

Southern Adventist University  
School of Social Work and Family Studies

Reflection Paper #3

By

Mike Hoback

General Integrative Seminar 1 (SOCW 541)

Dr. Jennifer Nestell

September 13, 2010

## **Article Summary**

The articles assigned this week dealt with applying cultural competency in clinical practice, critical thinking as integral to social work practice and diversity and leadership in a changing world. The articles all explained why factors such as cultural competency, critical thinking and diversity were important in the social work field.

One article conducted a qualitative method in order to better understand how cultural competency could be integrated into social work and how individuals could be evaluated in their use of it. The second article explained why critical thinking was important in the role of a social worker and how educators valued it in their teaching with students. The third and final article addressed the issue of diversity and leadership in today's world and how different ethnic or minority groups were perceived by others in an ever changing world.

## **Critique**

Cultural competency is a vital role in dealing with individual that have a different background or different cultural values than the social worker in which they are working with.

Understanding the cultural values of individuals will enable the worker to formulate what action plan to take with the client and will also help build the relationship between the two. This can help the social worker understand what different types of problems individual with different ethnic backgrounds have. I remember a reading in which a female of Indian descent was upset because of her husband's infidelity but because of her values and her family's views on divorce she could not leave. This would help the social worker explore alternative actions for her to explore.

Diversity is a major issue facing us today and I really enjoyed reading this article. Diversity can be just more important as cultural competency due to the fact that women think different

than men and men in social work need to understand that some of the actions they conduct may be perceived as inappropriate to another individual. The thing about this week's reading is that it was really clear to see how cultural competency, diversity and critical thinking are all inter-related and at the heart of our core values. Without these three traits it would be hard for a social worker to reflect back to other core values such as conduct and ethical principles.

### **Reflection**

These articles actually made for an interesting night in that while I was reading these my girlfriend was over for dinner. While reading the article on diversity and leadership in a changing world we became involved in a discussion pertaining to what the article reported as to the effects of these issues in the real world. The article stated that women followed a more democratic leadership style and that women use more of a positive reinforcement method of leadership as opposed to a negative reinforcement in which one relies on reprimands.

The reason in which the article was so intriguing is that just 6 years ago my girlfriend went through a lot of this same stereotyping. In 2004, she was the first female elected to the position of judge in Chattanooga. This was a post that had always been dominated by men and upon winning the election the newspapers ran several articles with a reference that because she was a female she would let her personal feeling get involved with decisions that she made while on the bench. Of course this turned out wrong and she was elected by over 97 percent of the population in her second term. The point in all this is that as social workers we need to practice diversity and cultural competency in order to better understand their clients and not have any preconceived bias about the client. While this is true society as a whole is still in need for this same teaching in that young boys are still being taught that certain roles are to be performed by women and that men are far superior. As long as these beliefs are taught and accepted by members in our society

people will always have this bias but as social workers we can use our own personal experiences to help not only us but our clients to realize that these stereotypes are false. These readings actually made it really easy to see that cultural competency can be helped and learned through diversity and critical thinking. All of these core values are interrelated and it's almost impossible to learn one without learning the others.