as Facebook are a particularly promising
>
> resource for the study of people, as ''status'' updates are self-descriptive,
>
> personal, and have emotional content. Language use is objective and
>
> quantifiable behavioral data, and unlike surveys and questionnaires,
>
> Facebook language allows researchers to observe individuals as they
>
> freely present themselves in their own words. (p .13)

These assertions support the findings of the present study in that the influence of social media on learning in organizations cannot be understated. As it relates to the phenomenon of diversity training, the impact of social media may be more profound. This is the case because as noted above, the emotion that is often displayed on social media can, as this study finds, heighten the training experience. What's more, as organizations shift to include and integrate more social learning into their learning and development strategies, they must consider and account for the social media effect on interventions.

Overall, my review of literature found scant evidence which supported connections between social media, diversity training, and the confrontation of emotion. However, it is clear that the advent of social media will require organizations to shift learning strategies to account for the social learning which takes place through social media. As noted by Noe, Clarke, and Klein, (2014) "research that addresses the use of social media and blended learning in today's workplace is especially needed owing to employees' and organizations' increased use and demand for technology-aided instruction (p.266). I submit, this assertion holds especially true for diversity training interventions as the trainee experience and resulting views are increasingly shaped by social learning through social media.

After processing the information gained through participating in this diversity training, study informants were motivated to take some form of action to produce change. This change was described in broad contexts which ranged from mobilizing for change by focusing on those close to study participants, to shifting to more challenging course offerings to large scale activism. In the following section, I will situate this finding within the context of extant literature and explore connections in findings that may exist.

Mobilize for Change

Reflecting the unique nature of diversity training, my analyses of interview transcript texts indicated that after this training event, study participants were left with a desire to take positive action in some form to mobilize for change. This action was discussed in local contexts, such as by creating change through self-reflection and encouraging the development of those within their locus of control, advocating for more robust diversity training offerings, or engagement in large scale activism. Moreover, my

post analysis review of literature suggests that some support for my finding that diversity training participants were motivated to act in some form to mobilize for change as it concerns race, race relations, and societal change exists. My review of the related literature indicated that the connection between diversity training and social action are most prominent in the study of higher education and usually in the context of cross racial exposure through a diversity training and democratic action.

An example of this comes from Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, and Gurin (2002) who compared how different types of diversity experiences are associated with differences in educational outcomes among students of different racio-ethnic backgrounds. Analyzing longitudinal data from both a nationwide and University of Michigan student databases, the authors found support for their postulate that diversity experiences, both informal through cross racial interactions and classroom diversity, were positively related to democracy outcomes. Democracy outcomes included the motivation and ability to participate in an increasingly diverse democracy and consider the multiple perspectives that often arise when diverse others interact through placing emphasis on the common good and appreciation of common values. It is important to note that the Michigan study found some differences with respect to the African and Asian Americans in the sample, in that some diversity experiences proved more powerful. I contend, these findings suggest that as individuals encounter and interact with diverse others, through informal or formal means, they are better prepared and more inclined to take democratic action and mobilize for change.

Another connection between participation in a diversity training and the compulsion to mobilize for change comes from Laird, Engberg, and Hurtado (2005) and

their examination of how certain diversity courses "promote the importance students place on taking personal responsibility for social issues and problems" (p.449). The authors analyzed the responses of 367 students (227 from a diversity courses and 140 from a management course) and found that previous enrollment in a diversity course, and enrollment in one of the courses which was included in their study, served as positive determinants of the quality of students' interactions with diverse others. Further, the authors also noted that their "study also shows that previous enrollment in diversity courses and enrollment in one of the diversity courses in the study positively influenced students' commitment to social action engagement, an outcome that indicates students' desire to take actions in their communities and relationships in order to end social injustices" (p. 468). Again, I submit, these findings serve to support the findings of this work in that after a diversity training, participants were motivated to mobilize for social change.

In addition to the findings noted above, further support for the results of the present study were offered from Ross (2014) who explored diversity and intergroup contact in higher education among 61 undergraduate students guided by Allport's (1954) intergroup contact theory. Ross found the majority of course participants believed coalition building, or cooperation amongst diverse groups for mutual benefit, was possible based on their experience in the course. Moreover, the author identified intergroup cooperation as the democratic outcome of interest as it is through coalition building and cooperation that change is produced. The findings of these studies support the findings of the present study in that participation in diversity training can produce a desire to mobilize for change.

Overall, the ability of participation in a diversity training to motivate and inspire social action is substantiated in the literature. Unfortunately, my review of the literature also suggests that HRD, as a field of research and professional practice, has been so far reluctant to engage in the study of the diversity training experience. What's more, my findings suggest that by comparison, the higher education literature has pioneered the discovery of these important connections. I contend that for HRD professionals to appropriately design and advise organizations with respect to diversity training as a phenomenon, a deeper understanding of the phenomenon must be developed through the qualitative exploration of the lived experience of participating in diversity training. It is through qualitative methodologies that the nuances of participation may be developed, and new paths explored.

Summary

In the following section, I will summarize my findings from my post analysis review of the literature and their connections to the present study. Overall, my post analysis review of the literature produced results that were able to substantiate the themes discovered through the present study. While some findings were more robust than others, connections to the literature exist. There is much literature to support the connection between diversity training and emotion. This does not come as a surprise considering both the intentional, often provocative, design of diversity training and the often-controversial subject matter contained therein. Further, these emotions are often exacerbated by the comments and interactions of course enrollees. The impact of stories that are shared during a diversity training cannot be underestimated in terms of their

ability to produce emotional reactions for course participants through challenging their worldviews, highlighting discrimination, and sharing individual realities.

The ability of a training participant to be influenced by factors external to the training itself can be found in the literature as well, however, my review of the literature indicates that opportunities for further investigation exist. My post analysis literature review found that family, previous personal experiences, and personal growth and development may influence the participant experience in diversity training. While connections regarding the ability of social media to influence a diversity training event were less pronounced in the literature, connections to learning generally, and emotion specifically, are found in the literature.

Another critical finding of my post analysis review of the literature was that the field of HRD is generally lagging in terms of investigating diversity training as an organizational phenomenon. I find this to be deeply troubling in that we are missing the opportunity to conduct research which informs practitioners as they assist organizations in navigating the complexity created by increased organizational diversity. HRD scholars have made the case for the study of diversity, investigated many facets of diversity training, produced reviews of literature, and offered meta analyses of findings. However, the field has been reluctant to harness the power of phenomenology, as a methodology, to gain a profound understanding of this complex phenomenon. Until HRD researchers acquire this understanding, knowledge related to diversity training programs will be incomplete, at best.

Finally, my findings indicate that an opportunity for qualitative study of the phenomenon of diversity training exists. My review produced few studies which applied

phenomenological methodologies to investigate the experience of diversity training as lived by the participants. In my view, this approach to the investigation allows for researchers to gain a deeper understanding of the nuances of diversity training and have the ability to inform practice and may produce new theories which may guide researchers as they develop seek to develop profound knowledge of diversity training as a phenomenon.

In the following chapter, I will discuss my conclusions from this study, offer study implications for future research, and reflect on my profound experience conducting this study, and offer my final summarizing statement

CHAPTER SIX:

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH, RESEARCHER

**REFLECTION, LIMITATIONS, AND CONCLUSION**

"Without reflection, we go blindly on our way, creating more unintended consequences, and failing to achieve anything useful." - Margaret J. Wheatley

This chapter will discuss the findings of the present study, explore its implications for future research, offer my personal reflection after completing this work, supplementing and making connections to the bracketing essay presented earlier, and discuss the implications for future research. Finally, I will note the study limitations and offer the conclusion to the present study. In the following section, I will discuss the findings of this research and how it contributes to the phenomenon of diversity training in organizations.

Discussion

The present study endeavored to investigate the lived experience of participating in diversity training. The findings of this study suggested that the experience in diversity training is complex and multifaceted. Analysis of participant interview texts revealed that the experience is rife with strong emotion and largely influenced by several factors external to the training itself. Participants of this study were forced to confront visceral emotion during the training experience which served as the hallmark of the intervention. This confrontation of emotion was clear and profound as a defining experience of diversity training participation. Emotions encountered were myriad and included anxiety, sadness, fear, concern for others, appreciation, and hopefulness.

Figure 1. presents a conceptual model of the lived experience of participating in diversity training derived from the data obtained through my analysis of participant transcripts. The model reflects the pre-course concerns and emotions experienced by study participants. This model further details the influence of external forces identified as current events and the political climate, personal growth and development, family, social media, and the participants previous personal experiences. The model also reflects the identified meta-theme, confrontation of visceral emotion, and its emergence following the interaction of pre-course concerns, the identified influencers to the training experience, and the training experience itself. Finally, the model reflects the participants' desire to take action through mobilizing for change after the completion of the course and with the consideration of all of the previously identified themes.
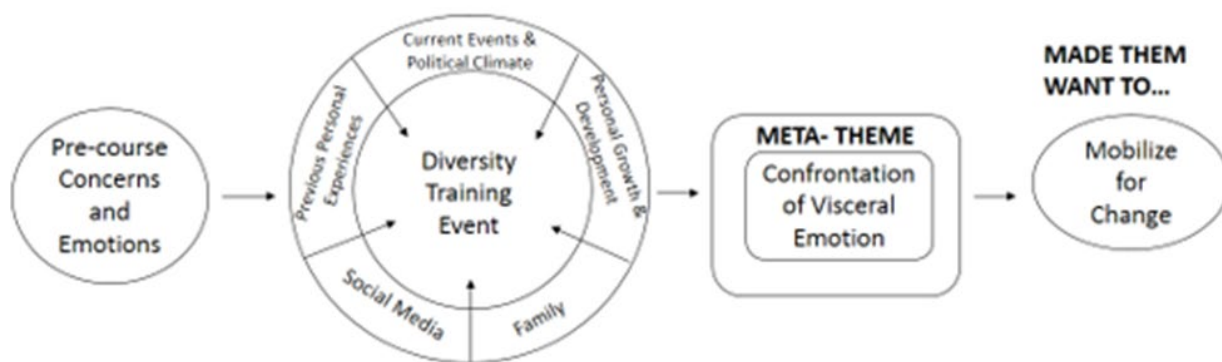
Figure 1. Conceptual model derived from the lived experience of participation in diversity training.

Research on the lived experience of diversity training is underdeveloped at best. Some of the findings of this work are supported by the findings of other scholars. For example, connections between emotion, learning generally, and diversity training have been established in the literature (Boekaerts, 2011; Curtis-Boles & Bourg, 2010). Moreover, the ability of diversity course content to provoke emotional responses from participants

has also been substantiated in the literature (Perry et al., 2009) as has the purposeful elicitation of emotion during a diversity training event (Brewis, 2017; Hassouneh, 2006). Further, connections between the findings of the present study that external influencers contribute to the diversity training experience may also be found in the literature.

Much of the knowledge acquired concerning diversity training and its impact has been obtained using trainee reaction measures (De Muese, Hostager, & O'Neill, 2007; Hanover & Cellar, 1998; Holladay & Quinones, 2005; 2008). While insightful, these measures also contribute to a limited understanding of this complex phenomenon. Much like Goldstein (1993) who argued that training evaluation that is solely focused on reactions can provide misleading information, I contend that relying exclusively on quantitative measures of diversity training will likewise provide us with an incomplete understanding of the phenomenon.

The findings of this study suggest that the experience of being a participant in diversity training may be summarized as follows: participants entered the training with emotions that ranged from general anxiety regarding what the experience would be like, to pre-course concerns for the minorities in the course, to the individual development of other enrollees and how it may impact the training. The course content and the sharing of stories interacted to produce an emotional experience for study participants. These emotions were exacerbated as participants considered the influencers to the overall experience and made connections to their own world through the influence of their own previous personal experiences which included instances of discrimination, interactions with law enforcement, and spending time abroad in a majority Black nation, to name a few. The influence of the current political climate and recent events were felt as

participants discussed the 2016 U.S. presidential election, President Donald J. Trump, and the Trayvon Martin murder, among others. Family and close friends influenced the training event through causing participants to consider previous private discussions with family members, their biases, and recalled various statements made which reflect the myths discussed in the course. Participants were also influenced by their desire to identify where they were in their own personal development around racial issues. They were motivated to continue on their individual journeys, but interestingly enough, were also concerned with how the personal development of other course enrollees would contribute to and influence the training experience. Finally, several participants referenced discussions they held on social media such as Facebook and how it influenced their training experience. These influencers are important nuances to the overall training experience.

Analysis of participant interview texts further revealed that after digesting all of the facets noted above, and engaging in reflection, informants were left with a desire to mobilize for change in some way. This finding is notable for several reasons. First, this motivation largely occurred after learning about the experiences of others through stories, reflexive learning, and connecting their own previous personal experiences with the content explored in the course. It is important to note that for some participants, this desire to mobilize for change was already present and thus strengthened and perhaps more sharply focused by their experience in the course. This suggests that learning did occur and that this course and the learning group writ large, had a profound effect on study participants. Secondly, this desire was expressed in terms of both mobilizing for change by continuing to focus on individual development, informing and enlightening

those closest to them, and through engaging in more large-scale activism. This finding suggests that the impact is profound and its reach broad. Finally, this desire for change was personal. Participants felt that they had a personal responsibility for making things better. This responsibility was conveyed to include making things better for their friends, family, co-workers, clients of their agencies, citizens of the county, and the nation as a whole. These findings represent the unique nature and experience of participating in diversity training programs. Again, these findings contend that diversity training is unique as a training intervention and must be recognized as such.

Implications for Future Research

The implications of this research are quite broad. First, this study discovered that the diversity training experience is incomparable to any other training intervention offered in organizations. The interview texts analyzed in this study indicated that when individuals engage and participate in diversity training they do so willing to accept the accompanying emotion within the context of several external forces and experiences. Further, this finding suggests that organizational diversity scholars and researchers have an opportunity to further explore and examine these connections as well as identify individual nuances that contribute to the diversity training experience and impact its effectiveness.

Secondly, the present study also noted that HRD, as a field, has proven to be reluctant to engage in the exploration of diversity training using qualitative methodologies. If we are to appropriately advise, create, deliver, and evaluate diversity training in organizations, we must do so with a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon and fully aware of the emotional nature of such interventions. While HRD

scholars have contributed knowledge to the collective understanding of diversity training, we are far behind other researchers, specifically those who research diversity training and education in the context of higher education. This disconnect can create challenges for those who are responsible for HRD functions in higher education in that there is a paucity of scholarship resources available to guide them.

With the acknowledgement of the small, all White sample of government employees, some speculative implications of this work may include: the adaptations of new models of diversity training which account for the heightened emotion experienced by course participants, the exposure of HRD practitioners (trainers) to different theories which may guide their interventions, and the development of a more comprehensive understanding of this complex organizational phenomenon. Another item to note is that HRD scholars and practitioners should be aware of the role of emotion in organizational life. Callahan and McCollum (2002) discussed the effects of emotion on theory and practical organizational interventions and noted "It is our contention that the ways that researchers in practice and academe conceptualize the nature of emotion and its role in individual and organizational functioning can have profound effects (p. 7). I submit, these effects extend to diversity training interventions and represent an opportunity for further study.

It is my hope that this work inspires other researchers to engage in phenomenological investigation of diversity training so that a deeper understanding may be obtained. Scholars have studied diversity training guided by a limited set of theoretical lenses which in turn, have the effect of limiting our understanding of this complex phenomenon. In my view, the information discovered through qualitative inquiry may

have the effect of both enhancing our knowledge related to this unique phenomenon and expanding the theoretical frameworks which guide our research.

In the section that follows, I will reflect on the themes identified during this work, offer my thoughts, and make connections to my bracketing essay presented earlier to limit my individual bias.

Researcher Reflection

In this section, I will reflect on the themes discovered during this study, how they connect to my personal experiences as both an educator and professional and make connections between the bracketed information presented earlier which was conducted to limit my individual bias while carrying out this work.

As I stated previously, I believe the power of organizations to bring people of diverse backgrounds, cultures, and ethnicities together to work toward a common goal. I decided to investigate the lived experience of diversity training because I firmly believe that the contribution of such a study could do much to further the collective knowledge base as it relates to the phenomenon of diversity training. Further, as a constructivist, I generally believe that reality is socially constructed, and as such, I believed that phenomenological investigation of the lived experience of diversity training served as a natural fit for my doctoral dissertation.

The diversity training experience of study participants, and my resulting analysis of the texts associated with participant interviews, indicated the training experience was emotional. This finding was not surprising to me but rather was expected. It is important to note that the reason I was not surprised was because when I initially conceived this study, I envisioned it having participants who represented multiple racial groups and I

expected the minorities in this conceived sample to be emotional. I was, however, surprised at the level of emotion conveyed by this all White group of participants. The women and man who agreed to participate in this study cared deeply about both their own personal development around racial issues and diversity generally from both a societal and organizational standpoint. Additionally, the confrontation of emotion that study informants encountered was greatly influenced by the experiences of other course enrollees learned through the sharing of personal stories and experiences and, at times, reinforced through their own personal experiences.

My personal experiences have greatly influenced my views on diversity, and more specifically, racio-ethnic and religious diversity and consistent with the findings of the present study, were largely influenced by my family and upbringing. As previously noted, I was exposed to diversity at an early age. I was fortunate because my early experiences with diversity engrained in me what the world looks like and cultivated what would become one of my life's most important purposes – the study of and subsequent advocacy for the benefits of organizational and societal diversity. As I reflect on this experience, I am, however, reminded that my commitment to diversity was not always as resolute as it now is. As previously mentioned, there was a time when I held racist views, limited my circle to those who looked like me, and even expressed these views to those closest to me: my family. Ironically, it was my family that supported and allowed me to go through this period unencumbered by their emotion. They recognized I needed to grow and allowed me to go on my journey alone hoping I would return to my more appreciative roots. This must have been difficult to do but must have also been done with some confidence that the genuine me would eventually emerge. This experience taught

me that respect and appreciation for diversity are not static but rather fluid in nature and often reflect the preponderance of our experiences at the time. I was encouraged to find that participants in this study did not indicate they underwent the same journey as none of them expressed espousing racist views in any way at any time. Perhaps this is because they did not feel comfortable with making such a revelation. However, considering the extent of out interviews and the content discussed, I am confident that if they held such views at one time, it would have come up, if not expressly, then perhaps in my examination of the interview texts.

Through this work, I am reminded, and deeply troubled, that we currently live in an environment where our politics is messy and personal, our disagreements omnipresent from social media to the workplace training room. Furthermore, our political climate is divisive and at times, racially charged. What's more, we now live in a time where certain government organizations and politicians are more inclined to question the benefits of diversity than disavow statements that are clearly racist. During the time of the passage of the Civil Rights Act, it was government leading the change and organizations lagging to integrate it, and when they did, as discussed earlier, it was with the point of avoiding litigation and financial risk for organization. It appears the roles have reversed as organizations are now the leading proponents of diversity and inclusion with most having expressed some values-based commitment to diversity and inclusion. Consequently, it comes as no surprise that one of the findings of this study was that the diversity training experience was greatly influenced by current events and the political climate.

Diversity training does not happen in a vacuum. Because its content may challenge our worldview, often expose us to diverse others we may not generally interact

with otherwise, and either attempts to enlighten or create behavior change, it is often complex and emotional. My participants, like myself, experienced this phenomenon, in part, through the lens of current events taking place in the United States today. They, too, were aware of the current political climate, the relatively recent U.S. presidential election, and cognizant of the current challenges that exist in this environment between Black and Brown Americans and law enforcement. Further, they have engaged in discussions, both face to face and digitally with friends and family regarding these hot button issues and it is no coincidence that these topics were revealed during our interviews and emerged as during text analysis.

As I reflect back on the execution of this study, its findings, and the general experience, I am encouraged. I was encouraged to see individuals purposely choosing to enroll in one of the more challenging diversity courses offered by this county thus placing personal development and understanding over the potential conflict associated with the discussion of personal and political views. I am further encouraged that six of these course enrollees consented to participate in this research to share their experience and contribute to the collective knowledge of the diversity training experience. I am also encouraged by the organizational commitment to diversity at this county and I wholeheartedly believe they are doing their part to address some of the societal challenges we face through addressing the organizational challenges associated with increased organizational diversity.

Many personal lessons were learned from this endeavor. I, too, have participated in diversity trainings, some voluntarily, some required and for the most part found my experiences to mirror the findings of the present study as well as the findings included in

the work of Curtis-Boles and Bourg (2010) in that I was reminded of discriminatory encounters and societal racism more broadly. I recall trying to limit sharing my personal thoughts and experiences to avoid offending others and because I thought it to be a useless endeavor. Through the participants associated with this study, I learned that as it concerns these participants, they desire minority participation. Our (minority) voices provide unique insight into our challenges and may serve to motivate others in addressing these challenges and finding solutions. It was clear that this group of White participants was genuinely distraught by some of the information they learned from this course. While expressed to varying degrees, it was clear.

Upon further reflection, the most promising finding of this work was that after the training experience and with the consideration of the reflexive learning that was inspired, was the finding that study informants were motivated to mobilize for change in some form. Their desire to mobilize for change mirrors my desire to mobilize change. In a country where minority birth rates are higher than White birth rates and where most respectable demographic projections indicate that we are on path to becoming a minority majority country in the not too distant future, change must be made. I understand that this information can be unsettling or even produce anxiety for some as it represents a dramatic change from the past and people are always reluctant to cede power. I submit that this is the wrong lens with which to view the change. We should begin to look at how diversity adds a unique richness to our lives, like travel, and resist the urge to stereotype and engage in tribalism. Diversity training can be one way to support this transition and is often the most prevalent way of addressing and managing diversity in organizations.

Diversity training, however, is messy. Its delivery requires a facilitator skilled in creating a learning environment of trust, openness, fairness, and group learning. The findings of the present study indicate that diversity training is unlike any other training intervention that individuals will encounter during their careers. It requires much from its participants and mandates respect. While diversity training must be able to produce motivation for change to be effective, we must also recognize that this change is also difficult for individuals to comprehend and furthermore, study after study has informed us that individuals prove resistant to change generally and diversity training specifically. As I reflect on this experience and the findings that emerged from this study, I firmly believe that while diversity training may not produce a profound commitment or appreciation for diversity in all of its participants, it can, perhaps, serve as a Ms. Baker for some.

Limitations

In the following section, I will offer my conclusion to this study and discuss the limitations of this work. As this study investigated the lived experience of participating in diversity training and employed elements of both case study and phenomenology methodologies, there are several limitations to note. First, as this study was conducted at one large Midwestern county using participants recruited from one section of one course, the generalizability of the results is limited and not reflective of the experience of other sections of the same course or of other diversity courses offered by this governmental organization. Further, as this sample of course enrollees contained one man, an opportunity to develop a more profound understanding of the phenomenon as it relates to men, and specifically White men may exist to supplement the existing knowledge and

answer questions such as why White men are often resistant to diversity training. Conversely, a sample of minority men may add richness to the understanding of their experience and answer questions such as why minority men are reluctant to actively participate and engage when in diversity training.

The participants in the present study were all White and of Midwestern origin therefore offering a limited range of experience and geographical background. To expand, the lived experience of a racially diverse and geographically dispersed group of participants may have produced more variability in the experience. Finally, as the present study is limited to the experiences of six participants, its generalizability is further limited. Future research should investigate the lived experience of a larger sample of organizational members to enrich our understanding.

Conclusion

When I began this study, I did so after much thought and with a genuine desire to learn what the experience of diversity training was like for its participants. What's more, I wanted to know if HRD scholars and practitioners had an accurate understanding of this complex organizational phenomenon. I was also driven to make a unique contribution to the field of HRD and attempt to respond to the concerns of Bierema (2010) and expand HRD's role in diversity education and research. A summary of findings from this study is the primary role of the confrontation of strong and visceral emotions in response to participation in diversity training in a public-sector organization. Further findings highlighted that these strong emotions were developed over time and were influenced by many facets of life including current events and the U.S. political climate, participants' previous personal life experiences, the participant's own personal growth and

development as well as that of other course enrollees, family, and social media. Furthermore, study participants were left wanting to act and were mobilized for change. It seems the diversity training course merely provided the context for this convergence to occur. It also discovered that the training event provoked several emotions in study participants which arose before the course began. These findings cannot be overstated, and I argue, have increased our knowledge of diversity training.

The findings of my literature review suggest that the field of higher education has so far led the way in qualitative research of diversity training. This is problematic. If (HRD) is to claim as its responsibility the training and development of human assets in all contexts, my results indicate we have work to do. Moreover, as the focus of most HRD scholars largely remains on for profit organizations, we must recognize that many institutions of higher learning contain as many, if not more, organizational members than most for profit enterprises that we choose to study. This represents opportunity for HRD scholars. Finally, it is important to note that the study of HRD in governmental contexts is severely lacking and represents an opportunity for further exploration. It is my hope that this work inspires others to pursue similar lines of inquiry so that we may, as a field, reach the full potential that we help organizations develop in themselves and their members.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A

Human Subjects IRB Letter

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

| *Twin Cities Campus* | *Human Research Protection Program*
Office of the Vice President for Research | *D528 Mayo Memorial Building*
420 Delaware Street S.E.
MMC 820
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Phone: 612-626-5654
Fax: 612-626-6061
Email: irb@umn.edu
http://www.research.umn.edu/subjects/ |

EXEMPTION DETERMINATION

August 22, 2017

Kenneth Bartlett

612-624-4935 bartlett@umn.edu

Dear Kenneth Bartlett:

On 8/22/2017, the IRB reviewed the following submission:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title of Study:	What is the Lived Experience of Participating in a Diversity Training in a County Government setting?
Investigator:	Kenneth Bartlett
IRB ID:	STUDY00000952
Sponsored Funding:	None
Grant ID/Con Number:	None
Internal UMN Funding:	None
Fund Management Outside University:	None
IND, IDE, or HDE:	None
Documents Reviewed with this Submission:	• Revised form, Category: Consent Form; • Revised form, Category: Recruitment Materials; • Revised Protocol, Category: IRB Protocol

The IRB determined that this study meets the criteria for exemption from IRB review. To arrive at this determination, the IRB used "WORKSHEET: Exemption (HRP-312)." If you have any

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questions about this determination, please review that Worksheet in the [HRPP Toolkit Library](#) and contact the IRB office if needed.

This study met the following category(ies) for exemption:

- (2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that Human Subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the Human Subjects responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Ongoing IRB review and approval for this study is not required; however, this determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these activities impact the exempt determination, please submit a Modification to the IRB for a determination.

In conducting this study, you are required to follow the requirements listed in the Investigator Manual (HRP-103), which can be found by navigating to the [HRPP Toolkit](#) [Library](#) on the IRB website.

For grant certification purposes, you will need these dates and the Assurance of Compliance number which is FWA00000312 (Fairview Health Systems Research FWA00000325, Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare FWA00004003).

Sincerely,

Clinton Dietrich, MA, CIP IRB
Analyst

We value feedback from the research community and would like to hear about your experience. The link below will take you to a brief survey that will take a minute or two to complete. The questions are basic, but your responses will help us better understand what we are doing well and areas that may require improvement. Thank you in advance for completing the survey.

Even if you have provided feedback in the past, we want and welcome your evaluation.

https://umn.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_5BiYrqPNMJRQSBn

APPENDIX B

IRB Modification Approval Letter

University of Minnesota

Twin Cities Campus	*Human Research Protection Program* *Office of the Vice President for Research*	*D528 Mayo Memorial Building* *420 Delaware Street S.E.* *MMC 820* *Minneapolis, MN 55455* *Phone: 612-626-5654* *Fax: 612-626-6061* *Email: irb@umn.edu* *http://www.research.umn.edu/subjects/*

MODIFICATION ACKNOWLEGED

September 28, 2017

Kenneth Bartlett

612-624-4935 bartlett@umn.edu

Dear Kenneth Bartlett:

On 9/28/2017, the IRB reviewed the following submission:

Type of Review:	Modification/Update
Title of Study:	What is the Lived Experience of Participating in a Diversity Training in a County Government setting?
Investigator:	Kenneth Bartlett
IRB ID:	MOD00000866
Sponsored Funding:	None
Grant ID/Con Number:	None
Internal UMN Funding:	None
Fund Management Outside University:	None
IND, IDE, or HDE:	None

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Documents Reviewed with this Submission:	• MODIFIED PROTOCOL, Category: IRB Protocol; • Invitational letter sent to participants.pdf, Category: Recruitment Materials; • Invitational letter sent to participants.pdf, Category: Other;

The IRB determined that the criteria for approval continue to be met and that this study continues to qualify for Exempt category 2.

Modifications/updates included:

> Due to a lower than anticipated response rate, I would like to have recruitment email re-sent to class enrollees.

You will be sent a reminder from ETHOS to submit a Continuing Review submission for this study. You must submit your Continuing Review no later than 30 days prior to the last day of approval in order for your study to be reviewed and approved for another Continuing Review period. If Continuing Review approval is not granted before, approval of this protocol expires immediately after that date.

You must also submit a Modification in ETHOS for review and approval prior to making any changes to this study.

If consent forms or recruitment materials were approved, those are located under the Final column in the Documents tab in the ETHOS study workspace.

In conducting this study, you are required to follow the requirements listed in the Investigator Manual (HRP-103), which can be found by navigating to the HRPP Toolkit Library on the IRB website.

For grant certification purposes, you will need the approval and last day of approval dates listed above and the Assurance of Compliance number which is FWA00000312 (Fairview Health Systems Research FWA00000325, Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare FWA00004003).

Sincerely,

Jeffery P Perkey, CIP, MLS
IRB Analyst

We value feedback from the research community and would like to hear about your experience. The link below will take you to a brief survey that will take a minute or two to complete. The questions are basic, but your responses will help us better understand what we are doing well and areas that may require improvement. Thank you in advance for completing the survey.

Even if you have provided feedback in the past, we want and welcome your evaluation.
https://umn.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_5BiYrqPNMJRQSBn

APPENDIX C

INVITATIONAL LETTER SENT TO PARTICIPANTS:

THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF PARTICIPATING IN

DIVERSITY TRAINING:

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL CASE STUDY

My name is Jeremy Michael Clark and I am a doctoral student of Human Resource Development in the Department of Organizational Leadership, Policy, and Development at the University of Minnesota. Additionally, I have had the pleasure of serving as a Planning Analyst in Integrated Planning and Analysis for the last year and a half. During this time, I have been able to witness firsthand Hennepin County's commitment to diversity and inclusion.

I am passionate about workforce diversity and its implications for organizations and on organizational life. My dissertation explores the lived experience of participating in diversity training in a county government setting. Additionally, I am interested in understanding the emotions, thoughts, and feelings elicited through participation in a diversity training. Further, I am interested in how the experience of participation varies across diverse racial groups as the extant research literature suggests individuals (and groups) may react differently to the content discussed in diversity trainings.

I have been provided the names of participants currently registered for Hennepin County's *5 Myths of Racism* diversity training program that will take place on September 7, 2017. I am inviting you to participate in this study. At the completion of the training, I would like to individually interview you to learn more about what the experience of participation was like for you? Questions will be designed to assess aspects such as: Was the information presented in the training new to you? Did you feel will the information covered in the training connected with you? Were those connections positive or negative? Was participation an emotional experience? This line of inquiry will allow for a comprehensive assessment of the lived experience of participating in a diversity training. Additionally, participant identities and all content of the interview will remain confidential and will be treated with the utmost care. Further, Hennepin County will not be made aware of your participation or as this study addresses content that may be emotional for some.

Women and men from any orientation, participating in this diversity training in Hennepin County are welcome and encouraged to participate in this study.

Should you be interested in participating in my study, please contact me by email: clar1422@umn.edu, or by phone: (707)616-5142 (cell).

The study has no foreseeable risks. However, questions regarding your experiences may recall events or moments that were painful, emotional, or frightening. You may a range of emotions. Please remember that that your participation in this study is voluntary and that you may choose to leave the study at any time with no explanation and no risk or negative consequences. You may refuse to answer any question without having to provide a reason. All answers will be coded so that your identity is protected.

The benefits to participation are: The study does not represent any immediate benefits for participants, however, the outcomes of the study will contribute to gaining knowledge about the experiential aspects of diversity training. Further, your participation may help inform future diversity training content and focus at Hennepin County as well as contribute to the body of scholarly knowledge available with respect to the phenomena of organizational diversity training.

Future participants may gain knowledge, so they may more effectively deal with particular experiences through their careers.

NOTE: If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in a face to face interview after completing the *5 Myths of Racism* diversity training at Hennepin County. The interview should last approximately 1 hour and will be scheduled at a time that fits your schedule. Interviews will take place at a location of your choosing where confidentially can be maintained. In the interview you will have an opportunity to discuss your experience and express your feelings and perceptions in regards to diversity training in the workplace.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Michael Clark, M.A.

PhD Candidate

University of Minnesota

APPENDIX D

CONSENT FORM SENT TO PARTICIPANTS

CONSENT FORM

THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF PARTICIPATING IN

DIVERSITY TRAINING:

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL CASE STUDY

You are invited to be in a research study focusing on the experience of participating in a diversity training. You were selected as a possible participant because you read an invitational letter that was sent to your professional organization and after you read the invitation you contacted me and agreed to participate in this study. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by Jeremy Michael Clark, a doctoral student. His advisor is Dr. Kenneth Bartlett, Professor in the Department of Organizational Leadership, Policy, and Development at the University of Minnesota. The purpose of this study is to examine of the lived experience of participating in a diversity training.

Background information

The purpose of this study is to gain an in-depth understanding of what it feels like to participate in a diversity training in a county government setting.

Procedures:
If you agree to be in this study, we will ask you to do the following:

You will be asked to attend the *5 Myths of Racism* training at Hennepin County. Once the training is complete, you will be asked to participate in one interview. In this face to face interview you will have an opportunity to discuss your experience and express your feelings and perceptions regarding diversity training. The interview will last approximately one hour. The interview will be conducted at a mutually agreed-upon time, date, and location convenient for you. Additionally, interviews will be transcribed for analysis and themes identified by the researcher will be shared with participants to ensure accuracy. The results of your participation will contribute to gaining and sharing knowledge of the related to the personal experiences of participating in diversity training. Please note that while future participants, practitioners, and scholars may gain a deeper understanding of the effects of diversity training, however, there are no direct benefits to you for participating in this study.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study

The study has no foreseeable risks. However, questions regarding your experiences may recall events or moments that were painful, emotional, or frightening. You may a range of emotions. Please remember that that your participation in this study is voluntary and that you may choose to leave the study at any time with no explanation and no risk or negative consequences. You may refuse to answer any question without having to provide a reason. All answers will be coded so that your identity is protected.

The benefits to participation are: The study does not represent any immediate benefits for participants, however, the outcomes of the study will contribute to gaining knowledge about the experiential aspects of diversity training. Further, your participation may help inform future diversity training content and focus at Hennepin County as well as contribute to the body of scholarly knowledge available with respect to the phenomena of organizational diversity training.

Future participants may gain knowledge so they may more effectively deal with particular experiences through their careers.

Compensation:

You will not be paid for participating in this study.

Confidentiality:

The records of your participation will be kept confidential. In any reports to be published, no information will be included that will make it possible to identify your responses. Records of your responses will be kept in a secure location that will only be accessed by the researcher and advisor and will not be available to others. Audio recordings of the interview session will be made so as not to miss any key points. A coding system will be used to handle the generated idea. Audio recordings and transcriptions of interviews will be deleted once the study is complete. Findings will be presented as group data using quotations and pseudonyms.

Participation in this research will only be known by me and you. Your participation will not be shared with any other enrollee in the course and Hennepin County will not be aware of your participation at any point in the research process

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the Hennepin County, the University of Minnesota, or your current or future professional affiliations. If you decide to participate,

you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is: Jeremy Michael Clark. You may ask any questions you have at any time. If you have questions once the interview has been completed, you are encouraged to contact Mr. Jeremy Clark at (707)616-5142 (cell) or by email: clar1422@umn.edu or Dr. Kenneth Bartlett at (612)624-4935 (office) or by email: bartlett@umn.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to speak with someone other than the researcher(s), you are encouraged to contact the Research Subjects' Advocate Line: (612)625-1650; submit feedback online: z.umn.edu/hrppfeedback; or send a letter to HRPP, D-528 Mayo MMC 820, 420 Delaware St. SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

APPENDIX D

LIST OF PROBES

- What was the experience like of participating in this training?

- Can you describe the emotions elicited, if any, from participating in this experience?

- Can you tell me about a time during the training when you felt that way?

- I want to make sure I understand you, did you mean…?

- How does this relate to how you felt before this training?

- What was your takeaway?

APPENDIX E

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Label	Descriptor	Age	Occupation	Tenure with County	Themes
Liz	28-YEAR-OLD FEMALE	28	PLANNING ANALYST; GRADUATE STUDENT	> 1YR	· Emotion · Myths were not Remembered · Comparison to and Viewed within the Context of other Diversity Courses · Personal Experiences · Current Events/Political Climate · Focus on other Whites in the Class · Personal Growth and Development · Learning from/Impacted by Others' Stories · Hoped for More Prescriptive Content · Strong Desire to Affect change
Daiane	EXPERIENCED SOCIAL WORKER	LATE 50'S	SOCIAL WORKER	<15YRS	· Emotion · Myths Were not Remembered · Connection to work; you Experienced this Class Within the Context of your Role as a Social · Learning from Others; Desired More Minority Participation to Make Experience More Profound · Deeply impacted by others' experiences · Intersectionality · Current Events/Political Climate · Family · Awareness and Introspection · Connection to Organizational Experience and Role
Michael	MID 40'S MALE	MID 40'S	ADULT CASE MANAGER	<10YRS	· Emotion · Myths not remembered · Deeply Impacted by Others' Experiences · Personal Experiences · Hoped to Learn More about Differences; Hoped for a More Informational or Prescriptive Approach · Current Events/Political Climate · Family · Personal Growth and Development · Social Media · Strong Desire to Affect Change
Stephanie	MIDDLE AGED WHITE WOMAN	48	CHILD SUPPORT WORKER	<10YRS	· Emotion · Myths not Remembered · Comparison to and Viewed within the Context of other Diversity Courses · Personal Experiences · Current Events/Political Climate · Family · Personal Growth and Development · Impacted by Others' Stories · Strong Desire to Affect Change · Unburdened
Mary	MARY	MID 40'S	UNKNOWN	<10YRS	· Emotion · Myths not Remembered · Strong Focus on other Whites in the Class · Concern for People of Color in the Class · Personal Growth and Development · Strong Desire to Affect Change · Personal Experience · Family · Deeply Impacted by Others' Experience · Current Events/Political Climate · Awareness/Introspection · Social Media · Previous Courses
Lana	57-YEAR-OLD WHITE FEMALE	57	UNKNOWN	<10YRS	· Emotion · Myths not Remembered · Learning from Others' · Desired More Minority Participation to Make Experience More Profound · Current Events/Political Climate · Family · Strong Desire to Affect Change · Historical Perspective/Orientation · Personal Experiences · Social Media