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## *Multicultural Pair Counseling and the Development of Expanded Worldviews*

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Referred to as the fourth force in counseling—after psychodynamic, cognitive-behavioral, and humanistic approaches—multicultural counseling has become an integral and important perspective on intervention. Integral, because many find they cannot be effective dynamic, cognitive, or humanistic counselors without considering the effects of culture on the everyday experience of their clients. Important, because it signifies psychologists' and counselors' desire to work more effectively with members of cultural groups that previously have not been well-served by traditional psychological services. Because a multicultural perspective can facilitate understanding and improve counselor effectiveness with a more diverse range of clients, counselors are increasingly incorporating it into their practice and their understanding of human being.

We realize that people approach the role of culture in counseling from a number of different vantage points. As such, readers will vary in their interest in and previous exposure to the concepts discussed here. This chapter will be most easily understood by readers having some prior exposure to the multicultural counseling literature (Pedersen & Ivey, 1993; Ramirez, 1991; Sue & Sue, 1990); to cognitive-developmental or structural developmental theory, such as that described in Chapter 3 and elsewhere (Piaget, 1983; Selman, 1980; Selman & Schultz, 1990); and to philosophical psychology, specifically hermeneutics (Gadamer, 1975; Heidegger, 1962; Messer, Sass, & Woolfolk, 1991; Packer & Addison, 1989). We do not expect, however, that readers will find themselves lost if this is their first exposure to multiculturalism, structural development, or hermeneutics. We have attempted to write the chapter in a manner that makes the material accessible either as an introduction to these concepts or an elaboration, depending on the reader's knowledge.

## Cross-Cultural Pairs for Multicultural Understanding

Pair counseling with children from different cultural backgrounds provides a unique opportunity for the development of multicultural perspective-taking and intergroup understanding. As the chapters in this volume suggest, social perspective-taking development is the primary issue pair counseling has addressed throughout its evolution as a treatment, prevention and social development modality. Children participating in cross-cultural pairs for multicultural understanding<sup>1</sup> are confronted not only with the basic perspective-taking tasks of understanding and responding to another person's thoughts, feelings, and behavior, but also with the challenge and opportunity to learn about, interact with, and perhaps befriend, a member of a cultural group different from their own.

In a society as diverse as ours, one in which meaningful cross-cultural or intergroup interactions are fairly limited, engagement in a friendship-developing activity like pairs with a culturally different partner is an important and rare opportunity. It is also a potentially transforming one. When such an opportunity is successful in helping children from different backgrounds move towards friendship, the result is an understanding of difference that—more than expanding intergroup knowledge, enhancing tolerance, and achieving respect—represents an incorporation of the other's experience of group membership into the core of one's own interpersonal being. Central here is the changing of self through understanding the experience of another. Understanding generated through friendship is a felt understanding, a depth of knowing more convincing and memorable than abstract knowledge. Through this way of knowing, children actually enter and participate in the life of a person from another culture, rather than simply learning cultural facts or listening to multicultural rhetoric.

In this chapter, we describe the framework that guides our efforts to provide cross-cultural friendship opportunities for children and adolescents through pairs. Although pair work with children from different backgrounds has been presented elsewhere (Karcher, 1996; Nakkula & Selman, 1991; Schneider, Schlapkohl, & Karcher, in press), this chapter represents our group's most thorough attempt to explicitly articulate the uniqueness of pairs as a medium for cross-cultural counseling and the development of intergroup understanding. Through practice-oriented theoretical discussion, the introduction of some new concepts, and the use of case vignettes, we examine the use of pairs to enlarge the worldviews of children and adolescents who differ from each other in terms

of one or more cultural memberships, such as race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and religious affiliation.

## Intergroup Understanding and Worldview Development

The bridging and broadening of worldviews are the essential goals of our approach to pair counseling across cultures. We bring these goals to a range of prevention and intervention contexts, including the multicultural world of urban education, where there is an increasing demand for support services to enhance intergroup understanding. This demand has arisen, at least in part, from a national resurgence in cultural prejudice and associated acts of hostility, the effects of which are felt by students in their everyday functioning (Arthur & Shapiro, 1995). In one Boston middle school, for example, a recent before-school-hours fight erupted between groups of Laotian and white American students. The fight, which was instigated by racial slurs and bigoted taunting, resulted in physical injuries, detailed plans of retribution, educational withdrawal by the distracted combatants, and eventual departure from the school for one Laotian student due to family concerns about his safety. Scenarios like this one are not uncommon in urban schools with diverse student bodies, where cultural differences and intergroup prejudice have become more complex and call for a broadening of our traditional "black and white" models for understanding and addressing diversity. Multicultural pair counseling is one response to that call.

A typical response to the conflict between the white and Laotian students might rely on a conflict resolution model, an intervention that, on the surface, can look similar to "pairs," with one counselor working with the two main instigators. In conflict resolution programs children discuss their grievances or misunderstandings, come to some consensus about what each needs from the other, and commit themselves to a written contract to "get along," or, more accurately, to stay out of each other's way. If all goes well, from this perspective, the children honor their contracts and avoid future conflicts with each other. Such programs can be quite effective in some cases, but where larger prejudices and misunderstandings are at play, contracts and one-time interventions only band-aid the problems.

Pair counseling can be more effective than the conflict resolution approach in such situations because, instead of relying on contracts, pairs attempts to produce changes in worldviews and ways of being. Rather than learning to avoid each other, the goal of pairs is to help children

better understand and get along with one another. If their conflicts persist, the children, who meet face to face each week during their pair sessions, discuss their prejudices and misunderstandings, and experience the effects of the conflicts on their relationship. Through pairs a child can come to understand another well enough to anticipate the other's wants, beliefs, and actions. In this way, he does not live by a contract, but in response to a new view of the world that includes a clearer differentiation of the other's perspective from his own. Unlike honoring conflict resolution contracts where combatants avoid each other as agreed, successful pair experiences create expanded worldviews that inform children's understanding, actions, and concerns both in the immediate conflictual relationship and beyond in later relationships and other contexts.

#### A Hermeneutic Conception of Worldview Development

The construct of worldview has received fairly widespread use in the mainstream multicultural literature. Many researchers and counseling practitioners have followed Sue's (1978, Sue & Sue, 1990) seminal work in the field by associating worldview with the psychological orientations of "locus of control" (Rotter, 1966) and "locus of responsibility," (Jones, Kanouse, Kelley, Nisbett, Valins, & Weiner, 1972). From this perspective, the development of one's worldview is largely contingent upon two issues: first, the individual's interpretations of whether the demands and challenges of life are within or beyond her control, and second, upon her beliefs regarding who should take responsibility for what actions in particular contexts. This framework, emphasizing control and responsibility, attempts to explain cultural socialization patterns, and the relative access different cultural groups have to societal resources and political power, access which is significantly related to the concepts of control and responsibility. For example, Sue and Sue (1990) describe "rugged individualism" as the worldview most common among middle-class white Americans, and suggest that this worldview places primacy on the individual's role in his achievement or failure. Individuals embracing this worldview may find it difficult to understand members of cultural groups that see their economic plight or prosperity governed more by circumstances and discrimination than by individual efforts. This early approach to studying worldviews uncovered important sources of both cross-cultural conflict and misunderstandings in cross-cultural counseling.

The original conception of worldview developed by Sue has been substantially broadened through Ibrahim's (1984; 1985) work. Grounding his theory of multicultural counseling and development in a "cognitive-values perspective," Ibrahim (1991) locates worldview at the center of one's thoughts, attitudes and beliefs about a range of concerns associated with one's place in society. Although he acknowledges the importance of Sue's emphasis on culturally-derived notions of control and responsibility, he contextualizes these constructs within a broader range of cultural influences, including ethnicity, socioeconomic status, languages spoken, religion, philosophy of life, acculturation level and age. In short, Ibrahim emphasizes how the within-group diversity of cultures contributes to one's assumptions about the world and the way it functions. Specifically, he cautions us against overgeneralizing patterns of worldviews to specific groups. In this vein, his research emphasizes differences in worldviews within groups as a balance to the more traditional multicultural counseling focus on within-group similarities. Ibrahim's conceptualization of worldviews not only introduces within-group differences as an important focus in multicultural counseling, it also moves counselors' thinking away from group generalizations and toward the individual's experience of membership in her cultural group.

This distinction, between explaining groups and understanding individuals within the context of their experience as group members, relates to two core concepts in the field of hermeneutics, or the theory and practice of interpretation. In the philosophy of Heidegger (1962), from which contemporary hermeneutics is derived, this distinction is captured by two terms: ontical and ontological. Ontical refers to the traditional approach of the sciences, including psychology, of categorizing, labeling, and objectifying that which is studied. It is the explaining of "things" and their generalized ways of being. Ontology is the study of the meaning of human experience. In the case of multiculturalism, ontological study represents a focus on understanding, not explaining, the individual's unique, subjective experience as a member of a cultural group. This distinction is a core component of the worldview that guides our practice of multicultural pairs.

To make this distinction clearer, we introduce and elaborate Heidegger's approach to hermeneutics as the basis for our discussion of how these two approaches—ontical explanation and ontological understanding—contribute to our conceptualization of culturally-informed worldviews. In Heidegger's (1962) hermeneutics, the concept of world is central to the development of one's self or one's being. He suggests that there is no meaningful sense of being apart from one's active engagement in the world. But the generalized fact of explaining an individual's engagement in the world are not primary; primacy is

given to the view or interpretation of such engagement as it develops or changes over time. As such, a person's view of the world, or worldview, is inextricably connected to her interpretation of her engagement in specific contexts at particular points in time. In this sense, our use of worldview is consistent with the core of most contemporary hermeneutics: it is rooted in systematic, personally engaged interpretation. By systematic we mean the individually-organized conscious and unconscious processes by which new information about the world is interpreted into those understandings that already exist. These processes are most productive when the person is actively engaged with or meaningfully connected to the experience she is interpreting, most importantly the experience of being in relationship with others.

The utility of hermeneutic theory for the practice and understanding of pairs was originally presented in a paper by Nakkula and Selman (1991) on pair counseling and moral development. In that paper, they used the hermeneutic notion of world to articulate the development of the "pairs world," which they defined as a contained and protected environment in which the pair partners practiced for interpersonal life in the world at large. The pairs world, although influenced by everyday involvement in each child's real world, provides a relatively safer space to construct a shared culture, and to take an ongoing, ever-changing perspective on that culture. It is also a place safe enough to allow the pair to consider and reflect upon—that is, to differentiate—the views of others. Theoretically, the interpretations generated and developed in and about the world of pairs have implications for the children's participation in and interpretation of the larger worlds to which they return.

One's worldview, from this hermeneutic perspective, is particularly open to modification or revision in close interpersonal relationships, where experiences in the world, and perspectives on those experiences, can be intimately shared and reflected upon. Through cross-cultural pair counseling, children and adolescents bring their experiences in the world into a developing relationship with a peer who frequently has had dramatically different experiences, both culturally and individually. Indeed, cross-cultural pair partners often view their experiences in the world as being fundamentally different, and see the very worlds from which they come as unequivocally different, with their own typically viewed as better or right. As their respective views on these differences become recognized, articulated and ultimately more familiar, their views of the world are expanded.

This expansion of worldviews is, as we have commented previously, a primary goal of multicultural pair counseling. We believe that people fundamentally and irrevocably change when their understanding of the world changes in important ways. When such change includes an ex-

panded appreciation of cultural similarities and differences, we are en route to altering aspects of worldviews that reflect unhealthy prejudices and constrict healthy development.

### Differentiating and Integrating Worldview Perspectives

Emphasizing "the development of larger worldviews" (O'Keefe, 1993) as a primary goal in our work, we demonstrate how the content of understanding-in-relationship (what we think about) and its complexity (how we think about it) evolve through an interpretive process of uncovering, identifying, rejecting and appreciating both individual and cultural differences. But appreciating differences is beneficial to individuals and to their interpersonal growth only to the extent to which these differences become integrated or actively brought into interaction with the individual's own views and ways of being. Integration, in this sense, does not mean that a child's views or worldview needs to be merged with, or absorbed in, the worldviews of a culturally different peer. It means that her worldview changes, becomes transformed in some way, when she has meaningfully interacted with and genuinely attempted to understand the worldview of another.

Pair counselors of course, must be aware that the experiencing of and reflecting on relationships occur within the confines of the child's developmental abilities. Development affects the ability to integrate another's perspective with her own and to use this shared perspective to guide her experience of being in relationship with the other person. Even if she rejects, based on her developmentally-shaped assessment, the views of her peer as invalid or dysfunctional, this developmentally-structured assessment leaves the child's previous views altered—expanded, if you will—simply because her worldview is now more broadly understood in relation to someone else's perspective.

We refer to our multicultural pair counseling approach as an *interpretive integration model*. We do so for two reasons. First, because our understanding of growth is rooted in the well-known developmental processes of differentiation and hierarchical integration<sup>2</sup> (Werner, 1948). Second, our hermeneutic conception of development is one in which worldviews grow through the maturing of interpretations. Hermeneutics, most commonly referred to as the art and science of interpretation, is conceptualized by Nakkula and Selman (1991) as "the interpretation of one's connectedness to the world over time" (p. 186). The four prongs of this definition—interpretation, connectedness, world and time—are central both to our understanding of child development and our ap-

proach to multicultural pair counseling. We understand the child's experience of connectedness and her interpretations, in part, through an awareness of her cognitive abilities, that is, her ability to develop interpretations through the integration of multiple social perspectives.

But the manner in which children (and adults) integrate differences into their worldviews is fundamentally a process of interpreting perceived or experienced differences through genuine connectedness (or active engagement) within meaningful human relationships in the world, particularly relationships that continue over time. Only through active, caring or concerned engagement with real people do interpretations come to include different aspects of self, other and the world into more integrated perspectives and new ways of being. Interpretations of authentic interactions, differentiated and then integrated continuously over time, guide self-understanding, other-understanding, and all forms of human growth. From our hermeneutic framework, integrating interpretations in meaningful relationships is central to the development of intergroup understanding.

We propose that expanded cultural understanding occurs naturally through the developmental processes of differentiation and hierarchical integration, if a context for such development is made available. From this perspective, first steps in understanding are taken through differentiating self from other, and one's own view of the world from those of others. This process occurs with remarkable poignancy when individuals from different cultural groups engage in dialogue that reveals differing or contradictory worldviews, particularly on topics that each finds personally meaningful. A next developmental step is taken when the individuals begin to view their differences less as alien and distancing, and more as familiar and engaging. The ultimate integration of differences uncovered and interpreted in relationships occurs when an individual internalizes core aspects of the other and her worldview into her own conception of self and her corresponding view of the world.

Then how do hermeneutics and developmental models inform the practice of pairs? Hermeneutics encourages us to keep clear the distinction between ontical and ontological inquiry—explaining versus understanding. We have suggested that cognitive development influences one's interpretations. Indeed, the ability to hold multiple perspectives informs both explaining and understanding. But it is through understanding another's experience as seen through their eyes, told through their words, and known through real emotions that genuine growth of intergroup understanding occurs. This is illustrated in the case that follows and in the final section which introduces two developmental models for understanding children's perspectives on culture. One illustrates children's ontical explanations of cultural groups as seen objec-

tively through a series of developmentally-driven worldviews. The other distinguishes among children's ontological attempts to understand the experience of culturally different persons. Both of these developmental models highlight the process of making interpretations of the world (e.g., culture, race, ethnicity) over time. But only the latter model is based on knowing that occurs through experiencing, being with, and caring for another person. This model, called intergroup understanding, provides the pair counselor with an ontological framework because it depends primarily on the children's experience of mutual connectedness in pairs. That is, it provides a developmental model for keeping the children focused not so much on facts about groups, but on the experience of the other person in pairs. As the case of David and Manuel illustrates, multicultural pair counseling emphasizes learning about culture through genuinely attempting to understand the meaning a culturally different pair partner makes of her unique cultural experience.

#### David and Manuel

The following case illustrates the two main points of this paper: that culturally-informed worldviews may best be understood as subjective interpretations of common group experiences, and that through sharing interpretations in authentic relationships one can better understand and come to care about another's cultural issues as well as gain a new perspective on one's own cultural experience. The following case demonstrates that interpretations of the personal meaning of cultural membership typically reflect individuals' understanding its effects on their connectedness to others.

In many ways, David and Manuel represent a fairly typical pair. Both foundered interpersonally—that is, both tended to talk about and interact with their peers in immature ways; and both struggled with cultural as well as individual differences. David was school phobic, or at least that is what his teachers told us. He attended a school where he was in many ways in the minority, and frequently assumed the subordinate, less powerful role in relationships. He was a white Irish-American in a middle-school that was 98% children of color. He was the shortest boy in his grade, perhaps in the whole school. Often when I (the first author and pair counselor) saw David in the hallways between class he was clowning around. Usually this meant that he was playing into the prejudices his peers held toward his race and size. For instance, he would sometimes feign being attacked and collapse to the ground when one of his bigger peers pretended to hit him. He did this to manipulate the larger students into protecting him from the attacks of others. On one

occasion, he was harassed repeatedly after a teacher showed his class a movie illustrating the treatment of African slaves by white slave owners. He was told by a couple of African-American students that if he did not lynch himself, they would do it for him. For David, difference was a menacing problem.

David worked in pairs for one year with another seventh-grade boy named Manuel. While Manuel was a "minority," he did not see this as an important difference for him at school. When he was seven he had moved from Puerto Rico into a fairly homogenous Latino community in the U.S. He did not feel his ethnicity was problematic, despite his teachers' and parents' concerns about his perceived need to join a local Puerto Rican gang for self-defense. Rather, as an increasingly self-conscious teen who very much wanted a girlfriend, the most devastating difference for Manuel was his weight problem. He was not obese, just slightly overweight. Yet, his concern about his weight kept him at a distance from the other students whom he felt would surely reject him.

A month or two after they were first paired, these two boys began to do better in school, both socially and academically. While a causal inference is purely speculation, it seems that both boys felt more at ease at school, each knowing that he was not the only one who felt sad and excluded. An analysis of their case shows that their movement from feeling alienated to feeling included began with their physical interactions in pairs, which was followed by their discussion of similar family experiences, then to a sharing of their different experiences in school, and finally toward efforts to help each other out.

Throughout their work together they were encouraged to both talk and act through their differences. Initially the boys were uncomfortable talking and were bored by games. They wanted to play "tag"—sometimes tackle—football. They would push the two couches to opposite sides of the room, creating a space of no more than twelve by six feet in which to play. For several meetings the boys used half their meeting time to play ball. It appeared that they preferred to negotiate their power and overall relationship in the pair more through physical play than through words. I took these sessions as an opportunity to interpret their strengths out loud by complimenting their actions—in this way I was able to differentiate their positive qualities, qualities which they themselves perceived as liabilities in other contexts. For example, I described to them how it seemed David's small build allowed him to move quickly and with agility. I explained that David seemed to have become quite crafty in his play, such that he was able to match the other students' height by using his own wits. For Manuel his size was clearly an asset in the game. Once he got hold of David the play was finished. But I also commented repeatedly on how gently he played with David, that Manuel did not abuse his

power to hurt his friend. I suggested that this showed he liked and cared about David. When they negotiated conflicts I noted this and praised their efforts, pointing out actions that suggested David cared about Manuel too.

The structure of each session remained similar throughout their work, regardless of whether they focused primarily on play or discussion. We began our sessions with ten minutes of discussing what we had done during the previous meeting and the ways in which each was becoming a better friend to the other through their actions. (Often I did much of the talking here.) Then they selected the activity that would structure their time together, and played. Toward the end of each session, and per our agreement, they spent the last fifteen minutes cleaning up the space, talking about what they did, and discussing how they negotiated their interests and conflicts. At first they were uncomfortable reflecting on the hour, but soon it became part of our routine. With each week they became more willing to talk about what the other did that was "cool" or "uncool." Increasingly, they came to tire more quickly of their play and would take breaks to breathe and talk.

On many occasions they talked in response to my questions about their differences. I would push them, for example, by asking David to make analogies between his crafty play and his survival techniques in the hallways of the school. For better or worse, I coaxed them into talking about how being white or Puerto Rican was affecting their lives at school and beyond. Most often they resisted, with David initially insisting "I'm proud of who I am. There's nothing wrong with being Irish or white. We're not just racists or winos. It's just who I am. If they don't like it that's their problem." Both boys suggested that from their point of view, culture was no big deal.

The first home-base<sup>3</sup> theme emerged serendipitously, when one of the boys told the other his father made him angry that morning. Then, for a number of sessions the boys talked about their fathers. The boys were surprised by how similarly they felt, about their desire to spend more time with their fathers and their anger about their father's absence from their lives for one reason or another. Several sessions were spent discussing this theme, and just when I had convinced myself that this was "the critical issue" for them, and had abandoned my focus on their cultural differences, they reintroduced the issue of culture. David explained that one reason he really longed for time with his father was that he had few white friends at school, and that his black and Hispanic friends always teased him, either about being short or being white. Manuel, to my surprise, also brought up culture, explaining that one reason he wanted a girlfriend was to earn his father's respect and admiration. "Puerto Ricans gotta have girlfriends!" he exclaimed, "and

around here, you gotta be in their gangs or else the Dominicans or somebody else will get after you." David took a perspective on the possible meaning of his cultural experience by explaining that he thought his attempting to feign falls and stunts around the black students to win their protection was okay, because it would make him a tougher and more agile football player someday; that would make his father proud. After a mere two weeks of this intimate sharing, both began to give advice to each other about dealing with peers' attacks, playing the race games, and dealing with their fathers. Most of the last two months of school were spent with the two really trying to help each other deal with their unique experiences of cultural membership.

This case suggests that the meaning children make of their cultural membership varies, depending in part on the context, time, and relationship in which interpretations are made. It also highlights two distinctions. First, it illustrates the importance of both individual and cultural differences. Second, it grounds the distinction between the objective, or ontical explanations the counselor sees as "cultural issues," and the ontological, or personally meaningful understandings of culture that emerged in and through the development of the pair's friendship. The next section describes in greater detail the influence of developmentally-driven worldviews for ontical and ontological intergroup understanding.

### Being Different and Being Understood

The traditional multicultural counseling approach has been to explain to counselors important differences among groups, and to encourage them to use this knowledge as a guide for therapeutic practice. Many, if not most, multicultural counseling books facilitate this process by providing cultural group profiles; while these profiles can provide important information, they tend to reflect fairly simple generalizations that by their very nature fit no person exactly. At the least, these profiles suggest cultural faux-pas to avoid, and highlight culturally congruent therapeutic goals. At best, they provide the counselor with an understanding of values a client may hold, have experienced, or struggle with (Schneider, Schlapkohl & Karcher, in press). In short, ontical cultural profiles hint at *what* an individual may experience as a member of particular group, but also suggest the importance of exploring *how* she may ontologically or personally experience these common ways of being.

This section describes two structural-developmental models of cultural understanding, one of which we consider ontical and the other ontologi but both are structural in that they represent varying degrees

of social-cognitive complexity. The models inform either one's understanding of information about cultures (ontical understanding), or one's willingness and ability to care about the perspective of another group or person (ontological understanding). The term structural development refers to the level of complexity present in social cognition and the degree of perspective-taking present in interpersonal or intergroup understanding. The greater the number of group or individual perspectives integrated in one's worldview, the more structurally complex one's understanding. This is important because interpretations of culture are shaped as much by the structure of knowledge as by the content of knowledge about a cultural group. Multicultural counselors have, in our opinion, overemphasized *what* is known about culture and underemphasized *how* different groups and their members are understood.

This belief flows naturally out of the general practice of pair counseling but particularly out of our experience with cross-cultural pairs. From the perspective of structural-developmental psychology, being recognized as different is not the same as being understood. Having some knowledge about the ways and experiences of a particular group does not ensure, or even suggest, that one understands a person in that group. Understanding that a child comes from an "individualistic" cultural group, for instance middle-class Americans (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swindler, & Tipton, 1985; Spence, 1985), does not tell a counselor what individualism means to the child, how the child is influenced by this cultural value, nor whether the child has even differentiated this value from other possible values.

In pair counseling, as in most multicultural interventions with youth, it is critical to assess what characteristics and experiences a child has differentiated within her own culture as distinct from her own unique experience and her perceptions of other groups. For example, is she aware of the values generally held by her culture, that those values may differ from other groups' values, and that particular members of her own group may not embrace the values believed to be held by her culture in general? The process of differentiation and integration we are describing here is similar to psychodynamic processes describing a person's increasing awareness of her own personality patterns or unconscious motivations. It is not that something appears that was not present before. Both the patterns and motivations are present all along, but at some point they become differentiated, consciously recognized for the first time. A person becomes "aware" of them by seeing them "objectively," as she sees objects; whereas before the patterns and motivations were only known subjectively—the person was so embedded in her personality patterns and motivations that she could not take a perspective on them.

Understanding culture and its effects on one's personality and life experience are uncovered similarly, through increasing differentiation of the cultural characteristics and experiences of groups and their subsequent integration into broader interpersonal and intergroup understanding—into expanded worldviews. In the language of subject-object psychology (Kegan, 1982), this process of differentiating and integrating cultural understanding can be revealed by asking: Is the child subject to her culture—unaware of its distinct practices, beliefs, and historical experiences—or has she differentiated these practices, beliefs, or historical experiences so that she can take them as object and reflect on them and their bearing on her life or the unique lives of others? Understanding the distinction between cultural knowledge as facts versus cultural knowledge as structural complexity provides the multicultural pair counselor two frameworks for assessing both what a child knows about other groups and how she knows it.

### Developmentally Driven Worldviews

The two developmental models of cultural understanding are both built on Selman's (1980) initial explorations of children's understanding of peer groups. The first model, called ethnic perspective-taking (Quintana, 1994) is an ontical model. It describes the common characteristics youth perceive in their efforts to define cultural groups. It starts with children's physically-based descriptions of groups and moves towards more social and psychology-based definitions of culture. From this ontical perspective, ethnic groups are described by individuals differently as they mature, initially in terms of physical features, later as social practices, and finally as beliefs or attitudes—like those presented in cultural profiles. An ontical perspective is one that objectifies understanding into facts; this model is ontical because it describes structurally different ways of explaining culture as generalized and observable entities or ways of being. In his theory of interpersonal development, Selman refers to this as *knowledge* of others, which he distinguishes from the *personal meaning* one makes of this factual information. This distinction is important because Quintana's ethnic perspective-taking model refers less to individuals' embodied, personally meaningful perspectives and more to objectively derived, common ways of perceiving groups and their experiences.

A second model, called intergroup understanding (Karcher, 1996), describes the more ontological perspective; it reflects a person's unique interpretation of what culture means to her everyday existence. Her intergroup understanding is the degree to which she has authentically

differentiated her group's experience and beliefs from another's, as well as her own experience and beliefs from those common among her own cultural group. That is, can a child take a perspective on her cultural group's physical qualities, social practices, experiences or beliefs? Can she understand the perspective of other groups, the social or psychological experiences of its members? Does she understand her own experiences and beliefs as different from her culture's ontical characteristics yet shaped by them? Finally, and most structurally complex, can she use this understanding of herself as unique but embedded in her culture to help her understand a culturally different person more authentically? To connect this model more directly to the integration concept we can ask: Does the child's group understanding facilitate her understanding about, actions with, and care for another group or person?

The ontical/ontological distinction is fleshed out below in more thorough descriptions of the two models, using references to David and Manuel.

### Ethnic Perspective-Taking

Steve Quintana, following Selman's (1980) early work on interpersonal understanding and children's understanding of peer groups, researches ethnic perspective-taking abilities among Mexican-American children. Quintana's (1994) research has focused primarily on children in grades two to six from middle class, professional Mexican-American families. Like the earlier work of Aboud (1988) and others (see Phinney & Rotherman, 1987), this research illustrates how the structure or level of cognitive understanding lays the bedrock for a child's understanding of culture. Through probing children's understanding of their own ethnicity, Quintana's research suggests that the structure of children's social perspective-taking (Selman, 1980) directly relates to their understanding of culture (Quintana, 1994; Quintana, Ybarra, & Villanueva, 1995). His interviews illustrate that young children focus first on the observable features of ethnic groups, and later they come to see that there are nonphysical features common to groups, such as languages, foods, and geographic heritage. Beyond this physicalistic and literal understanding of ethnicity in early childhood there emerges the capacity to understand the more social and psychological aspects of ethnic group membership. For example, initially David explains that being white literally means just that, nothing else. His most complex understanding of culture seems to be that he knows some people characterize his group as racist and alcoholic. This awareness of cultural patterns and prejudice later becomes fleshed out when he reflects on his own experience in school



and when he hears Manuel tell him that he feels "Puerto Ricans gotta have girlfriends and be in gangs." Similarly, by the end of their work in pairs, Manuel seems to more clearly understand how this cultural imperative is a cultural game he may choose to play or allow himself to be played by. Nevertheless, during our year together, neither of the children was able to articulate precisely how these practices might inform his own or others' personality or identity development.

An implication of this research for pairs is that in the case of a child whose ethnic perspective-taking seems far below her capacity for interpersonal understanding, it is worth considering possible restructuring phrases or interpretations the pair counselor might provide to encourage the development of more complex ethnic understanding. For example, a counselor might structure the activities or conversation for a middle school pair whose ethnic understanding relies solely on physicalistic understandings of culture so that the pair may begin to understand the social aspects of cultural membership. This would afford the children a chance to talk about their own unique cultural experiences. In other words, by providing a more complex ontical or observable description of culture, a pair counselor can lay the foundation for the children's ontological or internal understanding of other groups. The counselor does this by encouraging the children to share their perspectives and the meaning they make of their experience as group members.

But these processes of social and psychological ethnic perspective-taking and cultural awareness do not lead automatically from ontical to ontological understanding. While the appearance of more complex ethnic perspective-taking tends to be accompanied by increasing group affiliation and social awareness, frequently it is also accompanied by an increased tendency to generalize about and stereotype groups—even one's own (Quintana, 1995). That is, even at more complex levels of ethnic perspective-taking, the understanding of groups may remain ontical: based on objectified categorizations. Learning about culture ontically does not necessarily lead one to better understand another individuals' unique experiences (i.e., ontologically), nor does it reduce the alienation created by the categorizations and generalizations inherent in abstract awareness of culture.

### Intergroup Understanding

As children and adolescents move from their more literal understandings of culture to increasingly complex appreciations of the psychosocial quality of culture and intercultural relations, they face new opportunities for moving from ontical to ontological intergroup understand-

ing. The cognitive capacity for self-reflection that typically appears in late childhood, however, is not sufficient for ontological understanding of another's unique worldview as a group member. This step requires deliberate, thoughtful inquiry, dialogue, and sincere efforts to understand the culturally different person's experience. Developing such an awareness requires that one enters into relationships with culturally different persons. This was the notion argued by Mamie and Kenneth Clark (Clark, 1963/1988) and others whose work initiated school desegregation. The importance of "coming together" is supported by our research and experience with pairs: the complexity of intergroup understanding depends, in part, on the multicultural experiences a child has and the support provided to that child for understanding the meaning of membership in different groups (Karcher, 1995). But just as understanding the physical properties of culture is insufficient for authentic understanding of other groups, so too is placing culturally different students in close proximity insufficient for promoting the kind of interactions and dialogues that lead to authentic understanding and expanded worldviews. Such development requires meaningful interaction and dialogue, like that exemplified by David and Manuel during the second half of their year together.

Like Selman's (1980) social perspective-taking model, the intergroup understanding framework described here is based on the ontogenetic principle of differentiation and hierarchical integration: the idea that each new understanding must first be uncovered or differentiated and then reintegrated at a structurally more complex level. In the case of cultural understanding, what gets differentiated are perspectives on being a member of a particular group. First a person becomes aware of what it means to be a member of her own group in general (ontically) and for her personally (ontologically). Then other perspectives are differentiated, such as a culturally different person's unique interpretation of the meaning of her group membership. Having differentiated two separate perspectives well, a "third group perspective" is possible, in which social situations, events, or dynamics are understood in relation to both of these perspectives.

For example, in this model, an understanding of "affirmative action," when described from only one group or person's perspective, would be considered less integrated than one that took into consideration two or more groups' perspectives. This differentiation is not directly captured in the ethnic perspective-taking model since it is not based on this ontogenetic principle. But in multicultural societies, it is important to consider multiple perspectives when thinking about the merit of programs or the justice of laws (Taylor, 1994). In one of their earliest discussions about race David said, "Affirmative action is unfair; I know that blacks

were done wrong in the past, but that doesn't mean that one of them should get into Notre Dame instead of me—I never had any slaves!" This comment shows a limited amount of perspective taking, both inter-personal and intergroup. It reflects the subjective concerns of his needs only, and little awareness of his own cultural experience, such as the many privileges afforded to whites everyday. Nor does it truly consider the psychological perspective of another group or its members. But bring up this argument in a multicultural pair, and it is quickly evident that there are multiple perspectives to be taken. Later, as he became more aware of Manuel's point of view and experiences, David spoke less ethnocentrically about group relations. Likewise, by relying on both his own relationship with his father and Manuel's description of a Puerto Rican emphasis on "having girlfriends" and "sticking up for each other," David was able to share with Manuel a unique perspective on Manuel's problems. By the end of the year, David was able to give Manuel advice, based on his understanding of Manuel's experiences, that he could not have provided earlier that year. This sharing of interpretations appeared to make both of them feel more connected and important.

### Intergroup Understanding and Cultural Identity

The intergroup understanding framework can be helpful in promoting cultural identity development among youth. Why is this important? Because models of identity development, especially those based on Erikson's (1968) and Marcia's (1980a; 1980b) stages of ego identity, illustrate the importance of differentiation and integration. They illustrate that the most complex levels of identity development represent both those individuals who are most tolerant and appreciating of other groups, and those individuals who articulate more integrated understanding of themselves through a genuine understanding of others. In fact, the highest levels of identity development also reflect the greatest integration of cultural perspectives—not simply cultural knowledge. Racial identity theorists argue that this integration of personal and cultural perspectives into one's self-understanding leads to an internalized racial identity (Cross, 1991), one in which race is *part of* one's personality but not the whole picture. Such an identity represents a more complex and integrated worldview through its balanced understanding of multiple cultural perspectives.

Similar to the development of intergroup understanding, at the core of models of racial and ethnic identity development are the processes of

differentiation and integration (Cross, 1991; Helms, 1990; Phinney, 1992; 1993). These identity models illustrate that as individuals develop and gain increasing exposure to and authentic contact with a variety of members of other groups, the degree to which they demonstrate ethnocentrism and prejudice against other groups decreases. Most important to the rationale behind multicultural pairs is that changes in one's level of racial and ethnic identity seems to have more to do with exposure to multiple cultures than to increased cognitive abilities (once age is accounted for), such that the more multicultural experience and close, mutual contacts one has with diverse groups, the more likely one is to develop an identity that is respectful and appreciative of both one's own and other groups.

Understanding these models can assist both trainees and experienced multicultural counselors. Counselors in training often struggle with their own understanding of other groups since this understanding is typically one of abstract generalizations, such as those found in the cultural profiles in multicultural counseling texts. But the child, unable to think abstractly, is often forced to make meaning of such abstractions, typically collapsing them into concrete categorizations and stereotypes (i.e., ontical worldviews). Unable to understand the shaping power of culture on personality, the child's social cognition leads her to misunderstand these generalizations as absolutes and irreconcilable, physically-based differences that alienate individuals. Experienced multicultural counselors may overestimate the child's ability to understand more complex effects of culture on one's daily existence, simply because they are sometimes unaware of the very complexity of their own understanding of culture. Counselors can promote understanding and communicative competence, either by speaking to children in ways congruent with their everyday level of social cognition (Selman & Schultz, 1990) or by leading them gently into the structural worldview they will use to understand culture tomorrow—their zone of proximal development for cultural understanding.<sup>4</sup> This requires that the counselor be able to identify the structure of children's understanding—*how* they understand culture—so that she can help them integrate cultural characteristics and multiple perspectives into larger worldviews.

But why two models? Because both offer different vehicles for understanding the interpretations children make of culture. The first, the ethnic perspective-taking model, suggests the importance of the characteristic ways in which children perceive culture. For instance, a child who defines her own culture in terms of physical qualities will not likely be able to understand a counselor's description of another group in terms of its psychological experience. She can only know another's

world as she knows her own. The second, the model of intergroup understanding, provides an assessment of the youth's ability and willingness to consider, entertain, and authentically appreciate the perspective of another group. To what degree will the child entertain and authentically integrate another's perspective? This is a critical question for the development of expanded worldviews. The two models provide different vantage points for understanding how the child interprets culture. In pair counseling, as in much of everyday life, it is not just how complexly a person thinks about an issue, but also her willingness to listen to, understand, and take into consideration another's point of view that really matters.

### Conclusion

This chapter has contributed some new ideas to the multicultural counseling literature, mainly the idea of developmentally-driven worldviews that inform ontological intergroup understanding. These ideas come together in the interpretive integration model, which suggests that counselors working with cross-cultural pairs must focus their attention on helping children share their personally-meaningful understandings of group membership if they are to conduct multicultural pair counseling in a manner that promotes intergroup understanding. To make this clear we have tried to hone two particular points. First, we drew the distinction between ontical explaining and ontological understanding. Second, we suggested that expanded worldviews are the result of an interpretive process that naturally leads from the sharing of unique cultural experiences to the integration of multiple cultural perspectives.

The interpretive integration model also has clear implications for thinking about integration beyond the interests of developmental theorists and human service practitioners. Although most public schools, like many other institutions in our society, have moved toward one form of desegregation—integration on a demographic, or what developmentalists might term a "physicalistic," level—we are proposing that a deeper integration is necessary to effect the changes in self and social understanding intended by the "Brown versus Board of Education" decision. What is needed is a form of integration that desegregates at the level of culturally informed human understanding—that is, at a structurally more complex level. We attempt to foster this level of integration in pairs by moving beyond physical proximity as the sole measure of desegregation, and moving toward the sharing of culturally-based worldviews through the development of meaningful relationships. Our thesis is that the reduction of destructive prejudices occurs by bringing

whole people into relationship, as opposed to simply bringing their bodies and minds into a shared physical environment.

In essence, we are suggesting that integrative human development is an ongoing process of recognizing and interpreting difference, then interacting with it in a manner that transforms the once unknown and alien into the now novel and challenging. This transformational process yields expanded worldviews that make possible new, more complexly integrated ways of being.

### Notes

1. As this chapter progresses, it will become clearer to the reader that pairs with culturally different children are, objectively, cross-cultural; it is when the meaning of cultural group membership and experiences are uncovered and shared that multicultural understanding emerges. The term cross-cultural pairs explains that the children differ, while the term multicultural pairs implies that the children have begun to explore the meaning of culture for each other. Not all cross-cultural pairs become multicultural pairs.

2. The use of hierarchical integration in this chapter does not necessarily assume a linear sequence of development that occurs similarly for all or even most people, nor does it assume that higher levels represent developmental or moral superiority over lower levels. Hierarchical is used to represent the movement from simpler forms of understanding to more complex forms, based on the recognition and integration of new information into one's pre-existing state of awareness.

3. "Home-base activities" are the games or themes of play that children come back to repeatedly in pairs. These activities help them organize their time together, and allow for a background of familiarity or routine from which more intimate discussions often arise. Home-base themes are topics that are brought up repeatedly, by the children themselves, and which serve as shared concerns or focal points for reflection and discussion.

4. Vygotsky's (1978) "zone of proximal development" refers to the range of skills that are just beyond what the child can perform on her own, but which she can perform with the support of a more competent guide, and which will be hers in the near future with practice and experience. Similarly, the limitations of cultural understanding, that which a person can understand today only with the help of another, we refer to as the zone of proximal development for cultural understanding.