The Experience of International Students in a Masters Program in Community Counseling: A Preliminary Study

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Abstract

In this qualitative study, four (4) masters-level international students in a community counseling program were interviewed. International counselor education students are the “unheard” voices in studies of diversity issues in counselor identity studies. Semi-structured interviews were conducted, audiotaped, and the transcripts qualitatively analyzed. Six major categories emerged: relating to the counseling profession; adjustment and acculturation; experience with bias; barriers to success; pedagogical experience; and internship experience. Implications for counselor education are discussed.

The number of international students studying in the United States has grown steadily since the 1980s, involving up to 438,000 at the present time (Jacobs, 2001). Therefore, educators are placing greater emphasis on the academic and personal adjustment experiences of international students in higher education (Eland, 2001). Due to this steady increase, counselor education programs will likely witness an increase in international student enrollment and should also be addressing the academic and personal adjustment experiences of these students.

As can be expected, the educational experience of international students is different from American students because of relocating to study in a foreign country. Murphy, Hawkes, and Law (2002) believe that they “must deal with feelings of dislocation, adjustments to new cultures, and long-term, geographically vast separations from home and family” (p. 37). More specifically, Murphy et al. claim that international students struggle with issues of relocation, studying in a second language, social alienation, and adjusting to the academic requirements and teaching strategies of American professors.

Adjustment occurs on both an individual level and at a university level. On an individual level, international students address issues such as communication styles, cultural differences (e.g., orientation to time and space, socially acceptable behavior), contact with American families, financial support, lack of social support, and prejudice and discrimination (de Verthelyi, 1995; Parson, 1992; Pedersen, 1991). They also address academic and university issues such as English grammar, written reports, test anxiety, heavy academic pressures, sorting through the “maze” of university systems, knowledge of university and community activities, and adjusting to differences in assumptions about
teaching and learning (Beykont & Daiute, 2002; Dedrick & Watson, 2002; Eland, 2001).

Chapdelaine and Alexitch (2004) described the educational experience of international graduate students in the United States as a cultural shock, and Perrucci and Hu (1995) described their adjustment within a problem framework. Therefore, specific counseling and pedagogical strategies are needed to help international graduate students be as successful as possible in their academic experience (Pedersen, 1991).

Counselor education programs are designed to “ensure that students develop a professional counselor identity and also master the knowledge and skills to practice effectively” (CACREP, 2001, p. 55). The traditional core competencies of counselor education include courses like theories of counseling, group counseling, human development, counseling techniques, practicum, and internship. However, these core competencies have been criticized for “canonizing the views of Euro-American culture and rendering them inseparable for the techniques and theories proffered in counselor training programs” (Nelson & Neufeldt, 1998).

This “canonizing” a Euro-American cultural view has already caused controversy and conflict within the profession in general, relating to the pedagogy of teaching counselor education to American students. For example, multicultural counseling and related standards developed for American populations have been criticized as being inadequate (Hanna, Bemak, & Chung, 1999; Pedersen, 2000), and Sue and Sue (as cited in Hanna et al., 1999) “were even more forceful in their criticism of traditional counseling theory and practice, claiming that it has done serious harm” (p. 125). Additionally, Weinrach and Thomas (1996) called for an emphasis on developing skills to work with culturally different clients and to practice within some framework of diversity-sensitive counseling. And, even though the profession calls for more diversity-sensitive counselors, “there are few findings regarding diversity issues in counselor identity development” (Nelson & Jackson, 2003, p. 4).

The pedagogy of counselor education has evolved in a Euro-American body of literature. However, little scholarly literature exists related to the pedagogy of counselor education (Darcy Hagg, 2000) and much of what is known about counseling and counselor education relates to American graduate students and the inherent diversity issues represented in the United States. Additionally, Darcy Hagg claimed, “many of the traditional teaching methods are not sufficient to address the needs of diverse learners in a multicultural society.”

If the profession is struggling with addressing the pedagogical needs of a diverse American graduate student population, then the profession needs to more critically examine the needs of international graduate students in counselor education programs. Jacob (2001) claimed that “the needs and issues faced by international students in the United States have not received as much attention in the literature,” and similarly little can be found in the literature related to international students in counselor education programs. Without better understanding the needs of our international students in counseling programs, the Euro-American models of the pedagogy of counselor education will persist without considering the diversity issues inherent in “crossing borders” by training counselors from a foreign country.
The purpose of this preliminary study was to hear the voices of international graduate students studying community counseling in a Euro-American framework. What is the experience of international students studying counseling theories and models that have already been called into question by the counseling profession? Therefore, this research focused on hearing the experience of international students in a masters-level community counseling program. Two research questions guided this study: 1) What was the experience of international graduate students studying community counseling in America; and 2) What was their experience in theories courses (like theories of counseling) versus skills based courses (like helping relationships and internship)?

Methods

Qualitative interviewing was used to address the research questions posed. We wanted to generate collective stories which “take the point of view of interviewing subjects, and giving voice to those who are silenced or marginalized in the cultural [story]” (Miller & Glassner, 1997, p. 99). In this case, international students are the “unheard” voices in studies on diversity issues in counselor identity development. Qualitative interviews allow for “in-depth semi-structured or loosely structured forms of interviewing” (Mason, 1997, p. 38), so we developed questions to enter the academic world of international students in a counselor education program. Interviews “generate data which give an authentic insight into people’s experiences” (Miller & Glassner, p. 100).

Participants

Participants were 4 international students, 2 female and 2 male, at the internship stage of their studies. All were informed of the purpose of the research, volunteered to participate, and were interviewed during the Fall 2004 and Spring 2005 semesters. Participants ranged in age from 23 to 35 (M=29). They were from Africa, South America, Nepal, and Turkey. All acknowledged English as a second language; on a scale of 1-10, their highest rating was for the ability to comprehend the spoken language (M=8.75), and the lowest was their ability to interpret the nuances or special jargon/phrases used by Americans (M=5.25).

Participants attended a small private university in the northeast and were enrolled in a community counseling program with approximately 80 other students. On a scale of 1-10, their understanding of the profession of community counseling before starting the program ranged from 4 to 7 (M=5). They agreed that they would concentrate in community counseling over again (M=8.75), yet 2 gave a second rating of a “4” if they considered returning to their countries to work. On the demographic questionnaire the 3 most commonly reported difficulties in being international students in America were: language skills, management of time, and financial problems. The one most commonly added item (listed by 2 participants) was American students.

Procedures

Purposive or theoretical sampling was used in this study, which means “selecting groups or categories to study on the basis of their relevance to your research questions” (Mason, 1997, p. 94). Therefore, all international students (n = 4) in a community counseling
program at the internship stage of study were included in the sample. One program was used for this preliminary study to ensure consistency in the course work, professors, and domestic student population.

Before being interviewed, participants signed a consent form guaranteeing their anonymity and completed a demographic questionnaire. At the top of the questionnaire they supplied common names in their countries, which were the names used to identify their voices throughout the study.

A protocol of 10 questions was initially used to address the research questions in a semi-structured in-depth interview, which lasted from 1 to 1 ½ hours. A colleague in student affairs, who is experienced interacting with international students, critiqued the questions, and recommended changes were made. After the first interview, the interview protocol was re-examined, and two questions were added that emerged from the first interviewee’s observations.

The first author was the interviewer because of his experience with the interviewees. In such a relationship, the foundation of trust had been established, and “over time strong rapport” was developed that provides “more accurate and usable information that would build upon the theoretical foundations in the literature” (Kocet, 2001, p. 60).

Triangulation of data was accomplished in several ways. First, following the interview, notebooks were provided, and participants were asked to note anything else that came to mind. Second, after the tape was transcribed, the transcribed answers were reviewed for clarity. Follow-up questionnaires of no more than 5 questions were generated and participants were asked to write responses. Finally, participants were given copies of their transcriptions, asked to review them and comment on any of their answers. All participants made notations on their transcriptions (no more than 4 notations).

Data Analysis

All tapes were transcribed, and the researchers separately coded the transcriptions by identifying repeated words and phrases, which were independently grouped into themes (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). We met, compared our identified themes and discussed similarities and differences. Through discussion, we mutually agreed upon six (6) categories that emerged from the initial analysis. We then separately reanalyzed the data, only this time working with similar words, phrases, and themes within the established categories. All data sources were included in this process.

We met again and critically compared our analysis by category. We “looked for themes and meanings, rather than merely draw[ing] conclusions” (Nelson & Jackson, 2003, p. 6.). Differences of opinion were discussed, and a consensus was reached in terms of category. All relevant data were included in a category, so that the common experiences of the participants were represented equally in the findings.

Results

Six (6) categories were identified through the analysis of the data. These categories reflect the “silenced and marginalized” voices of international students studying community counseling, which then gives an “authentic insight into people’s experiences” (Miller & Glassner, 1997, p. 100). The categories are discussed below.
Relating to the Counseling Profession

We begin with this category because this is where the journey of our international participants began. It is a journey that began with a lack of connection and understanding of the Euro-American practice of counseling in the United States, and finished with an over identification and rigid connection to the Westernized practice of counseling.

Three of the participants had little to no understanding of what the profession of counseling involved before coming to study in America. The participant from Argentina (Cora) knew about counseling from the Internet, but didn’t know about community counseling programs until being in America. Additionally, the profession of counseling is not well established in any of the countries. Most considered counseling “advising,” and Agyemfra from Ghana thought that teachers did what he thought of as counseling.

The job title of “counselor” or “licensed counselor” does not exist in any of the countries. If mental health counseling occurs, usually psychiatrists and maybe psychologists perform this function. If seeking the help of such professionals, the participant from Turkey (Pinar) thought such people would be considered “mentally sick people.” When people seek advice they normally approach indigenous helpers; the participant from Nepal (Suba) stated, “They would rather go to their parents or even great-grandparents or even some older persons who they look at as a mentor to seek advice rather than talk about this easily with any professionals.” Even the profession of social work is not well established with Suba believing that his social work program was the first of its kind in his country.

What happened on their journey to becoming community counselors in America? Pinar, Suba, and Agyemfra claimed that if they returned to their countries, they would work for an American organization. They believed that these types of organizations would appreciate and understand their education. Pinar and Suba both thought they might work for an American school with “ADHD students” or as “a career or school counselor.” Agyemfra spoke of wanting a job before leaving the U.S. with an international organization like World Vision, which already works with “poverty stricken communities” in his country. Only Cora didn’t speak of working for an American organization, but would apply her training in “social service and mental health; case management...in the hospital.” If returning and working as a professional counselor, 3 participants indicated that they would be “pioneers” of sorts and weren’t sure they had the expertise or confidence to do so at this time.

Adjustment and Acculturation

As with many international graduate students, participants in this study made the inherent financial, academic, and cultural adjustments to studying in the United States, but with unanticipated degrees of difficulty. Half of the participants described the hardships of moving from economic stability, to a condition of relative poverty as a graduate student. “It’s like going back to 18 years old,” one participant commented,” and another described it as “down sliding.”

The participants’ educational adjustment, like others previously studied, was impacted not only by cultural differences but also by language and writing complexities. Understanding, and then being asked to write using APA style, and not unintentionally plagiarize, was difficult and anxiety provoking for each student, regardless of the level of
sophistication of English skills. Even one student who was fairly comfortable with his English skills felt a language barrier: “We were taught to speak back home [English] different from the way people speak over here.”

The cultural shift into the counseling profession was described in many different ways. In terms of developing clinical acumen, ideas related to using the self as an instrument (no easy task for most counseling students), required an even greater psychological shift for these international students, given that most came from countries where counseling was seen as advising. “Moving from critical comments [on others and the environment] to commenting on self, then changing my way of looking at things, changing my perceptions” seemed to be the general consensus of how students accomplished the shift.

Interpersonal adjustment to graduate study in America proved to be more difficult than most participants expected. Two of the 4 students talked about the social isolation they experienced. One mentioned a lack of personal connection to anyone to help in the transition, including during the application process. Nearly all spoke of wanting a “fuller” social life, in the face of experiencing a noticeable degree of impatience and standoffishness from American students. “They [American students] don’t have patience to listen to international students,” said one. The student from South America contrasted this kind of personal distancing to what she stated would happen there: “You are in the class, you are from another country, they start talking to you, invite you to the house.” Nearly all students in the study placed a high value on interpersonal comfort, friendliness, and belonging, which they simply did not experience for a long time.

**Experience with Bias**

A range of bias related experiences, and fears of bias, was reported by each student. Nearly all students reported feeling hindered from speaking in class because of a perceived language bias on the part of American students; none wanted to “appear stupid.” Fear of religious bias was described as concerns about Americans having negative feelings against Muslim or Turkish people. For at least one international student in this study, dealings with culturally encapsulated Americans posed a significant hindrance with disturbing consequences. This student, Pinar, spent an additional semester here studying in another field on the advice of an administrator who stated, “…probably you don’t have counseling in Turkey so why don’t you study human resources.” Other students talked about bias that seemed implicit in some American students who were experienced as “very monocultured.” Ill conceived assumptions based on race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status were also reported. Cora (Argentina) discussed people thinking that she was “either a baby sitter or a housekeeper,” and how the impression changed upon learning that she was a fulltime student. In another instance, it was suggested to Cora that she “wouldn’t have the finances” to pay for her schooling, when the opposite was true. Incidents such as these contributed to feelings of isolation and stress for students who were already struggling to adjust to an educational and cultural environment that was so substantially different from their own.
Barriers to Success

Three major themes emerged in this category that caused problems for these participants. First, all participants mentioned something about the American educational system and how international students must be given more “understanding and consideration.” Examples included: needing more time for written work, particularly in condensed course formats; language difficulties causing slow reading and falling behind in classroom lectures and/or discussions, thus the need for sharing notes; professors asking questions of students unfamiliar with this teaching style; taping in English; and types of exams. Will international students ask for help with these problems? Cora felt that most would not bring it to the attention of the professor. She said, “South Americans are educated to not be so quiet in class, but in some cultures you’re not allowed to say [to the professor] that you have problems.”

Second, “assumptions” made by professors on student knowledge prior to entering the program was detrimental to these participants’ success in the classroom. The most common listed assumptions were: knowledge about the terms and concepts related to mental health; understanding of the profession of counseling not being advising; and historical events and movies in America used as examples during class. American students are more familiar with these things, due to media and living here, so they seem to understand quicker and easier, thus “not every student was on an equal level.” Suba believed that it was “easy for international students to get overlooked because [they] aren’t completely getting the ideas to be learned in class, so at a disadvantage.”

Finally, three of the participants experienced a lack of support or patience from American students, something which maybe “surprised” them since these students were studying to become counselors. Cora summarized it in saying, “I’m sorry, but if you’re a counselor, if you work with someone, I’m not talking about someone from a foreign country, maybe somebody with a disability or maybe someone who cannot speak good English, maybe someone who is on medication so he cannot articulate…they don’t have patience to listen to international students.” The three areas mentioned most frequently were: American students being more competitive in nature rather than being on a “shared journey,” thus unwilling to help international students more; cultural variations related to interpersonal relationships; and lack of sensitivity when discussing perspectives on issues like sex roles.

Pedagogical Experience

Three themes emerged under this category to include: professor/student relationship; educational support; and teaching strategies/methodology.

Professor/Student Relationship.

All participants agreed that developing a close relationship with professors was critical to success, even though all but Cora stated that students don’t have that type of relationship with professors in their own countries. Pinar felt that professors “opened doors” for them, and the relationships involved one-on-one meetings where information was shared about the program, about graduate assistantships, their experience adjusting
to the country, and the university in general, as well as having an opportunity to discuss counseling theory more intensely.

However, this type of student/professor relationship is not common in the home countries of three participants. Agyemfra stated, “No, we don’t have that culture over there [Ghana],” which prevented him from more frequently seeking meetings with his advisor. Pinar claimed that international students might think they’re “bugging” the professor but that “they have to understand that this is a different country with different rules and they have to face this country’s rules. They have to forget about their countries for awhile.”

While this may be sound advice, it probably won’t happen easily for some international students. Cora relates a story of a fellow student from China (in another counseling concentration) who struggled with finishing a paper on time because it took her so long to write in English. Cora advised the student to talk with her professor about needing more time, but the student couldn’t bring herself to do it because “you would not discuss such problems” with professors in China, as it would be “shameful.”

**Educational Support.**

All students reported needing “special consideration” and “extra help” in their studies due to language differences, being in another country, the transitions they experienced, and lack of familiarity with the American educational system, culture, and profession of mental health. Some of these educational supports included: special consideration when videotaping because it can “be fearful” and they’re counseling in a second language; needing more time for written assignments; being culturally sensitive to the fact that not all countries may agree with ethics [and other western theories] as presented in America; Cora shares that “we need orientation to the importance of [the counseling] skills; maybe explain to us why the skills are important for the American profession;” given extra help like forming study groups; more attention from faculty; more information about licensure; and focused assistance when it comes to placement for internship.

Agyemfra summarized by saying, “We can’t be judged by the same standards as domestic students.” He echoed the sentiments of other participants that faculty and staff needed to be more “culturally sensitive” from the beginning. For example, he believed that they “needed more information,” and that it needed to be stressed differently with more information put into print. He also felt that the domestic students had an advantage. He believed that “international students may not do as well in most of their courses as compared to the indigenous ones. The indigenous ones easily make friends and get their past notes and their questions and the rest. So they use some of these things and then they improve upon it and they do better than us.”

**Teaching Strategies/Methodology.**

Three of the four students described their home education as focused on memorization, with little or no discussion or expression of opinions; only professors provide opinions. One participant indicated that students are seen as competitors with their professors; another described a collectivistic perspective with less focus on self and “more on how the government wants you to be.”
While discussion was appealing, they also understood the inherent difficulties for international students related to discussion including: not knowing this was expected of them; not being able to participate freely because of language skills; not used to sharing personal information and/or somebody “looking down on you” when you share cultural-specific information; and fear of making mistakes and being noticed.

Almost all other teaching strategies that were recommended were experiential in nature. They included: self-awareness work; videotaping; practicing skills; role plays; giving examples; showing videotapes of professionals counseling; and the “skills-building” classes in general because those classes “teach how to counsel.” Agyemfra summarized in saying, “It makes it harder [i.e., understanding theory] just because, you see, to us, most of the time you have to like imagine them without examples or practicing [because the mental health theory is so new to them].” Three participants mentioned other types of teaching strategies: Pinar felt that research helped with the language and with learning APA; Suba believed that close textual reading helped him better learn the theories; and 3 participants found the transcription of tapes not useful or difficult (due to language skills and work overload).

While all participants believed that self-awareness as a teaching strategy was “growth-producing,” concerns about this teaching method were addressed. They included: it might not be politically correct for a country to want this individualistic approach, and Pinar stated, “But in a collectivistic country you don’t need that much self-awareness, so that was my first concern when I first started studying counseling;” lack of familiarity and discomfort with the process of sharing personal information in such a public forum; and concerns about confidentiality of the information being shared or being judged due to lack of cultural sensitivity.

The other experiential strategy discussed most often was videotaping. All believed that they “grew” from the experience. However, reported concerns included: more pressure because English is not their primary language; taping is not a commonly used strategy in their countries and Cora was initially “fearful” because “in my country the people from the military, the dictatorship…taping or videotaping…something is watching them;” and concerns about what others would think and that the taping “made them change their personalities.”

*Internship Experiences*

Overall, participants demonstrated a useful flexibility that enabled them to work well with clients, and each reported a good experience with internship. The flexibility was evident and implemented in several ways. First, they used cognitive reframing with thoughts like, “People are the same way only just speaking English.” Second, they changed their interpersonal and counseling styles and speaking pace to ensure they were understood by their clients (and vice versa). They talked slowly and precisely, feeling free to either make mistakes or cue clients to ask if they didn’t understand something, strategies that were reinforced by their supervisors. Finally, most asked for help at their site when necessary.

Being flexible was an outcome of the internship experience, but this flexibility arose out of initial concerns about working with American clients. Three of the participants used
words like “nervous, fear, or self-conscious” with regard to counseling clients in English. Suba expressed this concern in saying, “Would I make sense or not?” Another concern was the use of language as part of the culture. Cora stated, “It’s a big challenge for me because it’s in another language; of course I miss so many things because it’s not my culture.”

Another concern that surfaced in general was the lack of understanding of diagnosis and the medical/psychological terms that are more familiar to American students. Only Cora from Argentina didn’t struggle with this concern as much. Pinar stated, “So it put more pressure on me because you’re writing codes, the things we’re keeping and I make mistakes, medical mistakes, and also the concept of what you’re writing in those notes is really important and I thought I was going to have problems.”

Finally, two participants suggested that community agencies should be better informed in advance that an intern is from another country. Cora felt that “assumptions” were made about her because she’s Latina, but not from America, so they needed to be more patient with her when presenting cases during a case conference.

Discussion and Implications for Pedagogy

Hearing the voices of international students who were immersed in an American community counseling graduate program was compelling, and raised a number of areas for discussion and implications for pedagogy.

Results of this study suggest that international students have a qualitatively different experience in graduate school community counseling programs than their American counterparts. Understanding and relating to the counseling profession, becoming acclimated to the field, interpersonal experiences of bias and isolation, lack of a shared historical culture, and experiencing little or no understanding (on the part of Americans) of the impact of these differences all contributed to difficulties these students experienced. While many of these students’ experiences can in all likelihood be generalized to the broader experience of international students in any discipline, our study was able to pinpoint these issues in the context of a program that prepares students for the helping professions. Findings suggest that our graduate counseling curricular strategies, however effective they may be with clients in the field, are less than successful in our own programs. Perhaps the inherent usefulness of these strategies should be implemented and practiced within the classroom milieu throughout a program of study in counseling.

Hearing the voices of the international students studying community counseling in America means that we must begin to take an even harder look at our European based counseling models. Perhaps these theories and practices are sufficient if students are preparing to work in the United States, certainly debatable, given the cultural richness and diversity present in this country. But clearly, if international students are preparing to return to their countries of origin and use this knowledge, then the training received here could be problematic. Three of the four students in this study indicated very clearly that they could not return home and use the kinds of language and strategies that they were learning in this American graduate program. Clearly this suggests or implies that the preparation of international students falls short of what they perceive as necessary and sufficient to carry out effective counseling functions at home.
Our findings have implications for pedagogy and practice with international students in graduate community counseling, as well as for our work with American students also in training. We offer several suggestions as strategies to begin to address the important issues raised by students in this study.

1. Eurocentric theories can and should be challenged as professional hegemony. Such challenge is best led by those who are experts on their own culture, and international students must be able to candidly question whether some counseling strategies, techniques, and models are appropriately adaptable, if at all. Then they must be helped to explore and modify these models to work with clients in their home countries.

2. The profession can and must do more to highlight, improve and expand the development of multicultural competence of American students at earlier stages in their training. The study clearly suggested that these international students began their studies with expectations of friendliness, support and connection with American students that were simply not met. It is difficult to imagine how a counseling student can work effectively with diverse clients in the field while overlooking such diversity in the very classroom in which they learn. This particularly leads us to question if our multicultural models within the classroom are too narrowly practiced, that is, mostly with respect to American diversity issues.

3. It may be useful to provide a short term counseling focused primer on diagnosis, treatment, and other aspects of generally accepted counseling practice for students from other countries. Such an effort, as a weekend course, workshop series, or other short term endeavor, could serve to provide important contextual information for international students who often enter without the benefit of historical, cultural, or experientially derived counseling knowledge that American students take for granted.

4. International students seemed to benefit greatly from experiential strategies. Understandable, such pedagogy serves as a learning bridge over language based difficulty of translating theory into action. Professors would do well to recall this and infuse experiential pedagogy into all counseling classes. However, clear instruction, beginning with the need for such pedagogy (e.g., self-awareness; videotaping), and cultural sensitivity (e.g., special needs with internship) to the concerns about these strategies must be articulated before their application actually occurs.

In addition, other aspects of academic work need to be prepared in written form and not just discussed in class, in order to give students who may struggle with language access to the information long after the discussion has ended. The use of Blackboard and other online discussion boards is just such an example.

5. Given the social and academic isolation that international students reported, counseling programs need to make more concerted outreach efforts. The assignment of a professor and a peer mentor respectively for each international student could help to ease transitions, eliminate isolation, provide an early warning system for difficulty, and create cross cultural bridges on a small, interpersonal level. Additionally, American students may need guidance in changing their cultural paradigms to help them be more helpful to, accepting of, and patient with international students.
6. Discussions of pedagogy are usually reserved for the academic and classroom experiences. However, from our study, it is clear that the “educating” of our international students about community counseling and the selection of such as a concentration must begin much earlier. To make an informed decision before deciding to spend years in a graduate program that maybe isn’t as common in their home countries, more in-depth information must be contained in literature, advertising, and web pages about the practice of professional counseling in America. This goal can be accomplished by providing: 1) more thorough descriptions distinguishing between mental health, school, and career counseling; 2) examples of where professional counselors work; 3) e-mail addresses of former graduates now working; and 4) case illustrations exemplifying the types of client problems with which counselors work.

This study explored the experiences of graduate international students studying community counseling in America. It highlighted the significant cultural, personal, socioeconomic and academic adjustments that these students make as they become immersed in preparation for a career in counseling and mental health. International students are juggling with the duality of training in one country and potentially utilizing that training in another. As counselor educators who are shaping the profession, we would do well to listen and incorporate the knowledge and experiences of international students into our framework of education.
References


